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Editor's Note

It is with great pleasure I introduce the July 2019 issue to the readers. This issue, longest in length so far in the history of Nidān, focuses on Indian Christians and Christianity in India. It demonstrates the extent to which the topic is of interest to scholars as well as general readers. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Deepra Dandekar for editing this issue with great care, scholarly rigour and attention to detail. I thank all the authors for choosing to submit their scholarly papers to Nidān. We have selected these papers from a large pool of submissions and after subjecting them to a rigorous double blind peer review process. On behalf of the editorial team, I wish to gratefully acknowledge the work of the anonymous reviewers. This issue offers scholarly insight into the Indian Christian community through the very well researched papers. I hope the readers from not only the Christian scholarly community but also the general readers at large would find these papers worth reading. We have included book reviews on three latest scholarly books in the field of Indian studies. It is perhaps worth noting that rarely do we publish more than one review on the same book. This time, Arun Jones' book has elicited such positive response that we have decided to include two reviews on his book. The other two books are by two prominent scholars in the field of Indian studies—Deonnie Moodie (2019) and Sumit Sarkar (2019). We thank all the reviewers for their insightful reviews.

Introducing 'Christianity in India'

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This Nidān double-volume special issue on 'Christianity in India' is an extensive enterprise of most recent scholarship pertaining to the topic. Contributions for this special issue, carried out from a historical, literary and anthropological perspective explore pertinent questions about Christian vernacular movements, identity, texts/ literature, music, poetry, institutions, missionaries and cantonments. All this, further contextualized within the local and regional history of colonialism and Brahminism, analyzes gender and caste segregations within the Indian Christian community and their transformation in postcolonial India.

Christians constitute 3% of India's population, and are a diverse religious minority, further segregated across sect, denomination, caste, region, history and language. While the demographic size of Indian Christians lends itself to an image of a homogeneous community produced through colonialism and postcolonialism, scholarship on Indian Christianity fragments this monocultural imagination of a singular postcolonial identity by historicizing its diverse and heterogenous roots. The perception that Indian Christians are homogeneous and akin to Christians from Western countries that had a colonial presence in India during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, further flattens the complex diversity of Indian Christians, who enjoy intricate intersectionality with regional Hindus and Muslims. This special issue on Christianity in India is, hence, significant, for it explores the very juxtaposition between the homogeneous image of Indian Christians as a minority that contrasts with the community's regional, historical, linguistic, denominational and caste-based diversity.

It would prove worthwhile to pause a little, while reconsidering this instability and apparent juxtaposition between the uniform minority status accorded to the Indian Christian community, and evidences of its diversity. It is important, for example, to interrogate whether this accorded homogeneous identity is fostered by 'othering' misconceptions that consider all other religious groups, viz. Hindus and Muslims as equally uniform; a religious uniformity predicated on national identity. In contrast, from a perspective that is rooted and emerges from 'inside' the community, the idea of Hindu homogeneity is as fallacious as Christian or Muslim uniformity. Distinctions between 'inside' and 'outside' in this case is wrought through by processes of discrimination and 'othering', since the latter produces all those discriminated against and all those who discriminate, as ideologically separate but internally uniform groups. For from 'within' the community, whether for Hindus, Muslims or Christians, identities are diverse, in terms of region, language, religious beliefs, and communitarian identities. The only thing their yielding to a uniformity paradoxically achieves, is a facilitation of 'othering' and discrimination. Similarly, castes like 'Brahmin' can be hardly considered uniform or a monocultural communitarian

identity across space and time. Spanning vast territorial divides and a diversity of cultural development over time, it is impossible to perceive Brahmins as a homogeneous group without historicizing the discourses of specific regional subgroups, identified with status, ownership and power. While community homogeneity does not mean the absence of violence, it is violence itself that is of analytical value here, since violence within apparently homogeneous groups demonstrates the absence of ascribed uniformity. And hence, there are a myriad regional and denominational subgroup within caste, as also within Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities, characterized by overlapping and crosscutting interests that intersect teleological notions about their homogeneity.

Considering Indian Christians, who 'intersect' identities that are traditionally considered Hindu (like caste-identity), as uniform, is therefore, tantamount to considering all Hindus Indians, and all Brahmins Hindus. The discourse of religious homogeneity, as part of postcolonial nationalism, that converges onto plural regional, vernacular and caste identities is moreover so powerful that it becomes almost impossible to consider intersectional identities for religious minorities, such as Tamil Muslims or Brahmin Christians. This intersectionality constitutes an unstable territory, accompanied by discrimination from those, who in turn, are also forced to ascribe to religious uniformity and cultural stereotypes. Thus, Indian Muslims are expected to ascribe to an Urdu-Persianate lineage for others to consider them adequately Muslim, just as Christians must be Westernized first, to be accepted as Christians. And these nationalist performances of religious uniformity that produce the recognition of religious 'difference' leads in turn to the discrimination and 'othering' of religious minorities. Therefore, while Christians are 'othered' as a monocultural category of anti-nationals, who assisted colonials and rejected Indian culture by adopting Western morality; upper-caste Christians 'other' lower-caste converts as opportunists. It is paradoxical on the other hand to consider that Hindu elites, who gained equally from colonial institutions of education and professional mobility, were never suspected of anti-nationalism or opportunism, simply because they did not convert their religion. Neither did upper-caste Christian converts ever share personal narratives of clan and family oppression that proved to be catalysts for their conversion, propelling them to flee to missions with as much alacrity as Dalits facing caste oppression. Similarly, European missionaries never shared personal stories of crushing poverty when fleeing England for missions abroad, while using their racial superiority as authentic Christians against Indian converts and 'othering' them as inferior.

The denationalization of Indian Christians (allegations that denounce Christians as anti-national), their reduction as a homogeneous minority in postcolonial India, without according them any historical or cultural intersectionality within region and community is dismaying. This dismay is reflected quite early on, in the vernacular writings of Christian converts, who deliberately elaborated on caste, community and regional belonging, while bemoaning social and family ostracism. The reification of nation with religion, a specific postcolonial process in India that selectively erased all community intersectionality by highlighting religion as the only identity of national consequence, resulted in the production of Indian Christians as a religious minority. If religion had not constituted such a vital benchmark for Indian nationalism, Indian Christians would be equally Bengali or Tamil, or equally Dalit, Adivasi or Brahmin.

Similarly, Anglo Indians or Goanese Christians would simultaneously acquire and consolidate other national alliances without losing their intersectionality with the Indian subcontinent. Instead, postcolonial religious nationalism in India, that hinges upon purist notions of religious community-homogeneity produces discrimination against all religious minorities, subjecting them to pogroms, forced migrations, and denationalization. Finally, as already mentioned, discrimination against Indian Christians as a religious minority undermines their diversity, while at the same time serving to further intensify and reify all other communities as equally homogeneous- a concern that is ideologically central to the Indian nationalist mainstream.

But there is a good side, and potential benefits to this production of Indian Christians as a monocultural but hybrid 'other' religious minority in India; and this good side quite vitally, concerns questions about caste. It is important to remember that Christian conversion and missions in India denounced caste discrimination, upholding emancipatory ideals of a justice-driven and gentle Christian society. While the practical leveling of caste and race hierarchies never really took place within the history of missions and the Indian Christian community but for a few exceptions, injunctions against caste-discrimination were at the very core of Indian Christianity, remaining strong enough to allow Christian individuals from desisting practicing their pre-conversion intersectionality. The emancipation that lay hidden within the 'othering' of Christians in the postcolonial mainstream therefore, primarily lay in the possibility of eradicating caste-discrimination among Christians altogether; a process unimaginable for Hindu upper and lower castes.

This special issue, comprising articles that centrally address juxtapositions between questions of Indian Christian homogeneity-heterogeneity is at the center of exploring intersections between religion, community, region and minoritization in India. I remain grateful to Professor Pratap Penumala, journal editor of 'Nidān: International Journal of Indian Studies' for offering us scholars of Indian Christianity an opportunity to demonstrate the symbiotic interaction of Christianity with Indian history, culture, literature and anthropology. While this double-volume special issue is cohesive, with every article speaking to this interaction of Christianity, each volume also forms its own cosmos. While the nine articles in the first volume speak with one-another with matching contributions on Christian music, poetry, literature, historical, archival and oral narrative, our authors have simultaneously explored common concerns about minoritization and discrimination within and outside the Indian Christian community. At the same time, they also discuss the prevalence of caste and gender segregation, along with the community's shared linkages with colonial and Brahmanical oppression/ facilitation. While most articles in the forthcoming second volume would explore regional Pentecostal movements, Christian Ashrams, Dalit Christianity and Christian-Muslim relations that consolidate religious ideas from a historical and anthropological perspective, others analyze archival vernacular texts that outline the regional and historical development of Christianity. I would finally end this introduction by reiterating the unique nature of this extensive double-volume special issue that brings global scholarship on Indian Christianity together, as an embodied part of the ongoing research and debates on Nidian religion, history and culture. Finally, in this issue, we also included two independent reviews of Arun Jones recent book on *Missionary Christianity and Local Religion: American Evangelism in North India, 1836-1870* (2017) in addition to two

book reviews—one on Deonnie Moodie's *Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kālīghāṭ and Kolkata* (2019), and Sumit Sarkar's *Essays of a Lifetime: Reformers, Nationalists, Subalterns* (2019). Additionally, in the broader interest of Indian studies, we have included a special paper of Nalini Rao on "An Analysis of Political Power through Royal Iconography" with reference to the ancient city of Vijayanagara in South India. We hope that this issue will interest the readers of Indian Christianity as well as those who are interested in the broader topics on Indian studies.

The Cantonment Town of Aurangabad: Contextualizing Christian Missionary Activities in the Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

The cantonment town of Aurangabad has a legacy of being soldier's territory since the inception of the city of Aurangabad or Khadki/Fatehnagar in the late 13th century (Ramzaan, 1983, Green, 2009). The city's settlement pattern evolved as per the requirements of cantonment, planned during the Nizamshahi and later, during the Mughal rule in the city. In fact, Aurangabad evolved as a cantonment city even before the British. As we study the city's networks and its community history, we come across a civic society web, which gathered and settled gradually as service providers or as dependent social groups on the resident military force. In the late eighteenth century when the British allied with the Nizam state of Hyderabad, they were given special place in the Aurangabad cantonment to develop a military base. The British military base in the early decades of the nineteenth century in Aurangabad, thus, worked intensively to cope with the already well-established community connection of a strategic defence town. This research paper will explore and discuss relationships between British soldiers and officers and the well-established societal web of communities living in Aurangabad from early decades of nineteenth century, before the 1857 revolt.

Keywords: Aurangabad, British, Cantonment, Defence, English

Introduction

During July 2018, army cantonments in India constituted the news headlines, and soon entered coffee table discussions among heritage lovers. Concerns began with the news, and certain decisions already in the making in the defence ministry regarding the demilitarization of civilian territories, that army cantonments would be made exclusive.[1] Cantonment settlements as part of history and heritage of colonial India have a legacy of more than two hundred years, remaining as the residue of bygone days in public memory and urban history narratives. As we browse through sources available on cantonments through websites, several nostalgic blogs that reminisce of childhoods spent in post-colonial, colonial or pre-

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[1] Link, Time of India: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/army-mulls-abolishing-all-cantonments-to-save- funds/articleshow/64968270.cms (Accessed on 11/10/2018, 06:40 p.m.)

colonial cantonment towns emerge. My own upbringing in a cantonment town brings up sweet-sour memories of the same, while writing this article. The cantonment barracks, bungalows and offices remain closely linked to civilian settlements for its socio-cultural requirements, and the lives of cantonments remain part of an experience of urban life in India. The markets or *bazaars* of cantonments constitute an important space for setting the prices for farm produce. New tastes mixed with past flavours within these *bazaars* surrounding cantonments remain strong, irrespective of their historical situatedness, as many cities in India continue to thrive of the legacy of Cantt-markets, with their special tailors, who once sewed uniforms for army staff members, bakery houses, meat markets and weekly fruits and vegetable markets (Sengar and Gaikwad, 2018).

It is hard to imagine cities like Ambala, Aurangabad, Barrackpur, Bhatinda, Danapur, Kanpur, Karachi, Lahore, Mumbai, Nasik, Pune and many others without the colonial legacy of cantonment merged with civil settlements in South Asia. And as we narrate the stories of these cities, they remain alive with the imageries of colonial writing. The spaces of cantonment towns from Ambala, Delhi and Lahore are vividly expressed in the stories of Manto (Gopal, 2005: 96), as he narrates how the feminine voices of women were produced through the debauchery and sexual desire of white soldiers (Jalal, 2013:66). Similarly, even in the popular culture and memory of Bollywood, cantonments retain valuable spaces. Thespian of Indian cinema Dilip Kumar, unfailingly remembered his memories of cantonment life in Nasik and Pune, replete with its *tommy* boys and white girls (Kumar, 2014). Cantonment thrived as the intersection of the Indian elite produced through colonial fashions and a class of servitude, formulated in its planned markets and bungalows. These areas of new colonial settlements defined a cultural pattern that had a unique style. The spaces of cantonment provided social fabric of India with its Indo-Islamic legacy to blend with the frills of British flairs.

According to the English Oxford living dictionaries, the term 'cantonment' refers to a permanent British military station in British India. Cantonment, although etymologically derives from the mid-eighteenth-century French term *cantonnement* or *cantonner*, it refers to 'military quarters' as part of the town, assigned to regiments. These quarters were divided into *cantons*, meaning the action of quartering troops dated to 1757.[2] A similar usage occurs in British writings where a large training camp with living accommodations, especially during winters, was built to enable a campaigning army. By the beginning of the nineteenth century a permanent military camp in British India came to be known as Cantonment. It is interesting to note that this term remained in vogue almost for a century.[3] With their demographic, social and political influence, cantonments remained a major resource for small towns during the transitionary phases of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. However, as we delve into the historicity of

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[2] Link: https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cantonment (Accessed on 11/10/2018, 05:50 p.m.)

[3] Link: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/cantonment (Accessed on 11/10/2018, 08:00 p.m.) As per the Collins dictionary analysis

the foundation, formation and expansion of cantonment towns, a significant feature, distinctive from the definition of 'cantonment' that emerged is, not all cantonment towns were exclusive (Raghuvanshi, 1969). Cantonment towns were also creation through prevalent regional political power structures (Fox, 1971, Bayly, 1988, Gommans and Kolff 2001). The *Cantt*[4] or Cantonment as spaces within South Asian cities were already part of an existing urban structure. The soldiers, the British or other European officers were not always on agreeable terms over societies that formed the core of these cantonments (Green, 2009, Beverley, 2015).

This paper will explore the structure and societal web of Aurangabad in the late decades of eighteenth and early decades of nineteenth century through various archival, ethnographic and secondary sources. Delving through eighteenth century debates, the following narrative will delve into and seek parallels with the evolving life and social order among British soldiers, missionaries and communities in the eighteenth and early decades of nineteenth century Deccan. Broadly in the context of South Asia, this eighteenth and nineteenth century era of Indian history was perceived as epochal (Marshall, 2005; Alavi, 2007), since eighteenth century life and culture in India continued to enamour European colonialists (Berg and Eger, 2003). This era embodied the charm of a lively oriental-Indian glory accompanied by power struggles within oscillating political structures among Indian regional principalities and the British, irrespective of the declining Mughals in Agra and Delhi (Dirks, 2009). This power structures were also important in defining ways in which the cultural praxis of contemporary times was formulated.

Cantonment as Pre-colonial and Colonial legacies

> *ab to zarā sā gaañv bhī betī na de use*; *lagtā thā varna chiin kā dāmād āgara*
> Not even a small village will ever give him their daughter now; else there were times when Agra looked like the son-in-law of China.
> -Nazeer Akbarabadi (1735-1830).[5]

These verses were written by the famous poet Nazeer Akbarabadi of Agra in the late decades of the eighteenth and the early decades of the nineteenth century. Nazeer was a people's poet and in the times when Agra was taken over by the British, he lamented on the state of its affairs in his poetry, providing accounts of Agra in his famous anthologies *'Banjarnama'* and *'Aadminama'* (Mir, 2014).[6] The account of Nazeer's Agra brings the quest to know and understand the complexity within the state of cities and towns that were in a state of flux due

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[4] 'Cantt' is a popular abbreviation used for term cantonment in India. It is interesting to note here that even though the term does not exist in the thesaurus, it is widely used in the Government Records in India and Pakistan. See; India. Office of the Registrar General, Census of India: Paper, Issue 3, s.n., 1960, Directory of Libraries in Pakistan, Pakistan Library Association (Headquarters), 1996, Encyclopaedia of Cities and Towns in India, Volume 1, Gyan Publishing House, 2008.

[5] https://www.rekhta.org/poets/nazeer-akbarabadi/couplets [Date of Access]?

[6] Raza Mir, The Taste of Words: An Introduction to Urdu Poetry, Penguin UK, 2014.

to the changing power structures of India to the forefront.[7] With the gradual shift in power, Mughal control shifted to regional principalities such as the Marathas and the Nizams of Hyderabad and then to European counterparts: Portuguese, French and British.

In the British and contemporary documents of eighteenth and nineteenth century prominent towns or cities of the Mughal era, commonly referred to as '*Moglai'* in the British documents, appear to be either dead or languishing (Le Grand, 1903: 320). And Eighteenth and nineteenth century trends in the British systems of administration were predominantly governed by the indigenous economic and cultural practices (Bayly, 1988). As Bayly suggests; 'Studies of the regional principalities of Bengal, Hyderabad and Awadh suggest that the turbulent events of the century heralded not the final dissolution of the Mughal polity as much as the emergence of regional dynastic rulers who initiated new cycles of growth and regeneration' (Bayly, 1988: 36). Kolff also argues that the British East India company, due to the discouraging approach of the British parliament, never tried to dominate local Indian markets and retained instead, a distant approach that allowed British towns to maintain their regional and indigenous character (Kolff, 2010: 8).

The emergence of cantonments around pre-existing towns in South Asia, as shown by studies on military cantonments of the late decades of seventh and eighth centuries, had *gadhis* and *shahar* (towns) replace the ancient *pur* (Garrick, 1885: 32-34). While Mohammedan rulers generally did not occupy palaces built by Indian princes, they built their own cantonments and palaces on the peripheries of these ancient seats of government, or on top of the ruins of temples and palaces. For the origin of Bhatinda and Govindgarh in Punjab for example, with their religious traditions, this major army town or *lashkari* town emerged in the early decades of twelfth and thirteenth centuries with its religious traditions intact, and where traders were invited to settle (Garrick, 1887:4-6). In a similar example, traders were lured to settle down permanently in Jodhpur in the Marwar region and establish business enterprises here. While changes in government led to the decay of original pre-Sultanate urban centres, it led to the further expansion of Mohammedan seats of government. In this way, cities like Delhi enjoyed continuity[8] even as new towns emerged as military or cantonments seats under the Mughals. Since these administrative and military center's became the main targets of succeeding invaders, urban centres were often fortified, leading to the emergence of walled cities in eighteenth-century India (Hussain, 2008:14-15).Villages in the neighbourhood of these urban centres usually found no refuge in the face of foreign invasions (Sharma, 1986: 146-157).

Emergence of cantonments around existing pilgrimage, administrative and commercial towns are well-traced as most cantonment towns emerged and

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[7] Link: http://www.historydiscussion.net/history-of-india/towns-and-cities-during-the-eighteenth-century-indian-history/6042 (Accessed on 11/11/2018, 00:00 a.m.).

[8] Surbhi Kadam, Towns and Cities During the Eighteenth Century | Indian History, http://www.historydiscussion.net/history-of-india/towns-and-cities-during-the-eighteenth-century-indian-history/6042 (Accessed on 11/17/2018)

evolved around pre-existing and well-known cities. Thus, when these urban centres started harbouring cantonments in their well-established cultural matrix, soldiers in cantonment were provided a peripheral space to fit into the system. A few good examples of these adjustments can be understood in towns and cities that first emerged as pilgrimage centres, like Banaras, Puri, Allahabad, inter alia. Secondly, they emerged around the seats of administrative power like Delhi, Kanauj, Patna, Mysore inter alia. And, thirdly commercial towns emerged as trade centres like Lahore, Surat, Mirzapur inter alia., on trade routes leading to different markets within the country linking these to foreign markets (Wheeler, 2014: 8-10). After the Mohammedan conquest of North India, administration did not disturb either villages or the urban centres. Rather the administration established military cantonments to control existing villages and cities (Kumari, 2007:75). When the factory towns of East India Company were in the making, neighbouring city cultures grew around them. In one such instance, the experiences of Madras is as follows:

> This factory was the germ of the city of Madras, on the coast of Coromandel. Weavers, washers, painters, and hosts of other Hindu artisans, flocked to the spot and eagerly entered the service of the British, and began to set up their looms and to weave, wash, and paint their cotton goods in the open air beneath the trees. Villages of little huts of mud and bamboo soon grew up on the sandy soil to the north of the island and factory. Each avocation formed a caste, which generally had its own quarters and its own headman. In this manner a Hindu settlement grew up by the side of Fort St. George and was known as 'Black Town'; and the whole locality, including Fort St. George and Black Town, was called Madras, and was the first territory acquired by the East India Company in India (Wheeler, 2014: 8).

Contrary to what was experienced in Madras, where neighbouring city cultures occupied the factories of Madras, the experiences of cantonment town such as Banaras were different. When attempts to change pre-existing city plans and cultural praxis were made, this was met with resistance. Wheeler explains and narrates these as follows:

> Colonel Neill did not reach Allahabad for some days. He was detained at Benares from the 4th to the 9th of June. This city, the Jerusalem of the Brahmans, is situated on the river Ganges, about 420 miles above Calcutta and eighty miles below Allahabad. It had a population of 300,000, mostly Hindus. The cantonment is two or three miles from the city, and was occupied by a regiment of Bengal infantry, one of irregular cavalry, and a Sikh regiment (Wheeler, 2014: 235).

For many years, the Brahmans at Benares utterly refused to have the sacred city lighted or drained. They declared that lighting and drainage were contrary to the Hindu religion, and arguments made by the British magistrates to the contrary were wasted. At last, in 1851, the British magistrate, a Mr. Frederic Gubbins, carried out municipal reforms in the teeth of a Hindu mob. Then there was a

commotion at Benares, precisely like what had occurred at Madras in the seventeenth century, when British rulers endeavoured to reform the sanitary condition of their city. Traders and bazaar dealers shut their shops and refused to supply the cantonment with grain. Mr. Gubbins was pelted and fired at and fled for his life. He called out a detachment of sepoys, arrested the riot ringleaders, and lodged them in jail. From that moment Mr. Gubbins became lord of Benares. He rode through the city and ordered all the shops to be opened, and no one could refuse him (Wheeler, 2014: 236). Although these colonial narratives display caution, the Mughal narratives are differently projected. For example, Wheeler defensively explains that British justice and administration was milder in contrast to the Mughals, to demonstrate the judiciousness of the British:

> It might, however, be added that the action of the British magistrate, arbitrary and high-handed as it must appear to British readers, was mild and merciful in comparison with Mogul severities. Under an imperious ruler like Aurangzeb, trains of armed elephants were driven through the masses in the streets, and trampled down all that came in their way, until the crowd broke up and fled in terror at the carnage (Wheeler, 2014: 8).

Cantonment towns sported commercial markets as well, and therefore, a lot of communities specializing in production and commercial selling settled in and around cantonment markets (as explained above in the case of Madras, and Surat). Also, as suggested by Kolff (2010), there was an increase in emphasis on trade and commerce within these cantonment towns, compared to the defensive fortifications of earlier times. For half a century the British paid little or no attention to their defences. In Madras, Fort William had been deemed enough protection, on the river side of the city, while the land side, it was thought that native inhabitants would provide the British with enough protection. In the case of Aurangabad and Bengal:

> [In Bengal] a formative protection had begun to dig a ditch as a defence against the Mahratta horsemen; but the Mahrattas were paid *chouth* to go away, and the ditch was never finished. The Europeans dwelt in houses and gardens along the bank of the river Hughly, on either side of Fort William; and an English Church, the Mayor's Court and some other buildings, covered Fort William on the land side. The native quarter, including a large bazaar, adjoined the Mahratta ditch, and avenues of trees led from the native quarter to Fort William and the European buildings (Wheeler, 2014: 36).

It is debated whether the society and structure of the cantonment was decadent, when British took over these traditional cantonment towns. Raghuvanshi (1969) supported these arguments by stating that British arrival problematized the Indian social order. He stated:

> Civilized life cannot flourish amidst conditions of insecurity and oppression. In the 18th century, the break-up of the Mughal monarchy

released forces of political disintegration and anarchical conditions which destroyed the creative and co-operative spirit of man. They caused deterioration in every phase of national life. The regions which suffered most from the savages of the soldiery became the scenes of uprooted humanity and epidemics. The period glorified by war bred anarchy and held civilization in terror. These arguments were derailed and questioned by others engaged in the eighteenth-century debate. Other views supported a theory of how a new society—modern, as it is called— emerged, regulated more by law than by religion, as before the eighteenth century (Raghuvanshi, 1969: 1).

The initial historical expositions and descriptions of Raghuvanshi certainly initiated debates in the pre-Victorian narratives of South Asia. With them followed writings by Bayly (1988), Riddick (2006), Green (2009) and Kolff (2010) and that introduced a paradigm shift with new sources that enabled access to a history that was far from being decadent. Eighteenth century was instead said to be marked by centrifugal channels, both in political and commercial networks in India. The networks of Bazaar cultures connected through cities and towns in the eighteenth century concentrated on the dynamics of exchanges and negotiations between different groups, and on what can be learned through the "voices" of people in the bazaar: landholders, peasants, traders, and merchants.[9] While British supremacy did not change the fact that India was becoming rapidly urbanized, it did lead to new alignments and priorities, since the controlling power was so different. Several new towns and new suburbs were built to house the British, and a pattern of new town planning emerged. India was still divided into administrative districts, as under the Mughals, and towns that functioned as district headquarters were the ones sporting most of its new architectural styles (Yang, 1999). A description of a cantonment by a traveller in October 1819 is as follows:

> The general plan of a cantonment is to have a good piece of ground for the exercise of the troops in front, with a line of small buildings for depositing the arms in the rear. Next to these are huts of the sepoys and in their rear the bungalows of the officers, which are built in the cottage style, very well adapted for the climate, and each having a garden around it, with a range of offices, consisting of a kitchen, stables and servants' houses.[10]

The historical reasons necessitating the formation of individual cantonments differ, depending on its contemporary political and military realities. For example, the Secundrabad cantonment was established to assist the Nizam of Hyderabad against his local adversaries, whereas the Lucknow Cantonment was established to maintain pressure on the Nawab of Oudh and to finally capture that State. Similarly, the need for a cooler climate for the British troops and strategic

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[9] Anand A. Yang, Bazaar *India: Markets, Society, and the Colonial State in Bihar*, University of California Press, 1999

[10] Link: https://www.tornosindia.com/a-forgotten-british-cantonment-mardiaon/ (Accessed on 11/10/2018, 06:00 p.m.)

importance of the Doab dictated the setting up of hill cantonments in modern day Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. A similar notion was followed for Aurangabad as well. However, irrespective of local factors, the paramount consideration for setting up all these cantonments were the need for military camps in various strategic locations of India that established, maintained and consolidated British power. While most cantonments came to be established in the early part of the nineteenth century, its transitory governance involved a plethora of rules and regulations to suit the requirements of the local administrators. The construction of administrative structures was of a makeshift nature, referred to, in Indian architectural terms, as *kacchā* (inferior, flimsy, impermanent) and *pakkā* (superior, solid, durable). These terms became pivotal and conjoined with concepts useful for the construction of both military and civil environments in colonial India under the British East India Company (1757-1858) (Cowell, 2016). While the Commanding officer of the cantonment was in charge of both civil and military administration, he had a group of civil officials like sanitary officer, executive engineer, and civil surgeon to assist him in his civil duties. He also consulted the magistrate of the district on important issues of civil and criminal administration. This system of informal consultations was later codified into a permanent structure called cantonment committee by the act XXII of 1864 (Home Department, 1864: 1171-72). This act was the first attempt by the British to put an end to the makeshift cantonment administration prevalent till then. The act legalized cantonment administration, providing sanctity to institutions like cantonment committee and cantonment magistrates with retrospective effect. Cantonment committees were now entrusted with powers to regulate and administer municipal functions (Omissi, 1994: 23-25) and the British conquests of important territories in late eighteenth-century India demonstrated new ideas about the construction of empire. Responding to a prolonged crisis of imperial legitimacy (1757-1858), British officials in India also tried to build authority, based on an 'ancient constitution', supposedly the remnants of a declining Mughal Empire, (Travers, 2007: 1) to grapple with and formulate a combination of old and new ideas to consolidate possible networks in the construction of an empire (Travers, 2007: 1).

The British were emerging as a major ally to the Nizam of Hyderabad along with the French, during the eighteenth century. The two rival powers had their own shares of influence under the Nizam's authority. With the decline in power of the Mughals and the increasing influence of regional polities accompanied with strained relations between the Nizams and the Marathas, the British were in a dilemma about their allegiance (Regani, 1988: 120-130). However, intermittent struggles among local *zamindars* and landlords gave the British an upper hand in matters concerning the Berar Nizam. Reluctantly, the Nizams accepted British support and from 1762 onwards, the British deployed an army battalion in Aurangabad. By a Treaty signed in 1788 a resident was additionally appointed for Hyderabad in 1798, along with a subsidiary force of six battalions that was made permanent here. This was further revised in the treaty of 1800, according to which the number of battalions was increased to eight (Regani, 1988: 125). The gradual increase in the armed *contingent* (Green, 2009: 8-9) of the Nizam's State introduced a new set of cultural questions that were different from debates about

how British soldiers transformed the cantonment city and the concept of cantonment in the framework of a Moglai State?

The history of the cantonment in Aurangabad goes back to times of the *defacto* ruler of Nizam Shahi dynasty Malik Ambar in 1600, when he decided to develop a cantonment city at Khadki. To avenge and averse the incurring forces of Mughals from northern India, Khadki (later known as Aurangabad) became a refuge and den of the Nizam Shahi armies that defended the Deccan from Mughal onslaughts (Sengar and Gaikwad, 2018: 10). The new defensive cantonment city proved beneficial for Malik Ambar, and in 1610, to mark his success against the Mughal Empire, he even constructed the magnificent Bahar-Kul gateway (known as 'Bhadkal Gate') in the centre of the city (Sengar and Gaikwad, 2018: 10). The city remained a challenge for the Mughal Empire in its desire to conquer the Deccan. The Mughals attacked it twice, but like a phoenix, it was rebuilt and remain under the Nizam- Shahi till the Mughals conquered the Deccan in 1627 after Malik Ambar's death in 1626 (Siddiqui, 2017: 9). After Aurangabad came under Mughal jurisdiction, it was further enhanced as a strategic and defensive town for the Mughals. The fortification walls and gates in various directions at the end of seventeenth century, made it one of the most sought-after cities in the Deccan (Sengar and Gaikwad: 2018: 12-14). It remained under Mughal power and was later, the capital of the Deccan under the Mughals up to 1720's. Aurangabad continued to remain capital of Nizam's State of Deccan-Hyderabad till 1754. In 1754, due to consistent warfare and conflict with the Marathas, the Nizams shifted their capital to Hyderabad (Sengar and Gaikwad, 2018: 20). and the border region of Aurangabad from 1760's onwards, was assigned to the British contingent, as described above.

The Moglai Chhawani: 1760's to 1857

The British at the Aurangabad Cantonment largely adjusted to the cultural trends of Mughal '*chhawani*' (an Urdu word for army cantonment) that spread from Daulatabad to the Mecca gate of Aurangabad. According to the Mughal records from the seventeenth century, the present Aurangabad cantonment area originally housed the Mughal cavalry and army, while depending on the *risala* near *tofkhana bazaar* and *gavlipura* for their daily needs (Sengar, 2017: 35-36; also see Green, 2009: 8-10). As discussed above, the British gradually acclimatized themselves to well-established Moglai towns and cities that were built above or adjacent to ancient or established political structures, in order to avoid making any major changes to existing socio-political governance. Thus, the administration of the *Moglai Chhawani* continued to follow ongoing social rules, as a large part of the British contingent constituted of native army men. Aurangabad cantonment in the eighteenth century was one of the largest under the British occupation in Deccan, although the nature of this cantonment remained largely mercantile, serving the business enterprises of East India Company (Rorabacher, 2016: 66-67; also see Sengar, n.d. unpublished).

French and British Rivalry and growth of Mission activities in the Cantonments of Aurangabad region

The British-dominated Aurangabad division of the Nizam's state was never looked upon with appreciation, by the fellow competitors of the French East India Company at the Nizam's court. Just like the northern territories of Aurangabad, the French army had quite a presence at Jalna and Hingoli (Mallampalli, 2017: 71-72). However, the French influence declined after the arrival of the British army contingent in 1798. The newly established hierarchy among army troops stationed within the Nizam's territory invited different group of socio-religious servicemen as well. Initially in the eighteenth century, when both British and French army personnel dominated Aurangabad division, Catholic missionaries were much in demand. However, surprisingly, there was no evidence of missionary activities in the Aurangabad division of Hyderabad state till the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to military documents of state, senior officials at British camps also acted as priests in case of required religious services (Sengar, n.d). The first evidence of missionary entry in the Aurangabad division appears in early decades of the nineteenth century and in these early phases, the Hyderabad State was governed through Nagpur, included within the 'Vicariate of Great Mogul', wherein there was no trace of any missionary till the beginning of the nineteenth century. Nagpur, Kamptee, Aurangabad and Jalna were first visited by priests of the Goan jurisdiction, from Poona in 1814. A chapel in honour of St. Francis Xavier was built in Aurangabad by the Goan missionaries in 1816. Another such chapel was also built by the same missionaries in Kannar or Kannad sub-divisional headquarters of Aurangabad (Herbermann, et al., 1913: 669).[11] At the same time, around 1827, military cantonments were developed in Jalna town in imitation of the Aurangabad cantonment, built in 1813, after the Nizam and the British signed the subsidiary alliance treaty of 1798 (Green, 2009: 8-9; 90-105). The Goan priests retained their jurisdiction in these parts until 1839, when in consequences of the Apostolic brief "Multa Praclare" of 24 April 1838, the district fell to the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of Madras. 'In January 1839, priests from Madras took possession of Kamptee and Jalna and these were the Fathers Breen (died 1844) and Egen at Kamptee, and D. Murthy at Jalna. Father Murthy, whose registers are preserved in the bishop's residence at Nagpur, subsequently became Vicar Apostolic of Hyderabad and then Archbishop of Hobart Town, Tasmania, where he died in 1908. In 1845, some missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, from Annecy (Savoy, France), were appointed to the charge of the northern portion of the Vicariate of Madras, which was thus, separated and made into the Vicariate of Vizagapatam. They took possession of Aurangabad and Jalna in 1846. A school was established by the Daughters of the Cross at Aurangabad, as part of the Mission with substantial enrolments (Herbermann et al., 1913: 669).[12]

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[11] Also see: http://nagpurarchdiocese.org/history.aspx
[12] Also see: http://nagpurarchdiocese.org/history.aspx

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Image 1: Church of North India, Aurangabad Cantonment, established in 1841. Image Courtesy: Ojas Borse (2018)

Churches in Aurangabad Cantonment Non-Catholic Missions

Francis Moget refers to the missionary activities in Aurangabad district, especially in its cantonment region in the early decades of the nineteenth century (Moget, 1990: 1, 23). The early chapels built here were meant to minister to catholic soldiers (Moget, 1990: 1, 23). According to the Church Missionary Society (hereafter CMS) records, there was growth in the missionary activities of Hyderabad State's Aurangabad, Jalna and Kannad regions and also in the Kinwat regions that included converts from various communities (Stock, 1916: 685). The CMS Reports describe the largest numbers of converts to be reported from Aurangabad, part of the Western India Mission (The Christian Express, 1886: 139). Rev. Ruttonji Nowroji converted at this time and converted 1065 persons, a number that doubled in three years (The Christian Express, 1886: 139). The growth of the CMS increased and impacted urban, rural and also forest communities of the Hyderabad State. And the numerical strength of Christians predominated in the Aurangabad region, with its centre at the Aurangabad cantonment. The CMS was established in 1841 and various other church of different denominations were given to other communities. After the 1860's, missionary activities in Aurangabad region came under Bombay Presidency and its headquarters for the Hyderabad State was shifted to Manmad town (Stock, 1916: 685).

Social Life and Christianity in Aurangabad Cantonment

A question that often arises is: why missionary activities came so late to Aurangabad cantonment, and why it became so essential among the British contingents of Aurangabad cantonment to have missionary activities by the early nineteenth century. There is a large cemetery in the Aurangabad cantonment that houses more than a hundred graves of soldiers and their families. Most of these graves belonged to British soldiers, indicating to the social dilemmas of marriages and raising children and fostering families. As we delve into the ethnographic documentation of these families, that rest in graves at the Aurangabad cantonment cemetery, they tell several stories of their own. Earlier, the families of British army men at Aurangabad cantonment were living in Jalna. Many among those deployed to the Aurangabad cantonment were too young to get married. Here descriptions about the marital dilemma faced by army personnel at the Surat cantonment could be of relevance:

> This was notoriously the case at Surat, where female slaves might be purchased by Europeans. There was a Dutch factory at Surat of the same stamp as the British factory, and its married inmates were in like manner forbidden to bring their wives from Holland. But when the Dutch got possession of Java, they offered grants of land to married Dutchmen, and, according to Pietro della Valle, there was a sudden change in domestic arrangements. Dutch bachelors were in such a hurry to go to Java, that they married Armenian Christians, or went off to the bazaar and bought female slaves and baptised them and married them without loss of time (Wheeler, 2014: 19).

This is not too different from the family histories of soldiers at the Aurangabad cantonment, many of whom married female slaves or women of the *risala* market, or went to Ahmednagar to marry Armenian women. In one such incident, a famous artist who represented the ancient Ajanta cave paintings, Major Robert Gill also married an Armenian woman from Ahmednagar (Sengar, n.d.). The urgency of social life for soldiers necessitated the expansion of missionary activities at the *risala* markets and the cantonments of Aurangabad. By the mid nineteenth century, there is a remarkable expansion in missionary activities at Aurangabad. There were missionary chapels constructed in Kannad, Ajanta and Jalna that not just served the British contingent, but also promoted conversion among the lower castes and tribes, consisting of Mahar, Mang, Bhil and Mahadeo Koli populations. According to CMS reports, Saharanpur missionaries were given the responsibility of initiating conversion among the Muslim communities of Aurangabad division, but this mission did not succeed. Mr. and Mrs. Lane-Smith initiated conversions among the Muslims of Aurangabad with minimal success. However, in the Kannad and neighbouring region, conversions among Bhils was more successful and processions of Jesus with hailing voices of '*Christ Maharaj ki jai*' became a trend in these regions. These converts from lower the castes and tribes also became part of the British Bhil and Mahar contingents that helped in quelling the 1857 revolt, in favour of the British (David, 2001: 245-250).

Image 2: The paved street and bazaar of Aurangabad Cantonment since the 18th century. Image Courtesy: Ojas Borse (2018).

The 'wanton' behaviour of soldiers also accentuated the growth of missionary activities, as Nile Green refers to various diseases and the prevalence of alcoholism that was solved through missionary activities (Green, 2014: 226-245). According to Nile Green, there were *faqir* saints addicted to opium and alcohol in the cantonment of Aurangabad (Green, 2014: 230-231) Missionary activity in Aurangabad certainly increased with a growing requirement for good British men in the army. With this, the expansion of converts among marginalized communities in the Moglai state, dominated by high caste Hindus and authoritative Muslims, also grew. P.V. Kate in his seminal work on history of Marathwada states that Nizams were not against the propagation of Christianity and on the contrary encouraged it. So, the number of Christians increased gradually from the nineteenth century onwards. He explains conversion among communities in Marathwada, by referring to a study carried out by Robert Palmer, a tourist in India. In his book "A Little tour in India", while providing details of *Moghlai* and Aurangabad district, Palmer says: "The Christians in this district (Badnapur, Aurangabad district) are almost Mangs, who are the lowest tribe of all, the rope makers. Only 10 percent Mang population of the district has been reached, owing to lack of workers and funds. There are Mang Christians in some of the most responsible state positions. The Government thinks highly of them and supports the mission in every way. This was in accordance with the philosophy of Islam, which divided the world into Dar-ul-Harf and Dar-ul-Islam-the land of infidel and the land of believers. The infidel (unless he happens to be Zimmi, i.e. a Jew of a Christian) must be converted or killed. The Zimmi may be allowed to live in the land of believer after paying Zizaya tax, but the followers of other religion have no such option. This principle was practiced in slightly modified form. Hence, Christianity received patronage from the Nizams and ultimately took roots in

Marathwada" (Quoted in Kate, 1987: 190). Through the writings of Kate, the superiority of being Muslim and the inferiority among Hindus of the Nizam's State becomes evident, and this divide eventually led to an increase of conversion among Mang communities. Later studies on caste mobilisation in Marathwada also refer to Bhil and Mahar Christian populations asserting themselves, based on their upbringing within the Christian missions of the early nineteenth century (Bayly 2001: 353). With the mid nineteenth century, there was remarkable expansion within Christian cultural values at Aurangabad. British rule was resisted, especially by Muslim contingents in the 1857 revolt. The emergence of cantonments such as Aurangabad were based on cultural patterns that produced relationships between British and local populations, producing a sociability of spaces that interrelated with community and religious life. Aurangabad evolved from *Chhawani* and *bazaar* to influence the configuration of what is urban life in Aurangabad today.

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'Worship Towards the East': Texts and Transitions of Christianity in Kerala

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Abstract

The history of community is best understood as an archive of collective memory. The history of Christianity in Kerala—the Southernmost state of India, where Christians belonging to different castes/sects constitute around twenty percent of the total population—has unfolded in an ensemble of multiple narratives about community. Nonetheless, caste and sectarianism have been the vantage points for the historiographical analysis of the Christian community in Kerala. As a result, experiences of a "minor" community, with its heterogeneous genealogies, has often been translated into the homogenous language of the colonial and nationalistic discourses of Hindu majoritarian "secular" nation-state. There has been little space for narratives that explicate community as a subjective experience, based on ontology and belief. This study, hence, explores textual universes of Christianity in Kerala, as an experiential category to engage with communities in transition. In doing so, the analysis problematizes the existing archive as that which identifies a faith community as a historically available category and re-reads and extends this archive to enable new interpretations of Christian subjectivity in the region. We re-read historical narratives in an attempt to destabilize the ways in which the history of communities is perceived as a chronologically evolved structure of events. The paper proceeds by critically analyzing various contemporary Malayalam texts that offer new narratives of Christianity, which, foreground heterogeneous genealogies of a community-in-the-becoming. These narratives of Christianity are identifiably at loggerheads with both the canonical and historical understanding of Christianity in Kerala. The community's history is unfolded in these texts as an experiential category with political implications for the imagination of Christianity in the region, and in doing so offer an analytical frame to identify community within its discursive formations. The paper argues that Christianity in Kerala manifests an 'Eastern' imagination that enables us to explore possibilities beyond discourses generated by 'Western' Christianity and the Christian 'West'.

Keywords: Christianity, Kerala, archive, Christians, genealogy, community

Introduction

The title of this essay 'worship towards the East' primarily refers to the Christian tradition of East-facing prayer. However, we use the phrase to imply the 'Eastern' routes, if not roots, of Christianity in South India. In this study, we explore the diverse manifestations of an 'Eastern' Christianity in Kerala in an attempt to move beyond the colonial modern and western Christian paradigms for understanding Christianity in the region.[1] This study also departs from academic discourses that foreground caste as the analytical category to understand Christianity in Kerala,[2] by reiterating the paradigm of a binary, i.e. upper caste Christian communities and subaltern Christian communities. Scholars such as, Fuller (1976) and Viswanathan (1993) discuss Syrian Christians in Kerala to affirm that its caste-Christian subjectivity is a product of claims about historic 'descent,' and further discuss 'other' Christians (Latin, Dalit, Jewish, Pentecostal, and so on.) to delineate their subalternity within Kerala's Christianity. This, we argue, reemphasizes the colonial and nationalist archives and knowledge production, because they take Christians as a historically available category. Departing from this frame, scholars such as, Mohan (2015) have re-read colonial and missionary archives to argue for an active agential role played by subaltern Christians to locate anti-'caste-Christian' struggles in a continuum of anti-caste movements (Mohan, 2015). However, Syrian Christianity remains a given category even in such studies. This monolithic

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[1] Christians constitute a minority community in the region that is now unified under the linguistic state of Kerala from 1956. Earlier, the region spread across the princely states of Thiruvithamcore, Cochin and Madras. According to 2011 census, Christians constitute around 20 percentage of Kerala's population, whereas they only form around 2 percentage of the national population (Census Data 2011, Government of India. http://www.censusindia.gov.in/).

[2] Christians in the region manifest different caste-community affiliations owing to mass conversions from different communities; they exhibit diverse liturgical traditions, religiosity and belief systems as they were mostly constituted by migrants/converts from across the world, beginning from second or third century, who co-existed with 'native' communities who were equally migratory in nature. In the given scenario, this phenomenon has unfolded itself in the classification of Syrian Christians, Latin Christians and Dalit Christians, to name the few who are also focus of this study. The Syrian Christians enjoy hegemonic status in the region by claiming a privileged origin for themselves. Arguably, the origin narratives of this community have two important strands: 1) it imagines an apostolic origin, 2) it imagines a Brahmanic origin. Syrian Christians traditionally believe that St. Thomas, the apostle of Christ, came to Kerala in AD 52 and converted Brahmin families to Christianity. This narrative of apostolic and Brahmanical origin is complimented, contested and complicated in various historiographic accounts. Whereas, mainstream historiography traces Latin Christians' beginnings to the Portuguese period (1492-1663) when missionaries started mass conversions; but Latin Christian historiography dismisses this teleological understanding of Kerala Christians and instead, argues for multiple strands of conversion across time. Further, Dalit Christians are traced to mass conversions from 'lower' caste communities under the Portuguese, Dutch and British, as well as 'native' Christian missionaries, thereby creating their 'othered' status within Kerala's Christian community (Ayyar, 1912; Bayly, 1989; Menachery and Hambye, 1972; Pascal, 1937). This colonial understanding locates the Kerala Christian community in a purity/pollution binary and negates the possibility of various castes/tribes/communities being already part of the community.

production of Syrian Christianity ought to be problematized in order to deconstruct Christianity in the region. Susan Bayly (1989), for instance, denies minority religions like Islam and Christianity in Kerala any fixed order. For her, Christianity in Kerala is neither an extension of caste-Hindu society, nor a product of the colonial mission; it is a dynamic community that interacts with and is incorporated into the centuries of political and religious changes underway in the region. This is not to deny that the metahistorical deployment of "miraculous origin"[3] narratives of the Syrian Christians in Kerala has constructed this teleological history for Christianity in the region.[4] However, this paradigm of binaries constructed by and for the community makes it impossible to go beyond caste and sectarianism that is internal to Christianity, and engage with the dilemma of a 'minor-migrant-modern'[5] community in a secular democratic nation-state.

Our attempt in this paper is to deconstruct the reading of Christianity, to make sense of the present Christian community and its different caste-sect differences with its 'minor-migrant-modern' predicaments, with re-presentations from the community constituting our 'archive'. And, as we depart from existing discourses that have facilitated a regional process of a community becoming a caste, through teleological projections within colonial/nationalist discourses, we explore how minoritarian quandaries inherent to community formation, are also concealed. Through this archive, we try to go beyond internal differences and instead, make an argument for Christianity and about a Christian community-in-the-becoming. Contrary to teleological history that fixes origins for each sect, a genealogical analysis proposes that regional Christianity has multiple beginnings. This Christianity, cutting across castes and sectarian affiliation, and constituted by global migrants and converts, then becomes trans-regional: vernacular and cosmopolitan at the same time. We propose for instance, that the 'East' is not just a space-temporal territory, but a de-territorial imagination that reclaims trans-regional roots and routes of Christianity. We argue that Christianity in Kerala

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[3] Foucault refers to Nietzsche, when explaining the quest of "miraculous origin" as an attempt to "capture the exact essence of things, its purest possibilities, protected identities" that is "directed to the image of a primordial truth fully adequate to its nature, and necessitates the removal of every mask to disclose an original identity" (1984: 77-79). Here, miraculous origin refers to the apostolic and Brahmanical origin of Syrian Christians (cf. Yesudasan, 2016).

[4] With the advent of print capitalism, history writing proliferated: apologetic church histories written by 'native' Christian historians who claimed legitimacy for their churches, colonial histories written by missionaries about the Christianization of non-Christians and 'pagan' Christians and finally, nationalist histories written by 'secular' historians that read Christianity in the light of regional caste systems.

[5] In Kerala, Christians, despite their minority status, are considered an influential community though they are distributed across denominations, subject to their caste, sect and community. Syrian, Latin and Dalit Christians share unique relationship with colonization, modernization, secularism and capitalism that universalizes and makes particular their lived experiences. They also form a diasporic community after migrating to different parts of the world post-Independence. Hence, the 'minor-migrant-modern' predicament suggested in this essay refers to the contradictory subject-citizenship of Christians within the region.

manifests this 'Eastern' imagination that enables us to explore possibilities beyond discourses generated by 'Western' Christianity and the Christian 'West.' The tension between 'East' and 'West' is visible in the South Indian context after the fifteenth century Portuguese invasion. And hence, this essay begins by analyzing the *Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper*, the event (1599) and the text (Zacharia, 1994), to delineate the vernacular-cosmopolitanism of Christianity within regional contexts, despite what Derrida called "globalatinization" (2002). Further, select texts are analyzed to elucidate their in-tense relation with the 'Westernization' of Christianity that goes hand-in-hand with the modernization and secularization of the region.

Beginnings: Foregrounding the East

In this section, we foreground the community's heterogeneous "historical beginnings" through a genealogical analysis of Christianity in Kerala.[6] This heterogeneity of beginnings is an opportunity for the community to delegitimize its own quest for an essentialist identity and reclaim plural genealogies of becoming. 1599 is taken as an entry point to critically engage with the genealogy of Christian community in Kerala. Hundred years after the arrival of Portuguese in the Malabar Coast, the Synod of Diamper was held on 20 June 1599 at Diamper in Kerala, under the leadership of Alexio de Menezes, the Portuguese Archbishop of Goa. The objective of the Synod was declared as an exaltation of the Christian faith, destruction of heresies within 'local' Christian communities, purging false doctrines from texts and the union of 'local' churches and replacing it with the universal Catholic church that pledged obedience to the Pope (Zacharia, 1994: 75). It is important to remember that the entire Synod was conducted in Portuguese language and was only available to the attendees in translation.[7]

Scholars have already read 1599[8] as one of the first waves of colonization in Kerala/India. However, in this paper, we consider 1599, the Synod of Diamper and

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[6] Genealogy, for Foucault, does not oppose itself to history; it uses beginnings to "dispel the chimeras of origin". Genealogy, for him, is the analysis of "descent" and "emergence". Descent, for him, is not an acquisition or possession that grows and solidifies; it is an assemblage of faults, fissures and heterogeneous layers that threaten the fragile inheritor from within or from underneath. Hence, the analysis of descent disturbs foundations: fragments that were considered unified but are heterogeneous from what was imagined as consistent with itself. And, emergence is the moment of arising; not the final term of a historical development- merely current episodes in a series of subjugations. The analysis of emergence must delineate the interaction of forces and emergence designates a "non-place" that is an endlessly repetitive play of dominations, always occurring at interstices. Hence, genealogy of history shows that development can only be understood as a series of interpretations (Foucault 1984: 80-86).

[7] The politics and poetics of translating religions needs elaborate discussion. However, this remains beyond the purview of this essay.

[8] See Zacharia (1994). It is observed that Christians in Kerala in 1599 gave up 'vernacular' and Eastern Christian beliefs and traditions to surrender to the Roman Catholic Church and accepted

the 'Acts and Decrees' as an entry point, as also a point of departure, delineating the genealogy of Kerala Christians in the present. We read the Synod primarily as a projection of 'Western' problematics for a 'worship towards the East' both literally and figuratively. This is particularly visible in the 'Acts and Decrees' that professed "true obedience to the Pope, the Roman Catholic Bishop, the successor of the blessed prince of the Apostles, St. Peter, and vicar of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, the head of the whole Church on earth" (Zacharia, 1994: 80-105). The decree anathematized Kerala church's relationship with East Asian churches and the Patriarch of Babylon who was declared a heretic. Further, it condemned and burned texts containing anti-Roman Catholic instructions and exhorted the replacement of Syriac texts with Latin ones, to Latinize existing 'vernacular' textualities (89-105)[9], while swearing to purge pagans, infidels, heretics and all 'vernacular' traditions.[10] The 'enemy' was clearly identified, as heresy/blasphemy became contextualized within Roman Catholicism/ Latin Christianity, embodied by the Pope. According to this formulae, 'vernacular' Christians in Kerala, who had their own traditions, and owed affiliation with Eastern Christian churches, were considered 'pagan' and identified as the 'internal enemy' of Christianity, their belief considered blasphemous to Roman Catholicism/Latin Christianity/Pope and to the 'Universal' Church. Jews/ Muslims/ 'Hindus' and Tribals from the region subsequently became the 'external enemy' of Christianity. 'Acts and Decrees' therefore constituted a single stroke of 'Western' Christianity that purged Kerala Christianity of both internal and external enemies through the decree of Universal

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the Pope as their head. A group of regional Christians at Mattanchery in contrast, held a cross in 1653 while declaring that "thenceforth we have no love, agreement or community with the Franks", thereby proclaiming the independence, autonomy and sovereignty of the 'vernacular' Christian community. Hence, 1653 is often read as one of the first instances of anti-colonial uprising in the region. Today, mainstream historiography claims and owns this tradition solely for Syrian Christians and hence, this has led to the revival of the 'uncontaminated' and primordiality discourse among Syrian Christianity. This falls into the Western teleological historiography trap that 'others' diverse interpretative traditions among Christians in Kerala. We argue that, while the Synod is part of the genealogy of the Christianity in the region, it does not solely represent the history of Syrian Christianity in Kerala.

[9] The Synod condemned the Syriac version of the *Bible* used among Kerala Christians and offers additions, deletions, manipulations within the text that was given by the Church of the East, and endows Francisco Roz, the Latin Christian priest, with the responsibility to translate the same, using the Vulgate Latin edition of the *Bible* as a source. The Synod names a set of books as heretical and condemns "many Syrian books, forbids all Christians to read them, and commands that they be destroyed" (Zacharia, 1994: 89-98).

[10] In a similar vein, the Synod also condemned all "heathenish" practices in Kerala Christianity— such as belief in transmigration of souls (Zacharia, 1994: 90); fate and fortune; laws for salvation (91); exorcism (161); ceremonies related to marriage at propitious times, heathenish contracts, and rituals to ensure success; polygamy (162,178,179); superstitious ablutions (188). It forbids pagans from being present in church during Holy Sacrament (142); forbids Christians from attending heathen festivities (204); consulting witches and fortune-tellers; witchcraft workers and conjurors (205). It regulates the interest of money (206); condemns extortion (207); and exhorts Christians to dwell together to form communes and be separated from all communication with infidels (213). In the same breath, it also prohibits any Judaic practices to be followed among Kerala Christians (179).

Christianity. At one level, this sixteenth century text is an entry point to diverse pre-Synod textualities for Christians in Kerala, which, despite attempts of erasure, have been transmitted among the post-Synod Christians. For example, the many versions of *Paalpusthakam*, an astrological calendar that was used to predict mis/fortunes before events such as wedding, journeys etc., have been recently discovered. While, such astrological practices were certainly influenced by 'local' traditions, one version of the *Paalpusthakam*s is also considered a translation of the Syrian version (Thomas, 2017). There is also a reference in the Diamper Synod, of a ban on certain astrological texts and traditions that circulated among 'native' Christians. Along with the ban of other 'pagan' practices, the Synod also condemned a particular text titled *Parisman* or Persian Medicine to be burned, that contained directions for countering sorceries, magic, witchcraft and misfortunes (Zacharia, 1994).

The cosmopolitan textuality of Christianity in Kerala is exemplified by a close reading of yet another newly discovered manuscript—*The Revelation of the Seraphic* (or Fiery) *Gregory (Gregorios Nurono)*—in the Syrian Orthodox monastery of Gethsemane Dayro, Kottayam, Kerala in 2005 that was condemned by 'Western' Christianity.[11] Another version of the same text is found in the archives of the Church of the East, Thrissur, Kerala. Both versions are copied by different scribes—first by Mor Iyovannis Hidayat Allah, Bishop of Nineveh, Iraq in 1689, and the second by Mar Abdisho, Chaldean Metropolitan of Malabar Christians in 1880. The manuscript discovered in 2005 is written in a mix of East-Syrian and West-Syrian script on Italian paper and is dated to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. *The Revelation* narrates the vision of St. Gregory, a theologian of Nazianzus, who dreams the apocryphal revelations of a journey through heaven and hell. The colophon of the manuscript states that it was translated from Arabic to Syriac by the scribe, Mor Ivannios, the foreigner, Bishop of Nineveh at the church of St. George in Koramattham, in the year 2000 of the Greeks, (AD 1689) (Perczel, 2013: 346). Georg Graf, a scholar working on the Arabic text of *The Revelation*, elucidates that the Arabic text was itself a translation of the Syriac text, written in the seventh or eighth century at Edessa (Perczel, 2013: 340). Further, this Arabic text was composed in Cairo, Egypt. The 'movement' of such texts from seventh century Mesopotamia[12] through Egypt and Iraq to nineteenth century Kerala and their translation from Syriac to Arabic to Syriac-Malayalam by scribes from across the world (and now by Perczel into English in the 21st century) destabilizes any notion of a universal Christian cosmology.

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[11] Details regarding the text have been gathered from Istvan Perczel's translations (2013: 337-356).

[12] Mesopotamia was considered the cradle of Eastern Christianity, conquered by Muslims in the seventh century and reconquered by the Byzantium in eleventh century, to later become a Crusading state in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The area was eventually conquered by the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century.

This short detour to some of the texts in the Christian repertoire suggests that these textualities disrupted any essentialist idea of a root that defined a community, instead suggesting to the presence of heterogenous routes in the becoming of the community[13]—'Eastern' Christians, the Judaic and the 'vernacular'. These 'routes' can be traced to Asian traders and their converts; migrant 'pagan' converted communities of the region; their readiness to intermarry with dominant castes; their engagement with warrior cults; their fluctuating equations with upper caste Hindus and colonial regimes; their intense relationship with 'Eastern' Christianity and tension with the Portuguese and 'Western' Catholic Christianity; their ambivalent relationship with British missionaries and 'Western' Protestant Christianity; and finally their antagonism to new Christian religiosities (like Poykayil Yohannan's PRDS) that emerged within the local milieu. Thus, the genealogy of the 'vernacular' Christian body politic in Kerala consists of a diversity that include migrants from Persia, Assyria, Babylon and other East Asian regions, who held on to 'paganism' and heterogeneous Christian traditions that were incompatible with 'Western' Christian traditions. This migrant body politic further engaged with 'regional' communities in Kerala as well as with different 'Christianities' that arrived with various waves of colonialism and gradually constituted a regional Christian body politic that was both 'cosmopolitan' and 'vernacular' in its textualities. According to these genealogies of migration and movement, the past opens up to its own multiple beginnings and deconstructs origins, thereby, reconfiguring the community-in-the-present to the potential of 'becoming a community' where nobody is 'othered.'

Contrary to this spirit of its own genealogy, an essentialized Syrian Christian identity emerged in the post-Portuguese period, probably as a strategic response to a 'vernacular' Christian community, endorsing universality based on the 'Western' mission of European Christianity. Further, this emerging community, by adopting modernist imperatives of a teleological historiography, sought to construct an apostolic and Brahminic "divine, mythical and privileged origin" (Said, 1985: XIX)[14] and thereby appropriated caste-Hindu body politic. While the

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[13] Stuart Hall argues that the concept of identity can no more "be essentialist, but a strategic and positional one…. nor is it the collective or true self, hiding inside the many other more superficially or artificially imposed 'selves' which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common…. identities are never unified and, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions…. though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from,' so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation….it is not the so-called return to roots, but a coming-to-terms-with our routes" (1996: 3-4). P. Sanal Mohan uses Hall to argue the becoming of the Dalit Christian identity in Kerala (2015: 189-191).
[14] We have invoked Said's understanding of "divine, mythical and privileged origin" and "secular, humanly produced and ceaselessly reexamined beginning" (1985: X1X) as well as Tomoko Masuzawa's (1993: 52-54) reflections on "essential, atemporal" origin and "temporal" here.

construction of Apostolic origin authorized the authenticity of a 'vernacular' Christian community, formed far away from the cradle of Christianity among 'heathens' within global Christendom, Brahminic origin authorized a 'foreign' religious community in a land, organized in viciously caste hierarchical terms.[15] However, what is lost in this historiographic exercise of concretizing an "essential and a-temporal origin" are the "temporal beginnings" (Masuzawa, 1993: 52-54) of a community-in-the-becoming. This 'cosmopolitan-vernacular' community resorted to configuring a static point for its own legitimate and historical origin, rather than exploring the community's 'nomadic' descent, to resist the hegemony of 'Western' Christianity. And consequently, reconfigured itself as a hegemonic Christian community along lines of colonial, nationalist and modernist imperatives that continued to construct its own internal and external enemies. It is the essentialization of a 'major' self and the impossibility of 'becoming minor' that constituted their dilemmas of being a 'minor-migrant-modern' citizen-subject. As a result, communitarian experiences were constantly deferred as the community always remained in the state of 'as-yet-to-come.'

Storyteller's Stories: Community at the Threshold

The discourse of Eastern Christianity produces a regional community that cannot cling to simplistic notions of cause and effect. Most significantly, the emphasis on a distinct 'Eastern' tradition within history defocuses from conflicts within a discourse of western modernity. Neither is eastern roots/routes an orientalist project about an essentialist church history. Rather, identity emerges from multifarious interpretative traditions inherent among Christian communities in

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According to Masuzawa, "religion's unity is the kind of totality that is claimed to emanate from a common source, an original and originating principle" (38). Further, myths (narratives of origin), ritual (repetition, reenactment of an original event or paradigmatic order), and tradition (concern for the transmission of an essential, original "truth" through time), represents—thus making it present again—this moment of absolute beginning of religion (15). Origin, thus, is most often born out of a linguistic process, carried out by modern historians in their quest for absolute beginning of religions. Beginning, on the contrary, is "profane," "active" and "intentional." The beginning, then, is the first step in the intentional production of meaning" (Said, 1985: 5). Beginning, is a conscious act which, decides what follows from it, relates what follow from it with each other in an "eccentric order of repetition"; 'repetition' because it negates an unintentional essential origin from which everything else is derived, and 'eccentric' because it accentuates possibilities of variances within repetition.

[15] The origin is strategically forged in the teleological church histories of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which sought to define a primordial Syrian Christian identity in response to the pressures of colonial missions and caste-Hindu governance. Further, these apologetic church histories organize archival materials like the Copper Plate Grants from fourth century onwards, architectural evidences and manuscripts that testify to an uninterrupted Syrian Christian tradition, upper caste privileges and industrious status of the community in order to legitimize the continuity of a caste-Christian community. (These questions are discussed in Bivitha Easo, 'Origin/Beginning Narratives as a Site of Enquiry: A Study of Syrian Christians in Kerala, India,' an unpublished paper presented at Oxford Symposium of Religious Studies, Oxford).

Kerala. In the subsequent sections, we explore various interpretative traditions explicated through select texts, to identify fissures within colonial missions, different Christian traditions in the region, and notions of secular, modern rationality. This constitutes a departure from newly emerging and hegemonic ideas of an essentialist Christian community with a linear history that dispossesses 'other' Eastern Christian communities. Arondekar points out: "the concept of a fixed and finite archive has come under siege it has simultaneously led to an explosion of multiple/alternate archives that seek to remedy the erasures of the past" (Arondekar, 2009: 2). Hence, the way 'literary' texts and their contextual terrains explicate Christian traditions in the region, constitutes an archive through which community can be analyzed as an experiential category. Bearing this in mind, the following section scrutinizes the nuances of the narrative self, which is contingent upon the social imaginaries of the community at stake. This repertoire comprises of texts that primarily contextualize Latin Christian life-worlds as part of a historically evolved, and interpretative paradigm.

The crucial argument pertinent here, is the observation that Latin Christian genealogy is a heterogeneous exercise, its binding force characterized by unflinching loyalty to the Latin rite and Latin liturgy (Ochanthuruthu, 2010: xii) and the distinctiveness of its religiosity that is "free of caste-community prejudices" (Ochanthuruthu 2010: xvi).[16] Further, by closely reading selected texts, we argue that the Latinization of Christianity in Kerala does not fall in line

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[16] Latin Christian historians argue that the historiography of the Latinization of Christian presence in Kerala has a longer history than the Portuguese evangelizations in the coastal areas of Kerala (which is the dominant historical narrative on Latin Christians, which has led to their 'othering' in relation to Syrian Christians), a region which has a major population of Latin Christians today. According to Thomas Thayil the Latinization of Kerala Christians was never a linear process or entirely colonial enterprise but it has nuanced historical premises of assimilation and dissent (Thayil, 2003: 16-18). Thayil refers to many historical documents where there are references to "Latin Christians", "Latin Syrians" and "Latinized St. Thomas Christians" (18). Further, it is even said that the Syrian Christian tradition that is alleged to be due to the apostolic conversion occurred in and around the coastal areas of Kerala and hence the Latins and Syrians have an intrinsically intermingled history of translations—of traditions and nomenclature—and there were also instances where the name "Latin Syrian" had been used to refer to the early Christian communities (Thayil, 2003:21). But, in his introduction to *Kerala Sabhacharithram: Latin Catholics* (*Kerala Church History: The Latin Catholics*), John Ochanthuruthu vehemently criticizes the community narratives that attaches Latin Christianity to a Syrian Christian tradition (Ochanthuruthu, 2010: xiii-xvii). This inclination to share the Syrian Christian origin myths and hegemonic claims, according to him, is fundamentally against the religious and theological foundation of Latin Christianity. One must not be blind to the fact that though Ochanthuruthu refutes the Syrian Christian lineage to do away with the preoccupation of hegemonic identity, he distances Latin Christian identity from other subaltern caste communities especially from any affiliation to a Dalit Christian history. Implicitly, even when making a very significant remark about Christian legacies of Kerala, the Ochanthuruthu finds it important to distance the Latin Christian history from the Dalit interventions and trajectories. This is more an indication of the many anxieties shared by marginalized/minority religious communities that engenders modes of self-articulations necessary to belong to the secular modern imaginations.

with the 'globalatinization' of the Universal Catholic church.[17] Rather, it has its own vernacular-cosmopolitan manifestation that demarcates its departure from 'Western' Christian discourse, and affinity to 'Eastern' Christian experiences. Tellingly, an emphasis on 'pre-modern' Christian routes can be deciphered in these 'post-modern' textual renderings that nuance historical and political implications and complicate the idea of 'modern.'

Literatures that contextualize minor and marginal community aesthetics is a new phenomenon on Malayalam literary scene, wherein narratives tend to 'write the self'. This discursive platform afforded by flourishing literary space provides glimpses of the intersections within community narratives. Reading closely, the texts bear testimony to lost/absent community rights. Narrative fictions like *Asharanarude Suvishesham* (*The Gospel of the Destitute,* by Noronha, 2018), *Thottappan* (*Godfather*, by Noronha, 2018), *Iruttiloru Punyalan,* (*A Saint in the Darkness,* by Mathews, 2017), *Jeevichirikkunnavarkku Vendiyulla Oppees* (*Requiem for the Living,* by Miranda, 2015), *Chaavunilam* (Dead Land, by Mathews, 2010) inter alia., are a few texts that exemplify community narratives.[18] They clearly sketch the community ethos and cultural formations of Latin Christianity in Kerala. At the same time, they inaugurate a multiplicity of discourses towards an attempt to historicize the present from a subject position that is outside the idea of 'modern.' That way, these texts represent resistance to the existing narratives of Christianity and contest secular-modern desires engendering the binaries of 'modern' and 'non-modern', and homogenous beginnings and linear histories. An exploration of the thematic renderings and subject positions demonstrates how these texts are anchored in thanatopolitics, biblical allegories, elements of myth and magic and subversive histories to unsettle the internal coherence of Christian community narratives. While the sense of loss

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[17] Kathanar's *Varthamanapusthakam* (1989, first published 1785) is a travelogue that documents the journey of two priests from Kerala to Rome representing the Christians who had accepted the Papal rule and Catholic doctrines. The mission of the sojourn was to make a representation from the Catholics in the region demanding that they should be allowed to maintain their 'regional' differences and Syriac traditions.

[18] The identifiably distinct aesthetic paradigms within these texts mark a departure from the linguistic and aesthetic cannons of Malayalam literary scene, create its own genre. While the symbolism and images employed in these narratives are unfamiliar to mainstream Malayalam literature, the conscious use of region/community specific registers and expressions is also new within standard Malayalam language. The images are often shady and mysterious that creates awe and misery, these narratives not being bound by the moral codes of society. Violence is the new normal, and in many of Norohna's works, and it is through this subversion of universal/Christian morality that the writer represents Christian subjectivity. Dalit writer C. Ayyappan's stories like "Niravathukayyaani" or "Prethabhashanam" (Ghost-Speech) (2008) and the novels of Mathews and Norohna use the subtle and shaded, to invoke the potential of the un/misrepresented. Though the politics of language employed by 'minor' communities needs special attention, Christian inter-textual and trans-textual universes that contain Syrian or Latin and lead to the development of Garshuni-Malayalam, or the subversion of Malayalam in Poykayil Yohannan's texts, opens up a range of debates on the relationship between language, print and pre-print cultures and community formation.

is foundational within these narratives, it is not accidental that many stories bear names that indicate death, barrenness, and life at a standstill. The titles of the narratives already set the emotional tenor of the characters who symbolize 'stillness' like Eanassu/Eassi in *Chaavunilam*,[19] Natalie in "Kakkukali"[20] (*Thottappan*), and Josie *in Jeevichirikkunnavarkku Vendiyulla Oppees*.[21] The stories written by Norohna, Mathews, and Miranda present death and notions of the imperishable body as indelible to the collective memory of community. In *Requiem for the Living*, Juvana Mammanji's death—the matriarch of the family—and her incorruptible body is venerated by the community (Miranda, 2015: 75-78), whereas, in *Chaavunilam*, Eanassu (Mathews, 2010: 15) is portrayed as the one who spreads the smell of death among the people around him. In this regard, it is curious to note that recent Malayalam cinema *Ee. Ma. Yau.* (Directed by Lijo Jose Pellissery in 2018) containing Latin Christian settings, narrativizes the event of death as an entry point to talk about community. Death here, represents an intense political statement about the precarious existence of a marginalized and minor Christian subjectivity in contemporary Kerala. The ubiquitous presence of death and the imperishable body reverberates with the predicament of a community, which is dead/lifeless but is imperishable at the same time. By implication, life can only be represented through an idea of anti-life. This refutation of 'life,' in other words, is the impossibility of life in the present. That is,

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[19] *Chaavunilam* is set within the cultural landscape of Latin Christian life in Kochi and the story unfolds with the different lives of an imaginary land that the author calls the dead land. The story does not follow a linear narrative and recounts the life of three generations in the dead land. While this is a new experiment in the Malayalam literary scene, the novel is noted for its 'dark' characters and themes. The novel begins with the death of Eanassu, one of the central characters in the narrative, who is unable to belong to family or community and is always represented as caught between a sense of loss and an equally strong thirst for life. His hometown is a place where mysterious killings take place, and he is literally and metaphorically imprisoned at home, where "no one dares to step in." Nevertheless, he becomes a symbol for the stillness of the land where he lives, through his inability to break its rules. The narrative ends with Eanassu's disappearance into the mysterious place.

[20] Natalie was coaxed to join an elite Christian convent in the prospect of a good quality life that is otherwise outside her reach. But reality hits hard, as she realizes that she is an unpaid servant with a changed name and an "over-sized religious habit and veil." The metaphor of prey and predator is used throughout to suggest recurring self-destructive choices that create the ensuing emotional and physical violence.

[21] *Jeevichirikkunnavarkkuvendiyulla Oppees* is a story of Latin Christian Portuguese Indian community experiences that cut across popular memories and myths of a Christian community with heterogenous practices of faith and religiosity. It tells the story of Josie Pereira, his grandmother Juvana Mamanji who is believed to have superhuman powers in his family. Josie Pereira is a man, caught in an apparently never-ending journey— he thinks 'sacred' and has a 'divine mission' in his life of finding something that he has lost generations ago, represented in the metaphor of a key. The stories of Portuguese Indian/ Luso Indian descendants in Kochi by Johnny Miranda throws light into the cosmopolitan routes of Christian communities in Kerala that challenge mainstream ideas about cosmopolitan histories. The lower strata, the 'poorer majority' eventually merged into the Latin community of the Kochi through community affiliations and intermarriages (Devika, 2016: 132). The cultural imagination predicated on their lifeworld further complicates Christian legacies from the region that are situated outside hegemonic Christianity and secular, western modernity.

the allegories of anti-life signify the deconstruction of 'being' that is representative of the community-in-the-present. This impossibility of being, or the emotions of a community under erasure, signals the potentialities of a 'coming community.' These textured themes are rich in 'mythological' and 'magical' elements as well as contain recurrent allusions to Biblical allegories that are built around this affinity to an anti-life. This feature demarcates these texts from other Christian representations in Malayalam. Arguably, attempts to envisage a new religious cosmology and episteme constitute the substratum of the discourses they present. The texts offer counter-narratives that are not appropriated by the grand narratives of modernity and Christianity and the modes in which the narratives counter these appropriations involve elements of myth, magic, and memory.[22]

The overarching presence of 'unconventional' tropes throughout the narratives tends to restructure Biblical hermeneutics into vernacular sensibilities. For example, *Iruttil oru Punyalan*[23] is structured around a mystery that engrosses a man and his progeny. The image of Satan and conflicting terrains of belief are so prominent that these obfuscate the 'sacred' histories of what the Church propagates. In another instance, "Thottappan" introduces a gendered idea about Jesus which is at variance with conventional Christology.[24] The orphaned and vagabond female protagonist of the story is often described as Jesus incarnate in a female body. It is within this background that narratives become gospel for the oppressed/invisible, where the very existence of texts constitutes a resistance and the possibility of alterative histories. For instance, *Asharanarude Suvishesham*[25] suggests the absence of a gospel for the destitute, in Poykayil Yohannan's vein, who asserted the need to re-write history and create new gospels for slave caste communities of the region. Precisely, the texts engage with, and contest Biblical

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[22] As is already discussed, 'magical' practices were one of the primary sites for contestations between 'vernacular' Christianity and 'Western' Christianizing missions. Popular Christianity in the region always dwelled on magic and myths: the popular figure of Kadamattathu Kathanar, who is archetypical for a magician priest.

[23] Mathews' *Iruttil Oru Punyalan* (2017) uses ideas about evil and Satan to talk about human existence. The plot is centered around the life of Carmali, her husband Xavier and their son Kunjumon who is believed to be possessed by Satanic forces. The rest of the story is narrated through different dead and living persons, finally culminating in the murder of the 'possessed' Kunjumon by his own mother Carmali.

[24] Christology in Eastern as well as Western theological traditions forbids women from becoming priests and performing other ecclesiastical duties. The story 'Thottappan' (Norohna 2018: 80-102) represents a female character alluding to a feminine Jesus figure and thus pointing to the possibility of a subversive Christology and history. The story is about the life of the girl who lives in the outskirts of society and is brutally killed by a perpetrator.

[25] *Asharanarude Suvishesham* is a long narrative history of Latin Christian life in central Kerala. The story, through the character of an apparently saintly figure, Father Reynold who dedicated his life 'for the destitute' – the poor and orphaned boys in a 'charity' institution run by the Catholic Church. The novel contextualizes the history of Kerala along with the histories of Latin Missionary and Church so as to place the Latin Christian community experiences in the larger debates of Kerala Church history.

hermeneutics in different idioms.[26] In another sense, this history is at odds with the "sacred" histories of the religion itself. The mystery in the story, represents the community itself that do not adhere to teleological explanations of the self.

The movement and migration of communities and their belief traditions cast a strong presence throughout these texts. They re-present community ethos in terms of a mixture between vernacular and cosmopolitan routes to Christianity. Johny Miranda's novel the *Requiem for the Living,* represents the plight of Latin Christians, who are descendants of Portuguese-Indians settled in Kochi. It has been suggested that the novel embodies the subaltern and communitarian experiences of a cosmopolitan worldview (Devika, 2015: 91-92): "*Requiem for the Living* offers a rare view of an 'actually existing' historically shaped cosmopolitanism of everyday life. It depicts, albeit unselfconsciously, the intermingling of European, Malayali, and South-East Asian elements in the totality of Paranki[27] life, that implicitly privileges the hybridity that makes it impossible to isolate these elements from each other and from the whole. Given that increasingly narrow nationalisms and sub-nationalisms encourage the purging of elements deemed 'foreign' and/or 'low', Miranda's account is politically valuable as well. But most importantly, it alerts us to the possibility of finding traces of both the 'foreign' and the 'low' in all communities in Kerala" (Devika, 2015: 141).

This time-travel is axiomatic in the images of darkness and whiteness that indicate to currents of colonial interventions and modernity. Images like *Karutha Punyalan* and *Velutha Punyalan* (Black Saint and White Saint) (Norohna, 2018: 90-91) and the local deity *Kappiri Muthappan*[28] (The Black God) are a few among manifold symbols that talk about a community, not necessarily bound by a geographically defined community identity. *Karutha Punyalan* and *Velutha Punyalan* are part of an everyday religious experience that is symbolic for the invasions and interferences of a western/white God. At the same time, the myth of *Kappiri Muthappan* is the embodiment of complex, colonial and religious histories from a different perspective that is beyond the colonizer/colonized paradigm. The tradition re-invents community within the dynamics of migrations and mobility—of the internal and the international—making the community's formations as constituted by multiple genealogies. The way in which lived Christianity

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[26] The epigrammatic language of the characters is one such example. For example, the novel *Chaavunilam* ends with a bizarre bloodshed and allusions to the doomsday but it ends with the biblical dictum "everything has fulfilled now" (Mathews, 2010:160).

[27] Colloquial term referring to Portuguese Indians, now absorbed into the Latin Christian population of Kochi.

[28] Kappiri Muthappan is the African Slave God; a local deity in Kochi. Muthappan is believed to be the spirit of African slaves brought to Kochi to work for the Portuguese colonizers in the 16th and 17th centuries. Kochi is a prominent port city in Kerala with a considerable population of Latin Christians. It has a long colonial history of Portuguese, Dutch and British invasions as well as numerous migrant populations from across the world belonging to different religious and political affiliations.

complicates established ideas of Christianity in the region is symbolically manifested in these narratives. Characters like Josie Pereira in *The Requiem for the Living* who lives in search of a bygone time, that locates him as wandering at thresholds, makes belonging itself impossible. The conflicts of this character appear to be that of the community itself, which has lost in its own histories. It is only through the enquiries of this self-fashioning of community that embodies discursive traditions, that any attempt to understand the transitions and translations of Christian community becomes meaningful.

Songs of Civilization: Deconstructing Christianity

Poykayil Yohannan or Poykayil Appachan (1879-1939) marks an important phase in this interpretative tradition of religious epistemology. Yohannan's anti-caste movement that was later manifested through *Prathyaksha Raksha Daiva Sabha* (PRDS), pursued emancipatory ideas about community of faith, attempting to reinterpret Christianity or the Christian community. Though parallels can be seen in the Protestant Reformation and much more in Liberation Theology, PRDS movement pushed these limits as it questioned even basic tenets of Christianity, to enable the possibility of a community with a civilizational potential. In this section, we analyze select Songs of Poykayil Yohannan that are now read as part of Dalit Christian emergence in Kerala.[29] Yohannan's Songs (1905-1939) contain different significations: it critiques mainstream historiography that erased histories of minor and marginal communities; it enlivens the oppressive memory of their lived realities; it exposes caste within Christianity in the region; and it deconstructs the universality of the *Bible* and Christianity. We focus on one aspect of Yohannan's Songs that celebrates the personally experienced particularities of Christianity, but at the same time rejects the universalization of a singularity, like Syrianization or Latinization of Christianity. Instead, he argues for a civilizational spirit within Christianity that enables the owning of differences, makes unlimited interpretations, and focusses on an experience of community. His Christianity, true to its genealogy, is civilizational.

Yohannan's primary contention is that castes and tribes that are now untouchables inhabited this land in the beginning, and were then displaced and dispossessed of their land, freedom and dignity. He uses speculative interpretation from memories as a method to reconstruct the erased history of communities, outside the rational and evidential logic of modern historiography. However, this speculative interpretation is neither apologetic history about one's identity, nor a nativist

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[29] PRDS was a Dalit religious and social movement in twentieth century Kerala. It belongs to a long history of anti-caste movements that engaged with and resisted entrenched casteism within the region, especially anti-'caste-Christian' movements that broke ties with the casteism inherent within Kerala Christianity. In this essay, we focus only the select Songs of Poykayil Yohannan. For an in-depth analysis of PRDS movement and Poykayil Yohannan, refer, Sanal Mohan, 2015.

argument that seeks to establish a long-lost glorious past. Rather, Yohannan's speculative interpretation of community locates the conflict of integration and disintegration at the heart of regional formations. This is also the basis of his critique of Christianity that transcended its own nomadic pasts. This critique of Christianity's self-evidentiality is best postulated by Jean-Luc Nancy in his *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*— "What is there then in the depths of our tradition, that is, in our own depths? What has been handed down to us by our own tradition from the depths of this storehouse of Christian self-evidence, which is so self-evident to us that we do not examine it more closely?" (2008: 140).

There is consistent and continuous critique of the liminality of Dalits within Christianity in the region. As Yohannan sings, Syrians christened in Antioch and brought here (to Kerala) by Knayi Thoma along with all those who believed in the crucified Christ, were never shown any mercy (Appachan, 2011[Song 11: 47] hereafter referred to as Song). He further asks: "Have you read *Bible* / Have you seen caste in it" (Song 12: 48). And he finally says that they neither had a place in this world, nor the other world (Song 24: 58). At one level, he laments, "A church for Pulayan, a church for Parayan / A church for the fishing Maraykan / A church for the master, A church for the slave" (Song 3: 35), and at another, he exalts the civilizational spirit of Christ's blood as he sings, "Hark! Baptized in Christ's blood / My never-ending untouchability ends here / You call me a Pulaya again / I am not coming to that church ever again" (36). Therefore, caste in Christianity is an anomaly and it defies and denies the civilizational spirit of religion, revealing a double schema at its heart; i.e. even as it is 'absolute and present', it integrates preceding heritage, and hence constitutes self-transcendence. It could be argued that Yohannan's interpretation is a critique of the failures of such transcendence, when he pursues the possibility to postulate religion as an immanent category for his community, rather than a transcendental one. Therefore, Christianity must be deconstructed, for, "the essence of Christianity is opening: an opening of self, and of self as opening" (Nancy, 2008: 145).

Yohannan's interpretative methodology is founded on the basic assumption that history is not an end. His words— "Not a single letter is seen / Of my race / Of so many races, are found / So many histories" (Song, Trans. Ajay Shekhar) substantiates his critique of colonial and the nationalist historiography. Memory is a tool for his reinterpretation of history. His Songs, for a very long time, were transmitted orally, and the possibility and potentiality to interpret opened this orality further. He extends the same critique to religion as well. For him, Christ or the *Bible* is not the end of history for Christianity, but only a beginning. He exclaims, "God's voice has ceased / Messengers halted their journey" (Song 7: 43), and continues, "Apostles died… / True church has slept / Books are theirs / …. / Whatever is in the Books / Are made into idols" (Song 25: 59). His audacity to burn the *Bible* comes from his own conviction that religion and its texts are

living and not dead! He argues for a hermeneutical practice that interprets religion, to making it more meaningful for believers in its 'vernacular-cosmopolitan' forms.

This hermeneutical practice is reflected in Yohannan picking a fight with god for selective calling. In an interpretation of Noah's Ark, Yohannan sings, "Chosen ones entered the Ark / God shut the Ark's doors / How sad is this, how sad" (Song 2: 35). Similarly, there is an interpretation of the *Bible*—the New and the Old Testament—in one of his songs where he reads both the texts as god's measured will. Here also he critiques divine selection of calling the chosen ones—be it Noah or Abraham, who were chosen to carry god's words, or be it the twelve apostles chosen after the word became god, or be it the people chosen to serve the apostles; he laments that the church has ended its hope for a Second Coming (Song 17: 53). In a way, Yohannan locates the problem of caste-Christian experiences within the inherent problem of Christianity becoming a community of chosen ones. Owing to the inherent contradictions of this attempt, that defies the civilizational spirit of religion, community never comes, but is constantly deferred. That is, when Syrian Christians essentialize their 'contradictory consciousness' or when Latin Christians negate their 'conscious contradictions,' the community remains 'impossible' in Christianity. Hence, the community-(yet)-to-come must interpret its own internal contradictions and imagine a coming-community that celebrates the civilizational spirit of religion. Yohannan's Songs reject universalization of any particular singularity that 'others' different singularities. This does not imply that he rejects universality as such. In his songs, there are several instances of civilizational imagination. He sings about an imagined "god's holy city" that is not located in the spatial-temporality of the *Bible* or church. It is an imagined community of "all those whose names are written in the book of life" (Song 10: 46). And blood of the Lamb is an universal catalyst that extends the community to all those who believe and not just the chosen ones. A similar imagination is found, while discussing Amarapuram, a Dalit settlement in Kerala, as he conceives of it as a "community of those beyond death" (Song 15: 51). Death, here, is not an end, but a beginning to a communitarian experience. Again, when he sings about the "Table of the Saved", he imagines this table as one that shatters caste/sect differences within Christianity; a Table that should be open to the entire universe; a Table of love, freedom, truth and justice (Song 33: 68). Yohannan's texts can be read as a manifesto for 'becoming-Christian.' Therefore, Christianity in the region has to open to its own limits of being, and engage in an act of becoming, for it to reclaim the civilizational spirit and communitarian experiences of religion.

Conclusion

What makes each archive a deconstructionist reading of another is in Derridian terms, its preoccupation with "the work, the before-work and the outside-the-work" (Derrida 2006: 11). What we have attempted in this article is a genealogical analysis of the Christian community in Kerala, to unsettle homogenous discourses generated by the existing archives. We have analyzed texts spanning different periods that arguably offer an analytical frame to read the archive against itself. In a nutshell, the reading of selected texts from the 'early-modern' Christian repertoire deconstructs any essential root/route for Christianity within the region. While the lived Christianity of Latin Christians critiques the 'global' of 'globalatinization', Poykayil Yohannan's conceptualization of community, as re-presented in his songs, asserts the possibility of particularities within Christianity, rejecting the universalization of any singularity. In the texts discussed in this article, the 'eastern' routes of Christianity come to present the 'non-western' and 'non-modern' legacies of Christianity that can neither be essentialized to caste-community discourses, nor located within secular modern narratives addressing religious minorities. The elements of the vernacular along with trans-regional religiosities and cosmopolitan textualities in the regional community become markers of an excessively 'eastern' Christianity that was insufficiently Christian. These 'excesses' and 'lacks' within communitarian experiences represent discontinuities within Christian genealogy that has suffered erasures, while constructing a teleological history of Christianity within the region. We argue that Christianity must defragment itself by opening up to its own limits and leave its own appropriated 'major' self aside, 'becoming minor' in the Deleuzian sense, to reclaim the civilizational spirit of religion. The problems of community-in-the-present, including its caste-sect differences, 'minor-migrant-modern' predicament as well as its ambivalent equations with secularizing and democratizing projects of the nation-state are thus symptomatic of structural problems that are internal to modernity, and its historiographical reproduction. It is important to acknowledge these structural incompatibilities and embrace differences within, to imagine a 'coming-community' that is not based on 'being' but on 'becoming.'

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Evangelii Gaudium: Catholicism as the Source of Consolation in Goan Society

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Abstract

Even though close to one fourth of Goa's population is Catholic, much scholarship on Goa is at pains to emphasize the Hindu nature of Goan society. Contesting these assertions, this paper will draw on popular culture in Goa, with special reference to the lyrics of popular Konkani music, to not only demonstrate the way in which Christian cosmology structures the world represented in these lyrics but provides hope for the suffering Goan subject. Indeed, it was the institutions around local Catholicism that allowed for Konkani music tradition to emerge in the first place. It is Catholicism, this paper argues, which sutures diverse case groups into a single social unit and thus makes a society possible in Goa, and it is also the same faith tradition that provides the possibility to see persons not as members of castes but as human beings. By providing a language to challenge caste and other similar discrimination while retaining space for pleasure even while this goal is unrealized, this paper argues that it is Catholicism, or the message of the Gospel, which is the source of consolation in Goan society.

Keywords: Goa, Catholicism, music, suffering, nationalism

Introduction

In his work *Refiguring Goa* (2013), Raghuraman Trichur points to the methodological nationalism that structures research on Goa. In particular, he points to sociologists and anthropologists whose work on the territory sought to encourage the process of assimilation, post-colonial nation-building and State formation. This has ensured that scholars effectively provide support to the consolidation of Hindu nationalism in Goa (and India more generally). A good example of this bias would be *Hindu-Catholic Encounters in Goa: Religion, Colonialism, and Modernity*, the recent book by Alexander Henn (2014). At the base of this book is an astounding suggestion, that despite professing Catholicism for generations, Goan Catholics are in fact Hindu. My own reservations about the book were eloquently articulated in Aditi Shirodkar's as yet incomplete doctoral dissertation, where she points out that Henn argues that the hybridity in contemporary Goa can be traced back to the

colonial era where the ambivalence of the conversion policy, shifting between persuasion and punishment, allowed native Goans to convert to Catholicism while preserving the valences of Hindu symbols and their attachments to them (Shirodkar, due 2020). His approach, she emphasizes, is emblematic of the notion that, in a significant sense, Goan Christians never stopped being Hindu. By insisting that Christian norms and rituals were simply a veneer upon an authentic non-Christian Goan self, his interpretation devalues Goan claims to Christianity. The argument that Henn, and others, forward is astounding because it goes against the assertions of Catholics in Goa, that they are Catholic and not Hindu. In making this claim, these scholars seem to suggest that it is they who can best determine what Goan Catholics are *actually* doing. It could be argued that these scholars' privileged location in Northern academia is not insignificant to the sheer arrogance of their claims. As I have argued elsewhere (Fernandes, 2018), what this represents really is a case of not letting the subaltern speak, but instead speaking for (or replacing) the subaltern. This erasure of Catholicism is not unique to Goa. P.J. Johnston draws attention to two tendencies identified by Wendy Doniger[1], which render popular Christianity in India invisible. The first trend was that of treating only the Christianity of elites as normative, or assuming that the Christianity in India would be the same as that elsewhere in the world (read Europe). When not identical to these models, but like non-Christian faith practices, Christianity in India is burdened with descriptors such as "syncretism" (2016: 2-3). This fetishization of syncretism, and the subsequent erasure of non-Hindu faiths, has also been commented on by Jackie Assayag who observes that in the case of Islam, scholarship on India has often been marked by a greater emphasis on the adaptation of Islam to the Hindu environment, being celebrated variously as assimilation, acculturation or syncreticism, while "the acculturative strength of the Muslims, which forced Hinduism to redefine itself continuously, was usually neglected" (2004: 24). Following Johnston and Assayag, in this paper I seek to address two issues. The first is to be attentive to the beliefs and practices of the Catholics in Goa, the second is to demonstrate the impact that Catholicism has had on the Goan polity, converted it into a society, and provided a deep source of consolation in it. To do this, I will particularly attend to manifestations of Catholic piety in the lyrics of popular Konkani music. These lyrics not only demonstrate the way in which Catholic cosmology structures the world represented in these lyrics, but also provides evidence of the varied landscapes generated through Goan engagement with Catholicism. The emotional is but one of these landscapes, given that, as Gauri Viswanthan has eloquently demonstrated, belief forms a relationship with civil and political rights (1998: xi-xvii). Attention to these lyrics, and the beliefs and practices they manifest, is also useful because as Viswanthan argues it highlights the beliefs of individuals and the communities they belong to, and the way these influence the public, political, and social domain. Exploring in this vein the way various societies deal with trauma, when discussing the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Phnom Penh Ananya Kabir points out that "[A]s

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[1] An Indologist at the University of Chicago.

in Cambodian society at large, the Museum's source of consolation is Buddhism" (2014: 68). It was inspired by this observation that I asked myself the question "what is the source of consolation in Goan society?" This article also results from this interrogation and I will conclude by demonstrating the manner in which it is Catholicism that not only constitutes a society from the plethora of caste groups into which the Goan polity is always under the threat of collapsing, but also provides consolation to those who suffer from the violences produced by this polity.

The Miracle of Society

Prior to appreciating how Catholicism offers consolation to persons in Goa it is first important to uncover the biases that currently structure the interpretive field, and the way the existence of a society is simply assumed by those working on South Asia. This assumption is linked to the way the practices of Christians or Muslims in South Asia are perceived as syncretic. As Gauri Viswanthan points out, the labelling of syncretism speaks of the methodological nationalism that structures the work of many scholars, for syncretism, or the "yearning for a condition of hybridity – the happy merging of discrete identities" is seen as "a precondition of national identity" (1995: 19-32). Indeed, the assumption of many scholars is to presume the existence of a society prior to the arrival of European colonialism. However, to do so is to fail to appreciate the way caste structures social relationships.

In the debate of whether the term "society" is theoretically obsolete, both sides to the debate sought to move away from the idea of the term as a tool of analysis with a single, precise meaning (Ingold, 1990).The participants agreed that the term could not be used unproblematicallyto allow for the assumption of the *a priori* existence of a society. While those opposing the motion suggested using the term society for a "problem space variably and flexibly defined by the co-presence in the same semantical field of other terms such as culture, community, nation and state" (Ingold, 1990:2), I would rather sidestep the confusion and use the term polity instead. Particularly relevant for my argument, those supporting the motion emphasized that the individual is not a pre-formed, natural identity, but that the specificities of personhood come into being through definite forms of *sociality* (*ibid*: 2). It is necessary, therefore, that we pay attention to the kinds of sociality present in the polity under study. Another scholar who problematizes the use of the term "society", and who is in accord with those who stress the constructed nature of society, is Barry Hindess (2000). Hindess points out that many of those who insist on the invented and artefactual character of nations fail to extend the same logic to societies, treating this category "as if they were altogether more substantial entities" (ibid: 1492); this is to assume that these polities are either civil societies, or nascent civil societies. He argues that "societies are presented as substantial and enduring collectivities, exhibiting their own cultural patterns, possessing definite social and political structures, and, in some cases, developing a sense of national identity"

(ibid). Indeed, it is Hindess' argument that it is precisely to support the international project of nation-states coinciding with societies that the same kind of rigor is not extended to the concept of society, and what are in fact polities are simply assumed to be societies. If the scholars above emphasize that society is not a pre-formed, natural entity simply existing but is the product of processes of formation, and often produced to support projects consolidating nation-states and their associated international order, others like Bryan Turner suggest that sociality not be simply reduced to mere interaction between individuals and groups, but necessarily involve affective relations of friendship: "Society is that space within which the companions are sociable and for Aristotle these relationships are the true basis of the polis, since without trust and friendship the competition between rational actors in the state may well destroy political life through endless interpersonal conflicts. We have lost this sense of the political significance of friendship..." (Turner,2008: 178).

Friendship, of course, is only possible between those who see each other as equals. The question we need to pose, therefore, is whether prior to the arrival of Christianity, and the radical idea that human beings are created equal in the eyes of God – itself a deeply consoling idea, the regions that came to constitute Goa[2] were marked by social groups that saw each other as equal. This is, of course, a rhetorical question since caste polities do not recognize the equality of human beings, and indeed, do not recognize the humanity of human beings in the lower orders. Rather, to appropriate a concept from Dr. Ambedkar's phrase "ascending scale of reverence and a *descending* scale of contempt," (Proceedings, 1931: 126) what these polities do is to assert the decreasing humanity of persons, the lower they are in the caste hierarchy. In his essay, Turner suggests that associations of civil society are those that work to the general benefit of society, excluding from civil society those associations intent on cornering benefits solely for themselves (Turner, 2008: 179-180). This is an interesting observation because in the context of recognizing whether India is marked by a society or not, Soumyabrata Choudhury (2016), once again drawing from Ambedkar, suggests that Hindu polity is not marked by the social but by gangs. Choudhury informs us that John Dewey was Ambedkar's teacher at Columbia University and points us in the direction of the former's definition of gangs as "narrow cliques" governed by "intense loyalty to their own codes", in other words associations concerned with monopolizing benefits. On the matter of whether the caste polity is societal or not, Choudhury (2016) captures Ambedkar's argument saying, "Hindu society is not a society because caste, at its core, produces a kind of auto-immune disorder. Because of this internal fragmentation into castes or *jati* gangs, society, instead of being a totality, is in a state of permanent minoritization." In other words, what obtains in the

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[2] I use the awkward formulation "regions that came to constitute Goa" to draw attention to the fact that prior to Portuguese conquest Goa was merely an island, and that it was only under Portuguese sovereignty that a variety of diverse territories came to constitute a single region and share a political identity. To similarly avoid reading the nation-state of India back into the past I use the phrase South Asia.

subcontinent, thanks to the oppressive presence of caste, is emphatically *not* society. One example of how such a notion of society did not obtain in Goa at the time of the implantation of Portuguese sovereignty in that territory is made visible through the work of Paulo Varela Gomes (2011). Commenting on the location of churches in Goa, Gomes observes that "that, contrary to what happens in Europe, churches do not appear to have been built within villages, but outside them" (ibid: 19). He explains this odd location by arguing that this was necessitated by the fact that unlike in Europe the polity on the west coast of peninsular South Asia was so fragmented by caste that there was no one single location which could be accessed by all residents of the village. As such, "Faced with the existence of several caste or professional circumscriptions, Catholic priests obviously did the sensible thing: they chose for the location of their churches places that could not be identified with any of the existing social or professional groups in particular" (Gomes, 2011: 20).

One could take Susana Sardo's observation about the operation of music in Goa, as another buttress for my argument. Sardo observes that the Goan Catholic elite demonstrate an "attitude of immobility" when it comes to sharing what they see as "their" music. She reckons that such an attitude is a sign of what she calls "Indian-ness…the sentiment that each caste has attributes which are only partially shareable with other castes" (2011: 205 – my translation from the Portuguese). She points out that each caste has its own repertoire which, once transferred to other castes, alters its significance. The very social and linguistic organization of different castes ensures that the musical repertoires cannot be intelligible between them or transferred without being modified. Each time a caste adopts another's repertoire it changes, in the sense of being turned classical, when adopted by the elite, or folklore-ized, when adopted by lower castes (2011: 205).

My arguments should not be understood as a denial that there was any kind of social arrangement prior to the arrival of Catholic missionaries in the territories that today constitute Goa. Of course, there was a social, but there was nota societal, or what Aniket Jaaware, who also denies the possibility of society, especially in India, calls relatability (2019– see especially pp. 170 – 189). There was no society, what obtained was merely a polity, an arrangement of various groups bound together without any bonds of trust and/ or friendship. Jaaware points out to the fact that the word *samaj* which in Marathi (and other sanskritised languages in the subcontinent) is often translated to mean society, is in fact a reference to caste. Thus, what obtains in India is not a single *samaj*, or society, but many *samaj* marked by a refusal to relate to each other. To those who would argue that all societies consist of groups, cliques, corporations and gangs, one could once again refer to Choudhury (2016), who agrees that this is true but indicates that "it is also more or less understood that society itself is not a gang, not a gang of gangs". Necessary to society is the need to recognize the other as also human, as the worthy receptacle of trust, and the ability to forge friendship with this person. These are not possibilities within a caste polity. As such, into this polity of gangs, it is only Islam

(possibly Christianity's predecessor in regard of constituting a society in the region we are discussing) and/ or Christianity that make it possible to have a society through their rhetorical emphasis on the equality of all members of the faith, and the uniqueness of the individual human being[3].

One could have reference to the discussion of Stephen Dale (2008) to appreciate the way Islam radically reconstituted a caste polity and the perception of individuals who were earlier enslaved within the caste system. Referencing the observations of Duarte Barbosa, the sixteenth century Portuguese commercial agent resident in the Malabar, as well as those of nineteenth century British colonial administrators, Dale highlights that the persecuted often found Islam a possible route out of persecution, an option made feasible, particularly in "heterogeneous commercial centers such as Calicut" (2008: 60) thanks to the warm reception of new Muslims by established members of the Kerala Muslim community (ibid: 59). Dale recounts a particularly striking anecdote from 1843 involving the conversion to Islam by the marginalized caste woman servant of a Nair landlord. On converting, she immediately dispensed with the customary forms of deference required of low castes by addressing the Nair with the familiar rather than the honorific form of you and refused to stand at the distance which her polluted status had dictated in Brahmanical society. Not surprisingly, Dale narrates, the Nair became enraged at this explicit challenge to his social authority and caste status. Rather than accepting the conversion as a social *fait accompli* he ripped off the bodice which the woman had begun wearing to signify her new religion and communal allegiance (ibid: 67). This anecdote is not only replete with examples of caste polity denying marginalized castes a sense of dignity and enforcing caste even on those who, upon conversion asserted equality, but also demonstrates the impossibility of society within caste polities.

Catholicism in Goa

One way to appreciate how Catholicism manifests in the popular culture of Goa is to have reference to a phrase from Susana Sardo's detailed discussion of the culture (in the sense of lived practices) around the *mando* (Sardo, 2011). The term *mando* refers to both a song, as well as the dance, that emerged in the halls of the Goan Catholic elite in the region of Salcete, in the nineteenth century. A slow decorous

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[3] Following Richard King (1999), in my understanding Hinduism is a nineteenth-century invention of the dominant caste anti-colonial nationalists in the subcontinent. A political ideology built with an aim towards consolidating a Hindu community, it actively excludes non-Hindus, while further hierarchizing Hindus along Brahmanical lines. There are without doubt non-Abrahamic traditions that offer egalitarian visions within the subcontinent, and of these the bhakti traditions would be a popular example. More recent scholarship, however, points out that the bhakti traditions that range over centuries are often misunderstood and misrepresented (Keune, 2015: 77; Novetzke, 2014:105). Further, it needs to be pointed out that these traditions often pertained to specific caste groups alone, did not encompass polities as a whole, and often eventually collapsed into being regarded as caste groups (Dube and Dube, 2008).

dance form, it is combined with faster paced *dulpods*, which sing of the quotidian life of Goa. The *mando* was originally restricted to the ballrooms of this Catholic elite, and who, as we will see later, claimed it as their unique possession. This exclusivity underwent a dramatic change (especially after it was actively promoted as a part of Goa's cultural patrimony following the annexation of Goa to the Indian state in 1961) through the *Mando Competition* held in the territory since 1965.

In keeping with the methodological nationalism that dominates the field there are many who search for the pre-Christian and vernacular origins of the *mando*. It needs to be recognized, however, that as much as it may have built on pre-existing sensibilities, the *mando* as a cultural form is a product of the reconstruction of the caste polity encountered by Catholic missionaries when sovereignty of the Portuguese crown was first established in the territories surrounding the Bijapuri island and city of Goa into a Christian society. Ângela Barreto Xavier's *A Invenção de Goa* (2008), demonstrates the amount of painstaking effort that was required to convert the earliest territories of the Portuguese Crown into a part of a Christian kingdom. This involved not merely the nominal conversion of the natives, but their Christianization as well, involving the establishment of parishes, resources for their administration, the creation of churches and chapels, as well as the acculturation of the local communities to the Christian, or more appropriately Catholic, worldview. As we will see later, this ensured a dramatic change in the way in which these populations perceived the seen and the unseen world. Critical to the evolution of the *mando* was the *capela-mestre* (or chapel master). An office supported by the local village community, or *comunidade*, the *capela-mestre* was a man conversant with Latin, Portuguese and Concanim, as well as classical music. The *capela-mestre* was responsible for catering to the musical requirements of the liturgical and para-liturgical services, and often for formulating new compositions (Sardo, 2011:164). These men also taught the skills of reading and playing music, and singing, to the students at the catechetical and parish schools. Susana Sardo points out that even after the appearance of the primary school at the start of the nineteenth century, music continued to be taught at the parish schools (ibid: 163). The *capela-mestres* also had another existence as *mestres da musica* when they were hired by well-to-do families to teach their children at home. It was in the course of the formation of young women in music that these men also helped in elaborating new *mando* that would be sung at the wedding of women from the dominant castes in Salcete (the discussion of this office, and Sardo's conversation with Micael Martins from pp. 163 – 172 are worth attending to in detail). It was not just children from dominant castes who were able to benefit from this training in music, however. Rather, those from marginalized castes also received musical formation and were able to use this formation to escape village life, migrating to British India and from there onward to the wider world, and often contributing to the composition and production of music for films emerging from Bombay (see the reference to personal history in Souza, 2013; see also the discussion in Fernandes, 2015). The *mando*, therefore, and other western music forms emerged within a profoundly Catholic context.

There is no space here to go into examples of the sentiments in the various *mando*, but a review of the lyrics[4] sung over the years at the *Mando Festival* reveal a very Catholic sensibility that pervades the universe of the mando[5]. Speaking largely of frustrated love, the beloved is compared variously to angels, archangels, and cherubs: "*Anj(u) tum rê arkanj(u), Kerobim adorad(u)*" (you are an angel, an archangel, beloved cherub), as in the lyrics of the very popular *mando* titled *"Doriachea Lharari"* ("On the waves of the sea"). Other compliments include comparisons to guardian angels ("*anjbhoddveanch"*) as in "*Chintun Fuddar Deva Mhozo*" ("Thinking of the Future my Lord)", or the Virgin Mary, where in the mando "*Amkam Meuliai Beatinnim*" ("We Met Some Spinsters") three spinsters are suggested to be so beautiful as to appear like the sisters of Mary ("*Distai saibinnicheo boinnim*", but are in fact companions of the devil ("*Deucharacheo sangatinnim*"). In the mando "*Anjo Mhunn Tum Sorgincho*" ("You are an Angel from Heaven") the protagonist suggests that he adored his beloved on his knees ("*Dimbier adorar keloll*"), a posture similar to the way one prays in the Catholic tradition, and especially how one engages in the popular Eucharistic tradition of the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Also reproduced in these lyrics, as obvious in the title of the aforementioned *mando*, is the Christian cosmography of heaven, and the suffering of the beloved - whether in the event of a woman leaving her natal home after marriage, because of separation from the beloved, or because of frustrated love - is often compared to the pain of the Christian martyrs. And time is measured in terms of the daily prayers of the Angelus ("*Am'recher lisanv ghetalom tujem*") as in lyrics of *Bolanddun Iskolacho Vellu* ("After School Hours"), the pre-Lenten festivities of Carnaval or *Intruz* as in "*Bolkanvcheri Rê Boisotam*" ("I am sitting in the balcony"). The lyrics of *Sontos Bogta Rê Jivaco* ("The Heart is Satisfied") offer a particularly charming description of marriage where the protagonists sing that their hearts were joined together through the linking of the priestly stole ("*Estolachearê pontanum, Ectaim kellim amchim coracão-ã bandunum*") a once common ritual in Catholic marriages. While "*Eko Vorso Bolanddilem*" offers a recognition that in the end it is to dust that we turn ("*Zaleary pasunum muji mati*"). But Catholicism not only shapes the bodily practices and mental imagery of Catholics in Goa. Rather, it allows for the constitution of Goan society itself, and furthermore, influences the way non-Catholic Goans perceive the world around them.

While the Christianisation of Catholics in Goa may well be conceded by scholars studying Goa, all too often the non-Christian and non-Muslim Goans are portrayed as guardians of a Hindu faith, and untouched by Christianity. In the curatorial essay titled "Goa não e um país pequeno" (2015) I wrote for a group of Goan artists

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[4] The lyrics of the various *mando* are all freely available online at https://www.songs-from-goa.at/info30-mando.html#a84 last accessed on 2 Dec 2018.
[5] I undertook this review when briefly integrated into the ERC supported Modern Moves project. The mando referenced here were the most popular over the various years as evidenced in the lists presented in the souvenirs of the festivals.

exhibiting their works in the Indian city of Hyderabad, I commented on the ubiquity of Christian images in the work of artists from Hindu *bahujan*[6] backgrounds. Depictions of Christ, the cross, the Virgin Mary, or depictions of what are clearly visible as Catholics and Catholic lifestyles pervade this art. It was, in fact, the presence of the Christian in the artworks selected for this exhibition that forced me see Goa anew and look for the presence of the Christian, or the representation of the Christian in Goan society.

The impact of Catholicism on Goan society was similarly apparent in an exhibition titled "The Invisible River of Konkani Surrealism" curated by Vivek Menezes in the year 2017 as a part of the Serendipity Arts Festival held toward the end of that year. Featured in this exhibition was the work of another *bahujan* Hindu artist, Sandesh Naik. In the course of his guided tour, Menezes indicated that a visiting group of Indian tourists were most mystified by the fact that an artist with a Hindu name had authored the large canvas, which while depicting a miniscule *Yama raja* (the Brahmanical deity of death) painted a large *pietà* at the heart of the canvas and a depiction of the Holy Spirit – represented as a dove - circling the pair of icons. According to Menezes, the tourists were unsure about the religion of the artist. Unarticulated perhaps was the question: Why would a Hindu artist depict a Catholic scene? Unknown to them, Menezes recounted, the artist was observing this discussion from a corner of the room. Eventually he intervened, interjecting, into the loud debate, "My religion is Goan". To be Goan, seems to involve for the artist, an intense engagement with Christianity or Catholicism.

However, it is not merely a familiarity with Catholicism that the presence of Catholicism in Goa has engendered. It seems to have also fundamentally altered the possibilities for the self-representation of persons from marginalized castes who are neither Christian nor Muslim. Discussing the case of the humiliation of members of Dalit groups in a village in Goa, Peter Ronald de Souza, points out that the radical changes wrought by the operation of the Inquisition and Christianization of Goagave Dalits the possibility of escape from the brutality of the code of Manu which operated in the surrounding Konkan region, especially after the establishment of the oppressively Brahmanical Maratha regime. "Since they now became equal subjects of a European king who did not recognize caste distinctions as valid legal distinctions," migration from the territories conquered by the Portuguese crown in the eighteenth century into the older segments of the *Estado da Índia* held by the Portuguese crown since the early sixteenth century offered these Dalit populations an opportunity to reinvent their identities (Souza, 2009: 128), a project that was systematically undertaken, as Parag Parobo demonstrates, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Parobo 2015). As a result, Goa is still today characterized by a very large *bahujan* Hindu population, and a relatively tiny Dalit population. If consolation is seen as the offering of hope, the presence of a

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[6] Literally translating into "many", or "multitude", the term bahujan is used to refer to the subaltern labouring castes that are more numerous than the dominant castes.

European and Christian legal regime in Goa, operated as a symbol of consolation to the extent that it offered an alleviation of life under Brahmanical and caste-ist legal regimes.

Consolation

Catholicism not only shapes the bodily practices and mental imagery of Catholics in Goa, but it is my argument that it also allows for hope or consolation in a polity that continues to be marked by a variety of dehumanizing tendencies. Before I elaborate on this possibility, however, I would like to discuss what I mean by consolation. The term consolation has a rich life within Catholic spirituality. Elaborating on mourning and consolation, Joseph Ratzinger makes reference to the second Beatitude referenced in the Gospel of Mathew (5:4): "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted". He points out that the mourning that is referred to here is that of "those who do not harden their hearts to the pain and need of others, who do not give evil entry to their souls, but suffer under its power and so acknowledge the truth of God" (2007: 86). This mourning, he continues, is what attracts the comfort, or consolation, from God, which is the promise of the Kingdom of God. Consolation also features prominently in Ignatian spirituality. In this latter tradition within Catholicism, St. Ignatius defines consolation as:

…that which occurs when some interior motion is caused within the soul through which it comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord. Finally, under . . . consolation I include ... every interior joy that calls and attracts one toward heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, by bringing it tranquility and peace in its Creator and Lord (cited in Bishop and Carlton, 2016: 115).

While the relevance of this definition may not be immediately obvious, what is important to note is that this state of consolation, which is prized within the Catholic tradition, does not mean that one will be euphorically happy. On the contrary, the consolation provided by being inflamed with the love of Christ, may cause one to accept a situation that a worldly, or immanent, logic would have rejected. As Iona Reid-Dalglish phrases it "Consolation is not about pleasure but about a deep sense of Christ's presence, and an orientation towards Christ that enables the person to live with whatever struggle or pain is being experienced rather than being overwhelmed by hopelessness and despair" (2018). In other words spiritual consolation may not always leave one feeling pleasant but it lessens the pain felt, allows for a clarification of insight which gives strength, or reason, to cope with the unpleasantness one is experiencing (see also the discussion in Reek, 2016: 112, 117). This is not so different from secular definitions of consolation which suggest that "Consolation soothes and alleviates the burden of grief but does not take away the pain" being a "trust in a reality outside the self" (Klass, 2014: 15). However, as I will elaborate later, Christian notions of consolation involve an extension of the

world from the immanent into the transcendent, and results in a radically different notion of the body, and of politics. Making the link between consolation and happiness, Dennis Klass suggests that to be consoled is to be comforted and that this comfort brings pleasure, enjoyment, or delight amidst hopelessness and despair that characterize sorrow. Repeating Reid-Daglish's suggestion, Klass too points out that solace alleviates, but does not remove distress (ibid: 5). Consolation, then, can be, and *must* be read as more than just stabilizing of the traumatized. Rather, consolation can be read as something that provides a joy that is more than euphoric, but a more nuanced pleasure even amidst distress. But there is more to consolation that requires highlighting; consolation is eminently a collective emotion, for not only does it require that one be consoled by another, but it also requires participation in a collective world. It "emerges from relationships, attachments, expectations, and obligations" (Nina Jakoby,2012: 680), and involves, in a period of withdrawal an invitation from a person, or a member of the collective, an invitation back into communion with the group (Klass, 2014: 6). Thus, consolation is not only an emotion felt, it is also an act, requiring a subject who acts intentionally, for the good of another; and an emotion when this care is felt by the other when it is received (Reek, 2016: 112). Klass points to three elements; the first being an encounter with a transcendent reality that one experiences as an inner reality, the second element is that it provides a worldview that gives meaning to events and relationships in our lives, and finally the community, as the third element which validates the transcendent reality, worldview and personal experience (2014: 2-3). In other words, it is the possibility of the act of consolation that creates the possibility of constituting a society.

Singing Consolation

When Sardo identifies spirituality and love as the dominant emotion contained within the *mando*, the examples presented above demonstrate that by spirituality one means Catholic spirituality and a familiarity with the Catholic cosmology. By love one is referring not merely to platonic love (since, within Catholic tradition, sexual love can be legitimately obtained only within the confines of matrimony) but kenotic love as well; that is self-emptying love, the giving, or sacrificing of oneself for the love of the other. Interestingly, Sardo suggests that the Catholic elites she spoke with saw the emotions of spirituality and platonic love present in the *mando* as something specific, and peculiar to them, not something that can be found in other castes (Sardo, 2011: 191-192). This is an honest capturing of the attitudes among Catholic upper castes, who often see the Catholic faith as embodied by their practices and sentiments alone. Indeed, one could well argue that the arguments of scholars who stress the Hindu-ness of Goans are the result of interactions with dominant-caste Catholics who through their insinuations deny the Catholic-ness of marginalized-caste Catholics. If these emotions are the features of Catholicism in the *mando*, then one realizes that one finds these emotions or sentiments on music

composed by Catholics by subaltern castes as well. Indeed, one could argue that despite the fact that the *mando* and *tiatr/cantaram*[7] are traditionally seen as belonging to the realm of the dominant and subaltern castes respectively, there is nevertheless a common thread in Catholic imagery and sentiments that unites them both. Take, for example, two *cantaram*, that I discuss below.

First are the lyrics of the *canto Zati* (caste). Sung by Maria Antonia D'Souza, more popularly known by her stage name Antonette Mendes, (1944-), the song was written as a part of the *tiatr Sounvsar Sudorlo* written by the famous *tiatrist* M.Boyer (1930 – 2009). In the absence of any reference to the name of the lyricist, I will assume that as was common the song was also penned by Boyer. Boyer, while Chardo, and technically a member of a dominant caste, was nevertheless to my knowledge not from what would be called a first-class Chardo family which could be assumed to embody the upper-class traditions of the *mando* (Robinson, 1998: 79).The lyrics are in the voice of a young girl who recounts that she fell in love with a class-mate in school, and who promised to marry her. Unfortunately for her, the boy's family takes caste seriously and arranges for him to marry someone else, leaving the girl in the lurch. The girl sings of the social humiliation she would now face "*Gharant boson roddtam re lojen koxim bhairsorom*" ("I sit crying within the house, ashamed to venture outside"). Nevertheless, despite this great shame she does not wish either her beloved or his family ill:

> *Gorib mhunnon soddlam mhunn maka, famil tuji sontosan bhorom,*
> *Girestamchem cheddum mevon tumi girestamuchurom*
> You abandoned me because I am poor (though given the caste context the word could double for socially lower), may your family grow in happiness,
> You found a rich girl (from a *good* family), may you remain in wealth.

In the lyrics of this song, self-emptying love is witnessed to by several actors. One has the kenotic love of the brothers of the girl, who took a loan to purchase the gold ornaments a bride is expected to carry with her on her marriage. But more importantly, is the self-sacrificing love of the girl who despite being abandoned indicates, "*Sodanch tujem borem zaunk mozo axirvad ditam*" ("I bless you to be always happy"). She promises that on his wedding day ("*respera dis*") she will receive communion after him and will be satisfied with not ever being married and would retire to a convent for the rest of her life. None of these blessings, however, deflect from the critique that she mounts against caste, and the boy and his family for letting it weigh on their decision. The song ends with the reminder that at the end of the day we are all consigned to, and consumed by, the same mud (*Sogleank amkam melim mhunntoch ekuch mati*). In terms of exploring the contours of consolation, what should be noted is that Christianity offers the girl consolation at

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[7] *Tiatr* is an extremely popular theatre tradition in Goa, which involves the songs or *Canto* (sing.)/ *Cantaram* (plu.) sung between acts. For a discussion of the *tiatr* and *cantaram* tradition see Fernandes, 2014.

multiple levels. It allows communion with Christ, whether through physical consumption, or lifelong devotion to Him in a convent to operate to off-set the pain of frustrated romantic love. The convent, as an institution that harbors a community, also appears as a space of consolation. More importantly, however, it gives a person from a marginalized caste the moral high ground of castigating dominant caste persons that what they do is abominable in the eyes of God, the final judge, and that those who suffer will be rewarded on the final day. This rhetoric is available to a lower-caste person *only* within Christianity or Islam which unlike Hinduism, theologically recognize the equality of all humans and a final reckoning in the court of a just God. We have united in the example of the lyrics of *Zati* the three elements identified by Klass of consolation in a religious context, communion with the transcendent reality of Christ, a worldview that given meaning to events and relationship, and finally the community of the faithful which the transcendent reality, worldview and personal experience.

In a similar vein, one has a more recent song penned and sung by Jr. Rod, son of the famed *Cantarist* Minguel Rod. The untitled song was articulated in the context of the continuing violence against Christians in Orissa and mounts a challenge to the Vishva Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal, two prominent groups of the Hindu right in India. In the song Rod points out that Catholic laity, priests and nuns have been subject to all kinds of persecution, having been murdered, raped and forced to watch their places of worship destroyed.

> *Kiteak khuris-ak igorozio modun padre-madri martat guneanv nastana*
> *Hea adim kitle Kristanv-ank padrink jivexim marleat madrink rape keleat tim lok visronkna,*
> Why then did you destroy crosses and churches and murder innocent priests and nuns
> We have not forgotten how many Christians and priests have been killed and nuns raped

But, he sings, "*tedna Kristanvani dubavant Hinduvank marumk Hinduanchi devlam fodunk na*" at the time the Christians did not respond in kind, because if struck on one cheek Christians offer the other cheek instead (*ami eka polear marlear marunk ditanv dusrea polear*). Further if they did strike back, then as in Ayodhya, referring to the destruction of the Babri Masjid in that city by Hindu nationalists in 1992, innocent blood would be spilled. Rather than respond in kind, therefore, he suggests to Hindu nationalists that the way to increase the numbers of the Hindu fold would be to follow the path demonstrated by Jesus, who despite being the son of God humbled himself, washed the feet of his disciples and showed the way to his followers. Similarly, Hindu nationalists should ignore caste and help orphaned children get education, following the example of Mother Teresa who cared for the sick regardless of their faith. He ends the song by appealing to the Virgin to frustrate the plans of those who trouble those who follow in the footsteps of Christ.

Reviewing the lyrics of this song one could well say that in the contemporary period of terror experienced by Christian groups in India and in Goa, the elements of the Christian faith, of recourse to humility, to martyrdom, and appeal to a divine mother, continues to operate as a source not merely of Christian consolation, but consolation for the larger polity. By refusing to respond violently to the oppression they face, and ending the spiral of retributive violence,but simultaneously denouncing the violence they face, these Christians create the space for what Jaaware (2019) calls relatability, and the friendship that Turner (2008) identifies as critical to creating a civil society. Once again, I would like to point out that this Christian behaviour finds its logic only because of a belief in a world beyond the immanent, a transcendent world that is presided over by a just God, i.e. Christ's promise of the kingdom of God, and concretely anchored in what Christians see as the fact of the resurrection of Christ.

Alegria and Consolation

In her stimulating text 'On Postcolonial Happiness' Ananya Jahangir Kabir asks scholars of the postcolonial an extremely pertinent question which provided an initial starting point for this article.

Theories and analyses of postcolonial subjectivity focus overwhelmingly on the "unhappiness effect": trauma and its aftereffects, oppression, displacement and deracination, and pervasive melancholia as the result of long histories of being either colonized or colonizing cultures. Is this scholarship's only major insight about postcolonial cultural production? What are the choices - conscious and unconscious –that make us (re) produce studies of unhappy states of being through the postcolonial cultural archive, and what do those reveal about us as scholars? This essay thinks through postcoloniality by shifting the hermeneutic paradigm from trauma to *alegria*, and in a concurrent move from textuality to the body (2017: 35-36).

Kabir's work effects a number of very important shifts. Not only does she advocate a shift from trauma to *alegria* (the Portuguese term for happiness), and textuality to the body, but she also urges us to think of *alegria* as opposed to mere pleasure, the latter emotion having been trapped within the registers of capitalist consumption, and as a result conceived of primarily in terms of sexual pleasure. If capitalist consumption urges sexualised individual pleasure, through her example of the euphoria in Rio de Janiero's *sambódromo* Kabir nudges us toward also thinking of *alegria* as embodied, collective pleasure. As much as these shifts are important, however, I could not help feeling that it was possible to extend these conceptual shifts further. First, while the shift to the body, and the collective body, is important, we still need to ask, what kind of body is this? If the body is one that is circumscribed by the immanent, then we are no further from the very body that is

imprisoned by consumerist design. If, however, the body is that of one who believes in the transcendent world, a body possessed by a soul, this allows the immanent world a depth that is otherwise not possible. If Kabir's project is one that is concerned with harnessing "political forces for radical change" (ibid: 46) I argue that in addition to rightly pointing to the potential of happiness, play, and exhilaration, we should also spend some time contemplating how the way in which we conceive of the body can also open a deeper and wider appreciation of the potential of *alegria*. I have to confess that this possibility occurred to me precisely through the recourse the Kabir takes, in her choice of the term *alegria*, to the use of Portuguese language. At about the same time as I was reading Kabir's work I was also urged to read the 2013 apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis titled *Evangelii gaudium.* This Latin term, when translated into English, is rendered as 'The Joy of the Gospel', but in the Portuguese, emerges as '*A Alegria do Evangelho*'. Read in the context of this translation, *Alegria*, which Kabir limits to the more immanent happiness, seems to have greater possibilities, given that for Francis, and indeed Catholic teaching in general, it is an encounter with Christ and his teaching, the Gospel, that allows for joy. This context reminds us of groups for whom the body is more than just the corpus but is animated by the soul, and that the immanent world is but one aspect of an eternal realm where the actions of the world are judged and judgment though apparently missing now, are nevertheless forthcoming. A second way in which Kabir's insights can be extended is by underlining that her descriptions of *alegria* seem rooted in euphoria. As I have already pointed out when referring to Ignatian spirituality, drawing precisely on Catholic imagination it is also possible for *alegria* to be located in quotidian stresses and unhappiness. This *alegria* is possible through the promises of Christ, which offer consolation, to those suffer in this world.

Conclusion

I will conclude, therefore, by arguing that the joy of the Gospel, or *evangelii gaudium*, is in fact a, if not *the*, source of consolation in Goa. The message of the Gospel, quite literally the *good news*, allows for the subaltern subject to affirm a divine investment in the equality of all humans. Further, it assures the subaltern that even if they should suffer in the present, they shall be rewarded in the afterlife, providing hope for those to whom a violent revolutionary response is simply not possible. This is one of the possibilities of extending our appreciation of the body to include not just the immanent, but also the transcendent. The manner in which a belief in the transcendent impacts on judicial processes, and hence justice, is interestingly captured in Michelle McKinley's work *Fractional* Freedoms (2016). In this work she looks at the judicial processes initiated by slaves in ecclesial courts of colonial Lima. While these slaves may not have been able to enjoy full freedom, the work emphasizes the feelings of contingent liberty that they were able to enjoy as a result of these ecclesial processes which very much relied on the belief in the

reality of the transcendent. I would like to take inspiration from the title of McKinley's work, to suggest that to the subaltern it is these *fractional freedoms* that are possible in their quotidian existence and provide the *alegria* beyond the euphoric. I would argue, that these fractional freedoms that are available *via* recourse to the transcendent ensure that we do not conclude on the slightly depressive tone that Kabir (2017:36) proposes when, invoking the lyrics of Tom Jobin's "*A felicidade*" "*tristeza não tem fim/ felicidade, sim*" (sadness has no ending, happiness does) she points out that one cannot do away with melancholia altogether. The happiness of the poor and the subaltern is not an illusion, and it is most certainly not the case that as "*A felicidade*" suggests "*tudo se acaba na quarta-feira*" (everything ends on Wednesday, indicating in this case Ash Wednesday). On the contrary, placing the bacchanalia of Carnaval in its Christian context, and referring to the period of Lent that ends with Easter Sunday, i.e. the commemoration of Christ's resurrection, his return from the dead, it can well be said that everything begins on *quarta-feira*! It is critical that scholars of post-colonial subjectivity produce studies of happy states of being, but that this happiness not be limited to the euphoric but offer more nuanced possibilities for hope.

More critically, it is the values of asserting equality, while also opting for a non-violent response that allows for a truly societal engagement in Goa. Thus, it is precisely through the presence of Christianity, which is so dominant in Goa that one can have the possibility of a society, just as it is Christianity that lies at the heart of the western European and international discourse of contemporary human rights (Moyn, 2010). Of course, this is not to argue that the Catholic polity in Goa perfectly embodies a society. On the contrary, as is indicated earlier, for reasons of continuing to privilege exclusionary logics of caste, Catholic groups contribute to the impossibility of realizing perfect society and fail the consolatory potential present in the gospel. But Catholicism does provide the discursive possibility to realize society, as well as offer consolation.

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Com tudo o mais á pertençe a solemnid. de huâ grande festa – Spotlights on 'Music' in the Jesuit Mission in South India during the late 17th and 18th Centuries

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Abstract

The extraordinary success of the mission of the *Society of Jesus* is said to be based—above all—on its psychologically well-thought-out methodology, the deliberate adaptation to the habits of life and the level of education of the people to be converted. Within the context of their intercultural communication, missionaries of the Order used 'music' or musical phenomena as a 'tool' in order to spread the religious message all over the world. The mutual influence of the missionaries' 'music' and the converts' indigenous forms resulted in music-cultural change. In accord with their commitment to global mobility, Jesuits of the *Old Society* were active in South India until their expulsion in 1759. A special feature of the communication of the Order's members is a collection of letters and reports, which formed a global system for the exchange of information. Some of them have been published, but for the most part they remain unprocessed in various archives and libraries. An important source for music research, these documents offer statements about musical phenomena as well as representations of the overall context, enabling one to investigate whether and how the Jesuits in South India succeeded in fulfilling their missionary tasks *precisely* through 'music' in a deliberately chosen form. The present study examines two discourses analytically on the basis of illustrative examples—spotlights—from primary sources written by Jesuits: (1) *musical phenomena* and (2) *intercultural communication in the mission*. In addition to *Historical Discourse Analysis*, *Content Analysis* and especially *Grounded Theory* prove to be of significance. The question is to what extent these two discourses are interwoven, so that the use of the musical repertoire in intercultural communication can be judged from the perspective of 'music as a tool'. This study will focus on questions of different forms of contact points—enabled by musical phenomena—on which mission success was based. What role did emotions play in this context, and what was the deliberately chosen form of 'music' like?

Key words: Jesuits, Old Society, Malabar, Goa, mission, intercultural communication, musical phenomena, accommodation, transculturation

Introduction: Jesuits, mission and 'music'

The mission in Asia is considered one of the earliest steps of the *Society of Jesus* and India as the first province of the Order in this area (Brancaccio, 2007: 53). Missionaries have traditionally been regarded as the best-educated early European travellers—and among them especially Jesuits whose expertise also lay in the field of *musical phenomena*[1]. However, the cultural influence did not take place mono-directionally. From the foundation of the Order onward, the work of the Jesuits was *internationally* and *interculturally* or even *transculturally* oriented (Sepp, 2012: 9; Irving, 2009: 378 and 392), and efforts in the field of 'music' can be demonstrated in a very special way for South India[2]. As is well known, the Jesuits did their work of conversion behind a thousand masks, with the ultimate goal being *Omnia ad maiorem Dei gloriam* (*All things to the greater glory of God*), according with the requirement to be *All things to all men* as demanded by the maxim of Saint Ignatius (e.g. Barthel, 1991: 219; Barthel, 1984: 210-211; Fülöp-Miller, 1947: 255). The members of the Order committed themselves to worldwide mobility: to fulfil their commitment, i.e. spreading the religious message, they also made use of secular disciplines such as mathematics, literature, 'music', drama and architecture. These were to serve the expansion of the Kingdom of God, but the tactics of the Jesuits varied greatly depending on the field of activity. If for other mission areas of the Order—for Japan, China and Spanish, as well as Portuguese America—evaluations of the use of musical phenomena in the context of missionary efforts are available,

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[1] The contents of this essay and the decision to use the terms 'music' or *musical phenomena* are based on my dissertation "*Jesuita cantat*! 'Musik' in der interkulturellen Kommunikation jesuitischer Mission in Südindien während des späten 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts" ("*Jesuita cantat*! 'Music' in the Intercultural Communication of Jesuit Mission in South India during the late 17th and 18th Centuries"), which I submitted to Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg in September 2018. European readers may become suspicious of the term *musical phenomena* as they become aware that in their understanding, *musical phenomena* are something different from music. The fact that there is no universally accepted term for music worldwide that can be translated into all languages, let alone a universally valid notion of what forms and phenomena 'music' encompasses, suggests that the pair of concepts or the spelling 'music' in single quotation marks—especially when taken from primary sources—should be used instead of music(s) in order to avoid the understanding associated with the term in the modern Western sense. In this way, dance and theatre also come to the fore in the investigations, thereby approaching the (South) Indian understanding of the term 'music' during the period of time under investigation here.

[2] In the present context, South India comprises the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Their extension is understood as South Indian territory and as the core area of the Malabar region, as they show a cultural and linguistic unity through their Dravidian roots. An understanding of the extent and use of the term Malabar in the context of Christian mission efforts during the period under study may be aided by the following: The names Malabar or Malavar in European literature referred to the entirety of the South Indian regions. The Portuguese used it to refer to 'their' Indian territory, the Malabar or West Coast. Strictly speaking, this name could not be applied to the east coast of Koromandel, which is not mountainous—since *malaivaram* means mountainside in Tamil and *mallai* is the Dravidian word for mountain. In a broader sense, however, the whole south could be described as such (Debergh, 2010: 900). The Province of Malabar of the *Old Society* was therefore huge in terms of its area; it encompassed the complete south of the Indian subcontinent. In addition, the Province of Malabar was responsible for the Jesuit stations on Sri Lanka, the Moluccas, as well as for the college in Malacca and the Jesuit missions in the Moghul Empire.

statements on this topic relevant to (South) India for the late 17th century until the expulsion of the Order have so far been based on speculations. The aim of the present study, therefore, is to provide insight into this question via 'spotlights' onto the explored holdings of the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* in Rome (ARSI), thus basing conclusions about the use of 'music' in the Jesuits' missionary effort in (South) India upon verifiable sources of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Contextualisation: Peculiarities of the Jesuit Order

Mission in the Jesuit understanding is both personal deployment and work *in situ*, as well as the place of mission. This place can be where non-Christians, non-Catholics and insufficiently evangelised Catholics live (Meier and Schatz, 2015: 388). Furthermore, mission means *peregrinatio*, i.e. inner (spiritual) as well as outer (geographical) pilgrimage. Delegation to overseas mission areas was seen as a special distinction in the Jesuit Order (Sepp, 2012: 19). Accordingly, the Jesuits understood mission—in a summarised understanding—as systematic, permanent, organised cultural work for the purpose of Christianisation. This view notwithstanding, it is important to note that the Jesuits did not have any universally valid and binding mission strategy. They had recognised that mission was to be understood as a local act, for which only some basic conditions could be formulated (Friedrich, 2016: 448 and 452). In order for the faith brought along by missionary activities to take root in life, to come alive, it was necessary to have a precisely thought-out strategy oriented towards the respective circumstances of the field of activity; hence mission strategy was based on different foundations and required the work of personnel sensitised in intercultural communication.

Communication can be seen as the challenge par excellence of missionary work. Musical phenomena in this context are best understood as a decisive part of a comprehensive complex of activities that constitute the respective culture, whereby the understanding depends on the respective regionally and locally collected experiences (Wicke, 2011: 11 and 42). In missionary work, communication is understood as any interpersonal relationship, i.e. everything in which mediation and participation take place between people and groups (Bürkle, 1979: 85). The dialogue that comes about through communication is therefore decisive for the success of missionary work. But the aim of the dialogue is not the conversion of one's counterpart to one's own ideas of faith; it rather presupposes the recognition of forms of faith in their multiplicity (Hirudayam, 1968: 116). In addition, for a fruitful dialogue within the framework of mission, the awareness of the peculiarities of the dialogue partners, a certain degree of adaptation to this reality, is necessary (Henkel, 1979: 241); dialogue becomes a process of listening and discovering the other, a process requiring mutual respect (Pathil, 1991: 331). In the Asian mission areas, the Jesuits of the *Old Society* sought dialogue above all due to the recognition that indigenous religions were so present and strong in their own areas that without

them they could not have been dealt with in the usual sense of missionary aims and purpose (Meier and Schatz, 2015: 388). Accordingly, communication is based on reciprocity; it cannot function as a one-way street—just as mission as a whole cannot—but presupposes that both parties listen to and speak with one another (Han, 2011: 162). The Jesuit missionaries who carried out their work in the advanced civilisations of Asia in the 17th and 18th centuries were well aware of this. They did not seek short-term successes in conversion, but rather sought to create a basis of trust.

With regard to missionary work, culture means the human basis on which—and especially with the help of which—evangelisation is carried out (Nunnenmacher, 1987: 235 and 239). The process of the Christian church's detachment from the dominant occidental culture, which is often necessary in evangelisation, is marked by concepts such as *accommodation* and *adaptation*, and more recently by *contextualisation*, *indigenisation*, *inculturation* or *transculturation*. The goal of the efforts described by these terms is always the preservation of the right of each culture to find its own suitable form as well as formulation of the Christian faith—albeit in different forms and intensities (Müller, 1987: 176-177). The work of the Jesuits was about a transfer *between* cultures, and not about a transfer *of* cultures (Lederle, 2004: 172). Johannes Meier speaks of *global players* because of the way in which Jesuits became active worldwide, since they are said to have worked with flexibility and competence in spreading Christianity to the remotest regions (Meier, 2000: 5). What they aimed for can be described as 'guided cultural change' (Meier and Schatz, 2015: 388). In this context, one should regard the European colonial metropolises in Asia as specific transfer milieus, which, as areas of intense intercultural communication, are especially well suited for investigation. In these areas, cultural transfer developed to a high degree (Trakulhun, 2007: 89).

A further perspective one must attribute to communication in the work of the Jesuits in the overseas missions is their communication with Europe that they had left behind. In order to overcome this spatial separation in the time of the *Old Society*, the idea of letters as a global communication system of the Jesuits arose. Letters can serve many purposes, but in the present context they are understood as a medium of communication between absentees, as a replacement medium for *face-to-face* communication (Münkler, 2002: 335). In the letters and reports written by Jesuits, especially those that were not sent to private addresses, descriptions of the successful transfer of the Christian religion through European culture and values usually had to form the core (Toelle, 2013: 103); in fulfilling this function, letters constituted an essential part of the administrative system of the *Society of Jesus*. They are essentially of two types: On the one hand, there are copies sent to the superiors of the order, mostly written in an elevated style; on the other are letters addressed to other members of the *Society* or to personal friends and family members. These tend to reflect the actual sensitivities of the individual missionary. In addition, another type of official letters was written at periodic intervals, known

as *private letters*, which can be devided into so-called *first* and *second catalogues*. The superiors provided the recipients of this kind of letter with biographical information about the respective members of the Order and with assessments of their abilities in different fields. Besides this reporting, which could be described as European- or even Rome-centred, there was an ongoing exchange among the Jesuits in the missions themselves (Lederle, 2009: 32-40 and 236). One can summarise underlying intentions and function of this communication system on a letter basis as follows: The vertical information practices of the Order provided for the tightness of the system; the collegial correspondence was decisive for the spreading of information (González, 2005: 359).

The special case of South India: Framework conditions

As a starting point for the following observations, one must state that the continuous deployment of missionaries by Portugal since 1510 started from Goa—the 'Rome of the Orient'—and that the Jesuits, subjected to *Padroado* (Portuguese patronage), stood out particularly as compared with various other orders that were active in the Asian mission. Although India remained the heartland of Portuguese colonial rule until the 18th century, and thus the centre of the *Padroado* mission, the entire mission to Asia was marked by only sporadic success. The foundation of the *Propaganda Fide* in 1622[3] intensified the looming loss of power of the Portuguese in Asia. Disputes between *Padroado* and *Propaganda Fide* missionaries became a regular occurrence, preventing a united appearance of the Roman Catholic church *in situ* (Lederle, 2009: 98 and 110), finally culminating in the *Malabar Rites Controversy*[4].

Soon after the arrival of the Portuguese in India it became clear that it was, above all, pastoral workers who were needed in order to care permanently for the recently missionised people; hence, in their work the Jesuits acted as pastors and not as warriors. They penetrated far into the interior of India; toward the end of the 16th and during the 17th century, the Jesuits in the Portuguese territory thus became the

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[3] Pope Gregory XV (1621-1623) founded the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* as a kind of counterweight to the *Padroado*. It functioned as a Roman organisation of the missionary system and was therefore responsible for all the duties that were summarised above under the term of mission (Lederle, 2009: 96-98 and 110).

[4] The *Malabar Rites Controversy* represents a decisive event in the history of the *Society of Jesus* in the South Indian region. The starting point for this controversy was a mission-methodological issue—namely, the question of the missionaries' adaptation to the societal peculiarities the members of the Order had found among the indigenous populations of China and India. The controversy concerning the accommodation efforts by the Jesuits related to questions of true conversion and how far Christianity could be adapted to different cultural worlds (Schmidlin, 1924: 379; Rubiés, 2005: 237). In India, the *Rites Controversy* erupted in the years 1703/1704; at that time, the Capuchins accused the Jesuits of using unacceptable missionary methods, specifically their acceptance of the *Malabar Rites*. In 1744, the prohibition of these *Rites* was confirmed, which led to a complete interdiction of the accommodation practice for the Jesuits, at least on paper (Lederle, 2009: 62 and 140-141).

most important and influential order. The construction of an empire by the Portuguese at that time was inextricably linked with the Christianisation of the dominated regions in Asia, and the arrival of the Jesuits gave enormous force to this Portuguese cultural expansion (Lederle, 2009: 20-21 and 94-95). At the end of the intercultural and interreligious learning process initiated by Francis Xavier SJ (1506-1552), the pioneer of the Jesuit mission in East Asia, it became apparent that the missionaries had to acculturate themselves to a certain extent to the circumstances in the places they were working (Meier, 2010: 364).

The Jesuit provinces in Asia were part of the Portuguese Assistancy of the Order (Meier, 2007: 9).[5] The first province of the Jesuits in Asia was the Province of Goa, established in 1549; in 1583 Japan became independent as a Vice Province and in 1623 China followed. South India was declared a Vice Province in 1601, and four years later the region now called the Province of Malabar finally became an independent province of the Jesuit Order.[6]

'Music' in the Jesuit mission in South India: Spotlights

Artistic forms and religious rituals—musical phenomena and liturgy in particular—have proven to be unsurpassably suitable vehicles for transporting religious content since the beginning of recorded history (MA, 2014: 242). Religious institutions have long recognised that a high degree of local religious meaning can be created only through the active participation and experience on which practice is based. Musical phenomena expand these opportunities for participation and for collecting experiences substantially (Bohlman, 1997: 69), which helps explain why they have played an important role in the success of missionary activities (Thauren, 1927: 56). They are said to have been used to convey the Christian message in different cultures, with the aim that the respective indigenous population could implement the message inside its own cultural framework. Although the Gospel stands above all cultures, it can only be proclaimed on a cultural level, and musical repertoire contributes to the creation of a space that encourages this (Carstens, 2006: 19, 25 and 51). The Jesuits recognised that the religious content they wanted to convey needed a representation that appealed to people both aesthetically and intellectually. Making music together, singing, theatre play and dancing became the basis of cultural influence and a vehicle for conveying religious content, which

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[5] The Province of the Philippines was an exception.

[6] The choice of South India as a research field necessitates bringing information from the core areas of the Province of Malabar into focus. One must note, however, that in the interior of the country the borders between the two Jesuit provinces on Indian soil were still not precisely defined in the 17th and 18th centuries (Lederle, 2009: 121). This, in turn, has led us to examine written sources concerning the work of the members of the Order in the Provinces of Goa and Malabar in the present research context. In addition, there is the importance of Goa as a port of arrival for the members of the Order who were destined for the Asian mission; it was in Goa that the missionaries working in South India could be trained for a certain time after their arrival in the overseas territory.

reflects the catechetical function of musical phenomena (Friedrich, 2016: 355-357 and 379).

A specific Jesuit way of dealing with musical phenomena can be demonstrated especially for the *Old Society*. We can summarise the following steps: At first, there was a ban on liturgical singing for the members of the Order. Within a few years after the enactment of the ban, however, missionaries began to introduce new musical forms, i.e., musical phenomena that were in vogue in the respective field of action of the *Society of Jesus*, into the everyday life of Jesuit-led educational institutions and within the framework of the public self-presentation of the Order. The third point that should be mentioned is the enormous pedagogical and mission-driven functionalisation of forms in the (overseas) provinces and in the context of the efforts of Catholic reform; musical phenomena quickly became an expression of Jesuit self-understanding (Wald, 2007: 12-13).

In South India—a missionary field of activity of the Jesuits completely different from Europe and the two Americas—musical phenomena have played an essential role since the beginning of the work of the *Society of Jesus*. The missionaries could immediately include new musical forms in their local work (Hortschansky, 2012: 174), as the sources show.[7] There were essentially four different areas of apostolic work in which musical phenomena played an important role: (1) in the liturgical and paraliturgical services within the churches and colleges led by the Jesuits, (2) in Jesuit theatrical performances, (3) in the academic meetings of the institutions, as well as in public disputes and (4) in the Marian Congregations within the colleges (Kennedy, 2001: 19). In addition to pastoral care, the education of young people was the main task of Jesuit work. The use of the arts in the context of religious work was considered a fundamental part of the Jesuit mission; an aestheticisation of faith could lead to the theological doctrine through the sensory impression produced (Hust, 2015: 26). Musical phenomena therefore fulfilled the full spectrum of the classical three-part motto *docere - delectare - movere*: to teach, to delight and to move. They helped the Jesuits to promote their Christian message, to get in touch with representatives of different cultures as well as social strata, and to create collective identities. The chosen repertoire became a 'tool' to attract and entertain, to form habits and to redefine perceptions of time and space (Filippi, 2016: 357). Moreover, since the constitutions of the *Society of Jesus* did not regulate any musical tradition by law, the repertoire could be entirely oriented towards the functional level at the respective place of use (Kennedy, 2005: 417-418).

The examples presented here have been taken from various *Litterae Annuae* and catalogues of the *Society of Jesus* one can consult today in the ARSI. I have chosen them to provide answers drawn from quotes of the members of the Order. *Litterae Annuae* represent annually written 'house reports' of the Jesuit establishments,

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[7] One can refer to the volumes of the *Documenta Indica* by Josef Wicki SJ (and John Gomes SJ) as a decisive collection of source material.

which primarily served order-internal communication. At the same time, the members of the Order used them to enable a worldwide sense of community as well as the formation of a self-definition—also directed outwards (Nebgen, 2007:126). In their function as annual reports, they facilitated the exchange of information within the Order; in addition, they could be shown to non-members with the permission of the superiors of the Order. Their main function was therefore not only to maintain contact between the Jesuits but also to strengthen it. Following the form and content that was regulated by the provincialate (Oswald, 2001: 465-466), in the *Litterae Annuae* the Jesuits summarised the activities of the individual Jesuit houses of the respective previous year and noted closer details. These documents are the main representations of the edifying news in the communication system of the *Society of Jesus* on a letter basis (Zech, 2008: 46-47 and 50). The catalogues of the Order were composed for internal use; the Jesuits wrote them to provide the superiors with periodic information about precisely formulated aspects of the functions of the Order. The *first* and *second catalogues*, the private letters of the *Societas Jesu*, have a more personal character; they contain basic biographical information about each member of the provinces, together with evaluations of their spiritual, intellectual and physical capacities. Finally, the *third catalogue* contains financial reports of the missions of a province (Osswald, 2013: 12-13). References to and information about musical phenomena, as observed by Jesuit missionaries in South India, are numerous in the *Litterae Annuae* and in the catalogues. Based on the material reviewed in the ARSI, these references can be divided into two broad categories, with the possibility of cross-category classifications of different selected passages. The two categories are (a) *musical phenomena in the context of ecclesiastical feasts and holidays* and descriptions of material the Jesuits used as part of (b) *activities related to educational institutions of the Order* in (South) India.

a) Ecclesiastical feasts and holidays

Numerous sources for the period under study here show that the Jesuits employed 'music' to a great extent in the celebration of ecclesiastical feasts and holidays in (South) India. An example is the letter of Fr. Emmanuel (Manuel) Carvalho SJ (?-1720) to General Michelangelo Tamburini SJ (1647-1730) of 25 October 1710 from Goa. Fr. Carvalho reports on 'music' in the context of masses and novenas to feast days, which members of the Order had performed in churches and chapels of the *Society of Jesus*. He also states that 'musician-seminarists' (*Seminaristas Musicos*) were employed in the Professed House in December 1708 (ARSI, Goan. 9 II: fols. 467^r-473^v). In a letter of 1702, the musicians needed in connection with churches in Salsette are specified in more detail as to their origin; Carvalho writes about Canarian musicians (*Canarinos musicos*), which clearly emphasises their indigenous origin (ARSI, Goan. 36 I: fol. 104^r).

A letter of the year 1717 reporting on a solemn celebration in the Province of Goa, also proves informative (ARSI, Goan. 36 I: fols. 253^r-262^v). This letter not only states that many musicians were organised in a choir, but also mentions sounding cymbals and that a large crowd of people gathered. One can even find an evaluation of the quality of the 'music': The reporting missionary writes about a number of singers and musical instruments, and states that the sweetness of the voices resulted in their receiving considerable applause on the aforementioned feast day (ARSI, Goan. 36 I: fols. 256^v and 257^v). Finally, he reports about other solemn occasions celebrated in the Province of Goa in 1721 (e.g. ARSI, Goan. 36 I: fol. 284^r). In these reports, a member of the Order describes the choirs as pleasant and in harmony, with all kinds of musical instruments. In addition, he mentions several songs of praise to Our Lady, the hymn of *Te Deum laudamus* as an expression of gratitude and the performance of a tragicomedy (ARSI, Goan. 36 I: fols. 263^v, 264^v, 265^v and 284^r). This source therefore answers several questions simultaneously: On the one hand, it documents the performance of plays and the sounding of various musical instruments in a given context; on the other it confirms that songs and hymns that were used in the home countries of the Jesuit missionaries were performed on comparable occasions in the mission areas, and could therefore be named with familiar terms in the letter. The fact that the missionary describes the choirs as 'pleasant' and the singing of the *Te Deum laudamus* as a 'solemn activity' gives rise to the assumption that their performance was carried out in a way that satisfied the European ears of the missionaries.

b) Educational institutions of the Society of Jesus

In addition to all the possibilities mentioned for the first category, the local educational institutions led by Jesuit missionaries offered special possibilities for the targeted use of 'music' in its function as a 'tool'. The holding *Provincia Goana et Malabarica* 35 (*Goan*. 35), which provides information about the Province of Goa for the period from 1660 to 1695, is an item in the inventory of the ARSI particularly rich in information about musical phenomena in the work of the Order in South India. It shows that a variety of music was used in certain festivities celebrated at different colleges. The annual report of the years 1663 to 1666 (ARSI, Goan. 35: fols. 11^r-25^v) answers several questions concerning the Jesuit-led school system *in situ*. Fr. Antonius da Sylva SJ (fl. 1666 in Goa)[8] writes about the Seminary *Sancta Fidei* on 25 December 1666 stating that 32 priests and a secular person were working there; 40 boys from 'Lusitania' and just as many from India were trained during this period. These boys devoted themselves to grammar, speech, philosophy, theology, 'music' and other liberal arts. In the same letter, da Sylva reports on a Jesuit college—the *College of Bacain*—in India. In this section he describes various indigenous phenomena, stating, for example that people played hand timpani as

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[8] According to Josephus Fejér it could be the Jesuit missionary Fr. Antonius da Sylva SJ, who died on 22 June 1676 in the Province of Goa or on 24 August 1693 in Goa (1990: 156).

accompaniment to cantilenas and—according to the custom—in this way beseeched the oracle. Despite the observance of the rules, the summoned demon remained silent, which led to repetitions of the described musical forms by those present. This was to no avail; the summoned demon still remained silent (ARSI, Goan. 35: fols. 16ᵛ and 21ʳ):

> *[…] timpana pulsant, solitas edunt cantilenas, et oraculum rite consulunt; silet tamen vocatos Dæmon; mirantur miseri, iterant preces, crebrius tympana fatigant, efficacius ingeminant cantillenas, nec tamen responsa audiuntur […]* (ARSI, *Goan.* 35: fol 21ʳ).

Another letter from South India—now from the early 18th century—that describes many categories of musical phenomena in a few consecutive lines and is, by virtue of its concrete statements, a particularly vivid example, is Fr. Manuel Carvalho's SJ letter of 5 January 1706 from Goa. In this letter, Carvalho reports on the development of 'Christianity in South Indian Maissur' (now called Mysore) in the form of a short description (ARSI, Goan. 45 II: fols. 534ʳ-538ᵛ). The first decisive passage appears as part of the description of the state of Christianity of Salsette, and provides information on educational institutions as well as musical phenomena within their field of activity:

> *Em todas as Igrejas hâ escholas pagas pella comonidade das aldeyas em que se ensinão os meninos a ler, escrever, contar, cantar, e tanger viola, arpa, Orgãos, e os mais instrumentos, o que tudo aprendem com notavel destreza* (ARSI, *Goan.* 45 II: fol. 537ᵛ).

According to the passage cited here, in all the churches there were schools paid for by the community, where children learned to read, write, do arithmetic, sing and play various musical instruments. The musical instruments mentioned included the viola, the harp and organs; the reporting Jesuit also states that the students learned everything with remarkable skill. Shortly after, the letter contains information on 'music' that was performed during feasts and holidays. The annual feast of Our Lady was celebrated with a procession; on Saturdays, the litanies to Our Lady were performed polyphonically (*a Canto de Orgão*) as well as with other instruments, and mass was read accompanied by musical instruments (fig. 1) (ARSI, Goan. 45 II: fol. 537ᵛ).

Fig: 1 Reference to the use of musical instruments within the framework of a mass and to the polyphonic composition of a litany of the Virgin Mary (source: ARSI, *Goan.* 45 II: fol. 537ᵛ. © Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu).

We should discuss a further document of the ARSI inventories in more detail; it is a description of the state of Christianity in Salsette of the year 1669 subdivided into different communities of this area. The author is unknown, but General Juan Pablo Oliva SJ (1600-1681) was noted as the recipient (ARSI, Goan. 45 I: fols. 295ʳ-365ᵛ). The example is particularly interesting in that it continuously provides numerous and detailed descriptions of musical phenomena from the South India Mission of the Jesuits of the second half of the 17th century by means of its many accumulated pages. It reports on various Jesuit institutions, where dancing, singing and instrumental playing—in various musical forms—were performed. Processions, further performances of material on the streets as well as phenomena on occasions such as ecclesiastical feasts and holidays, not only in the context of all offices of the church but also in schools, are also mentioned. In addition, the missionary provides information on the performers and on the language used in this context. If we summarise the content of the entire document by creating categories, the first step is to define the form of the musical repertoire that was heard in the context mentioned. In all, the reporting Jesuit lists sung masses, complines, matutines, novenas and vespers, sung litanies, motets, psalms, hymns and chansonetas. In addition, he describes the musical interpretation of the *Salve Regina*, the *Ave Maria*, the *Te Deum laudamus* and the *Hallelujah*. Comedies were also created with great splendour in the *College of Rachol*. The missionary furthermore mentions songs, responsories, antiphons, Miserere and Benedictus as well as choral music—all this performed in polyphony. The participants made these efforts in the musical field for a very specific purpose: to enhance solemnity. Again, and again, the aforementioned document contains statements about the great devotion and perfection with which the material was performed—for the praise of God or the respective saint(s), for their joy and for the edification of all people present. All Christians—men, women and children—as well as external musicians were involved in some of these performances, as the following passage testifies; the boys of the Jesuit institutions played an important role. At the same time, the reporting member of the Order states that on every Sunday of Lent, mass was celebrated in the 'local language' of the indigenous population:

> *Em todas as Domingas da Caresma concorre toda gente com m.ᵗᵒ cuidado a missa, antes della se canta toda a Doutrina e todo povo homes e molheres crianças e mininos a vai repetindo, assi como savai dizendo, missa acabada se lhe faz sua pratica na lingoa da terra, […]*(ARSI, *Goan.* 45 I: fol. 306ᵛ).

Also striking are the frequent evaluations of the musical repertoire that the reporting Jesuit missionary provides, which were consistently positive. At one point, we even read a comparison of the level of performance of the repertoire, as in the Benaulim congregation, with the experiences of the reporting missionary from many parts of Europe:

> *[…] vesporas, e missa a tres choros de tão boas vozes, que exede as que se cantão em muitos partes de Europa* (ARSI, *Goan.* 45 I: fol. 298ᵛ).

The passage above provides information about vespers and masses performed with such good voices that, according to the missionary, they surpassed what was sung in many parts of Europe at the same time. Finally, the member of the Order frequently mentions musical instruments in the document; examples include the harp, viola and clavichord, *bandurillha* (plucked lute), trumpets, shawms, drums, bells, timpani and organs. The songs were sung in Portuguese as well as in the indigenous language of the communities. More detailed contents and classifications are given in the examples below, drawn from the aforementioned letter:

For some communities the letter offers more detailed information about schools and the education they provided, illustrating diverse musical phenomena in several passages. The first example chosen provides information about the Jesuit-led school in Colva:

> *Todas as Igreias tem seu mestre da éscola aonde se ensina ler, escrever, contar, cantar, dançar, e tanger todos os instromentos muzicos de Viola, Rebequinha, Bandurrilha, Arpa, e Orgão, e toda a doutrina da cartilha assi na lingoa da terra como em Portuguez […]* (ARSI, *Goan.* 45 I: fol. 307ᵛ).

This paragraph illustrates the fact that the schoolmasters of the educational institutions belonging to the churches not only taught the children reading and writing, but also singing, dancing and playing musical instruments. Moreover, they taught bilingually, in Portuguese and in the children's mother tongue. We can find further information about the use of the boys trained in another Jesuit school in the description of the school in the municipality of Varca:

> *Tem esta Aldea escola de 45 mininos, à apredê a Doutrina, ler, escrever, cantar, dançar, arismetica, e instrom.ᵗᵒˢ, ao mestre da escola paga a aldea seu salario; servê estes min.ᵒˢ da escola m.ᵗᵒ ao Culto Divino eo a muzica e assisté cia da Igreia […]* (ARSI, *Goan.* 45 I: fol. 323ʳ).

This institution also taught the boys reading, writing and arithmetic. In addition, the schoolmaster, who was paid by the community, taught singing, dancing and instrumental playing as described above. The reporting Jesuit missionary also provides information about where and when the boys trained as described were able to put into practice the skills they had learned. Finally, we can summarise the question of musical phenomena throughout the document and with reference to the question posed at the beginning: Everything that belonged to the celebration of God's great feast was summoned:

> *[…] com tudo o mais á pertençe a solemnid.ᵉ de huâ grande festa […]*
> (ARSI, *Goan.* 45 I: fol. 324ʳ).

Conclusions

One can demonstrate the influence of European musical phenomena, spread by the opportunities for personal as well as musical interactions described above, for the South Indian region in the late 17th and 18th centuries. This influence was primarily based on the feeling of superiority of the Church, the missionaries sent and, thus, the European culture. Nevertheless, cultural transfer took place not only in the direction from Europe to South India; it can also be shown to have moved in the opposite direction, for which we can use the sources of the ARSI as a possible starting point.[9] This mutual transfer was brought about by an increased effort of the Jesuits to establish the Christian faith in the non-European context, for which *accommodation* shaped by reflection was necessary. In the course of the missionary efforts in early modern history, an accommodative *concession*, i.e. a certain degree of adaptation of Christianity to the new world to be converted, had quickly proven to be necessary for mission success in South India. Only in this way could the Jesuits achieve the desired increase in attendance at church celebrations, their charisma and eventually the success of the mission (Bispo, 1988: 625). Accordingly, they created a suitable *atmosphere* for the indigenous populations based on extensive observations by the missionaries in order to be able to offer the South Indian populace *emotional*[10] access to the respective celebrations that was necessary for the best possible mission success. The missionaries had recognised early on the heightened impression created by a solemn atmosphere surrounding a given feast and holiday. They built on the realisation that musical phenomena did not serve mere entertainment, nor were they regarded as art for art's sake, but rather as acts of service and devotion to the divine within the context of ritual and liturgy (Beck, 2013: 37). *Emotions* played a decisive role in conveying the desired content.

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[9] In addition, I would like to refer to the analysis of private letters and account books of the Jesuits, the collections printed in *Der Neue Welt-Bott* and in the *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* as well as travelogues of other people working in India, which I carried out in my dissertation. The possibilities of using musical phenomena in the intercultural communication of the *Old Society* according to the notion of 'music as a tool', which I have determined in this context, supplement and extend the functions and characteristics described in this essay in the most diverse directions and underpin the conclusions reached.

[10] The notion that musical phenomena can trigger emotions refers to the views of the Jesuit missionaries, which they had developed through their education in the Catholic context, and also to the indigenous Indian view that *rāga*—understood as key melodic concept—created possibilities for this (e.g. Rahaim, 2010: 576). We should not forget, however, that different Hindu religious and philosophichal traditions view emotions in positive as well as negative ways and that there is not any exact term for the English word 'emotion' (McDaniel, 2008).

The missionaries' discernment that they had to build on commonalities in order to achieve successful intercultural communication as a basis for their mission became a decisive starting point. They found the necessary similarities in a special way in the musical repertoire as well as in the enthusiasm of the indigenous populations of South India for various musical phenomena that they experienced within the context of the Jesuit mission. The Jesuits had become aware of the peculiarities of their South Indian dialogue partners within the framework of intercultural communication in relation to these musical phenomena, which they could finally bring into connection with the overall cultural and social roots. This, in turn, refers to the choice of *accommodation* as a form of cultural encounter, since this term, coined by Catholicism, demands a series of *concessions* and a special way of *dealing with* the particularity of the respective counterpart. Nevertheless, one can probably assume that there was a certain degree of *transculturation—accommodation* with a tendency towards *transculturation*—in the musical field in South India: The missionaries not only came into direct contact with indigenous musical material and ideas; they also transferred practises and/or elements of Hindu (and probably Muslim as well as Jewish) worship to local Catholic worship.

We can formulate the functions that 'music' or musical phenomena, understood as 'tools', took over by influencing the culture and cultural representatives to be missionised in South India as follows: The Jesuit missionaries used 'music' in the context of their efforts in liturgical and paraliturgical services in South India. They not only utilised the material for the apostolic tasks of the Order; the sources examined reveal a conscious *decision for* 'music as a tool', and the numerous Jesuit-led educational institutions became platforms for the cultivation and development of musical repertoires. As a result, the communication and demonstration of a lively, active Catholicism took place in the most appealing form for the local people. As we have seen, the connection with existing musical phenomena *in situ* turned out to be suitable and even necessary. On the one hand, this was based on the *enthusiasm* for these phenomena in the existing *sensuality* of the indigenous population members and their *talents* in this field; on the other it was reinforced by the established *functions* the material had in the traditional contexts. The Jesuits based their use of 'music' on their insights into the importance of understanding shared *values* as well as (inter-)cultural *interactions* and *communication* as a foundation for their desired missionary efforts.

With regard to South India, the Jesuits had found a new and unique way of mediating Christianity on the basis of a deliberately decided *inter*cultural form, into which the newly converted Christians could integrate their cultures in all their phenomena and where they found their place as valuable dialogue partners. Through their flexibility and competence on the musical level, the Jesuit missionaries had indeed succeeded in their self-proclaimed and, regarding the indigenous populations, accommodating role as *global players* conducting 'guided cultural change' through long-term cultural encounters. Musical phenomena as

commonalities on which one could build as contact points and bridges of communication to the respective counterpart had become the basis of the desired communication in the mission work of the Jesuits in South India—with the aim of being able to live this communion in exchange and not with the attitude of having to tolerate musical phenomena as a 'necessary evil'. This shows that the two discourses of *musical phenomena* and *intercultural communication in mission* intertwined in dialogue in such a way that 'music' actually became the all-decisive 'tool' in a form uniquely suitable for South India.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ARSI: *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, Rome.
fl.: floruit.
fol.: folio.
Goan.: holding *Provincia Goana et Malabarica* of the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, Rome.

Acknowledgements

Women and Church Politics: A Study of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church

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Abstract

Church history in Mizoram omits women and pays little attention to the role played by Mizos in their own conversion. This paper seeks to restore the role of women in the church, while focusing on their financial contribution to building the early Presbyterian Church in Mizoram. In tracing the history of the 'handful of rice,' this article explores how the project began, and how it developed over the years to play an important role in financing the church and generating hundreds of female theologians and missionaries. However, despite their contribution, women are still denied ordination as Pastors or Elders and the church's definition of women's gendered roles prevents it from accepting women as equals within the church.

Keywords: women, church, Christian mission, Mizoram, gender

Introduction

After Christian missionaries came to the Lushai hills in 1894, many Mizos converted to Christianity. Almost 90 percent of Mizos today, belong to Presbyterian or Baptist Churches, or to other indigenous Christian denominations. While the Presbyterian missionary David Evan Jones arrived in Aizawl on August 31, 1897 and founded the Presbyterian Church, Welsh missionaries introduced reading, writing, and Christian values for new converts, in addition to translating the Bible. Their main concern lay in establishing churches, schools, mission centers, and 'Christian' villages for converts, while medical work served as an important tool to save lost souls and bring Mizo women to Christ. The legendary Mrs. Katherine Ellen Williams (1904-1927), the wife of the first Welsh missionary Rev. David Evan Jones, with other female missionaries founded the Presbyterian Mizo Women's Fellowship in 1904 and this is the largest religious group in the country today, with the first Women's Fellowship General Conference being held in 1960. Since then, this Conference has been held 48 times and currently, the Presbyterian Church Women's Fellowship has 1, 76,449 members consisting of 845 local and 95 branch churches. The Women's Fellowship has been working as one of the most effective bodies of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, struggling

towards a meaningful ministry to spread the mission, and developing institutions to help orphans and other disadvantaged members of society. According to the Women's Fellowship General Conference Report of 2017, the Women's Fellowship in 173 churches funded 2550 missionaries and evangelist teachers, 267 orphanages, and 21 disadvantaged members of society. In addition, the Women's Fellowship contributed to the mission through the unique measure of a 'handful of rice' project that began in 1913 and became one of the most important sources for the income of the Presbyterian Church Synod. The Synod Mission Board established in 1971, sent out hundreds of missionaries, making it possible for women to enter the Synod mission field.

This paper explores the 'handful of rice' project that was an important part of the Women's Fellowship that contributed greatly to the income of the church through daily acts of cooking. While early Mizo Christian women began this project under Welsh female missionaries in 1913, the project became one of the most important sources of income for the church. 'Handful of rice' was a practice that asked every Mizo family to put aside a handful of rice, each time they cooked a meal. Later, they offered this rice saved to the church. The church, in turn, sold the rice to generate income to finance its activities. The region now known as Mizoram, formerly called the 'Lushai Hills', was occupied by the British from 1895 and placed under the Assam administration from April 1, 1898. Welsh Christian missionaries entered Lushai Hills along with the British in 1894. While colonizers managed law and order, missionaries focused on reforming society through education and inculcating the Christian spirit among Mizos. Within a few decades of the arrival of welsh missionaries, the majority of local populations became Christian. According to the 2011 census, the population of Mizoram had 87% Christians. The Presbyterian Church established in 1896 became the largest denomination in the region. In 1903, Mrs. Katherine Ellen Williams (1904-1927), the wife of the first Welsh missionary Rev. David Evan Jones, who was working in Bengal, initiated the Women's Fellowship service, held every Friday afternoon in the Mission Veng (or locality). Women, mostly the wives and family members of mission workers, attended the service and shared personal problems, studied the story of John Bunyan's 'The Pilgrim's Progress' and held prayer meetings (Zomuani, 2004:27). An increasing number of women were drawn to the service and two women among them became enlisted as the five earliest Mizo Christians. By 1902, there were already eleven female converts (Biakchhingi, 2004:6-9). In 1904, Mrs. Williams introduced the practice of a 'handful of rice,' having borrowed this idea from Khasi women, who saved a handful of rice every time they prepared a meal. Legend tells of a poor and devout Khasi widow, who sacrificed her daily meals to collect enough rice to sell for a contribution to the church (Lalthansangi, 2011:113). Initially, the sum of money collected from the 'handful of rice' project was used for constructing a chapel and funding a society for Bible Women. Over the years, the project spread across the region, and the Synod Assembly of 1949 recognized the project as a contribution to the church's annual budget, its income

being utilized by the Synod thereafter for various mission activities.

This research article explores women's subordinate position in the church, despite their numerical strength as church members, their financial contributions, and their missionary work that sustained Christianity among Mizos. This article seeks to demonstrate the role of women in laying the foundations of the Presbyterian Church in Mizoram. While this research first began in the archives, there were very few surviving documents. Therefore, it became necessary to turn to oral history. Interviews were therefore conducted with the oldest surviving women members of the church, senior pastors and senior elders, women theologians, and former and current leaders of the Women's Fellowship, in 2016 and 2017 at Aizawl. This location was chosen due to the large concentration of Presbyterians in the region and interviews were based on semi-structured questionnaires that allowed interviewees to diverge and speak of other issues unrelated to the questionnaire. Using materials generated from the archives and combining these with interviews, this article reconstructs an early history of the 'handful of rice' support program organized by Bible Women that funded the building of churches and missionary enterprises. Oddly enough, the very same project led to the solidification of a subordinate role for women in the church.

Bible Women and the 'handful of rice' project

In 1913, Welsh missionaries recruited 'Bible Women' to train other Mizo women in three subjects: The Bible, nursing, and housekeeping. Bible Women were expected to impart spiritual and practical knowledge to women and the first Bible Woman Mrs. Chhingteii was appointed in 1913, funded from the income generated by the 'handful of rice' project (Roberts, 2003:133). The amount raised, Rs. 80 was enough to employ two Bible Women including Mrs. Khuangi, and both were given Rs 5 as salary (Zomuani, 2010:17). An additional six Bible Women were appointed in 1916. When income generated from 'handful of rice' was insufficient to employ Bible Women, the offerings collected at local churches were diverted to their salaries (Roberts, 2003: 133). In time, the number of Bible Women increased, and the sum of money collected through the 'handful of rice' proved insufficient for paying the salaries of those employed as Bible Women. In 1916, the highest decision-making body of the Presbyterian Church, the Synod began funding Bible Women (Zohmangaihi, 2000:26), who trained for a six-month period and served the local community in a region assigned to them by the church. Between 1910 and 1923, the church employed 21 Bible Women, closing their hiring in 1924. By 1963, Bible Women were already terminated by the church (Zomuani, 2004:33).

In 1915, Mrs. Sandy (Welsh missionary) introduced Bible Women to midwifery training. After acquiring midwifery skills, they were also welcomed in non-Christian homes. Though their main purpose was to evangelize, they also taught sanitation,

performed midwifery tasks, and volunteered as childcare and nursing attendants, frequently called to distant places to attend to pregnant mothers. The Synod meeting held in 1923 passed a resolution encouraging each working Bible Woman to extend their services outside midwifery (Zohmangaihi, 2000:24). Mrs. Kailiani, daughter of Mrs. Chawngchhungi (Bible Woman 1923-1925) said, her mother worked for only two years, as the Synod assembly of 1925 passed a resolution not to allow Bible Women to continue working after marriage. Despite early retirement, she said her mother spent her entire life helping the sick and hardly had any time to rest. She added: "In her entire life, my mother never failed to attend to any emergency call for illness regardless of time and distance. All I remembered was carrying her oil lantern to attend a call for patient in the middle of the night".

Bible Women underwent many hardships and suffered persecutions even from their own families. Most of these women were married and had to provide for their infants while traveling. Often their area of work included 26 villages or more - a vast territory. Mrs. Nemthangi (Bible Woman 1917-1941) named her son Bialzauva or 'wide area' to mark the vast area of 26 villages covered by her missionary activity. Mrs. Aichhungi (Bible Woman 1923-1925) named her daughter Zokalkhumi or 'passed over Mizoram' because she traveled across Arakan in southern Bangladesh to Zampui village in Tripura for mission tours (Lalthangliana, 1998:14). Mrs. Lalchhuanthangi was the only surviving woman who had experienced work as a Bible Woman, and she was 94 years old at the time of interview, when recounting her mission tours with Mrs. Chhingteii (another Bible Woman). Mrs. Lalchhuanthangi said: "We normally carried our bedding, clothes and books in a wooden basket at the back, and we traveled barefoot for more than two days, sometimes being hosted by villagers in the middle of our journey". Spreading the 'handful of rice' project was a part of the mission's work assigned to Bible Women, and this project increased their persecution in villages. Since locals were suspicious that they made private income from the 'handful of rice' project, this made it more difficult to convince people of their task. There are many stories about Bible Women being beaten, tortured or thrown out of villages. They were pelted with stones and insulted, as people taunted them with questions of: 'how poor is your God?' Some locals charged them of corrupting the 'handful of rice' offerings (Malsawmi, 1993:34) as they suspected Bible Women of misusing the money (Zomuani, 2004:74). Others accused them of worshiping a 'handful of rice' instead of God. All this struggle, hardship and opposition however, never daunted Bible Women, or lessened their enthusiasm for the missions (Roberts, 2003:135). In fact, Bible Women were the first Mizo women to receive formal education. Despite termination from the church, these women made a remarkable contribution to missionary goals by founding the Women's Fellowship and the 'handful of rice' project in various villages. The decision to terminate the work of Bible Women remain unknown, at first, the church assembly 1925 passed a resolution to terminate employed Bible Women after they were married (Zohmangaihi, 2000:24). One of their objections was that, while visiting different

local churches the married Bible Women were surrounded by their children, therefore, no longer qualified for a full-time worker in the church. However, female theologian writing argued that their work as Bible Women was no longer relevant as more pastors were employed by the church (Laltlani, 2003:89).

The arrival of Mrs. Robert (missionary 1944-1968) introduced remarkable progress to the 'handful of rice' project, for she initiated different ideas and tactics to promote the project. During her tenure of more than two decades, she maintained an earnest relationship with Mizos and used their vernacular (Malsawmi, 1994:15). In the early days, people used a piece of bamboo to store their 'handful of rice'. She asked people to keep a special bin to store their 'handful of rice' and to insert encouraging Bible verses in that bin. Mrs. Roberts took the charge of the project in 1946 and encouraged women to practice 'handful of rice' in accompaniment to the traditional Mizo ritual of *khuatlai* (setting rice aside for the spirit at every meal), a mandatory ritual for every family before the advent of Christianity. She asked people to combine *khuatlai* ritual offerings with a 'handful of rice' as an offering to the Holy Spirit (Roberts, 2003:134). To promote the project, she organized contests among local churchwomen in 1950, a practice still prevalent today. The 'handful of rice' mission was a symbol of gratitude to the Lord that everyone could participate. It was believed that 'handful of rice' could uplift spiritual existence, while helping to spread the gospel to others (Lalthansangi, 2011:113). To further demonstrate the Women's Fellowship's inspiration to the 'handful of rice' project, it is important to highlight how leaders in the Central Women's Fellowship describe it upon interaction relating to project. Mrs. Biakchhingi, (Ex-Chairman 1999- 2001, Ex- officio 2007-2009) defines it as a missionary activity that could be performed by everyone to keep in touch with God daily. Mrs. Lalnguri, (Ex-Finance Secretary 1979-1985, Ex-Treasurer 1985- 1987) compared the 'handful of rice' project to the Biblical story of how Jesus fed five thousand men with just five loaves and two fish (Mathew 15:34). In this way, she explained the significant role of a humble beginning multiplied into a blessing for many. Others considered the 'handful of rice' project as God's special gift to missionary work for Mizo women and declared women's unity in their offerings, and the unity of every family contributing to the spread of the mission. They also believed setting aside a 'handful of rice' at every meal symbolizing the presence of God at every meal. Others quote the Bible verse, 'Give, it will be given to you' (St. Luke 6:36) by claiming to have received more blessing with the offering, than giving. Some testimonies indicated an improvement in their health after increasing the amount of their offerings.

The practice of 'handful of rice' has been endorsed in various ways, since church authorities recognized its significant contribution. In 1995, the Synod started distributing an attractive sticker (to tag a special bin for keeping rice) that read *Lalpa Chanpual* or 'God's share', as an instrument that encouraged more donations. The Women's Fellowship bore the sole responsibility of endorsing the project and even celebrated the 'handful of rice' centenary in every local church with many

memorable events in 2004. Every appointed Central Women's Fellowship Committee Member undertook personal responsibility to promote the project by travelling to villages for campaigning, spreading encouraging sermons and organizing seminars. They also endorsed the project by organizing drama-writing competitions on the topic of 'handful of rice'. All these measures encouraged more women to donate to the project. Besides, there were endless encouraging sermons and writings to promote the project, influencing people to give in 'cups' and not just in 'handfuls'. Others suggested more than one cup for a single meal. The amount was not mandatory, and how much was donated was left to the wish of individuals as their 'thanksgiving' to the Lord (Lalthansangi, 2011:113).

Before 1952, mothers carried their offerings to church while attending Sunday morning services and the average amount of collected rice amounted to one cup per family in a single month. After the method of collecting rice from every home was adopted since the 1990s, the amount increased significantly (Mission Veng Kohhran Centenary Souvenir, 1994:99-108). The Synod had more than a thousand churches, and Pastors were allotted to certain areas under each Pastorate, consisting of numerous local churches. Collectors appointed by the local church from the Women's Fellowship committee collected rice from their respective areas, submitting it to the church at the end of the week. Committee members undertook the responsibility of keeping records and selling rice to local communities and submitting the final accounts to the Synod headquarters on a monthly basis. Although each family at the local church could buy rice, priority was given to lower income families, since the selling price was comparatively lower than the market price and the population size at local churches determined the number of beneficiaries. For instance, the Mission Veng Church, one of the largest branches of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church has 100-240 families as buyers and 5-10 kgs of rice is distributed to every family per week.

The 'handful of rice' project produces more than the estimated budget proposed by the Synod every year. For example, while the estimated budget for April 2016 - March 2017 was Rs.13,35,00,000/-, the amount generated Rs. 16,10,86,154/-, which is Rs. 2,10,86,154/-more than the estimated budget (Women's Fellowship General Conference Report 2017:10). The capital income for the project, submitted to the Synod headquarters was utilized to support the church and its workers, missionary fields and different Synod departments (Lalthansangi, 2011:114). It also served as important security for the Synod, utilized as contingency funds. The Synod has various other projects, and while the funding generated for other projects like the missionary fund or hospital exclusively serve their own activities, funds from the 'handful of rice' project are freely utilized to cover the shortages of other projects. Therefore, the project constitutes a primary resource for the Synod. It is with the support from the 'handful of rice' project alone that the Presbyterian Church Synod sponsors 537 pastors, 2618 missionaries and several Colleges, Schools, Hospitals and health care centers (Synod Statistic

2017). Church leaders recognize the significance of 'handful of rice' for the Synod. For example, Rev. Zosangliana, former Executive Secretary of the Synod (2007-2012) stated that in the year 2012, up to 12% of the Synod's total income of 13 million dollars came from the 'handful of rice' project. Senior Pastor, Rev. Lalthanmawia, former Executive Secretary of Synod (1995-1996) declared that if the Synod stopped receiving funds from all other sources, the amount generated from the 'handful of rice' project was sufficient to support all those employed at the Synod.' There is a need to recognize the missionary achievements of the Women's Fellowship, since their financial support sends out hundreds of missionaries across the world. It is appropriate to claim that the reason behind the successful working of the Synod was the simple idea of a 'handful of rice' (Chuaungo, 2012).

Female Theologians and Missionaries

The Aizâwl Theological College established in 1907 by Welsh missionary Rev. D.E Jones was affiliated to the Senate of Serampore College since 1965 and administered under the Synod. Though hundreds of students obtained theological degrees here, the college opened its doors to women only in 1968. The first female theologian in Mizoram, Mrs. Lalnilawmi obtained a Licentiate in Theology (L.th) in 1970. There have been 106 female theologians in the Mizoram Presbyterian Church since (ATTWI, 2014:63-67). Although women were provided theological education more than six decades after the establishment of the institution, hundreds of female theology students obtained degrees in the various fields of theology after 1970. Later in 1978, the Aizawl Theological College introduced a separate Missionary Training Department for Bible Studies and Missiology and upgraded it as a Missionary Training College in 2010, to train committed Christian missionaries. Every year, this college sees several students graduating, to become missionaries at various places. Currently, there are three female theologians among twelve teaching faculty members in this college. Though an increasing number of women earned theological degrees with the passage of time, this did not encourage the church to ordain women. While the first Mizo male pastor Rev. Chhuahkhama was ordained in 1913, no Mizo woman to date has been ordained. The number of Mizo women seeking theological degrees is thus, an indicator of their larger interest in rising in the church (Remthanga, 2013:114-118). However, decision makers in the church have not recognized this interest and despite ambitions, female graduates from theology colleges are not ordained as pastors but remain teachers in private schools and evangelists in various mission fields (Lalsawmliana, 2009:65). From the list of 102 female theologians recorded by the Association of Theologically Trained Women of India (ATTWI), the Mizoram branch (2014:63-67) identified 30 women to work as evangelists in Assam, Karbi Anglong, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Nepal, and Delhi, while 20 of them remained housewives and 14 worked as teachers in

mission and private schools. Additionally, 12 women found work in government departments, another nine women worked in Synod office/schools, five worked as lecturers in Aizawl Theological College, another five in the theological institutions outside Mizoram and the last five are pursuing further studies in theological education. Two women remained jobless.

The Synod Mission Board established in 1961 aims at promoting missionary work within and outside the country, such as in Cambodia, Taiwan, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, China, Nepal, United Kingdom, Samoa, Madagascar, American Samoa and Kiribati. And the Synod currently occupies 18 mission fields in the country such as Delhi, Kolkata, Assam and Arunachal, where appointed Pastors, working as Field Secretaries, supervise the field. The first female missionary employed by the Synod Mrs. Sangkhumi, a nurse was sent to Tripura in 1972 followed by Mrs. Hmingthansangi, a female theologian allotted to Barak Area in 1976. Currently, the Presbyterian Church employs 2618 missionaries on a permanent and contract basic. Among permanent employees numbering 509 missionaries, 250 are female. Since 2008, the church recruited missionaries on contract basis, and this made it possible for many women to enter the Synod Mission Field, as female missionaries outnumbered male missionaries every year. For example, in 2016 and 2018, there were 107 female employees among all 173 missionaries employed by the Synod in those years (Synod Newsletter, 2018). Besides, there were 28 women among the 36 missionaries employed by the Synod in partnership with other organizations in 2018. It may be noted that apart from Synod funded missionaries, various Christian groups additionally funded female missionaries from the Presbyterian Church in Mizoram.

Women's Fellowship

The first Women's Fellowship was held in November 26, 1904 guided by Mrs. William and over the years, the mission of Bible Women helped spread the formation of Women's Fellowship in many parts of the region. At first, Women's Fellowship from three or four local churches gathered to have a joint meeting. After that, more joined in the subsequent years. The first Women's Fellowship Conference was held in 1946 and since 1960, the Women's Fellowship holds general conferences every year till today. From the year 2000, the general conference usually held every year, was reduced to every alternate years, and the funding for conferences was generated from the contribution of every local church of Women's Fellowship. While every female communicant of the Presbyterian Church becomes a member of the Women's Fellowship, only married women could act as its active members. The Synod Assembly of 1970 finally granted recognition to the Women's Fellowship. From 1979, the Synod appointed a full time secretary for the Central Women's Fellowship and its first chairman was appointed in 1982 by the Synod. Every general conference of the Women's Fellowship appointed new

committee members from various pastoral areas. And currently, the Central Women's Fellowship Committee consists of 45 members aged between 50 and 70, who are selected after being nominated from the different pastoral areas of Aizawl town. Appointed Committee Members must serve their pastoral areas as committee members for at least four years. Here we might note that not every woman in the local committee has a chance to enter the central committee, since one Pastoral area consists of four or five local churches. In every local church, official leaders are selected through secret ballot at Women's Fellowship Church services, and these official leaders then select committee members from the church. The local church committee leaders' additionally select their delegate for the Synod Assembly every year.

The main objective of the Women's Fellowship is to initiate a process through which churchwomen dominate its spiritual development by maintaining the Christian family, where women play significant roles as mothers and nurturers. Since 1970, the Women's Fellowship even organizes local competitions based on 'the ideal Christian family' and since then, every general conference awards trophies and citations to winners. The achievement of goals by Christian families is determined by the average amount of rice that is given by every family through the 'handful of rice' program, and the number of family prayer services held every day by families in their respective areas. They organize Christian family campaigns every year, and Women's Fellowship Committee Members in every local church spend a great deal of time visiting families of church members, encouraging mothers to hold regular family devotions towards maintaining ideal Christian family life at home. They also organize campaigns and seminars on the Christian Family, where Biblical verses surrounding women's role and responsibilities are discussed. Since 2000, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church annually observes the Christian Family Day on the last Sunday in September. According to the general conference held in 2017, 65.74% of families regularly held family prayer services and 98.15% regularly offered a 'handful of rice'. 82 pastoral areas scored a 100% in the 'handful of rice' project (Women's Fellowship General Conference Report, 2017:37).

Women's Fellowship Committee members were engaged in a wide range of social activities that included comforting the grieving, visiting the sick and attending marriage and funeral services. Many believe that God selected them as leaders to continue his mission within church communities and spent their time outside the home as voluntary service. They felt responsible for the spiritual lives of young mothers and organized home visits to persuade mothers to draw closer to the church. For maintaining an ideal Christian family, Women's Fellowship members advocated proper and regular family devotional meetings that would teach children to follow moral conduct within daily lives. They argued that mothers were fully responsible for conducting family devotions, even if the father was irresponsible or exhibited poor moral conduct. They inspired women through the

Bible verse: 'Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives' (Peter 3:1-2). They encourage women to stay humble and committed to convincing their irresponsible husbands, the recognized heads of families. This situation reinforces a persistent belief in accepting the husband's undesirable behavior as something women and wives must learn to live with, and internalize gender roles that expect women to bear hardships, adjust to difficulties, remain patient, and not question her lot in life. Instead of questioning dominant male authority, the Women's Fellowship suppressed other women who attempted to take charge of their families, arguing that a woman must respect the head of the family because God approved men's authority in the family.

The Women's Fellowship believed that adjusting to dress code was important in maintaining women's moral life. In 2010, they issued a notification regarding dress code at church weddings. In this statement, churchwomen said that the best way of promoting a traditional dress code was to endorse traditional bridal dresses. To this end, they recommended the Mizo bride's dress to combine a clean white cotton blouse with the traditional Mizo *puan* [women's attire]. The statement indicated church disapproval of wide-open necks, open backs, and sleeveless dresses that exposed too much of the female body and perceived immoral conduct. Their teaching about ideal Christian families encouraged mothers to stay at home and not work outside, and to protect children from social evils like alcohol and drugs. Most women leaders, advocating young mothers to stay at home and not earn, themselves belonged to elite family backgrounds. Many were retired from government services, and could spend quality time outside the home. When one examines the identity of those women, who become leaders in the church, it is apparent from interviews that most were married to pastors or church elders. These women naturally claimed that their husbands and families were supportive of their work, and none of them complained about difficulties at home. Additionally, some women leaders belonged to well-respected church families. Very few women were appointed to leadership positions, based simply on their hard work.

The Solidification of a subordinate gendered role for women within the church

In 1978, Ms. Saptawni, daughter of a prominent pastor Rev. Liangkhaia, was elected as a church elder in the Mission Veng church. Though she won two-thirds of majority among church members, the Church Assembly of 1979 disapproved the ordination of a female elder, notwithstanding the fact that she was a famous figure in the church, and politically influential as the first Mizo woman nominated as a member of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly in 1972. Her presence signaled the importance of religion in politics, as she introduced devotions within the

schedule of the Legislative Assembly. Though she died in 1998, her life story continues to remain inspiring for many women till today. She became the first and remained the last elected female church elder in the Mizoram Presbyterian Church. The church's objection to Ms. Saptawni's ordination was based on the absence of female church elder in history. In this regard, interviews with senior and prominent Pastors, elders and leaders of the Women's Fellowship revealed interesting information. Two senior members, Mrs. Lalnguri and Mrs. Biakchhingi who had witnessed the church's denial of Ms. Saptawni in 1978, spoke out against the church decision. Being a close friend of Saptawni, Mrs. Lalnguri said: "church authority was to blame for rejecting divine will. Though the church had offered a fervent prayer to elect an ideal church elder, the church authority had rejected the prayer because the elder in question had been a woman". She declared that it was the church and not God, who had rejected Mrs. Saptawni. Mrs. Biakchhingi expressed admiration for the way Saptawni handled her rejection and said: "despite the church's reluctance to ordain her as elder, she remained silent and dedicated her entire life to the church mission". Two leaders (while participating as delegates at the North East Indian Christian Council Women's Assembly – NEICCWA) said that they felt bad witnessing female pastor's from other churches administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, when qualified female theologians of their own church could not do so. Since the denial of Ms. Saptawni ordination as church elder in 1979, there have been repeated attempts by church leaders to criticize pregnant women and declare them unfit for administering sacraments, even though Ms. Saptawni remained single throughout her life. In response to the church decision, Rev. Lalsawma, the first Mizo, who was awarded an honorary doctorate in theology, said that there had been no female church elder in the history of the Mizoram Presbyterian church. Senior Pastor Rev. Remthanga and Elder Lalthlengliana endorsed this argument as a justification for not ordaining female Pastors and elders, and not ordaining Ms. Saptawni, and this church decision on female ordination remains unchanged since that time.

In 1986, six women theologians requesting ordination at the Synod officer's meeting received no response. In 2006, Prof. Vanlaltlani, a teaching faculty member at the Aizawl Theological College submitted an application to the local church for the post of probationary Pastor. However, she was rejected, since there are rules for the appointment of a probationary Pastor. At first, the applicant needs approval from the local church committee, where he is primary member of a local church. After approval from the local church committee, the application must be forwarded to the concerned pastorate committee and then finally to the church assembly for consideration in the Synod Pastoral Committee. Considering these various steps in the application for probationary Pastor, Prof. Vanlaltlani was rejected from the very first stage of the application process in the local church (Vanlaltlani, 2009:129). A proposal about female ordination was twice discussed in the Synod Assembly of 2001 and 2011, but this was rejected both times. There were strong opinions among a majority of delegates in both assemblies that even

if the assembly approved female pastoral ordination, society was not ready to accept female pastors. Rev. Remthanga, a senior Pastor, currently working as Finance officer at the Synod upon my interview said, "because there has been no female pastor in the past, it is difficult to adopt a new practice that has never been done before". He added that although female pastoral ordinations were discussed only twice in the Synod Assembly of Mizoram, the question had never been raised at the highest assembly of the Presbyterian church of India.

Although some female theologians raised concerns about the denial of female pastoral ordination, Mrs. Nghakthuami, teaching faculty at Aizawl Theological College, recognized strong traditional gender bias among the Mizos, as a major hurdle in the way of female pastoral ordination. She argued that the denial of ordination for women was contrary to God's word and that church leaders had taken their stand because of an undue influence of traditional culture (Nghakthuami, 2014:51-62). She based her arguments on St. Paul's statement: 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Galatians, 3:28). According Mrs. Lalpianthangi, a woman theologian, the lack of support for female pastoral ordination was a major obstacle and this is, moreover, very hard to change because there is no space, within or outside the church, for women's emancipation. She recommended the need to develop a feminist understanding of gender roles in the church to make women aware of how everyday practices rendered them subordinate. Without support from other women, the voices of change raised by women theologians, is considered selfish, in contrast to the Christian morality of 'selflessness.' Therefore, from the viewpoint of female theologians, it was more indigenous traditions and social customs, rather than theological prohibitions that prevented the ordination of women (Cazziol, 1992:80-81).

To understand women's attitudes towards female Pastoral ordination, 35 interviews were conducted with female leaders of the Central Women's Fellowship. A majority of them was not ready to accept a female Pastor. And they did not want women to administer sacrificial rituals like sacraments and baptism in the church. Others, who supported female ordination, were critical of female theologians arguing that only a few and selected number of leaders could qualify as Pastors. For some, to find a qualified female Pastor with the capacity to manage various church communities was a difficult task. Others supported female theologians in obtaining the privileges and benefits of an ordained Pastor, but not to work as Pastors, assigned with the administration of churches. As for the current situation, it is obvious that without the support of women in the church, female theologians, who speak out in favor of ordination, are considered promoters of their own status without acknowledging the need to overcome gender inequality in the church. From interview responses it can be argued that modern churchwomen have fixed ideas about the roles of women in the church,

and most do not believe that women should be ordained. In contrast, retired Central Women's Fellowship Committee Members strongly condemned the church for rejecting Ms. Saptawni, who deserved to be ordained. There are hence, different ideas about the ordination of female pastors or elders in the church. As a result, any attempt to deal with equality in the church is met with unresponsiveness and silence. In addition, church teachings have reinforced ideas about woman's proper role of obedience and service. Pastors and church elders generally preach that the Bible endorses women's subordinate position in the church (Khiangte, 1997:41). And in fact, church communities fail to recognize that the ordination of qualified women pastors would only enrich Christian faith and practice (Cunha, 1995:85-86).

Conclusion

It almost seems like the Women's Fellowship gains no recognition for their achievements, other than from the 'handful of rice' project. However, once the rice is converted into money, church authorities decide how it is spent. Male dominated decision-making in the church demarcates the utilization of money, without any input from churchwomen. Local women have been excluded from power and decision-making processes, since Christianity came to Mizoram and one explanation for this is their internalization of indigenous patriarchal culture. The ban on female ordination and the underutilization of women theological graduates in the church, combined with the decision of phasing-out Bible Women has limited the role of women in the church. Instead, women are praised and rewarded for essentialist roles that relegate them to subordinate leadership positions within church hierarchy. For some women, this has been empowering because it gives them power over younger women. But for others, this has effectively subverted feminist ideas through the notion of an 'ideal Christian family' that dominates women's lives.

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Attitudinal survey conducted to 35 leaders of Central Women's Fellowship to understand women's fellowship view of women's legitimate participation in the church.

Bharatiya Pooja: Worshiping Jesus Using Hindu Methods

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Abstract

The paper is dedicated to the Indian Christian Ashram Movement and to the liturgy of *Bharatiya Pooja* that represents the unique phenomenon of a systematic synthesis between Christianity and other elements of religious theory and practice adapted from Hinduism. Representatives of the movement are mostly Christian monks known as Christian *Sannyasis*. These Christian *Sannyasis* live lifestyles that are, in many aspects, similar to their counterparts amongst Hindu renouncers and ascetics. The first part of the paper introduces the historical context that predetermined the birth and development of the movement and the second part presents and interprets the ethnographic data collected during field research at the Kurishumala Ashram in Kerala. The article pays special attention to *Bharatya Pooja*, the mass held at Kurishumala Ashram, conducted by Christian monks, and discusses its many aspects that as yet retain Hindu ways of religious worship. The final part of the article discusses questions of religious authenticity within Indian Christianity.

Keywords: Bharatiya Pooja, Christian Ashram Movements, Christian *Sannyasis*, Christianity, Hinduism

Introduction

The aim of this article is to describe a unique form of Christian liturgy called *Bharatiya Pooja*, conducted in the Kurishumala Ashram in Kerala. The exceptionality of *Bharatiya Pooja* rests in its synthesis of concepts borrowed from the Christian mass and Hindu *Pooja.* Its liturgy does not just combine the formal, but also the philosophical and theological elements of both religions. *Bharatiya Pooja* uses the terminology of Hindu religion and philosophy and the ritual is full of references to Hindu scriptures like Vedas, Upanishads or the Bhagavadgita. The *Bharatiya Pooja* was developed as a response to the Second Vatican council that encouraged missionaries to adjust their preaching to the cultural needs of local inhabitants of a region that was specific to worship. However, many Catholic authorities condemn *Bharatiya Pooja* as a spiritual experiment that went too far and exceeded the limits of the Second Vatican Council, claiming that Christianity loses its purity due to such radical adaptions specific to given cultural environments. Purists argue that instead of an "Indianization" of Christianity, we are witnessing its "paganization" (See Kulanday, 1985). Therefore, unsurprisingly, Kurishumala is the only place in the world where performance of the *Bharatiya Pooja* is allowed by the Catholic

authorities. Since discussions about liturgy mentioned above are inseparable from the Christian Ashram Movement and Christian *Sannyasis*[1], monks who adapted the lifestyle of Hindu renouncers, a historical background of this Ashram movement and the approaching of Christian goals through Hindu practical and philosophical methods needs elucidation. The second part of the study draws from ethnographic field research at the Kurishumala Ashram conducted in 2015, describing *Bharatiya Pooja*, with additional commentaries and explanations of the most intriguing encounter between Christian and Hindu ritual elements. It is necessary to bring to the attention of readers that due to certain limitations I do not claim to provide a "screenplay" of the *Bharatiya Pooja.* The description of the liturgy is selective, and many details of the mass that are considered irrelevant for detecting influences of Hindu rituals are omitted. My informants consisted of Kurishumala monks, and two visitors to the ashram from India and France, who arrived here for a spiritual retread. The semi-structured interviews I used, addressed all segments of Kurishumala´s hierarchy, from novices to ashram´s abbot. Lastly, I conducted an additional interview with one of the authors of the Malayalam *Bharatiya Pooja*, who was a professor at the Dharmaram Vidiya Kshetram University in Bangalore. The interviews I conducted were taped, and the *Bharatiya Pooja* was itself video recorded. Another important tool for data collection about the *Bharatiya Pooja* consisted of participant observation in addition to the other activities of Kurishumala´s community life. Lastly, the ashram´s internal document that detailed the "scenario" of its liturgy constituted an important source for the study of *Bharatiya Pooja*.

The Historical Background of the Christian Ashram Movement and Bharatiya Pooja

The second Vatican council (1962–1965) had introduced profound changes to the approach of the Catholic Church towards non-Christian religions. While the Vatican document titled *Nostra Aetate* recognized spiritual truth to also be present in non-Christian religions, which contained the "seeds of gospel", the document anticipated salvation through Jesus at the same time, in a manner that was similar to the Old Testament. The *inculturation*, the formal adaptation of Christian missions to local cultural traditions and regional customs became the legitimate methods of evangelization for missionaries. In reality, attempts to "Indianize" Christianity had preceded the council by centuries. The first pioneer of the formal adaptation of Christianity to Indian culture, was the 17th century Italian Jesuit, Roberto de Nobili. As a strategy of convincing Hindus to convert to the Christian faith, De Nobili decided to adapt to certain Brahmin customs. He became a vegetarian; he wore the *yajnopavita*, the sacred thread of twice born *dvijas*; and he wore the *sikha*, a long lock of hair on the top of one's head. He founded a missionary center at Madurai, which is considered the first Christian ashram in India (See Cronin, 1959).

The next important personality who synthetized Christianity with Hinduism was Bhavani Charan Banerjee (1861–1907). After his conversion from Hinduism to

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[1] The term *Sannyasi* is derived from the term *Sannyasa* which means „the life state of renounciation of the mundane world".

Catholicism (although he converted initially to the Anglican Church), he began introducing himself as Brahmabandhav Upadhyay. Banerjee also published a magazine titled *Sophia*, in which he presented his vision of Indian Christianity, focusing on the Indian philosophic system of Advaita Vedanta. The Advaita Vedanta represents a monistic, non-dualistic approach to reality that is constituted by one essence, or one principle. Differences between objects are illusory, and the human beings should not view objects as divided, different or as individual entities. Probably his most important contribution to the discourse of the Christian-Hindu synthesis was the Advaitic interpretation of Trinitarian theology. Upadhyay considered the Holy Trinity as the perfect illustration of the teachings of Advaita, since it expresses different entities that actually share the same essence. Upadhyay identified the Holy Trinity within Indian philosophical concepts as *sat* (being), *chit* (consciousness) and *ananda* (bliss). In Upadhyay´s view, while *sat* represented the Father; *chit* represented the Son and *ananda* was the Holy Spirit (Nayak 2008: 107–125). Upadhyay´s vision of Indian Christianity resonated with the institution of *Christian Sannyasis*, who would, similarly to their Hindu counterparts, renounce the mundane world and live in constant prayer and meditation. In accordance with the Bengal renaissance trend, of founding (neo)Hindu *ashrams*, Upadhyay expected the Christian *Sannyasis* to be concentrated in *ashram*s (See Thomas 1969). And it is due to this idea that Upadhyay is considered the father of the official 20th century Movement of Christian Ashrams.

The pioneers of the Movement also consisted of European Catholic monks, Jules Monchanin and Henry Le Saux. In 1950 they fulfilled their common vision of founding the Saccitananda ashram (known also as Shantivanam) in Tamil Nadu, where they planned to develop a community of Christian *Sannyasis* (renouncers). Mirroring Hindu *Sannyasis*, they adapted new *Sannyasi*-like names. Monchanin became Swami Paramarupyananda and Le Saux took the name Swami Abhishiktananda. However, Abhishiktanda was so deeply fascinated with the life and teaching of Hindu *sadhus* and gurus, that he started to prefer the lifestyle of the wandering *sadhus*, accompanied by his Hindu counterparts. There is not enough space to introduce the breath-taking story of this man[2], but let me note that he considered Hindu Advaitin *sadhu* Swami Gnanananda Giri as his guru, accepting initiation (*diksha*) from him (Abhishiktananda, 2012: 95). In 1955 the Saccidananda Ashram was visited by Cistercian monk Francis Mahieu, who has later proved as crucially important for the development of the Christian Ashram Movement. Mahieu shared his profound intellectual interest in Hindu religion and philosophy with Monchanin and Le Saux, but he had a different idea about the organization of the ashram community. In 1958 they founded the Kurishumala ("the Mountain of the Cross" in Malayalam language) Ashram in the mountains of Western Ghats in the state of Kerala. Mahieu became the abbot and started to use the title *achariya* which refers to the founder of the spiritual lineage *sampradaya* or religious school (See Mahieu-De Praetere, 2008).

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[2] For a reader interested in the life of Swami Abhishiktananda I recommend Oldmeadow´s publication focusing on this personality (2008).

As we see, the Second Vatican council did not initiate the "Indianization" of Christianity, which was ongoing, but rather presented approval for its existence and Indian theologians reacted to this council almost immediately. In 1967 the National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Center (NBCLC) was established and the key personality of this center was Tamil theologian D. S. Amalorpavadass[3]. This man played a crucial role for the enculturation of Christianity within Indian cultural contexts. These attempts also resulted in the introduction of the "Indian liturgy" As NBCLC became an intellectual foundation for the creation of such a social and religious experiment. This group of theologians were the first to develop the concept of *Bharatiya Pooja*[4], a Christian mass inspired by the Hindu *Pooja*, which would resemble Indian religious traditions. While the *Bharatiya Pooja* has various versions and language mutations, the first version of the liturgy was held in Malayalam. The Cistercian ashram of Kurishumala adopted the *Bharatiya Pooja* and it became the only place in India that was allowed to conduct rituals. However, permissions from Catholic authorities was soon limited, and hence, the future of the *Bharatiya Pooja* is uncertain. According to the Ishananda, the abbot of Kurishumala, the Vatican does not approve of it, and hence, *Bharatiya Pooja* survives only due to the protection of the local bishop. The Vatican authorities view this experiment as too extreme even for the idea of enculturation, and hence consider it risky engagement with Hindu religion. The bishop´s protection is conditioned by several limitations as well. The rite cannot be conducted publicly. It can only be conducted within Ashram premises, and monks disallowed from conduct it on Sundays and holidays. On holidays monks hold the Syriac mass called Qurbana instead. In the following paragraphs I will offer an ethnographic description of the *Bharatiya Pooja* with additional commentaries and explanations, since this would shed light on the enculturation of a Christian ritual within Indian cultural frameworks.

The Ethnography of Bharatiya Pooja

The *Bharatiya Pooja* is in Kurishumala is celebrated every morning, except on Sundays and church holydays. In the beginning of the ritual celebration, approximately fifteen Indian monks dressed in *kavi*, the typical orange clothing of a *Sannyasi*, enter in procession to the modest chapel that has a simple wooden cross in its center at the altar. Monks are carrying water, light (lamps), incense and flowers. Along with the fifteen monks, approximately ten people participate in the *pooja.* These are mostly villagers employed at the ashram and believers who visited the ashram. Monks chant the mantra "*Aum, shanti, shanti, shanti*" and some among them who are ordinated as priests, bow to the altar. Similar to Hindu rituals, a celebrant sprinkles the altar and all participants with holy water. The priest then, turns east, lights an oil lamp and put his hands first above the flame, and then to his eyes. All attendees follow in the same act. Such purification, known as *arti* in Hindu rituals is conducted by millions of Hindus over the world on a daily basis. After *arti,* people in the chapel sit with crossed legs and sing *bhajan*s or devotional songs accompanied on harmonium. Amongst Hindus, *bhajan* is a popular form of

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[3] http://www.nbclcindia.org/history.html (1.12.2018)
[4] Literally "Indian worship".

worshiping deities that involves the singing of devotional songs. As I was told by an NBCLC theologian, supporting the concept of *Bharatiya Pooja*, an important part of the ritual was formed by first visiting Hindu temples and studying the principles of *bhajan* music. Christian *bhajans* were then, composed in accordance with traditional Hindu *bhajan*s:

> *Aum, adoration to you, Father, Son and Holly Spirit. / Adoration to the splendor of eternal Sacchidanda. / Adoration to you, Triune God of truth and love. / Aum, Lord of universe! Ever-conscious-one! / Lord of the universe! adoration to you! / Aum, most adorable One. / Self-far-and-near. /Adoration to you always."*

After the hymns, monks ask for God´s grace and mercy above sinners; they remind the people of the prophets, saints, martyrs and apostles and read from Old Testament and Epistles. During the silence, held in repentance of sins, the priest touches the altar with hands and then touches his eyes in the same way as during Hindu *poojas.* These activities are followed by a sign of mutual love that is not represented by handshaking, but by a short and deep look into the eyes of one's neighbours. However, this habit is common also for Latin rites in India. Before priest starts to read from the gospel, he lights incenses to the Bible and blesses the people. Another hymn sung, that strongly reminds the people sitting there of the philosophy and aesthetics of Hindu religion is:

> *O Lord Christ, Satguru of the whole world! / Lead us from the unreal to the real, from the darkness to the light / and from death to immortality*.

These verses are apparently moulded to the *Pavamana mantra* from Brhadaranyakopanishad (1.3.28) and modified for the needs of Christian liturgy. Attention should also be paid to the term *satguru* used as an epithet for Jesus, literally meaning "good teacher". The title is traditionally assigned to an enlightened person or saint among Hindus. However, Christian *Sannyasis* perceive the idea of *satguru* in a mystical way: Jesus is not just considered *satguru* and as a person who teaches the Christian *dharma*, but he is also viewed as an inner guru who teaches believers to the depth of their hearts. Jesus is also the guru who validates *diksha*, the ritual of initiating *Sannyasi*s. Alternatively, monks call Jesus *paramguru*, meaning supreme guru. After the priest reads the gospel from the New Testament, the mass reaches its peak. Similar to traditional Catholic mass, the time for transubstantiating bread for Christ's body and wine for his blood, arrives. However, in these conditions of enculturated Christianity that notably corresponds with Hindu traditions, the sacrifice of food to deity is seen as part of Hindu practices. Sacrificed food is sanctified and becomes the *prasad* while, according to Hindu traditions, the food contains the very qualities of the deity. In the terminology of Christian *Sannyasis* and their followers, the Host is *paramprasad,* or supreme *prasad*, while the wine turned to Christ´s blood is called *paramatirtha.* While the Sanskrit word *tirtha* has several meanings (e.g. holly place; bridge to the spiritual world, etc.), the closest meaning in this case would refer to holy water. The transubstantiation is accompanied by rituals, which, again retains the practice of Hindu Pooja. The priest sprinkles water into dishes and (like in Hindu Pooja) takes a small sip of water.

Then, he takes up the plate with eight flowers representing the eight sizes of the world and rotates each flower around the bread and wine. While the bread and wine on the plate, called *talam*, are incensed with the smoke, monks chant the following mantra:

> *Aum, adoration to the Lord, Eternal God. Aum, adoration to the Lord Being, Knowledge and Bliss. Aum, adoration to the Lord Path of Truth. Aum, adoration to the Lord, Life Eternal. Aum, adoration to the Lord, Son of the virgin.*

Mantras developed in Christian Ashrams Movement are derived from Hindu mantras and in most cases, Christian *Sannyasis* substitute the words for the Hindu deity in the original mantra with the name of Jesus or with some of his epithets[5]. Within the relatively long sequel of litanies and prayers there are other noticeable "fusion" practices of Christian and Hindu traditions. According to an obligatory prayer that is part of *Bharatiya Pooja* recorded in Kurishumala's internal and unpublished document, already mentioned in the introduction:

> *Because we disobeyed you who are goodness itself, we lost eternal life and dharma declined, ignorance surrounded us with spiritual darkness / Through the prophets and teachers of dharma, you revealed to us the message of salvation in many ways.*

The assertion about the decay of *dharma* apparently points to that part of the Bhagavadgita, where Krishna addresses Arjuna:

> *Whenever dharma declines and the purpose of life is forgotten, I manifest myself on earth. I am born in every age to protect the good, to destroy evil, and to re-establish dharma.*" (Bg.4.7–8).

This excerpt from the Bhagavadgita about the teachers of *dharma* who came to preach salvation in various ways, illustrates the perspective of my informants from Kurishumala who view the great religious personalities of the world as prophets of Jesus. Christian *Sannyasis* see, in accordance with the results of the second Vatican council, the "rays of gospel" in all religious scriptures of the world. The *Bharatiya Pooja* liturgy also points to *dharma* after the act of transubstantiation. The Monks pray to God:

> *O Lord of all, Source and Establisher and Preserver of eternal dharma, we pray that peace and tranquility may descend on the whole world and on us who offer your eternal sacrifice. It was this sacrifice that restored the cosmic order and re-established dharma. May all men grow in the eternal life which you give them.*

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[5] For instance, in the Christian Sacchinanda Ashram in Tamilnadu, the monks sing the following mantra: "Hare Yesu Hare Yesu/ Yesu Yesu Hare Hare/ Hare Christa Hare Christa/ Christa Christa Hare Hare".

These sentences bring to light another interesting issue about the ambiguous meanings of sacrifice. On the one hand we could understand sacrifice in a specific Christian way, while sacrifice in the context of *dharma* and the re-establishment of the cosmic order also suggests inspirations drawn from the Vedic concept of sacrifice (*yajna*), assigned for the preservation and re-establishment of the universe and cosmic order. However, Kurishumala monks are sensitive to the universe not just in the philosophical way; they also care about the world in a concrete ecological manner, illustrated by the following prayer:

> *We pray for our planet: for the air, for the rains and the dews and the fruits of the earth, for the seasons of growth and of harvesting. We pray for all living beings, that all who control the oceans and the earth, and space may respect nature and share its treasures with the millions who are in want.*

The *talam* with transubstantiated bread and wine[6] are lifted by the main priest and his assistants make a *trivithrarati* (triple arati) by venerating the *talam* with flowers, fire and incense. This act is, similar to Hindu Pooja, accompanied by the ringing of bells. The priest recites:

> *This is the divine food that comes down from heaven. This is the divine presence that gives the amrita to the soul. May this sacred presence take possession of us and may we be one with the Lord.*

There is an interesting use of the Hindu term *amrita*, the nectar of Gods symbolizing immortality in Hindu mythology. Christian *Sannyasis* view *amrita*, which once secured immortality for Hindu Gods, as an analogy to the transubstantiated bread and wine that secures Jesus-like immortality for man. The priest again compares the Host to *paramprasad* and transubstantiated wine to *paramthirtha* and after the distribution and consumption of the offerings by participants of the mass, the priest blesses attendees with the final mantra that ends the *Bharatiya Pooja* ritual:

> *Aum, adoration to the Self-existent/ Aum, adoration to the God-man/ Aum, adoration to the Holy Spirit/ Aum, shanti, shanti, shanti.*

After the *Bharatiya Pooja* is over, monks usually stay sitting in the chapel and meditate, their legs crossed. They sit and meditate in the same position as Jesus on the many pictures decorating the walls of the Kurishumala Ashram.

Who Speaks for the Authentic Indian Christianity?

My informant Sevananda was a priest and missionary in Assam. And in his own words, he led a network of church hospitals, bringing hundreds of people to the Catholic faith. The bishop of his church recommended him to take a spiritual retreat in Kurishumala for a year and Sevananda after a year at Kurishumala, decided to

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[6] Transubstantiated strictly in accordance with the Latin rite

stay on here for the rest of his life. He claimed to have a good material background in Assam, with power and a high social status, but now he has renounced everything, and his only property now, is his *kavi*. He claims to have never regretted his decision, because he feels the strong presence of the Holy Spirit in Kurishumala. Sevananda explains why he is so attracted to *Bharatiya Pooja*:

> *It seems to me that the temple is always full. Saints and martyrs are present, and they sit everywhere, even on windows. It is wonderful. I have never met something similar in Antiochian neither in Latin rite, only in Bharatiya Pooja. Singing of "Aum" is very powerful!*

Sevananda´s response to the question, why people from surrounding villages do not attend the *Bharatiya Pooja*, reveals a lot about the effects of modern religious experiments that includes the enculturation of Christianity in India:

> *Ordinary Christians don´t like our way of worshiping. They were educated to consider syllable "Aum" as something devilish. Also, our parents didn´t allow us to attend Hindu Poojas.*

When I asked Sevananda, for whom *Bharatiya Pooja* was really created, he answered without hesitation: *"It is just for us."* In this respect, it is important to mention that Christians (mostly Catholics) from rural areas surrounding Kurishumala ashram are disinterested in *Bharatiya Pooja*. While villagers attend masses in the local parish church, only those employed at the ashram attend the Indian mass here. Apparently, there are Christian ashram missions, which are more popular amongst Indian populations than ashrams, which are dedicated to intellectualist experimentations of combining the Christianity with selected elements from Hinduism.

Richard W. Taylor´s typology recognizes two main types of Indian Christian ashrams. He calls the first *khadi* (after Gandhi´s weaver campaign). These ashrams, founded mainly by Protestant churches, are oriented to *seva*, or services aimed at providing people with education, health care and improved living standard. *Kavi* ashrams on the other hand, represent the second type in Taylor´s typology. These are ashrams like Kurishumala or Shantivanam that are inspired by Hindu traditions, where *sannyasis* follow an ascetic lifestyle, donning saffron robes. Taylor claims that while *khadi* ashrams draw from Indian nationalism, *kavi* ashrams have built their identity surrounding religion and Hinduism. Taylor is aware that while this typology is imprecise, since there are ashrams combining ascetic life with social charity (Taylor, 1990: 19-20). According to my informants, generations of Indian Christians were brought up to consider non-Christian religions as temptation and devilry. The aversion against everything non-Christian therefore also resulted in negative attitudes towards the practices of Christian *sannyasis*.

The process of conceptualizing *Bharatiya Pooja* is however, not yet a closed topic within Indian theologian discussions. Although, several decades of experimentation with the "Indian masses" have shown that enculturation remained unaccepted by a majority of Indian Christians, the issue remains more complex. Despite the liturgy

of *Bharatiya Pooja* that seems an authentic form of Indian Christianity at first sight, founders of the Christian Ashrams Movement neglected the existence of an authentic Indian Christian tradition for many years before the movement. For example, experts would agree that Christianity was settled in the region by the 8th century (See Nedungatt, 2008; Neil, 2004) and that Indian Christianity has already been profoundly influenced by Hinduism through folk customs. However, in the case of the modern Christian Ashrams Movement it is not the folk, but a section among Christian elites, who try to implement elements of Hinduism within Christian practice. The artificiality of such attempts also hinted at the western origins of such a movement which had its own vision of Indian religious life that was not necessarily in accordance with local Indians. The movement vision was perhaps overdetermined by orientalist perspectives and based on the studies of sacred Hindu scriptures that better represented Brahminism, rather than local cultural practices. In short, the conception of an authentic Indian Christianity created by strangers to the region seemed entirely unauthentic and strange to the locals. Nevertheless, the idea of enculturation based on the conjunction between Christianity and Hinduism finds positive response among urban, educated and economically well-grounded Indian upper castes, who are relatively disengaged from local religious practices. Apparently, projects such as Kurishumala or Shantivanam are more likely to encourage dialogue between social classes , rather than between religious groups. However, there is another economically well-grounded group that is relatively free from the bonds of local religious traditions– western spiritual seekers. Due to its original and attractive approach to Christianity, and perhaps, also due to western stereotypes about Indian mysticism, many western spiritual seekers find new meaning in the religion that they were brought up in.[7] This could be especially documented after the 1960's, when India witnessed a massive influx of western spiritualists, disappointed with western Christianity and materialism, looking instead, for meaningful spiritual alternatives. In the 1970's, the German priest Josef Bockenhoff reacted to hippie "pilgrimages" to India, as he founded the 'Om Yesu Niketan Ashram' in Goa. The purpose of the ashram was to achieve what priests and missionaries in the West could not do, viz. bringing back lost sheep to the shelter of the Church. Om Yesu Niketan Ashram tried to remediate Christian teachings through the attractive form of an Indian lifestyle. The ashram was offering young hippies with free treatment for drug addictions and indeed, Bockenhoff also wanted to discourage the western youth from looking for spiritual answers from Hindu gurus (Sundarajan & Mukerjee, 1997: 552; O´Toole, 1983: 25-26). Om Yesu Niketan became a small missionary station intended for western seekers, and this station situated in India sought to "catch" people leaving their Christian identity, and return them to their original faith, consequently helping embassies to track and repatriate citizens to their country of origin. Unfortunately, as academics did not pay adequate attention to ashrams such as Om Yesu Niketan, we know very little about life and the social dynamics of such communities.

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[7] After all, approaching Christianity through Hindu philosophy affected a lot of people over the world thanks to well-known Jesuit of Maharashtra origin (and friend of the founders of the Movement of Christian Ashrams) Anthony de Mello. For readers interested in the life of de Mello and his philosophy of *sadhana* I can recommend the book *Anthony de Mello: The Happy Wanderer* (2012) written by his younger brother Bill de Mello.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have described *Bharatiya Pooja* and explained it as the specific consequence of a systematic missionary tactic afforded by the Catholic Church. However, it is not as though *Bharatiya Pooja* (and the project of the Christian Ashrams Movement) was a trick to gain more converts to Christianity. Despite initial motivations among its western founders, who came to India inspired by the "white man's burden" (Perumpallikunnel, 2011: 58), their deeper interest in and study of Hindu religion led to profound changes in attitudes towards Hinduism on the one hand, and to the reconsideration of Christianity on the other. The story of Henry Le Saux later known as Swami Abhishiktanda is a perfect example. While his encounters with Shree Ramana Maharishi affected his approach to Christianity, the breaking point occurred after he was introduced to Shaiva Sadhu Gnanananda Giri who became Abhishiktananda´s guru and initiated him. The changes of Abhishiktananda´s perspective after he accepted Gnanananda Giri as his guru can be illustrated by the following sentence in his diary: "*How mysterious that Christ can take for a Christian a form of Shaivite guru!*" (Stuart, 1995: 89). Moreover, Abhishiktanda himself became a guru to young French seminarist Marc Chaduc and in 1973, initiated him through *diksha* to the state of a *sannyasi.* Chaduc received a new *sannyasi* name – Swami Ajatananda and in 1975, went to the Himalayas to live as a hermit. He went there to spend ten years in silence and disappeared in two years thereafter, as yet remaining untraceable (Oldmeadow, 2008: 54).

If one were to evaluate the effects of the Christian Ashram movement, the crucial role of Advaita philosophy in the approach of Christian *Sannyasis* towards Christianity, Hinduism and religion in general, cannot be ignored. Christian *Sannyasis* who adopted Advaita philosophical perspective of denying differences between objects, also promoted that differences between religions were equally illusory. Therefore, they could engage in missionary activities or effect conversions to Christianity. My informant John Martin Sahajananda, the leader of the Shantivanam Ashram, expressed this clearly by calling the movement "Mission without Conversion". Such missions would not convert people, but rather brought them to understand that all religions shared the same universal values. From this perspective, discussions about the effectivity of the Christian Ashram Movement and *Bharatiya Pooja* as a form of Christian evangelism became useless. Apparently, the movement has lost its initial ambition to encourage people to become Christians and has instead become oriented to attracting people for prayer, regardless of their religious or national affiliation, especially those who are searching for new meanings to both Christianity and Hinduism by combining them.

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Simão Gomes S.J. and God's Human Avatāra: Religious language use in Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa

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Abstract

Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa, written in Marathi by the Portuguese Jesuit Simão Gomes in the early 18th century, is a philosophical text, presenting and arguing for Christianity and arguing against various Hindu ideas. The text is unusual in the rich early modern Christian Marathi/Konkani literature as it was written after its 17th century peak, in Devanagari (as opposed to Roman) script, and outside the Portuguese territory of Goa in Marathi speaking Deccan. It shares some features with one particular manuscript of Thomas Stephens' *Kristapurāṇa*, suggesting that Gomes' intervention is part of the reason for some peculiarities of that better-known work. The aim of this paper is to analyse the use of Christological terminology in *Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa*. I will identify probable sources of inspiration for using particular words, similes and imagery, for example Hindu sources that are recorded to have been known by Jesuits in Goa in the 17th century. I will also try to identify principles for choosing certain terms instead of others, principles that could explain for example the reference to the Holy Spirit as *spīrītu sāṁtu* although almost all other words for God, the Trinity and the intricacies of the doctrines of Christology are of Sanskrit origin.

Keywords: Marathi, Christianity, literature, Portuguese, Konkani

Introduction: Gomes in context

The Portuguese Jesuit Simão Gomes was an ingenious Christian author, writing in a foreign language in a foreign land, both of which he had made his own. He was playing the language games of the land, learning local strategies and using them along with moves he had learnt from his European Christian background. He entered into Indian religious discourses and gave them a new twist. In order to communicate his message in an adequate way, he drew on both European/Christian and Indian/Hindu[1] ideas and sources. The aim of this paper is to analyse Gomes' use of

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[1] Using "Hinduism" as an analytic concept can be problematic for various reasons (cf. Sweetman, 2018). Nevertheless, I find the term useful for denoting a number of Indian religious systems and phenomena that, although very different and often polemic toward each other, share family resemblences and to a high degree a common reference system. More specific terms ("Advaita", "Vaṣṇavism" etc.) risk narrowing the view unduly, whereas alternatives like "Indian religion" and "native religion" can give the impression that Christianity, although present in South India since at least the third century C.E. (Frykenberg, 2008: 115), is a foreign element. Terms used by early modern Catholic missionaries – like *gentilismo* (de la Croix, 1634: 4), "the law of the gentiles" ("*alei dos Jentios*") (Anon. 1559) and "Konkanhood" ("*cõcannapanna*") (Esteuão, 1945 [1622]: 32) – are

the Marathi language for communicating ideas about God in his *Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa*, written in the early 18th century. The outlines of Gomes' life are summarised by his *confrère* Joseph Wicki in a letter from Rome to the Goan historian and language scholar A. K. Priyoḷakara in 1964:

> From the catalogs of our Archives (*Goa 25* and *Goa 26* of ARSJ) I was able to secure the key biographical data. He was born in Vermelha (District of Cadaval, Portugal) about 1647. He joined the Jesuit Order in Goa on June 9, 1661; he made the usual philosophical and theological studies. In 1680 he made his solemn religious profession. He taught Latin Grammar for two years; twice he was busy as a missionary in Maisur and once he was Vicerector in Diu. He was the Parish priest for considerable time in Salsette near Goa. In 1709 he founded a new mission in Deccan. He mastered the language of Salsette, in which he also made a successful examination. He was a tall man. He died in Rachol on August 26, 1722 *(Hist. Soc. 51*, f. 322). […] Extant are two short letters of his of the year 1708, which show the status of the mission of Dessu (Priyoḷakara and Prabhudesāī, 1994: 10–11).

Dessu usually refers to the Marathi speaking part of Deccan, in modern anglicised spelling written Desh. The exact location of Gomes mission is not known, but according to Priyoḷakara it was probably around Belgaum in what is now Karnataka (Priyoḷakara and Prabhudesāī, 1994:3). Sureśa Āmoṇakāra suggests that it could be the village Desur near Kanapur in Belgaum district (Āmoṇakāra, 2017: 84). *Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa*, found in the Marsden collection in London, is written in Devanagari script, which maybe indicates that it was not written in Goa, where Christian texts were usually written in Roman script (Priyoḷakara and Prabhudesāī, 1994: 1–2). The language is Marathi with traces of Konkani, perhaps a remnant from Gomes' years in Goa. Gomes creative use of Indic words and "translation" of Biblical names as exemplified below, as well as his use of similes and comparisons taken from Hindu contexts, indicate that he was a man with a free mind. Maybe the fact that he was working outside the Portuguese territory made him feel freer to drape the messages in whatever words and images he deemed fitting without worrying too much about authorities. Working outside the Portuguese territories was perhaps also a reason for using a more Sanskritised/Marathified style (Āmoṇakāra, 2017: 85).

Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa begins with an introduction, giving a brief ontological outline of everything that is. The introduction is followed by six main parts (*bhāga*), subdivided into subchapters (*teja*). The first part is about God, including discussions about the soul and false gods. The second part continues with God's deeds. The third part is about the incarnation and the fourth about the passion of Jesus Christ. The fifth part is about the resurrection and the Church, whereas the sixth and last part treats the last judgement. The manuscript contains, apart from *Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa*, an appendix containing the apostolic creed and various prayers,

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both dated and vague. In this article, I will use "Hinduism" for referring to Indian religious systems and phenomena, excluding Christianity and Islam as well as religions like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism with South Asian origin.

special prayers for some major feasts and a sort of catechism in question-answer form. In this article, I am providing references to the edition of Priyoḷakara and Prabhudesāī (Gomes, 1994) for the main text, and to the Marsden manuscript (Gomes, 18th c.) for the appendix, which is not included in the former. English Bible quotes are taken from NRSVCE (Bible 1993). All other translations are my own, except otherwise stated.

Apart from its originality, *Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa* is interesting because of its special relations to two of the most ingenious Jesuit missionaries in India in early modern times, namely Thomas Stephens (1549-1619) in Goa and Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656) in South India. The title is similar to that of de Nobili's *Ñāna Upadēsam* in Tamil, and although the latter is a much larger work, they are both prose treatises about the Christian religion composed in a manner different from the more standardized cathechisms that were written in various Indian languages following European models (Nardini, 2017: 230–232). Gomes uses the same vocabulary and the same Devanagari script that distinguishes the so-called Marsden version of Thomas Stephens' *Kristapurāṇa* from other available manuscripts. Some of these Sanskrit-based words are also used by de Nobili. Examples are *gnyānasnāna* for baptism (Gomes, 18th c.: 7, 47, 92, 93, 147; Gomes, 1994: 17, 44, 77),[2] *Sṇābaga Krupājīḷ-nātha* for John the Baptist (Gomes, 18th c.: 93, 147; Gomes, 1994: 77), and *Veda* for the Bible (Gomes, 1994: 115). What does this mean? Although it seems safe to suppose that de Nobili was influenced by his senior Stephens (Nardini, 2017: 233), part of the similarity may be due to Gomes' intervention in Stephens' text, as Priyoḷakara has suggested (Āmoṇakāra, 2017: 83). As already mentioned, the vocabulary and script of the *Kristapurāṇa* manuscript of the Marsden collection differs from available manuscripts in Roman script. A plausible explanation for this is that the Marsden copy of the *Kristapurāṇa* was written by Gomes, who allowed himself to make minor changes in it. This hypothesis is strengthened by a verse where the Marsden *Kristapurāṇa* says that few people on "this island" (i.e. India) has recognized the true saviour in the last 1712 years, corresponding well to the time when Gomes would have layed his hand on Stephens epic (Stephens, 1712: v. 40.141; Stephens, 2009: v. II.40.141). Other manuscripts in the corresponding verse say 1600 years (Stephens, n.d.: v. 2.41.141; Stephens, 1907: v. 2.41.141; Stephens, 1996: v. 2.41.141), which corresponds well to the time when Stephens wrote the original work.

Meaning and use

Part of the theoretical bases for the study is Saussure's structuralistic theory of language (de Saussure, 1983). There a word (*signe*) is analysed as consisting of a sound pattern (*signifiant*) and the concept (*signifié*) it represents. The relation between sound pattern and concept is arbitrary, so that any sound pattern can stand for any concept. This means that it is principally possible to let a certain word mean something else than it did before, or to denote a certain concept with a new

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[2] *gnyānasnāna* reminds of similar concepts in Vārkari literature. Bahiṇābāī wrote about "*jñānagaṁge snānā*", i.e. "bathing in the Ganges of knowledge" (Bahiṇābāī, 1996: v. 103.6). There it is used in a non-dualistic discourse and closely associated with realisation of oneness with *brahman*.

sound pattern. The other basic principle in this theory is that language is a system of differences, where a concept (i.e. the meaning, *signifié*, of a word) is defined by its relation to other concepts. Consequently, the whole system is affected if a word is added to or removed from the language system, or if the concepts associated to certain words are altered.

The structuralistic conception of language as a system of differences raises the question how far translation is at all possible. In order to express the same thing in two different language systems, these must have exactly corresponding sets of signs, but two so similar languages hardly exist. As the translation theorist Eugene Nida writes, there are no complete synonyms in the sense of words with the same denotative and connotative meaning even within a language (Nida, 2002: 30). Perhaps then, one must give up the idea that translation is about saying the same thing in another tongue and accept that the best that can be achieved is saying something similar in the target language (Buber, 1976: 7). However important the communication of semantic meaning is, it is not the only function of language. As Ludwig Wittgenstein demonstrated in *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, language can be described as a game including many subgames (Wittgenstein, 2006: para. 7), where sentences primarily have function rather than meaning.[3] A word is like a chess piece. To know a word is to know how to use it in accordance with the rules of the game (Wittgenstein, 2006: para. 108). To know a language is to know to use words and phrases. One and the same word is used in different ways in different language games. Wittgenstein's idea of the language game facilitates the search for the function of words, phrases and larger linguistic units. It can also contribute to a better understanding of the function of Christian scriptures in Indian languages, when these position themselves in the row of Indian religious texts, and both explicitly and implicitly claim a certain status in relation to the same. Although the ideas of Saussure and the late Wittgenstein about language are admittedly quite different, they meet in their anti-nomenclaturistic insistence on the social nature of linguistic meaning (Harris, 1988: 7–17). Thereby they contribute in different ways to an understanding of unconscious as well as conscious shaping of languages. The real meaning of a word cannot be learned from a dictionary entry. It is learnt from its use (Wittgenstein, 2006: 350). The meaning is in the use and the difference of use shows the difference in meaning. Especially the Saussurian conception of the structure of language invites us to see translation in a Foucaultian light (Foucault 1971). The arbitrariness in the relation between sound pattern and concept makes a language system a potential play field for actors seeking to control the language.

Formless – God and the soul

In the introductory ontological explication, Gomes states that there are two kinds of things or substances (*vastu*), of which the first is formless (*nīrākāra*) and the second formed (*ākāra*). The formless substances are of two kinds, God on the one hand and substances created by God on the other. About God, Gomes says the following:

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[3] "Sieh den Satz als Instrument an, und seinen Sinn als seine Verwendung!" (Wittgenstein, 2006: para. 421).

Among formless things (*vasta*) there are two kinds (*jīnasa*). The first thing[4] is the greatest of all. It is by itself. That thing should be called True God (*satyavaṁta deva*). [People] say the names Lord of All (*sarveśvara*), Highest Spirit (*paramātmā*), first and last thing (*ādī parāpara vastu*), first root, first cause, Highest Light, Lord of the World. In the scriptures of this land several names are written. With those names, they tell bad stories of sin. Therefore, such stories of sin are not at all of the highest (*aparāṁpara*) True God. For this reason, do not think of and pronounce such names. If in this message we have pronounced only two names, namely Lord of All (*sarveśvara*) and True God (*satyavaṁta deva*), that is enough (Gomes, 1994: 14).[5]

This gives an idea of Gomes' general approach and attitude to local non-Christian religion. The reason for not using the many god-names found in Indian scriptures is not that the names as such are false, but that they are associated with false and sinful stories. Gomes seems to mean that people actually use these names or epithets to refer to the self-existent thing that should be called *sarveśvara* (Lord of All) and *satyavaṁta deva* (True God) (Gomes, 1994: 14). Hence, these names actually do or at least can refer to God, but they are not recommendable for the purpose because of their unfortunate connotations. This reveals a pragmatic rather than dogmatic attitude towards religious language use. In fact, Gomes later picks up the word *paramātmā*, which he here rejects, and says that it is a proper epithet for God, since God's relation with the world is similar to the relation of the soul (*ātmā*) to the body. To describe God's nature, Gomes introduces the concept of essential characteristics (*subhāva lakṣaṇeṁ*). To explain the concept, Gomes says that the essential characteristics of a human being are body and reason ("*sarīra aṇīka budhī*") and whatever has both body and reason is a human being. Similarly, God has six such essential characteristics and whatever has all six is God and whatever lacks at least one of them is not. Below follows God's six essential characteristics according to the main text and thereafter, in cases where the wording differs considerably, according to the appendix:

> *svayaṁbhu* (self-existent)/*apaṇa houna āhe* (being of himself)
> *anādi* (infinite)
> *āśarīrī* (unembodied)/*nīrākāra* (formless)
> *samasta subhasvarūpī* (of all good qualities)/*aparaṁpāra sarva baraveṁ houna āhe* (being of infinite goodness)
> *sarvavyāptīni* (all-pervading)
> *sakalāṁsa ādīkāraṇa* (the first reason of everything) (Gomes, 18th c.:144; Gomes, 1994: 24–25)

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[4] "*pahīlī vasta*" is taken as feminine singular (and not as neuter plural, which would be correct regarding the Sanskrit origin of *vastu*).

[5] "*nīrākāra vastāṁmadhyeṁ donī jīnasa āheta // pahīlī vasta sakalīkāṁhuna thora // tī āpaṇa houna āhe // cha // tya vastulā satyavaṁta deva mhaṇāve // tyālā sarveśvara // paramātmā // ādī parāpara vastu[5] // ādī muḷa //ādīkāraṇa // paraṁjyoti // jagadeśvara nāve sāṁgatyāta // cha // hya desācyā purāṇāta aṇīka nāve līhīlyāta // cha // tyā nāvālā pāpācī vāīṭa kathā līhuna sāṁgatyāta // mhaṇuna asalī pāpācī kathā aparāṁpara devālā kāmā naye // cha // hyā kāraṇe asaliṁ nāṁve ucārūna ciṁtuṁ naye // cha // amhī hyā upadeśāmadhe donī nāṁveṁ mhaṇaje sarveśvara satyavaṁta deva mhaṇuna ucārile tarī pure // cha //*" (Gomes, 1994: 14).

The same list of divine attributes is found in various texts by Roberto de Nobili, e.g. in a brief Tamil treatise, translated by Anand Amaladass and Francis Clooney as *Inquiry into the Meaning of "God"* (Amaladass and Clooney, 2005: 303–321). It is reasonable to surmise that Gomes new the list either from Nobili's writings or from somewhere else in his Jesuit circles.[6] I have not yet been able to identify the ultimate origin of the list, which could theoretically be either European or Indian, since it fits well in Christian as well as Hindu contexts (Amaladass and Clooney, 2005: 304). Actually, Nobili writes in his elaborate Latin *Report on Indian Customs* that:

> […] the Vedānta theologians explain just about all the divine attributes, stressing their absolute character. For instance, they show that God is a self-subsistent Being, that he is eternal, immaterial, that by his nature he is God, that he exists everywhere and that he is the cause of every being (Amaladass and Clooney, 2005: 85).

The way Nobili refers to his finding of "just about all the divine attributes", in a text addressed to ecclesiastic potentates to support his stand in the debate about the so-called Malabar rites, seems to reflect a heuristic recognition of familiar Christian concepts in the Vedāntic texts.

Like Étienne de la Croix, the Jesuit author of an epic Marathi text about Saint Peter the apostle (de la Croix, 1634), but unlike Thomas Stephens, Simão Gomes openly criticised and denounced even the most prominent Hindu deities. He uses the six essential characteristics of the True God as a touchstone (Gomes, 1994: 32) for testing the worth of the three major gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Īśvara (i.e. Śiva). He says:

> First, we need to understand one thing. Considering the names of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Īśvara, their meaning must be regarded as True God. But their deeds, according to what is written in the *purāṇas*, are certainly not those of the True God. They must be called the deeds of false gods. […] If their deeds – written in the *purāṇas* – if those deeds are in accordance with the six characteristics, then we must call them True God. If they are not in accordance with the six characteristics, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Īśvara must be rejected as false gods (Gomes, 1994: 32).[7]

Gomes is the one who chooses the criteria for testing the Hindu gods, but he tests them according to his understanding of what is written about them in their own scriptures. At this point, he does not question their existence and does not denounce

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[6] Alexandre de Rhodes gives the following similar but slightly different list of divine attributes in his Vietnamese catechism: "infinite in essence, eternal in duration, immense in presence, most wise in counsel, omnipotent in action, all-good and generous in communication, most just and inscrutable in judgment" (Phan, 1998: 232). Similar lists are found also in Hindu texts (cf. Amaladass and Clooney, 2005: 305).

[7] "*adīṁ yeka samajāveṁ // brahmā // vistaṇu // īśvara // mhaṇāyācyā nāṁvāceṁ artha bareṁ // asaleṁ artha satyavaṁta devālā phāve // tara tyāṁceṁ caritra // purāṇāṁta līhīlyāpramāṇī satyavaṁta devālā kāmāsa na ye // laṭīka devāceṁ kāma mhaṇuna sāṁgāveṁ // cha // […] purāṇāṁta tyāṁce caritra līhīleṁ // teṁca caritra sāhā lakṣaṇāṁpramāṇī āhe tarī // satyavaṁta deva mhaṇuna sāṁguna ṭhevāveṁ // sāhā lakṣaṇāṁpramāṇīṁ nāhīṁ tara // brahmā // vistaṇu // īśvara laṭīka deva mhaṇuna ṭākāve // cha //*" (Gomes, 1994: 32).

their names as such. Not the names as such are the problem, but the qualities associated with them. Perhaps not surprisingly, Gomes finds all three gods fail on all six criteria.[8] In reality, according to Gomes, they are no gods at all. Therefore, he cannot be accused for prompting people to abandon their gods (Gomes, 1994: 46). What is really to be abandoned is "the ignorance of your fathers" ("*tujyā vaḍīlāceṁ agnāna*") (Gomes, 1994: 46). Thereby, Gomes enters the discourse of binding ignorance and liberating knowledge, so prominent in many branches of Indian thought, which we shall soon see.

Now first back to Gomes division between formless and formed substances. As we have seen, the first unformed substance is the uncreated and selfexistent True God. To the other group of formless substances, those created by God, belong the human souls:

> The other formless things[9] are those created by the God of All. Among those, the *ātmā* of man is one. This *ātmā* of man has another name, that is, as we say, "*jīva*" [which also means life], as man lives [*jīto*] because of the *ātmā*. When the *ātmā* leaves the body, we say that life [*jīva*] is gone. Therefore, let us call this *ātmā* "*jīva*" (Gomes, 1994: 14).[10]

The double meaning and usage of Marathi *jīva* mirrors part of the palette of meanings of Latin *anima*, which can mean soul as well as life. Gomes uses the terms *ātmā* and *jīva* as synonymous terms for the human soul. In intellectual Hindu texts, however, there is usually a subtle difference between the two. The *ātmā* is then the true spiritual self, whereas the *jīva* or *jīvātman* is a substance of fine matter that transmigrates from one life to the next (Küng et al., 1984: 314). According to Mukuṁdarāja's *Vivekasiṁdhu*, a text relevant to Gomes' educated marathiphone audience and apparently known to Catholic missionaries in Gomes' times (Anon. 1559; Falcao, 2003: 13), the *ātmā* is in reality identical with *brahman* and hence the same everywhere. Nevertheless, it appears as many individual souls (*jīvātmā*) because of *māyā*, like the sun appears as many when reflected in the water of many jars (Mukuṁdarāja, 2014: v. II.4.28,31).

After a short Aristotelic discourse about all things' natural place, Gomes says that the natural place of the soul is before God's face unless it is loaded down by great sin and therefore sent to hell (Gomes, 1994: 15).[11] The ultimate reason for such tragedy is ignorance, and hence its remedy is knowledge:

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[8] Part of Gomes' arguments against the divinity of Hindu gods is based on their being formed and embodied, and being deadly or dying, both of which, however, in various ways seem to apply even to Jesus Christ.

[9] Here "*dusarī nīrākāra vastā*" is taken as neuter plural.

[10] "*dusarī nīrākāra vasta sarveśvarane racīlī tī // cha // tyāmadheṁ manuśācā ātmā yeka // cha // hyā manuśācyā ātmyālā aṇīka nāva mhaṇaje jīva mhaṇatyāta // māṇusa ātmyābadala jīto mhaṇuna // ātmā sarīra soḍuna gelā tara jīva gelā mhaṇatyāta // mhaṇuna hyoca ātmā jīva mhaṇuṁ ye // cha //*" (Gomes, 1994: 14).

[11] Ricci similarly says: "This world is the world of birds and beasts and therefore the bodies of each incline earthwards. Man is born to be a citizen of Heaven and therefore his head is lifted heavenwards" (Ricci et al., 1985: 143).

> If [you] ask about the first root of the destruction of this infinite *ātmā*, it must be said that the ignorance of the True God that affects man is the first root of this destruction. Therefore, so that the soul of the man who serves *sarveśvara* shall enjoy all joy, [this] message of knowledge will remove ignorance and show the way to *mokṣa* (Gomes, 1994: 15).[12]

Gomes analysis of the problem of man fits very well into Indian religious discourses about liberating knowledge, where ignorance is the fetter that binds one in *saṁsāra*, only to dissolve when confronted with the clear sight of knowledge.[13] The ultimate purpose of religion/philosophy is then to remove the delusive mirage of *māyā* and facilitate a clear sight. Wittgenstein wrote similarly about philosophy, that it is "*ein Kampf gegen die Verhexung unsres Verstandes durch die Mittel unserer Sprache*" (Wittgenstein, 2006: para. 109). That is a good characterization of what Gomes is trying to do. Certain words are likely to lead the thought in wrong directions and should therefore be avoided. "*Eine unpassende Ausdrucksweise*", as Wittgenstein wrote, "*ist ein sicheres Mittel, in einer Verwirrung stecken zu bleiben. Sie verriegelt gleichsam den Ausweg aus ihr*" (Wittgenstein, 2006: para. 339). Gomes' rejection of various traditional Indian names and epithets for God can be seen as a linguistic-philosophic therapy (Wittgenstein, 2006: para. 133). His aim is to liberate his audience from cognitive errors binding them in fatal ignorance, and show the "light of the sun of knowledge for walking on the way to *mokṣa*" (Gomes, 1994: 14),[14] the great and final liberation.

Death, according to Gomes, is a parting of body and soul and resurrection is a reversal of that. Using a simile that was apparently popular at the time – Alexandre de Rhodes S.J. also used it in his Vietnamese cathechism (Phan, 1998: 291) – he writes:

> An emperor drew his sword from the sheath with one hand and killed and destroyed his enemies. In one hand was the sheath, in one hand the sword. Having destroyed the enemies, he put the sword back in the sheath, as both were with him: the sheath and the sword. To draw it and to put it back in the sheath, he has the power, so he draws it and puts it back by his own power. In the same way, the body of Saviour Jesus was like a sheath, and the *ātmā* in it like a sword, in the hands of the divine nature (*devasubhāva*). To destroy and kill the demons that should be called enemies of himself and of human beings, he drew his *ātmā* out of his body and destroyed demons and sin. Thereafter, with his divine power, he put the sword that should be called *ātmā* in his body and became living again (Gomes, 1994: 101).[15]

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[12] "*hyā akhaṁḍita ātmyācyā naṣṭālā ādī mula koṇateṁ mhaṇuna pusaleṁ tara jeṁ māṇusāsa lāgateṁ satyavaṁta devāceṁ agñāna // yā naṣṭālā ādīmule mhaṇuna sāṁgāve // cha // hyā̃badala sadāṁ kāla sarveśvarāhujīra māṇusāca ātmā sarva sukheṁ bhogāyālā // gñāna upadeśa // agñāna ṭākuna // mokṣāsa vāṭa dākhavīla //cha //*" (Gomes, 1994: 15).

[13] About Advaitic discourses on liberating knowledge approximately in Gomes' times, see Odyniec, 2018: 35–64.

[14] "*mokṣsācīyā vāṭevara cālāyālā gñānasuryāceṁ prakāśa*" (Gomes 1994:14).

[15] "*pātchā[ne] hatyāra meṇāṁtane yeka hātāna kāḍuna // apalyā vairyāṁsa jīvīṁ mārūna // saṁvhāra kelā // cha // eka hātāṁta meṇa // yeka hātāṁta hatyāra uralīṁ // cha // vairyāṁsa saṁvhāra kelyā upara // dusaryāna hatyāra meṇāṁta ghālīto // avagheṁ apaṇājavaḷa āhe mhaṇuna*

The passage gives the impression that the divine nature is something more essential than the *ātmā*, something like a divine self having an *ātmā* which it is able to command. This is obviously quite different to Hindu understandings, where the *ātmā* is the deepest self and in Advaitic systems like that of Mukuṁdarāja even understood as ultimately the same as *brahman*.

Trinity –three persons sharing one nature

Whereas the dominant praxis among authors writing in Marathi and Konkani was to use some form of *Trindade* for Trinity, Gomes used the Sanskrit construction *trītva*, meaning threeness. The central dogma about God's Trinitarian nature is formulated in the following passage, which at the same time indicates a difference from (Gomes understaning of) the Hindu *trimūrti* Brahmā-Viṣṇu-Śiva:

> Having proved that there is one and only one True God [one] should believe that that True God is threefold, namely Father, Son, *Spirito Santo*, three persons (*tīgajaṇa*) [but] one God-nature, one intellect, one mind, one thought, one mercy, one strength of the three persons [...]. Hence the Father created heaven and earth, the Son created heaven and earth, the Holy Spirit created heaven and earth. The three persons [but] one God created all in one deed. God created all in one deed (Gomes, 1994: 21–22).[16]

Gomes treats all three divine persons as equals and attributes them with the same function of creating the world, unlike a traditional Hindu understanding that Brahmā creates, Viṣṇu maintains, and Śiva destroys. As is evident from Roberto de Nobili's *Report on Indian Customs*, this view was familiar to early modern Jesuits in India (Amaladass and Clooney, 2005: 92–93). However, it is not uncommon in Indian religious discourses to attribute either Viṣṇu (often as Kṛṣṇa) or Śiva with all the three functions. To give an example that was probably familiar to Gomes, we can look at Kṛṣṇadāsa Śāmā's *Śrīkṛṣṇacaritrakathā*, a Marathi version of the tenth book of *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*.[17] There, Kṛṣṇa has the functions that are elsewhere associated

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// mheṇa // aṇīka hatyāra // cha // kāḍāyāsa // aṇīka meṇāṁta ghālāyāsa hukuma āhe // mhaṇuna apalyā hukumena kāḍīto // aṇīka ghālīto // cha // taiseṁca jeju tārakāceṁ śarīra meṇāsārīkhe // tyāṁta hotā ātmā hatyārāsārīkheṁ devasubhāvācyā hātāṁta hotīṁ // cha // apalā // aṇīka māṇusācyā vairī mhaṇāyācā bhuta saṁvhāra karāyālā // maraṇāvarauna // ātmā śarīra bāhīra kaḍuna // bhutācā // pāpācā saṁvhāra kelā // cha // tyā upara // apulyā devahukumena ātmā mhaṇāyācā hatyāra śarīra mhaṇāyācyā meṇāṁta ghāluna // dusaryāna jīvaṁta jhāle // cha //" (Gomes, 1994: 101).

[16] "yekaca satyavaṁta deva āhe mhaṇuna khareṁ kelyāupara // tyo satyavaṁta deva tritva houni āhe mhaṇuna satya mānāveṁ // mhaṇaje pitā // putru // spiritu sāṁtu tīgajaṇa yekaca deva subhāva // yekaca budhī // yekaca mana // yekaca citta // yekaca dayā // yekaca baḷa tīga jaṇāṁlā // [...] mhaṇuna pītyāne paraloka bhuloka racilā // putrāne paraloka bhuloka racilā // spirītu sāṁtāne paraloka bhuloka racilā // tīga jaṇāne yekāca devāna // yekāca karaṇīyāne avagheṁ racileṁ // cha //" (Gomes, 1994: 21–22).

[17] According to the text, Kṛṣṇadāsa Śāmā or Śāmarāja from Keloshim in Salcette in southern Goa wrote *Śrīkṛṣṇacaritrakathā* in 1523 (Śyāmā, 1600: vv. 19.246-250). The text was then written down in Latin script and, judging from the marginal notes in the manuscript, served as a means for Jesuits to learn local language, literary style and religious ideas. Étienne de la Croix refers to and cites

with the other gods of the *trimūrti*. He creates (*rǎchitâ*) the world, upholds it (*pâllitâ*), and destroys it (*sǎuhâruni*) (Śyāmā, 1600: v. 2.2). It is even said that he becomes Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra (i.e. Śiva) and creates, maintains and destroys respectively (Śyāmā 1600: v. 3.105). Even understood in that way, common in Vaṣṇavaite thinking, there is a difference to the Christian concept of Trinity as Gomes tried to communicate it. Whereas Gomes tells about three equal divine persons that are not reducible to any one of the three, the three gods of the *trimūrti* seem to be understood rather as various aspects or functions of Kṛṣṇa. As A. Roussel writes about the Vaṣṇavaite *trimūrti*, "*il s'agit de trois personnes inégales, en toutes choses, qui, étudiées et vues de près, se résolvent en trois fonctions du même principe*" (Roussel, 1908: 304).

Gomes uses the terms *subhāva/Skt. svabhāva* (nature) and *surūpa/Skt. svarūpa* (form) to explain the relation between the three persons in the Trinity. They are "three persons (*jaṇa*) one God, for the three persons have one and the same divine nature" (Gomes, 1994: 22).[18] When the Father sees the Son, he does not only see likeness of form (*surūpa*), as when one looks into a mirror, but he also sees his own nature (*subhāva*) (Gomes, 1994: 22). The lesson to learn from the simile of the mirror is the following:

> That form (*surūpa*) [of the Son] has that very nature (*subhāva*) of *sarveśvara*, that very intellect, mind, righteousness, mercy, exceeding virtue, everything. So that form (*surūpa*) is the True Son of the True God *sarveśvara* eternal Father, God like the Father […]. The Father and the Son both have the same love for one another. This love of God should be called *Spirito Santo*. This *Spirito Santo* is True God *sarveśvara* just like the Father and the Son, as he has the very same God-nature (*deva subhāva*) (Gomes, 1994: 22–23).[19]

Perhaps a deeper and more interesting conceptual parallel of the Christian idea of the Trinity than Brahmā-Viṣṇu-Śiva is that of *brahman*, the perceptible world (*māyā* or *prakṛti*) and God (*īśvara*) as the constituting members of the tripartite word *saccidānaṁda*. In the tenth chapter of Mukuṁdarāja's *Vivekasiṁdhu*, we read:

> *Brahman* is called by the word "truth" (*sat*)
> By the word "understanding" (*cit*), *māyā* is imagined
> By the word "joy" (*ānaṁda*), God (*īśvara*) is proved
> Full of joy.
>
> *Brahman*, that is unmanifest
> *Māyā*, that is the appearing image

Śrīkṛṣṇacaritrakathā ("*Crusttnacharitra*") a number of times in his *Discursos sobre a vida do Apostolo Saõ Pedro* (de la Croix, 1634).

[18] "*tīga jaṇa yekaca deva // tīga jaṇāṁlā yekaca deva subhāva mhaṇuna*" (Gomes, 1994: 22).

[19] "*tyā surūpālā tyoca sarveśvarācā subhāva āhe // tīca budhī // mana // nīta // dayā // aparāṁpara punya avagheṁ āhe // mhaṇuna to surūpa satyavaṁta deva sarveśvara anādi pityācā kharā putra // pityāsārīkhā deva […]// pityālā aṇika putrālā dogajaṇāṁmadheṁ yekamekāṁsa sārīkhī prīti āhe // hī devācī prīti spīrītu sāṁtu mhaṇāvā // hā spīrītu sāṁtu pītyā // aṇika putrāsārīkhā satyavaṁta deva sarveśvara // tyālā tyoca deva subhāva āhe mhaṇuna // cha //*" (Gomes, 1994: 22–23).

> Within these two subsists
> The form of God (*īśvarasvarūpa*)
>
> The word "truth" is formless (*nirguṇa*)
> The word "understanding" is formed (*saguṇa*)
> Formless and formed are made
> Of the word "joy" (Mukuṁdarāja, 2014: v. II.10a.2-4)[20]

Cit, the second element of *saccidānaṁda*, is formed (*saguṇa*) and brought forth by the third one (Mukuṁdarāja, 2014: v. II.10a.4), just as the second person of the Holy Trinity, as the Nicene Creed has it, "by the Holy Spirit [i.e. the third person of the Trinity] was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man [and hence *saguṇa*]" ("*incarnátus est de Spíritu Sancto Ex María Vírgine, et homo factus est*"). *Cit* is *māyā*, which is later "translated" into Sāṁkhyā terminology as *prakṛti*, i.e. nature (Mukuṁdarāja, 2014: v. II.10a.11). A rough translation of the concept could be "the perceptible world". *Māyā* is the appearing image of *brahman* (Mukuṁdarāja, 2014: v. II.10a.3), which reminisces of biblical words about Wisdom (in Christian interpratations understood as the Son)[21] as a radiance of divine light.[22] Unlike the relation between *cit* and *māyā*/*prakṛti* as layed out by Mukuṁdarāja, the relation between God the Son and the perceptible world in Catholic theology is generally not understood as one of identity. Being himself God, the Son is creator of the world and distinct from the same but entered into a unique relation of immanence in the world in the incarnation as Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, there are Bible passages that, at least when read alone, lend themselves to interpretations in a non-dualistic or pantheistic paradigm. For example, the Christians in Corinth are addressed as "the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians, 12:27), and the apostle Paul in Athens approvingly cites "one of your own poets" as saying about God: "In him we live and move and have our being" and "we too are his offspring" (Acts, 17:28). However, Gomes did not elaborate on the apparent but perhaps deceptive similarities between the concepts of Trinity and *saccidānaṁda*. In fact, the first prominent author to correlate the two concepts may have been Brahmo Samaj reformer Keshub Chandra Sen (1838-1884) in his lecture "That Marvelous Mystery – the Trinity" as late as 1882 (Rigopoulos, 2019).

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[20] "*sat śabdeṁ brahma bolije / cit śabdeṁ māyā kalpīje / ānaṁdu śabdeṁ īśvaru pratipādije / ānaṁdamaya // brahma teṁ avyākṛta / māyā teṁ biṁba ābhāsata / yā dohīṁcā aṁtarī varttata / īśvararūpa // satpada teṁ nirguṇa / citpada teṁ saguṇa / saguṇanirguṇa nirmāṇa / kīje ānaṁdapadeṁ //*" (Mukuṁdarāja, 2014: v. II.10a.2-4).
[21] Gomes also writes that the Son is the wisdom or knowledge (*gnāna*) of the Father ("*tyo putra pityāceṁ gnāna*") (Gomes, 1994: 23).
[22] "He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word" (Hebrews, 1:3); "For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness" (Wisdom, 7:26).

The Spirit

In modern Marathi, the Holy Spirit is usually called *pavitra ātmā*, *pavitra* often translated as "holy".[23] In early modern Christian literature, however, the word *ātmā* is usually not used for the Holy Spirit, and Bror Tilliander has made a similar observation about Christian Tamil literature (Tilliander, 1974: 251). Instead, *ātmā* is reserved for the soul and the Holy Spirit is referred to with a Portuguese loan word as *Spirito Santo*. A plausible explanation for this is a perceived risk of blurring the distinction between God and man, since *ātmā* easily comes along with an idea of the individual soul as identical with the ultimate *brahman* or *paramātman*, an idea well articulated by Mukuṁdarāja.[24] Even for Gomes there is a certain affinity between God and the human soul. God created man in his own image, and therefore the human soul is triune like God:

> So the True God *sarveśvara* is one in threehood (*trītva*), namely Father, Son and *Spirito Santo*, three persons one True God. In the same way, the human *ātmā*, being one, has three parts, namely memory, intellect and will. The three parts of the *ātmā* became one *ātmā* – therefore it became like the *svarūpa* of the True God (Gomes, 1994: 52).[25]

The relation between God and the human soul for Gomes, however, is one of similitude and not of identity. This point was apparently too important to risk a misunderstanding because of an inappropriate choice of terminology.

Early modern Jesuite missionaries in Japan made similar considerations, as we learn from a letter written by Baltasar Gago in 1555, here in a translation provided by Stefan Kaiser:

> These [Buddhist] Japanese have a number of words which they use in their sects. For a long time we preached them the truth through the medium of these words. Once I had become aware of them, however, I changed them immediately because, if one wishes to treat the truth with words of error and lies, they impart the wrong meaning. For all words, therefore, which I realised to be damaging, I teach them our own words. Even just the things that are new require new words. Besides, theirs have in essence very different meanings from what we mean (Kaiser, 1996:10).

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[23] Probably the word *pavitra* was not the problem, since Gomes uses it elsewhere (e.g. Gomes, 1994: 103). In the beginning of Stephens' *Kristapurāṇa* we even find the phrase *spīrītā pavītrā pāvanā* (Stephens, 2009: v. I.1.12).

[24] This view is for example clearly expressed in Mukuṁdarāja's explanation of the famous phrase *tattvamasi* ("You are that"): "The word *tat* means the supreme *ātmā*; the word *tvam* means the human soul (*jīvātmā*); the oneness of these both is expressed by the word *asī*" ("*tatpadācā arthu paramātmā / tvaṁpadācā arthu jīvātmā / yā ubhayāṁsi tadātmā / boleṁ asi pada //*") (Mukuṁdarāja, 2014: v. II.1.7).

[25] "*mhaṇaje satyavaṁta deva sarveśvara yekaca āstāṁ trītva hounī āhe kīṁ mhaṇaje pita // putra // spīrītu sāṁtu // tīgajaṇa yekaca satyavaṁta deva // cha // taiseṁca māṇusācā ātmā yekaca āstāṁ // tyālā tīna bhāga āheta // mhaṇaje yāda // matī // khuśī // tīna ātmyāce bhāga yeka ātmā jhālā // mhaṇuna satyavaṁta devācyā svarūpāsārīkhā jhālā // cha //*" (Gomes, 1994: 52).

However, Gomes sometimes writes in ways that seem to blur the distinction between God and creation in exactly the same way as the choice of terminology for the Holy Spirit apparently serves to avoid. In order to explain God's sixth charasteristic, that of being all-pervading, Gomes tells a simile of God as the root and the world as the tree:

> The one and only first root of all this is the True God. The root is self-existent and through it several things come to be. Hence, all things have come out of it, and are of it. If there were no root, everything would fall and nothing come to be (Gomes, 1994:25).[26]

The simile of God as the root of everything that exists seems to have been common at the time. For example, it had already been used by Alexandre de Rhodes S.J in his Vietnamese *Cathechismus* from 1651 (Phan, 1998: 224–225). Interestingly, it gives the impression that the creation grows out of God as a sort of emanation. The impression that God and creation are organically connected is further strengthened in another simile, comparing God and creation to the human soul and body:

> Your *ātmā* fills your whole body, hence eyes, nose, mouth, ears, hands, feet, and other limbs, the whole body does trade and work. If the *ātmā* is not in the whole body, if it is not in some single limb, the body does not do trade and work but becomes like a log. Therefore, [they] call the True God *paramātmā*. In other words, like the *ātmā* fills the whole body and gives the limbs life (*jīva*) to do trade and business, so the True God fills the whole heaven and earth and all things do their work (Gomes, 1994:28).[27]

This passage from *Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa* apparently blurs the distinction between God and creation even more by introducing the term *paramātmā* ("the highest soul"), as a legitimate epithet of God. Possibly, the term *Spirito Santo* was so established that Gomes did not feel free to replace it but allowed himself to introduce *paramātmā* as a complementing term.

God's human avatāra

The *avatāra* concept plays a vital role in many Indian religious traditions but is not common in early modern Christian Marathi and Konkani literature. That makes Gomes unreserved use of the term even more interesting. Gomes describes Jesus Christ as God's true human *avatāra*, who came to remove the sins of man.

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[26] "*hyā sakaḷāṁsa yeka ādī muḷa satyavaṁta deva āhe // muḷa apaṇa hoūnī āstāṁ tyāceṁ adīṁ aṇika vasta vhotī // mhaṇuna avagheṁ tyāpāsuna āle // aṇika tyāpāsuna āheta // muḷa nāhīṁ tara avagheṁ paḍuna kāhīṁ nāhīṁ hoīla // cha //*" (Gomes, 1994: 25).

[27] "*tujā ātmā tujyā śarīrāṁta avaghā bharalā // mhaṇuna ḍoḷe // nāka // toṁda // kāna // hāta // pāye // aṇika avayeva // avagheṁ śarīra dhaṁdā kāma karateṁ // avaghyā śarīrāṁta ātmā nāhīṁ tara // koṇa yeka āvayevālā nāhīṁ tara // āvayeva dhaṁdā kāma karīnāstāṁ lākudā sārīkheṁ hoīla // mhaṇuna satyavaṁta devālā paramātmā mhaṇuna sāṁgyāta // mhaṇaje ātmā avagheṁ śarīra bharūna avaghyā jaiseṁ āvayevāṁlā dhaṁdā kāma karāyālā jīva*[27] *deto // taiseṁca satyavaṁta deva avagheṁ paraloka // bhuloka bharūna avaghyā vastā apale kāma karatyāta // cha //*" (Gomes, 1994: 28).

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Sarveśvara made human *avatāra*, took the name Jesus Christ, and gave his life for the good of man (Gomes, 1994: 105).[28]

The idea of God taking human shape as such was not new to the Indian audience. The stories of Jesus' birth by Mary is in many ways like stories of Kṛṣṇa's birth by Devakī. Like king Herod was awaiting the birth of the Messiah with fear and wanted to kill him before he grow, so king Kaṁsa wanted to kill Kṛṣṇa before he got big enough to kill him according to the foretelling. Like the shephards and the three kings came to see the newborn Jesus in the stable, so the gods (Brahmā, Indra and Brahaspati) came to Vasudeva's house to praise the newborn Kṛṣṇa (Śyāmā, 1600: v. 3.33). Then, like the infanticide in Bethlehem through king Herod missed the intended target, so king Kaṁsa killed other children in place of Kṛṣṇa (e.g. Śyāmā, 1600: v. 4.3ff.). In fact, even Gomes' claim that the *avatāra* is *sarveśvara* himself fits nicely in this picture. Even the child Kṛṣṇa is said to be *parabrahma* itself (Śyāmā, 1600: vv. 3.57-58). He may appear small, but in reality, he is *īśvara* (Śyāmā, 1600: v. 6.32). As there are stories about the worldly parents of *avatāra*s like Kṛṣṇa or Rāma, Christianity provides a story about Jesus' mother Mary. In accordance with Catholic tradition, Gomes refers to Mary as mother of God or literally God-mother (*devamātā*) (Gomes, 1994: 64, 75, 111) and also "mother of *sarveśvara*" ("*sarveśvarācī mātā*") (Gomes, 1994: 67, 72). The story includes the story of the Annunciation, where the archangel Gabriel tells Mary:

> The *Spirito Santo sarveśvara* will descend upon you. The power (*hukuma*) of *sarveśvara* will throw its shadow upon you. Therefore, the one born from you will be called blessed Son of *sarveśvara* (Gomes, 1994: 66).[29]

The corresponding Bible verse is Luke, 1:35,[30] in the words of Vulgata (Bible, 1969):

> *Et respondens angelus dixit ei Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi ideoque et quod nascetur sanctum vocabitur Filius Dei*

Obviously, it is the phrase *virtus Altissimi* that is translated as *sarveśvarāceṁ hukuma*. The phrase is interesting as it uses the Arabic word *hukuma* instead of Sanskrit word *śakti*, which would have contributed with many associations that would seemingly fit quite well in the context of God manifesting himself as man. In *Vivekasindhu*, Mukuṁdarāja explains that *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are the words used in *sāṁkhya* for *parabrahma* and *māyā*. *Prakṛti*, often translated as 'nature', is then, according to his view, "*puruṣa*'s own *śakti*" ("*he māyā mūla prakṛti / puruṣācī nijaśaktī*"). (Mukuṁdarāja, 2014: vv. 3.45-46). He also says that "*mahāmāyā* is the Lord's *śakti*" ("*prabhūcī śakti māhāmāyā*") (Mukuṁdarāja, 2014: v. II.9.18).

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[28] "*sarveśvara māṇusa avatāra karūna // jeju krīstu nāṁv gheuna // māṇusācyā baravyākrutī śīluvyāvara prāṇa dilā //*" (Gomes, 1994: 105).

[29] "*spīrītu sāṁtu sarveśvara tumhāvara utarala // sarveśvārāceṁ hukuma tumhāṁsa saulī karīla // hyā pāsane tumhātuna janmala teṁ sadeṁva sarveśvārācā putra sāṁguṁ hoīla // cha //*" (Gomes, 1994: 66)

[30] "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God" (Bible, 1993: v. Luke, 1:35).

Perhaps this kind of associations of *śakti* with an illusory nature as well as with the personalised power of Śiva were considered too problematic and the Arabic *hukuma* chosen as a safer option. The phrase *sarveśvarāceṁ hukuma* is also noteworthy as a composite term combining one Indic and one Arabic element. Another Sanskrit option would have been *bala*, which Gomes uses elsewhere when he writes about the power of Jesus Christ (Gomes, 1994: 91) or the power of God (Gomes, 1994: 34), but for some reason does not apply in this case.

In Indian religious thought there is an often-encountered distinction between full *avatāra*s or *pūrṇāvatāra*s that embody God as a whole (such as Kṛṣṇa being a *pūrṇāvatāra* of Viṣṇu) and partial *avatāra*s or *aṁśāvatāra*s that do not embody God as a whole. Gomes does not use those terms but instead distinguishes between true and false *avatāra*s. Unlike Jesus, who is "the real human *avatāra* of the True God" (Gomes, 1994: 62),[31] "the many false *avatāra*s of false gods described in the *purāṇa*s are all *avatāra*s of demons" (Gomes, 1994: 63).[32] Immediately after Mary's agreeing to give birth to God's son follows a passage that gives a lot of information about Gomes idea of the incarnation:

> The moment she said this, the true Son of the eternal Father *sarveśvara*, [himself] *sarveśvara* like the Father, became a human being through the *Spirito Santo* in the womb of that excellent, ever immaculate virgin Mary, for the sake of the sins of human beings. That means that *sarveśvara* was in the womb of that ever-immaculate virgin and composed an excellent body of all good qualities (*guṇa*). To that body [he] created an excellent *ātmā*. In that moment, the second person Son true *sarveśvara* of the *trītva* united that body and *ātmā* for himself and became man. Like he was True *sarveśvara*, from that moment he became true man. So being God, he has no mother, the real son of the True God Father. Being man, he has no father in his human nature, [but] mother is the ever-immaculate virgin Mary. So real God, real man, this [one] should believe (Gomes, 1994: 66–67).[33]

Perhaps the stress on Jesus' true humanity is where Gomes' Christian concept of God's *avatāra* differs most fundamentally from most similar concepts native to the region. Not surprisingly then, this stress is made over and over again in various Christian Marathi and Konkani writings of the early modern period (Stephens, 2009: v. I.1.22-23; Esteuaõ, 1945: 2; Jośī, 1962: 17). This generates several delicate questions about the relation between the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

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[31] "*mānusa avatāra kharā satyavaṁta devācā mānusa avatāra*" (Gomes 1994:62).

[32] "*laṭīka devāce bahuta bālaṁṭa avatāra purāṇāṁta līhīṁle te avaghe bhutāce avatāra*" (Gomes 1994:63).

[33] "*heṁ sāṁgatāca kṣaṇāmadhe anādī pītyā sarveśvarācā satyavaṁta putru // pītyāsārīkhā sarveśvara // tyāutma sadāṁ parīsuda kanike marīyecyā udharīṁta mānasāṁcyā pāpākrutīṁ mānusācyā saṁgāvīna spīrītu sāṁtā varauna mānusa saṁbhavalā // cha // mhaṇaje sarveśvara tyā sadāṁ parī suda kanīkecyā udharīṁta hote nītaḷa ragtāna yeka utma śarīra sarva baravyācyā guṇāṁnī racuna // tyaśárīrālā yeka utma ātmā racuna // tyāca kṣaṇāmadhe trītvācā dusarāpaṇa putra satyavaṁta sarveśvara teṁ śarīra ātmā dekhīla apaṇālā yekavaṭuna mānusa jhālā // cha // adīṁ satyavaṁta sarveśvara hotā taiseṁca tyā kṣaṇā dharne satyavaṁta mānusa jhālā // cha // mhaṇuna deva āstā tyālā māye nāhīṁ // satyavaṁta deva pītyācā kharā putru // mānusa āstāṁ tyālā mānusa svabhāvalā bāpa nāhī // māye āhe sadāṁ parī suda kanīkā marīyāī // tara kharā deva // kharā mānusa mhaṇuna vīsvāsāve // cha cha cha //*" (Gomes, 1994: 66–67).

How, for example, can a human woman be mother of a divine child? Gomes replies that "in his humanity he has no true father" ("*maṇusapaṇī satyavaṁta bāpa nāhīṁ*") (Gomes, 1994: 75), and "in his divinity no mother" ("*devapaṇī māye nāhīṁ*") (Gomes, 1994: 75–76; cf. Stephens, 2009: v. I.1.24-26). Maybe the most delicate question related to Jesus' simultaneous divinity and humanity is his death. How, if Jesus is God, is it possible that he dies, especially as Gomes himself writes, with address to the false gods of the country, that God does not die (Gomes, 1994: 37)? The answer is that Jesus died in his human nature ("*māṇusa subhāva pāsane*"), but not as True God ("*satyavaṁta devā pāsane*") (Gomes, 1994: 99). This is an intricate theological point that various early modern Christian Marathi and Konkani authors tried to make (e.g. Esteuaõ, 1945: 24–25), reflecting statements in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, saying that the suffering and death did not affect Jesus' divine nature, which was and is "impassible and immortal" (Catholic Church et al., 1829: 43). Summing up the question, the Catechism of the Council of Trent states that:

> […] burial, passion, and also death, apply to Jesus Christ, not as God, but as man: to suffer and die are incidental to human nature only, although they are also attributed to God, because predicated with propriety of that *person* who is, at once, perfect God and perfect man (Catholic Church et al., 1829: 46).

Why does Gomes go into this intricate matter with so many risks for misunderstanding? He has a number of important points to make. First, Jesus is true God and true human being at the same time. Nevertheless, he is only one person. How is that possible? Because he has "two natures without confusion, change, division or separation" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994: 467). Further, Gomes' use of the death of gods as a proof against their divinity requires an explanation of why Jesus' death does not disqualify him as God. Although hard to grasp, the doctrine about Jesus' two natures provides the necessary means to solve the problem.

Conclusion

Gomes argumentation about divine names as well as usage of similes and images suggests a sort of constructivist and pragmatic view on language. The value of a word lies not in its lexical meaning but in its usage and the associations and reactions they prompt in the language community. This helps us to understand the way Gomes plays with the Marathi language on grounds provided by the majority host culture. His communication of the Christian message in many ways fits well into various religious and philosophical discourses prevalent in and formative of the cultural landscape in the marathiphone part of India.

To recapitulate the main topics of this article, Gomes casts the message of Salvation in the discourse of binding ignorance and liberating knowledge. His extraordinary willingness to adopt terminology from Indian religious discourses is illustrated by his description of Jesus as *avatāra* of *sarveśvara*, unusual among early modern Christian

writers in Marathi and Konkani. Reasoning about the Holy Trinity, although deviating from the practice of using the Portuguese term *Trindade*, he avoids the term *trimūrti*, which was and is embedded in Hindu thought. Instead he uses the semantically and affectionally less loaded word *trītva*. He also indicates how the Christian concept differs from certain conceptions of the *trimūrti* Brahmā-Viṣṇu-Śiva. The use of *Spirito Santo* as name of the Holy Spirit had long been established praxis in Gomes' days, and he did not challenge it, at least not in *Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa*. A plausible rationale for not using a term like *pavitra ātmā*, which is common in modern Marathi, is the fear that it might give Indian readers an impression that God and the human soul are ultimately identical, a central thought in Advaita theology. However, the fact that Gomes introduces *paramātmā* as a legitimate epithet of God, shows that he nevertheless saw benefits of talking about God as *ātmā* in one way or the other. Perhaps Gomes' strongest reason for using the loan word *Spirito Santo* was the fact that it was established praxis.

The remarkable similarities in language use between *Sarveśvarācā Gnāna Upadeśa* and especially the Marsden version of Thomas Stephens' *Kristapurāṇa* has been noted before, first perhaps by Priyoḷakara, who suggested that some of the similarities are due to Gomes' interventions in the text. In this article, I suggest that Gomes was inspired by Jesuit missionaries in South India, especially by the excentric inculturalist Roberto de Nobili, who was himself influenced by Stephens. If that is correct, Gomes has an important role in shaping the image of Thomas Stephens and the reception of his writings in later times.

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A Socio-Evangelistic Mobilization of the Depressed Castes in late 19th Century Colonial Coastal Andhra

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Abstract

The socio-evangelistic mobilization of depressed castes was afforded by Christian missions in 19th century colonial Andhra, by advocating that depressed castes disengaged with old traditions, customs and worship. While this efforts was viewed with suspicion by some, educated members of the society accepted missionaries as agents of social change among depressed castes. Missionaries were great pioneers of education within the region, conducting vernacular and English schools for children, irrespective of caste. This combination of proselytization and reform created avenues for upward social mobility among the depressed castes especially in South India. In the light of proclaimed spiritual equality and the just society afforded by Christianity, a new wave of adherence and conversion began among the depressed castes, influenced by the Gospel – a consciousness combined with deep dissatisfaction with established order. A combination of internal and external factors contributed to reform and precipitation of change in society, as social mobility was legitimated by a desire to convert. The main objective of this article is to examine the growth in social consciousness among Mālas and Mādigas, as they encountered Christian missionaries, and were motivated to consciously abandon their traditional religious practices to adopt a new faith. Through Christianity, they progressed in education and achieved occupational mobility, striving to create social identity.

Keywords: Caste, Christianity, Coastal Andhra, missionaries, social reform

Introduction

Conversion and social change among the depressed castes[1] of Andhra Pradesh, especially the *Mālas* and the *Mādigas,* in the second part of the 19th century makes

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[1] A term used by the Colonial administration to designate those who were considered outside the four-fold varnas/castes. In the hierarchically ordered Indian society the 'caste people' were categorized as upper castes and *Súdra* castes (Backward/middle or lower castes). Traditionally, those outside the four-fold castes were called 'outcastes' or panchamas (fifth caste),' untouchables', etc. After Independence, the Depressed Castes/Classes were officially called 'Scheduled Castes' and

an interesting study for the dynamics of upward social mobility. It is unsurprising that in the second part of the 19th century, Christianity and missionaries spearheaded various social, economic, religious and spiritual reforms among depressed castes (Varikoti-Jetty, 2019). The main goal of this paper is to briefly outline the upliftment of the *Mālas* and the *Mādigas* under the influence of Christian missionaries in the context of their present-day social status, while contradictions have been created by the Scheduled Castes Order (1950). According to the order, SCs or Dalits exist only among Hindu, Buddhist or Sikhs, whereas converted Dalits are denied SC status and debarred them from Government benefits. In order to comprehend how Christian converts lack privilege in independent India, where laws push them down the socio-economic ladder, it is essential to know more about the upliftment of these castes by Christian missionaries in the second half of the 19th century. The geographical area of this study comprises districts of Vizagapatam, Godavari, Kistna, Guntur and Nellore that were erstwhile parts of the Madras Presidency (Government of India, 1909: 288). According to official records, Christian converts in the Madras presidency belonged to the Lutheran, Baptist and Anglican denominations (Risley, 1903: 387). According to the Census Reports of 1871, there were 7,670 Christians in the Kistna district alone (with Guntur) and 10,802 without Guntur by 1891 (Cornish, 1874: 102). Guntur district alone, stood at a headcount of 79,479 (Sturart, 1893: 69) and in 1901, together with Guntur, Christians of the Kistna district formed the highest proportion of the Christian population than any other district north of Madras city (The Government of India, 1909: 324). Also, according to the *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Baptists in Nellore and Ongole were counted to be 88,967, and the Lutheran adherents of the Kistna and Godavari districts stood at 20,000 at the close of the 19th century (Ibid.). Today, Christians are found in large numbers in the coastal districts of Vizianagaram, Vizagapatam, two Godavari districts, Krishna and Nellore district. As far as Coastal Andhra is concerned, a maximum number of converts belonged to the *Māla* and *Mādiga* castes, since these were the only groups that received Christian missionaries to construct a new and positive social identity, and consciously changing their lives to enhance their status (Forrester, 1977: 45). While *Mālas* were traditionally an agricultural laboring caste, the *Mādigas* were traditionally leather workers (Baines, 1912: 9). These castes had suffered social and economic marginalization for centuries and references to their 'non-Aryan' origin can be found in Oppert's *On the Original Inhabitants of Bharatavarṣa or India* (1898). The *Mālas* were more homogeneous, with various sub castes and *Jati* (birth), traditions and customs. Nicholson describes *Mālas* as '*Kudipaita*' or a right-hand caste, that allowed their women to wear a cloth over their right shoulder (1926: 91-103). Being an agricultural labouring caste, they were also engaged in the allied occupation of weaving (Baines, 1912: 9). They were known to work for the *Súdra* caste in return for a minimum wage (Dubois, 1906: 49). While the *Súdras* supplied them with cotton, *Māla* women spun clothing for *Súdras* (Ware, 1912: 82). They were known

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recently the generic term 'Dalits' is functionally adopted by the Scheduled Castes themselves. (Roth and Wittich. 1978: 493; also see M.N. Srinivas' 'Introduction', in Srinivas, 1990).

to be Saivite prior to conversion into Christianity (Nicholson, 1926: 91). The Madigas on the other hand were denoted by the name *Kārāvara*, or according to the Sanskrit dictionary, the *Carma- Kāra* (Charmakara), who were shoe makers and leather workers (Williams, 1892: 221). Due to their handling of leather, *Mādigas* lived a considerable distance away from upper caste dwellings (Thurston, 1909: 294). According to Thurston, the *Mādigas* belong to the 'left-hand caste' or the *Edamapaitavaru* (Thurston, 1909: 295). The left-hand faction was considered to comprise of trading classes and artisanal castes, whom *Mādigas* helped (Dubois, 1906: 25). Social and economic conditions among these two castes was attributed to their occupation that involved agriculture serfdom and leather handling and they were poorly compensated for their work, often being considered slaves. Traditionally, until Christian conversion, the *Mālas* and the *Mādigas* were regarded as Hindu, and they took on an important role in village festivals (Clough, 1891: 93). Despite differentiated social standing and a lack of homogeneity, these two castes were placed at the same rung on the caste social ladder.

Christian Missionaries

After the East India company permitted Christian missionary activities with the passing of the Charter Act of 1813, colonial India received a growing number of Christian missionary societies (London Missionary Society, the Canadian Baptist Mission, the Godavari Delta Mission, the Church Missionary Society, the American Evangelical Lutheran Mission, and the American Baptist Mission) that made their way into Madras Presidency, areas that included coastal Andhra. While Christian missionaries worked among natives by preaching the gospel, rendering works of mercy and empowerment possible, by establishing educational institutions, health care facilities and economic avenues, the conversion of natives remained a primary motive. The London Missionary Society (LMS) was the first to lay mission foundations in coastal Andhra, in early 19th century, their evangelism preparing future ground for missions here. LMS missionaries were actively interested in translating the Bible and other scriptures and literary tracts. A revised version of the New Testament, portions of the Old Testament and twenty thousand tracts were printed under the guidance of Revs. Cran, Granges, Hay, Gordon, Porter and Dawson (Hough, 1845: 504). While Christian missions largely worked among lower castes, some early converts came from upper caste society, such as Purushottam Chaudhary, Pulipaka Jagannadham and Anandarayer, a *Brahmin* and Telugu Bible translator. At the end of the 19th century, there were a reasonable number of native converts connected to the LMS stations of Vizagapatnam and Vizianagaram (The Government of India, 1885: 140). The missionary activities of the Canadian Baptist Mission (CBM) were concentrated in Cocanada (present city of Kakinada) from 1874 and spread to Vizagapatam, Bimlipatnam, Tekkali, Gunnanapudi, Tuni, Akidu (Akividu), Samalkota, Vuyyuru, Bodagunta, Yelamanchili, Bobbili, Avanigadda, Ramachandrapuram, and Pithapuram (Craig, 1908: 34).The CBM established a vast

network of educational and technical schools, bringing a perceptible change to the life of converts, by providing converts and their children with educational and employment opportunities. In terms of other missions, the founder of the Godavari Delta mission (Plymouth Brethren Mission), Anthony Norris Groves, established an independent mission as an alternative to the mighty government-supported mission establishments of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Guided by the principles of 'precedence of the scriptures' over 'Ecclesiastical Authority and Church', Groves and his associates worked strenuously in the Godavari delta region to proclaim the Gospel. Their wives gathered village women on the other hand and taught them the Gospel (Groves, 1869: 644). The missionaries of the CMS first came to Masulipatnam with active support from the British Crown, from where they spread to Bezwada, Kondapalli and Eluru. The first CMS missionaries were 'University Men' Robert Turlington Noble and Henry Watson Fox, who were convinced of reaching out to Hindus by preaching in bazaars and utilizing Christian schools as agencies of conversion (Stock, 1917: 102). But the slow pace of conversions made missionaries turn their attention to the depressed castes, who were eager to receive external support. This was testified by the *Mālas* of Pattametta who asked missionary Rev. Sharkey "if they were to convert into Christianity, whether they could wear the Sharai (shortpant)? (Gledstone, 1941: 7) The CMS mission won the hearts of the *Mālas* and even at present, Christian adherents of the *Māla* caste outnumber other castes. Some historians view the conversion among depressed castes as a 'caste movement', wherein caste was transferred into the Church after conversion (Manickam, 1988: 55-56).[2] Another prominent mission, the American Evangelical Lutheran Mission conducted vast missionary enterprises in the towns and surrounding villages of Guntur and Rajahmundry. Founded by Rev. Christian Frederick Heyer of the Pennsylvania Ministerium on 31 July 1842, the first converts were *Mālas* and this tradition continues (Wolf, 1896: 87). This missionary activism also resulted in the taking up of the missionary activities by clergymen, namely, Burger, Dunkelberger, Fink, Neudoerffer, Roy Strock, Slifer, Prakasam, Moyer and Gopal (Swavely, 1952: 229). Last but not the least, the American Baptist Mission (ABM) founded by Rev. Samuel S. Day was known as "the miracles of modern missions", and activities of this mission were concentrated in Nellore, Ongole and other adjacent towns and villages. The mission had a humble beginning in the city of Richmond, Virginia, in 1835, and Rev. Day conducted evangelical services in Nellore for twenty-six years thereafter, resulting in the mission being named the '*Lone Star of the Telugu Mission*' (Smith, 1883: 42-44). The conversion of Yerraguntla Periah at the mission and the admission of *Mādigas* into the Church ushered a multitude of other *Madigas* into the Christian fold (Clough, 1891: 84. Conversions took place on a large scale at Talakondapadu, Markapur, Ongole, Ramapatnam and Vellumpilly (Clough, 1891: 268). At the group conversion at Vellumpilly on 3 July 1878, a number of 2222 people were baptised. In 1882, six

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[2] During the early decades of the nineteenth century the activities of the Lutheran Church in North America were confined to two bodies, namely, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the General Synod. (Drach and Kuder, 1914: 12)

hundred villages under the influence of the ABM, contained ten American missionaries, forty-six ordained native preachers, two hundred and forty-nine un-ordained native preachers, two hundred theological students, and an estimated fifty three thousand adherents (Sherring, 1884: 410).

Group conversion movements among the *Mālas* and the *Mādigas* between 1870 and 1950 are important and also contextualized within the Indian Independence movement that led to the decline of missionary activities and the emergence of Indian church leadership. Contrary to the public opinion on the 19th century Christian conversion of depressed classes in Andhra region that they were coerced into becoming Christians, this paper argues that the depressed class conversion was based on voluntary choice, notwithstanding the consequential benefits that they might have received due to such conversion. Converts made conscious decisions about their new faith. For example, Pagolu Venkayya from Raghavapuram said, "this is my God, and this is my Savior. I have long been seeking for Him, now I have found Him" (The Church Missionary Society, 1881: 190). Similarly, Yerraguntla Periah's burning zeal for the souls of his fellow-men led flock of the *Mādigas* into Christianity (Cough, 1891: 63). In Rev. Clough's words, the converts' minds were not fixed on rupees but wanted salvation for their souls. The people pleaded him by saying, "we are very poor, our huts are fallen down, and we have not much to eat but leaves. But we do not ask you for money. We will not ask you for the smallest copper coin, even though we starve to death, we believe in Jesus, we want to be baptized" (Clough, 1891: 264). When the Gospel came, people received and accepted it; however, it is important to note that baptism was administered only after a thorough demonstration of faith (Clough, 1899: 5). In the mission stations of the CBM, frequent group baptisms were reported not only under missionaries, but also under the native leadership. It may be noticed that conversion here did not occur solely due to the deprivation of people under famine conditions. Instead, even under thriving economic conditions, the aspirants called for better ways for achieving an alternative identity through Christianity. At the end of the 19th century, the CBM had already established eighty churches in Cocanada, Kollair, Akidu and Gunnanapudi. With an aggregate membership of about seventeen thousand Christians, church congregations maintained a vast circle of village communities guided by teacher-evangelists (Craig, 1908: 258). The Godavari Delta Mission had also conducted significant evangelistic work through preaching and educational activities among depressed castes. During the construction of the anicut across the Godavari River at Dowlaishvaram between 1847 and 48, thousands of coolies were employed by the chief engineer Sir Arthur Cotton, who invited Rev. Beer and Rev. Bowden to preach the Gospel (Moses, 2004: 130). By 1880, six native preachers were fully engaged in preaching the Gospel, while three hundred converts founded a local Christian fellowship, covering some thirty villages (Sherring, 1884: 417). The CMS began evangelizing in 1847 in the Kistna District and the *Māla* village headman of

Kondapalli was the first to convert (Moses, 2004: 35). He shared the Gospel, not only among his fellow caste men, but also in the neighbouring hamlets where it was reported that more than 100 men were placed under Christian instruction (Lovett, 1899: 138). *Mālas* living in the Pattametta area of Bezwada asked Rev. Edmund Sharkey to baptize them, and Rev. Sharkey's efforts were complimented by fellow missionaries such as Rev. Henry Fox, Rev. Thomas Young Darling, and Rev. F. N Alexander (Oddie, 1977: 73). The statistics on mass conversions in the Kistna District comprised of 1,414 converts in Masulipatnam, 516 in Bezwada, and 756 in Raghavapuram (Mackenzie, 1883: 289) The group conversion movement in Andhra saw considerable speed during the first decade of the 20th century, where Christian populations grew at a fast pace of 12,855 per month (Moses, 2004: 184). The missionaries of the American Evangelical Lutheran mission too, were quite fruitful in their evangelistic tasks, beginning in 1844. Their first converts were among the *Mālas*, and in 1859, when other missionary societies were struggling to get even a single convert, the number of baptisms at the AELM were recorded to be forty-four. Besides this, there were 16 confirmations and 109 communicants. In 1867, the number of Christians under the AELM's influence stood at six hundred and eighty, with three hundred and fifty communicants. By 1894, there were nearly two thousand *Māla* Christians in Bhimavaram, who were active in the tasks of church building and consecration under the AELM. In 1905, Dr. Harpster reported that there were 11,938 baptized members at the Church (Drach and Kuder, 1914: 291 and 355). However, the ABM's group conversion movements were the most remarkable in modern missionary history. Rev. Clough was the most important missionary, to lead *Mādiga* group conversions. On 2 July 1878, on the banks of the river Gundlakamma, a large number of people gathered in a Tamarind grove, asking Rev. Clough for Baptism, "we do not want help. By the blisters on our hands we can prove to you that we have worked and will continue to work. If the next crops fail, we shall die. We want to die as Christians. Baptize us, therefore!" (Clough, 1891: 279). On that day itself, 2202 *Mādigas* took baptism and were admitted into the Church (Moses, 2004: 32). At Ramayapatnam, another 600 converts were baptized in gatherings that are described above (Downie, 1892: 115).

Christian Converts

Conversion lifted individuals and families out of depressed conditions, recreating their identity, based on their upliftment process (Pickett, 1933: 78). The propagation of the Gospel invariably involved the establishment of educational institutions, health care facilities, skill building schools and technical training, and relief measures during natural calamities (Mackenzie, 1883: 289). Conversion did not simply entail a change of religion, but it entailed many changes in other aspects of life — like social, economic, educational, cultural

and so on.   Upon being baptized, the *Māla* and *Mādiga* converts placed themselves under instruction, and demonstrated an intense desire to learn (Lovett, 1899: 138). The desire for education, especially for future generations, rather than the tending of cattle or agricultural field, was the most significant outcome of mass conversions in Colonial Andhra (Oddie, 1975: 73).   In Rev. Clough's words, converts begged for teachers to be sent to their villages (Clough, 1891: 302). Boys and girls, who had received education in mission schools became intelligent members of the community (Ibid.,: 381). When a village had an adequate number of Christians, a primary vernacular school was begun there, with subsidies received from the government. Boarding schools provided converts with opportunities of self-expression and self-discipline, and after completing middle-level education, pupils were sent for teachers-training, to teach in village schools (Wolf, 1896: 225-226). The learning schedule in schools began with the basic instruction in Christian doctrines, followed by classes on basic language. Instruction in English was also started at the primary level, besides arithmetic, geography, history, land mensuration, and area calculation, all taught in the vernacular Telugu (Morris, 1878: 96). In 1858, government schools and colleges were opened for every caste, class and creed (The Government of India, 1858: 9) and the Madras government's commitment towards the education of the depressed Castes was demonstrated by its call for equality in all educational matters, and the admission of all sects and castes within institutions (Morris, 1878: 100). The Wood's Despatch of 1854 was a great achievement for the depressed castes, as well as for missionaries, as it was the official policy on education in Colonial India.[3] In their efforts to lead and collaborate with the government, they worked hand in hand with the latter and benefitted from grants and subsidies (Sharp and Richey, 1920: 25). Christian missionaries showed the most interest in the welfare and material

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[3] The Wood's Despatch was the first comprehensive and conscious effort of the British government to take up the responsibility of education of the natives on official lines. A well planned system of education was introduced in every Presidency whose principal features were: (1) The constitution of departments in the several provinces or presidencies for the administration of education.
(2) The establishment of Universities at the Presidency towns.
(3) The creation of training schools for teachers for all classes of schools.
(4) The maintenance of the existing government colleges and high schools, and the increase of their number when necessary.
(5) The establishment of new middle schools.
(6) Increased attention to vernacular indigenous schools for elementary education.
(7) The introduction of a system of government grants-in-aid.
(8) The provision of Vernacular school books and
(9) The annual examination for government rewards
(see Satthianathan, S. 1894).
Full Ref: Satthianathan, S. (1894). *History of Education in the Madras Presidency*. Madras: Srinivasa Varadachari and Co Publishers.

improvement of depressed caste converts and taught them to sustain their livelihood through industrial training (Lapp, 1938: 23).

The educational work of the LMS was pioneering, as they opened a native school as early as 1805. Later, a girl's school and an Anglo-vernacular school was opened in Vizagapatam. However, in 1845, the Director of Public Instruction directed all small vernacular schools maintained by the LMS to be merged into one native Anglo-vernacular High School, and this school became the only one of its kind in Madras Presidency (Francis, 1907: 63). By establishing schools, and by employing native converts in printing houses, to distribute a number of Christian literary works, the LMS mission laid the foundations for educational networks between missionary societies. The initial educational activities of GDM became a path for launching the mighty educational enterprise carried out by the CBM and the AELM. Mr. Beer's Boys' School at Narsapur and Rev. Bowden's School provided converts drawn mainly from the *Mādiga* caste with education (Morris, 1878: 40). By its Jubilee year in 1924, the CBM had four hundred village schools with an attendance of more than ten thousand pupils (Groves, 1869: 314).They also ran two high schools attended by 1500 boys, one industrial school, one ordinary school, one Bible women's school and one theological seminary (Ibid.).Students received free books, food, shelter and clothing and these institutions benefitted the *Māla* and *Mādiga* students greatly Kutty, 1990: 23-24). Students earned enough to fund their own boarding and clothing, and also supported other mission schools through their newly acquired industrial skills in agriculture, poultry farming, gardening, etc. (The American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, 1922: 74). Mission schools, moreover, followed local government directives to extend free and elementary education to backward sections of the population. The government also aimed at the qualitative improvement of pupils life by influencing their habits through instruction, health awareness, recreation and discipline. Much attention was paid to the modification of moral habits that would reform social life and the environment through hygienic habits and cleanliness (The Government of India, 1915: 3-4 and 10). These measures were attuned with missionary advocacy about erradicating social ills, the four demons of dirt, drink, debt and disease and it can be said that the mission imparted education to all converts and the downtrodden (Kutty, 1990: 24). CMS missionaries on the other hand, were said to be 'school masters first' as they established a school network system, even prior to the commencement of gospel preaching in Masuplipatnam. From 1854 onwards, four hundred *Māla* children attended the village schools of the CMS mission at Masulipatnam, Ellore and its surrounding areas (Morris, 1878: 39). A school was started in 1854 at the CMS Ellore station, as missionaries observed how much local inhabitants longed for education (Ibid.,: 37). Rev. F. W. N. Alexander founded an elementary school exclusively for the converts as the *Māla*s increasingly sought baptism (Ibdi.,: 38-39). There was also a boarding-school for Christian girls in

the mission compound, where forty pupils received instruction up to the fourth standard. In 1862, Rev. Alexander's wife also started a boarding school at Ellore with nearly 90 pupils, primarily meant for converts, who were admitted free of charge owing to their financial backwardness (Ibid.). During the 1880s, the CMS maintained 84 vernacular village schools with 6,573 students (male and female) and had 180 Christian teachers (Sherring, 1884: 423). The AELM maintained an Anglo-Vernacular school which eventually became the Andhra Christian college and by the middle of the 20th century, schools maintained by the AELM at Rajahmundry became transformed into Luthergiri theological college, Women's Bible training school, two normal training schools, three high schools for boys, two high schools for girls, three nurses training schools, four trade schools (agriculture, carpentry, weaving and lace making), seventeen higher elementary schools and eight hundred and ninety two elementary schools, with an enrolment of 46,809 pupils. This extent of educational enterprise demonstrates the spread and depth of missionary influence within the region (Highland, 1945: 19). The Census Commissioner in 1911 observed, "although converts to Christianity are recruited mainly from the aboriginal tribes and the lowest Hindu castes who are almost wholly illiterate, they have in proportion to their numbers three times as many literate persons as the Hindus and more than four times as many as the Muhammadans (Molony, 1913: 296). According to the Report on Public Instruction in Madras Presidency for the year 1911-12, the government emphasized on industrial education (The Government of India, 1938: 45). Regarding improvement in agricultural work, students were required to read books on topics associated with rural life, understand village maps and acquire knowledge about village accounting systems to understand the demands made by their employers. This strategy helped students to understand business transactions with landlords, whom they paid rent and grain dealers who procured their crops (Vakil and Natarajan, 1966: 156). The pioneering educational work of the ABM in Ongole also started with the establishment of an Anglo-Vernacular school in 1867 that developed into two separate institutions; one for boys and the other for girls (Baker, 1947: 290). Rev. Clough gathered hundreds of famine orphans into mission schools and orphanages (Dennis, 1899: 395). And these schools did well in their annual examinations, organized by Madras University (Downie, 1892: 59). The Free Church Mission school at Nellore, named the Coles Ackerman Memorial High School came under the management of ABM missionaries in 1887. Pupils learnt plowing, irrigation, planting seeds and other necessary operations here, as part of agricultural education that enabled them to earn enough to pay for their own fees, boarding and other expenses. The prospect of them getting jobs as preachers and teachers after an eighth-grade degree, made parents of children enthusiastic enough to send their children to be educated, instead of sending them for agricultural labouring. In the field of female education, the Hunter Commission of 1881 recommended that female education be supported through local, municipal and provincial funds. The Commission also recommended that

girls schools could apply for higher rates of government aid, in case these schools educated lower caste girls (Satthianathan, 1894: 193). Christian missionaries also encouraged female education, for not just the depressed castes, but also for Hindu and Mohammadan women. Owing to mission efforts, the first generation of Māla and Mādiga caste girls were educated till the fourth and fifth forms, entering government service as teachers, preaching assistants and Bible women (Syamala, 2003: 33).

In the field of health care, missionaries undertook humanitarian services by prescribing simple remedies for common diseases and temperance campaigns that created a feeling of wellness and health Harper, 2000: 191) and missionary wives, who were often trained as nurses, rendered efficient assistance in treating native women Craig, 1908: 106). Women converts were also employed as Bible women to carry out Zenana work: visiting Hindu and Muslim women to spread the message of gospel, and health and wellness awareness (Burton, 1996: 395). There was great increase in the number of vaccinations in this period including that of infants (The Governmnet of India, 1902: 221). However, this was also a time for frequent occurrences of malaria, cholera and small pox epidemics, blamed on festival gatherings and flood waters that spread infection in Kistna and Guntur districts and the government sought to counter this by appointing deputy inspectors of vaccinations in these districts (The Government of India, 1923: 221 and 226). 'Health weeks' were also organized at the Dornakal diocese, where musical dramas about health were staged, and booklets on sanitation and precautionary methods were distributed (Azariah, 1930: 46).

By the last quarter of the 19th century, the British government began transforming ranked economic rights into absolute economic rights by monetizing rural economy (Dutt, 1901: 170). Traditional produce and service related occupations were disturbed among villagers and agriculture was commercialized. In addition, railways and communication facilities were also set up. Besides traditional occupations, there were new and alternative occupations, like brick-making and tile-making and channels for acquiring new jobs were based on primary education. Castes like the *Mālas* and *Mādigas*, many of whom were educated by now, began teaching at missionary and government schools, along with preaching, missionary supervision, organizing catechism classes in village churches, midwifery in mission and government hospitals, and engagement with military, police, railway and telegraph services. The apparent economic progress of the *Mālas* and the *Mādigas* can be traced in government reports and accounts, apart from missionary reports, wherein their education was used as an effective mechanism of understanding their rights within village economy, both in terms of remuneration and debt management (Morris, 1878: 101). According to Henry Morris, the author of Godavari descriptive accounts, improvements in agricultural methods benefited

not only the agricultural castes, but also the labouring castes (Ibdi.). Agricultural cooperative societies were organized by missionaries with government support, not only for enabling agricultural credit, but also for practical demonstrations that improved agricultural technology, the distribution of seeds and the use of manure (The Government of India, 1932: 64). After 1865, canal constructions were undertaken within the region and these works offered employment to thousands of *Malas* and *Mādigas* (The Government of India, 1868: 190-194)*.* Missionary societies in coastal Andhra also set up cottage industrial units, mainly for converts, who had lost their traditional livelihoods subsequent to conversion. Various small-scale industries such as printing, leather manufacturing, brick-making, aluminum work, tailoring, and lace-making began with investments made by the mission and the local government. Additionally, carpentry, weaving units, and the burning of lime and brick as a cottage industry economies were begun (The Government of India, 1917: 109). Carpet weaving factories were established at Tadepalligudem and Ellore by the American Evangelical Lutheran Mission (The Scottish Missionary Society, 1924: 259-260), while weaving factories were established in Cocanada and Nellore by the Canadian Baptist Mission and the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (Ibid.). By 1909, handloom industries were improved in ways that could gain workers profit from their work (Ware, 1912: 82) and training courses were conducted in collaboration with industrial schools that improved weaving technologies (Noble, 1930: 257). According to the 'Memorandum on the Progress of the Madras Presidency', a number of depressed castes were enlisted as sepoys, and also as cooks, nurses and horse keepers in the domestic establishment of Europeans Raghavaiyangar, 1893: 85). As per the Indian Factories Act of 1881, the government, under the department of labour, created many employment opportunities that trained and helped the *Mālas* and *Mādigas* (The Government of India, 1923: 188), in turn leading to great occupational mobility within the region (Ibid.,: 216).

Therefore, conversion to Christianity offered especially depressed caste converts a new social identity, especially with the growth of vernacular and English education that resulted in greater social and occupational mobility among them (Forrester, 1980: 77). Missionary endeavours that ameliorated the degraded conditions suffered hitherto by the *Mālas* and *Mādigas* took place on an unprecedented scale that had never occurred before. This was also noted by many Hindu reformers and social scientists of the time. According to Srinivasa Raghavaiyangar, the Inspector-General of Registration of the Madras Presidency, "the best thing that can happen to them is conversion either to Christianity or to Muhammadan religion, for there is no hope for them within the pale of Hinduism" (Raghavaiyangar, 1893: 85). In short, Christian missionary undertakings in India were not just limited to evangelizing and converting, but they empowered the poor and depressed castes through

material and educational means, thereby helping them to improve in many conceivable ways.

This aspect of conversion did not, however, leave the culture of the converts unchanged. As converts took conscious decisions to convert, certain un-Christian practices were abandoned, such as idol worship and the consumption of *tsachina mamsamu* (carrion) and alcohol. However, converts also adapted Christianity to native religious practices and ceremonies, such as at the occasion of birth and weddings Liebau, 2007: 46). In Rev. Clough's words, "Christianity brought the sword of change that had cut through the social evils that the *Mālas* and *Mādigas* had to suffer with" (Clough, 1891: 166). The Baptist Church members in Ongole practiced complete abstinence as both men and women from churches were admitted to the Christian Temperance League as members (Dennis, 1899: 120). These perceptible changes in society were noted by many such as, Carol Graham as, "cleanliness in place of squalor, temperance instead of drunkenness, a concerted effort towards clean-living, honest dealing and truthfulness, above all the discovery of the most precious of human possessions, self-respect were the outward results of inward spiritual transfiguration" (Graham, 1946: 56).

Conclusion

Missionaries set foot in India to evangelise, and received enormous response in return from the depressed castes belonging to the *Māla* and the *Mādiga* of Coastal Andhra*.* Though missionary services were available to all, irrespective of caste, large segments of these two castes made a conscious decision to break away from traditional religion and the caste system that had hitherto relegated them to degraded positions. Now, the question is, did the *Mālas* and the *Mādigas* really achieve socio-economic mobilization? While the historically verified presence of large conversion rates among these communities in official missionary and government reports testifies to this, a lot can also be accorded to the zeal for change and reform within the community. The socio-economic mobilization of Christian *Mālas* and *Mādigas* in coastal Andhra can, therefore, also be attributed to their own reformist zeal that combined with conversion and the educational benefits and economic opportunities provided to them within the various missions that were operative in the region. That Christianity as a 'social religion' and Christian missionaries as 'social reformers' created institutions for the betterment of the depressed castes is undoubted, but this growth also came to an abrupt halt, when the progress of Dalit converts became hindered by the Scheduled Castes Order of 1950 that disqualified Dalit Christians from constitutionally guaranteed protection and privileges, that were instead reserved for Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh Dalits.[4]

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4 The Constitution of India accorded in 1950 a new nominal identity 'Scheduled Castes', to the Depressed Classes. However, since 1970s certain leaders among them have preferred to use the

Several scholars have studied the plight of Christian converts from the depressed castes or Christian SCs and Dalits. The exclusion of Christian SCs from reservation in education and employment has affected them negatively and their deprivation from representation within democratic institutions, and denial of reservations in educational institutions and public employment has hampered their development. At the same time, Dalit Christians have also failed to develop strong political leadership; instead focusing too much on the inner politics of the church to safeguard their own interests by overlooking a call fight for the common good of the converts.

Acronyms

1. ABM: The American Baptist Mission
2. AELM: The American Evangelical Lutheran Mission
3. CBM: The Canadian Baptist Mission
4. CMS: The Church Missionary Society
5. GDM: The Godavari Delta Mission
6. LMS: The London Missionary Society

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term Dalits, in place of Scheduled Castes. Since this term has gained much currency in the present time, we have used this term in our discussion above. These belong to different religious persuasions. Hence Scheduled Caste converts to Christianity are called Dalit Christians. (See Varikoti-Jetty, 2019).

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"In His Radiance I Would be Cleared of My Black Colour:" Life and Songs of Dalit Christians in Colonial Kerala

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Abstract

The 'conversion' of slave castes was a complex phenomenon and there are a number of theories woven together by various historiographical schools regarding their conversion in Kerala. While social and economic aspects predominate in the study of religious conversion among the lower castes in South India, most ignore the presence of religious desires among slave caste Christians and their 'inner transformation' after encountering protestant Christian missionaries. While caste was also present in the church, experiences of suffering and discrimination that Dalits faced in their everyday lives, forced them to transcend their hardships through prayers, songs, stories, etc. These songs were, hence, not mere expressions, but embedded within Dalit resistance and struggle against within hegemonic power relations. Although, a substantial amount has already been written about the social aspects of religious conversion among Dalits in Kerala, a significant number of Dalit Christian songs have not been adequately analyzed. Though Christian songs were largely used to reach out to larger audiences during the colonial period, these also contained certain specific messages and ideas. The songs informing singers and listeners about the abolition of agrestic slavery in Travancore (1855) were important in this context. However, over time, compositions depicting the discrimination of Dalit Christians, and the caste-based contempt they physically faced, also increased, reflecting the hope and anguish of Dalit Christians. In effect, Dalit Christian songs exemplify a variety of 'linguistic' modernity for Dalits in Kerala and the Malayalam in these poems and song were perceived as being uncontaminated by the caste. Finally, Christian songs are important for Dalit history and their search for rights and citizenship in a caste ridden society. The present paper offers an analysis of the Dalit songs in Malayalam with a view to construct new knowledge that will push the frontiers of historical scholarship forward.

Keywords: Dalit, Christian, songs, caste, modernity, Kerala

Introduction

There is rich secondary literature on European missionary movements and their intervention with lower castes and conversion in south India (Mohan, 2015; Viswanath, 2014; Kent 2004; Kooiman, 1989; Gladstone, 1984). This paper is an attempt to foreground the songs of Christians as a powerful genre, contributing to the creation of a Dalit Christian identity in modern Kerala. While Christians were traditionally identified as a caste among several other castes in Kerala, it had a recognized place within caste hierarchy (Forrester, 1980: 99). Syrian Christians believed and identified themselves as early Brahmin converts from the time of St Thomas; the apostle of Jesus Christ believed to have visited the Malabar Coast in the first century AD. These beliefs and claims are challenged by many scholars based on available records on early Christian settlements that are traced back to 9th century AD (Jeffrey, 2014: 16; Balakrishnan, 2014: 372). Members of the low-caste fisher community embraced Christianity in the Portuguese period in the 16th century and came to be known as Latin Christians of Kerala (Gladstone, 1984: 57). However, it was only with the arrival of 19th century Protestant missions that lower castes or slave caste (lower caste people also known as salve caste) in Kerala began embracing Christianity. They came to be known as Dalit Christians.[1] Even after conversion in different periods of time, these three Christian groups have been maintaining the caste structure, making a division in Kerala Christianity as upper-caste Christians and lower-caste Christians.[2] This paper concentrates on the lower castes, the *Pulaya* and *Paraya* Christians who embraced Christianity from the mid-19th century onwards, after the arrival of British Christian missions to Kerala.[3]

Christians are divided among numerous denominations in Kerala, distinguished from each other by ecclesiastical authorities, historical context and differences in liturgy and theology. Dalit Christians are a significant presence in several Christian

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[1] There are some references to slave baptism by the Portuguese before the 19th century, when they baptized their domestic slaves (Collins, 1873: 48-49; Thekkedath, 1988).

[2] 19th century British Protestant missionaries attracted a number of backward castes in Kerala and Christian conversion among them occurred in different periods and after conversion, some castes gained Syrian Christian status. For instance, *Nadar, Ezhava* and *Thiyya* -- dominant social groups among backward communities shared equal status in colonial Kerala and were part of major mass movements. After the formation of Kerala (1956), *Nadar* Christians were included in OBC (Other Backward Community) category while a majority of *Ezhava* Christians became Syrian Christians. Thiyyas on the other hand are known as Basal Mission Christians. However, Dalits, no matter which denomination they joined, continued to be known as Dalit Christians, as they did not merge into other backward castes.

[3] In the beginning of the 19th century, Kerala was divided into three administrative units: the British Malabar in the northern part, the princely states of Cochin and Travancore in the center, and the southern extreme. Travancore, Cochin and Malabar were united to form the state of Kerala on November 1, 1956. Several missionary groups worked actively in colonial Kerala: London Missionary Society (LMS 1806), Church Mission Society (CMS 1816), Basal Mission Society (1835), Zenana Mission (1865), Salvation Army (1896) and Plymouth Brethren (1897).

denominations in Kerala.[4] Historians have critically explored reasons for the Dalit engagement with colonial Christianity and various theories on the 'conversion' of slave castes in Kerala exist (Mohan, 2015; Oommen, 1997; Kooiman, 1989; Gladstone, 1984). Acquiring new traditions, emancipation from social bondage andmaterial advantages, aided by changes in external behavior represent some of the major scholastic findings on the topic (Kooiman, 1989; Gladstone, 1984). Most studies stress on socio-economic factors for conversion (Jeffrey, 2014; Kooiman, 1989; Gladstone, 1984),while Sanal Mohan's *Modernity of Slavery* (2015) analyses the experiential aspects of conversion—lower caste religious desires and their history of critically engaging with missionary writings that led to an 'inner transformation' with their encounter with Protestant missionaries. In addition, scholars were also interested in interpreting the layers of caste within Kerala Churches (Yesudasan, 2010; Oommen and Webster, 2002; Forrester, 1980; Alexander, 1971), considering the history of caste discrimination as important for writing a history of Dalit Christian citizenship. Meanwhile, the experiences of suffering and discrimination that Dalits faced in their everyday life forced them to transcend hardships through prayers,[5] songs and stories.

The paper is divided into three parts. The first part explores the historical background of slave holdings by Syrian Christians followed by the arrival of modern missionary enterprises, abolition of slavery and the beginning of slave caste conversions. The second part of this paper explores how Protestant Christian Malayalam songs were used to convey specific messages to a larger audience, such as the abolition of agrestic slavery in Travancore in the colonial period. This part argues that Christian songs exemplified a linguistic modernity for Dalits in Kerala, erasing and challenging prevalent caste-inflected Malayalam. The third section explores the context of caste-based discrimination, in which Dalits composed Christian songs that depicted the cruel attacks and colour prejudices faced by Dalit Christians. These songs reflect both the hope and anguish of Dalit Christians, these songs providing historical insights into the inner transformation of Dalits, in their search for rights, faith and citizenship in a caste-dominated society. The context of 'suffering and discrimination' in these songs and narratives constitute a significant source for writing Dalit history.

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[4] After Protestant missionary intervention among lower-caste groups (1850) was successful, native Catholic communities began attracting them too, and a number of Dalits joined these churches. It is also noteworthy that the Salvation Army, Brethren and Pentecostal movements (1909) and Seventh-day Adventist Church (1914) also had a large following in local Dalit communities (Thomas, 1975: 28-35).

[5] See Sanal Mohan's recent article 'Creation of social space through prayers among Dalits in Kerala, India', in *Journal of Religious and Political Practices* (Mohan, 2016: 40-57).

Church as a Slave Emporium: Slavery, Missionary and Abolition

Caste Slavery and lower caste sale constituted major social institutions in Kerala's ancient and medieval society. Many documents throw light on the transactions surrounding slave caste persons as commodities (Kusuman, 1973; Hunt, 1997 [1928]; Madhavan, 2012) and agrestic slaves in Kerala belonged to communities such as *Pulaya* and *Paraya* that are considered Dalit in contemporary political parlance.[6] The transaction of a slave was a legally established relationship involving several mechanisms and institutions, and Kerala's society was divided and arranged, based on caste, in a hierarchical order that ranged from the sacred to the untouchable, or from the *Brhamin* to the *Pulaya*. Syrian Christians, who had a strong position in Kerala society, and who received patronage from local chiefs, also played an important role in slave sale (Jeffrey, 2014: 16-17), as all upper-caste landlords participated in the network of slave transactions in Kerala. With the arrival of the Portuguese (1498) and the Dutch (1603), slave trading networks became strengthened in Kerala, as they also exported and imported slaves. While the Portuguese and Dutch Companies did not create slavery in Kerala, they transformed and reshaped its existing forms, introducing new ones.

The upliftment of untouchable lower caste persons to the status of domestic slaves was an important structural shift during the medieval period. Lower caste slaves entered Portuguese and Dutch houses and this transformed untouchable slaves into touchable slaves, who were widely used (Ferroli, 1939:18; Geelen, 2017).[7] The Christian conversion of slave castes was an important consequence of the Portuguese era and the many domestic slaves were baptized with Portuguese names (Collins, 1873: 48-49). Many *Pulayas* were baptized in the Latin Church of Pallurthy in 1571 (Eranakulam district in Central Kerala) under the leadership of Portuguese. They were provided a separate Holy mass on Saturdays, since they would not be allowed to attend Holy mass with others on Sundays. *Pulaya* Christian children went separately for evening catechisms, while other Christian children went in the mornings. Even feasts were celebrated on different days as slave converts celebrated Christmas on the 26 of December (Thekkedath, 1988: 23).

As Syrian Christians were major slave holders and agents of the Portuguese and Dutch in Kerala, recent studies show how slaves in Cochin were mostly sold by Syrian Christians, as part of their alignment with Dutch East India Company officers (Mbeki and Rossum, 2017: 105). In the Dutch period and on special emergencies,

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[6] In this paper, I am using the word 'slavery', fully aware of the discussions and debates it had generated on the labour control regimes in various parts of colonial India (Major, 2012; Kumar, 1992; Prakash, 1990).

[7] A church historian noted, that Portuguese women, dressed mostly in gold and silver brocade, adorned with precious stones on the head, arms, hands, and round the waist, with their cheeks painted to a shameful degree, were carried to church in gorgeous litters, guarded by slaves. When they entered the church at Cochin, they were taken by the hand by two or three slave men, since they could not walk by themselves, on account of their high slippers (Ferroli, 1939:18).

Church buildings often acted as slave godowns or warehouses. These buildings were used in the week days to keep lower caste Kerala slaves, when they were not required for religious purposes (Day 1863: 171). According to Malayalam sources, church buildings played an important part in the sale of slaves as the public auction of slaves was also often conducted in church (Kusuman, 1973: 40; Payyappilly, 2012: 1-23).[8] Sources claim that Syrian Christians had very little role in spreading the gospel among lower-castes, since they maintained a caste hierarchy, they exploited and treated lower castes cruelly. It was, in fact 19[th]century British Protestant missionaries, who were pioneers of the lower-caste conversion movement in Kerala. Travancore was the first among princely states in British India to receive the Protestant missionary's gospel. The London Missionary Society (LMS) was the first Protestant missionary society in Kerala (Edwin, 1974: 189) and William Tobias Ringeltaube was its founder, starting his work in 1806 (Agur, 1990: 497; Asariya, 1929). The beginning of LMS in Travancore is associated with a convert from Travancore called Maharasan, from the Tamil *Paraya* caste (Mateer, 1871: 260-262; Yesudasan, 1993). And in its first two decades, LMS was disinterested in working among lower castes, focusing instead on the conversion of *Nadar* castes. In 1845, LMS celebrated its jubilee in Nagercoil, in a significant event that established their work among the slave castes of Travancore. Soon they established a Malayalam mission in Trivandrum (Hacker, 1908: 42)[9] with many slave-caste-converts joining the LMS mission after 1845, making it a 'mass movement' with the inauguration of numerous Dalit chapels.

The Church Mission Society (CMS) in Travancore and Cochin were different from other Protestant movements in the 19th century, as CMS was established with a specific aim to spread knowledge about Protestant ideas among Syrian Christians in the Malabar Coast. Their objective was to start a pure 'English' mission among Syrian Christians (David, 1930: 9-10)[10]and John Munro, the evangelical British Resident from 1810, undertook responsibility for commencing with the CMS work in Travancore and Cochin. The Resident believed that Syrian Christians in native states needed reform and he requested Thomas Norton, the first Englishman who was trained as a Church missionary to join him (David, 1930: 9-10). Norton accepted Munro's offer in 1816 and commenced missionary work in Travancore and Cochin, exclusively for Syrian Christians. In other words, CMS mission only try to convert Syrian Christians to Protestantism. But these initial cordial relationships between

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[8] The private archives of Mulamthuruthi Church in Ernakulam district in central Kerala possess an important document that throws light on a typical slave transaction (year unknown). One Varky Chacko pledged a *Paraya* slave woman called Kochu to the church, as a guarantee for the 10 *parahs* [bushel] of paddy secured from the church. He agreed to leave her in the service of the church in case he failed to return the paddy by a stipulated date (Kusuman, 1973: 40).

[9] In South Travancore, LMS mission congregations were equally split among Tamil and Malayalam-speakers.

[10] The first European missionaries sent to India by the Church Mission Society, CTER Rhenius and J C Schnarre (both were from Germany) arrived at Madras in 1814.

Syrian Christians and missionaries eventually became strained andby 1836, conflicts between them reached an impasse, where no reform was possible. This led to their separation, and Anglican missionaries broke ties with Syrian Christians. After this, they reached out to lower-caste groups. CMS missionaries commenced working among slave castes in the early 1850s and on September 8, 1854, a slave named Theyvatthan came under the tutelage of the CMS and was baptized Abel, at Kaippatta, near Mallappally in central Travancore (Hunt, 1968: 200; Mohan, 2015: 1). This was opposed by many Syrian Christians and upper-caste Hindus, as the baptism of Abel became a 'mass movement.'

On the basis of the British Parliamentary debate, Act V of 1843 was passed and thereby slavery was legally abolished in the Madras presidency, part of British India. During that time, Kerala was divided into three administrative units, the British Malabar in the northern part and the two princely states of Cochin and Travancore in the central and southern part. Slavery was abolished in British Malabar in 1843. Slavery in the princely states of Travancore and Cochin but continued as we have seen earlier, and it was with the consistent and persistent efforts of the missionaries that slavery was finally abolished in the princely states. There was no great cordiality between CMS and LMS missionaries, but the issue of slavery affected members of both missionary societies so greatly that they jointly presented the Travancore Maharaja with a petition to abolish slavery in 1847 (Jeffrey, 2014: 40). Based on this, the Act V of 1843[11] was passed and slavery was legally abolished in Madras Presidency (Hjejle, 1967: 96-102). This encouraged Protestant missionaries to intensify their fight against slavery (Gladstone, 1984: 153), while slave transactions continued within princely states such as Travancore and Cochin.[12] Since LMS and CMS missionaries were the only ones reporting slavery in princely states, their writing attracted global attention as they published articles in English newspapers and evangelical journals from India and London, and also privately circulated slavery-related writings through private networks (Agur 1990: 925). Slavery was finally abolished in 1855, based on a memorandum signed by 13 Protestant missionaries (5 CMS and 8 LMS) on March 19, 1847. Missionary propaganda hence forced the Madras Government to pressure native states into implementing anti-slavery measures. While the proclamation was finally issued on June 24, 1855, it was not widely circulated, and many slave communities not knowing about the proclamation, continued to live as slaves (Jeffery, 2014: 45).

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[11] Act V of 1843, by which the English East India Company proclaimed slavery to be illegal within its Indian territories, after seventy years of controversy (Hjejle, 1967: 96-126).

[12] For instance, a Syrian Christian landlord bought a *Pulaya* slave in 1845. This slave transaction deed is published in a Malayalam book *Angaleya Sabha Charithram* (1915)*. '*The transfer deed executed on 17th *Kumbam* 1020 [Malayalam Era] (March1845) whereby Govindapuram Desathu Cheerattamannu Eravi Parameswaran transfers his ownership of Amrithi, the male *Pulaya,* and Mani, the female *Pulaya*, born as the children of Nalathramani, after receiving cash 601 chakrams (Rupees21), to Enathikkal Thomman Varkey' (John, 1915: 20-21).

"Slave labour is Over…": Singing Liberation

Although slavery was abolished in 1855 in Travancore, lower castes were unaware of the proclamation by which slavery legally came to an end. Many of them continued to be slaves and this was expressed by LMS missionary Samuel Mateer [1835-1893] in the following words:

> [t]he former slave-owners grudged, as they still do, the emancipation of the serfs, fearing the ruin of their agricultural interests; and sought to hinder freedom and keep the *Pulayas* down in every possible way…. This proclamation and advancing civilization doubtless have made a marked improvement in their favour; and yet one has only to make a slight inquiry to find that, even in the present day, their condition is most wretched and pitiable, and that in some important points these edicts are a dead letter. We are assured that in many parts in the eastern districts of Travancore, slavery practically exists, and that many are unaware of their emancipation (Mateer, 1883: 307-308).

Protestant missionaries tried to create awareness among slave castes about the abolition of the slavery andmany papers, tracts, and reports on anti-slavery and against caste slavery were written by Protestant missionaries and widely distributed in the public. Robin Jeffrey noted that low castes who heard of the proclamation probably connected it with missionary influence, and even if they did not, CMS missionary Henry Baker Sr made this connection openly. As soon as the abolition law was issued, Baker printed copies and adding a few passages from the Bible on the duties of masters and servants respectively and distributed them among lower-caste people, even though upper caste Kerala slave owners begged Baker not to distribute these (Jeffrey, 2014: 47). It is in this context that Christian songs became a missionary tool to proclaim the abolition of slavery to a larger section of slaves. Protestant missionaries travelled across Travancore to proclaim the abolition of slavery, preaching the Bible and singing songs proclaiming anti-slavery ideals. Landlords, supported by powerful Travancore government officials, repeatedly tried to thwart these Protestant mission operations by slapping false criminal charges and lawsuits on Dalit Christians and LMS mission agents (Knowler, 1893: 70) and many cases of caste-based brutalities and cruelties were reported despite the abolition of slavery (Baker, 1862:54-55; Mateer, 1883: 308-311). In 1867, native LMS agent William Fletcher (1837-92) was ordained as assistant missionary in Pazhugal in south Travancore and he took great interest in the liberation of lower-caste groups of the area (*Pulayas*). The LMS missionary, popularly known as '*Pulaya* priest', Samuel Mateer asked Fletcher to write a hymn for liberated slaves that Fletcher did at once in Tamil,[13] which Mateer translated it into English. And this song was

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[13]*Adimai velayum ozhinthathe- enkal Adimai olayum …* This Tamil version was first published in *Desopakari* magazine (Jacob, 1990: 153).

immediately translated into Malayalam for a lyrics book. The curious thing is that the original Tamil composition did not become as popular as the Malayalam version, translated by native missionary Mosavalsala Sastrikal (1847-1916). It was sung with tremendous gusto in Trivandrum district (Mateer, 1893:72) and the song proclaimed 'Adimavela Ozhinjunammude...' to slave communities that can be translated as "our slavery is over; there is no more slave-work". The kirttanai or lyric was composed in traditional Carnatic music style, and Sherwood, a British missionary ethnographer noted that it was commonly used by Dalit congregations in South India (Eddy 1912: 89-90). Adimavela Ozhinju was sung in Dalit congregations in central Kerala till the 1960s (Mohan, 2015: 187) and the verses went like this:

> Our slave work is done, our slave bonds are gone,
>   For this, we shall never henceforth forsake Thee, O Jesus!
> To purchase cattle, fields, houses, and many luxuries (we were sold);
>   (Now) Messiah himself has settled in the land a people who once fled in terror (Our).
> The father was sold to one place, the mother to another;
>   The children also separated. But now (Our).
> The owners who enslaved us often caused us much suffering;
>   But will it comfort us to relate all the oppression in full? (Our).
> After exhaustion with labour in burning heat, in rain and cold and dew,
>   They beat us cruelly. With thousands of strokes (Our).
> Dogs might enter streets, markets, courts, and lands;
>   (but) if we went near, they beat and chased us to a distance (Our)....
> (Continue)……. (See full version, Mateer, 1883: 317-318; Eddy, 1912 89-90)

This song represents the history of lower-caste slavery in 19th century Kerala powerfully. Since agrestic slaves were the major transferable labour force linked with agricultural fields, this form of slavery was hereditary and practiced as part of a social organization surrounding agricultural production. Slaves were employed in all kinds of agricultural labour related to rice and sugar cane cultivation. They not only worked by day but kept watch at night too (Mateer, 1883:41). The above song reverberated against caste exploitation strongly, its lyrics creating a subtle realization among singers about slavery constituting a 'sin' and being unacceptable within biblical discourse and Christianity. Generally, in south India, the musical expressions of Dalit Christians, even as early as 19[th]century,were important acts of resistance and protest that reflected a caste consciousness and the critical attitude of slaves towards social discrimination (Sherinian, 2014: 24). Also, the lyrics celebrated Christ's love for slaves, which was very effective in slave congregations and in fact, the slave hymn powerfully used the oral tradition of Dalit communities

in which the emotional aspects of their life have been kept alive (Mohan, 2015: 187).

Mosavalsalam Sasthrikal wrote many songs about Travancore's casteist social milieu and these are popularly known as missionary or gospel lyrics.[14] In the colonial period, missionaries and their adherents conducted wayside meetings at various places, preaching the gospel and singing songs full of the anti-slavery and anti-caste messages. Christian songs became a medium to reach out to a larger audience. In Travancore, many locals would gather at roadsides to listen to missionary lyrics, and the meaning of these verses was explained at the same time. All sections of society could access pamphlets containing copies of Malayalam Christian hymns, and learn its tunes from the native missionary, taking the papers home with them to sing. Many mission tracts and leaflets of the time were issued in poetical form, as locals often asked for 'a song', when they saw missionary tracts. LMS Missionary Mateer noted that it was most encouraging and cheering to hear Christian converts singing at family prayers in their houses or at work in the fields; or children in the schools, with bright eyes and glowing countenances, singing sweet hymns of praise (Mateer, 1883: 264).

Due to the persecution and suffering in their lives, Dalits joined missionaries and embraced Christianity, being exposed to modern notions of equality, self-pride and self-confidence. Sanal Mohan argues that colonial modernity and events that connected to it engendered new ideas about liberation, and the worldview of liberation offered by Protestant missionary Christianity to slave castes (Mohan, 2015: 38-105). Their new life world created a new mentality and a new vision as Biblical concepts provided them with new categories of thought. Protestant missionaries translated songs from English to Malayalam even as native missionaries wrote new Malayalam songs. In the northern part of Kerala, Basel missionaries published a large collection of Malayalam hymns, mainly translations from the German in 1842 and in the same year CMS missionary Henry Baker Sr. prepared a Malayalam hymn book for church mission followers, consisting of 125 hymns exclusively translated from English hymns, composed on English meters and intended to be sung to English tunes (Julian, 1907: 751). In 1872-3 Samuel Mateer selected Malayalam Christian Hymns that he considered suitable for public worship and edited them for the Madras Religious Tract Society (Agur, 1990: 1153). This was a collection of Christian songs composed to local meters and sung to local tunes. Gradually, all mission groups introduced these unique local lyrics within their own congregations (Julian, 1907: 751). In other words, protestant Christianity in Kerala had two kinds of meters and tunes: the European and the local (Diez, 1880: 394) and Protestant missionaries who published Malayalam lyrics books and distributed

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[14] Nowadays, most Protestant Christian churches use these Missionary lyrics in their Sunday prayer services. See more songs in *Kristheeya Geethangal* (see, Christian Lyrics, 36th edition, Kottayam: Diocesan Publications, pp. 139-153 (1995).

these among church members, taught the Dalits to sing these songs in their churches.

According to the ethnographic notes of Travancore CMS missionary Richard Collins:

> [t]he Malayalee people do not use English tunes properly. For this reason, in Tamil congregations they use many of the native tunes in public worship. But the Travancore missionaries have always honored the old English tunes of their own childhood. Never shall I [Collins] forget the first time I saw Joseph Peet [CMS Missionary] in his pulpit, giving out and singing the hymn before the sermon [a mixed congregation]. Long used to the difficulty of leading the natives, Peet sang the well-known 104th Psalm with a stentorian voice that thrilled through the building. Every voice was raised through the church—m but not to the tune. A great sound truly as of 'many waters', such a Babel of discord as I have nowhere else heard, began as soon as he had given out a verse; but ever, high above all, the determined voice of our dear friend Joseph Peet ringing out the tune to semitone (Collins, 1873: 208).

At the same time, the new chorus songs were completely different from the religious practices prevalent in Kerala society that were also against the tradition of Syrian Christian prayers. While Syrian Christian worship songs were in the Syriac language, which was a marker of Syrian Christian identity (Palackal, 2000: 5), Syriac songs were not popular among all sections of Syrians. It appears that the clergy monopolized these songs that were mostly anonymous, while Syrian Christians themselves played no role in the prayer services. Arguably, the new Protestant Christian songs ruptured the hierarchical musical order of Kerala society. One of the significant features of the songs is their composition in modern Malayalam, and not in a caste-marked language that was specific to Dalits of an earlier generation. Noted ethnomusicologist Sherinian has argued that in these kinds of songs, the Dalit Christians' attempt to appropriate upper-caste culture through the practice of Carnatic music becomes evident (Sherinian, 2014: 26).

Colloquial Dalit speech at this time was vastly different from that of other caste groups like Syrian Christians and upper castes, with whom missionaries communicated on a regular basis. In the early stages of the 19th century, English Protestant missionaries were unable to truly enter the spirit and style of *Pulaya* verbal communication (Oommen, 1997: 83) and in colonial Kerala, the Malayalam that Dalits were compelled to use was the most abject and degrading. Words and phrases categorized people into upper castes and lower castes; and lower castes had no right to use certain words. They dared not say 'I' but '*adiyan*' (your slave) or '*adiyangal*' (one who lies at your feet). They could not call their food '*choru*' (rice) but '*karikkadi*' (charcoal rice).Their house was called '*chala*' (small dirty hut).They spoke of their children as '*kitanagal*' (calves).When referring to their body parts,

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they were required to prefix these with "old"- old eyes, old hand (Mateer, 1871: 45).[15] Protestant Christianity broke the linguistic caste hierarchy in Kerala society; Dalits began using modern vocabulary and the new songs in this modern vocabulary had the potential to create a different linguistic culture among Dalits. The significance of songs can be discussed as a variety of linguistic modernity, wherein Protestant Christian songs played a crucial role in constructing new images of life and hope. Sanal Mohan identified the use of modern Malayalam language by Dalits in the context of missionary Christianity as an instance of linguistic modernity (Mohan, 2015: 225) and the songs composed in Malayalam are easily discernible due to its recurring themes. These songs created a linguistic modernity among the slave caste people and Dalits, who joined Protestant missions learned modern Malayalam through the reading of Scriptures, and learning prayers and songs. Dalits began acquainting themselves with modern words, biblical concepts and even Sanskrit words. For Dalits who converted to Christianity, Christian songs symbolised a change in their social life. It is undoubtedly clear that the songs offered them a space to liberate their thoughts, these songs reflecting their changing understanding and worldview. Christian songs thus influenced Dalit lives and brought a change in their lived experiences. At the local level, Dalit Christians composed folk Christian songs, based on their historical experiences.

Church historian CM Agur notes that the Malayalam Christian literature of the Protestant church in Travancore was not as rich or varied as Tamil Christian literature (Agur, 1990: 1150). Some recent studies have demonstrated how Tamil Dalit Christians on the other hand composed Christian folk songs. Sherinian's research for example explains the agency of those, who freely recomposed Tamil Dalit Christian songs as everyday acts of resistance to inhuman caste, gender and class oppression in South India, songs constituting an important conduit of liberation (Sherinian, 2014: 3). But Christian folk songs were not very popular among Kerala Dalit Christians as these were never used in prayer services. Experiences of caste slavery, Christian liberation, and heroic images of the European missionary were instead, some of the more important themes of Christian Malayalam songs. The following translation of *Ayyayyo Daivame* (Oh God!) that was sung at work, or at unofficial Christian meetings, illustrates the local history of conversion.

> Oh God!
>   Hear our heartbreaking cries
> Cleared forest and made it into land

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[15] Non-converted, lower-caste people, even *Ezhavas,* also faced this kind of linguistic problems. BR Ambedkar quoted a notable incident, from *The Bombay Samachar* (November 4, 1936): At Ottapalam [Palghat] an Ezhava by caste named Sivaraman, aged 17, went to the shop of a caste Hindu to buy salt and asked in Malayalam for *'uppu* (salt); being an untouchable he ought to have used the word '*pulichatan*'. Consequently, the high-caste grocer was very angry and allegedly thrashed Sivaraman so severely that the latter died (Ambedkar, 2014: 54-55).

> We made our small huts as home
>> These people are thrown into the wilderness
> Half dead and half alive (Oh God)
>> Made to plough fields yoked with bull and oxen
> When they become frail
>> Beaten to death and buried (2)
> Lord of creation heard our cries on the cross
>> Showed us the path of mercy (Oh God)
> And we remember the color of his mercy
>> Fell down fatigued with the heavy load
> Fell down exhausted
>> Found too frail and beaten up mercilessly
> Bundled together and thrown into the wild
>> Half alive and half dead (Oh God)
> Six days after delivery
>> Mother went out for work
> Left the sleeping baby under the shade of a tree
>> Returned to find ant-eaten remains
> Lord of creation heard our cries on the cross
>> Showed us the path of mercy
> And we remember the color of his mercy (Oh God)
>> Europeans came among us
> Slaves were freed with gospels (2) ....[16]

Dalit songs in Kerala, as elsewhere in India, constituted an indisputable a repository of oral literature and traditions. These Christian songs depicted Dalit history, and the detailed, wounded memories of Dalit life, as they explained the suffering of slave labor work, the importance of slave school and Sunday school, mission centers, the slave's faith. While Dalit Christian folk songs were built around missionary themes and the hope engendered by faith in Christ and the Cross, these songs were devoid of revenge-seeking, and heroism, and focused more on liberation and salvation.

Composing of Songs by Dalit Christians

Even after conversion, Dalit Christians were at the very bottom of the social order. They were not allowed to use roads, courts, markets and other public spaces (Painter, 1883: 215-218); neither did they own land or permanent habitations. They lived instead, in temporary huts on their upper-caste landlord's property. In this social situation, according to missionary reports, some early Dalit converts begged missionaries for a piece of land, where they could construct their own churches (Gladstone, 1984: 115). Missionaries noted how they strengthened the gospel

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[16] SSRC The Prayer Blog: 'Dalit Christian Prayer Songs', posted by Sanal Mohan on April 15, 2014. http://forums.ssrc.org/ndsp/2014/04/15/dalit-christian-prayer-songs/ (October 26, 2018, 11 pm).

movement among *Pulayas* (Andrews, 1863: 120-21) and reported how Dalit Christians were forced to leave their small churches, due to strong protests from the upper castes (both Hindus and Syrian Christians). Instead, they sought safe spaces to offer their prayers; places that were isolated, including mud-lands and forest fringes, to escape direct attacks from upper caste groups. They erected temporary chapels, while missionaries sent them gospel workers (Gladstone, 1984: 116).These chapels, the best indicator of religious desire among Dalits, were small and miserable sheds, made from sticks and mud, and thatched with straw, situated on the far side of rice-swamps or on mounds, so that they would not pollute people.

Upper caste elites attacked Dalit Churches throughout the 19[th]century and early 20[th]century. There was virulent resistance to the conversion of Dalits from upper-caste Hindus and Syrian Christians. The history of the first CMS Dalit church in central Kerala is the best example of such upper caste prejudices. One Sunday morning in 1854, slaves were driven away from a Syrian church (at Mallappally) just as they were assembling for prayer; and the following Saturday night the chapel in which their baptisms took place, was set on fire and burnt down. As the Dalit Christians rebuilt their chapel at the same spot; upper castes burnt down the church again. On Sunday, they assembled on ashes, for their regular worship. By standing on the ashes of their church, they proclaimed:"[it] was here we first found the saviour, and here on this spot we will still worship Him" (David, 1930: 57; Gladstone, 1984: 112). Upper-caste opposition did not weaken them; it made them stronger and gradually conversion became a mass movement, despite upper-caste opposition. By composing and singing songs, they broke the restrictions of upper caste language and the hegemony of upper caste communities that imposed it, helping Dalits to subvert many entrenched notions caste superiority within the Church. In 1898, the Salvation Army Dalit Church conducted a prayer meeting at Kangazha in central Kerala, where Vellara John, a Dalit Christian poet and gifted preacher of the Salvation Army congregation participated in the meeting with his family. Upper-caste Hindus rushed to interrupt the prayer and attack the gathering, sprayed chili powder on worshippers and thrashed everybody, chasing them away. The worshippers – all Dalits – ran for their lives. Vellara John fell into a deep pit and eventually, managed to escape. He later composed a song in memory of the event titled, *Veenu Njan Oru Kuzhiyil*, translated as: I fell into a deep pit, I fell to bottom, my Savior saved me and lifted me from the pit…(History of Salvation Army in Kerala, 1998: 133). This song is still popular within the Salvation Army congregations, the song indicating to the inner transformation of Dalit Christians in colonial Kerala.

In the end of the 19th century, some mixed-caste church congregations were organized under missionary control and the biggest difficulty they faced was the lack of integration between Dalit Christians and Syrian Christians or upper-caste convert Christians. Dalit Christians faced discrimination and were forced to sit at the back of the church, and CMS areas saw a complete segregation between Dalit Christians and Syrian Christians. In 1893, when a missionary attempted to admit

Dalit Christians into a church for communion services in central Kerala, all the Syrian Christians bolted out of the church through the window (Gladstone, 1984: 126). The early decades of the 20[th]century witnessed increased caste violence and discrimination in Kerala churches with the Syrian Christians practicing caste hierarchy and maintaining their domination over all Christian denominations. Even cemeteries were divided based on caste hierarchy. The bodies of Dalit Christians were buried only in the rear of the cemetery (Raj, 1966: 80).

The testimony of Vettamala Philipose (1900-85), a Dalit pastor in central Kerala, is a fine example of how Dalit Christians, persuaded by strong faith, responded to discrimination experienced within churches:"After 1924, Syrian Christians conducted a number of revival meetings in different parts of central Kerala. Dalits also joined these revival meetings. Vettamala Philipose, a Dalit pastor from Ranni, once went to listen to Mammen Pastor, a Syrian Christian. Seeing a dark young man staring at him and keenly listening to his speech for a long time, Mammen Pastor took a break from his sermon and turned to the young man and said, "See, a black like an Ethiopian has come here. Hey, do you have any testimony to offer?" He then added, "Can an Ethiopian change his colour and can a leopard remove its spots?" This comment hurt Philipose. He thought for a while and the following words from the Bible suddenly came to his mind and he stood up and sang a new song, the meaning of which is roughly translated as:

> When the sun of justice comes in His radiance,
>   I would be cleared of my black colour,
> in His second coming, I will be seated beside him like a king"
> (Vettamala Ganangal, 2000: 4).'

Vettamala's testimony demonstrates how Dalit Christians resisted caste hegemony and created a social context of liberation through Christian prayer service. This incident is an example of such imagined liberation that Dalit Christians intensely longed for, as songs became a powerful tool to express ideas. These songs were meant to be dialogical and generated empowerment and hence, questions the 'material benefits' argument (Kooiman, 1989), a stereotypical narrative that denigrates the question of Dalit faith, espousing instead, that Dalits converted for material benefits.

On the other hand, vernacular writings from the colonial period demonstrate that slaves were hostile to and suspicious of new religions. They accepted Christianity only cautiously, and as a result of conscious choice and faith, even as many Dalits refused Christian teachings. For instance, in 1857, when K. Koshi, a native missionary, spoke against idol worship to a group of *Pulayas*, they immediately clambered away from him, as they realized their gods being disparaged as mere wood and stone (Jeffrey, 2014: 49). In the 1860s, Henry Baker Jr. reported that he began organizing pecial sessions for runaway *Pulayas* after the Sunday worship

service in central Travancore, since no one had come forward for baptism in three years. And it becomes evident that some Dalits were disinterested in joining the mission (Dalton, 1963: 52).

In the above Vettamala incident, the Syrian Christian pastor adapted words from the Bible, Jeremiah 13: 23, when he said:"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spot? Neither are you able to do good - you who are accustomed to doing evil." At the same time, Vettamal's counter response also came from his biblical knowledge; the book of Malachi 4:2:"But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and leap like calves from the stall."When Syrian Christians used biblical phrases to mock Dalit Christians, victimised Dalits would find a fitting reply from the Bible, as they declared their conviction about the Bible.

Conclusion

It is undeniable that Dalit Christians faced caste discrimination and deprivations in the public sphere and in churches. At the same time, they were seldom passive about this discrimination, especially in the Church. Their resistance found expression in songs that problematised caste discrimination, while re-affirming their faith in God. These songs enabled them to imagine a new social thought and world view that was devoid of oppression and constituted strong evidence for their spiritual and social awakening. The powerful use of biblical imageries in these songs was centered on Dalit Christian spiritual life that lost its social and historical meanings, when dominant Christian churches appropriated them as part of their liturgy. Dominant-caste churches did not accept the Dalit sensibilities of these songs. Even as these songs were absorbed by the Church and became a part of worship, their core theme lost its importance and critical meaning. They came to be understood, interpreted and assimilated as the everyday difficulties of Christian believers unmarked by caste background. As far as Dalits were concerned, hardships and segregation were part of their everyday life, as they suffered the brutality of caste oppression, supported by the existing social structure. Moreover, the language of Dalit Christian songs is modern Malayalam that became available to them in the context of colonialism. Modernity exemplified the linguistic modernity of Dalits in Kerala that decontaminated Malayalam of the caste markers characteristic of an earlier generation. Finally, Dalit Christian songs erupted from terrible social conditions and deprivations, as songs became part of Dalit efforts to overcome their oppression and express their hopes and anguish. These songs created new space for Dalits to reflect on and strengthen their liberation through Christian beliefs, even as the mass movement was gradually coopted by upper castes.

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An Analysis of Political Power through Royal Iconography

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Abstract

Images of kings on traditional Indian architecture has been a neglected area of study. This paper aims to analyze royal images in the city of Vijayanagar and what they reveal about the interaction between political and religious powers. I contend that royalist iconography confirms and substantiates various aspects of political power and kingly traditions that demonstrates ways in which the king combined political authority and religious duty. It reveals the structure and dynamics of authority in new ways and forms in the kingdom of Vijayanagara.[1]

Key Words: Royal Portraits, Vijayanagara, Iconography, Hampi, Temple Cities

Introduction

The fortified city of Vijayanagara, (The City of Victory) was the capital of the kingdom of Vijayanagara which ruled South India from 1336 to 1565 CE. The present city is a vision of conglomerations of built forms: magnificent temples, palaces, shrines, gateways, walls, platforms and bazaars. The recent excavations in the capital city of Vijayanagara in South India[2] has brought to light numerous palaces, platforms, tanks, religious and royal stone sculptures (Fritz and Michell, 1981: 295-304).   The free-standing portraits unearthed from this unique archaeological site, however pose numerous problems. Their original location is unknown (Longhurst, 1917. Reprint 1988). In the absence of inscriptional or textual evidence entail difficulties in identification. The relief portraits are often confused with the genre of door guardians who occupy similar places on monumental architecture (Patil, 1983: 66-68). This article aims to discuss royalist

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[1] Diacritics have been inserted only on non-English words, but refrained from proper names, including names of deities and names of places.
[2] The city of Vijayanagara (now known as Hampi), was the capital of the kingdom of Vijayanagar, the most powerful, wealthiest Hindu empire in South India[2] between 1336 and 1565 CE. As attested by Domingo Paes, it was "as large as Rome, and very beautiful to the sight...the best provided city in the world…"   Sewell 1988: 256-257. (Sewell, first published 1900)

iconography in the light of literary and epigraphical sources. It analyzes in particular the portraits of Krishnadeva Raya and Achyuta Raya in the context of the built environment of the royal palace and sacred temple cities (Fritz et al., 1984).

In order to establish the identification of royal portraits with reasonable certainty it is necessary to define the term portraiture in Indian traditional art and the criterion for the identification of portraits during the Vijayanagara period. The popular concept of a portrait is that there is in the figure a close resemblance of the physical characteristics of a person to those of his or her image (Breckenridge, 1968: 4). However, Indian portraiture departs from this accepted criterion which led scholars as Benjamin Rowland to believe that portraiture did not exist in ancient India as Indian sculpture does not display individual characteristics (Rowland, 1954: 35). Paradoxically, there is a substantial reference to resemblance in Sanskrit literature. Although in Sanskrit terminology, there is, in fact, no specific word for portraiture, the Sanskrit terms for image *mūrti, vigraha, pratima* and *pratikṛti* are used for both religious and secular images (Banerjea, 1939: 83-88; Apte 1965). C. Sivaramamurti uses the term *viddhachitra* to mean portrait painting, while a painted portrait was called a *pratikṛti ākrti* (reflected form) by A. K. Coomaraswamy (Sivaramamurti, 1985: 29). The *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* uses the term *sadṛśya*, meaning visual correspondence and considers resemblance as one of the limbs of painting.[3] However, there appears to be a discrepancy between the frequency with which portraiture, defined as physical likeness, is mentioned in the texts and the infrequency with which we find it in art.[4]

Yet there are numerous identifiable royal portraits, which include those of the Kusana kings, Castana, Kaniska and Vima Kadphises (Rosenfield, 1967: 13),Bactrian and Gupta kings on coins (Altekar, 1975: xiv), Ikshvaku king Vasisthiputra Santamula, Pallava representation of King Simhavishnu and inscribed portraits of king Mamalla and Mahendravarman and identifiable royal portraits of Colas All these portraits reveal that the criterion for identification was the artist's intent, which is mainly obtained from the inscriptions and as long as the image

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[3] According to Padma Kaimal, the term *sadṛṣya* means visual correspondence. Kaimal, 1988. But unlike the terms, *susadṛṣa* and *sadṛṣa, sadṛṣya* means that "in which there is a similitude only partially connected with the material world." (Coomaraswamy, 1956: 192).
In the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* it is stated that figures actually rose to life. *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*, 1961:104.
[4] Coomarswamy recognizes two types of portraits in Indian art through texts. One was ideal, and the other taken from life. Coomaraswamy 1939: 74-82. Even Greek literary sources are full of references to how life-like the statues by Daidolos (an early Greek sculptor) are, by our standards, early Greek sculpture is very conventional. However, "likeness" in Indian portraiture has a different basis than in post-classical Western art.

could be recognized as representing an individual it served the purpose for which it was created; there was no need to create a resemblance to outward appearance (Lockwood, 1974: 42-61. Aravamuthan, 1931: 5).

However, at Vijayanagara the intent to represent the individual, made clear by the inscriptional evidence, is a criterion in the case of the image of king Mallikarjuna Raya (1447-1465 CE) which occurs on the right of the shrine doorway on the outer wall of the Anjaneya (Rao et al., 1985: 96-100) temple near a large unnamed gateway at the major entrance to the fortification of the inner city identified by the inscription carved nearby.[5] The free-standing royal portrait which is one of the two inscribed images from the period, is the well -known image of Krishnadeva Raya and his two queens, Cinna Devi and Tirumala Devi in bronze, placed in the northern entrance gateway of the Temple at Tirupati (Sastry, 1981: 211). The family group portrait figures are, in *abhaṅga* (straight posture) in *añjali mudra* (hands joined), on lotus pedestals. The figure of the king, which is about four feet in height, is placed in the center; he wears a simple lower garment, a decorative girdle, a conical cap, two bracelets, two necklaces, and anklets on each leg. His face is oval, with downward looking eyes. Their bodies are youthful and slender and they wear garments that are not normally worn by figures of common people or other royal figures, but are shown in the manner worn by Siva and Parvati. But for their iconography, the Tirupati images give the idea of being idols of gods rather than portraits of human beings.

Images of Krishnadeva Raya on the Krishna Temple

Small uninscribed relief portraits of Krishnadeva Raya occur on the Krishna temple in Krishnapura. The temple was constructed by Krishnadeva Raya in 1513 CE after his return from his victory over the Gajāpatis of Orissa to house the image of Krishna which he had brought from an unknown temple in Udayagiri (Patil, 1983: 61-63).[6] As one enters the gateway on the left side of the jamb of the gateway, is a figure of Krishnadeva Raya, about eight inches in height. It is in high relief and the king stands erect on a pedestal with feet slightly apart, heels together and toes pointed outward. His hands are in *añjali mudra* and he carries a sword under his arm. He wears a tight upper garment, *kañcuka* (coat), which is full sleeved and reaches down to his knees. In the upper square space of the pilaster above, is a small delicately carved image of Krishna in a dance pose; the left arm is stretched

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[5] For the dated inscription of this temple see *South Indian Inscriptions* 1. (1890), no. 153. Fly wisks are attributes which are waved either for a god or king.
[6] The inscription mentions the construction of the temple and the consecration of the image by the king. It states that it was brought from Udayagiri after its capture from the Gajāpati forces in 1515 CE. (*South Indian Inscriptions* 4, nos. 354, 355. Sharma 1978: 123-124).

outwards and the right arm holds a ball of butter. That it is a human image (and not that of a god) is based on cognizable *lakṣaṇas* (iconographical marks) (*Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa*: 108*)* which include having only two arms and the lack of halo, with a comparatively simple dress. All these characteristics, however, may be found in images, such as those of "old men" or soldiers who are not royal. In order to distinguish royal images, the figures normally wear ornaments which include earrings, necklaces, a *yajñopavita* (sacred thread).[7] However, the most important apparel, worn only by royal figures (and chiefs) during the Vijayanagara period is a slightly tapered cylindrical *kullāvi* (crown or cap).[8] In addition to the specific apparel and lack of attributes, royal figures are in *añjali mudra*, an attitude of submission or humility. In the absence of inscriptional evidence, the specific identification of the image as that of Krishnadeva Raya is derived primarily from the architectural context as South Indian temples have inscriptional evidence, which identifies the royal builder who made large gifts for its construction.

Other representations of Krishnadeva Raya occur on a pillar in the front open pillared hall, *maṇḍapa* of the Krishna temple. On the pillar at the left (the eastern pillar of the porch), facing north is an image of Krishnadeva Raya which is visible to the viewer as he or she enters the *maṇḍapa*. The figure stands before an image of baby Krishna who holds a butter-ball. Some of the figures,[9] wear a type of coat which was normally worn by kings on hunting expeditions, and are in a posture of devotion which are portraits of Krishnadeva Raya as well. However, the identification of the two images is also derived from an idiosyncratic feature, which includes details of incidents from the life of the individual, or specific royal emblems, which had political significance for an individual or even a particular religious affiliation or a personal deity. The feature may mean an attribute or a physical characteristic that identifies the figure specifically in contrast to the more general features of the *lakṣaṇa*. In the case of the royal figures of Krishnadeva Raya the idiosyncratic feature was the devotion of Krishnadeva Raya to Krishna. He was the first Vijayanagara emperor who minted coins with the image of Balakrishna on them; his favorite form was of the god holding butter (Murthy, 1975: 162-163). In addition, his own name reflected his devotion to the god. The literary work, *Pārijātāpaharaṇam*, dedicated to the king describes him as God Krishna born again into the world (Rao, 1936: 241-244). In the *Rāyavācakamu* he is described as God Vishnu (Krishna being his incarnation) who brought the idol of Vitthala (a form of Krishna) from Pandharpur.

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[7] In the *Prabodha Chandrodaya Vyākhya* by Nadindla Gopa Mantri, Gopa was presented by Saluva Timma   (well-known minister of Krishnadeva Raya) with a palanquin and anklets (*kaṭaka),* flywisks (*cauris*), earrings, bracelets and other insignia of royalty. Thus, these ornaments may be considered as royal marks (Aiyangar, 1986: 144).
[8] In the Vijayanagara paintings at Lepakshi, Virupanna wears a *kullāvi*, while his followers standing behind him, wear turbans (Sivaramamurti, 1985: 35).
[9] Many royal figures belonging to the Mysore Wodeyar dynasty carry the sword in this fashion.

While devotion to Krishna was partially a criterion for identification, this does not appear to be true in the case of the king's portrait where the representation of Krishnadeva Raya is before a symbol of Siva, *liṅga*. This image is on the topmost part of the pillar, facing south in the *maṇḍapa* and forms part of an interesting group of three portraits of the king. The other two portraits on the same pillar are standing in *añjali hasta*. Although Krishnadeva Raya was a devotee of Krishna, his depiction before a *liṅga* is not surprising. The presence of the king before the symbol of a politically powerful Saivite sect, especially the Veerasaivites, was a gesture of support since a majority of his people were followers of some form of Saivism. This support was extended to Saivite temples. Indeed, the ecumenical nature of Vijayanagara kingship is repeatedly seen in art.

An important scene depicting an historical event, which technically speaking cannot be included in the class of portraits, includes a battle scene of Krishnadeva Raya which probably originally included a portrait of the king. This unique representation can be identified on the *gopura* (temple gateway), of the Krishna temple (fig. 1).

Fig.1: Temple Gopura

These ornate structures of *rāyagopuras* (kingly entrances) during the period under review assumed monumental proportions.[10] On the inside of the stone gateway, facing the inner courtyard of the temple, are the remains of two parts of a battle scene, the major part in the northern section and the other in the southern section. One can identify seven or eight horses on the northern section of the *gopura* while below and towards the left are a large number of fallen or dead men. The furious horses, the fallen men, and the whole group composition can be securely recognized as a battle scene.

One may identify the scene as representing the war which Krishnadeva Raya waged against the Gajāpatis of Orissa. One of the inscriptions on the temple mentions the construction and the consecration of an image of lord Krishna by the king. It also states that an image was brought from Udayagiri after the capture of the fort from the Gajāpati forces in 1515.[11] The victory was a unique achievement and was recorded by many contemporary poets. The campaign is described in the *Rāyavācakamu* composed probably by Visvanatha Nayanayya in colloquial prose. It is also described in the *Krishna Rāya Vijayam* written by Kumara Dhurjati, the poet who wrote on the victories of the king. The victory over Orissa is mentioned by the king himself in his work *Āmuktamālyada* as well as in the *Pārijātāpaharaṇam* of Nandi Timmayya and in the *Chatu* Verses written by Allasani Peddana, the court poet of Krishnadeva Raya (Aiyangar, 1986: 115, 131, 138, 153, 154.). The poet Allasani Peddana refers to the king's triumph at Simhadri and his marriage with the daughter of the defeated Gajāpati king.

Krishnadeva Raya's capture of the impregnable fort was no mean achievement. The forces of Gajāpati were large and the Moslem allies had pledged support to him. In addition, the humiliation which the Vijayanagara kings had suffered at the hands of the Gajāpati provoked Krishnadeva Raya to humiliate the Gajāpati to an act of submission. The latter gave his daughter in marriage to Krishnadeva Raya after putting upon his ankle his own anklet, the *gaṅḍapenderam*, as a sign of submission (Aiyangar, 1986: 253). Krishnadeva Raya took the idol of Balakrishna from Udayagiri at the request of his guru, Vyasatirtha, and installed it in the Krishna Temple at Hampi (Rao, 1971: 21- 22). He acquired the title of *Gajāpati* (lord of the elephants, or assuming the title of the Orissan king, *Purōsottama Gajāpati*) after his victory. Thus the construction of the Krishna temple articulated with battle scenes, portraits and inscriptions appears logical. The inscription, the

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[10] It may also be described as the superstructure over the gateway with a barrel roofed pavilion, belonging exclusively to South. Indian architecture. The *gopuras* are normally adorned with the figures of gods, nobles or devotees. (Filliozat, 1959: 251-253; Harle, 1963).

[11] *South Indian Inscriptions.II* 4, nos. 354 ,355. The second image must have been a movable image (*utsava mūrti* of Krishna and not the immovable image *mūla vigraha* enshrined in the sanctum

entrance gateway, the royal portraits, the battle scene and the temple itself give an idea of victory.

Images of Krishnadeva Raya on The King's Balance

Located on the way to the Virupaksha temple is a very important and unique structure known as the King's Balance or the *Tulābhāra* (fig.2). The structure consists of two pillars supporting a central beam and has provisions to hang a balance which was used in the ritual of gift-giving, *dāna*s when the Vijayanagara kings weighed themselves against gold and precious stones and made them over to temples.[12] On the base of the monument are three small figures, that of a king and his two queens which may be identified as that of Krishnadeva Raya and his two queens on the basis of their comparison to their images in the temple at Tirupati. The Balance portraits are small, but the monument as a whole was a powerful symbol of the kings' generosity. Seven inscriptions praising the gifts of the king are inscribed in the Vitthala temple. The majority of them praise the *tulāpuruṣadāna* (the gift equal to one's own weight), as well as other *dāna*s, of kings. However, it was only Krishnadeva Raya who built a permanent structure for gift giving and thus institutionalized the royal practice of giving large gifts.

Fig. 2. King's balance

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[12] Sundara Pandya after his victory upon Sendamangalam perfomed a *tulābhāra* ceremony, then covering the roof of the shrine of Nataraja with gold, anointed himself ruler of the Pandya and Cola kingdoms (*Praṣaṣṭi* (Meykkirti) of Jatavarman Sundarapandya I in Appendix II: 55-65 in Aiyangar, 1971: 48).

Portraits of Achyuta Raya

The second group of portraits depicted at Hampi are those of Achyuta Raya in the Tiruvengalanatha temple, more popularly known as the Achyuta Raya temple as it was built by king Achyuta Raya (1530-1542 CE) (*South Indian Inscriptions* 9, Part II: 609).[13] He was the younger half-brother of Krishnadeva Raya and succeeded him as in 1530; he was nominated and crowned as king by Krishnadeva Raya himself (Sewell, 1983: 366-67). The royal portraits in this temple are however not in the main porch but in a side shrine in a pillared porch.   The four *maṇḍapa* pillars contain royal images facing the entrance of the *maṇḍapa* which is towards the north. The portraits are all highly visible from the courtyard, which is at a slightly lower height than the shrine, and the sunlight shines directly on them.

The portraits on the front two pillars in the *maṇḍapa* are standing in *añjali mudra,* wear a *kullavi* (conical cap). However, while Krishnadeva Raya wears a, *kañcuka* (tailored upper garment), Achyuta Raya's *antarīya* (lower garment) is distinct, with a layer of wrapped cloth, sandals, an anklet around his leg. Achyuta Raya's face is round, with well-articulated features: arched eyebrows, open eyes, and a double chin while his body is stout. Although it had been pointed out above that resemblance to outward form was not a major concern of Indian portraiture, it appears that some individualization was done if it had a special, ideological significance. The king, according to *Rajanatha Dindima*, had an athletic and sturdy body built through regular and rigid physical exercise and that the king possessed enormous physical strength. Thus, the depiction of this idiosyncratic physical trait of a sturdy body is to indicate his strength and his power, but it might not be incorrect to say that physical appearance was also an aspect of kingship.

The portraits on the front left and back right pillars are different from those just considered. They are in groups of two, and the figures in both groups are shown in action. On the lower part of front left pillar is a scene with a sturdy looking figure standing on a pedestal with another figure, which can be identified as that of the king Achyuta Raya with his minister (fig. 3).

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[13] He is also said to have completed the construction of the Vitthala temple and the Pattabhirama temple at Kamalapur, according to the inscription on the gateways of the Achyuta Raya temple.

Fig. 3: Achyuta Raya with his minister

The king, who is tall and sturdier looking than his companion, stands in a peculiar manner, almost in a stance of defiance. He is looking at his companion, while his right arm is stretched downwards as though he is in a listening attitude and contemplating an issue. The companion figure on his right is shorter and is half turned toward the king; his right hand is raised up to his face as though in a gesture of giving advice. As he wears similar attire as the king, it must be the image of royalty, perhaps a minister or local chief advising the king.[14]

However, the portrait on the back right pillar has a different narrative (fig. 4). Here is the figure of a king with a young boy who wears a lower *dhōti*-like garment. His head is shaven, and the small ponytail at the back of his head can be seen at the side. It is the mark of a *brahmacārin* young boy who has had his

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[14] The figure has been identified by Rajasekhara as that of a minister (Rajasekhara, 1983: 62).

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thread ceremony. He faces the tall figure and has his arms extended as though receiving a gift.

Fig. 4: Achyuta Raya giving a gift

Fig. 4 represents Achyuta Raya giving a gift which was commonly performed by the kings to demonstrate their largess. King Achyuta Raya made numerous donations to temples, *brāhmins* and poets with gifts of gold, villages and lands.[15] There are altogether nine inscriptional records at Vijayanagara which praise the gifts of Achyuta Raya. It is likely that the scene represents a specific gift of the king and the most likely gift-giving event could be that of *ānandanidhi* performed in 1539 CE. The gift of *ānandanidhi*, a pot of gold, was performed by Achyuta Raya several times, but it is only the *ānandanidhi* gift of 1539 CE that has been mentioned in seven of his nine gift-giving inscriptions at Vijayanagara - twice in the Krishna temple, twice in the Achyuta Raya temple (one of them being on the *gopura* of the temple), once in the Pattabhirama temple, once in the Cikkahude

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[15] Achyuta Raya is said to have had Raghunatha, the poet, bathed in gold and precious stones, *Kanakaratnābhiṣekham*, unction with gold and pearls, after he wrote the poem *Pārijātāpaharaṇa* in six hours as mentioned in the *Sāhityaratnākara* by Yoganarayana Dikshita (Aiyangar, 1986:270).

temple and once in the Vitthala temple(Rajasekhara, 1985: 101-119). The gift of *ānandanidhi* made to the learned *brāhmins*, involved pots made of *udaṃbara* wood filled with precious stones and coins of gold, silver or copper. By this gift in 1539 CE Achyuta Raya is said to have made the *brāhmins* equal to Kubera (the god of wealth) and the merit accruing from this ceremony is said to be longevity, perfect health and imperial sovereignty.[16] As the temple was built (and consecrated) in 1539 when the particular gift was made, the gift-giving scene must have been carved at that time. The fact that the figures on this image were not as skillfully carved as the other figures in the shrine supports the view that they must have been carved within a short time. Thus, it is most likely that the gift-giving scene depicts the *ānandanidhi* gift of 1539 CE.

In regards to the scene on front left pillar, the issue is not that of gift-giving but of the identification of the figure with the king Achyuta Raya. The fact that the figure is carved with the king shows that he must have been important to the king. Rama Raja (the son-in-law of Krishnadeva Raya) was the most important minister of Achyuta Raya and was bearing the burden of the kingdom with him. He was the partner of the king in the administration of the country.[17] Rama Raja was a threat to Achyuta Raya's shaky reign, and for a period the two ruled almost as joint rulers.[18] Moreover, it was Rama Raja who advised Achyuta Raya to punish the Chera king Chellappa (Vira Narasingha) who had rebelled against Achyuta Raya and the latter is said to have taken his advice. Rama Raja is also praised for his heroic acts: in the poem, *Rāmarajīyamu*, a list of the important titles assumed by Rama Raja is given and he succeeded to the throne after Achyuta Raya.   Thus, it is likely that the companion of the king in the portrait might be that of Rama Raja.

Free-Standing Portraits

A few unattached images of royalty have been found at Hampi and are now housed in the museum at Kamalapur. Some were unearthed during the course of the recent 1979 excavations at the site.   However, they cannot be placed as to their original locations. A. H. Longhurst had collected them from various sites in the area and kept them in the Zenana, and during the 1979 excavations they were recovered from there. Hence, in the absence of the architectural context, it is

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[16] The purpose of the gift is enumerated by Hemadri in the Dasakhanda of his *Chaturvarga Chintamani*.

[17] Rama Raja, was bearing the burden of the kingdom with the king; that is, he was a partner of the king in the administration of the country.

[18] Achyuta Raya appears to have realized that to antagonize Rama Raja would not help him much in holding his power successfully (Venkatramanayya, 1936: 14).

difficult to identify them. In addition, they are all headless, un-inscribed, and they look almost alike. However, the free-standing portraits at Hampi can best be discussed in relation to the inscribed bronze portraits of Krishnadeva Raya and his two queens at Tirupati in the Pratima Mandapa or northern entrance of the Tirumalai temple, *devasthānam* at Tirupati. The free-standing portraits of the queens are similar in form to those in the Tirumalai temple. They wear *sarees* and the coiffure is in the form of a bun. They wear earrings *ratna kuṇḍalas,* armlets *keyura*, bracelets and girdles as well as an *yajñopavita*. All the three portrait images are exceptionally well executed and are fine specimens of art. On the basis of the king's Tirupati portrait and on the basis of iconographical marks and idiosyncratic features, one of the free standing stone portrait figures is a torso of a male and a female, who may be identified as that of a king and a queen, both images are depicted in the gesture of humiliation. If we compare the portrait images at Tirupati with these, they are similar in their gesture, dress, hair-style, standing posture and ornaments, although the image of the second queen is missing.

Both the Tirupati image and the free-standing portrait share characteristics with other kingly portraits at Hampi in posture and gesture. However, without the architectural context it is difficult to identify the similarities. Interestingly, there is an identifying feature which characterizes the image - the anklet on its left leg. The anklet called the *gaṇḍapeṇḍeram*, the royal insignia depicting the two-headed bird, is referred to in the *Catu* verses of Peddana of Krishnadeva Raya. According to the text, the Gajāpati of Orissa gave his daughter in marriage to the Raya together with the royal anklet (Aiyangar, 1986 152-153).[19] Whether it was a mark of submission, or an insignia of respect granted by royalty the free-standing male figure may be identified as that of Krishnadeva Raya who was given the *gaṇḍapeṇḍeram* by the Gajāpati.[20] In the portrait at Tirupati, the king does not wear the anklet. Perhaps the victory over the Gajāpati was too recent, or perhaps he could not be represented with this untraditional royal insignia especially in such a sacred and popular temple as the Tirumalai temple. A careful observation of the figure of Achyuta Raya shows that he wears only one anklet as well, probably signifying that the anklet became an insignia of royalty after the time of Krishnadeva Raya as referred to in *Cārucandrodayam*.[21]

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[19] The poet Allasani Peddana, who survived his patron, Krisnadeva Raya, writes: "Where were you, Gajapati, at the time when Krisnaraya's elephants attacked the fort of Aratla?...Where were you on the day on which you gave your daughter in marriage to the Raya together with the *gaṇḍapeṇḍeram*?..Were you dead?" (Venkataramanayya, 1936: 17).
[20] The king is also said to have lifted the palanquin of the poet, Peddana, on his shoulders and adorned with his own hands the poet's ankle with a *kavigaṇḍapendera*.
[21] In the *Charuchandrodayam* by Chennamaraju, the author states that once the poet carried from the emperor (Venkatapati Raya) the several insignias of his position to his patron, Pemmasani Timma. These were the triumphal banner of Garudanarayana...an elephant, a costly horse and a

Regarding the location of the free-standing images, the torso of the queen was found in the Vitthalasvami temple; hence it is possible that the king's portrait was placed in the same temple. That the portraits are in *añjali mudra* and wear a simple dress shows that they were most likely to have been in a sacred area. In the recent excavations, remains of the feet of portraits have been found in the *raṅgaśāla* of the palace (Rao, 1984: 9-29). Nearby stucco heads recovered. Domingo Paes who has left accounts of the city to the life-like images of Krishnadeva Raya and of his father at the entrance of the king's residence, perhaps opposite the *raṅgaśāla* (Sewell, 1983: 284). It is likely that a large number of royal portraits were placed in palaces but these were probably made of stucco than stone.

Conclusion

It appears that the Vijayanagara artist approached each representation in its own social context, handling rank and authority from a traditional perspective especially when no written texts guided his work; yet it was sufficiently innovative to incorporate identifiable criteria when the notion of identity was local, flexible and determined by the views of society (Frel, 1981: 2). The images of Krishnadeva Raya on the Krishna temple were meant to express certain relationships, relationships between the king and an important contemporary political event. In both cases, important aspects of Vijayanagara kingship are being expressed. The iconographical messages of the reliefs is clear. The battle scene was an allusion to a political event of contemporary significance and depicted the valor and heroism of the king. The heroic nature of the battle scene is obvious, but the portraits of the king reveal both the heroic and devotional aspects. In the portraits over the gate and pillar, the figures hold a sword, which signified the military aspect of the king. The sword, depicted in all the relief portraits, was a symbol of his military prowess. Hence, one of the major purposes of the architectural reliefs on the gateway and of the portraits and enshrining the image brought back from conquest was to portray the temple as a monument of victory and the king's heroism.

Heroic kingship glorified the king's qualities of courage, sacrifice, conquest and victory. A number of Vijayanagara inscriptions and texts glorify the military campaigns and the heroic qualities of the king who is linked to the ancestors of heroic warriors. The record found in the Ranganatha temple at Nagenahalli describes the Kalinga campaign of Krishnadeva Raya (*South Indian Inscriptions,* vol. 4: nos. 254, 255).The *Rāyavācakamu* gives a detailed account of his conquest

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necklace called *vīra mālāhari, talicaudattu,* bangles made of pearls, the anklet called *gaṇḍapeṇḍeram* and a sword ornamented with a tassel at the hilt (Aiyangar, 1986: 242-243).

of Udayagiri (Aiyangar, 1971 110-129). In fact, the kings often assumed titles as a result of their victories. Krishnadeva Raya assumed the titles of "Lord of the eastern, western and southern oceans," *pūrva paścima-dakṣina samudrādhipati*,"Hindu Sultan" *paribhūta surātrāṇa* and "a fever to the elephants of the *Gajapati*" *Gajāpati gaja kūṭapākala* (*South Indian Inscriptions,* vol.4: no 259; *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 1: 361-371). They indicated his victory over the Muslim ruler, Yusuf Adil Khan of Bijapur, and the Gajāpati ruler respectively. Deva Raya II had the titles of "destroyer of elephants,"… "courageous and victorious," and "victorious king" *gajabentekara, paribhūta pratāpa* and *vijaya rāya.*

The characteristics of heroic kingship revealed through historical sources were qualities of a military hero: courage, sacrifice and victory over the enemies- basically the virtues of a *kṣatriya*. These by themselves were sufficient to immortalize the warrior in stone, as seen on the numerous *veergals* (hero stones) at Hampi. However, according to the inscriptional sources, the battles were not merely for conquest, but are said to have been undertaken to protect the people and deliver them from the sufferings of Moslem rule and from their *adharma* "immoral acts". The acts of *adharma* are described in the *Madhura Vijaya* by Gangadevi who was an eyewitness to the campaign undertaken by her husband, Kumara Kampana, son of Bukka Raya (*Madhura Vijaya* 1957: Canto I verse 6). Protection involved an obligation to promote education, religion, arts, agriculture and economic development. It was believed that if the sacred traditions were upheld, the state would prosper (Drekmeier, 1962: 255). The aspect of military protection overlaps with the *dhārmic* aspect of kingship, as *dharma* entailed protection as well as promotion of prosperity. The *kṣātradharma* "royal obligation" was basically a martial ideal from which the concept of protection developed.[22]

In all the portraits, clear differentiation exists between the gods and royalty; the latter are in a subservient position and depicted in a posture of devotion and humility in *añjali mudra*, in the form of a devotee. The royal portraits signify the special status that the king enjoyed in relation to his subjects and in relation to the god. The *añjali hasta* was a familiar symbolic gesture; already embedded in official and religious pictorial convention, signifying the devotion of the worshipper. An instrument of status identification it was made highly visible. There is an inscriptional reference to the three images in Tirupati as offering salutations to the deity (Vijayaraghavacharya 1985), 376). The royal portraits in *añjali hasta* found at Hampi indicate that they must have been kept in the temple as they are represented in a pose of worship. They were installed as representing themselves (kings) serving gods at all times.

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[22] The ancient Indian king was called a *nṛpa* or protector of men, *bhūpa* and *bhūpāla*, protector of the earth (*Mahabharata*: 3, 63, 79).

Religious kingship entailed two aspects, the king as a *bhakta (devotee)* and as the embodiment of certain virtues of deities. The Vijayangara kings proclaimed themselves as devotees of gods showing their personal love to their personal god or their *iṣṭa devata* (favorite god) with whom the king could identify himself. The *bhakti* relation between king and god, the desire for a personal god, instead of the Advaitic Brahman, was felt strongly in South India. This was a continuation of the great upsurge of popular devotionalism which swept Tamil Nadu beginning about 700 CE. Subsequent devotional movements of South India were deeply influenced by saints.[23] As a result of *bhakti* infused popular Hinduism preached by Saiva Bhakti of Tamil Saints and Vaishnava Bhakti by Ramanujacharya, (early twelfth century) and Madhvacharya (thirteenth century), and epic heroes such as Rama and Krishna became popular gods. Influenced by the devotional movements, the sectarian schools also imbibed the devotional content and achieved a new doctrinal synthesis. The *brahmanical* philosophic and religious schools, such as those of Advaita and Dvaita, reinterpreted Vedic ideas for the incorporation of *bhakti* philosophy. During the Vijayanagara period, the kings patronized the *bhakti* saints, such as Purundaradasa and Kanakadasa, whose influence largely spread through devotional poetry and music and were effective religious propaganda of *bhakti*. The inscriptions at the capital city mention the name of Tondaradippodi Alvar and Prundaradasa who were patronized by the kings, and the saints had considerable influence in the city of Vijayanagara.[24] The devotional impulse by the king increased his status in the eyes of a religiously based society.

The king as a devotee before his deity was by no means contradictory to his quality of *deva* (god*)*, who embodied the virtues of deities, sometimes of his personal deity. Krishnadeva Raya was likened to god Krishna. The Nallur grant of Harihara II (*Epigraphia Indica,* 3: 113-126) compares the attributes of Siva and of king Harihara, and identifies him directly with Skanda, son of Siva. It adds that this great lord, Harihara, whose name identifies him with Vishnu (Hari) as well, is renowned in particular for his *Śakti* (power*)*.   King Nrasimharaya is called *rājaparameśwara* (*Kongudesarajakkalin Caritram*: 16-6-9) while Bukka is compared to the gods:

"With him the earth seemed to have Rama (for her ruler), because he shone by killing his enemies (was accompanied by Satrughna), was learned in the dance

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[23] Devotional literature of Appayya Diksita, Vedanta Desika, Madhvacharya, Tatacarya, Vadiraja (Kannada), and Nachana Somanatha and Srinatha (Telugu).

[24] The portrait of a saint has been found at Hampi. There is a controversy whether this is the image of Tondaradippodi Alvar or of Purandaradasa. There is also a *mandapa* on the banks of the river,   called the Purundaradasa Mandapa, where the saint is said to have lived during his last days (Rajasekhara, 1985: 109).

(was followed by Bharata), had god like qualities and was devoted to Hari and Isvara (was attended by Laksmana and the monkey Lord Hanuman), was a foe to villains (Khara), and afraid of slander (terror to Dusana)" (*Vaidyarajavallabham*: nos. 148, 1283, 3832).

Such comparisons of the king to the deities do not imply divine kingship or divinity of kings but only a moral superiority, crediting the king with special qualities, and virtues of deities, or, at the most, a godly essence.

The above two aspects of devotional kingship, namely the king as a devotee and as the possessor of special god-like qualities, were, however, not incongruous in the eyes of Hindu subjects. As a devotee, the king gained in status and was comparable to aspects of divinity, like the saints. The sincerity of devotion of the king was exhibited through endowments and grants largely to temples for – the purposes of building, feeding and maintenance of rituals. Religious kingship which entailed characteristics of devotion was reflected in the relation of the king with God while the virtues of deities was expressed in the relation of the king with his subjects. The relation of the Vijayanagara kings to the gods is complex, but it is of central importance to their notion of kingship. In art, this relationship is articulated by the king's portraits in their stance, hand gestures, architectural placement, and relation to other imagery. In the relief portraits of Krishnadeva Raya and Achyuta Raya, the king stands with joined hands *añjali hasta*, indicating the devotion *bhakti* of the king to his personal god(s). This devotion is seen as well in the placement of the royal portraits on areas of architecture normally reserved for *dvārapālas* (door guardians) of shrines, suggesting the submissive status of the king as an analogy to that of guardian before the deity. In fact, the king can perhaps be seen as a human *dvārapāla*, a role of honor before the deity within the temple. The *lakṣaṇas,* royal iconogaraphy of the portraits - two arms, absence of attributes, simple attire, an *añjali mudra* would clearly identify the human nature of kings. In addition the royal image, such as the one at Tirupati, shows a remarkable similarity to the image of gods (as Vishnu) in its stance, and modeling, thereby implying not merely an internal conjoining of secular and spiritual realms, but a "godly" ruler, publicly acknowledging the overlord-ship of the god.

This aspect of devotion was tightly interwoven with the heroic style as embodied in the image of Krishnadeva Raya who appears in a devotional pose while wearing a prominently depicted sword. While the king was a victorious warrior, he was subordinate to him.[25] However, it is interesting to note that the image of a king

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[25] The king was represented as a devotee is because there was perhaps a traditional injunction over the representation of mortals along with immortals. Sometime during the Pandyan period, the injunction was overcome by the representation of the king in the form of a god. Perhaps, another reason as to why the tradition was abandoned was that the mortals (including kings) could be

was represented while he is still living.　This act is forbidden in the *śāstras* (traditions) and normally can be done only after the demise of the king or saint. But this rule does not seem to have been followed in the case of Vijayanagara portraits, thus indicating the privileges of royalty.

As one stands in the courtyard surrounded by subtle but significant references to the king -the battle scene high up on the entrance gateway, the figure on the gate and those on the pillars the onlookers' eyes are drawn upward on a vertical axis. The portraits in the *maṇḍapa*, though small, are highly visible, as they are slightly above eye-level.　The courtyard is at a much lower level than the *maṇḍapa*, which is constructed on a high plinth approached by a high flight of steps.　In fact, the placement of the three portraits on a single pillar and the portrait of the king before the image of Krishna are in highly visual areas; the rays of the morning sun shine upon the portraits.　The portraits also gave affirmation to the contemporary viewer of the great deeds of the king.

The political nature of the imagery is clear, but it is subtly indicated.　Familiar as we are with the use of art for political propaganda, such small and unpretentious images as these portraits of the king are apparently surprisingly ineffectual to carry a political message.　Yet, they fit within Indian art generally, where it is usually very difficult to identify any political content.　Certainly, the building of the Krishna temple to house a captured icon was in itself a major political statement. But other subtle political comments are being made in the portraits.　For example, Krishnadeva Raya, although a staunch Vaisnavite, portrayed himself once as a worshipper of Siva.　He is standing before the image of the *liṅga* with folded hands, which shows his tolerant religious nature.　He gave endowments to Saivite temples, and was tolerant towards Jains and other sects as well.　Perhaps the portrait of the king with the *liṅga* was specifically to appeal for support from the Virasaivas who had become popular.　The imagery of the king before the *liṅga* was especially meant for the worshippers of *liṅga*, for whom the image would have meant a great deal.　While this can perhaps be termed propagandistic, it is not that the king is cynically worshipping the *liṅga.*

The concept of religious kingly tradition[26] included the concept of *dharma* which was fundamental to Indian kingship. *Dharma*, was the ancient and indigenous holy law of India (Lingat 1973: 3). The word defies exact translation in English; it is the

represented as *bhaktas* or devotees. This also explains the lack of written texts on the making of royal images.

[26] Burton Stein defines tradition:　"The term tradition here refers to more than a set of valued ideas transmitted from the past; use of the term is intended to draw attention to specific historical transmitters of such ideas as well as to the context in which such transmissions occurred.　Tradition deals with the circumstances in which and the means by which ideas of kingship were expressed by various persons to various receivers of these ideas" (Stein 1984:115-167).

eternal and necessary moral law, the code of righteousness; a set of moral norms and codes. According to Charles Drekmeier, "*Dharma* stands for a manner of life, the whole duty of man in relation to the general moral, material, and intellectual purposes of life. It can mean custom, obligation, sacred law, justice and the norm of conduct" (Drekmeier, 1962, 8-9). Thus, it included both rules as well as duties. In time, it acquired two interpretations, related but distinguishable. It implied virtue, the moral duty but also came to refer to the performance of caste functions, the social duty. *Dharma* implied both religious and social (or political) concerns and meant a major obligation of the king. The *dharma* of the king, *rājadharma* implied that the king must preserve *dharma*; not to protect *dharma* would lead to disastrous consequences. For its preservation, the king employed justice *daṇḍa* or else the guilt of not upholding *dharma* is transferred to the king. Hence, the concept of *dharma* was also a restraint on the king to act arbitrarily according to his own rules; he had to act according to the rules of *dharma* laid down in the traditions or *śāstras* passed down from generations. *Dharma* reminded him of his duty to protect his subjects and promote their welfare. Vijayanagara kings styled themselves as kings of *dharma, dharmarāya*.[27] The *dharma* of Vijayanagara kings however was not different from the role that Indian kings had with *dharma*; the king's *dharma* included acts of kingship, such as constructing forts and temples, irrigation canals, establishing, *agrahāras (Brahmin settlements)* and increasing the welfare of the kingdom. *Dharma* also expressed individual caste obligations of the state. The Vijayanagara kings championed the cause of maintaining the caste system i.e., *svadharma* individual *dharma)*. The Nallur grant of Harihara II specifies that Harihara protects the earth according to *dharma* and presides over a prosperous realm, where the people, "unaffected by calamities, were continually enjoying festivals."   Harihara also upheld "the observances of all the castes and orders *varṇāśramadharma*" and by so doing made the earth (up to the four oceans) and milked "the celestial cow itself in fulfilling all desires" (*Epigraphia Indica* vol. 3: 113-126).

Dharma, which was rooted in the Indian psyche was used by the king in a practical way to control the people. The *svadharma* was for maintenance of established order. Thus, the *dharma* of the king existed as a guarantor of the whole social organization along functional lines (together with its social inequality). It was used as a practical way to establish the existing social order at a time when internal peace was important and external troubles especially by the Bahmani kingdom was a perpetual threat. The idealization of the caste system by the king perhaps also served to check the conversion of lower castes to Islam, which the Hindu rulers strongly disliked. In addition, when the king idealized the actual caste hierarchical order, he was placing himself beyond the range of criticism. Kingship, being a function of the upper castes, gained by preserving the system;

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[27] Immadi Narasimha was called *dharmarāya.*

the maintenance of caste maintained the power of the king and others of the upper castes.   Thus, *rājadharma* (king's *dharma*) implied the king's obligation toward his subjects, which entailed almost every aspect of the social good. He was, as mentioned above, in reference to heroic kingship, obligated to protect his subjects by defending them from enemies, to maintain peace, promoting prosperity, and support the moral order (through the caste system). Royal beneficence thus entailed support for a broad range of architectural projects to fulfill the king's *dhārmic* obligations.   It is not surprising that the Vijayanagara kings built irrigation tanks, wells, and roads. They fortified the city with walls and towers, supported monasteries and temples, and also sponsored festivals. All of these royal actions had architectural and artistic expressions.

Finally, the religious nature of kingship involved the king as patron of religious institutions. The king patronized the temples by giving gifts and honors to the *brāhmins*. The temples, were one of the major carriers of royal artistic imagery, not only in terms of the relatively few portrait sculptures, but also mainly in the structure of the temples themselves. The act of building a temple was a royal as well as a religious act. Building temples was a forceful precedent for the kings' reestablishment of Hinduism.   Another key concept of kingship revealed through the texts and inscriptions is the liberal aspect of Vijayanagara kingship. Almost all the inscriptions inform us about gifts to temples, the majority being those of kings. The gifts ranged from small articles for ritual worship to large sums of gold and money and large tracts of land. They were given to temples, religious institutions, *brāhmins* and individuals. They were given for the sake of constructing temples, for worship, maintenance of rituals, as thanksgiving or commemoration, and to express liberality. They were also given as honors to chiefs on special occasions. Large gifts were made in the form of great gifts *mahādāna*. The two most often cited great gifts were the weighing of king against gold *Tulāpuruṣadāna* and *Hiraṇyagarbhadāna*.   The *Tulāpuruṣadāna* was performed by Krishnadeva Raya, Achyuta Raya and Deva Raya (*Epigraphia Carnatica* 1919: nos. 511, 543, 546). Here the king was weighed in gold and an equal amount of gold was distributed, perhaps to the people or *brāhmins*, through the temples. Achyuta Raya visited Kanchipuram (1532 CE) and had himself weighed against gold. Among the nine inscriptions of Achyuta Raya, seven of them, in the Vitthala Temple at Vijayanagara praise the king for the gift of pot of gold, *ānandanidhi* to the *brāhmins* in August 1539 CE (Rajasekhara, 1985: 110).

This concept of the king as the most generous, who tried to bestow the good things in life to the people, also had a practical purpose. This was to gain the support of the people, as is very clearly revealed in the contemporary historical text, *Madhura Vijaya*. In the *Madhura Vijaya*, the King Bukka Raya advises the prince to keep the people happy and to give gifts as the people were the wealth of

the nation (Shanbhag: 1964: 5). Finally, royal generosity to temples had an economic aspect. Gifts in the form of land and money endowments helped in the redistribution of state resources. They provided a perpetual income for services and the land and money provided a place and income for investment in development projects, such as irrigation.[28] Apart from mobilization of development funds, the money endowments provided for perpetual services, food and income to temple functionaries, and also helped local merchants (Stein, 1984: 161-180). C. A. Breckenridge proves that royal gift giving institution was an important factor for economic development.

Royal portraiture at Vijayanagara reveals aspects of the kingly tradition of gift-giving, devotion, conquest, victory of the king, as well as his relation with the nobles and chiefs. However, the categories of kingship, heroic, religious, liberal are not absolute; the line of demarcation between them is vague and they overlap. Each can be understood only in relation to the other. It was not based on a pure form of authority but contained diverse elements and reveals the inherent problems of these analytic categories and the distinctions they imply. The artistic sources express the amalgamation of different concepts in a single image. The relief portraits of kings at Vijayanagara, all placed within temples are small, which, in part may be explained by format. Portraits are placed on pillars in areas where the images of gods as well are small in size; but the freestanding portraits are larger. The original location of the freestanding portraits is unfortunately, unknown, but they were probably placed, as were in the Tirupati portraits, either in the *maṇḍapa* or the entrance of the temple in an act of devotion and worship. An inscription in the Tirupati temple clearly states that the portraits were made as a substitute of the king. The suggestion is, thus, that the freestanding portraits were seen as "substitutes" for the king in the temple, and were there as royal statements. The relief portraits, on the other hand, appear to me, to be more religious statements made in the context of the temple-god relationship. That is, the king's relief portraits present the king's role within the temple, a role that is necessary to the temple's completeness and function. These relief sculptures thus do not have to be large; they are not political or propagandistic statements. While the relief images are iconographical representations of the view of religious authority towards kingship, the freestanding ones are the king's conception of his independence and authority. Royalist iconography thus confirms and substantiates various aspects of kingly traditions and demonstrated the ways in which the king combined political authority and religious duty.

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[28] Money grants to the Tirupati Temple showed marked increase during the time of Achyuta Raya, 1530-42 CE. (Stein, 1960: 163-176).

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Book Review

Moodie, Deonnie. (2019) *The Making of a Modern Temple and a Hindu City: Kālīghāṭ and Kolkata*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 217.

Those of us who have conducted research in Kolkata often recall vivid experiences of Kālīghāṭ, the city's major Hindu pilgrimage site to the goddess Kali. Many of us will also have listened to Kolkatans talk in emotive terms about this temple – how powerful the goddess is, how some of the priests harass pilgrims, how the surrounding area can be chaotic, crowded and dirty. This is a temple that invites discussion, although it has rarely been the subject of academic research. Deonnie Moodie's much-needed case study of Kālīghāṭ enters straight into those discussions in terms which are familiar to Kolkatans themselves, drawing on different kinds of data (fieldwork interviews, historical documents, legal case history) in order to tell a compelling story about the trajectories of Indian modernity as they have played out through a major temple's relationship to the state and the Hindu public at large.

Moodie introduces us to Kālīghāṭ's story through an intriguing observation: counter to Jawaharlal Nehru's famous proclamation that dams will serve as the temples of modern India, the country's temples themselves shape and have been shaped by modern values. The book shows how Kālīghāṭ has been modernized, both discursively and in terms of its physical forms and management structures, along with the ways in which such modernizing projects have been resisted. This argument is neatly developed over four chapters which move from the conceptualization of Kālīghāṭ as sacred ground in nineteenth-century histories, through to the court cases which made it a public trust subject to legal interventions and new management regimes from the mid-twentieth century onwards. This process culminates in contemporary efforts to modernize the temple motivated by middle-class visions of order, cleanliness, and accountability to the concerns of devotees and other public interests.

The first chapter explores the representation of Kālīghāṭ through four texts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The four writers inscribe Kālīghāṭ into Kolkata's history in ways which undermine the notion that the city was established with the arrival of the East India Company. These writers work within the modernist idiom of history rather than traditional *sthalapurāṇa*, whilst establishing a claim to the Hindu roots of the city. They also negotiate the temple's uncomfortable associations with Tantra and sacrifice (*balidān*) by recasting it as a site with Vedic roots and Vaishnava practices. The existing literature on the nineteenth-century bhadralok in Kolkata has emphasized those reformists who rejected temples, ritualism and so-called idol worship in favour of the Brahmo Samaj and Advaita Vedanta. However, this chapter addresses the use of Kālīghāṭ as a cultural symbol amongst those bhadralok who have not been well-represented in previous studies. Their histories remade Kālīghāṭ as an emblem of the modern city, whilst suggesting the need to restore the temple to its rightful status as a timeless sacred space.

The discursive restoration of Kālīghāṭ in the city's history leads to a number of legal interventions in the twentieth century which turn it into a public trust subject to the expectations and aspirations of a modern public. The second chapter reconstructs this process in detail, showing how a number of plaintiffs target a perceived sense of corruption amongst the hereditary Brahmin priesthood (the *sevāyet*) who hold the privilege of conducting worship to the deity. The idea of the site as an eternal *śaktipīṭha* where the Goddess manifested herself is used to diminish the traditional claims of the *sevāyet* over the site. The temple needed to be declared public in order to become an object of state intervention, and this came with a set of claims about public needs and who should represent them. The categories of a trust – with its donors, beneficiaries and trustees – come to supplant the traditional set of arrangements between a god, the priesthood and devotees. The chapter provides a fascinating exploration of how legal categories (both the Śāstra and those of colonial and Indian courts) are developed in relation to religious institutions.

This legal history provides a welcome contribution to the existing body of literature on Hindu temples which has often focused on the huge temple complexes of Tamil Nadu. The chapter critiques Arjun Appadurai's well-known argument about the persistent cultural function of a temple complex in a post-independence context, by arguing that sovereignty has shifted from the deity to the public, and that authority has shifted from a traditional hereditary priesthood to the modern middle classes. The idea that priestly authority is based on their education in Sanskrit and therefore serving the public's needs recalls Chris Fuller's discussions of Agamic education in Madurai, although priestly education per se is not explored in the book. The chapter shows how emergent ideas of the public expressed and enforced through legal mechanisms actually belie a conflict between two kinds of elite – one, a priesthood which understands its authority in terms of rights, privileges and responsibilities to the Goddess alone; and the other, a modern elite educated in particular institutions, working in particular professions and generally adhering to a set of modern ideas about cleanliness, management, and the appropriate relationship between various spheres of modern life. Although the book does not explicitly engage with the existing literature on Indian secularism, it provides rich data for debates about the modern state's intervention in religious life.

The remaining two chapters work as a pair and examine the contemporary middle-class projects to clean up Kālīghāṭ and develop the temple into a monumental tourist attraction, as well as the various forms that resistance to these projects takes. Moodie describes two middle-class interventions in the temple: an NGO which works to develop and promote Kālīghāṭ as a tourist attraction with a number of new features and attractions and a more peaceful ambience; and an example of a public interest litigation (PIL) which seeks to compel the temple management (established through the court cases previously discussed) to adhere to a list of court-mandated directives regarding cleanliness and accountability of the priests through surveillance. Although these are distinct initiatives, they have been combined through the court's decrees. Moodie convincingly shows how the sacred ground of Kali has now become a sovereign space for the latter-day bhadralok.

However, these grand plans have never been fully realised because various modes of resistance bring other agendas into play. These include the *sevāyets'* reluctance to grant court authority over their domain, the effective organization of priests and hawkers into powerful unions to protect their livelihoods, as well as devotees who resent state interference in their ritual activities. These devotees are not concerned with the ability for Kālīghāṭ to represent Indian modernity; their devotion to the Goddess, moreover, positively colours their experience of the temple space in spite of the apparent dirt and crowds. This final chapter includes some fascinating ethnographic anecdotes, such as a female devotee who keeps an image of the Kali *mūrti* in her household shrine despite objections from her non-Bengali relatives that such a vision of the goddess is dangerous and only for tantric renunciants. The importance of Tantra in popular Bengali Hindu devotion could have been explored further here, as it points to the heart of the contradiction between the powerful experience of many devotees and those middle-class bhadralok actors whose grand projects have largely remained frustrated and unfulfilled. Whilst the book deals with what we may call the political dimensions of the temple and its management in considerable detail, the author does not discuss the kinds of rituals carried out at Kālīghāṭ by *sevāyets*, *pāṇḍās* and devotees to the same extent (with the exception of goat sacrifice, which becomes a clear object of middle-class, modernizing scrutiny). Further attention to strictly religious activities would only have strengthened the argument, as the kinds of traditional, modernizing and reformist practices make sense in light of the temple as a ritual arena.

The book is a timely contribution to discussions on the relationship between Hindu institutions and the state in contemporary India and will be useful for those exploring questions of modernity, secularism, legal traditions and the public sphere. I was reminded of Charles Taylor's suggestion that modernity is less a linear movement towards cultural convergence than a shift from one constellation of understandings about our self in relation to others to another. This constellation of modernist understandings emerges through Moodie's analysis of the modern genre of history writing, new legal categories that apply to religious institutions, the shifts in status for the Brahmin priesthood, and the kinds of interventions and initiatives by which private citizens shape the temple according the needs of a perceived public interest. By the end, the reader feels convinced that places like Kālīghāṭ may indeed act as temples of modernity, but one in which modern values emerge through complex processes of negotiation within a diverse public sphere.

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Book Review

Jones, Arun W. (2017) *Missionary Christianity and Local Religion: American Evangelism in North India, 1836-1870*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press. [ISBN: 978-1-60258-432-7] Hard Copy. Pages i-xxi+321.

Bhakti and Christianity in India share many features. *Missionary Christianity and Local Religion*, Arun Jones's rich study of nineteenth-century Indian Christians, substantially expands our understanding of this complex relationship. Jones's work is pioneering in many ways. It focusses on practitioners and lived religion. It grounds Christian life in broader religious movements. It identifies distinct Christian claims. It explains the effects of demographics on the development of religious practices. Jones's book also stands in line with groundbreaking scholarship on the development of Christianity in India.

A comparison by Sabapathy Kulandran (Kulandran 1957: 118-121) listed the following shared features between *bhakti* and Christianity. Both modes of religious expressions describe the human response to the divine. They embody a commitment to another and characterize God as the 'other' in whom one places complete trust. They rise above legalism, ritualism, and caste. Yet, important differences remain, such as claims about the nature of God and the source of salvation. David Scott (Scott 1980: 12, 21-22) has also characterized Christianity and *bhakti* as comparable responses to the sacred that express a "personalist tradition of religious devotion" and make *bhakti* a gateway to an Indian understanding of Christianity.

However, Christian devotion did not complement *bhakti* traditions in certain ways. Some scholars argued that *bhakti* traditions were an antidote to Christian colonialism in India (for instance, Pinch 2003: 167). As Tapan Raychauduri (Raychauduri 1988) and Dipesh Chakrabarty (Chakrabarty 2000) have noted, *bhakti* became a source of political unity among nationalist authors in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Comparativist scholars during the British Raj were also wary of certain forms of *bhakti*. George Abraham Grierson (1851-1941), an influential ethno-linguist, found much to admire about the *bhakti*-focused writings of Indian religious leaders like Sitaramsharan Bhagvan Prasad (1840-1932). Yet not every form of *bhakti* earned a positive review. Grierson was critical of Krishna-*bhakti*, which he argued was a troubling form of exaggerated love, and preferred Ram-*bhakti*, which he appreciatively compared to Victorian notions of sacrifice and social duty (Pinch 2003: 178-179). Jones adds to this history of critical work on Christianity in India.

Jones draws a distinction between evangelical Christianity and *bhakti* traditions, which he designates "local religion." He argues that nineteenth-century evangelical

Christianity found its place in the religious milieu shaped and nourished by *bhakti*. In the motifs and practices of *bhakti* groups, evangelical Christianity unintentionally found substantial echoes. Jones identifies five areas of resemblance. First, both religious groups looked to a divine savior for liberation. Devotees sought a personal, intimate relationship with their savior. Second, both traditions emphasized personal experience of the divine over rituals and doctrines. They fostered vernacular expressions. Third, *bhakti* and evangelical Christianity, Jones explains, shared a reformist impulse that provided counterpoints to formal religion, orthodoxies, and religious hierarchies. Fourth, communities were the primary site of religious devotion for *bhakts* and evangelical Christians in North India. Finally, both groups shared a demography, drawing members primarily from groups on the margins of society.

Despite the sharing of motifs and practices, Jones notes, *bhakti* and Christianity could not be (con)fused in nineteenth-century North India. Important differences remained. If *bhakti* was mostly henotheistic in outlook, evangelical Christianity located divine self-expression in Jesus of Nazareth. Where *bhakti* groups challenged social hierarchies, evangelical Christians emphasized personal holiness in addition to social change. In many cases, evangelical Christian communities were more socially active than *bhakti* communities in nineteenth-century India. Christian communities had political power in colonial India. Jones pays some attention to the effects of colonial power on the social impact of Christian communities. Yet, Jones's general thesis is on point: nineteenth-century evangelical Christianity in India found hospitable spaces in the religious milieu shaped by north Indian *bhakti* traditions. His observation that this hospitality was "coincidental" and "unwitting," however, needs to be qualified. The devotional hymns of Indian Christians show an affinity with and adopt *bhakti* motifs. Christian books and hymns in Hindi, for instance, demonstrate a robust affinity to the ideas and terms of *bhakti*. Like nineteenth-century Christians, a twentieth-century Christian in North India may not describe Christianity as a *bhakti* religion. Yet, thematic analogies between the world of *bhakti* and Christianity are evident in Hindi Christian hymnbooks.

Jones's book has three parts. The first describes the religious landscape of nineteenth-century North India as a confluence of Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities. To this mixture of religious polyphony, American evangelicalism added its notes. Jones presents the history of American evangelism in India as a story of cautious encounters led by Presbyterian and Baptist missionaries who sought out friendly communities for potential mission fields. The second part of the book describes some of the outcomes of such a strategy. Using case-studies of Christian leaders, Jones sketches the contours of a Christianity that was driven by religious and social reforms and shaped by Indian Christians. In the third part of the book, Jones extends his study of the effects of India's religiosity on American evangelicalism in India to the task of theology and ecclesiology. Jones shows how

Indian evangelical Christians adapted western Christian theology to Islamic and Hindu motifs such as omnipotence and *karma* in order to localize Christianity. In similar vein, the establishment of new Christian communities led to particular types of church space. These spaces were infused (for the most part) with *bhakti*'s rejection of caste and gender hierarchies and a certain 'middle-class ethic' that championed love over duty or *dharma* as its guiding principle.

Missionary Christianity and Local Religion is a fascinating read. It uses history, culture, and ethnography to paint a new portrait of north Indian evangelical Christianity from the perspectives of both Indian Christians and foreign missionaries. It not only deepens our understanding of nineteenth-century Indian Christianity but also sheds new light on the ways in which India's religious milieu shaped that Christianity. For these reasons, *Missionary Christianity and Local Religion* is destined to become the standard work on the topic in the field of mission studies.

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Book Review

Sumit Sarkar. *Essays of a Lifetime: Reformers, Nationalists, Subalterns*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2019. Pp. xiv + 650.

Karl Marx of post Napoleonic Prussia and the defunct (after 1806) Holy Roman Empire, is reported to have observed in respect of the manuscript of his *Capital* (1867) that he was "*expanding* this volume [for the publishers], since those German scoundrels estimate the value of a book in terms of its cubic capacity" (letter to Friedrich Engels, June 18, 1862; emphasis added).   Postcolonial India's distinguished historian Professor Sumit Sarkar's massive tome may not have been deliberately produced to satisfy the business interests of any roguish publishers but manifestly intended for worldwide circulation of his scholarship (mostly published in India including some which may not have been easily accessible outside of the subcontinent). The magnificently produced *Gesammelte Schriften* is loaded with densely written historical and historiographical essays. The Contents page lists them grouped in three sections: Bhakti and Samāj: Social reform and Religious Modernity (8), Nationalists and Subalterns (6), and Tributes (3). It is unclear why the author decided to include such *non sequitur* items as an obituary of a Marxist professor (and president) of Birkbeck College, London and reminiscences of a British labor historian, and of an erstwhile Indian Communist Party leader and the editor of an anthology to which Sarkar had contributed an article.

This stupendous *Sammlung* contains, barring the three Tributes, fourteen long chapters of which some, especially chapters six, seven, eight, and twelve, are, indeed, lengthy. Most of these pieces are reproductions of conference and seminar presentations or of invited chapters in anthologies such as the Subaltern collectives of which Sarkar had been one of the founding members and subsequently a famous renegade. In fact, Professor Sarkar, reputedly a "leftist" [in Indian context standing for "Marxist") historian, never cared to publish in any refereed scholarly journals of the West (except two) noted for vetting all submissions rigorously via patient and painstaking editorial intervention as to, *inter alia*, their linguistic clarity and cogence, and stylistic coherence and uniformity. Apparently, Sarkar's privileged exemption from the hawk-eyed copy editors has rendered his texts littered with the outdated "op. cit." and "ibid." (barring some select cases) erratic referencing.

 As a matter of fact, most journals in the social sciences nowadays use either the MLA Style Guide (8th edn., 2016), or the Chicago Manual of Style (14th edn., 1993), or Kate L. Turabian A Manual for Writers (9th edn., 1987) and discourage the use of "ibid." and instead insist on using "short titles.". Sarkar, on the other hand, dutifully continues with the venerable British system but, even then, he is neither consistent nor corrected. His failure to use diacritics in the terms such as the (illiterate)

Koliyuga for Kaliyuga (evidently to differentiate from the Goddess Kālī) has been problematic, to say the least. His lackadaisical, even indifferent, use of Bengali and Sanskrit words without diacritical marks elsewhere in this anthology is not only idiosyncratic but especially, coming as it does from a native speaker, outright irresponsible.

In addition to these glitches there are, however, some serious concerns over his research and writing. The professor (and he is not the only one in India) does not bother to mine the works of other scholars in his field except some from among his close circle of ideological and professional friends and associates. Consequently, some of his conclusions appear to be outdated as he has failed to keep up with the researches of other scholars, or they are too theoretical to be historical. For example, his understanding and treatment of Rāmakṛṣṇa's piety or popularity transforms this harmless, fun-loving, witty, but almost illiterate, temple priest (created by a concatenation of accidents than by training or choice), a self-proclaimed *avatār* of the Goddess Kālī (*Śrī* M [Mahendranath Gupta, 1854-1932], *Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇakathāmṛta*, III, 239-40. Diary of November 6, 1885) as well as the murderous rogue Kālācāṅd *sādhu* of eastern Bengal, a *Kalkī avatar* (312), into exemplars of the binary of "*bhadralok*" and their "others."

Sarkar appears to be unaware of what a *kalikā* [*kalke>kalki*] is and what is its precise function while smoking tobacco [*tāmāku* or *tāmāk*] or cannabis [*gāṅjā* or *gaṅjikā*]. It is a small slim funnel with a hollow stem for holding cannabis leaf on the charcoal cinders with both hands to suck the smoke to inhale and exhale it either through the nostrils or the mouth. No pipe is used for smoking cannabis (p. 313) it being used for smoking tobacco with a wider shaped funnel inserted on the stem of a hookah bowl filled with clear water. Sarkar's misunderstanding of the *Kalkī-avatār* parallels that of *kalkī*. On first reading, his essay appears to be a picture-perfect clone of Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-century Miller* (1980), but on closer inspection the stark incongruities appear quite disturbing. The murderous *Kalkī-avatār* of Daihata, Dhaka was no heresiarch Menocchio, the miller from the village of Montereale, Friuli (a region of northeast Italy). Professor Sarkar, ever suspicious of positivist apotheosis of texts and a crypto postmodernist with loyalty to Marxist historiography, his family inheritance, never interrogates his sources that he takes at their face value. No doubt, Menocchio's cosmology constituted a progressive ecclesiology of Reformation Europe for the admission of which he was burnt at the stake on papal orders, whereas the eschatology of the Bengali Kronos wreaked havoc with women's degradation and mayhem of neighborhood properties. *Pace* Sarkar, we learn nothing historically significant from the violent antics of the "Hanuman" and his acolyte, the *bhadralok* Droṇācārya.

Sarkar's lengthiest chapter in the anthology, on Kaliyuga, *kerāṇī*, *cākri*, is also the weakest and as such it calls for an extended critique. Rāmakṛṣṇa's animus against gainful (salaried) employment has to do with his personal handicaps for obtaining

one—lack of education, experience, disciplined regimen of social life, and his anxiety for the wives' importuning their spouses for gold jewelry and thus obliging them to slog in the labor market as *kerāṇīs* or clerks of the British and Anglo-Indian agency houses. Contrary to the views that the rustic mystic attracted the attention of the university educated *bhadraloks* thirsting for spiritual guidance and searching for their authentic identity, it is actually the imaginative Kamarpukur boy's songs, dances, and trances by reinventing himself as a divine incarnation and even as a godman prodded by his scheming nephew Hridayram Mukhopadhyay (1840-99), the enigmatic tantric nun *Bhairavī* Yogeshwari, and his influential employer Mathuranath Biswas (1817-71), that made him a celebrity (Narasingha Sil, *Crazy in Love of God: Ramakrishna's Caritas Divina*, 2009, 45-47).

Sarkar echoes John Rosselli ("Sri Ramakrishna and the Educated Elite of Nineteenth Century Bengal," 1978) to argue that "the cult that developed around Ramakrishna remained an essentially bhadralok affair in Bengal" (152) and claims to score a tad better over Partha Chatterjee's monochromatic portrayal (155) by producing a polychromatic (in my lingo "colorful") profile of the saint of Dakṣiṇeśvar. But Sarkar's idea of the *bhadralok* shows little familiarity with the term as defined by Kylas Chunder Dutt (1817-1857) (1817-57) or Shib Chunder Bose or as studied by Surajit Sinha & Ranjit Bhattacharya, Soumendra N. Mukherjee, Soma Munshi, or Narahari Kaviraj (see Sil *Problem Child of Renascent Bengal: The Babu of Colonial Calcutta*, 2017: Bibliography). But while making *Paramahaṁhamaśāi* (to borrow the *bhadralok* terminology of Amritalal Basu [1853-1929]) primarily an urban *guru*, he unwittingly highlighted the master's relative obscurity among the larger population of contemporary Bengal by adducing a fictional conversation between two elderly women from Bengal in Benares in which "the city lady was full of Ramakrishna , the village woman never heard of him" (153). But Rāmakṛṣṇa's admirers and regular visitors to Dakṣiṇeśvar were not all, as Sarkar claims glibly, "a growing number of English-educated professional men" following his enchanting encounter with the Brahmo reformer Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-84) (164).

Most people came to Dakṣiṇeśvar not to listen to the saint's spiritual sermons (if ever there was one) but to see the performance of a colorful godman and savor his funny scatological quips such as "shitty *guru*" [*hego guru*] and his flock the "gassy disciples" [*pedo śiṣya*], "If I pee standing, you buggers shall have do it romping around me" [*āmi yadi dāṅriye muti, to śālārā pāk diye mutbi*], God had mistakenly endowed "educated and independent minded Brāhmo women with vagina instead of penis," "The moment I utter the word 'cunt' I behold the cosmic vagina, which is Mā Brahmamayī, and I sink into it," or his didactic tale of a frustrated sly fox's false hope of munching the succulent balls of a big bull illustrating the wealthy parsimonious patrons' cunning strategy to frustrate the demands of their covetous clients and cronies, or his merry doggerel for his devotee Latu's [later *Svāmī* Adbhūtānanda, d. 1920] enlarged testicles (possibly a hydrocele condition):

"It's something that swings without a shove" [*holang kimbā dolang, tare nā dulāle āpni dole*]. He in fact considered cuss words [*kyeur, khisti*] as meaningful as the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas* (this paragraph is based on Sil, "The Professor and the *Paramahamsa*: Martin Luther and Ramakrishna Compared," *Asian Social Science*, VII, 5, May 2011, 13).

Of the Master's seventeen monastic disciples only *three* had college degrees, *one* passed the First Arts examination (that is, he completed two years of college studies), *one* studied up to F.A. [First Arts or I.A. Intermediate in Arts], *one* passed the college entrance examination, *two* passed high school examination, *seven* read up to high school level, *one* totally illiterate, and one with no information about his education. The bulk of the *paramahamsa's* visitors comprised young urchins from the neighborhood or schoolboys, some of them procured by *Śrī*M, who had earned the derisive sobriquet of *cheledharā* ["kidnapping teacher"]. Rāmakṛṣṇa's village neighbor and friend Pratap Hazra (1846-1900) objected to his fondness for rich and goodlooking boys and queried about his meditation for the divine (Sil, *Crazy in Love of God,* 82).

The *paramahaṁsa's* popularity owed to a great extent to his personality as well as to the ambience of his abode. Free from the austere atmosphere of a monastery, Dakṣiṇeśvar was a veritable "mart of bliss" [*ānander hāṭbājār*], sheltering an extended holy family presided over by a "male mother" figure, who made no demand upon his visitors. The latter, especially the adolescents among them, on the other hand, found in their older mentor the proverbial *leprechaun*, a trusting friend and a compassionate councilor, and in his "nurturant environment" a psychologically stable asylum from the demands of the adult world for education, work, or marriage. They also found the saint an exceedingly funny individual who treated them as equals and kept them amused with his songs, stories, sermons, and *samādhis*. Kedarnath Bandyopadhyay (1863-1949), a resident of Dakṣiṇeśvar, saw about seventeen or eighteen "very bright and jolly" young boys with the Master who "spoke to them in a lighter, more humorous vein, cutting jokes with them." *Svāmī* Brahmānanda (Rakhalchandra Ghosh, 1863-1922) recalled in his advanced years. "We used to have a cramp due to laughter" (Sil, *Crazy in Love of God*, 2009, 179-80).

Among the Western educated literati, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (1838-94) and Michael Madhusudan Datta (1824-73) were one-time visitors to Dakṣiṇeśvar and, reportedly, the *paramahaṁsa's* perorations on God, *kāminī-kāñcana*, or *bhakti* did not leave much of an impression on them. On the other hand, they were impressed by his song, *samādhi*, and dance. The famous *paṇḍit* and social critic, Ishvarchandra *Vidyāsāgar* (1820-91), remained quite lukewarm about Rāmakṛṣṇa's devotionalism. He, of course, never took the initiative to visit with the Master. Three more names stand out from Rāmakṛṣṇa's educated *bhadralok* viksitors: Keshab Sen, Narendranath Datta (1863-1902), and Mahendralal Sarkar (1833-1904). Keshab met the Master in 1875 at the retreat of their common acquaintance

Jaigopal Sen and found Rāmakṛṣṇa's ecstatic piety quite useful for his own sect and utilized the incarnational reputation of the *paramahaṁsa* to develop his personal charismatic leadership in the Brāhmo movement. Rāmakṛṣṇa's greatest disciple Narendranath first visited the Master as a college sophomore and later as an unemployed baccalaureate. Initially he felt importuned by the impulsive mystic's insistence on seeing him on a regular basis. He did not show much enthusiasm for the Master's spiritual discourse. It was only at Cossipore after Rāmakṛṣṇa's death that Narendra, as the *Svāmī* Vivekānanda, conceived of a Rāmakṛṣṇa movement after having publicly demonstrated his love for and loyalty to the *paramahaṁsa* by swallowing his bloody phlegm expectorated on the floor. Dr. Sarkar was fond of the child-like mystic but quite critical of his ecstatic exuberance.

In general, Rāmakṛṣṇa's *bhadralok* devotees came to him to have a good time and not necessarily to listen to his spiritual ministrations (whatever they were), though some did and said so, such as *ŚrīM*, Ram Datta (1851-99), Ishan Mukhopadhyay, "Captain" (*Kāpten*) Vishwanath Upadhyay, or *Paṇḍit* Vaisnavacharan *Gosvāmī*, Mahimacharan Chakravarti, or Prankrishna Mukhopadhyay. Following Rāmakṛṣṇa's death, when his close [*antaraṅga*] assocoates wondered where they would have a common venue to meet regularly as they did during the lifetime of their late Master, one of his householder disciples Surendranath (*alias* Sureshchandra) Mitra (1850-90 offered financial help for renting a room for daily rendezvous of everyone by saying: "Well, we householders need a place for relaxation after our daily hard labor for earning money" (Mahendranath Datta, *Śrīmat Vivekānanda Svāmījir Jīvaner Ghaṭanābalī*, vol. I, 32-33). Most people visited with the Master to have a good time, albeit almost everyone came to witness the miracle about a man "who died seven times and came back to life seven times" (*Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇakathāmṛta*, vol. 4, 190. Diary of September 19, 1884).   *ŚrīM* reportedly remarked in a conversation with a young initiate called Sacchidānanda that "what the Bengal Club is to the worldly men the Math is to the devotees" (cited in Sil, *Crazy in Love of God*, 180).

Chapters 1 to 4 of the book under review contain important historical discussions that cry out loud for bibliographical updates with studies published mostly in Kolkata and some overseas (see Narasingha Sil, *Problem Child of Renascent Bengal: The Babu of Colonial Calcutta*, 2017: Bibliography). Chapter 5 demonstrates Sarkar's weakness in referencing sources. Here he follows (something unusual for him) the conventional scholarly referencing style by providing place of publication and the name of publishers for the sources in English though never bothering to do the same for vernacular sources. I suspect he is unfamiliar with the publications of Bengali books in the nineteenth century where printers were often publishers. Thus, scholars using such sources are obliged to use the name of the printers as publishers.   I would still think that such anomalies are caused by sloppy editorialization on the part of the publishers rather than authorial oversights. However, apart from the chaotic referencing, the contents of this chapter amply

demonstrate Professor Sarkar's wonted scholarship. Likewise, Chapter 7 on Vidyasagar could have been a great scholarly article but sadly much of its merit is marred by astonishingly irregular referencing.

Sarkar's *oeuvres* demonstrate his basic grounding in Marxian historical method and shows his onetime experiment with the Subaltern collective. He is at his best in his historiographical essays (Chapters 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14). While trying to use the intellectual resources from the West (Marx, Gramsci, Thompson, to name a select (Karl Marx, 1818-83, Antonio Gramci, 1891-1937, Edward P. Thompson, 1924-93, to select few), he is by the same token cautiously critical of India's Western contact and impact (the Sarkars are the finest beneficiaries of India's, especially Bengal's, historical conjunctures) and remains intellectually attached to the historical odyssey of the unprivileged underdogs of late colonial and postcolonial society of India. It is an honorable privilege for this author to review the scholarship of postmodern India's one of the most renowned historians with whom he had the good fortune to be in the same undergraduate and graduate classes to witness the legendary history professor Sushobhan Chandra Sarkar's (1900-82) brilliant son—a veritable chip of the old block—perform triumphantly with his inimitable awesome intellectual é*lan*.

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Book Review

Jones, Arun W. (2017) *Missionary Christianity and Local Religion: American Evangelism in North India, 1836-1870*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press. [ISBN: 978-1-60258-432-7] Hard Copy. Pages i-xxi+321.

Having an interest in nineteenth century South Asian Islam, and more latterly reform and revival among Hindus in this same period, I found this volume fascinating as it overlaps with my work on South Asia in the late nineteenth-century as well as my studies on the rapid expansion of Christianity amongst Indians in South Africa over the past three decades. This study by Arun W. Jones, the Dan and Lillian Hankey Associate Professor of World Evangelism at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, is part of a Baylor University Press series on Studies in World Christianity, which examines Christian ideas, traditions, movements, and historic episodes in different contexts. Previous works have focused on places like China, Korea, and Ethiopia, marking a shift away from the association with, and excessive focus on practices of Christianity in Western Europe and North America.

This is an excellent analysis of the beginnings of evangelical Protestantism in what is today the Uttar Pradesh state in North India. It is essentially about interreligious encounters and their consequences for the wider society. Jones shows that although Christianity promoted itself as an alternative to Hinduism (and Islam for that matter), the faith adapted to the pre-existing environment by borrowing from elements of Hinduism when it took root in India. The example discussed by Jones to make his argument is the *bhajan*, a religious song in North India with deep roots in *bhakti* movements, which remains a feature of Christian practice to the present day. *Bhakti* movements rejected Brahmanical (elitist) Hinduism and offered worship to a supreme being. Christian *bhajans* were sung alongside translations of European hymns into local languages.

The evangelical movements brought to India by American missionaries resembled the *bhakti* movements and were shaped and constrained by them though Jones is clear that evangelicalism was not another type of *bhakti* movement. However, similarities between these traditions helped to increase the appeal of Christianity amongst Hindus by creating a religious space that 'provided credibility to some of the claims and expressions of Evangelicalism' (p. 16). The similarities between the emerging Protestantism and existing *bhakti* sects allowed missionaries to build Christianity in the religious spaces created by these sects. Christianity did not completely replace either Hinduism or Islam, but established itself in the margins of the *bhakti*-inspired movements. Similarities cover such areas as theology, religious expression, reformation, social formation, and social location (pp. 6-14). Both the *bhakti* and evangelical traditions were 'heart religions', which emphasised the affective dimension of religion; both tendencies opposed attempts by religious authorities to control access to the divine; both emphasised distinct religious communities where devotees could develop religious devotion and practices; and most devotees of both traditions were of lower or outcaste.

This comprehensive study begins by providing an excellent overview of the religious terrain in North India in the early nineteenth century in chapter one. The variety of Islamic and Hindu practices in nineteenth-century India are discussed, ranging from the philosophical to the popular expressions of Hinduism, and those that sought to promote monotheism, as well as the politically and reform-oriented practices of Islam, and the mystical tradition of Sufism which allowed a myriad of practices to take place under its umbrella. Two key points illustrated in this chapter are that the boundary between religious groups and within various religious tendencies in a single religion were highly porous and that the American missionaries who arrived in India did not introduce Christianity to the region, but built on the pockets of Christian communities in parts of North India by the beginning of the nineteenth-century.

Chapter Two provides a history of American missions and the emergence of evangelical Protestantism as a new religious movement within North India. It discusses the work of pioneering Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries, both lay and clergy, some of whom were in the employ of the British East India Company and who attempted to spread Christianity among the native population. This trend was continued by civil servants and officials of the British government. The missions arrived at a time when the Mughal Empire was disintegrating and the the British emerged victorious, facilitating the work of missions which expanded rapidly after the 1857 Revolt. As Jones puts it, 'there was a parallel growth in strength of empire and of evangelical missions' (p. 85). Missionaries were committed, and preached in chapels as well as in the open air, especially at religious fairs (*mela*), while the employment of Indian preachers, teachers, and catechists helped establish Christian missions.

Chapter Three identifies some of the Christian missionaries whose culture, profession, language, and message were foreign, but who became important agents of change as some amongst the locals responded to their message. Missionaries were not only agents of change, but also religious specialists who showed great enthusiasm and compassion in serving God. They provided pastoral care, and were pioneers in medical and educational services, while some among them were critics of the economic and political conditions under British rule. Many Indians became involved in the work of missions and even provided support without converting to Christianity. Missionaries found support in communities whose *bhakti* poets had critiqued the religions and society around them and who were seeking alternatives to the existing socio-economic, cultural and religious status quo. It was in such spaces that early American Evangelicals enjoyed support.

Chapter Four examines the life, works, views, and beliefs of four prominent native Christians of North India, who have variously been recognised as fighters for racial equality, being loyal mission workers, or Indian Christian intellectuals. The strength of these workers and advantage they enjoyed is that they were able to traverse as religious, cultural, and communal brokers between European missionaries and the indigenous peoples. This chapter also traces the work of Indian Christian women who assisted missionary wives as Bible Women and companions. Jones also probes the issue of missionary authority over native Christians, for evangelicals preached

'that it was a religion of equality, where all the faithful were brothers and sisters in Christ. So Indian workers were pulled by the opposing forces of loyalty to missionaries and freedom from their control' (p. 131). These Indian workers were crucial in helping to forge new religious communities in a Third space forged by low-status *bhakti* communities. Chapter Five develops this theme further by undertaking a critical analysis of the work of Indian theologian Ishwari Dass.

Chapter Six focuses on those who embraced the new faith. As with Empire and Science in general in the nineteenth-century, the American missions were also divided by race, comprising of Europeans, Eurasians, and "natives". European members were strong supporters of the Empire which they saw as 'a providential instrument for their mission'. Though they attracted Indian converts, there was a strong contingent of soldiers, civil government employees, and traders who were members of the mission. Native converts included mission orphans, who were viewed as the foundation of a future Christian community, as well as low caste and outcaste groups. Missions saw converts as cutting off their relationships with Indian society and as forming a paternalistic relationship with the mission. Converts, however, saw themselves as continuing to exist within Indian society but with an improved social status. Many converts also did not abandon their old religious world for the new one, but continued to practice elements of their old faiths. Converts valued the material and ideological support of missions but resisted their ideological control. The missions themselves conceded that many Indians converted for material gain. The consequences for converts ranged from ostracism to violent attacks on their person and property. This study shows that although some forms of proselytising demonised Hinduism and Islam, there were others that sought to engage with living communities in dialogue.

Indian converts occupied a marginal or in-between space between British rulers and mass of ruled Indians, constructing communities in a Thirdspace, where they could be different but also part of the wider society. Jones employs the concept of 'Thirdspace', drawn from urban geographer Eward Soja, which refers to that space which incorporates both the life we live as individuals based on the experiences we have gained from the society and our individually imagined experiences with social space as a whole. Jones writes that 'from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, *bhakti* had created what Edward Soja has termed social and ideological Thirdspaces in Hindi North India, places where reigning orthodoxies and orthopraxis could be subjected to rigorous critique, and new ideas for human community could be imagined and developed, discussed and debated, and put into practice' (276). In closing this study, Jones points to the ways in which various expressions of North Indian Christianity are moving outside traditional Christian power structures into specifically Christian Thirdspaces.

While Jones, at times, places too much emphasis on the Thirdspace provided by the *bhakti* groups, this is a well-researched and argued book that provides an excellent analysis of Christian missions in North India. It makes a valuable contribution to the study of Christianity in colonial India and some of the issues raised in this study will

provide impetus for new work which will help to deepen our understanding of Christian movements in India.

More generally, this study raises broader issues of religious conversion as an integral part of the expansion of colonialism on a global scale since around the fifteenth century, raising questions about the political and intellectual context surrounding the emergence of missionary projects and the role of race in religious conversions in colonial contexts. This book also explores the role of the British government in assisting the missionary project and underscores that missionary movements received different responses in different settings. The questions raised in this study, such as who converted, how conversion changed social structures, to what extent new religions accommodated older beliefs and rituals and so on, will be invaluable to students of Christianity as well as those interested in religious conversion more generally.

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