Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca
Cluj Center for Indian Studies

Romanian Journal of Indian Studies

Editor-in-Chief: **Mihaela Gligor**

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ARGUMENT

Mihaela GLIGOR
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> "India is seen as a country of immense diversity, of distinct hopes, of vast and disparate beliefs, of extraordinary customs and a genuine feast of opinions. The cultural heritage of contemporary India combines the Islamic influences with the Hindu ones, as well as those pertaining to other traditions, and the outcome of the interaction among different religious communities can be fully seen in literature, music, painting, architecture and many other fields." (Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize laureate)

India is a mixture of emotions, colours, feelings, music, happiness, sorrow, life and death, gods and people. India is an endless puzzle which each soul that meets its mystery tries to solve. India is infinite, just as untrammelled as the fascination that it produces in the others.

India is an incredible rich culture, with a history of thousands of years. It saw the rise of various civilizations, religions, dynasties, human groups, cultures, and arts. India has been presented and represented in many forms in literary discourses, arts, and heritage symbols. But the country is so vast that there always remains an area to be explored. Moreover, there are many new things to be interpreted. Any discussion on anything belonging to India and its culture is incomplete without interdisciplinary dialogue between various cultural aspects and elements.

Through its incredible stories, India has always attracted people of distant places from archeologists, travelers, merchants, artists to scientists, and academic researchers. Its rich diversity and its myths, legends, arts or music fascinated and allured many minds. The languages of India, from Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil, the regional languages from the ancient times, to Persian and Urdu from the medieval times, and English, Bengali or Hindi from the modern period, were and still are fascinating for linguists and researchers.

The *Romanian Journal of Indian Studies* seeks and encourages interdisciplinary approaches in linguistics, literature and literary studies, Indian philosophy, history of religions, political philosophy, and history of ideas, science, anthropology, sociology, education, communications theory, history, and performing arts. One of its primary aims is the integration of the results of the several disciplines of the humanities so that its studies will have a synthetic character in order to acquaint the reader with the progress being made in the general area of Indian Studies.

The *Romanian Journal of Indian Studies* is affiliated to *Cluj Center for Indian Studies,* Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca. The Journal appears once per year and it is dedicated to all those with interests in Indian culture.

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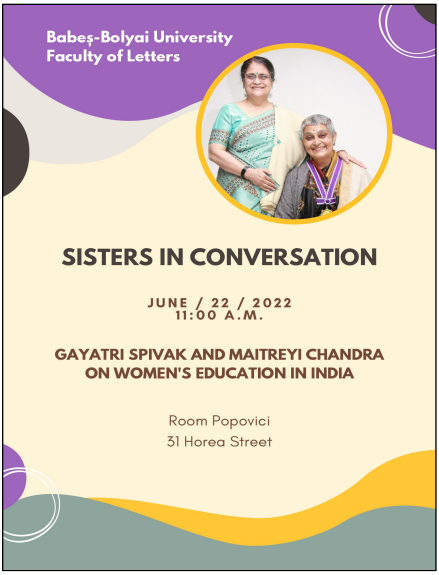
EVENT

On Women's Education in India. Sisters in Conversation

Gayatri CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK and Maitreyi CHANDRA

Between 20 and 25 of June, 2022, Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was guest of Babeș Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca.

In her Romanian trip, she was accompaniated by her sister, Professor Maitreyi Chandra. The two of them offered a wonderful talk, on June 22, *On Women's Education in India*. The audience had the opportunity to learn details about the educational system of India and how it changed during time. At the end of their conversation, Professor Spivak presented to us her most recent volume, *Living Translation,* her 80 years birthday gift she received from Seagull Books from Calcutta. We were mesmerized by the candour she displayed and also about her willingness of signing the volumes for us. Their dialogue was transcribed by Georgiana Nicoară, PhD student at the Faculty of Letters, Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca.



Rareș Moldovan:[1] Good morning, everyone. Distinguished Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Professor Maitreyi Chandra, dear colleagues and guests, it is an honour and an absolute pleasure to welcome to Cluj-Napoca, for the first time, Professor Spivak, Professor Chandra, for the first of the two events this week occasioned by her visit to Cluj, as you could see, a dialogue on women's education in India today. And after the event, we have a few copies of Professor Spivak's most recent book, which reunites many of the writings on translation, which could be bought and signed, there will be a signing afterwards, and you get a chance to chat with Professor Spivak as well.

Professor Spivak needs no introduction for us. Her ideas have shaped the field in which we all operate, the conceptual consolation that we used to orient ourselves in so many of our pursuits. She has been as influential as a theorist, but equally as an activist, as a builder of institutions, as one who creates and fosters education in India. Once again, we are so, so thankful to have her today.

I'd like to extend my thanks to Professor Michaela Mudure, who initiated this thing to the English Department, to Professor Mihaela Gligor, from *Cluj Center for Indian Studies*, to everyone who's contributed to making this a reality.

Professor Maitreyi Chandra was a Reader in Chemistry at the National Institute of Technology, in Srinagar. She also taught at the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi and she was a senior scientist advisor for the National Council, for the Technological Education. She was deeply involved in environmental education at all times.

[1] Rareș Moldovan is currently the Dean of Faculty of Letters, Babeș Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca. He is Associate Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, and the director of the M.A. in Irish Studies at the Faculty of Letters, and is affiliated with the Centre for the Research of the Contemporary British Novel (CCRBC) and the Centre for European Modernism Studies (CEMS).

So, this amounts as a fascinating discussion and there will be also a Q&A at the end of it. Professor Maitreyi Chandra, thank you for your visit. Before it begins to sound too much like mansplaining, I have to sign off by handing out the microphone to Professor Spivak.

Gayatri C. Spivak: First of all, thank you for turning up here. Our subject today is women's education in India. The positions of my sister, Maitreyi Chandra, and mine are very different in this regard. We actually went to the same schools, went to the same college and then we went for our Doctorate to the same place, Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Her Doctorate is in Chemistry, and mine is in Comparative Literature. So, our interests are very different, but what happened afterwards is what is significant for this story.

I'll speak about myself first. By chance, I translated a very famous Algerian-French philosopher, Jacques Derrida. I started translating in 1967, and that's what made me well known. Translating someone else's work made me well known, and I married in the United States, I got a job, I got tenure, and, although I had not gone with any intention of staying, as lives go, I stayed. And I was, because those were the early days, I was very thoroughly tokenized. In those days, before Lyndon Johnson changed the Alien Registration Act in 1965, I was like a rarity, especially since I had done Derrida. So, my reputation is not a real reputation: it's a token reputation, because I was in the United States. It's a cultic reputation. It's not a scholarly reputation. So, this is a very different story from my sister's story.

When she and her absolutely brilliant husband, they're absolutely brilliant, (he recently died of COVID) when they met at Graduate School at Cornell, he was in Physics and she in Chemistry. They got their PhD's and they decided to go back home, to India, and to work there. And so therefore her story is one of soldiering in India. Her

connection with our topic is much more important than mine. Remember what I said? I do have a kind of reputation that Rareș was very, very kind in mentioning, but it's a cult reputation, it's not a scholarly reputation, and it's a token's reputation, because I was there when such tokens were important.

Whereas my sister's job was not one that brings reputation, she was working, finally, the important work which actually made her involved in India's large country, in women's education on a certain level, because this is not an extra state activist. She was working for the state, for the central government. Her work was much more influential in every sense of the term. I say this often that, in the long run, her work was more influential than my kind of high theory type work that doesn't go too far. But, of course, that can't be known because I have this United States based reputation, whereas she was working for her own government.

And so therefore I just wanted to say: this is not the kind of glamorous work that gives you reputation. You just keep on working, especially aware of the glass ceiling. That's my sister. So, therefore I wanted to give this introduction so that you knew what our situation was in terms of our conversation. Now, I am not going to lead with questions or anything, but one question I've told her I'm absolutely going to ask: I want her to share with you, because she's also part of the example, we are both part of the example, and my BA is also from the University of Calcutta, we are also part of the example of women's education in India, as well as, of course, in her case, a very active person in the field and in my case the localized thing, which I'll talk about later. Our own parents were absolutely pro education, not only pro education, but they brought our brother up in the same way as the sisters. We were into education, but my father died when she was ten

years old, so by the time she came into the adult world of work, she no longer had the kind of family enablement that I was fortunate enough to have, because I graduated high school the year my father died, so I could just go on to do what I wanted to do, which was science. But I wasn't good at it. So, there she was. But so therefore I fell into literature because it's a women's subject. In her case, the story of how she chose has a kind of family background which I absolutely wanted to share. I didn't know this until quite recently, so may I ask you?

Maitreyi Chandra: Well, good morning and it's, as my sister said, it's very nice to see all of you. And well, I hope I can be heard in the back. Well, she asked me this question, how I went to science. In India you take what we call the stream, whether it is science or humanities or commerce, at the end of your schooling years, which is in the 11th and 12th class. When I was in class 10, for whatever reason, I wanted to be a chartered accountant and chartered account is, in the United States, I suppose they are called CPA, certified public accountants. As I said, for whatever reason, I wanted to be a chartered accountant, but a very close and elderly relative of mine literally put his foot down and said "women don't become chartered accountants." So, well, you know, I was about 12 years old at that time, maybe 13 and, well, I didn't have any other idea, because it was just not possible for me to become a chartered accountant the way this person, you know, our relative, he himself was a chartered accountant. So, I sort of agreed that maybe what he is saying is correct. Well, before I go any further, I would say things have changed so much that his granddaughter ultimately became a chartered accountant. So that's one part of the story.

So, I had the option of either taking the science stream or the humanities stream in classes 11th and 12th, which is school-leaving stage. For humanities stream you had to take languages, that is Bengali,

which is our mother tongue, and English, which was the second language. And unfortunately, unlike her, I just don't have flair for languages. So, I had no other option but to go to science stream, because for being a chartered accountant you had to go take commerce stream. And since I was not going to be a chartered accountant, there was no point of taking the commerce stream. So therefore, I went to science stream. Fortunately, I was always good in Science and Mathematics in the lower classes. Well, then when I went to science stream, then I started studying Physics and Chemistry separately, because in India till you go to the last stages of schooling, that is in class 11 and 12, you learn science as Science, that is not as Physics or Chemistry, but Science as a subject itself, which is a very good idea, in fact. But, in any case, in the higher classes then you start studying Physics and Chemistry and, of course, I had Mathematics. And I found myself much interested in Chemistry, and therefore when I finished my schooling and went to college, that was way back in 1961, so I decided I'll take Chemistry, as we called Chemistry honours, that is main subject as Chemistry with Physics and Mathematics as the subsidiary subjects.

Now let me tell you, I went to an all-girl, all-women's college and she went to that college also, this is a very well-known college of Calcutta, it's called the Lady Brabourne College, and it was an established old college, but you know, it only taught humanities. There were no science subjects. And it so happens that our 1961 batch was the first batch that had Chemistry as an honest subject, and I was a product of that first batch. That also shows how in those days, not only chartered accountancy, even science was sort of, you know, was not taken to be a woman subject, Physical Science especially. Biological Sciences yes, because people went to Medicine. Medicine was supposed to be not for Surgery or say Oncology or heart specialist,

whatever they are called, not those, but Gynaecology was supposed to be a woman subject, so therefore women went to science only in the Biological side, but Physical sciences, Physics and Chemistry, were not women subject, but, in any case, I decided I will take Chemistry and I went on doing Chemistry and, ultimately, as my sister said, I not only graduated in Chemistry, I went to the United States, did my Master and PhD in Physical and Organic Chemistry, and I started teaching Chemistry basically in the Engineering colleges, that is first in the Regional Engineering college which is now called the National Institute of Technology, and also at the Indian Institute of Technology, and I produced chemical engineers, all males.

In fact, I was the only female faculty member teaching science subjects also, and I was very happy to produce all these famous chemical engineers. So, that's how I went, to answer her question, into Chemistry science and then to Chemistry teaching. For many years I taught Chemistry basically to produce chemical engineers, but gradually my interest turned from hardcore Chemistry teaching and research to chemical education, Chemistry education. So ultimately, I sort of gradually shifted towards Chemistry education. And as I was mentioning in my introduction, as I was told, I became, I retired as the Head of Science and Mathematics Education in the National Council for Education Research and Training, which is the advisory wing of what we call the Education Ministry of the Government of India.

So that's my story of starting to become a chartered accounting and ending up producing chemical engineers and then, you know, sort of, doing Chemistry education. So, I suppose I gave you my answer.

Gayatri C. Spivak: Thank you! And as I said, I just learned that she had wanted to be a chartered accountant. But what is to me very interesting is that she transformed this choice that was really imposed

on her as she transformed this into something very positive. And I'm always amused by the way she says that she produced 'male chemical engineers.' That, you know, that's also a story of women's education. As I said, we are examples. I mean my first job; I was not only the only person of colour, but also the only female in a department with 65 white men. So, we are talking about a real change, not just in India, but also in the United States. When I got my first job at the University of Iowa, it was an English women's subject, but even then, I was the only woman and the only person of colour in this wonderful department, along with 65 white men. It was a very hairy experience. But I want to get back to your work: when you say that you became interested in chemical education, I would like to hear, I would like the audience to hear a little bit about what that chemical education was. I know that it was a certain class and then how you moved into women's technical education. Tell us the story.

Maitreyi Chandra: Well, for many years I was teaching in the chemical engineering departments, so I was really teaching chemical engineering, but gradually I got interested in Chemistry education also to find out, well, not quite to find out, but to see why is it that women don't quite go to Physical sciences like Chemistry and Physics and even if they take science, it is basically the Biological sciences and end up in Medicine, not in Engineering.

When I was teaching in the Regional Engineering College in Srinagar in Kashmir, I would say that not only I was the only female in the entire institution, female teacher in the entire Engineering College, but there were only five girl students. In the entire Engineering College, there were only five girl students and I was the only female faculty! So, since that time onwards I had this question, you know: why women do not go to science? And since Chemistry was my subject, why they don't

go to study Chemistry? So, the fact that I though Chemistry was my bread and butter, that's where I earned my salary. But, as I like to say, women's education in science and technology was the jam of the bread and butter. I did not earn my salary from women's education, but that was my interest. And I did some quite a bit of work on that, but then what I found out was that there are two things that happen and that happened all over the world.

In fact, I was reading something very recently, and I forget the name of this very famous woman scientist in astrophysics who got the Nobel Prize in 2020.[2] She writes that when she was in high school, this was in the United States, she was very good in Mathematics, but her fellow students who were males would challenge her saying that 'you cannot be good in Mathematics because you're a female.' So therefore, and as we all know, you can't do Physical sciences without Mathematics. So, if a female is discouraged to take Mathematics because saying that 'you cannot be good in Mathematics,' even to a person who ultimately won the Nobel Prize, so one of the reasons is this social bias that the society has against women being good in Mathematics. I was good in Mathematics, I had had Mathematics, still my PhD, because the subject that I did for my PhD, I needed Mathematics to have Mathematics. So, one thing is that it is basically the society that sort of discourages women.

Now I will give you another example: my little grandson who lives in the United States and he will be going to what we call a grade 6 next year. So, he decided he will do some Mathematics with me and I was

[2] Professor Andrea M. Ghez, one of the world's leading experts in observational astrophysics. She has been awarded the 2020 Nobel Prize in Physics. She shared half of the prize with Reinhard Genzel, "for the discovery of a supermassive compact object at the center of our galaxy." The other half of the prize was awarded to Roger Penrose, "for the discovery that black hole formation is a robust prediction of the general theory of relativity." (Editor's note)

amazed to see, and this is about a week ago, the Mathematics book that he had, that he showed me and said 'Jane did this particular calculation wrong.' Now my question is 'why is it Jane?' It could have been Jack. But see, even today in the United States, a country that we think is the most developed country; the whole idea is that Jane can do a Mathematics calculation wrong, not Jack. So, this is the whole thing that the society discourages women to do Mathematics, and therefore to do Science. Now, another thing is if you think of a scientist, the first image that comes to your mind is an absent-minded scientist being, hair blown out and, wearing a white coat and things like that. Now, a girl who is now a teenager, the last thing that the girl would like to be is like an absent-minded scientist with blown up hair and wearing a white coat. So, that also creates a thing to the girl that, well I should not be a scientist because, you know, if I become a scientist I will not look pretty, I will not wear nice clothes, everybody will look at me and say 'oh well, this is a scientist.' So, these are social reasons. Not only the reason, but as I said, some of the reasons, the social reason why women do not go, girls, you know, before they become really women, they do not want to get to science because of these social reasons.

So, therefore when I went to National Council of Education Research and Training, we did a lot of work in taking these biases away. We tried to taking these biases away from our textbooks in science, as well as in textbooks in Mathematics, we try to see to it that it is never only a girl who cannot do this calculation; as I said last week, to my 10-year-old grandson, when he showed me the book. He didn't realize that, but I was very surprised to read this. So, we tried our very best to see to it that such stereotyping is not there in our science books or in our Mathematics books. That was one of the reasons why I went

to science education, as you asked me. This is because what I've experienced in my life. So that was one of the reasons.

Gayatri C. Spivak: OK, you know, we are getting on at 12:00 o'clock and we have fifteen more minutes. I want to divide that into two things, just as I said to you this morning, I want you to comment on how you, because I saw you do that work, how you put environmental ideas long, long before it became so common, the idea of environmental education into every subject, because these were the textbook people, right? She was at the head of Science in the NCERT, as it is called, National Council on Educational Research and Training. This is the top thing in the Government of India. And she was at the Head of Science, and what you were doing, and I was very much with you there, I have, in fact, somewhere in my files the wonderful booklets that you produced, more than booklets, books that you produced on environmental education and how it could be put into every subject. Could you just tell us a little bit and then I'll talk a little bit about the book I'm selling?

Maitreyi Chandra: Well, when we were young, which is almost prehistoric, but, in any case, when we were young, even in our primary classes, we had a subject called Nature Study, you would remember this is called Prakriti Party in Bangla, which we had from our primary class till about class 10, secondary education. In Nature Study what we were taught about, there were the trees, the animals, the flowers, but the word environment was not there. It was all about Nature, but the word environment did exist in our vocabulary and that word environment was the social environment. We would say this particular girl or boy has grown up in this particular environment and we meant the social environment. It was in early 70s and, without bragging, I would say I was perhaps fortunate in introducing the word Environmental

Education in place of Nature Study. And in environmental education, what we tried to do was to develop a syllabus book which not only talked about the nature but about environment, which is both physical environment as well as social environment.

And therefore, in all textbooks that we developed, whether in Science or in Languages or in Mathematics, we try to put in this concept of environmental consciousness as we said, whether it's about including the nature, as well as the social environment. So, that is how we sort of introduced the environmental consciousness. Quite long before environmental consciousness became a buzzword and we talked about it. Now we talk about all sorts of environmental issues. And, as she said before, all these things became, shall I say popular or fashionable, whatever word one wants to use, we had written little booklets, for growing up children, people who would be in school-leaving stage, on issues like acid rain and ozone hole and, you know, as best as the problems of asbestos and these sort of environmental issues.

So, that's how the concept of environmental consciousness we tried to put in all subjects because, as I said, it is not only the natural environment, but also the social environment, which is very important in developing environmental consciousness because, unless you have that social environmental consciousness, you will never be able to develop the natural environmental consciousness either. So, that's how every subject in a nutshell, I, you know, I can't go on and on how we did it, but in nutshell that's how every subject we tried to develop this environmental consciousness.

Gayatri C. Spivak: Thanks! My work in education in the Indian context is very much focused on extremely poor folks, who have been the victims of the caste system. So, what I have been helped by comments coming from her, because she has a much greater structural

experience of year after year working at the top, she has said to me, a number of times, that to sustain and to preserve, you will contradict me if I'm wrong, but I have heard you say this, to sustain and to preserve the kind of structural work that she's talking about, and I can assure you, she said much less than she could have, the kind of structural work that they do, the exploration for teaching everybody can only be sustained if there is textural work of this sort of focused small happening. And so, this has given me confidence in pursuing what is not very common at all at the bottom layer with deep focus trying year after year to see that these educational reforms that very few people, but she's an outstanding example, that they bring in at the top, that they are internalized at the bottom and sustained. So, this is the relationship. India has, at the same time, a very strong women's movement from a very long time.

My mother was born in 1913 and she was a member of the All India Women's Congress. So, it's not something unknown in India, it's a strong women's movement. But, at the same time, because of this difference, there is also a kind of normality to Rig Vedic culture, which is common in the world, it's not just confined to India, because my experience, of course, is much broader, although much shallower. I'm a mile wide and an inch thick, but nonetheless, this experience, actually this combination, of a strong women's movement and a taking over rape culture as normal. This is a contradiction that women are working at and my own work, in fact, also involves men. I don't focus on single issue, feminism, because where I work the men are, first of all, they are also gender biased, so unless one can treat men who are historically unfortunate to have inherited this characteristic, unless one treats this with sympathy, they'll only be opposition, and I'm more interested in a future that will, I've never come to pass, but nonetheless, one can work for it. So, I, in fact, teach men and women and, as you heard, and girls

and boys and, she produced male chemical engineers. There's a similarity there. But I don't want to go on about myself; I just wanted to say what I had started with: her involvement with women's education in India is much more important than mine.

And, at any rate, I want to say something about the book. I was 80 on the 24th of February this year, and some friends who had, well, friends, you know, associates who had, in fact, a planned to bring out a book where my writings on translation would be collected.[3] They decided that they would give it to me as a birthday present. So, what you see there is a birthday present. It was supposed to come out with Princeton. But Princeton, of course, being a heavy-duty press, takes time, so in fact Seagull Press published it.

I want to say just one word about Seagull Press: it is located in Calcutta. It has an office in London, Verso, it runs Verso, and it is distributed by the University of Chicago Press in the United States. But it is the only, *the only*, and this is not easy, it is *the only* press located in the so-called Global South, which has and retains world distribution. It is not something that is connected to a central press, which is located in the Euro-US. And for this, it is my press. And so therefore, on the 24th of February, suddenly in my house in New York appeared a huge box full of these books, my birthday present, I decided that I was going to sell these books for single press. So, it's not easy in a country like India against the huge conglomerates to remain an independent publisher. So, anyone who buys this book is also contributing to the life of a press that tries to retain its identity as a Global South press with world distribution. So, I just want to say that: number one, this is my birthday

[3] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Living Translation,* Edited by Emily Apter, Avishek Ganguly, Mauro Pala, and Surya Parekh. With a Preface by Aron Aji and Maureen Robertson, Seagull Books, Calcutta, 2022, 268 pp., ISBN: 978-1-8030-9-113-6.

present, and number two, I'm giving it back to the press, because I'm selling it for them. I've never done it before. This book is the first book that I have myself sold in this way. But it is because I want to share the fact that this press is a very unusual press. It's just completing its 40th year and that it hasn't been easy. So, that's about the book. And thank you very much, Maitreyi. That was a lot of fun. Thank you!

Rareș Moldovan: Thank you, Professor Spivak, and Professor Chandra for your conversation. We will now take a number of questions and I will ask my colleague to move the mike around the room. And I would say questions, I know you all have questions or questions to the topic obviously, but also questions that are related to the presence here of our guests, Professor Spivak. That is education in India, whatever the question might be.

Gayatri C. Spivak: It's always hard to ask the first question. Go for it.

Question 1: I think about asking you, Mrs. Spivak, probably your opinion on these social files that women can't work job and men can work job. Why?

Gayatri C. Spivak: O.K., so she can. Is there another question? Because we can do three questions at a time. That's a good question. Thank you! And by the way, I'm not Mrs. Spivak, Professor Spivak is good. I know they always say it's the translation of Madame or whatever your word is, but why?

Question 2: Can you comment on the education of the members of the caste, victims of the caste system, you know, for those among us who are not as familiar with the subject?

Gayatri C. Spivak: And just one more. Let's hear it from a woman.

Question 3: Thank you for a very informative presentation on how education for women, and not only for women, is spoken of in India and also, in this respect, I would ask you to further elaborate on another separation. The separation that is inbuilt in most systems of education, especially pre university ones, between hard sciences and soft sciences or literature studies or humanist studies, the humanities.

Gayatri C. Spivak: So we have three questions: one about the difference between what do we think about the difference between some jobs for men and some jobs for women, another one is about education as it relates to the caste system, and this extremely interesting question about the difference between not just no access to science, but the difference between science, of course, *Science* (Fr.) – this is more general in these languages rather than science in our English, where we don't call knowledge science, but nonetheless, what about the difference between the human sciences, in other words, humanities and the hard sciences, the real sciences? So, these are the three questions.

Okay, well, you know, I'm older by three and a half years, but I might as well be older than twenty years. So, because I'm sitting here, I'm the big girl. So, I'll begin. And if you [Maitreyi] have another opinion, you break in. Yes, what would be my opinion? I mean, surely, you've answered your own question. I don't think that question is a good question, and I'm glad that you asked the first question, but really the answer is already there. What would I think? That it's a wonderful thing? No, of course not. I think it's not a good thing. That's what I think, to say that women should do this and men should do that. So, unless you want me to go into great detail, I think I'll pass on since we don't have that much time. But thank you for asking. It's not an unimportant question. I'm saying that the answer should be obvious to everyone, but it isn't.

As for the caste system? You [Maitreyi] agree with what I said, right? So, you see, I actually work with the caste system, right? This is my basic focus. And these are schools that are very small, elementary schools. Now, of course, since our students are some, very few, going into the high schools, we also do high school coaching and, as she knows, although I'm very bad in Mathematics, I'm even coaching after six hours the day before trying to learn, let's say, lowest common multiple and highest common multiple etc, and Algebra. I actually also coach in Mathematics, because there's nobody there to do this. Why? Because these people have been millennially separated into people who can only obey and not think for them, and punished for obeying. So, within this group there is gender bias, but on the other hand, there is also a greater liberty for women, which is a peculiar kind of liberty, which I can't really explain here, but I'll give you an example.

One of our wonderful, wonderful men in the 19th century has been much praised for introducing widow remarriage into Bengal in India. On the other hand, among the so-called outcasts, widow remarriage was a given. But we never recognized that they were more advanced than we were when this widow remarriage was introduced and proclaimed to be a great reform. Only the upper classes required this reform, not the ones at the bottom. But it has never been acknowledged that they were more advanced there. So, at any rate, therefore the way in which one approaches the caste system is to learn how to access mind machines that have been broken in this way. As intellectual labour cannot be taught, I do not think the most important thing, although it is important to teach income possibilities, it is very important to teach or bring about poverty alleviation. But generally speaking, it's my opinion, for what it's worth after all these years of experience, that unless you try to produce problem solvers by yourself learning from your mistakes, how

to approach these mind machines broken by your own caste, unless you do that, nothing is going to last in the long run. So, this is why I mentioned what she has said to me about this kind of textural work, which gives me courage. That's my view of the caste system.

There is caste consciousness also among the outcasts, which is the most horrifying thing. And I will quote, the word now is *dalit*, that's a more international kind of world, but I will quote someone who teaches at one of the elite universities in India, a well-known man who was born into one of those outcasts. There was a programme being run by the India International Centre, we are both members of this group and it was a wonderful programme on caste, counting on the census. The others were all Hindus. They were good people. They were anti castes themselves. But this man, the only member there who was actually from one of these broken castes, said something very interesting. He said it's very good that you're talking about how difficult it is for caste count in the census etc., but you must also learn how to approach the consciousness of these, you know. He didn't learn it from me; he was talking about his own experience, so the consciousness of these folks who are supposed to be the outcasts. Some of them think that this was ordained by God, that they are wretched like that because they deserve to be wretched, because this is brainwashing. But this is millennial, they believe that they are less good, they are less than human, therefore they are in their appropriate place, and some others feel that this is incorrect. This is made by human beings and they want education. And in this group, you can also find some who are encouraged to think violence is a good way. And, unfortunately, these folks have been cannon fodder for so long that this kind of basically middle class political fashionable endorsement of violence is not a good thing. So therefore, I'm just quoting this man. I know I'm going on a little too long because he spoke, I mean I called him

after the thing because I couldn't access the Q&A, and I said I wanted to say this in public, so I am saying it in public here. He was so correct, that the approach to the caste system is not just passing laws; because it is just that there'll be law. But law is not justice. Law is not justice. Minds must be changed. So that's my answer to your excellent question. And again, if you feel that there's something that you [Maitreyi] would like to add or contradict, that's fine.

Maitreyi Chandra: No, that's fine.

Gayatri C. Spivak: Of course, we are using up time, so that's okay. And as for the humanities and the sciences, I think the humanities have been trivialized now, certainly in my teaching career. The humanities have been trivializing themselves also. I mean, that's my main work to talk to the humanities folks and ask them against insurmountable odds, because in terms of allocation at my own university, for example, the humanities are suffering a hatchet job. We have nothing. Again, what can I think about this separation? I think it's a terrifying separation, and I don't believe humanities should be close to men, just as nobody believes that the sciences should be close to women. Do you [Maitreyi] want to say a word about castes?

Maitreyi Chandra: Well, as far as caste system is concerned, you know, she is much more involved with the caste system because she is teaching people who are of the lower caste. But I just want to mention something. India is a huge country, it's a heterogeneous country and it is very difficult to say whatever she said is true for the whole country. It is not, it is not. Just to give an example, the President of India is from the lower caste. So that shows that the people have been there. She's much more involved with them than I am. You know, they are being talked to that they should be like this. But then we also selected, we

elected the President. He is the lowest caste possible. So that is one thing and then there has been for years, a tendency, even the family in which I am now after I got married more than 50 years back, they don't even write the cast names. And that is not true only of this particular family. There are hundreds and thousands of families who do not write the caste name so that, you know, it will not be known what caste they are. So, as I said, it's a very heterogeneous country, it's a huge country. Therefore to, answer about the caste system is very difficult. So, that's all I want to say. But what she said was absolutely correct, absolutely correct. And also, I would like to say that now the lower caste, as she was talking about, they have understood their potential and in India we get to see that, especially in the cities, they are fortunate. She [Gayatri] works in very small villages where both what she said still exists, but in the cities, I'm not saying that again true for every state, every part of India, the lower caste in fact has become much more aggressive, as she said, and the lower caste is sort of raising up. So, I would like to say that it is very difficult to generalize about the caste system in India. It's too huge, too heterogeneous, and all sorts of things exist.

Gayatri C. Spivak: So yes, I should have in fact said that it's very class differentiated and I do, however, believe that appointing folks, I mean, I heard discussions about this at the top, does not reflect what happens at the very bottom. And I don't know how many of you here are into the subaltern business. She's absolutely correct. The subaltern is not generalizable. My work there in that little corner does not reflect the entire. This is why I quoted that guy who's certainly not from that corner and also what she says is absolutely correct. It's very class differentiated and it's very urban-rural, differentiated. And, of course, it is true that there is a sense of caste being unimportant, you see that even not in the good things that you mentioned, in the marriage columns in

the in the newspapers, caste is not such an important thing. So yes, it is indeed something that should be mentioned that my problem is, since I work at the very bottom, which is the largest sector of the electorate, that's why I stopped as I do and she acknowledged that. But she's giving a general Indian experience. It's not the same thing at all as it used to be. This is also true. So, I think we agree with each other's perspective and I think this is a good moment perhaps to stop.

Rareș Moldovan: So, thank you once again, Professor Spivak, and Professor Chandra! We will move on now to the book signing of the books that we had, which weren't very many, we've only two left, if anybody is interested. And, as you've heard, every purchase supports an independent local self-publisher, which is a very worthwhile thing to do. So, those of you have bought the book are kindly invited to come up to the podium and get your autograph.

Gayatri C. Spivak: And I really thank you! And I should also tell you that I sold all of them in Senegal where, you know, they don't read English that much. I think I should have been in marketing, but I'm shaming you. So here we go.

About the Authors:

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is University Professor in the Humanities at Columbia University and a founding member of the establishment's Institute for Comparative Literature and Society. Among her research interests are the following: 20th Century Literature, Marxism, Feminism, Deconstruction, General French Theory, Globalization and Postcolonial, Political Theory and Critical Social Theory. Professor Spivak is the recipient of many international prizes, among them the 2012 Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy, and the 2013 Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award given by the Republic of India. On June 23, 2022, Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was awarded Doctor Honoris Causa of Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca.

Maitreyi Chandra was Reader in Chemistry at the National Institute of Technology, in Srinagar. She also taught at the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi, and she was a senior scientist advisor for the National Council for the Technological Education, within Ministry of Education, Government of India.

The conversation was transcribed by **Georgiana Nicoară**, PhD student at the Faculty of Letters, Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca. Nicoară researches the reception of Victorian literature in Communist Romania. She has published articles in *Hradec Králové Journal of Anglophone Studies*, *Buletinul Sesiunii Studenților și Masteranzilor Filologi*, *Journal of Student Research in Languages and Literatures* and *Studia Philologia*. Her main interests are Victorian literature, phonetics and cinematography.

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On June 23, 2022, Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was awarded Doctor Honoris Causa of Babeș Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca.[4]

Professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Professor Maitreyi Chandra
in Aula Magna of Babeș Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca.
Photo: © Cristian Vasile Muntean, BBU

[4] Her magistral discourse focused on *Humanities for peace.* It can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojhSfIe6Qlo

STUDIES

Alcoves of Indian Knowledge in Theofil Simenschy's Works [*]

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Abstract: The present text aims to highlight the contribution of the Romanian scholar Theofil Simenschy to Indian Studies in Romania, who became the first to teach Sanskrit at an institution of higher education – in Iași. The goal of reminding or helping readers discover his legacy in the forms of translations from Sanskrit into Romanian of sacred Hindu texts and several didactic works, full of useful information, was also kept in mind when bringing ideas together.

Keywords: Theofil Simenschy, Indology, Indian Studies in Romania, Translation from Sanskrit.

The year 2022 marks 130 years since the birth of the great Romanian Philologist and Classicist Theofil Simenschy, and how else could we honour his memory and legacy if not through a meeting precisely in the cradle of his existence, Iași? With your permission, I

[*] The present text was adapted from the presentation made in Romanian at the conference entitled *Simenschy and India*, held at the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași on June 6, 2022. The event was the result of the fruitful collaboration between the University, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the "Mihai Eminescu" Central University Library Iași, and the Embassy of India to Romania. More information on the event may be found here: https://litere.uaic.ro/conferinta-simenschy-si-india/.

will begin my presentation by briefly mentioning, accompanied by a few other relevant details, his academic journey. I ask your forgiveness if I repeat the information pointed out by previous speakers, but I invoke the Latin saying "*Repetitia mater studiorum est.*"[1]

Thence, Theofil Simenschy was born on January 27, 1892 and is the first Romanian to translate massively directly from the Sanskrit language. He graduated from the University of Iași, specialized in Classical and German Philology, in 1913, and, in 1927, obtained his PhD in Letters with a thesis in French, "Le complément des verbes qui signifient entendre chez Homère. Étude de syntaxe historique et comparative."[2] In 1929, he became an associate professor,[3] and, in 1938, a professor of classical languages at the University of Iași.

By the grace of his linguistic explorations, he came to know about the ancient Indian literature, especially of a philosophical and sapiential nature. He was the first Romanian to teach Sanskrit at the University of Iași and undoubtedly contributed to the popularization of the Indian civilization and the circulation of correct translations directly from the original, without having an intermediate language as aid. Between 1931-1936, he translated *Pancatantra*, in 1937 excerpts from the *Mahābhārata*, with special mention of the episode of Nala's Story, and in 1939 he switched to the *Upaniṣads*, translating the *Kaṭha* and *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣads*.

In 1944, the translation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* sees the light of day. He also ventured into the sacred world of the Vedas, translating Vedic hymns, being the first Romanian to edit Sanskrit texts in original, with

[1] Repetition is the mother of study.
[2] "The complement of verbs that mean "to understand" in Homer. A study of historical and comparative syntax."
[3] *Conferențiar universitar*, in the original Romanian (the second highest academic rank in present-day Romania).

Latin transcription, or transliteration, as we call it today, accompanied by translation, comments, notes. Regarding these translations, Prof. Cicerone Poghirc[4] emphasizes that the rich and slightly archaic, dialectal language he used is charming, and the texts seem to be written in Romanian from the very beginning, exemplifying with the names of characters like *Hiraṇyaka* which becomes *Aurică,*[5] respectively *Vardhamānaka* becoming *Chiaburu.*[6] In 1959, Prof. Simenschy became the author of the first Sanskrit grammar to appear in Romania. Many of his works remained in manuscript form, once he left for his heavenly abode on December 15, 1968.

By publishing numerous studies on some important themes and concepts in Indian culture and literature, for example Indian civilization, Sanskrit language, ancient Indian literature, the influence of Indian literature on Romanian literature, the origin of the universe, a comparative work etc., he left behind a treasury of knowledge. The alternation between high-profile scientific works and those addressed to the general public shows his interest in disseminating information, his desire to educate all those willing to be enlightened through the written word.

It seems that for Prof. Simenschy, in addition to the literary value, the moral value of the texts for which he expressed his interest also mattered profoundly. Thus, his choices led him to fundamental scriptures not only for Indian culture, but also for universal culture. He translated from Sanskrit into Romanian more than all other specialists combined. This fact is a huge service to Romanian culture, but especially Indian, making information accessible to members of a

[4] Theofil Simenschy, *Cultură și filosofie indiană în texte și studii*, traduceri din limba sanscrită de Theofil Simenschy, ediție îngrijită, cuvânt înainte și note de Cicerone Poghirc, Editura științifică și enciclopedică, București, 1978, p. 8.
[5] Aurică may be translated as Golden/Goldie.
[6] In Romanian, *chiabur* may be defined as a well-off peasant/farmer or ploughman.

culture foreign to the Indian tradition. Thence, not only knowledge deepened, but also the friendship between the two peoples.

After the lengthy introduction, let us take some rest in the lands of Prof. Simenschy's studies. In the work *Sanskrit Language and Literature*, in the subchapter *Indian Civilization,*[7] he skillfully makes a brief summary of the history of India from the Harappa and Mohenjo Daro civilizations to Brahmanism and Buddhism; then, in *History of India*, he emphasizes the lack of historicity of events, facts. Due to the lack of historical sense, an uncertain chronology, a mixture of fantastic legends and historical core prevail. We must admit that it is an accusation often made against the Indian civilization; in such contexts, it is always appropriate to emphasize the difference in the traditions of the peoples of the world in terms of understanding time and the way people relate to it. Here we invoke the oral tradition of transmitting knowledge through the *guru-śiṣya paraṃparā.*[8] One scholar – unfortunately we are unable to recollect his name – said, at one point, that in the event that all volumes containing the Vedas or fragments thereof disappeared from the face of the earth, they could be fully recovered from the collective memory of those in charge with the protection of the millennial knowledge, the Brahmins.

His observations on Sanskrit literature are relevant. Prof. Simenschy's erudition transpires from the structuring of his writing, the division into periods of development; interesting is the use of the phrase *ancient literature* for what we call today *sacred texts* or *scriptures*. Again, a quote from Whitney reveals the care and interest with which he approached sacred literature:

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[7] Simenschy, p. 17.

[8] That is, the tradition of the transmission of knowledge from teacher/master to disciple, based on oral communication from generation to generation.

> "All the data fixed in the history of Indian literature are pins set to be overturned again. Every important work has undergone so many changes, before it took the form in which it came down to us, that the problem of the original composition is complicated by that of the final wording."[9]

As we are well aware, the Vedas, we mention the *Ṛg Veda Saṃhitā* here, considered the oldest and most important, are compilations, a result of a long process of polishing and perfecting, having reached us in a certain form, and that generations after generations of specialists studied diligently.

He distinguishes between Vedic and Classical Sanskrit, pointing out the codification of Sanskrit by Pāniṇi in the 4th century A.D., resulting in the language of high Indian spirituality, a language of the elite and not of the people, as exemplified by references to Kālidāsa, in whose works high-ranking characters spoke Sanskrit, while those of lower rank spoke Prākṛts. Consequently, in terms of language, he emphasizes an old Indian which he calls Vedic and a more recent old Indian, Sanskrit. Sanskrit, in turn, is divided into Pāniṇi's Sanskrit, respectively into the epic and classical (i.e. literary), post-Pāniṇi one.[10]

His inclination towards the moral value of the texts emerges, for example, from the study *The teaching tradition in Gandhi's homeland*, where Prof. Simenschy explores the *guru-śiṣya paraṃparā*, with valuable observations on the initiation into knowledge and the learning process, using a fundamental text from the *śāstra* literature, namely *Mānava Dharma Śāstra* (*Manu Smṛti*), the Code of Laws of Manu.

In few words, he describes the bringing of the disciple to the teacher, the different ages for the different castes and the culmination, the bestowing of the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta* or *jāneu*), which

[9] Simenschy, p. 21.
[10] Simenschy, p. 27.

represents the second birth for the individual, the spiritual one through which he will become wise and gain certain benefits that only the twice-born (*dvija*) can enjoy.[11] This is one of the rites of passage, *upanayana*, without which man cannot advance in his journey through this world: whether he chooses *gṛhastha*, domestic life in the form of the head of the family, or *sanyāsa*, the existence as a hermit, nothing can be achieved without the fulfillment of the *upanayana*, according to sacred precepts. Most wonderful is the remark:

> "the whole life of the Indian, in general, is, thus, regulated down to the smallest detail, from the moment he is born and until he dies. An endless series of religious ceremonies accompany him from the cradle to the grave, and even beyond these two boundaries."[12]

A more successful synthesis could not be possible, because there are rites of passage performed especially for conception, and rituals to be performed periodically after the departure from the physical plane of a loved one, respectively.

We should all probably learn something from the Indian method of instruction; as Prof. Simenschy rightly notes,

> "the fact that the whole culture of the Indians is based on oral tradition explains to us on the one hand the overwhelming role of the teacher, on the other hand the method of teaching and learning. The Indian does not distinguish between parents and teacher and gives them the same name: *guru*."[13]

[11] Simenschy, pp. 29-31.
[12] Simenschy, p. 31.
[13] Simenschy, p. 35.

He also points out that the disciple obeys his teacher almost blindly. The culmination of the apprenticeship period comes after a long physical, especially mental, instruction, strenuous for the development of memory and the ability to penetrate the subtlety of information. The intuitive method, comparisons are indispensable in the teaching approach. Everything happens slowly, because the goal is quality above quantity, thorough knowledge and sharpness of mind, and not the birth of an imitator robed of substance. Of course, both a capable disciple and a skilled teacher are necessary elements.

The scholar aptly emphasizes the idea that the oral tradition did not exist in isolation, after the advent of the written word; the latter lived simultaneously, but only as an auxiliary, almost as a backup plan, so to speak. He gives a unique example in world literature, as he himself admits: the *sūtras*, those lines that render in a word a universe of wisdom.[14] Difficult to penetrate precisely because of their succinct character, exuding ambiguity, obscurity and leading to multiple interpretations, these aphorisms fascinate by conciseness; they seem to perfectly reflect the Romanian proverb "vorba lungă, sărăcia omului."[15] This is how the commentaries upon the fundamental texts were born, as well as the commentaries on their commentaries. As a result, a *sūtra* must always be accompanied by the related commentaries, different schools of thought thus emerging, according to the vision of one commentator or the other (see the schools of Bhaṭṭa, respectively Prabhākara within the *Mīmāṃsā philosophical tradition*, for instance).

As we well know, only a part of Indian society had access to education. The circle of the privileged tightened all the more as a

[14] Simenschy, pp. 37-38.

[15] In the good fashion of a chatterbox, talking too much does one no good. There may be no exact equivalent for the proverb in English, but one may get the gist from the paraphrase.

significant portion of this teaching was secret, namely the *Upaniṣads*. The riches of these texts were not to be uncovered to the unworthy, even if the individual were to be rewarded with a multitude of valuables. There is no need to insist on the skill of the teacher and the worthiness of the disciple, because without these two constitutive elements, the completion of the act of transmitting wisdom is unattainable.

Because we have talked today about teaching, particularly in a special place full of history such as the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, maybe we should end on a note that we think defines the Indian spirit quite appropriately. Many texts, whether sacred or not, often mention the reward that awaits the one who will retain the text or a fragment of it: deliverance from sins, ascension to heaven, eternal blessings from ancestors, deliverance from any evil, etc. The *Gītā* recommends that, when we act, especially when we transmit information or offer goods, we do so out of pure altruism, without ever waiting for something in return or for any subsequent reward, like the promises in the previous examples. In the translation of Prof. Simenschy,

> "The concentrated (i.e. the one united with the supreme spirit), who has renounced the reward of (his) deeds, obtains the supreme peace; (while) the unconcentrated one, who longs for the fruit (of the deed), is bound to (the chain of rebirths), because his deed is subject to desire" (*Bhagavad Gītā*, V.12).[16]

[16] In the Romanian translation of Prof. Simenschy: "Cel concentrat, care a renunțat la răsplata faptelor (sale), dobândește pacea supremă; (pe când) cel neconcentrat, care năznește spre rodul (faptei), este legat de (lanțul renașterilor), pentru că fapta sa este supusă dorinței," *Bhagavadgita și alte texte sanscrite*, traducere din limba sanscrită, prefețe și prezentări de Th. Simenschy, Editura Saeculum I.O., București, 2017, p. 45.

The concepts of *karman* and *phala* should find a corner in the soul of every man, being linked, to some extent, to Hindu morality, here, returning to the moral value of the writings and closing the circle.

We managed to bring to light but a small fraction of the treasure left behind by Prof. Simenschy, part of it still in manuscript form. It is inappropriate to express our opinion on his translations from Sanskrit as long as our shortcomings are obvious, especially since there are talented Sanskrit enthusiasts who carry on the tradition. We should remember the prolific author not only thanks to his translations, but rather especially for his didactic texts, an ocean of knowledge concentrated in a few pages, meant to instruct Romanian readers.

With the will of the celestial powers, maybe our meeting today will rekindle the flame of passion for the rediscovery of Romanian values and will determine the researchers to enter archives and to transform the well-worn words into a new garment. Maybe this represents a beginning to reduce the distance between India, the country I respect and serve with dedication and Romania, our motherland.

This is for us, in a few words, Prof. Theofil Simenschy, the scholar, the Romanian Indologist whose heart beat in harmony with the millennial spirit of India.

About the Author:

After having completed a B.A. in Philology, with the major in English and the minor in Hindi, **Hilda-Hedvig Varga** went on to finish her Master's studies in Religious Studies, both at the University of Bucharest. She is currently a PhD student at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest, with a thesis on Hindu rites of passage. Her interests encompass anything Indian, be it language and literature, history or philosophy.

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Local Cosmopolitans: A Study of Barkas neighborhood in Hyderabad

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Abstract: Drawing from M. N. Pearson's and Enseng Ho's concept of "local cosmopolitanism," I propose to study the neighborhood of Barkas in Hyderabad as a representation of how cosmopolitanism works in small communities where the people, while embedded in local relations, also maintain connections with distant places, thus articulating a relation between different geographical scales. Barkas is inhabited by people of an African origin, the Hadrami people from Hadramawt in Yemen, from where they came to Hyderabad to become part of the Nizam's army. When they reached India, they were given land to build their own barracks (this is also how the neighborhood got its present name) and after the Nizam's rule ended, most of them stayed back.

Apart from attempting to illustrate how cosmopolitanism is represented in the community of Yemenis from Barkas, my paper also tries to look at the people who left Barkas to work or settle in the Gulf countries. The Gulf migration which started in the 1970s has had an important influence on the migrants who left Barkas, especially in terms of occupation, social status, marriage ceremonies, but also in terms of food, attire, and even language. In my study I try to showcase the influence that Gulf culture has on the local one, mainly through the people who come to settle back in Barkas, or the ones who are simply sojourners, but every time they come back

home, they bring a part of the Arab culture with them, through material objects, business ideas, food, etc.
My choice to write a paper on Barkas is derived from the fact that this neighborhood has all the characteristics of an area where Gulf migration is predominant, and where, at the same time, the people of Barkas claim that their identity is an Arab one despite being Indians. Therefore, through Gulf migration, they try to restore this identity which they believe as their own, despite also considering themselves as Indians.

Keywords: Barkas, local cosmopolitanism, Hadrami community, Hyderabad, Yemen, Islamic networks.

Introduction

There is a place few kilometers ahead of the old city in Hyderabad, further from the famous Charminar,[1] where people drink *qahwa*, Suleimani tea, and eat Arabian *mandi* and *hareesa* in one of the countless restaurants named "Hadramawt Restaurant," "Yemeni Food Place," "Mat'aam al Arabi,"[2] etc. During evenings, after the *namaaz* at Juma Masjid, they talk about politics and Gulf migration, and sit full of pride, with their colorful and unique-patterned lungis, in front of their shops with products from Dubai or Saudi Arabia. This place is called Barkas.

Barkas is an Arabian colony in Hyderabad, mainly inhabited by the Hadramis from Yemen who, after working in the Nizam's Army, chose to settle down in the city as they lost their jobs as the Nizam's bodyguards and treasury guards. However, starting with the 1970s and

[1] Charminar is the four-towered structure standing at the intersection of the four main streets of the city, and has become the symbol of the city of Hyderabad. It commemorates the spot where Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah, the king whose seat was Golconda Fort, first caught glimpse of Bhagmati, the Hindu girl who captured his heart and who also became his queen.
[2] The restaurants that serve the Yemeni dish called *Mandi* are so popular that the whole street is called now Mandi Street.

the boom of migration to the Gulf countries, the people from Barkas too decided to go in search of better opportunities. According to Mukherjee, this area used to serve as the Military Barracks of the Nizam of Hyderabad. The word itself is known to have been derived from the English word "barracks." The area is also known as little Arabia as even today the area has elements of a typical Arabian colony. Every household in Barkas has at least one member who works in the Gulf or who has just returned and is opening a business in Barkas. The neighborhood is located in the South-East of the main area of Chandrayangutta which was formed in 1880. Also, according to the study done by Mukherjee, and the data collected by Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation in 2001, the total population of Barkas is around 34,288 among which 17,808 are males and 16,480 are females. The neighborhood is surrounded by Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp, quarters of CRPF and Kendriya Vidyalaya School. There are also seven mosques in the neighborhood.

This area was earlier called Maisaram where Yemeni guards were shifted to decrease distance from King Koti where the Nizam lived. In 1880, land was given for free by the Nizam and barracks were made and that is how the place got its name of Barkas. Moreover, it is said that at that time, 1200 Arabs migrated to Hyderabad and that most of them were from Yemen. They were recruited in the Nizam's irregular army to guard his treasure and also as personal bodyguards and wore uniform *rumi topi* (cap) with Nizam's emblem and *lungi* (wrapper) with Yemeni print and Yemeni dagger. Recruitment in the army at that time was done based on relatives' networks and since during that time there was dearth of food and employment in Yemen, these people decided to come to India as a result of the push and pull factors of migration. Earlier the neighborhood was divided into two parts. One was known as

18/11, where the Hadramis and former employees of the Nizam lived, and the other was 18/10, where the servants, maids and washermen lived. Nowadays, however, this division is no longer followed.

Hadramis first migrated to India many hundreds of years ago and it is commonly believed that the first group comprised of *sayyids* who were descendants of the family of the Prophet Muhammad. They came to India and became preachers of Sufism mainly to the Hyderabadi Muslims at that time. The second group, primarily Sunnis, was bigger, and they came in search of greener pastures and got employment in the armies of native rulers of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. In Hyderabad, some of them rose to become part of the Nizam's nobility whereas others entered into the Nizam's irregular army. After the independence of India, those Yemenis who married Hyderabadi women or were children of mixed marriages decided to remain in Hyderabad. When the Hadramis settled in barracks, which eventually came to be known as Barkas, India and Yemen had trade relations. Wood perfumes (Bukhur) and clothes were imported to India, especially to South India by the Yemenis; the trade route was mainly through the Indian Ocean. Migrants from Yemen were summoned by the seventh Nizam to serve as his personal guards and treasure guards. When they migrated to India, they settled in the outskirts of the city of Hyderabad which is nowadays known as Barkas.

My choice to write a paper on Barkas is derived from the fact that this neighborhood has all the characteristics of an area where Gulf migration is predominant, and where, at the same time, the people of Barkas claim that their identity is an Arab one despite being Indians. Therefore, through Gulf migration, they try to restore this identity which they believe as their own, despite also considering themselves as Indians. I have also chosen to write about Barkas, because this place

can very well represent the concept of "local cosmopolitanism" discussed in literature by authors like M.N. Pearson or Enseng Ho, especially when talking about the Hadramis from the Malabar Coast.

We are Hindustani. But we are Arabs as well.

"We are Hindustani. You ask us why our forefathers didn't go back to Yemen after the Nizam's era ended. Sonia Gandhi is also not Indian and she too stayed back," declares full of pathos Shakil Shayk, the right hand of Dr. Ahmed from probably the only clinic that I see while wandering these narrow streets of Barkas. My question was not meant to contest his nationality, but for the people of Barkas, identity is everything. Their forefathers, the Hadramis who came from the deserted region of Hadramawt in Yemen, were known for their knowledge as Islamic scholars, as well as for their Hadrami identity, a community for whom homeland was always referred to, where the tombs of the ancestors are places of pilgrimage, and where genealogies are created and kept safe in order to trace families and networks of ideas and common heritage.[3]

As Shayk mentions, during the Nizam's time, when his father was a veterinary doctor, a family of ten could be fed with only one salary of 200 rupees, so they had no interest to return to a place known for aridity, droughts, and famine. In the present times, the situation is not so different though, with the only exception that now they leave India, their adoptive homeland, to find better life opportunities in Arab countries, an occasion to consolidate their own Arab identity. But are the people from Barkas considering themselves Indians or Arabs?

[3] As mentioned by Enseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim. Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean,* Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006.

We are the only pure Arabs.

"We are the only pure Arabs. The other ones who came from that region are now mingled with the locals. Attire, food, language, they aren't the authentic Hadramis," declares another old man who was passively participating in the discussion. The other ones are actually the Hadrami traders from the Malabar Coast and, despite a few similarities; they don't have too much in common with the ones from Hyderabad even if they came from the exact same region in Yemen.

It is an interesting fact to observe that the descendants of the Hadrami traders who arrived in Malabar centuries ago are now so integrated in the Malayali *ethos*, speaking Malayalam, wearing white *lungis*, eating the same food like all the other people in the region, going to mosques that resemble Hindu temples in terms of architecture, and in general, being fully integrated in the local culture socially as well as politically. On the other hand, the Barkas community is a closed one, the distance maintained even from other Muslim societies few kilometers away from them is clearly visible. When asked about the other Yemenis who also came from Hadramawt and reside in Hyderabad,[4] but who are now known for playing a type of music called Marfa,[5] the men from Barkas became restless and insisted in not showing any association with them. On the contrary, they even argued that they stopped inviting them to play Marfa music at their weddings. However, no reason has being given for this decision, other than the fact that it might be an expensive affair. It was very clear, however, that they did not want to show any association with this community and, at

[4] Hyderabad is home to another African community called "The Siddis" who live in A.C. Guards colony.

[5] The Siddis play a type of music called Marfa which has its origins in Yemen. It is mostly a type of music played during weddings.

the same time, it was visible that there is some kind of hierarchy even within the same group of people who came from Yemen.

The Hadramis from Barkas feel superior to the community of Siddis from the A.C. Guards Colony in Hyderabad because, according to them, they are the ones who respect the religious rules and preserve their Hadrami identity at the same time. The Siddis also came from Hadramaut and following excerpts from two known scholars of history, Rahman and Pankhurst,

> "The Shidi (Habshi or Siddi) was received in the Sindi (Indian) society as a unique creature. This ebony skinned, thick-lipped man with a head of extremely curly hair was strange to the Sindis. The feudal lord acquired this creature to amuse himself and adorn his court with." (Rahman 1976: 4)[6]

One important thing to mention is that Barkas is not necessarily the representation of a poor colony; despite Muslims being at the end of the hierarchy when it comes to financial stability, among Hindus and Christians, the inhabitants of Barkas have diverse occupations, from dealing with real estate business to going abroad and taking up jobs in the Gulf or opening their own shops in the community after they come back. The people from Barkas are mainly sojourners and not settlers, i.e. they mostly return to Barkas after some time of working in the Gulf countries. A sojourner is, according to Siu (1952), a person who would cling to the culture of his/her own ethnic group in contrast to the culture of the hostland. A sojourner can be defined as a 'stranger' who spends long periods of time in the hostland without being assimilated by it. The colonist, foreign trader, the diplomat, foreign student, international journalist, research anthropologist abroad and some sorts of migrant

[6] Quoted in Ababu Minda Yimene, *An African Indian Community in Hyderabad. Siddi Identity, Its Maintenance and Change,* Cuvillier Verlag, 2004.

groups in different areas of the globe may be considered as sojourners in a sociological sense.[7]

Local Cosmopolitans

Cosmopolitanism is seen as a universalist perspective emerging from western theoretical and philosophical outlooks rooted in the fundamental work of Kant, who presented cosmopolitanism as being a philosophy that urges all to be "citizens of the world," thereby creating a worldwide community of humanity committed to common values (Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent," in *Basic Writings of Kant*). Kant saw cosmopolitanism as a potential social and political order, "a universal civil society administered in accord with the right." According to Georg Cavallar, Kant actually differentiates between different types of cosmopolitanism: epistemological, commercial, economic, moral, or ethico-theological, political and cultural as well.[8] Simpson and Kresse have explained cosmopolitanism as an "idea of being part of a broad social project that exists outside the confines of kinship, ethnicity or nationality."[9] In response to Enlightenment notions of multicultural tolerance and the interdependence of cosmopolitan ideals, scholars have applied many unique labels to cosmopolitanism. Homi Bhaba and Pnina Werbner proposed using "vernacular" or "marginal" cosmopolitanism to denote a cosmopolitanism that observes from the peripheries of the centers of power.[10]

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[7] A. Mukherjee, Ph.D. Thesis, "Understanding Homeland(s) and Identities. A Study of Barkas in Hyderabad," p. 12.
[8] Georg Cavallar, *Cosmopolitanism in Kant's Philosophy*, p. 98.
[9] Edward Simpson and Kai Kresse, "Introduction," in *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean*, Columbia University Press, 2008, pp. 1-41.
[10] Homi K. Bhaba, "Preface to the Routledge Classical Edition," in idem, *The Location of Culture*, New York, Routledge Classics, 2004. For a transnational, multicultural view

The notion of cosmopolitanism remains haunted by several cosmopolitan dispositions rooted in regionally diverse historicities and worldviews. In the Indian context, cosmopolitanism is usually related to societies belonging to the Indian Ocean arena, coastal mercantile communities which were connected in one way or the other to networks of trade and religion at the same time. It can be stated that, in general, in India, cosmopolitanism is usually associated to trade and mercantile activities. However, I propose to discuss about the concept of cosmopolitanism in societies that are not related to any coastal ports, to trade or mercantile activities in general. In the case of Barkas, cosmopolitanism stems from the military connections that the Deccan had with the state of Yemen, where the Nizams had a great faith in the African population and brought them to Hyderabad to be part of his army.

In my analysis, I propose to bring into discussion Pearson's understanding of a coastal cosmopolitanism on the Malabar coast, in order to create a parallel between his idea of a coastal cosmopolitanism and one that is not coastal (in the case of Hyderabad) but deeply local i.e. a type of society where people are inward-looking, having limited lives, but being at the same time connected with lands far away from their home through their identity, cultural or religious practices; Pearson pointed out that there were coastal populations in many port cities in the Indian Ocean who lived quite provincially, being inward-looking with limited lives. They were connected with the neighboring lands and hinterlands with which their port was linked through shipping and business.[11] In another context, Enseng Ho has identified "local cosmopolitans" in the Indian Ocean as persons who, while embedded in

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of vernacular cosmopolitanism, see Pnina Werbner, "Vernacular Cosmopolitanism," *Theory, Culture and Society* 23, nos. 2-3 (2006): 496-498.

[11] M.N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean*, London, Routledge, 2003, chap. 4.

local relations, also maintain connections with distant places, thus articulating a relation between different geographical scales.[12] What is most striking in these influential historiographical stances is the identification of the coastal cosmopolitan, who is deeply local and transnational at the same time, without necessarily experiencing any conflict as a result of this dual status, and who remains "itinerant across the oceanic space." In the case of Barkas neighborhood in Hyderabad, the Hadramis are deeply local and transnational at the same time, without experiencing any conflict as a result of this dual status; when they were asked if they feel their identity is an Arab or an Indian one, different people picked one or the other or even claimed to have a double identity; they were not just Arabs, or just Indians: "We are Hindustani. But we are Arabs as well."

Pearson and Ho's perspective is basically seeing the Indian Ocean as a space of diverse geographical entities and connectedness where many people, in various settings at many points in time, lived lives that were provincial and transnational, evolving a new space of coastal cosmopolitanism connecting local, urban, and rural exchanges. Extending their understanding of a local or vernacular cosmopolitanism to inland places like the Deccan, we can say that cosmopolitanism is a concept that, apart from being related to mercantile activities in an Indian Ocean context, can also be related to military relationships between far-away places like Hyderabad and Yemen. The Nizam hired the Hadramis from Yemen because they were famous for their loyalty and military training, yet after his rule, they decided to stay back in Hyderabad due to more prosperous living conditions; this, however, did not stop them from keeping a close relation with their original place in

[12] Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Geneaology and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, p. 31.

Yemen, either through family relations, genealogies, cultural practices like wearing Yemeni *lungis*, drinking *qahwa*, speaking Arabic and not Telugu (as a matter of fact, very few people in Barkas are fluent in Telugu, but most of them speak good Arabic), eating Arab dishes and preserving other cultural practices that are more familiar to Yemen than to India. Similarly, in the present, the Barkas population lives on streets that are crammed with Dubai-originated products, perfumes from Saudi Arabia, Yemeni *lungis* brought from the Gulf, and in general, even the food advertised in the local restaurants has nothing or little to do with the Indian food (except probably for the rice or *chappatis*; they eat *mandi*, chicken, byriani, *kofte*, and kebabs, as well as soups and *hareesa* and drink mostly *qahwa* or *suleimani* tea).

The idea of a local cosmopolitanism is not only visible in their attempt to preserve their Yemeni identity (like wearing the colorful African *lungis*, for example), but it is also recreated through the actual migrations to the Arab countries – being influenced by the Arab country where they get a job and bringing those practices from there back home in Barkas. At the same time, opening shops with products from abroad, selling those goods or opening businesses tying Barkas with places like Saudi Arabia, the Gulf or even Turkey, or Yemen, is another way of representing this idea of a local cosmopolitanism. The local market has products from Saudi Arabia brought by migrants and their families and the Gulf influence can be observed in the names of shops such as Hadrami Harees café, Musqati Dairy, Dubai Shopping, Al-Ain Tailors, Dubai Footwear, Dubai Burqa shop, Oman general Stores, Hadrami Shoes, New Saudi Arabian Shawarma Restaurant, and even the local library of the neighborhood is known by the name "Yemeni Video Library." All these names suggest that the residents of Barkas try to maintain the ties with their original place in Yemen,

Hadramawt, in different ways. This way they also claim that their identity is different from the other Muslim communities in Hyderabad with whom they anyway don't keep a close connection. For example, they are situated very close to the Charminar area where most of the Muslims of Hyderabad reside, but they do not mingle with them. Similarly, drinking black tea and *qahwa* are supposed to be Arabian habits through which they reinforce the idea of a separate identity. Arabian dishes like *Kabsa Laham*, *Laham Masvi*, *Tahte*, as well as Hyderabadi Biryani, are few of the popular dishes famous in the neighborhood that are prepared for different occasions and that are unique in that area.

Moreover, meeting every evening after *namaz* for discussions and talks about those far-away places in the Arab countries where their extended family works is another way, although indirect, to showcase this idea of a local style of cosmopolitanism. Barkas people have a habit of coming out from the mosque and spending a good amount of time seated on plastic chairs in front of *qahwa* shops, talking to their friends about local politics as well as distant ones, most commonly from the Gulf region. During my time spent in Barkas, I was repeatedly told to come in the evening to talk to the people there because during the daytime there would be no one on the streets. When I finally met them in the late evenings, I could find many people interested to talk and share their routines and daily struggles. Many people complained about their financial situation and talked with pride about their sons working in foreign lands to lead a better life or return to Barkas and open a business or a shop. They all seemed to be aware of the local situation in those specific Arab countries where their children work, also stating that there is no chance for them in India – one could sense a slight feeling of marginalization in their voice.

Sharing stories about their ancestors and their Yemeni connections as well as reinstating their Indian identity through anecdotes and memories about Barkas and about the Nizam's period is a way of understanding this double identity that the Hadrami people from Barkas have: they consider themselves as Hadrami but also Hindustani at the same time; one identity does not cancel the other, but it only reinforces the fact that there are communities where conflicts do not arise out of this kind of situations. On the contrary, it is an example of how some communities can have a double identity and no conflict arising between them at the same time.

Cosmopolitanism is also associated with the idea of having multiple homes. People from Barkas are at home in Hyderabad or in the Gulf, even if their homeland is Yemen. For the Hadrami people in Barkas, home becomes a fluid concept, and is represented by a subjective feeling or imagination, rather than a physical location: "Home is wherever I am. Home is within me. I carry everyone and everything with me wherever I go," says Mohammas Shamlan, a driver who worked for a private household in Sharjah and who was interviewed by prof. Mukherjee as part of her doctoral thesis work.

Geertz (1986) has pointed out that the past is reconstructed and presented in a hybrid manner which includes multiple cultures and identities. Rayaprol (1997) suggests that the homeland that people construct is part real and part imagined. In the case of Barkas, most of the people have never been to Yemen, but they do recreate that original homeland in various ways: through language, by speaking Arabic and teaching their children to speak it as well, by wearing a Yemeni attire, by migrating to Gulf where they can recreate more or less their Arab identity, or by coming back from Gulf to Barkas and opening small businesses or shops with products from those specific countries. Also,

according to prof. Mukherjee, many Hadrami households in Barkas decorate their houses in order to recreate Hadramaut. Similarly, the cultural practices, although changed, are a proof that the connection with Yemen and the region of Hadramaut was one that lasted. For example, according to prof. Mukherjee, when women were out on the streets in the 80s, and when they were observed by a Hadrami man, he would cover his face with the headgear. According to the locals, this was part of a Yemeni culture back in those times.

Conclusion

Pearson and Ho discuss about local cosmopolitanism in the case of the Hadramis from Yemen who migrated to the Malabar Coast, stating that they created, via trade, a society where people were inward-looking, with limited lives, but where they were at the same time connected with lands far away from their home through their identity, cultural or religious practices. Hadramaut in Yemen was their original home, and so was it for the Hadramis who came to Hyderabad as well. In my analysis, I brought into discussion Pearson's understanding of a coastal cosmopolitanism on the Malabar coast, in order to create a parallel between his idea of a coastal cosmopolitanism and one that is not coastal (in the case of Hyderabad) but deeply local i.e. a type of society where people are inward-looking, having limited lives, but being at the same time connected with lands far away from their home through their identity, cultural or religious practices; Pearson pointed out that there were coastal populations in many port cities in the Indian Ocean who lived quite provincially, being inward-looking with limited lives. They were connected with the neighboring lands and hinterlands with which their port was linked through shipping and business.[13] In

[13] M.N. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean,* chap. 4.

another context, Enseng Ho has identified "local cosmopolitans" in the Indian Ocean as persons who, while embedded in local relations, also maintain connections with distant places, thus articulating a relation between different geographical scales.[14] What is most striking in these influential historiographical stances is the identification of the coastal cosmopolitan, who is deeply local and transnational at the same time, without necessarily experiencing any conflict as a result of this dual status, and who remains "itinerant across the oceanic space."

In the case of Barkas neighborhood in Hyderabad, the Hadramis are deeply local and transnational at the same time, without experiencing any conflict as a result of this dual status; when they were asked if they feel their identity is an Arab or an Indian one, different people picked one or the other or even claimed to have a double identity; they were not just Arabs, or just Indians: "We are Hindustani. But we are Arabs as well."

Apart from attempting to illustrate how cosmopolitanism is represented in the community of Yemenis from Barkas, my paper also tried to look at the people who left Barkas to work or settle in the Gulf countries. The Gulf migration which started in the 1970s has had an important influence on the migrants who left Barkas, especially in terms of occupation, social status, marriage ceremonies, but also in terms of food, attire, and even language. In my study I tried to showcase the influence that Gulf culture had on the local one, mainly through the people who come to settle back in Barkas, or the ones who are simply sojourners, but every time they come back home, they bring a part of the Arab culture with them, through material objects, business ideas, food, etc. Thus, apart from maintaining their original identity as Hadramis from Hadramaut, they recreate this Arab identity through

[14] Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Geneaology and Mobility across the Indian Ocean,* p. 31.

migration and ties with the Gulf countries, or even through maintaining a lifestyle that they used to have while working in these countries, be it via food, cultural practices, attire, or even religious practices.

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Two Circuits for Labour: Different Labour at Different Sites

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Abstract: The main aim of this study is to explore and analyze the labour conditions and labour relations of migrant workers, in two sub-parts of the construction sector in New Delhi; one in big public works projects in Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University and second, the study of labour *chowks* at Rani Bagh, Kingsway Camp and Wazirpur.

Keywords: Labour, Indian subcontinent, migrant workers, construction sites, social insecurity.

Introduction

The informal sector in India has been the subject of much debate in recent years and among those who have contributed to this debate are social scientists as well as economists.

According to the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS), India, above 92% of the labour force was employed in the informal economy in 2007 and this number has been consistently increasing. This implies that more than 92% of the Indian labour force is exposed to job/income insecurity, exploitation, violation of rights and absence of effective legal protection. Various authors (Ghosh, 2004; Jha, 2005; 2003) underline how the State, from the late 1980s, started to favour capital more and more openly, to the

point of questioning the existing legislation for the protection of labour, arguing that it is an obstacle to investments and growth.

In the words of Jha,

> "problem of non-enforcement of labour laws has been a major issue right since independence, However, during the post-liberalization era, there has been a sea change in the state's participation; what was earlier probably inefficiency/corruption, has now become unstated policy" (Jha 2005, 902).

The love of concrete and iron is not new to the Indian subcontinent, especially in the post-colonial context of the process of so-called nation-building. The construction sector in India is a developing sector and in the last five decades has witnessed a boom, especially in big cities such as Delhi, Mumbai etc. These big cities are also acquiring more and more land and broadening their peripheries. Moreover, according to the National Sample Industry Organization, the growth of employment in the sector (until 2000) has been noteworthy (see Mathew 2006, 33-37). "In Asia, the construction industry is considered one of the most important industries for national development." The focus on the construction sector – being one of the fastest growing in the Indian economy – and more specifically on medium-big projects, brings into the picture certain key issues related to migrant labour, concerning their recruitment, where they come from, what are the condition under which they have migrated and such like.

The urban labour force has many different characteristics in the form of skilled and unskilled labour, formal and informal labour as already put forth by many social scientists and scholars (As classified by Jean Breman into four distinct categories; The labour elite, the petit bourgeoisie, the sub-proletariat, and the paupers). I shall take further this argument and will try to show the variation within the informal sector, more specifically in the construction sector. Through my

research on the construction sector in Delhi, I will try to show the different tendencies within labour recruitment and the question of their agency vis-à-vis mobility. I will also try to investigate the determinants and dynamics of their migration while problematizing the division/ clear boundaries drawn between the public and private construction sector, where private/small projects are seen as more exploitative and unregulated and public construction more regulated and secure.

Construction sector and migrant labour:
A brief overview

The construction industry is the single biggest non-agricultural industry in the capitalist world. Construction workers are, however, treated largely as secondary citizens, deprived of means to protect their dignity.

Moreover, the construction sector is peculiar in the sense that it offers an example of the intermingling of formal and informal relations in the economy (contrary to some literature which considers the two sectors somehow separated), like in medium-big projects that require legal procedures – such as tenders from the government, contracting someone through legal and monitoring means etc. – but at the same time employ labour on a complete casual basis. This intermingling is institutionalized within such public works in a manner that retains the façade of formality and at the same time perpetuates informality.

The construction industry is made of a range of business sizes, from small artisan, often family-run, units to big investors and developers. The small units still maintain their local markets, rural but also urban, but increasingly more often they are integrated into construction chains for the realization of big construction projects. The recruitment of workers varies according to the size of the project, the main

commonality being the extreme precariousness of employment for many workers.

In the big cities, one came across two kinds of labour markets where on the one hand labourers are hired for medium/big projects through a long chain of jobbers and middlemen and on the other hand, *labour chowks* are famous in various parts of the city, where a completely different set of labourers gather every morning waiting for labour contractors to come and pick them. This kind of labour market fulfils the need for small construction sites, where the work engagement/ agreement is available either for a few days or the terms and conditions are not the same as at medium/big projects where workers have a longer-term engagement.

Migration, Labour Relations and Labour Conditions in the Study Worksite (DSE(DU) and JNU)

The recruitment of workers for big projects works differently: groups of workers are transported directly to the work sites in big groups from backwards states where the cost of labour power is lower, and the labourers are in dire need of employment and ready to enter all sorts of exploitative agreements with contractors and who can provide disciplined workforce. Labour of this sort is necessary to sustain the kind of society that it serves. It often happens that this migrant labour force, after finishing work at one construction site stays in the same city and tries to access other work sites. (In this case, they often find work with the same contracting company). Most of the big projects are public sector work, as they include the government's public works department (PWD) and then the contracts are given to big contractors or construction companies. These big construction companies or contractors also further distribute

the sub-contracts to small contractors and sometimes at a worksite one can find plenty of small contractors working for.

In this chain of hiring labour and getting them to the worksite, the jobber/middleman is an important element. Most of the time, this jobber is from the same village or nearby areas as where the labourers are hired. But the role of this jobber goes beyond simply facilitating hiring, as according to labourers who got the work through him, that jobber is the person in the *shahar* (city) they can rely on, economically and for other means as well. For example, they kept their savings with him till the time they went back, sometimes when they needed an advance they could ask him; he is also helpful in resolving any dispute between the labourers or between labourers and contractors. Sticking to the same *jobber* is crucial for the labourers who are not familiar with the sector and how it works in cities. They also take time to familiarize themselves with the terms, conditions and dynamics of this sector. This dependency works for both sides (labourers as well as *jobber*).

This *jobber*, therefore, becomes quite an important figure for two reasons, first for fellow villagers to find work in the off-season and second, for the contractor/employer in the city, through which they have access to cheap labour and while doing so, he gets paid from both sides (commission from the contractor as well as five rupees a day from almost half the labour force at DSE and JNU work sites).

Most of the time, they stick with the same jobbers they come into the city through. At the DSE worksite most of the labourers from M.P. and Chattisgarh came with a jobber from their district and this jobber does not work here, but helps different contractors get labourers for different worksites. This works in the interest of both the contractors in recruiting labourers through him and the labourers in finding work upon returning from their native villages. For this purpose, they always

tend to remain in touch with the jobber, who is an important contact in the cities for more reasons than one.

At that point, anyway, they have learned the rules and they continue to behave as a cheap and disciplined workforce. Those types of medium-big projects, especially when realized in the middle of the urban texture, display quite openly to the citizens and the public authorities the labour and life conditions of workers and, eventually, their families. The violation of basic norms and laws is often very obvious and rarely any measures are taken.

Finally, another characteristic of the labour employed in the construction sector – again, especially in cases of medium-big projects – is the migrant nature of the workers, people who are not properly settled anywhere but who are on the move, from work site to work site, for a variable number of years. The construction sector – like many others – is a complex and variegated world in itself.

The vast majority of the workers in the sample are engaged in masonry or as helpers of 'mistry' masons. they were 'long-term' workers, while specific jobs such as marble cutting and road construction – are carried out by very flexible and highly mobile workers provided by sub-contractors, who settle in the work site just for the few days necessary for the completion of the task assigned to them. Because of the nature of those 'contracts', the intensity of the work (few of those workers performed overtime) was so fast, as their principal contractor is already booked these skilled labourers for another site, so they have to finish work as soon as possible and move to next site.

Characteristics of the workers

At the work site, there is a clear prevalence of families and single men. The majority of the workers are male (about 23), while the families

of workers come mainly from Chattisgarh, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, states characterized by family migration. Most of the labourers stay with their families here, and when they move from one worksite to another they move with their entire families. As told by some labourers that moving around with the family is not easy but other members of the family contribute to working hands that also increase the income of the family. Below 18 years old working children can be seen in this context.

Almost all the workforce here at these two sites belonged to lower castes. Most of the labour force comprised Scheduled Castes and others from OBC (Other Backward Castes). This shows the caste pattern of migration and also gives a sense of 'the push and pull factor to migrate. Labourers working here do not have any legal entitlement since they do not constitute legal labour (none of them has any kind of identity card or wage receipt, which they should get on every payment), and so cannot claim anything even in the case of an injury at the work site. (When one labourer died during working hours, the contractor only paid a small amount of money to his family for the cremation rituals).

The labourers here on this worksite proved to be very often unaware or confused about the hierarchy above them. As the worksite was a mix of different kinds of labourers, one who directly worked for the company (but was recruited through the jobber), and the second, who worked for the company but under the petty contractor. This worksite was also divided into fea w sub worksites. This transfer of the power from chief contractor to petty contractor was confusing for the labourers, due to this they had enormous difficulty at the time of payment. Labour relations at the work site were evidently quite complicated, with several co-existing agreements and hierarchies.

All the labourers declared to be absolutely free to leave whenever they wanted to, but contrary to that their relationship with the employer

was not so simple. The payment dynamics were so complicated from the employer's side that no labourer could easily leave. This bondage was carried out through the wage mechanism, in which the employer always kept ten days of wages of every labourer with him. This was also forced through the 'virtual advance' (a weekly payment given to all the labourers, which was called advance by the employer as well as labourers) given by the employer (After work for a week, most of the labourers were receiving 500 rupees each and they were considering this as an advance to them by the contractor. So at the end of the month what every labourer used to get was not more than 400 to 500 rupees). The labourers, however, had no complaints about payments and declared that they had always received their money. Some of the workers lamented that the rate was too low, but most of the workers who had a long-standing relationship with the company valued very high the 'timely' and secure payment and the stability of the employment, worth accepting a lower pay compared to elsewhere. The dynamics and conditions under which they agree to work are noteworthy. Aware that whatever they received was much lower than minimum wage, their priority was to get regular and stable work. Together with this bulk of labourers – most of which were masons and helpers – with a long-lasting relationship with the company and who declared to be directly employed by the same (although without any written contract), other groups of workers gravitated toward the same work site. In particular in three groups:

(1) A group of unskilled workers, all coming from the same village or nearby in Chattisgarh,

(2) A group of skilled labourers linked by family relationships,

(3) A group of road builders working for a subcontractor who resided at the work site for a short period.

Those who declared to have been taken to the work site by a fellow villager or a middleman/jobber from the village come lower in the subcontracting chain paying the price of being new. This section in the same medium size work site demonstrates that a wide variety of contractual labour arrangements co-exist at a single work site. The situation of workers sharing the same conditions may actually differ depending on the position they occupy in the layer of this informal subcontracting chain, deeply rooted in the social and cultural context and completely functional to a capitalist mode of production.

When interviewed, the site engineer declared that all the labourers residing at the work site were employed regularly and directly by the company and received the minimum wage. But contrary to his claims he was not able to provide any list of workers and was not even aware of the minimum wage in the state. The preoccupation with workers in the industry is the last one, admitting that it exists. Dealing with the labourers is a burden left to the last subcontractor and no one above in the chain takes any responsibility for their conditions. In the studied work site the labourers have no clear understanding of who they work for and the management does not know who its labourers are. The chain of intermediaries is a crucial one therefore that enables the execution of the project.

Migrant construction workers have different characteristics and enter at different levels of the subcontracting chains. They are always on the move from one work site to another and most of the time linked to the same jobber. It is particularly difficult for those labourers who have nowhere else to go back to. Their life is where they are settled. In a later phase, they do not need necessarily look for a jobber or mistry to be taken to a new work site as they also build a personal network and possibly acquire some skills. But this delinking with the jobber takes

some time and till such time they stick with the jobber. The jobber is usually hand in glove with big contractors to always look for a new chunk of people because a) the old chunk starts to learn the dynamics of the sector or how to earn livelihood in the city, b) to keep this chain of exploitation there is always need for new labouring hands.

The links to find a new work site may be horizontal and not necessarily vertical (although 'horizontal contacts' are themselves inside a vertical labour relationship). They are likely to be less vulnerable and better able to move in the labour market. In the case of the group who is specialized in road building, they claimed to have a sort of 'permanent' agreement with the person they worked for, which gives them some employment stability together with a good salary. Those skilled workers were confident that as long as their employer would be happy with their work they had no reason to worry about losing their job and that anyway, with their skills they would not have much problem finding new employment. The leader of the group is the one who negotiates the piece rate contract with the contractor above him. Unskilled members claimed to receive a daily rate, as well as the elders and skilled members of the group.

All the respondents at the work site declared that the industry proves to be not such an easy labour market to access by fresh migrants, unless through a channel, which is exploitative.

From the Labour Chowks

Apparently as each sector has its own variations (Jan Breman, 1976, a critique of informal sector formation) so does the construction sector. The second part of this paper will trace the history and experiences of labour from a different departing point than the first one. Labour chowks (LC henceforth) are quite familiar in cities like Delhi,

as they form a major part of daily wage labour. Most of the time these labour chowks are constituted by different kinds of labourers, from masonry, carpenter, skilled and semi to unskilled labourers. Almost all the labourers hired from here work in small- small private construction sites. The task is also different for different sites like; breaking the old house, small renovation work, building a new house etc.

This study was focused on 3 LCs in various parts of Delhi (Rani Bagh, Kingsway Camp and Wazirpur). My focus was on construction labourers. Most of the time what I found was that the stories of/by the labourers located in these sites are quite different from what I found in 'big' construction sites (in this case from DU and JNU).

In some of the interviews which I had taken in these 3 LCs, the labourers said some very interesting things, like they do not want to work on big worksites as their location in LCs earns them more daily wage than big worksites and also they are free to work whenever they want and if they do not want to work they can do other things. The labour recruitment in big worksites is so tight that once you leave the site, it's really hard to get work again independently. Quite contrary to the big projects, here labourers ask for more money for work, the average rate for unskilled labour is something between 150-200 rupees whereas the maximum wage for unskilled labour at big/public projects is somewhere between 85-100 rupees per day.

Occupational multiplicity is one of the other characteristics among the labourers here at LC. Some of the workers I spoke to told me that they keep switching from one work to another like, from rickshaw pulling to construction work to any other form of work they come across. (They had relatives in Delhi who earned their livelihood in different ways like selling coconut on roads, rickshaw pulling, phone booths, repairing

shops, small eating places especially for these rickshaw pullers and construction labourers, working at small shops etc.)

The whole point is that the mobility of these labourers at LC is much more than the labourers working at big sites. Also their personal linkages with potential employers in the city are much stronger than the other big-site workers. Big site workers usually only find the time to go back home during festive seasons like Diwali, Puja (Durga), Chath, and Holi, and return after that and that too only if they do not have some serious engagements (like debt paying, not getting payment, completion of work etc.). On the other hand labourers at the LC is much more mobile than the group seen at one LC keeps changing from time to time, either since they frequently visit their native home, including during the festive season or shift to other kinds of work. Some of the unskilled labourers also spoke of the potential to become a skilled workers (like a mason) with the help of fellow villagers who stand at LC rather than going to the big sites, as the work burden in the big sites is much more and there are fewer chances to move up the ladder.

Most of the labourers at LCs are from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and sometimes all the labourers who stand on one LC are from nearby districts. They also have a strong network of 'friendship' with others but they also compete amongst themselves in the same market conditions. This kind of relationship is quite complicated in a way that, at a time it can be seen as friendship, looking to get work for others as well. All the labourers at the LCs are divided into groups and often try to take up work as a group and when more labourers are required, these ties or friendship work, but not at the cost of their own employment. Their rivalry-friendship relationship works in a completely different sphere altogether. Most of the time all the labourers have linkages in

one way or another, old friends from work, family ties, same village or from the same district or nearby areas.

While talking to labourers on the LC, I also got to know that all of them not only have some kind of sense of the construction industry in Delhi but also understand the market mechanism. For example, if there is not much need for construction labour, they can easily switch to other kinds of work. This kind of confidence did not come simply from the working condition that emerged in the market, but also from the extended network they had in Delhi.

Some of the major things which were quite striking were that, there was no woman labourer standing in any of the LCs, not alone and not with the family. This is contrary to the labour composition one usually finds at big worksites. Most of the labourers standing on the LCs come to the city alone. Their mobility from one place to another also pushes them not to keep their family here in the city.

Their perception about the big project work, as told by some of the labourers, is that there is always more work and less pay. The contractors do not pay the labourers sufficient money to survive. Delay in payment is another key issue these labourers identify with big construction sites. During a chat with some of the skilled labourers at LC they shared their reason to come and stand there. When they first came to Delhi, they used to work as unskilled labourers with someone they did not know or did not have any kind of linkages (family, village, district, state etc.). This did not allow them to bypass these intermediaries too to enhance their skills. Once they caught on to the market mechanism and shifted to the LC, they got to know through some of their fellow mates that they could work with them. Gradually they acquired the skill required in different kinds of work from their fellow labourers in the LCs. Had they stayed on at the big construction

sites they would have been working at the same rate they used to work as unskilled labourers.

However, this doorway to LCs is not so easy for every labourer; this space is also a closed one, or simply not open to all labourers. New labourers are quite sceptical about the market and initially want to stick with the jobber or their fellow mates for security and stability.

Conclusion

In both cases, we can see the regularization of 'irregularity' but through different means where the agency of labourers is manifested differently. While on the one hand labourers working in small private projects through LC would seemingly be more exploited, this study showed they retain a degree of agency and mobility that cannot be neglected. On the other hand, we see the bondage of labour in big sites, often part of the public sector, seemingly more legal, regulated and standardized. This study of two kinds of labour relations within the construction sector shows that this sector is not homogeneous, ridden with complexities, and layers of networks, linkages and hierarchies.

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Kolkata's Foodscape: the Evolution of 'the Calcutta palate'

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Abstract: Kolkata's cultural landscape can be defined by the existing foodscape. The heritage restaurants existing in the city are an amalgamation of the cultural diffusion between the different communities that reside in the city. In this paper, primarily, three food zones have been recognized, each specializing in a particular type of cuisine. The paper seeks to understand the development of the cuisines in relation to these food zones, how different communities have slowly exchanged ideas which have led to the creation of a new type of fusion cuisine, modified in accordance to suit local tastes and preferences. This acculturation process is constantly occurring and is reflected in the present day foodscape of the city.

Keywords: foodscape, palate, cultural diffusion, fusion food, Calcutta palate.

Introduction

"I live to eat or do I eat to live? [...] But when you are in Calcutta, it is the second question that will come and tease you at every street corner, on every pavement, at every turn. Calcuttans rarely agree on anything, but when it comes to food, every Calcuttan will always be proud to be known as belonging to the foodie city of India." (R. Ray 2014, 280-285)

The question that always plagues anybody living in the city is the whole mechanism of buying, cooking and consumption of food because strictly speaking, the citizens are finicky as to what they eat. A whole set of energy goes behind the running of the kitchen, often a hub of activity. Food is not just required for survival, it is an emotion. It keeps occurring in popular literature as well as many important scenes of films. Food is an association with a multitude of emotions. Food can be a used as an indicator of health as well as associated with the psychological well-being of an individual. (Low and Ho, 2018) Food is related with memories, food can be nostalgia, buying food can be a great exercise, and preparation an art, the fine tuning of ingredients and blending can create a masterpiece. (Bhattacharya, 2014)

In recent times food has become an expression of the global, with the people of the city embracing into the idea of eateries and restaurants more whole heartedly. However, the culture of 'eating out', (though not very popular in the past) can be traced back to the few select eating places in the city, specializing in experimental or exotic food. So the evolution of the eating habits of the citizens of Calcutta can be attributed to not only the old recipe books as well as the hotels and restaurants making certain types of dishes accessible to the people. These restaurants are a way to understanding culture interaction, hybridity, diffusion and change.[1]

Food regions (places or streets selling / specializing in a particular type of cuisine) in a city are an effect of the historical evolution of the city. The city's foodscape is usually a result of the migration trends. The migrants of various ethnicities settle in bringing with them their

[1] How food and memory are interlinked, especially what is authentic cuisine and what is the additional hybrid is discussed in Osella, C. 2008. "Food, Memory, Community: Kerela as both 'Indian Ocean' Zone and as Agricultural Homeland," *Journal of South Asian Studies,* 29, pp. 170-198.

culture and eating habits. (Wild, 2018) New ingredients and new dishes give color to the gastronomical aspect imbibed slowly in the culinary practices of the area. Hence, food history is often synonymous to the cultural history as food can act as the lens through which the city is tinted. (Wild, 2018) This study tries to establish the presence of the different food regions of Kolkata as a result of cultural diffusion. However it has been limited to 'eating out' or restaurants, shops and cafes, focussing on those which are older than 50 years or more as they reflect more on the city's past personal eating habits emerging from food preparation and cooking methods at individual houses have been left out from the analysis.

Calcutta's foodscape is not a simple assemblage, as it has emerged from interaction between the different ethnicities who have slowly adapted to the local climate, customs and practices. The land is fertile and the main type of staple grain favoured by the Bengali locals has been rice. (Sen, 2015) However in Calcutta, the anglicised city with a large European influence we see the emergence of many flavours and cuisines which have now become signature dishes of the city. Calcutta has welcomed and intergrated the Portugese Bandel Cheese, considered to be a predecessor of the 'cottage cheese' of 'channa' popularly used in Bengali sweets, the Armenian dolma is a household name in Bengali houses and so are the Southeast Asian malai curry and the Chinese chowmein. (DasGupta, 1995) Calcutta is emerging out of its colonial shackles post-independence and becoming a more global city in terms of newer restaurants and cafes. The evolution of its palate can never be seen as a complete process but rather it is still evolving.

The development of the 'Calcutta Palate' through time

The Kolkata cityscape has interesting and immense ethnic diversities. If one delves into the history of the city, one can see how the colonial city, from the days of initiation to its establishment as a supreme force, has seen waves of in-migration of the different groups. Even before British colonialism took its root, Calcutta has been a trading centre with local businessmen settling down in and around the vicinity of the present day city of Kolkata. Calcutta's legacy as an urban center was established as a British trading centre bringing together of three small villages bought by the East India Company. (Firminger, 1906) However, it was the Dutch who arrived first in 1663 followed by the British in the coming year. With time other European traders of French and Portuguese origin arrived. (Firminger, 1906) Since then Kolkata, at that time known as Calcutta, became the epicentre that attracted people from different regions of the country as well as the villages in the periphery. People from the countryside started descending into the city in the 18th and 19th centuries. (Ghose, 1960)

The city, based on the various historical neighbourhoods, can be broadly divided into three larger units which show a dominance of a particular ethnic group reflected in the amalgamation of typical housing styles, neighbourhoods and economic activities. Thus Old Kolkata, or Calcutta, can be broadly divided into three zones: White town or the British Kolkata, Black Town or the Native Town and Transition Zone where the migrants lived; the popular yet shady Grey Town or the Grey zone. (Mansfield, 2012) The terminology is not popular because of the coloured references, but was popularized by the British to practice a demarcation between the rulers and their subjects. The Grey Town is a popular term used mainly by heritage enthusiasts and those who

conduct heritage walks in the city[2] (Calcutta Walks, a walking tour agency based in Kolkata). This is basically an old part of the city which is occupied by the migrant communities who came for trading purposes. An example of a description found in 'Thacker's Guide to Calcutta' by Firminger where he quotes from A. K. Ray's Census of India, 1901, Vol. VIII, pt. 1 p. 89:

> "With the growth on a heterogeneous population came the necessity of allotting particular areas to particular races. Thus shortly after the English came the Portuguese who were the only people who kept fowl, the rest of the inhabitants being Hindus to whom fowls are forbidden, were allotted a quarter which came to be designated as Murgihutta (Murgi in Bengali or Hindi means chicken or fowl), and the Armenians a tola or division which was named Armani-tola." (Firminger, 1906)

The Grey town area, part of which is the Old China Town of Calcutta was known as the 'Tiretta Bazar Street' where there were 'Apin Chinaman's Opium Shop', 'Auchin Chinaman's Opium Shop', Chinese Huts, Chinese Temples and so on. (Calcutta Directory 1874) Keya Dasgupta describes this grey zone as

> "the intermediate zone between the two, what was popularly known as the 'grey' town, inhabited by a wide range of people, primarily immigrants – the Portuguese, Greeks, Armenians, followed by the Chinese and Eurasians." (Dasgupta, 2009)

These spatial divisions of the city are seen to roughly coincide with the food regions of the city.

Calcutta, an amalgamation of multitude cultural forces can be explained best with examples beyond the colonial forces with food

[2] www.calcuttawalks.com/the-grey-town-of-kolkata-is-somewhere-between-black-and-white-towns/ Last accessed: September 1, 2022.

cultures. So a rough charter of the food map and its evolution can be traced in the following way:[3]

(1) The Mughlai-Dhakai food's origin can be traced back to the Mughal influence that was prevalent over all parts of Bengal in the 18th and the 19th century. Murshidabaad (a town in Northern part of West Bengal, which was the capital of undivided Bengal, Bihar and Orissa provinces during the 18th century in the Mughal Empire) played an important role not only on the administrative and economic growth of the region but also in the flourishing Mughlai cuisine which has an influence in determining the city's palate. The ingredients and methods of cooking Muslim food have largely been dependent on local conditions and availability of local vegetables. The Muslim gharana (family) of cooking is dominant in the Chitpur area of Calcutta.

(2) The middle of the 19th century has seen the advent of the British into Bengal. Europeans have embarked on the city back in the early 17th century with the Armenians and Portuguese establishing themselves for trading purposes followed by Baghdadi Jews, Chinese and Parsis (Dasgupta, 2009). The city of Calcutta was established and the European traders started mingling with the Hindu and Muslim locals. This led to the diffusion of culture which can be best reflected in the Anglo-Indian and continental cuisine of Kolkata, food made palatable for the Europeans with local flavors, cooking techniques or vice-versa (Achaya, 2012).

(3) Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, the tenth and last Nawab of Awadh (1882-1887) was exiled and deported to Kolkata in the year 1856 and his advent made the Awadhi (Lucknow, a city in Northern India in the State of Uttar Pradesh, formerly the capital of Awadh) style dishes more famous than the

[3] Cuisine, Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal. In this description the chronology of food practices have not been adhered to as there is no definite time line for cultural practices: the boundaries are always blurred.
http://bengalcuisine.in/history. Last accessed: September 1, 2022.

Mughlai style cooking. This was a benchmark to the city's culinary developments - a shift as well as amalgamation of two styles of Islamic food.

(4) A lot of Europeans and Asians from different countries migrated to India out of which the Chinese people left a serious mark on the development of the foodscape of Kolkata. To this day the city dwellers love the Indianised style of Hakka Chinese food which is a fine example of cultural diffusion and a landmark growth of the food habits of the city.

It is also interesting to note that the native people of the region, i.e. the Bengalis, were open to experimentation and acculturation as was evident in the numerous recipe books and cook books that came to be published in the late 19th and early 20th century, (R. Ray, 2014) which were trying to establish the regional and cultural aspects of what the people of Bengal ate. The food hybridity has developed from the regional context, keeping in mind what can be defined as Bengali cuisine. In this regard there is a great debate as to establish the food habits of the Bengalis which has been done with the help of the Europeans.

Sengupta (2010) points out in his paper tracing out the development of the culinary history of Bengali food and points to a British surgeon practising in Madras, named Curtis, who recalls that native food "consists for the most part of boiled rice, and fruits, highly seasoned with hot aromatics, along with meat items and sauces, but with a small proportion of animal matter." The Bengal diet was too rich in carbohydrates and scanty in protein. It is only in the late 19th century, that a quest to establish 'Bengali food' was sought through cookbooks to guide the women in sharpening their culinary skills. It is here that a glimpse of hybridity comes into play, as the Bengali cuisine was an amalgamation of different tastes and cooking skills.

The Foodscape of Kolkata: a spatial understanding

The food zones of Kolkata, when delineated on a map, show a very interesting clustering. (Map 1) To arrive at such zones, restaurants and eating houses which are atleast 50 years old have been delineated on the map of the city. A total of 96 restaurants have been marked on the map. A zone demarcating its immediate influence on the nearby region has been generated on the map, with each restaurant creating these overlaps. These food regions can be hence broadly named as (1) European Style, (2) Indian Style, and (3) Chinese Style. The 'style' here strictly does not adhere to traditional recipes or cooking techniques but has an affinity or resemblance which is close to the places from where the particular cuisine may have evolved. Within these broad categories, finer classifications have been made in order of the restaurant / hotel / shop's prominent food sold. Certain restaurant owners or managers (2 restaurants from each cluster) have been interviewed for the unique stories about their restaurant and how particular recipes have evolved. The shops were chosen based on popularity as well the willingness of the owners to strike a conversation. These recipes have been gathered to get a general understanding of the food palate of customers and the interesting stories revolving around food cultures.

Establishing the Calcutta Palate: where cultural forces merge

Food's ability to incorporate different flavours while retaining originality is visible in the way recipes retained some masalas (a mixture of ground spices used in Indian cooking) and different items were fused together to make fusion food. Our interview with the manager of 'Nizam's', the inventors of Kati Kebab rolls (skewer-roasted grilled meat wrapped in an Indian flatbread) whose popularity has not waned till date, revealed that since its establishment in 1923,

'Nizam's' (a popular eatery, named after Sk. Nizamuddin who popularized the outlet after he took it over from Isaar Alam)[4] has introduced "32 types of rolls." He further mentioned that

> "At that time when the British would come they would eat kebabs and paratha which would turn their fingers greasy. So the paratha was wrapped into a roll inside paper. Later the roll was garnished with onion and green chilly and served. This was how the roll was discovered." (Appendix 1 and 1.1)

Moreover, as the manager mentioned, these rolls are made with their signature secret kebab masala; and kebabs hail from mughlai origins. What this interview highlights is the execution of a clever business idea while retaining originality, where eating habits and flavours have transcended boundaries in creation of something new. The wrapped roll inside a paper, a custom that persists today across many parts in India has become a signature for the dish. But at the same time, they retained the mughlai flavour. The roll, therefore, is an example of how hybridity is executed. Considering their forthcomingness in attracting and retaining British customers, 'Nizam's' can be seen as being eager to cater and accommodate a larger audience in its food culture. This eagerness, however, does not come at the cost of completely foregoing the food item's roots.

Didur Rannar Boi, one of the oldest and most celebrated recipe books in Bengali, is another significant example of hybridity. It provides a succinct history of Bengali food wherein it mentions that, "the Bengali chefs who went to England along with their Bengali masters, successfully amazed the whole British crowd with their food." (Translation ours) Therefore, the recipe book mentions "it is very

[4] Interview with manager of Nizam's, Mr. Deependu Roy, by authors on 27.11.2019.

important to note in detail the recipe of Bengali food items." These can be seen as acts of hybridity wherein, instead of subservience, the master tongue is manipulated to be adjusted for other tastes.[5]

This act is also visible in places like 'Mocambo' (established in 1940) where Indian and Mughlai cuisine have found place next to Italian cuisine (Appendix 2). A very interesting observation can be made if we look at the menu card from another popular restaurant in Kolkata, 'Flury's' which is famous for its English breakfast. The addition of chopped chillies and onions to 'beans on toast' is a perfect example of how accultured the food map has become (Appendix 3). The Indianness in many of cases is preserved with the addition of clarified butter (ghee) to make cutlets and steaks. This is a common occurrence in eateries like 'Allen's kitchen' (established in 1920) near Sovabazar in North Kolkata. (Appendix 4) In this case, experimental food which has been a major character of Kolkata's foodscape is notable.

Food zones / food hubs

Based on the map, (Fig. 1) a brief discussion on the food zones of Calcutta as cultural hubs has been developed.

(1) *European/Anglo-Indian cuisine Food Cluster Zone*:

This cluster roughly coincides with the White Town of Kolkata which was popular as the British dominated part of the city. The streets around this region have a prominence of the colonial legacy: palatial European mansions housing legendary hotels, shops, markets and even

[5] However it must be argued that the Bengali recipe books are not only about acculturated food. As already discussed by (Sengupta, 2010) we find such instances in most celebrated recipe books like 'Aamish and Niramish' by Pragyasundari Devi where the cuisine is established drawing from the larger understanding of religion and climate existing in the region which Pragyasundari claims to be scientific and good for health. Some recipes however are peppered inside her large volume which draws from Arabic or western influence.

offices. The most popular and vibrant part of the city was the Park Street, which takes us to a nostalgic era. (Guha, 2015) Bars and Bakery serving some of the finest European and Anglo-Indian fare is still sought after by the Kolkata residents as well as tourists. (Singh, 2015) The most notable mentions are the Bakeries of New Market and Park Street: 'Nahoum and Sons', and the 'Flury's Bakery' respectively. Rich puddings, creamy pastries, Lime Tarts, Bacon and Eggs for a typical English breakfast take one back to the days of the British Raj. Legendary Bars are an integral essence of this region. Park Street, Central Avenue, BBD Bag are famous for joints serving alcohol and fusion foods. The 'Olympia Pub' is one of the oldest in the city. Some are famous for their live Bands (which have proved to be platforms for the rising musicians) are relicts of a cultural ingrowth of the Anglo-Indian culture into the mainstream Indian society.

Anglo-Indian influence has been dominant in this cluster as this part of the city was where the British resided in. (K. S. Chan, 2011, S. C. Chan, 2018) This new type of cuisine popularised as the Anglo-Indian 'oriental' cuisine, which was a melting pot of the Indian spices like masala, cloves with the European style of cooking such as baking and soups. In Mrs Grace Johnson's cookbook, *Anglo-Indian and Oriental Cookery*, published in 1890 she introduces her readers to something more than 'Currie and rice' where she establishes that "Oriental dishes are as varied as French or Italian, and are prepared with equal delicacy." Her book talks about not only 'kebobs' (grilled meat of Turkish origin) but there are recipes on different types of 'curries' and "chutneys" (sauces) as well as "cutlets" and mentions the use of "ghee" (clarified butter) in her recipes. (Johnson, 1890) Although the Anglo-Indian fare can still be savoured in certain homes where recipes are handed down, some of the best restaurants, such as

'Firpos', to savour this cuisine have been shut down. Still many newer restaurants in South Calcutta are reintroducing many of these dishes in their menus.

(2) *Native Town cuisine Food Cluster Zone*:

This cluster can be traced down with the 'Native' town or the Black Town of the city. As one travels to North Kolkata, interspersed with narrow alleyways and palatial mansions of the rich businessmen of yesteryears, one may come across various shops, popularly known as 'cabins' (local eateries with partitions to maintain privacy for the women eating out with their families) (Ray, 2015) that serve various Anglo-Indian fusion dishes. (Guha, 2015) Some of the origins of these delicacies are interesting in nature as they can be categorised into fusion food having a more affinity to suit the Bengali palate. Cutlets and pudding are two such examples. The British steak and cutlet, which come directly from the British menu, have found favour with the local Bengalis, descending, transforming itself and becoming a new type of food amalgamation that was experimental to the taste buds of the city dwellers (R. Ray, 2014).

An interview with the owner of 'Dilkhusha Cabin' who tried to share some interesting information on some of the food that is available in their restaurant which is over 100 years old. He tells us the story behind 'Kabiraji Cutlet' (cutlet covered with egg chiffonade) a very famous delicacy available in Dilkhusa.

> "The word was 'Chicken Coverage Cutlet' not 'Kobiraji'. Somebody came and asked us to make a chicken covered cutlet which was different. So then the chicken cutlet was covered with egg, and a new food item was discovered."[6]

[6] Interview with Mr. Utpal Basu, owner of 'Dilkhusha Cabin' by authors, 10.12.2019.

Next come the wide range of sweets – a plethora in which the Bengalis have not stopped experimenting. Rosogolla (ball-shaped dumplings of chhena argued by food historians to have been derived from the Portuguese means of making cheese), Mohonbhog (Semolina Pudding), Misti doi (fermented sweet yogurt) are some of the exquisite sweets that are synonymous with Kolkata.

The Mughlai (or Moghlai) cuisine can be traced back to the Mughals who occupied Bengal since 1717. This cuisine was primarily Dhakai (famous in the city of 'Dhaka') in nature, but with time there was a shift from beef to mutton and lamb, possibly having to cater to regional tastes. The Mughlai cooks (literal translation from Mughals) who were left behind, started serving their dishes, adhering to the taste of the general people of Kolkata and Moghlai food shot to fame and found its way to reach the Bengalis via cookbooks and the cabin restaurants. This meat-heavy diet, best described as 'camp-food' brought in new methods of cooking and the kebab, kalia, quorma became a household name in Calcutta (DasGupta, 1995).

The Awadhi legacy of the city can be traced back to the exiled Nawab of Awadh, Wajid Ali Shah. With him came his cooks and the legacy of Awadhi cooking in Kolkata. Before the Nawab, muslim 'bawarchis' (chef) and 'khansamahs' (a house-steward or native servant, being in charge of the kitchen and the food supplies) were commonly employed by the British to work in their kitchen as the Hindus found touching beef a sin. The curry entered the British kitchen, and the Indians developed a taste for European fare. The amalgamation and exchange of food has led to a unique kind of Kolkata food that is different. This genre also saw a transformation with time. The kebabs were experimented upon and a unique kebab (grilled meat), the Sutli kebab (Sutli: string; soft grilled meat that needed to be tied around the

skewer with a string), was discovered. The biryani (mixed rice dish of rice and meat and curries popular in the Indian subcontinent) was modified and the 'Calcutta Biryani' emerged with its own versatile taste because of the presence of the potato which was added for experimentation (claimed by Manzilat Fatima, descendants of the Nawab Wajid Ali Shah's family).[7]

(3) *Chinese Food Cluster Zone*:

The Chinese food in Kolkata has very interesting origin as well as spread. The Chinese community migrated to Kolkata in three phases (early 19th century, early 20th century and the post-1945 period), basically from two major provinces of Canton and Hakka, (along with smaller streams of migration from other regions as well) slowly setting up their roots, intermarrying and then most of them settling in Kolkata permanently. Chinese restaurants and eating joints have existed in Kolkata since the 20th century (Liang, 2007). The 'Nanking Restaurant' in the Bowbazar area was known to be frequented by the British. There are a lot of Chinese restaurants which adhere to the traditional Chinese methods of cooking,[8] ingredient and taste (S. C. Chan, 2018). However we find an alternative Chinese cuisine that is a fusion of Indian spices and Chinese sauces to amalgamate into what is popularly now known as the 'Calcutta Chinese cuisine'. Owners of a small restaurant 'D'Ley' in Old China Town in Teriti bazar area (established in the 1970s) tried

[7] "The only difference between the Kolkata biriyani and the Awadhi biriyani is that the latter has allo (potato). When Wajid Ali came to Kolkata, he did not have enough funds to feed his entourage in an elaborate way…. So after a few years in Kolkata, potato was introduced in the biriyani". Interview with Manzilat Fatima by Srishti Dasgupta published as 'Here's how Wajid Ali Shah made the Kolkata biriyani' in *Times of India* on 11th May, 2017.

[8] There are differences in cooking methods in the different Chinese regions. In Kolkata, the Hakka Chinese community who were initially into the tannery business started their alternative business in food, setting up the Chinese restaurants.

to explain how they serve certain authentic items for lunch. They said that the Kolkata Chinese food is very spicy unlike the authentic Chinese food which is bland. Authentic (Hakka) Chinese food is not available in most of the shops. Different types of sauces are added during the cooking process in case of Kolkata Chinese food.

To demonstrate this they gave the example of certain types of food which have been modified to fit the Kolkatan palate. Yam Wonton (soup made with seasoned chicken broth and filled wontons. Wontons are tortellini folded around spiced meat mixture), is the authentic Hakka Chinese dish which has been modified into the Wanton soup (there is a change even in the spelling). Ham choi / Wok choi fish ball soup (fish bones and meat boiled in chicken stock) and steamed chicken are varieties of authentic Chinese food which are bland and use of sauce is minimal. Chilly Chicken (light battered crispy chicken chunks tossed in spicy chilly and soya sauce), which has a thick saucy gravy has been invented in Kolkata in order to suit the Indian palate, where spices and hot sauces became a favourite.[9] The popularity of the 'Calcutta Chinese' is world renowned, with newer restaurants coming up in different parts of Kolkata. The New China Town in Tangra is an amalgamation of Chinese restaurants and forms a chain of high end Chinese food corridor.[10]

The family who owns the 'D'Ley' restaurant was initially a bit reluctant to speak and did not disclose their names.[11] Moreover, they

[9] Interview with the owners of 'D'Ley' restaurant (refused to disclose names), by authors, 10.12.2019.

[10] Goenka, S. (2016), *Chinatown, Kolkata: The Disintegration of an ethnic enclave* https://theculturetrip.com/asia/india/articles/chinatown-kolkata-the-disintegration-of-an-ethnic-enclave/ Last accessed: September 1, 2022.

[11] The younger generations of the Chinese family seemed hesitant to converse about the food being served and said that the real owner, their father would be better conversant with the food types being served. The father had recently passed away.

have been born and brought up in Kolkata where the modified food has become their staple diet. Hence the ability to differentiate between what is authentic and what is modified was marginal. The questions raised surprised them and they kept pondering about what was authentic and what was not. The interviewers tasted Ham choi and rice, which was a kind of a spicy curry with lots of chicken and some sort of vegetable. When questioned about the dish, they claimed that the vegetable was exported, but it looked a lot like bottle gourd leaves which is commonly eaten by the Bengali community in Calcutta. The little girl (granddaughter of the owner) offered the interviewer a kind of a sweetened ginger which they claimed was eaten for good luck and after the birth of a child. When questioned about the name of the item, she seemed baffled and was unsure. The generations of Chinese who have been even born in the city are the products of acculturation are a perfect example of how food cultures have amalgamated.

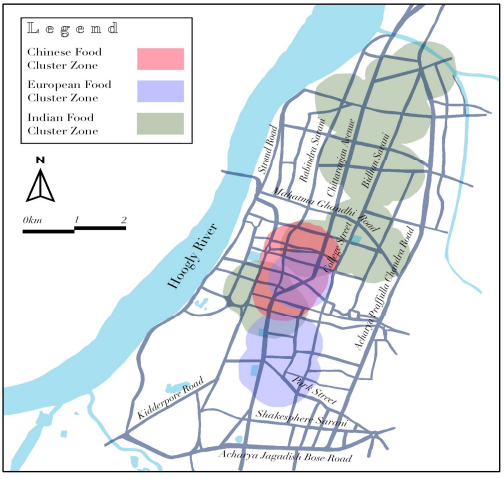


Fig. 1: Foodmap of Kolkata
Source: authors

The popularity of Chinese and Mughlai cuisine has led to the emergence of fast food joints in many parts of the city which are an integral part of the current foodscape of the city.

Table 1 shows the years when certain well known restaurants and food joints were established in Kolkata. In the 19th century, the Indian food cluster seems to have been established with the 20th century leading to a well-established food map emerging in other parts of the city. This was the century when 'eating-out' exotic delicacies became more and more popular for the residents of the city. The exotic food which was not possible to be cooked at home became available in these food joints/restaurants.

Year	Restaurant /Shop	Type of cuisine served
1826	Bhim Chandra Nag	Bengali sweets
1844	Girish Chandra Dey	Bengali sweets
1857	Golbari	Bengali
1868	Jadav Chandra Das	Bengali sweets
1875	Chacha's Hotel	Indian/fusion
1876	Indian Coffee House	Café/Indian/fusion
1885	Sen Mahasay	Bengali sweets
1885	Balaram Mullick	Bengali sweets
1890	Basanta Cabin	Indian fusion
1902	Nahoum	Bakery
1905	Royal	Mughlai/ Awadhi
1906	Chung Wah	Chinese
1918	Favourite Cabin	Indian fusion
1918	Paramount	Indian fusion
1918	Dilkhusha Cabin	Indian fusion
1919	Balwant Singh's Dhaba	North Indian

1920	Mitra Cafe	Indian fusion
1920	Allen's Kitchen	Indian fusion
1922	Niranjan Agar	Indian fusion
1925	Anadi Cabin	Indian fusion
1927	Flury's	Bakery and Cafe
1936	Trinca's	Bar and European
1948	Ralli's	North Indian
1948	Sabir	Mughlai/ Awadhi

Table 1: Some famous restaurants of Kolkata on a timeline
Source: Compiled by authors

Intersections and acculturation: an exchange of food cultures

Acculturation is characteristic in each food cluster as each food region has developed its own cooking styles that have given rise to some very interesting fusion food which can be claimed as the city's very own. Anglo-Indian fare itself is a hybridization and deviation from authentic British food, suited to the climate and availability of spices and vegetables in India. Similarly the Indian Chinese evolved to suit the taste buds of the region, when with time it became a household food. Similarly, North Kolkata has traditional 'cabins' serving Anglo-Indian food, most suited to the Bengali tastes along with the modified varieties of Mughlai and Awadhi food. Though the fusion process has been a common occurrence in each cluster, each cluster has a dominance of what type of cuisine was changed. For example, traditional bakeries are absent in the Indian food cluster, because the dominant ethnic groups living in those regions had their own traditional variety of desserts namely mishti or sweetmeats. So cakes did not find a huge popularity. Similarly, an absence of mishti shops in the European cluster is very evident of the choices offered to the type of cultural exchange. Close linkages to the dominant ethnic group which lived in a particular area

has an influence to what food would be expected where you went in Kolkata. The Food Map (Fig. 1) shows overlaps of food zones, which are zones of accessing more than one fusion cuisine. For example, Dharmatalla can be seen as a central point where the roll, the cakes and the chowmein restaurants and shops are to be easily found.

The peripheries of the grey town have developed flavours that transgress boundaries by negotiating with the cultural differences of the migrants. Such intermingling is visible on the peripheries of BBD Bag-Dalhousie region, New Market – Dharmatalla region, Ganesh Chandra Avenue-Central interface and the Park Street – Park Circus interface. This is strictly adhering to the map as the interfaces have blurred out with time. The city has expanded beyond its former limits and so has the food culture. A multitude of newer experimental cuisines are a part of the current scenario and are spread beyond their former limits.

Moving beyond: The food map of the present day

These are some of the later food hubs that are seen in and around Kolkata. With increased urbanisation, the city has grown in the South. Such a food cluster is seen in the Hazra-Bhowanipore region and another small cluster in the Kidderpore region. The Hazra region has seen the development of some Bengali eateries which specialise in sweets or fries. Some Tibetan and Chinese shops as well as restaurants selling Punjabi and Gujarati cuisines are found here. The Kidderpore region is in close proximity to the Metiabruz region, birth place of the Kolkata-Awadhi connection. One of the oldest shops of Kolkata selling Awadhi biryani is 'India Resturant.' This region also houses some traditional shops selling sweets and fries, prepared in authentic Bengali style. Post 2000s the food scenario has changed with new restaurants

and cafes becoming a frequent phenomenon in the city.[12] Fusion food remains a favourite in the city and gives a tough competition to some of the old renowned restaurants in the city. The city and its food culture would always keep expanding and moving beyond its boundaries, incorporating new flavours and tastes with time.

The Old Eateries today: a glimpse

The changes in the food culture, with the emergence of newer varieties have led to the closure of many heritage eateries. Though the popularity has not completely waned, the attitude towards food has changed. The owner of 'Dilkhusha Cabin', a 100 year old 'cabin' restaurant speaks with nostalgia about the how their shop was in the past:

> "We had partitions that has now been transformed into general [booths / dining tables]. Those who would come to savour the food (the old customers), they cannot eat in peace (because of the new customers). Some boys and girls take the food to kill the time without any kind of appreciation of the food. They eat like birds, just imagine, not even savouring the food for which the place has earned its name. They cannot understand if the curry or the food has a different taste (comparing it with previous meals here). I have nothing to say about them (the youngsters). But till date a lot of old customers come who can point out if there has been any change in the taste of the food. Because of these customers we are still in business for so many years. For this reason we want to preserve the old, the nostalgic."

The food here has also seen some changes, adhering to changing tastes and times.

[12] South Calcutta, especially around Golpark, Hindustan Park, Deshapriya Park has witnessed the growth of new restaurants and cafes which have a-la-carte menus ('Marbellas', 'Hinduthan Park', 'Santa's Fantasea' to name a few) and fusion food which is a witness to the widening of the palate and choices.

"The old food items are there for the last 100 years. However there has been a change. Chicken Fowl cutlet was removed because the customers thought that fowl is associated with the football game and had no idea that it can be a food item. A very large pound of chicken meat is called fowl, when the meat piece is more than 750-800 gms."

The owner of 'Dilkhusha Cabin' is worried about the future of the traditional food and these decade old shops which are linked to the city's history of eating out.

"Previously a lot of teachers from Presidency, Scottish Church College would come but many a times they have left because of the behaviour of the young people who visit the shop. So there has been a change in the clientele, a lot of old patrons do not feel like coming because of the way the younger crowds' behave. So holding on to the old nostalgia we are still carrying on. However the beauty of eating chops and cutlets is dead now, the younger generations do not appreciate it anymore. After a few more years these things will not be eaten anymore. Now chicken momo, strawberry (flavoured food), pasta (Italian starchy dumpling) etc is being asked, we tell them we do not have such items. You will not get such good food at such a reasonable rate in any fancy shop."

The waning popularity of traditional fare is felt in Kolkata's traditional foodscape. It is felt as popularity of some food joints and some food items reduce. But in recent years, there is a growing interest in the traditional food joints of the city.[13]

[13] Food walks by a number of Travel and Tourism agencies has led to a spike in the interest. A number of youngsters have taken interest in the heritage and history of the city. Food blogs and you tube channels have contributed to the growing interest of the city dwellers as well as tourists.

Kolkata – A culinary melt pot

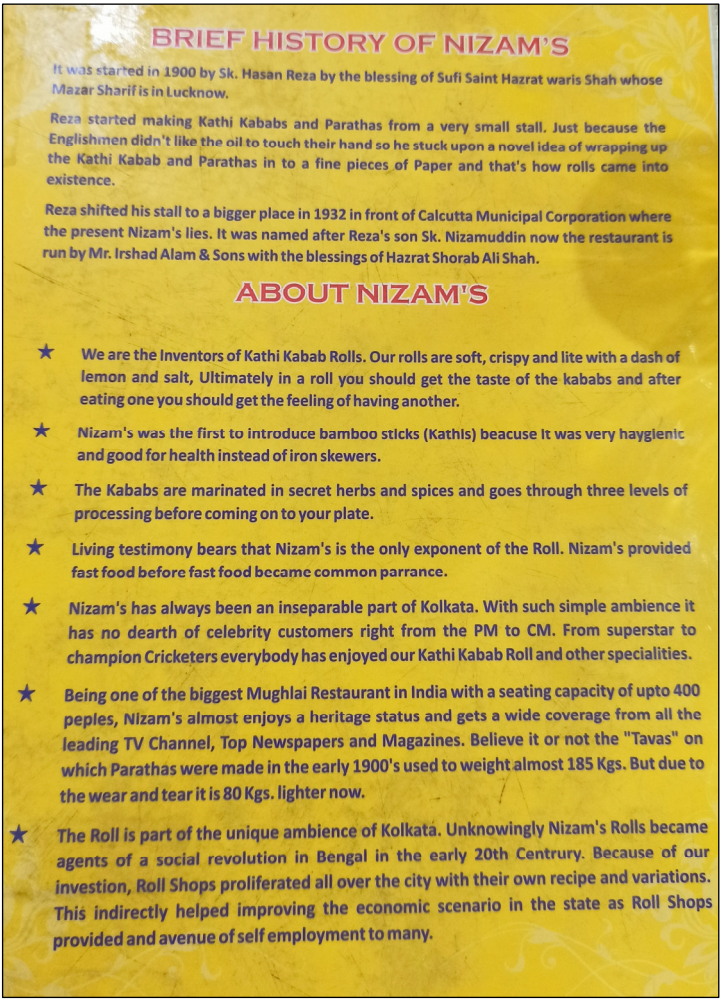
The cultural map of the city has been ascertained with the help of the food map. Culture and food are synonymous, but what is most interesting for Kolkata is the cultural fusion that is profusely seen here. Food can be seen as a cultural product, "as hybrid, as tying together influences from many traditions, as existing not so much *in* a specific place and time as *between* different places at once" (Smith, 2006). Kolkata has given space to multitude of cultures by accepting their food habits which is prevalent in the present food patterns of the city. The food map gives a glimpse of how the food culture of the city has evolved and how the legacies of the city's growth are felt in its ever encompassing food cultures and flavours. Cultural diffusion process is best reflected in Kolkata and similar studies like this one through food trails and walks can be an interesting research project for future work.

Note: Throughout the work, Calcutta and Kolkata has been used synonymously, which is the name of the city. Calcutta was renamed as Kolkata in the year 2001, to reflect the Bengali pronunciation of the name. However both the names are popularly used in writing and speaking. The menu cards have been photographed / scanned in the restaurants and they have given permission to be printed.

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank our numerous colleagues and friends who inspired us to delve deep into the culinary diversity of the city and explore different food joints from a spatial context. Our special gratitude to the owners and managers of the heritage restaurants who willingly shared with us their experiences and experiments in food.

Appendix 1: Menu card of Nizam's, New Market, showing the story behind the shop



BRIEF HISTORY OF NIZAM'S

It was started in 1900 by Sk. Hasan Reza by the blessing of Sufi Saint Hazrat waris Shah whose Mazar Sharif is in Lucknow.

Reza started making Kathi Kababs and Parathas from a very small stall. Just because the Englishmen didn't like the oil to touch their hand so he stuck upon a novel idea of wrapping up the Kathi Kabab and Parathas in to a fine pieces of Paper and that's how rolls came into existence.

Reza shifted his stall to a bigger place in 1932 in front of Calcutta Municipal Corporation where the present Nizam's lies. It was named after Reza's son Sk. Nizamuddin now the restaurant is run by Mr. Irshad Alam & Sons with the blessings of Hazrat Shorab Ali Shah.

ABOUT NIZAM'S

- ★ We are the Inventors of Kathi Kabab Rolls. Our rolls are soft, crispy and lite with a dash of lemon and salt, Ultimately in a roll you should get the taste of the kababs and after eating one you should get the feeling of having another.
- ★ Nizam's was the first to introduce bamboo sticks (Kathis) beacuse it was very hayglenic and good for health instead of iron skewers.
- ★ The Kababs are marinated in secret herbs and spices and goes through three levels of processing before coming on to your plate.
- ★ Living testimony bears that Nizam's is the only exponent of the Roll. Nizam's provided fast food before fast food became common parrance.
- ★ Nizam's has always been an inseparable part of Kolkata. With such simple ambience it has no dearth of celebrity customers right from the PM to CM. From superstar to champion Cricketers everybody has enjoyed our Kathi Kabab Roll and other specialities.
- ★ Being one of the biggest Mughlai Restaurant in India with a seating capacity of upto 400 peples, Nizam's almost enjoys a heritage status and gets a wide coverage from all the leading TV Channel, Top Newspapers and Magazines. Believe it or not the "Tavas" on which Parathas were made in the early 1900's used to weight almost 185 Kgs. But due to the wear and tear it is 80 Kgs. lighter now.
- ★ The Roll is part of the unique ambience of Kolkata. Unknowingly Nizam's Rolls became agents of a social revolution in Bengal in the early 20th Centrury. Because of our investion, Roll Shops proliferated all over the city with their own recipe and variations. This indirectly helped improving the economic scenario in the state as Roll Shops provided and avenue of self employment to many.

Appendix 1.1: Menu card of Nizam's, New Market, showing the food items available

Appendix 2: Menu card of Mocambo

MOCAMBO'S
SIZZLER SPECIALITIES
"OUT OF THE FIRE & INTO THE PAN"

- SURF & TURF — "THE WORKS !" A COMBINATION OF FRESH PRAWN AND TENDER CHATEAUBRIAND BEEF STEAK. YOU WILL LOVE IT ! CHOICE OF PEPPER OR MUSHROOM SAUCE .. 530
- FISH STEAK — FOR BECKTY LOVERS. NO TRIP TO MOCAMBO IS COMPLETE WITHOUT A TASTE OF THIS DELICIOUS SPECIALITY OF BENGAL .. 390
- PORK SIRLOIN STEAK .. 380
- CHICKEN STEAK — WITH MUSHROOM SAUCE .. 335
- ORIGINAL CHICKEN GARLIC STEAK — SURE TO KEEP THE VAMPIRES AWAY FOR TONIGHT AT LEAST !! .. 335
- VEGETABLE STEAK .. 280
- HAM STEAK — SINGAPORE OR MUSHROOM .. 375
- MUTTON HAMBURGER STEAK .. 385
- IRISH CHATEAUBRIAND BEEF STEAK — COOKED IN GARLIC BUTTER. THE IRISH LOVE IT !! .. 400
- CHATEAUBRIAND BEEF STEAK — CHOICE OF MUSHROOM/PEPPER SAUCE .. 400
- GRILLED CHICKEN .. 355
- CHICKEN CHIPOLATA — CHICKEN GRILLED AND SERVED WITH SAUTED ONIONS, SAUSAGES, BACON AND BUTTERED VEGETABLES, ALL IN ONE .. 375
- TANDOORI MIXED GRILL .. 345
- MIXED GRILL A LA MOCAMBO .. 390

COLD BUFFET & SALADS

- FRESH SALAD .. 80
- FRESH KACHUMBER SALAD .. 88
- COLD CHICKEN AND SALAD .. 335
- COLD CHICKEN AND HAM SALAD .. 355
- CHICKEN MAYONNAISE .. 355
- PRAWN MAYONNAISE .. 415
- FISH MAYONNAISE .. 380
- RUSSIAN SALAD .. 170
- POTATO SALAD .. 140
- CORN AND CHEESE SALAD .. 150

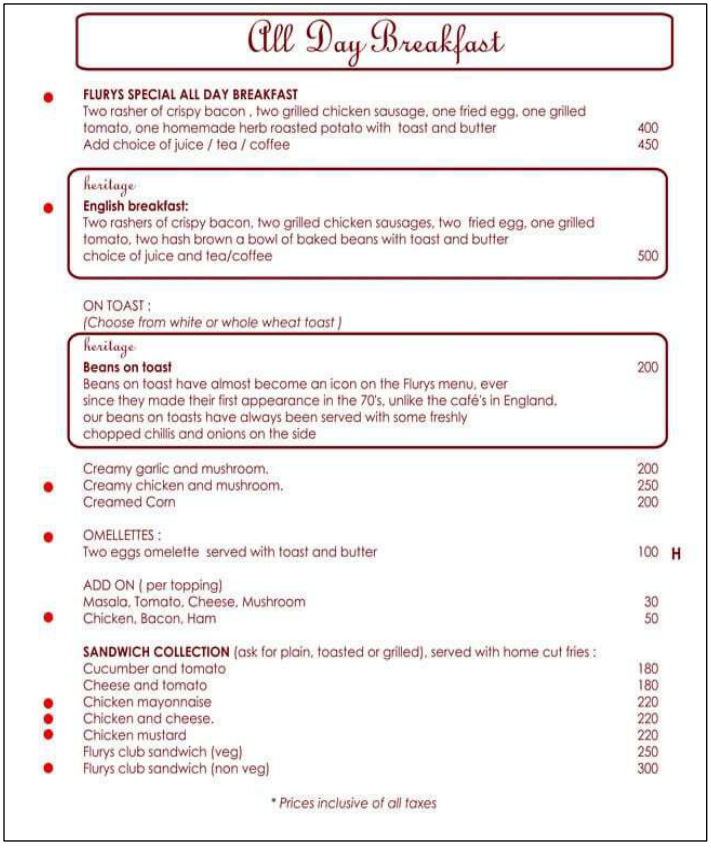
MOGLAI

- MURGH MUSALLAM- A DISH MADE THE WAY THE NORTHERNERS LIKE IT. IT'S MADE WITH AN ALMOND CREAM SAUCE AN EXCELLENT DISH .. 250
- MUTTON DOPIAZA .. 260
- CHICKEN DOPIAZA-CHICKEN SERVED WITH MILD FULL RED CHILLIES AND GRILLED ONIONS. IT'S RICH AND FILLING .. 235
- CHICKEN SAG .. 225
- CHICKEN CURRY .. 210
- ROGAN JOSH .. 250
- SAG MEAT .. 260
- NALLI GOSHT .. 405
- FISH MASALA .. 340
- PRAWN MALAI CURRY .. 345
- PRAWN BUTTER MASALA .. 350
- KIMA CURRY .. 260
- EGG CURRY .. 190
- MATAR PANIR .. 195
- SAG PANIR .. 200
- CHANNA MASALA .. 170
- MALAI KOFTA .. 200
- VEGETABLE KORMA .. 195
- VEGETABLE BEGAMBAHAR .. 210
- DAL MAKHANI .. 170
- ALOO MATTAR .. 190
- AAJ KI SPECIAL SABZI .. 195

MAY WE SUGGEST

- STUFFED TANDOORI CHICKEN (FULL) 415
- CHICKEN BUTTER MASALA .. 245
- CHICKEN KABAB MASALA .. 295
- PANIR BUTTER MASALA .. 215
- CHICKEN BHARTA .. 245
- KADHAI MURG .. 250
- MUTTON MOCAMBO .. 255

Appendix 3: Menu card of Flurys



All Day Breakfast

FLURYS SPECIAL ALL DAY BREAKFAST
Two rasher of crispy bacon , two grilled chicken sausage, one fried egg, one grilled tomato, one homemade herb roasted potato with toast and butter 400
Add choice of juice / tea / coffee 450

heritage
English breakfast:
Two rashers of crispy bacon, two grilled chicken sausages, two fried egg, one grilled tomato, two hash brown a bowl of baked beans with toast and butter
choice of juice and tea/coffee 500

ON TOAST :
(Choose from white or whole wheat toast)

heritage
Beans on toast 200
Beans on toast have almost become an icon on the Flurys menu, ever since they made their first appearance in the 70's, unlike the café's in England, our beans on toasts have always been served with some freshly chopped chillis and onions on the side

Creamy garlic and mushroom. 200
Creamy chicken and mushroom. 250
Creamed Corn 200

OMELLETTES :
Two eggs omelette served with toast and butter 100 H

ADD ON (per topping)
Masala, Tomato, Cheese, Mushroom 30
Chicken, Bacon, Ham 50

SANDWICH COLLECTION (ask for plain, toasted or grilled), served with home cut fries :
Cucumber and tomato 180
Cheese and tomato 180
Chicken mayonnaise 220
Chicken and cheese. 220
Chicken mustard 220
Flurys club sandwich (veg) 250
Flurys club sandwich (non veg) 300

** Prices inclusive of all taxes*

Appendix 4: Menu card of Allen's Kitchen

MENU & PRICE LIST

1. Sp. Prawn Cutlet (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 150/-
2. Prawn Kabiraji (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 170/-
3. Sp. Fish Cutlet Big (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 150/-
4. Sp.Fish Cutlet (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 120/-
5. Fish Kabiraji (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 150/-
6. Fish Pakora -6pcs (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 160/-
7. Fish Pakora - 12pcs (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 290/-
8. Fish Roll (Refine Oil)	:	Rs. 100/-
9. Fish Fry (Refine Oil)	:	Rs. 80/-
10. Fish Chop - (Refine Oil))	:	Rs. 40/-
11. Sp. Chicken Batter Cutlet (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 110/-
12. Chicken Roll (Refine Oil)	:	Rs. 110/-
13. Chicken Kabiraji (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 150/-
14. Chicken Steak (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 120/-
15. Chicken Pokora(B/L) - 6pcs (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 150/-
16. Chicken Pokora(B/L) - 12 pcs (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 260/-
17. Chicken Chop (Refine Oil)	:	Rs. 90/-
18. Chicken Breast Cutlet (Refine Oil)	:	Rs. 80/-
19. Chicken Cutlet - (Refine Oil)	:	Rs. 70/-
20. Mutton Kabiraji (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 150/-
21. Mutton Steak (Pure Ghee)	:	Rs. 140/-
22. Mutton Cutlet (Refine Oil)	:	Rs. 90/-
23. Mutton Chop (Refine Oil)	:	Rs. 40/-
24. Egg Devil - Full Egg (Mutton / Fish) (Refine Oil)	:	Rs. 50/-
26. Percel Box (For Steak)	:	Rs. 5/-
27. Foil Packing	:	Rs. 5/-
Salad Extra	:	Rs. 10/-

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Madhva and Calvin.
A Comparative Study of the Views of Two Medieval Theologians of Hinduism and Christianity

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Abstract: This article compares and contrasts two eminent theologians, one Hindu (Madhva), and one Christian (Calvin) who had similar ideas in terms of the sovereignty and majesty of God and the doctrine of Predestination of souls each, of course, based on their respective religious-cultural contexts and scriptural texts.

Keywords: Madhva, Calvin, Predestination, Bhagavadgītā, Bible.

Madhva

The Hindu philosopher Madhva (1238-1317 CE) was the founder of the Dvaita school of Vedānta in Hinduism. His philosophy, within the classical systems of Hindu thought was quite unique in many of its tenets. Among these, the doctrine of triple-natured souls (*jīvatraividhya*) is certainly one that stands out. In this doctrine, Madhva holds that there are three types of souls. The doctrine operates at two levels. The first tier is as follows. There are three types of souls. These are the eternally saved (*nityamukta*), saved (*mukta*), and bound (*baddha*). According to Madhva's psychological tenets, only the goddess Lakṣmī qualifies for the *nityamukta* status. The *muktas* are all souls that have been saved from the cycle of births and deaths by the Grace of God (*bhagavadprasāda*). The *baddhas* are all the souls that

are still caught up in the cycle of births and deaths. The second tier is as follows. There are three types of *baddha* souls. These are the salvation-oriented (*muktiyogya*) souls, the eternally doomed (*nityasaṁsārin*) to the cycle of births and deaths (*saṁsāra*) souls, and the everlasting damnation-oriented (*tamoyogya*) souls. This doctrine is based on Madhva's interpretation of Bhagavadgītā XIV: 18:

> *ūrdhvaṁ gacchanti sattvasthā madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ*
> *jaghanyaguṇavṛttisthā adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ*
>
> "Those that are good rise upward. Those that are mediocre stay in the middle, and those that are steeped in ignorance go downwards."

According to Madhva, the scriptural evidence for the *nityasaṁsārin* type of souls is found in Bhagavadgītā XVI: 19:

> *tān ahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrān sansāreṣu narādhamān*
> *kṣipāmy ajasram aśubhān āsurīṣv eva yoniṣu*
>
> "*I constantly hurl into the cycle of births and deaths* and into the wombs of demonic beings, these cruel and hateful people."

And the scriptural evidence for the *tamoyogya* type of souls is found in the very next verse, Bhagavadgītā XVI: 20:

> *āsurīṁ yonim āpannā mūḍhā janmani janmani*
> *mām aprāpyaiva kaunteya tato yānty adhamāṁ gatim*
>
> "Being born again and again into demonic wombs, the ignorant souls *do not attain Me*, O Arjuna, but eventually sink downwards."

In no other system of Hindu thought is there the view that there are certain types of souls that will never attain salvation from the cycle of births and deaths. In this, Madhva's system is unique. Some scholars have pointed out that this is on account of Christian influence on the

Madhva's tradition. This is not true. Madhva has provided ample evidence from within the aegis of the Bhagavadgītā (albeit his interpretation) that such categories of souls, who will not attain salvation, do exist.

So, why did God (who by definition is good) create such souls? To Madhva, the answer is simple. God did not create the souls. The souls are co-eternal with God. In this tenet, he agrees with the other systems of Hinduism that accept God such as the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Rāmānuja school of Vedānta. However, according to Madhva, though the souls are co-eternal with God, they are dependent (*paratantra*) on Him. God alone, according to Madhva, is Independent (*svatantra*). The *nityasaṁsārin* and *tamoyogya* souls are by their very natures (*svabhāvas*) deemed to be so. They are not created by God as such. So, the question of a good God creating an evil-tempered soul is avoided in Madhva's philosophy. However, as a true theist, Madhva staunchly upholds that though the souls and (for that matter) the other co-eternal metaphysical substances such as Primal Matter, Karma, Time etc. are so, not despite God, but purely by God's Grace. Madhva finds support for this view in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa II: 10:12:

> *dravyam karmam ca kālaśca svabhāvo jīva eva ca. yadanugrahataḥ santi na santi yadupekṣayā.*
>
> "Matter, the Law of Karma, Time, self-nature of souls, and the souls (themselves), exist by His Grace, and not despite Him."

The faiths of Abrahamic Theism who all doctrinally uphold *ex nihilo* theory of Creation may find Madhva's theism as strange as it severely curtails the omnipotence and sovereignty of God as the Lord of everything. However, Madhva has his own logic that is peculiar to the Indian context. Despite deep faith and staunch theism, the Hindu

theists are wedded to the canons of logic. Their opponents (both from within and outside the Hindu context) are deeply guided by the canons of logic. Madhva and the other Hindu theists thus could not afford to seem illogical. Madhva finds it illogical, (as do other Hindu theists), that ontological substance like Space and Time can be created. Afterall, even in Abrahamic theistic traditions, God does His act of Creation in Space, and in Time. The Bible says Void existed,[1] i.e. Space. And if God is eternal, Time has to be co-eternal with Him. How else can God's eternality be established? Also, Madhva finds it odd that God is first as Deity and only Creator afterwards. This creates problems in terms of God and His attributes. If God and His attributes (creatorship included) are not co-eternal, then that leads to another set of problems. Madhva, of course, in trying to overcome such an impasse, upholds the doctrine of eternal creation (though not *ex nihilo*). In this, Madhva is both like and unlike Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 CE). Hence, to Madhva and other Hindu theists, the (non-Thomist) doctrine of *ex nihilo* Creation of the world upheld by the Abrahamic faiths, is riddled with contradictions.

Calvin

The Reformed Protestant Christian theologian, John Calvin (1509-1564 CE), is most famously known for his anthropological doctrine of Double Predestination. As to all traditions of the Abrahamic faiths, God is the Supreme Cosmic Sovereign that is the Creator of all things. To Calvin especially, God's Sovereignty is paramount. His supreme Grace is manifest to Creation through Jesus Christ. Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920 CE), a very famous Dutch Calvinist theologian, brought it altogether with the words: "There is not a square-inch in our whole

[1] Genesis 1:2.

domain of human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry 'Mine[2]!'." The Sovereignty of God is so important, that it follows that God ultimately chooses who He wishes to save, and who He wishes to damn. This is the doctrine of Double Predestination. God's Will is beyond question.[3] This doctrine has plenty of Biblical support.[4]

> "And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; *and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy*." Exodus 33:19
>
> "I speak not of you all: *I know whom I have chosen*: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." John 13:18
>
> "*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." John 15:16
>
> "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and *foreknowledge of God*, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Acts 2:23
>
> "For he saith to Moses, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion*." Romans 9:15

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[2] Kuyper, A., A Public Lecture delivered at the Inauguration of the Free University on October 20th 1880 CE.

[3] Romans 9:20.

[4] All Biblical passages are from the King James Version (KJV) and the phrases and sentences in the Biblical passages cited that have been italicized are mine showing emphasis on the Presdestination doctrine.

"*Hath not the potter power over the clay*, of the *same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor*?" Romans 9:21

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, *according to the faith of God's elect*, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." Titus 1:1

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, *The Lord knoweth them that are his.* And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Timothy 2:19

"*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." 1 Peter 1:2

"*Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world*, but was manifest in these last times for you." 1 Peter 1:20

Analysis

In the Hindu philosophy of Madhva, God is *not* the Author of the Scripture (*Vedas*). Despite Madhva being an avowed theist, he firmly affirms that the high Hindu Scriptures[5] (*Vedas*) are authorless (*apauruṣeya*), eternal (*nitya*) and intrinsically valid (s*vataḥprāmāṇya*). It is precisely the second attribute of the *Vedas*, i.e., eternality (*nityatva*), which logically makes the *Vedas* authorless. In the Hindu tradition, eternality is defined as something which has 'no beginning, no middle, and no end (*ādimadhyāntarahita*).' Such an entity alone is deemed fit to be called 'eternal'. So, if God is the author, then the Vedas would have a beginning point, i.e., at the time of their authorship

[5] The Scriptures in Hinduism are divided into two genres. They are *Śruti* and *Smṛti*. The *Śrut*i genre consists of the Vedas only. The *Smṛti* genre consists of all other sacred Hindu literature other than the Vedas. Whenever, there seems to be an apparent conflict between *Śruti* and *Smṛti*, *Śruti*, which has a higher canonical status than *Smṛti*, trumps the latter.

by God. This would certainly go against the Vedas being eternal. Hence, the Vedas are considered to be co-eternal with God. At the beginning of each world period (*kalpa*),[6] when God re-creates the Universe, God re-issues the Vedas exactly in the same order. Therefore, God becomes merely the re-issuer of the eternal cosmic edition of the Vedas. And since the Vedas are authorless and eternal, they are innately valid. The Vedas are authoritative in all supersensuous matters such as the existence of God, souls, Law of Karma, Dharma, heavens, hells, salvation etc. Since, the Vedas are co-eternal with God, they alone can vouch for His existence. Madhva opines that independent of the Vedas, the existence of God can neither be known nor be established. Also, since our knowledge of God comes from the Vedas, the knowledge of the Vedas cannot come from God as it would lead to the fallacy of reciprocal dependence (*parasparāśrayābhāsa*). In other words, to Madhvite ears the following reasoning would *not* be acceptable:

Q: "Why should I believe in God?"
A: "Because the Scriptures (Vedas) say so."
Q: "Why should I believe the Scriptures (Vedas)?"
A: "Because they are God's Words."

It is to avoid this type of circular reasoning that the Vedas are considered to be co-eternal with God.

In the Abrahamic faiths too, though the Bible or the Quran are considered the Word of God, they are co-eternal with Him. In the case of Christianity, the Gospel of John 1:1 makes it clear:

> "In the beginning was the Word, and the *Word was with God, and the Word was God*."

[6] The Hindus (except for the followers of the Mīmāṁsā system), all believe that the Universe goes through cosmic cycles (*kalpas*). According to Madhva, one of the functions of God is to create, sustain and dissolve the Universe at every *kalpa*.

The last two italicized (by me) phrases make it very clear that the Scripture cannot be anything but co-eternal with God (Father).

Even in the case of Islam, the Quran (the Word of God) being His attribute is, therefore, co-eternal with Him. The eternal cosmic edition of the Quran is in a sacred tablet[7] (*al Lawh al Mafūz*) which is then sent down to the 'Abode of Honor' (*bayt al Izzāh*) and which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (570-632 CE) on the 27th of Ramādān (*Laylatul Qadr*) in 610 CE.

For Calvin, in his great theological zest to maintain the Sovereignty of God, he cannot but hold the absolutist theological position that God is the Creator of everything despite such a position being illogical. Logic is not one of the strong points of Protestant theology nor have its theologians cared much for it.[8] In the Calvinist way of thinking, the following two Biblical passages show God's absolute and unequivocal sovereignty in terms of Creation:

> "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: *for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*" Revelations 4:11

> "*For by him were all things created*, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: *all things were created by him, and for him.*" Colossians 1:16

By contrast, for Madhva, logic cannot be ignored no matter how anti-theistic it may seem. In Madhva's epistemology, there are three sources of knowledge (*pramāṇas*). These are perception (*pratyakṣa*),

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[7] Quran 85:22.

[8] To paraphrase Martin Luther (1483-1546 CE), 'Reason is the Devil's greatest whore… and she ought to be drowned in baptism" (Erlangen Edition, vol. 16, 142-148).

inference (*anumāna*) and Scripture (*āgama*). According to Madhva, Scripture is the ultimate authority in spiritual matters. Scripture has to be interpreted according to the six determinative marks of purport. These are: the initial and concluding passages, repetition, novelty, purpose, glorification by eulogistic passages as well as condemnation of deprecatory ones, and *intelligibility in the light of reasoning*. Though reasoning is only one among the determinative marks of purport, *it still plays a very important role* in settling the other points.[9] In short, Madhva upholds a rational theism. Of course, the rationalism, in all honesty I must say, does come into conflict with his overall theology of theistic absolutism. This is especially brought to light when Madhva declares in the opening statement of one of his works:

> *svantantram asvatantram dvividham tattvamiṣyate. svatantro bhagavān viṣṇuḥ bhāvābhāvau dvidhetarat*. (Tattvasaṁkhyāna 1:1)
>
> "Reality is fundamentally divided into two, the Independent and the Dependent. The Lord alone is Independent, and the being and non-being are the other two (which are dependent)."

Also, another important difference in the soul doctrines of Madhva and Calvin is about the missing middle category in Calvin's anthropology. While Madhva upholds the doctrine of three types of bound souls, Calvin has only two, i.e., the ones predestined to be saved, and the ones predestined to be damned. There is no third category because Calvin, being a Christian theologian, firmly rejects the doctrine of re-incarnation, leave alone eternal reincarnation. The Bible makes it very clear that there is only one life after which there is either eternal life in Paradise or eternal damnation in Hell.

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[9] Rao, P.N., *Epistemology of Dvaita Vedānta,* Adyar Library & Research Centre, 1976, p. 104; italics mine.

"And as *it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*." Hebrews 9:27

Both Daniel 12:2 of the Hebrew Bible and the Matthew 25:46 (in the New Testament) go to the next step by describing as to what that Judgment is:

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel 12:2

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Matthew 25:46

Whereas for Madhva, the one-life theory is both irrational and capricious. Why would God, who by definition is good, arbitrarily save some and damn others without reason. The discrepancies in the circumstances and endowments of life from one individual to the next in itself makes the one-life theory unfair, and arbitrary judgment of the Deity would make Him look like a cosmic despot who rules by his own whim. The twin doctrines of the Law of Karma and reincarnation provides some sort of rationale to explain the discrepancies in the endowments of life among various souls. For Madhva, the doctrines of the eternality of the soul and reincarnation are clearly spelled out in the Bhagavadgītā.[10]

Eternality of the soul

na tvevāham jātu nāsam na tvam neme janādhipāḥ. na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayamataḥ param. Bhagavadgītā II: 12

"Never was there a time when I was not, *nor thou*, *nor these lords of men*, nor will there ever be a time hereafter when we shall all cease to be."

[10] All the cited translations of the passages of the *Bhagavadgītā* are based on Radhakrishnan's translations

na jāyate na mriyate vā kadācin nāyam bhūtva bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ. ajo nityaḥ śāśvato'yam purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre. Bhagavadgītā II: 20

"It is never born, nor does it die at any time, nor having (once) come to be will it again cease to be. It is unborn, eternal, permanent and primordial. It is not slain when the body is slain."

Reincarnation until salvation

vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni gṛhṇāti naro'parāṇi. tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇānyanyāni samyāti navāni dehī. Bhagavadgītā II:22

"Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, even so does the embodied soul cast-off worn out bodies and take on others that are new."

Both Madhva and Calvin uphold the view that God Incarnates, i.e., God becomes man. However, the reasons provided by Christianity and Hinduism for the Incarnation of God are different. For Madhva, the rationale is spelt out in Bhagavadgītā IV: 7-8:

yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata.
abhyutthānamadharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmyaham.

"Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and the rise of unrighteousness, O Arjuna, then I send forth (incarnate) Myself."

paritrāṇāya sādhūnām vināśayaśca duṣkṛtām. dharmasaṁsthāpanārthāya saṁbhavāmi yuge yuge.

"For the protection of the good and the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age."

For Calvin, God incarnates as Jesus Christ for the Redemption of Man.

> "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16
>
> "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Corinthians 15:22

God Incarnates twice. The first as Jesus for redeeming man, and the second as the Cosmic Christ to usher in the Kingdom of God on earth.

Second Coming

> "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30

Conclusion

These two firm theists, i.e., Madhva and Calvin, both deeply committed to Divine Sovereignty, I believe, are the products of their varying historical and geographical circumstances. While Madhva was trying to operate in a highly charged culture of religious rationalism in the India of his times, and therefore trying his level-best to accommodate his deep theism with the competing deism (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika), absolutism (Advaita Vedānta) and non-theism (Jainism, Sāṅkhya-Yoga and Mīmāṁsā) of the rival Indian religio-philosophical traditions, Calvin, similarly, was trying to rebel against the over rationalized theism of the dominant Roman Catholic tradition in the Europe of his times. Therefore, Calvin's whole approach (like his fellow Protestant leaders like Luther and Zwingli) was to de-rationalize Protestantism by holding to the slogans 'Back to Scripture' (*revertere ad Scripturam*), 'Faith only' (*sola fide*), 'Scripture only' (*sola Scriptura*) and advocate a type of theism bereft of logical gymnastics.

The problem with Madhva is that he believes that God is All in All, but yet yields to rationality and logic. How can God be supernal on the one hand, and be delimited in terms of His Sovereignty on the other? That is the unresolved contradiction in Madhva's creed.

The problem with Calvin is that in his anxiety to keep God the Sovereign Lord of the Universe, he compromises the Justice of God and the rationality of Man. The senses of Justice and Reason are intimately tied to one another and part of God's theological and ethical plan for the cosmos and man. God's special creature, i.e., Man, constantly feels pulled toward a sense of justice which is very rationally based. If Man is created in the image of God and God is Just, why is reason not only ignored but considered fiendish and so opposed to faith. God, Justice and rationality should all be on the same side. Afterall, the *rationale for rejecting Reason in Protestantism as a whole is also based on Reason*. That is the unresolved contradiction in Calvin's creed.

In the final analysis, both Madhva and Calvin are considered to be oddball theologians by the theoreticians of their larger respective religious traditions of Hinduism and Christianity respectively, since neither Madhva nor Calvin ultimately believes in the concept of universal salvation (*sarvamukti*).

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The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, in 1961, in the Asian Religious Context of the Second Half of the Twentieth Century [*]

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Abstract: The Third General Assembly of the World Council of Churches took place in New Delhi, a multicultural and interreligious town in India. By this means, the World Council took a step forward towards the dialogue with the world's religions. From ancient times, India was a place of dialogue between adherents of different cultures and religious traditions. At the Third General Assembly of the WCC, the interreligious dialogue which will be more acknowledged throughout the years became a *leitmotif* on the ecumenical agenda of the member churches. In this study, I try to present how this historical ecumenical event has shaped the interreligious dialogue architecture of the World Council and how it fits in the Asian interreligious landscape. It was the first General Assembly of the WCC outside the *traditional* Christian space, which up to that moment represents more or less the European and North-American geographical space.

Keywords: Asian Religions, Ecumenical Movement, Indian Christianity, Indian History, Interreligious Dialogue, Postcolonialism, Religion and Politics, World Council of Churches.

[*] This study was written under the supervision of Rev. Dr. Habil. Buda Daniel, Dean of "Sf. Andrei Șaguna" Faculty of Orthodox Theology, "Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu.

Introduction to the history of the modern ecumenical movement

The term *ecumenism*, from an etymological point of view, comes from Greek, more precisely from the passive participle of the verb *oikenin*, which means *to inhabit*. A historical analysis of the meaning of the term *ecumenism* is provided by Rev. Dr. Daniel Benga, a member of the commission of theological dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Church in Germany, who quotes the German author R. Frieling, showing that

> "in the fifth century BC, the inhabited world, the concept of "oikoumene", was limited only to the Roman Empire, and then, starting with the fourth century of the Christian era, it was taken in the church language, when ancient Christianity held the famous 'Ecumenical Synods'."[1]

Referring to the evolution of the concept of ecumenism, R. Frieling shows that:

> "Beginning with the nineteenth century, ecumenism began to be understood, especially in Protestant circles, as the human desire to transcend traditional separations and boundaries between nations, denominations, and social classes. Later, being limited to the efforts to unite denominations, the term became established in the Roman Catholic Church together with the Second Vatican Council, but it referred more to the inner unity of Catholicism."[2]

[1] Daniel Benga, *Identităţi creştine europene în dialog – De la mişcarea husită la ecumenismul contemporan*, Ed. Universităţii „Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, 2010, p. 197.
[2] R. Frieling, *Ökumene*, quoted by Daniel Benga, pp. 46-47.

World Council of Churches

A *fraternity of churches* seeking restauration of Christian unity

The World Council of Churches[3] was founded in 1948, when the first General Assembly was held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.[4] This structure is an ecumenical organization that brings together most Christian traditions from around the world.[5] All administrative and other decisions and resolutions are made in a General Assembly,[6] which takes place every eight or ten years. A total of ten General Assemblies were held, and the next one will be held in 2022 in Karlsruhe, Germany. The last General Assembly was held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2013.

World Council assemblies have been organized and they have addressed the main issues facing humanity, real and current issues for

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[3] In the words of Dutch theologian and historian Jurjen A. Zeilstra, The World Council of Churches is a *global religious non-governmental organisation*. (Jurjen A. Zeilstra, *Visser't Hooft, 1900-1985: Living for the Unity of the Church*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2020, p. 357)

[4] "History." https://www.oikoumene.org/about-the-wcc/history Last accessed on March 25, 2022.

[5] Today, the World Council of Churches brings together 349 churches globally, according to the latest statistics, belonging to the Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican or United Churches. These member churches include about 580 million Christians in 120 countries throughout the world. ("What is the World Council of Churches?" https://www.oikoumene.org/about-the-wcc. Last accessed on March 25, 2022).

[6] According to the official website of the World Council of Churches, which gives us the definition of the concept: "The Assembly is the "supreme legislative body" of the WCC, and meets every eight years. The formal purpose of the Assembly is to review programmes and to determine the overall policies of the WCC, as well to elect presidents and appoint a Central Committee which serves as the chief governing body of the WCC until the next assembly. Alongside the committee work and business for the delegates, assemblies are also times of celebration and sharing for the many thousands of other visitors at the event. A central element of assemblies for all participants is the worship life, where the community gathers for prayer and meditation, drawing on the diverse spiritual experience of the churches around the world." (https://www.oikoumene.org/about-the-wcc/organizational-structure/assembly, Last accessed on March 25, 2022).

human society to this day. Rev. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria made some remarks at the moment of the thirtieth anniversary of the accession of the Romanian Orthodox Church to the World Council of Churches:

> "November 20, 1991 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the accession of the Romanian Orthodox Church to the World Council of Churches, on the occasion of the Third General Assembly in New Delhi. The World Council of Churches (WCC) was founded at the General Assembly in Amsterdam in August 1948 in a critical political context created by World War II. Indeed, the separation of Europe and the world into economic and military blocs has deepened the existing crises and historical divisions, for which, in part, the Churches were also responsible. A divided Church cannot heal a divided world. Starting from this principle, the WCC called on the Churches separated for historical reasons to set up a movement to restore their seen unity, so as to serve together a suffering and divided humanity. The Romanian Orthodox Church joins the WCC with the understanding that there is no incompatibility between its participation in the pan-Orthodox communion and its presence in an ecumenical and multi-faith community."[7]

Religious and cultural heritage and diversity of contemporary India. A short introduction

With the end of World War II, a series of global political changes took place. These include the end of the colonial era and the formation of new nation-states in the former colonial territories. The Republic of India gained its independence in 1947 from the British rule. However, India and Pakistan joined *the Commonwealth*, a community of states, regions, provinces and dominions, where the British Crown played a rather symbolic role.

[7] Ion Bria, *Ortodoxia în Europa: Locul spiritualității române*, Ed. Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei, Iași, 1995, p. 118.

From a religious point of view, the Indian territory has always been a multi-cultural and multi-religious one. Since 1947, Indian policy on religious diversity and freedom has sought to establish a climate of tolerance, in which every religious tradition is recognized as part of India's cultural and identity mosaic, as stated by the well-known sociologist of religion, José Casanova.[8]

Professor Gurpreet Mahajan from the Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Science of Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, presents statistical data from the first census in post-colonial India, which took place in 1951. Thus, the religious scene at that time was dominated by Hindus, who accounted for 84% of the population of the entire country, a proportion of about 10% Muslims, 2.3% Christians, 1.89% Sikhs, 0.74% Buddhists, 0.46% followers of Jainism and 0.43% others.[9]

Between the gaining of independence and the formation of the Republic of India, from 1947 until the Third General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, the political, social and religious scene was marked by internal tensions between various ethnic and religious factions (Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and followers of other philosophical and religious traditions). These tensions culminated in the assassination of activist and pacifist Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) by a Hindu fundamentalist, Nathuram Godse, on January 30, 1948.

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[8] "Faculty Overview: José Casanova on Secularization," The YouTube's Page of Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & and World Affairs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOs8J2758_s, Last accessed on March 25, 2022.

[9] *Routledge Handbook on the Governance of Religious Diversity*, Edited by Anna Triandafyllidou and Tina Magazzini, Routledge International Handbooks, London and New York, 2021, p. 256.

The Third General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi (1961). General Considerations

Regarding the Third General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, India (19 November - 5 December 1961), it can be said that it was the first event of such a religious importance, for Christian denominations, to take place on Asian territory. In fact, the last major General Assembly of the World Council was also held in Asia, but at that time in Busan, Republic of Korea in 2013.

It should be added that among the great achievements of this General Assembly, in addition to the accession of the Orthodox Churches, was the physical and cultural closeness to such a diverse religious space as India. To this day, India is a diverse and homogeneous space, both culturally and religiously.

It can thus be noted that among the constant concerns of the Churches were not only those focused on Christian interfaith meetings and dialogues, but also those concerning the relations with other religious traditions. This is especially true in the current conditions, where there are large displacements of populations in various parts of the world, due to various factors. The importance of interfaith dialogue has been one of the constant concerns of ecumenical meetings since the beginning of the ecumenical movement,[10] which was better highlighted at the New Delhi meeting.[11]

[10] "Interfaith dialogue is fundamentally made up of an exchange of words and mutual listening that puts believers of different religious traditions on an equal footing… The experience of interfaith dialogue results in a *dialogical approach to the faith* of believers, complementary to other university approaches to the religious phenomenon: historical, anthropological, sociological, psychological and phenomenological. After a long period of punctual or fruitless attempts, the 1970s witnessed a real explosion of interfaith dialogue at international level, both bilaterally and multilaterally. Less spectacular and much more realistic, basic or local dialogue is developing all over the world, where different religious communities coexist in the same city or region."

Indian-born Protestant theologian Paul David Devanandan (1901–1962), who attended the New Delhi General Assembly, emphasized the importance of interfaith dialogue in meetings and ecumenical dialogue, at the *Conference of the East Asian Christian Leaders.*[12] The conference was held in Bangkok from December 4 to 11, 1949. Devanandan was one of the most representative promoters of interfaith dialogue in the Asian multi-faith context, and was appointed director of the *Centre for the Study of Hinduism*, in Bangalore, India.[13]

Devanandan considered that the other religious traditions are the fruits of the creation of the Holy Spirit, a statement made in the plenary of the New Delhi Assembly, showing that:

(Mihai Himcinschi, *Misiune şi Dialog: Ontologia misionară a Bisericii din perspectiva dialogului interreligios*, Ed. Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2020, p. 219).

[11] "Devanandan's address to the New Delhi assembly of the WCC (1961) - at which the IMC was integrated into the WCC - challenged the churches to take seriously the experience of the younger churches in the newly independent countries, where they had to work and struggle together with peoples of different religious traditions in nation-building. In this context the concept of dialogue appears in the New Delhi statement as a way of speaking about Christian relations with people of other faith traditions. This was further considered at the first world mission gathering under WCC auspices in Mexico City in 1963. A more significant discussion took place at the East Asia Christian Conference assembly in Bangkok in 1964. Its statement on "Christian Encounter with Men of Other Beliefs", incorporating much of the re-thinking in Asia in relation to other faiths, took the debate at many points beyond the Tambaram controversy." ("Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement article on Interfaith Dialogue", (The following article is the entry on Interfaith Dialogue (Dialogue, Interfaith) from the revised edition of the *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, published jointly by the World Council of Churches and the Wm. Eerdmans in 2002), Doc., 01 September 2002, World Council of Churches:
https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/dictionary-of-the-ecumenical-movement-article-on-interfaith-dialogue. Last accessed on March 25, 2022).

[12] Zeilstra, *Visser't Hooft, 1900-1985: Living for the Unity of the Church*, p. 331.

[13] Idem.

> "The only alternative is to confess either the Christian ignorance of God's ways with people or the Christian blindness in refusing to believe in God's redemptive work with people of other faiths."[14]

Through this position, the Indian theologian punishes those who preach the exclusivism of their own tradition and, through it, the confessional confiscation of the Christian and religious message.

The report of Rev. Dr. *Willem Adolph Visser't Hooft*, the first General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, written in 1959, addressed to the *Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches*, sets out the principles underlying the organization of the General Assembly in New Delhi.[15] After the Assemblies in *Amsterdam, the Netherlands* (1948) and *Evanston, the United States of America* (1954), held in two countries with a predominantly Christian population, in those years it was the turn of another country in another geographical area, belonging to another cultural and religious tradition, to be chosen as the venue for the Council Assembly. This was the criterion for which India was designated as the country, and as the venue, the capital *New Delhi*. This was also intended to emphasize the Council's vision of *Catholicity*.

The testimony of the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches Visser't Hooft, recorded in writing, has a special documentary and historical value:

> "First of all, the assembly will take place in Asia. So far, we have met in countries where Christianity is the dominant religion. This time we will meet in a country whose culture is shaped by other religions and where the

[14] *The Ecumenical Review - Current Dialogue*, Special Issue: Fifty Years of Dialogue: Embracing the Past, Envisioning the Future, Volume 73, Number 5, December © 2021 World Council of Churches, p. 661.

[15] Visser't Hooft, Willem Adolf. "Report of the General Secretary to the Executive Committee: 1959," *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, Oct. 1959, pp. 70-77.

Christian Church is in a minority position. This can become an opportunity to demonstrate that the ecumenical movement is in the deepest sense Catholic, that is, it is not tied to any particular form of civilization, not even to any specific form of Christian civilization, but fundamentally independent and therefore capable of talking about the condition of people of all cultures and all religions."[16]

Regarding the choice of the venue for such an event in an Asian region, the testimony of the former General Secretary of the WCC, Rev. Dr. Konrad Raiser,[17] is a reference. Referring to the political and social context of Asia, which hosted the 10th General Assembly of the WCC in Busan, in 2013, General Secretary Konrad Raiser makes the following remarks:

"What are the features of this assembly if seen against the background of the history of WCC assemblies? The first point to be noted is the fact that this is only the second time in more than fifty years (after the New Delhi assembly in 1961) that a WCC assembly convenes in an Asian country. Northeast Asia in particular has never seen such a major WCC meeting since the World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation at Seoul in 1990. The fact that the WCC is coming back to Korea after 23 years is an indication of the strong links of solidarity between the ecumenical community and the Korean churches and Christian groups who have been struggling courageously for human rights and justice, peace and reconciliation in this still divided country."[18]

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[16] Idem.

[17] He was General Secretary of the World Council of Churches from 1993 to 2003. http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/press_corner/pc_konradbio.html. Last accessed on March 25, 2022.

[18] Konrad Raiser, "The Busan assembly in the history of WCC assemblies and as an occasion to unfold a new ecumenical vision", Berlin, September 2013, p. 1, E-Book: https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/201459. Last accessed on March 25, 2022.

Dr. Jurjen A. Zeilstra, Dutch theologian and historian, in the biography dedicated to General Secretary Visser't Hooft as part of his doctoral thesis defended in 2018, in the field of *Religious history* at *Amsterdam Free University*, the Netherlands, in the paragraph entitled *New Delhi 1961: A Crowning Success and an Estrangement*, presents the dynamics of the preparatory events of the New Delhi General Assembly, coordinated by the Council members supervised by General Secretary Visser't Hooft:

> "During this period, Visser't Hooft was busy with the preparations for the third assembly of the World Council of Churches to be held in New Delhi. The conference was to take place in November 1961 in the Vigyan Bhavan, an enormous conference centre, with the theme 'Jesus Christ: Light of the World'. Visser't Hooft had high expectations of this conference and compared the rooms of the centre with the meeting rooms of the United Nations in New York. But the programme was overfull, and it would once again be a challenge for Visser't Hooft and his stuff to manage properly. In contrast to the two previous assemblies, the member churches, including many young churches, were now expected to make relatively large contribution."[19]

For the first time, the Preparatory Committee has added to the agenda of the Assembly the topic of the meeting between Christianity and other religions, showing that:

> "the assembly itself was a manifestation of the new multifaceted nature of the World Council. The word 'dialogue' was used more and more in this period. There was now a true need for a more precise description of the purpose of unity and the concrete tasks in society, such as youth work and

[19] H. van Run, interview with Visser't Hooft, 'Markant: Visser't Hooft, NOS Television, 8 December 1977, Sound and Vision Archives in Jurjen A. Zeilstra, *Visser't Hooft, 1900-1985: Living for the Unity of the Church*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2020, p. 343.

the reception of refugees. The brochure 'Jesus Christ, the Light of the World' was published in 32 languages. Visser't Hooft was proud when the Indian premier Jawaharlal Nehru, whom he had once met in 1953, gave a speech. Nehru warned against thinking in terms of camps that were connected to the Cold War, which Visser't Hooft could personally appreciate. Nehru was always seen by Visser't Hooft as a great man because he felt that, in contrast to, for example, the Indonesian Kusno Sukarno, the Indian leader was always himself, true to his principles and never thought too highly of himself."[20]

Conclusion

The 1961 New Delhi General Assembly represents the moment of the full opening of the global ecumenical community, in that a multicultural and multireligious metropolis like New Delhi was chosen as the venue for such a meeting. Thus, in New Delhi, the *leitmotif* for the interfaith meeting becomes a reference. After the accession of the Christian Churches in the colonial territories to the World Council of Churches, interfaith dialogue has become much more relevant, with a better understanding of the cultural and religious diversity of these geographical areas.[21] Interfaith dialogue was in its initial phase, as shown by researcher Dr. Jutta Sperber, a specialist in the study of the dialogue between Christianity and Islam, who states that at the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, interfaith dialogue was still in its early stages.[22]

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[20] Idem.

[21] Zeilstra, *Visser't Hooft, 1900-1985: Living for the Unity of the Church*, p. 341.

[22] "The initiatives of the churches in the 'Third World' and of the study centres concerning dialogue did not meet with the desired response." (Jutta Sperber, *Christian and Muslims: The Dialogue Activities of the World Council of Churches and their Theological Foundations*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 2000, p. 8.)

However, from 1961 until today, the Christian community outside the traditional space of this religion (European and North American territory) began to become an important part of the table of inter-Christian dialogue. In a speech delivered at the first gathering of the Global Christian Forum,[23] in Limuru, Kenya, in 2007, Dr. Cheryl Bridges Johns, a true exponent of the Pentecostal tradition in the ecumenical movement, showed in an introductory statement how Pentecostal Christians can become a bridge between the northern hemisphere and the southern hemisphere. This contribution can better highlight the current phenomenon by which the manifestation of the Christian faith shifts its focus to the Global South, a phenomenon that will become an important point on the agenda of future ecumenical assemblies, considers Dr. Johns.[24]

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[23] "The idea for the Global Christian Forum began with Konrad Raiser, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, who, in the 1990's, began reflecting on the need for an ecumenical forum that was broader than the scope of the World Council. In 1998 a consultation was held at Bossey, Switzerland to explore the possibility of creating a new ecumenical forum that could hold a "more effective, more sustaining, more inclusive network of relationships." Under the leadership of Hubert van Beek, the Global Christian Forum took on a more formal purpose and structure. Meetings held in Pasadena, California in June 2002, provided clear organizational structure and purposes. It was decided to hold regional meetings around the world culminating in a global meeting of the Forum in 2007. The first worldwide gathering of the Global Christian Forum was held in 2007 in Limuru, Kenya. The global gathering was designed to share the successes of the regional meetings as well as to discover a vision for future of the quest for Christian unity." (Cheryl Bridges Johns, "Remodeling Our Ecumenical House," in *Pentecostal Theology and Ecumenical Theology. Interpretations and Intersections*, Series: Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, Volume: 34, Brill, 2019, p. 138)

[24] "In particular, I believe we have a unique role as interlockers between the Global South and the Global North. In my address to the Global Christian Forum, I noted that the ecumenical task of the future would be to reconcile Christianity in the Global North with Christianity found the Global South. It was my thesis that "a new form of ecumenism is needed in order to embrace the present challenges of world-wide Christianity." (Ibidem, p. 150)

Moreover, today, one in twelve people in the world identifies themselves religiously as being of the Pentecostal faith. Dr. Johns states that in the current ecumenical paradigm, Christianity will seek to reconcile the two global hemispheres that comprise a Christianity of traditional cultural and religious structure and expression (as it exists historically in Europe and North America), and on the other hand, a Christianity with a form of modern cultural and religious expression (as it begins to develop more and more pronouncedly in Africa, Asia, etc.). This process of reconciliation and unity of the two modes of expression of the Christian faith, says Dr. Johns, can be accomplished through the theology of assuming on a personal and community level "a death and rebirth with Our Saviour Jesus Christ" (similar to that of the Sacrament of Baptism in the Orthodox tradition), as received thorough the theology of the World Council of Churches Assembly in New Delhi in 1961.[25]

The phenomenon of death and rebirth also involves a process of repentance on the part of the two global Christian hemispheres, as well as an *exchange of gifts*, which represents a phenomenon in the ecumenical dialogue.[26] Referring to this process, Dr. Johns points out that the relationship between the two hemispheres represented by the

[25] "Death and rebirth are needed if the visible unity of the church is to be achieved, Pentecostal scholar says." (Pentecostal theologian and scholar Cheryl Bridges-Johns proposed a radical reinvention of the ecumenical movement in a keynote address delivered on the third day of the Global Christian Forum which takes place 6-9 November in Limuru, near Nairobi, Kenya). 9 November 2007, *World Council of Churches*: https://www.oikoumene.org/news/death-and-rebirth-are-needed-if-the-visible-unity-of-the-church-is-to-be-achieved-pentecostal-scholar-says. Last accessed on March 25, 2022.

[26] "Furthermore, I noted that in order to achieve this unity, there would need to be, in the words of World Council of Churches Assembly in New Delhi, a death and re-birth. This death and re-birth calls for repentance from both the Global North and Global South. It also calls for reception of the gifts held in the Global North and the gifts found in the Global South." (Ibidem, p. 150)

two types of Christianity, determined by the condition of mutual repentance, will remove the concept of sender (the Global North) and receiver (the Global South).

Thus, it is recalled that at the beginning of the twentieth century (when historically many regions in the southern hemisphere had the status of colonies), the issue of Christian mission was addressed in the light of these realities, which concerned the point of view of the missionary gone from the Global North to the Global South, as it was concluded at the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh (1910).[27]

[27] "If these gifts can be offered and received in the context of continual repentance, there would no longer be a 'receiving' mission field (the Global South) and a 'sending' church (the Global North) as was envisioned at Edinburgh 1910." (Ibidem, pp. 150-151)

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Nehru standing in front of Oikoumene sign, 1961 (Document).
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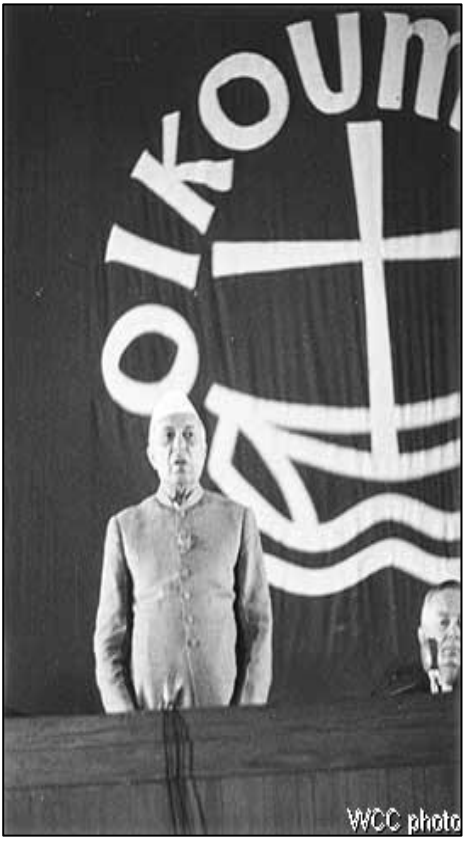

[28] http://archives.wcc-coe.org/Query/detail.aspx?ID=53111.
Last accessed on March 25, 2022.

Ref. code: ND14-02

Group of unidentified delegates at the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi, India, 1961 (Document).

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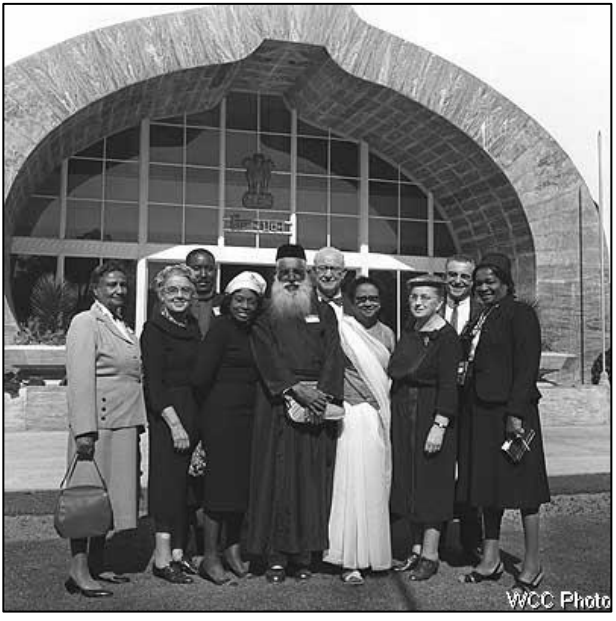

[29] http://archives.wcc-coe.org/Query/detail.aspx?ID=74676. Last accessed on March 25, 2022.

Ref. code: ND27-19

Dr. Radhakrishnan, vice-president of India (right) greeting Dr. Ernest A. Payne during the Third Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi, November 18 - December 6, 1961. In the background: Archbishop Iakovos (left) and Bishop Henry K. Sherrill. (Document)

[30] http://archives.wcc-coe.org/Query/detail.aspx?ID=74955.
Last accessed on March 25, 2022.

Ref. code: ND29-09

On behalf of the Presidium of the WCC and delegates to the Third Assembly of the WCC, two of the Council presidents laid a wreath on the tomb of Gandhi. The ceremony took place during the Third Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi, November 18 - December 6, 1961. Left to right are: Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill (USA, WCC president); Mr Korula Jacob, secretary of the National Christian Council of India; Bishop Sante Uberto Barbieri (Argentina, WCC president); Metropolitan Juhanon Mar Thoma, (WCC president); Mr Rustagi, custodian of Gandhi's tomb. (Document)

[31] http://archives.wcc-coe.org/Query/detail.aspx?ID=74983.
Last accessed on December 30, 2021.

Ref. code: ND64-22

Delegates from Africa and Asia at Third Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi, November 18 - December 6, 1961. At the right is U Kyaw Than, of the Burma Baptist Convention, associate general secretary of the East Asia Christian Conference. Next to him is Rt Rev. Thomas Mar Athanasius (India) (Document)

[32] http://archives.wcc-coe.org/Query/detail.aspx?ID=75492.
Last accessed on December 30, 2021.

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REVIEWS

Amartya Sen, *Home in the World. A Memoir*, Allen Lane, an Imprint of Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2021, 464 pp., ISBN: 978-1-846-14486-8.

Mihaela GLIGOR
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From Nobel Prize laureate, Professor Amartya Sen, comes a long-awaited memoir about home, world, belonging, identity, education, and cultural differences, presenting worlds in which the author had lived and worked. *Home in the World. A Memoir* is a masterpiece that spans for more than three decades, and offers an intimate view on things that made him stronger, and also "a global intellectual" (*Financial Times*).

Amartya Sen is Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard. He was Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, from 1998 to 2004, and won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1998. Among his many celebrated books are *Development as Freedom* (1999), and *The Argumentative Indian* (2005).

Born in 1933, in Santiniketan, Amartya Sen received his name from Rabindranath Tagore, the first Nobel laureate of Asia, who was very close especially to his maternal grandfather, "a well-known scholar in Sanskrit and Indian philosophy, Kshiti Mohan Sen."

> "Kshiti Mohan was not only something of a lieutenant to Tagore, helping him to give shape to Visva-Bharati as an educational institution, but he also contributed greatly to its academic standing because of his

extraordinary reputation as a scholar and his much-admired books – written in Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi and Gujarati." (7)

"When I was born, Rabindranath persuated my mother that it was boring to stick to well-used names and he proposed a new name for me. Amartya, by inference, means immortal, in Sanskrit." (8)

Young Amartya Sen spent much of his early educational years in Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan, and this fact exposed him to unconventional schooling methods, but also shaped his humane nature. Visva-Bharati "invoked the objective of uniting the world (*Visva*) with all the articulated wisdom (*Bharati*) it could offer." (7)

"The emphasis at the Santiniketan School was on fostering curiosity rather than competitive excellence; indeed, interest in grades and examination performance was severely discouraged. I greatly enjoyed exploring Santiniketan's open-shelved and welcoming library with stacks of books about places all around the world, and I absolutely loved not having to perform well." (17-18)

Sen describes his long fascination toward rivers of Bengal and the long trips he and his family had on rivers, a time when he read a lot of poetry, both in English and Bengali, and was also focused on learning new things about the nature. He also notices that

"The fascination with rivers in Bengali literature goes back to the early days when Bengali emerged as a language, with a serious grammar, around the tenth century, differing greatly (though descending from) Sanskrit." (28)

"My dedicated pursuit of Tagore's thoughts thus began just after his death and has given me a lifetime of rewarding engagement. In particular, his overarching emphasis on freedom and reasoning made me think seriously about those issues, which became increasingly important to me as I grew older." (36)

> "Santiniketan was fun in a way I had never imagined a school could be. There was so much freedom in deciding what to do, so many intellectually curious classmates to chat with, so many friendly teachers to approach and ask questions unrelated to the curriculum, and – most importantly – so little enforced discipline and a complete absence of harsh punishment." (37-38)

The *Memoirs* also contain precious details about some of the most important characters of Indian recent history, like Mahatma Gandhi and some of his actions. It's very interesting to learn about Gandhi's thoughts after the huge earthquake that happened "in Bihar – not far from Santiniketan – at 2 p.m. on 15 January 1934."

> "While Tagore and others expressed their deeply felt grief and sympathy, and went actively into organizing relief activities, Mahatma Gandhi not only joined in those efforts, but also decided to make a statement identifying the earthquake as a punishment given to India by God for the sin of untouchability." (79)
>
> "Rabindranath was predictably furious. He was, of course, equally committed to the removal of untouchability and had joined Gandhiji wholeheartedly in the anti-untouchability movement, but he was appalled by Gandhiji's interpretation of a natural event that was causing intense suffering and death to hundreds of thousands of innocent people – including children and infants. He also hated the epistemology of seeing an earthquake as an ethical phenomenon." (80)

The Tagore – Gandhi exchange on this subject is mentioned by Amartya Sen as an important part of "a world of arguments," that was about to open in front of him.

> "Rabindranath and Gandhiji had very different concerns in the arguments they tended to present to each other.[...] To varying extents we all remained puzzled about the way Gandhiji's reasoning seemed to proceed, and saw ourselves very much on Tagore's side of this division." (82)

Amartya Sen's preferences in school were quite different from other students:

> "My great loves at Santiniketan were mathematics and Sanskrit. [...] I was very absorbed in the intricacies of that language, and for many years Sanskrit was close to being my second language after Bengali. [...] Reading Panini, the great grammarian from the fourth century BC, was as exciting an intellectual adventure as any I have undertaken in my life. In fact in many ways Panini taught me the basic demands of intellectual discipline, well beyond the cultivation of Sanskrit itself." (93-94)
>
> "As I look back on the little work I have been able to do over my life (I wish it had been more), it seems to be broadly divided into quite abstract reasoning (for example pursuing the idea of justice and exploring various avenues in social choice theory, with axioms, theorems and proofs) and the rather earthy practical problems (famines, hunger, economic deprivations, inequalities of class, gender and caste, and others). The foundations of both were quite firmly established in my schooldays." (98)

Professor Amartya Sen is also linked with another famous Indian university, Nalanda. Considered by historians to be the world's very first residential university, and among the greatest centers of learning in the ancient world, Nalanda University played a vital role in promoting the patronage of arts and academics during the 5th and 6th century CE, a period that has been described by scholars as the "Golden Age of India." The re-opening, in September 2014, of newly Nalanda University,

> "Was a notable moment in the history of higher education in the world. It was also, for me personally, as the Chancellor of the newly re-established Nalanda University, a deeply nostalgic moment. I recalled the time – nearly seventy years before – when, as an impressionable child, I had wondered whether Nalanda could ever come to life again. 'Is it really gone forever?' I had asked my grandfather, Kshiti Mohan. 'Perhaps not,'

said the old man, who always generated cultural optimism, 'it could do us a lot of good today.'" (105)

For Sen, "Nalanda is associated with that egalitarian vision which is extremely important for education in general and higher education in particular." (107) The new Nalanda University has been listed as an "Institute of National Importance" by the Government of India.

The volume contains many examples of major historical events that the author experienced, such as the Hindu-Muslim riots of the 1940s, the great famine in Bengal in 1943, the partition of India in 1947, the riots that preceded the independence of Bangladesh, and also beautiful lines on the power of language that transcends the borders:

> "What unites the Bengalis in Bangladesh is not only a shared economic or political history – though it does play a big role – but the common language of Bengali and pride in its richness and accomplishments. The language has had an amazingly powerful influence on the identity of Bengalis as a group on both sides of the political boundary between Bangladesh and India." (134)

The volume also comprises some extremely personal fragments, describing his battle with desease. At only 18 years old, Amartya Sen diagnosed his own cancer. Not long after he had moved to Calcutta for college, he noticed a lump growing inside his mouth. He consulted two doctors but they laughed away his suspicions, so Sen, then a student of economics and mathematics, looked up a couple of books on cancer from a medical library. He identified the tumour – a "squamous cell carcinoma" – and later, when a biopsy confirmed his verdict, he wondered if there were in effect two people with his name: a patient who had just been told he had cancer, but also the "agent" responsible for the diagnosis. "I must not let the agent in me go away," Sen

decided, “and could not – absolutely could not – let the patient take over completely.” (228)

Although the doctors gave him only 15% chance of survival, the young man overcame the disease. After the recovering, he “returned to College Street – and what a joyful return it was. My world was restored.” (234) “Back at Presidency College and the coffee house, I resumed my old College Street life – reading, arguing and debating. I felt completely happy.” (238)

Amartya Sen began his teaching career at Jadavpur University in Calcutta. Then his life and scholarships took him, among others, to Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford, Berkeley, University of Delhi and Delhi School of Economics, London School of Economics and Political Science and Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. This is, in fact, the reason why he calls many places *home*, including Dhaka, in modern Bangladesh; Kolkata, where he first studied economics; and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he engaged with the greatest minds of his generation. In *Home in the World*, these homes collectively form an unparalleled vision of twentieth and twenty-first-century life in Asia, Europe, and later America.

He met many incredible minds of the world, and had different intellectual interests, from economics to philosophy and education. He found his way and, after receiving the Nobel Prize in Economics (1998), he started the Pratichi Trusts, “one in Bangladesh and another in India – aimed at improving elementary education, basic health care and gender equity.” (60)

In the end, *Home in the World* is the true story of an international recognized intellectual who answered spontaneously to a question about the language he dreams in: “Bengali, mostly.” He is a citizen of the world, but this is how he affirms his identity. The roots are there,

always. And they remain. But they also help the individual to spread his wings and 'conquer' the world. The 'argument' is the key, in his case. And this is, in fact, Amartya Sen's 'super power,' as he candidly recognises:

> "Our reasoned sympathy, across the borders of geography and time, may come from the strength of our spontaneous affections or from the power of argument." (407)

The range of this remarkable volume and the memoirist's interests is vast and varied, as is Professor Sen's intellectual and personal peregrinations: Dhaka, Mandalay, Santiniketan, Cambridge, Calcutta, Delhi, Massachusetts, California, Boston and many other place of the world called, for one reason or another, *home*.

Home in the World, affectionaly written by Professor Amartya Sen, is, ultimately, an extensively researched social and cultural history of India, and the world. *Home in the World* is a pleasure to read, and I feel fortunate to be amongst the readers of this remarkable journey, and honored to have met Professor Amartya Sen.

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Uma Das Gupta, *A History of Sriniketan. Rabindranath Tagore's Pioneering Work in Rural Reconstruction,* New Delhi, Niyogi Books, 2022, 234 pp., ISBN: 978-93-91125-44-8.

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A historian and a reputed Tagore biographer, Professor Uma Das Gupta is the author of a series of books and articles on the first Asian Nobel Laureate in Literature. Her latest volume, *A History of Sriniketan. Rabindranath Tagore's Pioneering Work in Rural Reconstruction*, looks at the history of Sriniketan, Rabindranath Tagore's institute for rural reconstruction, exploring the less known side of the poet's work, that of a social thinker and reformer. Whereas his contribution to art and literature, along with his educational philosophy embodied in the schools he founded at Santiniketan, are much acclaimed, his remarkable work in rural reconstruction at Sriniketan, just two miles away from Santiniketan, has received less attention in public discourse.

The aim of Das Gupta's book, as mentioned in the introduction, is "to document the work of rural reconstruction and examine its pioneering features of integrated thought and action." (12) There are eleven chapters that trace the development of Sriniketan's project from Tagore's initial interest in countryside life, to the concrete actions undertaken in the fields of education, agriculture, health, economic improvement, and village welfare on the whole. The information is sustained by historic evidence: rural surveys, village economic studies, samples of handbills, statistical tables, graphs, facsimiles of photographs, bulletins, and reproductions of the art and craft works made at Sriniketan, and also frequent references to his's essays and personal correspondence.

Working for the villages was Tagore's constant commitment for many years, "his life's work," as he himself acknowledged. It all began in 1889-90 when he was sent by his father to Selidaha, to look after the family's agricultural estates in East Bengal. While supervising the zamindari estate's works, he got in contact with his peasant tenants and listened to their stories of constant sorrow, poverty, sadness, and low self-esteem. It was out of compassion for these less fortunate people that Tagore decided to act and do something that could stir them to life. Yet, it was not charity that he thought of offering, but a change from within the village that could enable the people to cooperate, to work together, and eventually to take responsibility for their own lives.

There were several causes of the decay of rural communities: "the general oppression inflicted on the tenants by the zamindars" (45); the drained soil which was never replenished; the lack of education; the huge gap between the rural and the urban areas, as a result of the migration of English-educated Indian elite to the city; people's poor state of health caused by malaria and other diseases, inappropriate hygiene and lack of medical services. The most discouraging factor, however, was that people despised themselves, thought of themselves as powerless and unworthy, on account of their inborn karma. In the chapter titled "Mentality of the Villages," Das Gupta closely scrutinises all the aspects related to individuals' self-perception in the countryside, emphasising Rabindranth's determination to bring about "a change in human psychology" (49), as he believed that would be the only change that could endure time.

In 1901, Tagore moved to Santiniketan with his family in order to start a school, and there the work for rural reconstruction began, stretching to the neighbouring villages. The work was formalised through the Sriniketan Institute of Rural Reconstruction, founded in 1922, as a wing of his Visva-Bharati International University at Santiniketan. The

pioneering idea was to bridge the gap between the city and the village by combining traditional knowledge with scientific experiment and modern expertise. Having travelled extensively, Tagore understood that progress implied fructifying the discoveries of modern science; hence, he aimed at improving the condition of the peasantry by using new scientific methods of land cultivation, crop rotation, cattle breeding, poultry farming, in experimental works performed by experts and peasants together.

In order to achieve all these, he sent his son Rathindranath and two other students to study agriculture in the U.S.A., and thus acquire qualified knowledge for the work of rural reconstruction in India. In 1921, he also brought a young Englishman, L.K. Elmhirst, who had completed his studies in agriculture at Cornell University, U.S.A., to work for Sriniketan and start the experimental Surul Farm. The team was joined by a paramedical nurse, Miss Gretchen Green, who came from the U.S.A. to set up the Village Health Centre and Clinic at Surul. Observing the malleability of the younger generation of villagers, Rabindranath tied up the Sriniketan experiment with the Scout Movement that he much admired. Tagore thus worked hard to bring scientists, economists, sociologists and technicians from India and abroad to join hands with the villagers in a collaborative effort to reform village life.

The reforms envisaged by Tagore constituted "an all-rounded approach that would take account of the villager's life in all aspects" (35). Thus, the Sriniketan Institute set up banks, paddy stores, weavers' cooperatives, irrigation systems, health cooperatives, a Health Union, and three institutions of education: Siksha-Satra initially for the village boys, later joined by girls, Loka-Siksha Samad for the village householders, and Siksha-Charcha Bhavana for the village school teachers. The curriculum for Siksha-Satra included only one hour of formal training in reading, writing and arithmetic, the rest of the time being dedicated to the study of

nature, gardening, carpentry, and housecraft. Elmhirst emphasised that housecraft referred to the acquisition of a number of vital skills:

> "care and cleaning and construction of quarters; care and proper use of latrines; sanitary disposal of waste; cooking and serving of food; clothes washing and repair; personal hygiene and healthy habits; individual self-discipline; group self-government; policing and hospitality; fire drill and control." (qtd. in Das Gupta, 79)

A revolutionary idea that literally flourished at Sriniketan was "to integrate art and craft with everyday life experiences by reviving the traditional crafts and reviving them with new and creative designs" (13). A wide spectrum of industries – weaving, tannery, carpentry, lacquer craft, pottery, bookbinding, embroidery, tailoring – was brought under Sriniketan's Silpa-Bhavana. The cottage industry came to revitalise village economies in an unprecedented way, becoming a major component of the Sriniketan experiment of rural reconstruction, and also a source of inspiration for national crafts. "The marketing of Sriniketan's beautiful handicrafts brought about a transformation of artistic taste in Bengal and in other parts of India," (97) writes Das Gupta.

The attention paid to cottage industries from the very beginning of the reform reflected Tagore's strong conviction that art and craft encouraged the expression of individuals' artistic sensibilities, while playing a key role in social regeneration. Craftsmen were trained to design products that combine art and purpose. With the poet's taste for beauty, Rabindranath urged people, for instance, to take up the hobby of cultivating flowers in their courtyards, so as to make their villages look beautiful. The cultivation of beauty was to serve to the revival of joy and happiness in people's lives. Das Gupta cites Tagore who, referring to the Sriniketan work, wrote:

> "the poverty problem is not so important. It is the problem of unhappiness that is the great problem. […] Our objective is to try and flood the choked bed of village life with streams of happiness." (qtd. in Das Gupta, 102)

As a result, Sriniketan's plan for rural reconstruction included village festivals, dramas and musical programmes for which Tagore himself wrote texts and songs, restoration of Hindu temples and Muslim mosques, all meant to bring "joy and happiness" to the rural communities. He called upon scholars, poets, artists and musicians to collaborate in this effort.

The final chapter of the book under revision addresses the inevitable question: was Sriniketan a successful project or not? In order to give an answer, the author resorts to the sociological charts provided by Sugata Dasgupta in *A Poet and a Plan.* The hard statistical data reveal for instance that, in the village of Laldaha, the income per capita increased by a thousand per cent, child mortality was reduced to zero, the level of literacy was as high as one hundred per cent, the consumption power was augmented, credit became self-financing, and no disputes were referred to any court of law. Silpa-Bhavana became a successful independent business, attracting increasing numbers of workers even during the Second World War years. The pace of growth was however unequal in the twenty-two villages integrated in the reform plan, and a series of "negative" results were also registered.

It is worth pointing out that Tagore worked almost alone to put his ideas into practice, "without any understanding from his people or from the government" (103). The Indian National Congress entrusted the work of village reform to the colonial government, while educated Indians gave speeches and studied at universities about economics and ethnology, without ever going to see the villages. Rabindranath became cynical of national programmes and concentrated on working for the

villagers with his "own light burning", as he said (41). Perfectly aware of the small size of his plan, he wrote:

> "I alone cannot take responsibility for the whole of India. But even if two or three villages can be freed from the shackles of helplessness and ignorance, an ideal for the whole of India would be established. Fulfil this ideal in a few villages only, and I will say that these few villages are my India. And only if that is done, will India be truly ours." (qtd. in Das Gupta, 19)

Tagore devoted 50 years of his life to rural reconstruction in East Bengal, spent his funds, "gave his Nobel Prize money to the Patisar Krishi Bank to be invested in rural credit for the tenant farmers in his family estate" (105); yet, sadly enough, he was respected, but not loved, for villagers had no faith in themselves or others, and no hope that good things will ever happen to them. Sriniketan is undoubtedly not about achievements or errors; it is about Tagore's determination to make a beginning and set an example for the whole country, out of his confessed love and compassion for the unfortunate. From this perspective, the great merit of Das Gupta's book is that of bringing to the reader's attention the profound humanity underlying all Tagore's social actions. Beyond well documented facts and figures, *A History of Sriniketan* is a tribute to the exceptional personality of Rabindranath Tagore and his devotion to the spiritual work of art, called Man.

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Malini Bhattacharya and Abhijit Sen (Eds.), *Talking of Power. Early Writings of Bengali Women,* New Delhi, Sage Publications India, 2021, 181 pp., ISBN: 978-93-81345-81-8.

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When reading *Talking of Power. Early Writings of Bengali Women,* published in 2021 by SAGE Publications, we find ourselves at the intersection between gender studies, South Asian history, religious studies, and cultural studies. The volume, edited by Malini Bhattacharya and Abhijit Sen, offers its readers a selection of essays written by Bengali women translated into English. The essays were written in the Indian peninsula from the early nineteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century and they illustrate not only the problems of women in that region and time, but also their causes, whether rooted in religious teachings and practices or in cultural habits.

Other contemporary Indian gender studies volumes, such as *The Emergence of Feminism in India, 1950-1920* by Padma Anagol, *Indian Modern Dance, Feminism and Transnationalism* by Prathana Purkayatha, *Indian Feminism: Class, Gender & Identity in Medieval Ages* by Rukhsana Iftikhar, and *Feminism and Indian Realities* by K. A. Kunjakkan, analyze the way women's lives have evolved from housewives to actors, or workers outside the household and so on, or explain why Indian women were more present in the household. In contrast, *Talking of Power. Early Writings of Bengali Women* presents firsthand accounts of sixteen Bengali women on the ways in which they militate for the advancement of women's rights so that women in Bengal

can learn, become free from their family restrictions, and employed, or become active members in their communities.

Before the sixteen essays of the Bengali women, we can find the *Forward* and *Introduction* sections presenting why the authors chose to write the selected texts. In the *Forward*, composed by the retired professor Tanika Sarkar, we find out that the women who wrote the essays in this book were part of the new social category of women that appeared in nineteen century Bengal, i.e., *lekhika* / female author. These women obtained their knowledge in Christian missionary schools opened after 1820. Before that time, only the elite Muslim women had access to learning the Arabic Quran, while the Hindi women were illiterate. The professor emphasizes that, although in the middle of the nineteenth century the *lekhika* fought for the right of women to go to school, not to be subordinated to a man and so on, the female authors from the twentieth century were more focused on the importance of women contributing to the building of the nation or of going back to the old values. The *Introduction* by Malini Bhattacharya, former Director of the School of Women's Studies from Jadavpur University Kolkata, offers us a clear chronological guide of the problems these women writers encountered and mentioned in their texts.

Although some Bengali women had obtained a certain amount of education, due to the Christian missionary schools, most of the women from South Asia were not sent to school because of lack of money. The common belief was that families with many children should prioritize sending their sons to schools and if they had remaining resources, they would send the daughters to school. This lack of women's education is criticized by Bamasundari Devi in the first chapter of the anthology, "What Are the Superstitions That Must Be Removed for the Betterment of Our Country." The main focus of her writing was on problematic old

customs, such as child marriage and Kulinism, where the woman could only marry a man with the same social status as her. In a similar way, the chapter of Kailashbasini Devi, "Woeful Plight of Hindu Women", also highlights the problem generated by the marriage of girls at a young age, as it allows their parents to think that they do not need education to simply become wives that do house chores. Another important aspect mentioned by Kailashbasini Devi is that women want to obtain more freedom and become unbound from their house duties, as more Bengali women obtain an education by learning their own native language from modern intellectual husbands or English from missionary schools. The need of free will in marriage and freedom in decisions for women is the main theme in the third text, "A Letter", by Kusumkumari Devi.

The previously mentioned chapters were written during the middle of the 19th century, but the fourth one, "The Modern Age and the Modern Woman", by Saratkumari Chaudhurani, was penned in 1891. It describes how some people think that educated women have earned more freedom and to be married to such a woman means that you have to employ maids. But I think this change in society is good, as educated women have more time to teach their daughters and other girls and the poor women can be hired as maids, and therefore can earn a living as modern women. In the same direction, the fifth writing, "A Terrible Problem", by Girindramohini Dasi, describes how some men thought that women had obtained too much freedom during her time, but she argues it was not true, as women were still restricted by men in some areas. Moreover, Girindramohini Dasi says that the women were not created "only to suckle a child and to be a slave to men" (75) and explains why husbands should share house duties. Furthermore, the author of the fifth text argues that women should not be educated only in the arts and literature but in science as well, as women are intellectually equal to men. Next we find

"Independence and Subjugation in Women's Lives", by Krishnabhabini Das, a woman who had lived in England for 14 years. The text argues that although the right to obtain an education did much good to the women in the Indian peninsula, due to the lack of women's independence in thinking, the freedom of women did not evolve as it had in England. The tenth text, "The Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge", by Kamini Roy, also focuses on the importance of being an educated woman in India. It starts with the story of Adam and Eve, and the Tree of Knowledge and uses this to explain that without knowledge and/or education, both men and women would be docile beings that only fed themselves.

The need for formal education for women is an important topic across many of the texts in *Talking of Power. Early Writings of Bengali Women*. However, Hiranmoyee Devi posits, in the twelfth text "Proposal: A Women's Arts Association", that not only the education in schools is important for the development of modern women, but also the guidance of other women on more practical matters such as needlework, machine work, handicrafts, fine arts and so on. This necessity cannot be fulfilled in school, but in special institutions funded by women. Furthermore, in the fifteenth essay, "Words from Times Past", by Swarnakumari Devi, the author emphasizes that while many women were obtaining B.A. and M.A. diplomas in her present day, as opposed to women from intellectual families receiving an education only from their parents and husbands in her youth, this change did not mean that the women had been less respected if they knew how to use the knowledge they possessed.

As time passed, women managed not only to obtain an education in primary school, but some of them started to write about matters of national interest for f those in the Indian peninsula, after studying at home with their husbands or obtaining a higher level of education. Therefore, the seventh text, "How to Establish Amity among the

Different Communities in Bengal", by Anindita Devi, describes the problems of unity in the Indian peninsula, as there was not only a big Hindi population, but also many ethnic minority groups. Unfortunately, "one Hindu does not touch rice cooked by another, never forms marital relations outside the narrowest boundaries of his small schisms" (108), and many tensions might arise even in the Hindi community, due to the social class system. The ninth essay, "What Women Should Do When the Motherland Is in Distress", by Kumudini Mitra, also talks about the negative influence of the British rule of the Indian peninsula, as those from South Asia embraced the British products and way of life and forgot the local and traditional products. The same idea of foreign goods being bought more frequently than the local ones is discussed by Khairunnissa Khatun in the thirteenth text, "Patriotism". She believes that foreigners buy Indian products at low prices, because the locals do not value these traditional goods.

The eighth chapter, "Women's Dress", by Hemantakumari Chaudhuri, offers us a history of the evolution of women's dress in the Indian peninsula by emphasizing the "moral discomfort about the imitation of Western fashion" (p. 10). In the fourteenth text, "On the Use of Footwear by Women in Ancient India", by Jagadishwari Devi, the author explains how women in ancient times were allowed to wear shoes – unlike the time of her writing, when they could not – and how this is discriminatory. In "The Worship of Women", Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain creates an imaginary dialogue between four educated women. The topic is how some women from Ancient India were treated as goddesses, but one of four explains that the idea discussed is contemporary conjecture, and she reminds the others of Khana who "was killed by having her tongue cut out" (111). The last chapter of the volume is Sarala Devi Chaudhurani's essay, "My Life Changes Track",

and tells the story of her own evolution from a young teenager who, due to the education received in her family, managed to publish essays on classical Sanskrit literature and literary composition in various magazines to one of the first intellectual women ever allowed to study not just literature and arts, but science as well. Her writing might be used in order to encourage the young generations of women to learn, write and publish, even if they encounter difficulties, as a woman can become a realized white-collar intellectual or worker by striving and becoming educated.

In conclusion, we can argue that this volume, *Talking of Power. Early Writings of Bengali Women,* brings to the attention of the not-so-specialized public from various parts of the world the way in which women from the Bengal region managed to obtain formal education, establish themselves as important scholars in various fields, and how they argued against being discriminated by men. Moreover, it is important for the readers to observe that, in some of the texts, the authors compared the way women were perceived in their time versus the way they were perceived a few decades prior or in Ancient Times. Therefore, the uninitiated readers of the history of the women from the Indian subcontinent can picture the evolution of their rights and social status.

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Materials, as well as general inquiries, can be sent via e-mail at mihaela.gligor@ubbcluj.ro.

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