Interdisziplinäre Zeitschrift für
Südasienforschung

The *Interdisziplinäre Zeitschrift für Südasienforschung* (IZSAF) is an electronic peer-reviewed journal that seeks to provide a platform for young researchers with a research focus on South Asia to publish their findings. The intention of IZSAF is to bring together young scholars from a variety of disciplines and to enter into interdisciplinary discussion regarding issues surrounding the study of South Asia. IZSAF is open to new formats and also publishes photo essays to present topics in South Asia studies visually.

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Editorial

Liebe Leser:innen,

vor mehr als sechs Jahren, im Herbst 2016, erschien die erste Ausgabe der *Interdisziplinären Zeitschrift für Südasienforschung* (IZSAF). Damals waren zahlreiche Nachwuchswissenschaftler:innen unterschiedlicher Disziplinen an Bord, um mit viel Enthusiasmus eine Zeitschrift herauszugeben, die insbesondere für den wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchs eine Möglichkeit bietet, seine ersten Forschungen in unterschiedlichen Formaten auf Deutsch oder Englisch zu publizieren, und Fachgrenzen übergreifend Einblicke in die gegenwärtige Südasienforschung im deutschsprachigen Raum und darüber hinaus gewährt.

Sechs Jahre später ist dann das passiert, was bei Nachwuchsprojekten in der Regel zu beobachten ist: Der Nachwuchs ist kein Nachwuchs mehr. Die meisten Redaktionsmitglieder der ersten Ausgabe sind mittlerweile an einer anderen wissenschaftlichen Institution, wo sie mit neuen Herausforderungen konfrontiert sind, haben zudem eine Familie gegründet und sich nach und nach aus der Redaktionsarbeit zurückgezogen. Dies ist mehr als verständlich und nachvollziehbar. Wir möchten uns auch deshalb an dieser Stelle ganz herzlich bei allen bedanken, die in den letzten sechs Jahren die Herausgabe dieser Zeitschrift mitgestaltet haben, und bei allen, die ihre wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse in der IZSAF publiziert haben. Unser besonderer Dank gilt Nicole Merkel-Hilf, die mit viel Geduld, wissenschaftlicher Akribie und stetem Zuspruch die Herausgabe der IZSAF überhaupt erst ermöglicht hat. Dank ihr, ihres Teams an der Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg und der Förderung durch die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft für die Open-Access-Plattform Heidelberg Asian Studies Publishing (HASP) kann die IZSAF nicht nur im Internet, sondern auch ohne jegliche Zugangsbeschränkungen veröffentlicht werden.

Auch die für alle zugängliche Zugriffsstatistik bestätigt, dass Leser:innen vor allem aus Deutschland und Indien, aber auch den USA und vielen weiteren Ländern zahlreich auf die Beiträge der IZSAF zugreifen und die Autor:innen so eine Leserschaft erreichen, die ihnen mit den üblichen Printmedien oder kostenintensiven Online-Zeitschriften höchstwahrscheinlich verwehrt bliebe. Kostenlos bedeutet aber auch im Falle der IZSAF nicht qualitativ bedenklich. Neben

Essays, die intern von der Redaktion geprüft werden, werden die Artikel dem inzwischen üblichen anonymen Peer-Review-Verfahren unterzogen.

Dies gilt selbstverständlich auch für die aktuelle Ausgabe. Diese umfasst einen begutachteten Beitrag von Barbara Schuler, einen Essay von Nora Warmer und fünf weitere begutachtete Beiträge, die den Themenschwerpunkt *Negotiating Religion in South Asian-European Entanglements* bilden. Die thematische Bandbreite der aktuellen Beiträge illustriert auch dieses Mal, wie vielfältig die Südasienforschung sein kann. Wir hoffen, dass die IZSAF auch in Zukunft jungen und etablierten Wissenschaftler:innen und ihren Forschungsergebnissen eine Plattform bieten kann, die einlädt, über den eigenen disziplinären Tellerrand hinaus in einen Dialog miteinander zu treten. Dazu laden wir auch Sie ein, sich sowohl in der Redaktion als auch mit Beiträgen zu beteiligen.

Carmen Brandt und Maria Framke

Honour Matters: Social Group-Based Narratives as Sources for the Study of Situated Honour Practices and their Sets of Emotions in Early Modern Tamil-Speaking South India

Barbara Schuler[1]

Abstract: What do we know about honour-based emotional practices of the various social groups in early modern Tamil-speaking south India? And which emotions were involved in honour practice? This case study applies a well-known approach in emotion history studies to this new terrain, a terrain that is largely uncharted and deserves to be explored. By examining two honour-sensitive social groups and their respective key narratives—on one hand, a lower status group, on the other, an elite and privileged group—it will be shown what kinds of practices were highlighted or evoked in conflict settings, and how honour-bound emotional practices came to the fore. Against the backdrop of a pre-modern Tamil culture, where practices were shaped by traditional normative social attributions and demarcated group boundaries, this study offers ample details of the fluid boundaries in the new literary genres of the time, where gender-specific emotions compete strongly with the clear boundaries for emotions in normative orders. The study will further show that an investigation of pre-modern Tamil emotion treatises, lexicons/glossaries (*nikaṇṭu*), moral canons, and proverbs counter the Western tendency of considering honour an emotion. Examining community-specific situated honour practices and the sets of emotions surrounding them not only gives us insight into the self-understanding, emotional life and needs of these groups. It also provides insight into questions pertaining to new political facts, internal literary dynamics, and social expectations. These insights are also relevant to questions about honour concepts and practices in India today.

INTRODUCTION

Studies on Emotions

Since the canonical studies by Peter and Carol Stearns (emotional styles, 1988),[2] Barbara Rosenwein (emotional communities, 2006), William Reddy (emotional regime/refuge, 2001) and Monique Scheer (emotions as a kind of practice/embodied emotions, 2012) it has been standard in scholarship on emotion that emotion has a history.[3] Few humanities scholars would place themselves at the 'universal and timeless' end of the spectrum in their understanding of emotions. Most would see emotions as bio-cultural and socially constructed, rather than merely hard-wired or visceral.[4]

The body of scholarly work on emotion histories mentioned above has provided a rich vocabulary as well as a set of analytical categories. Among these, emotives, emotional communities, regimes, refuges, and emotions-as-practice are now indispensable concepts.[5] Particularly Rosenwein's 'emotional communities' (2002, 2006 & 2010a & b) and Scheer's 'emotions as a kind of practice' (2012) can be easily transferred beyond geographical boundaries.

Scholars of emotion histories have moved into terrain traditionally occupied by other disciplines, such as literature, art, philosophy, anthropology,

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[2] Also Gammerl (2012).

[3] On the English word 'emotion' and its history, see in particular Dixon (2004), and Frevert et al. (2014). An overview of the international state of research on the history of emotions is found in Boddice (2018). — On pre-modern Tamil thinkers' interest in emotion across time, and pre-modern shifts in Tamil emotion knowledge, see Schuler (2022: Chapter 1).

[4] For a recent inclusion of aspects of neuroscience in studies on emotions, see Boddice & Smith (2020). About cross-cultural research that has been done on affect, see Fontaine, Scherer & Soriano (2013). — For the neurobiological dimension of emotions, see e.g., Roth (2021: 54f.): the lower limbic level, the hypothalamus, controls life-sustaining functions, such as fleeing when threatened or reacting in anger if there is an obstacle.

[5] A promising concept is also 'emotional arenas' (e.g., courts of law, homes, parliaments, opera houses, etc.) coined by Seymour (2020). There was also an attempt by Gerd Althoff to introduce 'staging' (*Inszenierung*) of emotion as a new approach; see Althoff (2010). In the last twenty years in Europe, there have also been revisions in historical research on emotions. There were critical responses (Rosenwein 2006: 6 & Rosenwein 2012a: 9) to the research approach of Huizinga (1997 [1921]) and Elias (2010 [1939]).

sociology, and law. But more recently, they also have taken interest in the affective sciences.[6]

As a number of emotion historians have made clear, despite recognition from at least the time of Lucien Febvre that emotions profoundly shape history, the importance of emotions in the past has not always been acknowledged.[7] Indeed, what can be said about the emotions that were experienced by people who are long dead? To answer this question, the historians of emotions have engaged in particular in debates about sources. According to the Routledge guide on *Sources for the history of emotions* (Barclay et al. 2021), there is a wide range of available and useable sources, including rituals, relics, religious rhetoric, prescriptive literature, medicine, science and psychology, legal records, visual and material sources, and fiction.[8]

Emotions have been extensively studied in recent decades across many academic fields: by sociologists (Hochschild 2003 [1983]; Illouz 2018), anthropologists (Lutz 1988; Röttger-Rössler 1989, 2004 & 2009; Rosaldo 1980), psychologists (Averill 1982; Ekman 1999; Strongman 2003), philosophers (Nussbaum 2001), historians (Althoff 2010; Chaniotis 2012; Frevert 2011, 2014 & 2015; Reddy 2001; Rosenwein 1998 & more; Stearns 1988 & 1989), Sinologists (Harbsmeier 2004; Santangelo 2006a & b; Messner 2006; Eifring 2004), literary scholars (Benthien et al. 2000; Schnell 2004), and linguists (Kövecses 1998; Wierzbiecka 1999). Also, scholars of Indian Studies have undertaken research in this direction.

If looking at the publications, there are quite a few Indological works on primary emotions such as love, anger, disgust and joy.[9] But only since the

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[6] See National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) "Affective Sciences – Emotions in Individual Behaviour and Social Processes" (University of Geneva), one of the world's first interdisciplinary research networks to examine emotions in a comprehensive manner; and Max-Planck-Institut für empirische Ästhetik "Ästhetische Gefühle" (Frankfurt a. M.); see also Duke et al. (2021).

[7] See Seymour (2020: 8, Introduction), who refers to Lucien Febvre (1973 [1941]).

[8] In addition, the Routledge guide offers introductions to emerging fields, including 'comparative emotions' and 'intersectionality and emotions'.

[9] S. A. Srinivasan (1987): the Tamil emotion word *uṇar, uṇarcci*; Trawick (1990a & b): family love; Vamadeva (1995): *vaṇṇaṇpu*, violent love; Monius (2004): love, violence, disgust; Orsini (2006): love; Ali (1996): pleasure; Eichinger Ferro-Luzzi (2003–2004): expression of emotion in the 20th century; Gnoli (1968), Colas (2004), Cuneo (2009), Pollock (2012): the concept of *rasa*, emotion as aesthetic experience in poetics and dramaturgy; Hara (2001, 2006): anger, Sanskrit *manyu*, *krodha*; shame, Skt. *vrīḍā*, *lajjā*, *hrī*; Torella (2009): *passioni-emozioni*; Oranskaia (2007): lexical representation of Hindi 'fear'; the research group "History of Emotions in

research centre "History of Emotions" was established at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development (MPIB), Berlin, has work also been done on the history of emotions in India.[10] Encouragingly, in 2021 two collected volumes on emotions in South Asia appeared: *The Bloomsbury research handbook of emotions in classical Indian philosophy*, edited by Maria Heim et al., and the special issue "Studying emotions in South Asia", in *South Asian History and Culture*, edited by Margrit Pernau. These were preceded in 2017 by the collected volume *Historicizing emotions: Practices and objects in India, China, and Japan*, edited by Barbara Schuler.

Studies on Honour

One aspect that has received little attention in Indian Studies until now is the history of emotions associated with honour, as well as honour concepts and practices. Indeed, the vast majority of publications on India offer very little about how honour and the emotions linked to it has been described, represented or culturally formulated in texts of different periods or social groups. Nor has it been addressed what emotions have been related to certain categories of honour (gender-specific honour, group honour, honour of elites, family honour). Thus, there is still a lot of open terrain for research in Indian Studies.

Also on the semantic meaning of honour far less research has been done in Indian contexts than in European ones.[11] Indeed apart from Pamela Price's research on honour of the Maṟavar in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries (1996: 19–32) and on postcolonial and contemporary Karnataka and

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India" at MPIB Berlin: male anger, female malice, decency, disgust; Menon & Shweder (1994): the cultural psychology of 'shame' Oriya *lāja*, *lajjā*, *lājyā* (also Shweder 2003); Rozin (2003): the psychology of 'shame', 'happiness'; Lynch (1990): emotion as a social construction; Kapferer (1979), Michaels & Wulf (2011), Schuler (2012): emotions in rituals.

[10] See the publications of Margrit Pernau's research group, which deal primarily with Muslim north India. An exception is the volume by Rajamani, Pernau & Schofield (2018).

[11] For research that has been done in Western contexts and domains, see Peristiany 1966, Frevert 1992 & 2011, Miller 1993, Stewart 1994, Schreiner & Schwerhoff 1995, Palmer & Brown 1998, Bowman 2006, Rodriguez Mosquera et al. 2008, Speitkamp 2010, Christiansen & Thaler 2012, Oprisko 2012. The state of international research from the 1960s to the end of the 1990s on honour in the Western sense was presented by Martin Dinges (1989). Longer gender-specific studies on honour in Europe can be found in Frevert 1992 and Burghartz 1995; more recent research on honour in Asia (e.g., Indonesia) can be found in Röttger-Rössler 1989 & 2009.

Andhra Pradesh (2013: 210–238 & 260–290), no systematic historical research can be found that focuses on the south Indian Tamil context, despite the fact that honour is a central phenomenon in that culture and has been textually transmitted in many ways. As a result, in the current research literature there is a clear lack of studies on historical honour semantics, concepts,[12] communities and practices in various eras, not to mention a systematic overview (also lexicographic), which is completely missing.

Honour is a multi-layered concept; it is more complex and intricate than is usually thought. There is considerable variance among scholars about whether honour is an emotion. Anthropologist Frank Stewart (1994: 33) argues against equating honour with 'sentiment', whereas sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1966: 191) speaks of 'sentiment of honour', and anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers (1966) describes 'sentiment' as being an aspect of honour. In turn, emotion historian Bettina Hitzer (2011: 30) refers to honour and trust as 'more complex emotion concepts'. Ute Frevert (2015), who does work on the history of emotions, and ethnologist Birgitt Röttger-Rössler (2004 & 2009) consider honour (like shame) to be a 'social emotion'.

Several scholars (Rodriguez Mosquera et al. 2008; Palmer & Brown 1998; Schreiner & Schwerhoff 1995) have shown that honour is linked to various combinations of emotions (indignation, anger, revenge, shame, pride, envy). It therefore makes little sense to view honour isolated from emotions. The present study on honour is guided by this thought.

While honour seems to have largely lost its significance in today's Western cultures (Frevert 1992, 2011; Stewart 1994: 9), in pre-modern times honour was connected to a multifaceted and sophisticated system of social communication and interaction (Schreiner & Schwerhoff 1995: 9). In-depth research on honour as a socio-cultural phenomenon has shaped the understanding of honour decisively in the relevant literature. Above all, honour is no longer considered a moral concept. The idea that honour can be defined without any contradictions has also been abandoned (Schreiner & Schwerhoff 1995: 9).

Cultural and social psychological studies as well as anthropological research describe societies as India (also Pakistan, UAE, Turkey, Russia, Poland,

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[12] As has been explained by Andy Blunden (2012: 4), we can speak of a 'concept' if you 'know what it is', 'what it's for', 'what it's called', or 'who it belongs to and where it came from'.

Spain, and others) as being highly oriented towards honour (Maitner et al. 2022: 264–266; Cross et al. 2014; Leung & Cohen 2011).[13] Academic literature distinguishes honour cultures from dignity cultures (Germany, United Kingdom, United States, and others) and face cultures (China, Japan, Indonesia, and others). There has been a considerable amount of research investigating honour-related behaviour cross-culturally, but differences between social groups within a single South Asian culture, for instance, have rarely been addressed.

The present study examines the topic of honour and its accompanying emotions through a praxeological lens (mainly based on the theoretical model of Monique Scheer (2012: 209–217).[14] Examining practices allows us to compare sources from different historical groups and contexts. It sees honour and emotions as being something people 'do' in a concrete social context and shaped by social preconditions and knowledge from past experience. In this approach, language, social hierarchies, honour appraisal, goal relevance, emotion rules, and gender are all of importance. Under the assumption that emotions are a central component of honour experiences, it seems of particular interest to examine the components of emotions (that is, the evaluation of the event communicated in bodily reactions such as tears, or expressions, verbalised, gestural, postural), and to identify aspects of coping or actions that are involved.[15] This includes a focus on the emotional communities (as coined by Barbara Rosenwein, groups of people who adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and values, or who devalue the same or related emotions), and the honour styles practiced by such emotional groups.

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[13] See Maitner et al. (2022) for further references; for Turkey as an honour culture, see Cross et al. (2014).

[14] Scheer describes emotional practice in terms of four basic categories.

[15] On the five components of the emotion process (appraisal, bodily reaction, action tendency, expression, feeling), see Fontaine, Scherer & Soriano (2013). See also Scheer (2012: 214). On a similar component process in a Tamil theory of emotions, see the references to medieval Tamil thinkers below ('Tamil key terms for emotion the Tamil way', note 49).

APPROACHES AND SOURCES FOR THIS STUDY

Social Groups as Emotional Communities

The Maṟavas of pre-modern times, traditionally seen as both warriors and thieves, are one of two honour-sensitive groups I will examine here.[16] The other is the Vēḷāḷas, an elite agriculturalist group.[17] Maṟava and Vēḷāḷa are both caste names.[18] Traditionally, a caste's social and economic functions were clearly defined and governed by sets of rules. This also holds true for emotional patterns, as is evidenced by the seventeenth-century Tamil

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[16] Quite a few scholars have dealt with the history of the Maṟavas/Kaḷḷars social group. See Sathyanatha Aiyar (1924), Vriddhagirisan (1942), Sathianathaier (1956), Kadhirvel (1977), Blackburn (1978), Shulman (1980), Dumont (1986), Dirks (1993), Shulman & Subrahmanyam (1993), Rao, Shulman & Subrahmanyam (1998: 264–304, "The South: Maṟavar, Kaḷḷar, and Maraikkāyar"), Bes (2001), Pandian (2009). For *maṟavaṉ*, see *Tamil Lexicon* (TL), *s.v.*; for *maṟam*: 'valour', 'bravery' (*vīram*); 'strength' (*vali*); 'cruelty', 'harshness' (*koṭumai*), 'fearless-ness' (*taṟukaṇmai*), 'anger', 'wrath' (*ciṉam*), see *Varalāṟṟu muṟait tamiḻ ilakkiyap pērakarāti/Glossary of historical Tamil literature (up to 1800 AD)* (*VMTIP*), vol. 5 (2002: 1931 *s.v.*). For the Maṟava self-understanding and self-ascription as hunters, thieves, and military chiefs, see the unpublished chronicle *Ūttumalai pāḷaiyappaṭṭu vamcāvaḷi*, Manuscript D 3583 GOML. This chronicle of the Ūttumalai Maṟavas (one of the eleven Maṟava sub-groups) will be discussed in a separate article (in preparation). For the paradoxical joint role of half watchman, half cattle rustler and bandit, see the oral-tradition ballads *Palavēcaṉ cērvaikkārar katai* and *Cantaṉattēvaṉ katai*. In particular, Palavēcaṉ's story points to the Maṟavas' significant histor-ical importance in village policing systems (*kāval*). This hybridity of thief–watchman was not a contradiction, nor was the culture-specific group of institutionalised thieves and robbers, which as official *jāti* (caste: Maṟava; Kaḷḷar) belonged to the social order. See also Shulman (1980). On the pre-modern practice of seasonal cattle raiding, and 'publicly tolerated […] small-scale violence, such as plundering or thieving', see Gommans (1999: 303, 304).

[17] The two forms Vēḷāḷa and Veḷḷāḷa are in usage. However, the former is considered to be the older of the two. For the history of the landowning peasant elite community of the Vēḷāḷas, see Ludden (1989: particularly 67, 85, 87 & 91–94). — In a collection of didactic verses dating to c. 650–700 CE (*Tirikaṭukam*, 12, 42), the Vēḷāḷa is portrayed as good person/*Gutmensch* (*vēḷāḷa ṉeṉpāṉ viruntirukka vuṇṇātāṉ*) and land cultivator (*vēḷāṉ kuṭikku*) who is helpful, cour-teous and hospitable (*vēḷāṇmai*) (*Tivākaram nikaṇṭu, s.v.*, in *Tamiḻ nikaṇṭukaḷ*). For the dating, see Zvelebil (1995: 666).

[18] The 'Portuguese-derived' term 'caste' (Tamil *kulam*, Sanskrit *jāti*) is defined by Gijs Kruijtzer (2009: 106 & 140) as 'any named status group of which membership was generally perceived to be based on descent'. — Note that there exist native Tamil classifications that are themselves historically conditioned, namely *maṟakkuṭi* and *aṟakkuṭi*, the martial group versus the virtuous group. While the term *maṟakkuṭi* according to the *VMTIP*, vol. 5 (2002: 1930 *s.v.*), is attested in the literary composition of the *Cilappatikāram* 12.6 (first millennium CE) and in the glossary is equated with *vīrar kulam*, the term *aṟakkuṭi* has not entered the glossary. However, both terms, *maṟakkuṭi* and *aṟakkuṭi*, found entry into the twentieth-century *TL s.v.* For a more precise dating of the *Cilappatikāram*, see the recent monograph of Shulman (2016: 334, note 103).

grammar *Ilakkaṇa Viḷakkam* (and its auto-commentary) by Vaittiyanāta Tēcikar. It lists the Tamil emotion word *taṉmai*, meaning the nature of a caste, as one of the thirty-two auxiliary emotions (*meyppāṭu*s).[19]

This Tamil idea that social groups adhere to specific norms of emotional expressions and behaviour is easily compatible with Rosenwein's notion of 'emotional communities', where the groups can be of different types and sizes (e.g., military, professional classes, members of specific elites, kings, intellectuals, religious bodies, families, people of the same sex, peers). By examining emotional communities, it is possible to extract honour-bound emotion practices and concepts based on group-specific styles and affective patterns.[20] How a community evaluates emotions and thus prioritises or negates them is an interesting question connected to this process.[21]

Norm-Governance in Practices, Honour Functions, and Oral Culture

Considering honour-related practice to be situated practice—that is, situated in a particular time, space, body, and community—I shall argue that honour in the given context is used for various ends and in different emotional styles. The Sanskritist Sheldon Pollock has noted that by the period under discussion, and in traditional India in general, virtually all aspects of human

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[19] For *taṉmai*, see *Ilakkaṇa viḷakkam*, *Akattiṇaiyiyal*, ed. Tāmōtarampiḷḷai, 526–527, verse 579; see also Schuler (2022: 85, note 223). The *Ilakkaṇa Viḷakkam* auto-commentary (by Vaittiyanāta Tēcikar as well, 17th c.) reproduces the same set of topics in play from the period of the early thirteenth-century emotion theory commentator Pērāciriyar. For Pērāciriyar's discussion of emotions (*meyppāṭu*s) not usually found in Western lists of emotion words, see Schuler (2022: 79): Among the thirty-two auxiliary emotions (*meyppāṭu*s) is also the term *taṉmai*, which is explained by Pērāciriyar as 'things specific to certain castes', which he portrays in small scenes. '*Taṉmai* means the nature of a caste', e.g., 'a king walks with an erect/straight neck (*eṭutta kaḻuttu*) and a battle-scarred chest (*aṭutta mārpu*)' (*TP*Pēr 260, p. 41). Vaittiyanāta Tēcikar, whose work is also called 'little *Tolkāppiyam*' (*kuṭṭit tolkāppiyam*, p. 2), does not add his own explications or readings to his auto-commentary, a commentary based one-to-one on Pērāciriyar's commentary. On the traditionalist Pērāciriyar and his dislike of innovations, see Schuler (2022: 26).

[20] When using the word 'emotion concept', I refer to a script that is the result of repeated experiences in terms of stimuli, evaluations, physical reactions, emotional consequences, and the regulation of emotion and action.

[21] Cf. Briggs (1970) on how anger is little valued by the Utku Eskimos; and Foolen (2008: 377), on anger as a prominent emotion in Tahiti.

practices had been treated systematically in treatises,[22] whether thievery or emotions.[23] This makes it obligatory to take into account relevant emotion treatises of the period as well. Particularly if we assume that theorising does not exist in a vacuum, but rather is a purposive practice in and of itself, one that shapes and is shaped.

While a highly normative control of cultural practices was the rule, the ordering of knowledge, defined as a means of communication, was largely oral. In oral cultures, as has been postulated by Barend ter Haar, people are group-oriented and live based on reputation.[24] This, I argue, is also what shaped models of honour and their accompanying emotional styles in pre-modern south India. In the following I shall offer evidence for these views.

The Time Period

In the present study, I will focus on the sixteenth to eighteenth century. Why do I choose this time period? Early modern[25] south India witnessed huge changes, both economically and politically.[26] There were transformations in

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[22] For a Sanskrit culture-related discussion of the pre-modern domination of theory (*śāstra*) over practical activity as part of an Indian 'centrality of rule-governance in human behaviour', see Pollock (1985: 500).

[23] Regarding the 'science of thievery' (*steya-śāstra*), see Das (2001), Strauch (2001), and George (1966).

[24] The Sinologist Barend ter Haar, who has done many years of research on the history of orality and textuality, argues that oral cultures are collective and cannot exist without a group. They require peer pressure. Further, he argues that orality is performance and that in orality, a person exists through reputation that, again, is based on performance (inaugural lecture at the University of Hamburg, Germany, October 2018).

[25] The current common consensus is to consider India's early modern era to have begun in the early sixteenth century; see Kulke (2005: 104).

[26] Prior to the momentous political and economic shifts of early modern period, the power structure was the following: during the late Cōḷa dynasty of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, the powerful agricultural landowner Vēḷāḷas called on Maṟava warriors for military services and gave these retainers land grants (*amaram*; *TL s.v.*) for their service. Again, in the twelfth century a new urban social stratification existed, with three categories: 1. Brahmins, 2. Vēḷāḷas; (1. + 2. in control of land), and 3. Right and Left-Hand castes, the latter a division 'to determine the social and caste status of the artisans and craftsmen [e.g., weavers] apart from new ethnic and economic groups' (Champakalakshmi 1996: 321). (On the control of land, see Veluthat 2011: 130). Two powerful organisations also existed: (1) the Five Hundred (*ai-nuṟṟuvar*) merchant association, which was an inter-regional/overseas trade organisation, dominant in 1201–1350 during the late Cōḷa period (on the dating, see Karashima, Subbarayalu & Shanmugam 2011: 152), whose members represented several castes and religions and also included soldiers; and (2) the Cittiramēḻi Periya Nāṭu, an agricultural and elite

knowledge about markets, trading conditions, and political etiquette (Subrahmanyam 1993: 276).[27] The powerful south Indian imperial state fell,[28] and various local power holders and political adventurers emerged.[29] The political idiom was the celebration of martial valour. The Europeans were on the scene;[30] and a Deccani influence in south India became visible.[31]

Precisely during this period, between 1600 and 1800, a considerable number of historiographical traditions in various genres emerged, including ballads, dramas, and chronicles. The new genres (e.g., *katai* or ballad/narrative poetic composition) enabled rising marginal social groups (e.g., Maṟavas and Kaḷḷars) to become visible and make a mark in history. One of many significant contributions of the scholar trio Rao-Shulman-Subrahmanyam was to demonstrate that these emerging literary genres presented history in various historiographical modes that interweave fact and fiction.[32] This makes it clear that history in India was not written in a genre resembling that found in the European tradition.

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organisation with its emblem the 'plough' (*mēḻi*) (late 12th–14th c.). Both organisations exercised joint authority from the thirteenth to early fourteenth century (Champalaksmi 1996: 319, 320 & 322).

[27] Interestingly, by 1700 India's share of world trade was almost twenty-five percent, the subcontinent roughly on par with Europe. (After English colonialism, in 1950 this percentage had fallen to four percent, as the economist Angus Maddison has calculated.) See Maddison (2006).

[28] Vijayanagara 1336/46–1565; at its height 1509–1529.

[29] See the Nāyakas of Telugu origin. For a genealogical chart, see Bes (2018a: 214). See also Bes (2018b); and Rao, Shulman & Subrahmanyam (1998).

[30] In this period, we witness an increase of monetisation and the emergence of individual traders (Champakalakshmi 1996: 325). The economy of the Indian Ocean around 1700 was linked to economies in Europe, and the dissemination of firearms is attested (Subrahmanyam 1993: 276).

[31] Nagaswamy (1987: 210) states that the Deccani influence was received through Telugu artists, not directly. See also Figs. 2 and 3 below. On the Deccan Muslim-ruled Sultanates, see Fischel (2016). The Deccan Sultanates comprised mainly Aḥmadnagar, Bījāpūr, Golkonda. As Fischel states, '[u]nder […] growing pressures, Bījāpūr and Golkonda collapsed and their territories were annexed by the Mughals in 1686–87'; Aḥmadnagar lost its political significance following the Mughal conquest of 1600 (Fischel 2017; also Alam & Subrahmanyam 2012: 171 & 203). See also Fischel (2020).

[32] As they argue, the presence of the fictive does not discredit the historical value of such texts; it is possible for readers to distinguish between the factual and the non-factual based on internal textual clues ('texture'). On this, see the discussion referring to Rao, Shulman & Subrahmanyam (2001): Mantena (2007); and Rao, Shulman & Subrahmanyam (2007). Cf. also postnarrativism representative Munslow (2007: 116): 'It is the function of the reader to determine […] why some views of the past are plausible, satisfactory or convincing and others are not'; and a critique of this approach, Kuukkanen (2015: 152).

The Sources

In this case study, I will focus on two pre-modern Tamil texts, one fictional, the other factual (first half of the 17th c.), in the two performance-oriented genres of *katai* and *ammāṉai*. In both cases, the texts are long folk-poetic narratives.

Why have these sources in particular been chosen? Most obviously, because honour plays a special role in them. Despite their surface differences in subject matter, there is a deep affinity between the texts, an affinity resting on their shared focus on the complex circumstance of honour. Both texts can be seen as key narratives to the self-understanding of the respective honour group and its habitus. Moreover, they have been chosen because both sources show characteristics of intertextuality, in one case with higher literary registers, in the other with testimony in the form of letters. The literary and social worlds of south India of the period in question were porous. As has been well established, high literary forms not only shaped popular forms, they were also shaped by popular forms (e.g., Hardy 1992; Schuler 2009). Thirdly, since both texts are vernacular-poetic performative works (sharing presentation and literary conventions such as formulas and repetitions) and since both play in conflict settings, they can easily be compared.

Concentrating on these two genres (*katai, ammāṉai*) for examining the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries makes sense, because their body of source material from this period is by far the best. The special value of such 'folk narratives' lies in the worldview they describe. The ballads are full of colloquial expressions and other indications of a local oral environment. The *ammāṉai* text under discussion has also proven to be a historiographic narrative. For neither text, however, do we know the author, or the exact year and context of composition.

Fiction versus Historiography

In this study I follow the claim that historiography is no less a form of fiction, as has been observed by Hayden White (1986: 146).[33] In his view, the

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[33] '[…] die Geschichtsschreibung nicht weniger eine Form von Fiktion ist' (146). White has examined the extent to which the discourse of the historiographer and that of the author of fictional literature overlap, have similarities, or correspond ('inwieweit der Diskurs des Historikers

historiographer and the author of fiction have the same goal: to give a linguistic account of reality ('sprachliches Abbild von der "Wirklichkeit" geben') (145). Both use figurative procedures. The image of reality that the author of fiction constructs is, according to White, no less real ('nicht weniger "real"') than that described by the historiographer (146).[34] The juxtaposition in the present study of two genre-related texts, one fictional, the other historiographic, is based on this view.

Difference of Emotions in Fictional versus Real-Life Contexts?

Many authors now reject the idea that there is a paradox of fiction, that is, a difference between the emotional reactions to fiction and real-life emotions. The nutshell of the debate is the question of why we respond emotionally to fiction and feel moved by characters we know do not exist. Ingrid Vendrell Ferran is among the majority of authors in the contemporary Western debate who accept that emotion does not always require belief, let alone belief in the existence of the object towards which it is directed. In her view, emotional responses to fiction are as real as emotions towards reality. One does not feel the same as what a depicted character is supposedly feeling; one rather experiences an emotion of the same type (Vendrell Ferran 2018: 220).[35] Today's students of literature looking for parallels to the so-called paradox of fiction debate in Tamil emotion theories will find it interesting that a collapse of the categorical boundaries between artistic representation of emotions and real-life emotions is encountered in texts by Iḷampūraṇar, a late thirteenth-century emotion theory commentator.[36] The theoretical view presented there is also that of the present study.

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und der des Autors fiktionaler Literatur sich überschneiden, Ähnlichkeiten aufweisen oder einander entsprechen'; 145).

[34] See also Latour (2018, Chapter 9), who argues that characters in fiction are beings that are authorised; they are not mere products of the imagination.

[35] On the current Western state of research on the (pseudo) 'paradox of fiction' debate, see Vendrell Ferran (2018).

[36] For the collapse between the Tamil technical terms *cuvai* (Sanskrit: *rasa*) and *meyppāṭu* (Sanskrit: *bhāva*), see Chapter 2, *Meyppāṭu* source readings, *s.v.* Iḷampūraṇar, point e, in Schuler (2022).

Methodological Issues and Limitations

Although in theory there is little that might seriously challenge the analytical tools of the 'honour-emotion-as-practice' approach, there are a few points that should be kept in mind.

First and foremost, any study on honour and emotion, especially those involving pre-modern non-Western texts, is confronted by the problem of Eurocentrism and the inappropriate use of modern terms and concepts. There is ample evidence that it is incorrect to assume that other cultures define, describe, practice, and evaluate honour and emotion in the same way contemporary Western cultures do (cf. Harbsmeier on China; Röttger-Rössler on Makassar; Lutz on Ifaluk; Rosaldo on Ilongot).[37] The best means for avoiding this pitfall in the present study is to employ a methodological strategy in which we are on guard for differences in semantics and connotations between the English term of 'emotion' and the Tamil term(s) for emotion we have identified. This also includes keeping in mind the difficulty and lack of consensus in defining emotion in Western contexts (see note 46 below). Moreover, it is right to call into question the overall category of honour, since it is so easy to take for granted that pre-modern Western practices of honour (e.g., duels between aristocrats, or honour killing in the Turkish culture) were also practised in Tamil-speaking social groups. What is more, even if we agree on a Tamil term for honour, it does not follow that it meant exactly the same thing in different Tamil social groups, let alone in Tamil-speaking culture as a whole. In the following I shall attempt to tackle these issues, on the one hand, through conceptual-historical enquiries into Tamil treatises, lexicons, and other compendia, and on the other, by examining the narrative sources through a praxeological lens, in order to understand how different early-modern social groups conceived honour and its set of emotions, and played it out in different contexts and situations. It can be anticipated that this will enable an understanding of the multidimensionality of honour. In this regard, a role is also played by autochthonous or emic concepts (including traditional

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[37] On the problem of merely hypothetical conceptual-semantic congruence, see the example of the ancient Indian word *ṛtú* and the cultural misunderstanding of the term in Slaje (1998). There are different contending approaches; also Hacker (1978: 18–32). Regarding methodology, see also the introduction in Barschel (2016: 3–24).

normative social attributions, self-ascription, and ascription by others) that govern behaviour.

Secondly, we have no evidence in principle that the descriptions of emotions from the pre-modern period are authentic. They may also have been staged (cf. Althoff 2010).[38] However, since we are not investigating into what honour 'felt' like, but rather how honour and its set of emotions were practised, this does not necessarily limit our interpretative and explanatory means. On the other hand, we should be aware of the polyvalence of physical expressions and the problem of reliability (for example, there can be various reasons for blushing, including embarrassment, envy, anger, humiliation, and shame; cf. Miller 1993: 103). More recently, the affective sciences are increasing our knowledge on this topic.[39]

To conclude this discussion of the approaches and sources of the present study, it is worth noting that a shift in attention requires new theories and methodological approaches. Indological studies not only contribute to theories in other disciplines, they also greatly benefit from them, as has been, in my view, clearly shown by the Indologist and Religious Studies scholar Axel Michaels.[40] In 2004, he argued for a close collaboration between Indology and the cultural turn and insisted on the significance of theories ('there is no way without theory'). Meanwhile a new route, that is, the 'emotional turn' has opened up, initiating new theoretical debates pioneered mainly by emotion historians. Scholars of Indian studies are now invited to contribute to an understanding of emotions in the South Asian world.[41]

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[38] Take for instance ritualised weeping and real weeping. Ritual weeping styles (welcome tears, tears of sorrow, etc.) are cultural forms that are socially learned and transmitted. Cf. Charles Darwin's insights that even the simulation of an emotion tends to arouse it in our mind (1872: 365).

[39] See, for instance, Vingerhoets & Bylsma (2016).

[40] Michaels (2004), particularly 469–471.

[41] It seems to me that there are good reasons for joining the theoretical debate and not to leave it to non-Indological researchers. For non-Indological works on pre-modern South Asia, see the work of emotions historian Reddy (2012), Chapter 4, "The Bhakti troubadour: Vaishnavism in twelfth-century Bengal and Orissa", which still lacks a review by an Indologist. See also the scholar of Classics, Kirby (2022: 240–256 on India).

TAMIL KEY TERMS FOR EMOTION THE TAMIL WAY

As I indicated above, if I use the meta-category 'emotion' as the term is employed in English academic writing, I do not suppose an easy conceptual-semantical equation with the Tamil terms I have identified below.[42]

The Tamil language limits itself historically to one, or respectively, two key terms: a generic term (*uṇarcci*)[43] and a technical one (*meyppāṭu*), the latter used in the Tamil theories of poetics.[44] The two terms do not designate a dualistic polarisation between emotion and rationality.[45] Both potentially have a wide number of meanings. There is no conceptual symmetry with the English term 'emotion'.[46]

Lexically, the generic term *uṇarcci* derived from the verb root *uṇar* and has a broad semantic range: 1. to be conscious of, know, understand; 2. to think, reflect, consider, 3. to examine, observe; 4. to experience as a sensation; 5. to realise; 6. to feel.[47]

The technical term *meyppāṭu*, in turn, is based on the theories of poetics and is broadly equivalent to Sanskrit *bhāva*, 'ordinary emotion',[48] in contrast to aesthetic emotion (Sanskrit: *rasa* or Tamil: *cuvai*). While there is consensus among Tamil scholars that the interpretation and thus the translation of *meyppāṭu* is difficult, it is nonetheless clear that the term emphasises the

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[42] See the section on methodological issues above.

[43] Srinivasan (1987); see also the *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, Chapter 79, v. 785.

[44] On the Tamil theories of poetics and the history of the technical term *meyppāṭu* (from the early Common Era to the 17th c.), see Schuler (2022). The theories of poetics considered emotions as an important part of literary knowledge.

[45] On emotion and rationality, see also Lynch (1990: 23).

[46] According to Dixon (2004), this is a quite late English term (having its predecessors in 'passion', 'affectus', 'sentiment'). — On the difficulty of defining emotion in Western contexts, as well as the lack of a consensus, see Dixon (2012), as well as Russell (2012: 337), and Mulligan & Scherer (2012). For the conceptual history in other European languages (e.g., German: *Begierde*, *Leidenschaft/Passion*, *Gemüt/Gemütsbewegung, Stimmung*, *Gefühl*, *Emotion*), see Frevert et al. (2014).

[47] *TL s.v. √uṇar*.

[48] I follow the Sanskritist Sheldon Pollock and translate Sanskrit *bhāva* as 'emotion'; see Pollock (2016). On the question of equivalence between Tamil *meyppāṭu* and Sanskrit *bhāva,* see Schuler (2022: 34). In contrast to the Sanskrit term, what in sum is called *meyppāṭu* does not introduce any functional terms, such as stable emotions (Sanskrit: *sthāyi-bhāva*), or transitory emotions (*vyabhicāri-bhāva*), etc.

physical basis (*mey*◦) of emotions.[49] In the Tamil theory of poetics, the chapter on emotions develops an eight- and a thirty-two-point list of emotions;[50] each emotion in the eight-point list corresponds to four causal factors that bring that emotion into being (for example, the emotion of *perumitam* [excellence or pride] arises from the four causes *kalvi, taṟukaṇ, pukaḻ, koṭai* [scholarship, bravery/fearlessness, fame, and generosity]).

The treatise treats poetic conventions, these being largely fixed stock formulated in stanzas (*sūtra*s). The tradition it presents was still valid in the seventeenth century in the *Ilakkaṇa Viḷakkam*.[51] Even though from 1600 to 1800 a number of new literary genres were introduced, in the contemporary emotion treatises new ideas were not added.[52] And although a type of treatise

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[49] For medieval Tamil thinkers of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, 'emotions' (*meyppāṭu*) are somatic, have a cause-object, involve a sense organ and a physiological change, and are registered by the mind (see Buddhist *Vīracōḻiyam* author Puttamittiraṉ and his commentator Peruntēvaṉār; also Iḷampūraṇar and Pērāciriyar). This conception of emotions endured until the seventeenth century. On a detailed history of Tamil theorisation of emotions, see Schuler (2022). — However, we do not know what the term *meyppāṭu* originally meant. Much hinges on the multiple meanings of *mey*, which range from 'body' to 'truth' or 'reality'. Lexicons such as the *VMTIP* note that the first occurrence of *meyppāṭu* is in the grammar *Tolkāppiyam* and translate it as 'emotion'. On the various translations of *meyppāṭu* by scholars of Tamil, see Schuler (2022: 33–34).

[50] See Vaittiyanāta Tēcikar's seventeenth-century *Ilakkaṇa Viḷakkam*, whose view is based on the authority of the *Tolkāppiyam, Poruḷatikāram* (*TP*), emotion chapter "Meyppāṭṭiyal": *TP*Ilam, 7: 247; 15: 256 (edition with the commentary by Iḷampūraṇar [hereafter *TP*Ilam]). This links the seventeenth-century author to the earliest extant Tamil tradition of theorising emotions in poetry, since Vaittiyanāta Tēcikar builds one-to-one on the emotion knowledge of the early Common Era. On Vaittiyanāta Tēcikar and his conservatism, see Schuler (2022: 27–30, 83–87). On the conservative views of Vaittiyanāta Tēcikar, see also Wilden (2014: 351).

[51] This Tamil pre-modern literary theory of emotions had, of course, its counterpart in practical and philosophical knowledge, as for example in Tamil *siddha* medicine, which is based on bodily humours, the causal role of emotions in disease and recovery, and the link between diet and emotion. (This medical science of the emotions that developed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was just one part of a much broader investigation into a mental-somatology of the emotions). In contrast (also different from Christian doctrine, e.g., Tommaso d'Aquino/Thomas Aquinas), most schools of Indian philosophy (in Indian traditions, there are no formal distinctions made between religious texts and philosophical texts) do not give a central role to the emotions. It is rather taught that one should overcome emotions (e.g., Sāṃkhya-Yoga). Only when leading a devotional *bhakti* life are emotions welcomed; those emotions, however, that are directed towards god. — For various philosophical accounts of emotions, see Tuske (2021).

[52] With the exception that the theory of literary emotion spilled over to thinkers on religion (both Tamil and Sanskrit ones). For Tamil and the sixteenth-century *alaṅkāram*-grammar of figuration treatise of Vaiṣṇava *bhakti*, by the Teṉkalai Śrīvaiṣṇava and Vēḷāḷa merchant Tirukkurukaipperumāḷ Kavirāyar, who composed the examples himself (using the poetic

emerged again in the sixteenth century, the *pāṭṭiyal* handbook (describing and prescribing forms, types, genres, and subgenres of medieval and early modern literary texts, including the *ammāṉai* genre; see *Citamparap-pāṭṭiyal*), it did not include a contemporary systematic theoretical treatment on emotions or a thorough understanding of emotions based on time, place, or constituency.[53] Thus, the emotion canon of the seventeenth-century *Il-akkaṇa Viḷakkam* remains a theoretical reference for the present study. While the longevity of such a treatise might seem unusual to Europeans, this was not uncommon for India.[54] In pre-modern India, lack of change was not considered a defect or something negative.[55]

If we compare the pre-modern Indian list of emotion words (*meyppāṭu*s) (*TP*Ilam, 7: 247; 15: 256) with Western pre-modern lists of words describing emotions (Rosenwein 2008), it is striking that in the Tamil treatise, various functional aspects are pooled under the single umbrella term of *meyppāṭu*. Some of the listed emotions are very close to Western ones, as for example disgust, joy, affection, jealousy, and sloth.[56] But other words for emotions are closer to mental states (remembering, doubt, and dreaming).[57] Still others

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technique of triple entendre, including a lover, the Nammāḻvār saint [who lent his name Māṟaṉ to the treatise], and the god), see *Māṟaṉalaṅkāram*. See also Schuler (2022: 26–27 & 81–83). – For Sanskrit and the sixteenth-century theoretician of Bengali Vaiṣṇava devotional *bhakti*, Rūpa Gosvāmī, who adopted aesthetic emotion (*rasa*) conceptions of secular literature, see Pollock (2012: 431 & 432).

[53] *Pāṭṭiyal*s, 'literary genres'; nature/quality (◦*iyal*) of poetic compositions (*pāṭṭu*◦). I could not find any theoretical treatment in the chapters in the *Citamparappāṭṭiyal*, dating to the six-teenth century and encompassing *uṟuppiyal, ceyyuḷiyal, oḷipiyal, poruttaliyal* and *marapiyal*. On the list of *pāṭṭiyal*s and their dating, see Zvelebil (1995: 540). See also Kōpālaiyar's *Tamiḻ ilakkaṇap pērakarāti*, vol. 16, *poruḷ: pāṭṭiyal*, 12, 35 & 163.

[54] Although, of course, it can be argued that even if a tradition remained the same, it would be different because its context had altered, since the world is constantly changing.

[55] See Pollock (1985: 499). As for the Tamil theory of emotions, it was homogeneous over perhaps some fifteen hundred years, supported by an unbroken regulating commentary tra-dition. This is not documented here since it can be verified elsewhere; see Schuler (2022).

[56] *TP*Ilam, 7: 247; 15: 256: Tamil *iḷivaral* ('disgust'), *uvakai* ('joy'), *aṉpu* ('affection'), *poṟāmai* ('jealousy'), *maṭimai* ('sloth'). — On *acedia* and that 'sloth' has gone out of fashion in today's Western emotion vocabulary, but in Thomas Aquinas' medieval Europe, 'sloth' was seen as an emotion, even a deadly sin, see Frevert (2011); and Harré (1986: 11).

[57] *TP*Ilam, 15: 256: Tamil *niṉaital* ('remembering', 'recollecting'), *aiyam* ('doubt'), *kaṉavu* ('dreaming'). Cf. recent neuroscience research which has shown that emotions have an inte-grated functionality in our mental life. See Barrett & Satpute (2017).

are of a physiological nature (trembling, weeping, laughter, perspiration, and horripilation).[58]

IS HONOUR AN EMOTION? – AN ENQUIRY INTO TAMIL TREATISES, LEXICONS AND GLOSSARIES, MORAL CANONS, AND PROVERBS

The question of whether honour is an emotion has been raised at least since Birgitt Röttger-Rössler (2004 & 2009) and Ute Frevert (2015), who regard honour (in Indonesia and Europe, respectively) as a 'social emotion'. But does something that applies to Indonesia and Europe also apply to pre-modern India?

Māṉam (most commonly translated as 'honour') as a specific emotion is not found in the eight- and thirty-two point lists of *meyppāṭu*s ('emotions') in the Tamil theory of poetics.[59] Nonetheless, shame and loss of position are causal factors for the emotion of *aḻukai* ('weeping').[60] And further, fearless-ness/courage and fame are causal factors for the emotion of *perumitam* ('ex-cellence'/'pride').[61]

In Tamil lexicons and glossaries (Nikaṇṭu)[62] from the ninth to eighteenth centuries, the term *māṉam* is found. This word, which can have various meanings, is a Sanskrit loan word.[63] Among its manifold meanings are 'hon-our', 'sense of shame'/'disgrace', 'chastity'/'modesty', 'dignity', 'status', 'es-teem', and 'respect'. It was obviously redefined across time, with changing yet synonymous terms. While in the ninth century, its meaning was limited to esteem, respect, and a sense of shame, in the seventeenth/eighteenth century its meaning became more varied. Between the eleventh and six-teenth centuries, the Tamil honour term *māṉam* seems to have been lexically

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[58] *TP*Ilam, 7: 247; 15: 256: Tamil *naṭukkam* ('trembling'), *aḻukai* ('weeping', 'crying'), *nakai* ('laughter'), *viyarttal* ('perspiration'), *meymmayir cilirttal* ('horripilation').

[59] Nor are other terms.

[60] *TP*Ilam, 9: 249: Tamil *iḻivu* ('dishonour', 'shame'), *acai* ('loss of position'); 'causal factor' (San-skrit: *vibhāva*, Tamil: *ētu*).

[61] *TP*Ilam, 13: 253: *taṟukaṇ* ('fearlessness'), *pukaḻ* ('fame').

[62] The source 'lexicon'—unlike the Western lexical tradition—has not proven very fruitful, nor are debates reflected in such purely additive lexica, which do not take a position one way or the other.

[63] Sanskrit *mānapamāna*, n., 'honour and dishonour', see Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 809 *s.v.*

dispensable (also other honour-related termini, such as *kauravam, matippu, perumai* and *mariyātai*, are not lexically documented). What is striking is the historical change (or new wording) of the synonymy/polysemy expression for *māṉam*: in the ninth century (*Tivākaram nikaṇṭu* glossary), the synonyms for the key honour term *māṉam* are *nāṇam* ('shyness' as a feminine quality; 'esteem'/'respect'; 'shame') and *nāṇ* ('sense of shame', 'modesty'). In contrast, in the seventeenth/eighteenth century (Nikaṇṭu-Lexica *Vaṭamalai, Arumporuḷ viḷakka, Potikai*) synonyms for *māṉam* are *veṭkam/ilaccai* ('sense of shame'/'shyness') and *perumai* ('greatness', 'dignity', 'excellence', 'grandeur', 'power', 'renown', 'pride'). Thus, in this later period is there not only a change in the term for 'shame' (from *nāṇam* to *veṭkam*), but also an expansion of the lexical semantics of *māṉam*, the key honour term. Again, in the *TL s. v.*, in addition to the above-mentioned terms of the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries, the lexical semantics of *māṉam* are primarily *kauravam* ('dignity'/'honour', 'pride'), *matippu* ('esteem', 'respect'), *kaṟpu* ('modesty'/'chastity'), *avamāṉam* ('disgrace').[64] The lemma *mariyātai* ('respect') that is commonly used today (for instance in the term *kulamariyātai*)—occasionally as a synonym for *māṉam*—and that is primarily associated with temple rights does not appear historically-lexically as linked to *māṉam* (see also *VMTIP*, vol. 5, 2002: 1911 *s. v.*).

The Tamil moral canon, which functions in an advice mode, explicitly refers to the field of tension between honour and humiliation, insult, disgrace, and the loss of honour. The high status of honour can also be seen from the fact that the across time most frequently cited moral/didactic text, the sixth-century *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, devotes an entire chapter to each of the termini *māṉam* ('honour') and *nāṇ* (sense of 'shame', 'modesty') (respectively, Chapters 97 and 102).[65] It also refers to the link between honour and corporeality, including the retreat into death: 'Honour is to be regarded as higher than life'.[66]

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[64] See also *VMTIP*, vol. 5 (2002: 1972) *s.v. māṉam*. Emeneau & Burrow (1962: 54, v. 297) reduce *māṉam* to the meaning 'shame, disgrace, ashamed'. For the Nikaṇṭu glossaries, see *Tamiḻ nikaṇṭukaḷ*.

[65] For the term *māṉam* in connection with 'valour' (of a king or an army), see *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, Chapters 39, v. 384; 77, v. 766. On the author of the *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, Tiruvaḷḷuvar, as a collective persona, see Shulman (2016: 94).

[66] For this semantic reach, see *Tirukkuṟaḷ*, Chapter 97, v. 970: '*iḷivariṉ vālāta māṉam uṭaiyār / oḷi toḻutu ēttum ulaku*'; in the 'moral' (*nīti*) canon, see also the possibly ninth/tenth-century *Nalvaḻi* by the poetess Auvaiyār, v. 14: '[…] *māṉam aḻiyātu uyir viṭukai cāla uṟum*' (cited from

In collections of Tamil proverbs, the twin formation 'honour–shame' (*māṉamum nāṇum*) is often attested.[67] The advantage of didactic collections of sayings and proverbs is undoubtedly that unlike lexica, they reflect existing social voices and values, and depict many different points of view.

In conclusion, the current results indicate that there is no evidence for the assumption that honour in Tamil is an emotion *per se* in treatises, lexica, or proverb collections. Honour and specific emotions are considered inextricably linked with one another, but these emotions also arise outside the honour domain.

HONOUR AND ITS SETS OF EMOTIONS IN CONFLICT SETTINGS

I would now like to present two 'key narratives' that offer ample details about honour-group-based emotions in conflict situations, as well as about conflicting emotions. Key narratives and their transmission may spring from different emotions (e.g., pride), values, and needs. They are important parts of the collective biography and 'cultural memory' (Aleida Assmann 1999 & Jan Assmann 1992).[68] I will start with a historiographic narrative that I consider a key narrative of the Maṟava warrior elite, followed by a key narrative of the Vēḷāḷa agricultural elite. In the first narrative, it is significant that although the Brahmin commander Rāmayyaṉ/Rāmappayaṉ provides the title for the *Irāmayyaṉ ammāṉai*, the Maṟavar Cataikkaṉ Cētupati is its real protagonist and hero. The way the events are described shows that certain form of explanation is being endorsed.

Aṟavāṇaṉ 2011: 614, v. 1576); see also a first-millennium *Nālaṭiyār* poem: '[…] *māṉam talaivaruva ceypavō* […]' (cited from Kuḻantai 2015: 419, v. 928). This semantic reach is also emphasised in the Tamil proverb 'What is more valuable, honour or life?' (*māṉam peritō pirāṇaṉ peritō*) as found in Jensen (1993 [1897]: 177, v. 1617). Cf. also the eighteenth-century French political philosopher Montesquieu, who assumed 'that an integral part of honor is the conviction that death is preferable to a life devoid of honor' (cited from Speier 1952: 42).

[67] *Paḻamoḻi nāṉūṟu*, 16, v. 22: *māṉamum nāṇum*. This is an early collection of proverbs (ca. 700? CE), belonging to the *patiṉeṇkīḻkkaṇakku* (18 short classics). Another collection that has been consulted is Jensen's thematically ordered proverb collection of 1897.

[68] For Tamil narratives as part of a memory culture, see Schuler (2010).

Narrative 1 – Irāmayyaṉ (Irāmappaiyaṉ) ammāṉai[69]

It is the first half of the seventeenth century. The Brahmin commander[70] Rāmappayaṉ of the Telugu Nāyaka king of Madurai, Tirumalai Nāyaka, is undertaking a campaign against Cataikkaṉ Cētupati, the Maṟavar leader of a peripheral Tamil region who has challenged the established rules of the greater kings and refused to pay them tribute.[71]

On the one side is the Nāyaka commander, Rāmappayaṉ, a tiger-like, heroic, triumphant and proud Brahmin, sitting in a palanquin in the midst of his marching army:[72] 600 elephants, 700 camels, 6,000 horses,[73] and uncountable numbers of soldiers. To the sound of kettledrums, a thousand other heroes in palanquins are around him. Actors announce his awards and honours; poets praise him. The Brahmin commander's appearance makes the young women of Madurai, with their dishevelled hair, unable to control their emotions and they sigh heavily upon seeing him.[74]

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[69] *Irāmayyaṉ ammāṉai (Irāmappaiyaṉ ammāṉai)*, which is one of the numerous unpublished manuscripts in Tamil that was selected in 1949 by the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library (GOML), Madras/Chennai, to be published. My sincere thanks go to Dr G. John Samuel, Director of the Institute of Asian Studies, for having given me a copy of this text in December 2014. The *Irāmayyaṉ (Irāmappaiyaṉ) ammāṉai* (hereafter *IA*) belongs to the *ammāṉai* genre of the oral tradition and represents one of the historiographical modes of its time. For a list of the proverbs (*paḻamoḻi*) used in the ballad, see *IA*, 21. For a study of the text, see Kamaliah (1975) (underlining its historical value, 43).

[70] The Brahmin caste is, theoretically at least, not associated with warrior functions, but there are numerous examples of Brahmins training for military activities (also attested in the Indian epics). Interestingly, in the Telugu work *Āmukta-mālyada* ("The woman who gives a garland already worn"), written by the Vijayanagara emperor Krishnadevaraya (r. 1509–1529), in the *raja-nīti* section 4.207, the royal author advises making Brahmins commanders (Rao, Shulman & Subrahmanyam 2011: 90).

[71] Telugu Tirumalai Nāyaka, king of Madurai (r. 1623–1659), Tamil Caṭaikkaṉ Cētupati of Rāmanātapuram/Ramnad (r. 1635–1645). For the dating, see *Irāmayyaṉ (Irāmappaiyaṉ) ammāṉai*, preface, 22. For the genealogy of the Cētupati or Tēvar lineage, see Sewell (1884, vol. 2: 228–232). Since at least 1600/1604, Cētupatis held royal titles (Ramanatha Ayyar 1924: 7–18, "Copper-plate record of a Ramnad Cētupati: Kollam 945"). They also displayed marks of royalty, such as carrying royal paraphernalia or granting and receiving honours, and had temple-related privileges (donor and protector role of temples and their deities), with the deity as the source of honour. See the Rāmanātapuram palace murals in Nagaswamy (1987).

[72] *Irāmayyaṉ (Irāmappaiyaṉ) ammāṉai (IA)*, 20.8–10 (citing page and line).

[73] *IA*, 23.27–28: *āṉai aṟunūṟu āṟāyiram kutirai oṭṭakai eḻunūṟu*.

[74] *IA*, 21.1–11. Young women's (*maṅkai*) lovesick emotions are a literary convention found in scenes of a hero in a splendid procession (cf. theory of functional beauty). The term *ulā* is used for the Tamil poetic genre that describes the procession of a hero through the streets. For the *ulā* genre, see Shulman (2016: 156).

On the other side is the Maṟava leader, Cataikkaṉ Cētupati, who flies into a rage[75] when his spy tells him about the Brahmin's plans. Proud of his past combat victories, he proclaims: 'I wonder who is able to defeat me?'[76] This self-confidence and pride is underlined by a proverbial statement made by his son-in-law: 'Can a jackal jump on a tiger?'[77] Not hiding their emotions of pride and insolence, the two compose and send by messenger a letter on a palm-leaf showering verbal insults of utmost contempt on their Brahmin opponent:[78] 'My name is not Cataikkaṉ Cētupati Maṟavar and my weapon in hand is not a weapon if I do not tie a coconut to the Brahmin's tuft of hair, blind him, and drive him to wander in the forest.'[79] The Maṟavar's son-in-law then tops this insult with one of his own: 'I will remove your sacred Brahmin thread from your chest and replace it with a cow's neck-rope.'[80] Like oil poured into a burning fire, this inflames the anger of the Brahmin, who furiously responds to his enemy, contrary to all decency and etiquette, with a deliberate and well-placed counter-affront using sexualised insults (also written on palm-leaf): 'The womenfolk with Cataikkaṉ, we will cut their marriage badges and hang them criss-crossed at each gate of the palace.'[81] In their verbal combat, the rivals lack any of the basic attributes of cultured warriors.[82] Fearing accusations of cowardice and disgrace in the eyes of fellow kings come to the fore, in the disguise of rage: 'Will I pay tribute, allow my hands to be tied and stand in front of him? All the other kings will slander and ridicule me,'[83] says the Maṟavar Cētupati. And the Brahmin commander roars: 'Is only the Maṟavar a man? And all others in the world, are they

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[75] IA, 24.14, 16: cīṟṟam ('angry snort'), ciṉam.

[76] IA, 24.29: eṉṉai melivikka yevarāl muṭiyumōṭā.

[77] IA, 40.5: puliyai naripāyntu pōkumō.

[78] For the 'economy of insults' at Indian courts, see Subrahmanyam (2012: 78), who hints to 'the insult as a key factor in explaining political events and their logic [… and] the role that insults play'. On honour's central role in disputes, see also Kruijtzer (2009: 118 & 150).

[79] IA, 24.31–33: kaṇṇaip piṭuṅkik kāṭṭilē yōṭṭiṭāmal / eṉpeyr tāṉ caṭaikkaṇō eṭuttatuvum āyutamō / piṉkuṭumi taṉṉil pērulaku tāṉaṟiya. Repetition 38.1–3 written on palm-leaf (ōlai, 38.4).

[80] IA, 27.20–21: mārpiliṭum pūṇūlpaṟittu māṭṭuvaṭam pōṭṭiṭuvēṉ.

[81] IA, 38.18–20: caṭakkaṇiṭa peṇcāti tāli taṉaiyaṟuttu / aramaṉai tōṟum ācāra vācalellām / erukku kurukku miṉiviraippē. It is a threat making the women widows.

[82] Seemingly, this status tussle was how royal affairs in the Nāyaka-Maṟava milieu were conducted when geo-political rivalry was at stake.

[83] IA, 25.19–20: kappamuṅ kaṭṭi kaikaṭṭi niṟpēṉō / iḷittu maṉṉavarkaḷ eṉṉai nintippārkaḷ.

women?'[84] These elaborate insults serve their purpose; the scene is set for the battle. It lasts several days, with much honour and fame for successful military actions on the Maṟavas' side.

Winning or losing is a question of gaining honour or nothing but disgrace. This forces the Brahmin to use dubious tactics. It is assumed that he has resorted to sorcery, since the Maṟavar's son-in-law falls ill (*IA*, 75.28–31). In response, a counter-spell is sent, causing the Brahmin to get abscesses all over his body, leaving him in great pain (*IA*, 77.6–8). Intense scenes of conflicting battlefield emotions evolve: the Maṟavar Cētupati, himself wounded, feels guilty knowing that he did not do his full share when his son-in-law had a fever yet continued to fight. Shaken by an intimate encounter with the gravely ill son-in-law, he beats himself, falls down and weeps,[85] remembering with affection and pride his son-in-law sitting on a decorated elephant, broad-shouldered and decked with flower garlands (*IA*, 83.3–5).

The Brahmin, in turn, leaves no cruelty untied: He has the skin of two captured Maṟava warriors peeled off by a carpenter and their bare bones collected in a basket (*IA*, 55.23–31). He commands that the baskets with the husbands' mortal remains be put on the heads of their wives. The women are then paraded around the barracks, accompanied by drumming (*IA*, 56.3–5). Still not satisfied, he decides to ruin the wives' female honour, ordering some hirelings to molest them (*IA*, 56.10). The women escape this shame with dignity by committing suicide, proclaiming: 'Would a Maṟavar hold my hand after that?'[86] Ironically, the Brahmin cheerfully praises the two Maṟavar wives' fidelity and chastity, and directs his men to arrange a ceremonial burial for them.

When the Maṟavar's son-in-law dies (his wife immolating herself on her husband's funeral pyre)[87] and matters grew more complicated since the Brahmin had obtained support from the Portuguese,[88] the Maṟavar Cētupati

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[84] *IA*, 36.17–18: *maṟavaṉō āṉpiḷḷaikāṉ maṇṭalattiluḷḷōṟṟē peṇkaḷō*.

[85] *IA*, 82.22/83.8. We witness humanness and femininity rather than masculinity, the standard for military emotions.

[86] *IA*, 56.11: *maṟavaṉ piṭippāṉo*.

[87] *IA*, 82.20, 84.1.

[88] *IA,* 65.20, Tamil *paṟaṅki* (European, Franks [Portuguese]), Persian *farangī* (Franks). Kamaliah (1975: 38): 'Paraṅkis of Singhala'. For *firangis*, see Subrahmanyam (1993: 258 & 268); and Subrahmanyam (2005: 72). See also Deloche (2011: 62), where, referring to Satyanatha Aiyar (1924: 13 & 123), it is stated: 'Tirumala Nayak himself was on friendly terms with the

resigns himself to his fate and surrenders.[89] He demands to be treated hon-
ourably. But the Brahmin takes off the turban, shouting at him: 'Hey Caṭaik-
kaṉ, take off the coconut you have tied [to my tuft of hair]!' (*IA*, 85.18–19).
He triumphs arrogantly, laughing cynically with malicious joy. The indomita-
ble Maṟavar Cētupati disdains the unsoldierly conduct of his opponent,
quickly making it clear, with no remorse but rather pride, that he would not
be standing before him had his son-in-law still been alive (*IA*, 85.24–25). The
Brahmin, determined to humiliate him, orders the Maṟavar to fall to his
knees (IA, 85.28–31). In the end, the Brahmin is bathed in gold and the
Maṟavar is imprisoned. But, as the ballad has it (switching here to formulae
as found in legends), he is freed by the grace of god and the Madurai king,
Tirumalai Nāyaka, gives him back his little kingdom and reputation (together
with gifts).

Analysis of the Situated Maṟavar Warrior Honour Practice, and the
Emotions (as well as Expressions) Involved in it

Generally, in courtly sources the king-warrior ethos is described as to 'not
make himself subject to immediate outbursts of emotion, whether it be an-
ger, surprise or pleasure [and] to keep an equanimity in his outward demean-
our' (Ali 2007: 13). However, the warrior ethos of the Maṟavar Cataikkaṉ
Cētupati is not that of a gentlemanly king-warrior, he is something quite dif-
ferent: he has a lack of humility, is proud in the face of his rivals, is not con-
scientious, and indulges in cruel words that cause emotional excitement. He
is not interested in 'conquering' his senses, nor in defeating his anger. In the
literature of the noble court society, this corresponds to the image of men
from the frontier (i. e., hills, forests).[90] However, this portrayal is incomplete.
Not only historically did the Maṟavas find their way to power (Fig. 1),[91] they

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Portuguese: he obtained their support during the Marava war against the Setupati and the
Dutch, and even gave them the right to hold a fortress near Pamban with a Portuguese cap-
tain, 50 soldiers and 100 lascars'.

[89] *IA*, 84.16.

[90] For the image of hill and forest men in court literature as 'fierce, given to violent outburst,
unrestrained and ignorant of the ways of self-cultivation […] lack[ing] self-control', see Ali
(2007: 15).

[91] See Nagaswamy (1987: 203): Through alliances with more powerful kings, the Cētupatis
strengthened their regional small kingdom. The Cētupatis belonged to the traditional Maṟavar
warriors of Tamil origin, 'who were appointed around 1600 to look after [… the Ramnad] tract
and its sacred temple by the Nayak ruler of Madurai, under whom they served as feudatories.

also adopted the attributes of the noble court society (Figs. 2 and 3),[92] a process amply demonstrated by their adopting a refined, pleasure- and sensuous-based lifestyle (Fig. 4).[93]

But back to the historiographic narrative. It focuses on the wounded honour of the warrior elite, with the accompanying emotions of fear of disgrace/humiliation, arrogance, pride, vengefulness, and rage/hatred.[94] But it also emphasises fame, fearlessness, firmness, and female honour (sense of shame), as well as conflicting emotions such as guilt, despair, affection toward the kinsfolk.

There are plenty of examples of terms describing accompanying (bodily) expressions or emotional intensity. Bodily expressions of rage include 'angry snorting' (*cīṟṟam*), 'burning red eyes' (*kaṇ civantu cīṟutal*) and 'biting teeth' (*pal kaṭittal*),[95] as well as onomatopoetic words for 'shaking' (*kiṭukiṭeṉal*) and 'violent anger' (*cīṟucīṟeṉal*). Terms for intensity include 'uncontrollable fury' (*matattal*) and 'falling into a rage' (*cīṟiviḻutal*). Verbal expressions of arrogance and humiliation include 'shouting in triumph' (*ārppatittal*) and 'ridiculing' or 'mocking someone' (*pakaṭi paṇṇutal*). Bodily expressions of mourning and despair include 'beating oneself', 'falling' and 'weeping' (*aṭittu viḻuntu aḻutal*).[96] The emotions mentioned above work closely in tandem with outer

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The first Setupati […] was Udaiyan Raghunatha Setupati. Around 1700, a powerful and energetic Setupati called Kilavan, who raised the principality into an independent kingdom, built a fortification […] erecting the palace […] which has survived to this day. Muthu Vijaya Raghunatha Setupati succeeded Kilavan in 1710'.—For Fig. 1, see also Nagaswamy (1987: 210, image 12).

[92] On the Cētupati rulers' clothing, see also Seastrand (2013: 350, image 117). Cf. Michell & Zebrowski (1999: 15, image 2).

[93] A life of bodily pleasures is advice for royalty as found in the sixteenth-century Telugu text by the Vijayanaga emperor, the *Āmukta-mālyada* 4.280 (also 271: 'at night […] he plays with women'; and 238), see Rao, Shulman & Subrahmanyam (2011: 106, 104 & 96).—For a Cētupati bird hunting scene, see Nagaswamy (1987: 209, image 10).

[94] On anger and honour, cf. Nussbaum (2013: 401, appendix), were she (summarising Chapter 3 of Nussbaum 2001) states that 'specific forms of anger are strongly shaped by social norms regarding what an insult is, what honor is'.

[95] These are ideal behaviours that make identification easy.

[96] The physiological emotion expression (Tamil *cattuvam*/*viṟal*) is considered an accompanying phenomenon, which is assigned a primary role by medieval commentators on literary and dramaturgical emotions (see *TP*Ilam., 15: 256, 26, 'misery'/'distress' [*iṭukkaṇ*] reflected by shrunken eyes [cf. Greek *enophthalmos*]; for dramaturgical emotion expressions, see scholiast Aṭiyārkku Nallār's commentary [closing decades of 12th c.] on the long narrative poem *Cilappatikāram*). See Schuler (2022).

signs of honour or dishonour, respectively. As for the honoured, outward signs include: a litter or palanquin, a large army, being surrounded by other heroes, panegyric, a 'bath of gold', gifts, insignia, or the grace of the goddess. For the dishonoured, they include: surrendering or going down on one's knees, chains or prison, women committing suicide to safeguarding their modesty (*kaṟpu*).

Narrative 2 – Icakkiyammaṉ (Nīli) katai[97]

A change of scenery and an entirely different honour-based emotional conflict: the key narrative of the Vēḷāḷa agricultural elite, a story that is culturally very well known (Fig. 5). In the search for a key narrative of the agricultural elite, many if not all roads lead to the *Story of Nīli/Icakki*. It is found in various genres, with echoes of its origins dating to as early as the first half of the seventh century. A relatively complete form of the narrative core with the name of the protagonist, however, is not found before the early fourteenth century. Then in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the story of Nīli/Icakki emerged in full light.[98] This narrative, unlike the narrative 1 above, is available in an edition with a full translation (Schuler 2009: 67–217).

Here is a detailed account: A married Brahmin priest of Kāncipuram, in love with a temple *devadāsī*, is forced by his caste to take back his abandoned wife, who is now living with her parents.[99] While pretending to do so, he kills his pregnant wife, whom he believes has been unfaithful to him, causing him personal humiliation and disgrace: 'Can a woman become pregnant without a man?' In reality, it is a virginal self-impregnation to escape shame.

This Brahmin murderer then also dies, bitten by a snake. He is reborn as a merchant (Ceṭṭi). Although warned not to go north, one day the merchant

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[97] *Icakkiyammaṉ (Nīli) katai*. For a thorough study of this orally transmitted ballad, including history, edition, translation, and *Vēḷāḷa* contextualisation, see Schuler (2009).

[98] Many different genres—such as the *villuppāṭṭu* (bow song) tradition, *yaṭcakāṉam* tradition, *kāppiyam* (Sanskrit: *kāvya*) poetic tradition, medieval religious literature, *viṭutūtu* (messenger poetry), proverbs and puzzles—form a network around the Nīli story and use it for their own purposes, be it in the form of allusions or analogies. In short, there was a shared knowledge and cultural memory of the narrative's core. For an overview, see Schuler (2009, part 1, Chapter 3).

[99] On adultery and the desertion of wives in the Indian context, see Kohli (2000). The author, referring to a ruling by the Supreme Court, points out that abandonment signifies 'the intention to bring cohabitation permanently to an end' (406).

travels north through a forest, protected by a magic sword/protective margosa leaf.

In the forest, the murdered woman[100] from his past life chases him vengefully. She (Nīli/Icakki) dances and sings: 'This is fine! This is good! No matter where the blameworthy man goes, I shall take revenge on him.'[101] He tries to flee, but in vain. He screams, panic-stricken. His mind shrinks, his limbs tremble, his mouth dries up. He wails: 'Fate has come.'[102] 'Who will save my life?'[103] In the village, where seventy Vēḷāḷas live, she pretends to be the merchant's legitimate wife and lays claim to him as her husband, cunningly telling them in detail the merchant's family history. 'On the wedding day itself […] he would go next door to a stranger's house […] a *dāsī*. [Wouldn't my mind suffer?] […] O Elder brothers, render your judgement so that your name will be known and send us back happily! […] He is my husband, who married me by tying on the *tāli*. […] Have compassion (*aruḷ*)! Don't fail to protect my *kaṟpu* [female honour]!'[104]

Since no decision is made by sunset, the two are locked in the *ilaṅkam* building/Kālī temple in the belief that they are indeed a couple. Although the merchant is afraid: 'Now we'll become prey for her,'[105] the seventy agriculturalists promise their own lives as security for them: 'If one should fall a victim to the other out of vengeance, all of us together will repay with our lives for the blame.'[106] When the Vēḷāḷas return in the morning, they find the man covered in blood and dead.[107] They immediately regret that they felt sorry for the fake wife and did not trust the merchant, now dead. The seventy

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[100] Now a hungry spirit (Tamil: *pēy,* Prakrit: *peya,* Sanskrit: *preta,* literally in German: *Dahingegangener*).

[101] *IK,* edition Schuler (2009: 100), lines 1102–3: *eṉ paḻi koḷvēṉ eṉru* (tr. 174, ll. 1102–3).

[102] *IK,* 101, lines 1117–8: *nīliyetirāka tōṉriṉāḷē. Maṉam pataṟi matikuṉri meyṉaṭuṅki. vāy ularntu. viti vantu eṉru.* (tr. 175, ll. 1117–8).

[103] *IK,* 118, line 1664: *yārō uyir kāṟppār* – read *kāppāṟṟutal* (tr. 193, l. 1664).

[104] *IK,* 121–123, ll. 1743: *kaliyāṇam ceyta aṉṟē,* 1747: *ayal vīṭṭil pōyiruntu,* 1750: *tāci,* [1624: *nōkātō eṉ maṉam*], 1759–60: *uṅkaḷ nāmam ellām kēḷppataṟkku niyāyam colli vaḻiyaṉuppum cantōcamāka aṇṇē,* 1785: *tāli keṭṭi koṇṭa kaṇavaṉivar,* 1822–3: *kāttu aruḷ* […] *kaṟpu* (lit. 'modesty'/'chasteness') *vaḻuvāmal.*

[105] *IK,* 128, line 1945: *iraiyākum nām iṉimēl* (tr. 202, l. 1945).

[106] *IK,* 128, line 1935: *oruvar paḻi oruvar koṉṟāl okka paḻi pōvōm* (tr. 201, l. 1935).

[107] *IK,* 134, lines 2216–7 (tr. 207, ll. 2216–7).

Vēḷāḷas are true to their word and commit suicide by their own hands/by jumping into the fire.[108]

Analysis of the Situated Landed Peasant Vēḷāḷa and Gendered Honour Practice, and the Emotions (as well as Expressions) Involved in it

In this narrative, a wronged woman is the avenging winner, thus restoring moral justice, while at the same time, the name of the righteous Vēḷāḷa agricultural elite is gloriously held up as representing high ethical ideals and values. In its outline of a crisis, the narrative offers a quite clear message of violence, vengeance, and fame. It highlights wounded female honour, with pent-up anger, pretence, vengefulness, and cruelty as accompanying emotions; further personal male honour and caste/community honour, with emotions of mistrust about the wife's fidelity and fear of disgrace/humiliation by one's peers. But it also emphasises compassion, guilt, firmness of mind and courage to commit suicide on the side of the righteous Vēḷāḷas, as well as conflicting emotions such as fickleness, doubt or trust, delusion, and helplessness.

There are numerous terms describing (bodily) expressions or emotional intensity. The bodily expressions of male fear and terror include 'shivering', 'trembling' (*pataṟutal*), 'retracting of the tip of the tongue' (*viṇ nākku iṟaṅkutal*),[109] 'paralysis'/'torpor' (*uṟaital*), 'perspiration' (*viyarttal*) and 'exhaustion' (*iḷaittal*). In contrast, the bodily expressions of female anger are 'cunningly' (*tantiramāka*) hidden or disguised. They include 'fake tears' (*nīlikkaṇṇīr*) and a graceful goose-like gait.[110] In this narrative, unlike the key narrative 1 (of the warrior elite), the outer signs of gendered honour stereotypes are inverted: to restore their honour, females kill and males commit suicide.

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[108] *IK*, 135, line 2243: *paḻitārum paḻipōṟōm* (tr. 207, l. 2243).
[109] A common expression in rural areas to describe a person on the brink of death.
[110] *aṉṉam* ('goose').

ARE THERE GROUP-BASED FUNCTIONS OF HONOUR?

On the basis of the two key narratives and their settings (that either happened or, respectively, re-emerged during the period under discussion here),[111] I would answer the question of group-based functions of honour in the affirmative.[112] I argue that after the sixteenth century, alongside the function of honour of the agricultural elite, another function and style of honour began to be visible. This seems to have been a response to the historical experience of the economic, political, and literary changes occurring at that time.

With the rise of three little Tamil kingdoms, there came to the fore what I call the 'Maṟava warrior-honour-style', whose literary echo is found in various new genres describing situations and practices of honour. This style's visibility achieved its furthest reach when the Maṟava-Kaḷḷar kingdoms (Rāmanātapuram/Ramnad, Putukkōṭṭai/Pudukkottai, and Civakaṅkai/Sivaganga) became independent in the year 1700;[113] and its function might be interpreted as indicative of the social integration of marginalised social groups that was underway at the time.

Alongside this style, there was what I call the 'Vēḷāḷa agricultural elite-honour-style'. In contrast to the Maṟava warriors's, the honour function of the Vēḷāḷa agricultural elite, I argue, is to be seen as predominantly a means of asserting the community's social distinction as a virtue-based elite.

In conclusion, honour practices play a functional role, differing from social group to social group, and from situated context to situated context in which they arise. They evidently have a place in competitive settings (cf. Handfield 2019: 12; Maitner et al. 2022: 265).

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[111] As I indicated above (note 98), the key narrative of the landowning agricultural elite of the Vēḷāḷas was transmitted over time, but, interestingly, it appeared in many different genres (including the *katai*-ballad genre) during the period under discussion. There is also a relatively complete form of the core events dating to the fourteenth century.

[112] The honour-as-function perspective posits that honour is not arbitrary, but rather that if something has a function, one can use it as a purpose to facilitate goal fulfilment. Focusing on particular functions of honour seems a fruitful way to advance our understanding of group-based honour and its accompanying emotions.

[113] On the declaration around 1700 of the Maṟavar Cētupati Kilavan of Ramnad as an independent kingdom (from the Nāyakas), see Nagaswamy (1987: 203). Rao, Shulman & Subrahmanyam (1998: 266), on the basis of Kadhirvel (1977), suggest a slightly different picture, namely that the goal of independence 'was never truly attained'.

FINAL REMARKS

Between the sixteenth and eighteenth century, south India experienced a period of new caste dynamics, a new landscape of literary genres, and a new understanding of the voice of individual groups. This made it necessary to view the question of honour and its accompanying emotions from a new perspective. There is no doubt that in the sixteenth to eighteenth century, honour was accorded the same importance and priority as in the twelfth to fourteenth century. However, other social groups had come politically to the fore and were claiming their rights to honour, with a different emotional emphasis. Honour as such was constant, but those now being revered were not same. Also functions, situations and practices changed.

There was both female and male honour. While the boundaries are clearly demarcated in the treatises and moral canon, in the new literary genres of the sixteenth to eighteenth century, female honour in a conflict of honour was not necessarily accompanied by the emotions of shame (*nāṇ*) or modesty, *kaṟpu*—a superior female concept and a woman's deeper spiritual being (Schuler 2009: 198, note 334)—but could also give rise to emotions of vengefulness and pent-up anger. The same holds true for male honour. Men did not receive a hero stone only for martial valour; they could also receive one for their courage to commit suicide in order to be true to their word.[114]

In no way do I claim to have exhausted the potential readings of the two key narratives. They are still open to further enquiries. However, I hope to have shown that honour practice and the emotions linked to it must be understood in context; it should not be projected on times, places or social groups where these categories were not (or were differently) in play.[115] This is what makes the investigation on the basis of emotional communities

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[114] Faithfulness to oaths, if we follow Friedhelm Hardy (1988), falls under the Tamil concept of honour, which includes a person's 'self-control, dignified behaviour, firmness of mind, fulfilling commitments, living up to social expectations' (130). On the mentioned norm, see also Kailasapathy (1968: 87–93). Note that for the Tamil concept of honour, Hardy uses the Tamil term *nāṇ*, translating it as a 'sense of honour' (130). As indicated above (see "Is honour an emotion?"), as far as the glossaries are concerned, only the ninth-century *Tivākaram nikaṇṭu* attests the synonymity between the terms *māṇam* and *nāṇ*, respectively *nāṇam.* In the seventeenth-century Nikaṇṭus this is no longer the case since the term has changed.

[115] In the present case study, there are practices of honour, or what we would regard as honour, that appear in one honour-sensitive social group, but not in the other, and vice versa.

(Rosenwein) and emotional practices (Scheer) in particular settings as approaches and analytical tools for Indological historical research on honour and emotion such a fascinating field of investigation.

It is reasonable to posit that the early-modern situated honour practices examined in this study are associated with heroism (*vīram*) (cf. Handfield 2019: 15), courage and revenge that is expressed in a public display. The practice of honour predicts bodily action and has a central role in disputes and conflicts.[116] Being willing to die or kill rather than violate group-norms of honour, but also swearing an oath, are evidently constructed as matters of honour. Moreover, honour as it is understood in the narratives is connected to how one is related to others. It can be acquired but also lost.

Let us take stock: to access the past of situated honour-bound emotion practice in different groups, evidence from many sources and multiple genres must be taken into account. This is limited in the same way all histories are limited: by scarcity of sources, or the partiality or limitations of sources that reflect the practices of only a small section of society. However, in Indology research of this type is still in its infancy.

If I argue for a practice-related approach, this does not mean that conceptual history does not offer us helpful or even indispensable tools. If systematically worked out, both presentations—the conceptual-historical and the praxeological—can in the best case be placed in relation to each other. In this, deviations from the norm or rules can be made visible and multidimensionality recorded.

This study responds to today's scholarly debates and interests within the field of the history of emotion. My hope is that this kind of Indological study will foster mutual cross-cultural interest, or even collaborative research across disciplines.

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[116] Especially in narratives, it is typical that they only describe events representing unusual or critical situations.

FIGURES

Fig. 1. The Cētupatis of Rāmanātapuram in power
Cētupati murals in the Rāmaliṅgavilāsam Palace in Ramnad/Rāmanātapuram (Tamilnadu).
Europeans paying tribute to the Maṟava king, who wears his traditional costume, a short
dhoti. (Courtesy: Virtual Academy, Chennai)
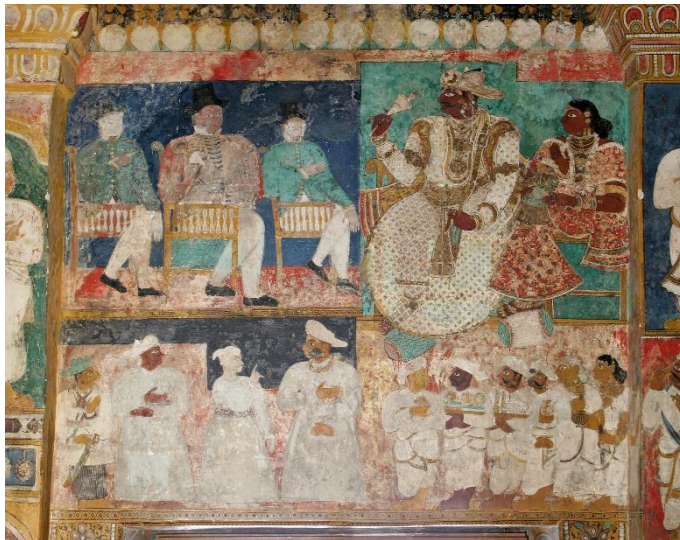
Fig. 2. Cētupati Maṟavar with turban conversing with Europeans
Cētupati Rāmaliṅgavilāsam Palace in Ramnad (Tamilnadu). The green background, signifying
a royal portrait, is a convention in Deccani painting (Seastrand 2013: 195).
(Courtesy: Virtual Academy, Chennai)

Fig. 3. Deccani art influence
Composite horses or elephants made up of several women (seven, nine or more) are a fa-
vourite theme of Deccani artists. A large wall panel in the Cētupati palace shows this type of
elephant and horse formed of several women, on which are seated the king and queen spor-
tively aiming flower arrows at each other, similar to Maṉmataṉ/Kāmaṉ and Rati. The hair-
style that is worked into a bun on the side and its covering are typical of Nāyaka costume
(Seastrand 2013: 196, note 87). (Courtesy: Virtual Academy, Chennai)
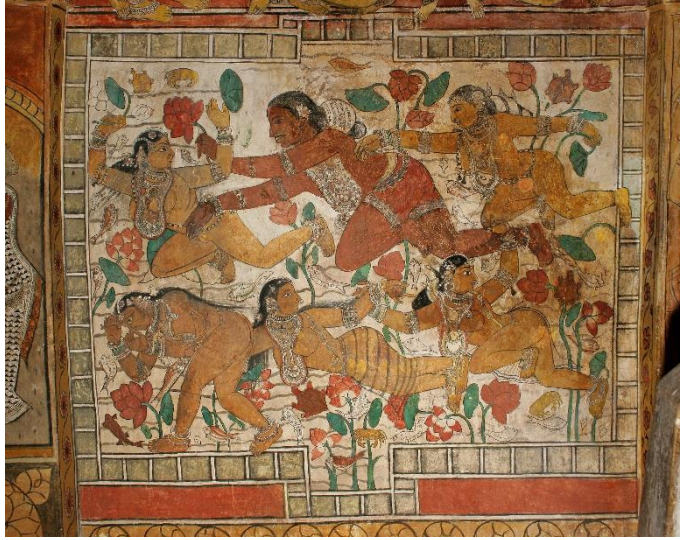
Fig. 4. Amorous sports of swimming (one of four causal factors of the emotion of joy) Cētupati mural in the Rāmaliṅgavilāsam Palace in Ramnad (Tamilnadu) in the upper-floor bed chamber. The king enjoying the amorous sport (*viḷaiyāṭṭu*) of swimming. (Courtesy: Virtual Academy, Chennai)

Fig. 5. The seventy Vēḷāḷas (agricultural elite), stone memorial at Tiruvālaṅkāṭu, Tamilnadu, (© Barbara Schuler)

ABBREVIATIONS

IA	*Irāmayyaṉ (Irāmappaiyaṉ) ammāṉai*
IK	*Icakkiyammaṉ (Nīli) katai*
TL	*Tamil Lexicon*
*TP*Iḷam	*Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, meyppāṭṭiyal, Iḷampūraṇam*
*TP*Pēr	*Tolkāppiyam, poruḷatikāram, meyppāṭṭiyal, Pērāciriyar urai.*
VMTIP	*Varalāṟṟu muṟait tamiḻ ilakkiyap pērakarāti/Glossary of historical Tamil literature (up to 1800 AD)*

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Zwischen gesellschaftlichen Umbrüchen und dem Festhalten am vermeintlichen Status Quo: Die Satire *Puruṣ-ratna* von Jogendra Chandra Basu

Nora Warmer[1]

Abstract: Die bengalischsprachige Kurzgeschichte *Puruṣ-ratna* („Das Mann-Juwel") von Jogendra Chandra Basu thematisiert die Einflüsse der britischen Kolonialzeit auf die bengalische Gesellschaft, insbesondere auf das Verhältnis von Mann und Frau in der Ehe, am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts. Mithilfe der satirisch dargestellten Hauptfigur seiner Kurzgeschichte bringt Jogendra Chandra Basu sein Missfallen über das Streben nach englischer Bildung und Lebensweise zum Ausdruck und erschafft mit dieser einen klassischen Vertreter der satirischen Figur eines die europäische Lebensweise nachahmenden Babus. Im Mittelpunkt des folgenden Essays steht die Analyse der Darstellung dieser Figur und ihrer Herausforderungen im Alltag.

EINLEITUNG

Der Autor und Zeitungsherausgeber Jogendra Chandra Basu (Yogendracandra Basu) (1854–1905)[2] gilt als eine der führenden orthodoxen Stimmen in Bengalen zu Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts. Obwohl Jogendra Chandra[3] aufgrund seiner Tätigkeit als Herausgeber der Zeitung *Baṅgabāsī* sowie seiner Mitwirkung an einer beträchtlichen Anzahl weiterer Zeitschriften und Zeitungen eine große Bekanntheit erlangte und zu einem der meistgelesenen Autoren seiner Zeit gehört, ist erstaunlich wenig über ihn und seine gesellschaftspolitischen Ansichten bekannt.[4] Seine gesammelten Werke sind lediglich in einer einzigen Fassung von Nirmal Dāś (1976) herausgegeben worden, und keines davon ist in einer Übersetzung erschienen. Auch sind abgesehen von der Auflagenstärke von *Baṅgabāsī* kaum Informationen zur zeitgenös-

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[1] Dieser Beitrag beruht auf einer im Rahmen des Masterstudiums angefertigten Seminararbeit.
[2] Ich verwende im Essay die anglisierte Schreibweise. Insofern es eine gängige anglisierte Schreibweise der Namen von weiteren Personen oder Orten gibt, wird ebenfalls diese verwendet.
[3] Bengalischem Usus folgend wird bei häufigeren Hinweisen auf die gleiche Person deren Nachname fallengelassen.
[4] Eingehender mit dem Autor befasst haben sich lediglich Amiya P. Sen (1993) zu seiner Tätigkeit als Zeitungsherausgeber sowie Chaiti Basu (2004) zum Roman *Maḍel Bhaginī*.

sischen Rezeption seiner Tätigkeiten vorhanden. Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit einem seiner vielen satirischen Werke, der Kurzgeschichte *Puruṣ-ratna* („Das Mann-Juwel"),[5] beleuchtet die gesellschaftspolitischen Ansichten des Autors, die in dieser zum Tragen kommen, und schließt somit einen kleinen Teil dieser Forschungslücke.

Der Essay gliedert sich in zwei Teile und beginnt mit einem Überblick über die Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts stattfindenden sozialen Umbrüche in der bengalischen Gesellschaft, darunter insbesondere neue Anstöße im Literaturgeschehen, ermöglicht durch die kommerzielle Nutzung von Druckerpressen und die Rezeption britischer Literaturstile. Auch der Lebensweg von Jogendra Chandra wird kurz skizziert. Im zweiten Teil, der inhaltlichen Analyse von *Puruṣ-ratna*, erfolgt zunächst eine nähere Betrachtung der Hauptfigur des Textes als typische Darstellung eines bengalischen Babus (bengal.: *bābu*), welcher versucht, der vermeintlich fortschrittlichen englischen Lebensweise zu folgen. Ebenso lässt sich an der Kurzgeschichte Jogendra Chandras Haltung zur westlichen Bildung und insbesondere zur Bildung der Frau eruieren. Diese inhaltlichen Schwerpunkte werden abschließend mit einer Analyse der verwendeten Sprache und Stilmittel verknüpft.

EIN ZEITALTER VOLLER REFORMEN

Das 19. Jahrhundert im unter britischer kolonialer Herrschaft stehenden Indien war der Schauplatz tiefgreifender gesellschaftlicher Reformbewegungen sowie der beginnenden indischen Nationalbewegung. Der zunehmende Einfluss aus dem Westen zog sich bald über „every sphere of life, religious, cultural, social, political and economic" (Ghosh 1948: 114). Der Ausgangspunkt dieser sogenannten „Bengalischen Renaissance" („Bengal Renaissance")[6] lag im urbanen Kalkutta (engl.: Calcutta; seit 2001 offiziell Kolkata) und erlangte ab der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts seine volle Entfaltung (ebd.). Durch Institutionen wie das 1817 gegründete Hindu-College, die heutige Presidency University, als Knotenpunkt westlicher Bildung in Kalkutta und den *English Education Act* des Jahres 1835 wurde der Grundstein für eine lokale

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[5] Sen (2001: 279) übersetzt den Titel als „The Exemplary Male".
[6] Von anderen Autoren wird die Zeitspanne oder Aspekte davon auch als „Indian Renaissance" (Ghosh 1948: 114) oder „literary Renaissance" (Sen 1993: 132) bezeichnet.

englischsprachige Elite gelegt, welche in den britischen Handelszentren und Administrationen arbeitete (Chatterjee 2014: 12; Basu 2004: 15). Diese neu entstandene Mittelklasse der englisch geprägten Bhadralok (bengal.: *bhadralok*, engl.: *gentlemen* oder *gentlefolk*) griff die aus dem Westen stammenden Ideen und Reformansätze auf und begann viele Sphären der bengalischen Gesellschaft, insbesondere des religiösen Lebens, neu zu gestalten, u. a. durch legislative Reformen wie dem Verbot der Witwenverbrennung oder der Polygamie (Basu 2004: 3–4; Sen 1993: 3). Die Klasse der Bhadralok wurde zwar nicht nur, aber besonders durch ihr Streben, Englisch zu sprechen und sich mittels westlicher Bildung zu profilieren, charakterisiert und als solche in den folgenden Jahren auch in der erblühenden bengalischen Literatur rezipiert und karikiert (Chatterjee 2014: 12–13; Ghosh 1948: 99).

In der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts, insbesondere nach den 1860er Jahren, begann sich diesen westlich inspirierten Bestrebungen, die „moralische Verderbtheit" der Hindu-Gesellschaft zu reformieren, vermehrt eine konservative Strömung entgegenzusetzen. Die Rückbesinnung innerhalb dieser Strömung des sogenannten *Hindu Revivalism* auf „ursprüngliche" Werte und Konventionen wird zumeist auf den Versuch, sich der Kolonialherrschaft ebenbürtig zu beweisen, zurückgeführt (Basu 2004: 48; Sen 1993: 3).

Druckerpressen und Literatur in Kalkutta

Die gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen der „Bengalischen Renaissance" standen unter anderem in engem Zusammenhang mit den neuen Möglichkeiten des aufkommenden Publikationswesens, durch welches eine neue Form der Öffentlichkeit und der Kommunikation entstand (Harder 2004: 358; Roy 1995: 30–31). Im Jahre 1800 wurden die ersten Druckerpressen im Fort William College in Kalkutta und in der Serampore Baptist Mission in Betrieb genommen. Bereits dreißig Jahre später war die Anzahl der Druckerpressen in Kalkutta auf etwa zwanzig angestiegen. Bis zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts war das Verlagswesen zu einem der größten, möglicherweise sogar dem größten Wirtschaftszweig der Stadt angewachsen (Roy 1995: 30–32).

Im Laufe des 19. Jahrhunderts entstand nicht nur in der Quantität der Publikationen ein großer Wandel, sondern auch in der Art der publizierten Erzeugnisse selbst (ebd.). Zuvor beschäftigte sich die Literatur zumeist mit historischen und religiösen Texten, basierend auf den großen indischen Epen

(*Rāmāyaṇa* und *Mahābhārata*) und anderen Erzählungen im Zusammenhang mit religiöser Verehrung (Basu 2004: 14). Zu Beginn bestanden die Publikationen, insbesondere beeinflusst durch das Fort William College, zumeist aus Lehrwerken, darunter vorrangig religiöse und mythologische Werke sowie Grammatiken und Wörterbücher. In den darauffolgenden Jahren überwogen christliche missionarische Schriften (Roy 1995: 40–41; Ghosh 1948: 104). Die erste, wenn auch nicht langlebige, bengalische Zeitschrift *Digˈdarśan* und die Zeitung *Samācār Darpaṇ*, welche Ghosh (1948: 106) als wegbereitend für den bengalischen Journalismus bezeichnet, wurden im Jahr 1818 durch die Serampore Mission etabliert. *Samācār Darpaṇ* als Zeitung christlicher Missionare übte vielfach Kritik an der lokalen Hindu-Gesellschaft, sodass deren Mitglieder als Antwort darauf eigenständige Zeitungen und Magazine gründeten (ebd.). Der bald erblühende Markt für Zeitschriften und Zeitungen wird von Harder als „preparing the scene" (2004: 258) für die „modernen" literarischen Genres, vorrangig Romane und Dramen, bezeichnet.

Die zweite Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts war durch Autoren geprägt, welche nun gleichermaßen Bengalisch und Englisch beherrschten und die aus Europa aufgenommenen gesellschaftspolitischen Ideen und literarischen Gepflogenheiten mit den bengalischen verknüpften (Ghosh 1948: 114). So stieg ab den 1860ern nicht nur die Anzahl der publizierten Bücher sprunghaft an, es gab auch eine deutliche Zunahme fiktionaler Prosawerke, aber auch lyrischer und solcher im Bereich der Dramen (ebd.: 115–116; Roy 1995: 47–48). Als der erste Romanautor nicht nur in den bengalischsprachigen Regionen, sondern in ganz Südasien gilt Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (Baṅkimˈcandra Caṭṭopādhyāÿ) (1838–1894). Er begann sein Werk mit Lyrik und einem englischsprachigen Roman, fuhr jedoch bald mit bengalischer Prosa fort und prägte die bengalische Literatur maßgeblich (Zbavitel 1976: 239–243). Mit seinen häufig historisch ausgerichteten Romanen trug er ebenfalls dazu bei, ein neues Bewusstsein für die vermeintlich großartige Vergangenheit vor der britischen Kolonialzeit zu schaffen (Sen 1993: 85–89). Sen sieht in Bankim Chandra und seinen Zeitgenossen die letzten Autoren, welche sich für einen Synkretismus englischer und bengalischer Traditionen einsetzten. Viele der ihnen folgenden Autoren, darunter nicht zuletzt Jogendra Chandra, verlegten sich – zumindest im Inhalt ihrer Werke, nicht jedoch in der Form – ihm gemäß auf eine Ablehnung aller westlichen Einflüsse (ebd.).

Somit scheint zumindest anfänglich beinahe alles im Zusammenhang mit dem neu entstandenen Verlagswesen von europäischen Einflüssen geprägt. Das Veröffentlichen und Lesen von gedruckten Erzeugnissen waren zuvor kaum üblich bzw. möglich. Erst die in britischen Institutionen und von christlichen Missionaren eingeführten Druckerpressen und die durch sie hervorgerufene Resonanz führten zu dem Erblühen moderner bengalischer Literatur. Auch abgesehen von den technischen Aspekten und dem allgemeinen Entstehen einer schriftlichen Öffentlichkeit entstammten die populärsten Literaturgenres – Romane, Dramen, Satiren –, welchen sich auch Jogendra Chandra Basu bediente, ursprünglich der britischen Literaturtradition (Roy 1995: 30).

Biografie des Autors

Bekanntheit erlangte Jogendra Chandra Basu insbesondere als Gründer der konservativ ausgerichteten Zeitung *Baṅgabāsī*. Geboren in einen konservativen Haushalt im Jahre 1854 im damaligen Burdwan District (heute unterteilt in den Purba Bardhaman- und Paschim Bardhaman-Distrikt) im heutigen Westbengalen übte er durch seine Zeitungen, Romane und Kurzgeschichten Kritik an den durch Einflüsse der britischen Kolonialmacht eintretenden Veränderungen der gesellschaftlichen Strukturen. Anders als beispielsweise Bankim Chandra scheint er sich gegen alle Reformbestrebungen gestellt zu haben, weshalb er als eine der bekanntesten orthodoxen Stimmen jener Zeit bezeichnet wird (Sen 1993: 258–259; Sen 1992: 221).

Er entstammte einer Familie mit bescheidenem Landbesitz. Für wenige Jahre war er mit einem achtjährigen Mädchen verheiratet, musste seine Frau jedoch kurz darauf scheinbar auf Grund einer Krankheit und des damit verbundenen Stigmas aus sozialem Druck verlassen (Basu 2004: 23). Bei der Verfolgung seines Bildungsweges scheint ihm ebenfalls wenig Erfolg beschieden worden zu sein. Nach dem gescheiterten Versuch, Jura zu studieren und als Lehrer zu arbeiten, widmete er sich vollständig dem Verlagswesen. Durch eine Anstellung bei der von Akhsay Chandra Sarkar (Akṣaẏˈcandra Sarˈkār; 1846–1917) herausgegebenen Zeitschrift *Sādhāraṇī* hatte er bereits während seines Studiums die dafür notwendige Erfahrung erlangt. Somit gründete Jogendra Chandra im Dezember 1881 die Zeitschrift *Baṅgabāsī*, welche sich durch ihren günstigen Preis sowie sprachliche und thematische Gestaltung schnell als Erfolg erwies (Sen 1993: 236–240). Laut Basu (2004: 23–24)

ist dies darauf zurückzuführen, dass er auf diese Weise nicht nur die englisch-
sprechende bengalische Elite erreichte, sondern auch die ärmeren, nur ben-
galischsprachigen Schichten. Die Zeitung richtete sich so insbesondere an die
häufig konservativ eingestellten Bewohner kleinerer Städte und Dörfer.

Das *Baṅgabāsī*-Verlagshaus begann zudem ab der Mitte der 1880er Jahre
Nachdrucke klassischer, religiöser Texte zu veröffentlichen, wodurch die Ver-
leger den Nerv der Zeit trafen. Einerseits erschienen die vergleichsweise
günstigen Nachdrucke in bengalischsprachigen Fassungen, und andererseits
bedienten sie die gesellschaftliche Rückbesinnung auf Hindu-Traditionen und
-Werte (Sen 1993: 243–244; Ghosh 1948: 132). Des Weiteren gab Jogendra
Chandra im Laufe der Zeit noch verschiedene, unterschiedlich erfolgreiche
Zeitungen und Zeitschriften heraus; einige davon auf Hindi, andere auf Eng-
lisch. Das *Baṅgabāsī*-Haus erlangte zudem Bekanntheit als erste indische Zei-
tung, welche aufgrund ihrer scharfen Kritik u. a. an der *Age of Consent Bill*[7]
im Jahr 1891 staatlich verfolgt wurde. Die Meinung der Öffentlichkeit stand
überwiegend auf der Seite der *Baṅgabāsī*-Autoren, und so wurde der Fall
kurz darauf fallen gelassen (Sen 1993: 249–250).

Jogendra Chandra wird von Sukumar Sen (1992: 221) als „the most popu-
lar organ of reactionary orthodoxy" bezeichnet, jedoch scheint sich diese Hal-
tung erst später entwickelt zu haben. So unterstellt Amiya P. Sen (1993: 255–
256) seiner Position zunächst eher einen gewissen merkantilen Opportunis-
mus als eine tiefverwurzelte orthodoxe Weltanschauung. Im Laufe der Zeit
scheint sich jedoch über öffentliche Angriffe auf den traditionellen Hinduis-
mus und kolonialstaatliche Reformen die dezidiert orthodoxe Haltung
Jogendra Chandras und auch der Zeitung nach und nach gefestigt zu haben,
insbesondere mit dem Einstieg Indranath Bandyopadhyays (Indranāth Ban-
dyopādhyāẏ; 1849–1911) in die Zeitung nach 1883 (ebd.; Basu 2004: 26). Vor-
rangig scheint sich Jogendra Chandras orthodoxe Haltung auf die Bewahrung
der hierarchischen sozialen Strukturen der Hindu-Gesellschaft zu erstrecken;
mit den Brahmanen an oberster Stelle und insbesondere auch mit einer tra-
ditionellen Frauenrolle. So war er im Vorfeld der *Age of Consent Bill* einer der
lautesten Kritiker und stellte sich entschieden gegen die Wiederverheiratung
von Witwen. Allerdings scheint er bei der Verfechtung seiner konservativen

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[7] Die im Jahr 1891 verabschiedete *Age of Consent Bill* legte als Mindestalter für die Verheira-
tung von Mädchen zwölf Jahre fest (Ghosh 2014: 88).

Positionen, wie Sen (1993: 262) anmerkt, seine unternehmerischen Vorteile an übergeordnete Stelle gesetzt zu haben.

Zum Ausdruck brachte er seine Kritik an den neuen gesellschaftlichen Konventionen neben den journalistischen Tätigkeiten mittels stark satirischer Texte. Das bekannteste seiner satirischen Werke ist der Roman *Maḍel Bhaginī* („The Ideal Sister")[8] sowie der Roman *Śrīśrīrāj'lakṣmī*. Basu (2004: 27) beschreibt sie als die beliebtesten Romane Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts. Auch die Zeitung *Baṅgabāsī* verfügte zu dieser Zeit über eine der größten Leserschaft in der Region. Doch obwohl also *Baṅgabāsī* eines der erfolgreichsten Verlagshäuser des späten 19. Jahrhunderts war, blieben Jogendra Chandras Werke insgesamt wenig beachtet, und in Abhandlungen zur bengalischen Literatur der Zeit bleibt er eine Randnotiz (Sen 1992: 221; Zbavitel 1976: 245; Ghosh 1948: 132 & 165; Basu 2004: 52–53).

Satire und Kolonialsatire

Satirische Texte erfreuten sich im Bengalen des 19. Jahrhunderts großer Beliebtheit, insbesondere wenn sich die Autoren in ihren Werken der Bhadralok-Klasse widmeten. Ob Satire ein eigenständiges Literaturgenre ist, ist jedoch umstritten. Die Betrachtung von Satire als Genre bezieht sich zumeist auf historische satirische Werke (des Westens). In diesem Sinne handelt es sich um eine eng gefasste Definition, welche nur wenige Textsorten umschließt, wie beispielsweise die menippeischen Satiren des Römischen Reiches (Greenberg: 2019: 8). Für andere und modernere satirische Texte scheint die Ansicht zu überwiegen, dass es sich eher um eine Form (engl.: *mode*) als um ein eigenes Genre handelt (Greenberg 2019: 8; Harder 2012: 165).[9] Satire als Form zu betrachten, ermöglicht eine weitergefasste Definition, welche nicht nur Literatur bzw. eine bestimmte Literaturkategorie bezeichnet, sondern auch andere Medien wie Musik oder Film miteinschließt (Harder 2012: 165). Als Literaturform kann Satire definiert werden als „a looser sort of category than a genre, lacking the strong structural and formal markers of a

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[8] Übersetzung nach Chaiti Basu 2004. Für eine englische Zusammenfassung der von Jogendra Chandra Basu veröffentlichten Schriften sowie des *Baṅgabāsī*-Verlagshauses siehe Chaiti Basu 2004, Abschnitte 6 und 7.

[9] Eine Gegenmeinung vertritt beispielsweise Charles Knight (2004: 4), der Satire als „pre-genre" bzw. an „exploiter of other genres" beschreibt, und sich gegen die Definition als *mode* stellt.

genre but still sending 'distinct signals' to a reader" (Greenberg: 10). Werden satirische Texte als eine Literaturform betrachtet, so interagieren sie mit den verschiedenen Genres, indem genretypische Themen, Sprache oder Formalien verwandelt oder überspitzt werden, oft als eine spöttische Nachahmung (ebd.). Es erfolgt eine vielschichtige Manipulation von Thema, Sprache oder Formalia, um negative Aspekte herauszustellen (Knight 2004: 4).

In Britisch-Indien erstreckten sich die im Zusammenhang mit der „Bengalischen Renaissance" eintretenden raschen Veränderungen im Publikationswesen – der außerordentliche Anstieg in der Veröffentlichung von bengalischsprachiger Literatur sowie ein Anstieg westlicher Literaturgattungen – auch auf die behandelten Inhalte. Das neu entstandene „Selbstbewusstsein" der gut gebildeten Bhadralok-Klasse schlug sich in dem Verlangen nieder, sich mit ihren eigenen Belangen zu befassen und somit ihre eigenständige Identität und Rolle in der Gesellschaft zu festigen (Basu 2004: 15; Harder 2004: 363). Laut Harder hatte in vormoderner bengalischer Literatur schlicht „no 'speaking about oneself'" (Harder 2004: 363) stattgefunden, sodass erstmals im 19. Jahrhundert eine Thematisierung des eigenen Selbst in der bengalischen Literatur aufkam. Dieses neue „Selbstbewusstsein" äußerte sich häufig in Form von satirischer Kritik, sodass satirische Texte einen beträchtlichen Teil der Werke dieser Zeit ausmachten (Harder 2012: 166).

Die Ausprägung, mit welcher die koloniale Einflussnahme der Briten thematisiert wurde und wodurch die Bezeichnung „Kolonialsatire" treffend erscheint, differiert stark (ebd.: 178–181). Sie reicht von satirischen Texten, die während der Kolonialzeit verfasst wurden, ohne diese jedoch indirekt oder direkt zu thematisieren, bis hin zur offenen Kritik an der Kolonialmacht (ebd.). Der vorliegende Text kritisiert zwar auf satirische Weise die Einflüsse durch die Briten, greift diese jedoch nicht direkt an und gehört somit zur größten Gruppe der bengalischen kolonialsatirischen Texte (ebd.: 197–198). Thematisiert und kritisiert werden in diesen zumeist die (als negativ wahrgenommenen) Auswirkungen auf die einheimische Bevölkerung, ohne dabei explizite Kritik an den kolonialen Strukturen zu üben.

DIE SATIRE *PURUṢ-RATNA*

Die satirische Kurzgeschichte mit dem Titel *Puruṣ-ratna* stammt aus der Sammlung *Bāṅgālī-carit* (1885–1887; im bengalischen Kalender 1292–1293), einer Kollektion von satirischen Sketchen, welche regelmäßig in den Zeitungen Jogendra Chandras erschienen. In vielen seiner Kurzgeschichten thematisierte der Autor die „anglisierte" Gesellschaft der damaligen Zeit. *Puruṣ-ratna* ist darunter ein besonders anschauliches Beispiel für seine Wahrnehmung der „superficiality of misplaced reform" (Sen 1993: 257 & 279). Die vorliegende Version des Texts wurde 1976 durch Nirmal Dāś als Teil einer Zusammenstellung der gesammelten Werke von Jogendra Chandra unter dem Titel *Yogendracandra Basu Racanābalī* in drei Bänden herausgegeben.

Die kurze Satire ist auf Bengalisch verfasst worden. Einige Gespräche in wörtlicher Rede verlaufen auf Hindi; auch sie sind in bengalischer Schrift[10] in den Text integriert (Basu 1976: 27). Zudem sind in den Text einzelne englische Sätze oder Satzfragmente in lateinischer Schrift sowie einzelne englische Wörter in bengalischer Schrift eingefügt. In den in lateinischer Schrift geschriebenen Sätzen finden sich vereinzelt Rechtschreibfehler, beispielsweise in der Großschreibung am Satzanfang (z. B. ebd.: 28). Der Text ist in der dritten Person geschrieben und vermittelt dem Leser eine auktoriale Erzählperspektive.

Die Hauptperson der Satire ist ein Kalikrishna (Kālīkṛṣṇa) genannter Babu, der sich selbst als modernen und westlichen Herrn betrachtet und an der mangelnden Bildung seiner nicht namentlich genannten Ehefrau verzweifelt. Er möchte die bengalische Gesellschaft reformieren und in diesem Zuge seiner „dummen" (bengal.: *bokā*; Basu 1976: 27), ungebildeten Ehefrau Bildung vermitteln, sie so zu einer besseren Gefährtin für ihn machend. Hierbei stößt er jedoch auf ihren Widerstand. Bei seinem Vorhaben wird er unterstützt durch seinen Freund und Vertrauten, dem Babu Mohinimohan (Mohinīmohan).

Die erste Szene spielt sich in einem Kleidungsgeschäft namens Harmon Company ab, in welcher Kalikrishna durch das Angebot eines einfachen muslimischen Schneiders, ihm seine Kleidung preisgünstiger als in einem englischen Geschäft zu fertigen, in Wut gerät und diesen ob seiner vermeintlichen Dreistigkeit beschimpft. Kalikrishna wird durch Mohinimohan beruhigt,

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[10] „Bengalische Schrift" ist die geläufigste Bezeichnung dieser Schrift, obgleich andere Sprachen ebenfalls in dieser geschrieben werden (Brandt 2014: 85–86).

wobei dieser darauf hinweist, dass er mit seinen Reformierungsbestrebungen zunächst im eigenen Heim bei der eigenen Ehefrau beginnen sollte. Sie einigen sich darauf, dass Mohinimohan den Versuch unternehmen soll, Kalikrishnas Ehefrau zu unterrichten.

Diese siebzehnjährige Ehefrau wartet zurechtgemacht, aber einsam und traurig in ihrem Zimmer auf ihren Ehemann. Sie vermisst die Zeit ihrer Kindheit, als sie noch von ihren Eltern umsorgt und behütet wurde. Kalikrishna erscheint und beginnt mit ihr ein Gespräch über ihre mangelnde Bildung. Er wirft ihr vor, aus Unwissenheit nicht einmal zu wissen, wie sie sich ihrem Ehemann gegenüber respektvoll verhalten solle, und dass sie nicht einmal den Wunsch habe, etwas zu lernen. Daraufhin erklärt Kalikrishna ihr, dass sein Freund Mohinimohan sie von nun an täglich eine Stunde unterrichten wird. Die Ehefrau erschrickt über die Stimmung ihres Ehemannes und der Ankündigung des Kontakts mit einem anderen Mann und beginnt zu weinen, weigert sich jedoch, den Anweisungen ihres Mannes Folge zu leisten.

Kalikrishna gerät erneut in Wut und beginnt, mit seiner Frau zu schimpfen. Er beschuldigt sie, sich absichtlich gegen seine Versuche, sie mittels Spirituosen zu kultivieren, zu wehren. Wütend fährt er fort, sie zu beschimpfen, da er aus englischen Büchern wisse, dass ohne Brandy keine echte Liebe zwischen Männern und Frauen bestehen könne. Die Ehefrau hätte ihm zu gehorchen, und er versucht nun, sie dazu zu zwingen, den Unterricht mit Mohinimohan zu beginnen.

Alarmiert von diesem Wutanfall kommen Kalikrishnas Schwester und Mutter angelaufen und beziehen, ohne zu wissen, worum es geht, Stellung für die Schwiegertochter. Kalikrishna setzt an zu erklären, er habe nur versucht, die bengalische Gesellschaft zu verbessern, endet aber in der Schlussfolgerung, dass dies nicht möglich sei. Im Wohnzimmer erwartet ihn sein Freund Mohinimohan und versucht erneut, ihn zu beschwichtigen, indem er sagt, wenn Kalikrishna seine Versuche kontinuierlich fortführe, würde er letztendlich damit Erfolg haben.

Die satirische Figur des anglisierten Bābus

Die satirische Schrift beschreibt offenkundig die Einflussnahme der britischen Kolonialmacht auf die bengalische Bevölkerung, welche sich vornehmlich in den Gepflogenheiten der neu entstandenen Bevölkerungsgruppe der

Bhadralok niederschlug. Besonders hervorgehoben werden dabei die Themen der (englischen) Bildung sowie der Beziehung zwischen Mann und Frau in der Ehe. Obwohl die nicht namentlich genannte Ehefrau der Hauptfigur diejenige Person ist, die als dumm und ungebildet beschrieben wird (Basu 1976: 27), ist der Hauptcharakter Kalikrishna selbst das satirisch dargestellte Objekt.

Kalikrishna betrachtet sich selbst als einen vollständig modernen und fortschrittlichen Mann. Seine Bestrebung ist es, die bengalische Gesellschaft nach seiner Vorstellung davon, wie die englische Gesellschaft funktioniere, zu modernisieren und zu verbessern. Dem Hinweis seines Freundes Mohinimohan folgend – „reformation like charity ought to begin at home" (ebd.: 28) –, unternimmt er den Versuch, seine vermeintlich modernen und richtigen Ideen über Bildung und Gesellschaft zunächst an seine Ehefrau zu vermitteln. Die vermeintliche Ungebildetheit und Einfachheit seiner Frau sowie ihre Resistenz gegen die Versuche, sie seinen Vorstellungen gemäß zu kultivieren, lassen Kalikrishna in solchem Maße verzweifeln, dass er sogar von Suizid spricht (ebd.).

Seine Überzeugung, ein moderner Mann und gebildet zu sein, äußert sich dahingehend, dass er Englisch statt Bengalisch spricht, sogar auf Englisch denkt, Alkohol trinkt und auch der englischen Mode nachkommt. Er trägt die Haare gescheitelt und trägt *sabhya jātir poṣāk* („die Kleidung des zivilisierten/kultivierten Volkes"; ebd.: 27) westlicher Marken. Die Vorstellungen von den Gepflogenheiten englischer Kultur scheint Kalikrishna englischen Romanen zu entnehmen, jedoch ohne diese richtig zu verstehen oder umzusetzen (ebd.: 27 & 29). So wohnt er mit seiner Ehefrau im Haus seiner Familie, zusammen mit seiner Mutter und einer unverheirateten Schwester (ebd.: 30).

Schon auf der ersten Seite, bei seinem Wutausbruch über die vermeintliche Anmaßung eines einfachen Schneiders, ihn billiger bedienen zu wollen, wird die Figur Kalikrishnas der Lächerlichkeit preisgegeben. Der bei der Beschreibung des „Kampfes" mit dem Schneider verwendete Humor ist zunächst eher bildlich und daher offensichtlich. Kalikrishna greift den Schneider des Geschäfts mit Mobiliar und lautem Gebrüll an, was in deutlichem Kontrast zu seinem distinguierten Selbstbild und der Kulisse des Kleidungsgeschäftes steht (ebd.: 27):

> Diese Worte hörend begann Kalikrishna Babus Körper plötzlich, in Ärger, in Hass, in Demütigung erbebend zu zittern. Beide Augen nahmen die Farbe roter Hibiskusblüten an; was [bedurfte es] noch weiter – […] er erhob sich, in

> heldenhafter Form einen Sprung ausführend, vom Stuhl;
> und sein mit einem Lederschuh des Hauses Cuthbertson
> geschmückter rechter Fuß fiel kraftvoll auf die dünne
> Brust des armen Schneiders. Der Schneider fiel um.[11]

Zudem steht diese Szene ebenfalls in deutlichem Gegensatz zu den im einleitenden Absatz geweckten Erwartungen, die Kurzgeschichte würde von der Dummheit Kalikrishnas Ehefrau handeln. Auf diese Weise wird direkt deutlich gemacht, dass es sich bei Kalikrishna um die satirisch dargestellte Figur handelt.

Diese Figur ist geprägt durch Gegensätze und Widersprüchlichkeiten. In ihm manifestiert sich die durch britische Einflüsse entstandene Entfremdung vom Eigenen, welche in bengalischen satirischen Schriften und Karikaturen in der Zeit Ende des 19. und Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts vielfach thematisiert wurde (Radice 1999: 109; Harder 2004: 363–365 & 377–378). Mehrmals gibt Kalikrishna in verschiedenen Gesprächen einander widersprechende Ansichten zum Besten. Trotz seiner verbalen Ausfälligkeiten gegen seine Ehefrau und der harten Worte über sie im Gespräch mit Mohinimohan beteuert er verschiedentlich, sie innig zu lieben (Basu 1976: 27 & 29). So nennt er sie im Gespräch mit Mohinimohan „the course [sic] of my life" (ebd.: 28), während er sie selbst kurz darauf mit „the soul of my life" (ebd.: 29) anspricht. In seiner Wut nach dem gescheiterten Gespräch mit seiner Ehefrau wird der durch die britische Lebensweise herbeigeführte Identitätsverlust besonders deutlich. Vor Zorn unfähig, viel zu sagen, schimpft er vor seiner Familie gegen „your country" (ebd.: 30), nennt dieses unmittelbar danach jedoch „my country" (ebd.). Er versucht, sich in seiner vermeintlich englischen Lebensweise über seine den veralteten Vorstellungen verhaftete Familie zu erheben, ohne dass ihm das je wirklich gelingen könnte, wodurch er lediglich in seinem Selbst gespalten wird.

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[11] Bengalisches Original: *ei kathā śuniẏā haṭhāt· kālīkṛṣṇa bābur śarīr krodhe, ghṛṇāẏ, apamāne thar thar kariẏā km̐pite lāgila. naẏan'dbaẏ jabākusumer barṇa dhāraṇ karila; adhik ki – […] ceẏār haïte bīr'mūrttite lampha pradān kariẏā uṭhilen; ebaṃ tãhār kath'bārṭsenbhabaner carmmapādukā-śobhita dakṣiṇ pad garīb dar'jīr kṣīṇ'bakṣe sajore patita haïla. dar'jī paṛiẏā gela* (Basu 1976: 27).

Die Beziehung zwischen Mann und Frau

Die tiefergreifende Zwiespältigkeit in der Persönlichkeit dieser Art von den Briten nacheifernden Personen (Harder 2004: 365) spiegelt sich auch im weiteren Verhalten Kalikrishnas gegenüber seiner Frau wider. Mit seiner Forderung an diese, sich zu bilden, versucht er einerseits, aus ihr eine ihm zum Teil „angemessenere" bzw. „ebenbürtige" Person zu machen. Dass sie dadurch jedoch auch ihre ursprüngliche, unterlegene Rolle in der Ehe anzweifeln könne, scheint Kalikrishna nicht in den Sinn gekommen zu sein. Durch ihre Weigerung bricht sie bereits mit den Erwartungen an eine gute und gehorsame Ehefrau und bezieht ihrem Mann gegenüber eine von ihm unerwartet gleichrangige Position. Zugleich jedoch ist Kalikrishna über genau dieses Verhalten erzürnt; seine Ehefrau wisse nicht, wie sie ihn angemessen ansprechen solle, und er erwarte unbedingten Gehorsam (Basu 1976: 29–30). Deutlich wird somit die Inkonsequenz und Widersprüchlichkeit in den die Frauen betreffenden Reformbewegungen der Bhadralok-Klasse, welche einerseits eine intelligente und ebenbürtige Ehefrau verlangten, andererseits jedoch keinesfalls ihre den Frauen übergeordnete und überlegene Position aufgeben wollten (Karlekar 1986: 25). Kalikrishnas Unterhaltung mit seiner Ehefrau nach seinem Eintreffen zuhause macht dies deutlich. So beginnt er das Gespräch mit ihr mit „Was soll das, warum sprichst du nicht? [Es] wird nicht gehen, wenn du dich heute schämst/schüchtern bist. Ich verstehe Scham/Schüchternheit nicht"[12], entgegnet auf ihre Antwort jedoch sofort gegenteilig mit der Aussage: „Du weißt nicht, wie du den Ehemann ansprichst, deine *Education* ist sehr gering."[13]

Eine solche Gehorsamkeit und demütiges Benehmen gegenüber dem Ehemann entsprächen dem Verhalten einer guten Hindu-Ehefrau (Sarkar 2001: 38–39). Dies sind Tugenden, die Kalikrishna von seiner Frau erwartet, obwohl er zeitgleich in den Augen des konservativen Autors auf das Gegenteilige hinzuarbeiten scheint (Basu 2007: 37), nämlich dass aus ihr eine westlich und somit in den falschen Werten gebildete Ehefrau wird. Für Sarkar (2001: 196 & 46) stellt diese Art von dominierendem Verhalten gegenüber

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[12] Bengalisches Original: *„oki"* [sic] *tumi kathā kahitecha nā kena? āj lajjā karile calibe nā. – lajjā āmi bujhi nā* (Basu 1976: 29).
[13] Bengalisches Original: *tumi sbāmī sambodhan karite jāna nā, tomār* Education *baṛa kam* (Basu 1976: 29).

der Ehefrau einen typischen Charakterzug der westlich beeinflussten Hindu-Männer dar: Den in der Kolonialgesellschaft vorherrschenden Autonomie-verlust versuchten sie, mit autoritärem Auftreten gegenüber der Ehefrau auszugleichen.

Auch in Bezug auf „wahre Liebe" in der Ehe ist Kalikrishna den Einflüssen des Westens unterworfen und versucht, diese auf sein eigenes Eheleben zu übertragen. Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts wurde der Hindu-Brauch, eine Frau bereits als Kind zu verheiraten und dann mit Einsetzen der Pubertät zu ihrem Ehemann zu geben, zunehmend kritisch diskutiert (Sarkar 2001: 194–196; Ghosh 2014: 82–89). Dies stellt einen Bruch mit den Traditionen dar, wel-chem sich der Autor entschieden entgegensetzte (Sen 1993: 259). Leider wird nicht klar, zu welchem Zeitpunkt Kalikrishnas Ehefrau, die zum Zeitpunkt der Geschehnisse siebzehn Jahre alt ist, verheiratet wurde und in das Haus ihres Mannes kam (Basu 1974: 28). Trotz der Beteuerungen seiner Liebe scheint Kalikrishna unschlüssig, wie diese auszusehen habe. Aus englischen Romanen entnimmt er, dass ohne den Konsum von Brandy keine wirkliche Liebe zwischen Mann und Frau entstehen könne (ebd.: 29). Auch hier zieht er die klassischen Traditionen in Zweifel und versucht, sie durch vermeintlich bessere zu ersetzen. Aber aufgrund seines völligen Mangels an tiefergreifen-dem Verständnis der in der englischen Gesellschaft üblichen Gepflogenhei-ten in Bezug auf Liebesheirat und Alkoholkonsum (Cocks 2013: 71 & 86), er-schafft er lediglich eine auf literarischer Fiktion basierende Karikatur dessen, wie er sich diese vorstellt.

Mit allen diesen Aspekten manifestiert sich in Kalikrishna die sich zur dama-ligen Zeit herausbildende und auch heute noch beliebte satirische Figur der anglisierten Babus (Radice 1999: 104). Die Bezeichnung „Babu" steht jedoch (auch heute noch) in ihrer Alltagsfunktion nicht als satirischer Ausdruck, son-dern als eine respektvolle Anrede für eine wohlsituierte (männliche) Person. Da diese oft als gebildet und ökonomisch gut gestellt galt und der Terminus auch von den Briten verwendet wurde, stellte sich die Betitelung als „Babu" als etwas Erstrebenswertes dar (Harder 2004: 366). Gegenläufig zu dieser positiv besetzten Bezeichnung etablierte sich die satirische Figur des Babu, in welcher die als negativ wahrgenommen Aspekte dieser Eigenschaften überspitzt dar-gestellt und ins Lächerliche gezogen wurden (Harder 2004: 365–266).

Der satirisch dargestellte, typische anglisierte Babu ist bestrebt, den Moralvorstellungen und Verhaltensweisen der britischen Gesellschaft nachzueifern, ohne jedoch deren kulturellen Eigenheiten vollständig begreifen zu können. So erzeugt er lediglich eine westlich gekleidete, Alkohol trinkende und schlechtes Englisch sprechende oberflächliche Kopie. Dieses Verhalten entfremdet ihn von der eigenen Kultur, während es ihm gleichzeitig nie möglich ist, ein englischer *Sāheb* zu werden. Wie Kalikrishna zeigt, ist er nirgendwo richtig zugehörig und macht sich in beiden Gesellschaftskreisen zum Gespött (Radice 1999: 109; Harder 2004: 363–365 & 377–378).

A. Ghosh (2004: 187–189) argumentiert, dass Autoren-Vertreter der orthodoxen Hindu-Bewegung, von welchen Jogendra Chandra einer der bekanntesten ist, umso mehr versuchten, die anglisierte Bhadralok-Klasse, insbesondere den „typischen" Babu, zum Gespött zu machen; je weniger sie selbst als Bhadralok mit dieser in Verbindung gebracht werden wollten: „The more absurd they [westlich-gebildete fiktionale Charaktere] were, the greater the distance at which the bhadralok could place themselves from it" (ebd.: 188).

Bildung für eine „bessere Ehefrau und Mutter"

Aus der Befürchtung, sie könnten zu sehr mit außerhäuslichen Dingen in Berührung kommen, war in jener Zeit Frauen und Mädchen der Zugang zu formaler Bildung kaum möglich und, abgesehen von den oberen Schichten, auch nicht erwünscht. Somit blieb nur die Bildung im privaten Rahmen. Insbesondere orthodoxe Hindus stellten sich generell gegen die Bildung von Frauen, und diese wurde in der Literatur vielfach verspottet. Dennoch war diesbezüglich ein Umdenken erkennbar, und auch von progressiven Gruppen der Hindu-Elite ausgehende Bemühungen, Bildung für Frauen zu ermöglichen, wurden deutlich (Basu 2004: 12–13). Im Jahr 1890 gab es bereits eine beträchtliche Anzahl von Mädchenschulen, wenn auch der Zugang zu höherer Bildung weiterhin verschlossen blieb (Karlekar 1986: 25–26). Ausgehend von in Großbritannien stattfindenden Diskussionen darüber, welche Form von Bildung Frauen und Mädchen zuzutrauen und nicht schädlich sei, wurden auch unter den bengalischen Oberschichten Erwägungen laut, Frauen zu „intelligent companions for the emergent *bhadralok* and better mothers for the next generation" (ebd.) zu machen. Somit erfolgte in zunehmendem Maße auch in Verbindung mit romantischeren Vorstellungen von ehelichen

Beziehungen in Form von einer „companionate marriage" (Mukhia 2002: 43) eine zumindest eingeschränkte Bildung der Frauen innerhalb des Hauses. In Kalikrishnas Bestrebungen, seine Frau zu einer ihm angemessenen Ehepartnerin zu modellieren, zeigt sich ebendiese reformerische und vermeintlich romantische Haltung der Bhadralok-Klasse.

Das Thema Bildung ist für Kalikrishna der zentrale Aspekt seiner in sich selbst wahrgenommenen Kultiviertheit. Ausschlaggebend ist für ihn hierbei der Erwerb westlicher *education* (Basu 1974: 29) und nicht die tradierte Hindu-Bildung. So spricht er gegenüber seiner Frau lediglich herablassend von dem „in euren *Śāstra*s" (bengal.: *tomāder śāstre*; ebd.) Enthaltenen. Er scheint zwischen sich selbst und den klassischen Lehren der *Śāstra*s keinen Zusammenhang mehr zu sehen und diesen keinen Wert beizumessen. Um seine Frau zu bilden, muss sie also die von ihm als „richtig" anerkannte Bildung erfahren.

Was genau er jedoch unter der Bildung seiner Frau versteht, erfährt der Leser erst ganz zum Schluss. Es handelt sich jedenfalls nicht um das Erlernen von Lesen und Schreiben. Auf die Frage seiner Frau, ob er sich auf Lesen und Schreiben beziehe, antwortet er lediglich aufbrausend: „Nein, du hast nicht im Mindesten den Wunsch zu lernen; falls [du] den Wunsch hättest, wärst du als meine Frau nicht dumm, [wärst] du nicht unkultiviert."[14] Kalikrishnas bisherige Versuche, seine Frau zu bilden, fanden stattdessen mit dem Versuch statt, sie zum Alkohol trinken zu bewegen, ihr also *spirits* einzuflößen, wogegen sie sich jedoch auf Grund ihres Festhaltens an klassischen Moralvorstellungen verweigert hatte (Basu 1974: 29). Für ihn scheint das Trinken von Alkohol sinnbildlich für die in höheren britischen Gesellschaftsschichten vorherrschende Bildung zu stehen. So solle sie sich ein Beispiel an den Herren nehmen und durch seinen Freund Mohinimohan, der ebenfalls einem Glas nicht abgeneigt ist (ebd.: 27–28), unterrichtet werden. Kalikrishna vermeint, durch das Lesen von englischen Romanen einen Zusammenhang zwischen englischer Bildung, einer modernen Ehe und dem Konsum von Brandy zu erkennen. In seinem Bestreben, seiner Frau „die Erhabenheit von Spirituosen" (bengal.: *surār gaurab*; ebd.) beizubringen, scheint er der Überzeugung zu sein, es bestünde ein Zusammenhang zwischen *spirit* „Geist, Genie" und *spirit* „Spirituose".

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[14] Bengalisches Original*: nā, tomār tilārddhao śikhibār icchā nāi; icchā thākile – āmār strī haïyā tumi mūrkha, tumi asabhya haïte nā* (Basu 1976: 29).

Kalikrishna scheint also weder Sprache und Gesellschaft noch Bildung oder Wissen der Engländer richtig begriffen zu haben. Er ahmt lediglich auf absurde Weise englische Gepflogenheiten nach und betrachtet sich dadurch als gebildet. Im Gegensatz dazu steht seine Ehefrau, die an „althergebrachter und vernünftiger" Bildung festhält und so ihre Unschuld beibehält. Jogendra Chandra sah in der westlichen Bildung und vor allem der Bildung der Frau eines der größten Übel des gesellschaftlichen Wandels seiner Zeit (Sen 1993: 259). Mit Kalikrishnas Ehefrau schuf er somit ein positives Gegenbild zu einer durch die schlechten Einflüsse westlicher Bildung korrumpierten Frau.

Eine vergleichbare Darstellung einer von westlichen Einflüssen unberührten Ehefrau zeigt sich in Bankim Chandras satirischer Kurzgeschichte mit dem englischsprachigen Titel *New Year's Day*. In dieser Satire hört die vom Land stammende Ehefrau ein Gespräch ihres Mannes mit einem englischen Freund mit an und gerät über die Sinnlosigkeit der vermeintlichen Nonsens-Frage *hā ḍu ḍu* (Caṭṭopādhyāẏ 1954: 47), d. h. „How do you do?", in Streit mit ihrem Ehemann. Auch hier verweigert sich die Ehefrau den englischen Gepflogenheiten, da sie ihren Sinn im Kontrast zu den für sie üblichen Konventionen der Höflichkeit nicht zu begreifen vermag*,* und fungiert als Bewahrerin der ursprünglichen Werte (ebd.: 47–48).[15]

Die Rolle der Frau und das häusliche Leben

Im deutlichen Gegensatz zur stark karikierten Figur Kalikrishnas steht seine junge, jedoch nicht namentlich genannte Ehefrau. Die schöne Siebzehnjährige ist umsorgt und behütet aufgewachsen und mit der Annahme, im Ehemann einen Beschützer zu finden, in die Ehe gegangen (Basu 1976: 28). Sie entspricht den Erwartungen der konservativen Hindu-Gesellschaft an eine gute, liebende, jedoch auch durch ihre Eltern äußerst umsorgten Ehefrau (ebd.; Sen 1979: 59–60 & 63–64), indem sie sich für ihren Ehemann schön macht und abends auf ihn wartet, was dieser jedoch nicht im erwünschten Sinne zu würdigen scheint (Basu 1976: 28–29).

Obwohl sie damit die Befehle ihres Mannes missachtet, spricht ihre Weigerung, einen anderen Mann als ihren Ehemann zu treffen, für ihre Reinheit und das Festhalten an den „richtigen" moralischen Werten (Sarkar 2001: 41).

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[15] Die Komik potenziert sich für den bengalischen Leser dadurch, dass *Hāḍuḍu* die bengalische Bezeichnung für den beliebten indischen Mannschaftssport *Kabaḍḍī* ist.

Anstatt den durch Kalikrishna vorgebrachten Versuchungen, der britischen Gesellschaft und den sozialen Reformen nachzugeben, begnügt sie sich mit ihrem Ehemann als einzige männliche Bezugsperson und bleibt somit den traditionellen Hindu-Moralvorstellungen treu (ebd.).

Als literarische Darstellung der bengalischen Frau des 19. Jahrhunderts herrschte zunächst analog zum anglisierten Babu für Frauen das Bild der durch moderne (westliche) Lebensweise beeinflussten Bibi (bengal.: *bibi*) vor (Sarkar 2001: 35; Radice 1999: 102–104; Harder 2004: 363). Dieses Bild der Frau ist auch in Jogendra Chandras Werken anzutreffen; so entspricht beispielsweise die Ehefrau in der im gleichen Gesamtwerk erschienenen Kurzgeschichte *Śāśuṛī-baü* diesem negativen Frauenbild: „Today the wife reigns supreme […] young men of this generation consider their wives to be inimitable objects of creation."[16] Auch andere Autoren kritisieren mit dieser Form des Frauenbildes die westliche Bildung und Lebensweise. So entwirft beispielsweise Indranath Bandyopadhyay in seiner Satire *Strī-sbādhīnatā* („Frauenemanzipation")[17] eine Zukunft, in welcher eine vollständige Umkehr der Geschlechterrollen erfolgt, wodurch Bestrebungen der Frauenbildung und -emanzipation als lachhaft dargestellt werden (Bandyopādhyāy 2007: 187–189).

Im Gegensatz dazu entspricht das von Jogendra Chandra gezeichnete Bild der Ehefrau Kalikrishnas der zur Jahrhundertwende populärer werdenden Darstellung der reinen und von britischen Einflüssen unberührt bleibenden bengalischen Frau (Sarkar 2001: 202–203). Diese hält anders als die durch täglichen Kontakt mit der neuen britisch-beeinflussten Gesellschaft verdorbenen Männer an der klassischen Bildung der *Śāstra*s, also den traditionellen Hindu-Schriften, fest (ebd.) – so wie Kalikrishna es im Streit seiner Ehefrau vorwirft (Basu 1976: 29). Die Frauen, aus heutiger Sicht im Kindesalter verheiratet (John 2021: 2–3), blieben auch nach ihrem Umzug vom elterlichen in den Haushalt des Ehemannes stets in beschirmter Umgebung (Ghosh 2014: 81–83). Da sie also wenig in Kontakt mit der Außenwelt traten und bereits in sehr jungen Jahren verheiratet wurden, konnte auf sie das Sinnbild von Reinheit und Unberührtheit projiziert werden. Ebenso galt jedoch auch das Bild der besonderen Stärke der Hindu-Frau, auch durch die ihnen durch die Gesellschaft auferlegten strengen Regeln wie beispielsweise der frühen Verheiratung und Treue zum

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[16] Übersetzung nach Amiya Sen (1993: 208).
[17] Übersetzung nach Hans Harder (2011: 208–215).

Ehemann auch nach dessen Tod. Dank dieser vermeintlichen Stärke vermochten sie es scheinbar eher als ihre Männer, sich den Verlockungen der westlichen Reformen zu widersetzen (ebd.; Sarkar 2001: 195 & 202–203).

Durch die Ende des 19. und Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts zunehmenden Bestrebungen, auch Mädchen einen Zugang zu Bildung und Schule zu ermöglichen, sah sich das Bild der Frau als Bewahrerin der Traditionen erneut verstärkten Widersprüchlichkeiten ausgesetzt. Zwar fanden diese Bemühungen mit der Absicht statt, Frauen eine „dem schwachen Geschlecht zumutbare" Bildung zu vermitteln, jedoch betrachtete ein großer Teil der Gesellschaft auch diese als bedrohliche Neuerung. So sahen sie die Unberührtheit der Frauen, welche durch ihr Verbleiben innerhalb der festen Grenzen des Hauses gewährleistet wurde, in Gefahr (Karlekar 1986: 25–26; Mukhia 2002: 42–43). Die Fähigkeit der Hindu-Frauen, sich den negativen äußeren Einflüssen der „Moderne" zu widersetzen, sollte offenbar nicht auf die Probe gestellt werden. Die Vorstellung, „that there was something special about a woman's nature, which would be destroyed by excessive exposure to education" (Karlekar 1986: 25), blieb weiterhin bestehen, sodass ihr Schutzbedürfnis in Anbetracht der sozialen Reformen unangetastet blieb. Als Resultat entstand die angestrebte, jedoch widersprüchliche Rolle der Frau, in bestimmten Bereichen gebildet zu sein und dennoch weiterhin auch Tugendhaftigkeit und Traditionen auf sich zu vereinen (ebd.; Sarkar 2001: 204). Kalikrishnas Ehefrau scheint lediglich das Erlernen von Lesen und Schreiben in Erwägung zu ziehen, jedoch nichts, was darüber hinausreicht, sodass sie sich den negativen Reformen als weitestgehend überlegen erweist.

Auch die Fokussierung der Satire auf das häusliche Leben ist eine der typischen Thematiken der bengalischen Literatur Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts, was sich ebenso in den Texten Bankim Chandras und Indranath Bandyopadhyays zeigt (Zbavitel 1976: 244; Caṭṭopādhyāẏ 1954: 47–48; Bandyopādhyāẏ 2007: 187–189). Im Vordergrund stehen als typisches Thema der Zeit die „[d]omestic relations" (Sarkar 2001: 198), insbesondere die zwischen Ehemann und Ehefrau. Sarkar (2001: 197–198) führt dies darauf zurück, dass das häusliche Leben die letzte von der Kolonialisierung unberührte Sphäre der einheimischen Bevölkerung war, in welcher selbstbestimmtes Handeln möglich war. Konsequenterweise erfährt der Leser über die Verdienstquellen Kalikrishnas oder Mohinimohans auch nichts.

Zusätzlich führt Sarkar an, die Familie wäre für den bengalischen Mann der damaligen Zeit kein Rückzugsort gewesen, sondern stattdessen „their real place of work" (ebd.: 197). Die Beschreibung der Bestrebungen Kalikrishnas, seine Frau zu „verbessern" (bengal.: *saṃskaraṇ karite*; Basu 1976: 28), scheinen diese These zu bestätigen. Auch die Figur Kalikrishnas Freundes Mohinimohan verwendet die Worte „in der Gesellschafts-Verbesserungsarbeit" (bengal.: *samāj-saṃskaraṇˈkāryye*; ebd.).

Das letzte beeinflussbare Umfeld für den kolonialisierten bengalischen Mann, dargestellt durch Kalikrishna, würde also genutzt, um es nach seinen Vorstellungen zu reformieren. Jedoch ist Kalikrishna bereits so weit durch die neuen Moralvorstellungen beeinflusst, dass er die Schädlichkeit seiner Ansichten nicht (mehr) erkennt. Somit ist die eigentliche Heldin der Satire seine Ehefrau, die den Versuchen ihres Mannes, sie zu korrumpieren, widersteht; die guten bengalischen bzw. Hindu-Werte widerstehen den schlechten britischen Einflüssen.

Die Sprache der Kurzgeschichte

Der Text ist hauptsächlich in der Sadhu Bhasha (bengal.: *sādhu bhāṣā*)[18] verfasst, hinzu kommen einzelne abweichende Abschnitte. Darunter fallen z. B. die Konversationen zwischen Kalikrishna und Mohinimohan, welche durch einen häufigen Wechsel zwischen Bengalisch und Englisch gekennzeichnet sind. An vielen Stellen ist der Text einfach und repetitiv geschrieben, mit einem sich stets wiederholenden Satzbau. Insbesondere in den Dialogen erfolgt in einigen Passagen eine stark elliptische Schreibweise. Die Begleitsätze zur wörtlichen Rede fallen weg, sodass diese Passagen theaterstückhaft anmuten (Basu 1976: 28). Andere Abschnitte wiederum sind bildhaft beschrieben und durch Metaphern und Vergleiche gekennzeichnet (ebd.: 27).

[18] Bei der Sadhu Bhasha handelt es sich um die heute nur literarische bengalische Hochsprache, im Gegensatz zur Chalit Bhasha (bengl.: *calit bhāṣā*), der später entstandenen Alltagssprache. Abgesehen von einem vermehrten Gebrauch von Sanskrit-Wörtern in der Sadhu Bhasha bestehen die Hauptunterschiede in abweichenden Pronomina und Verbformen (Sen 1992: 8). Zum Ende des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts stellte sich die Entwicklung ein, neue bengalische Prosa in der Chalit Bhasha zu verfassen, die somit zur zweiten, heute vorherrschenden Hochsprache wurde. Zudem zeigten sich die schriftlichen Werke der neuen Autorengeneration in Struktur, Rhythmus und Interpunktion stark durch das Englische beeinflusst (Ghosh 1948: 120).

Abhängig vom jeweiligen (sozialen) Kontext lässt Jogendra Chandra seine Figuren auf unterschiedliche Weise sprechen. So reden Kalikrishna und die Angestellten des Kleidungsgeschäftes miteinander auf Hindi (ebd.: 27):

> Der Babu hob „*Ist jemand da"* sagend, laut zu schreien an. Der Ordner kam sofort laut „*Herr"* rufend gelaufen. Der Babu gab Anweisungen: „*Packt diesen am Nacken und entfernt ihn*.“ Der Schneider nun den Staub von seinem Körper bürstend sagte: „*Sāheb! Was ließ ich mir zu Schulden kommen*?" [kursivierte Passagen auf Hindi][19]

Zusätzlich zu den bengalisch-englischen Unterhaltungen zwischen Mohinimohan und Kalikrishna (ebd.: 28 & 30) verlaufen auch Kalikrishnas Gespräche mit seiner Frau und seiner Familie zum größten Teil auf Bengalisch mit einzelnen englischen Einschüben (ebd.: 29), beispielsweise im Gespräch mit seiner Ehefrau:

> „*Nonsense!* Wirst du auf die Worte des Ehemannes hören oder nicht? Du brauchst *Education.* Mohini Bābu wird dein Lehrer sein; mit ihm werde ich dich heute bekannt machen, er wird dich täglich eine Stunde unterrichten. Wenn er mein *bosom friend* ist, dann [ist er] auch dein *bosom friend*.“[20] [kursivierte Passagen in Englisch und lateinischer Schrift]

Die verschiedenen sozialen Sphären, in denen sich der Text bewegt, werden durch die verschiedenen Arten des Sprechens hervorgehoben. Hierbei ist insbesondere der beständige Wechsel zwischen Bengalisch und Englisch der Figuren Mohinimohan und Kalikrishna aussagekräftig. Trotz der einleitenden Erläuterung, Kalikrishna denke sogar auf Englisch (ebd.: 27), erfolgen die Unterhaltungen nicht in reinem Englisch, sondern in einem ständigen Wechsel zu Bengalisch. Auch gegenüber seiner Ehefrau und Familie spricht Kalikrishna partiell auf Englisch, obwohl diese kein Englisch zu sprechen scheinen. Wie viel sie von den englischen Teilen seiner Aussprüche verstehen, wird nicht deutlich. Seine Ignoranz und Borniertheit werden somit noch unterstrichen.

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[19] Bengalisches Original: *bābu „kyoi hyāẏ" baliẏā mahācit·kār kariẏā uṭhilen. cāp'rāsī amani „khodāband" hā̃kiẏā dauṛāiẏā āsila. bābu hukum dilen, „garddān pāk·ṛ'ke isko nikālo." dar'jī takhan aṅger dhuli jhāṛiẏā uṭhiẏā balila, „sāheb! myāẏ'ne keẏā kasur kiẏā?" (Basu 1976: 27).*
[20] *Bengalisches Original: „Nonsense! tumi sbāmīr kathā śunibe ki nā? – tomār* Education *cāi. mohinībābu tomār śikṣak haïben; tā̃hār sahit tomār āj ālāp karāiẏā diba, tini tomāke roj ek ghaṇṭā paṛāiben. tini yakhan āmār* bosom friend *takhan tomār'o* bosom friend" (ebd.: 29).

Um über die Bildung zu sprechen, die Kalikrishna seiner Frau angedeihen möchte, verwendet er zumeist das englische Wort *education*, entweder als englisch geschriebenes Wort oder mittels einer Übertragung in die bengalische Schrift als *eḍukeśan* (Basu 1976: 29). Nur selten wird das bengalische Wort *śikṣā* („Bildung", „Lernen") gebraucht. Die Verwendung des englischen Wortes unterstreicht Kalikrishnas Ausrichtung auf westliche, englische Bildung bzw. die Art von Bildung, die er sich darunter vorstellt.

Mythologische Metaphern

Im Text ist eine Reihe von Metaphern der Hindu-Mythologie enthalten. Sie ermöglichen dem Leser eine bildhafte Vorstellung vom Verhalten der Figuren, insbesondere dem Kalikrishnas. In seiner Auseinandersetzung mit dem Schneider wird das Auftreten Kalikrishnas mit dem des Dämons Mahiṣāsur (Sanskrit: Mahiṣāsura) verglichen, welcher die Göttin Durgā bekämpft (Basu 1974: 27; Dimmitt & van Buitenen 1998: 224–225). Der Vergleich mit Mahiṣāsur verstärkt die Absurdität Kalikrishnas Verhaltens in dieser Szene weiter. Sein übersteigerter Zorn gibt ihn bereits der Lächerlichkeit preis, und der Kontrast seines Wutanfalls zum epischen Kampf zwischen Göttin und Dämon hebt dies noch stärker hervor.

Ebenso verhält es sich bei dem kurz darauf genannten Vergleich seines Erschöpfungszustandes nach seinem Zornesausbruch. Dieser wird gleichgesetzt mit dem des Gottes Shiva (bengal.: *śib*, Sanskrit: *śiva*) nach seinen Kämpfen mit Dämonen (Basu 1974: 27; Dimmitt & van Buitenen 1998: 148–154). Auch diese Metapher erzielt denselben Effekt wie diejenige zu Kalikrishnas Wutanfall. Die Übertreibungen, mit dem seine Handlungen beschrieben werden, steigert seine karikierte Darstellung.

Die Beschreibung der Ehefrau

Anstelle ihres Namens wird Kalikrishnas Ehefrau lediglich mit verschiedenen Varianten des Wortes „Ehefrau" bezeichnet, z. B. *strī* („Frau", „Ehefrau"), *ramaṇī* („schöne Frau", „Ehefrau"), *sahadharmiṇī* („Ehefrau"). Ihr Ehemann spricht sie mit *strī*, aber auch mit Koseformen oder Diminutiven wie *māi ḍiyār* („my dear") oder *bāchā* („Kindchen") an. Bereits diese Nichtnennung ihres Namens rückt sie in ein passives, aber auch ein von äußeren Einflüssen

unberührtes Licht, was für den Autor scheinbar den erforderlichen Eigenschaften einer guten Ehefrau entspricht.

Beschrieben wird sie als schöne Frau, die sich am Abend in Erwartung ihres Mannes zurechtgemacht hat; Haarzopf und Hals sind mit Schmuck versehen. Ihr Aussehen wird mit Blumen verglichen; sie hat einen „erblühten Lotus-Mund" (bengal.: *praphulla-mukh-kamal*; Basu 1974: 29). Gegenüber ihrem Mann ist sie schüchtern und nervös und wagt es kaum, ihn anzusehen (ebd.: 28–29). Die Beschreibung und ihr Verhalten lassen sie, zumindest in den Augen ihres Ehemannes, hilflos und kindlich erscheinen; zudem erscheint sie unglücklich ohne die Aufmerksamkeit und die Beschützung durch ihren Mann. Doch obwohl die Charakterisierung der Ehefrau als kindlich den literarischen Gepflogenheiten während der Jahrhundertwende entspricht (Sarkar 2001: 205–206), entspräche sie mit siebzehn Jahren in der gesellschaftlichen Wahrnehmung der Zeit eher einer erwachsenen Frau (Sen 1979: 68–69; Ghosh 2014: 85).

Kalikrishna jedoch scheint sie eher als Kind wahrzunehmen, was durch seine Anrede mit Wörtern wie *bāchā* oder der Beschreibung ihres Schutzbedürfnisses und ihrer Ungebildetheit noch unterstrichen wird (Basu 1974: 30). Für die Ehefrau entsteht somit die Diskrepanz, dass sie der gesellschaftlichen Auffassung nach eine „erwachsene" Frau wäre (Sen 1979: 68–69; Ghosh 2014: 85), ihr Mann sie jedoch als ungebildetes Kind betrachtet. So scheint Kalikrishna in den Augen des Autors also auch dahingehend von den britischen Idealen korrumpiert, dass er die Verheiratung von jungen Mädchen hinterfragt und seine Frau als (noch) nicht mündig erachtet, einhergehend mit der zunehmenden Infragestellung der Gepflogenheit, Mädchen bereits im Alter von unter zehn Jahren zu verheiraten, ab dem 19. Jahrhundert unter dem Einfluss der britischen Administration (Ghosh 2014: 82–89).

Ihre traditionelle Bildung und ehefrauliches Verhalten scheinen Kalikrishna nicht ausreichend, um seine Ehefrau schon als ihm ebenbürtig zu betrachten (Basu 1974: 29–30). Sie ist demnach gefangen zwischen den für sie nicht nachvollziehbaren Ansprüchen ihres Mannes und ihren eigenen, traditionelleren Vorstellungen von ihrer Rolle als Ehefrau. Diese Diskrepanz findet sich auch in ihrer Beschreibung. Dargestellt als schüchtern, demütig und nervös, versteht sie nicht, was ihr Mann von ihr erwartet (ebd.: 28), und so sehnt sich „die viel geliebte Tochter" (bengal.: *baṛa ādarer meẏe*; ebd.) nach ihren Eltern. Als

jedoch die Forderungen Kalikrishnas ihren Moralvorstellungen zu sehr widersprechen, bezieht sie ihm gegenüber Stellung und verhält sich entgegen seinen Vorstellungen von ihrer unschuldigen Beeinflussbarkeit nicht als gehorsames Kind, sondern als verletzte Ehefrau, die ihrem Mann widerspricht.

FAZIT

Die satirische Kurzgeschichte *Puruṣ-ratna* von Jogendra Chandra Basu ist in vielen Elementen typisch für ihre Zeit. Deutlich zeigt sie die abweisende Haltung des Autors zum in der Gesellschaft stattfindenden Wandel während der Wende vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert. Am deutlichsten tritt dies in der Darstellung des westlich beeinflussten Kalikrishnas hervor. Er vereint in sich alle Auswüchse der schlechten Einflüsse der britischen Kolonialmacht auf die gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Normen der Bengalen.

Als Gegenpol zu Kalikrishna fungiert seine unberührte, nicht korrumpierte Ehefrau, der es dank ihrer Stärke gelingt, allen Versuchungen durch ihren Mann zu widerstehen, womit sie die ursprünglichen und für den Autor richtigen Werte innerhalb der Gesellschaft darstellt. Ein solches Frauenbild als letzte nicht durch britische Ideale beeinflusste Person deckt sich ebenfalls mit anderen literarischen Werken jener Zeit (Sarkar 2001: 195–198). Die Darstellung der Ehefrau hebt den Kontrast zur karikierten Hauptperson umso weiter hervor. Auch die Konzentration auf häusliche Probleme ist kennzeichnend für in jener Zeit verfasste Werke (Zbavitel 1976: 244). So sind beide Motive beispielsweise ebenso in verschiedenen satirischen Schriften von Bankim Chandra und Indranath Bandyopadhyay zu finden (Caṭṭopādhyāẏ 1954: 47–48; Bandyopādhyāẏ 2007: 187–189).

Insgesamt verfolgt Jogendra Chandra insbesondere mit der Figur des Babus Kalikrishna eine stark vereinfachte Persiflage, ohne seinen Figuren Schattierungen zuzugestehen. Somit ist der Humor seiner Kurzgeschichte eher simpel, bedacht darauf, englische Einflüsse in voller Absurdität darzustellen. Als einen der größten Faktoren, durch welchen sich Kalikrishna die fehlgeleiteten englischen Eigenarten angeeignet zu haben scheint, stellt sich der übermäßige Konsum englischer Romane dar. Durch die gänzliche Missinterpretation dieser Bücher gibt sich Kalikrishna im Höhepunkt der Satire schließlich vollständig der Lächerlichkeit preis.

Die sehr polemische Thematisierung des Autors der allzu offensichtlichen Schwächen der anglisierten Babus würde auch mit der von Ghosh (2004: 188) angestellten Überlegung übereinstimmen, dass Autoren der Bhadralok-Klasse sich durch solche Satiren von den Auswüchsen ihrer eigenen Gesellschaftsschicht zu distanzieren suchten. Um die Haltung des Autors zu einzelnen Punkten, wie beispielsweise die Wichtigkeit traditioneller Bildung, vertiefend darzustellen, wäre eine weitergreifende Analyse seiner anderen satirischen Werke sinnvoll, auch unter der Betrachtung der von ihm in seiner Zeitschrift explizit geäußerten Ansichten.

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Introduction: Negotiating Religion in South Asian-European Entanglements

Isabella Schwaderer[1]

This special issue explores religion's contribution to South Asian global histories and developments around 1900, focusing on intellectual, political, and other societal levels. Studies of exclusively Indian authors and debates appear alongside those from Europe, especially Britain and Germany, to show the breadth of debates influenced by Indian religious themes. Recent scholarly debates have highlighted the need for considerations concerning the genealogy of 'religion' and related terms. The articles therefore develop their arguments on a meta-level and challenge notions of a supra-temporal category of religion. In this process, authors from India and Germany and different disciplinary backgrounds—including Political Science, Political Theory, Indian Intellectual History, Religious Studies, and Philology—have worked together. They have chosen a range of methodological approaches to show the historical growth and contingency of understandings of religion as interwoven with ideological backgrounds and other layers of power. The 'religious' is not to be considered as a sui generis category but embedded in the dynamics that have shaped this concept in the examined period between the 1880s and the beginning of World War I (cf. Bergunder 2014; idem 2020). The concept of 'Indian religion'

is not limited to the regions of the subcontinent but has a history in European contexts, which are integrated into this perspective.

One of the most contested ideas of the early 20th century was undoubtedly the 'secular' as opposed to the 'religious' as a construct to establish a social order based on non-religious principles. Sebastian Conrad (2018) repeatedly emphasises from a global historical perspective that the 'secular' and the 'religious' are mutually dependent concepts. Concerning the situation in Britain, these complex developments resulted 'in a shift of political loyalty from religious identity to national identity' (van der Veer 2001: 22).

Similarly, historiography in Germany understood interactions of the nation-state and the religious communities according to the Westphalian model, which posited a direct connection between secularisation and modernisation as an irreversible process, otherwise known as the 'secularisation thesis'. The idea of a declining importance of the 'religious' in modern history dominated sociohistorical research in German academia, resulting in a 'religious amnesia' of historians (Habermas 2019: 5). Recently, the 'secularisation thesis' in its Weberian articulation has been subject to considerable criticism in the field of sociology of religion. For example, Hans Joas (2017) challenges the historical image of the irreversible progress of disenchantment, adding to this the tension between re-sacralisation and its involvement in power-building structures (for further discussion, cf. Yelle & Trein 2020). New approaches have been exploring the 'endeavour to historicise the secular-religious binary beyond its linguistic representation in modern contexts' (Wohlrab-Sahr & Kleine 2021: 288). Shifting focus to the agency of subjects in processes of religio-secularisation and the specific places where the religious and the secular are produced, demarcated, and distinguished (cf. Dreßler & Mandair 2011) prevents essentialising conclusions. Recently, a related approach has been applied to 'global religious history' (Maltese & Strube 2021: 232) and 'how exactly religion was negotiated by historical actors within globally entangled contexts' (ibid.). The contributions of this collection make similar studies of Indian, German, and British material at the micro and meso levels in order to facilitate comparative and inclusive approaches.

Vanya Vaidehi Bhargav's article 'From Theology to Culture: Secularisation in Lajpat Rai's "Hindu Nationalism", the 1880s–1915' focuses on the nationalist thought of Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928), a prominent actor-thinker often

considered an ideological ancestor of Savarkarite Hindutva. Bhargav draws on Sudipta Kaviraj's distinction between thick and thin religion (Kaviraj 2010) and takes one sense of secularisation to consist of a decline in religious beliefs (Casanova 2006). With this theoretical framework, she argues that the 'thinning' of religion was not just part of 'religionisation' but also 'secularisation'. Illuminating a progressive decline in emphasis on detailed and complex theology in Rai's thought, Bhargav highlights the intellectual process of 'secularisation as thinning' in one strand of Hindu thinking during the early twentieth century. Through further analysis of Rai's thought, she also develops the concept of 'secularisation through culturalisation'. The culturalisation of Hindu religion and its re-fashioning as 'Hindu culture' eventually formed the basis of Lajpat Rai's imagined 'Hindu nation'. This culturalisation and secularisation served to include various religious groups within the 'Hindu nation' but simultaneously excluded India's Muslims and Christians. Yet, Bhargav argues that while Rai's 'Hindu nationalism' and Savarkarite Hindutva are products of these same processes, they remain significantly distinct.

From this perspective, speaking about religion is not an act whose purpose is self-evident. In thinking and writing about religion, historical figures reflect purposes approximate to their contexts, which, in turn, may be characterised by global, imperial, and colonial entanglements. But the reflections of such figures may also be analysed for their contributions to the constitution of social imaginaries.

Rinku Lamba, in her article 'Engaging Bhakti as/in Translation', highlights the different layers of meaning that can be gleaned from an essay titled 'The Saints and Prophets of Maharashtra', first published in 1895 by the Indian thinker Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842–1901). In her analysis, Ranade's reflections about bhakti, and a comparison of it with the Protestant Reformation in Europe, are sites not only for comprehending Indian nationalist imaginations but also for discerning translations and shifts from premodern to modern conceptions of moral order on the subcontinent. Translation is no doubt an important methodological device for observing how Ranade, through a comparison of the phenomenon of bhakti and the Protestant Reformation, can advance 'the notion of civil liberty as accessible, and even intimate, to lifeworlds resonant with bhakti'. More specifically, however, it permits recording of points of interruption in an otherwise seamlessly

convergent (translatable) comparison of distinct historical phenomena. Lamba draws attention to one such point of interruption in the translations, which is present in Ranade's engagements with bhakti and the Protestant Reformation, whereby Ranade highlights an important older inclusive approach to religious diversity in the subcontinent. Lamba argues that attention to such interruptions in processes of translation draws attention to the way older understandings of diversity mutate into the social imaginaries that constitute Indian modernity.

Meanwhile, in the German Empire, support for modern and secular aspirations was not to be understood as increasing disenchantment and the decline of a religious worldview but as an integral part of, and only within, the confessional debates, and therefore more as narratives than as timeless theory (Habermas 2019: 4). In her contribution 'Enlightened Religion? On Buddhism in Karl Gjellerup's novel *Die Weltwanderer* (The Wanderers of the World, 1910)', **Isabella Schwaderer** explores to what extent secularisation was negotiated in Imperial Germany. Starting from a novel and other writings by the German Dane writer Karl Gjellerup, she deals with the literary popularisation of Indological research in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. Here she elaborates on contemporary strands of the debate concerning secularity and religion that were influenced by Schopenhauer's understanding of India and the 'modernisation' of Christianity.

In Schwaderer's article, the actors in Germany were primarily concerned with a reorientation of 'religion' as a reunion of religion and (idealistic) philosophy under national auspices. **Ulrich Harlass**, on the other hand, in his article 'The Theosophical Reception of Buddhism', examines the encounter of Buddhist traditions and Theosophical teachings through analysing how the 'meaning of Buddhism—and this holds true for Theosophy as well—was constantly negotiated before the backdrop of the global context'. He traces the intricate development towards what was later understood as esotericism/theosophy, which proceeded through the confrontation with and in opposition to competing strands of discourse concerning Buddhism. Thus, he abandons both the concept of Western vs Eastern esotericism, which has been common in previous research, and at the same time the central position of Helena Blavatsky as the driving force and prominent shaper of an 'oriental shift' in the history of the Theosophical Society. From the 1800s to the

beginning of the First World War, in the German as well as the British con-
texts, various debates demarcated concepts such as Buddhism, Theosophy
and Christianity them with new meanings. Interestingly, those disputes
emerged precisely in semi-academic and non-academic publications. Har-
lass's text develops a particular aspect of the history of religious entangle-
ment between Europe and the subcontinent, examining what was deemed
Buddhism in Europe. He thus amplifies Sebastian Conrad's consideration of
Theosophy and Buddhism as 'prime examples of the global entanglement of
religion, where global and local developments are mutually imbricated' (Con-
rad 2018: 582–660). From the diverse source texts from different parts of
Asia, which gradually became known and eagerly translated in Europe in a
textual 'nostalgia for origins' (King 1999: 118, see also: 62–72; cf. Masuzawa
2005: 121–145), Buddhism was soon constructed in Europe as a religion that
was even named after its alleged founding figure, which followed the Chris-
tian model. Accordingly, Thurner argues, 'the establishment of the categories
"Hinduism", "Buddhism" and "Islam" must be understood as the result of
global discourses on religion, which, although marked by asymmetrical
power relations, nevertheless occurred constitutively in a reciprocal relation-
ship between "Western" and "colonial" expressions' (2021: 2).

Individual actors or debates and more complex entities such as public
space are integrative components of a transnational approach to the con-
struction of the religious. In his study of public space and religious controver-
sies, **Mohinder Singh** explores the interplay between reason and affect in his
article 'Religious Criticism, Public Reason and Affect in the Reformist Age.
Early Arya Samaj and the Religious Controversies'. Singh opens the panorama
by examining the global interactions and entanglements of ideas in the his-
tory of reason, science, religion, forms of civilisation, and the public spheres.
Drawing on approaches by Pernau (Pernau et al. 2015; Pernau 2019), the au-
thor integrates the essential aspects of the study of emotions and what role
they played during religious and social reforms and in religious controversies,
communal conflicts and the anti-colonial movement. Equally important are
questions about continuities and ruptures with the pre-colonial past regard-
ing the emotional management of the private and public self. In two signifi-
cant ways, Singh distinguishes the 'public sphere of religious controversies'
from the 'modern public sphere' in Habermas' sense (1990). Firstly—and this

connects to the common thread of global interactions—the article shows that the dominant conception of reason articulated in these debates is neither transcendental nor secular in a Kantian or Habermasian sense. Rather, what emerges is a concept of reason grounded in the actors' respective religious traditions yet reworked in the modern global context of religious controversies. Secondly, following Judith Butler, Singh emphasises the constitutive role of affective elements in the formation of this public sphere without discounting the role of reason in it. Altogether, one objective is to offer a corrective to the hyper-rational image of the classic conceptualization of the public sphere in Habermas.

In a joint effort to highlight various facets of Indian and European debates about religion on the threshold of modern, secular societies, the contributions to this volume reveal complex phenomena that, despite geographical and even ideological distance, prove to have a common ground of mutual inspiration in the assimilation of ideas and social projects. Thus, they succeed in showing the interaction in this epoch as a tense coexistence and interdependence of actors who meet in the question of the relationship of religious-theological in contrast to secular world models ordered according to scientific points of view. Thus, one can state (mutatis mutandis) with Kondylis that in the 'logical character of the [...] posed questions [it] is appropriate to assess the unity of the thinking effort of that time in the diversity of ways of thinking. Indeed, the unity is not based on the answers but on the question' (Kondylis 1986: 20)—which allows for a more differentiated view of the debates about religion at that time.

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From Theology to Culture:
Secularisation in Lajpat Rai's 'Hindu Nationalism', 1880s–1915

Vanya Vaidehi Bhargav[1]

Abstract: This article explores the Hindu thought of Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928), a prominent actor-thinker in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and often considered an ideological ancestor of Savarkarite Hindutva. Focussing on Rai's thought between the 1880s and 1915, it argues that at the same time that Hindu beliefs and practices were undergoing a process of 'religionisation' in the late nineteenth century, in a prominent strand of thinking about Hindu identity, represented by Rai, Hindu religion was being 'thinned down'. It was being defined less by reference to theological detail and complexity and more in broad and simple terms. Second, Hinduism also underwent a process of 'culturalisation'. It was decoupled from faith and practice and re-formulated as secular 'culture'. In Rai's definition of Hindu identity, Hinduism progressively lost ground to 'Hindu culture', which by 1909 formed the centrepiece of his imagined 'Hindu nation'. 'Hindu culture' served to include within Rai's 'Hindu nation' various groups of Indians who were not followers of Hinduism, and simultaneously excluded India's Muslims and Christians. Yet, I argue that this Hindu nationalism remained different from Savarkarite Hindutva. Through its examination of Rai's thought, the article makes broader analytical points. One, that Hindu identity can be defined in various senses—thickly religious, thinly religious, broadly non-religious and 'cultural', apolitical, openly political, or implicitly political. Second, the thinning of religion can be viewed as a form of both religionisation and secularisation, and the secularisation of Hinduism via its culturalisation was co-eval with the larger process of religionisation. Third, it challenges the

dichotomy drawn by Hindu nationalists and secularists alike between the process of secularisation and articulations of Hindu nationalist identity. Finally, Rai's thought reveals that the secularisation and culturalisation of Hindu identity can culminate in a conception of 'Hindu nationalism' distinct from Hindutva.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the Hindu thought of Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928) between the 1880s and 1915. Lajpat Rai is seen as articulating in these years a Hindu nationalism, viewed either as an ideological precursor to or virtual equivalent of V. D. Savarkar's Hindutva (Jaffrelot 1999: 18 & 2011: 79, 113; Bhatt 2001: 2–4, 42–44, 48–55), an ideology elaborated in 1923 and a major intellectual influence on the contemporary Hindu right. As a prominent politician-thinker, Lajpat Rai's ideas about Hindu identity both reflected and shaped broader intellectual phenomenon, representing certainly not all of but still a significant strand of upper-caste, middle class Hindu thinking on Hindu identity. At the very historical juncture when Hindu beliefs and practices were still undergoing a process of religionisation, in the strand of thinking about Hindu identity represented by Lajpat Rai, Hindu religion was thinned down (a concept I explain below). This thinning can be viewed as part of religionisation but also as secularisation. Quite distinct from thinning, Hinduism was also decoupled from religious belief and practice, and reformulated as secular culture (Astor & Mayrl 2020: 3, 7–10). In short, in being culturalised, it was also secularised. Moreover, Hindu 'religion' was losing ground to non-religious Hindu 'culture'. By 1909, 'Hindu culture' formed the centrepiece of Rai's imagined 'Hindu nation' and served to include various groups of Indians within the 'Hindu nation' while simultaneously excluding Indian Muslims and Christians. With this culturalisation (and secularisation) of Hindu identity at its core, Rai's Hindu nationalism overlapped with Savarkarite Hindutva which gained popularity in the 1920s. Yet, it remained significantly distinct, a fact obscured by teleological readings of it as Hindutva's 'antecedent'.

Intellectual history is concerned not only with tracing the intellectual trajectory of a particular individual but also uncovering distinct textures and modes of argumentation and reasoning, which have significance over and above individual lives. This article deliberately restricts itself to understanding the intellectual processes—of thinning down and culturalisation—

occurring within the 'Hindu nationalism' Lajpat Rai articulated between 1880s and 1915 (Rai's most robust articulation of Hindu nationalism in 1909, encountered at the end of this article, represented his thought till 1915). After 1915, Rai permanently ceased to view Hindus and Muslims as separate 'religious nationalities', moving firmly to view them only as members of a single 'Indian' nation (Bhargav 2022a: 3–5). This held true for his 'Indian' nationalism during his exile in America (1915–19) (idem 2018b: 100–125), the Khilafat movement (1920–23) (idem 2022a), and even during his Hindu Mahasabha years (1924–28) (idem 2022b). After 1915, he ceased to thin down and culturalise Hinduism in order to transcend religious diversity among Hindus and realise a capacious 'Hindu nation'. The article's restricted focus on Lajpat Rai's ideas between 1880 and 1915 aims to clarify the intricacies of these intellectual processes occurring within a particular strand of Hindu thought, allowing us to glean analytical insights which go beyond both Rai and the chronological time-frame of this article.

Before I begin, an elaboration of key terms is required. By 'religionisation', I mean the process by which certain assemblages of Hindu beliefs and practices were re-understood and reconstituted in terms of the modern concept of 'religion', i.e., as a comprehensive, unified homogenised and reified system (Cantwell-Smith 1978; Dressler 2019: 3–4). In referring to the 'thinning of religion', I draw on Sudipta Kaviraj's distinction between thick and thin religion. By thick religion, Kaviraj means a religion whose contents are imagined as a vast catalogue of beliefs about large and small things, all of which are seen as crucial to the practice of faith (2010: 345–346). By thin religion, he means the conceptualisation of religion according to a few, simple and broad criteria indifferent to finer details and complexity of religious belief and practice (ibid.: 348). This thinned down definition of Hindu religion, which entailed a de-emphasis on theological detail and complexity (not necessarily a disappearance of theology) can be viewed as a form of religionisation, provided religionisation is understood to assume two forms. One, the subsumption of belief and practice under one system may add to what was earlier covered by the term replaced by 'religion'. In other words, religion may now have more meat in it, be thick. Or, two, it may cover fewer phenomena than were previously covered by the term close to religion. It does this by emphasising a few, select theological criteria as defining religion, i.e., by thinning it.

This thinning may also be seen as 'secularisation'. Here, I partly draw on José Casanova (2006) who posits that one sense of secularisation consists of a decline in religious beliefs. While Casanova refers to secularisation as a sociological process, I use it here to refer to an intellectual process involving a decline in emphasis on detailed and complex theology.[2]

Since Lajpat Rai's thinning down of Hinduism entailed both the adoption of the use of 'religion' but one with a reduced emphasis of theological detail and complexity, it can be seen as both religionisation and secularisation. But Rai subsequently also culturalised Hinduism. This term too needs further clarification. The 'culturalisation' of religion signifies a process by which a belief or practice is conceived as decoupled from theology or religious meaning and explicitly recast as 'cultural'. 'Culture' encompasses a complex, wide-ranging array of capabilities, beliefs, habits, activities and products, in largely non-religious, secular terms and therefore as broadly distinct from 'religion'. Culturalisation then is the process whereby phenomena lose their religious significance, their ties to theology and religious practice, but survive and even flourish with their new, non-religious/secular 'cultural' meaning. For instance, for many individuals, the festival of Diwali or Christmas has been culturalised, celebrated without the religious meaning with which they were previously endowed. According to Casanova, a second form of secularism consists in the making of conceptual distinctions between a religious domain and a non-religious secular domain. 'Culture' is seen as falling in the secular domain.[3] By saying that Hinduism was being culturalised by Lajpat Rai, I mean that Rai was partially de-linking Hinduism from theology and practice, recasting it as non-

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[2] Theology generally refers to an explicit, argumentative discourse about the nature of God and the divine world and, more broadly, religious beliefs. Drawing on Jan Assmann, I take such systematic discourse to constitute explicit theology. This phenomenon does not exist in every religious tradition, Hinduism being one of them. However, Assmann also uses the term 'implicit theology', which he claims is a necessary prerequisite of every religion in the same way that grammar is a necessary prerequisite of every language irrespective of whether an 'explicit' grammar of that language exists (Assmann 2008: 13). If this is so, Hinduism has an implicit theology. In this article, I use the term theology largely in this second sense, to refer to a network or set of religious beliefs. An implicit theology, it might be noted, undergirds even religious practices and rituals.

[3] The emergence of the modern, nineteenth-century concept of 'culture'—signifying the totality of socially-transmitted knowledge, beliefs, behaviour patterns, institutions, arts, morals, laws, customs and all other products of human work and thought (Appiah 2018: 295; Eagleton 2000: 34)—is itself seen by some theorists as part of a wider process of secularisation (Eagleton 2000: 42).

religious/secular 'culture', and thereby distinguishing 'Hindu religion' and 'Hindu culture'. Such culturalisation of Hinduism is an aspect of its secularisation. Here, I wish to also clarify that I of course use the term 'secularisation' in a descriptive rather than normative, value-laden sense, and keeping in mind its distinction from 'secularism', which connotes an ideology seeking the separation of religion and politics for particular normative purposes like individual freedom, non-domination, equal citizenship, or peace. Similarly, throughout the article, I use the term 'secular' in a descriptive sense simply to mean non-religious and not as a derivative of 'secularism'.

Context: Religionisation of and contestation within Hinduism

Several scholars have illustrated how Hindu beliefs and practices underwent radical transformation through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in response to their encounter with British colonialism. The British colonial lens saw religion as the primary unit of Indian society. The colonial state practice of bifurcating Indian family law into new scripture-based 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' law spurred homogenising tendencies within them, and a sharper demarcation between Hindu and Muslim identities, even generating 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' public spheres. This accentuated the cohesiveness of modern Hinduism, and its sense of separation from other faiths. This process was accelerated by the colonial practice of the decennial census, which also took religion as the primary classificatory category for Indian society. To count Hindus and Muslims, census officials defined Hinduism and Islam in a standardised, homogenised manner, which also hardened their boundaries vis-à-vis each other. Believers and practitioners of the Hindu faith were marshalled into a Hindu 'community', mapped, counted and compared to other religious 'communities'. New means of communication like the railways and telegraph, and a booming print culture encouraged Hindus across India to reconceptualise Hinduism in all-India rather than local or regional terms. The increased cohesiveness of Hinduism, as a single religion for all Hindus, was increasingly imagined at a pan-India level (Vishwanathan 2003: 29; Killingley 2003: 509–511; Metcalf 1994: 137; Jones 1981: 74–84; Sarkar 2014: 27–34; Zavos 2000: 40–41; Adcock 2013: 26; Appadurai 1993: 332). Thus, Hinduism was being religionised in the sense of being homogenised and reified.

But Hinduism was also being religionised in another sense. This happened as British scholar-officials and Christian missionaries attempted to understand Hinduism through the new modern concept of 'religion', which itself often remained tied to its western, Christian moorings (Josephson 2012: 76–77). Having never encountered a phenomenon like Hinduism before, the British sought out comparable features with Christianity or other Abrahamic faiths, re-defining and representing Hinduism in their light. Ignoring the plethora of oral, local and vernacular Hindu beliefs and practices, they saw true Hinduism was located in one or more of its ancient, classical scriptures/texts. Often, Hinduism's lack of conformity to Abrahamic faiths provoked vituperative criticisms. Contemporary Hinduism was portrayed as degenerate, disorganised and inferior, with polytheism, idol-worship and caste receiving special censure. The minority of middle-class Hindu subjects with access to the colonial system of education were exposed to such reformulations—and/or scathing evaluations—of Hinduism vis-à-vis Christian-inflected concept of 'religion'. As they defended Hinduism, a significant section of this Hindu intelligentsia responded by reconfiguring aspects of it in light of western, Abrahamic conceptions of 'religion'—often by partially emulating features such as an emphasis on exclusive monotheism and a single, infallible divinely-revealed scripture. The colonial encounter therefore sparked efforts to creatively re-define and reform Hinduism, sometimes to make it correspond more closely to Christianity or Abrahamic faiths more generally (Vishwanathan 2003: 25–28; Zavos 2000: 32, 43; Pennington 2005: 19, 65–69; Scott 2016: 17, 36–38; Sen 2003: 3, 47–48; Thapar 1989: 218 & 1997: 65–66; Frykenberg 1989). In many cases, of course, Hinduism's transformations, even when resulting from a borrowing of external features, represented creative reformulations which were still genuinely Hindu rather than wholesale derivations (Pennington 2005: 11, 16–17), an unsurprising fact given that Hinduism, much like other religions, never constituted a self-contained, unalloyed and unchanging entity.

This religionisation of Hindu beliefs and practices was accompanied by vigorous internal contestation. In re-defining Hinduism in engagement with the modern, western concept of 'religion', Hindus disagreed over what constituted its core features—which text was central to Hinduism or whether texts were important at all; which God was central or whether polytheism was permitted; whether temple-going and idol-worship were integral modes

of worship or a corruption of true Hinduism. Nineteenth century India witnessed a vibrant culture of public debate among Hindus around the nature of Hinduism, manifest most starkly in the proliferation of Hindu socio-religious reform organisations like the Brahmo Samaj, Dharma Sabha, Tadiya Samaj, Arya Samaj, the Sanatan Dharm Sabhas, the Dev Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission founded by Swami Vivekananda (cf. Jones 1989).

It was the Arya Samaj (Society of Aryans/Nobles), founded by Dayanand Saraswati in 1875, that the young Lajpat Rai joined in 1882. As shown in the following section, the Arya Samaj articulated a distinctive conception of Hinduism as it was being religionised and internally contested. The Samaj's religious outlook, in different ways, would continue to shape Rai's conceptualisation of Hindu religion and Hindu identity. But, as we shall see, even in the early 1890s, imperatives of realising a robust 'Hindu nation' were prompting Rai to dilute the thicker aspects of Arya Samajist theology as he defined Hinduism. Theology was also beginning to get side-lined by secular (in the sense of not strictly related to the divine/sacred) categories like history and culture.

The Thinning of Religion and the Temptation of Culture

Lajpat Rai's conception of religion was shaped by the basic framework of Arya Samajist theology. Following the Samaj, he insisted that the ancient Vedas alone contained the word of God and all divine knowledge. Other historically more recent texts like the Puranas, Tantras and even the Upanishads—called the Vedanta or the 'end of the Vedas'—were dismissed as false creations of man and devoid of divinity (Lajpat Rai 2003l: 375, 377–378, 409 & 2003m: 221; also see Adcock 2013: 43–44). In limiting true religion to the Vedas, Rai, like other Arya Samajists, defined himself against and drew the ire of the self-proclaimed 'orthodox' Hindus, who claimed to defend Sanatan Dharma (Sanskrit: *sanātana dharma*), the eternal continuous tradition of Hinduism, and considered the medieval Puranas (the basis of Krishna, Shiva and Ganesha devotionalism) as divine alongside the Vedas. Locating divinity solely in the Vedas, Rai, again like other Arya Samajists, also differentiated himself from prominent Hindu reformers like the late Rammohan Roy (1774–1833) and Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), who based Hinduism in the philosophical Upanishads, or Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836–86), who drew inspiration from the strikingly transgressive Tantras (Adcock 2013: 10–11; Sarkar 1992).

Following the Arya Samaj, he also shunned many contemporary Hindu cere-
monies, festivals and practices for their alleged deviation from the Vedas
(Jones 1976: 95–96). But it was Hinduism's polytheism that was singled out
for special censure, with the insistence that true religion embodied in the
Vedas was monotheistic, affirming belief in one God (Lajpat Rai 2003l: 378).
Interestingly, this was despite the Vedas mentioning many Gods (Witzel
2003: 517; Killingley 2003). Lajpat Rai quoted the nineteenth century German
orientalist Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900) to argue that Vedic monothe-
ism was comparable to the monotheism found in the Koran and Bible:

> The real teaching of the Vedas is that there is only one
> God and that there is no other God. This view, according
> to Professor Max Muller, is as important as the view ex-
> pressed in the Koran or the Bible about God […] According
> to Max Muller, even the Bible does not contain such a
> clear enunciation of the concept (Lajpat Rai 2003l: 380).

While the Arya Samajist attack on popular Hindu practices (Jones 1989: 107)
and even insistence on monotheism was shared by some 'orthodox' Sana-
tanist Hindus (Dalmia 1995: 180–190), what really offended Sanatanists was
the iconoclastic attack by Arya Samajists like Lajpat Rai on idol-worship
(Hindi: *mūrti pūjā*). Arya Samajists interpreted Vedic religion as endorsing the
belief that God was formless. This prompted them to reject the notion of
incarnation (the divine assuming human forms), holy-men, and worship
through temples and idols (Lajpat Rai 2003l: 378–379, 407, 412–415). Reject-
ing worship through idols, and even elaborate ritualism—which in fact per-
vades the Vedas (Witzel 2003)—as the trickery of priests[4] (Scott 2016: 155–
157), Lajpat Rai, like other Arya Samajists, enjoined worship through simpli-
fied rituals, including a simple fire ceremony and reading some portion of the
Vedas once a day (Lajpat Rai 2003m: 227). Defining true religion as Vedic
monotheism—grounded in simple, abstract worship to a single formless God,
Rai and his fellow Arya Samajists challenged 'orthodox' Sanatanist Hindus
who, claiming to represent ancient, unbroken Hindu tradition, justified much
of existing Brahmin-led ritual practice, and frequently affirmed a personal

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[4] For Lajpat Rai's views on Brahmins and caste as they evolved through his political-intellectual
life, see (Bhargav 2018a).

God (or gods) to be worshipped through *bhakti* (Hindi/Sanskrit: *bhakti*, '[personal] devotion/love/worship') to his idols and images (Dalmia 1995).

The re-definition of religion—found in the Vedas by Arya Samajists like Rai—as idol-free, abstract monotheism, was substantially a response to persistent British colonial and missionary criticism of contemporary Hinduism for its idolatry and polytheistic excess. Appropriating the supposedly superior abstract monotheism of Protestant Christianity and locating it in the Vedas was partly a way of asserting the standing of ancient Vedic religion vis-à-vis Christianity, portrayed by the British as superior in the colonial context (Jaffrelot 2011: 76; Mitter 1987: 195). Of course, while Arya Samaj's conception of religion was neither purely Hindu nor wholly derivative. It drew on and re-interpreted pre-colonial Hindu traditions in light of Protestant Christianity (cf. Scott 2016: 155–157).

Re-defining Vedic religion in view of British criticism, Rai, like other Arya Samajists, censured several aspects of contemporary Hinduism. Yet, he refused to eschew the category of 'Hinduism' in favour of a separate 'Vedic religion', differing from Arya Samajists willing to do so, as became clear in the split in the Arya Samaj in 1893. As C.S. Adcock has shown, one faction of the Samaj, the 'Gurukul Faction', insisted that all fifty-one doctrines outlined by Dayanand Saraswati, including adherence to vegetarianism, were essential for membership to the Samaj (2013: 97–99). Lajpat Rai joined the opposing 'College Faction', which held that Dayanand, though a great man, was not infallible; some doctrines espoused by him, like vegetarianism, were not key, binding tenets of Vedic religion. Instead, this faction wished to place the Samaj on a 'broad and catholic' basis, requiring members to only express belief in one God and the Vedas (ibid.: 97). As Rai would reminisce in his 1914 book on the Samaj, the only doctrinal requirements were: belief that God was the source of all true knowledge, worship of this single omniscient, formless God alone, and belief that the Vedas were the sole source of His divine wisdom. He wrote:

> This, surely was the simplest of creeds, to which no Hindu, at any rate, should have any difficulty in subscribing […]. [It was] intended to keep all dogma in the background and to free the Principles from any controversial matter. It is said, in fact, that the object was to make the Arya Samaj as Catholic as it possible could be without sacrificing its Hindu character (Lajpat Rai 2003m: 221).

Although vegetarian himself, Lajpat Rai did not insist on the particularities of Arya doctrine and practice (Jones 1976: 171; Lajpat Rai 2003m: 224). Unlike the Gurukul Faction which prioritised elaborate theological requirements, Rai did not insist on these at the cost of the separation of the Arya Samaj—as the embodiment of true 'Vedic religion'—from the larger entity known as 'Hinduism'.

Lajpat Rai de-emphasised Arya Samajist theology to lay claim to the broader category of Hinduism. Quoting Dayanand as stating that 'I do not entertain the least [*sic*] the idea of founding a new religion or sect' (Lajpat Rai 2003m: 217 & 2003l: 412–413), Rai insisted that Dayanand had merely wished to 'purge Hinduism of all the evils that had found admittance into it' (2003m: 201). This 'reform of Hinduism' would be achieved through a 're-turn' to the ancient, monotheistic Vedic religion conceived as nothing but the uncorrupted, original and true form of Hinduism (idem 2003l: 412–413 & 2003m: 266). An Arya Samaji wishing to hold on to Hindu identity, Rai's definition of Hinduism was influenced by the Arya Samajist religious outlook. But he concluded that the only way to successfully balance both identities, without sacrificing one for the other, was to substantially dilute much of the prickly, intricate Arya Samajist theology, and define Hinduism in terms of the Samaj's broadest, most basic tenet: abstract Vedic monotheism.

Minimising Arya Samajist theology was essential to make room for the largest number of Hindus to identify—despite the stunning diversity in their beliefs and practices—with his Arya Samaj-inflected definition of Hinduism. In fact, imbibing colonial-official and missionary criticism, Lajpat Rai saw contemporary Hinduism's idolatrous polytheism as a source of disarray, and abstract monotheism as a source of unity and strength (idem 2003l: 394–395). For him, 'returning' to abstract Vedic monotheism, to Hinduism's original form, was the best means to transcend Hinduism's complicated religio-theological diversity and achieve Hindu unity. Therefore, while some elementary theology was evident in Lajpat Rai's imagination of Hinduism in the nineteenth century, the imperative of engineering a Hindu unity fuelled its dilution and attenuation. Theology, in the form of belief in one God and the Vedas as the sole source of His wisdom, became a means to assert Hinduism's worth vis-à-vis Christianity (and Islam), and strengthen its integrity and unity. Beyond emphasising Vedic

monotheism towards this purpose, Rai remained largely uninterested in the intricacies of Arya Samajist articulations of Vedic theology.

Imperatives of building the Hindu 'community' or 'nation' (Rai used both terms in the 1890s) led Lajpat Rai to sacrifice theological detail and move towards a thin (as opposed to thick) conception of religion. These same compulsions ensured that while envisioning the educational curriculum for the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) College, founded in 1888 to honour the Samaj's founder, Rai advocated a 'Vedic' education less geared towards theology than secular instruction in the language, history and culture of Hindus. The DAV College was conceived as a response to what Rai (and other Arya Samajists) considered a 'defective', 'highly lopsided' colonial education, which neglected indigenous learning (Lajpat Rai, 2003a: 104; for more on colonial education, cf. Seth 2008: Chapter 1; Sarkar 2014: 39–41). But unlike the Gurukul Faction, named after the Gurukul it founded in Kangri, U.P., in 1902, Lajpat Rai and his College Faction (named for its association with the DAV College) did not emphasise a rigorous religious education for Hindus (Jones 1976: 85–86; Fischer-Tiné 2001: 283). As evident in his 1893 tract *A Historical Glance at Sanskrit Education in the DAV College*, the young Lajpat Rai wished to 'avoid' the systematic teaching of what he called 'Vedic theology' as a separate subject at the College (Lajpat Rai 2003a: 102–104).[5] The same relative indifference towards theology is evident in his wish that Sandhya (Sanskrit: *saṃdhyā*, prayers involving the recitation of Vedic *mantras* at particular junctures of the day), not be performed during College hours as this forced students averse to prayers to pretend to pray only to retain their place in the college (ibid.: 103–104).

If not 'Vedic theology', what then was the 'Vedic' education Lajpat Rai wished to impart? For him, this entailed 'the promotion of our own language and culture on a national scale' (ibid.: 98). This meant teaching the Vedas, something ignored in government-run education, a greater emphasis on Sanskrit than in government universities, and the 'propagation of our national language' through 'the study of Hindi literature and the [*sic*] allied culture' (ibid.: 98, 100–101). Rai's views on language resulted from the broader, older

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[5] Here, Rai used the term 'Vedic theology' to refer to an explicit theology developed by Arya Samajists which systematically reflected on the nature of God and religion as they believed was expounded by the Vedas.

and still-ongoing process whereby the Hindustani language was cleaved into modern (more Sanskritised) Hindi and (more Persianised) Urdu, conceived as the national languages of Hindus and Muslims, respectively (Dalmia 2001: 146–152, 219–220). He unquestioningly saw Hindi in the Devanagari script as the language of Hindus, despite his own ignorance of it (Lajpat Rai 1965: 79; Chand 1978: 22–25). The 'Vedic education' Rai envisioned for Hindus entailed the teaching of Sanskrit and Hindi language and literature, which he in turn equated with Hindu 'culture'.

However, opposing the Gurukul Faction which strongly prioritised an elaborate scheme of Vedic and Sanskrit studies (Fischer-Tiné 2001: 391 & 2013: 283)[6], Lajpat Rai insisted on the indispensable importance of English education alongside Vedic education. Like Congress 'moderates', Rai considered English liberal education as the greatest blessing of British rule (Lajpat Rai 2003h: 86). He emphasised that even Swami Dayanand was 'not quite happy with institutions […] which taught only Sanskrit', believed that 'the recent enlightenment and so-called renaissance had come from the West mainly through the English language', and appreciated the importance of English education for the 'rejuvenation of the nation' (idem: 2003a: 97). Rai's appreciation of 'liberal education' suggests that he attributed collective rejuvenation to exposure to Western liberal values entailed in English education. For Rai, then, English liberal education was crucial for fostering collective reawakening among Hindus.

For Lajpat Rai, it was English education which had enabled Hindus to 'realise our position', and 'the fact that unless we progress with the times, we will be left behind in the march of nations. It is English education again, which has, strange to say, made us admire our past history' (2003h: 86). Having read numerous histories of India through European writers (idem 2003i: 117–118), Rai saw English education as vital for imparting a historical consciousness, necessary to spur Hindus into collectively regeneration in the present. History as a subject conceived in European terms and deploying European methods—articulating a linear, factual account rather than a cyclical one expressing general historical memory—had indeed been central to the new system of colonial education (Diamond 2014: 81). Despite their intent to justify colonial rule, colonial education conveyed a consciousness of

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[6] English was taught at the Gurukul but accorded lesser priority (Fischer-Tiné 2001: 283).

historical depths and trajectories, and its tripartite periodisation of Indian history into Hindu, Muslim and British periods accentuated 'community consciousness' (Dirks 1990: 25; Chatterjee 1995; Diamond 2014: 93). Rai clearly associated English education with historical consciousness, and the latter with collective consciousness. And so, along with Vedic education in their language and culture, Hindus needed English liberal education which, through its teaching of 'history', would revitalise Hindus.

In fact, as he made clear in the preface to his 1898 book *A History of India*, Lajpat Rai believed that imparting historical knowledge, particularly of one's religion, community and country, should be the main purpose of education (Lajpat Rai 2003i: 115). For Rai, an education in this particular 'history' promoted an understanding of the distinctiveness of Hindu identity, attachment and pride in Hindu religion and community, and finally, knowledge of 'the path laid down by their ancestors' which must be emulated to overcome present Hindu decline (ibid.: 115–116). Such 'history' showed a path towards the regeneration of Hindus as a community/nation. Therefore, apart from instruction in their language, an education for Hindus had to include a knowledge of their 'history', a crucial vehicle to endow them with a collective identity of which they could be proud.

Clearly, the education Rai envisioned for Hindus was geared less towards theology than profane or secular instruction in the language and history of Hindus, both considered central aspects of the unspecified Hindu 'culture' he sought to promote through DAV education. Already by the 1890s, the imperatives of building a regenerated Hindu community/nation were causing theology to lose out to secular categories (in the sense of not strictly related to the divine/sacred) like history and culture in Lajpat Rai's Hindu thought.[7] Of course, religion played some role in the Hindu history Rai wanted Hindus to learn.

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[7] I should briefly pause to clarify that I do not wish to overstate the differences between Lajpat Rai and his College Faction, on one hand, and the Gurukul Faction, on the other. Like Rai and his faction, the Gurukul Faction would attempt to transcend internal diversity among Hindus and forge a Hindu nation by emphasising their common Hindi language, Hindu history, and Aryan Hindu culture (Fischer-Tiné 2001: 284–292). It too evidently engaged in the culturalisation of Hinduism for nation-building purposes. But Lajpat Rai and his faction diverged from the Gurukul Faction in that to build a Hindu nation he defined Hinduism in terms of minimalist theology and de-emphasised theology in favour of non-religious instruction in Hindu language, history and culture. On the other hand, the Gurukul's emphasis on thick religion (Adcock 2013: 97–99; Fischer-Tiné 2013: 391) simultaneously ran counter to its projects of Hindu nation-building.

Countering those British imperial discourses—best exemplified by James Mill—which denigrated Hinduism and Hindus as degenerate and hopeless in their capacity for unity and national self-rule (Zavos 2000: 32–33; Scott 2016: 32; Trautmann 2006: 129; Adcock: 2013: 94–95; Inden 1986: 25–28), Rai, drawing on European Orientalist narratives, contrasted a glorious ancient Vedic past against the picture of contemporary Hindu degeneracy whose reality he uncritically accepted. This ancient Vedic past was an age when Indian society and polity was infused with 'Vedic religion' (Lajpat Rai 2003l: 382). The ancient ancestors of Hindus, the 'Aryans', were united in following Vedic monotheism. Reflecting the influence on Rai of another crucial element of Arya Samajist religious outlook i.e., anti-clericalism—and contrary to the vital role actually accorded to priests in Vedic rituals (Witzel 2003: 75, 79–80), Rai saw Aryans as rejecting Brahmin mediators between themselves and God. This apparently made them intolerant of domination and fiercely politically independent (Lajpat Rai 2003l: 382). Interestingly, here Rai neatly exemplifies J. Barton Scott's argument about Hindu reformist attacks on priesthood, and their concomitant assertion of a spiritually self-ruling subject, laying ground for the notion of a politically self-ruling subject at the heart of nationalist thought (2016). In Rai's eyes, in the Vedic age, ancient Hindu Aryans, strictly adhering to the Vedic religion, were united because of monotheism, and ferociously politically independent and self-ruling because of their insistence on direct worship to God. Religion appeared in this Hindu 'history', but had less to do with theology or practice, and more with asserting Hindu capacity for unity and self-rule.

Hinduism, Social Darwinism, National Spirit: Further Secularisation

The first few years of the twentieth century saw Lajpat Rai de-emphasise theological content even more strongly as he defined Hinduism. Rai now defined true ancient Hinduism as a 'social faith' with the potential to 'arouse the multitudes', containing 'the idea of social unity' and 'social responsibilities and obligations', in turn implicitly seen as evidence that Hinduism possessed 'the notion of national responsibilities' (Lajpat Rai 2003d: 298 & 2003o: 302, 307). Reflecting his engagement with Social Darwinist thought discredited today but ascendent globally at this time (Goldman 2011; Pick 2011; Bayly 2011), Lajpat Rai argued that Hinduism contained the 'social ideals' advanced by Herbert Spencer and Benjamin Kidd. While unlike radical revolutionaries Rai

would never completely abandon faith in effecting change through constitutionalism, he perhaps converged with them to the extent that his belief in the limited Indian capacity to effect change through the colonial state attracted him to the Social Darwinist notion of society-driven change (Kapila 2007: 114–116). In his 1904 article "The Social Genius of Hinduism", he set out to prove that Hinduism was the social force which could drive change, possessing evolutionary social ideals advanced by esteemed Social Darwinists, and resources for social and national regeneration. He read Spencer's social ideal as one in which 'the interests of each citizen and the interests of citizens at large' become 'merged', making the social organism 'socially efficient'. Over time, the individual would develop an 'altruistic instinct' whereby he attained 'the highest of all satisfactions in voluntarily sacrificing himself in the interests of the social organism' (Lajpat Rai 2003o: 303). Spencer, a populariser of the new concept of 'altruism' as much as of Darwinism, was in fact not an enthusiast of extreme altruism (Dixon 2008: 8, 198–199). His *Data of Ethics* (1879), which Rai quoted, rejected both extreme egotism and extreme altruism, arguing for a compromise between them. Still, Rai read Spencer as advocating the social ideal of altruism whereby the individual would happily sacrifice his interests and even himself for the sake of the social organism.

Lajpat Rai also quoted Benjamin Kidd's bestselling *Social Evolution* (1894) to argue that Kidd's social ideal required members of the social organism to sacrifice their individual good not just for the good of the whole but also in 'the interests of the generations yet unborn' (Lajpat Rai 2003o: 304). Spencer believed that as human society naturally evolved from predatory to industrial, civilised forms of social life, it would naturally progress towards higher levels of altruism (Dixon 2008:195–196, 204). He criticised Christianity for promoting a forced and extreme altruism as an ethical ideal in the present, which he believed would promote inferior, degenerate classes. Contesting Spencer, Kidd argued that altruism could only be fostered by religion, and more specifically Protestant Christianity (ibid.: 303–306). Religion was required to persuade individuals to act irrationally and sacrifice their interests for the sake of human progress and even unborn generations, an idea upon which Rai drew in 1904.

To show that Hinduism met the social ideals advanced by Spencer and Kidd, Lajpat Rai quoted selected translations from numerous Hindu texts—not just Vedic texts like the *Rigveda* (Ṛg Veda) and *Atharvaveda* (Arthavaveda), but also later, non-Vedic texts like the *Manusmriti* (Manusmṛti), *Ramayana* (Rāmāyaṇa) and *Mahabharata* (Mahābhārata). Overlooking its theme of war among ancient Aryas (Sanskrit: *ārya*; 'noble'; also appellation for speakers of Indo-European languages) (Singh 2008: 815–816), Rai argued that the *Rigveda's* division of society into four castes reflected the 'unity of the social organism'. The four castes, 'as individual units of one organism', performed 'their own separate functions', and expressed the 'mutual interdependence of all parts of society', a 'complete system of social duties', and the 'essential oneness of the whole' (Lajpat Rai 2003o: 307–308). For him, the *Manusmriti*, the Brahminical legal code which Rai associated with 'orthodox Hindus', also substantiated this reading of the caste system, reflecting Hinduism's 'original social conception' that emphasised 'service of others' and 'the social good of the whole community' (idem: 308–309). It enjoined members of each caste to perform their duty not just for themselves but for other castes: 'The Brahmin is enjoined to study not for the benefit of his soul only, but to teach others as a purely social duty. In the same way, it was the duty of Kshatriyas to protect all [...] the duty of the Vaishya was to produce and trade for all and that of the Shudra to labour for all [*sic*]' (ibid.: 309). In his "Social Genius" article, Rai fleetingly noted with alarm that the *Manusmriti* advocated 'astounding inequalities of treatment between the Brahmans and Shudras, verging in places almost on inhumanity and cruelty' (ibid.: 308). Even so, the article ultimately glossed these over to present the caste system as evidence of Hinduism's social harmony and unity. Underlining that the 'welfare of all' depended on individuals performing their social duties conscientiously, and emphasising duties of charity and hospitality, the *Manusmriti* embodied 'altruistic morality' (ibid.: 313–317). For Rai, Manu's marriage laws reflected 'an anxiety for the welfare of unborn generations' (ibid.: 319), meeting Kidd's altruistic ideal.

Lajpat Rai also cited selected hymns of the *Rigveda* and *Atharvaveda* which contained exhortations to 'assemble, speak together', have a 'common mind' and 'common purpose', to 'agree and be united', and 'love one another' (ibid.: 319–322). While these Vedic hymns either addressed Vedic

gods or promoted unanimity in the family, Rai interpreted them as aiming at 'effective social organisation' and a 'common national purpose' (ibid.: 321). Lajpat Rai held that the 'actual working' of this 'spirit of unity' was found in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* (ibid.: 322). Evidently for him, the multiple texts of Hinduism contained the 'germs and foundations' of the 'highest' Social Darwinist ideals, proving their possession of the notion of 'social or national responsibilities' and the existence of 'spirit of nationality' among ancient Hindus (ibid.: 301–302, 322). The sociality of the Hindu faith, which had once constituted Hindus into a nation, had the potential to do so again.

In stressing Hinduism's social and national spirit, Lajpat Rai saw himself as refuting those 'Hindus educated on Western lines' who, urged by 'some eminent Hindus of the western Presidency', held that the 'the genius of Hinduism is essentially individualistic and anti-social', and that Hinduism had no resources to reform the social (ibid.: 301–302, 319). This likely referred to a group of reformers led by Narayan Chandavarkar (1855–1923), who believed that the reformation of Hindu society required not a return to ancient Hindu texts but reliance on reason, and urged rationally-motivated radical breaks with Hindu traditions (Heimsath 1964: 200–204; Natarajan 1959: 86). Lajpat Rai saw himself as countering the belief allegedly held by such Hindus that sociality, absent in Hinduism, must be borrowed from the West, via the western concept of 'reason' (Lajpat Rai 2003o: 301, 306). Rejecting reason as the sole source for building or reforming the social, Rai adduced Benjamin Kidd's argument that 'uncontrolled reason' produced excessive individualism and anti-social tendencies (ibid.: 306). Indeed, Kidd had argued that human progress required societies to be persuaded to become less rational and more religious and altruistic. While Kidd's equation between irrationality, religion and altruism, on one hand, and rationality and selfish individualism, on the other, had been criticised by several commentators (Dixon 2008: 311–312), Lajpat Rai seized on Kidd to reject reason as the sole basis for rejuvenating Hindu society. Ignoring Kidd's emphasis on Christianity, Rai utilised his broader stress on religion to assert that ancient Hinduism already possessed resources to re-build a social and national oriented-ness.

Yet, for Lajpat Rai, excessive reliance on reason was problematic also because it was viewed as a western, foreign concept. In his 1904 article titled "Reform or Revival?", Rai highlighted common ground between what he

called the reformers' 'rational' approach to reform, and the revivalists' shastric, 'national' approach to it (2003k: 327). While Rai defended both approaches, he equated Hindu scriptures with the 'national' and indigenous, and reason with European foreignness, and rejected reason as an exclusive basis for social reform. In wishing that Hindus continue to rely on ancient Hindu scriptures for purposes of reform, Rai saw himself as promoting the indigenous 'national' over the Western. Of course, the equally western concept of 'altruism' was unquestioningly appropriated from British evolutionary sociology, and presented as the defining feature of ancient Hindu texts; Rai's own arguments criticising reason and pushing for a reliance on religion/Hinduism drew on Western public intellectuals like Kidd; and Rai found within ancient Hindu texts a faith corresponding with Social Darwinism and nationalism, modern ideologies originating in the West. Rai saw his references to ancient Hindu texts as an assertion of the 'national' over the western, even as he located modern western ideals within these Hindu texts. Because these ideals were imagined as integral to ancient Hinduism, desirable change towards greater social and national cohesiveness could be seen as consistent with original, true Hinduism rather than a departure from it towards the West.

What is relevant here is that in asserting autonomy from the West in the colonial context, by arguing that the social and national could be built by relying not on western reason but ancient Hindu texts, Lajpat Rai abandoned his earlier Arya Samaj-inflected definition of Hinduism as Vedic monotheism. Reflecting his acceptance of the Samaj as one of Hinduism's many sects, and his move towards a more catholic definition of Hinduism, Rai moved beyond the Vedas to embrace Hinduism's multiple, non-Vedic texts. Importantly, he also elided theology while defining Hinduism. Hinduism, as supposedly embodied in its various Vedic and non-Vedic texts, was stripped of divinity and sacredness, and further secularised as social and national spirit.

In defining Hinduism as sociality and nationalism, Lajpat Rai again sidestepped theological diversity among Hindus. But his subsequent writings reveal that internal religious diversity among Hindus remained a persistent thorn in his project of forging a Hindu nation.

In an article titled "Hinduism and Common Nationality" (1907), Rai wrote:

> It is often said that Hinduism is not the name of a particular religion, nor that of a religious nationality, and that it does not represent one set of beliefs, common to all who call themselves Hindu, and that therefore it is perfectly idle to appeal to Hindus in the name of a common nationality. It has become almost fashion to insist that the term Hinduism is too vague to be properly defined, and that there is hardly anything substantially common which binds one Hindu to another in the ties of national brotherhood. Hinduism, in short, is said to be more often a congeries of different religions and sects holding diverse and not unoften [*sic*] diametrically opposite views on matters of faith and doctrine. Hinduism is said to include and cover almost every form of religious faith known to or practiced by mankind from the purest monotheism to the lowest form of animism, polytheism, hedonism, pantheism, in fact all sorts of isms. There is a fairly large class of Hindus who suffer from want of faith in the potentialities of their religion to unite them or inspire them to the lofty ideals of a great religious platform whereupon to bring together a Hindu union (2003f: 331).

To counter this, Lajpat Rai quoted German Sanskritist Theodor Goldstücker (1821–1872) who highlighted the 'hundreds of creeds' within Christianity, 'every one of which claims to be in exclusive possession of Christianity', and whose 'difference was so essential that it was strong enough to perpetuate the most inveterate animosities and to result in wars the like of which cannot be traced in the history of any other creed' (ibid.: 333–334). Islam too contained 'as many varieties and shades of religious beliefs and doctrines [...] if not more, than Hinduism does' (ibid.: 332). Just as internal diversity and even discord did not disqualify Christianity or Islam as 'religious nationalities', so did it not nullify the existence of a Hindu nation. Rai argued that Islam and Christianity accommodated even 'scoffers, agnostics, and skeptics' who questioned the divinity of the Quran and Bible but still clung to 'the outer form of religion, the very essence of which they take pleasure in decrying' (ibid.: 332). Countless individuals who did not consider the Bible as divine revelation stayed within 'the pale of outward Christianity' and for 'religious rites and ceremonies, baptism, marriage, etc.' remained 'as much Christians as those who believe that every letter of the Bible was spoken by God Himself' (ibid.).

Lajpat Rai was suggesting that even atheists could be part of 'Hindu nationality' if they clung to Hinduism's 'outer form'. Belief, worship, ritual and practice were now de-emphasised even more strongly as Rai defined Hinduism. It was instead defined in broadly non-religious, cultural terms to facilitate 'belonging [even] without believing' (Astor & Mayrl 2020: 9). To be sure, Rai's Arya Samajist background still prompted him to invoke the Vedas as the central marker of an internally differentiated Hinduism. He insisted, quoting Goldstücker, that the great bulk of Hindus considered the Vedas 'as the pivot on which all religious questions of Hindu India rest' (2003f: 335). But no mention was made of the theological or ritual content of the Vedas, which served merely as an identity-marker around which Hindus, despite their deep diversity, could rally. Rai equated belonging to a common religion with belonging to a common nation. To transcend the internal diversity among Hindus so they could be seen as members of a common religion and nation, he strongly de-emphasised theological details even as he utilised the Vedas as a de-sacralised identity-marker to unite Hindus despite their theological diversity. Hindu identity was now even more strongly defined by Rai as having less to do with faith and observance and was conceived in non-religious/secular terms, functioning as a marker of communal and national belonging rather than an expression of religious faith.

Strong Culturalisation: Lajpat Rai's Hindu nationalism and Hindutva

Then, in 1909, in his speech to the Punjab Hindu Sabha, Lajpat Rai argued differently. In light of the separate electorates and weighted representation granted to Muslims by the British—which adversely affected the Hindu minority population in his province, Punjab—Rai now jettisoned the category of religion while defining the essence of the Hindu nation. Instead of diluting theology to arrive at a more capacious definition of Hinduism, which then formed the basis of the Hindu nation, Rai now subordinated Hinduism to the more broadly-conceived category of 'Hindu culture'.

He argued that the German word 'Nation' did not 'signify a political nation or a state' but 'connoted what is generally conveyed by the English expression "people", implying a community possessing a certain type of civilisation and culture'. According to this German sense of the term, Hindus were 'a nation in themselves because they represent a type of civilisation all their

own' (idem 2003e: 158–159). Citing Johann Kaspar Bluntschli (1808–1881), an exponent of German ethnic nationalism (Jaffrelot 1999: 32), Lajpat Rai stated that a 'people' or 'nation' was formed through a 'slow psychological process, in which a mass of men gradually develops a type of life and society which differentiates them from others'. This distinctive 'accumulated culture', passed down generationally, became 'hereditary' (2003e: 159). Crucially, Rai argued:

> There was a time when community of religion was made the ground of nationality, but […] in present times community of religion is neither necessary for the formation of a political nation or of a "People" […] However important a part there may be of religion and language in the formation of peoples and nationalities, difference of religion and language is by no means prohibitive. The essence of a people lies in its culture (ibid.: 159–160).

Thus, Hindus constituted a distinct 'nation' and people because they shared a common 'Hindu culture'. By 1909, in the wake of the British concession of separate and weighted Muslim representation, Lajpat Rai realised that basing Hindu nationhood in shared Hindu religion, itself ultimately based in the Vedas, would:

> […] necessarily exclude those who do not subscribe to the scriptural authority of the Vedas, such as our friends of the Brahmo Samaj, the Jains and some Sikhs. But so far as I understand the aim of the leaders of the present Hindu movement, such exclusion is far from their desire. I presume that they wish to include everyone who calls himself a Hindu within the folds of their movement […] (ibid.: 155–156).

It was to provide his hitherto most catholic definition of the Hindu nation that Lajpat Rai based it in 'Hindu culture':

> For the bulk of our people the problem is easily solved by their taking their stand on the Vedas and making them the rallying point of all their efforts after unity and reform. For others who cannot accept the authority of the Vedas as scriptures binding on them, it is quite sufficient if they were to studiously retain, and laboriously maintain, the distinguishing features of Hindu culture in their thought and life (ibid.: 157).

By making 'Hindu culture' its centre, Lajpat Rai now actively included religious groups like the Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists within his 'Hindu nation'. To

arrive at his most encompassing, catholic definition of Hindu nationhood to date, even that most surface-level marker of Hindu religion—the Vedas—which till now still lingered in his 'Hindu' thought—was now assertively superseded by 'Hindu culture'. To build a broad-based Hindu nation which could transcend the internal diversity of Hinduism, and even go beyond this to include other non-Muslim, non-Christian religious groups like the Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists, Hinduism was substituted by the secular notion of 'Hindu culture' as the defining essence of Hindu nationhood.

As for what precisely constituted 'Hindu culture', Lajpat Rai cursorily stated that it was 'easily distinguished from the Semitic and other non-Aryan cultures' and from European culture (ibid.: 157). Like several other north Indian, upper-caste Hindus, Rai seemed unaware that his definition may alienate south Indian and lower-caste Hindus who saw themselves as descendants of non-Aryan Dravidians. Nevertheless, he clutched onto non-European Aryanism alongside non-Semitism as he attempted to define Hindu culture. Elsewhere in his 1909 speech, Rai clarified that he did not believe in 'racial purity' or 'racial superiority' (ibid.: 160), and stressed that obsession with racial purity had led to 'aristocratic' caste exclusiveness which had promoted Hindu stagnation and weakness. Yet, he maintained, 'if identity of racial origin is a necessary condition for the community of a people, which I do not admit, then it exists to the largest possible extent amongst the Hindus' (ibid: 162). To bolster his claim about the existence of a Hindu nation, Rai marshalled the supposedly common Aryan racial origin of Hindus. Nevertheless, for him, it was 'culture' rather than racial origin that constituted a nation's essence. Racial terms—Semitic, non-Aryan—surfaced as Rai attempted to distinguish Hindu 'religion' from Hindu 'culture', and groped for something against which to define this nebulous 'Hindu culture' he sought to make the defining essence of the Hindu nation. But for Rai, ultimately, the 'spirit of Hindu culture which gives us the right to call ourselves a people' was 'reflected in our literature, especially in our epic poetry' and 'our festivals and social practices' (ibid: 163). Rather than race, a culturalised Hinduism, recast as 'Hindu culture' and stripped of its religious significance, was the core of the Hindu nation. Still, the distinction between non-Semitic, Aryan 'Hindu culture' and Semitic, non-Aryan cultures defined the 'Hindu nation' as distinct from India's Muslim and Christians. This distinction was further accentuated by the tacit assumption that these groups partook not

in culturalised Hinduism (Hindu culture) but in culturalised Islam and Christianity (Islamic and Christian cultures).

In summary, in the 1880s and 1890s, at the same time that certain assemblages of Hindu beliefs and practices were undergoing a process of religionisation (getting homogenised as well as translated and reconstituted in terms of the modern category of 'religion'), Lajpat Rai, as an Arya Samajist, was defining Hinduism in terms of a deliberately minimalised Arya Samajist theology. As an Arya Samajist who wished to continue to lay claim to the larger Hindu identity, maintain the integrity of Hinduism and strive for Hindu unity, he chose to define Hinduism in terms of Arya Samaj's most basic tenet: Vedic monotheism. In the context of colonial humiliation and domination, the felt imperative of asserting Hindu self-esteem, and building a united, robust Hindu 'community' and 'nation' transcending Hinduism's internal theological diversity, led Rai to water down Arya Samajist theology as he defined Hinduism. He simultaneously de-emphasised Vedic theology in favour of secular instruction in the language and 'history' of Hindus, both seen as crucial aspects of the Hindu 'culture' he wished to promote.

In 1904, the felt need to assert autonomy from the West led Rai to further strongly de-emphasise doctrine and belief as he defined Hinduism and instead equate it with sociality and nationalism. As evident in his article published in 1907, the imperative of forging a Hindu nation, despite astounding theological diversity among Hindus, prompted Lajpat Rai to radically de-emphasise theology and secularise his conception of Hindu religion, even as his Arya Samajist background made him anxiously retain Vedas as an external identity-marker of Hindu religious and national identity. Finally, as the need to build a robust Hindu nation was felt more urgently after the grant of separate and weighted Muslim representation in 1909, Lajpat Rai articulated his most broad-based definition of the Hindu nation yet. To include all non-Muslim, non-Christian groups within the Hindu nation, he was willing to have Hindu religion be superseded by the broader category of 'Hindu culture'. The Vedas, occasionally retained as an identity-marker to unite the diverse Hindus, were now felt to be insufficient. 'Hinduism' and the category of 'religion' was superseded by the secular notion of 'Hindu culture' which now assertively took centre-stage.

As we know, Hindu beliefs and practices were being increasingly religionised in response to modernity, colonialism, nationalism and modern, number-driven representative politics. Against the background of this broader social-political process of religionisation, we can discern certain intellectual processes evident in Lajpat Rai's thought. An influential politician-thinker who both reflected and shaped broader discourses, the trajectory of Lajpat Rai's ideas represented wider intellectual trends, reflecting a significant strand of Hindu thinking on Hinduism and Hindu identity. As an intellectual process, religionisation could simultaneously take two forms, resulting in a new comprehensive (very thick) religion consisting of a greater number of practices and beliefs or the invention of a thin Hindu religion with fewer beliefs and practices. Rai's initial deliberate reduction of theological detail and complexity and introduction of a definition of Hinduism in terms of a simple, broad criteria set by Vedic monotheism reflected an intellectual process of religionisation in its second form. Since thinning entailed a de-emphasis on theological detail and complexity (a decline in religious belief), it also represented a form of secularisation. Subsequently, against the broader sociological process of religionisation, Rai also engaged in the culturalisation of Hinduism, representing a strong degree of secularisation, both in the sense of a decline in emphasis on theology and conceptual distinction-making between 'religion' and 'culture'. The broader sociological process of the religionisation of Hindu beliefs and practices coexisted with particular intellectual trends represented by Lajpat Rai. By tracing Rai's trajectory, I do not mean to suggest that it represents a broader sociological progression within the Hindu world from religionisation to culturalisation. The trajectory of his thought reflected an emerging intellectual current, not the larger sociological process of the ongoing religionisation of Hindu beliefs and practices or of secularisation.

The thinning down, culturalisation and secularisation of Hindu identity allowed for an expansion of numbers who could belong to the 'Hindu nation'. Yet, in these years, Hindu culture was not conceived by Lajpat Rai as something in which Indian Muslims and Christians also partook. The secularisation and culturalisation of Hindu identity facilitated the inclusion of the tremendously diverse Hindus, as well as of Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists, in his definition of the 'Hindu nation', while simultaneously *excluding* Muslims and Christians. De-emphasising thick religion in favour of thin religion, and religion in favour of Hindu

culture, to transcend the internal religious diversity of Hindus, and produce a broad and catholic definition of the Hindu nation, which simultaneously excluded Muslims and Christians—these were also the hallmarks of Savarkar's Hindutva ideology, elaborated roughly fifteen years later in 1923 in a tract titled *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* Like Rai, Savarkar defined 'Hinduism' extremely capaciously. He argued that while the term was used restrictedly to refer to the majority of Hindus following Vedic dharma, its proper use would refer to all religions native to India, including Avedic (non-Vedic) dharma or religions of the 'minority' of 'heterodox' schools, including not just Arya dharma, but also Sikh, Jain and Buddhist dharma (Savarkar 1969: 104–108). Savarkar therefore de-emphasised theology, and provided a radically thinned-down definition of Hinduism to include larger numbers of people within its fold. However, Savarkar emphasised that 'Hindutva', translated as 'Hindu-ness', was 'not identical with' but broader than adherence to Hinduism, which was a 'limited, less satisfactory, and essentially sectarian term', signifying a 'spiritual or religious dogma or system' (ibid.: 4). The 'essential significance of Hindutva', he clarified, 'was not primarily—and certainly not mainly' concerned with 'any particular theocratic or religious dogma or creed (ibid). The first two essentials of Hindutva nationhood included being 'resident in' and loving India as a Fatherland (ibid.: 83, 91, 101, 115), and possessing Hindu blood (ibid.: 84–91, 101). Yet, these were not sufficient for belonging to Hindutva nationhood, and a third essential—reverence for 'Hindu culture' or Sanskriti—was key (ibid.: 92, 99–100). Thus, like Rai, rather than religious belief, a culturalised Hinduism, stripped of religious significance and recast as 'Hindu culture', was made the key essential of the Hindu nation. While the majority of Indian Muslims and Christians met the first two (geographical and racial) 'essentials' of Hindutva nationhood, they did not meet its third (cultural) essential (ibid.: 92, 99–100). Having adopted a 'new cult', most Muslims and Christians had disowned Hindu culture and therefore failed this key essential of Hindutva. As in Rai's definition of Hindu nationhood, the culturalisation and secularisation of Hinduism and Hindu identity facilitated the inclusion of a diverse range of Hindus, as well as Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists, while excluding Muslims and Christians.

To be sure, for Savarkar, what decisively excluded all Muslims and Christians from Hindutva nationhood was the important 'religious aspect' of the third 'essential' of Hindu culture (ibid.: 102). This entailed belonging to any

of the different schools of Hindu dharma (including Sikh, Buddhist and Jain dharma), which were the 'offspring of' Hindusthan and, because it was the land of their 'revelation' and where their Gurus and Godmen were born (ibid.: 110, 112), considered Hindusthan their Holyland (ibid.: 111, 113, 115). Therefore, even the minority of Muslims and Christians who proudly partook in Hindu culture were ultimately excluded because they supposedly considered not India but 'Arabia or Palestine' as their Holyland, and because their 'mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes' were not native but 'foreign' to India (ibid.: 113). Belonging to religions whose origin, myths, and seers were linked exclusively to the territory of Hindusthan was crucial for Hindu national belonging. Alongside culture, then, religion and geography played a critical role in Savarkar's imagination, helping affirm the inclusion of large numbers of people into his definition of Hindutva nationhood, while decisively excluding Muslims and Christians.

What Savarkar considered the 'religious aspect' of the third essential of Hindutva—Hindu culture—was therefore decisive for Hindu national belonging. Yet it appeared only after 'Hindu culture' had first facilitated the exclusion of the majority of Muslims and Christians. Moreover, religion surfaced not to emphasise theological details but to decisively tie Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists to the territory of India, while questioning the ties of Muslims and Christians to it, and to thus conclusively include the former and exclude the latter from Hindutva nationhood. For Savarkar, the religions of Muslims and Christians, by drawing them into non-Hindu cultures, and alienating them from Hindu culture, certainly excluded them from Hindutva nationhood. Belonging to the Hindutva nation required these groups to abandon their religions, with their links to 'foreign' holylands and cultures. Yet Savarkar required them to not convert to any schools of Hindu dharma, but to adopt and show attachment to the native 'Hindu culture' of India and, in forgoing their links to Islam and Christianity, and to their foreign holylands, exclusively treat on the territory of India as their sacred land (ibid.: 84, 115, 130). Savarkar's return to revelation, gurus, mythologies, godmen and Holyland ultimately makes religion appear as important to his definition of Hindutva nationhood. Yet, an atheist himself, Savarkar considered theological belief as unimportant for membership to it. Belonging to rather than believing in schools of Hindu dharma was important. Belief and practice remained superseded by territory and 'Hindu culture'. While rejection of Islam and Christianity was essential,

it was assimilation into Hindu *culture* rather than conversion into Hindu *religion* that was required of India's Muslims and Christians.

Both Lajpat Rai and Savarkar considered theological belief an unimportant criterion for Hindu national belonging. Both secularised and culturalised Hinduism, decoupling Hindu identity from religious meaning and refashioning it as non-religious 'Hindu culture'. Both considered 'Hindu culture' as key to their definitions of Hindu nationhood, using the concept to circumvent internal Hindu theological diversity and arrive at a capacious Hindu nation which even included Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists but simultaneously excluded Muslims and Christians. This appears to support the Jaffrelot-Bhatt interpretation of Lajpat Rai's 'Hindu nationalism' as constituting an ideological precursor to or virtual equivalence of Hindutva. Yet, this convergence elides significant distinctions.

As we have seen, the secularisation and culturalisation of Hinduism by Savarkarite Hindutva was accompanied by the demand that Muslims and Christians abandon their religions and cultures and assimilate into Hindu culture. This requirement is the key defining feature of Savarkarite Hindutva (also cf. Pandey 1991: 2999; Bhatt 2001: 98; Bakhle 2010: 178–181). By contrast, Lajpat Rai's self-proclaimed 'Hindu nationalism' did not demand that Muslims and Christians abandon their religions and cultures and assimilate into Hindu culture. Rai's Hindu nationalism imagined Muslim and Christian 'religious nationalities' as robustly existing alongside the Hindu nation (2003c: 6–10 & 2003j: 233–234 & 2003e: 165). Wishing them 'joy and prosperity', Rai believed that these nationalities were 'perfectly justified' in looking to advance their interests, and wished to grant them a 'free hand to strengthen themselves' (2003e: 166, 168). Lajpat Rai accepted the right of Muslim and Christians to proselytise (2003b: 315), and the existence of separate, religion-based personal laws (2003g: 195). Rather than demanding religious abandonment and cultural assimilation, Rai's Hindu nationalism accepted India's religio-cultural diversity. Rai also did not portray Hinduism and Hindu culture as native to India, and Islam/Muslim culture and Christianity/Christian culture as foreign to it. Unlike Savarkar, he did not attempt to establish the supreme claim of Hindus, and their religion and culture, over the land of India. This entailed an even fuller acceptance of India's religio-cultural diversity.

Like Savarkar, Rai saw Hindus, Muslims and Christians as separated by radical religious and cultural differences such that they even formed different 'nationalities'. Yet, unlike him, Rai conceived these distinct nationalities as politically sharing some 'joint aspirations' and interests (2003c: 6–10 & 2003j: 233–234 & 2003e: 165). Despite expressing discomfort and even acrimony towards Muslim politics (idem 2003e: 165–166), he remained open to working with Muslims politically (idem 2003c: 4–9; Nair 2011: 18–19). This is also why, in 1909, he stressed the compatibility of his imagined 'Hindu nation' with a broader 'Indian nation':

> By aiming at unity and solidarity amongst the Hindus, we do not contemplate a blow at Indian unity. [But] I am firmly convinced that it is impossible to build an Indian nation from above. The structure must be built from below (Lajpat Rai 2003e: 165).

Rai prioritised uniting the 'Hindu nation', but firmly declared, 'I believe that the political salvation of India must come out of the combination and union of all communities into one national whole. The goal may be a distant one, but that decidedly is the goal' (ibid.: 167). In 1909, Rai's politically-charged cultural 'Hindu nation' was conceived as existing alongside a similarly conceived Muslim 'nationality', both envisioned as eventually merging into a single 'Indian nation' (ibid.: 165–166).

By 1909, Lajpat Rai had articulated his most robust cultural conception of the Hindu nation. Hindus were imagined as 'nation' in what he considered the German sense of the term, constituting a distinct 'people' with a distinct culture. The Hindus were a distinct 'nation' and 'people', with these concepts signifying a cultural community. While certainly not apolitical, this culturally-defined 'Hindu nation' was never imagined in the full-fledged, modern nationalist sense. It was not imagined as having superior claims over India's territory, or deserving a self-governing state of its own over that land. The Hindu nation and people were not imagined as the repository of sovereignty, which in turn must find expression in a state. Instead, when Lajpat Rai used the word 'nation' in what he called its 'modern political' sense—that is, its full-fledged, modern nationalist-statist sense, embodying the principle that every nation must have a self-governing state over a particular territory—Rai imagined an 'Indian' rather than a 'Hindu' nation (ibid.: 158, 165). When it came to imagining a nation and people that were sovereign, and whose sovereignty must find expression

in a state, Rai imagined an 'Indian' nation and people including Hindus and non-Hindus. And while in these years he did not explicitly elaborate a cultural identity for his weakly-imagined 'Indian nation', his lack of assertion of superior claims for Hindu culture over India, and basic respect for India's pluralism are revealing. Its identification of India with Hindu culture and condition of cultural assimilationism meant that hierarchy, supremacy and domination were central to Savarkarite Hindutva. In contrast, Rai reiterated that he 'does not seek a Hindu majority crushing a Mahomedan or other minorities' (2003n: 199), and accepted Lord Morley's 1908 scheme which guaranteed proportionate Muslim representation (2003e: 167).

Thus, Rai's 'Hindu nationalism' converged with Savarkarite Hindutva in its secularisation and culturalisation of Hinduism to produce a catholic 'Hindu nation' which excluded Muslims and Christians. Yet, it differed in ultimately accepting, despite rivalrous friction and acrimony between the Hindu nation and them, the existence in India of other, robust and politicised 'religious nationalities', and in insisting that Hindus and Muslims must ultimately unite into a common, overarching 'Indian nation'. Unlike the Savarkarite vision, Hindus were not imagined as occupying a position of hierarchical supremacy and domination vis-à-vis India's other religious and cultural groups. Savarkar's secularisation and culturalisation of Hinduism produced a diversity-averse, culturally-assimilationist Hindutva nationalism; Muslims and Christians were excluded from the Hindutva nation (the only nation in India) unless they assimilated into India's essential Hindu culture. By contrast, the secularisation and culturalisation of Hinduism by Lajpat Rai, produced a differently imagined 'Hindu nation'. While Muslims and Christians were excluded from this 'Hindu nation', they were imagined as 'religious nationalities' which, albeit existing in a friction-ridden relationship with the 'Hindu nation', were seen as freely co-existing alongside it in a sort of multi-national, religiously and culturally diverse India (with these, too, imagined as eventually uniting into a diversity-respecting, self-governing 'Indian nation').

CONCLUSION

The significance of the specific textures and trajectories of Lajpat Rai's ideas, as unveiled in this article, go beyond what they tell us about Rai and the particular period under consideration. Their excavation helps clarify the following analytical points. One, that Hindu identity can be defined in various senses—thickly religious, thinly religious, broadly non-religious and 'cultural', apolitical, openly political, or implicitly political. Lajpat Rai of course defined it in specific thinly religious, cultural and implicitly political senses. Second, Rai's thinning of religion represented a form of both religionisation and secularisation, and his secularisation of Hinduism in the form of its culturalisation was co-eval with the broader process of religionisation. Third, Rai's ideas challenge the dichotomy drawn by Hindu nationalists and secularists alike between the process of secularisation and articulations of Hindu nationalist identity. These are not necessarily opposed to each other. Strong articulations of Hindu nationalism are often the product of a thinning down and culturalisation of religion, both of which are part of secularisation—understood in both senses of a decline in emphasis on theological detail and of conceptually differentiating between 'religion' and 'culture' as understood in largely secular terms. Secularisation need not cause the disappearance of religion but can transform religion from its thick to thin form, the latter more conducive for national and other political projects. It can result in the culturalisation of religion, whereby phenomena lose their religious meaning but flourish with their new, 'cultural' meaning. These are important points for secularists to remember.[8] Champions of Hindu nationalism may do well to remember that they are not upholders of an unchanging Hindu religion as against secularists who advocate secularisation. Their projects are as much products of secularisation as the transformed (thinned down or culturalised)

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[8] Self-proclaimed secularists (as well as practicing Hindus) might want to note that for its sophisticated theorists, secularism is about substantially separating organised religion from political power for the sake of normative values (i.e., peace, non-domination, liberty, equal citizenship), and not desiring secularisation in the sense of a decline in religion. Indeed, sophisticated conceptions of secularism allow religion its separate, even public sphere, where it is free to flourish as long as it does not undermine secularism's core normative values (Bhargava 2010: 77–82, 88–89). Of course, while such theorists are not troubled by a flourishing culturalised religion per se, they object as soon as it begins to undermined any of secularism's core values like peace, liberty, non-domination, or equal citizenship.

Hindu identity they vehemently champion. Finally, Rai's thought reveals that the intellectual processes of the thinning down, culturalisation, and secularisation of Hinduism need not generate an assimilationist and domineering Hindutva. Sometimes, these produce a different kind of 'Hindu nationalism' altogether, which, while expressing discomfort about Muslim politics and anxiety about preserving or projecting a Hindu majority from perceived threats, accepts India's religious and cultural diversity.

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Engaging Bhakti as/in Translation:
An Outline of a Methodological Approach to Analyse Ranade's Views about the
"Saints and Prophets of Maharashtra"

Rinku Lamba[1]

Abstract: The analysis in this article suggests that M G Ranade's reflections in his essay about the 'Saints and Prophets of Maharashtra' are significant because they offer a site to unravel shifts from a premodern to a modern conception of moral order on the Indian subcontinent, in the context of the encounter with colonialism. For its role in allowing such unravelling, and for the way it permits attention to hitherto neglected dimensions of Ranade's comparison between bhakti and the Protestant Reformation, this article argues for the value of investigating Ranade's reflections through the framework of *translation*. While doing the above, the article also seeks to gesture toward methodological issues involved in the study of ideas and clusters of concepts that bear transtemporal resonance and relevance.

INTRODUCTION

Charles Taylor's scholarship about the social imaginary of the modern West points toward understanding Western modernity in terms of a vision of moral order that was at first 'just an idea in the minds of some influential thinkers,' but that later mutated into a social imaginary (background understandings) of large groups of people, and 'eventually whole societies' (Taylor 2004: 2). These background understandings anchored certain 'social forms'

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that came to characterise Western modernity: 'the market economy, the public sphere, and the self-governing people, among others'. (Taylor 2004: 2). Taylor's scholarship in this regard is important for many reasons. First, it illustrates what Taylor calls a 'cultural' approach to comprehend modernity (idem 1995). Taylor himself endorses this approach in comparison to an 'acultural' understanding whereby modernity is presented as a phenomenon linked mainly to material changes in society such as can be replicated in different parts of the world wherever similar material changes are ushered (idem 2004: 2). Further, and consistent with ideas about multiple and alternative modernities, Taylor's work inspires interrogations of the contents of the social imaginaries that sustain modernity in other jurisdictions, including India. Such interrogations will entail studies of doctrines, symbols and embodied practices, all of which, according to Taylor, are sites for comprehending the vision of moral order that constitutes a social imaginary (ibid.).

The discussions in this article are part of a research project pertaining to political ideas in modern India through which I seek to contribute to the emerging scholarship about the vision of moral order that has mutated into the social imaginary constituting Indian modernity. Admittedly, such a task requires work by a whole community of scholars, and I cannot pretend to provide some overarching answer to questions about what constitutes that vision of moral order. The scholarship of Sudipta Kaviraj and Rajeev Bhargava helpfully sheds light on *how* to study notions like religion, secularity, toleration and state power. Through the use of devices like translation, and of conceptual spaces, Kaviraj and Bhargava respectively demonstrate how to engage the conceptual resources of precolonial, colonial and postcolonial epochs to comprehend aspects of an Indian modernity (Kaviraj 2002, 2005a, 2005b, 2014 & 2016; Bhargava 2001, 2014, 2015 & 2016). Drawing on their work, and in consonance with the aims of the aforementioned research project, in this article, I take up a study of the social and political thought of an important modern Indian thinker named Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842–1901).

Ranade was a prominent Indian social reformer with a complex disposition toward imperialism and colonialism.[2] Ranade was exposed to the best fare

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[2] According to Ambedkar, 'it would be difficult to find in the history of India any man who could come up to Ranade in the width of his learning, the breadth of his wisdom and the length of his vision. [...] His whole life is nothing but a relentless campaign for social reform' (Ambedkar

provided by the system of western education in colonial India and excelled in it. Despite holding a string of colonial appointments, Ranade, along with Dadabhai Naoroji, was at the forefront in advancing a critique of the economic exploitation wrought by colonial rule. Importantly, the encounter with colonialism, and the forms of racial domination accompanying it, led Ranade to reflect critically on Indian socio-religious practices. For him, the experience of humiliation generated by colonialism illuminated the forms of degradation permitted by many Hindu social practices. He asks: 'Is our own conscience clear in these matters? How do we treat members of the depressed classes – our own countrymen – even in these days?' (Ranade quoted in: Sharma 2002: 157). In fact, as I have pointed out in previously published work, for Ranade, the social, economic and political aspects of freedom were very closely interlinked. Consider, for example, the following statements:

> You cannot have a good social system when you find yourself low in the scale of political rights, nor can you exercise political rights and privileges unless your social system is based on reason and justice. You cannot have a good economical system when your social arrangements are imperfect. If your religious ideals are low and grovelling, you cannot succeed in social, economical or political spheres. This interdependence is not an accident but is the law of our nature. […] It is a mistaken view which divorces considerations, political from social and economical, and no man can be said to realize his duty in one aspect who neglects his duties in the other directions (Ranade 1915: 192).

Ranade, thus, became engrossed in debates about social reform in colonial India and also founded the Indian National Social Conference in 1887 in the image of a pan-Indian social reform organisation. His was a key voice in the

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1943: 23). Coming from Ambedkar, this can be seen as high praise, because for him the task of social reform was a most valuable and urgent one. 'It is on his role as a social reformer that this title to being a Great Man rests' (ibid.: 22). Even as Ambedkar lauds Ranade's role as a reformer, he laments that Ranade did not prioritise 'mass contact', 'propaganda' and 'concerted action' owing to which liberal ideas did not get sufficiently communicated to the masses (ibid.). I mention all this with the clarification that an evaluation of the accuracy of Ambedkar's assessment of Ranade is beyond the scope of this essay. A final remark here: In the text of this address Ambedkar says he wants to compare Ranade with Jyotiba Phule (ibid.: 4), since he sees them both as social reformers. But he neither develops the comparison nor provides any suggestions for speculation about the content of that comparison.

debates over the Age of Consent Bill that sought to raise the age of consent for married Hindu girls to twelve; the bill to enable that was enacted in 1891. In his interventions during the debates surrounding this issue, he endorsed state intervention in social and religious reform. I have argued in previously published work that his reflections in this regard permit very insightful analytical distinctions between state power and colonial power and contain resources to resist postcolonial theorists' attempts to fuse state- and colonial power. Further, I suggested that engaging Ranade's views about reform are key for tracing the emergence of liberalism in India, especially with regard to the role of the state for instituting impartial rule to protect the liberty of all persons (Lamba 2011). There I also noted Ranade's interest in the conceptual resources of the bhakti (Hindi/Sanskrit: *bhakti*, 'devotion/love/worship') tradition, and especially the Warkari tradition, and remarked how any persuasive comprehensive account of Ranade's political perspective would have to reckon with his creative attempt to bring to bear the conceptual resources of Indian ideas and practices alongside West-inspired ones (ibid.: 243).

In a broad sense, this article seeks to continue the earlier theoretical engagement with the social and political thought of Ranade. More specifically, however, it takes up the task of critically analysing Ranade's engagement with the conceptual resources of bhakti poet-saints, especially though not only the saints associated with the bhakti tradition in western India. I focus on Ranade's essay titled "The Saints and Prophets of Maharashtra", which was first published in 1895 as a stand-alone piece in the *Sarvajanik Sabha Quarterly* (Deshpande 2007: 128). The discussion in this article entails a close study of Ranade's engagement with the 'saints and prophets of Maharashtra' for probing conceptual moves through which the term 'religion' acquires sense in a period that was fraught with social and political change. Given that, and also because it was published independently in the first instance and can thus endure pointed attention, I focus almost solely on this essay of Ranade's in this article.[3]

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[3] For a good discussion of this essay of Ranade's in the context of the text titled *The rise of the Maratha power* where it was also published in 1900, see Deshpande (2007: 126–150).

A reading of the essay reveals crucial and puzzling aspects of Ranade's engagement with the bhakti tradition.[4] The consolidation of the nation of Maharashtra, and a discussion of the significant impact of the Maharashtrian bhakti tradition for that consolidation, is doubtless one of Ranade's concerns. But, arguably, Ranade expects the substance of his reflections to also pertain to the Indian nation more generally, not least when he acknowledges the India-wide legacy of the bhakti saints and prophets—consider, for example, the numerous references he makes to the fifteenth-century poet-saint Kabir in the aforementioned essay. He comments on the tradition not only with reference to 'Maharashtra' but also, given important allusions to Kabir, to the Indian subcontinent more generally. However, with respect to positing the implications of bhakti in Maharashtra as relevant for the emergent Indian nation more generally, Ranade seems to be toeing a line that Deshpande identifies as a feature of Indian nationalist imaginations (ibid.: 135). She illustrates this in the Marathi context by mentioning how 'Marathi historians were unanimous in invoking the "uniqueness" of the Maratha experience in the subcontinent's history and citing its importance as a lesson for those in the colonial situation' (ibid.). Ranade's essay on the saints and prophets of Maharashtra, then, is meant not just a sub-nationally relevant articulation but is preoccupied with making interventions deemed relevant for India as a whole. There is a proto-national vision at work here.[5] It is in this context that I find it pertinent to focus on what Ranade identifies as noteworthy distinctive features of the tradition of saints and prophets when he compares it to the phenomenon of the Protestant Reformation.

While attributing the nation's 'spiritual excellence' to the saints and prophets, Ranade classifies their disposition as marked by 'intense spirituality,' a 'spirit of self-surrender', and a 'quiet resignation to the will of god' (Ranade 1900: 169, 172). He says the saints and prophets 'came out well in their struggles with their foreign rulers' (ibid.: 171). And he attributes the reestablishment in Maharashtra 'of a united native power in the place of

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[4] Unless otherwise indicated, all allusions to Ranade's text in this article refer to the pagination of the article on "The saints and prophets" in the collection of his essays titled *The rise of the Maratha power* (1900).

[5] I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for asking if Ranade's views can be called 'proto-national' and, if yes, then how 'truly' they 'encompass[ed] subcontinental diversity'. Responding to this query helped me to sharpen my claims in this article.

foreign domination' to the religious and political legacy of the traditions of the saints and prophets. Ranade states that 'a stronger backbone and more resisting power are needed in the times in which we live [...]' (ibid: 170). But he goes on to say that 'in an account of the saints and prophets as they flourished more than two hundred years ago, we cannot afford to interpolate our own wants and wishes' (ibid.).

Evidently, Ranade is reluctant to impose the requirements of his own time in his engagement with the nature of interventions made by the prophets and saints who lived in another historical time period. He wants to avoid both anachronism and presentism. And yet Ranade's essay on the saints and prophets of Maharashtra can end up being interpreted as an account of bhakti that corresponds to modern Indian nationalists' 'wants and wishes'. At the very least this is the conclusion that others who have studied Ranade's interventions about bhakti suggest. I have in mind particularly the analyses of Prachi Deshpande and John Stratton Hawley.

But, is there any other analytically pertinent way to consider some of the puzzling aspects of Ranade's reflections about the saints and prophets of Maharashtra, beyond some of the extant interpretations of Ranade in this regard? What it is that Ranade can be interpreted to be doing when, (i) against his own wishes, he compares the Reformation in Europe with the bhakti tradition in India (entailing a comparison across two distinctive social imaginaries); (ii) engages the putatively old and the new in the Indian subcontinent itself (again, thinking across two plausibly distinctive imaginaries), and (iii) recalls bhakti and employs it, at least as per the accounts of Deshpande and Hawley, for contemporary nation-building purposes? My claim in this article is that it would be fruitful to interpret Ranade's engagement with the heritage of the bhakti saints and prophets via, first and foremost, a frame of *translation* for enabling historical understandings of conceptual and political change, and shifts in social imaginary.

Scholars have commented on the significance of Ranade's reflections about bhakti with respect to (a) the concept of Maharashtra Dharma (Deshpande 2007) and (b) comparisons of the bhakti tradition with the Protestant Reformation in Europe (Hawley 2015). Neither discussion, however, is driven by a motivation to undertake what James Farr calls 'historical thinking about politics' (Farr 1989: 37). Nor is it the express interest of either to undertake

an exercise in conceptual history or explore shifts in social imaginary. In the course of her rich analysis of the attempts to build a Marathi nation, Deshpande engages Ranade's views and comments on the reshaping of bhakti and a loss of its earlier lustre; but, as this article will demonstrate, there is more to be discerned in Ranade's perspective, and the framework of translation is very enabling in that respect. Hawley's primary interest is in reading Ranade's engagement with the saints and prophets of Maharashtra for locating how the notion of bhakti as a *movement* acquired traction. And like Deshpande, he too analyses aspects of the comparison that Ranade generates in his essay between the phenomenon of the Protestant Reformation in Europe and that of the tradition of bhakti on the subcontinent. However, neither Deshpande nor Hawley acknowledges or attaches importance to Ranade's calm articulation of a key difference between the monotheism associated with the Protestant Reformation and that which Ranade considers to be characteristic of the subcontinent. Nor is it their intention to analyse what that difference can bode for the way the notion of religion assumed meaning and coherence enough to constitute aspects of an emergent Indian modern social imaginary. My aim in the above comments about Deshpande and Hawley is neither to chastise their accounts for not working within the rubric of translation, nor to undermine the richness of their respective contributions; admittedly, distinctive scholarly interests drive their respective engagements with bhakti. But what I do want to say is that there remain important aspects of Ranade's treatment of the tradition of the saints and prophets in Maharashtra (which indeed he compares with the tradition as it has played out in other parts of India) that can endure further analytical attention, and that is what this article seeks to demonstrate.

Indeed, the main claim of this article is that Ranade's interventions with respect to the saints and prophets of Maharashtra may be best interpreted as valuable sites for witnessing an enactment of translation. I want to demonstrate how translation, as a conceptual framework, permits discernment of the way a new script for a normative ordering of society emerges in the presence, or even within the contexts of a withering, but nonetheless powerful, pre-existing vision of moral order. In fact, the boldest thesis advanced in this article is that Ranade's essay on the saints and prophets of Maharashtra embodies a method for the study of conceptual and political change, and any

engagement with it that does not articulate and explain this fully is guilty of neglecting an important dimension of this text. Accordingly, this article approaches Ranade's engagement with bhakti, particularly his comparison of the Protestant Reformation with the tradition of bhakti through the framework of translation. The convergences Ranade notes—and especially the divergences—are treated as among the key sites where translations of ideas across cultural contexts (both within the same jurisdiction, across different time periods, and across different cultural contexts in the same period, or across different jurisdictions in different time periods) came to be enacted. Attention to these enactments, I will show, makes it possible to discern changes, improvisations, resistances and retentions with respect to ideas and social practices, which in turn can make it possible to map shifts in the moral order in India from a premodern to a modern one. And, Ranade's views on bhakti are treated as a key site because he is among modern India's stalwart social reformers.

The article is divided into three sections. The first section contains an overview of some of the extant scholarship on Ranade's engagement with bhakti, especially the views of Prachi Deshpande and Jack Hawley. The main aim is to demonstrate how certain questions pertaining to Ranade's interventions on bhakti still remain unaddressed, particularly with a view to considering how those interventions are a site for translation through which conceptual and political change can be discerned. Moreover, neither Hawley nor Deshpande register Ranade's enlisting of a difference in forms of monotheism associated with the culture of the Protestant Reformation and those that characterise the religio-cultural landscape of the subcontinent. The first section concludes by gesturing toward the need for considering Ranade's reflections within the rubric of translation. The second section is devoted to spelling out how this article engages the theme of translation, particularly with respect to capturing the kind of conceptual and political changes that took place (i) during the Indian encounter with colonialism; (ii) in the comparison between bhakti and the Protestant Reformation; but also (iii) in the way Ranade recalls bhakti for purposes of his own times. The aim of this section is not only to spell out methodological points related to translation but also to demonstrate how the device of translation allows some important features of Ranade's engagement with bhakti to come into sharp relief, in

ways that do not get discussed by Deshpande or by Hawley.[6] What I want to claim is that something about studying social change—involving exchanges between the putatively old and the putatively new, and tracing shifts in the meaning of concepts for studying politics in a historically informed way—in the context of encounters with different social imaginaries is facilitated by the device of translation. The section draws on the views of Kaviraj and Stewart, and spells out what I classify as *translation as equivalence*. The aim of the discussion here is both to demonstrate the fittingness of structuring the approach to Ranade's views about bhakti under the rubric of translation, and to generate an outline of what that approach can entail. I also demonstrate how translation as equivalence allows the discernment of shifts from a premodern to a modern sensibility, with respect to the new conceptual space for turning caste inequalities into socially, rather than religiously, sanctioned matters, and for the new legitimacy for ideas about the legislative reform of the social order. The third section considers how to understand conceptual and political change when efforts to establish equivalence reach a dead end. Here I note the conceptual and analytical importance of moments where divergence, rather than convergence, is registered, and highlight the need to probe it, because focus on divergence can make it possible to discern the preexisting rival and/or opposing notions at work in a period that is otherwise witnessing conceptual and political change. I highlight the place of bricolage (cf. Leslie 1970) as a mode through which to continue to consider the nature of exchanges between entities that have registered the end of convergent or equivalent exchange. I highlight the importance of Ranade's observations about the inclusive variant of monotheism in India and discuss how its divergence from the European mode of monotheism sheds light on extant stable notions on the subcontinent for engaging diversity in an inclusive manner. Finally, I offer some remarks about the insights that can be gleaned from interpretations of Ranade's work for unravelling the modern vision of moral order in India. In particular, I consider the place within that vision for religion, and also note how older inclusive stances toward religious heterogeneity seemed to have fought it out to stay in the modern vision of moral order to shape emergent modern background understandings pertaining to the

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[6] I thank an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to clarify how my account of Ranade's reflections differs from the ones offered by Deshpande and Hawley.

accommodation of religious diversity. I also offer some observations about the way bhakti has percolated into the social imaginary of modern India. I conclude the article with brief remarks to affirm the salience of approaching studies of conceptual and political change through the rubric of translation.

Bʜᴀᴋᴛɪ ᴀs ɪᴅᴇᴏʟᴏɢʏ, ᴀs ᴀ ɢʀᴏᴜɴᴅ ꜰᴏʀ ɪɴᴛᴇʀᴄᴜʟᴛᴜʀᴀʟ ᴄᴏᴍᴘᴀʀɪsᴏɴ, ᴀɴᴅ ꜰᴏʀ ᴛʜᴇ ɪᴍᴀɢɪɴᴀᴛɪᴏɴ ᴏꜰ ɴᴀᴛɪᴏɴ: Aɴ ᴀɴᴀʟʏsɪs ᴏꜰ Rᴀɴᴀᴅᴇ's ᴠɪᴇᴡs ᴀs ᴀᴅᴠᴀɴᴄᴇᴅ ʙʏ Dᴇsʜᴘᴀɴᴅᴇ ᴀɴᴅ Hᴀᴡʟᴇʏ

Let me begin by reciting the main points observable in the discussions about Ranade's engagement with the saints and prophets of Maharashtra as envisaged by Deshpande and Hawley. Doing so will not only permit discerning the distinctive focus of this article but also enable a fulsome portrayal of the details of Ranade's reflections in his essay on the saints and prophets.

Prachi Deshpande (2007) offers valuable insights about Ranade's participation in a discourse about Maharashtra Dharma. She notes how Ranade 'interpreted' bhakti 'as a vibrant and peculiar set of religious values and practices that had developed in the medieval period in Maharashtra through a blending of traditional Hinduism and the monotheism of Islam' (ibid.: 129). For thinkers like Ranade, this aspect of Maharashtra's past was 'distinctive' in 'its rejection of Brahmanical values and tenets; the contribution of poets, men and women, from different caste groups, including Muslims; and the establishment of devotional spirituality as superior to the ritual-driven traditions of Hinduism' (ibid.). The kind of 'popular participation' bhakti demonstrated, and the way it 'denied the importance of caste difference' all led, and Deshpande quotes Ranade directly now, to making 'the nation more humane, at the same time more prone to hold together by mutual toleration' (Ranade quoted in: ibid.: 129).

Deshpande also notes, as does Hawley in his brief and thoughtful analysis of Ranade less than a decade later (Hawley 2015: 30), the association that Ranade makes between the tradition of bhakti and a prevalent 'combination of religious and political unity' on the subcontinent (Deshpande 2007: 129). That combination generated feelings of membership within a coherent political community consisting, as Ranade put it, of 'all classes' (ibid.). Deshpande mentions how Ranade likened these feelings to 'patriotism' (ibid.). Further, Deshpande

discusses, as does Hawley, Ranade's comparison of the 'Bhakti movement' 'as similar to the European Reformation of the sixteenth century' and how Ranade argued that 'in both places […] a heterodox spirit of religious devotion had protested against the excesses of a corrupt, ritualistic priesthood, breathing new life into the religion and the nation. Ranade also, interestingly, slipped between region and nation in his discussion of the Marathas' (ibid: 130).

For Deshpande, interpretations of the Maratha past such as those offered by Ranade 'threw up different perspectives of religion, region, and nation[7] (ibid.: 133). One outcome was the 'overdetermination of a complex and diverse set of spiritual interventions' like bhakti 'into a generalized and politicized ideology of religious community' (ibid.). Further, 'poets like Tukaram and Ramdas, especially the latter, were too often reduced to overt political stances—advocating either the rejection or the maintenance of caste identity and nationalism—which obfuscated their complex contributions to the devotional and philosophical tradition as a whole' (ibid.).

Finally, Deshpande states that in the "connections" made by figures like Ranade

> between Bhakti poetry and the Maratha struggle, religion became less a matter of spiritual contemplation and everyday practice and more the expression of the political philosophy of the Marathas. Moreover, the Marathas were understood not in terms of state power but as an undifferentiated population, a people. Bhakti now became a variant of a modern Hindu religion, not so much a spiritual worldview or an expression of ritual difference and belief, but the glue that held together an enumerated political 'Hindu' community. This community could be plural, inclusive, and tolerant, as put forward in the writings of Ranade and Bhagvat, but it was still conceived of in political 'patriotic' terms (ibid.: 133–134).

Deshpande's appraisal of the 'connection' between bhakti poetry and the Maratha struggle is two-pronged. First, the sense of bhakti got distorted from something predominantly 'spiritual', 'devotional' and 'philosophical' into something 'political' (ideological). To impose the terminologies of translation on Deshpande's analysis, bhakti in its translated form acquired the sense of

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[7] Rosalind O'Hanlon argues that 'social groups at all levels in society' in colonial Maharashtra were invested politically in constructions of the Maratha past (1983: 7).

a 'generalised and politicised ideology of religious community' in contrast to having referred earlier to something 'complex', 'diverse' and 'spiritual.' Second, intriguingly, 'politicisation' and distortion of social forms like bhakti can be compatible with inclusive, plural and tolerant visions for an enumerated community. But Deshpande could elaborate more on what exactly inspires these pluralistic inclinations. Is it the case that more spiritually inclined 'translations' of bhakti can generate pluralism-seeking enumerated communities in the image of what Rajeev Bhargava calls 'patchwork' solutions to the encounter with modernity (Bhargava 2001)? Or is there some way in which, notwithstanding a reliance on enumerated techniques of rule (such as that of the census), some modern state forms are able to transform the uses of those techniques to generate plural and inclusive orders different from the ones usually associated with the homogenising forms of the modern nation-state? My point in raising these questions is to demonstrate that some engagement with the thematic of translation could sharpen the insights in Deshpande's thought-provoking claim about the combination of enumerated polities and pluralism.

Deshpande's conclusions are both thoughtful and persuasive. But they could be refined further through more fine-tuned observation of Ranade's recalling of the saints and prophets of Maharashtra, as well as a more nuanced understanding of bhakti itself. Deshpande's observations above can contribute to showing how, historically speaking, a distinction has arisen between the domains of the 'spiritual' and the 'political-ideological'. And it can be interrogated if this distinction culminates in Ashis Nandy's marking of Indian modernity as grounded in a distinction between 'religion as faith' and 'religion as ideology' (Nandy 1988). To be sure, Deshpande does not rule out that ideological formations can be inclusive, pluralist and tolerant. Still, it is also noted that communities shaped by enumeration techniques of rule come to be characterised by a consciousness of the strength of their numbers and can, unsurprisingly, shift away from articulations of politics that are more homogenising than pluralism-friendly (Kaviraj 2014: 257).

But, (i) Deshpande's understanding of bhakti as spiritual, devotional and philosophical appears a little sanguine and rides roughshod over comprehensions of bhakti as a site for both inclusivity and exclusion (cf. Keune 2021). Furthermore, (ii) Deshpande's account bypasses any analysis of how Ranade,

in the course of a comparison between the European Reformation and the subcontinental bhakti tradition, notes an important dissimilarity between the Reformation and bhakti as an analogous Indian site for articulations of matters religious. Finally, (iii): Deshpande's analysis can endure being construed through a framework of *translation*—for the way it traces changes in the meaning (and functions) of bhakti from a precolonial to a colonial modern context thereby, laudably, considering conceptual change *and* political change in an appropriately interconnected manner (cf. Farr 1989). However, it neither expressly discusses translation as a methodological device for comprehending change nor offers illustrative analysis for mapping the complex processes involved in translation. Nor does it elaborate how to account for distortions—which, speaking more impartially, really, are changes in meaning related to conceptual repertoires of an epoch—that occur when conceptual and political change is underway.

Hawley's treatment of Ranade's reflections on the saints and prophets of Maharashtra also attracts the comments listed in (ii) and (iii) above. Hawley's interest in Ranade's views is related to tracing significant interventions that contributed to the *modern* construal of bhakti as a *movement* (as opposed to a *network,* which is Hawley's endorsed way for interpreting the phenomenon of bhakti). In this regard, Hawley's conclusion is that Ranade's discussion of bhakti did not presuppose the different bhakti movements in India as related to a 'single thrust' (Hawley 2015: 31). Although Hawley cites *Rise of the Maratha Power* as the text through which he engages Ranade's views on the bhakti saints, Hawley's analysis is understandably centred mainly on the essay about the saints and prophets of Maharashtra. Hawley notes that while Ranade 'is comfortable with an idiom that speaks in terms of movements, he does not trace out a bhakti movement that would encompass all of India' nor does he use the term movement (ibid.: 29). From here Hawley goes on to comment on Ranade's 'drawing out' of 'parallels between what Ranade called bhakti's "reforms" and – note the term – the Protestant Reformation in Europe' (ibid.). Ranade's 'overriding comparison between the religious and cultural histories of India and Europe' includes such commonalities as arguments against the dominance of Sanskrit and Latin, the protest against what Ranade calls 'the thraldom of scholastic learning'; the sense of 'common humanity that emerged on the pilgrimage from all parts of Maharashtra to Pandharpur and

the sense of shared human dignity that led to the Protestant reformers' rejection of clerical privilege in distributing the Eucharist' (ibid.: 29–30).

Further, Hawley describes accurately how Ranade

> also analogized polytheistic worship in India to the image and saint worship of the Roman Catholic Church, and depicted the bhakti reformers' deep allegiance to their own 'favourite form of the divine incarnation' as an instinct for true monotheism, just the sort of thing that had inspired the activities of the Protestant reformers, especially the strictest among them. Here and elsewhere was a manliness – he did not shrink from the word – that caused religion and politics to march together as two sides of a single movement, in India no less than in the early modern Europe (ibid.: 30).

Ranade, says Hawley, describes not only the saints and prophets of Maharashtra but is also well aware of a '"similar movement [that] manifested itself much about the same time" in northern and eastern India – he mentioned Nanak, Chaitanya, Ramanand, Kabir, Tulsidas, Surdas, Jayadev, and Ravidas in referring to it' (ibid.).

But, as Hawley observes, for Ranade the religious movement of Maharashtra was unique in comparison to the one in other parts of the subcontinent such that it enabled Maharashtra 'in a way no other nation in India was prepared, to take the lead in re-establishing a united native power in the place of foreign domination' (Ranade quoted in: ibid.: 30). And Hawley argues that the yoke of foreign domination that the bhakti saints helped Maharashtra struggle against was what Ranade called '"the Mahommedan yoke" that had spread across India in the wake of successive invasions by "Afghans, Gilchis, Turks, Usbegs, and Moghuls"' (Hawley 2015: 30). What is very interesting, but remains uncommented in Hawley's cataloguing of the normative vision Ranade attributed to the tradition of the saints and prophets, is that Ranade judged this tradition to offer even 'a plan of reconciliation with the Mahomedans'[8] (Ranade quoted in: ibid.: 31).

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[8] I will discuss the significance of this in the parts of the article that follow. Other features Ranade attributed to the tradition of the saints and prophets, catalogued by Hawley, included: 'a stress on vernacular usage, a protest against the "the old spirit of caste exclusiveness", an elevation of "the Shudra classes;" an attention to the status of women, a suspicion of "rites

Why does Ranade engage in a comparison of Bhakti and the Protestant Reformation?[9]

A question could arise about the reasons for Ranade's comparison of the bhakti tradition with events in sixteenth-century Europe. Hawley's analysis adduces one reason for Ranade's comparative exercise. And it is that a comparison with Europe facilitated analogies 'that could be located *in between* religious communities in various parts of India itself' (Hawley 2015: 31; emphasis mine). For Hawley, 'Ranade saw analogies between what had been experience in Maharashtra and what had happened elsewhere in India, but they were not part of a single thrust […] what brought them parallel to one another was at least as much their synchronicity with what was happening in Europe as the force of the analogies that could be located in between religious communities in various parts of India itself' (ibid.). Still, and very correctly, Hawley does not overlook the way Ranade's reflections simultaneously also comprehend a 'pan-Indian bhakti'. To demonstrate this, Hawley draws on Ranade's perception that pan-Indian bhakti had a 'shared tendency to contemplate the "bright side of divine Providence,"' which 'came in to focus by virtue of its contrast with the darker proclivities of "the Shemitic religions" that ruled the day in Europe and elsewhere – their "awe and trembling" before "a judge who punished more frequently than He rewarded"' (ibid.: 32). This was different, says Ranade, in the case of the 'religions of Greece or Rome or of India. God with us has always been regarded more as a father and a mother, a brother and a friend, than a judge and a chastiser and a ruler. Not that he does not judge, or rule, but He judges, rules and chastises with the love of a father or mother, ever ready to receive the repentant prodigal son back into his arms' (Ranade 1900: 166).

But there is another important, and somewhat obvious, historical reason that can account for Ranade's comparison between bhakti and the Protestant Reformation in Europe. It has to do with the normative power of a Protestant (and missionary) gaze with respect to the category of religion in the subcontinent during the encounter with colonialism (and orientalism)

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and ceremonies, and of pilgrimages and fasts, and of learning and contemplation" in comparison with "the higher excellence of worship by means of love and faith"' (Hawley 2015: 31).

(O'Hanlon 2002: 50–87, 97, 194).[10] Ranade is certainly responding to this gaze, and in fact, it is in this context that he asserts a difference of Indian forms of monotheism with respect to the one that underpins 'Shemitic religions' (ibid.: 166) and phenomena like the Protestant Reformation. Arguably, this historical-context-based reason for the comparison is quite weighty. Politically speaking, it entails a more express acknowledgment of conceptual and political exchanges occurring within the context of a colonial encounter.

If this is a weighty reason for Ranade's engagement with the Protestant Reformation in Europe, and I would argue it is, then there is another important portion in Ranade's essay on the prophets and saints of Maharashtra that deserves attention. It is Ranade's assertion of a difference between monotheism as conceptualised in India and the one associated with Western Europe and the Reformation. However, curiously, it is a part of Ranade's essay that escapes the attention of Deshpande, Hawley, and even Jon Keune (2021), who too discusses Ranade's perspective on bhakti in his recent book.

More attention to the contents of Ranade's reflections with regard to bhakti is thus required to address the scholarly neglect of his observation about the divergence of the meanings of monotheism in the two jurisdictions. Capturing this dimension of Ranade's reflections can, arguably, be enabled by close attention to the enactments of translation therein (I will elaborate on this more in the discussion that follows), which occurs rather symmetrically and seamlessly for the most part of Ranade's essay but then suddenly pauses when it seems that something untranslatable is encountered. Registering the untranslatability—in terms of the jarring dissonance between the religious traditions of western Europe and subcontinental India—can, I will show, serve as a site for understanding conceptual and political change, both formally and substantively.

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[10] O'Hanlon offers a discussion of the conceptual resources such as those of ekāntika dharma on the subcontinent that facilitated a positive reception of monotheism for figures like Jyotiba Phule, who was a contemporary of Ranade (2002: 194). See also Mitter (1987). For reflections on a 'monotheistic imperative' see Basu (2012).

TRANSLATION AS EQUIVALENCE AND INSIGHTS FROM RANADE'S USE OF IT

I now turn to demonstrate how that the register of *translation as equivalence* (Stewart 2001: 160–163) allows a comprehensive engagement with Ranade's reflections in his essay about the saints and prophets of Maharashtra. Let me provide a fuller account of it and of the way it allows us to discern processes of conceptual and political change.

First, a note on the term translation, in the context of social, political and conceptual change, is essential here. What I want to claim is that something about studying social change—involving exchanges between the putatively old and the putatively new, and tracing shifts to study politics in a historically informed way—in the context of encounters with different social imaginaries is facilitated by the device of translation. My use of it is influenced, among others, by Sudipta Kaviraj's enunciation of it in the context of his discussion of multiple modernities (Kaviraj 2002 & 2005b; cf. also Stewart 2001). Kaviraj develops Gadamer's insights about the way historical consciousness is always 'effective-historical' (Gadamer quoted in: Kaviraj 2005b: 516) to point to how

> a particular interpretation of a text or cultural object remains active *through its effects*, that is, the effect of a particular historical reading is not really erased when it is replaced by a succeeding interpretation. The subsequent reading, which is really different from the previous one, works on the material of the earlier reading, and is still determined by the first as its pre-condition […] the effectuality of the earlier reading is never really effaced (Kaviraj 2005b: 516).

The point of the quotation above is to note that when some social practices and ideas hold over time, or are recalled over time, then older meanings about them can play a key role in the development and articulation of new meanings.[11] He says that just as it is not possible in literary translations to

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[11] Kaviraj clarifies that the term 'new' can have two senses. First is the possibility of something being 'utterly new' without 'precursors or precedents in earlier history' (Kaviraj 2005b: 517). In a second sense many new, and even 'modern' practices, 'are really transformed ways of doing the same general thing' (ibid.; emphasis mine). While Kaviraj's reflections pertain to complicating the novelty of some modern phenomena, I think their broader implications can extend to thinking about shifts in meaning in other epochs too, and allow consideration of the

'turn off the connotative effectivity of the receiving language to ensure transfer of meanings from the language to the text', so too, in considering changes and developments in the meaning of ideas and practices, 'the social effectiveness of the prior practices are never entirely neutralised by the reception of new ways of doing things' (ibid.: 519).

Turning directly to Ranade's essay again, in the course of his comparison and/or translation, Ranade notes similarities in phenomena associated with the Marathi poet saints and the Protestant Reformation in Europe. As seen earlier, for Ranade both cases displayed a discernible preference for expressions of religiosity in languages other than the classical ones, such as Latin and Sanskrit. Both celebrated a certain sameness among persons, and rejected status privileges that came from caste in one instance, and from the enjoyment of sacramental authority over laypeople in another. And both denounced the emphasis on celibacy and renunciation of the life of a householder. In all these sections of the text, Ranade's exercise approximates what I will call *translation as equivalence* (TE). Translation here refers to a necessary form of engagement that must occur between entities for understanding or approximating one another in the context of something comparable, like shared features.

Translation as equivalence (cf. Stewart 2001: 160–163) is demonstrable in the way Ranade receives notions of liberty associated with developments that mark the modern western social imaginary, and translates them into something comprehensible through reference to the imaginaries that sustain/ed the perspectives of bhakti. For Ranade 'what Protestantism did for Western Europe in the matter of civil liberty was accomplished on a smaller scale in Western India. The impulse was felt in art, in religion, in the growth of vernacular literature, in communal freedom of life, in an increase of self-reliance and toleration [...]'[12] (Ranade 1900: 11). I think it is helpful to read these comparative reflections of Ranade's through the frame of translation as equivalence. TE certainly contains the potential to avoid something like 'cognitive dissonance' during colonial encounters where civilizational discourses may lead the colonised

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way older 'meanings and habits' 'affect and modify' or, as mentioned above, 'transform ways of doing the same general thing' (ibid.: 517–518).

[12] I draw on this section of *The rise of the Maratha power* because it connects straightforwardly and coherently with Ranade's reflections on the bhakti tradition.

to be faced with novel conceptions of freedom and equality associated with the modern West. TE is an attempt to demonstrate the proximity between two different albeit comparable phenomena connected to distinctive social imaginaries in contexts like the aforementioned ones.

The spirited comparison continues, and Ranade registers analogies and equivalences between what he stipulates as Indian and European variants of reform. Ranade says:

> The fact was that, like the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the sixteenth century, there was Religious, Social, and Literary Revival and Reformation in India, but notably in the Deccan in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This Religious Revival was not Brahmanical in its orthodoxy; it was heterodox in its spirit of protest against forms and ceremonies and class distinctions based on birth, and ethical in its preference of a pure heart, and of the law of love, to all other acquired merits and good works. This Religious Revival was the work also of the people, of the masses, and not of the classes (ibid.: 9–10).

It must be noted that Ranade's construction of the religious revival associated with bhakti, and especially its non-brahminical orientation, and its critique of caste and class, may not be entirely accurate, from a historical point of view. Contemporary scholarship on bhakti reveals the way the discourses of bhakti, which were critical of caste, contained resources to re-entrench caste hierarchies (cf. Novetzke 2011; Keune 2021). However, as Tony Stewart points out, exercises of translation along lines that establish equivalence among entities are not to be confused with exchanges in which thorough and precise doctrinal knowledge is required.[13] As Stewart puts it: 'Doctrine seems often to have had little bearing in these situations, but that in no way should imply that doctrine was not present; it was simply used and understood differently than is the academic norm today' (Stewart 2001: 261). It is an attempt to make the understanding fit with what is encountered; the process of understanding becomes an 'extended act of "translation"' (ibid.: 263).

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[13] To make an orthogonal observation, it is for similar reasons that Jyotiba Phule's 'speculative, radical reinterpretation of classical Hindu scriptures', while 'partly appropriating colonial orientalist arguments' (Kaviraj 2002: 119), functions as an important site for discerning the emergence of a modern moral order in which older religion-based hierarchies could now be, with default precision, subjected to rational, and I would add social, critique.

Furthermore, instead of a focus on the practical and historical efficacy of Ranade's ideas, or on a simplistic reduction of his ideas to a caste- and gender-related positioning,[14] the methodological space opened by the rubric of TE allows engagement with the conceptual and political innovations that Ranade pursued and enabled. Let me illustrate with the following example. Ranade says that the 'result of all this elevated teaching' of the saints and prophets was reflected in 'the fact that caste exclusiveness now finds no place in the religious sphere, and it is relegated solely to the social concerns of men, and even there its restrictiveness is much relaxed' (Ranade 1900: 155). The exercise of establishing equivalence with a phenomenon from sixteenth-century Europe that is connected to the emergence of civil liberty there allows Ranade to, among other things, free the caste question from a 'religious sphere' to one focused on 'the social concerns of men'. In doing this, Ranade is able to participate discursively in the production of a division

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[14] For a very thoughtful rejoinder to critiques of Ranade cast along gender- and caste-based lines see Aparna Devare (2019: 216–219). See especially her comments when she considers Ranade's perspective alongside that of his contemporary Bal Gangadhar Tilak's: 'While I am not trying to "defend" Ranade for some of his actions, I believe some significant differences between Ranade and Tilak get flattened out when solely viewed through the prism of Brahminical patriarchy. Moreover, a gendered reading of Ranade will focus on the patriarchal nature of his relationship with his wife and the overall male upper-caste mindset towards women that places certain limits on them (which is in itself useful and necessary). But how does one account for the variation in responses such as Tilak's hyper-masculinity versus Ranade's more sensitive one that stressed on bhakti via the Marathi bhakti traditions? Ranade's stress on compassion, self-abnegation and fellow-feeling for others, which he recovers through the language of bhakti, does point to an alternative masculinity that is more inclusive, open and just in contrast to the strands of hyper-masculinity emerging in the nationalist movement' (ibid.: 218–219). I thank an anonymous reviewer for pressing me to address the caste- and gender-dimensions of Ranade's views. For a more general reflection on the search for parity between ideas, ideals and the extent to which they are achieved, it might be salutary to recall Ambedkar's words too. Consider the following remarks he made: 'How much did Ranade achieve in the field in which he played so dominant a part? In a certain sense the question is not very important. Achievement is never the true measure of greatness. "Alas," as Carlyle said, "we know very well that ideals can never be completely embodied in practice. Ideals must ever lie a very great way off; and we will right thankfully content ourselves with any not intolerable approximation thereto!" Let no man, as Schiller says, too querulously "measure by a scale of perfection the meagre product of reality" in this poor world of ours. We will esteem him no wise man; we will esteem him a sickly discontented foolish man. And yet Ranade's record of achievement was not altogether bare' (Ambedkar 1943: 47). This quotation is very helpful also for the openness it allows for studying ideas about ideals, and for studies of shifts in ideas pertaining to them, in scholarship about conceptual and political change.

between the social/cultural and the religious in a way that is akin to what Kaviraj notes about Vivekananda's views about caste. Vivekananda, according to Kaviraj, 'distinguished social practices like caste and patriarchy from the philosophical beliefs of Hindusim' and so 'it was not difficult for him to continue crusading against caste inequality while defending Hindu culture against Christian and rationalistic criticisms' (Kaviraj 2002: 131). Putting caste into the social domain entailed creating room for the consolidation of a modern moral order in which the reorganisation of society along rational lines, via state intervention, can come to be seen as justified. Such emergent understandings contrast starkly with premodern conceptions of state power and of the appropriate nature of relationship between the domain of rule and that of the social. As Kaviraj has persuasively demonstrated, the reorganisation of society through the state was an alien idea in premodern India, where questions about the fate of a caste order were external to the state, given the principled marginality of premodern state power with respect to legislating social orders.[15] Legally driven social change is a new possibility—it just did not exist in the conceptual repertoire of the premodern period, because that period was sustained by a different vision of moral order.

Consider another instance, this one related to the value Ranade attached to setting aside 'distinctions based on birth' (Ranade 1900: 10), and his intervention to put the issue of legitimation of caste-based hierarchical orders into the 'social' rather than 'religious' domain. Such valuation can be better understood as connected to the constitution and emergence of a new moral order in India in which social conventions could be questioned and reformed—by the state, no less—in the direction of ideals like civil liberty, and in ways that allowed some hierarchies to be viewed as questionable and unreasonable, again because of the move in the direction of a different conceptual repertoire.

What can drive exchanges of equivalence? If, as seems to have been the case, the extant concepts and linguistic structures in Ranade's immediate context were insufficient for articulating notions like civil liberty, which had come to acquire currency given the encounter with the West through colonialism, then Ranade's choice (forced though it may have been because of the imperatives around toeing a monotheist line) to draw a comparison of

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[15] See Kaviraj (2005a) for an excellent discussion of the distinction between premodern and modern state power in the Indian context. See also Kaviraj 2014.

bhakti with the Protestant Reformation is prudent for it let him engage with a historical phenomenon that possessed illuminative worth. Whether or not the Reformation is related to civil liberty, Ranade foists the connection. And by positing the Reformation comparable—equivalent—to bhakti, Ranade advances the notion of civil liberty as accessible, and even intimate, to life-worlds resonant with bhakti. In exercises of equivalence, the attempt is not so much to 'borrow' an idea as it is to find the closest equivalent terms to 'approximate the ideas' that an actor wants to 'express' (Stewart 2001: 273).

Finally, the establishment of equivalence is to be understood as entailing a presupposition that 'two conceptual worlds are seen to address similar problems in similar ways, *without ever proposing that they are identical*; to express one in terms of the other – the quintessential metaphoric step – remains an act of translation, not an assertion of identity or some mysterious change of allegiance on the part of the author' (ibid: 284; emphasis mine). It entails an exploration of the other to illuminate aspects of one's own self (ibid: 287). And it is a kind of 'accommodation' of, not 'conversion' to, another approximate but not identical conceptual lexicon that might eventually even allow for some appropriation to take place (ibid: 276). In the case of Ranade, his broad association of the Protestant Reformation with civil liberty, and his claim that what the Reformation achieved for people in Europe was achieved in India by the saints and prophets, paves the way not for identification or imitation of the West but for something like an Indian liberalism to gain foothold, which Ranade was definitely instrumental in ushering in.[16] Notice, however, that an acknowledgement of the presence of liberal elements in Ranade's social and political thought, especially with respect to faith in the indispensability of the instrumentalities of the state for providing political conditions suitable for securing the liberty of persons, may not be coterminous with calling Ranade a liberal.

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[16] See Lamba (2011) for arguments about how the political thought of Phule and Ranade generated conceptual space for the endorsement of liberal institutions in an emergent modern India.

WHEN EQUIVALENCE IS NOT POSSIBLE

Interestingly, however, significant points of divergence between the kinds of religiosity associated with bhakti and the Protestant Reformation in Europe begin to show up as Ranade's comparison advances. That is, some kind of *untranslatability* is encountered because the notion of monotheism as associated with Abrahamic religions clashes with another kind of monotheism understood and practiced in the subcontinent. The sense of monotheism is not 'new' on the subcontinent; in fact, it has its own distinctive and well-shared conception of it (Kaviraj 2014). The extant conception of monotheism on the subcontinent bubbles up in Ranade's point-by-point comparison of bhakti with Protestantism, and then serves to highlight a point of divergence. In these parts of the comparison Ranade, almost ineluctably, ends up underscoring an important disjuncture, before sliding back to positing symmetries and congruence between the Indian and the European experiences. I think it is precisely in these tension-ridden parts of Ranade's reflections that it becomes possible to discern emergent shifts—including resistances, improvisations and accommodations of older conceptual clusters—for a consolidation of the meanings and functions of religion integral to the new vision of moral order in modern India. I call these parts of Ranade's comparison tension-ridden because in them the pursued conformity with the western European normative standard of religion remains unachieved due to the significant moments of disjuncture and untranslatability.

One disjuncture is registered while Ranade addresses the symmetries between aspects of bhakti and the Protestant Reformation on the issues of image-worship and monotheism. Even if the poet-saints' tradition did not assume the 'iconoclastic form' adopted by some of the stricter Protestant reformers, Ranade insists that there were other markers of convergence between bhakti and the Reformation with respect to monotheism. Ranade says:

> Polytheistic worship was condemned both in theory and in practice by the saints and prophets of Maharashtra. Each of them had his distinctive favourite form of the divine incarnation, and this worship of one favourite form left no room for allegiance to other gods. Ramdas, for instance, worshipped God under the name of Rama; Tukaram, Chokhamela and Namdev under the name of

> Vithoba; Narahari Sonar and Nagnath under the name of Shiva […]. (Ranade 1900: 162–163).

Ranade even goes so far as to say that 'the supremacy of one God, one without a second, was the first article of the creed with every one of these saints, which they would not allow any body to question or challenge' (ibid.: 163). But just after announcing such perfect symmetry with monotheism of the kind that characterises Abrahamic religion, Ranade discerns something quite jarring:

> At the same time, as observed above, the iconoclastic spirit was never characteristic of this country and all the various forms in which God was worshipped were believed to merge finally into the one Supreme Providence or Brahman. This tendency of the national mind was a very old tendency. Even in Vedic times, Indra, and Varun, Marut and Rudra, while they were separately invoked at the sacrifices offered for their acceptance, were all regarded as interchangeable forms of the one and supreme Lord of creation. This same tendency explains the comparative indifference with which the saints and prophets treated the question of image worship (ibid.).

As it turns out, and possibly unbeknownst to him, Ranade's reflections touch upon a crucial distinction between two kinds of monotheism that contemporary political theorists like Rajeev Bhargava have recently underscored. Drawing on the notion of the Mosaic distinction spelt out by Jan Assmann, Bhargava distinguishes between inclusive and exclusionary forms of monotheism (Bhargava 2016). Inclusive monotheism, Bhargava points out, accepts the idea of oneness of god without hinging on demonstrating the falsity or truth of some god or gods. Exclusionary monotheism, on the other hand, is associated with an insistence on one true God and a concomitant judgment about other gods as false. Bhargava clarifies how inclusive monotheism, through practices of translatability or hyphenated conceptions of god, has allowed difference to coexist on the subcontinent without the need to perceive the presence of different other, inside or outside one's group, as an existential threat (ibid.).

Returning to Ranade's text, it is the inclination toward 'inclusive' monotheism that Ranade includes and underscores as characteristic of the approach in which God was worshipped in 'this country'. In the quote above Ranade notes how different gods 'were all regarded as interchangeable forms of the one and

supreme Lord of creation' (Ranade 1900: 163). He continues reflection on this point when he notes and applauds how such an inclination toward inter-changeable forms of one god continues to be at work in notions such as those of the 'essential unity of Alla with Rama', which 'made the nation more humane, at the same time more prone to hold together by mutual toleration' (ibid.: 171–172). Admittedly, Ranade is vaunting these aspects of the perspectives of the saints and prophets, and that characterised pan-Indian bhakti too. Ranade's reflections on Kabir, Nanak and other poet-saints associated with bhakti outside Maharashtra, extend the scope his analysis about the inheritance of the visions of community advanced by those saints and prophets to the subcontinent more generally (and as mentioned earlier, Hawley also notes this pan-Indian sense of bhakti in Ranade).

If one takes the scholarship of Muzaffar Alam (2004), Sudipta Kaviraj[17] and Rajeev Bhargava seriously, as I do, then Ranade's registering of the divergence from the *model* of monotheism expressed by the religious structures of the coloniser, is more than an act of courage and reversal of gaze. The recent work of the contemporary scholars mentioned above is marked by an affirmation that an inclusive and accommodative stance toward religious diversity has been an oft-repeated stance in the subcontinent's long history.[18] In Ranade's reflections about bhakti, it becomes possible to see how an older notion, that permitted all to belong in the game,[19] asserts itself in the course of translation as equivalence.[20]

The above considerations about the assertion of difference call attention to the notion of 'bricolage' as developed by Margaret Leslie (1970). The

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[17] For an illuminating and detailed account of how diversity and tolerance were worked out in ancient, medieval and colonial-modern India, without leading to a withering of religion on the subcontinent, see also Sudipta Kaviraj (2016).

[18] In fact, in *Rise of the Maratha Power* Ranade alludes to Akbar and Sawai Jaisingh in a manner that is startlingly similar to how the contemporary scholars mentioned above recall political moments when rulers chose a political morality that permitted diverse faiths a level-playing field even when they could have acted contrarily (Ranade 1900: 51).

[19] In using this phrase I am recalling Hawley's way of thinking about inclusion and belonging as worked out in a chapter titled "Bhakti, Democracy and the Study of Religion" (Hawley 2005).

[20] One is reminded of Gandhi's "all-inclusive Hinduism" here, which as Rajeev Bhargava (2015) has argued, resonates with sympathies for an inclusive monotheism. And, given this shared reference to something like an inclusive monotheism in the work of Ranade and Gandhi, I would wholeheartedly support the spirit behind the line that Aparna Devare (2019) draws from Ranade to Gandhi when it comes to thinking about religion and politics in the subcontinent.

notion helps to register how, despite reaching a point of cessation/interruption with respect to the drawing of convergences in exercises for establishing equivalence (undertaken to comprehend and respond to political, conceptual and social change), even encounters with the interruptions and divergences/differences during a comparison can serve as useful sites for considering transtemporal translations, and for studying movements in conceptual and political realms therein.

For the instance at hand, i.e., Ranade's observation about the divergence in Indian ideas and practices from the kind of monotheism associated with the Protestant Reformation, bricolage serves as an appropriate frame to steadily continue to evaluate the worth of the exchange that is afoot in Ranade's reflections. An older, resilient, and possibly stubbornly relevant concept—pertaining to a kind of openness that could anchor a diversity of faiths—rears its head in the course of Ranade's attempts to reckon with and respond to a hegemonically dominant understanding of monotheism. Ranade shows no coyness in pointing out the difference; in fact, the difference is listed in a most casual manner and taken-for-granted manner, with no attendant pomp or apology. For a contemporary reader of the text who is interested in the long history of religious diversity on the subcontinent, Ranade's comparison with Europe is one to be vaunted for what it reveals about extant background understandings with respect to religious heterogeneity. The reader is forced to reckon with the silent yet forceful intervention. It comes across as a brave act in the context of the currency of civilizational discourse in a colony whilst also demonstrating a certain honesty in Ranade's search for equivalence. Retrospectively, then, it adds some persuasive force to Ranade's comparison, and encourages engagement with it.

Most of all, however, in our example of Ranade's comparison, the breakdown of equivalence—but not of the exchange—shows an acknowledgement by Ranade of an abiding feature of Indian monotheism, its openness to multiple religions that are seen as translatable or as different paths leading up to the same place, thereby expressing a form of religious accommodation. Ranade even claims a longstanding presence of this feature — 'this tendency of the national mind was a very old tendency' and it spanned from 'vedic

times' (Ranade 1900: 163, see also 50–52).[21] But the matter of factness with which the divergence is registered leads one to speculate that this notion was integral to the background understandings of Ranade's times, a time when sweeping social changes were rife.

All of the above discussion prompts a claim, which, admittedly, can endure further clarification. But let me advance it nevertheless. I would not call it vacuous speculation, but rather something like a stretch of imagination grounded in an exercise of joining the dots. Ranade's refusal to iron out differences with the dominant model of religion in colonial India is a signal of his easy recognition of a conception of monotheism in his time. He makes no mention of it as weakened or extinct. But what does also happen is that this conception gets a fresh lease of life in being reiterated by a prominent figure. It seems to have stayed long enough to find resonance in Rabindranath Tagore's understandings of unity in diversity, and Gandhi's conception of an inclusive Hinduism alongside his idea of equal respect for all religions. This idea, that we today call inclusive monotheism, seems to have enjoyed currency even in the high noon of anti-colonial nationalism. Bhakti too seems to have travelled further on in modern India — it caught Rabindranath Tagore's fancy fulsomely, and Kshitimohan Sen's too. Contemporary secularists cleave to the fifteenth-century poet-saint Kabir as Hindu nationalism becomes more mass-based and militant (cf. Bharucha 1993). Scholars rightly remind us of the problem in construing bhakti only as an emancipatory force, but the idea of bhakti that is current is also one that, as Jack Hawley acknowledged in an interview in the daily *The Hindu*: that 'challenges communal religion' (Raman 2016). So what is the point here? It is to say that some of the ideas found in Ranade's engagement with bhakti—about inclusive monotheism, and about bhakti as a basis for integration of a community—still seem to be around, both at a popular level and as

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[21] For reasons of space, I am unable to develop this point, but Ranade's reflections in this essay also contain rich insights for tracking the shifting sense of relationships between Hindus and Muslims. While some of his statements refer to the 'militant religion of Mahomedanism' (Ranade 1900: 170), there are other parts of the text where he lauds efforts for the 'reconciliation' of Hindus and Muslims in the 'mutual recognition of the unity of Alla with Rama' (ibid.: 171). Elsewhere in *Rise of the Maratha Power,* Ranade's *normative endorsement* of something like inclusive monotheism stands well demonstrated. He says only 'bigots' challenged the higher teaching of the oneness of God that exhorted people to 'identify Ram with Rahim', in the interest of both 'freedom from the bonds of formal ritualism and caste distinctions', and getting them to 'unite' 'in common love of man and faith in one God' (ibid.: 50–51).

matters of scholarly enquiry. But what is the importance of this observation? The importance lies in its basis for generating the claim that normatively charged notions like unity, coexistence, inclusion, and integration without the erasure of heterogeneity have a place in the vision of moral order that animates the modern Indian social imaginary. These notions are clustered within conceptions of secularism, democracy, state-society relationships that are fighting creeds alongside other understandings of religion-based modern political communities. It is helpful to recall Kaviraj's statement that 'the social effectiveness of the prior practices are never entirely neutralised by the reception of new ways of doing things' (Kaviraj 2005b: 519). A further claim, and admittedly I am advancing a rudimentary formulation of it, is that the category of religion is an important placeholder for determining how questions about freedom and hierarchy got worked out within the context of another important placeholder in understanding the emergent Indian modern moral order, which as Kaviraj (2005a) persuasively indicates, is the modern state and its instrumentalities.

But, furthermore, for a contemporary bricoleur inspired by Margaret Leslie, what also has to be acknowledged inevitably is the *recurrence* in the subcontinent of a cluster of concepts. The recurrent cluster I have in mind pertains to what is today being called inclusive monotheism, the contents of which would be comprehensible broadly to Ranade, Tagore and Gandhi. And this same cluster also functions as a bridge between the present and numerous instances from the past where too ideas akin to inclusive monothesim were exhorted, such that this cluster of concepts enjoys *transtemporal* worth. As such, in the case of the study of concepts and ideas in the long Indian past, there seems to be a viability, and even desirability, of asking if there may indeed be some perennial transtemporally relevant questions in ways irreducible to projections of essentialism. The discussion of this article shows one instance — Ranade's engagement with the saints of Maharashtra — of how the Indian case can bring to the fore this methodological issue. Attention to Ranade's recalling of bhakti sheds light on the positive potential of something like *bricolage*,[22] and illustrates possibilities for studying a stock

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[22] I draw on Margaret Leslie's engagement with Levi Strauss's notion of bricolage (Leslie 1970: 443) Although I am unable to develop the point here, my interest in giving attention to the

of concepts nested in transtemporal contexts without disproportionate worry about either anachronism or the presupposition that there are no perennial issues in the history of ideas (cf. Skinner 1969).[23] Thus it is that I concur with Rajeev Bhargava's suggestion (made in the context of his work on the contents of some Ashokan edicts and the nature of their link to issues in contemporary Indian secularism) about the need for caution with respect to the methodological assumption 'that ideas presuppose specific contexts and these contexts are not reproduced from time to time' (Bhargava 2014: 174). And further, I would underscore the importance of devices of translation as equivalence and bricolage for studying transhistorical concepts, such as the ones pertaining to inclusive monotheism. To be sure, the suggestions here are not fully fleshed out and remain in the form of an outline that must be developed.

But let me sum up. Right after recording observations about a distinctive national tendency to consider diverse gods as 'interchangeable forms of the one supreme Lord of creation', Ranade slides back into evaluating Indian practices in light of Orientalist and missionary lenses, especially when he engages the issue of the worship of 'stocks and stones' (Ranade 1900: 164). The pressure to conform to the gaze of those lenses is palpable again, right after he reversed it and registered the difference in Indian approaches to monotheism. In a direct response to the kinds of statement about Hinduism made by Monier-Williams, Ranade goes on to say that it would be a 'complete misunderstanding' to consider members of the bhakti tradition as 'idolaters in the objectionable sense of the word. They did not worship stocks and stones' (ibid.).

Still, what I hope will stay as a point to reckon with is how, with respect to changes emergent in encounters between the old and new, the device of

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notion of bricolage is also related to developing the methodological possibilities contained within the notion of 'conceptual spaces' advanced by Rajeev Bhargava (2014).

[23] To be fair, Skinner seems to water down his opposition to the existence of perennial issues in philosophy when he concedes that, if 'sufficiently abstractly framed' it may be coherent to talk of some 'apparently perennial questions' (Skinner 1969: 52). But he immediately raises the threshold again when he says the following: 'All I wish to insist is that whenever it is claimed that the point of the historical study of such questions is that we may learn directly from the answers, it will be found that what counts as an answer will usually look, in a different culture or period, so different in itself that it can hardly be in the least useful even to go on thinking of the relevant question as being "the same" in the required sense after all. More crudely: we must learn to do our own thinking for ourselves' (ibid.).

translation can make accessible the imagination of innovative responses to political and conceptual problems by political actors—like Ranade—who were also theorising about their times.[24]

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[24] My understanding of the issues involved here is inspired by James Farr's insights for understanding conceptual change 'politically' (Farr 1989).

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Enlightened Religion?
On Buddhism in Karl Gjellerup's novel *Die Weltwanderer* (*The Wanderers of the World*, 1910)

Isabella Schwaderer

Abstract: In the broader discourse regarding the relationship between religion and secularism in modern Imperial Germany (1871–1918), this article focuses on the impact of Arthur Schopenhauer and his understanding of Indian philosophy on debates on a 'regeneration of Christianity'. In the early 20th century, thanks to the mediating activities of philosophical societies and cultural magazines, these debates spread from academic circles and spilled over into popular culture. This article explains how the popularisation of Indian texts by scholars such as Paul Deussen and Karl Eugen Neumann aimed to reorient Western philosophy and Christian faith. Karl Gjellerup's once-famous, now almost forgotten, novel *Die Weltwanderer* (*The Wanderers of the World*, 1910) will serve as a literary example of an attempt at a nationalistic reorientation of Christianity between artistic fantasies of redemption and nationalist and racialised beliefs.

NEGOTIATING THE RELIGIOUS IN IMPERIAL GERMANY

If we examine the negotiation of the religious and the secular in Germany, this occurs over a long period of time in parallel with broader debates about a nationally oriented Christianity[1] formed from autochthonous elements. This topic seems to have received little attention so far for a variety of reasons. First, a final step towards secularisation in German history took place relatively late: the constitution of the Weimar Republic (1919–1933) finally imposed a reorganisation of the relationship between church and state. With the end of the monarchy in 1918, Kaiser Wilhelm II went into exile. With this, not only a secular ruler abdicated but also a religious leader, for Wilhelm II was also the supreme bishop of the Protestant Church of Prussia. This paved the way for further measures toward secularisation, and the idea of a nationally oriented form of Christianity for the German Empire seemed like another

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[1] I understand the terms Christian/Christianity, as well as Buddhist/Buddhism and Hinduism as constructed and in their mutual dependence in the sense of a global history of religions, cf. Thurner 2021: 1–19.

detour toward modern developments. On the other hand, as Rebekka Habermas notes, 'this long-lasting ignorance was rampant among German historians, who all shared the same Weberian vision of nineteenth-century Germany as a country experiencing an increasing disenchantment and decline of religious world-views' (Habermas 2019: 5). This neglect of religion's social and cultural function in the imperial era was also true for a long time among specialists in religious studies and sociology of religion. However, a concept of religion understood anthropologically and culturally in the Geertzian sense, which defines religion as a symbol system, can show the structure-forming power of religion (ibid.) and add another layer of understanding to the religious vs secular debate. In this, notions of the secular compete with different ideas around spiritual renewals, which, however, are not represented in a narrative determined by the secularisation thesis.

In the meantime, new approaches to studies of religion have been explored by problematising and historicising the construction of the complementary terms 'religious' and 'secular' (Asad 2003). The focus here is on the agency of subjects in processes of religio-secularisation and the specific places where religion and the secular are produced, demarcated, and distinguished (Dreßler & Mandair 2011b). This can lead to insights regarding the nodes of discourses from where new ideas around the role of religion in society emerge, especially in the context of global history (Wohlrab-Sahr & Kleine 2021; Maltese & Strube 2021). In this way, the current studies about religion and secularism can help comprehend the processes of negotiation that have led to a polarisation of the 'religious' and the 'secular' in German history. According to Asad, these are not 'essentially fixed categories' (Asad 2003, quoted after Habermas 2019: 5), and 'the alleged self-evident character of the secular as simply referring to the absence of religion or the banning of religion to the private sphere' (ibid.) should also be reconsidered. They can thus be understood as an integral part of and only within the context of confessional debates, and therefore more as narratives than timeless theory (Habermas 2019: 4; Borutta 2010). A closer look at the religious debates and assumptions in the German Empire reveals a variety of discourses that question a linear and irreversible movement towards modernism equated with secularism. The material presented in this article illuminates a section of the debates on religion and modernity. Traditional religion is not contrasted with

a concept of modernity of any kind but rather with a religious renewal that overcomes and heals the breaches of the modern age. Indeed, the period witnessed several different formations struggling for a form of Christianity that was compatible with modernity. The discussions here are related to the negotiations of the religious and the secular in the Wilhelmine Empire and aim at establishing a renewal of traditional Christianity on a national base integrating aspects of Indian traditions.

The article has three sections. It starts with considerations around a philosophical association, the *Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft* (Schopenhauer-Society). The associations can be seen as a network of persons interested in debating, among other things, aspects of reconstructing Christianity from national, autochthonous resources, namely philosophical idealism, art, and philology, as the basis to explore what is genuine *German*. As the main topic of this article, I have chosen a literary example, a novel written by a member of the Schopenhauer Society, Karl Gjellerup's book *Die Weltwanderer*, because from this emerges an opposition of two different variations of an idealised German-Indian religion: either (a projection of) Vedantism or Buddhism, both seen through a Christian lens. In a third part, this article contextualises Gjellerup's interpretation of Buddhism that goes back to Arthur Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner, which at the beginning of the 19th century was debated along with a nationalist understanding of Christian traditions. In Gjellerup's case, specifically, Buddhism became a cypher for a philosophical religion beyond a theistic belief system, i.e., a system presupposing a concept of God as a person, combining a long-standing tradition of religious anti-Judaism with more recent antisemitic invectives. Finally, against the backdrop of the politically restrictive climate of the imperial era, this study of a text serves as an example of how a bourgeois elite erects and perpetuates its political interests in cultural-political debates installing new religious models against the alleged menace of secularism and democratic institutions.

The Schopenhauer-Society: Where Philosophy, Religion and Arts meet … Richard Wagner

The philosophical tradition, going back to Immanuel Kant's *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der Vernunft* (*Religion within the Limits of Reason*, 1793), repeatedly formulated new approaches to reconciling reason and religion as well

as religion and natural science. From the middle of the 19th century on, Arthur Schopenhauer, who was not particularly successful in the academic world, had a broad impact on a wide range of non-academic readers, and many artists (Mann 1974 [1938]: 530). Writers, composers, and painters, some of whom were women,[2] were among those who served to popularise his work. His followers saw in him not only the culmination of Kant's teachings and Western philosophy in general but also regarded him as an innovator when it came to questions concerning the compatibility of empirical natural sciences and transcendentally conceived metaphysics. Additionally, as Christopher Ryan has pointed out, Schopenhauer 'assimilated the ancient Religions of India to his system to create a centre of opposition to positivism and materialism, and to fill the gap opened up by the decline of Christian institutions in the wake of the increasing awareness of the intellectual indefensibility of historical Christianity' (Ryan 2010: 62). Schopenhauer thus became the focus of a 'kind of counterculture within the *Kaiserreich*, which popularised discourses on non-Western religions' (Knöbl 2019: 41; Marchand 2009: 302) and, indirectly, discourses on the compatibility of the *Christian* faith with modernity. This counterculture incorporated many aspects of what has been coined *German Orientalism* (Marchand 2009) and shared high esteem for the allegedly common linguistic, spiritual and, to a certain degree, racial origins of Germans and Indians (Aryans).

The following will examine a dispute that took place within a particular social group, namely the members of a philosophical association, the Schopenhauer-Society, founded in 1911 by, among others, Paul Deussen (1845–1919), professor of history of philosophy at the University of Kiel, and appointed editor of the first complete critical edition of Schopenhauer's works. He earned his place in the history of philosophy not for his writings but primarily for his life-long friendship with Friedrich Nietzsche (Deussen 1901). Deussen studied Indian wisdom traditions intensively, especially the Upanishads, which through their most important thinker Shankara (around 800 AD) became the basis of a doctrine (*vedānta*) in which the individual Self, the Human Soul (*ātman*) is seen as identical to the World Soul (*brahman*), the All-One. This also means that the multiplicity of things, the world, is

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[2] The Schopenhauer-Society developed from an academic, predominantly male association into a more diverse group over the years. The history of the women of the Schopenhauer-Society is an absolute desideratum of research.

ultimately an illusion (*māyā*) and that the ultimate mystical experience is the insight that there is no separation between creator and creature (*advaita*).

Deussen would also never tire of claiming an unbroken continuity from Indian philosophy, via the Platonism of Greek antiquity to Kant's metaphysics and its perfector Schopenhauer. Thus, in the preface to his first work of systematisation in the history of philosophy, he writes of the 'imperishable content of the doctrine' and the 'inner agreement with the most important circles of thought of the past, especially the Brahmavidyâ of the Indians, the doctrine of ideas of Plato and the theology of Christianity'[3] (Deussen [1877] 1890: V). He continues: 'Religion and philosophy are the two forms in which metaphysics developed since the most ancient times, especially in the Indian, Greek and Christian worlds' until Kant laid 'the foundations for a completely scientific metaphysics', on the basis of which Schopenhauer built a 'metaphysical edifice without equal', which will remain an 'indelible possession of mankind' (ibid.: 7).[4] Deussen's *opus magnum*, the seven-volume *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Religionen* (*General History of Philosophy with Special Reference to Religions*, 1894–1917), integrated the histories of philosophy and religion(s) and popularised the idea of an idealistic, eternal truth of 'Aryan' religion (Marchand 2009: 308; Myers 2013: 172–184). Its other was not only what Deussen deemed the theistic 'religious concepts of the Semites'[5] (Deussen 1913b: 3) which included a belief in a personalised God, but also 'the desolation of an empirical worldview' and of a 'materialism that mocks philosophy and religion' and whose 'consequences in the field of art are platitudinous and vulgar, and in the field of morality, desolate and nefarious'[6] (Deussen [1877] 1890: 16).

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[3] 'unvergängliche Gehalt der Lehre', 'innere Übereinstimmung mit den wichtigsten Gedankenkreisen der Vergangenheit, insbesondre der Brahmavidyâ der Inder, der Ideenlehre des Platon und der Theologie des Christentums'. All translations were made by the author.

[4] 'Religion und Philosophie sind die beiden Formen, in denen sich die Metaphysik seit den ältesten Zeiten entwickelt [hat], besonders in der Indischen, Griechischen und Christlichen Welt,' bis Kant 'die Grundlagen zu einer vollkommen wissenschaftlichen Metaphysik' legte, auf dessen Grundlage Schopenhauer einen 'metaphysischen Bau ohne Gleichen' aufbaut, 'der ein unverlierbares Besitztum der Menschheit bleiben wird.'

[5] 'religiöse[n] Vorstellungen der Semiten'.

[6] 'Trostlosigkeit der empirischen Weltanschauung: So gewiß der Materialismus allem Tiefsten und Höchsten der Philosophie und Religion Hohn spricht, so gewiß Konsequenzen auf dem Gebiet der Kunst platt und gemein, auf dem der Moral trostlos und ruchlos sind, - ebenso gewiß bleibt es, daß er auf *empirischem Standpunkte* die allein richtige und konsequente

Following these ideas, many of the protagonists of this counterculture, a heterogeneous group of personalities, shared a certain degree of mistrust about modernity when understood in materialistic terms. They gathered in the Schopenhauer-Society (Schwaderer 2021), which had about 400 members shortly after its founding and gained about 80–100 new ones every year until the end of the First World War.[7] Particularly prominent in the Society's *Yearbook* publications are the intertwined thematic complexes of Schopenhauer's philosophy, namely, Indian religion, art, and especially music. Interestingly, next to Schopenhauer, a key figure in the common debates was Richard Wagner who recognised in Schopenhauer many of his own ideas, which he developed in his musical dramas (Karnes & Mitchell 2020). Wagner's musical visions were closely linked to his cultural criticism and anti-Semitic invectives (Bermbach 2011; Hein 1996), ideas, which in the early 19th century experienced a strong revival. The Schopenhauer-Society absorbed a number of persons that frequented also the circle of the Wagner-family in Bayreuth and gathered, thus, artists and critics that dreamed of religious renewal in national terms, for example, Indologist Leopold von Schroeder[8] (1851–1920), musicologist Arthur Prüfer[9] (1868–1944), composer Felix Gotthelf[10] (1867–1930), translator of Buddhist Pali-texts Karl Eugen Neumann[11] (1865–1915), translator and populariser of Arthur Gobineau in

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Weltanschauung […] ist […] daher es verlorene Mühe ist, den *Materialismus widerlegen* zu wollen' (Highlights by Paul Deussen).

[7] On the history and development of the Schopenhauer-Society see Hansert 2010; Ciracì 2011.

[8] Von Schroeder's comparison of Buddhism and Christianity can be found in Schroeder 1893. He was seen as an Indologist, but he wrote more than one theatrical plays on Indian subjects (Roy 2017: 739). On von Schroeder's views on what he understood as 'Aryan Religion' see Myers 2013: 184–191; his connections with the Wagnerians in Roy 2017: 740–741.

[9] Prüfer published a collection of lectures (Prüfer 1909) on various aspects of Wagner's works and donated the proceeds of the book to the Richard-Wagner-Scholarship-Foundation.

[10] Gotthelf composed an 'Indian' Opera in Wagnerian style which von Schroeder reviewed enthusiastically (Schroeder 1917) and published essays on the connections of Schopenhauer and Wagner (Gotthelf 1915 & 1916).

[11] Together with the society's eventual first chairman Deussen, Neumann also belonged to the group of first signatories of an appeal to found the Schopenhauer-Society in 1911 (Hansert 2010: 33).

Germany Ludwig Schemann[12] (1852–1938), and art historian and Cosima Wagner's son-in-law Henry Thode (1857–1920), to name just a few.

In the following, the case of German-Danish writer Karl Gjellerup (1857–1919), a member of the Schopenhauer-Society from its very beginning, who won the 1917 Nobel Prize for Literature, will be treated as an example of someone who took part in the debates around alternatives to the traditional Christian faith as a moral base for the society of his time from an artistic perspective. Inspired by Schopenhauer's interest in Indian philosophy and Wagner's musical works he interacted in a learned debate with his teacher and friend Paul Deussen, creating literary works meant to entertain the reader and disseminate what he deemed Buddhist religion.

A PASSION FOR GERMANY: BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON AN ALMOST FORGOTTEN AUTHOR

Karl Adolph Gjellerup was born on 2 June 1857 in Roholte, Denmark.[13] When he was three years old, his father died. He went into the care of his uncle, pastor Johannes Fiebiger, and his wife. In the religious and erudite vicarage, Gjellerup developed his literary inclinations and his enthusiasm for German literature and culture at an early age. At the request of his foster parents in Copenhagen, Gjellerup began to study theology, not to become a pastor but because he saw it as an opportunity to develop his interest in German education. His studies brought him to engage in biblical criticism, which shaped his later opinions on religion. After completing his studies, he wrote his first prose works, where he expressed his enthusiasm for what he perceived as the epitome of German culture, literature, and philosophy. He explained Wagner's *The Ring of the Niebelung* to his Danish readers (Gjellerup 1891). His turn in favour of German idealism eventually caused a break with the literary landscape of Gjellerup's homeland and, following a period of turbulence in his life, led to his move to Dresden, the hometown of his wife Eugenia. There, under the influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy of world and self-negation, Gjellerup not only gained a different view of Christianity, from

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[12] Schemann and Gjellerup exchanged letters from 1900 for two decades exchanging and commenting on each other's publications. The correspondence is located under the signatures NL 12/603 and NL 12/1889 in the archives of the University Library of Freiburg.

[13] A detailed biography along with archival documents is included in Nybo 2002.

which he had alienated himself during his theological studies (Gjellerup 1922: 21), but this also led him to a deeper engagement with Indian themes in the 1890s (Fedrich 1995: IV). Gjellerup immersed himself in Buddhism and Vedanta philosophy and read major German publications on these subjects. He was particularly impressed by Deussen's philosophical treatises and translations of Vedic texts and by the work of Neumann. Both personalities later belonged to Gjellerup's circle of friends.

Gjellerup was also active as a contributor to the society's *Yearbook* as he had been for the *Bayreuther Blätter*, the mouthpiece of Richard Wagner's family and spiritual heirs. These activities were highly appreciated, and his literary treatment of Indian themes and their subsequent dissemination to a broad public helped him open up important contacts with publishers (Gjellerup 1922: 21). Indeed, his first mention in documents compiled by the Nobel Prize for Literature Committee as early as 1911 came from a letter of recommendation signed by German professors from precisely these circles of Wagner and Schopenhauer supporters;[14] it took until 1917, however, before he was awarded the prize. Gjellerup's literary work was considered an art form committed to his time's 'high idealistic values'. These values that the committee mentions are directly influenced by his engagement with an understanding of Buddhism coined by Schopenhauer and Wagner. In the tense atmosphere around 1910, the invocation of spiritual values, religious renewal and German traditions appealed to readers and created cohesion through shared convictions and beliefs.

GJELLERUP'S BUDDHIST NOVEL: SUFFERING MEN AND REDEMPTION AT THE EXPENSE OF WOMEN IN *DIE WELTWANDERER*

While Gjellerup had dedicated his first 'Indian' drama, *Die Opferfeuer* (*The Sacrificial Fires*, 1903) to his friend and role model Paul Deussen, and had developed his plot based on Vedic scriptures, his most famous novel *Der Pilger Kamanita* (*The Pilgrim Kamanita*, 1906) narrates legends about the Buddha's life. This shift in emphasis from Vedic to Buddhist religion was not

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[14] The initiator of this letter was Ludwig Schemann from Freiburg; other signatories were Arthur Böhtlingk, Paul Deussen, Arthur Drews, Otto Harnack, Leopold von Schroeder, Henry Thode, Georg Treu and Hermann Türck. Cf. Gjellerup's letter to Otto Borchsenius of 29.06.1911, KB, Nks 46561 4°, Nybo 2002: 326 and n. 507.

accidental, and it eventually resulted in *Die Weltwanderer*), an imaginative and at times grotesque adventure novel full of Orientalist clichés depicting romantic love and palace intrigue against a stereotypical exotic backdrop. In the following, the novel's somewhat confusing plot will not be reproduced in total, but only those parts that are necessary to isolate a conflict that illustrates Gjellerup's worldview. Comparing the novel with journalistic texts by the author, we witness a development from a specific academic interpretation of (ancient) Indian philosophy as popularised by Deussen toward a blending of Buddhist and Christian motives that were to form Gjellerup's take on Schopenhauer's philosophy and Wagner's musical and cultural visions.

The novel begins with a description of a German professor and his daughter Amanda, the story's protagonist. The professor's description fits Paul Deussen in his physical appearance and his habitus. Gjellerup primarily uses personal details to emphasise in his character the very traits of a German professor par excellence that Paul Deussen embodied (Ross 1994). The descriptions of Indian people and their living conditions, which display (from today's point of view) the professor's western arrogance and colonial attitude (Delfs 2017), were not invented by Gjellerup alone but borrowed from Deussen's travelogues, *Erinnerungen an Indien* (*Memories of India*, 1904), as well as from possible personal information that can be accessed with the help of his autobiography, *Mein Leben* (*My Life*, 1922), published posthumously by his daughter Erika Rosenthal-Deussen (1894–1956).[15]

The character of the professor is described rather unsympathetically as someone 'whose aesthetic sense was merely moderately developed' (Gjellerup [1910] 1922: 13). The constellation of the travelling couple, the professor with his daughter, is also close to the model of Deussen, who undertook a six-month study trip to India in 1892–93 and, somewhat unusually for the time, took along his wife Marie (née Volkmar, 1861–1914), 14 years his junior. The fictional and the 'real' professor share views on philosophy and religion. Schopenhauer also makes a small appearance in the novel (ibid.: 55). The character of Professor Eichstätt, like his model, thinks little of supernatural experiences and similar 'irrational elements' (ibid.: 24). Deussen himself had little interest in transcendent experiences and practices of

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[15] On the biography of the committed child and adolescent psychologist Dr. Erika Rosenthal-Deussen cf. Feldhoff 2018.

renunciation. In his descriptions of contemporary Indian religiosity, there is 'often a certain comical disillusion in his dealings with so-called saints. Spiritual emotion made him suspicious. Deussen's faith was philosophy, intuition gained in intellectual abstraction' (Feldhoff 2009: 163). The author Gjellerup maintains a critical distance from his novel's character, and the resemblance the character of the professor in the book bears to Deussen provides grounds for understanding how Gjellerup saw the contrast between himself and the professor from Kiel concerning their interpretations of Indian traditions.

THE VEDANTIST, THE BUDDHIST, AND REDEMPTION THROUGH LOVE: NEGOTIATING RELIGION BETWEEN SCHOPENHAUER AND WAGNER

However, the ironic portrait of Paul Deussen in Gjellerup's novel is more than a purely literary play on an admired friend. Gjellerup's interest in Indian themes flowed not only into his literary works but also into a series of extended essays in various journals from which his readings can be traced. His book reviews included the works of Deussen on Indian and biblical philosophy, the translations of Buddhist texts by Neumann and the works of Deussen's fellow professor and rival[16] at the university of Kiel, Sanskritist Hermann Oldenberg (1854–1920). This allows us to see how he directly related his Indian and Buddhist studies to the cultural processes of his time (McGetchin 2009: 124). Thus, it is possible to reconstruct the contemporary discourses on religion, art, and philosophy from these texts.

However, Gjellerup does not read these as the fruit of philological efforts or philosophical-historical tradition but as personal confessions. For him, the entire concept of his understanding of the world rests on Indian elements transmitted by Schopenhauer and modified in a certain way by his successors. Thus, in a memorial leaflet for Neumann, he summarises less the worldview of the commemorated person than his own:

> One can say that Schopenhauer's philosophy is a double herm with a Buddhist and a Vedantist face. These two physiognomies are represented in our Indology by two different Schopenhauer students: the Pali scholar Karl

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[16] On the rivalry between Deussen and Oldenberg see Feldhoff 2009: 144, 195.

> Eugen Neumann and the Sanskrit scholar Paul Deussen
> (Gjellerup 1919a: 451).

This difference between these two approaches to Schopenhauer's legacy Gjellerup stressed here is his personal interpretation, and I have not found it in other sources. In the context of his publications, I argue that this is not a scholarly comment on different philological approaches but rather an attempt to deduce from these two interpretations of Christianity, one still based on theological traditions (Deussen's Vedantism) and Neumann's non-theistic approach to religion, where morality does not need an understanding of God as a person as final justification (Buddhism).

Next to these two moral and theological approaches, Gjellerup elaborates a third theological concept: a particular notion of love understood as a self-sacrifice. He shared this idea with the composer and musical visionary Richard Wagner, to whom he had dedicated a whole book (Gjellerup 1891) before his commitment to Indian subjects. Wagner had also discovered his spiritual leaning toward Buddhism in his first reading of Schopenhauer in 1854 and saw in the critical element of Schopenhauer's ethics, the principle of the 'Negation of the Will' (Schopenhauer 1988: 319 sqq.), a confirmation of what he deemed a 'redemption-oriented' aspect of Buddhism as a prerequisite for salvation. In Schopenhauer, he found a model for his struggle for the role of love in his musical dramas (Slepčević 1920). Wagner himself wavered in his assessment of redemption, which appears on the one hand as redemption *through* love (for example, in *Tristan and Isolde*) or redemption *from* love, i.e., complete renunciation, as in *Parsifal* or the Buddhist opera sketch *Die Sieger* (*The Victors*) which was never composed (App 2011: 29). Particularly clear for Gjellerup were the traces of an interpretation of Buddhism prefigured by Schopenhauer in the different variants of the conclusion of *Götterdämmerung*. He analyses this as an interweaving of female self-immolation with Schopenhauerian pessimistic ethics, according to which existence itself has no intrinsic value and detachment from it is the only way for the individual to find peace (ibid.: 21–24).

Gjellerup constructed, thus, a more or less consistent eclectic system, in which he addressed the fundamental conflicts of his life, his alienation from traditional Protestant Christianity as well as his romantic inclination to find redemption in love, but ultimately also to distance himself from it, adopting

asceticism and renunciation in chastity instead. In the Schopenhauer-Society, this had an extraordinary response, and it resonated with the debates in the *Yearbook* of the society, where the connections of Schopenhauer and Wagner were perceived predominantly from a religious angle. Although the religious ideas exchanged there have always been touted as the pinnacle of occidental culture, they are philosophically unsophisticated, not to say banal. Arthur Prüfer, musicologist and Wagner specialist, had already connected them in his didactic book *The Work of Bayreuth* (Prüfer 1909) where he also traces back world-redeeming love to Schopenhauer's asceticism, which is a conscious breaking of the will. The result is a concept of redemption through which man (perceived solely as *male*, as will be shown later) can ultimately free himself from a world perceived as suffering, and the Indian ideas of overcoming the world through renunciation, all together found in Wagner's works (ibid: 182–188). Gjellerup's novel can thus also be read as a comment on the widespread disputes around philosophy, religion, and art. He developed a religious vision using literature as a vehicle, as Wagner did in his musical dramas.

Returning to the novel's content, the author consequently split two opposite adaptations of Indian philosophy and religion, both of which go back to Schopenhauer's model, into two of his characters. On the one hand, the German professor is modelled on Paul Deussen, the actual Vedantist, Eichstätt in the novel. On the other, Eichstätt's daughter Amanda, who elegantly overtakes her father with her genuine interest and intuitive understanding of Buddhist culture, is modelled as a Buddhist. Unsurpassed in his knowledge of ancient Indian scriptures, the German professor in the novel remains an ignorant spectator and has no relevant role in the book. This belongs exclusively to his daughter, who both understands the driving elements of the story and, in the end, resolves all conflicts and even brings about her happy ending in both a sensual and supernatural relationship. The elements marked as Buddhist in the novel, reincarnation and the redemption from suffering through love and compassion, are more likely a very idiosyncratic mixture of Christian protestant belief, which was Gjellerup's point of departure, and what he learned about Buddhism from the popular works of Deussen, Neumann, and Oldenberg.

Two narrative levels are interwoven in the novel. The first level is an adventurous story with the journey undertaken by the professor and his daughter, an impending palace revolution, court intrigues and mysterious religious rituals narrated as the present plot. To this, the narrator adds a second narration, in which a very similar story develops in the distant past and presupposes an idea of *karma*, according to which everything happens for a reason. In the novel, Gjellerup introduces the notion of the interconnectedness of human deeds and their consequences wondering, if this was 'the benevolent providence of God, which directs all this for the best [...] or as this ancient land of wisdom taught and had taught before the times of European thought, Karma, an eternal moral law, which guided everything?'[17] (Gjellerup [1910] 1922: 202). Thus, the protagonist Amanda cannot have loved the male protagonist, Sir Edmund Trevelyan, romantic poet and hypermasculine hero with dark sides, for the first time; rather, their connection lies further back and is actualised against the background of the first story. Amanda senses the mysterious link to her own story, 'sees' events less than she only hears them in the account (ibid.: 305), and participates directly in her parallel character Amara's conversion to Buddhism as well as her self-sacrifice to save the man she secretly loves. Amanda, realising that she had averted a catastrophe in one of her earlier existences, recognises her importance in the plan of salvation.

This plot is not arbitrary; Gjellerup adapts this idea of a 'modified renewal of the Indian doctrine of the transmigration of souls' (Gjellerup 1891: 189) from Wagner who also felt a strong connection between his dramas and the Indian thoughts he had read in Schopenhauer. Hence the notion of *karma* fulfils a double function in *The Wanderers of the World*. On the one hand, with the transmigration of souls, the author shapes one of the main themes of his literary work as Buddhist and thus moves into the cosmos of his philosophical-artistic models, Schopenhauer and Wagner. However, the core themes of love/desire - renunciation and redemption can easily be integrated into a Christian worldview. On the other, it connects the two narratives over a long period of time and serves as a justification and rationale for the moral development of the main characters. The book ends—and how

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[17] 'die gütige Vorsehung Gottes, die alles dies zum Besten lenkt [...], oder wie dies alte Land der Weisheit lehrte und vor den Zeiten europäischen Denkens schon gelehrt hatte, das Karma, ein ewiges Moralgesetz, das alles leitete?'

could it not? —with love's victory over wickedness, adultery, and betrayal. The plots of the two narrative strands, which have so far run parallel, unite at the end of the novel. The protagonists of the main narrative finally succeed in breaking the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. They reach redemption by becoming aware of their former ways of existence and averting the catastrophe of their repetition at the last moment.

The second 'Indianising' element Gjellerup introduces in his novel is female self-immolation in the highly debated form of a *sati*, a widow burning. During a discussion within a group of Western travellers, Eichstätt rationalises this phenomenon, which he perceives as barbaric. This custom was, as he states 'subsequently forged into the sacred text by the Brahmins by adding a hook to a Sanskrit letter' (Gjellerup [1910] 1922: 183), taken almost verbatim from (Deussen 1894: 77: 'forged in by the bending of a hook') and explains it as 'fear of the wholly joyless life of Indian widowhood' (Gjellerup [1910] 1922: 183). Taking a contrary view, his daughter Amanda comments on the ensuing discussion as follows:

> But I believe that if such an act is really done out of pure love, if there is no fear of a joyless life involved and the unfortunate woman lies down next to the corpse of her spouse on the funeral pyre because she cannot let go of him. After all, she does not want to live without her beloved, and probably also hopes to be united with him in a blissful life. Then, I do not understand how one can have any other feelings than those of unconditional esteem and admiration before such loyalty even unto death (ibid.: 187).[18]

Amanda thus learns about the Indian custom through conversation and initially integrates it into her ideal of absolute romantic love. As the novel progresses, this theme is shifted to the centre of the second narrative strand by Amanda's alter ego, Amara. However, self-sacrifice and renunciation of love are not enacted in the form of *sati*, in which the wife follows her dead

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[18] 'Aber ich finde, daß, wenn eine solche Handlung wirklich aus reiner Liebe geschieht, wenn gar nicht die Furcht vor einem freudelosen Leben mitspricht, wenn die Unglückliche sich neben den Leichnam ihres Gemahls auf dem Scheiterhaufen hinlegt, weil sie von ihm nicht lassen kann, weil sie ohne den Geliebten nicht leben will und wohl auch hofft, mit ihm in einem seligen Leben vereinigt zu werden, dann verstehe ich nicht, wie man vor einer solchen Treue bis in den Tod hinein andere Gefühle als die der unbedingten Hochachtung und Bewunderung hegen kann.'

husband to the funeral pyre. Still, the woman's willingness to sacrifice goes further. Initially, the girl had decided to consecrate herself as a Buddhist nun, but she changed her mind in order to save her lover. Like the Buddha, who in his lifetime renounced his final enlightenment and liberation to preach and save humanity, she sacrifices herself to save her secret lover from his own deeds and his damnation to eternal rebirth. This, in turn, leads her to thwart a murder and a palace revolution. With a clever plan, she puts herself in the victim's place, is killed and, finally purified, the intruder also dies. However, the couple, temporarily united in a joint suicide, incarnate two millennia later into the two world wanderers, Amanda and her lover, of the main plot and then proceed towards a happy ending. In the gradual unfolding of the novel's Buddhist subtext palpable in the ideas of *karma* and eternal rebirth, the meaning of the initially somewhat obscure title is eventually decipherable. The title *Wanderers of the World* refers to the lovers in the story whose fate unfolds in the first incarnation but is only fulfilled centuries later in a renewed cycle of life and love that turns to the good.

Next to the transmigration of souls Gjellerup thus added another element connecting Schopenhauer and Wagner in this adventurous and, from today's perspective, difficult-to-digest plot. It was the theme of a sinful man who only recognised the meaning of life when a woman sacrificed herself for him, which can be explained by its contextualisation in the author's intellectual horizon and the subjects of popular novels and operas at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is part of his very specific conception of love, which aims at a spiritual merging of the lovers embracing death. Gjellerup's friend and biographer Peter Andreas Rosenberg praised the conclusion of *The Wanderers of the World* in his preface to *Gjellerup's Life in Self-Testimonies*: 'The self-negation in the union of love, the sublimation of instinctual life in religious ecstasy – that is "Isolde's *Liebestod* in words!"' (Gjellerup 1922: 18).[19]

For Gjellerup and his contemporaries, the connection between Buddhism and Isolde's *love-death* lied with none other than Schopenhauer. In his last contribution to the *Yearbook of the Schopenhauer-Society* in 1919, Gjellerup described his eclectic understanding of the philosopher and the central motif, 'the negation of the will to live' (Gjellerup 1919b: 206), which he adapted

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[19] 'Die Selbstverneinung in der Liebesvereinigung, der Untergang des Trieblebens in der religiösen Extase (sic!) – das ist "Isoldens Liebestod" in Worten!'

as the moral foundation of his own religio-philosophical worldview deemed as Buddhist. In the novel, the first self-immolation occurs in the mythical side-narrative, though not at the funeral pyre, but, rather, in connection with a conversion to *Buddhism* of the woman willing to make the sacrifice. Finally, it is all about the last renunciation, which is supposed to result in a union in eternity. Thus Amara, having decided to sacrifice herself to prevent her lover from murdering, prays for this union, which, although for the couple means further immersion in the cycle of becoming and passing away, contains the possibility of purification and redemption:

> Finding each other again and again - may we both go on and on
> Together on pilgrimage, so crisscrossing the vast desert of nature,
> Till rightly purified, cheerless, not suffering ourselves, only pitying,
> Tearing Maya's colourful veil asunder...
> Into the eternal light, we will rise, united, where there is no you and me![20]
> (Gjellerup [1910] 1922: 342).

The motif of female self-sacrifice is a Wagnerian motif that is present in various works: Senta in the *Fliegende Holländer* (*Flying Dutchman*, 1843), Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* (1845), and Brünnhilde on the pyre in the *Götterdämmerung* (*Twilight of the gods*, 1875). The latter has been connected to Wagner's reading of Schopenhauer's Buddhism (Dahlhaus 1971; App 2011) but also on the backdrop of German Orientalism (Sen 2010). The release from suffering thus lies in overcoming the deception of this world (the veil of Maya, Schopenhauer 1988: 456) and a voluntary *Liebestod* (love-death) to be united in the afterlife. Purification and redemption, two religious themes the composer struggles with throughout all his artistic and personal life, thus become possible through the self-immolation of the loving woman, who sacrifices herself and thus becomes fused with the beloved man rather than striving for redemption herself.

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[20] 'Einander immer wieder findend – mögen wir beide fort und fort
Zusammen pilgern, so durchkreuzend die weite Wüste der Natur,
Bis recht geläutert, lustentronnen, nicht leidend selbst, mitleidend nur,
Den buntgewobenen Schleier Mayas zerreißend einst gemeinsamlich
Ins ewige Licht empor wir tauchen, vereint, dort wo kein du und ich!'

Schopenhauer's will and its negation, which manifests itself prominently in erotic love and its renunciation, has been thematised by Gjellerup in various works (Nybo 2002: 133; here also, the discussion of how the motif could also integrate an aspect of Gjellerup's private life). Slepčević already correctly identifies this Buddhist element of redemption as something different: redemption comes through the feminine—a concept that Wagner decisively emphasised throughout his work. He quotes a passage from a letter by Wagner to August Röckel: 'the suffering, self-sacrificing woman finally becomes the true redeemer; for love is actually "the eternal feminine itself"' (Slepčević 1920: 44).

At this point, it is necessary to add some critical remarks. Strictly speaking, we see a patriarchal—and not religious per se—world view with different but exclusively male perspectives: the male characters' passivity and sufferings are widely exposed. Thus, in discourses in which the self is coded as masculine, the woman serves as the *Other*. A woman ready to become a victim can dissolve male pain and use her agency exclusively to carry it to the extreme and redeem the man and the entire community. A woman decides to sacrifice herself, and in his grief over her death, the man understands the meaning of suffering. Her death becomes thus a 'requirement for the preservation of existing cultural norms and values or their regenerative modification' (Bronfen 2017: 181). The mirror image of the protagonist Amanda (who already has *love* in her name), the nun Amara, who ultimately renounces, precisely accomplishes this healing of the schism that her beloved provoked through the palace revolution. In this way, the woman's individual sacrifice also has a collective meaning, bringing the Buddhist view very close to the Christian understanding of a self-sacrificing saviour. In the Wagnerian cosmos, women are more inclined to the flesh and to sin, but if they repent, they can move from the lowest moral level to the highest (Prüfer 1909: 185–188). They can save themselves, usually with the help of a male catalyst for whom she immolates herself, be it Kundry with Parsifal, Senta with the Flying Dutchman, and redeem others. In Gjellerup, this applies to Amara, who vacillates between the negation of this worldly life in ordination as a nun and the ultimate service of love in self-sacrifice.

With his exotic adventure novels, Gjellerup meets the literary needs of his 'civilisation-weary audience' at the turn of the century (Nybo 2002: 260). For Vridhagiri Ganeshan, too, the 'cultural fatigue of Europe' (Ganeshan 1975:

36) forms the backdrop of these and comparable texts of the time. However, reading Gjellerup's novels exclusively in terms of literary escapism would be somewhat reductive. In the pleasing form of fiction, he finds a vehicle for disseminating his religious and ideological ideas, which go beyond fictional entertainment and aim at a cultural renewal.

BETWEEN INDIA AND GERMANY: FORMATIONS OF A DISCOURSE AROUND A MODERN CHRISTIANITY

While Perry Myers claims that 'Deussen […] had no apparent organizational imperatives that might have emerged from his account of Schopenhauer. He never sought to found any social, religious, or political movements' (Myers 2013: 184), I suggest that the Schopenhauer-Society, his 'most beloved child', as his daughter Erika states in the afterword of Deussen's memoirs (Deussen 1922: 352) is exactly this: a platform to disseminate Schopenhauer's thought to a wide audience and whose publications are intended to 'provide a picture of the growing influence of Schopenhauer's philosophy on all circles of the nation and on the whole of cultural life'[21] (Deussen 1913a: 264–265). Here, Schopenhauer's thoughts on a spiritual renewal under Indian auspices, however, were read and continued in different forms, particularly by artists. Authors like Gjellerup connected the writings of academic specialists by incorporating their texts into their own, thus making them accessible to a broader, non-academic audience. So far, the fantasies of redemption projected on Buddhism have been traced in Gjellerup's novel. However, they also belong to a broader social context in imperial Germany, whose adherents met like-minded people in the Schopenhauer-Society, which (also) aimed to modernise Christianity through its discussion of Indian religion or even in experimenting with alternatives to the Christian faith (Marchand 2009: 302; Knöbl 2019: 41). Gjellerup's works were seen as the epitome of translating Schopenhauer's thought into art, and at the fifth annual meeting in Dresden in 1916, members applauded a symphonic performance of Gjellerup's first 'Indian' drama, *Die Opferfeuer* (*The Sacrificial Fires*, 1903).

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[21] 'ein Bild von dem wachsenden Einflüsse der schopenhauerschen Philosophie auf alle Kreise der Nation und das gesamte Kulturleben bieten soll'.

In his Indian-inspired novels, Gjellerup did not intend to produce books for easy consumption, but he had a mission. With this, he carried out a task that Neumann had once promoted as a translator of Buddhist texts (Gjellerup [1913] 1921: 322). Neumann had emphasised that after his philological efforts, the dissemination of Buddhism must now take place through a poetic treatment of the legends (Neumann 1893: 112), a commitment that Gjellerup endorsed in *The Wanderers of the World*. But the advocacy of Neumann's Buddhist mission, which Gjellerup considers a rejection of a theistically conceived Christianity, can also be read as Gjellerup's distancing himself from the philosophical-religious orientation of his teacher and friend Paul Deussen who finally decided to ignore critical theological stances of his age and persisted in more conventional teachings (Gjellerup 1915).

Deussen himself was widely known (and frequently frowned on) as a scholar that followed an almost prophetic mission in his teachings (Feldhoff 2009: 97–101). Like Gjellerup, he had studied theology, too, though more as a concession to his parents than out of religious conviction. He quickly grew tired of the 'Orthodox mysticism' of the theological seminary in Tübingen and the 'narrow-mindedness' of his fellow students (Deussen 1922: 91) and, later, interdenominational debates. He had sought ways to unite their contradictions, at least in his classroom and, not lacking in pride, he even reports in his memoirs that this had earned him the reputation of a 'founder of religion' (ibid.: 137). Deussen was also eager to establish contacts with religious specialists from the subcontinent and his acquaintance with Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) was characterised by the common conviction that the Hindu tradition of *Advaita Vedānta* represented a viable alternative to the religious developments of a modern world (Deussen 1904: 239–251). Mutual influences have been recognised in this transreligious encounter, which could have influenced neo-Hinduistic movements (van der Veer 2001; Bergunder 2012).

Like in Gjellerup's case, it was Schopenhauer who first opened up a new understanding of Christianity which would become the starting point and endpoint of his philosophical and historical work (Deussen 1922: 121). His understanding of philosophy was meant to heal the modern world by rediscovering its ancient Indian forms. He saw the tradition of Indian, Greek, and Christian thought and faith finally converging in Schopenhauerian philosophy. Already in his first systematic approach to philosophy, the *Elemente der*

Metaphysik (*Elements of Metaphysics*), we read of a 'worldview [...] in which all the essential salvific truths of religion are derived from the analysis of experience itself', and which is to be recognised 'as a regenerated, purified Christianity built on an incontestable foundation' (Deussen [1877] 1890: iv, similarly (Deussen 1894: 22).[22] In Schopenhauer, who challenged academic philosophy, particularly Hegel's and that of his religion-critical disciples, Deussen saw an alternative to a 'bleak [...] materialism as a consequence of the empirical worldview' (Deussen [1877] 1890: 14) that was also able to repair the rupture between religion and philosophy.

As Atzert (2015: 107–110) has aptly shown, Deussen differed in this considerably from Schopenhauer's original ideas. Although Schopenhauer had prepared this reorientation of Christianity through his connection to abstract Indian content, this did not justify Deussen's theology of a Hellenising (and thus non-Jewish) influence of Paul on early Christianity (Deussen 1913b: 274). Thus, Deussen himself was also the origin of a universalist image of Christ, which, supplemented by the teaching of Vedanta (ibid.: 270), could dispense with the Jewish tradition (Atzert 2015: 107–108). Nevertheless, for Schopenhauer's followers, the highest virtue of self-sacrifice, which readers also found in Gjellerup's novels, was supposed to reunite religion and metaphysics, and thus to lead man to his purpose as a superior being.

The differences in Gjellerup's and Deussen's treatment of the Indian tradition can be understood more clearly from Gjellerup's articles in cultural journals. Gjellerup reviewed new philosophical publications and participated in philosophical debates as a regular commentator on the significance of Buddhist thought in religious critiques. Thus, he underlined his disappointment at the neglect of Buddhism in Deussen's *opus magnum*, the *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie* (1908) and replaced Deussen's interpretation of Schopenhauer's direct dependence on Vedanta with a more meaningful approximation of Schopenhauer to *Buddhist* thought. According to Gjellerup, Buddhism was characterised above all other Indian religious currents by the unconditional 'thought of redemption'[23] and linked to a purely negative wish

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[22] 'Weltanschauung [...], in welcher alle wesentlichen Heilwahrheiten der Religion aus der Analysis der Erfahrung selbst gewonnen werden', 'als ein regeneriertes, geläutertes, und auf unanfechtbarer Grundlage aufgebautes Christentum'.

[23] 'Gedanke der Erlösung'.

of leaving the transient and suffering world without needing to introduce the comforting idea of an afterlife (Gjellerup 1910: 23–24). This worldview where a personalised God is absent was, in Gjellerup's view, thus better suited to a modern world than the continuity of an abstract but never quite abandoned notion of a divine principle that manifested itself again and again from ancient India to Schopenhauer, as postulated by Deussen. For Gjellerup, Deussen merely supplemented Christianity 'with Vedanta, with the most abstract monism we know, which is full of contradictions because the absolute reality in it is the principle of absolute illusion'[24] (Gjellerup 1915: 436 f). Here he thus saw a problem in Deussen's understanding of Kant's metaphysics since he dogmatically transformed 'the "transcendental character" into God' and thereby brought critical philosophy to collapse (ibid.: 437) Similarly, Stephan Atzert explained:

> In the harmonisation that Deussen undertakes, a universal morality, which resides as a natural law within the human being, stands next to a universal (for Deussen actually simultaneously Vedantic-monistic and Christian-monotheistic) conception of God, the religious equivalent of the supreme heights of philosophical reflection in the realisation of a unifying One[25] (Atzert 2015: 93).

Nor was the principle of rebirth, which Deussen saw as a crucial moment of his eclectic monistic approach realised in Indian philosophy via Platonism, the New Testament and finally in the idealism of Kant and Schopenhauer, a valid assumption for Gjellerup to maintain Christianity on a philosophical basis. Here lies the sharpest conflict between the two thinkers: for Deussen a Christian faith based on a transcendentally conceived moral sense was not only possible but the ultimate escape from the 'whole phantasmagoric circle of empirical reality'[26] (Deussen 1913b: 284–285). Gjellerup disagreed with this and repeatedly rejected Deussen's Vedantist theology that he illustrated

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[24] 'durch den Vedanta, das heißt durch den abstraktesten Monismus, den wir kennen, der so widerspruch-klaffend ist, weil die absolute Realität in ihr das Prinzip der absoluten Illusion ist'.
[25] 'In der Angleichung, die Deussen vornimmt, steht eine universale Moral, die als naturgegebenes Gesetz im Inneren des Menschen wohnt, neben einer universalen (für Deussen eigentlich gleichzeitig vedantisch-monistischen und christlich-monotheistischen) Gottesvorstellung, der religiösen Entsprechung der höchsten Höhen philosophischer Reflexion in der Erkenntnis eines einenden Einen.'
[26] 'aus dem ganzen phantasmagorischen Zirkel der empirischen Realität'.

in *The Wanderers of the World*. He saw the core problem in the 'deep rift [...] that undeniably gapes with the classical period in religious relations between the majority of the German people and the highest educational circles involved in art and science'[27] (Gjellerup 1915: 440). He, therefore, considered it impossible to return to a naïve Christianity from before the break of a historical-critical reading of the New Testament, and neither he accepted Deussen's arduous reconstructions of an idealistic Jesus (ibid.: 430 ff).

In summary, Gjellerup expressed massive doubts about the philosophical consistency of Deussen's interpretation of Vedantic texts, which cannot be dismissed out of hand. Atzert also argued in the same way when evaluating Deussen's idiosyncratic use of Schopenhauer's terms for his theological argumentation, which already at the time of the publication of his book had fallen far behind the contemporary theological discourse (Atzert 2015: 144). Instead, in another review, Gjellerup (1916) praised the work *The doctrine of the Upanishads and the beginnings of Buddhism*, written by Oldenberg in 1915. Far from following Deussen's religious eclecticism and rejection of Buddhism, Oldenberg calls it 'India's pinnacle of its religious form'[28] (ibid.: 61). To sum up, although Gjellerup repeatedly suggests modesty and declares himself an amateur within the philosophical and religious discussions, he succeeds in participating in and even moderating the debates between the Schopenhauer-Society and the Wagner Circle with his literary works and his semi-scientific essays.

ARYAN PHILOSOPHY AND RACIALISED CHRISTIANITY: GJELLERUP BETWEEN SCHOPENHAUER AND WAGNER

However, these philosophical and theological disputes took place in a broader context. Despite his critical attitude towards Deussen, Gjellerup followed him in one aspect: he favoured a radical solution to integrate parts of Christianity into the modern age, one which Deussen did not develop himself but certainly popularised in his widely read texts. Possibly without being able to assess the full implications of his thoughts, Deussen believed removing all 'Semitic' parts, i.e., Old Testament, the religious doctrine would serve to establish a

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[27] 'tiefen Riß [...], der unleugbar mit der klassischen Periode in religiöser Beziehung zwischen dem großen Teil des deutschen Volkes und den in Kunst und Wissenschaft sich beteiligenden höchsten Bildungskreisen unleugbar klafft'.

[28] 'Indien's Höhepunkt seines religiösen Gestaltens'.

connection to a 'pristine, authocthonous (sic!), primeval India' (Marchand 2009: 309). This reading paved the way for what Marchand deemed a particular form of 'Germanic Christianity' and 'Aryan piety' (ibid.) and which was present in the Schopenhauer-Society as well, but to a far greater extent in the intellectual circle that surrounded the Wagner-family in Bayreuth.

As a sympathiser of the Bayreuth Circle, it was undoubtedly not the racist subtext of this developing form of theology that deterred Gjellerup. On the contrary, Gjellerup's racist worldview was undoubtedly the flip side of his elitist idealism. Repeated references to an 'Indo-Germanness' understood not linguistically, but culturally-religiously (Gjellerup 1899: 43), and even explicitly racial and antisemitic invectives can already be found in his articles from when he was still a young man. His connection to the circle of the Wagner family in Bayreuth was long-lasting, which is also worth noting. This, at least, is indicated by his involvement with the *Bayreuther Blätter* and by his detailed knowledge and appreciation of the texts by Houston Stewart Chamberlain, Wagner's son-in-law and 'Hitler's mastermind' (Bermbach 2015).[29]

In his criticism of Marchand, Grünendahl vehemently denied any antisemitic subtexts in Deussen's works (Grünendahl 2019: 126). As far as Deussen's personal attitude towards Jews is concerned, that can be discussed. Deussen's wife came from a family of converted Jews (Feldhoff 2009: 127–128), and Deussen had innumerable friends and students of Jewish origin. Nevertheless, in his writings, he combined a long-standing tradition of anti-Judaism in theological thought with, as Atzert puts it, 'the willingness to use linguistic terms in a racialised way as ethnic designations'[30] (Atzert 2015: 105, note 109). Also, Delfs read anti-Semitic statements in Deussen's travelogues (Delfs 2017). If one considers the Schopenhauer-Society as a space for various discourses, the antisemitic bias cannot be dismissed out of hand and is closely linked to Gjellerup's person. It is not without reason that the Dresden pastor Constantin Grossmann summed up Chamberlain's ideas of a 'Germanic Christianity' with reference to Schopenhauer in the *Yearbook* (Grossmann 1917). He later dedicated a detailed memorial leaflet to the now long deceased (and largely

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[29] On the anti-Semitic agenda of the *Bayreuther Blätter*, see Hein 1996. On Chamberlain, who was eventually co-opted posthumously by the National Socialists, see Field 1981; Lobenstein-Reichmann 2008; Bermbach 2015.

[30] 'der Bereitschaft, sprachwissenschaftliche Begriffe rassistisch gewendet als ethnische Bezeichnungen zu benutzen'.

forgotten) Gjellerup (Grossmann 1936), when he had already emerged as a prominent representative of the anti-Semitic religious movement *Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen* (German Christians) (Grossmann 1934). As already elaborated by Ciracì, despite its originally cosmopolitan orientation and its high number of members with a Jewish background, there were also strong anti-Semitic tendencies in the Schopenhauer-Society which became manifest in the founding of the New German Schopenhauer Society in 1921 (Ciracì 2011) and the philosophical-religious debates about a renewed Christianity in Schopenhauer's shadow (Atzert 2015: 129–144).

THE RELIGIOUS AND THE SECULAR UNDER NATIONAL AUSPICES

If we look at Gjellerup's novel as a mirror of debates about religion and national principles of his time, personal, social and ideological dimensions become visible and are thus the main reason for the incompatibility of Deussen's and Gjellerup's views: while the famous Professor Deussen remained rather liberal-conservative, both theologically and politically, and endorsed a monist worldview opposed to modernity with a rational but nevertheless soulful Christianity, in Gjellerup's case, a narcissistic slight of the misjudged genius prevailed, for which even the Nobel Prize for Literature came too late. For him, no reformation of Christianity was radical enough, and he preferred to replace it with his own interpretation of Buddhism. In the end, he combined Schopenhauer's misogyny and his call for the renunciation of sexual drives together with a Wagnerian redemptive pathos in this very creative appropriation. These nationalist and anti-Semitic overtones resonated in vast areas, not least in bourgeois circles where membership in a philosophical society such as the Schopenhauer Society was not uncommon, and where ideas were exchanged in numerous cultural journals.

From the perspective of the negotiation of the 'religious' and the 'secular', a reassessment of what can be understood as a *philosophically founded faith* occurred, outlined here and based on the relationship between Christianity and Indian traditions in the context of the Schopenhauer-Society. This did not necessarily only occur in academic circles but in the broader context of a bourgeois *Bildungsreligion* (erudite religion) (Hölscher 2005: 330–400), or *Kulturprotestantismus* (cultural Protestantism) in general, which included the veneration of classical national philosophers, composers and writers such

as Kant, Beethoven, and Goethe, or, specifically for the circle around Gjellerup and Deussen, Schopenhauer and Wagner. This group in particular could be understood as nationalistic in nature and even as carrying the seeds of eventual völkisch movements. This form of extra-ecclesiastical religiosity, described by Thomas Nipperdey as 'vagrant' religiosity (Nipperdey 1990: 508), shaped the German debate on religion, in which the 'secular' tended to play a subordinate role, and where the focus was on the exploration of religious alternatives to Christianity (Hölscher 2019). In the current discussion in religious studies, the question of an appropriate historicisation of its objects, Religion and Christianity is highly controversial. An adequate perspective lies in a contextualisation into global negotiation processes in the second half of the 19th century, where the encounter of Christianity with Hinduism and Buddhism also occurred, as Mathias Thurner has excellently elaborated (on Deussen's contribution cf. Thurner 2021: 427–431).

Gjellerup's novel and its connections to popular and semi-academic discussions around a specifically German Christianity show how these negotiations took place not only in erudite circles but also between popular literature and musical dramas. For these phenomena, the classification of different strategies of religion-making according to Dreßler and Mandair is helpful (Dreßler & Mandair 2011a). The authors distinguish three levels of religion-making, which, however, can also be strongly intertwined, namely the process 'from above', i.e., from a position of power, 'from below', and 'laterally', i.e., from an (apparently) neutral, *scientific*, perspective. Therefore, in the case of the members of the Schopenhauer-Society, the actors in religion-making move between perspectives two and three, while the perspective 'from below' is dominant. Here, according to the authors,

> particular social groups in a subordinate position draw on a religionist discourse to re-establish their identities as legitimate social formations distinguishable from other social formations through tropes of religious difference and/or claims for certain rights (ibid.: 21).

For a particular bourgeois stratum at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, the debate about a rational religion went hand in hand with an ambivalent climate of colonial striving for power (Perraudin & Zimmerer 2011) and military self-conceit far beyond academic circles. It had a final idealistic boost in

the period before the First World War, before these elements underwent a decidedly national-völkisch reassessment.

German professors from Deussen's circle and the Wagner family praised Gjellerup's novels as an art form committed to high idealistic values, and they recommended him several times to the committee for the Nobel Prize in Literature. When the committee eventually chose Gjellerup in 1917, it was for his multifaceted poetry, because it was rich and supported by high ideals. As Neumann had wished, Gjellerup presented Buddhist teachings to a broader audience and emphasised a unique closeness between Indians and Germans due to an alleged affinity in both their languages and respective cultures (Gjellerup 1899: 43), something which served to perpetuate a German sense of superiority over members of the other European powers.

All three protagonists of this discussion about Christianity compatible with modernity, viz., Gjellerup, Deussen, and Neumann died in 1919 when the Weimar Republic led German history to a different development. With the end of the First World War, the time for idealist literature in the style of Gjellerup also became history. Interest in religious debates about Indianising music and literature became as much a part of the past as did the interest of readers in the aestheticisation of language and the descriptions of affects and sentiments of the anti-modern author, all of which explains why the German-Danish author is almost forgotten today. Nevertheless, his large audience at the time, however, made him an actor in the broader field of discourse around religion, race, and nation.

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The Theosophical Reception of Buddhism

Ulrich Harlass[1]

Abstract: When the Theosophical leaders developed the intricate 'esoteric doctrine', many aspects of Buddhist philosophy became prominent points of reference. Even though Buddhist teachings are commonly held to be a central aspect of Theosophy to the present day, it is not clear how exactly 'Western esotericism' became 'Orientalised'—and if at all. This paper reconsiders the connection between Theosophy and Buddhism that is predominantly depicted as an encounter of 'East and West', assuming two distinct spheres meeting in the course of the globalisation of 'Western esotericism'. Furthermore, H.P. Blavatsky commonly appears as the central agent who explored Buddhism and (Asian) Oriental thought while shaping her Theosophical doctrines, particularly during her years in India. Such viewpoint excludes important aspects as it is based on categories that are themselves products of this discourse. This article focuses on the historic (discursive) production of 'Buddhism' and 'Theosophy', as opposed to the 'West'. The analysis of the debates and disputes between Theosophists and a wide range of interlocutors will illuminate how and why Buddhism emerged as a central subject. These positions often defy clear cut categories (e. g., spiritualist, Christian, Theosophical) and I will demonstrate how much 'Buddhism' in its esoteric Theosophical reading depended upon the quarrels between the Theosophists in India and their opponents.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ITS GLOBALISATION, AND BUDDHISM

In recent years, academic perspectives on a globalised world have become increasingly convincing, recognising the importance of intercultural exchange and cross-cultural entanglement (Randeria & Römhild 2013), where previously there had been predominant assumptions of a global 'Westernisation' of the modern world (cf. Bayly 2004: 1–22 & 325–365). Research on esotericism and the Theosophical Society, however, has only slowly begun to consider such perspectives (cf. Rudbøg & Sand 2020; Chajes 2021b), with few notable exceptions that reflect a more theoretical approach (Bergunder

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2020; Krämer & Strube 2020; Maltese & Strube 2021). This is all the more remarkable given the fact that the Theosophical Society, with its Oriental, and more specifically Buddhist leanings and its wide transnational distribution, is considered instrumental for modern esotericism and the global context of its emergence—even when deemed 'Western esotericism' (cf. Hanegraaff 2015 & 2020; Forshaw et al. 2019; Partridge 2020). Recent perspectives on global entanglements based on poststructuralist epistemology enable us to approach the question of how Buddhism 'entered' Theosophical discourses in a different light. In the following article, I will critically discuss research perspectives on ('Western') esotericism, its globalisation, and Buddhism. From that, I will then deduce my thesis. Finally, I will examine one of the earliest historical debates that led to the inclusion of Buddhism in Theosophical doctrine, that is, 'esoteric Buddhism'.[2]

Numerous academic accounts on Theosophy share the narrative about the Society's affiliation with Buddhism, drawing on the idea of the globalisation of 'Western esotericism'. Broadly speaking, the Theosophical Society, as an esoteric organisation founded by members from the USA and Europe who drew on a range of so-called esoteric currents (cf. Hanegraaff 1996 & 2019; Hammer 2013), is considered a Western phenomenon. It then globalised and appropriated key concepts from the Orient simultaneously. Accordingly, Blavatsky's two-volume *Isis Unveiled* (1877) impressively illustrates this 'Western esoteric theme' (Goodrick-Clarke 2008: 215; cf. Hanegraaff 2020), but a crucial change towards systematic Theosophical doctrine occurred when members of the society shifted focus on Asia in the late 1870s. Subsequently, this narrative continues, they started referring to Oriental religions and literally globalised Western esotericism not only through establishing numerous branches abroad, but the founders even moved to India, bringing 'Western esotericism' to 'the East' (Stuckrad 2004: 122–132; cf. Partridge 2012; Goodrick-Clarke 2008). Even though alert to the problems of such perspective, Rudbøg summarises: 'In order to revive and expand the Theosophical

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[2] In this article, I use the terms Orient, Oriental, Buddhism, Buddhist, etc. as quotations that arise from the historical debates I analyse. For example, 'Buddhism in theosophical doctrine' denotes claims and references in the historical debate that refer to what is called 'Buddhism' by the different speakers in this context. I do not imply that there is a phenomenological, primordial 'Orient', or 'Orientalist' or other 'Eastern' or 'Buddhist'- or Western-thought, tradition or, ultimately, essence.

Society, from 1879 onward India became central to the Society's new identity and resulted in the first phase of the globalization of Western esotericism' (2020: 254). Nevertheless, the currents bound together by the Theosophists originated from the geographical West and its history of *enlightenment* (cf. Hanegraaff 2012, 2016 & 2020). I will challenge this view after a closer look at how the relation between Buddhism and Theosophy is depicted in academic accounts.

Theosophy and Buddhism

'Western esotericism' as manifest in the Theosophical Society, however, is explained based on the assumption of its Orientalisation, including an adaptation of Buddhist thought. Therefore, Blavatsky refined her philosophy after *Isis Unveiled* and eventually presented her elaborate *Secret Doctrine* in 1888, which is considered—by Theosophists as well as many historians—to contain the Theosophical core-teachings, her 'mature Theosophy' (Goodrick-Clarke 2004: 14; cf. Hanegraaff 1996: 252–256), and hence a 'shift away from Spiritualism towards occultism and Orientalism' (Lavoie 2012: 212). This reorientation towards Oriental religions had a lasting impact. Through its '[Orientalisation], Theosophy became a force of religious innovation, […] integrating terms and concepts from Indian religions that had never been part of Western esotericism before' (Hanegraaff 2013: 130–131). For this 'Oriental shift', which includes teachings such as karma (Sanskrit: *karma*), reincarnation, nirvana (Sanskrit: *nirvāṇa*), or a specific sevenfold (or septenary) cosmology based on a Sanskrit nomenclature (Hall [Chajes] 2007), Buddhism apparently was pivotal (Godwin 2013; Santucci 2006; Chajes 2021).

Although Buddhism was mentioned previously (cf. Godwin 2006; Jackson 1981: 157–173), research basically agrees that Theosophical interest in Buddhism boosted after 1879. This connection and its public impression solidified in particular with the founders' formal commitment to Buddhism in Ceylon in May 1880 (cf. Prothero 1996; Hanegraaff 2020; Rudbøg & Sand 2020). Eventually, it was even customary for contemporaries of Blavatsky to identify Theosophy with (esoteric) Buddhism (Tweed 2000: 51; cf. Jackson 1981). As with the general connection between Theosophy and the Orient, many scholars are inconclusive regarding the link to Buddhism as well. Despite a vast amount of valuable research, this general inconclusiveness prevails—as I will

show in the next section. In one of the earliest academic accounts dealing with the historical link between Theosophy and the Orient, Carl T. Jackson maintains that the Theosophical Society was 'dominantly a Western spiritualist society' (Jackson 1981: 161). Yet, according to Jackson, Theosophy's doctrinal sourcebook, *The Secret Doctrine*, 'reflected much greater indebtedness to Oriental thought' (ibid.: 166) that was a result of the Theosophists' commitment to 'the promotion of Oriental ideas, particularly Hindu and Buddhist conceptions' (ibid.: 169). Joscelyn Godwin states similarly ambivalently that *The Secret Doctrine* is a form of 'modern Neo-gnosticism' (Godwin 1994: 377), and yet, Blavatsky advocated 'Eastern' thought and thus made Theosophy become 'the main vehicle for Hindu and Buddhist philosophies to enter the Western consciousness' (ibid.: 379). Similarly, Goodrick-Clarke maintains that Blavatsky 'assimilated Buddhist ideas into her eclectic Theosophy' (Goodrick-Clarke 2008: 219), and Prothero finds in *Isis Unveiled* 'a first step […] in the direction of Asia' (Prothero 1996: 59), with a mutual influence of everyone involved in the encounter. Furthermore, he assumes 'the Buddhisticization of America and the Americanization and Protestantism of Buddhism', but both entities persist as it 'is difficult to change one's deep-structure assumptions' (ibid.: 182).

The above-mentioned accounts on esotericism seem to have established a historical narrative that prevails to the present: in Theosophy and Buddhism there was an encounter between two cultural spheres, and even despite possible 'creolization' (ibid.: ix), Kipling's proverbial rhyme seems to apply that 'East is East and West is West, and never the twain should meet' (consciously omitting the poem's clue, of course; Kipling 1899: n. n.).

In more recent scholarship, the perspective shifted towards a focus on the globalisation of (Western) esotericism. Hanegraaff wishes to abandon a universal (ahistorical) category of esotericism (Hanegraaff 2016: 155–159), aiming at the study of the globalisation of Western esotericism. He recently clarified concerning the Theosophical Society that 'in their sincere efforts to give a voice to Buddhism, the founders ended up promoting what they believed Buddhism should be all about', i.e., *their* imagination of Buddhism (Hanegraaff 2020: 65). In this regard, numerous scholars provide similar arguments (cf. Hammer 2004 & 2015; Goodrick-Clarke 2008; Partridge 2013 & 2015; Chajes 2017, 2019 & 2021; Rudbøg 2013; Rudbøg & Sand 2020; Bester 2018). What these approaches

have in common, is that 'East' and 'West' are distinct categories that come into cross-cultural contact, nevertheless understanding Theosophy and the prototypical 'Western esotericism' of Theosophical doctrine via its Oriental shift. In principle, this type of narrative even remains persistent in otherwise thorough research on the problematic Orientalist representations of the Orient in the history of Theosophy (cf. Godwin 2006; Partridge 2015; Chajes 2019: 160–175; Mukhopadyay 2019). This is particularly striking as most researchers do acknow-ledge the shortcomings in the representation of 'Orient and Occident', or 'East and West', to the effect that the Hinduism or Buddhism of Western esotericists, is labelled 'imagination' (Lubelsky 2012: 81; Hanegraaff 2020: 46), 'invention' (Chajes 2019), or plain 'Orientalism' (cf. Godwin 2006; Partridge 2015).

The Global Production of Meaning

My main concern is to survey the emergence and signification(s) of 'Buddhism' in Theosophical discourse. However, I will not discuss the inherent problems with the term 'Western esotericism' in more detail (cf. Harlass 2020 & 2022; Strube 2020). The question remains, which 'Buddhism' did the Theosophists encounter in their search for the occult doctrines, and what meaning was produced of it, if Buddhism was not simply there as an historical entity?

Richard King observed what applies to the study of esotericism as well: '[t]he existence of a world religion known as "Buddhism" has been a largely unquestioned assumption both in academic scholarship and in popular conceptions of "religion"' (King 1999: 143). He then demonstrates 'Buddhism's' familiar development in the nineteenth century under the auspices of Orientalist scholarship with its central premises of a textual 'nostalgia for origins' (ibid.: 118, see also: 62–72; cf. Masuzawa 2005: 121–145). Consequently, these origins were sought after in the teachings of the historical Buddha as contained in the oldest, most 'authentic' Buddhist scriptures that could be deciphered exclusively by (European) Orientalist scholarship (King 1999: 145–147). Nevertheless, the context of the historical emergence of the general category of religion, as well as its derivatives (hence indispensable for the concept itself) such as Buddhism or Theosophy, was global (cf. Berkwitz 2006). Christopher Bayly has argued that the (re-)emergence of religion in the late nineteenth century needs to be interpreted along the lines of global

developments and that 'these changes [of religions] were cumulative and interrelated at a world level' (2004: 334). Similarly, for Sebastian Conrad, Theosophy and Buddhism are prime examples of the global entanglement of religion, where global and local developments are mutually imbricated (Conrad 2018: 582–660).

If we maintain that discourses on religion, Buddhism, Theosophy, etc., have emerged in a global context, the question remains how this affects our approach to the emergence of Buddhism in Theosophical doctrine. Postcolonial scholarship has offered insights for decades that, in my view, can be fruitfully adapted to the study of esotericism. Richard King indicates a further shift away from the common notion of a Western invention, stressing the necessity to put 'emphasis upon the interaction between Western Orientalists and the Asian subjects they are purporting to study' (King 1999: 149). Charles Hallisay, whom King refers to, concludes that nineteenth-century 'Buddhism' was a product of Orientalists and local agents equally: 'we will inevitably have to rethink our conceptualizations of Buddhism as a translocative tradition with a long and self-consciously distinct history but which is at the same time a tradition dependent on local conditions for the production of meaning' (Hallisay 1995: 51). Michael Bergunder has further elaborated on these insights and connected them with recent approaches of global history: Christianity, Buddhism, or esotericism 'were the products of multidirectional discourses and entangled relationships on a global scale' (Bergunder 2020a: 313; cf. Bergunder 2014b; Chajes 2021b). In other words, the meaning of Buddhism—and this holds true for Theosophy as well—was constantly negotiated before the backdrop of the global context that framed the emergence of such discourses in the nineteenth century. It is the historian's objective to expose this context's contingent historicity, its fragile 'sedimentation' that takes place through the continuous 'resignification' of meaning and make it thus available for understanding and critique (cf. Butler 1995). Consequently, my focus will rest on the negotiations about East and West, or, more specifically, on the significations of Buddhism and its varied representations in the context of Theosophy's Oriental shift (see also: Hall 1992; Harlass 2021; Randeria & Römhild 2013).

Therefore, as I will show below, it is doubtful to maintain that 'Western speakers'—mostly Blavatsky—almost exclusively 'discovered' (the cultural

entity) Buddhism on the grounds of Orientalist research and further popular readings. Instead, contemporary controversies and contentions serve as proper starting points to analyse the specific production of meaning(s). Accordingly, I will investigate pivotal contemporary debates and trace their mutual influences as they negotiate the relation of Theosophy and Buddhism. It can be expected that Asian Buddhists have also influenced the new teachings and thus became entangled with Theosophy and *vice versa*. But I will show that this has hardly been the case in those specific discussions. The examination of aforementioned historic source materials might be a first step in the necessary (and far expandable) endeavour that could be termed 'provincializing esotericism' (cf. Chakrabarty 2007).

Considering the Oriental shift and the Theosophical reception of Buddhism, I ought to put emphasis on the vivid debates in the periodicals of the time that mark a crucial place for the historical contentions (Morrison 2008; Oppenheim 1985: 44–49). In this, research on esotericism generally agrees with global history (cf. Bayly 2004: 456–459; cf. Hermann 2015). Contributions to the periodicals continually 'produced', challenged, changed, and temporarily fixated (or 'sedimented') the meaning of Theosophy and Buddhism, and they did so in the frames of global discourses. The pivotal publications comprise *The Theosophist*, the mouthpiece of the Theosophists in India with an international readership and correspondence, published in Bombay, and the two London-based papers *Light* and *The Spiritualist Newspaper* (henceforth *Spiritualist*).

First, I will delve briefly into A. P. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism* that constitutes the first Theosophical publication with explicit reference to Buddhism (as the *Buddhist Catechism* was meant for the consumption of Singhalese Buddhists). Furthermore, the book is often classified as the pivotal step in Theosophy's integration of Buddhism that paved the way for later Theosophical Oriental doctrine and key concepts in *The Secret Doctrine*. Secondly, after this general overview, I will deduce the central themes for the analysis of the debates in the periodicals that lead to the putatively Buddhist teachings in Sinnett's book. Finally, I will analyse those debates and their 'productions'.

THE 'DISCOVERY' OF BUDDHISM

Esoteric Buddhism

One of the key changes between Blavatsky's two major works involved the depiction of 'fundamental sets of ideas: evolution, man's septenary constitution, karma and reincarnation, and after-death states' (Goodrick-Clarke 2004: 14; cf. Hammer 2004: 253–55). Practically all of these teachings made their first literary appearance in *Esoteric Buddhism*—a strong focus on Blavatsky in scholarly accounts on Theosophy conceals this to an extent, but nevertheless is a well-established assessment among scholars (e. g., Godwin 2006; Rudbøg 2013 & 2020; Bester 2018; Chajes 2019). The book not only features Buddhism prominently for the first time in Theosophical theorising but is also considered the first systematic statement of 'mature Theosophy' that was fully represented in Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* (cf. Bester 2018: 105; Lavoie 2012: 212–219).

Esoteric Buddhism contrasts considerably with Sinnett's former publication, *The Occult World*, for its systematic character, providing an in-depth description of occult teachings pointing explicitly to Buddhism. According to Sinnett, esoteric Buddhism originated at a significantly older stage than that of the (historic) Buddha, who merely modernized the occult science. On a functional level, esoteric Buddhism substituted the occult philosophy from *The Occult World*, where Buddhism stood next to further ancient traditions and their 'science of the magi' (Sinnett 1881: 3–6). Two years later, Buddhism became the frame of Theosophical occultism, and Sinnett highlighted his own occult source, the Tibetan (implicitly Buddhist) Mahatmas. He claimed to present what these adepts revealed to him—albeit considerable doubts were expressed at that time already and even by himself (cf. Santucci 2007; French 2000: 132–151; cf. Sinnett 1986: 16–24).

Sinnett now established Buddha's teaching as the exoteric tradition closest to the esoteric truth behind it, and later Buddha's tenets had a profound influence on all successive religions (Sinnett 1883a: viii). His coeval Orientalists accordingly treat but the surface of the Buddhist exoteric doctrine and are thus ostensibly eliminated as proper sources on Buddhism (ibid.: 3–7). Nevertheless, Orientalist works have indubitably been a crucial source for Sinnett, as for example the accounts of Herrmann Oldenberg, T. W. Rhys

Davids, and even the staunch Blavatsky-critic Arthur Lillie. Consequently, Sinnett adopts characterisations of Buddhism from several Orientalist works (for a good overview see Chajes 2019: 166–179). Even though reference to Buddhism is less frequent than one might expect, three topics stand out in *Esoteric Buddhism*: the historic Buddha, the doctrine of reincarnation and devachan, and the inherent science of Buddhist lore. As mentioned above, after the historic Buddha received his knowledge of perennial wisdom, he passed it on when he was reborn as the great eighth century Vedanta-philosopher Shankaracharya (Sanskrit: Śaṅkarācārya) (Sinnett 1883a: 140–159, here: 154). This argument substantiates the universality of Buddhist teachings, and also Oriental esoteric superiority in general by establishing a link to a most popular discourse on Hinduism at that time, i.e. Advaita Vedanta (King 1999; cf. Bergunder 2020a; Halbfass 1981; Mühlematter 2022).

According to Sinnett, Buddha taught the 'real' form of evolution that is material as well as spiritual. His antique occult teachings are state-of-the-art science, and indeed, reincarnation is exactly that: 'a sober scientific achievement' of evolution (Sinnett 1883a: 142). With these doctrines being both Buddhist (i.e. Oriental) and scientific, Sinnett shields occult philosophy against two objections, that is, against the impeachment of the validity or rationality of occultism, and furthermore against 'Western' criticism in general. I will show the emergence of these arguments in detail below. Sinnett's account provides a systematic theory of reincarnation, which was a big surprise for most, as Theosophy (and most prominently, Blavatsky) was considered dismissive of reincarnation (see below; cf. Zander 2006: 985–990; Chajes 2017).

In sum, *Esoteric Buddhism* is considered as the first account providing all the basic tenets to constitute the momentous change to what is otherwise seen as Blavatsky's systematic 'mature Theosophy'. Nevertheless, it remains unclear how the allegedly Oriental elements entered Theosophical theorising apart from a general late nineteenth-century 'vogue of Buddhism' (McMahan 2008) and the integration of Orientalist knowledge. Even when the roots of these teachings may be traced back to the Mahatma letters, which in turn are attributed to Blavatsky (cf. Bester 2018; Hammer 2015; Lavoie 2012), the circumstances of their origin are still at dispute.

Negotiating Buddhism and Theosophy against Christianity

In order to trace the Theosophical 'discovery' of Buddhism, it is necessary to consider the main debates the Theosophists were involved in—with Spiritualism and Christianity standing out most prominently. Whether the Oriental shift began with *Isis Unveiled* (cf. Blavatsky 1877a/b) or after the famous 'conversion' of the two Theosophical leaders to Buddhism, a constant of Blavatsky's main concerns was her criticism of Spiritualism (cf. Lavoie 2012: 35–44) and polemics against Christianity (Hanegraaff 1996: 450–451; cf. Rudbøg 2013: 206–250). In *Isis Unveiled*, Blavatsky openly highlights that 'this volume is particularly directed against theological Christianity, the chief opponent of free thought' (Blavatsky 1877b: iv), and she never abandoned this attitude (cf. Goodrick-Clarke 2004: 8–11).

Nevertheless, '[t]ensions within the Society around the issue of Christianity were evident from the outset, but they came to a head during the early 1880s' (Owen 2004: 40). In the *Theosophist's* first volume from October 1879 to October 1880, Buddhism was exposed by prominent speakers—among them Buddhists from Ceylon. The famous Singhalese monks Sumangala, Gunananda, and Terunnanse (cf. Bretfeld 2012) explained basic currents of Singhalese Buddhism (cf. Blavatsky 1880b; Gunananda 1880; Sumangala 1880a; 1880b; Terunnanse 1880). Nevertheless, the integration of and explicit reference to Buddhism in Theosophical reasoning occurred later—and with different interlocutors. One of the main Theosophical targets was Christianity.

In spring 1880, Olcott struggled to conceal his disdain for Christian interpretations of Theosophy as expressed by George Wyld, the then head of the Theosophical London Lodge. In his inaugural address in March 1880, Wyld emphasised the bond between Theosophy and Christianity. Against the growing interest in the Orient, South Asian Buddhism in particular, Wyld argued that Jesus Christ was the prototypical adept who 'attained the full spiritual condition' (Wyld quoted in: Olcott 1880: 143). Olcott's comment on this speech reveals his attitude towards Christianity and his growing focus towards the Asian East, even despite the inclusive wording. He reassured his readers that 'our Oriental friends will see practical evidence of the truly republican and cosmopolitan nature of the Theosophical Society', and voiced doubts as to whether Jesus was the son of God and even questioned his

existence as a whole. 'Nor do I see that the ideal character of Jesus is any better than that of Gautama, if so noble" (ibid.).

While the Theosophical connection to Buddhism intensified by Blavatsky and Olcott's 'conversion' to Buddhism in Ceylon in May 1880 and by Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism* (Olcott 1881), these events do not provide insight into the reception of 'Buddhist thought'. Hardly any Theosophical reasoning was related to these circumstances, much opposed to two years later, when *Esoteric Buddhism* bore the paradigmatic connection with Buddhism. Consequently, a considerable development must have taken place during that time. I will trace in the next section how Buddhism was increasingly considered to represent central aspects of occultism by Theosophists in India. These claims emerged due to intricate imbrications with and constant differentiation from competing positions which considerably influenced the emergence of Theosophical doctrine. And the debate was constituted by a global historical discourse on religion and Buddhism. I will limit this discussion to two topics, firstly, the introduction of karma, and secondly, its final consequence being nirvana.

Systematic depictions of occult philosophy that led to the prominent inclusion of the two concepts began in autumn 1880, when Allan Octavian Hume and Sinnett received the first letters from the Tibetan adepts Koot Hoomi and Morya. From October 1881 on, a series of articles was published that sought to explain the new adeptic insights. Hume in these "Fragments of Occult Truth" (henceforth "Fragments", cf. Hume 1882a) replied to letters of the W.H. Terry, an Australian Theosophist and Spiritualist who could effortlessly reconcile the two perspectives. Thus, Hume strived to convince him that occultism alone contained the proper theories about man and his destiny. Since October 1880, the debates on Theosophical (i.e. occult) doctrines had gained momentum, but the exploration of allegedly Buddhist concepts arose only slowly in various aspects. Belatedly, these debates and the Theosophical claims for occult teaching were systematically formulated, primarily from 1882 onwards, with particular attention to Spiritualism and Christianity. And not only Theosophists were attracted to Buddhism, but Spiritualists equally sought to clarify their relation towards Buddhism, too.

What is more, the disputes of the early 1880s predominantly subvert clear categorisations of Spiritualist, Christian, or Theosophical identities. The same applies to the self-designations of the historical discussants when they

contributed to the question, as Janet Oppenheim summarises, 'how to syn-thesize modern scientific knowledge and time-honored religious traditions concerning man, God, and the universe' (Oppenheim 1985: 59). Spiritualists, Christians, Theosophists, so-called 'esotericists' from Europe or South Asia thus reflected upon the 'Victorian crisis of faith' (cf. Franklin 2009; Owen 2004), and they negotiated different options in dealing with it. One of the main disputes concerned the relation of Spiritualism and Christianity which also included Buddhism.

Spiritualist Interest in Buddhism

Despite the diversity and fluidity of the different standpoints in these de-bates, three main assumptions about Buddhism prevailed: generally, Bud-dhism was an interesting yet ominous phenomenon that deserved serious consideration, which partly followed previous Transcendentalist narratives and drew on popular Orientalist knowledge (cf. Tweed 2000: 1–26; Jackson 1981: 45–84). Furthermore, Buddhism frequently appeared as the name of a religion based on the teachings of the historical Gautama Buddha, as was confirmed by the two above-mentioned Singhalese monks. And for the ma-jority, it belonged to the same category and was thus comparable to both, Spiritualism and Christianity (cf. Jackson 1981: 48–77). The outcome of this comparison, however, could go either way, in favour or against Buddhism.

In early 1881, Stainton Moses, for example, reprinted a section from the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* which contrasted the religious leaders of the world, including Buddha and Jesus (Moses 1881a: 19). Later that year, he recommended Arthur Lillie's *Buddha and early Buddhism* (cf. Lillie 1881) to anyone interested in Chinese and Indian Spiritualism (!) or, the 'Spiritualism in Buddhism' (Moses 1881f: 308–309). Moses proclaimed remarkable simi-larities between Christ and Buddha, as previously observed by Lillie (Moses 1881e: 300).

In the *Spiritualist*, interest in Buddhism became equally apparent when it was compared with Spiritualism and the two were considered compatible. In December 1881, contrary to the Theosophists, some speculated that Chinese or Japanese Buddhists also believed in a lasting soul and thus worshipped 'the spirits of their ancestors', implicitly assuming the existence of East Asian (Buddhist) Spiritualism (cf. Scrutator 1881: 292). On the whole, Buddhism

was perceived to aim at 'universal improvement' (ibid.: 293) and thus provided reasonable means to become 'fit' for evolution. Furthermore, during his short visit to India, the famous medium (and exposed conjurer) William Eglinton (cf. Eek 1965: 199–201) held séances with allegedly Buddhist spirits, attempting to establish Spiritualism there (Harrison 1882a: 4–5). Some authors saw Buddha as a teacher for Buddhist 'adeptship' (Harrison 1882c: 20), perceived him as a master Spiritualist, or as proficient in Mesmerism (cf. A.J.C.: 1881: 50–52; Kohn 1881a: 20; Moses 1881e: 300). Consequently, the *Spiritualist's* editor Harrison correctly concluded in January 1882, that 'much has been brought forward of late by various writers in Spiritualist periodicals about Buddhism' (Harrison 1882b: 13).

More critical voices were raised when Buddhism was considered in connection to Theosophy around 1881—a relation primarily seen in light of Olcott's activities in Ceylon and his *Catechism*. One author of *The Spiritualist* quoted Olcott in December 1881 on the Singhalese connection of Theosophy to Buddhism—the latter being part of the universal esoteric tradition, as he saw in Theosophical teachings '[s]hades of Pythagoras, Sakya Muni, the great Buddha, Socrates, Plato, Virgil, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius!' (Scrutator 1881: 292). Julius Kohn, the editor of the *Saturday Review* and frequent correspondent to Spiritualist journals, had mentioned the universalist outlook of Spiritualism earlier, including Buddhism as well (Kohn 1881b: 20–22). Moreover, the link between Theosophy and Buddhism was surprising to William Harrison, and he wondered about Olcott, 'formerly a spiritualist, afterwards a Theosophist, seems now to have turned Buddhist' (Harrison 1882b: 13). As many others, Harrison rather formulated a universalist agenda of Spiritualism 'to inquire, without prejudice, into the merits and demerits of all religious systems' (ibid.).

In sum, Buddhism and Spiritualism did not appear contradictory to Spiritualists at that time and it belonged to a vastly 'religious' category of comparison—as did Christianity, Spiritualism, or Theosophy. Whether the authors favoured or dismissed Buddhism, it was not automatically connected to Theosophy, or even a point of reference in this respect. In short: Buddhism constituted an interesting and exotic 'religion', but Spiritualists did not see any specific, let alone exclusive connection to Theosophy. And the Theosophists

gradually came to establish exactly that, an exclusive claim on the 'true', i.e., esoteric contents of Buddhism.

Theosophical Claims on Buddhism

Parallel to the rising Spiritualist interest in general Oriental teachings and their attempts to distinguish and establish occultism as the 'true' substitute for Spiritualism (and Christianity, of course), the Theosophists not only increasingly referred to Buddhism they even began to raise exclusive claims on it. When Spiritualist interest in Buddhism came to the fore, the Theosophists began to present enhanced reflections about occultism as connected to 'Eastern' (synonymously Oriental) concepts in general, after Hume's "Fragments" (Hume 1882a: 17–23). But neither the two Singhalese monks and former contributors to the *Theosophist* were addressed explicitly, nor did the Mahatma letters refer to Buddhism extensively in 1881, beginning with two remarkably unspecific mentions in July (cf. Barker 1923: 43; 48). At that time, Oriental and Buddhist could appear synonymously in Theosophical discourse. A clearer image evolved as Theosophists developed their teachings as opposed to Christians and Spiritualists.

Perhaps the most ground-breaking step in the Theosophical discovery of Eastern teachings and Buddhism is the emergence of the sevenfold or septenary constitution of man that replaced the tripartite scheme of body, soul, and spirit. Just like Spiritualists, and in part Christians, Theosophists applied the threefold scheme until it was substituted by the seven principles in the "Fragments". Accordingly, the septenary constitution was the occult, hence true understanding of man and the universe, and Spiritualist conceptions were void, with the séance phenomena, in the occultists' view, adjusted by their own, henceforth growingly Oriental doctrine.

This article does not provide space to delve into the intricate development of the seven principles and their Theosophical application in detail (cf. Chajes [Hall] 2007; Harlass 2022). Suffice it to say that the septenary constitution was a key feature in how the Theosophists claimed Oriental territory exclusively for occultism, in which 'Buddhist' as well as 'Brahmin' or 'Hindu' appeared interchangeably as witnesses of the ancient esoteric truth. This was a procedural and highly complex development—regarding the (Buddhist) signification of the principles, as well as the negotiations about karma

and nirvana that I will investigate in the following section. Hume invoked the seven principles as the 'subdivisions of the Occultists' (Hume 1882a: 18) against Terry's Spiritualist theories of disembodied spirits and séance phenomena, but he solely named three in Sanskrit (2. jiv-atma [*jīv-ātma*], 3. linga sharira [*liṅga śarīra*], 4. kama rupa [*kāma rūpa*]; ibid.). Consequently, the constitution of man revealed why Spiritualists err: the seven principles part at death, with only the lower ones, which do not relate to the actual personality remaining in the material world of the living to be meddled with at séances. Hence, Spiritualist phenomena are based on faulty perceptions of disembodied spirits. Since January 1882, comprehensive designations of the principles have emerged among the Theosophists in India that further illuminate the development which resulted in one of Theosophy's 'mature' core teachings, the septenary constitution.

Sinnett recorded private *Cosmological Notes* (presumably from lost Mahatma letters) with two nominal schemes for the seven principles, one for man and one for the universe (Barker 1973 [1925]: 376–386). The principles are given in Chinese or Tibetan, but the whole scheme never went public. At the same time, Subba Row had just begun to take the place of the allegedly 'authentic Oriental' erudite affirming Theosophical doctrine from a native Brahmin (in this case: Advaita) perspective. He maintained the accordance of the 'Aryan-Brahmin' and the 'Tibetan Buddhist' concepts of the sevenfold constitution (Row 1882a: 93–98), and he affirmed that 'the results arrived at (in the Buddhist doctrine) do not seem to differ much from the conclusions of our Aryan philosophy' (ibid.: 93). Blavatsky now also addressed the septenary constitution. However, she used different terms for the principles. Moreover, she emphasised the bond between Theosophy and Buddhism while simultaneously confirming Row, because his conclusion 'is also sound Buddhist philosophy' (ibid.: 96).

Stated briefly, Buddhism and Theosophy evolved as interrelated entities in Theosophical discourse from 1882 onwards, along with the emergence of a septenary constitution. Obviously, it was neither the naming of the seven principles, nor their (textual) origins that were pertinent to the discussions. Consequently, the question arises which debates and their main issues led to forming the seven principles and their purported connection to the Orient and Buddhism. As I shall show in the following, two prototypically 'Buddhist'

teachings come to the fore: karma and nirvana, that were connected to the wider disputes over reincarnation.

Karma and Reincarnation

One of the most popular and controversial debates among Spiritualists revolved around rebirth, or reincarnation, a 'hardy perennial of spiritualism' (Godwin 1994: 340), that burgeoned in the early 1880s with staunch defenders as well as fervent critics. In this context, the Theosophists established karma and nirvana—and the legitimation of both was embedded in the new (allegedly perennial) anthropological concept outlined above: the septenary constitution. A glimpse into this debate from mid-1881 shall suffice to illustrate the protracted dispute and its main characteristics.

George Wyld, the British Spiritualist and president of the British Theosophical Society from 1880–1882, and Francesca Arundale, a Spiritualist propagator and later Theosophist, quarrelled over reincarnation. In this, both combined Christian theosophy with their own Spiritualist convictions like so many others discussed above. Wyld, however, was a harsh critic of reincarnation, whereas Arundale emphatically promoted it (e.g., Wlyd 1881a: 95; 1881b: 109; Arundale 1881a: 109; 1881b: 230; cf. Burr 1881: 218). Consequently, Wyld habitually criticised Arundale for her misinterpretation of the Bible, which did not teach reincarnation in his view. He referred to Jesus or the Prophets and authors like Swedenborg, arriving at an unequivocal verdict: 'I conclude the doctrine of Re-Incarnation is a dream unsupported by one single fact, and it is contrary to the teachings of the apostles and prophets, and saints and seers, and in deadly opposition to the teachings both of the historic and the esoteric Christ' (Wyld 1881a: 95). Arundale rather concluded to the opposite that all Christian sources and even Swedenborg *did* in fact teach reincarnation. Many authors argued along a similar vein and sided with either Wyld or Arundale (e.g., D.J. 1881; S.C. 1881; Kohn 1881b; T.W.G. 1881). Clearly, reincarnation was indeed a popular and disputed issue among Spiritualists at that time.

Closely related was the question whether the human (i.e. the soul's) progress is achieved via rebirth or not. Julius Kohn accepted reincarnation as the progress of the soul on 'her' way to God, because 'by re-acquisition of her original purity, the Soul is once more in harmony with her Maker and returns

to the Divine source' (Kohn 1881b: 106). In contrast, S.C. Hall stated that the idea of reincarnation 'must be rejected by all Christians as an abomination' (Hall 1881: 107). Evidently, for all writers, the soul had to make its progress, which was often conflated with evolution (cf. Arundale 1881b: 230, Moses 1881b: 74–75; Paynter 1881). Nevertheless, it was heavily disputed how: whether by means of reincarnation, the individual responsibility in life for a consecutive divine judgement and its merits in eternity, or progress without the acceptance of a (Christian/Biblical) god (cf. Hammer 2004: 455–494; cf. Zander 1999). Apparently, the debate in *Light* overheated with a flood of correspondences and Stainton Moses had to announce its suspension by April 1882 (Moses 1882a and 1882b).

Generally, 'Oriental religions', or 'Buddhism' more specifically, were not particularly prominent, but they were mentioned, and they were occasionally connected with Theosophy. It is not surprising that Wyld rejected Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism*, for not only was there no personal god available in Buddhist doctrine, but it even appeared to teach reincarnation (Wyld 1882a: 6–8). And a proper catechism almost two and a half millennia after Buddha seemed to prove that 'Oriental apathy' held sway in Buddhism (ibid.: 6). Yet, Wyld accepted the *Buddhist Catechism* as a source of information about Buddhism, and surprisingly he did not rebuke Olcott or Blavatsky for proclaiming reincarnation, or for their Buddhist affiliations. Nevertheless, Spiritualists as well as various Theosophists were astounded when the Theosophists in India eventually seemed to embrace reincarnation.

One reader was struck with this finding in January 1882, and his corresponding letter was belatedly published in June together with Blavatsky's reply that she perceived no discrepancies between *Isis Unveiled* and recent theories in the "Fragments" (Blavatsky 1882: 225–226). While the correspondent focused on the 'occult' rejection of Spiritualist phenomena, Blavatsky, besides adjusting key concepts from *Isis Unveiled*, opened a Pandora's box: after death, she explained, the Ego was in a gestation state and underwent 'countless re-incarnations' afterwards (ibid.: 226). From this point onwards, the debate rocketed—and as a result, reincarnation was gradually included in Theosophical occult theories in a discursive process of critical scrutiny, criticism, and Theosophical response. Moreover, Blavatsky henceforth referred to Buddhist concepts, which gained increasing prominence in Theosophical theories.

A crucial step towards the Theosophists' acceptance of reincarnation occurred in autumn 1882: in a review of Kingsford and Maitland's *The Perfect Way* (Kingsford and Maitland 1882c), Sinnett rejected most of the book—with the exception of the concept of reincarnation (Sinnett 1882a). Consequently, he did not only oppose the authors' Christian focus and their claim that Christianity had influenced Buddhism, which they had adopted from Arthur Lillie and Edwin Arnold. The main deficiency, in Sinnett's view, was the authors' ignorance of the sevenfold constitution which, according to Sinnett, led to an inaccurate interpretation of reincarnation including the possibility of retrogression. Replying in September 1882, Kingsford and Maitland re-enforced the identity of esoteric Christianity with further religions of the world, in particular with the teachings of the 'arhat doctrine', i.e. with Buddhism (Kingsford and Maitland 1882b). Numerous readers were particularly puzzled by Sinnett's confirmation of reincarnation because they perceived that the Theosophists, and Blavatsky in particular, had been hostile towards it (Blavatsly 1882; Caledonian Theosophist 1882: 225; cf. Chajes 2017: 74–86). From this point onwards, the Theosophists further integrated reincarnation and focused on Buddhism, which they now signified as the only true approach to reincarnation's true esoteric understanding—now including karma and nirvana.

The term karma was familiar since at least the first instalment of the "Fragments". Moreover, from 1881 onwards, it functioned as a marker of the Oriental characterisation of occultism. However, karma was already an established concept and occasionally referred to in Spiritualist circles as well, even though it barely played a role for the Theosophical theories at first. In August 1881, Moses discussed an article by Massey from the *Psychological Review* (cf. Massey 1881: 66–75) and he included reflections upon 'the Hindu doctrine of karma', which Moses, in turn, declared relevant to 'the Western student of Buddhism' (Moses 1881d: 252). And like Massey, Moses expressed his doubts about the comprehensibility of the intricate thoughts of the 'Hindus' to a Western audience—'Buddhist' or 'Hindu' clearly did not make much of a difference for the authors.

Ironically, the reprinted article was a review of Moses' own book, *Higher Aspects of Spiritualism* (Moses 1880), which Massey interpreted in light of the recent Orientalist allure, even though neither Hindu nor Buddhist teachings were mentioned in the book. For Massey, karma seemed like a natural

law for Buddhists that not only explained the specifics of rebirth, but it was also the causa vera of morality, because 'Karma is the formative force of a new sentient being' (Massey 1881: 69). However, when he consulted the famous Orientalist T.W. Rhys Davids' *Buddhism* (cf. Rhys Davids 1880), he found many concepts that were ominous to him. In this, Massey appeared to stay true to the author's own reservations about Buddhism—with karma being one of the four 'mysteries' that, maintained Rhys Davids, 'is most certainly wrong' (cf. ibid.: 99–125, here: 101). Although Massey perceived Buddhist theories as 'philosophical curiosities' (Massey 1881: 73), he interpreted karma as a type of reward or acquittance for the deeds of life—which enabled him to connect karma to the wider Spiritualist debates and participate in the global discourse on Buddhism. Numerous Spiritualists sought to adhere to a modern way of 'proving once and for all the reality of life after death' (Oppenheim 1985: 67), which provided explanations accounting for the different circumstances in the lives of people and what they could expect from their fate, other than 'eternal damnation' or 'divine grace' (cf. ibid.: 92–96). It was this understanding were spiritualists connected karma and 'scientific' ideas of causality (cf. Lopez 2008: 146–152; Almond 1988: 84–90), and in the same manner, the Theosophists also referred to karma.

Hume, in the first "Fragments" in October 1881, argued against William Terry's defence of Spiritualism, that in each rebirth lies 'the fruits of the good deeds, its "Karma"' (Hume 1882a: 19). Nevertheless, merely implying reincarnation, Hume equivocally explained that karma 'invigorates' the *reliquiae*, the remains of the lower principles at séances (ibid.: 20). It is worth noting that Terry was an Australian Theosophist and editor of the Australian edition of the *Psychological Review*, the popular magazine where Massey reviewed Moses' book and introduced karma a few months before (cf. Eek 1965: 164–5; Linton & Hanson 1972: 344–45). One of the crucial questions concerned the 'incentive' of moral behaviour (D.N.K. 1882: 225), to which the scientific interpretation of karma was indubitably relevant. And yet, there was a certain unease among various Spiritualists about the possible absence of a personal god—be it owing to an atheistic interpretation of Buddhism or otherwise.

In August 1882, an anonymous author summarised 'the increasing prominence in the literature of Spiritualism of an opinion which is identical, as far as it goes, with the Buddhist doctrine of Karma' (Anonymous 1882: 454–456,

here: 454). But he found it impertinent, as Spiritualism had already 'developed [a] Western conception of Karma' (ibid.). He cited Fechner's *On life after Death* (Fechner 1882) as an example—which neither mentioned Buddhism, nor karma—concluding that 'death leaves the individual just what his past life has made him, and that his future condition is determined by that and not by a Divine judgment, [that] is a principle that is now established in Spiritual opinion' (Anonymous 1882: 454). At the same time, the Theosophists began to link karma to their own theories when they incorporated reincarnation.

In the closing months of 1882, the Theosophists in India adapted to the situation and integrated karma with reference to the Spiritualist discussions—and they began to claim exclusive access to Oriental and more specifically Buddhist lore. Since September 1882, Sinnett had continually referred to those afore-mentioned positions concerning karma and the contentions about the Theosophical discrepancies on reincarnation. Massey, in turn, reaffirmed his criticism, adding that to him the Theosophical explanations were unconvincing (Massey 1882: 323). Henceforth, Sinnett began to strengthen the theoretical ties to Buddhism (Sinnett 1882b) and maintained that karma was the occult explanation of how 'Nature rewards and punishes her children for the acts in this life' (ibid.: 294). Blavatsky added that karma is a natural law excluding impunity, because it constitutes 'the inexorable causal relation between action and result' (ibid.: 295, footnote). In addition, Hume and Sinnett further elaborated on karma, exposing it as moral impetus for good deeds (probably responsive of said need for a moral 'incentive') and covering ongoing disputes, ranging from the fate of suicides to deceased children. Furthermore, they now included their theorising on spiritualist séances, in which not only was it more probable to provide the lower principles of people with bad karma, but the attendants themselves accumulated malevolent karma, thus putting their next reincarnation, hence their own future at risk (cf. Sinnett 1882b; Hume 1882c & 1882d).

In the final parts of the "Fragments", after Hume had abandoned the occult project, Sinnett combined the manifold discussions, suggesting a Buddhist esoteric narrative and wrapped it in detailed 'occult' explanations of karma. Moreover, he elaborated on the evolution of man that resulted in the development of the seven root races (cf. Sinnett 1883d, 1883e), in contrast to the doctrines of allegedly 'illogical Western Theologians' (Sinnett 1883c:

47). In summary, karma was the (atheistic) law of cause and effect, guiding reincarnation, which was the means to progressive racial development, i.e. the evolution of man.

Nirvana

The issue of nirvana is more opaque than that of karma: while occasionally part of vivid discussions, the Theosophists integrated nirvana relatively late—particularly in the accounts directly preceding *Esoteric Buddhism*. However, if nirvana was not essential to the (Indian) Theosophists' reactions, why did they incorporate it anyways? The superficial explanation might be that nirvana was a familiar Buddhist concept (cf. Almond 1988: 102–110) and well-known through Orientalist literature. While this is a plausible argument, it neither explains the minor role of nirvana in these debates, nor its prominent feature in *Esoteric Buddhism*. Jeffrey Franklin even suggests that 'Theosophy almost entirely avoided several key Buddhist concepts, in particular, "nirvana"' (Franklin 2008: 83). Although this observation deserves reconsideration, Franklin adds the important remark that the Theosophists rather focused on 'the process of reincarnation and Devachan' (ibid.: 84).

While many Spiritualists apparently accepted reincarnation, its function and meaning remained in dispute. The Theosophists around Blavatsky in India contributed to these debates when they too began to incorporate reincarnation in the summer of 1882, and eventually wrap up the clustered topics, critiques, and theories. One of their novel concepts was devachan, a transitory place for the higher human principles after death and their separation in a sphere called kama loka (Sanskrit: *kāma loka*). Sinnett explained in spring 1883 that after a 'gestation' in devachan, the lower principles remained in the earthly spheres of kama loka, while the higher ones (the Ego) faced their rebirth (cf. Sinnett 1883d). Blavatsky initially characterised devachan (next to the one-time mention of 'Bardo') as the sphere where mediumistic insight was possible, but dangerous (Blavatsky 1882). With that, she referred to a previous argument made by Hume, who eventually adapted devachan in the third part of the "Fragments" (Hume 1882c).

However, the idea of a subjective intermediate state was neither innovative, nor originally introduced by the Theosophists (cf. Chajes 2012). Similar reflections took place in the Spiritualist press in the context of the debate on

reincarnation (cf. Moses 1881c; Wyld 1882b). For example, Kingsford and Maitland had already explained that parts of the deceased would experience a blissful phase when reaching the 'summerland' (Kingsford and Maitland 1882a), reminiscing Andrew Jackson Davis (cf. Lavoie 2012: 118–19). As a consequence, to further differentiate from such competitors, Hume concluded that solely occult knowledge about the seven principles of man—including devachan—explained the dangerous potential of the mediums' deception. This was exactly 'why we are strongly opposed to habitual mediumism' (Hume 1882c: 312). Unsurprisingly, the Theosophists in India claimed to correct, rather than to consent with the discussions they considered in the framing of devachan.

A close reading of the debates reveals that the Theosophical concepts clearly reflected the protracted disputes and statements of the Spiritualists. These viewpoints represented, to a considerable extent, Christian positions that called for a paradise or type of divine merit in the afterlife. Sinnett adopted various of the criticised ideas under Oriental auspices but openly admitted that devachan 'corresponds to the "Hereafter" or Heaven of vulgar Theology' (Sinnett 1883c: 48). Naturally, the conformity with Spiritualist and Christian concepts did not lie in the idea of divinely ruled eternity, which Sinnett continuously denounced as place where the deceased suffer as they 'survey the miseries of the earth' (Sinnett 1883d:). Instead, he described devachan as a state of 'true happiness' (ibid.: 133) according to the deeds in life. The central functions of 'heaven' were thus appreciated in the Oriental occult revelations about karma and devachan, which was now explicitly affiliated with Buddhism.

While the Theosophists' shaping of their systematic doctrines with reference to 'Buddhism' and Orient took shape from 1881 onwards, nirvana attracted their interest as late as spring 1883. Blavatsky contributed copious appendices to Sinnett's "Fragments" (Blavatsky 1883; Sinnett 1883d), and both concatenated the different currents of discussion under the header of Buddhism. In Blavatsky's view, the beginning and end of the whole karma-led spiritual journal was nirvana (Blavatsky 1883: 135). Accordingly, they depicted Buddhism (in its esoteric meaning) as comprising a sophisticated understanding of evolution operating through reincarnation. In consequence, reincarnation worked through the passage of the higher human principles

through devachan according to the Ego's 'moral and spiritual affinities' (ibid.). A further concession to the debates and criticism, avitchi (Sanskrit: *avīci*) was introduced as devachan's hell-like counterpart (ibid.: 136). In April 1883, Sinnett expounded the chain of planets and the development of the human race through evolutionary rounds—Buddha being the most advanced human, the sole 'sixth rounder' (Sinnett 1883e: 163), thus lending Buddha himself a final 'scientific' (evolutionary) christening.

At that time, Sinnett was already travelling to London to publish *Esoteric Buddhism* and engage in the London Lodge, which resulted in an infamous 'clash of egos' (Godwin 1994: 342) with Anna Kingsford. Not incidentally, in *Esoteric Buddhism*, he devoted a whole chapter to nirvana. The contours that Sinnett disclosed of it sound strikingly familiar when reading it in light of the previous debates: nirvana is the final stage of the full seven-round evolution of the cosmos, and although devachan and nirvana might not be compared (Sinnett 1883a: 161), the Ego's state in nirvana is 'the Devachan of its Devachanic states' (ibid.). As I have shown, the Theosophists in India combined the conclusions of Spiritualist and Christian and their own theorising that came to the fore in robust discussions with layers of 'Buddhism' and scientific entitlement to carve out an intricate Theosophical philosophy. The main strands of these developments would constitute fundamentals of Blavatsky's 'mature Theosophy'.

The Global Entanglement of Occult Buddhism and South Asian Contributors

While I have shown in detail, when, how, and why specific topics evolved to become Theosophical doctrine through an Oriental shift to 'Buddhism', one final point requires clarification: the contribution of South Asian perspectives and a supposed mutual influence, or entanglement, that influenced the emergence of the allegedly Buddhist occult theories. The topics that the Theosophists cumulatively appropriated were carved out in the course of contemporary contentions, which I followed through the main periodicals of that context. All the key topics were obviously debated among Spiritualists and Christians as well. But while many 'non-Europeans' (such as the Singhalese monks or the two Theosophists Subba Row, or Damodar Mavalankar [see below] and many others) contributed, particularly in the *Theosophist*, there

was little influence from further authors deemed Eastern, Oriental, or Buddhist themselves.

And even many key issues, like reincarnation, were not perceived to be particularly Oriental or Buddhist by the discussants. As I have shown, for various authors, reincarnation was not connected to 'Eastern religion', but rather to French Spiritism, if such connection was made at all (cf. Zander 1999: 472–485; Chajes 2019). In India, the Theosophists of Blavatsky's circle worked diligently to establish the Oriental foundation of their own adeptic occultism as best preserved in Buddhism. Moreover, their allegedly Oriental vocabulary clearly functioned as marker of Theosophical authority. This strategy may be paradigmatically illustrated by Sinnett explaining paradise and '[r]ejecting the unscientific name which has become encrusted with too many misconceptions to be convenient, let us keep the Oriental designation' (Sinnett 1883d: 132), i.e. devachan.

While nirvana was incorporated into the occult theories only after 1883, it was mentioned in this regard in two instances before. Damodar Mavalankar (1857–1885 [went missing]) and T. Subba Row (1856–1890) claimed their own Oriental space: the two Theosophists named nirvana in a dispute with William Oxley, defending the 'esoteric Buddhist and Brahmanical doctrines' against that 'Western' author (Mavalankar 1882: 62; cf. Row 1882b). Obviously, for the two, nirvana was part of esoteric Oriental Brahmanism and Buddhism, and thus applied to Theosophy as well (cf. Chajes 2019), making them 'authentic authorities' vowing for Theosophy's Oriental character.

Another instance of South Asian contributions is represented by articles from the Singhalese monks Sumangla and Gunananda. Sumangla explained that 'the Buddha rejects the doctrine of the existence of the soul' (Sumangala 1880b: 144) but assumed a composite of five aggregates (the skandhas [Sanskrit: *skandha*]) instead, which eventually dissolve. In September 1880, a paragraph from *The Pioneer* (where Sinnett was an editor until 1879) on the spread of Buddhism to the West and the uncertainty of Western observers concerning nirvana was presented in the *Theosophist*. Like other South Asians (cf. Blavatsky 1880a), the Singhalese monks were presented as the native references of 'the pure, unadulterated doctrine of Buddha' (cf. ibid.; Anonymous 1880; Sumangala 1880b). In descriptions of a controversy between Singhalese Buddhists (Anonymous 1880), the anonymous author

(possibly Blavatsky[3]) announces further explanations concerning nirvana from these monks. Nevertheless, the universalist conclusion of the article is revealing: 'Buddhistic philosophy in its refined esoteric aspect differs very little from the creed of the Vedanta school, and still less from the secret doctrine that can be read between the lines of the Veda' (ibid.).

In other words, while the Buddhist monks were not excluded from the debate in den periodicals, they predominantly fulfilled a role as legitimising authority for the Theosophists and their access to Oriental knowledge in general. Just like other Indian members (Row and Mavalankar in particular), the monks primarily served as 'authentic' witnesses and amplifiers, but they seem not to have directly influenced, nor were they referred to in the debates analysed above. This is not astounding considering the disagreement over the status and meaning of nirvana between Olcott and Sumangala. While Olcott needed Sumangala's approval of his *Catechism* (cf. Prothero 1993: 101–104) and apparently, the Buddhists served as stooges of Theosophy, the atmosphere became increasingly tense. Their relation turned sour over several doctrinal struggles and Sumangala eventually published a counter-catechism, the *Bauddha Prashnayak* (cf. Bretfeld 2012; Young and Sōmaratna 1996).

Nevertheless, the discourse named 'Buddhism' was at that time a global one. The variability of the terms in the Theosophical vocabulary displays a clear trend, reflecting the wider historical context of (academic) Orientalism. While their earlier theories and concepts primarily refer to Tibetan terms, there is an obvious preference for Sanskrit after 1882. Sinnett's "Cosmological Notes" provide a comparison of English, Tibetan, and Sanskrit designations for the constituents of man and cosmos (cf. Barker 1973: 378). Unfortunately, the source of these terms remains subject to speculation (cf. Reigle 1999 & 2013). With the substitution of Tibetan terms for Sanskrit, the Theosophists appear to have followed belatedly a general trend. In the second half of the nineteenth century, it became customary among scholars to focus on the origins and (scriptural) sources of Buddhism, which was now classified

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[3] The unnamed notes and articles in the Theosophist were frequently written by Blavatsky, and a Theosophical Society's internet-site lists this article as Blavatsky's as well (<https://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/theosoph/theos12a.htm#spread>, Accessed: 13. September 2022).

as an originally Indian religion, hence Sanskrit and Pali were considered its authentic repository (cf. de Jong 1976; Lopez 2008: 1–28). The work of the famous Pali-scholar T. W. Rhys Davids (1843–1922) was substantial in this respect and his work provided a central source for Buddhism in the debates. While the exact wording concerning 'occult' Buddhist terminology was secondary, its shift away from Tibetan and Chinese to Sanskrit demonstrates the Theosophists' reliance on this Orientalist development.

A similar (textual) focus and simultaneously an explicit disqualification of South Asians can be found in the Theosophists' opponents, too, but with a cynical twist: James M. Peebles rejected Sumangala's statements, but not for the monk's 'authenticity', but rather for his putative Western contamination. For Peebles, agnostic Europeans have 'done what they could to make Atheists and Materialists of Buddhists' (Peebles 1882: 234)—consequently privileging (European) Orientalist texts over living Buddhists. In many accounts like Peebles', deliberately 'Western' authors explicitly excluded 'modern' or 'Westernised' Buddhists (cf. Kohn 1881b, 1882, Meyrick 1882; Wyld 1882a), favouring the 'original' scriptural sources. The demand for 'authentic Oriental' knowledge thus reiterated the imperial hegemony over South Asian discourses and even 'erased' the legitimacy of South Asian contributions.

Apparently, in spite of the Oriental claims of the Theosophists, their South Asian contacts and references to their own residing in India, direct Oriental or Buddhist contributions were scarce. This finding could seem to suggest that esoteric Buddhism was actually 'Western esotericism', as is commonly asserted, and its globalisation was an Orientalist colonial project in the Saidian sense. Yet, I argue differently: while Olcott and Blavatsky indubitably have come to Ceylon with prefigured images of Buddhism, these have been part of a global discourse already. Consecutive claims on East versus West took place in an unequal, yet globally entangled context, as two examples from the above-mentioned debates illustrate: between European Orientalists and Singhalese monks.

Firstly, the constitution of the Theosophists' sources of information: Rhys Davids' pivotal works on Buddhism were indebted to global entanglement and mutual exchange. When Rhys Davids began studying Pali, he relied on the help of Yatramulle Unnanse, an old Singhalese monk (Allen 2003: 239–241). To his initial displeasure, the old cleric not only taught him language,

but 'he was constantly turning away from questions of Pali to questions of Buddhism. (…) [there was] a high mindedness that filled me with reverence' (Rhys Davids quoted in: Allen 2003: 240). This experience shaped his ideas about Buddhism, and it was instrumental in Rhys Davids' subsequent career as an Orientalist. As Richard King notes: 'Buddhists have responded to the Orientalist gaze and thereby contributed to Orientalist representations of "Buddhism"' (King 1999: 149; cf. Berkwitz 2018).

Even Friedrich Max Müller, another main Orientalist source of the Theosophists, was also entangled in this global discourse, although he never even travelled to Asia himself. Müller's search for origins and the essence of religion was decisively shaped by Unitarian and Brahmo Samaj influence (cf. Strube 2021). Furthermore, Müller received considerable help from Japanese 'interlocutors' in his works about Buddhism (Krämer 2019), even though he clearly considered them his eager 'students' (and child-like friends). Nevertheless, Müller's growing appreciation 'marked the beginning of a new positive attitude towards Buddhism in the West', and in turn, it was Rhys Davids' *Buddhism* (1880) that was 'the main vehicle for this new thinking' (Allan 2003: 241)—a vehicle that indubitably served the Theosophists as well, even though the later debate between Blavatsky, Olcott, and Sinnett with Müller was conflictive (cf. Lopez 2008; Lubelsky 2016).

Secondly, in Ceylon, the Theosophists encountered Buddhists who already had experienced decades of clashing with Christian missionaries. Gunananda had skilfully countered missionary polemics and, most famously not only in his own view, had defeated Reverend Da Silva in the debate of Panadura (Tamil: *pāṛṇaturai*) in 1873. Challenging Da Silva too, Sumangala was instrumental establishing the image of Buddhism as compatible with modern science and, in turn, forced the missionaries to reconsider their own reasoning as well (Lopez 2008: 39–42). It was thus no mere 'appropriation' of Western ideas when Sumangala and Gunananda contributed to the *Theosophist* about Buddhism in ways that were comprehensible for the journal's readers—their mutual understanding already rested on a global discourse. And it was a report of their victorious debate that seems to have aroused Olcott's interest in Singhalese Buddhism after all (cf. Peebles 1873; Prothero 1996: 206) Thus, I certainly cannot agree that Theosophists were merely 'faithful heirs of nineteenth-century Orientalism and the Platonic Orientalist tradition

in Western esotericism' (Hanegraaff 2020: 39), or that a 'mutual fertilization' taking place only *after* the Theosophists' move to India in 1879 (ibid.: 48–49).

CONCLUSION

At the outset of this article, I identified inconsistencies arising from a common historical narrative about Theosophy, which tends to rest on essentialist distinctions between East and West. This narrative furthermore fails to inquire into the historical emergence of 'esoteric Buddhism'. The historicisation of central Theosophical doctrines that were shaped by the so-called 'Oriental shift' proved to be equally hazy. Consequently, I suggested a perspective based on postcolonial and global historical insights to broaden the scope, shifting focus to contemporary debates and historical contingency. Based on the assumption that the Oriental and Buddhist references in Theosophy are historical discursive products (as 'Oriental' or 'Buddhist') without essential or primordial significations, I examined popular contemporary periodicals where central disputes about Theosophy and Buddhism have taken place.

The analysis of this pragmatically restricted archive has shown that the reception and integration of 'Buddhist' topics was highly dynamic and gained momentum in the early 1880s. Rather than Blavatsky 'inventing' or 'discovering' an entity named 'Buddhism' mostly on her own, as is commonly described, we saw a far more intricate production of meaning. The Theosophists in India grouping around Blavatsky gradually applied different understandings of Buddhism (and the Orient) as their distinctive feature from 1881 onwards. They did so in the course of many disputes and their emerging concepts clearly show the traces of these controversies. Hence, they increasingly occluded putative Western positions, so as to identify allegedly Buddhist concepts as the sole path to the true esoteric meaning of all religions. The septenary constitution was explained as a—more sophisticated—replacement for the tripartite one, integrating all the major aspects that were debated at that time. Whether there was a direct influence in the expansion of the constituents is still unclear, but at least it was no hindrance to Theosophical reasoning that the Buddhist 'authority' Sumangala had expounded on the 'aggregates' of the world, of man and the composition (i.e. subdivision) of the soul in Buddhism in *The Theosophist* (Sumangala 1880b).

Despite their polemic disdain for Christianity, the Theosophists in India obviously considered and included main topics from their adversaries. However, part of the Theosophists' authority (and at the same time the problem of their credibility) not only issued from the backing of 'Oriental Mahatmas', but from the approval of South Asians as well. This enabled them to include familiar concepts and ideas, while simultaneously claiming them exclusively for occultism, most prominently reincarnation/rebirth, ideas of after-death states (heaven) or the constitution of man, that were supposed to wipe away Spiritualism and substitute it for occult science. And a science it was indeed, in their view, as Buddha taught evolution with his doctrine of karma that would eventually lead to nirvana. In their occult appearance, all these concepts bore remarkable resemblance to those developed in Spiritualist debates in response to urgent contemporary concerns. The 'Buddhism' Theosophists 'discovered' in the course of these disputes was thus a contemporary product, based on the global discourse of Orientalist representations, 'esoteric' discussions and the South Asian colonial context.

Further research is utterly needed to continue provincialising (Western) esotericism by scrutinising its historical contingency in the wake of what is termed 'mature' Theosophy and its Oriental shift. Even though South Asians (or any self-identification from a non-'Western' context) hardly voiced their concerns in the discussions analysed above, it can be expected that South Asian discourses have been more influential than commonly assumed. They defy notions like Eastern appropriations of Western concepts—which is nevertheless not ignorant of massive inequalities in power and status. Recent research has begun to analyse such entanglements for several related topics (cf. Mukhopadyay 2019; Strube 2022; Mühlematter 2022). 'Mutual imbrications' are likely to reach far beyond the debates with Sumangala and Gunananda, the contributions and then criticism of Subba Row—particularly after 1884 (cf. Eek 1964: 481–482; Chajes 2021: 32–42; Baier 2016)—and further significations of Buddhism, of East and West, or of esotericism.

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Religious Criticism, Public Reason and Affect in the Reformist Age: Early Arya Samaj and the Religious Controversies

Mohinder Singh[1]

Abstract: Several movements for religious and social reform emerged among the religious communities in 19th century India as varied responses to the colonial 'civilizing mission'. The work of reform among the Hindus and Muslims involved both the defence of their respective religious traditions and simultaneous critiques of established religious practices and institutions seen as corrupt or inauthentic. Both Hindus and Muslims inherited rich traditions of reason, reasoning and rational argumentation as well as of internal religious innovation and reforms. What is new about the 19th century reformist discourses, is the imbrication of these concepts with the Western conceptions of reason and science. The public sphere that emerged in this wake involved diverse forms of polemics and contests within religious traditions (i.e., between the orthodox and the reformers within a tradition) and between the religious traditions. The colonial state protected religious criticism, subject to public peace and order. However, public order frequently became a concern for the state as both these dimensions of religious controversies tended to generate affects—hurt feelings, passions, public enthusiasm—often leading to violence. A large number of court cases were also filed as a consequence. The public sphere of the religious controversies was also exposed to the global circulation of concepts, images and rhetorical figures. This article attempts to explore the rational and affective dimensions of the religious controversies in the early 20th century India by focusing on an important document related to the history of the reformist organisation Arya Samaj relevant for this theme.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most intractable problems that has emerged in the last century and half is concerned with the appropriate balance between the possibility of reasonable criticism of religious doctrines and practices and the proscription of offensive and hurtful speech. The 19th century religious and social reform

movements provide an important historical site for a historical understanding of this problem. Faisal Devji has recently argued that the origins of the current global controversy involving the conflict between 'free speech' and 'hurt religious sentiments', involving the Muslim communities particularly, can be traced back to the religious controversies of late 19th century South Asia (Devji 2022 & 2021). A deeper historical analysis of this conflict will involve understanding the modes of public reasoning deployed in these religious controversies. Such an analysis may give us some clues as to why certain forms of public criticisms of religions gave rise to the kind of affects they did.

A strong emphasis on reason and reasoning was an important part in the self-representations of the modern reformist discourses that emerged in 19th century India—an emphasis shared across Hindu and Muslim reform movements. Although conceptions of reason and rational argumentation were present among both Hindu and Muslim traditions—theological, philosophical and scientific—what is new about the 19th century reformist discourses is the imbrication of these concepts with Western conceptions of reason, science and religious criticism (Prakash 2000; Ganeri 2012; Tripathi 2016). Several historical studies have shown how the glorification of Western reason was wielded as a weapon in the self-legitimating colonial ideology of 'civilizing mission' (Prakash 2000; Mann & Fischer-Tiné 2004; Pernau et al. 2015). The Western conception of reason that accompanied the ideology of 'civilizing mission' was a capacious one. On the one hand, it included the notions of rational efficiency applicable in the fields of science and technology, law and administration and government—a concept that later came to be characterised as instrumental reason; on the other hand, it included a more substantive and teleological conception of reason that could be used for judging socio-religious customs and practices.

Such conceptions of reason—informing both the Christian missionary and the emergent liberal-utilitarian-secular worldviews of the early 19th century—were implicit in the critiques of prevalent Indian religious and social institutions and practices. In the early decades of the 19th century, the colonial government aggressively promoted reform through legal and pedagogic means. Sections of Hindus and Muslims—particularly those exposed to Western education—responded to these measures by inaugurating their own programmes of 'self-civilisation' through reformist efforts. The Hindu

and Muslim reformist discourses[2] that ensued elaborated their own conceptions of reason, reflexively but critically defending their own respective traditions, often ironically on the grounds and parameters of Western conceptions of science and reason (Prakash 2000). The defence of specific traditions and their authoritative texts on rational and scientific grounds became important. Despite the ethnocentric origins of modern Western reason, some of its constitutive features—emphasis on the value of empirical evidence in natural sciences and history-writing and the value of utility and individual autonomy in ethics—became attractive to the reform enthusiasts. Some of the reformist and revivalist organisations went as far as to claim the presence of science (i.e., modern science) in their own ancient scriptures (ibid.).

The reformist discourses—both colonial and Indian—centrally involved the category of religion, as their main target of critique and reform. As Timothy Fitzgerald has argued, the colonial discourse of religion was framed in terms of the binary of civility and barbarism wherein Christianity—particularly Protestant Christianity—was represented as the paradigmatic rational and civilised religion, while other religions, particularly Hinduism, were denounced as irrational and uncivilised or semi-civilised because irrational (Fitzgerald 2000). While Western notions of reason and rationality were deployed as criteria for judging and comparing religions, simultaneously, the colonial and missionary rhetoric of civilisation exposed many Hindu religious rituals and social institutions including family and caste as sites of shame and disgust. As a response, one of the strategies chalked out by some of the reformist movements like the Arya Samaj used a strong dose of revivalism in their reformist rhetoric, affirming pride in the 'scientific' ancient Vedic civilisation that was supposedly corrupted by later accretions like Puranic Hinduism.[3]

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[2] On the question of the classification of various religious organisations of the 19th century, I agree with the arguments in recent historiography—for instance by Vasudha Dalmia, John Zavos, and Julian Strube—that question the earlier rigid classification in terms of reform versus revival or modernist versus traditional. As these scholars have shown, the organisations— mostly named *dharma sabha*—that sought to defend the *sanātana* ('eternal') *dharma* against the reformist critique, also promoted reformist agendas in their own ways, not only in the social domain but also in the religious one. On the other side, reformist organisations like Arya Samaj were able to combine their reformism with Hindu revivalism. (Dalmia 2000; Zavos 2001; Strube 2022).

[3] Traditions of Hinduism grounded in the *Purāṇa*s, post-Vedic Hindu sacred texts. The founder of Arya Samaj, Swami Dayanand considered *Purāṇa*s to be the main sources of corruption of the Vedic tradition as they provided textual basis for polytheism and idol-worship in Hinduism.

The 19th century Indian reformist movements, however, did not remain limited to critiques of their respective religious traditions. Since the initial challenge was thrown by the polemics of Christian missionaries and the liberal-utilitarians, Indian responses and counter-attacks constituted as much of the discourse as the defence of their own respective traditions. The grounds of comparison were broadly the ones established by the colonial discourse claiming Christianity to be the only 'true' and 'rational' religion. The public sphere of religious controversies that emerged in this context was animated by the comparative and competitive claims of superiority of the competing religious denominations. The interplay of the complex emotions of shame and pride in this historical context reveals both the outrage and vulnerability of the protagonists to being exposed to not just new—globally civilisational—criteria of judgement and criticism but also to a different conception of publicness, civility, and concomitantly of exposure.

The main objective of this article is to explore the interplay between reason and affect in this public sphere of religious controversies. I explore this interplay through a contextual reading of a book by two prominent Arya Samaj reformers of the time—Lala Munshi Ram (Swami Shraddhanand after 1917) and Rama Deva, *Arya Samaj and its detractors: A vindication.* (Jijyasu & Deva 1910) published in 1910. This text, written by two active participants in the religious controversies of their time, gives us a snapshot not only of some of the key controversial issues of the time but also of affects generated and the modes of reasoning, rationalisation and justifications used by different parties. In addition, since the text was primarily a defence of the Arya Samaj position in the wake of several legal cases against this organisation, it also gives us a view into some of the legal dimensions of the controversies. Finally, the text also offers insight into globally circulating concepts, rhetorical figures and images through the print media of the time.

The thematic explorations of this article are located at the intersection of several lines of historical research in recent decades. One of the most important of these developments is the current emphasis on the history of emotions and affect in South Asia (cf. Pernau 2019; Blom & Lama-Rewal 2020). Apart from underscoring the importance of studying the hitherto neglected aspect of human culture in the histories of modern South Asia, these studies show how colonial interaction affected the emotional world of different

sections of Indian society and which emotions were mobilised for and in response to the restructuring of social and religious life in the wake of the calls for reform and revival. They also demonstrate what role emotions played—and which emotions specifically—in religious and political mobilisations that ensued in the wake of religious and social reforms, during the revolt of 1857 and its suppression, and in religious controversies, communal conflicts and the anti-colonial movement. Equally important are questions concerning the continuities and breaks with the pre-colonial past in terms of the emotional management of private and public selves. Another field in the current historiography that intersects with the central concerns of this article is the focus on global interactions and entanglements of ideas in the histories of reason, science, religion, modes of civility and public spheres (Strube 2022; idem et. al. 2021; Pernau et. al. 2015). Finally, this article is also concerned with the relation between colonial law regarding religious freedom and the possibility of hurting 'religious sentiment' through public speech, writing or other modes of public representation, also an important focus area of South Asian history (Adcock 2016; Scott 2015; Nair 2015; Devji 2021). I engage with the latter two sets of literature in the contexts of the relevant discussions in the paper.

The article is divided into three sections. The detailed analysis of the relevant sections of *Arya Samaj and its detractors* is preceded by a brief discussion of the historical context of the religious controversies and the role of the Arya Samaj in these. The last section takes up the analysis of some of the basic features of the public sphere that emerged in the wake of the religious controversies.

ARYA SAMAJ, RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES, HURTFUL SPEECH

Emerging in the wake of the reformist and revivalist movements of the 19th century, 'religious controversies' involved diverse forms of polemics and contests within religious traditions and between different religious traditions. The colonial state protected religious criticism[4] or the public use of reason in critiquing religions, subject to maintenance of public peace and order.

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[4] By the early decades of the 20th century however the colonial state began to dilute this protection of the rational critique of religion as Indian religions began to be construed purely as realms of emotions and sentiments, a colonial construct that stands discredited now (Adcock 2016).

However, public order frequently became a concern for the state as both these dimensions of religious controversies tended to generate affect—hurt feelings, passions, public enthusiasm—often leading to violence. A large number of court cases were also filed as a consequence. As Kenneth Jones' edited volume on religious controversies during this period shows, the multidirectional flow and circulation of affect that the controversies generated in the public sphere worked in interesting ways in the context of fluid and constantly shifting boundaries of communities and selves (Jones 1992). In her essay in the volume, Barbara Metcalf shows how a spectacular debate between Indian spokesmen and Christian missionaries had the effect of bringing the Indians of all backgrounds together in solidarity. At the same time, the public debates between the representatives of Indian communities led to the consolidation and rigidification of community boundaries.

At times, in situations that did not allow for an open articulation of political critique of the colonial regime, the controversies could also provide Indians a space for the expression of anti-colonial feelings, as Metcalf writes: 'A significant dimension of the appeal of these debates lay in the opportunity to encounter Europeans on open turf, to challenge those who, in their ever intensifying political control, could not be challenged elsewhere.' (Metcalf 1992: 236). The enthusiasm generated by the spectacle of a European held up to ridicule by an Indian debater irrespective of religious belonging, was a 'general enthusiasm' not specific to any community (ibid.: 229–40). This was in addition to the routine community-specific emotions and enthusiasm the controversies generated.

Another interesting aspect of the religious controversies, noted by several scholars, is the general lack of interest in mutual intelligibility except in rare cases. Metcalf notes that it was rare for the debaters to make a sincere effort to enter into the 'frame of reference' of their opponents (ibid.). Further, the controversialists were generally more interested in impressing their own specific addressee audience than reaching any 'mutual intelligibility'. In one case, Deobandi Muslim debaters claimed that their Arya Samaj opponent spoke Sanskrit ostensibly to impress the Hindus in the audience (ibid.: 236). Needless to say, most Hindus would only be *impressed* by the public use of Sanskrit rather than actually *understand* the content of the argument. As the goal invariably was to 'stand forth to champion one's own side and foster

communal self-esteem', each side invariably claimed victory, with partisan presses reporting conflicting views (Jones 1992; also Tareen 2012; Jordens 1978). All these instances demonstrate the role played by the affective in the public sphere of religious controversies.

Such scenarios further confirm that the actually existing public spheres in different parts of the world are far from conforming to the normative model of public sphere as public use of reason. Rather, a more promising point of departure is to understand public speech to be embodied and excitable from the very outset. Yet, all victories in such public debates were claimed in the name of reason: reason as embodied in the superior argumentative reasoning of the victor and the superior rationality of the defended position. Nonetheless, the work of missionaries and reformers would continue beyond the public debates into more private, individual and relatively much slower levels of persuasion and conversion (cf. Young 1981).

The form of public reasoning—both written and oral—used by the early Arya Samaj makes an interesting study in this context. Two dimensions of this public reasoning should be noted at the outset. In its self-representation and initial reformist enthusiasm, the early Arya Samaj put a premium on rational and scientific arguments—particularly emphasising the role of empirical evidence and utility—for arguing its case for religious and social reform and for converting people to its own denomination. Further, the Arya Samaj sought to appropriate modern scientific reason and project it on to the original and supposedly uncorrupted Vedic tradition—in this way, participating in the construction of what Gyan Prakash has called 'another reason' (Prakash 2000). At the same time, the Arya Samaj was frequently accused of indulging in offensive public speech since its foundation in the 1870s (Jones 1976). The founder of the Arya Samaj, Swami Dayanand Saraswati himself was an arch polemicist and a key participant in the religious controversies of the 19th century; a legacy that was enthusiastically taken forward by his early Arya Samaj disciples. Swami Dayanand was notorious for his 'sledge-hammer style of denunciation' in his public addresses as well as written works (Jordens 1978: 187). The founding text of the movement, *Satyarth Prakash* (The light of truth) authored by Swami Dayanand, frequently found itself in the midst of controversies owing to its content perceived offensive by different

religious communities at different times: Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains and *sanātanī* Hindus[5] (Cort 2019; Scott 2015).

The eminent Sanskrit scholar Radhavallabh Tripathi has recently published a book tracing the history of argumentation (*vāda*)[6] in the Sanskrit intellectual tradition from the early Vedic times to the 20th century (Tripathi 2016). In this tradition of *vāda*, Tripathi shows that the *śāstrārtha*[7] form of argumentation came into existence and became popular only in the 19th century (ibid.: 5). Tripathi shows that the traditional intellectual practice of argumentation included—along with established tools of logical reasoning (*tarka* or *yukti*) and use of perception-based empirical evidence—the uses of several tactics contrary to these prescribed forms, in order to achieve the goal of victory. Although overall normative emphasis was in favour of rigorous logical and evidence-based reasoning in the interest of arriving at truth, hurtful and violent speech was very much a part of the tradition and within the domain of acceptability (ibid.: 1–39). According to Tripathi, Swami Dayanand used several of such traditional tricks like wrangling and cavil quite regularly in his debates (ibid.: 321–3).

Although Swami Dayanand remained far more firmly grounded in the Sanskrit intellectual tradition—both in terms of the doctrinal contents under discussion and the forms of reasoning—than some of his Western educated disciples, he was also sufficiently exposed to the new, more global debates around the themes of religion, reason and science, particularly through his interaction with prominent theosophists of the time as well as well-known Christian theologians and Muslim reformers like Syed Ahmad Khan (Jordens 1978). On several occasions, like in the preface to his magnum opus *Satyarth Prakash* and frequently on public platforms, Dayanand emphasised the values of truth, impartiality and civility in public speech and writing (Dayanand 2010: 'Preface'). It seems that the 'sledge hammer' did come in handy from

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[5] *Sanātanī* refers to the followers of *sanātana* ('eternal') *dharma*. In the historical context discussed in this article, s*anātanī* refers to the individuals and organisations that sought to defend what orthodox Hinduism against the reformist critique. For further clarification of the contextual usage of these terms refer to footnote 2.

[6] The Sanskrit term *vāda* is polysemic. Its semantic range covers speech, logic, argumentation, reasoning and discourse.

[7] The term *śāstrārtha* refers to a disputation over the meaning of scriptures.

time to time when he was set upon demolishing a particular doctrine or practice of opponents in his writings.

As mentioned above, one of the forms of controversies that was publicly witnessed was the *śāstrārtha* form, in which Swami Dayanand and early Arya Samaj reformers participated. The *śāstrārtha* was used mainly for debates between Arya Samaj and the *sanātanī* Hindus and was initially conducted mainly in Sanskrit. These debates were widely reported in print. The print genres of tracts, pamphlets, and newspaper columns soon became the predominant media of religious controversies coexisting with publicly witnessed debates in the market square. The oral public debates and the arguments in print fed into each other (Singh 1903; Jones 1976; Jordens 1978). The early Arya Samaj, from 1880s onward produced its own missionaries in the form of *upadeśak* and *praćārak* as professional controversialists in defence of Vedic dharma and civilisation (Jones 1976; Adcock 2014).[8]

Another notable feature of the early Arya Samaj approach to religious controversies is its global-universalist orientation. For instance, Lala Munshi Ram frequently used in his writings the metaphor of battleground to describe the contemporary historical situation. In this rhetoric, Swami Dayanand is presented as the saviour not only of India but of the whole global humanity from general spiritual decline and the looming threat of nihilistic materialism emanating from the West (Shraddhanand 1987). The Gurukul faction, the faction of the Arya Samaj led by Munshi Ram, soon added another dimension to the 'battle' beyond the defence and propagation of Vedic dharma by starting its own activities of proselytising or *śuddhī*.[9] The Gurukul faction also placed great emphasis on the subjectivity of *upadeśak* warriors by prescribing self-cultivation as the necessary foundation of individual and social reform (Adcock 2014: 54–5). A vegetarian diet and the practice of *brahmaćarya* ('celibacy') along with a rigorous physical training regimen were prescribed for the discipline of self-cultivation of the Arya Samaj. According to the account of an early Arya Samaj activist, Tarachand, 'religious controversy was above all an occasion to display the virtues acquired through self-cultivation. Gurukul party tradition presented self-fashioning through *brahmacharya* as

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[8] The Hindi terms *upadeśak* and *praćārak* are used for 'preachers' or 'propagandists'.
[9] The term *śuddhī* literally means 'purification'. In Arya Samaj discourse, it was used for the practice of reconversion back into Hinduism through 'purification' rituals.

the foundation for *śāstrārtha*, prerequisite for successful dissemination of Vedic knowledge and for attaining victory over opponents' (cited in ibid.: 56). The prevalence of such practices of the rigorous self-cultivation of the debaters again underscores the affective dimension of the religious controversies insofar as the public display of the embodied self of the controversialists was considered valuable in itself, beyond the content of the argument. On the darker side, the heat and passion generated by the controversies often led to the outbreak of violent clashes. Beginning in the 1890s, the number of incidents of violence started growing at an alarming rate.

DEFENDING RELIGIOUS CRITICISM: 1910, *ARYA SAMAJ AND ITS DETRACTORS*

The occasion for publication of the tract *Arya Samaj and its detractors* was a series of legal cases brought against the Arya Samaj after 1907, particularly in the wake of the arrest of Lala Lajpat Rai, a prominent Arya Samaj reformer of the 'College faction' and Congress politician active in the Swadeshi movement. His arrest brought the Arya Samaj under the cloud of governmental suspicion for seditious activities. Many of the Arya Samaj activists were being hounded and some victimised by government agencies. The book was written in response to the ongoing trial of Arya Samaj activists in a court in the Punjab town of Patiala. The ostensible purpose of the book was to publicly respond to two of the main charges brought against the Arya Samaj in the course of the trial. One was that the Arya Samaj was a 'political' organisation and its members were involved in seditious activities in the garb of 'religion'. The second charge was that the Arya Samaj—its founder, the founding text *Satyarth Prakash* and its activists—were repeatedly offending other religions with hurtful speech (Jijyasu & Deva 1910).

The general line of defence

Apart from a general defence of the necessity of religious criticism, the three sections of the chapter 'Swami Dayanand and Other Religions' defend the former's specific criticisms of Christianity, Islam and Puranic Hinduism one by one. The purpose of this defence was not merely to refute the arguments brought against Swami Dayanand in the court by the prosecution lawyer but also to address the larger public. As a matter of fact, this section of the book

does the work of further advancing the Arya Samaj critiques of these religious traditions.

The general defence gives the reader insight into the authors' idea of legitimate religious criticism. Implicit in the authors' general line of defence is that religious criticism is not only legitimate and ought to be protected in any civilised legal order but that, from time to time, it becomes necessary for the sake of truth and for the welfare of humanity (ibid.: 138–227).

The authors opened the beginning of this section with their main argument:

> Those who have read the works of great world-reformers know full well that because they feel deeply, they express their sentiments in strong language. [...] Great men hate nobody. They love humanity at large, and if they sometimes use pungent and cutting language, and employ the sharp tool of incisive ridicule and bitter satire, it is because the sight of human suffering impels them to the adoption of remedies which to those whose angle of vision is different, appear cruel (ibid.: 138).

Thereafter, they compare the work of great reformers to that of a surgeon who may have to cause necessary pain in order to heal the sick body:

> If a surgeon who boldly uses his lancet heedless of the momentary excruciating, poignant and agonizing pain which he is inflicting on his patient, or the physician who administers the bitter medicine to the refractory and contumacious child who lies pinioned before him is a benefactor and not a butcher, the reformer who wants to eradicate evils which are eating into the vials of society and effete superstitions which are dragging down humanity to the bottomless pit of eternal hell by performing an operation on the spirit and the intellect and manipulating the lancet of trenchant criticism is the greatest well-wisher of his kind. To this category of great men belonged Dayanand Saraswati. He attacked all unvedic faiths with unprecedented ardour and unparalleled vigour. The sectaries are yet smarting under the needle-pricks, although some of them have recovered. People who are recovering slowly charge him with intolerance (ibid.: 138–9).

In these rhetorical passages, the authors are implicitly working with an analytical distinction between the performative intention and the semantic

content of a speech-act. The metaphor of 'needle-pricks' is comparable to the 'gadfly' metaphor used for Socrates. Later in the text, Dayanand's speech-act is explicitly compared to those of Socrates, Jesus Christ and Martin Luther. The second important distinction that is made is between judging the acts of ordinary humans and of the extraordinary or great personae in human history, such as prophets, founders of religions or great religious reformers. Needless to say, Swami Dayanand is placed in the league of such extraordinary personae: 'A religious reformer burning with zeal for the eradication of evils which he considers have crept in a holy religious faith is *not to be judged by the standards of common humanity*.' (ibid.: 147; emphasis added). In other words, the criticism the 'extraordinary' reformers level at the existing dogmas, doctrines and practices cannot derive its normativity from the same doctrines and dogmas they are denouncing. The normativity of such critiques is supposed to be grounded in the higher and extraordinary capacity of judging the crisis or critical condition a religious or social body is in at any given time.

The analogy between the work of the extraordinary individual as critic and that of the figure of the surgeon cited above is clearly of utmost rhetorical value. Yet, the surgeon metaphor is inadequate as the normativity and the acceptability of the work of a surgeon is internal to a community, whereas the 'extraordinary' reform-oriented critics' supposedly superior and external normativity—on which their exceptional and sovereign status is based—depends on the performative success of their own enterprise. In the case of at least two historical parallels invoked, namely Socrates and Jesus, performative success materialised after prosecution and judgment by existing legal frameworks. In this text, the authors cite the offensive languages of Jesus and Paul, adding that the public prosecutor in the Patiala case would have charged Jesus Christ under 'Section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code!' (ibid.: 142). The authors however firmly place their hope in the current political establishment as 'the British statesman is not a coward like Pilate!' (ibid.: 227). They are also hopeful of the success of the Arya Samaj in its world-conquering mission as they write in the concluding pages of this section:

> The giant has drunk the ambrosia of Vedic Truth. No power on earth can despatch it. The time will surely come and those that have the eye of faith can picture it to themselves, when the Vatican will resound with the

> sound of Vedamantras, Vedic prayers will be recited in St. Paul's Cathedral, the air of Medina will be impregnated with the fragrant particles of Hom Samagri and students of history will wonder why once people, who boasted of living in an enlightened age, misunderstood the teachings of the World-Redeemer, the Jagat Guru, the True Christ – Dyananda [sic] the embodiment of mercy (Dya) and beatitude (ananda) (ibid.).

The authors however blur an important distinction here. Swami Dayanand had grounded the authority of his claims in a definite source, the Vedas, with his own interpretation of what constituted the authoritative scriptures and what their true meaning was (Dayanand 2010 [1883]). From its inception, the Arya Samaj and its founder worked with an implicit distinction between Vedic religious traditions such as Puranic Hinduism and non-Vedic religions such as Christianity and Islam. This distinction operated in the religious controversies insofar as the Arya Samaj debates with Christian and Muslim denominations would be based on the parameters of truth, rationality, and science, widely circulating in the global discourse of religion, whereas those with the *sanātanī* Hindus would, in addition to these parameters, involve the question of the correct interpretation of the Vedic scriptures.[10] The general thrust of the authors' defence in the initial part is that ridicule or other such forms of linguistic expression—including the one targeted at other religious traditions—should be acceptable as a legitimate part of rhetoric in public debates. The underlying rational purpose of such rhetoric however was a fearless separation of universal truth from error. The question of the criteria of judging, critiquing and comparing religious figures, doctrines, and practices is important and will be taken up at appropriate places in the following two sections.

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[10] By the third decade of the 20th century, Arya Samaj intellectuals and politicians enlarged the ambit of the 'internal' by including non-Vedic Indic religious traditions such as Buddhism and Jainism into the larger Hindu fold even as the Arya Samaj begins to be included in the Hindu fold, something the Arya Samaj had resisted until the first decade of the 20th century (Shraddhanand 1926). It may be noted that Swami Dayanand, in his *Satyarth Prakash*, is as scathing in his attacks on Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism as Islam and Christianity (Dayanand 2010 [1883]). For the use of modern Protestant conceptions of 'religion' by Muslim controversialists, see Tareen 2012.

Religion Specific arguments

In the authors' defence of Swami Dayanand's use of scandalous language in his critical remarks on Christianity, Islam and prevalent forms of Hinduism, the strategy is to mainly deploy the argument that there was nothing new or unprecedented in the Swami's use of offensive language. For this purpose, the authors mobilise a large number of citations from globally circulating texts from different parts of the world. This is an unclassifiable set of mostly English language texts from Britain and the USA and a large number from the 18th and 19th centuries. For showing precedents in the use of scandalous language in the history of Christianity, the authors cite passages written by the Protestant reformers Luther and Calvin against the Catholic Church establishment. Luther's language was notoriously scandalous and abusive. They employ the same line of defence against Dayanand's scandalous language that Luther had used for the defence of his language. Luther had justified his decision to do so by arguing that the very existence of the Catholic Church was a scandal (Jijyasu & Deva 1910; for an analysis of Luther's use of scandalous language, see Szabari 2006: 55–71). Likewise, in Swami Dayanand's reformist critique, the existence of Puranic Hinduism itself was nothing short of a scandal that needed to be exposed as such.[11]

The authors then compare Dayanand's attack on Christianity with Thomas Paine's, remarking that Mr. Grey—the public prosecutor in the court case against the Arya Samaj activists—would have prosecuted Paine as well. Dayanand's savage attack on 'Immaculate Conception' and the figure of 'Virgin Mary' is placed in parallel with Paine's equally savage ridicule of these conceptions (Jijyasu & Deva 1910: 144–5). That there was no shared ground of critique between the Protestant reformers and the Deist Paine, or the fact that Paine was critical of all organised churches, including the Protestant Church, did not become an issue for the authors. Similarly, Dayanand's ridiculing of the Quranic conception of paradise is compared with the similar account of it in Syed Ahmad Khan's work on the Quran, and justified on that count. Interestingly, the chapter on Islam in *Satyarth Prakash* also compares the Quranic conception with similar Puranic Hindu conceptions. While

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[11] Dayanand considered Puranic Hinduism scandalous due to the prevalence of the practices of idol-worship and belief in polytheism. See footnote 3 also.

'immaculate conception' is equated with the story of Kunti in Mahabharat and the Quranic paradise is compared with the stories of Krishna and the Gopis of Vrindavan. Dayanand did not consider any other tradition more 'corrupt' and 'disgusting' than Puranic Hinduism (Swami Dayanand 2010 [1883]).

Over the next hundred pages of this book, several texts are cited as instances of the use of mixing criticism and ridicule by European and Indian writers as part of what the authors considered to be legitimate religious criticism. Their choice of texts is eclectic. For instance, anti-Christianity tracts include Tom Paine's *The age of reason*, Thomas Gill's *The papal drama,* Charles Beard's *Martin Luther and the reformation,* W. R. Greg's *The creed of Christendom*, Arthur B. Moss' *Christianity and evolution*, Robert Ingersoll's *Lectures and essays,* Joseph McCabe and Florence Dixie's *The religion of woman* and Philip Sidney's *The truth about Jesus of Nazareth*. A similarly eclectic choice of texts—for instance Washington Irving's *Life of Mahomet* and William Muir's *Mahomet and Islam*—is made for mobilising citations for anti-Islam polemics (Jijyasu & Deva 1910: 148–227).

The excerpts cited in the tract show that these polemics are launched from diverse grounds with very different, even mutually incompatible, presuppositions. Martin Luther's and Syed Ahmad Khan's reformist critiques invoke the authority of the scriptures belonging to the traditions they critique. This method is broadly similar to Swami Dayanand's, who also invoked the authority of the Vedas for his reformist critique. He and other early Arya Samaj reformers also invoked parallels with the Protestant Reformation frequently for the legitimation of their own reformist programme. The perspectives reflected in the selection include a wide range—Evangelical and Deist to agnostic, freethinkers' and rationalists. The tract also offers the reader a valuable historical information about the nature of texts on religion circulating in the global public sphere at that time. Furthermore, it also gives the reader clues about reading and critical practices and how such practices may be engendering new sensibilities constituting religious public debates and subjectivities.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that in their prefacing of Paine's 'biblical criticism', the authors go beyond the content of Paine's polemics to include detailed comments on his prose style and method of reading: 'Naturally Paine's Biblical criticism doesn't do all that generations of scholarly

research have done since. But it is still one of the best possible introductions, for *plain people*, to Biblical Criticism, because it supplies what so many of the "higher" critics do not give a strong lead to moral as well as to literary veracity' (ibid.: 150; emphasis original). Further, they praise Paine's and Burke's writing style for their 'clarity of expression' and the 'sincerity' of their arguments (ibid.). Modern standards of judging myths and miracles in Paine's and Ingersoll's works using empiricism, 'common sense', and utility find strong approval. Similarly, passages using modern parameters of civilisation and civility with a marked emphasis on abhorrence towards cruelty and spectacular violence are italicised: 'would a civilized God daub his altars with the blood of oxen, lambs, doves? Would he make all his priests butchers? Would he delight in the smell of burning flesh?' (ibid.: 163).

Several of the textual excerpts cited in this section go beyond strictly theological and religious questions to include attacks on Christianity and Islam on secular and historical grounds. Thus, Christianity is shown to be anti-science generally and condemned for its historical involvement in colonialism and slavery. Such arguments were not per se illegitimate grounds of criticism, but not strictly necessary for the authors' ostensible objective either. However, again, such citations give the reader valuable information regarding the methods, sensibilities and parameters for judging and critiquing religions prevailing in the public sphere. Equally importantly, they throw valuable light on the nature of the public sphere of the time generally and of the public forms of religious criticism particularly.

THE PUBLIC SPHERE OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES

The text analysed above gives us a perspectival snapshot of the key aspects of the public sphere of religious controversies in the first decade of the 20th century. It introduces the readers to the modes of public reasoning, rhetorical styles as well as the array of texts circulating in the print media accessible to the English educated public in India around this time. What is distinctly noticeable about this public sphere is that it is different from both the Kantian model of the 'public use of reason' and the Hindu practices of public reasoning, deployed particularly in theological and philosophical debates. Its difference from the Kantian model can be marked on several counts. First of all, in the public sphere discussed here, the scope of public criticism is limited

primarily to social and religious reform agendas. The colonial state is even less willing to tolerate political criticism than the Absolutist state that formed the historical horizon for Kant's conceptualisation of public reason, even though the latter sought to expand the scope of political criticism.[12]

The discourse of religion, far from being privatised, is central to this public sphere. Concomitantly, the conception of reason deployed in the religious controversies is significantly different. Whereas in the Kantian model, the conception of reason deployed in public criticism is transcendental and secular, in the historical situation under discussion, the different parties sought to ground their concepts of reason in their respective religious traditions.[13] In the case of the Arya Samaj, the Vedas were repeatedly invoked as a repository and fountainhead of reason itself. The Arya Samaj founder as well as its leading early thinkers were emphatic in disparaging any conception of reason not subjugated to the authority of the scriptures. In this regard, Arya Samaj differentiated its position from that of the Brahmo Samaj as the latter was inclined towards Deistic concepts of reason and natural religion. Frequently, they would also raise the spectres of Western materialism and atheism as the necessary destiny of such contentions of the priority of reason over revelation.

In the Sanskrit practices of public debates (*vāda*), as discussed earlier, the public defence of one's philosophical or theological position was considered important. The translational equivalents of reasoning and logic—*yukti*, *tarka*, *hetu*, *viveka*, or *anvikśikī*, terms that refer to the systematic use of empirical evidence and logical reasoning—were used as necessary intellectual tools for arriving at truth (Ganeri 2001; Halbfass 1992). However, at the same time, their status was primarily that of instruments to be used for interpreting and arriving at the truth already revealed in the Vedic scriptures. In other words, as Jonardon Ganeri has shown, the role of reason, independent of the revealed truth of the scriptures, was not to prescribe the ends (Ganeri 2001: 7–41). The uses of reason independent of revelation were seen as a threat to the ritual and ethical order established by dharma. Those who sought to lead

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[12] A genealogy of political criticism in modern South Asia is indispensable for a more complete picture of the public sphere that emerged in the early 20th century, but it does not fall within the scope of this paper.

[13] For a comparison of Kant's conception of public reason with public criticism in the Middle East, see Asad 1993: 200–36; for Kant's formulation, see Kant 1970 [1784].

their lives based on 'reason alone' were condemned as promoters of 'immorality, hereticism and untruth' (ibid.: 10).

Just like other instances, the public use of reason in the Hindu intellectual tradition had its own inherent limitations. Most important of these was the question of authority. The participants in the debates derived their authority from their status as being learned in the knowledge of scriptures and philosophical argumentation. These qualifications limited these debates to the class of people—primarily the Brahmin—with access to Sanskrit language and texts. The authority of the Brahmins due to their exclusive access to the sacred texts had faced challenge from ancient non-Vedic traditions like Buddhism and Jainism. During the medieval period, it faced further challenge from the Bhakti formations within the Vedic traditions that relied on the vernaculars for spreading their messages and establishing communities' practices. In many ways, the public sphere of religious controversies discussed in this article can be seen as both continuous and discontinuous with the tendencies within Hindu practices of public reasoning. One of the main features of the discontinuity noted by scholars is the 'relinquishing of systematicity as the goal in religious and philosophical thinking' by modern Hindu thinkers and public intellectuals in favour of a 'more free and individual style of reflection' (Frazier 2011: 2). Ganeri calls this approach of the 19th and 20th century Hindu thinkers the 'new attitude', the origins of which could be traced to colonial educational policies. Ganeri's main example of the figure exemplifying the 'new attitude' is Swami Vivekananda (Ganeri 2011: 44–51). As mentioned earlier, the main historical figure discussed here, Swami Dayanand, was firmly grounded in the traditional practices of public reasoning; his disciples, including one of the authors of the book *Arya Samaj and its detractors,* Lala Munshi Ram, however, seem to exhibit the 'new attitude' Ganeri mentions.

In this regard, the 19th century religious controversies were an important factor in shaping the nature of public reasoning. Lala Munshi Ram reflects on the experience of his initial participation in religious controversies in his Hindi autobiography published in 1924. Even for a reformist organisation like the Arya Samaj that had challenged the mediation of Brahmin priests for religious rituals, it was necessary to be from the Brahmin caste with the ability to speak Sanskrit, particularly in debates with orthodox Hindus. The scene described in Munshi Ram's autobiography is from 1886. Munshi Ram, who

was not a Brahmin, had newly converted to the Arya Samaj and was in charge of the organisation in Jalandhar city. Once, when the Jalandhar branch of the Arya Samaj was openly challenged by a *sanātanī* pandit for a public debate on the themes of idol-worship and divine incarnation, Munshi Ram, with great difficulty, managed to find a young Brahmin Sanskrit scholar and briefed him on the Arya Samaj positions on these themes and the relevant scriptural sources. As the debate started, it was the *sanātanī* pandit himself who broke the rule by lecturing in Hindustani, apparently in order to impress the local people. As soon as the rule was broken, Munshi Ram himself decided to debate with the pandit in the vernacular. Munshi Ram recounts that this event had important consequences not just for himself but for the Arya Samaj movement in Punjab. The most significant consequence was that non-Brahmin Arya Samaj activists started to participate in the controversies in the vernaculars and also started to learn Sanskrit and read the Vedic scriptures directly (Shraddhanand 1924: 129–31).

It should be remarked here that following the lead of Swami Dayanand, the early Arya Samaj scholars developed their own rigorous method of reading the Vedic scriptures. The general thrust of that method—as practiced by the early Arya Samaj Sanskrit scholar Gurudutt Vidyarthi—was to challenge the mythology-centred polytheistic interpretation of the Vedas (Dodson 2007). Yet, the general tendency towards democratisation of the public sphere was not seriously impaired by more scholarly arguments. With the removal of barriers of caste, language, and technical expertise in scriptural knowledge, the sphere of public religious debates was widening in its social reach. At the same time, and equally consequently, it was also becoming open to the influence of globally circulating texts, particularly English texts, either through direct reading or through translation. The darker side of the democratisation, however, was that the lofty motives and goals used for rationalisation and justification of Swami Dayanand's harsh and offensive speech—even if the contemporary readers were to be persuaded by Munshi Ram and Rama Deva's arguments—such might not always be the motives inspiring other participants. One of Munshi Ram's colleagues from Punjab Arya Samaj, Pandit Lekh Ram, murdered in 1897, was one of the early victims of the passions generated by the religious controversies (Jones 1976: 148–53).

Pandit Lekh Ram was a passionate Arya Samaj preacher active in the 1880s and 1890s. Lekh Ram actively sought controversies by challenging opponents to open debate. He published a number of tracts and pamphlets in Urdu attacking other religious denominations and became notorious for locking horns with Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya, a newly emergent Islamic sect established in 1879 (ibid.). Some of these tracts were later translated into Hindi as well. The language of the tracts attacking Islam is particularly aggressive. Apart from recycling all the critical points made against Islam in Swami Dayanand's *Satyarth Prakash,* he adds further attacks, needless to say rehashing some of the material already circulating in the public sphere, probably including those cited in the tract by Munshi Ram and Rama Deva and their translations.

While Swami Dayanand had limited himself primarily to scriptural exegesis and theological content in *Satyarth Prakash,* avoiding mention of historical-factual issues, the parameters of criticism seemed to shift around this time in the South Asian religious controversies, particularly in print and in verbal debates from 1890s onwards. The important question in this context is: to what extent can Swami Dayanand's and other contemporary reformers' endeavours involving critiques of their respective religious traditions be taken as being in continuity with precolonial South Asian practices and to what extent did they seek to make a break with them? The *sant* poets associated with the various branches of Bhakti were good exemplars of that practice, as discussed in Eleanor Zelliot's analysis of the 16th century Bhakti poet Eknath's *Hindu-Turk Samvad.* Her analysis shows the prevalence and public acceptability of the mutual criticism and ridicule of each other's religious doctrines and social practices such as caste among Hindus and Muslims during medieval South Asia (Zelliot 2003: 64–79). Another prominent Bhakti poet known for his no-hold-barred method of exposing the hypocrisies of Hindu and Muslim religious establishments was the 15th century poet Kabir. Connections to the Bhakti legacy among the 19th century reform movements differ from region to region. While Hindu reform movements in Maharashtra region sought to appropriate and integrate the Bhakti legacy into their own programmes of reform the same is not true about North Indian reformism. As Swami Dayanand denounced Bhakti figures like Kabir and Nanak vehemently, the Arya Samaj sought to

make a break, not just with the Bhakti legacy, but with the Indo-Islamic culture of cultural argumentation and exchange.

It is interesting to note that Munshi Ram and Rama Deva decided not to cite even one figure from South Asian history despite the fact that there is no dearth of such figures—Kabir for instance—who engaged in public religious criticism and whose speech may be construed as 'offensive'. This may be partially explained by the fact that the text was written in English, with the colonial authorities, European intelligentsia and the English reading Indian public in mind as its primary addressees. The language of the address is not irrelevant for the terminological, conceptual and rhetorical articulation of arguments in this historical context. In many ways, the English reading Indian intellectuals and political leaders were continuously involved in the work of translation. However, the text also gives ample evidence of the larger global public discourse of religion that the authors were not only part of but actively wished to be part of (Strube 2022).

In the late 19th century, there were several other factors introducing new elements to the practices of religious criticism. Due to the presence of novel factors such as the colonial legal and governmental apparatus and the exposure to the global discourse of religion, substantially new forms of religious criticism began to take shape. Several scholars have emphasised the role of colonial law in shaping the culture of religious criticism and of the complaints about 'hurt religious sentiments' in 19th century South Asia. The colonial legal framework protecting the right to religious propagation and the tolerance of free-speech provided not just the background condition for the exercise of the right to free public speech—both verbal and written—at times, it also, as scholars have shown, acted as an incentive for taking to the street and appealing to the government for action (Adcock 2016; Viswanath 2016; Scott 2015). Adding to this argument, Faisal Devji has also argued that modern Muslim complaints about 'hurt religious sentiment' due to the perceived offensive comments on the Prophet Mohammad are not grounded in Islamic theological concepts. Such complaints originated in the late 19th century South Asian context wherein the protesters took recourse to the possibility of protection that was legally equivalent to liberal legal concepts such as libel or defamation rather than any Islamic theological concept of blasphemy. In addition, the resulting protests and violence were also addressed to an

'anonymous' or 'generic' public through mass circulation via the print media (Devji 2022 & 2021).

It seems that these factors worked in tandem to shape the culture of late 19th and early 20th century religious criticism and of the protests against hurt sentiments in a way that made these practices substantially different from pre-colonial cultures of mutual criticism and ridicule practiced by religious communities in South Asia. The eclectic, indiscriminate and even opportunistic practices of citation from the global market of opinions, images and rhetorical figures had become legitimate among educated Indians, as shown in the case of our authors' citations in defence of their case. Furthermore, the distinct emphasis on the authority of the factual truth based on empirical evidence and 'authentic' historical and biographical sources, rather than theological reasoning alone became another important feature of the new culture. In this regard, the orientalist William Muir's biography of Muhammad, *The life of Mahomet*, one of the texts in global circulation since its publication in the middle of the 19th century, is interesting. In this biography and in the *The Mohammedan controversy* published in 1897, Muir puts great emphasis on the importance of factual truth based on 'contemporary records of undoubted authenticity' in religious controversies (Muir 1992: xiii & 2022). The subtitle of his biography of Mohammad says 'From original sources' (idem 1992).

The emphasis on the factual truth clearly has to do with the rising prestige and authority of the parallel but intertwined discourse of modern historiography. Yet, as Dipesh Chakrabarty has argued in *The calling of history,* the acceptance of the absolute authority of the factual truth in history writing did not deter the discourses of history from being entangled in the partisan identitarian politics of regional, caste and religious communities in early 20th century India (Chakrabarty 2015: 151–66). In this regard, it should not be astonishing that Munshi Ram and Rama Deva were marshalling all the 'evidence' and 'facts' circulating in the global print media in defence of their creed and its founder.

Many of their contemporary Arya Samaj activists were much better versed in the global debates on the religious question. They were also more open to using parameters of comparison and judgement based on modern Western concepts of utility and civilisation. Like other global participants in the religious controversies of the times, early Arya Samaj activists like Pandit

Lekh Ram also responded with equal rhetorical vehemence and aggression. In one of his most notorious tracts, *Risāla-e-Jihād: Yāni Dīn-e-Muhammadī kī Buniyād* ('A treatise on holy war, or the basis of the Muhammadan religion') he paints a picture of Islam as fundamentally violent from its inception and the main protagonists in history are characterised as mainly driven by the evils of bloodthirst and lust (Jones 1976: 148–53). The Hindi edition of this tract that appeared in 1920s translates the title simply as *Jihād: Kurān va Islāmī khūṃkhvārī* ('Jihad: Quran or Islamic bloodthirst'). One of the well-known legal consequences of these pamphlet wars was the insertion of the Article 295 (A) to the Indian Penal Code in 1927, in the wake of the notorious *Rangila Rasool* controversy, that added stricter legal proscription of the freedom of speech in relation to religious matters than was the case previously (Nair 2013; Stephens 2013; Adcock 2016).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The article has analysed the forms of public reasoning deployed in the context of the religious controversies that emerged in the wake of the 19th century reformist movements in colonial South Asia. In addition, it has tried to show how these forms of public reasoning and criticism got embroiled in the generation of a range of affects in the public sphere. It is interesting to note that the two sets of arguments used in one important tract, analysed here, to defend the aggressive speech used by the founder of Arya Samaj are clearly incompatible. In the first set of arguments, the authors retroactively elevate his status to a prophetic or mythic subjecthood, as a point of absolute origin of the speech by claiming extraordinary or exceptional status for their teacher. Through the use of the surgeon metaphor, they argue in favour of tolerance of pain on the consequentialist ground of the eventual benefit of the sick social body in need of surgery. However, this consequentialist argument is in further need of grounding in the faith in performative intentions behind the offensive speech. The missionary activists of the Arya Samaj, defending his speech have the right to such a faith in their teacher and his teachings. For the rest, it depends on the performative success of their persuasive power.

At the same time, in the second set of arguments, unwittingly as it were, the authors seek to prove that there was nothing new or unprecedented in

what Swami Dayanand was saying about Christianity or Islam. In the detailed analysis of the global print sources they marshal at their disposal, they also reveal the situatedness of both the Swami's as well as their own discourse somewhere in the midst of the global circulation of affects. As Kenneth Jones has shown, religious controversies were an important factor in shaping and consolidating the borders and boundaries of communities (Jones 1992). John Cort's recent work offers further evidence that demonstrates how controversial statement about Jains in *Satyarth Prakash* became instrumental in the modern construction of the Jain community (Cort 2019). Texts like those by Lekh Ram and similar texts published by other parties circulating in the public sphere led to the continuous 'accumulation of affect.' In Lekh Ram's *Jihad,* Islam is produced as nothing short of an 'abject' object, an object of strong aversion and repulsion. As Judith Butler and Sara Ahmed have shown in their respective analyses of hateful and injurious speech, while legal and political apparatuses strive to locate the originary accountability in the definite intentions of a subject, affect works through reiteration and repetition of stock phrases, images and other forms of representations (Butler 1997: 43–70; Ahmed 2014 & 2005: 95–111). Furthermore, Ahmed's works foreground how certain representations tend to 'stick', available for a relatively longer duration for further reiteration and repetition (Ahmed 2014: 42–61). Finally, the article has argued that the law was also the main protagonist in the theatre that formed the background for the tract *Arya Samaj and its detractors* and of the theatre enacted inside the text.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Vanya Vaidehi Bhargav is an intellectual historian of modern South Asia, with interests in the diverse conceptions of Hindu and secular nationalism. Her D. Phil research at the University of Oxford, soon to be published as a monograph, undertook the first intellectual history of the nationalist thought of Lala Lajpat Rai, and highlights internal differentiation within 'Hindu nationalism'. Bhargav's research has also been published in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, *Global Intellectual History*, and *Studies in Indian Politics*. She is an ICAS:MP fellow (2022–23), and affiliated Senior Research Fellow with the Multiple Secularities Research Group, Humanities Centre for Advanced Studies, University of Leipzig.

Ulrich Harlass is a postdoctoral researcher at Bremen University, Germany. After obtaining his PhD at Heidelberg University, he worked at the institute for Japanese Studies in Heidelberg before continuing his work in Bremen. His dissertation *Die orientalische Wende der Theosophischen Gesellschaft* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021) analysed the "oriental shift" of the early Theosophical society. Harlass' research comprised topics such as the Orientalist reception of (Mahayana) Buddhism, the history of the Theosophical Society and the 19th century global discourse on religion and science. Further research interests lie in early 19th century discourses on religion, science, and nation. His most recent publication is "Theosophical Anthropology, or the Septenary Constitution of Man Reconsidered" (2022).

Rinku Lamba is an associate professor at the National Law School of India University in Bengaluru. Her research and teaching are in the areas of contemporary political theory and the history of political thought (Indian and Western).

Barbara Schuler, Dr phil., Universität Hamburg, is an Indologist, with a focus on Tamil. Her current research focuses on the history of emotions in pre-modern Tamil-speaking contexts. She worked as Principal Investigator of a DFG-funded project in the field of the History of Emotions and is the author of "Introduction: Historicizing Asian Community-Based Emotion Practices" and "Food and Emotion: Can Emotions Be Worked On and Altered in Material Ways?—A Short Research Note on South India" (in *Historicizing Emotions: Practices and Objects in India, China, and Japan*, ed. Barbara Schuler, Leiden: Brill, 2017), and *Theorising Emotions: An Enquiry into the Emotion Knowledge of Premodern Tamil Treatises* (Heidelberg: HASP, 2022).

Isabella Schwaderer studied Greek and Latin Philology and Philosophy in Würzburg, Thessaloniki and Padova. She obtained her PhD in Religious Studies (Orthodox Christianity) from the University of Erfurt in 2018. Currently, she is a research assistant in Religious Studies, in Erfurt and previously held posts at the Universities of Jena and Kiel. Her research focuses on the mutual relations of religion, arts (especially music) and national identity analysing the repercussions of the Orientalist reception of Indian religious and philosophical traditions in less-known artistic productions in Germany from 1871–1945 and how they are related to new definitions of Christianity between religious reform and racialised beliefs.

Mohinder Singh teaches political thought at the Centre for Comparative Politics and Political Theory, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. His main field of research is political thought in modern India.

Nora Warmer ist M.A.-Studentin der Südasienkunde und Politikwissenschaft an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg. Dort absolvierte sie auch ihren B.A. in Südasienkunde und Linguistik. Während ihres Studiums fokussierte sie sich auf die Sprachen Hindi und Bengalisch sowie die Verknüpfung von Politik und Sprache. In ihrer Masterarbeit beschäftigte sie sich mit einer Stellungnahme der Sozialistischen Partei Bangladeschs zum indischen *River Linking Project* und dem bangladeschischen Parteienspektrum.