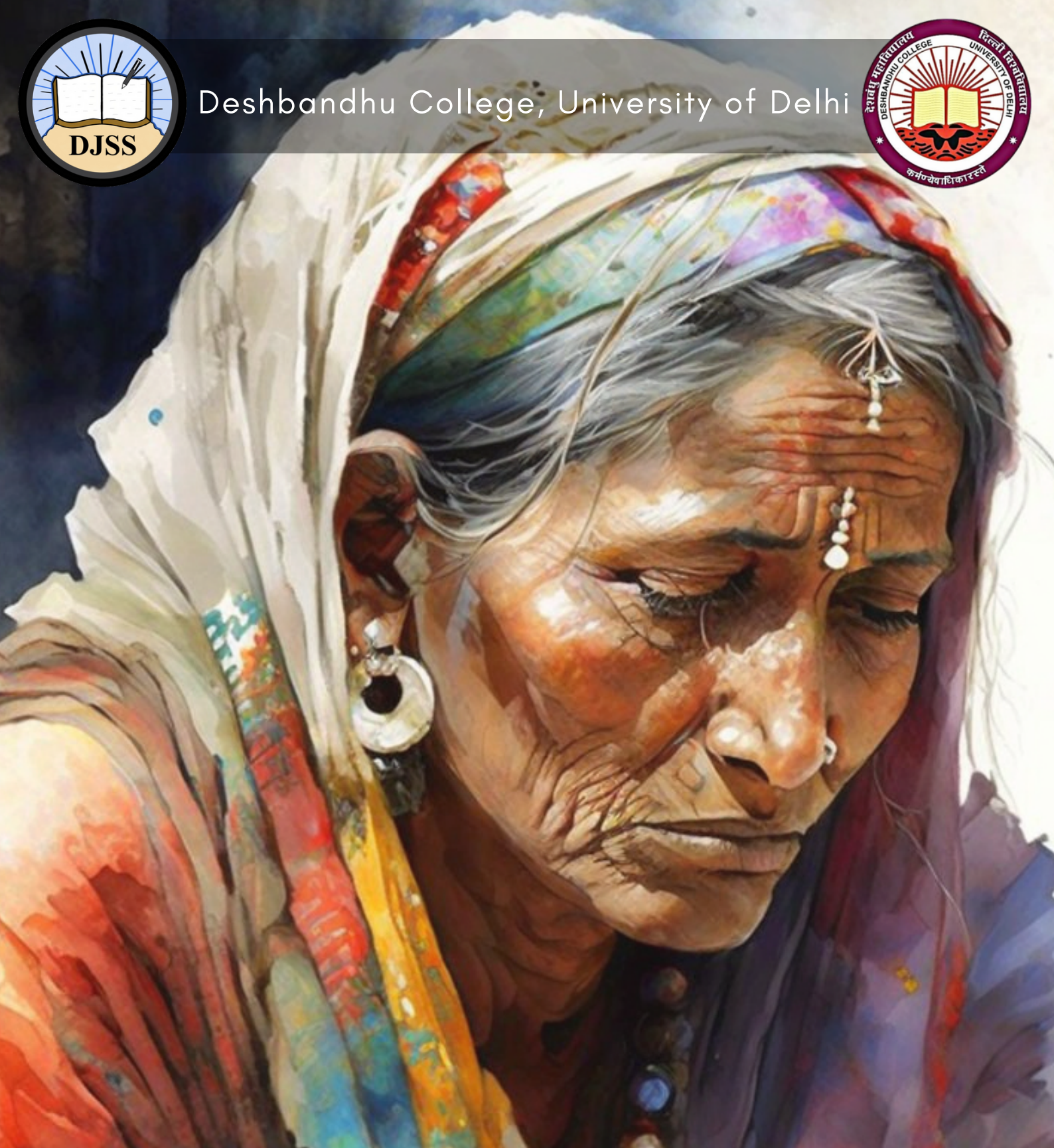




Deshbandhu College, University of Delhi



DESHBANDHU JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Principal's Note

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

I am delighted to introduce the second edition of The Deshbandhu Journal of Social Sciences. In this edition, we have the privilege of showcasing a collection of insightful research papers that cover a diverse range of social science topics. The submissions reflect the intellectual curiosity and academic rigour of various scholars, creating a rich tapestry of ideas and perspectives.

In addition to the written contributions, we are thrilled to present a captivating photography exhibition, building upon the success of the exhibition featured in the first edition. This visual exploration, presented by external photographers, provides a powerful narrative that complements the academic discourse presented in the Journal. Together, these contributions offer our readers a holistic and immersive experience.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the contributors for their exceptional work. Your dedication to advancing knowledge in the field of social sciences is evident in the quality of your submissions. I am grateful for the opportunity to feature your research and insights in our journal. I would also like to express my appreciation to the editorial team for their meticulous work in curating and refining the content for this edition. Your commitment to upholding academic standards has played a crucial role in the success of this publication.

As we celebrate the diverse perspectives presented in this edition, let us embrace the opportunity to engage with the profound ideas put forth by scholars from various backgrounds. I encourage our students, faculty, and staff to immerse themselves in the enriching content and use it as a springboard for further academic exploration and discourse. Thank you to all the external contributors for sharing your expertise and contributing to the intellectual vibrancy of our academic community. I look forward to future collaborations and the continued success of The Deshbandhu Journal of Social Sciences.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kamal Kumar Gupta

Acting Principal, Deshbandhu College

University of Delhi

Faculty's Note

Dear Esteemed Readers, Colleagues, and Students,

With great pleasure and scholarly enthusiasm, we are delighted to introduce the second edition of The Deshbandhu Journal of Social Sciences. As faculty members engaged in the editorial process, we are excited to present a collection that not only reflects the diverse landscape of social sciences but also embodies the academic rigor and inquiry that define our college community.

The realm of social sciences resembles a vast mosaic, where each piece contributes to a comprehensive understanding of society. In this edition, the research papers and book reviews showcased represent fragments of this mosaic, thoughtfully arranged to provide a holistic view of the intricacies shaping our social fabric. From sociology to political science, philosophy to economics, our contributors have delved into these disciplines with keen intellect and an eagerness to explore the nuances that make our world complex and fascinating.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, who said, "*Knowledge gained through experience is far superior and many times more useful than bookish knowledge*," the Journal not only aims to convey theoretical knowledge but also encourages the application of wisdom through practical experience. Running a journal is, in itself, a significant academic endeavor—a collaborative effort requiring intellectual acumen and a commitment to the pursuit of knowledge for the greater good.

We extend our gratitude to the dedicated contributors for sharing their their insights & research and also the editorial team, whose meticulous efforts have shaped this edition into a literary masterpiece.

As you navigate through the pages of this Journal, it is our sincere hope that the spirit of intellectual inquiry embedded in these pages will serve as a catalyst for further academic exploration and discourse.

Thank you for accompanying us on this academic journey.

Warm Regards,

Faculty, Deshbandhu College

University of Delhi

Letter from the Chief Editors

Esteemed Scholars, Discerning Academicians, and Seekers of Knowledge,

With great honour and anticipation, we present to you the second edition of the Deshbandhu Journal of Social Sciences. Our intellectual journey, ignited by the visionary Lala Deshbandhu Gupta's legacy, commenced with the noble aspiration to cultivate an intellectual space where ideas could flourish and knowledge could transcend boundaries. Lala Deshbandhu Gupta, the eponymous figure of our college and an indomitable Indian Freedom Fighter, stood as a beacon of social reform and press freedom in the country. His steadfast commitment to intellectual growth, epitomised by his efforts to safeguard the freedom of the 4th pillar of Democracy, served as the inspirational seed from which the academic endeavour of this Journal germinated. Much like Gupta's dedication to the cause of freedom, our Journal aspires to liberate minds, foster critical thinking, and champion the ideals of enlightenment.

In the realm of academia, standards are not mere benchmarks; they are the bedrock upon which the edifice of knowledge stands. This Journal, rooted in academic rigour, embarks on a journey of intellectual exploration guided by the foundational principle that true enlightenment arises from the pursuit of excellence. It is noteworthy that this Journal obtained an ISSN after its inaugural edition, a distinctive identifier serving as an incontrovertible testament to the elevated academic standards and authenticity inherent in the scholarly contributions contained within these pages.

A research journal transforms a college into an intellectual crucible, where students evolve into architects of thought, builders of hypotheses, and explorers of the uncharted realms of academia. The significance of nurturing academic curiosity cannot be overstated, as it represents the spark that kindles the flames of progress. A student's interest in academia mirrors a gardener cultivating the seeds of intellect. This edition was preceded by much excitement and anticipation, with contributors from diverse backgrounds submitting papers on almost every discipline covered under the social sciences.

It has been a profound pleasure interacting with these contributors, learning from their wealth of knowledge, and witnessing the collaborative spirit that has enriched the content of this edition.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the contributors whose dedication and intellectual prowess have graced these pages. Your valuable insights have elevated the scholarly discourse presented in this Journal, making it a true reflection of the diverse perspectives within the academic community.

In the end, we would like to leave you with the profound words of the revered Tamil philosopher Thiruvalluvar, "Wisdom is the superior virtue; ignorance the root of all evil." May you embrace the ever-evolving tapestry of knowledge, resonate with the rhythm of changing times, and relish the diverse spectrum of wisdom presented in this edition.

With utmost respect for the pursuit of knowledge, we extend a warm welcome to the second edition of the Deshbandhu Journal of Social Sciences—a repository not only of research but also of dreams, ideas, and the boundless potential of the human mind.

Sincerely,



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About the Journal

Deshbandhu Journal of Social Sciences is an academic research journal under the aegis of Deshbandhu College, the University of Delhi, pertaining to all disciplines under the purview of social sciences, established with the objective of promoting academic rigour and enhancing research & analytical output. It provides a forum for the exchange of ideas & seeks submissions from various scholars in the domain, and also integrates artistic exhibitions and themes relevant to contemporary societal issues of great importance.

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AN EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Colors of Womanhood: Vibrant Lives Across India

In the heart of India, where colors blend,
A tale of strength, from beginning to end.

Indian women, a vibrant tapestry,
Woven with threads of resilience and glee.

In sarees adorned with hues so bright,
They dance through challenges, embrace the light.

From bustling markets to the quiet plains,
Each woman's story, a melody that remains.

Bearing the weight of tradition and lore,
Yet standing tall, demanding much more.
In classrooms and fields, they pave the way,
An embodiment of courage, come what may.

With bindis that shimmer, stories untold,
In their eyes, a saga of courage unfolds.
Matriarchs, sisters, daughters so dear,
Guardians of tradition, breaking barriers with cheer.

Amidst the chaos, they find their grace,
In every smile, a powerful embrace.
Warriors in silence, builders of dreams,
Their strength echoes in timeless streams.

In the kitchen's warmth or the office's din,
They redefine what it means to begin.
From ancient scriptures to modern lore,
Indian women, evolving evermore.

Through history's chapters, they've left their mark,
In every corner, a resilient spark.
In the dance of life, they take their part,
Indian women, a masterpiece of art.









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Deshbandhu Journal of Social Sciences

Relationship between Corruption and Development: Evidence from India

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Abstract

According to theory, the effect of corruption on development is ambiguous. However, there is consensus among economists and policymakers that the negative effects of corruption outweigh the positive effects. Corruption is a major issue in most developing countries. According to the Corruption Perception Index Report (CPI, Transparency International, 2022), India stands at the 85th position among 180 countries. This paints a very dismal picture of the Indian economy despite it being one of the fastest-growing countries in the world. Many policymakers and economists share a common viewpoint that corruption negatively impacts productivity and equity and, hence, the country's development. Against this background, the paper aims to examine the linkage between corruption and development in India from 2012 to 2022. Corruption is measured using the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by Transparency International, and development is measured using per capita GDP and the Human Development Index (HDI).

The study examines the relationship between corruption and development using the technique of bivariate regression. Two sets of regression equations are estimated- 1. CPI and per capita GDP over the period 2012-2022 and 2. CPI and HDI over the period 2011-21. The empirical findings show that a lower level of corruption is associated with improvement in per capita GDP as well as HDI and vice versa. In addition to this, the results are statistically significant at a one per cent level of significance.

Therefore, it becomes essential for India to reduce corruption levels to achieve higher growth and better human development outcomes.

Keywords: Corruption, Per-capita GDP, Human Development, Bivariate Regression

1. Introduction

Countries worldwide seek to grow faster and attain better human development outcomes. Corruption has been one of the most severe concerns confronting practically all countries, with poorer countries bearing the burden. Corruption is extensively debated because it has a negative impact on productivity, equity, and, thus, development. Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions-promote peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels" (UNDP Website). Good governance is clearly associated with less corruption. According to Transparency International (TI), corruption has been a key reason for the Millennium Development Goals' poor achievement (Hartman and Mungiu-Pippidi, 2020).

According to the World GDP ranking, India ranks fifth with a GDP of \$3750 billion (Forbes India, August 14, 2023). According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF, December 2022), it will have the world's fastest-expanding GDP at 6.1 per cent in 2023. It has outpaced growth not only in comparison to emerging markets and developing economies but also to China. However, according to Transparency International's (TI) Corruption Perception Index for 2022, the global average score is 43. India ranks 85th out of 180 countries, with a score of 40 out of 100. According to the Transparency International Report (2022), India's score is not only lower than the global average but also lower than the Asia Pacific region's (45). New Zealand is the least corrupt country (87), and North Korea is the most corrupt (17).

Since 2003, the TI has also calculated the Global Corruption Barometer, which is based on the experiences of ordinary people with corruption. In India, 89 per cent of individuals believe that government corruption is a big problem, and over 39 per cent of persons who used public services paid a bribe in the previous year. The figures for Asia are 74% and 20%, respectively (TI, Asia-2020 Report). This paints a gloomy picture of India's corruption levels. As a result, the study's goal is to examine the relationship between corruption and development in India from 2012 through 2022. Corruption is measured using Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), and development is measured using per capita GDP and the Human Development Index (HDI).

The following section (2) discusses key concepts and metrics of corruption. Section 3 discusses the theoretical context of corruption and development. The current literature is reviewed in the following section (4), and data, variables, and findings are addressed in the following section (5). The final section discusses the conclusion and policy implications.

2. Definitions and Measures of Corruption

2.1 Definitions of Corruption

Corruption does not have a unique definition. Corruption is described as "abuse or misuse of public office for private gain" by Jain (2001). In a democratic democracy, he distinguishes three sorts of corruption. The first, "Grand Corruption," relates to the way political elites influence policy formulation; the second, "Bureaucratic Corruption," refers to corruption by bureaucrats in dealing with political elites or the general public. Finally, "Legislative Corruption" refers to the extent to which special interest organisations can influence legislators' voting conduct in order for legislation to be passed to their advantage.

The principal-agent framework is sometimes used to explain corruption. In these models, corruption is based on the profits that can be earned relative to the expenses that must be incurred for the agent's corrupt practices (Shleifer, V., and R.W. Vishny, 1993). Corruption is predicated on rent-seeking behaviour in resource allocation models, where multiple agents fight for economic rents. As a result, according to these models, corruption is predicated on three conditions: "1) discretionary authority of government employees, 2) the quantity of economic rents, 3) the legal system" (B.D. Simo-Kengne and S. Bitterhout, 2023).

2.2 Measures of Corruption

Because there is no single technique to measure corruption, measuring it becomes even more difficult. Some of the subjective metrics of corruption are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Measures of Corruption

Author	Index	Description	Coverage
The Transparency International	Corruption Perception Index (CPI), 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)	Degree to which the public sector is anticipated to be corrupt	Since 1995, 180 countries

The Worldwide Governance Indicators - World Bank (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2010)	Control of Corruption (CCI), -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong)	“capturing perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including petty and grand forms of corruption and "capture" of the state by elites and private interests” (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2010)	Since 1996, 200 countries
The Transparency International	Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) - 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest) per cent	People’s survey on corruption	Since 2003 (available for few years)
The Political Risk Services (PRS) Group	International Country Risk Guide (ICRG)- 0 (very high risk) to 100 (very low risk)	Political risk, financial risk and economic risk	Since 1984,140 countries

The GCB measure was one of the first attempts to assess corruption based on a survey/opinion of ordinary citizens who encounter corruption on a daily basis; however, it is only available for a limited number of years. The ICRG primarily calculates investment risk. CPI and CCI are both measurements of corruption. However, CPI is a more accurate indicator of corruption and hence used in the study.

3. Theoretical Framework

In economic literature, the relationship between corruption and development is ambiguous. According to some authors, corruption can have a positive effect by increasing efficiency and hence increasing growth. According to Leff (1964) and Huntington (1968), cited in (Hodge, A. et al. 2009), corruption functions as a 'grease' that lubricates the stiff wheels of stringent government administration. It also functions similarly to 'piece-rate' pay for bureaucrats, resulting in increased efficiency in providing public goods and services. According to Acemoglu and Verdier (1998), the costs of enforcing property rights and contractual agreements may be significantly higher than the advantages of optimal corruption.

Myrdal (1968), on the other hand, argues that the efficiency hypothesis of corruption completely ignores the fact that government officials have the motivation to cause further administrative delays to get more bribes. Furthermore, corruption redirects resources from productive to unproductive activities such as rent-seeking, in which actors compete for economic rents (Shleifer and Vishny, 1991). This demonstrates how corruption may diminish efficiency and harm economic growth. Bribery, according to Kaufmann and Grey (1998), generates uncertainty in the economy while also increasing transaction costs. It also affects efficiency by impeding/obstructing both domestic and foreign investment. Additionally, corruption is more prevalent in developing countries than in developed countries, owing to a greater desire to earn income, higher economic rents, and, most importantly, a lack of accountability on the part of the government, which is aided by a weak legal system.

The adverse effects of corruption on growth and development are well acknowledged by economists and policymakers. Corruption has a variety of detrimental effects on development (Gupta (2000) and Tanzi (1997), as cited in Chene, M. 2014). For instance, it distorts market dynamics of demand and supply, resulting in inefficient resource allocation across diverse sectors. Furthermore, rent-seeking activity diverts physical and human resources from productive to unproductive sectors. Bribery functions as an additional tax, increasing production costs and lowering return on investment. Corruption also lowers the quality of health and education services, lowering productivity and efficiency.

4. Literature Review

Researchers typically agree that corruption has a negative impact on growth; however, there is another school of thought that says corruption can be justified to some extent because it helps to overcome the inefficiencies of overly regulated sectors (as per the "grease the wheels" hypothesis, Dreher and Gassebner, 2011). In some circumstances, this could be beneficial to growth.

According to Dreher and Gassebner (2011), in industries with administrative barriers to entry, corruption aids in raising firm entry rates. So, while corruption aids in mitigating the negative impacts of overregulation, there is no evidence that it always leads to higher growth. Hodge A. et al. (2009) examine the association between corruption and growth in 81 countries between 1984 and 2005. According to the empirical findings, corruption

has a negative impact on physical capital and human capital investment, as well as political instability, which has a negative impact on economic growth. Similarly, a study of low-income nations confirms the negative consequences of corruption on economic growth via direct and indirect channels such as government spending, investment, and human capital (Ugur and Dasgupta 2011). Using panel data for 83 developing countries from 2012-2018, Spyromitros and Panagiotidis (2022) show that corruption positively affects growth in Latin American countries, whereas the effect is negative for other countries.

Considering other development outcomes, Mauro (1998) analyses the effect of corruption on government spending on education as a proportion of GDP for a cross-section of countries and finds that the two variables are negatively correlated. According to Sanyal and Samanta's (2008) investigation of US FDI outflows to 42 host countries in relation to the level of corruption, US businesses are less likely to invest in countries with high levels of corruption. Similarly, the cross-sectional analysis by Asiedu and Freeman (2009) demonstrates that corruption is a significant determinant of investment in developing nations. The poor are most negatively impacted by corruption since funding intended for various social welfare programmes is reduced or poorly targeted. This is supported by a study in Indonesia (Suryadarma, 2012), which found that public spending had a positive and significant impact in less corrupt regions while having essentially no effect in regions with high levels of corruption.

Hence, corruption can have a negative effect on the quantity and quality of government spending, which in turn would have effects on human capital, economic growth and equity.

5. Data, Methodology and Empirical Findings

5.1 Data and Variables

The objective of the paper is to analyse the linkage between corruption and development in India. CPI is used as a measure of corruption in this study. It varies from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). Human Development is measured using per capita GDP at constant prices and the Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI measures the progress in human development in three areas- a long and healthy life measured by life expectancy at birth, access to knowledge measured by mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling and lastly, standard of living by per capita Gross National Income. It ranges from 0 (lowest) to 1 (highest). The analysis is carried out from 2012-2022 because of the change in methodology to construct the index by TI, and the data for HDI is available till 2021. Table 2 below provides the variables used and sources of data.

Table 2: Sources of Data for the Study

Variable	Data Source
Corruption Perception Index (CPI)	The Transparency International (TI)
Per capita GDP at constant prices (2011-12)	Handbook of statistics on Indian Economy, RBI
Human Development Index (HDI)	UNDP website

5.2 Methodology and Empirical Findings

The study analyses the relationship between corruption and development in India. Using the bivariate regression technique, two regressions are carried out: 1) CPI and per capita GDP from 2012 to 2022 and 2) CPI and HDI from 2012 to 2021. Stata is used to carry out the analysis. Table 3 gives the descriptive statistics of the variables.

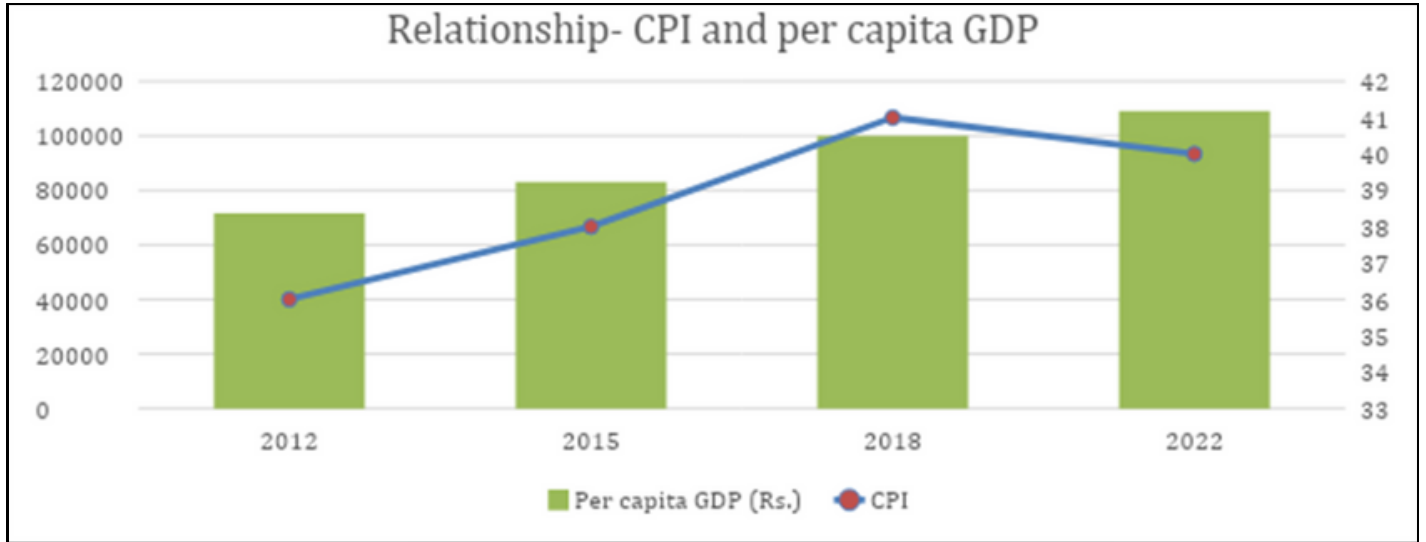
Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	CPI	Per capita GDP	HDI
Max	41	109060	0.65
Min	36	71609.3	0.6
Mean	39.09	92266	0.63
Median	40	94751.3	0.64
Coefficient of Variation	4.64	14.89	2.67

Source – Author's calculations

Figure 1 graphs the CPI and per capita GDP data for India from 2012-2022.

Figure 1: Relationship between CPI and Per Capita GDP

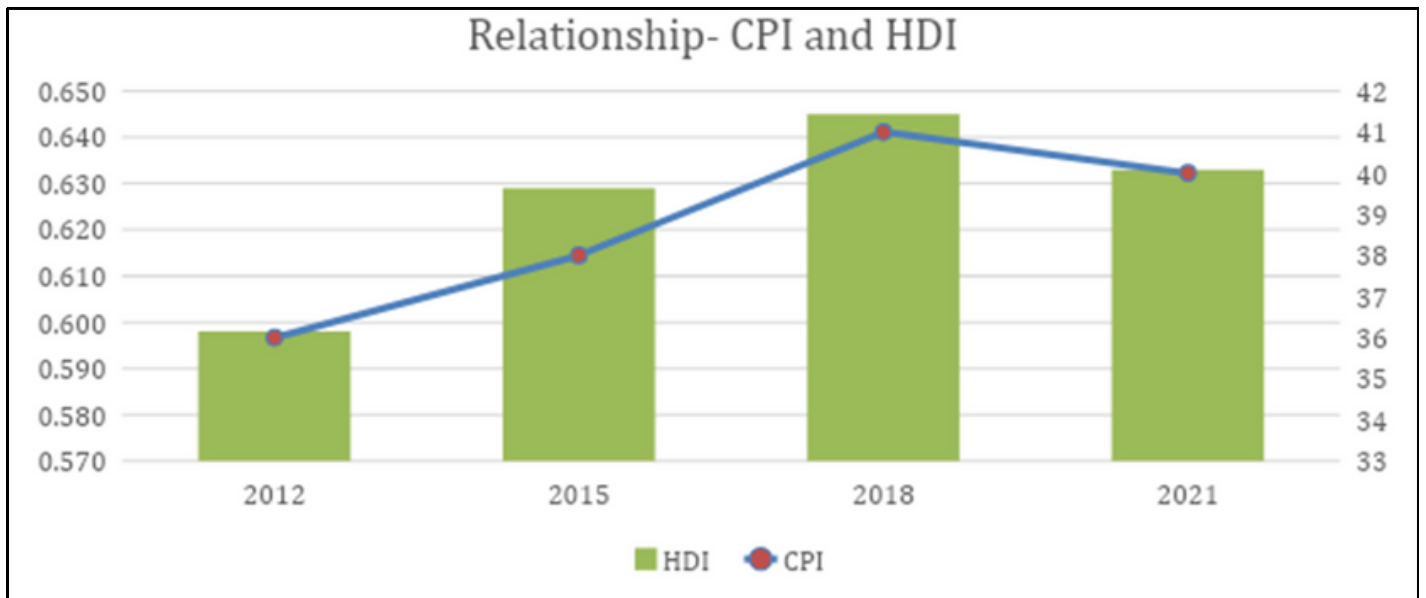


Source – Author’s Calculations based on CPI and per capita GDP

We observe that from 2012-2018, improvement in CPI is associated with an increase in per capita GDP. However, for the year 2022, a one-point fall in CPI is associated with higher per capita GDP.

Figure 2 shows the relationship between CPI and HDI between 2012 to 2021.

Figure 2: Relationship between CPI and HDI



When HDI is used as a measure of development, an improvement in CPI is associated with an increase in HDI from 2012-18, and a decrease in CPI in 2021 corresponds to lower HDI.

In this part, bivariate regression is carried out between corruption and development. In the first regression, CPI is regressed on per capita GDP, and the per capita GDP is regressed on CPI. Next, HDI is used as a measure of development and similar regressions are carried out. The empirical results for the first regression are given in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Regression 1- CPI and Per Capita GDP

Regression 1. Per capita GDP as a measure of Development					
Dependent Variable - CPI	Coefficients	P- value	Dependent Variable - Per capita GDP	Coefficients	P- value
Per capita GDP	0.0001167***	0	CPI	6698.21***	0
	-5.38			-5.68	
Constant	28.32***	0	Constant	-169573.3***	0.005
	-14.79			(-3.68)	
R-squared	0.78	0.0003	R-squared	0.78	0.0003
No. of Observations	11		No. of Observations	11	

The regression results indicate CPI and per capita GDP are positively related; that is, improvement in corruption levels is associated with higher per capita GDP and vice versa. The relationship is statistically significant at a one per cent level of significance. Table 5 below shows the regression results when HDI is used as a measure of development.

Table 5: Regression 2- CPI and HDI

Regression 2. HDI as a measure of Development					
Dependent Variable -CPI	Coefficients	P- value	Dependent Variable - HDI	Coefficients	P- value
HDI	107.63***	0	CPI	0.0086***	0
	-9.93			-9.93	
Constant	-28.82***	0.003	Constant	0.295***	0
	(-4.22)			-8.73	
R-squared	0.925	0	R-squared	0.925	0
No. of Observations	10		No. of Observations	10	

The empirical findings for regression 2 also show that lower levels of corruption correspond to better HDI and the other way around; also, the relationship is statistically significant at a one per cent level of significance.

6. Conclusion and Policy Implications

There is broad consensus among economists and policymakers on the adverse effects of corruption on growth and development. Corruption is also identified as one of the significant reasons for the dismal performance of Sustainable Development Goals, especially in developing countries (Sustainable Development Report, 2023). According to the CPI of Transparency International, corruption levels remain high in India. Its CPI score (40) falls below both the world average (43) as well as that of the Asia Pacific region (45). The study aims to investigate the linkage between corruption and development in India from 2012 to 2022. Corruption is measured using the CPI by Transparency International, and development is measured using per capita GDP and the Human Development Index (HDI).

The study examines the relationship between corruption and development using the technique of bivariate regression. Two sets of regression equations are estimated- 1. CPI and per capita GDP over the period 2012-2022 and 2. CPI and HDI over the period 2012-21. The empirical results indicate that a lower level of corruption is consistent with an improvement in per capita GDP as well as HDI and vice versa. In addition to this, the results are statistically significant at a one per cent level of significance.

Hence, in order to achieve superior development outcomes, be it health, education, income, investment, and more, it becomes essential to reduce corruption levels.

India has taken a few steps to curtail corruption, one of which was the establishment of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India in 1971 by the GoI. The main role of CAG is to audit the finances of all public institutions. In 2005, the government enacted the Right to Information (RTI) legislation. According to the RTI Act, every citizen has the fundamental right to get information from a government organisation or any institution that the government aids.

There is much to learn from countries such as Singapore and Hong Kong that have significantly reduced their corruption levels, mainly because of the governments' strong will. They made several changes, such as restructuring the legal system, reforming the administration and increasing the salaries of public officials, to name a few (Delabarre, 2021). Some other examples are Botswana, Estonia and South Korea. There are many factors that explain this, ranging from the determination to fight corruption at the top level of the government.

However, the efforts of the citizens and their push on the government play an equally important role (Terracol, M. 2015). In addition to that, transparency in areas related to the preparation and implementation of government budgets, the right to information from governments and government-aided institutions and the role of E-Governance, that is, greater use of technology at various government levels in dealing with citizens, businesses and other organisations is essential to reduce corruption levels.

Corruption is a big problem for India, and the efforts to curb it are inadequate. Very strong anti-corruption measures are required, which would require significant reforms in the judicial system and existing laws. It is imperative for India to reduce corruption levels for it to achieve higher growth and better human development outcomes.

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China's Aspirations in Forging a Strategic Nexus in the South-West Pacific

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Abstract

Since the presidency of Xi Jinping, the People's Republic of China has made efforts to establish essential corridors across the world. These strategic corridors are made possible in countries by providing assistance in areas such as infrastructure development, security cooperation, and trade. However, the underlying motivation behind such ambitions is the creation of a power projection for Beijing in the world order. The case of Djibouti can be taken as one of the primary examples to display such motivations. The Southwest Pacific, being one of the most strategic locations, especially for the US, has always been a part of China's strategic objectives. To achieve such objectives, China aims to enhance regional cooperation with the island states of the region as well as establish itself as the ideal partner on crucial development and security issues. In 2018, the Australian media claimed that China had asked for permission to deploy a permanent military presence in Vanuatu, which is fewer than 2,000 km from Australian territory, although no formal agreement had been drafted. However, the growing sphere of influence on the Solomon Island has raised concern to the traditional partners of the region, the United States. Such concerns have arisen as an outcome of an array of political developments between the Solomon Islands and China, especially after switching diplomatic relations from Taipei to Beijing in 2019. Since then, the Solomon Island has been considered a potential for China to establish a military base in the region. Although such a situation has been negated under the customary tenure for land on the island, however, recent developments about Bina Harbour have aroused new questions, particularly with reference to the leaked document, which was also deemed sceptical by many regarding China's role in the Solomon Islands. This paper aims to explore the multifaceted involvement of China in the Island as well as its growing presence in the region. Through comprehensive analysis and contextualisation, this research sheds light on the evolving dynamics and the strategic significance of the Solomon Islands and Bina Harbour in particular and brings a comparison to the approach made by China in other regions.

Keywords: China, Solomon Islands, Bina Harbour, Southwest Pacific, Strategic Development

1. Introduction

Serving as a critical front line between the continents – Asia and the Americas, the South-West Pacific region has found itself under the radar of Beijing, trying to create its foothold after successfully establishing one in Africa. Alternatively referred to as Oceania, the South-West Pacific region consists of islands which comprise 15 per cent of the world's surface. These islands, which are a component of the Second and Third Island Chains hemming in China, were frequently on the front lines of the Pacific Theatre during the Second World War. It still has military facilities like the French facility in New Caledonia and the American station in Guam. Although extensive, its imprecisely defined maritime region led to its consideration of having limited significance in the colonial era (Baker, 1992). It was also practically overlooked by the successive US administrations in the post-war era by adopting a "benign neglect" approach in the immediate aftermath of the war (Young, 1988) as well as after the Cold War, where the general strategic assessment of the region displayed to be less crucial and relatively secure (Paskal, 2018).

However, China's emergence in expanding its strategic horizons changed the perception of the region. Beijing, which perceives the South-West Pacific as an area of new opportunities to enhance its global position, rapidly became one of the region's top aid contributors, providing \$171 million in aid to its island states by 2017 (Say, 2019). Despite the fact that China is not the leading donor in the region, the manner in which it delivers its aid, particularly through enormous infrastructure projects financed by concessional loans, stands out (Pryke, 2020). Consequently, this has attracted attention to the region as a focal point for competition among major powers. Following that, China successfully concluded a security agreement with the Solomon Islands in March of 2022 and subsequently endeavoured to build upon this achievement by engaging in negotiations for another security agreement with ten other governments of Pacific Island nations in May 2022. Although a failure, such initiatives indicated Beijing's determination to challenge Australia's supremacy in Oceania and the United States' control over the Pacific. The prevailing perspective posits that this burgeoning trend is advancing at an accelerated pace that surpasses what might conventionally be regarded as a typical manifestation of China's expanding economic and geopolitical influence.

The objective of this study is to analyse the strategic initiatives led by Beijing in the South-West Pacific region and examine its efforts to build a presence through infrastructure development in the Pacific Island States. This study employs a qualitative method to comprehensively understand Beijing's approach to establishing diplomatic relations with regional leaders. Moreover, the present study aims to conduct a thorough analysis of the case of Djibouti in 2017, specifically focusing on its recent interactions with the government of the Solomon

Islands. The objective is to identify and examine the similarities in objectives between these two instances, particularly in connection to Djibouti's previous endeavours.

2. Literature Review

This article utilises a theoretical framework or conceptual model that integrates three analytical concepts: sovereignty, power, and economic diplomacy. Morgenthau and Thompson (1997) argue in their scholarly publication titled "Politics Among Nations, The Struggle for Power and Peace" (6th ed.) that the concept of sovereignty encompasses the principles of independence, equality, and integrity, which can be further comprehended as independence, equality, and unanimity.

The acquisition and consolidation of power represent a fundamental aim within the domain of politics, wherein governments universally accord it utmost importance as their central objective and coveted result. According to Baldwin, there are four unique approaches that a nation can employ to effectively exercise its power to enhance its influence or achieve hegemony over a state or another geographical entity. Baldwin (2013) posits that four discrete modalities might be utilised, namely the symbolic approach, financial approach, military approach, and diplomatic method. China is expanding its influence in the South Pacific region by using its economic might and strategic resources that are considered vital by Pacific nations. Furthermore, Morgenthau elaborated on his conceptualisation that the international political system is distinguished by the pursuit of three discrete manifestations of power – The continual status quo policy, imperialism, and prestige (Pham, 2008). This kind of influence is characterised by the adherence to the One China Policy and the preservation of China's sovereignty over the South China Sea.

In addition, this article will employ the economic diplomacy approach as a theoretical and analytical framework to analyse and elucidate China's goals and interests in the South Pacific region, particularly in establishing extensive trade and investment relations in the "Pacific Theatre" area. Milner and Tingley (2013) argue in their publication titled "Geopolitics of Foreign Aid" that economic diplomacy consistently maintains its position as the primary instrument in international politics, serving two key aims. The primary aim of economic diplomacy is to facilitate commerce and foster bilateral interactions between nations. The secondary aim of economic diplomacy is to serve as a political tool for attaining state power and enhancing its reputation. The field of economic diplomacy holds significant consequences for the geopolitical landscape within the realm of international relations.

Economic diplomacy pursued for political objectives can be understood as a manifestation of international trade politics. This entails the prioritisation of national interests in commercial relations and investments with external entities, exemplified by initiatives like China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which involves the provision of grants and soft loans. Hence, it can be argued that the regulation of foreign trade will consistently remain within the purview of the state. The political viewpoint of international commerce pertains to the ideological framework embraced by adherents of Mercantilism.

Furthermore, the study also heavily draws upon the concept of soft power, as articulated by Joseph Nye. Soft power is influencing the interests and preferences of others to align them with one's objectives, employing seduction rather than force. Certain scholars make a direct connection between exerting influence and the concept of soft power (Nye, 2005).

3. Research Methodology

This study employs qualitative research methodologies, with a particular emphasis on the collecting and analysis of primary and secondary sources. Qualitative research frequently relies on inductive reasoning for conclusions. Qualitative research methods encompass various sorts, including the descriptive-interpretive approach. The author employs this strategy as it serves at the initial stage of the research process. This involves meticulously gathering data and watching the phenomena, followed by analysing and drawing conclusions to address the research topic.

The qualitative technique is employed as a research methodology to inform the public about the underlying nature of Chinese soft aid and their strategy towards exerting influence in the region. This approach aims to shed light on the fact that the loans received by the country are not devoid of China's national interests. To enhance the comprehensiveness of their study findings, the authors seek to acquire primary data by examining and gathering written materials authored by political observers located outside of China. The study incorporates primary data alongside secondary data sourced from the media. Specifically, the mainstream media in the Pacific South region disseminates findings from interviews conducted with influential political figures from Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and China. Additionally, relevant information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, government publications, research articles, magazines, websites, and other pertinent sources are included in the analysis.

4. Historical Construct

Throughout the Cold War, from 1945 to the early 1990s, the South-West Pacific was considered solidly 'West-friendly', with major American and British diplomatic and military engagement in the region (Paskal, 2018). The region has been subject to a policy of "benign neglect" from consecutive US administrations, resulting in a lack of attention and consideration towards its foreign and security affairs. Simultaneously, it is important to recognise that the constant attitude of the United States towards the southern Pacific since the early 1950s has been supported by cogent justifications, including significant security concerns in the Northwest Pacific and Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the Second World War resulted in the United States Navy emerging as the dominant naval force in the southern Pacific region. In terms of diplomacy, the United States and Western regional interests have been effectively pursued through a collective security arrangement known as the ANZUS alliance, involving Australia and New Zealand. This alliance primarily entrusted Canberra and Wellington with the responsibilities pertaining to political and security matters (Young, 1998).

According to Young (1998), the policy of benign neglect in the perspective of American security objectives can be seen as "understandable and arguably appropriate" since the only specific U.S. objectives were to maintain secured communication from the North Americas to Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean. Apart from that, their only need was the protection of their territorial interests, such as the American Samoa, as well as to maintain its pro-West disposition. Hence, their interest in the South and specifically in the South-West Pacific region was primarily acquiescent and influenced by the security concerns in the broader Asian and Indian Ocean regions. Furthermore, until a relatively recent point in time, this geographical area had remained unburdened by the presence of external powers with potentially hostile intentions seeking to establish influence within the region. Also, before the commencement of the decolonisation process in the South Pacific in the early 1970s, the security of Western interests was further upheld by the notable circumstance that all the small islands in this vicinity were under the governance of either ANZUS or NATO member nations.

Upon the attainment of independence by island republics, the Soviet Union expeditiously undertook measures to develop communication and engagement. During the mid-1970s, diplomatic connections with non-resident entities were established, which subsequently paved the way for negotiations regarding research and fishing agreements. These negotiations culminated in the signing of a one-year fishing agreement with Kiribati in 1985, followed by another agreement with Vanuatu in 1987 (Dorrance, 1990). The level of Soviet engagement had an upsurge after Gorbachev's 1986 address in Vladivostok, wherein he articulated a heightened Soviet inclination

towards the Asia-Pacific area. The inaugural Soviet embassy in Papua New Guinea was established in March 1990, marking the commencement of official diplomatic relations between the two nations. However, the Soviet Union's endeavours in the islands were carried out with restricted resources and minimal expenses. It is highly likely that the Russian government, which assumed the Soviet diplomatic network in 1991, will continue to adopt a more subdued strategy in the foreseeable future. In the years 1986-87, Libya engaged in a limited involvement within the region, chiefly characterised by interactions with Kanak separatist factions in New Caledonia and the establishing of diplomatic ties with Vanuatu (Young, 1998).

The involvement of the Soviet Union and Libya elicited a heightened level of interest from the Western countries. Australia, being the primary contributor of help to island states, allocates over \$300 million annually for this purpose. It is worth noting that a significant portion, over 80 per cent, of this aid is directed towards Papua New Guinea, which was once under Australian colonial rule. However, it is noteworthy that Australia also augmented its aid to other island states during the period spanning from 1984 to 1987. Specifically, the assistance provided grew by nearly 40 per cent, rising from \$40 million to \$56 million per year. During this period, New Zealand experienced a proportional increase in its overall aid allocation to the islands, rising from around \$50 million to slightly around \$70 million. The United Kingdom has effectively halted a prolonged decrease in its provision of aid to the islands. The United States exhibited a longstanding pattern of generosity towards its island territories, as evidenced by its notable increase in economic assistance to the South Pacific states. Specifically, the financial aid provided by the United States rose from \$3 million in 1986 to \$8.7 million in 1988 (Young, 1998). Additionally, a substantial amount of \$10 million per year was allocated over a span of five years for a regional fishing agreement that was successfully negotiated in 1987. This agreement effectively resolved a significant point of disagreement between the United States and the islands. France also raised its expenditures for the autonomous island governments and initiated efforts to foster enhanced interaction between its Pacific Island territories and other island entities. Japan, a nation with established commercial and fishing interests in the area, significantly boosted its diplomatic and assistance endeavours in the islands beginning in 1987. This was consistent with its broader growth of regional and international influence. The level of Japanese support experienced a significant increase from negligible amounts in the late 1970s to above \$90 million in 1988, and it is expected to continue growing in the future. Several additional players have also entered the region, including South Korea, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and Vietnam, each driven by their respective interests. The islands in the early 1970s witnessed a considerable fight for diplomatic recognition and influence between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, driven by their global rivalry and the various chances presented by external powers.

Hence, in the words of Young, it was becoming apparent that during the Cold War era, Washington's long-standing relations with the Pacific Island States, especially in the South West Pacific, were coming at stake (Young, 1998). With such a condition, along with the opportunities created by external actors, the expanding significance of the region created a multitude of contention in the further years, especially between the West and China.

5. China's Increasing Footprints

The involvement of China in the South-West Pacific is based on three fundamental objectives: securing its influence, enhancing its access to resources, and limiting the West and its allies' capacity to ensure geographical constriction (Say, 2019). Such motivations were observed as per the Australian press claiming in 2018 that China asked for approval to establish a permanent military presence in Vanuatu, which is just around 2,000 km from Australian territory (Wroe, 2018) as well as outlined the interest in reconstructing a port on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, which served as an Allied naval station during the Second World War. In both cases, Beijing was obliged to seek elsewhere (Harding and Pohle, 2022). However, the Solomon Islands after switching its diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 2019, became the potential candidate for Beijing to secure its influence (Lyons, 2019).

The potential for diplomatic recognition of the Solomon Islands from Taiwan to the People's Republic of China was accommodated due to the three main factors. One notable aspect pertains to the magnitude of trade and the extent of the trade surplus with China, which stands in stark contrast to the substantial trade deficits incurred with Australia and Singapore, the primary suppliers of fuel imports. However, a significant proportion, if not the entirety, of shipments to China comprises round logs acquired through commercially unsustainable forestry practices. The involvement of international forestry corporations in the sector has been associated with the decline of efficient governance and the adoption of ecologically unsustainable logging methods. The company under scrutiny is marked by a significant degree of controversy since the escalating demand for round logs in China contributes to the worsening deforestation situation in the Solomon Islands. Furthermore, it was also asserted that the timber business in the Solomon Islands has engendered a pervasive culture of corruption through the practice of offering bribes to authorities, politicians, and communities (Aqorau, 2021). The existence of a trade surplus between the Solomon Islands and China can be attributed to a sector that is

associated with governance and environmental concerns. Despite the engagement of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, there has been an increase in corruption among government officials. In the year 2018, the legislative body known as Parliament passed legislation aimed at combating corruption. However, the degree to which this legislation has been successful remains questionable as a result of limitations in available resources. According to Transparency International, there was a decrease in the Corruption Perceptions Index from 44 to 42 points in the year 2019. The government's capacity to manage environmental repercussions arising from forest exploitation and mining is weakened by the presence of feeble state institutions. Additionally, Chinese enterprises pose compliance issues in this regard (Aqorau, 2021).

The subsequent element pertains to the influx of recent Chinese immigrants, who currently hold a prominent position within the retail industry (Lyons, 2019). The majority, if not all, of the prominent commercial locations in Honiara are possessed by these recent immigrants, hence generating heightened levels of resentment among the indigenous population. The individuals in question have acquired a reputation for engaging in corrupt practices, specifically utilising bribery as a means to navigate official institutions in order to get licenses, work and residential permits, as well as planning permissions. These actions serve to intensify the existing erosion within the public sector. Despite the occurrence of the Honiara riots in 2006, during which numerous newly established Chinese firms were subjected to arson and looting, the presence of Chinese enterprises has witnessed a subsequent rise and expansion into various provinces. The retail sector in the Solomon Islands has witnessed a significant presence of Chinese enterprises, leading to a consolidation of Chinese interests. This phenomenon has potentially resulted in the integration of the Solomon Islands' economy, employment opportunities, trade, and business activities with China. In contrast, the level of integration between Taiwan and the Solomon Islands in the commercial sector is limited (Aqorau, 2021).

The third determinant is the sisterhood affiliation between Guadalcanal Province and Guangdong Province in China. This relationship has facilitated a more profound and comprehensive engagement between provincial government officials and politicians from Guadalcanal and their Chinese counterparts, surpassing the level of interaction observed with Taiwan. The administrative body formerly known as the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of Guangdong Province, which has since been incorporated into the United Front Work Department, assumes the responsibility of overseeing the Chinese population residing in the Solomon Islands (Aqorau, 2021). This encompasses individuals of Chinese heritage, including those originating from Taiwan and Hong Kong, such as John Leong. The presence of Solomon Islanders in many public domains, such as shops, roads, rural regions, logging camps, and warehouses, holds significant importance for them. Solomon Islanders can

engage in regular interactions with them due to their prominent position within the community. While their participation in the community has created employment opportunities for Solomon Islanders, it is important to acknowledge that certain practices they have introduced have undermined effective governance in the public sector. Furthermore, corruption arises as a result of the prevailing local conditions that foster its occurrence (Aqorau, 2021).

The engagement with Beijing presented a promising opportunity for the Solomon Islands, particularly in the area of infrastructural development. This positive prospect was materialised through a contract awarded to Huawei for the construction of an advanced underwater cable network, aimed at bolstering the country's telecommunication infrastructure (Kekea, 2022). As a result of such interactions, a loan was extended to the Solomon Islands to support the construction of mobile telecommunication towers. The \$66 million loan was facilitated by the Exim Bank of China with an interest rate of one per cent for infrastructure development by Huawei to build 161 mobile towers across the state (Paskal, 2023) which also solidified their influence in the region. While the project creates a sense of connectivity and development, especially for the rural areas, it was observed that the deal could create financial risks for the Solomon Islands. Furthermore, KPMG, a financial consultant giant, warned about the risk for financial outcomes for the same (ABC News, 2022). Nevertheless, the ongoing project reflects the significant impact of China on the islands.

While observing Solomon Island's foreign policy, the PRC plays a huge role which concretes their influence in the area. The attainment of observer status by the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) during the 2015 Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) conference was a notable triumph for Papuan nationalists, with support from Vanuatu and Solomon Islands. This achievement is particularly noteworthy considering the limited financial resources available to Papuan nationalists. The level of political backing received from Vanuatu and Solomon Islands within the Melanesian Spearhead Group has emerged as a central topic of discussion in regional deliberations. The lack of support from these countries necessitates a reliance on regional civil society for the internationalisation of the Papua issue, which may potentially lack the necessary influence to impact Indonesia's foreign policy. Nevertheless, the expression of apprehension by a country such as the Solomon Islands in relation to Papua presents a significant obstacle to Indonesia's authority and control over the area.

The diplomatic legitimacy of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP) in the global context is reinforced by the formal endorsements it has received from recognised diplomatic channels, notably from

countries such as the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The aforementioned endorsements serve to elevate the Papua issue outside the confines of the Melanesian bloc, so opening up the possibility of engaging in negotiations within the Pacific Island Forum, which encompasses a total of 18 nations. The Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, Sogavare, has assumed a significant role as a mediator, vigorously advocating for the resolution of the Papua issue within the Pacific forum. The Pacific Coalition on West Papua (PCWP) functions as a forum for the politicisation of the West Papua matter, with the objective of attaining diplomatic support from the 18 Pacific States. The endeavors of Sogavare in promoting the interests of Papua throughout the Pacific region are closely linked to the financial support offered by Chinese enterprises (Mesak et al., 2020).

China, via the state-owned firm Sam Enterprise Group (Mesak et al., 2020), has provided significant financial support to Prime Minister Sogavare and other members of the political elite in the Solomon Islands as part of a geopolitical manoeuvre. The provision of financial assistance encompasses the facilitation of travel logistics and the coordination of many undertakings for the political elite, signifying a strengthening nexus between the economic and political realms. The Chinese state-owned firm has been awarded official permission and approval to undertake the development of Tulagi Island for the sake of economic and security investments. This has been facilitated by a 75-year lease agreement bestowed upon the enterprise by the government of the Solomon Islands. This agreement, which was made in close proximity to the diplomatic transition from Taiwan to China, exemplifies the interconnectedness of economic, political, and security factors within the realm of foreign policy (Mesak et al., 2020).

The endeavour of Prime Minister Sogavare to establish diplomatic ties with China is intricately connected to a dedication to uniform development and enhanced collaboration in investment. The economic and commercial agreement with China, encompassing financial assistance and concessional loans, is not solely a fiscal arrangement but rather intrinsically connected to political and security factors. The participation of countries in China's Belt and Road Initiative necessitates their adherence to the One China Policy, thereby highlighting the intricate nature of the diplomatic transition made by Sogavare without prior consultation with the inhabitants of the Solomon Islands (Mesak et al., 2020).

The diplomatic transfer occurred expeditiously and smoothly, mostly ascribed to the considerable impact of China's financial diplomacy on the government and political elite within the Parliament of the Solomon Islands. As a component of the diplomatic agreement, the government of the Solomon Islands made a commitment to

accept aid packages up to a sum of 500 million US dollars. The financial assistance granted to Prime Minister Sogavare and other members of Parliament was underscored in a report conducted by the Lowy Institute, with a total sum reaching as high as 220,000 US dollars. The gratuity fund is regularly employed by Sogavare to provide financial backing for his campaign over the Papua issue in the South Pacific.

The expansion of the Papua crisis beyond the Melanesian bloc community necessitates a significant allocation of financial resources. The Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, which have been designated as Least Developed Countries by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), encounter difficulties in securing adequate funds for international lobbying efforts on behalf of Papua simply through their domestic financial resources. Both nations are subject to the three classification requirements, namely Gross National Income below \$1,035 per day, Human Development Index below 60 per cent, and economic instability. Although it may be tempting to oversimplify the situation by attributing the funding of the Papua issue entirely to certain countries, it is important to recognise the significant and intricate role that China's financial support plays in moulding diplomatic ties and providing assistance to political campaigns in the South Pacific region (Mesak et al., 2020).

6. Security Strategy: An Interventionist China?

China's engagement has fostered stronger political ties with the Solomon Islands government, paving the way for an agreement on security cooperation between the two nations. China's expanding military presence is accompanied by a corresponding shift in its strategic orientation (Sora, 2022). Chinese policymakers have gained knowledge that Pacific Island governments exhibit greater openness towards security agreements that de-emphasise Beijing's military objectives and instead provide tangible advantages in return. The aforementioned estimate is presumed to have influenced the formation of the security pact between China and the Solomon Islands, and it proved to be effective (Sundaramurthy, Yu, and Fiala, 2022).

However, the draft version, which was leaked to the press, brought global concerns, especially with the part that reads: "China may, according to its own needs and with the consent of Solomon Islands, make ship visits to, carry out logistical replenishment in, and have stopover and transition in Solomon Islands, and the relevant forces of China can be used to protect the safety of Chinese personnel and major project in Solomon Islands." Such measures are not rare, as they illustrate how Chinese assets abroad are inevitably compelling the Chinese

state to intervene in overseas affairs. It has also allowed China an opportunity to showcase itself as an engaged security provider, offering support to Honiara in the form of Chinese police or military forces upon request to help uphold domestic stability and security (Sundaramurthy, Yu, and Fiala, 2022).

To understand the clear picture, the aforementioned agreement allows the Chinese Navy to use docking and replenishment services in the Solomon Islands, perhaps serving as a foundation for a facility that has the potential for future expansion (Sundaramurthy, Yu, and Fiala, 2022). It is highly probable that China intends to create a lasting military presence, albeit in a manner that affords both parties the ability to disavow its categorisation as a military post. Furthermore, the strategy has a resemblance to the United States' approach to its military presence in Asia over the past few decades. During this period, the United States has mostly focused on securing access agreements and implementing rotating deployments, as opposed to establishing permanent bases (Sora, 2022).

Furthermore, China and the Solomon Islands have recently entered into an agreement pertaining to police cooperation, marking a significant milestone in their efforts to enhance their bilateral relations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership" (Reuters, 2023). This development comes four years after the Solomon Islands transitioned its diplomatic allegiance from Taiwan to China. During the meeting between the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Manasseh Sogavare, and the Chinese Premier, Li Qiang, in Beijing, a total of nine agreements were signed, including a significant police cooperation pact. This event highlights the foreign policy pivot of the Solomon Islands (Associated Press, 2023). The noteworthy aspect of Beijing's dedication to assist Honiara in "sustaining societal harmony" through a bilateral agreement is that Chinese security personnel have typically been deployed to international conflict areas in recent times either as part of United Nations peacekeeping missions or as participants in multinational law enforcement initiatives aimed at countering terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking, and other criminal activities. Their involvement has not traditionally involved the explicit objective of supporting a specific government's authority. Chinese authorities frequently emphasise the notion that their nation represents a novel form of significant global influence, characterised by steadfast opposition to military interventions. Beijing and the elites also hold the belief that the decline of the United States can be attributed, in part, to its perceived misadventures as a global security provider. Consequently, they maintain that China is not inclined to assume a similar position (Kim, 2022).

It is noteworthy that Beijing has experienced a notable rise in its peacekeeping and law enforcement endeavours overseas during the last twenty years. This has been done with the dual purpose of enhancing China's reputation

as a "responsible power" and furthering its specific objectives, such as safeguarding Chinese citizens and investments in foreign territories, expanding its jurisdiction to monitor and extradite Chinese nationals in international contexts, and ensuring border security against extremist organisations (Kim, 2022). The significant influence behind the decision to safeguard Chinese residents and businesses can be attributed to the recent turmoil in the Solomon Islands, which specifically targeted Chinese enterprises. Fueled by Sogavare's official recognition of China instead of Taiwan, the disturbances led to the expansion of the PLA's influence into a strategically significant region was unquestionably a pivotal component. However, the agreement made by Beijing to offer direct security assistance in order to aid a foreign government in safeguarding against "internal threats" in return for promoting Chinese interests suggests a potentially concerning change in China's approach. Historically, China has predominantly relied on providing loans, investments, and economic incentives as a means of cultivating alliances and exerting influence on the global stage rather than directly involving itself in civil conflicts (Kim, 2022).

However, the focal point of this engagement is the Malaita province of the Solomon Islands. Being the most populous and one of the largest of the nine provinces of the Solomon Islands, was always critical of Chinese ambitions in the region. Under the leadership of Daniel Sudaini, the Auki Communique was issued in 2019, advocating for a halt on the operations of businesses affiliated with the CCP in the province, which escalated tensions between the province and the central government of Solomon Islands. However, the ousting of Sudaini under a vote of no confidence at the provincial assembly paved the way for China to resume their long south aspirations in the province. Following Sudaini's removal, the newly formed Malaita government promptly prioritised the revocation of the Auki Communiqué, which prohibited China from conducting operations within the province (Paskal, 2023). Moreover, in May 2023, both countries entered into a Memorandum of Understanding on Fisheries Cooperation, which will allow the China National Fisheries Corporations (CNFC) to invest in the Solomon Islands in areas of mutual interest (Kekea, 2023). This also includes the Bina harbour, where significant investment will be made (Sudaini and Califilu, 2023).

Although the installation of a military base has high risk, it was seen as a low probability (Kabutaulaka, 2022). However, the recent initiatives over Bina Harbour put the observation into reconsideration due to its strategic location. The Bina harbour, which serves as a strategic intermediary for expanding operations towards the middle of the United States Central Pacific defences, holds the potential to disrupt U.S. military endeavours in East Asia, including hindering support for Taiwan in the event of a conflict (Sudaini & Califilu, 2023). This development inflicts heightened attention as it recalls the development in Djibouti, which was claimed by

Beijing to be used as a supply facility and would lack a military objective or purpose. The base in Djibouti, however, transformed, evolving into a fully operational military base with the primary objective of safeguarding and advancing Chinese interests in the region. It was also noted that China deliberately refrained from employing overt military language when referring to the base in Djibouti, opting instead to use terms such as 'support facilities' or 'logistical facilities' (Headly, 2018). Of greater concern are the provisions delineated in the security agreement between the Solomon Islands and China, as revealed in the leaked text, which exhibit the same objectives.

Furthermore, China's fishing fleet, alongside the armed "Maritime Militia," has been identified as a potential component of China's expanding presence in the Southwest Pacific. Bina Harbor serves as a strategic base for these operations, which could act as a front line for the Chinese Navy and Marine Corps in the region (Sudaini & Califilu, 2023). Furthermore, China is advancing its goals in the Solomon Islands by winning a bid for reconstructing the Honiara port on the island of Guadalcanal (Paskal, 2023), as well as providing a loan of \$500 million to the government of the Island state for its project in Bina Harbour (Sudaini and Califilu, 2023). This is detrimental since the government's debt stock reached 15 per cent of GDP in December 2021, which was calculated to reach 35 per cent later on (Kekea, 2022).

7. Conclusion

China's recent activities and its diplomatic improvement with the Solomon Islands have brought concerns to the United States and other important players in the Pacific including Australia and New Zealand. This has led to the US ensuring a commitment towards the Solomon Islands by reestablishing an American Embassy in the capital city of Honiara. Additionally, the United States and its allies have intensified their involvement and interaction with the broader region. It has also led to the recent meeting of Pacific Island nations organised by Washington, where President Biden presented a comprehensive strategy encompassing collaborative efforts in the areas of climate change, maritime security, and the prevention of overfishing. The government has committed to provide \$810 million in additional assistance to Pacific Island nations over the next ten years. This funding includes a specific allocation of \$130 million to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

As China expands its strategic objectives in the South-West Pacific, specifically through its involvement with the Solomon Islands, it prompts an important inquiry about the feasibility of China successfully establishing a maritime presence in the region. Previously, this possibility was dismissed due to the customary land tenure

system on the island. However, recent developments, particularly those related to Bina Harbour, have brought this notion into re-evaluation. China's increasing influence and the Solomon Islands' alignment with Beijing instead of the AUKUS partnership and the Western bloc highlight the uncertainties surrounding the future choices of other Pacific Island nations. Indeed, it is clear that the dynamics in the South-West Pacific have shifted, transforming the region into a playground for geopolitical power struggles. China's pursuit of strategic opportunities in the region demonstrates its intention to expand its influence and assert its presence. This growing competition signifies the need for heightened attention and proactive engagement from the greater powers involved to navigate this complex and evolving landscape.

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“What is it Like to be a Worm?” Asked Bagel the Bat

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Abstract

One of Nagel’s attempts in his 1974 “bat” paper is to not reduce the “unfamiliar” down to the “familiar”, which, he rightly recognises, is an error which persists in the Philosopher’s thought more than they would like to admit. This essay aims to identify and discuss an aspect of his analysis of consciousness and alien phenomenology which falls prey to the same erroneous intuition. I argue, to state it explicitly, that Nagel betrays the sense of caution he propounds at the beginning of his paper. He does this by acknowledging the bat as entirely alien but ascribing to its alien world physicalist notions. Nagel thus recognises the alien in his world but fails to recognise the world of the alien. Starting with section 2, I reflect upon the phenomenology of an auditory being, whose experience could be close in one aspect to ours but also radically different. Then, within this frame of analysis, I map out the ways in which its world would also be radically different in section 3.2. As an intuition pump, the Prologue utilises the fictional character of a bat called Bagel and its reflections upon the phenomenology of a worm. Its caricatured prejudices towards the worm and its phenomenology are meant to rhetorically bring Nagel’s error to light. The entire analysis utilises Nagel’s own conception of Objectivity, which is characterised in section 3.1. This is done in an attempt to critique his discourse reflexively without asserting anything original or using another discourse as a crutch. The essay concludes that an auditory being, and a bat - if it indeed is an auditory being - would dismiss physicalism even if it were to be intelligent (A “Martian” would also do the same I conclude, which Nagel asserts would not). As a result, it is not just the so-called subjective phenomena of an alien being which would be radically different but also their understanding of “physical phenomena”.

Keywords: Nagel, Bat, Objectivity

Prologue: Thomas Bagel and his friends

One day, resting upside down on a tree, Thomas Bagel, the brightest bat¹ in the eighty-seven trees of the city park, thought to himself, “What must it be like to be a worm?”

So delighted was he by the question that he went to his other Akoesopher² friends to ask what they thought about this. He flew straight to the fifteenth tree since idealists inhabited the first fourteen. There, he met with the famous eliminativist Patricia Churchwaters³ to whom he put this question forth. “You are wasting your time on this question, dear Bagel”, said Churchwaters, “there is nothing exotically foreign it is to be a worm. It can be explained through the intensities and decibels of the Auditory how the worm perceives the sounds around it”.

“Sounds?” thought Bagel, “But sounds are not what constitutes the subjective experience of the worm. It is touch! It should be baffling how alien the worm’s phenomenology must be, experiencing a world full of amplitudes and frequencies only through touch”. He believed that even though the world might be Auditory, there is something it is like to be a worm which cannot be explained through the laws of the Auditory. ‘Psychoauditory’ reduction is not possible, he concluded. Indeed, if the worm were to be intelligent, it would understand the Auditory phenomena of Octaves and Pitches.

Before pecking into the woods, his ideas, which other scholars could chirp into and hear, he wished to gauge the views of the dualists. For this, he flew next to the sixtieth tree, where he saw his dualist friend David Dhalmers⁴, who was explicating the hard problem of consciousness. After his talk, Bagel asked him his thoughts on the issue. Dhalmers, after much contemplation upon this exciting question, said, “Well, of course, the worm is made up of sounds, but from the studies conducted in the department of Wormology, it seems the worm itself touches and feels the opaque lump of sound the earth and its soil is. It is peculiar, indeed, the way the worm navigates through the world. We bats do not solely rely upon touch since it is a primitive and ineffective form of perception. I suppose, Bagel that there must be an inaudible⁵ experience of touch inside the worm, irreducible to the reality of sounds. At the same time, whatever this inaudible experience is, it must surely be a property of the sounds that constitute it”.

¹ We imagine these bats to be entirely lacking in ocular capacities. They perceive the world solely through echolocation.

² Akoe (ἄκοῆ) is the ancient Greek word for hearing. Therefore, Akoesophers; that is, Listeners of wisdom.

³ A pseudonym for Patricia Churchland, who is an Eliminativist in regard to consciousness. That is, she believes conscious processes to be a result of, and reducible to, brain processes. A staunch reductionist, she would be least concerned with Bagel the bat contemplating the “Spiritual-sounding” “Inner and subjective” experiences of the worm. For more, see William Ramsey’s article in the SEP (2022).

⁴ A pseudonym for David Chalmers, who is a property dualist. He takes physical entities to be the only kind of things that exist in the world. At the same time, these physical entities have dual properties, some physical and some mental. Consciousness therefore is a property of physical entities according to Chalmers’ view, which is caricatured in the story. This is different from Substance dualism, which posits two kinds of substance in the world instead of a single substance with dual properties. For more see section 2.2 in Howard Robinson’s article in the SEP (2023)

⁵ Read as, “Not-physical” or Mental.

Familiar with all possible erroneity, Bagel set out to carve his ideas into the Tree of Truth. He established that over Auditory reality, it was something irreducible to be a creature of Touch. Thus, the realm of the Auditory and its laws could not, according to Bagel the Bat, account for the worm's subjective experiences. Nevertheless, siding with the Auditory regardless of its inadequacy, Bagel posited another kind of understanding of the mental realm of the worm objective in its own right. He then pecked some more, describing the Subjective/Objective distinction. The pleasantness of sound, Touch, Timbre, and Smell were all subjective and, therefore, secondary qualities of the Auditory. Decibels and Temporal cavity⁶, on the other hand, were examples of the primary quality of entities in the world. The Objective way of the world was, as such, the most general way to describe the world, even for the worm. The worm's subjective experience of the world as purely Touch, however, remained a mystery. Furthermore, the objective conception of the world and the mental also remained necessarily incomplete since the bat's mind cannot comprehend all of reality as it is. But certainly, worms would, if they came from Mars and were intelligent, understand the pitches of the soil as an Auditory phenomena, no matter the way they thought of it subjectively; that is, purely in terms of touch.

The End.

1.1 Beginning from the End - Introduction

“Philosophers share the general human weakness for explanations of what is incomprehensible in terms suited for what is familiar and well understood, though entirely different.”

- Thomas Nagel, 1974, p. 435.

Thomas Nagel, the brilliant American Philosopher, opens his discourse defining 1974 paper, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?” (Henceforth simply referred to as “Nagel’s paper”), with the quote above. His caution is situated in the context of the Mind-Body problem and Consciousness, which makes the former “intractable” for the scientifically oriented reductionists (Nagel, 1974, p. 435). Throughout the paper, Nagel successfully undermines the reductionist methods of studying consciousness and their unsatisfying accounts of psychophysical reduction, where attempts are made to explain the unfamiliar - consciousness - in terms of the familiar - physical entities.

⁶ Read it as an analogue of Distance for Ocularcentric perception. Sound emissions of bats have a delay in their echo. From this delay, the bats can tell how “far away” an object such as an insect is. For more, see Simmons (1989).

Yet, his intuitions when he addresses the Objective/Subjective distinction in the paper betray his own sense of caution as he explains the unfamiliar - “Objective reality” - in terms of the familiar - his own humanistic conception of what counts as Objective. He thus, while trying to distance himself from the mistakes committed by the reductionists, commits the same mistake in the discourse of Objectivity and Subjectivity.

The ‘Ironic prophecy’ is an archetype of stories that causes great intrigue. There is something enchanting about the kind of twisted fate the characters in such stories have. Insofar as this essay attempts to convey a story, it wishes to be one of cruel foreshadowing and a similar case of Ironic prophecy. Nagel does all he can to talk about the alien as alien, and yet, it seems that he cannot help but ascribe familiarity to the alien. Like Oedipus or Kansa, the fate he turns away from comes back to haunt him. The prologue tries to portray the same in a fable-esque fashion; Bagel the bat comes to confront the otherness of the worm, but so embedded are he and the others around him in their own world of shrieks and sounds that he cannot help but be mistaken about the unfamiliar to somehow also be part of the familiar.

Regardless of the final verdict on the matter, this is at least the narrative this essay wishes to establish, and it does so by making Nagel the subject of his own inquiry; by carrying it out in the same Nagelian spirit. The case argued, thus, is not that Nagel is too radical and therefore wrong, but that he is not radical enough in conceiving the otherness of the bat and is wrong in the way that he is right. In the story of Bagel the Bat, we would not say that Bagel is wrong, but certainly that he is mistaken. On a tightrope, we must tell him not to retreat but to go on and march farther ahead! For that is the only way he can get to the other side without falling into the valley of incoherence. As this essay runs its course, one should be able to see Nagel situated in Bagel’s fable and recognise that in the final analysis, it was Nagel’s intuitions after all that we were pursuing.

1.2 The Story So Far - Nagel’s Bat, Physicalism, and the Objective point of view

Upon a close reading of Nagel’s paper, reflecting on it retrospectively after decades of published research in the discourse, it is quite remarkable how much ground he covers and the questions he touches upon in a couple of pages. It would, therefore, be a project on its own to summarise and accurately situate Nagel’s arguments in a way that would be relevant to all contexts. Moreover, literature catering to this need already exists (Sundström, 1999). Keeping this in mind, this section will try to briefly map out my reading of Nagel’s paper, not with the intent to summarise and situate Nagel’s arguments accurately, but with a disproportionate yet faithful emphasis on the parts relevant with scope for further exploration and the objective of this essay.

Nagel's paper engages with two major discussions, first, the validity of Physicalism and Reductionism and how it impinges upon the Mind-Body problem, and second, the Bat's experience of the world fused with the Subjective/Objective point of view. To begin with the former, which is majorly discussed at the beginning and towards the end of his paper, it is interesting to note that Nagel argues explicitly against reductionism concerning the "Subjective point of view", and seems to be arguing against physicalism as well. In fact, this is the standard explication of the essay in the popular discourse⁷. Hence, it is surprising when we find out that Nagel, even in the face of the danger the Subjective point of view poses to physicalism, goes on to advocate for it. He writes, "It would be a mistake to conclude that physicalism must be false. Nothing is proved by the inadequacy of physicalist hypotheses that assume a faulty objective analysis of mind. It would be truer to say that physicalism is a position we cannot understand because we do not at present have any conception of how it might be true" (1974, p. 448).

This is unlike Jackson or Levine, who, at least on epistemological grounds, argue against physicalism (Jackson, 1982. Levine, 1983). Or, more recently, Chalmers, whose articulation of the "hard problem of consciousness" makes it seem impossible for physicalism to account for Consciousness (Chalmers, 1995). The ideas of Jackson, Levine and Chalmers find their sparks and traces already brewing in Nagel's paper. For this reason, I personally find it extremely peculiar that Nagel's position is for physicalism and not against it. However, this essay will not discuss whether his stand on this issue is justified or not since our present analysis will not be able to accommodate it. The essay can perhaps illuminate still the intuitions fueling Nagel's inquiry, which might help explain why, regardless of physicalism's inadequacy, he chose to stick by it. But I will not elaborate on it any further.

Nagel does argue against psychophysical reduction and does so quite successfully. To contextualise this, we must now address his discourse concerning the bat's experience and the Subjective/Objective point of view. We know that bats echolocate, navigating the world through the help of shrieks and echo sounds. This is something entirely alien for the Human, Nagel says. At best, one can imagine, in the capacity of being human, what is it like to hang upside down on a tree, have webbed feet, and hear objects instead of seeing them. But insofar as

⁷ See, [YouTube - Thomas Nagel's "What Is It Like To Be a Bat?"](#) and [YouTube - What is it Like to be a Bat? - the hard problem of consciousness](#). Also refer to, Pereboom (1994, p. 317).

one does this, they merely imagine themselves to be a bat. Nagel wants to know “what is like for a bat to be a bat”(1974, p. 439). This gives rise to the following paradox: Physicalism ambitions to explain the point of view of the subjective. But Physicalism is objective, and objectivity has no point of view; it is a “view from nowhere”. Therefore, one wishes to understand a point of view from a view of no point.

Nagel writes, “Experience itself...does not seem to fit the pattern. The idea of moving from appearance to reality seems to make no sense here...It appears unlikely that we will get closer to the real nature of human experience by leaving behind the particularity of our human point of view and striving for a description in terms accessible to beings that could not imagine what it was like to be us.” (1974, p. 444). He goes on to articulate, “If the subjective character of experience is fully comprehensible only from one point of view, then any shift to greater objectivity - that is, less attachment to a specific viewpoint - does not take us nearer to the real nature of the phenomenon: it takes us farther away from it.” (1974, p. 445). This is the crux of Nagel’s reflections on the bat’s phenomenology (sometimes, he also cites a more abstract entity called the “Martian”).

It should be pointed out that Nagel believes in “types” of experiences. An implication of such a view is that Adarsh, who is often happy, can understand Shivaay’s experience, who is also often happy. But Adarsh cannot understand the world of someone who was born blind since he is not acquainted with that “type” of experience. The otherness of experience, for Nagel, is thus concerned with inter-species and not intra-species experiences (1974, p. 441). Once again, this is peculiar since it would create a kind of blatant logical inevitability even for intra-species experiences in that, one could say X can be X, and nothing can else be X, for if it were to be X, it would be X. Each member of a species and their experiences could be wholly unique, from which, even the so-called same “type” of experience could not provide them with an escape. Sundström discusses the logical aspect of this issue (1999, p. 107-110), and Wider discusses, utilising Bernard Williams’ views, the impossibility of such a kind of imagination (1989, p. 489-490). Although this, too, is relevant to indicate further ways in which Nagel’s paper can be problematised, it lies outside the scope of present discussion. To summarise this point, this is what Nagel writes about the “type” accessibility of subjective experience, “I am not adverting here to the alleged privacy of experience to its possessor. The point of view in question is not one accessible only to a single individual. Rather, it is a type. It is often possible to take up a point of view other than one's own, so the comprehension of such facts is not limited to one's own case” (1974, p. 441).

For Nagel, since the Objective point of view cannot accommodate the Subjective point of view - for only a subjective point of view can account for a subjective point of view - Psychophysical reduction is not possible.

We can still, if we share the same type of experience, take up a common subjective point of view. According to Nagel, this is not the case when we think about the bat's experience since we have not the slightest idea what echolocation sensations feel like. He proposes still that a Martian or an intelligent bat would be able to share the objective point of view, thus being able to understand the objective facts about the world (1974, p. 443), and that we could make a schematic sense out of the bat's view of the world, describing it as a "three-dimensional forward perception" (1974, p. 439). More on this in section 3.2.

Additionally and most importantly, an admission. Nagel's conception of Objectivity is something I struggled with throughout the course of this essay. At times, it seemed he would consider the point that I was trying to make. On other occasions, it seemed he would not. Specifically, in the bat paper itself, it is evidently clear that he thinks if bats were to be intelligent, or if Martians were to stumble across Earth, they would at least share the physical understanding of the world - that is the objective point of view, differing only in their subjective points of view (Nagel, 1974). This is also the case with his idea of objectivity elsewhere being discussed as a point of view that any "rational being" can take up (Nagel, 1986). But in his other works, there are instances where he comes close to considering something akin to the dialectical observation presented in this essay. The issue concerning objectivity is of great relevance to this essay, and since I wished to conceive of it in more or less the same way, Nagel does, and clearly so that the pendulum does not sway against the final analysis, section 3.1 tries to characterise the same. On the whole, I believe there are only two possibilities. Either there is some error on my part in interpreting his conception of the objective point of view, or there is a genuine tension in his views and intuitions which need resolution. In the essay, I have tried to make the case for the latter in sections 3.1 and 3.2. Perhaps this requires further inquiry as well. For now, I hope it is indeed the latter that is the case.

1.3 A Summary of the Thesis

The essay does not aim to take issue with Nagel's arguments against psychophysical reduction. It wishes to further the same caution, in another aspect of Nagel's discourse, against reducing the unfamiliar down to the familiar, which is also how the "Nagelian spirit" was meant earlier. One way it does so is by recognising that the bat can be thought of as familiar and at the same time unfamiliar (Section 2), finally taking this logic to its conclusion where we recognise the bat is even more unfamiliar than Nagel would like to think so (Section 3.2), and to which he attributes concealed familiarity in the garb of physical objectivity.

I do not wish to make - I have not made this clear in the following sections themselves - any claims about the "true" nature of the bat's experience. The conclusion that is to come in Section 2 is thus only a tentative one,

which I will further attempt to deconstruct at the very end. As a result, the point of imagining ourselves as the bat is not to fulfil the ambition to know something about the bat per se but to know what we do not pay attention to within ourselves, what lies right beside what is seen but is never heard; the ear. It is this contemplation concerning Sounds which will lead us to recognise that even Nagel's recognition of the bat's world is mediated by the Ocular rather than the Auditory, which could, if not more, be equally the case. Reflections about the bat are thus a metaphor - as is the prologue - to articulate a thesis, which I will now briefly summarise in the hopes of orienting one to the spirit of this essay and the recognition it seeks.

In essence, we, as humans, lack genuine means to comprehend the world of a bat. It is possible that we may not even fully understand each other - other humans - in a profound sense. The latter is still more likely to be realised than the former, for what is too familiar to us finally reveals itself to be uncanny. However, Reason plays a trick in the case of the absolutely unfamiliar. Desperate in the face of the entirely alien, through a sleight of hand, it attempts to recognise the alien as alien but does so, ever so sneakily, through concepts that are familiar to us.

Nagel recognises the subjective point of view of the bat. But while doing so, he does not account for the fact that this radical difference in subjectivity might lead to a different objective world for the bat itself⁸. Thus, he casually ascribes to the bat's perception a certain description, and in the case of "Martians" (consider also intelligent bats), asserts that they understand the subjective phenomena differently but will have the same understanding of it "physically", that is objectively. Bagel does the same in his case, conceiving of the world in terms of sound. Thus, Nagel and Bagel recognise the alien in their world but fail to recognise the world of the alien, which is also alien, leading them to cage the alien-ness of the alien in the non-alien. For now, this is very clear in the case of Bagel, less so in Nagel's.

We must ask: if there were to be super-intelligent beings capable of conceiving the world through touch, sound, vision, and an additional super-sense, would they not find both Nagel and Bagel in the same situation, falling prey to the same dogma manifesting in two different phenomenological contexts? Moreover, if the bat itself were to speak of its experiences as entirely different, would we then conclude Nagel's conception of the bat's otherness to be wrong, requiring rectification by recognising a sense of agnosticism not only for the bat's subjective point of view but the objective point of view? I believe these are original questions and of much

⁸ Here I use Objectivity as Nagel employs it. More on this in section 3.1.

importance to be asked. The essay would like to make the case for them to be validated while it critiques Nagel's discussion of the bat and ruminates over the same.

There could consequently be - if the questions find themselves rightly situated - a disjunction, or a deadlock, between the "centerless" and most "general" view of the world for the human and the bat. Nagel's discourse must thus stand corrected and, at the same time, make room for the bat's voice, which might claim a new kind of objectivity, that of the the Auditory - which is a metaphor for all intents and purposes - or something entirely else! Nagel is unjustified, the essay argues, to assume that there are objective physical phenomena in the world for the bat or a Martian in the same way as they are present to our faculties of Understanding and Reason⁹. Therefore, if we are to follow Nagel's conception of objectivity and his intuitions as are expressed in the bat paper, the bat must, given its radically different subjective point of view - which Nagel recognises - also inhabit a world with a different objective point of view - which Nagel does not recognise. Section 3.2 will discuss this in detail.

There is also an epilogue which discusses how the seeds of the conclusion were already present in section 2. However, language works linearly, and I found myself incapable of making a point and at the same time deconstructing it. The epilogue is thus a self-conscious attempt at staying true to the intuition of not reducing the unfamiliar down to the familiar, which I suspect is present even in section 2. I have used the symbol (*) to mark all the statements which will be used as a context in the epilogue.

Lastly, the reflexive nature of this inquiry might have led me to cite examples and employ descriptions which themselves fall prey to the very thing the essay suggests a warning against. Wherever the danger seems likely, I have tried to show that I am cognizant of it. I will request the reader to receive the reflections and examples as tools to see the truth of the matter and then realise that the tool in itself is of no value other than having enabled the journey; a Wittgensteinian ladder of sorts. It is entirely possible still that there might be places where this inquiry can be applied to itself and turns out to be ignorant of its dialectical consequences. This is a dreadful possibility for any project, but it seems here it would seem to work in the same way that it has worked for Nagel's paper. The contents are negated, but the spirit moves on. The intuition behind Nagel's paper and this essay are meaningful, important, and right I believe, and they must be brought out into the brightest of lights so that even the Auditory-dwelling Nagel may be obliged to recognise it.

⁹ A very conservative aim of the argument could be: it might be the case that the world is "physical" for us, and conceivably "in fact" in reality as well (I would not know what this means). But, if the bat were to hear sounds, and that is what constitutes its world, and it can navigate through it just as efficiently with a phenomenology equally as rich and diverse as us, would it not justifyingly believe that the world is, for it, also "in fact" auditory? There will be no way to convince the bat of the physicality of the world.

2. Cognitive Content and Cognitive Capacity

Even though there exists a rich discussion for the purpose of ascertaining whether the bat's experience of the world is alien or familiar, it is dimly discussed by Nagel's commentators if the "pure experience" so to speak, is the same for the bat - for example, something akin to hearing sounds - differing radically with respect to only cognitive processes that underlie experience, or if, the experience itself is alien. Nagel's position concerning the bat's phenomenology is that it would be clear to "anyone who has spent some time in an enclosed space with an excited bat...[that it is]...a fundamentally alien form of life" (Nagel, 1974, p. 438)¹⁰, he is still not of much help as he goes on to write, "bat sonar, though clearly a form of perception, is not similar in its operation to any sense that we possess" (Nagel, 1974, p. 438), leaving it unclear if the raw experience itself is the same for the bat as it would be for a human, and that the bat's experience differs with respect to the "operation" of its senses, or if the radical difference lies in the very raw experience of the bat.

We can use the vocabulary of Cognitive Contents and Cognitive Capacities to inquire into this difference and ask, what aspect of the bat's experience is fundamentally different from ours? In the bat's case, the experience of the echo, which is a sound*, is its cognitive content. The sophisticated manner in which it maps out the world using Sound as a means is its cognitive capacity.* The former can be defined as the phenomenological substrate of experience, that which makes "vision" different from "sound" and "sound" different from "touch". It could also be defined as the last thing without change with keeps an experience from changing its kind*. The latter can be defined as the mechanism that interprets the 'same' cognitive content differently. A good analogue for cognitive content could be qualia. Additionally, the details of cognitive capacity - attention, memory, and so on - are not relevant for now. Now, if it is permissible to think of the bat's experience in this way, it would seem that the bat differs not at all from a human being with respect to the former. Presumably, the bat hears high-frequency echoes in the same way* a human hears a sound in its auditory threshold. Thus, the substrate of cognition - the kind of qualia - for the human and the bat would be alike, that is, it would be a "sound". Some have reached the conclusion that indeed, echolocation in bats, and therefore to be a bat, is to hear sounds of various kinds and make sense of the world through them (Allen-Hermanson, 2016. Alter, 2002. Flanagan, 1996.). It would appear in this case that the bat's phenomenology is not so alien after all. In fact, so familiar it is, beeps and boops and sounds of loved ones calling out to us, that we overlook in its entirety that the bat's

¹⁰ It could be possible that in this particular instance, Nagel means it metaphorically or illustratively. His position on the whole, in any case, is clear and well-established.

¹¹ I have not given references for the definitions. This is because these definitions refer to no school of thought or author in particular, and are merely make-do terms that I use to get the point across. Cognitive scientists do use this vocabulary, and most probably mean it the same way, but I am not acquainted with the context of its usage in the literature and would therefore not like to claim the same discursive force when I employ these terms.

world is constituted out of these very cognitive contents. This would diffuse to a great extent Nagel's claim about the radical alterity of the bat's experience.

The issue of difference in the "operation" of the senses, or the cognitive capacity, still remains. I will discuss in the epilogue what complications arise out of the dialectical entanglement of the cognitive capacities with the cognitive contents. For now, things can be laid out quite simply. A being can differ from us in terms of cognitive contents, cognitive capacities, or both. To imagine a being which differs in both aspects would be to imagine a complete alien. On the other hand, a being could differ from us in terms of cognitive capacities and yet share its cognitive contents. This permutation is of great intrigue and importance. Since, if a being is entirely alien, there is no use in imagining "what must it be like to be them". The answer at best would be, "What is it like to be them is what we cannot imagine it is like to be them". The other possibility, situating us at the cusp of the known and the unknown, gives us a unique view into the alien phenomenology of such a being. It would be like peeking through a window we would have otherwise been incapable of looking into. The recognition that the said being must be understanding the same kind of cognitive content*, "Sound" or "Touch", in a radically different way is the stool we stand upon which enables this. Our job next would be to imagine how alien of a world the being in question must inhabit since we already have a partial access to its world, that is, to its cognitive contents. This is precisely the case with the bat, whose cognitive capacities differ greatly while it shares its cognitive contents with us, and this invites us to imagine the unimaginable ways in which the bat might be making sense of the world through sound and how differently it would conceive sound itself. Furthermore, due to these differences, what, if any, fundamental oddities and contrasts could arise in the structure of the bat's world and ours?

Thus, it is not quite the case that bat phenomenology is simply familiar to us as some commentators of Nagel have come to conclude, neither is it the case that it is entirely alien as Nagel himself would like to think. Instead, it is twisted in that the bat's experience is close to us yet so far away, for it is familiar insofar as cognitive contents are concerned and alien insofar as cognitive capacities are concerned. Nagel treads very close to making this point, but he often cites as an equivalent of the bat's experience of the world the subjective experience of the "Martian", which he defines as entirely different from us, as a result straying away from the possibility of considering the ways in which we could indeed imagine the bat's experience of the world (1974, p. 440). Furthermore, he does not linger over the bat's phenomenology, even in his limited capacity, attempting to imagine just how different our own conception of sound could be. Indeed, how interesting it is to think that

we look at objects and say things like, “I see that building”. Whereas, the bat, if it could speak, might say things like “I hear that building”, even though it would be completely bizarre to us that it can “hear” a Physical object (we are considering stationary and in themselves inaudible objects like a building or a tree, of course). More on this in later sections. Nagel, in his paper, simply insists that the bat’s experience of the world is entirely alien, that “these experiences also have in each case a specific subjective character, which it is beyond our ability to conceive” (1974, p. 439). Perhaps it is, and towards the very end, we will see, how - in a way that Nagel does not even know - he might after all be right about the Bat being entirely alien to us. But for that, we must first turn towards the auditory, which is more alien than we think, to which we often pay little attention. And contemplate the ways in which Nagel does injustice to the bat’s phenomenology. We must do this while imagining the bat as a peculiar little thing; a creature which might be as alien as a “Martian”, yet as familiar as what is received through the ear.

3.1 Nagel’s Conception of Objectivity

Before turning towards the Auditory and confronting Nagel’s auditory conception of objectivity, we must make an attempt to establish Nagel’s conception of the same. This will clarify the way the term has been used in the essay and the contention that is to come. To see what Nagel has to say about it, this section will utilise another one of Nagel’s works, his 1986 book, “The View from Nowhere” (VFM). Apart from the motivation to have a deeper conversation with him, this work is also referenced because, in the bat paper, Nagel never talks about Objectivity concretely.

In the first half of the paper, Nagel talks mostly in terms of the Subjective and the Objective point of view, where he characterises the latter in opposition to the former. He writes, “An organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like to be that organism...we may call this the subjective character of experience” (1974, p. 436). This he also calls the subjective point of view. On the other hand, the objective point of view in the first half of the paper seems to be a purely negative category. In contrast to a “point of view”, it is a “view from nowhere”, which, of course, being incompatible with a subjective point of view, cannot account for a view from somewhere.

At one point Nagel also seems to equate objectivity with intersubjectivity. He writes, “There is a sense in which phenomenological facts are perfectly objective: one person can know or say of another what the quality of the other’s experience is” (1974, p. 442).

Then, while describing the move from the subjective to the objective characterisation, he expresses that he wishes to remain “noncommittal about the existence of an endpoint, the completely objective intrinsic nature of the thing, which one might or might not be able to reach”, and that “It may be more accurate to think of objectivity as a direction in which the understanding can travel.” (1974, p. 443). It is only later on in VFN that he writes of the primary qualities of the Physical as objective, as a point of view which is absolutely general, some end point of thought towards which we must strive to reach: “This means not only not thinking of the physical world from our own particular point of view, but not thinking of it from a more general human perceptual point of view either: not thinking of how it looks, feels, smells, tastes, or sounds. These secondary qualities then drop out of our picture of the external world, and the underlying primary qualities such as shape, size, weight, and motion are thought of structurally” (1986, p. 14).

A question can be raised here, and this will be expanded upon in the next section: Why is that shape, size, and weight “underlie” the “shallow” and more “subjective” secondary qualities? Could there be an entirely alternate set of primary qualities which happen to be incommensurable to the physical ones? Here, the question is not proposing something original in that it is attacking the Primary/Secondary Quality distinction. The Locke-Berkeley debate already exists, which concerns precisely that, and although I am myself not deeply acquainted with the literature, much of it is present to engage with (See Bolton in the SEP, section 5.2, 2022). Our inquiry here is slightly tangential.

It could be the case that there exists a set of primary qualities which we posit to constitute the world objectively. Of course, as beings of ocular-centric perception, we inhabit the world and move around in it while giving emphasis to certain ways of being. For us to posit size, shape, or texture as primary qualities should be seen as a logical extrapolation of our own subjective point of view, but not independent of it¹². It could be the case that auditory-centric beings, those who make sense of the world through sounds and not light*, speak of amplitudes and frequencies of sound as objective and underlying primary qualities of the world¹³. This would result in a

¹² This is not a suggestion to embrace Subjectivism. For now, I can only express my intuition concerning this without expanding upon it so that the motivations for what is said are clear. Practically speaking, if we were to be a creature of the sea, water quite literally would not exist for us. In that case, it is meaningless for another to debate from a point of view external to the sea, attempting to make the case that the water also exists for us. This universal claim seems to me to be nothing more than an epistemic imposition. This is not to say I do not agree with the latter, I do, but only because I already have access to both points of view. Any metaphor we construct concerning this would be misleading since we already know the truth which we are subjecting to differing perspectives. I personally do not see any point in convincing the creature of the sea that water does exist. This, however, does not change the fact for me that water exists. An abstract articulation of my motivations - not one which will make total sense at the moment - would be that primary qualities are not subjective, but neither are they objectively subjective. They are, in a way, Objective but subjectively determined - thus, subjectively objective.

¹³ Since it would be otherwise tough for us to imagine this, the prologue to this essay could serve a significant purpose for aiding our imagination at this junction of our discussion.

final analysis which would entail two kinds of objectivity, both of which are the most “general” and “centerless” way of viewing the world, but are incommensurable to each other; not contrary, but parallel - not more shallow or underlying, but different verticals of objective thought - one which lends itself to humans and another to echolocating beings such as bats¹⁴. The thesis would thus be that starting from an entirely alien phenomenology and consequent means of understanding the world would also result in different kinds of Objectivities.

It would appear at this point that we are going against Nagel, but from what Nagel writes in VFN, it seems like he might entertain this idea himself. He already posits two kinds of objectivity; one in the realm of the Physical and another in the realm of the Mental (p.17-19). Why could it then not be the case for the intelligent bat or the Martian that there be another objective epistemic category, that of the “Auditory”? We shall continue this in the next section. For now, Nagel recognises the point I have made in some way (given my reading of the text is correct). He, in fact, comes very close to talking about this in VFN, in the chapter concerning Idealism (see, p. 95-97), albeit not in the context of a bat.

Nagel also recognises that Objectivity has its own limits and has an odd attitude where he seeks to “critique” it at the same time as he “defends” it (1986, p. 5). While acknowledging the limits of objectivity, he explicates how objective ideas themselves change and evolve into “more” objective paradigms, making it sound like his conception of Objectivity is more a method than anything else (1986, p. 14). Moreover, his critique, to be specific, involves conceptualising objectivity not as a property of the world - which is usually how one might think of it - but rather as the relation between thought and the world. He writes, “In pursuing objectivity, we alter our relation to the world, increasing the correctness of certain of our representations of it by compensating for the peculiarities of our point of view. But the world is in a strong sense independent of our possible representations, and may well extend beyond them” (1986, p. 91). This begs the question, what is the world, which apparently lies outside both the subjective and the objective points of view, is it something super-objective?

¹⁴ Although this will be discussed in the next section, it is important to not appeal to the reduction of auditory primary qualities to Ocular primary qualities.

Considering all that has been discussed in this section, Nagel's conception of Objectivity can be characterised in the following ways:

1. A view from nowhere as opposed to a point of view of a specific subjectivity.
2. An intersubjective characteristic of facts accessible to all kinds of rational beings.
3. A function of the understanding in its movement towards greater representation.
4. The most "general" view of the world, one which is "centerless" and can be taken up by any being of a rational nature.
5. The method of representing the world accurately in thought; a specific orientation one's understanding takes in relating to the world. However, it is not all-encompassing, and the world could still escape an objective understanding. That is, there are facts that lie outside the possibility of objective analysis.
6. At least two kinds of objectivity; physical and mental.
7. Size, motion and shape as objective qualities of the non-mental realm.

3.2 Bagel's Conception of Objectivity

Nagel speaks in the first half of his paper about the subjective character of the bat's experience, which lies outside the objective means of understanding - physicalist methods - employed by humans. If Bagel were to read the paper, he would be delighted. "The same question I asked concerning the worm, Mr Nagel directs towards our own phenomenology!", he would say. It would not be long, however, before Bagel notices something odd. Here are two excerpts about which Bagel would have something to say¹⁵:

"For example, we may ascribe general types of experience on the basis of the animal's structure and behaviour. Thus, we describe bat sonar as a form of three-dimensional forward perception" (p. 439)

"A Martian scientist with no understanding of visual perception could understand the rainbow, or lightning, or clouds as physical phenomena, though he would never be able to understand the human concepts of rainbow, lightning, or cloud, or the place these things occupy in our phenomenal world." (p. 443)

¹⁵ I should make it clear that these are not the only excerpts which can we problematise in the way we are analysing them. There are many others, which, if one finds merit in the arguments of this essay, will be able to recognise while reading Nagel's paper. However, they are implicit and quite entangled with other affairs in the paper, and are thus not considered.

Upon this, Bagel would comment -

I find it odd that Mr Nagel describes our perception as “three-dimensional” and “forward”. For I am certain our cognitive so-ience departments describe it as “Stereophonic” and “Aurally oriented”¹⁶. Furthermore, How am I supposed to understand the rainbow, lightning, or the trees as physical phenomena? Rainbows do not exist for me, and as far as a tree is concerned, I do not look at one and say it is great in “size” as Mr Nagel would like to suggest it objectively is. I look at a tree, and I think about great amplitudes and low frequencies - oh, how my favourite bat poet puts it, “My favourite tree is also my favourite piece of music”.

The need to imagine a bat responding in such a manner is the fact that it is not obvious at all that intelligent bats or Martians will simply take “size” or “three dimensions” to be functional or describable terms for the objective world. Neither is it obvious that somehow, despite the radical difference in phenomenologies, the epistemologies of a Martian or a bat would find refuge in the Objectivity of Man. The only reason we take it as granted for this to be the case is because we do not truly understand the richness of the bat’s own world.

Striking parallels can be drawn between bats and humans, with the bat’s way of existing in the world being appreciated, along with the way the world reveals itself to the bat, if we engage with the literature while having some sympathy for the otherness of the winged mammal. Where Man might say he sees a tree, a bat would shriek that it hears a tree. For Man, the tree is a picture. For the bat, it might be music. Low frequencies are obstacles, and worms are mere high frequencies. Distances are temporal cavities, and the identity of objects extends into time instead of space.

Let us keep philosophical reflection aside and consider a comparison with humans who use visual aid: Hunter-gatherers coordinate when on a hunt, where one should not come in another’s line of sight, and cues are received from the other’s gaze on where to move next. Some follow without knowing where the prey is, for they believe the one who is followed knows. Bats species such as *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, *M. daubentonii*, *Rhinopoma hardwickei* (Habersetzer, 1981), *Tadarida brasiliensis* (Gillam et al., 2007) or *Noctilio* sp. (Barak and Yom-Tov, 1989) hunt in a similar fashion while they drown in a sea of sounds and echoes (Moss and Surlykke, 2001). Supposedly, it should be impossible in certain environments to do so since calls from all the bats make it impossible to map out where exactly the prey is (Moss and Surlykke, 2010). Yet, the bats make careful alterations in the spectral characterisation of the calls while flying with other bats and competing for a

¹⁶ This need not be accurate, since stereophonic perception of sound is still conceived in a spatial manner. The point merely is merely to imagine Bagel’s cognitive faculties as so different from ours that it would come up with terms equivalent to “Three dimensional” but in the Auditory realm.

single prey item (Chiu et al., 2009). This alone is a display of the sheer effectiveness of the bat's perceptual system.

Furthermore, the magnitude of these alterations depends on the baseline similarity of calls produced by the individual bats when flying alone. Adjustments of up to 8 kHz are made when two bats fly closely together (Surlykke and Moss, 2000), aiding target detection (Bates et al. (2008). Similar to how hunting practices differ in two-legged visual beings, free-tailed bats *Tadarida brasiliensis*, prevent mutual interference of calls by avoiding the emission of sounds at the same time (Jarvis et al., 2010). Sometimes, as human hunters mistake rustling leaves to be a predator, the bats get tricked as well, believing the sudden movement of small pebbles to be an insect (Griffin, 1958). The human realises that it is not a snake or a boar but withered leaves under the spell of the wind. The bat, as well on repeated occasions does not respond to the movements of pebbles as it recognises intelligently the difference between artificial movement and an insect buzzing around (Griffin et al., 1965).

When hunting individually, bats focus their calls, akin to how eyes bring specific objects into focus in one's field of vision, selectively sampling echoes from their environment. Phyllostomid bats can move their nose-leaf - a fleshy structure at the base of their nose - akin to adjusting one's gaze to independently steer their call beam towards specific objects (Weinbeer and Kalko, 2007). Other bats control the direction of their call beam and the space they investigate by moving their heads. Constant Frequency bats employ a distinct strategy to distinguish echoes from vegetation and insect prey, listening for Doppler shifts created by prey wing movements (Schnitzler and Flieger, 1983; von der Emde and Schnitzler, 1986, 1990; von der Emde and Menne, 1989). Such is the diversity of bats and the variety of echolocation solutions to the perceptual challenges that arise in a complex acoustic scene.

Let us also bring our attention to how the world itself is structured in ways which can only trouble a bat. The neotropical vine *Mucuna holtonii*, relies on phyllostomid bat *Glossophaga commissarisi* for pollination, guiding these bats to its fresh flowers using a tiny concave structure that functions akin to an acoustic cat's eye. This structure reflects a significant portion of the bats' echolocation calls back to them, effectively directing their attention to the virgin blooms, thus making it quite difficult for them to discriminate between plants (Helvesen and Helvesen, 1999). Like natural caves, which only make sense to be used as "shelter" by human beings or still-ponds serving the function of natural "mirrors", these flowers can literally be thought of as mirrors for the bats, blinding them temporarily.

Now that we have somewhat of an idea of the complexity of the bat's world, we can try discussing how this sophistication must be necessarily different from ours if bats were to exist as essentially hearing beings. Think about the dependence of our objective conceptions upon spatial extensionality as a basis. Categories such as distance and motion, even shape and size, are conceived only in terms of spatial extension. They involve the stretching out of space, voids which are filled, directions which are traversed. This would not make sense in the case of Auditory perception, for it entails intensity instead of extension.

Here is an example that would make this clear: Imagine a car that is approaching us on the road while we stand on a sidewalk. It closes in, finally stands in our vision for a brief moment in front of us, then takes off, receding into the horizon. In objective terms, we would speak of the car as having followed a line of motion, with each point upon this line distinct from the one prior and also from the next. The size of the car increases in the space it occupies in our vision as it closes in on this line of motion, reaching a maximum when it is right in front of us, then shrinking away as it races past. These are the qualities which Nagel terms to be primary and thus objective in VFN as discussed earlier. However, there is no way of conceptualising them in the bat's auditory perception. We could imagine this if we were to close our eyes as the car approaches us while it honked continuously - take this to be an analogue of what the bat does to survey its surroundings (Griffin, 1988. Pereboom, 1994, Simmons, 1989). In this case, we would hear a sound with increasing intensity, which, after a point, would reach a maximum, and then get slowly numbed. The experience of the car would thus not be based in extensionality in the spatial sense, rather, it would be a matter of intensity as one is able to recognise.

The car as a sound does not "move". It only piles up upon itself while we are oriented towards it; sounds fold upon sounds resulting in more sound. If the bat were to exist in a world as such, it would be confounded by the claim that it was supposed to understand its subjective experiences as physical phenomena. The reason we find physical phenomena to be a natural way of explanation and understanding is that we are dominated by ocular faculties of understanding, and so, we immediately reduce the car-as-sound, situated in an auditory field, understood as an intensity rather than as spatial extension, to categories such as size, motion, shape, and distance, resulting in an understanding of the car no different than if we were to see it¹⁷. For, Nagel, however, a sophisticated sense of frequency and decibels would be equivalent to a primary quality like size or motion since it will not reduce the former to the latter given its sensitivity of auditory cognitive capacities. And so, the world of the bat as described above, if the bat were to be an auditory being, would be entirely based in intensities instead of extensionality in the spatial sense.

¹⁷ In fact, so dominant are these visual faculties of understanding, that in human echolocators auditory cognition takes place partly in the calcarine cortex (also called V1) which, in sighted individuals, is responsible for vision (Thaler et al. 2011).

Consider again the point raised earlier in section 3.1. It could be the case that we conceive of some qualities of the world as so-called primary qualities. Since, for a fact, they would be for us the most general and centerless point of view to represent the world. At the same time, it could be the case that the bat embodies a world draped in an entirely different set of primary qualities which, for it, are the most general and centerless way of viewing the world. This, although it goes against Nagel in a significant capacity, still retains his conception of objectivity.

“It is quite suspicious as well, Mr writer-of-this-essay” Bagel could go on to say, “that Mr Nagel conceives of the world as centerless, not belonging particularly to a human point of view. Yet, somehow, he only seems to imagine the most objective ways of viewing the world as always accessible to the human”. Indeed, I would agree with Bagel. There is a tension in Nagel’s own intuitions. At points, he expresses that limitations always harrow objectivity and that there is a world that extends beyond it; perhaps one that cannot even be accommodated within it (refer to VFN, p. 14 and 91). But then he writes statements such as “Even if we acknowledge the existence of distinct and irreducible perspectives, the wish for a unified conception of the world doesn't go away” (VFN, P. 17), and that “The aim of such understanding [in the context of Mental objectivity], the deeper aim it shares with the reductionist views which I reject, is to go beyond the distinction between appearance and reality by including the existence of appearances in an elaborated reality. Nothing will then be left outside” (VFN, p. 18). This should make clear that on some occasions, Nagel wishes to negate the hegemony of the objective impulse, on others, he gladly admits to it. It seems that he revokes the privilege of omniscience from the individual only to cleverly preserve it in the role that the individual - that is Man - can take up¹⁸.

Bagel articulates it better as he experiences a moment of self-realisation -

The monarchy of Bats had an absolute leader once. Then one day, the dictator stepped down from his position and said, “You know what, it is time for the common man to choose his leader. We shall now have democracy in this country!” And then continued to rule by winning the elections every five years or so because no one else would dare step up for presidential candidacy. Thus, he still retained his power by displacing it outside himself. Mr Nagel’s subject, that is Man, is not supposed to be at the centre of every worldview. Yet, he, like our dictator who by happenstance keeps on winning,

¹⁸ In the chapter “The Incompleteness of Objective Reality” (See VFN, p. 25-27) Nagel does consider possible points of view which we still cannot take up. But he greatly undermines them by considering the example of possibly never knowing how “scrambled eggs” taste to a “cockroach”. He then acknowledges the same issue with knowing the values, goals, and more “subjectively” important features of life as well. I would like to point out here that the most dreadful kind of incompleteness of objectivity still remains unaddressed by Nagel. Not the kind which is objective but seemingly not important at all (the former), neither those which are subjective and so pose no real threat to the paradigm of objectivity anyway (the latter), but those which are objective and still inadequate. It is to overlook this, that makes Nagel ascribe physical conceptions of the world to an entirely alien being.

can always take up any Objective point of view. For Man to truly not be the centre of the world would be for an objective point of view to exist which he cannot even take up, but can only be taken up by a radical other; an entire representational aspect of the world to which certain beings have access to while Man remains excluded from it. Such an imagination, unfortunately, does not strike Mr Nagel, so he does injustice to our world, just as I, in my naivete, did injustice to the worm's.

For this reason, I wish to call for the consideration of the possibility of ways to conceptualise the world - objective ways, I must say - which are not accessible in the least to the Human, not even in describable terms. At times, Nagel acknowledges this only till he does not, which is the case in the bat paper. The result is the acknowledgement of the bat's otherness and its world, but conceiving the latter in a particularly human conception of objectivity - in a realm of abstraction that can only be reached, in a movement undertaken by understanding, through the Ocular as its starting point.

Nagel's blunder - if the accusation is deemed valid - is that he acknowledges so emphatically the radical nature of the bat's subjective world, but concerning what underlies it, that is, the bat's own conception of the world, he does not consider the bat at all, simply ascribing to it a physicalist vocabulary in the first excerpt and even claiming that it would understand physical phenomena in the second. Thus reducing the unfamiliar down to the familiar. Nagel could have furthered the same sense of caution that he unravels in the context of his attack on reductionist methods of studying consciousness; one human - a neuroscientist - cannot say to another, "You are neurons firing inside your skull", expecting the other human to conceptualise their reality the same way (See also, Churchland 1988). However, in the case of a human and the bat, he uncritically ascribes to the latter our own sense of objectivity without considering that it might just disagree with us. Of course, it could be difficult to imagine how exactly they would disagree, but a lack of imagination does not indicate a lack of possibility. Another articulation of the same would be as follows: If bats spoke one day (uncritically, we, of course, imagine if they spoke, they would speak English, not Swahili), and insisted upon the validity of an entirely different epistemic framework - something akin to physics but based in auditory phenomenology - there would be no way for us to claim the primary qualities of our world to be more objective than theirs. A brief consideration of the bat's world is undertaken in section 4, which might make one sympathise with a disagreement of this kind.

One last concern in regard to the first excerpt: It could be the case that one finds the schematic ascription to be unproblematic since Nagel is merely utilising human categories of recognition to describe the bat's perceptual apparatus, not claiming that the bat itself would think of its perception that way. If the bat were an object we

were describing - something that exists en-soi - my objection would indeed be uncalled for. Since objects cannot have an alternate set of descriptions for themselves. In contrast, an intelligent bat, or the Martian - which exists pour-soi - would have a means for self-recognition. It is this self-recognition we deny when we ascribe to their perceptual apparatus physicalist terms. An intuition pump for this concern would be a scenario where a group of colonisers - think of the original Europeans who set foot upon American soil - choose a certain description for the native inhabitants - the “Indians”. We would find it frustratingly annoying if the Europeans were to say, “Well, this is a mere functional description we have for them because we see them as so and so”, even though, we recognise that for the Europeans, this description would make sense for they think they sailed east instead of west. It would also not be a problem if what they called the “Indians” were objects existing en-soi. However, this is not the case. The “Indians” might have their own set of descriptions for themselves and might seek recognition through that instead of what the Europeans ascribe to them. The casual attitude of recognising the native Americans as “Indians” is thus dangerous, for the Colonisers risk conceiving of this representation in a way that corresponds to reality or mirrors it when the ascription is, in fact, purely practical. The point here is not a suggestion against describing the bat’s perceptual apparatus as “three-dimensional” or “forward” but a suggestion against an attitude that merely for the reason of this being a physical description which is objective for us, it an aspect of the bat which is “familiar” instead of “unfamiliar”. The danger schematism of this kind poses has nothing to do with the extent of their functional utility but with the kind of intuitions they reinforce; in Nagel’s case, the intuition that a bat or a Martian will understand physical phenomena to be the objective case in the world. When, in reality, even if the bat were to as familiar as hearing sounds just like us to make sense of the world, differing only in its radically different conception of the world, it might still conceive of an abstract centerless and general world quite differently than us.

Alternate objective descriptions are not to be found only in inter-species conceptions of the world. Think of Newtonian physics and Einstein’s relativity. Both are objective ways to describe the world, yet for certain predictive (The orbit of Mercury) and conceptual reasons (Action from a distance), we prefer the latter to be “more” objective. It is almost certain that we are still to find - if we do - an objective description that is physical, which reconciles Quantum physics with Macroscopic physics (Powell, 2015). The question of what exactly physicalism is - whether the world is particles or waves, pure energy (whatever that would mean) or matter, or both, or nothing, or all of it, or something entirely else - is itself also not clear (See, Stoljar, 2023 in the SEP). Thus, we must ask ourselves, if we ourselves are not sure as to what an objective description of our world is, how are we so sure that an alien being would agree with our one-out-of-a-hundred-different-possible-description of a world that it might not even share in the first place? Nagel mildly addresses something similar

when he talks about the “seeds of objection” being present in successful cases of reduction. He writes, “For in discovering sound to be, in reality, a wave phenomenon in air or other media, we leave behind one viewpoint to take up another, and the auditory, human or animal viewpoint that we leave behind remains unreduced. Members of radically different species may both understand the same physical events in objective terms, and this does not require that they understand the phenomenal forms in which those events appear to the senses of members of the other species. Thus, it is a condition of their referring to a common reality that their more particular viewpoints are not part of the common reality that they both apprehend. The reduction can succeed only if the species-specific viewpoint is omitted from what is to be reduced” (1974, p. 445). A subjectivist response would be one which points out that the Objective facts themselves are imbued with certain attitudes, although this is a line of reasoning that has been avoided in the essay. I would only point out in the end that given the diversity of Objective descriptions in the Physical realm itself, why can we not consider another type of objectivity, finally recognising the bat as the alien thing that it really is? And more importantly, perhaps, recognise how alien the world of the alien is as well.

4. Conclusion

The unfamiliar is sometimes more unfamiliar than the ways we imagine it. To pursue the ways in which an auditory being could be alien, we imagined it as familiar at the same time as it was alien since we have access to the realm of the auditory, but cannot cognize the world through it with much sophistication. Given that we conceive Objectivity as Nagel conceives of it - explicated in section 3.1 - we were able to contemplate the possibility of the radical alterity of an auditory being or a Martian not just in regard to its subjective point of view but also the objective point of view. There is no reason to think that there must be one means to represent the world objectively - something with which Nagel also seems to agree. However, he seems to ascribe physicalist vocabulary to the Martian and the bat, as if they would simply share this conception of the objective world with us, just as Nagel in the prologue does with the worm’s phenomenology.

Discerning this tension in his intuitions and bringing them to the surface, we argued for the possible case where Nagel, in his desire towards - which he admits to - a “unified conception of the world” from which “nothing escapes”, attempts to revoke the privilege of omniscience from the individual human only to cleverly preserve it, albeit unintentionally of course, in the role that the individual can take up. Thus, the accusation is articulated

of which one may be the judge: both Nagel and Bagel recognise the alien in their world but fail to recognise the world of the alien. This, I hope, is now clear in the case of both Bagel and Nagel.

We also explored the complexity and diversity of the bat's world, unravelling at least one way, that is, the difference between the Auditory and the Physical in terms of Intensity and Extension, as to how the objective conception of the world for an auditory being must be necessarily different. Furthermore, we inquired into - a little too briefly, I admit - the internal struggles of physical objectivity itself, something which Nagel seems to discuss at length in VFN (see the section on physical objectivity) but does not pay much heed to in the bat paper.

We did all of this while taking for granted other aspects of Nagel's discourse, such as his idea of Objectivity, the conception of Objectivity as limited, and the vocabulary of the Subjective and the Objective point of view. Disagreements with Nagel's idea of Objectivity itself were kept aside. At the same time, arguments and examples refrained from positing a positive conception of objectivity, which differed from Nagel's. The result of this, I hope, was an analysis built within Nagel's discourse that still managed to raise important questions concerning his ascription of physical objectivity, that is, Physicalism, upon alien - or as the bat is imagined in this essay - partially alien beings.

Epilogue - Cognitive capacity expressed as Cognitive contents

One could accuse the essay of still imposing humanistic conceptions upon the bat. "If we cannot ascribe ocular categories onto the bat, why ascribe auditory categories as well? The bat could be even more alien than that! Not residing in this sense but very comfortably and conveniently still within the other". Sure, the bat's echolocation could be considered a different sense altogether. I have merely imagined the bat as an auditory being to point out how there exists already within our grasp a world that is quite alien to us. We could have done this by taking up any other sense that we possess, it just so happens that we find in the world a creature which uses, apparently, what we perceive to be one of our underprivileged senses to navigate through the world and does it just as efficiently as we do with our dominant sense, that is vision. It is this empirical leverage of the bat's echolocation that makes it a special example to argue for alien phenomenology; the alien is present in our familiar gaze but with a possibly quite unfamiliar world of the alien, which we must not mistake to be familiar at all. If the bat is an auditory being, and imagines the world as comprised of sounds, good. If it is even more

alien than that, which I believe it is, even better! After all, this is what Nagel thinks as well, keeping aside the physicalist ascriptions of course. It is in this way that he is right after all, however, my aim throughout has been to show that his own intuitions do not do this conclusion proper justice. The aim of the essay, then, is to convince someone of this final conclusion in light of more appropriate intuitions, aided by the mediation of the auditory and its imagination. The latter is thus not a point that is argued itself, but what helps the point to be argued.

The vocabulary of cognitive contents and cognitive capacities is equally problematic, if I had to argue independently of Nagel's paper, the point could very easily be made in section 2 itself. I considered throughout the exposition of section 2 only a third-person point of view, where we assume access to the minds of the individual subject to cognitive contents and cognitive capacities. However, this analysis could look very different from a first-person point of view, making it practically the case that the cognitive contents themselves differ from point of view to point of view. Consider the famous meme from 2015 "Is the dress black and blue or gold and white?"¹⁹ The majority thought the dress to be black and blue (b&b), and a considerable minority thought the dress to be gold and white (g&w). Scientifically, it was concluded that the dress "in fact" was b&b. We could thus ascribe to the experience of the dress the cognitive contents b&b and leave the cognitive capacities to interpret it however they so wish. The dress could, therefore, be interpreted by some as g&w or by others as a combination of colours x&y, and this would be on the part of cognitive capacities. But think about the person - I am one of them - who sees the dress as g&w. It is quite literally the case for me that my cognitive contents are not b&b. This could be for a number of reasons, which science cites; white balance, picture warmth, my predisposition to perceiving the picture and so on. All of these would be factored for by my cognitive capacities. But these cognitive capacities, for me, seem to be expressing themselves as a radical shift in the nature of Qualia - cognitive content - itself. So radical is this change, that if someone, say my friend Himanshu, were to wear the dress, he might wear black heels since he perceives it to be b&b, whereas I might fancy white or golden heels since for me the dress is g&w. And we would continue to argue how each of our fashion sense is incoherent. Yet, perhaps we were supposed to recognise - other than the fact that feminine clothing is probably not our forte in fashion- that b&b and g&w share some baser or substantial characteristic in common, that is, the concept "colour" and conclude that even though our cognitive contents seem so different, they are of the same kind in some way, with the difference being factored for by the cognitive capacities.

¹⁹ See, [YouTube - The Famous Dress That Broke the Internet: A Scientific Breakdown](#)

All of this sounds very vague, and I believe it is. There is no way, from a first-person point of view, to make sense of cognitive contents and cognitive capacities. To reiterate what has been explicated till now in another way, the cognitive content might be of the same kind and be posited as simply the same between the two instances from a third-person point of view. But, the change in constitution, revelation of hidden content, and shape-shifting of parts into a different whole, results in a kind of experience where the subject might as well say that there is nothing same at all from a first-person point of view. The latter is, of course, quite hard to imagine since we have a tough time believing that someone might experience “sound”, which, to them, might seem as if it is “not-sound”. Griffin seems to suggest something similar - albeit within the realm of the five human senses - when he writes about human echolocators not even realising “that the information telling them of the proximity of obstacles comes through their ears” and when he writes, “Our brains are far from being specialized for echolocation, and when deprived of one of the principal sensory systems, it may be a natural tendency for information arriving by channels not normally exploited to be linked with mechanisms of perception ordinarily employed in vision or tactile feeling of objects. If so, bats or dolphins deprived of the ability to echolocate might imagine that they were detecting food by this, to them, predominant sensory channel when they were actually seeing or even tasting it” (Griffin, 1988). Griffin’s reflections can be translated into the discourse of Cognitive Contents and Cognitive Capacities as follows: The cognitive capacities of vision in the case of human echolocators are so overbearing in their expression as cognitive contents that it would seem to the subject that its cognitive contents are constituted of the visual instead of the auditory. It goes the other way around in the case of bats, where the auditory cognitive capacities are so specialised that the bat might as well take its cognitive contents to be auditory instead of what it really is, that is, visual. This could be the case with the bat as well, where its cognitive capacities differ so much that for it, the “same” cognitive content, the same “kind” of qualia, could be very different; an experience of a sound could be X or Y; something entirely unimaginable and totally alien phenomenological, thus leaving us with the same conclusion. We have recognised the alien, the world of the alien, not so much. Hopefully, this will clear the ways in which we - in the context of this essay, Nagel - violate our own intuitions; the unfamiliar is rendered more unfamiliar than it was hitherto conceived.

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Auroville and Cosmopolitan Spirituality

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Abstract

On 28 February, 1968, Auroville, the 'City of Dawn', was formally established under The Mother's guidance, while Aurobindo Ghosh's philosophy and writings provided the ideological framework for its genesis. Auroville was envisioned as a "universal town", a "new society", an "experimental township", a "laboratory for the conscious evolution of a city", and "a city of the future on ancient land". Two years later, in 1970, The Mother wrote a set of general guidelines titled "To Be a True Aurovillian". It is an interesting document because it sheds light on how Auroville was discursively imagined, created and brought to life. Drawing on recent research, this paper will attempt to locate Auroville within the modern transnational discourse of Indian spirituality. It will be interesting to see how the categories of the 'spiritual', the 'religious' and the 'secular' were negotiated, especially when they intersected with nationalism. In the process, this paper will also try to unravel how traditional religious concepts of Vedanta came to coexist with modern and secular formulations like Aurobindo's 'supermind' and 'integral yoga', giving rise to the psycho-spiritual revolution of the "Westernized East".

Keywords: Auroville, Aurobindo Ghosh, The Mother, Cosmopolitan Spirituality, Indian spirituality

1. Introduction

When historians of modern India speak of Aurobindo, there is a kind of starkness which characterizes his early and later years. At a young age, he left India to study in London. On his return, he was employed by the Maharaja of Baroda for 13 years and pursued revolutionary action against the British on the side. The Partition of Bengal was a pivotal moment, pulling him into the National Movement as an 'Extremist' leader. It was only in his later years (1910) that he retired from politics and went to Pondicherry to focus entirely on spiritual work. In the next 40 years, he evolved his own formula of spiritual practice called 'Integral Yoga' and beliefs that stemmed from mystical revelations.

Aurobindo's philosophical work '*The Life Divine*' is a rich and detailed exposition of his spiritual ideas and beliefs. He uses the metaphysical-spiritual terminology of the Indian tradition to talk of the Supreme Being, the *Brahman*, as the ultimate ground of the universe. But as he goes further, he breaks with Shankara's life-negating philosophy of *mayavada* and asserts that "individual salvation can have no real sense if existence in the cosmos is itself an illusion" (Aurobindo, 1942, p. 43). Aurobindo assigns importance to the individual as the driver of his own "supreme good". One of his most important philosophical contributions is that of the 'supermind'. Aurobindo describes it as the intermediary vastness between *sacchidananda* and the divided consciousness of Mind. The former is represented by the phrase "truth, consciousness, bliss" and constitutes the indivisible consciousness that sees no distinctions. *Sacchidananda* (a Vedic concept) is not an innovation of Aurobindo, but the supermind is.

Any assessment of Aurobindo's metaphysical and ontological beliefs must also take reference from the intellectual influence exerted by the developing body of nationalist thought in India at the time. It is interesting to note that he advocates the transformation of the lower consciousness (of the divided Mind) in the light of the higher that is gradually attained in order to reach the Ultimate Reality (*brahman*). It is reminiscent of the Indian intellectual milieu at the turn of the 20th century when the Extremist leadership (Aurobindo being one of the leaders) arrived on the scene and asserted their faith in the masses to achieve 'swaraj' for the country. Their faith in collective action and initiative was in sharp contrast to the "mendicant politics" of the moderates which believed in mild Constitutional agitation and supporting the colonial state in its endeavours. Similarly, Aurobindo's idea of the instrumentality of evil for the evolution of divine life can be seen as a derivative of the opposition created between the colonial British apparatus and the Indian people, causing the latter to develop modern ideas, self-confidence and political agency.

The Life Divine first appeared serially in the monthly review *Arya* between August 1914 and January 1919. It can be assumed that Aurobindo's philosophical ideas were still at a nascent stage of development then. After he died, in the 1960s, Auroville, the 'City of Dawn', was established under the guidance of The Mother, Aurobindo's closest disciple and companion. It was envisioned as a "universal town", a "new society", an "experimental township", a "laboratory for the conscious evolution of a city", and "a city of the future on ancient land". Aurobindo's philosophy and writings provided the ideological framework for its genesis.

Through this paper, an attempt will be made to study a document, titled "To Be a True Aurovillian" in the light of Aurobindo's own ruminations as well as the transnational discourses of modern spirituality. The latter have gained wide social currency in the post-Osho world and involve significant concept processing in order to reach wider audiences. The Auroville document was written by the Mother in 1970, 2 years after Auroville was established and can provide a glimpse into how Auroville was discursively imagined. In the process, several uneasy negotiations among the categories of the spiritual, the religious and the secular come to light.

2. Aurobindo & Modern Discourse of Indian Spirituality

Indian theorists tend to reinforce the cross-currents and fluidity among the Western categories of secular, religious and spiritual when they discuss India's mystical traditions. Many modern spiritual *gurus* claim that theistic religion is not strictly separated from individualized spirituality. Instead, as Ravi Shankar (2020, p. 35) has emphasized, "religion is the skin of the banana and spirituality is the fleshy inner fruit". For them, the rise of spirituality does not signal the erosion of religious faith but implies the deep, personal rooting and internalization of a religiously defined spiritual values and ethical system (Gooptu, 2016).

Some theorists like Vijendra Singh (2019) have argued that, for important national figures like Vivekananda, Gandhi and Radhakrishnan, the domain of the secular often became the domain of realizing the spiritual. For instance, Dr. Radhakrishnan insisted on spiritualizing politics in the light of religion to remedy many modern problems, such as religious bigotry and chauvinistic nationalism (Minor, 1981). According to Singh, Indian spirituality defies the contours of the Western conception of modern secularity, hinging on the differentiation of social and political domains from religion. He relies on Charles Taylor (2007) to make his argument, who

associates secularization with the transformation of the modern social imaginary in the West. It involves the rise of 'exclusive humanism' as a self-sufficient human goal, without reference to transcendental ideas of fullness that characterize the Judeo-Christian tradition, like serving God. A second crucial change involves the dominance of 'imminent frame', where natural order and its laws are understood in their own terms, without any reference to transcendental reality or metaphysics.

In the context of Aurobindo, it is important to highlight his aversion to not only mass movements but also to his teachings taking the form of an organized religion. "Integral Yoga" was one of his most definitive ideological contributions that emphasized spiritual evolution unto perfection through psychological tools and powers of the mind, not asanas. He was concerned with inner reflection, divine work and self-perfection. For Western theorists, Aurobindo is foundational to the New Age in India, or the "Westernized East". But in what terms can Aurobindo's philosophy be understood?

Many Western theorists locate variant discourses of Indian spirituality within the framework of contemporary forms of Hindu nationalism. Travis Webster (2016) takes the example of Aurobindo's integral approach to illustrate this. Based on their understanding of the Upanishads, Advaita Vedanta and Shankara's doctrine of *maya*, Indologists held the view that for the Hindus, all creation is an illusion and that Hinduism is world-negating. Instead of drawing on Shankara's understanding of *maya* to counter the Orientalist view, Aurobindo attempted to portray the world in terms of spiritual evolution and thereby suggested that Indian spirituality does not deny the reality of the world but is rather world-affirming. He talked of spiritual intuition in the form of a "supermind" as the creative power in the universe that manifests itself gradually as individuals open themselves up to altered states of consciousness and expand their intuitive capacity. In Aurobindo's formulation, the endpoint of this process is the 'divinization of humanity', which he sees as the "spiritual destiny of humankind".

According to Webster (2016), the translation of indigenous concepts into "spiritual nationalism" involves a significant transformation of Indian traditions. This means that as new discursive traditions are constructed within the rubric of 'Neo-Hinduism', traditional categories of Vedanta are decontextualized. One instance of this is the myriad ways in which Aurobindo "oversimplifies" Shankara and his doctrine of *maya* (Fort, 1990). A second instance concerns the discrepancy in traditional and modern conceptions of "divinization of humanity". According to Eck (1990), the traditional conception is derived from the Vedic axiom (*mahāvākya*) "you are

that” (tat tvam asi), which functions as a verbal means of knowledge, transmitted in teaching lineages (guru-śiṣya-paramparā) of the Advaita sampradāya. But for Vivekananda and Aurobindo, self-realization inevitably requires some transcendental intuition or superconsciousness.

Some other Western theorists have tried to investigate why modern Hindu religious movements have a tendency to wrestle with the category of the "Hindu" in their rhetoric and practices. Instead of aligning themselves with Hindu religiosity, which is seen as anti-modern, backwards, orthodox, ritualistic, and hierarchical, most modern gurus employ a “universalistic rhetoric” usually derived from Advaita Vedanta and hallmark Vedic maxims. These universalistic philosophies are couched in the language of spirituality but dissociated from the greater context of Hinduism in order to resonate with diverse and disparate audiences (Huffer, 2011). For instance, the head of the Hindu American Foundation famously remarked on the commonplace marketing of Hinduism as spirituality when he said, "our issue is that yoga has thrived, but Hinduism has lost control of the brand" (Vitello, 2010). In the context of Aurobindo and Vivekananda, using universalist rhetoric and neo-Vedantic concepts may have been a nationalist strategy to popularize Hinduism and Indian culture in the West.

Aurobindo is often seen as the kind of foreigner who returned from Europe and discovered his own tradition in Pondicherry and also “retreated from politics into mysticism” in his later years (Masselos, 1972, p. 90). The rhetorical content of his teachings cannot be compared to Vivekananda, whose mission was to present Hinduism as a highly ethical and rational religion to the Western world. To this end, he formulated a Universal Religion inspired by Yoga, marketed Yoga as India’s spiritual gift to the world and popularized an eclectic understanding of Advaita Vedanta. However, it is also well known that Aurobindo was heavily influenced by the teachings of Vivekananda and formulated his own ideas in reference to him. In his memoirs, Aurobindo recalls having undergone a “miraculous transformation” at Alipore Jail in Calcutta when Vivekananda came to him in his visions to share his knowledge of the intuitive mentality. Thus, the nationalist and secular content of Vivekananda’s philosophy is carried forward in Aurobindo (Purani, 1960, p. 209).

It is widely maintained that the origins of modern spirituality are connected to secularization since both provided desirable alternatives to institutionalized religion in the West in the 19th century. However, many theorists since then have problematized this conception. For instance, Peter van der Veer argues that the rise of spirituality as a universal concept distinguished from the religious and the secular is in fact, contradicted by its deployment in variant nationalist discourses. As shown above, Vivekananda used the Indologists’ insistence on

India's spiritual essence to reorient traditional Vedanta (using secular semantics) in order to meet nationalist ends: oversee its diffusion in the West, generate a positive Hindu self-understanding at home through a 'spiritual renaissance', and employ yoga as an emancipatory political tool.

The greatest contribution of Vivekananda and Aurobindo, and later, Ramdev and Ravi Shankar, lies in their ability to comfortably navigate the dichotomy of tradition and secular modernity by replacing it with transcultural modes of religious contact and transfer. They are called "cosmopolitan gurus" by Webster (2016) because they successfully sidestep the "clash of civilizations" and "great divide" discourses on Hinduism, modernity, and Westernization. For instance, routes to highly arousing states of superconscience (of Vivekananda) or supermind (of Aurobindo) lie at the intersection of Western interest in Yoga and Hindu yogis interested in Western sciences of the mind. The emphasis on transcendental intuition represents "cosmopolitan fabrications" that are syncretized with the "Yoga-Vedanta" syntagm manufactured by Vivekananda in order to elevate the purchase of spiritual discourses in the West. Aurobindo's spiritual psychology represents a similar blend of Eastern and Western mysticism.

3. "To be a True Aurovillian" Document

From the foregoing discussion, it becomes clear that the rise of spirituality as a universal concept is a distinctly modern phenomenon. Although it travels globally, "its trajectory differs from place to place as it is inserted into different historical developments" (van der Veer, 2014). Through a reading of the document "To be a True Aurovillian", this essay aims to probe the following questions: What form does spirituality take in the conception of Auroville? How secular and religious is this form?

First, we must address the vital question of who speaks through this document. "To Be a True Aurovillian" was authored by the Mother in 1970, two years after Auroville was founded, to guide the Aurovillians on how to live in the world and for the Divine at the same time. Mira Richard Alfassa, affectionately called The Mother, was Aurobindo's most intimate disciple and companion and was claimed by Aurobindo to be the incarnation of Shakti (the Divine Mother). After Aurobindo's death, it was Alfassa who conceptualized Auroville as an experimental city of the future, with the purpose of hastening the natural evolution towards human perfection. Aurobindo's philosophy and writings provided general theological support for Auroville's creation (Shinn, 1984), while The Mother's obstinate belief that a new divinized world was possible pushed the project forward.

She provided general process guidelines for the project and invigorated it with her vision of a place that belonged to no one particular but humanity as a whole, where non-compulsory education, cooperative work and integral yoga would lead to individual and collective progress towards universal harmony.

Another important consideration relates to how Auroville is understood by those who live and work there. Put differently, how is Auroville assimilated into the imagination of the people? Here, Maurice Bloch's concept of the 'transcendental social' may be immensely useful (Block, 2012, p. 114). His cognitive model seeks to explain how religion and social structure have a "permanence which negates the fluidity of life" and, therefore, possess the ability to transcend it. What we tend to call the transcendental or religious, he argues, is a realm much more solely focused on the idealized roles and groups generated out of the imagination. Thus, "what the transcendental social requires is the ability to live very largely in the imagination" (Bloch, 2008). The cognitive basis for being a "true Aurovillian" can be conceptualized using Maurice Bloch's assertion that for spiritual seekers, it is precisely the "omnipresence of the imaginary in the everyday" that lifts the supermind into the flux of the transcendental social. Spiritual work, rooted in the human cognitive capacity of imagination, is codified in the document under study:

4. Work, even manual work, is something indispensable for the inner discovery...if one does not put his consciousness into matter, the latter will never develop. [One should organize one's life] according to an inner consciousness, for if one lets life go on without subjecting it to the control of the higher consciousness, it becomes fickle and inexpressive. (The Mother, 1970)

The ethos of social service has a long history in the subcontinent. *Sewa*, understood as a mode of accreting religious merit, took a more sophisticated form in the colonial period. *Sewa* was undertaken in the service of society, community, and the nation, often in an ascetic modality of self-sacrifice, self-abnegation, and renunciation (Watt, 2005). Ethos of service or *sewa* was central to Vivekananda's Ramakrishna Mission and remains integral to the New Spirituality of Sri Ravi Shankar, as also to modern Sikhism. Work as a secular category is codified with spiritual semantics by cosmopolitan gurus, who promote social work as a form of self-improvement and a source of pleasure, contentment, and spiritual well-being (Gooptu, 2016).

However, the "work" delineated in the document is different from the ethos of *sewa*. Social service is often tethered to socio-political purposes, undertaken for community reinvigoration or patriotic nation-building

(Fuller, 2009). On the other hand, divine work, as prescribed by the document, must be done in order to inculcate “an inner rhythm in harmony with the Divine Will”. This spiritualization of work is especially vital to Auroville because it is a “city-in-the-making” (Savitra, 1975): it relies on the labour, agency and initiative of the Aurovillians to develop itself. Thus, work is seen as a form of evolutionary progress, a means to the end of total transformation of the ‘supermind’, and not for personal well-being, profit or gain.

What distinguishes Auroville and its philosophy from other New Age movements is its treatment of the individual as a means to an end of spiritual perfection, instead of treating the individual as an end in itself, as secular modernity often demands in the form of ‘exclusive humanism’ (discussed above). Nandini Gooptu (2016) has shown how modern spiritual gurus like Ramdev and Ravi Shankar emphasize individual agency, personal empowerment, and reliance on one's own 'inner' resources and romanticize the autonomous citizen as the protagonist of a modern and modernizing nation. This simple laicized narrative is tailor-made to resolve modern middle-class problems: spirituality is increasingly marketed as a motivational tool for personality development and affirmative thinking and as a method of stress and anger management, practised by everyone from students to housewives and corporate executives to NGOs working with the disadvantaged (Nanda, 2011). The Auroville document, on the other hand, harkens back to the Orientalist understanding of traditional concepts of the Advaita-Vedanta, preaching self-control and rejection of desire as ingredients of self-discovery:

2. ...freedom must not be a new slavery to the ego, to its desires and ambitions. The fulfillment of one's desires bars the way to inner discovery which can only be achieved in the peace and transparency of perfect disinterestedness. (The Mother, 1970)

Such an understanding is also reminiscent of Buddha's ‘Four Noble Truths’ that posit desire as the cause of all suffering and call for the *nirodha* (cessation) of this *dukkha* (suffering) by letting go of the *taṇhā* (desires). Much like Buddha's teachings that challenged the Brahmanical obsession with rituals in favour of a strict and self-denying lifestyle in pursuit of spiritual liberation, the document rejects the materialism of the modern capitalist world:

3. The Aurovilian should lose the sense of personal possession. For our passage in the material world, what is indispensable to our life and to our action is put at our disposal according to the place we must occupy. The more we are consciously in contact with our inner being, the more are the exact means given to us. (The Mother, 1970)

At Auroville, ‘inner discovery’ is the chosen recipe for a new utopia. He, who seeks to build something new, must repudiate what is normative so that he may replace it with something new and (in his opinion) better. Here, the insistence on losing the sense of personal possession reflects disapproval of a culturally coded modality of capitalism by reinforcing the concept of *maya*, associated with Sankaradeva (founder of the Advaita school). Interestingly, that is where the similarity ends. Unlike Sankaradeva, the denial of desire and possessions does not imply that there must be a denial of life itself. It actually indicates the intention to reify a new model of thought and way of life. At Auroville, one’s station in life is not to be defined by the modern parameter of material prosperity but by how spiritually evolved they are. Similarly, modern insistence on work is maintained, but instead of work as a means to earn money or fulfil a passion, it becomes a means of spiritual actualization. The discursive production of Auroville involves significant concept processing in order to construct a spiritual worldview.

Auroville’s outlook does not conform to Charles Taylor’s idea of what ‘secularism’ must constitute. In the document, matter is not explained in the scientific terms of atoms and molecules, instead it insists that matter awaits conscious utilization, so that consciousness permeates everything and the supramental descends upon the world. Scientific evolution is syncretized with Aurobindo’s belief in spiritual perfection of mankind. However, the agency to bring about this transformation is vested in the individual and his inner development becomes instrumental to the process. Auroville and the Aurovillian are tied together inextricably, because it is only through the success of one (Aurovillian) that the other (Auroville) can realize its destiny. This concern with the individual’s soul (being) is shown in the very beginning of the document:

1. The first necessity is the inner discovery in order to know what one truly is behind social, moral, cultural, racial and hereditary appearances.

At the center there is a being, free, vast and knowing, who awaits our discovery and who ought to become the active center of our being and our life in Auroville. (The Mother, 1970)

Interestingly, this kind of dialectical tension (between the Aurovillian and Auroville) is similar to the one prescribed by Aurobindo in his writings – that between the Brahman and all forms of evil. According to him, evil (includes aggression, death, incapacity, suffering etc) is necessary for the evolution of divine life. The present incompatibility of the world and Brahman indicates that the world is evolving towards a future spiritual harmony, characterized as “a new heaven and a new earth” (Philips, 1985). Auroville was conceptualized to accelerate this growth towards divine perfection.

Members of Auroville often remark that it is an experimental city based on “inner spirit” rather than social contract. Whether it is a sound framework to build a city on or not is endlessly debated. In his work, Larry Shinn (1984) has shown how Auroville has remained “a disparate collection of settlements embodying social fragmentation, not unity”. From the beginning, it has prioritized personal initiative over putting accountability mechanisms in place. In the early years, there was no firm physical or social blueprint for Auroville. Similarly, about the *matrimandir* (“The Soul of Auroville”), it was said that it is “a living and evolving form revealing itself one step at a time, the next step becoming clear, focusing, only when the previous one has been fulfilled.” (Savitra, 1975) This promise of novelty and excitement of pioneership is coded in the document:

5. The whole earth must prepare itself for the advent of the new species, and Auroville wants to work consciously to hasten this advent.

6. Little by little it will be revealed to us what this new species must be, and meanwhile the best course is to consecrate oneself entirely to the Divine. (The Mother, 1970)

This part of the document is interestingly phrased. First, “the whole earth must prepare” indicates that Auroville is a global project. It seeks to transcend regional, national, and even cosmic boundaries by inventing the particular universalism of the supramental being that will one day envelop every atom of every being. Second, the phrase “advent of the new species” indicates the use of hyperbole to signify that a spiritually conscious individual and society would be drastically different, to the point of no recognition by the present one. The use of such language serves to portray the novelty of Auroville. If people believe what is happening at Auroville is unprecedented, it adds to its charisma, appeal and exoticism. Third, “little by little it will be revealed” indicates the dynamism of the Auroville project as something perennially ‘in-the-making’.

The most important advantage of a spiritual discourse so laden with possibility is its ability to inspire, engender and invent. It is a discourse that consciously sidesteps the dogmatism and rigidity of religious association. Devotion to the divine, a feature common to all religions of the world, is also found at Auroville, but the divine is not an object of worship or adulation but is an ideal that stems from the perfection of the self’s psychic being. All concepts and doctrines, whether borrowed from the Vedanta tradition or otherwise, receive spiritual codification in the document. Amanda J. Huffer (2011) has shown how the “transidiomatic theolinguistic register” of Advaita Vedanta philosophy enables culturally embedded spokespeople to transgress the

particularities of Hindu religiosity in order to speak to global audiences in terms of generalized ethics, morality, and humanism. The primary thrust throughout the document is on the individualistic “Yoga of self-perfection” as a means to herald the dawn of a new species, a new world, and a new life.

It must be emphasized that, although Auroville rejected formal religion, all Aurovilians are required to subscribe to a particular spiritual worldview. For the Mother, “‘spiritual’ teachings are those that agree with the teaching and evolutionary goals of Aurobindo and the Mother . . . if they do not do so, they are defined as ‘religious,’ not ‘spiritual.’” Robert N Minor (1999) argues that although the Mother swore by spirituality, her definition of spirituality as distinct from religion was ambiguous and self-serving.

4. Conclusion: Westernizing Eastern Discourses

Aurobindo was a product of the Indian Renaissance of the 19th century when modern ideas of humanism, rationality and nationalism began to circulate among the elite sections of society. Many social reformers attempted to reconcile modernity with what they saw as the “traditional Hindu essence”. Translation of important ancient religious texts, such as the Upanishads, Bhagwat Gita, etc., into English took place, and attempts were made to show that India had a history, literature and a civilizational conscience.

Vivekananda and Aurobindo were the products of this intellectual milieu and exhibited a zeal to build a bridge between the modern West and the colonial East. Aurobindo and his “supramental yoga” can be understood as a classic example of, what Eugene Taylor has called, an “East-West psycho-spiritual revolution”. Instead of focusing on asanas or breathing techniques, the emphasis is on psychological advancement through self-reflection. The suggested approaches – yoga of divine work, integral knowledge, divine love and self-perfection – can take one to supramentalization (i.e. realization of the supermind).

When we compare Aurobindo to Shankara, we see an attempt on the part of the former to revive the ancient philosophical tradition of Advaita Vedanta, first popularized by the latter. However, as a mystic to whom the truth about the universe was gradually revealed, Aurobindo also adds his own concepts and interpretations, not in chaste Sanskrit but in ornate English, in order to earn for Vedanta a place among the modern spiritual movements of the world. When we compare the Auroville document to Aurobindo’s philosophy, we can see a significant watering down of complex philosophical concepts and ideas. Although it is true that they both serve

entirely different purposes and have been engineered to achieve particular ends; the Auroville document has much more in common with cosmopolitan spiritual discourses than with Aurobindo's ideas. The emphasis is on spiritually coded secular categories of advancement, such as inner discovery, manual work and renunciation of desire. The use of terms like "divine", "higher consciousness", and "new species" are entirely decontextualized from their roots in the Hindu Vedanta tradition for comprehensibility across transnational populations. Accommodating diverse cultural norms has been a defining characteristic of the spiritual discourses of "Non-Traditional Modern Advaita Gurus" such as Aurobindo and the Mother, especially since the advent of Osho.

The document reads "At the center there is a being free, vast and knowing, who awaits our discovery and who ought to become the active center of our being and our life". It is clear that the indication is to the 'supermind', the dynamic intermediate quality that can help the individual realize Ultimate reality (*brahman*). However, rather than positing it as a "hypothetical, trans-experiential metaphysical postulate" (Chaudhuri, 1972), it is imagined in terms of a vague instrument of individualized divine purpose and meaning. At another place, reference is made to the discord between the inner and higher consciousness as the cause of life becoming "fickle and inexpressive". Such maxims have the advantage of functioning on various levels – since they can be extended like an umbrella to spiritualize anything from quotidian dissatisfaction (e.g., with work, routine, a distant partner etc), consumerist hollowness and lifestyle readjustments (eg, swearing off alcohol, becoming vegan etc). Thus, when we move from Shankara to Aurobindo, Indic concepts receive spiritualization without complete erasure, i.e. they remain tethered to religious postulates; however, in the hands of the Mother, there is wholesale decontextualization for ease of adaptability and marketability. What we see is a gradual Westernization of Eastern Discourses.

The "cosmopolitan fabrication" of Aurobindo's supramentalization or inner discovery through higher consciousness is flexible and universal. Since it is so vaguely described and relies heavily on the faculty of imagination and belief, it can be adjusted to any cultural idiom, social reality or progress trajectory. Travis Webster's emphasis on such discourses having elements of Western transpersonal psychology [spirituality] syncretized with derivative forms of traditional Advaita-Vedanta is immensely relevant because it eases the export of spirituality beyond regional or national borders. Auroville's cosmopolitan rhetoric has been apparent since inauguration day, when "persons from 124 nations placed handfuls of earth from their native lands in an urn situated at the centre of Auroville and thereby symbolically codified the goal of human unity and integration

Auroville sought to achieve.” (Shinn, 1984) At the same time, it can become dangerously easy to co-opt malleable spiritual discourses. For example, states may find it strategic to project their soft power through global townships like Auroville because they represent the ideals of human unity, peace and harmony.

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Appendix A: To Be a True Aurovillian

Written by The Mother on 13 June 1970, one of the foundational documents of Auroville, she explains how to live in the world and - for the Divine - at the same time. These ideals are what each Aurovillian keeps in one's heart and strives towards.

To be a True Aurovillian:

1. The first necessity is the inner discovery in order to know what one truly is behind social, moral, cultural, racial and hereditary appearances. At the centre, there is a being free, vast and knowing, who awaits our discovery and who ought to become the active centre of our being and our life in Auroville.
2. The fulfilment of one's desires bars the way to inner discovery, which can only be achieved in the peace and transparency of perfect disinterestedness. One lives in Auroville in order to be free from moral and social conventions; but this freedom must not be a new slavery to the ego, to its desires and ambitions.
3. The Aurovillian should lose the sense of personal possession. For our passage in the material world, what is indispensable to our life and to our actions is put at our disposal according to the place we must occupy. The more we are consciously in contact with our inner being, the more are the exact means given to us.
4. Work, even manual work, is something indispensable for inner discovery. If one does not work, if one does not put his consciousness into matter, the latter will never develop. To let the consciousness organize a bit of matter by means of one's body is very good. To establish order around oneself helps to bring order within oneself. One should organize one's life not according to outer and artificial rules but according to an organized inner consciousness, for if one lets life go on without subjecting it to the control of the higher consciousness, it becomes fickle and inexpressive. It is to waste one's time in the sense that matter remains without any conscious utilization.
5. The whole earth must prepare itself for the advent of the new species, and Auroville wants to work consciously to hasten this advent.
6. Little by little, it will be revealed to us what this new species must be, and meanwhile, the best course is to consecrate oneself entirely to the Divine.

[When this was to be published at the end of 1971, Mother added:]

The only true freedom is the one obtained by union with the Divine. One can unite with the Divine only by mastering one's ego.

Source: <https://auroville.org/page/a-true-aurovillian>

Sub-nationalism in Arunachal Pradesh: A Study Of Its Construction & Conceptualization

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Abstract

The Indian nation-state shows a wide variety of Sub-nationalism in its components. There have been different manifestations of the same, and the basis of such sub-nationalism has been the commonality of language, culture or even religion. However, in a society as diverse as Arunachal Pradesh, does a sub-nationalism truly exists has been a pertinent question. Thus, this article would be a study to find this out through the usage of subaltern documentation and politico-historical analysis. The paper will first explore the ethno-cultural dimensions of the state of Arunachal Pradesh, followed by exploring Arunachali history through interviews. Following this, it would elaborate upon AAPSU and its role in the state and finally present a conclusion.

Keywords: Arunachal Pradesh, Sub-nationalism, Subaltern documentation

1. Introduction

In binary terms, if one wishes to classify the many ethnic communities that reside in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, this could be done in the following Bodhic and Non-Bodhic, the former being communities following primarily Buddhism and the latter the rest remaining. The above binary is rather a surface-level understanding which does not capture the true essence of cultural-ethnic diversity in the state. For this, I present a new 4 fold classification; the first one is the Bodhic group, which is composed of both the two major

sects within the religion, Mahayana or, more specifically, one might say Vajrayana Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism; both practice the extreme corners of the state. The second is the Tani group; they are primarily found in the central region of Arunachal Pradesh; the commonality of this group is that the ethnic communities which come under this wider umbrella are said to have descended from a single human being called "Abo/Abu Tani" or "Father Human". The third is the Mishmic group, which comprises three ethnic communities, i.e. Idu Mishmi, Digaru and Miju Mishmi, and finally, there is the TCL group, or the Tirap, Changlang Longding group, communities in the South East region of Arunachal Pradesh, which has the border with Nagaland.

A state with such a wide array of ethnic diversity begs the question, how do people identify themselves? There are obvious reasons to think since there aren't many things that give the people of Arunachal Pradesh a singular shared identity like there is among other North East Indian states, be it Christian identity, linguistic identity or a dominant ethnic identity. The only commonality one sees is the racial feature among the diverse ethnic communities living in the state, but this is superficial as race is not a uniting factor in the shared identity among the people groups of Arunachal Pradesh. This leads us to a pertinent question: what does unite the people? The shared identity as "Indigenous Communities" of the state is the point of reference, which is the uniting point for the people of Arunachal Pradesh. This, in turn, leads to the contention against "The Outsider", who is to be at times deported, fought against, and, in the extremity be, annihilated, this is demonstrated by the border issues with Assam, the protection of Arunachal's territory, her integrity from an encroaching Assam, further movements with pan-Arunachal character against CAA and NRC, which became interwoven with permanent residential certificates for communities like Chakma, Hajongs who have been at the receiving end of ethnic mobilisation for their deportation on their perceived non-indigenous origins, this has been the most prominent form of mobilisation, and thus a sense of "belonging" to a larger group, though which is not homogenous like the construct of Mizo or that of the Naga identity. This belonging is the uniting factor which has created mobilisation against the "outsider", a people united without a common language, ethnic origin, or religion, among others, rather united through the idea of being indigenous and against the outsider. The movement in the early 1970s to replace Assamese in favour of English as the medium of education is to be seen as the first resentment against the outsider, who is the regional centralising force which has a contest over the defined territory of Arunachal Pradesh.

The Arunachal identity, if seen through this belonging, is about being indigenous to the land; the Arunachal identity is not related to a particular religion, ethnic affiliation, or language, among others. This belonging is a thin layer of connection among diverse groups, which only seems to charge up against the perceived threats towards "outsiders". Further, if seen through a critical lens, this belonging is of a transactional character, of a diverse people group, rallying only for their interest of protection against "aliens" who will eat up their resources. In this regard, the emphasis on land is crucial and, above all, political representation. It is this transactional aspect that we find no Pan-Arunachal leader who has inter-ethnic popularity and acceptance and who is charismatic enough to whip up a people for action. These movements have been carried out by Pan-Arunachal organisations like the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU), which has a multi-ethnic leadership and doesn't possess a charismatic leader which could truly appeal to a large chunk of the Arunachal populace, the strength of many Community Based Organisations or CBOs, who further have Clan Associations makes the conception of belonging without fighting against an outsider wholly impossible to conceptualise and imagine. Even the shared language which acts as the popular lingua franca, as opposed to the formal lingua franca, i.e. English, is astounding; the popular lingua franca is a creolised version of Hindi, Hindi, a language which is often associated with Hindi belt in Northern India. The language of mobilisation is a non-indigenous language which has been altered to match the local context and milieu; leaders often engage in this creole to mobilise people and spread their message; thus, it further begs the question: is the language of Arunachal-belonging this creolised Hindi? And not the wide varieties of languages spoken by the different ethnic communities in the state? Furthermore, the demands of autonomous councils under the 6th schedule in the western and eastern regions of Arunachal Pradesh, inhabited by Bodhic and TCL communities, respectively, will end the apparent Arunachal belonging. But before delving into this and examining the evolution of this Arunachal belonging, one needs to examine the historical origins of this belonging and the creation of Arunachal itself.

The story of the people of Arunachal Pradesh has been of migration; in oral myths of many communities, we see how they have come from an original land of inhabitation to the current land they are staying in and have made it their home. This, in my opinion, makes the idea of the indigenous contentious; the whole idea of the binary which exists between the apparent "Insider" and "Outsider" collapses; who is even an insider or is truly indigenous to Arunachal Pradesh comes up as a daunting question, this is pertinent because it is through

this one can say who belongs here and who doesn't belong here. In our history, there hasn't been a singular Arunachal polity in the past; such a development of the state and people of a united Arunachal Pradesh living together is a rather Post-colonial development; during the colonial period, it was part of the wider province of Assam; like many states that later sprang out of this Greater Assam, such state formation was facilitated by ethnic identity as opposed to linguistic identity in the rest of India and the state formation through the basis of language was not a feature in this corner of the nation.

Arunachal Pradesh is thus to be considered a polity of migration, made gradually through the constant movement of people who have settled here and made it their home. The very notion and idea of indigenous are firmly tied to being tribal in Arunachal Pradesh since, as stated above, there seems to be no original inhabitant of Arunachal Pradesh as a whole. This logic of tribal is the replacement of such an assertion on who is indigenous to Arunachal Pradesh, where we have seen there is no one who claims this. The idea of being tribal has racial elements as well as ethnic elements; the first part of this argument rests in the wider conception of a racial type which is the Mongoloid racial type which is key in identification as a tribal from Arunachal Pradesh; the second and the most important element is ethnicity, which seems to be bigger and more profound in deciding who is "Indigenous" to Arunachal Pradesh, this final requirement sets apart the insider from outsider, this conception is broadcasted in how the state was formed and the problems of refugee settlement that have come about in the state.

In the creation of Us and Them in the development of Arunachali-Subnationalism, the experience with Assam comes as a major factor. Some of the states that we see today in the North East were carved out of what was called "Greater Assam." This has had ramifications in the sense that tensions related to boundary and land are still contested between the carved-out states and Assam, of which they were a part. Contestations about land and its belonging have sparked deadly tussles between Assam and the hill states. Contest with Arunachal Pradesh has existed on 804 km of border that both these states share. In finding out the reasons for conflict and the importance of peripheral land, its belonging, and ownership in the context of territorial integrity internationally and back home in India are important; the fight over Belgaum/Belagavi between Karnataka and Maharashtra, the brutal border clashes between Mizoram and Assam in July of 2021, claims to the Kotia cluster of villages by both Odisha and Andhra Pradesh are many examples of peripheral land and its belonging which spark sub-nationalistic struggle and antagonism.

2. Subaltern Experiences: From The Foothills and the Hills

A study has been done of Ruksin, a village which borders the Dhemaji district of Assam; the village is part of the East Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh, and the Adis form the majority of the population of the district, the oldest living person of Ruksin has been interviewed for the purpose of studying about the past experiences, which have not been documented and the perception of people, their belonging to the land and much more. Mr Tako Tasi (86) came to Ruksin in 1969; the search for Asi Arík (Wet Rice Cultivation Fields) and better economic opportunities drove him from Aalo, a town in the interior of Arunachal Pradesh in West Siang, to Ruksin, this move towards the Yíngkong Among (Plains) was part of a resolution passed by the Bogum-Bokang Kébang, the apex tribal body of the Adis in the year 1954, first at Pasighat, the oldest town in Arunachal Pradesh and then in Likabali another area on the border of Assam, located in the Lower Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh. The resolution was about settling down in the plains with Adi populations to strengthen the numbers for claiming the land in a future event of statehood, which could not be taken by Assam. He states that there was a clash between Mishings and Adis in 1967, a year before he arrived, on the issue of land, to whom it belonged, and where it went; later in the 1970s, there was a much bigger conflict between Nepalis and Adis over territorial claim over Ruksin and surrounding area, this he states was a much bigger clash, in which the Assam police got involved and killed an Adi-Galo¹ man, after this incident no further large conflict occurred, instead individual to individual contestation on land took place and still takes place in intervals. Still, the involvement of state apparatus like the police is not seen, as reported by our interview subject. All of these conflicts were fought for the territory which was part of their area, and the protection of these lands from the "Encroachers" was a prime target. The Mishings and the Adis are similar in many respects. Still, the conflict between the ownership and the area these lands belonged to creates a distinctive political identity, for sub-nationalistic tendency. The main reasons Tako tells for keeping up fighting for the ownership of the land was because they didn't see a political future with Assam; they would have turned into second-class entities in the political reality of Assam, and as such, would be oppressed and their land taken away. Increasingly, as Tako states, people started to see themselves as Arunachal Ami or Arunachal People. This fight to preserve land and its belongings was taking place when the NEFA, later the Arunachal Pradesh administration, didn't provide basic facilities like running water pipes and other crucial infrastructure. Tako recalls that it was because the administration was not sure where the area would go. There were chances that it would be eventually taken by Assam, and as such, providing infrastructure would be a waste of money and crucial resources. Tako states that only during the chief ministership of Gegong Apang that the people of Ruksin start getting government facilities (Tasi. Tako, personal communication, November 5, 2023).

This was an interview of an individual who lives on the periphery of the state, which happens to be contested, but the study of interior districts is equally important for identity development, as the interior would be a sphere of no contest. Mrs Ranya Yomcha Tato (69) was born in the winter of 1954 in the West Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh. Her experiences are greatly different from that of Taki, she is much younger than, and she was born when NEFA had already existed. Her experiences during the Chinese invasion of 1962 are a source of crucial information, though they are quite blurry; she was studying in a residential school in Aalo, the headquarters of West Siang District when the Chinese attacked it was thought that they would invade Aalo and reach the plains, in this panic and airlifts that happened during this traumatic period, she recalls that the Munim² at the shop owned by her father in Aalo, who was an Assamese fled with his Minyong³ Adi wife, whom Ranya called Mamo meaning mother, they were airlifted, and they never returned from Assam. Her elder brother, who was also studying in Aalo, was the person who took her along with his Adi friend, and they went back to their ancestral village, Yomcha, in the Liromoba-Yomcha tehsil of West Siang. She recalls she was carried by her brother and his friend on their backs, the people around her had developed a sense of identity and belonging as Indians belonging to NEFA, her family members and the community at large benefited from the post-colonial administration, and which provided opportunities like education, trade among others. She is part of the transitional generation, she remarks. The time when her political consciousness came, Arunachal Pradesh was born as a state, but she recalls that the contest with Assam for border never arrived in the discourse around her. Growing up in the interior of Arunachal Pradesh, but a sense of being Indians and distinctively NEFA People, whose criterion was that they had a unique culture and their indigenous nature to the land they belonged to, became apparent, especially after the Chinese invasion of 1962 which became a turning point in Arunachal's history (R.Y.Tato, personal communication, November 21, 2023).

3. AAPSU And Its Role

The above two subaltern documentation and the voices they put out offer a unique perspective on the development of Arunachali sub-nationalism, which is surely coming up even in people who are not necessarily part of the elite in the society, people were starting to see themselves in identities that would not have occurred before, the post-colonial experience and other factors are key contributors in the creation of this sub-nationalism it seems. To understand this further, look at the All Arunachal Pradesh Student's Union (AAPSU), which at times acts as the opposition party in Arunachal Pradesh, being one of the most powerful pressure groups within the state and its contribution to causes for Arunachal, and its Pan-Arunachal character without a specific community-based character, makes it the perfect study for sub-nationalistic development in Arunachal Pradesh.

The All Arunachal Pradesh Student's Union acts as the opposition party in the context of Arunachal Pradesh politics at times. The establishment and evolution of the Adi-Mishing Students' Union, later transforming into the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (APPSU), unfolded against a backdrop of significant names and crucial events that shaped the educational and social landscape of the region. In its early stages, luminaries like Daying Ering and Matin Dai, both from the Adi community, took prominent roles as the first president and general secretary, respectively, of the Adi-Mishing Students' Union in 1947. Notably, the union contested the colonial-era terms "Abor" and "Miri," deeming them derogatory, and successfully pushed for the adoption of "Adi" and "Mishing" instead.

The union's activism extended beyond nomenclature; it became a catalyst for positive change. Students, led by figures like Oshong Ering, actively participated in compelling school authorities to replace "Abor-Miri" with "Adi-Mishing."

The union, comprising leaders like Tajum Koyu and Susen Pao, not only addressed linguistic concerns but also embarked on a broader mission. Socially, it aimed for the unification of Adis, Galos, and Mishings under a shared socio-cultural identity. Educationally, it sought to raise awareness at the village level, persuading parents to enrol their children in schools. The union organised public meetings, cultural functions, and social services, contributing to the spread of awareness about the ill effects of drugs and the importance of preserving traditional values.

The support garnered by the Adi-Mishing Students' Union propelled it to address developmental issues such as the opening of more schools and health centres and the improvement of communication infrastructure. In the absence of a formal political class, students assumed a crucial advisory role, guiding the NEFA administration to meet the demands for educational improvements in interior areas.

The impact of the union's activities resonated across the Abor Hills, leading to the formation of branch unions. Branches like the Adi-Galo branch Union in the western part and the Adi-Minyong and Adi-Padam branch Unions in the central and eastern parts of Abor Hills showcased the union's expanding influence. In the southern part, the Mishing Students' Union emerged to represent the Mishing community.

As time progressed, the need for a Pan-Arunachal Union emerged to cater to the broader population of the North-East Frontier Agency. The Adi-Mishing Students' Union convened a crucial meeting in December 1959,

resulting in the decision to rebrand as the All NEFA Students' Union. The shift, led by figures like Talom Rukbo and Bakin Pertin, signified a pivotal moment in the union's history.

However, challenges arose as the NEFA Students' Union faced limitations and remained almost defunct until 1967. The context demanded a stronger, more efficient student union capable of addressing pressing issues like the demarcation of the Assam-NEFA boundary and the deportation of refugees. The circumstances led to the reorganisation of the defunct All NEFA Students' Union in December 1967.

Under the leadership of Lummer Dai, a "High Power Committee" consisting of university students at Guwahati University played a crucial role in revitalising the union. This effort resulted in the formation of the All NEFA Students' Union, with elections held in 1967 at the Jawaharlal Nehru College campus, Pasighat. The constitution of the revived union, featuring 16 articles and a federal structure, aimed at promoting unity, fraternity, and the preservation of indigenous culture.

As Arunachal Pradesh underwent political transformations, the union adapted accordingly. The renaming from NEFA Students' Union to All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union in 1972 mirrored the broader political shifts in the region. Yet, challenges persisted, leading to a period of dormancy for the union, as elections were not held for more than five years. In 1972, the political status of NEFA changed with its elevation to a Union Territory, and NEFA was renamed Arunachal Pradesh. The capital shifted from Shillong to Itanagar in 1974. Correspondingly, the NEFA Students' Union changed its name to the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union. The decision, made during the 8th general conference of the NEFA Students' Union in 1972, aligned with the broader political and geographical transformations.

The journey from the Adi-Mishing Students' Union to the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union encapsulates a dynamic response to the evolving educational, social, and political landscape of the region. The union's commitment to service, cultural preservation, and unity has positioned it as a transformative force in the collective journey of Arunachal Pradesh.

The AAPSU in 1972 was instrumental in bringing English as a medium of instruction into educational institutes, as well as bringing Hindi and removing Assamese, which at the time was the medium of instruction. Further the successful appeal to move NEFA HQ in 1974 within Arunachal was crucial in its development. Later, being influenced by the churning of the Assam and the election of Jarbom Gamlin as the president in April of 1981 at Tezu brought a sharp attention to the refugee issue, to the old goals of solving boundary issues

with Assam, detection and removal of foreign national, stopping infiltration among others these the old demands which had come after achieving the political status of union territory, new demands like reserving 80% of government jobs for Arunachalis, the stopping contracts to non-Arunachalis.

4. Conclusion

Now, going back to the subalterns, Tako mentions the conflict with Mishings was of self-preservation of one's land, attachment to NEFA/Arunachal Pradesh and general inconvenience with the people of Assam. Still, the later conflict with Nepalis truly cemented their identity as "Arunachal Ami"(Arunachal People); they had become part of a larger whole, they had an entity which was theirs, a Pan-Arunachal identity was achieved by AAPSU in 1972, a pan identity cutting across boundaries of tribe,sub-tribe, region, language and religion. The Arunachali sub-nationalism exists on a vague understanding of native ethnicity in its creation of Us and Them; it is this nativeness to Arunachal Pradesh that is used in the sub-nationalistic understanding to demarcate who is an Arunachali or who is not. It is this native ethnicity which is the foundation of Arunachali Sub-nationalism.

The formation of the Adi-Mishing Student's Union in the 1940s is an indication of how colonial penetration in the case of making of the first urban settlement in Arunachal Pradesh, i.e. Pasighat, which was founded in 1911, after the Anglo-Abor war as a military base for the Raj, this gave access to limited educational opportunities to the Adis, and led to other developments like the AMSU, which later morphed into AAPSU, Pasighat was also the site for further post-colonial development with the presence of the oldest college in the state, the Jawaharlal Nehru College, built-in 1964 along with other infrastructure, this made the town a centre for the growth of "Arunachali Sub-nationalism", and can thus be attributed as the town which birthed such an idea, due to colonial and later postcolonial developments taking place, along with the diaspora of student studying outside the state, who became leaders of these organisations.

Fast forward to today, the social movements and political mobilisation are not only related to the "Other" and to put up a fight against them. The Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission's (APPSC) corruption,neo-patrimonial nexus and paper leak were exposed by late Gyamar Padang in 2022; it had a ripple effect on the state and led to the formation of the Pan-Arunachal Joint Steering Committee (PAJSC), this took the imagination of the larger Arunachali society, with a 72-hour bandh called in Itanagar on May 2023, the response by the government was to impose section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, as there had been a tussle between PAJSC associates and police in February 2023, with injuries incurred by both police personnel and the protestors. The movement's success has been attributed to increasing internet penetration and reach to

the youth, and the movement still has an active presence in social media, in particular Facebook, though not at the level when the issue peaked. The movement has been marked by its eclectic collection of different ethnic groups coming together as Arunachalis to fight a system which they feel is broken. The language of the protest has been the creolised Hindi, and the fight as fellows of a singular entity, cutting across ethnic lines and belonging, to another larger belonging as an Arunachali has been the outcome of such a political churning and mobilisation, which has been not the fight against the “Other”, but the fight for “Us”, which has truly displayed that Arunachali sub-nationalism not only exists, and is thriving but it is also evolving.

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Acts Of Memory In Postcolonial Literature: A Study Of Mamang Dai's Poems from River Poems (2004)

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Abstract

The way memory works can be painful or restorative but always a dynamic process of seeking, re-collecting and re-making. Memories act as cultural repositories and play a significant role in identity construction. What we are and know depends on what we remember, and the past is often revisited and re-imagined to suit the present context. In her poems, Mamang Dai creates a counter-memory of Arunachal Pradesh against India's official memory and advocates for an ethnic attachment to ecology, myths and oral narratives of the past. This essay explores the significance of memory, its types and functions, notes Mamang Dai's descent into the depths of historical memory to excavate individual voices, and explore collective memories and cultural traumas. This paper uses the methods and theories of memory studies to investigate the complex relation between memory and postcolonial literature while analysing and interpreting the multi-layered deployment of memory in Mamang Dai's poems from her poetry collection, River Poems (2004).

Keywords: collective, counter-memory, identity, myth, oral narratives, postcolonial

1. Introduction: Memory, Its Types and Functions

The interest in memory and memory studies, both within academia and the wider culture, has increased since the early 1980s at an unprecedented velocity. Memory, it seems, is omnipresent: researchers, authors and poets are equally obsessed with the processes, products and consequences of memory. John R. Gillis suggestively calls memory a “free-floating, subjective phenomenon” (2005, p.3) whose depths still remain unfathomable.

Our minds stand imaginatively ungauged and, hence, hold innumerable possibilities and remembrances. Mind offers a limitless space for inquiry into the psyche of man, and as such, psychologists, theorists and academicians are devoted to the dissemination of imagination's and memory's personal, "[...] social, political and cultural relevance" (Assmann, 1999, p.16). 'The Persistence of Memory' (1931), a surrealist painting by Salvador Dali is one of the many representations¹ of what Andreas Huyssen marks as the contemporary memory "boom" that bespeak "the late modernity's equivocations and ambivalences concerning truth, embodiment, location and the temporality of hope - equivocations that had their source in the disruptions and discontinuities of post-revolutionary, urban society, whose force deepened under the impact of the holocaust and which are now being worked through in the context of late modern technologies and temporalities" (1995, p.5). Virginia Woolf², too deconstructs the present-past binary as unilateral/one-directional and presents the inadequacy of clock (mechanical) time to measure human experiences as she stretches and collapses time through the metaphor of a 'stream' erratically carrying man's consciousness away, plunging for a deeper exploration of his hidden and/or latent self: psychological as well as historical.

There is the sense of a "post-histoire" (Assmann, 1992, p.5), which is a time period beyond recorded history - the idea of historical consciousness and the resulting insecurity about how to narrate the lost, unspoken and repressed past(s). Peter Burke remarks, to the point, that "neither memories nor histories seem objective any longer" (1989, p. 98). The reliability of both memory and historical truth has come into question with the rise of modernity, emerging ideas of individualism, bleak prospects of industrialism and the world wars fought at the expense of human lives. History is no longer singular but plural, just as there is no one absolute truth but multiple truths, multiple stories and a deep, unorganised 'swamp' of mind: the place where memories come to rest. 'New historians' use the capital H in 'History' to signal the difference between dominant versions of the past delivered by history as a grand narrative and the 'other' historical accounts within a society or a nation

¹ Other visual representation of modernism's idea of a man is 'The Scream' by Edvard Munch, which shows a man in chaos, confusion, distortion and a crisis of existence. Modernism presents newer ideas on the representation of man, time, memory and consciousness.

² Novels, such as Mrs Dalloway (1925) and To the Lighthouse (1927), deal with the idea of memory and the impossibility of measuring its depth through time and space. These works talk about how memories serve as the architectures of human subjectivity and highlight the uncertainty and fluidity of experiences. Her works mark an important development in the modernist period with the emergence of the technical innovation of the 'stream of consciousness' (SoC) over the conventions of the 19th-century realist model. SoC locates a person within the complex intermingling of the present and the past through a series of recollections and traces the subjectivity, interiority and psychological state of a human being. Also see William James's Principles of Psychology (1890). ³ We may talk about Foucault's idea of an archive as we further our discussion on postcolonial literature and memory studies, whereby the archives of literature and other official records created by those in power dictate what the 'other' remembers about themselves and consider as their identity. However, we must not overlook the possibility of resistance in that the 'others' and marginalised communities may also use the notion of archiving to create alternate histories.

(Jenkins, 1999). History thus stands for a certain notion of truth and a certain notion of referentiality. It may seem to question the epistemological status of its object of study - the past - and yet fail to engage with how the past itself is variously conceptualised and constituted as history, memory or archive³. Marianne Hirsch goes one step further and associates the intergenerational trauma of the past (in particular, the Holocaust) with the concept of 'post-memory' in her work, 'The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust' (2012), which is powerful in the sense that it has connections to the 'past' through objects, habitual or acquired behaviours, and is not mediated through recollection only but through "representation, projection and through creation" (Hirsch, 2012). Toni Morrison's concept of 'rememory'⁴ addresses the recollections of things that a person has forgotten and, as Freud⁵ puts it, repressed in one's unconscious, with the intention to come to terms with one's personal, cultural and collective history in order to move on from the haunt of "disremembered and unaccounted for" ghosts⁶ of bygone times (Morrison 1987, p. 323). We cannot heal something which we do not feel; memory for Morrison is 'emotional' and 'alive' - "what the nerves and the skin remembers as well as how it appeared" (Morrison 2008, p.77) - and needs to be acknowledged and reclaimed to break the cycle of pain for "some kind of a tomorrow" (1987, p. 322).

Memory as a concept, theme, and/or trope has thus developed into a new paradigm of cultural studies in as much as it proves a groundbreaking figure in other branches of humanities, such as literature, media and film

³ We may talk about Foucault's idea of an archive as we further our discussion on postcolonial literature and memory studies, whereby the archives of literature and other official records created by those in power dictate what the 'other' remembers about themselves and consider as their identity. However, we must not overlook the possibility of resistance in that the 'others' and marginalised communities may also use the notion of archiving to create alternate histories.

⁴ A concept she gave in her Nobel Prize-winning novel *Beloved* (1987), which became an important term in postcolonial studies.

⁵ Freud's use of inherited memory in *Moses and Monotheism*. Freud's hypothesis of a real event "allows [him] to argue that both culture and individual minds are always in a pained retrospective attitude—guilty, remorseful, confused. However absurd or groundless the hypothesis may seem, it is the conceptual anchor of a retrospective theory of subjectivity that, at whatever cost to identity, is constituted in a crisis of retrospection" (p. 71). The crisis and suffering or ordeal of the individual is remembering what s/he has not experienced but carries within him/her as instinctive, evolutionary memory of the ancestors. This crisis of retrospection is noted in Freud's theorising wherein his "retrospective search for origins and meanings" leads him to discover "anguish: terror, grief, remorse, helplessness" (p. 74). Also, note Carl Jung's 'collective unconscious' or 'racial memory' theory; see Rob White, 'Freud's Memory', 2008.

⁶ In the deep south, millions of African Americans endured brutal treatment by white overseers or slave drivers who were determined to get as much labour as they could out of the slaves, which would result in heavy profits for these white masters. At the same time, these African Americans faced a constant loss of loved ones, homeland, identity and increasingly rigid slave laws, which were designed to keep the slaves under strict control. 'Beloved', in this context, is a text which goes beyond statistics and accounts, imagining the profound psychological cost of slavery to the men, women, and children - to whom no one was held accountable for and for whom no death is recognised in the present context as nameless bodies lie piled up or thrown into the water across the Middle Passage. It attempts to remember and give space to a time and history marginalised into oblivion by the dominant notions of society and nation at large. The text explores the theme of slavery and interrogates the meaning of freedom. The absence-presence of the literal, metaphorical and psychological ghosts represents variously the idea of the haunt and trauma of the past, and the inability to heal, free yourself from a lost history and move on. Another text which deeply indulges in the role of memory in remembering the past and tries to find alternatives to heal and recreate self-identity, as well as community feeling, is Fred D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts* (1997).

studies, architecture and archaeology, and postcolonial studies. Furthermore, we should not forget that the concept of memory has always held a firm place in natural and social sciences: cognitive psychology and neuropsychology, trauma studies, cultural and narrative psychology, neurobiology, law, sociology and political science being among the most prominent. Redstone, in her work, 'Memory and Methodology', notes this impressive spectrum of disciplines that "do[es] memory work" (2000, p.12), raising awareness about the complexity of various areas in memory studies and contests the disciplines' understanding of what exactly memory is and what theory and methods could be used to investigate it. On one hand, she explains memory as the inner workings of the mind, the processes of storing, forgetting and recalling. On the other hand, she raises a debate on whether it is more aligned with "history, community, tradition, the past, reflection and authenticity" or with "fantasy, subjectivity, invention, the present, representation and fabrication." (Radstone, 2000, p. 6).

The way memory works, thus, can be painful or restorative but always a dynamic process of seeking and remaking. It both unifies and fragments experience and locates us as agents within our own lives, which we often narrate as a story, with scenes from the past altered over time. Therefore, we remain cautious and sceptical about our memories while also embracing the creative aspects they bring to our lives in the form of writings, arts, etc. We fill in the gaps, probe the dark corners of our minds to broaden our perspectives and interpret an elusive 'self' that is often shaped by childhood experiences or education (nurture) or by adaptation (nature). Mark Philip Freeman links memory with this concept of 'self' explaining how memory often has nothing to do with "recounting the past but with making sense of it...[memory] is an interpretative act, the end of which is an enlarged understanding of the self" (1993, p.29). Memory thus plays a significant role in identity formation or identity construction. Who people are is closely linked to what they remember⁷ and what they can claim to remember. Meaning, forgetting⁸ is equally vital in identity-formation: "Identity of any kind requires steering a course between holding on and letting go. Identity is not composed of a fixed set of memories but lies in the dialectical, ceaseless activity of remembering and forgetting, assimilating and discarding" (Antze and Lambek 1996, p. xxix).

In his path-breaking studies, 'The Social Framework of Memory, and On Collective Memory', the French

⁷ Sir Frederic Bartlett, considered by many to be the father of the modern psychology of memory, titled his classic work

⁸ Remembering' as a way of emphasising the active processes of engagement in the "effort after meaning" (1995, p. 20).8forgetting is used in a broad, comprehensive sense, covering misremembering and repressing also. Remembering and forgetting are interdependent features. They not only are communicative actions and help in identity formation but also are institutional forms of transmission of knowledge. Forgetting is as much a function of memory-making as is remembering.

sociologist and founder of collective memory studies, Maurice Halbwachs, provides an extensive analysis of how social groups remember and perpetuate their collective pasts. He believes in the plurality of shared experiences of groups - geographical, positional, political, ideological, generational - which exert a great influence on the content of personal memories and help (re)construct and/or distort the past in a way “partly, if not wholly, shaped, by the present [needs]” (Halbwachs, p. 25). His ideas highlight that personal, individual memory is always connected to collective, social memory and vice versa. In postcolonial studies, Foucault explains that there is a nexus between power and knowledge; dominant groups, nations, and states often control what is to be culturally prescribed, narratively programmed and remembered, and what is to be erased, obliterated and forgotten. Often, it is noted that the established norms, rules and regulations in a society and nation at large do not allow for individual and collective interventions. However, memories may become sites for contestation and resistance, transgression and subversion while also uplifting a community’s status and celebrating its uniqueness. They become cultural repositories: an incredibly rich source of evidence against the official history, which tends to push the ‘other’ towards the periphery. The malleability of (memories of) the past helps us re-work and reclaim our identities - collective, cultural, social and personal - as well as mend our relation with the past: the two major functions of memory. This instrumentalisation of the past may rewrite history as described by George Orwell in 1984; the burning of books, the destruction of inscriptions, and the changing of names⁹ may be seen as acts of intentional and violent cultural oblivion. Dystopian novels like Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Yoko Ogawa’s *The Memory Police* present these (extreme) cases of instrumentalisation and are some of the best cultural instances of memory manipulation and brainwashing. Although, it is not necessary to wait for twentieth-century totalitarianism to note these instances. Louis XIV’s censor sanctioned changes, suppression or correction in information about the past as deemed fit according to the varying political situations (Burke, 1992, p.126). Foucault’s ‘counter-memory’¹⁰, therefore, runs as a mechanism (in a sense) to check and challenge the official accounts and/or available written records of governments, mainstream mass media and dominants in society to maintain the integrity of a nation in order to create a pluralistic space where groups, races, communities may freely make competing claims on ‘their’ idea of what the past is.

⁹ Derek Walcott’s poem, ‘Names’, which also delves into a beautiful idea of the changing realities and the waves that erase the names written on the sands of time in order to make space to write ‘new’ history all over again. Also, see Ursula K. Le Guin’s short story, ‘She Unnames Them’ (1985), as an example of subverting dominant history.

¹⁰ The term was coined by Michel Foucault in his essay, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’, published in English in ‘Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault’ by Donald F. Bouchard. Foucault explains the three modalities of history: “the third is sacrificial, directed against truth, and opposes history as knowledge. It implies the use of history that severs its connection to memory, its metaphysical and anthropological model, and constructs a counter-memory - a transformation of history into a totally different form of time.” In other words, counter-memory is an individual act of resistance to relentlessly question the veracity of “history as true knowledge.”

We have, so far, briefly discussed the various types of memories and its functions in memory studies, attempting to link it with postcolonial studies, majorly through postcolonial literature. Let us now further our case and analyse in depth how memory features in postcolonial literature and subsequently understand novels and poetry as reservoirs of cultural and counter-memory. We shall then locate North-East India (in particular, Arunachal Pradesh) within the realm of internal colonisation and insecurities of state conflicts and explore the role of North-East Indian Poetry in English as a (memory) storehouse¹¹ of people's as well as the ancestral past through the poems of Mamang Dai, an Adi poet from Arunachal Pradesh, excavating tribal memory, "removed from politics, the ups and downs of our states, marching towards progress and all that" (Dai 2010)¹².

2. Postcolonial Literature and Memory

Postcolonialism, in simplest terms, means 'which was once colonised.' It suggests a kind of temporality related to that which has happened and has been left behind. The Oxford English Dictionary records the very first use of the term 'Postcolonialism' in a British newspaper article in 1959 concerning the historical and political context of India and decolonisation. Postcolonialism was then used only as a periodising concept - that India is an independent nation. A self-conscious theoretical understanding of the term began to take shape in the 1970s, which Aijaz Ahmad notes in his 1992 work, 'In Theory: Classes, Nations, and Literatures': "the first major debate on the idea of Postcolonialism took place...not in cultural studies but in political theory where the object of inquiry was the postcolonial state." It was Edward Said who shifted the focus of study from geopolitical contestations of imperialism to the cultural and ideological hegemony of the rulers over the ruled. His seminal work, 'Orientalism' (1978), which is also the foundational text of postcolonial theory, and his 1993 work, 'Culture and Imperialism', posit the influence of Foucault¹³ and Gramsci¹⁴ in postcolonial studies, discusses the

¹¹ The archive, the wax tablet, the storehouse, the store-room were among the most used metaphors of memory in Western literature – from Aristotle, Plato, St Augustine to cognitive psychology.

¹² Mamang Dai's interview with Arundhati Subramaniam in 2010 compiled *The Land as "Living Presence."*

¹³ Edward Said was influenced by Michel Foucault's discourse of power whereby he examines how the passive Orient (the East) mirrors the opinions of the active Occident (the West) and aims to recognise and dismantle the claims of the Eurocentric discourses. In a 1993 article, "Foucault Primer", Alec Mehoull and Wendy Grace write that "Foucault's idea of 'discourse' shows the historically specific relations between disciplines (bodies of knowledge) and disciplinary practices (forms of social control and social practices)." According to Foucault, there is a nexus between truth and knowledge, and power on the other hand. It is power, the "disciplinary practices" of society that allows a certain kind of knowledge to take shape and dis-allows other kinds of knowledge from forming. What we understand as knowledge is really this coming together of "disciplines" - bodies of knowledge - and "disciplinary practices." Said uses the Foucauldian idea of archive to understand the discourse of the East, which is homogenised and stereotyped as the Orient by the West using its power - both hard and soft - to establish a hegemony.

¹⁴ Marxist scholar Antonio Gramsci, who protested against State Fascism in Italy, influenced Said through his concept of hegemony, which he examined not as simply a question of domination and resistance but investigated the role of culture in the domination of power. He defines hegemony as "the ability of a ruling power's values to live in the minds and lives of his subalterns as a spontaneous expression of their own interests." Also see: Raymond Williams' definition of hegemony in his work, 'Marxism and Literature', 1977.

importance of articulation of culture in the domination of power and how literature is “an incorporative, quasi-encyclopaedic cultural form” (Said, p. 88). This form becomes a crucial method with which colonised people across the globe resist and assert their identity and the existence of their own histories and narratives¹⁵. It should be noted, however, that all these field-defining books of Said, Bhabha, Spivak, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin on postcolonialism hardly make any mention of memory. Therefore, postcolonial studies hold a paradoxical relationship with memory and must be comprehended. Even a detailed study on the politics of memory by Radstone and Schwarz offers scattered and loose references to postcolonialism and memory. If anything, I believe Ngugi Wa Thiong’o best concludes the interconnectedness of history, culture, memory and language in his essay¹⁶: “language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people’s experience in history” (p.112). He presents the dual nature of literature and language as a means of communication and as carriers of oral narratives, myths, stories and folktales, which make up the cultural repositories of a community used for its identity construction and relation with the past.

Yet again, in the introduction to the influential book *Acts of Memory*¹⁷: *Cultural Recall in the Present*, cultural theorist Mieke Bal posits that “cultural memory can be located in literary texts because the latter is continuous with the communal fictionalising, idealising, monumentalising impulses thriving in a conflicted culture” (1999, p. xiii). Thus, the literary text is a medium - a ‘cultural tool’, a ‘soft power’¹⁸- that hugely influences which memories, stories and recollections of the past are to be narrated and transmitted for the public. Literature is thus a complex “site of memory” that preserves, advances, controls and subverts cultural meaning. Novels, poems, slave narratives, autobiographies, memoirs, life writings, etc., are preserves of individual memories, which are crucial for advocating the pluralistic nature of the historical record (outside the official statements) that creates a collective communal memory. But where does poetry stand in particular with regards to postcolonial studies?

¹⁵ In a 1992 essay, “Orientalism Reconsidered”, Said acknowledges that he overlooked the possibility of resistance against imperialism among the colonised people in his work *Orientalism*, and wishes to stand corrected and mentions the hope of forging new identities and interpretations: a future of hybrid existence and multiple cultures.

¹⁶ Taken from his work, *Decolonising the Mind* (1986).

¹⁷ Which features in the title of this paper as well.

¹⁸ Soft power includes the role of literature, influence of culture, control over communication and media, etc., while hard power includes economic and military might. Both these powers lead to the “othering” of the East and its cultures.

Many scholars argue that poetry is a non-transparent, highly figurative and dense medium to voice the concerns of postcolonial societies. They believe that poetry is stubbornly national, non-hybrid¹⁹ and local in tone to recapitulate the vast global history, politics and sociology of colonised nations. However, critics like Jahan Ramazani²⁰ and Rajiv S. Patke²¹, in their respective studies, lament the neglect and ignorance meted out to postcolonial poetry in contemporary times and extol the richness of the genre with multivalent symbols and paradoxes, ironies and metaphors that are “suited to register and negotiate the contradictions of a split cultural experience.” “Wrapped up” with “a heap of signifying” (Ellison 1952, p. 379), postcolonial poetry may dynamically engage with history in the discursive articulation of postcolonial subjectivity and its underlying rhetoric of resistance, which destabilised the authority of dominant history. The postcolonial poet conceptualises the colonial past as a zone of imaginative recovery and recuperation that needs to be revisited to understand how it shapes the postcolonial present. Poetry not only focuses on this negotiation but also attempts to reshape traditions and present alternate realities, the insecurities of displacement, fragmentation and alienation of the self, frailty of survival and the persistence of hope. It attempts to reaffirm a sense of belongingness and gives a platform to invoke the cultural past that foregrounds the possibility of a new articulation and creation of “forms that originate in imitation [of the Western texts] but end in invention” (Walcott 1974).

Poetry’s rebuilding and re-memoration is often seen as a “response to [...] a rupture” (Bardenstein 1999, p.148), a lack, an absence or consolation for something that is missing. Maybe also, an attempt to deal with the state of ‘in-betweenness’ and ‘double consciousness’, as explored by Homi K. Bhabha when he suggests that we live “on the borderlines of the ‘present’...neither a new horizon nor a leaving behind of the past” (Bhabha 1994). These absences, ruptures and lacks are what characterise and distinguish the shape and texture of individual or collective memories conveyed through a plethora of poetry whereby the structures, themes, figures of speeches (such as mixed metaphors, allusions), and an intertextual dialogue with canonical literature frames the central argument into a discourse of history, memory and archive. In doing so, they listen to (imposed) silences²², historicise the

¹⁹ The concept of hybridity is taken from Homi K. Bhabha’s observations in ‘The Location of Culture’ (1994), referring to the instability of identities in a postcolonial world.

²⁰ Work called ‘The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English’ (2001)

²¹ Work titled Postcolonial Poetry in English, 2006

²² In her book, *White Amnesia - Black Memory?*, Sabine Bröck argues along the same lines when she says that “the pervasive ellipses of Western historiography will only be pointed out and filled in by way of the (literary) imagination” (1994, p. 24).

past, and serve as a counter hegemonic chronicle²³.

The role of North-East Indian Poetry in English may well be understood as a constant struggle over articulation, recognition, and function of language in the expression of race, region, and place in postcolonial India. Said claims that every nation has its own internal 'other', which stands doubly marginalised by global imperialism that colonises a nation and the internal colonisation faced by them against the mainstream/canonical social traditions. While India was itself a colony of the British Raj, North-East India, too stood doubly neglected globally as well as within India. If poetry is externalised memory, writing about the loss of home, identity, and belongingness, can a group of internally colonised people use the coloniser's language (English, here) to paint a picture of their pain, struggles and the silenced tales of their past(s)? This is better explained by invoking the concept of 'minor' literature as expounded in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's 1975 study, 'Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature.' Minor literature is a work "which a minority constructs within a major language" that has been "deterritorialised" through defamiliarising devices (Deleuze 1975). The attempt of the minor poet is to open up alternate poetic spaces to safeguard an ethnic past against the homogenising attempts of the mainstream. However, postcolonial (in particular, North-East Indian) poetry must not be mistaken for regionalism. Poets and writers from North-East of India aim to write from the margins of the country to represent their culture and inculcate it into the country's multicultural setting. For this, the oral quality of poetry, which harbours a deep connection to North-east Indian roots, also becomes important. A look at the poetry of Mamang Dai will substantiate this line of thought.

3. Arunachal Pradesh and Mamang Dai

Arunachal Pradesh is popularly known to be the land of dawn-lit mountains. It was declared as a state in 1987. Arunachal homes a diverse culture with a myriad range of festivals, dances, folklore and languages. Prior to its statehood, it was called the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) and was directly under the administration of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The strategic location of Arunachal, which shares international borders with Bhutan, Myanmar, Tibet and China, puts the state in constant political and public gaze. Not just this, since Independence, the administrative machinery of North-East India has remained under the influence and control of majorly Bengalis and Assamese, the trade by the Marwaris and education mostly by

²³ Influenced by theorists such as Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault, postcolonial studies have explored relations and tensions between 'official' history and its contestation by unofficial, popular memory or "counter-memories" (cf. Foucault, 1997). Thus, in telling one story about the past, other stories about real or possible alternative versions of the past are excluded, rejected and overwritten.

Christian missionaries. The indigenous habitants of the region are marginalised and pushed to the peripheries within their own homeland. In the wake of such political neglect and economic exploitation faced by them, this region becomes an inevitable epicentre of extreme backwardness, underdevelopment and poverty. To make matters worse within the dominant national imagination, people from the northeast are often mistaken to be Chinese, Nepalese or Oriental and referred with derogatory labels such as 'Chinki.' This emerging politics of racism is marked by an internalisation of the processes of colonisation, which alienates a group of people within their own nation, making them rootless, restless and insecure (Baruah 2006, p.165-76). Against this backdrop of discrimination and intolerance, the literary writers from the north-east face the challenge of empowering their people, celebrating their cultures, festivals, and languages, uplifting the whole community with a strong sense of ethnic identity that could resist the homogenising tendencies of the Indian mainland towards the geographically aloof and 'othered' North-East India. Arunachal Pradesh is divided into five cultural zones. Out of these, one zone covers parts of the Upper Subansiri and the East and West Siang districts, where the Adis, a major tribe, dominate. Verrier Elwin (1902-64), one of the earliest anthropologists to work in Arunachal Pradesh, advocated a policy of isolation for the state. However, this has now been replaced by a policy of inclusive development, which influences the social, cultural, religious and linguistic heterogeneity of the place²⁴.

In her book, *Arunachal Pradesh: The Hidden Land*, Dai discusses the conviction framework of the Arunachalis before the British colonialism in their region. The historical backdrop of the Northeast goes back to their migration from Myanmar, where the Mongoloid tribal groups dwell. They fled and settled in the lower regions of what is now Northeast India. Their customary ethics included the conviction for spirits, devils, forest Gods with a mix of belief in higher powers, animism, supernaturalism, odd notions and shamanism. Indigenous literary works are compositions created by unique, local individuals and their descendants, and as such in writing about stories, Dai creates and authors a tribe which is powerful and enigmatic. The Arunachalis are animists, worshipping the gods of nature. They believe in a just and benevolent, omnipresent and omniscient supreme god. For instance, 'Donyi-Polo' (the sun-moon god), as a religious faith, unifies people in major parts of Arunachal. There is also a great influx of migrants from the rest of India and the neighbouring countries in the field of trade, construction and administrative services, with whom comes the religious faiths and cultures into the state. As such, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism and Sikhism make a part of the state's culture. The practice of

²⁴ Also see Verrier Elwin, *Myths of the North-East Frontier of India* (Shillong: North East Frontier Agency, Shillong, 1958); *India's North-East Frontier in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959); *A New Book of Tribal Fiction*, (Shillong: DIPR, North-East Frontier Agency, 1970); *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India* (Directorate of Research, Govt of Arunachal Pradesh, 1988).

Buddhism in Arunachal is locally influenced by the tradition of nature worship, food habits, etc. The festivals insofar are related to agricultural activities such as sowing and harvesting. These are collective rituals performed and celebrated by the communities as a whole. 'Solung' is a local festival celebrated by the Adis in Siang and Dibang valley, 'Nyokom' is celebrated by Nyishis. Similarly, 'Mopin' by Gallongs, 'Lossar' by Monpas, 'Dree' by Apatanis, 'Loku' by Noctes and 'Boori-Boot' is celebrated by the Hill Miris, respectively. These are a product of the co-habitation of innumerable tribes and sub-tribes in the region and, above all, their growing interaction with one another in modern times against the onset of globalisation and technological advancements.

Arunachal Pradesh has many dialects, most of these belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language family. Notedly, people living in specific cultural zones of the state speak distinct languages. Oftentime, the dialect and language of one zone remain unintelligible to other zones and communities of the state. Only the Khamtis, living mainly in the Lohit region bordering Myanmar, have a language with a distinct script. The other languages of the state do not have a script and, therefore, have traditionally preserved their literature, myths and legends in the oral form. Constructing the local history of different tribes by utilising and analysing the available oral literature proves an exciting area of study for the students of social sciences in contemporary times. The linguistic diversities of the state and the inability to communicate without a common language have led to a situation where the need for the English language for communication has arisen; it has become one of the official languages in administration and a medium of instruction in schools of modern and global society, especially after the end of colonial rule in India. Weaving words, metaphors, and similes from diverse languages and dialects into English, the literature thus produced reflects a stewed understanding of the political scenario of Arunachal Pradesh, the people's love for their land, its oral narratives, myths and legends, as well as a beautiful evocation of the natural surroundings. Mamang Dai's writings lay claim to a rich reservoir of many such homegrown symbols that arise from her self-consciousness of being a tribal: "I am a tribal, and the geography, landscape, our myths, stories, all this has shaped my thoughts" (Dai 2005, OCMAON²⁵).

Dai is an Adi poet, author, journalist and historian, writing in English, who hails from Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh. She attempts to open up a whole new discursive universe and present narratives derived not from an outsider's perspective but from a tribal's through her writings, especially her poetry. This makes her poems an

²⁵ Acronym of 'On Creation Myths and Oral Narratives'

act of reclamation, which is possible only when stories stored in the collective memory of a tribe find expression in literature via literature: “ours is an oral tradition. I was trying to meet people and collect and record these oral narratives...the small histories which were getting lost and when you talk to people even small things can trigger your memories off.” (Dai 2010) She is in particular influenced by the creation myths and inquires of our origins in another article, “where else can we begin but [in] myth and memory?” (Mandal 2016), and yet again, “...the legends and stories are still a wellspring of thought and emotions that are restored in a peculiar blend of myth and memory unique to the region.” (Dai 2010) Her first collection of poems, *River Poems*, published in 2004, established her as a major emerging voice from North-east India. With the poetry of Mamang Dai which is rooted in the act of recalling, recollecting and writing, the mosaic of postcolonialism undergoes a further revelation. Her poetry forges and constructs ethnic identity through the poetic act of writing about the land: the emotional memory which Morrison talks about - “writers are like that: remembering what we were, what valley we ran through, what banks were like, the light that was there and the route back to our original place” (Morrison, p.77). Dai insists on the role the land and its biodiversity plays in shaping the tribe’s identity, and therefore needs to be understood and accounted for within an alternate epistemological framework in as much as the tribal belief in animism serves as a philosophical chassis for Dai’s poetry. Lastly, her poetry links the importance of women as active agents in storing history and culture who hold these oral narratives in the form of songs, tales, bodily tattoos, taboos etc. Culture can be maintained or negated by maintaining or negating cultural significations present either on the bodies as markers or inside the body in the form of stereotypes and traditions. And hence, the act of destroying the body is equivalent to the destruction of a nation. As such women’s bodies and wombs are considered as carriers of culture, inheritance and memories. Fred A’guiar gave the beautiful concept of the ‘amnesiacal wombs’ (1997, p. 76) in his novel, *Feeding the Ghosts*²⁶, when talking about the loss of inheritance of African culture. In the Jungian sense, these wombs were sites of ‘racial memory,’ and children as such are carriers of intuitive memory.

Let us now examine how Mamang Dai’s poetry restores the mythic past, tribal memories and cultures within its verses.

²⁶ In biosciences, the theory of recapitulation states that the foetus in the womb goes through all generations of its life from single cell to amphibian form to human form by showing rudimentary signs of double eyelids, a tail etc. In literature, we understand this idea as a human baby’s ability to instinctively remember the past generations, an idea explored in the novel explaining how the babies may remember the ancientness of their cultures and traditions and may carry them forward. However, slavery, loss of homeland, multiple rapes and brutality inflicted on the bodies removes all such possibility and instead produces a new race altogether - of miscegenation and hurt.

4. Nature, Women and Tribal Inheritance in Mamang Dai's River Poems

"We made our vows but you had no faith." (Egret River 106-7)

Dai's poetry has survived "many journeys and forgetfulness before they were completed"²⁷ (Dai 2004). Written in various cities across the country and abroad, her poems suffer from the pangs of a painful romance with unfaithful history which refuses to acknowledge the 'vows' it made with her homeland: promises of remembering its cultures and traditions, people and stories. As history fails the people of Arunachal Pradesh, Dai's poems attempt to reclaim the land and articulate the ethnic identity of her people. Therefore, her poetry is a poetry of landscapes, mountains, rivers, of air, trees, seasons and of rain that encapsulates Arunachal Pradesh. The biodiversity which she captures in her poems becomes a signifier of what defines her tribe and tribal upbringing. The memories which the air carries, the stories it whistles about, the thirst for knowledge which the rivers meander and carry forth along with the voice of unspoken, lost times echoing in the mountains that exist as old mentors and teachers of civilizations, everything resonates the symbolic identity of the tribal community. For this reason, Dai's poetry ought to be read from an ecocritical perspective, recording the interconnectedness and interdependence of the land, its people and the diverse natural environment, adopting an alternative approach against the anthropocentric approach. Not just this, the tribal belief in animism that serves as a philosophical framework for her poetry clearly identifies the land as a 'living presence' (Dai 2010) whereby the physical world merges with the unseen spiritual world (where there is no value hierarchy or dualism or binary) - a river, mountain or a plant is equally sacred and capable of life as is an animal or a human.

This philosophy vehemently opposes the colonial and imperialist attitude towards environment and maybe seen as an attempt to safeguard nature from the onslaughts of the capitalist commercialism that erodes the nature, and degrades the biodiversity of the region, which is an alternate epistemological framework for the articulation of autonomous ethnic identity of the tribal people. For instance, her poem, 'The Voice of the Mountain'²⁸, generates an allegorical world by personifying the mountain as an 'old man.' The mountain is old, evergreen and has existed since times immemorial. It has changed, grown and outgrown many civilisations and epochs. However, its base and roots with the earth remain unchanged. The mountain has territories 'both ancient and new' as is the case with the life of a civilization that keeps growing and changing with each era. During times of transferences and phases of transitions, the mountain is the 'chance syllable that orders the world/ instructed

²⁷ Lines taken from the Author's Note in the collection

²⁸ This poem is taken from 'The Oxford Anthology of Writings from North-east India: Poetry and Essays', 2011, and hereon, abbreviated as 'AVOM.'

with history and miracles' (TVOM 20-3) because even if a civilization, language or culture dies, the mountain, the soil, and the roots may continue to live on as a symbol of that culture or a civilization's memories. Nature thus is the standard of remembrance on which tribal writings are based on: 'I am the place where memory escapes/ the myth of time,/ I am the sleep in the mind of the mountain' (TVOM 48-50). Yet another poem, Images, claims: 'I know where memory hides,/ in the long body of the mountain...' (34-5). Besides this, Dai deploys her rhetorical power of suggestion to intensify the feeling with which cultural memory is reprocessed and longed for in her poems: "why did we think gods would survive/ deathless in memory,/ in trees and stones and the sleep of babies" (Remembrance 17-9). She explains that when we cease to remember and deliberately exclude from our minds the presence of traditions, we kill our identities. She talks about how "we stare at the outline of the hill,/ lifting our eyes to the invincible sky" (Remembrance 28-9) and discloses how the tribal communities dwelling in the mountains have no listener to their histories and no one to remember them except their gods and the natural world. Dai cries defenselessly and anticipates respect and justice for the traditions of her land.

The absence of the accessibility of assets, political and monetary limits, indigenous issues and information additionally obstructs and disconnects the Northeast region and the indigenous individuals living in and around it. Dai does not divorce her writings from the reality of violence and bloodshed that drowns the region. Her poems very subtly harbour the insecurities faced by her people either directly, as in the lines that talk of the 'footfall of soldiers' (Remembrance 12) scattered on the hills, or indirectly through the carnivorous and oxymoronic description of the terrain: "the jungle is a big eater" (Remembrance 15); "the cloud is this uncertain pulse/ that sits over my heart" (TVOM 31-3). Dai advocates the need for us to be the generational breakers²⁹, those who 'leave [the] spear' and try to communicate - 'make a sign' (TVOM 14-5) - with the rest of the world that wishes to forge connections with the Northeast region. She constantly reminds us how the region is in a state of in-betweenness and suffers from a "deep-seated conflict between what is and what could have been, the hiatus between the past and the present" (Guha 2010). Dai's poetry reflects the trauma, tiredness, hurt and sadness of a society in transition under the shadows of insurgency, counter-insurgency, and state and non-state violence³⁰: "in the hidden exchange of news we hear/ that weapons are multiplying..." (Remembrance 13-4) and how a child dies "at the edge of the world/ the distance between end and hope" (TVOM 40-1).

²⁹ Those who end a particular cycle of trauma so that the next generation does not carry on the memories or the insecurities of the past.

³⁰ To name a few conflicts: The Border Conflict of 1962, 1967 Nathu La and Cho La Clashes, the Shino-Indian Border dispute of 2006, the 2017 Doklam Military standoff, etc.

Another poem, “The Missing Link”, traces the origin myth, customs, and traditions of Arunachal Pradesh as Dai recalls the oral stories and the excruciating recollections of the difficulties her ancestors faced as they fled and migrated to the foothills of Arunachal: “I will remember then/ the great river...when the seven brothers fled south” (TML 1-10) She draws upon the folk culture of her tribe to evolve an alternate narrative of the mythic creation of the world, and credits the two brothers, Lupon Rimbuche and Chom Dande, with the creation of human beings and the world they inhabit. The oral conventions of the state profoundly act as the ‘missing link’ between the past and the present, imparting tribal wisdom and knowledge acting as archives of memory and traditions. Dai laments the absence of historical records and hopes her poetry to become the surviving evidence of the lost or decaying legacies of the state. With the fast growing industrial and complex political setting of Arunachal, the members of the community are slowly losing touch with their ancestral roots and the natural gathering places and worshipping methods. Not just this, the lack of written evidence makes the case of the existing tribal practices weak. Dai pleads that one must “remember the river’s voice” (lines 38-9) and that we begin in silence and are carved by memory: “where else could we belong,/ if not of memory/ divining life and form/ out of silence...” (TML 41-5). She insists on the importance of remembering the myths and listening to the voices, suppressed and fading, that call from the ‘sanctuary of the gorge’ and speak about the ‘vanished land.’ Another poem, ‘Song of the Dancers’, makes a reference to the ritual Ponung Dance of the Adis performed by young girls, while ‘Tapu’ deals with the dance performed by men during the time of community fencing. There is a strong desire and anticipation of being recollected: “what are the words we will tell/ our sons and daughters?” (Tapu 13-4). Dai notes how these “silent hillmen...await the long-promised letters/ and the meaning of words” (TML 66-7) like an “unknown destiny...the invisible place / we can neither forget, nor survive” (Sleepwalking 5-7). Henceforth, the use of language mixed with tribal metaphors and tales in her writings became greatly significant.

Dai notes the noxious practices and ‘poisonous rituals’ of the old in her poem, ‘The Missing Link’, and examines how these should not be the reasons for prejudices, discrimination and marginalisation against the North-Easterns and should be understood simply as confirmations of their own identity and ethnic practices - a part of a rich heritage which adds value to the nation’s culture in general. Men and women of North-east India are known for their fortitude, as they confront the night to battle the venomous creatures: “where men and women/ dwelt, facing the night,/guarding the hooded poison” (TML 18-20). Agriculture and fishing are the main sources of livelihood; as the poet says, “the river was the green/ and white vein of our lives” (TML 22-3). Dai also extols the womenfolk of the states who act as cultural torchbearers and identity generators, spicing the

social development of the lamps (i.e., children) of a civilisation: “...remember...voices/of deaf women/ framing the root of light/ in the first stories/ to the children of the tribe” (TML 32-7); Dai reminds us of the role women play as carriers of language and memories, lamenting the sufferings of the “woman lost in translation” (TVOM 44) - skipped in pages, unspoken in syllables and hidden behind silences. Dai merges the female voice and body with the natural landscape (ecocriticism and ecofeminism in Dai’s poetry) and is able to identify the dualistic structure of otherness and negation. Preeti Gill notes how North-east women “find themselves at the receiving end of the violence on three fronts, from the states, the militants, and a corresponding escalation of violence within their own homes” (Gill 8), and yet they struggle and survive, “with happiness to carry on” (TVOM 45) and pass on to the generations to come.

5. Conclusion

Due to the absence of the most authentic histories and credible accounts, numerous scholars work towards the job of composing and recovering the identity of the Northeast. In a way, this empowers a person to connect oneself with one’s social chronicles, memories, collective and personal, and, of course, good morale. This connection becomes stronger when persons from a particular place whose history is being archived begin speaking and representing themselves through the moral reasoning of their own cultural practices and beliefs. Then we see the hope in uplifting the indigenous literature, as rightly said by Mamang Dai in her verse, “Remember, because nothing is ended/ but it is changed, and memory is a changing shape” (TML 54-7). Things change, and it is our duty to elevate the Northeastern legacy and proclaim its indigenesness. Insofar postcolonialist and postmodernist theorists have demonstrated history’s constructed narratives about the past and the textuality of all past evidence. This informed and aware textuality is the cultural product of a postcolonial poem. As inheritors of a troubled and broken history, we share in equal measure a responsibility to “re-member” the past. Though official accounts may fail to tell the whole truth, in literature (poetry, in particular), we can re-imagine and recreate it.

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Making English Plays Indigenous: Hybridization of Manipuri English Plays for Theatrical Growth

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Abstract

Achieving the trademark 'indigenous' requires establishing style and forms that go beyond the canonical foundation. English plays in India are not new but the production and adaptation of plays into a state of ethnic and cultural indigeneity bent a grace of indigenous element with English theatric tradition. The 21st-century Indian proscenium is charged with multifarious cultural adaptation of the dominant Indian subcontinent discourses yet plays from the Northeastern states like Manipur assert its cultural identity through Experimental dramas of adaptations on national and international stage. The paper will look closely at how Manipur Experimental theatre announces its identity through an admixture of Indigenous, Sanskrit and Western dramatic traditions thereby creating a hybrid formation, making plays avant-garde. This paper will demonstrate the hybridization of Manipuri performances from ancient to modern viz-a-viz the nature of the performance tradition of Manipur while investigating how Experimental Manipuri English-adapted plays are perceived by different audiences drawing out different meanings of the plays. Ratan Thiyam's adaptations of Macbeth by William Shakespeare and When We Dead Awaken by Henrik Ibsen will be assessed for this research.

Keywords: Manipuri, Adaptation, Performance, Audience, Moving painting.

1. Introduction

Plays written by Western authors were percolated through colonial encounters in India. Colonialism in India gave birth to the modern Indian theatre which concerning the proscenium tradition follows the dimension of

Western dramaturgy. Theatre scholars agree that traditional Indian performances are not strictly scripted nor codified but rather performances are based on improv that flows within the collective consciousness of the community. The stories of Ramayana, Mahabharata, and other mythological telling were staged as an act of community engagement in celebration. Stagecraft, Direction, Visual Effects, and dialogue are the souvenirs of the colonial legacy that defines Modern Indian Drama. The English Play¹ was a medium of communication staged to disseminate education around the cultures in the colonial context. After Independence, The Theatre of Roots dug the indigenous performative elements and incorporated them with the inherited colonial theatre (Awasthi, S., & Schechner, R. 1989). Performances flourished in resuscitating Sanskriti Natyasastric treatise where directors employed rich Indian aesthetics of Hindu culture of different parts of India. Major Manipuri² dramatic creation emulates various Hindu aesthetics due to the Bengali Vaishnavism influence yet, Manipuri drama curate elemental difference that is regarded as foreign in comparison to other Indian dramatic production. The ethnic and racial difference is one major affair that stands as a bulwark for national sensitivity against considering Manipuri plays as Indian kind. The larger question here that needs to be addressed is whether Manipuri directors use Indigenous components to revive their Indigenous roots or to exotify for notoriety. Ratan Thiyam's foray into English adaptation garnered respect both from national and international audiences reassuring the versatility he possessed (Nilu, K. 2010). However, existing scholarship on Ratan Thiyam pertains only to his repertory company's ability to communicate the political allegory of Manipur through adaptations while failing to pay attention to his stagecraft and the aesthetic he adopts. Using Visual methodology, the author will investigate whether Thiyam exotifies indigenous elements for audiences outside Manipur by analyzing how the three audiences perceive his plays: International, Non-Northeastern National, and Local audience. The paper will also demonstrate Thiyam's work beyond the question of the intended audience from the perspective of how his artistic rendition of still art from famous painters gets converted into moving art, asserting a statement of brilliance in reproduction.

With this paper, the author aims to target three arguments. First, the hybridization of various dramatic traditions in the indigenous performances that shape the outlook of Experimental Manipuri Dramas. Secondly, in the works of Ratan Thiyam, his theatre has been revered because of his contribution to the 'Theatre of Roots' in Modern Indian Dramas; often, scholars normalize and ignore the problematic elements he adopt. Third, using the visual methodology, the author attempts to show how different audiences react to Thiyam's hybridized forms and stories.

Richard Schechner³ posits that performance and ritual are interconnected to the evolution of Theatre. In Greek Performance, Tragedy evolved from rituals commemorating the names of Greek Gods. Likewise, Manipuri pre-Vaishnavite origin traces its performance to a ritual called 'Lai-Haroaba' - a ritualistic festival performed in the name of Manipuri Meitei's God and Goddess. The festival spans for days and each day has a specific function. During the festival, the Priest and the Priestess facilitate the entire celebration by acting as the middle passage between the Gods and the humans. The brief window⁴ of the festival allows supernatural forces not only to possess the body of the Priest in trance but the festival recounts the folk origin culture in dances and music on different days of observations. It is right to surmise that the Manipuri traces its origin to Lai-Harouba's performance. The dances like Khamba-Thoibi, and Maibi-Jagoi, and the cultural costumes, the musical rhapsody yodeled using an indigenous instrument like 'Pena' are a massive collective form of cultural indigeneity made possible by the observation of 'Lai-haroaba'. Sticking closely to the indigenous roots for Manipuri is an indigenous duty of imitating the ancestral performance (Devi, A. C. 2021), and 'Lai Haoroba' is one such event in a year where one is reminded of the omniscient God having potent power, instructed through the veils of the Priestess in trance. The festival serves as the repertoire where foreign influences interact and evolve into distinct cultural practices. To prove the statement, the Manipuri Vaishnavite dances like 'Ras-lila', Manipuri classical dance, 'Sankritan' take their influence from 'Lai-Harouba' performances and standardized as Vaishnavite performances (Devi, K. A. 2021). Later, pioneers of Theatre of Roots like Ratan Thiyam used aesthetics and styles that were quite close to the 'Lai-Haroaba' Performances and the Manipuri Vaisnavite performances. For instance, Thiyam's use of witches, the oracular tonality in Macbeth, and Saktam (Irene) in an adaptation of When We Dead Awaken produces imagery of the Priestess who would perform in 'Lai-Harouba'.

The historical account of Vaishnavism in Manipur narrates the influence of Hindu philosophy and how it created a new inspiration in arts and culture. The introduction to Bengali culture proved to be conducive as it accelerated literary production in Bengali scripts and the Bengali aesthetic integrated with Manipuri popular culture (Somorendra, A. 2000). Before the revival of the Meitei script, Manipuri culture defined itself along the lines of Bengali masterpieces but never produced a facsimile of its parent source. The hybridization of Bengali culture in Manipur rests as an assimilation of the Meitei aesthetic to the Bengali culture. Although Manipur became a Hindu nation, the indelible mark of Sanamahims⁵ and its apparent religious performances found in the display of 'Lai-Harouba' remain a base where Bengali and other cultural influences scaffold, defining and redefining Manipuri arts and aesthetics. In the space of the theatre, Arambam Somorendra⁶ explained the diasporic impact of first-generation Manipuri having had education outside Manipur experimented theatre with themes of religious and socio-political climate. Apart from the Socio-political plays, religious play in Manipur is ambiguous in describing what is original and what is exotic. Plays such as Devajani, Bhagyachandra, Kourav Parajay, and

Sita Banvas borrow Hindu sources but with the Meitei language assertion and the Hindu religious following of the masses, the play for the audience became indigenous construction. Similarly, there were also Indigenous religious themes played alongside, as seen in the production of Moirang Thoibi, Pamheiba, and Sija Lai oibi. The evolution of Manipuri drama from colonial and early post independent era thus demonstrate a trajectory where religion played a major role in hybridizing the Manipuri Drama with themes of both Sanskriti and Indigenous tradition whereby the Proscenium, a colonial western construction begets a synthesis of three culture into one form of Manipuri Dramatic tradition.

The arrival of Western Play in Manipuri Proscenium is a recent phenomenon, dating its earliest performance in 1995 with Nongthombam Premchand's adaptation of Aninoulls' Antigone⁷[sic]. When talking about English-adapted plays, the target audience is an important part of the discussion because, English adaptation comes along with a tag of an elitist background, catering its audience to only the ones that are privileged enough to understand and read the play. The above-mentioned conception is a contemporary understanding. But when these adaptations started performing, it was not much about privilege but rather it yielded the same approach of assimilation to the popular Meitie culture. To elaborate, Antigone by Premchand was a tussle between the State of Manipur and the central government in the wake of Indian Independence where Manipur losing its sovereignty was much like the state of rebellious attitude exuded by Antigone (Mee, E. B. 2011). In Premchand's production, he highlighted subtly the Indian Army's mistreatment of the people of Manipur which was a hot topic relevant and construed in the name of adaptation. This gives a strong indication that the play was for all the masses. In addition, the Macbeth adaptation directed by Lokendra Arambam in 1997 was performed on a floating stage⁸ attracting people on the riverside, to participate in the tragedy. The performance of such defied proscenium tradition and adopted a stage that is much closer to an indigenous form of play 'Sumang Lila'⁹.



Figure 1: Dr. Faustus trapped in his own schemes (Premjit, TH. 2021)

Nonetheless, Western-based drama was a kind of production that directors adapted to suit a common audience that slowly transitioned to an enclosed private audience. Dr. Faustus directed by Th. Premjit serves as a case in point that demonstrates the transformation of Manipuri Western drama in the use of an entire Western aesthetic in his production of the 2021 play of the same name, organized by CHORUS REPERTORY THEATRE, IMPHAL (Fig 1). Plays as such, fall under conventional theatre and it juxtaposes unconventional plays adopted by Ratan Thiyam in Theatre of Roots.

Theatre of Roots aimed to revive and redefine theatre for post-independent India (Awasthi, S., & Schechner, R. 1989). Directors from different parts of India aimed to achieve new dialogue through experimentation of Indigenous traits. Directors used Indigenous features that were concentrated in the rural part of India, yet, the drama produced by famed directors was fundamentally for the urban audience. A case like this is also seen in Manipur, where Western Dramatic theatre stands at a crossroads with the folk theatre of Sumang Lila. Sumang Lila is extremely rooted with the indigenous Meitei community and they do not have one particular stage but they travel and perform in the courtyard, in Sumang Lila, the production company goes to people unlike people go to the playhouse to watch the drama (Premchand, N. 2021). Whether we call it fortunate or unfortunate, Sumang Lila failed to adapt to Western play. Sumang Lila as space is a decolonizing sphere with its main component resisting and challenging proscenium theatre, produces plays of Manipuri Origins and the farthest the story in Sumang Lila adapted are from the land of major non-English speaking countries like China and East Timor. For instance, Sumang Lila produced plays related to international events of strictly non-colonial stories, like the changing power politics in East Timor in Gusmao gee khudol, the ordeals of German-occupied Lidice in Lidicie gee Gulap, the violent fate of Uganda in Ugandagi Maraibak and the Chinese resistance to colonialism in Opium War. Sumang Lila as an Indigenous theatre has time and time again proven its relevance by taking up stories from different sources thereby hybridizing its essence yet it has strictly resisted adaptation of the Western writers. To understand this anomaly, R.K Yaibiren Sana, a research scholar from the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, at Tezpur University, has stated:

First, Shumang Kumhei/Leela has been a rigorously experimented medium or say in its constant evolution. This remains true for the performance techniques it adapts to or adopts, its space (as you might have observed from the shumang to the open spaces or elsewhere). It is so, as well an experimental space for several playwrights. Dr Makhon Mani Mongshaba's Malemnganbi is an experiment with Sophocles's Antigone. This, however, could not hold the audience and I see this as an 'adaptation failure' because of lack of contextualization to the specific situation or culture or 'our' history and so was Devdas. Popular Shumang Kumhei plays are deeply the

stories of the land and its people. People simply do not quest for any stories they cannot have a link to. Hence it is not a mere question of resistance to playwrights of particular origin, rather, a question of critical contextualization which needs to be adapted to the situation of the land and its people. (Sana, R. K. Y. 2023, November 13)

It is at this juncture that we question for whom the English-adapted plays are for. Similar to this question, one is also confronted with why Independent India did not abandon colonial descendant proscenium if they are searching for roots. Participation is one of the key components in which we find the purpose of English-adapted play. Yes, proscenium theatre is a modern Western construct, but proscenium is also a space where different cultures interact. Indigenous culture could at times be limiting and conservative but interaction with different cultures moves the growth of modern civilization. The theatre served the purpose of entertainment and education in colonial times and in the post-colonial scene, theatre allows small communities to look out beyond its own culture and feel a part of a larger civilization. Hence, English plays often promote the universal nature of humanity through their competent themes concluding the relevance in post-colonial indigenous stages.

Chorus Repertory Theatre adapted the English play *When We Dead Awaken* by Henrik Ibsen Ashibagee Eshei directed by Ratan Thiyam in 2008 at Delhi Ibsen Festival (Datta, A. n.d.). Ratan Thiyam achieves his message through the assimilation of tonal and visual aesthetics while at the same time making his Indigenous work distant from Indigenous opinion. Based on the visual representation of Thiyam's work, one could notice the heavy emphasis he puts on creating the visual effect at the center of most of his productions that it becomes the primary method for discerning plays for the audience who do not speak Manipuri. The question of whether the emphasis is overly done at the expense of the plot of the play depends on the kind of audience Thiyam purports to target. Given Thiyam's reputation, we can categorically divide his audience as i) National ii) International, and iii) Local/ Manipur.

2. National Audience

Theatre on the national stage usually for established theatre companies are state-sponsored events in the form of competitions or national theatre festivals whereby theatre companies from various parts of the nation participate in the demonstration of their rich cultural heritage. A play like *Andha Yug* by Dharamvir Bharati could be staged by different directors at national events and each director produces their work based on the original or their take of the play. The interpretation that these directors take differs from one another based on their cultural

backgrounds but closely aligns with the national identity. For example, the play of Andha Yug will have a Hindu aesthetic in various forms of cultural indigeneity. Considering, the geographical isolation of the Northeast from the rest of the nation has not only created ethno-linguistic differences but its cultural representation in art differs majorly in its creative production as well. For instance, In Mahabharata Gandhari Sari is appropriated with a Manipuri woman garment called Phanek and Rani Phee in Thiyam's Andha Yug (Fig 2). Though the garment is appropriated with an equivalent of a woman's sari, there is an elemental difference between the two, Sari, is a one-piece fabric while Phanek is a lower garment that is always paired with Phee an upper body fabric.



Figure 2: Fallen Gandhari (Thiyam, R. 2016a)



Figure 3: Arjuna explains Chakravyuha to Subhadra. (Cinema Vision India, Mumbai (CVI). 2018)

The cultural performance displayed on Gandhari's costume set apart Manipuri's Hindu identity while at the same time, its stark elemental difference from the Sari a common Hindu marker makes Manipuri's adaptation of Andha Yug exotic. While aesthetic representation displays cultural grounding, actors playing characters are exoticized as well. The factor of otherness is defined not only by aesthetics but also by the actors involved in plays. Mahabharata in conventional cinemas and Hindi serials, is portrayed by actors of North Indian descent, thereby normalizing rigid representation of Indian Epics. Thus, when Arjun and Draupadi are on stage in Chakravyuha (Fig 3) the entire scene played by Manipuri actors could give an out-of-the-ordinary experience for the national audience.

Taking Ibsen's adaptation of *When We Dead Awaken*- Ahshibagee Eshei Thiyam's use of visual drama is the main method of communication for the national audience since they cannot understand Manipuri. The adoption of visuals is extremely effective in withholding audiences' attention but the non-verbal cues complemented with screaming dialogues reaching out to the audience gives prominence to the performance. In the adapted play *Macbeth*, Thiyam uses the tribal motifs primarily to construct a modern oriental tribal land, the music and the sound communicate the aggression leading to greed and ultimately *Macbeth's* destruction.



Figure 4: Rubek and Irene united in spiritual realm (Thiyam, R. (2010b)

One major criticism about such adaptations is that Thiyam perpetuates stereotypes that are not true to its sources. In *Ashibagee Eshei*, the women surrounded in a circle while dancing to their own tune wears costume like *Raas Lila* but in all white (Fig 4) which is a contrast to the *Raas Leela* dancers wearing colorful costumes. Thiyam's *Macbeth* is fictionalized in his creative invention but the tribal imagery that is presented on stage has no connection to one specific tribe and this archetypical image produces stereotypes of Manipuri tribals among national audience who would think that all Manipuri tribal act in ways displayed on stage. However, whether Thiyam uses stereotypes or not, the very differences in language, costumes, objects, and music used in his plays, already create an exotic experience for the national audience. To take a few examples, in *Ashibagee Eshei*, the women characters wear Meitei costumes of two types: one that of Domestic life worn by *Shakhenbi* (*Maia*) and the other that of Priestly life worn by *Shaktam* (*Irene*)(Fig 5). Now, taking these two into account, they are very different from those of women's costumes represented nationally in *Salwar-Kameez* and *Sari*. In adapted *Macbeth*, Thiyam's usage of objects such as the Manipuri reed mat- *Phak* and the wine jug carried by *Lady Macbeth* shows an indigenous culture far different from the Indian civilization.



Figure 5: Maia in domestic attire (Thiyam, R. 2010a) (left) and Irene in maibi attire (right)

3. International Audience

The adaptation of Western plays calibrated on the stage holds enough traction on the international stage because of its Western origin. The added perspective remodeled by a non-Western director increased the worth of universal ideas propounded by the Western thinker. For the Western audience, the adaptations of Thiyam bolster their pride in their stories' ability to reconfigure themselves, never getting old, suiting every walk of life outside the West. The stage is also directed in ways to relate to the Western audience for example the “melting clock” of Salvador Dali in Ashibagee Eshei is not only promoted to show how well the theatre company is adapted to hybridizing Western artwork into the indigenous craft but presents a pastiche of a unique directorial authority different in taste but familiar in context. Irene in Ashibagee Eshei is equated to a Manipuri priestess known as Maibi by its costume which gives an interesting take on the play, diverting majorly from the original play. Irene's character in the original, couldn't be really defined as dead or alive, or human or non-human for that matter by its plaster-like skin color but Thiyam's Irene represents a figure who is outside and inside of the society by equating her to a priestess who happens to wear white occasionally. Thiyam's Irene is unlike the original Irene because, from the outside reality, she is someone who is accepted and regarded as a normal member of society. The objects of three dolls representing the triangular relationship between Shaktam Lapka (Rubek), Shakhenbi (Maja), and Lamlanba (Ulfhejm) has a cultural connotation to Meitei 'Laiphadibi¹⁰'. The fact that Thiyam introduced these “Laiphadibi” (Manipuri Dolls) is an inspiration he got while reading *A Doll's House* (Nilu, K. 2010). But the episode where Maia (Shakhenbi) makes dolls punctuates that Maia (Shakhenbi) in

the argument with Rubek (Shaktam) understands what it is like to be an artist since doll making in Manipuri culture is a female-gendered job. By showing how Irene and Maia are adapted to the indigenous context, adding another feminist approach unknown to the international audience, Ashibagee Eshei is made avant-garde. The structure of the plot is already familiar to the Western audience, what they look for in the adaptations is something new to the storyline and Thiyam indigenous tweaked elements provide a spectacle that gathers a large crowd. With strong visual communication at the core of his entire play, Thiyam convinces effectively that his adaptation is a force to be reckoned with. His stagecraft aids in complementing a large grandeur that is at par with the international standard of theatre. Thiyam's Macbeth also creatively communicates the ever-growing idea of greed and power into the composition of tribal politics, proving Shakespeare yet again a universalist but the employment of tribal aesthetics everywhere in the play makes it a must-watch for spotting the differences in comparisons with other adapted Macbeths.

4. The Local Audience

The connecting line between Thiyam and his local audience is the language and the aesthetic he adopts. The language asserts the Manipuri identity in his major productions on stage beyond Manipur but his recent English adapted plays have created a disconnect with his local audience. Usham Rojio in his article GOODBYE RATAN THIAM points out that Ratan Thiyam fails to communicate the textual intricacies of Shakespeare. He further elaborates through Erin B Mee's argument on Thiyam's detachment from his local audience as critical to the theatre of Manipur. Could it be because Thiyam is hybridizing way too much? For example, Thiyam has deliberately used Noh theatre's techniques that stylized communication through forced voice modulation completely different from Manipuri's normal day-to-day talking convention. This adopted voice modulation of Noh stresses dramatic tension, however local audience finds it foreign and indistinguishable from the Manipuri aesthetic which he also uses in combination with various Manipuri-aesthetic-like elements. To elaborate on how Thiyam uses not-so-original but adopts Manipuri aesthetic elements, in Ashibagee Eshei, Irene (Shaktam) is loosely portrayed as a Maibi (priestess) in her costume, however, a normal Maibi (Fig 6) does not wear white phanek embroidered on the hem, neither do normal maibi (priestess) wear a glove or adorned in all white. Could this representation be all for the eyes? In adapted Macbeth, Thiyam's use of the Japanese Noh technique is prevalent and overpowering with heavy diction which at times becomes indiscernible to what the characters are speaking even for those who could understand Manipuri.

The tribal costumes worn on the land of Macbeth are even created by Thiyam's vision of a tribal that does not exist in real life(Sarkar, S. 2018, August 13). The point of how he creates a fictionalized tribal people is questioned further on his choices of objects that he tries to present as a tribal aesthetic. The use of a fishing trap (Kabo-Lu)¹¹ as headgear for the tribal men is rather exotic to the eye than accurate(Fig 7). Macbeth's hairstyle or for that matter Lady Macbeth's hairstyle does not have any close resemblance to any tribe of Manipur. Could it be just a mere construction of a tribal people or are local audiences able to find some resemblance in the play? Thiyam has purposefully used Manipuri elements although they are tweaked heavily to suit his creative vision, they however stir up debate regarding the question of the intended audience.



Figure 6: A Maibi in trance (Kongkham, R. 2023)



Figure 7: Army in Macbeth wearing Kabo-Lu as a headgear (up)(Thiyam, R. (2014) & Kabo-Lu the fishing trap (down)(MAIBAM, R. 2021)

To dissect how Thiyam has tweaked indigenous elements, Macbeth by Ranabir Mangang Heisnam could be assessed for comparative analysis. To begin with, the figure of witches in Thiyam's Macbeth is formless but produces an effect of the Maibi (Priestess) in trance-making prophecies. The figures are grand/formless having white tentacles, but the voices they enunciate are visceral like Maibi (Priestess) possessed by the spirit of the god. The imagery produced by the witches in Thiyam's Macbeth may be uncanny but for the local audience, the representation is contrasted by the idea of Maibis (Priestess) who are as normal as normal human beings living among them, creating an unseemly doubt while watching the episode play out. Heisnam's witches on the other hand are human-like, but not so human in their representation setting them out as Heloi (Nymphs). In Manipuri folklore, Heloi is described as attractive young female nymphs luring men to insanity (Chaki-Sircar, & Manjusri. 1984, January 1). The way they make prophecies to Macbeth and Banquo, the uncanny grandeur remains absent but the local audience gets connected by its human representation of a nymphic being exciting the audience by its folkloric representation of popular drama. From this, we can ground the idea that Thiyam's use of spectacular formless witches is a creative choice elaborated to amaze audiences of all types while Heisnam's work is calibrated to the Manipuri audience solely. (Fig 8)



Figure 8: Heisnam's witches (left) (Heisnam, R. 2022b) & Thiyam's witches (right) (Thiyam, R. 2016b).

The costumes worn by actors in Thiyam's Macbeth are certainly tribal however, one cannot trace from which tribe Thiyam has taken inspiration. It remains only as speculation to tribal aesthetic use of colors Black and Red, to which a local audience vaguely speculates it as Naga or Tangkhul or Maring or Chiru since all these tribal primarily use the colors red and black in their tribal attires. The composition of Music in Thiyam's Macbeth resonates with Japanese Noh and Kabuki musical background while Heisnam's Macbeth from the beginning to the end uses Manipuri sankritan and non-sankritan music entirely supporting the development of

the play without much dialogue. The objects Thiyam used in his Macbeth also digress much from their original sources, for example, the reed-mat locally known as Phak used by the indigenous people to sit on the floor has been utilized as the letter of Macbeth's victorious love (Fig 9), which could be perceived in two ways one, exoticizing an object from its intended use to appeal to an audience unbeknownst to Manipuri culture. On the other hand, this reed-mat supports the directorial vision on the emphasis of the gloat and greed Lady Macbeth possesses hinting at the central hamartia the character transforming at the opportune moment. Soldier's costumes in Thiyam's adaptation lack organic resonance too, for example, the visor they adorn is simply non-existent in any tribal of Manipur or Manipuri culture. Nonetheless, Heisnam's Macbeth pays careful attention to the details of the objects used in the play.

The stark differences between the complementary color scheme of tribal attire in Thiyam juxtapose with the vibrant colorful attire of Heisnam's version. The Thang-Ta is a martial art aboriginal to the Meitei kingdom developed to educate youths for the protection of the kingdom in wartime (Meitei, L. S., Singh, H. K., Singh, H. P., & Devi, A. J. 2020). Heisnam's Macbeth performance in war reverberates the tactics of 'Thang-Ta'. In addition, Macbeth's war-time attire though colorful, but traditionally black and red, is worn with knee-length trousers and a turban scarf for tightening the turban. (Fig 10).



Figure 9: Lady Macbeth gloating on the Phak letter (Thiyam, R. 2017)



Figure 10: Heisnam's Macbeth performing Thang-Ta (Heisnam, R. 2022a)

The long hour of Ranabir's Macbeth is extensive of the Manipuri Dance performances where women characters such as Lady Macbeth and witches dance with the artistic grace of 'Manipuri Raas Leela', and 'Khamba-Thoibi' (Fig 11) The dialogues and the music fall into a rhythm of Manipuri Sankritan, Sankritan being philosophical religious music of aesthetic Manipuri Vaishnavism (Konsam, R. 2021). A strong demonstration of Meitei Vaisnavite culture is expressed in the attire of the King and Lady Macbeth. The King wears a shawl and a Pheijom; a Meitei traditional men's pajama, while Lady Macbeth wears "Moirang Phee", a traditional silk textile with its design inspired by the teeth of the mythological pythonic god 'Pakhangba' (KURIAN, P. H. 2013).



Figure 11: Heisnam's Lady Macbeth imitates Manipuri Dances (Heisnam, R. 2020)

From the assessment of the two adaptations of Macbeth, one is left to wonder whether Thiyam is doing anything for the aesthetic without being mindful of its sources. The answer should be open-ended, as one also needs to look beyond this intended audience and find the genius in Thiyam's mastery of his artistic creation. Where do we find that in abundance? It is in his ability to transform static art into moving art.

5. From Painting to Theatre

The adaptation of the Western play by Manipuri directors itself is a product of hybridization, the ways in which they adopt or appropriate the Western text into indigenous performance are creatively polished not only in the storytelling of the plot but also in the interweaving of Western static art into moving artwork. Western art such as *The Persistence of Memory* by Salvador Dali (Fig 13) and *The Flying Fish* by Marc Chagall (Fig 15) are incorporated into the visual story of *Ashibagee Eshei*. This highlights Thiyam's prowess in making visual art correlate with the dramatic text. Dali's painting *The Persistence of Memory* is captured on the stage as the Melted clock representing Irene's memory stuck in the moment of her past decapitating her emotional time (Nilu, K. 2010) (Fig 12). The way Thiyam connected Dali with Ibsen is brilliantly done on a stage evoking a surrealist statement without dreaming but awe-inspiring. Nobody would have thought of Irene's chagrin with a surrealist statement but the re-representation of Dali's *The Persistence of Memory* brings a nuanced understanding of Irene's character in Thiyam's adaptation.



Figure 12: Lady Macbeth gloating on the Phak letter (Thiyam, R. 2017)



Figure 13: Lady Macbeth gloating on the Phak letter (Thiyam, R. 2017)

The moment of Irene's emotional death translates into her stillness while the clock hangs loose depicting Irene's stuck in the past. The difference between Dali and Thiyam is the number of objects they used in their artistic creation. Although Thiyam uses three objects (The leave-less tree, Irene, and one jointed melted clock) as compared to Dali's numerous details, Thiyam is apt in communicating his art in concrete detail.

The clocks in *The Persistence of Memory* are limber as if the clocks are soggy but Thiyam's single clock gives an impression that the clock is melting in drips. The color of the clock is white and its minute hand, hour hand, and the numbers on the clock are embossed in gold matching Irene's shade. This gives an impression in the clear juxtaposition of the clock and Irene hanging almost dead on the tree that- it is Irene's personal time that is displayed on stage. Marc Chagall's *The Flying Fish* is also renditioned on Thiyam's stage in the scene where Irene and Rubek float on a Lake reminiscing of their past lives (Fig 14). The scene recaptures the early modern art into a moving art hybridizing into local context. In Chagall, the fish is seen carrying a Jewish's three candles but in Thiyam the flying fishes are the most enchanting moment in the scene because it installs the idea that Irene and Rubek are in fact in another realm. The flying fishes are complemented by lotuses against Chagall's red flowers, but the objects though hybridized convey the same meaning of the conjugal relationship between a man and a woman. The moving frame is highlighted in blue hue like Chagall's painting and it is contrasted with normal lighting on the side of Maia and Ulfheim signifying the difference between the spiritual realm and the living realm. The swift motion of the canoe and the lotuses moving in the water current recreates a daily choreography of the people living on the floating island of Loktak Lake. This entire episode foregrounds Thiyam as the master storyteller who balances his audiences through a hybridized mode of representation.



Figure 14: Irene and Rubek in spiritual realm



Figure 15: *The Flying Fish*, 1948
(Chagall, M. n.d.)

The purpose of English play lies in educating the unfamiliar and familiar using various sources. The dependence on aesthetics lies in collaborating elements to make the unfamiliar familiar by bringing down the global to locale and at the same time elevating the locale to global. Thiyam's English-adapted plays contribute to disseminating global trends in Manipur and on an artistic scale his theatre significantly contributes to the excellence of Experimental Theatre. His production as *Erin B Me* indicates is "visually poetic and aurally muscular, making dazzling use of sound, music, rhythm and color. Thiyam's work engages all the senses—it is "total theatre." (Mee, E. B. 2017, March 15)

Notes

1. Plays authored by Western playwrights, not only English authors but also Greek, Norwegian, and other continental authors.
2. Manipuri here refers to the dominant cultural identity in Manipur- the Meitei: A major ethnic group in Manipur. While Manipur's identity internally comprises many tribals.
3. see *INTRODUCTION: THE FAN AND THE WEB, PERFORMANCE THEORY, RICHARD SCHECHNER*, p ix-xi. (Schechner, R. 1988)
4. The period within the festival where oracular predictions are made in regard to the community's overall welfare and yearly warnings. Priestess could also get into trance and make predictions on normal days besides during the festival.
5. A Pre-vaishnavite religion of Manipur based on pagan and animism
6. See Manipuri Drama: Indian Literature, March-April, 2000, Vol. 44, No. 2
7. Erin B. Mee, *The Fight for Regional Autonomy through Regional Culture: Antigone in Manipur, North-East India*
8. See Usham Rojio, *Macbeth: Stage of Blood*, Imphal Free Press. (Rojio, U. 2020, June 21)
9. Sumang Lila/khumei (a type of theatre, played using an all-male cast), is performed in the courtyard on an elevated stage in the middle keeping the dimension on all four sides open.
10. Indigenous Manipuri Dolls made from pieces of clothes, see *Laiphadibi: The Cloth Dolls that Guard and Guide* (Manipuri People, Akoijam Sunita, Sunita, A. 2019, October 10) <https://www.sahapedia.org/laiphadibi-cloth-dolls-guard-and-guide-manipuri-people>
11. a fishing trap made with sticks in an oval shape, see Traps, in Bamboo And Cane Culture Of Manipur, <https://ignca.gov.in/divisionss/janapada-sampada/northeastern-regional-centre/bamboo-and-cane-culture-of-manipur/>

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पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर: भारत और पूर्वी अफ्रीका के बीच सामुद्रिक सहयोग

आकाश वर्मा¹

सारांश

इस लेख में पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर स्थित पूर्वी अफ्रीकी देशों के साथ भारत के सामुद्रिक सहयोग पर चर्चा की गई है। हिन्द महासागर क्षेत्र में भारत के समुद्री संचार के रास्ते दुनिया में सबसे पुराने माने जाते हैं। हड़प्पा सभ्यता के दौरान गुजरात के लोथल में दुनिया की पहली गोदी (डॉक) का निर्माण किया गया था। प्राचीन काल में भारतीय जहाज पश्चिम में अफ्रीका और अरब के सुदूर तटों तक यात्रा किया करते थे। वहीं, चौथी शताब्दी ईसा पूर्व के साहित्य में भी भारत और पूर्वी अफ्रीका के बीच ऐतिहासिक महासागरीय जुड़ाव बिंदुओं का जिक्र है। भारत और पूर्वी अफ्रीका के मध्य प्राचीन और बहुआयामी विकास-साझेदारी समानता, मैत्री एवं भाईचारे पर आधारित है, जो 21वीं सदी में सभी आयामों में दक्षिण-दक्षिण सहयोग का प्रतिनिधित्व करती है। इसने भारत को अफ्रीकी देशों के साथ साझी वृद्धि, सुरक्षा और पारस्परिक लाभ के लिए सामुद्रिक सुरक्षा सहयोग की ओर प्रेरित किया है। भारतीय नौसेना पूर्वी अफ्रीका के विशाल समुद्री किनारों की सुरक्षा के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण भागीदार बनकर उभरी है। लेख में सहयोग पर चर्चा के लिए 4 महत्वपूर्ण बिंदुओं: सामुद्रिक कूटनीति एवं सुरक्षा; नीली अर्थव्यवस्था; हाइड्रोजन एवं खनिज संसाधन, और तटीय पोत परिवहन, बंदरगाह विकास एवं समुद्री संभार-तंत्र (लॉजिस्टिक्स) को शामिल किया गया है। साथ ही, इसमें महासागरीय सहयोग के उभरते क्षेत्रों पर भी प्रकाश डाला गया है।

मूलशब्द : पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर , पूर्वी अफ्रीकी देश , भारत ,सामुद्रिक सहयोग

1. परिचय

तीन करोड़ वर्ग किलोमीटर में फैला पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर क्षेत्र एक सुसंगत जैव-भौगोलिक, जलवायु और सामाजिक-राजनीतिक क्षेत्र है। इसमें 60 लाख वर्ग किलोमीटर का विशेष आर्थिक क्षेत्र और 15,000 किलोमीटर से अधिक लंबी संयुक्त तट रेखा है। पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर क्षेत्र में 18 देश शामिल हैं - कोमोरोस, जिबूती, भारत, ईरान, केन्या, मेडागास्कर, मालदीव, मॉरीशस, मोज़ाम्बिक, ओमान, पाकिस्तान, सेशेल्स, सोमालिया, दक्षिण अफ्रीका, श्रीलंका, तंज़ानिया, संयुक्त अरब अमीरात और यमन। इसके अलावा, यहाँ कई छोटे-छोटे द्वीपीय देश भी मौजूद हैं। ऊर्जा सुरक्षा के लिए भारत की मजबूतियाँ और विदेशी

संसाधनों पर उसकी निर्भरता भारत को इस क्षेत्र के करीब लाती हैं। इस क्षेत्र में सुरक्षित समुद्री वातावरण भारत और पूर्वी अफ्रीकी देशों, दोनों की राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा के साथ-साथ विशिष्ट आर्थिक क्षेत्रों में देशों के हितों की रक्षा करने और व्यापार एवं शिपिंग के रास्तों की सुरक्षा करने के लिए भी महत्वपूर्ण है। यह भारत की उभरती हुई समुद्री रणनीति में अहम योगदान देते हैं। पिछले 2000 सालों से यहां मौजूद बंदरगाह द्विपक्षीय व्यापार में संलग्न रहे हैं। वैदिक ग्रंथों में भी भारतीय तटों से पश्चिम में अफ्रीका और अरब के सुदूर बंदरगाहों तक समुद्री यात्राओं का जिक्र मिलता है। चौथी शताब्दी ईसा पूर्व में लिखे गए एरिथ्रियन सागर के यात्रा विवरण में भारत और पूर्वी अफ्रीका के बीच ऐतिहासिक सामुद्रिक संचार बिंदुओं और उनके मध्य व्यापार पर विस्तृत चर्चा की गई है। भारत और पूर्वी अफ्रीका के मध्य सदियों से चले आ रहे इन संबंधों ने फोकस अफ्रीका, टीम-9 पहल, भारतीय तकनीकी एवं आर्थिक सहयोग जैसे कार्यक्रमों के माध्यम से गति प्राप्त की है। हिन्द महासागर क्षेत्र में अधिक से अधिक सहयोग बढ़ाने के लिए हिन्द महासागर परिधि संघ की स्थापना और इसे मजबूत बनाने में भारत ने एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है। साथ ही, भारत-अफ्रीका मंच शिखर सम्मेलनों ने महाद्वीपीय, क्षेत्रीय और द्विपक्षीय स्तरों पर सहयोग के लिए संस्थागत ढांचा उपलब्ध कराया है। भारत-अफ्रीका मंच शिखर सम्मेलन भारत और अफ्रीकी देशों के बीच राजनीतिक, आर्थिक और सांस्कृतिक संबंधों में मजबूती लाने के उद्देश्य से साल 2008 में लॉन्च किया गया था। इसका पहला शिखर सम्मेलन अप्रैल 2008 में नई दिल्ली में हुआ, जिसमें भारत और 14 अफ्रीकी देशों के नेता एक साथ आए। इसके बाद, दूसरा शिखर सम्मेलन 2011 में अदीस अबाबा, तीसरा 2015 में नई दिल्ली में आयोजित हुए। शिखर सम्मेलन के माध्यम से, भारत समुद्री सुरक्षा, व्यापार और आर्थिक सहयोग को बढ़ावा देते हुए मॉरीशस, सेशेल्स और मेडागास्कर जैसे तटीय राज्यों के साथ संबंधों को मजबूत करना चाहता है। यह पहल भारत की समुद्री कूटनीति में योगदान देती है और क्षेत्रीय स्थिरता एवं विकास के लिए महत्वपूर्ण साझेदारियों को सुरक्षित करते हुए पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर में इस मंच की रणनीतिक उपस्थिति को मजबूत करती है।

पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर ने हाल के कुछ सालों में दुनिया का ध्यान अपनी ओर आकर्षित किया है। यहां समुद्री खाद्य पदार्थों व उत्पादों से लेकर, हाइड्रोकार्बन व खनिज संसाधनों के बड़े भंडारों का अनुमान है। साथ ही, यह माल एवं ईंधन के व्यापार के लिए एक प्रमुख पारगमन मार्ग है। पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर स्थित हॉर्मुज जल संधि और बॉब-अल मंदेब वैश्विक पेट्रोलियम व्यापार के लिहाज से सबसे महत्वपूर्ण रणनीतिक अवरोध-बिंदु हैं। हर रोज लगभग 24 मिलियन बैरल कच्चा तेल और अन्य पेट्रोलियम उत्पाद इस रास्ते से गुजरते हैं। हिन्द महासागर के केंद्र में मौजूद होने के कारण भारत के लिए तेल के समुद्री संचार रास्तों, व्यापार एवं उसकी सुरक्षा महत्वपूर्ण है। यहां समुद्री लुटेरे हथियारों, बहुमूल्य समुद्री उत्पादों और नशीले पदार्थों के अवैध व्यापार में लिप्त हैं। दूसरी ओर, बड़ी संख्या में चीनी बेड़े यहां गैर कानूनी रूप से मछली पकड़ने चले आते हैं। 2015 में आयोजित तीसरे भारत-अफ्रीका मंच शिखर सम्मेलन के दौरान इन महासागरीय चुनौतियों से निपटने के लिए सहमति जताई गई थी। जिसके अंतर्गत जारी किए गए 'दिल्ली घोषणा पत्र 2015' में समुद्री संसाधनों के सतत् उपयोग और विकास की दिशा में घनिष्ठ सहयोग पर जोर दिया गया था। भारत अफ्रीका मंच शिखर सम्मेलन की अगली बैठक से पहले, इन क्षेत्रों में वर्तमान सहयोग एवं संभावनाओं वाले अन्य पहलुओं की पहचान की जानी आवश्यक है।

2. सामुद्रिक कूटनीति एवं सुरक्षा

आज विश्व की शीर्ष अर्थव्यवस्थाओं के लड़खड़ाने और भारत सहित पूर्वी अफ्रीका की विकासशील अर्थव्यवस्थाओं के उभरने के साथ वैश्विक वृद्धि का केंद्र बिंदु तेजी के साथ बदला है। इसने पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर किनारे वाले देशों में परस्पर सहयोग को और गहरा बनाने में मदद की है। 'दिल्ली घोषणा पत्र 2015' में भारत और अफ्रीकी देशों के मध्य ऐतिहासिक संबंधों को स्वीकार करते हुए कहा गया है कि दोनों पक्षों में पुरानी और बहुआयामी विकास-साझेदारी समानता, मैत्री एवं भाईचारे के सिद्धांतों पर आधारित है, यह अपने सभी आयामों में दक्षिण-दक्षिण सहयोग का प्रतिनिधित्व करती है, जिसमें समुद्री सहयोग भी शामिल है। साथ ही, इसमें नशीली दवाओं और मानव तस्करी व अन्य प्रकार के अंतरराष्ट्रीय संगठित अपराधों जैसे कि बंधक बनाना, समुद्री डकैती से लड़ने पर जोर दिया गया है।

वहीं, पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर में सहयोग को और गहरा बनाने एवं विस्तृत सामुद्रिक सुरक्षा संबंधों के निर्माण के लिए भारत विदेश नीति के विभिन्न उपायों पर कार्य कर रहा है। इसी कड़ी में 2014 में प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में एनडीए सरकार बनने के बाद से सरकार के सामुद्रिक कूटनीतिक प्रयासों में और भी तेजी देखी गई है। इसके तहत भारत ने 2018 में सोमालिया और जिबूती में अपने राजनयिक मिशन शुरू किए। भारत के शीर्ष नेतृत्व के अफ्रीकी दौरों में भी वृद्धि हुई। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने मार्च 2015 में सेशेल्स और मॉरीशस, फिर 2016 में मोजाम्बिक, तंजानिया और केन्या का दौरा किया। राष्ट्रपति राम नाथ कोविंद ने अक्टूबर 2017 में अपनी पहली राजकीय यात्रा के लिए हॉर्न ऑफ अफ्रीका क्षेत्र में स्थित जिबूती को चुना। जिबूती भारत को मध्य अफ्रीका में सीधे पहुंच देता है। बाब अल-मंदेब जलडमरूमध्य के किनारे बसा जिबूती एशिया को यूरोप से जोड़ने वाली स्वेज नहर का प्रवेश द्वार भी है। यह दुनिया के सबसे व्यस्त पोत परिवहन मार्गों में से एक है। इन समुद्री संचार मार्गों की सुरक्षा के लिए भारत द्विपक्षीय रूप से जिबूती के साथ सुरक्षा सहयोग में शामिल है। इस क्षेत्र में शांति एवं स्थिरता बनाए रखने के लिए 2019 में भारत ने जिबूती के राष्ट्रपति इस्माइल उमर को पद्म विभूषण से सम्मानित किया था।

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने जुलाई 2018 में अपनी अफ्रीका यात्रा के दौरान भारत-अफ्रीकी रिश्तों को और मजबूत बनाने के लिए 10 मार्गदर्शक सिद्धांतों का उल्लेख किया। जिसमें उन्होंने दुनियाभर के देशों से अफ्रीका के पूर्वी तटों और पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर में प्रतिस्पर्धा की बजाय सहयोग देने का आह्वान किया। इस क्षेत्र में सुरक्षा एक बड़ा मुद्दा है, जिसमें सहयोग के लिए भागीदारों की आवश्यकता है। भारत-अफ्रीका मंच की तीसरी शिखर बैठक के दौरान दोनों पक्षों ने समुद्री डकैती, मानव एवं हथियारों की अवैध तस्करी जैसे समुद्री अपराधों के विरुद्ध लड़ाई के लिए प्रतिबद्धता दर्शाई एवं इस संबंध में और गहराई के साथ काम करने पर सहमति जताई। हालांकि, यहां सोमालिया के समुद्री लुटेरे सक्रिय हैं। क्षेत्र में मादक पदार्थों के अवैध व्यापार ने आतंकवाद को प्रोत्साहन दिया है। अल-शबाब जैसे आतंकवादी समूहों के लिए सोमाली चारकोल अवैध कमाई का मुख्य जरिया है, जिससे सालाना एक करोड़ अमेरिकी डॉलर तक की कमाई की जाती है। भारत समुद्री डकैती, आतंकवाद और ड्रग्स व हथियारों की तस्करी जैसे वैश्विक मुद्दों पर अंतरराष्ट्रीय मानदंडों को बनाए रखने और उन्हें लागू करने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रहा है।

केन्या, तंजानिया को रक्षा सहायता प्रदान करने के साथ, अफ्रीका की दूसरी सबसे लंबी तट रेखा वाले देश मोजाम्बिक की समुद्री सीमाओं को भी भारत सुरक्षित करता है। इस क्षेत्र में स्थित कोमोरोस, मेयॉट, रीयूनियन, मॉरीशस और सेशेल्स जैसे छोटे द्वीपीय देश भी सामरिक नीति के लिहाज से भारत के लिए बहुत मायने रखते हैं। यह न केवल सामुद्रिक कूटनीति में भारत का पलड़ा भारी करते हैं, बल्कि वैश्विक शक्तियों के बीच संतुलन में भी इनका महत्वपूर्ण योगदान है। भारत इन द्वीपीय देशों के साथ परस्पर संबंधों को बढ़ा रहा है। जनवरी 2018 में भारत और सेशेल्स के बीच एसम्पसन द्वीप पर हवाई पट्टी और जेटी के निर्माण के लिए एक समझौता हुआ। सेशेल्स के साथ इस समझौते को भारत हिन्द महासागर में व्यापक रणनीतिक हितों के अनुरूप मानता है। इस द्वीप पर सैन्य सुविधाएं भारत को रणनीतिक सुगमता देती हैं, जिससे मोजाम्बिक चैनल और हिन्द महासागर के विशेष आर्थिक क्षेत्र में समुद्री डकैती और अवैध गतिविधियों पर अंकुश लगाने के लिए निगरानी की सुविधा मिलती है। इसके अलावा, यहाँ सैन्य अड्डा भारत की समुद्री क्षमताओं को बढ़ाता है। विशेष तौर पर एक ऐसे समय में जब इस परियोजना को चीन हासिल करना चाहता था। ऐसे में यह भारत के लिए एक बड़ी सफलता रही। भारत ने हिन्द महासागर क्षेत्र में पोत परिवहन को सुरक्षित बनाने के लिए सेशेल्स को 2018 में एक डोर्नियर विमान उपहार में दिया था। वहीं, उसके अनन्य आर्थिक क्षेत्र की निगरानी और सुरक्षा के लिए नौसैनिक गश्ती पोत आईएनएस तारमुगली और अटैक क्राफ्ट आइएनएस तरासा भी भेंट किया। समुद्री डोमेन जागरूकता क्षमताओं में सुधार करने के प्रयासों के अंतर्गत दिसंबर 2018 में दिल्ली के पास गुरुग्राम में एक सूचना संलयन केंद्र की शुरुआत की गई। यह हिन्द महासागर में पोत परिवहन यातायात की निगरानी के साथ समुद्री घटनाओं के संबंध में प्रतिक्रियाओं का समन्वय करता है।

3. तटीय पोत परिवहन, बंदरगाह विकास एवं समुद्री संभार-तंत्र (लॉजिस्टिक्स)

पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर माल और ईंधन के व्यापार के लिए एक प्रमुख पारगमन मार्ग है। भारत के कुल व्यापार का 90 प्रतिशत समुद्री रास्ते से ही होता है। आने वाले दशकों में यहां वाणिज्यिक पोत परिवहन (शिपिंग) का और भी विस्तार होगा, खासकर तब जब भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था तेजी से बढ़ रही है। देश की बढ़ती व्यापार संबंधी आवश्यकताएं पूरी करने के क्रम में भी बंदरगाहों के बुनियादी ढांचा विकास और क्षमता विस्तार पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया गया है। ऐसे में, अंतरराष्ट्रीय संचार के समुद्री रास्तों की सुरक्षा के साथ संभार-तंत्र और बंदरगाहों का विकास एवं माल की ढुलाई के लिए इनका सड़क या रेल से जुड़ाव भी आवश्यक है। इसके लिए 'सागरमाला' परियोजना की शुरुआत की गई। इस परियोजना के चार मुख्य घटक हैं: पहला, पोर्ट आधुनिकीकरण और नए बंदरगाहों का विकास; दूसरा, बंदरगाहों के मध्य संचार एवं संयोजकता बढ़ाना; तीसरा, बंदरगाहों से जुड़े औद्योगिक समूह तथा तटीय आर्थिक क्षेत्रों का विकास; और चौथा, मत्स्य विकास, तटीय पर्यटन के माध्यम से तटीय समुदायों के सतत् विकास को बढ़ावा देना। भारत ने अपने जमीनी व महासागरीय पड़ोसियों तक माल एवं लोगों की सुगम आवाजाही और बेहतर संयोजन के लिए 'सागरमाला' परियोजना को हिन्द महासागर के सभी समुद्री पड़ोसियों तक विस्तार दिया है।

भारत दोहरे उपयोग वाली लॉजिस्टिक सुविधाओं के साथ मॉरीशस के अगालेगा द्वीप के विकास में शामिल है। 2015 में प्रधानमंत्री की यात्रा के दौरान मॉरीशस के इस बाहरी द्वीप पर माल ढुलाई सुविधाओं को बेहतर बनाने, समुद्री एवं वायु संपर्क के लिए बुनियादी ढांचे की स्थापना व उन्नयन के लिए सहमति बनी। 2017 में बेइरा बंदरगाह में एक नया कोयला टर्मिनल विकसित करने के लिए भारत की एस्सार पोर्ट्स और मोजाम्बिक सरकार के बीच 30 साल के लिए एक समझौता हुआ था।

4. नीली अर्थव्यवस्था

भविष्य के अफ्रीका को इंगित करती अफ्रीकी संघ की योजना 'एजेंडा 2063' के लक्ष्य और प्राथमिकता क्षेत्र में नीली अर्थव्यवस्था को महत्व दिया गया है। अफ्रीका की एकीकृत समुद्री रणनीति 2050 का उद्देश्य भी महासागर किनारे वाले अफ्रीकी देशों में नीली अर्थव्यवस्था की सुरक्षा और विकास को बढ़ाना है। भारत स्थाई रूप से नीली अर्थव्यवस्था के विकास और उसको बढ़ावा देने वाली अफ्रीकी योजनाओं एवं रणनीतियों को साकार करने, विशेष रूप से समुद्री संसाधनों की खोज, समुद्री जैव प्रौद्योगिकी, संसाधन सुरक्षा, मत्स्य पालन, जैव पर्यटन और समुद्री गतिविधियों पर आधारित समुद्री एंक्वैरियम, तटीय पार्क और समुद्री आरक्षित क्षेत्र में अफ्रीकी देशों की सहायता कर सकता है। भारत-अफ्रीका मंच की तीसरी शिखर बैठक के दौरान भी अफ्रीकी रणनीतियों के उपयुक्त कार्यान्वयन के लिए सहयोग देने पर भारत ने अपनी सहमति जताई। 2015 में प्रधानमंत्री की मॉरीशस यात्रा के दौरान समुद्री संसाधनों के क्षेत्र में उत्खनन व क्षमता विकास, मत्स्य, हरित पर्यटन, महासमुद्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी के अनुसंधान एवं विकास, विशेषज्ञों के आदान-प्रदान पर सहमति बनी। 2015 में सेशेल्स के राष्ट्रपति भारत यात्रा के दौरान नीली अर्थव्यवस्था के क्षेत्र में सहयोग करने पर सहमत हुए। जुलाई 2016 में प्रधानमंत्री की केन्या यात्रा के दौरान समुद्री संसाधनों के खनन और उनके सतत् प्रबंधन पर समझौता हुआ। मार्च, 2018 में राष्ट्रपति की मेडागास्कर यात्रा के दौरान, दोनों देश नीली अर्थव्यवस्था में सहयोग करने पर सहमत हुए। नीली अर्थव्यवस्था में सहयोग खाद्य सुरक्षा के लिए भी आवश्यक है। अनुमान लगाया जा रहा है कि 2027 तक भारत चीन को पछाड़कर दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा जनसंख्या वाला देश बन जाएगा। ऐसे में भविष्य की आबादी के लिए खाद्य सुरक्षा एक बड़ी चुनौती होगी। खासकर तब, जब यहां चीनी बेड़े बड़ी मात्रा में अवैध रूप से मछली पकड़ने के काम में लिप्त हैं। पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर में मछलियों और समुद्री खाद्य उत्पादों की एक बड़ी संपदा मौजूद हैं। ऐसे में, भारत को अपने समुद्री पड़ोसियों के साथ मिलकर इनके सतत् उपयोग पर काम करना होगा और अवैध एवं अनियंत्रित मछली पकड़ने पर रोकने लगाने के लिए कड़े प्रयास करने होंगे। बढ़ती समुद्री भोजन की मांग को पूरा करने के लिए मछली पालन के अलावा समुद्री जीवों की खेती और उनके उत्पादन पर भी ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है। साथ ही इस क्षेत्र में अफ्रीकी देशों के साथ मिलकर हाइड्रोग्राफिक सर्वेक्षणों को भी बढ़ाने पर जोर देना होगा। हाइड्रोग्राफिक जानकारी मत्स्य पालन के अलावा समुद्री नेविगेशन, समुद्री निर्माण, ड्रिजिंग, तेल की खोज, अपतटीय ड्रिलिंग आदि में भी सहायक है।

5. हाइड्रोकार्बन एवं खनिज संसाधन

भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था हाइड्रोकार्बन ऊर्जा आयात पर बहुत अधिक निर्भर है। इस संदर्भ में, ऊर्जा संसाधनों से समृद्ध पूर्वी अफ्रीका भारत के लिए बहुत महत्व रखता है। पिछले कुछ दशकों में पूर्वी अफ्रीका में हाइड्रोकार्बन संसाधनों के भंडार के अनुमान बढ़े हैं। तंजानिया, मोजाम्बिक, केन्या और मेडागास्कर में प्राकृतिक गैस और तेल के बड़े भंडारों का अनुमान लगाया गया है। एक अनुमान के मुताबिक, तंजानिया के माफिया डीप बेसिन में 57 ट्रिलियन क्यूबिक फीट गैस मौजूद है। वहीं, मोजाम्बिक के अपतटीय क्षेत्र रोवुमा बेसिन में 100 ट्रिलियन क्यूबिक फीट से लेकर 279 ट्रिलियन क्यूबिक फीट तक प्राकृतिक गैस होने की संभावना है। इस लिहाज से अगर देखा जाए, तो मोजाम्बिक रूस, ईरान और कतर के बाद दुनिया का चौथा सबसे बड़ा गैस भंडार हो सकता है। भारत फिलहाल अपनी प्राकृतिक गैस जरूरतों का 90 प्रतिशत कतर से प्राप्त करता है, ऐसे में उसके लिए मोजाम्बिक प्राकृतिक गैस का एक बड़ा स्रोत बन सकता है। भारत की तेल और गैस कंपनियों ने यहां कोयला, लौह अयस्क और अन्य खनिजों में काफी निवेश किया है। भारत ने मोजाम्बिक की रोवुमा गैसफील्ड में 6 बिलियन डॉलर का निवेश किया है। एक अनुमान के मुताबिक, मोजाम्बिक में 23 बिलियन टन से अधिक कोयले का भंडार मौजूद है। जब भारत का कोयला आयात लगातार बढ़ रहा है, तब मोजाम्बिक भारतीय उद्योगों की जरूरतों के लिए कोयले का निर्यातक बन सकता है। मध्य हिन्द महासागर बेसिन में 3800 लाख मीट्रिक टन पॉलिमैटालिक नोड्यूल मैंगनीज और कोबाल्ट जैसे खनिजों के रूप में उपलब्ध हैं। यह खनिज भारत में उपलब्ध नहीं हैं, इसलिए भारत के लिए इनका महत्व ज्यादा है। एक ओर मोजाम्बिक के किनारे टाइटेनियम और जिर्कोनियम से भरे पड़े हैं, वहीं केन्या के तटों में बड़ी मात्रा में मैंगनीज, तांबा, निकिल, कोबाल्ट और मिथेन हाईड्रेट्स का अनुमान है। भारत महासागर के भीतर 6 कि।मी। गहराई में रेंगने वाली मशीनों एवं पनडुब्बियों जैसी प्रौद्योगिकियों के विकास पर कार्य कर रहा है। यदि यह तकनीकें कारगर रहती हैं, तो इन्हें पूर्वी अफ्रीकी देशों में उपयोग में लाया जा सकता है।

6. सहयोग के अभरते क्षेत्र

पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर में भारत और पूर्वी अफ्रीकी देशों के बीच महासागरीय साझेदारी की संभावनाओं वाले कई क्षेत्र उभरकर सामने आते हैं। यह महासागर तैराकी, नौका विहार, सर्फिंग, रीफ वॉकिंग, व्हेल एक्वेरियम, स्कूबा डाइविंग जैसे समुद्री पर्यटन और मनोरंजन के कई अवसर उपलब्ध कराता है। मनोरंजन की पहलों में क्रूज यात्रा और लाइटहाउस पर्यटन को विशेष तौर पर प्राथमिकता दी जाती है। यह बड़ी मात्रा में रोजगार के अवसर भी उपलब्ध कराते हैं। इसमें होटल, रेस्तरां, आवासीय गतिविधियां, कृषि और मछली पालन जैसी गतिविधियां शामिल हैं। विकसित होते बंदरगाह, संचार और उनके मध्य बेहतर संयोजकता ने इस क्षेत्र में क्रूज पर्यटन के नए द्वार खोले हैं। भारत के साथ, कोमोरोस, मेर्याट, मेडागास्कर, सेशेल्स, मॉरीशस, रीयूनियन, तंजानिया और केन्या में क्रूज पर्यटन की असीम संभावनाएं मौजूद हैं। पोत परिवहन मंत्रालय के अनुसार, 2042-43 तक भारत में क्रूज पर आनंद लेने वाले पर्यटकों की संख्या 45 लाख तक पहुंचने की संभावना है।

मुंबई बंदरगाह पर इन संभावनाओं के लिए अंतर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर का आधुनिक क्रूज टर्मिनल विकसित किया जा रहा है।

पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर के समुद्री पर्यावास ने भी भारत और पूर्वी अफ्रीकी देशों के मध्य साझेदारी के लिए एक मंच प्रदान किया है। इस विशाल महासागर में मौजूद सूक्ष्म जीवों, शैवालों और स्पंजों ने दुनियाभर के शोधकर्ताओं और वैज्ञानिकों का ध्यान अपनी ओर खींचा है। समुद्री प्रजातियों का उपयोग कर कैंसर, अस्थमा, अल्जाइमर जैसी घातक बीमारियों के लिए दवाओं का निर्माण किया जा रहा है। भारतीय संस्थान भी समुद्री उत्पादों से जीवन रक्षक दवाओं की खोज पर काम कर रहे हैं। समुद्री जैव प्रौद्योगिकी विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में छोटे एवं मध्यम उद्योगों के साथ बड़े संगठनों को पर्याप्त व्यावसायिक अवसर उपलब्ध कराती है। आर्थिक विकास और स्थिरता के लिए पहली शर्त के रूप में ऊर्जा साझेदारी भारत-अफ्रीका आर्थिक सहभागिता की प्रमुख चालक है। जैसा कि अफ्रीका, ऊर्जा संसाधनों के वैश्विक मानचित्र में एक नए ऊर्जा स्रोत के तौर पर उभरा है, ऐसे में इसने भारत और पूर्वी अफ्रीका के बीच ऊर्जा क्षेत्र में व्यापार और निवेश साझेदारी की संभावनाओं को और गहरा किया है। महासागर में ज्वारीय ऊर्जा, अपतटीय पवन एवं सौर ऊर्जा, समुद्री प्रवाह और ताप के रूप में बड़ी मात्रा में समुद्री ऊर्जा मौजूद है। लगातार बढ़ती ऊर्जा की मांग की पूर्ति के लिए महासागर की ऊर्जा का उपयोग भी आवश्यक है। ऊर्जा साझेदारी में आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ाने, कार्बन फुटप्रिंट में कमी, समुद्री शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान व रोजगार पैदा करने की क्षमता है।

6. निष्कर्ष

महासागरों में तेजी से जमा होते प्लास्टिक कचरे को कम करने के उद्देश्य से भारत ने वर्ष 2017 में 193 अन्य देशों के साथ मिलकर केन्या में संयुक्त राष्ट्र पर्यावरण सभा में एक प्रस्ताव पर हस्ताक्षर किए थे। हालांकि, कचरे के निदान के लिए अभी तक कोई विशिष्ट लक्ष्य निर्धारित नहीं किए जा सके हैं। यह हानिकारक तत्व समुद्री भोजन के माध्यम से हमारी खाद्य शृंखला का हिस्सा बन रहे हैं। इस मामले त्वरित कार्रवाई के लिए बड़े समुद्री किनारों वाले पूर्वी अफ्रीकी देशों के साथ भारत को पहल करनी होगी। हिन्द महासागर परिधि संघ के सदस्य देशों के कानून अवैध, गैर-पंजीकृत और अनियमित मछली पकड़ने पर प्रभावी रोक लगा पाने में असमर्थ हैं। ऐसे में, पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर में संघ के सदस्य देशों के बीच कोई सहमति न होने के कारण, भारत को इसमें महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभानी चाहिए। भारत को ऐसे मुद्दों को हल करने और समन्वित कानून निर्माण के लिए अधिक सक्रियता दिखानी होगी। महासागर में वैकल्पिक शक्ति निर्माण, क्षेत्रीय सुरक्षा एवं संपर्क बनाने के लिए हिन्द महासागर नौसैनिक संगोष्ठी में पश्चिमी हिन्द महासागर स्थित महत्वपूर्ण देशों सोमालिया, जिबूती, मॉरीशस, कोमोरोस, मेयॉट और रीयूनियन को भी शामिल किया जाना चाहिए।

सामुद्रिक सुरक्षा के साथ आर्थिक विकास के लिए अमेरिका, भारत, ऑस्ट्रेलिया एवं जापान का चतुष्कोणीय गठबंधन यहां बढ़ते चीन के प्रभाव को संतुलित कर सकता है। हिन्द महासागर क्षेत्र में भारत का सहयोग सभी देशों के लिए शांति, सुरक्षा और प्रगति के सिद्धांतों पर आधारित है, जैसा कि प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने मॉरीशस यात्रा के दौरान सामुद्रिक आशियाने में सभी देशों के लिए सहयोग बढ़ाने और अपनी क्षमताओं का इस्तेमाल करने पर आधारित दृष्टिकोण का जिक्र किया था। प्रधानमंत्री का कहना है कि "हम हिन्द महासागर में ऐसा भविष्य चाहते हैं जो सभी के लिए सुरक्षा और प्रगति यानी 'सागर' के नाम पर खरा उतरे।"

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Patriarchy and Generational Trauma

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Abstract

Patriarchy, enforcing rigid general rules and expectations, leads to inherited beliefs and values. Patriarchal societies transmit traditional beliefs and values from one generation to another, justifying gender-based discrimination and abuse. This cultural normalisation of Stoicism, dominance, and discrimination between men and women puts them into fixed gender roles, providing little to no scope for celebrating their individuality. In men, it induces social isolation and exaggerated expectations, whereas in women, it yields emotional repression, inherited general norms, reproductive trauma, and other gender-based violence. Patriarchy perpetuates power polarities between the genders, with one of the two holding more authority. This power dynamic creates victimisation, trauma, insecurities, gender dysphoria, and identity crisis. These gender prejudices get inherited by the next generation until someone takes charge of putting a stop and reimagining their sense of self and gender identities. The internalised sexism pertains to women feeling inferior and powerless, thus making their personalities compliant and creating a sense of entitlement in men. This frame of mind being projected to people at a young age forms extremely severe and stern opinions about their identity, making it difficult for them to differentiate themselves from the rules and expectations associated with their gender. These beliefs can contribute to a cycle of abusive behaviour and trauma in successive generations. It is essential to recognise the building blocks of the patriarchal model to address generational trauma, challenge traditional, inherited, and projected values and opinions associated with identity, and provide support to consecutive generations.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Generational Trauma, Gender Identity

1. Introduction

Through the effect of patriarchy and gender discrimination, men are often placed in an authoritative position, which automatically makes women inferior. By enforcing rigid gender roles on consecutive generations, women have been conditioned to be subordinate. This generational wounding affects women's mental health in various ways. One of the ways in which patriarchy is projected upon women is through gender-based violence, i.e., domestic and sexual assault. Because of the belief that men should keep women in control, women tend to be under-confident, anxious, and hesitant towards opportunities in life. It makes women think that they should prioritise others' needs before their own, and generations of mothers keep accepting this trauma as their own until someone breaks the cycle of abuse. Patriarchy keeps women in a bubble of despair, which restricts their zeal to be ambitious. It restricts their autonomy by limiting their social, cultural, and physical tendencies, resulting in feelings of aloofness, insecurities about their looks, and body image issues. Furthermore, by enforcing higher-than-the-shelf expectations of tolerating and accepting the abuse, the cycle of trauma keeps getting worse, and women start accepting their fate even if they are educated and empowered enough. They are made aware that culturally, it would be unacceptable if they didn't tone their personality down and adjust to men in society. They are made to prioritise others' feelings and comfort before their own to fit into the already existing toxic gender roles, because of which a lot of empowered and well-read women are often looked down upon because they are not ready to give in to the gender norms and accept gender inequality.

What fuses patriarchy as a social construct is the compliance of women towards its existence and the male validation that comes with it. (McCormack & Lantry, 2022) Men in a patriarchal setup are often encouraged to achieve status and security so that they can be saved from the possible humiliation of not being the man of the house, which automatically puts women in the place of someone who is there to fulfil male needs and aspire to be someone who fuels the man's success. Because of this setup, men tend to have materialistic privileges, which they later use to oppress women by being the provider of the family. It makes women completely dependent on men for the necessities. Men and women are both encouraged to adopt the powerful system of patriarchy in which men compete with other men for power, and women are nowhere to be seen in the competition.

2. Maternal Trauma

Being the victim of the patriarchal setup of society, mothers often inflict trauma associated with a male-dominated society on their children. When women have grown up confirming to certain gender roles, they start

accepting and accommodating the gender beliefs that exist in society, as a result of which these beliefs get passed on to the next generation, affirming the roles of masculinity and femininity (Kian-Thiébaud, 2005). They force their daughters to conform to the feminine aspects, such as forcing them to dress a certain way, always to be put together, to be pleasing to the eyes, to be well-behaved, to sit, stand, and walk properly, to be mindful of their eating habits so that their body aesthetics can be maintained, always to choose things that are pleasing to the other gender, etc.

2.1 Body Image Issues in Young Women and Men

Children from a young age start developing confidence regarding their bodies and behaviour. It depends on their social and cultural surroundings as to how they will see themselves in the future. Because of rigid gender roles, men are supposed to be the providers, which entails them to have a strong and muscular body; women, on the other hand, are supposed to be inferior to men, which forces them to have a body that is weaker and leaner. These expectations to be of a certain body type affect the mental health of young adults. Men, in an attempt to be muscular and strong, torture their bodies in the gym for hours, working out to fit in the societal standards of masculinity. Patriarchal frame troubles encompass a number of challenges and expectations imposed on individuals, both male and female, by a society structured around male dominance (Woertman & van den Brink, 2012). This essay aims to dissect the numerous sides of patriarchal frame issues, exploring how they manifest, their effects on different genders, and the steps towards dismantling these deeply ingrained norms.

2.2 The Male Body: Stifling Stereotypes

Patriarchy establishes inflexible beliefs of masculinity that often place exceptional strain on men to comply with a specific physical image. The male body is regularly depicted as muscular, tall, and devoid of any signs of vulnerability. This image, perpetuated by media, advertising, and popular culture, leaves many men feeling insufficient and striving for impossible standards. This results in issues such as body dysmorphia, eating disorders, and depression. Moreover, the perception that men should be stoic and unemotional further exacerbates these problems. Expressing concerns about their bodies is often stigmatised, preventing men from seeking help or support. Breaking free from these constraints is vital for fostering a healthier understanding of masculinity (Grogan, 2010).

3. Patriarchy and Generational Trauma

3.1 The Female Body: A Battleground of Expectations

For women, patriarchal body issues are deeply entrenched in societal expectations of beauty. The media bombards women with images of airbrushed, skinny, and ideal bodies, setting an impossible standard. This has led to significant body dissatisfaction, with many women resorting to extreme measures in pursuit of the 'perfect' body. Eating disorders, plastic surgery, and a constant sense of inadequacy are all symptomatic of the oppressive beliefs perpetuated by a patriarchal society.

Additionally, the objectification of women's bodies reduces them to commodities, diminishing their worth to their appearance alone. This not only affects self-esteem but also hampers women's ability to be valued for their intellect, skills, and character.

3.2 Non-Binary and Transgender Experiences

Patriarchal body issues aren't limited to cisgender people; they also affect non-binary and transgender individuals. Society often enforces a binary view of gender, which can be highly alienating for those who exist outside of these categories. Non-binary people may face a lack of representation and understanding, leading to feelings of invisibility or invalidation. Transgender people, especially, grapple with a unique set of body-related challenges. The pressure to conform to cisgender standards can lead to feelings of dysphoria and distress. Access to gender-affirming healthcare, including hormones and surgeries, is often fraught with limitations, exacerbating feelings of marginalisation. The Intersectionality of Patriarchal Body Issues Patriarchal body issues intersect with other forms of oppression, creating a complex web of challenges. Race, class, and disability status all play significant roles in shaping how individuals experience and navigate body image expectations. For example, women of colour often face unique beauty standards that further marginalise them in the patriarchal framework. Likewise, disabled individuals may face ableist attitudes that compound existing challenges related to body image. The intersecting factors of oppression magnify the struggles people face, necessitating an inclusive approach to dismantling patriarchal norms.

3.3 Empowerment and Resistance

Addressing patriarchal body issues requires a multi-faceted approach. Education and media literacy are crucial in challenging harmful representations and narratives. Fostering body positivity and promoting diverse

representations of beauty can go a long way in dismantling oppressive norms.

Additionally, creating spaces for open and honest discussions about body image is critical. Encouraging individuals to share their experiences and seek support fosters a sense of community and validation. This is especially important for marginalised groups who may face additional layers of discrimination.

3.4 Historical Context

To understand the depth of patriarchal generational trauma, we must first delve into its historical origins. Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power, controlling roles of political leadership, moral authority, social rights, and management of property. This system dates back to ancient times; early civilisations such as Mesopotamia and ancient Greece laid the foundation for a system that would come to dominate many nations. The establishment of patriarchal values is closely linked to the agricultural revolution and the emergence of private property. As societies became more hierarchical, the balance of power shifted as they began to assume the role of property owners, warriors, and political leaders. However, women's roles became more restricted, reducing their influence and power in the community. This historical context laid the foundation for what we now call patriarchal generational trauma. It is important to understand that this depression is not limited to women; it also affects men. The social pressures of conforming to strict expectations of masculinity, suppressing emotions, and maintaining control can lead to deep, intoxicating trauma.

3.4 Reinforcement of Culture

Culture is the medium through which patriarchal values are transmitted. Myths, rituals, and social expectations reinforce the idea of male superiority, creating an environment where oppressive forces thrive.

3.5 Cognitive and Behavioural Mechanisms

Generations inherit not only physical characteristics but also abstract conceptions of mental state. This trauma is often internalised and subtly affects perceptions of self-worth, career aspirations, and gender roles.

3.6 Manifestations of Patriarchal Trauma

The manifestations of patriarchal generational trauma are numerous and widespread, affecting individuals, families, and society as a whole. This trauma often perpetuates a cycle of abuse, powerlessness, and emotional stress.

- **Gender-based Violence:** A direct consequence of patriarchal generational trauma is the persistence of gender-based violence. Normalising violence against marginalised women and men leads to toxic abuse in families. Victims may internalise this trauma and become perpetrators themselves.
- **Emotional Duress:** Men also suffer from the strict expectations placed on them by patriarchy. Pressure to appear stable and emotional can lead to the suppression of emotions, resulting in emotional withdrawal and an inability to show vulnerability or intimacy. This emotional pressure often blocks the path to authentic relationships with others.
- **Gender Stereotypes:** Stereotypes that limit the potential of individuals based on their gender are perpetuated due to patriarchal generational trauma. These delusions affect career choices, personal aspirations, and self-esteem, leading to a lack of realised potential and a lack of satisfaction in life.
- **Toxic Masculinity:** Patriarchal values dictate that men must pursue a certain marker of masculinity, which often includes dominance, aggression, and rejection of anything considered "feminine." As a result, toxic masculinity can lead to harmful behaviours and strained relationships.
- **Self-worth Issues:** Men and women affected by patriarchal generational trauma may struggle with self-worth and self-esteem. Constantly downplaying some of the qualities associated with femininity can make one feel inadequate.
- **Reproductive Rights:** Patriarchal systems have also historically managed girls' reproductive rights. This includes restricted access to contraception, abortion, and the ongoing debate surrounding reproductive autonomy. These issues deeply affect women's mental and physical health.
- **Objectification and Beauty Standards:** The media and society often perpetuate slim beauty standards, objectifying women and perpetuating harmful stereotypes. This contributes to body image problems, eating disorders, and low self-esteem.
- **Micro-aggressions and Everyday Sexism:** Patriarchal generational trauma also manifests in subtle ways through everyday sexism and micro-aggressions. These behaviours, while seemingly minor, accumulate over time, eroding the self-esteem and self-confidence of those affected (Baima & Feldhousen, 2007).

4. Transmission to Generations

One of the defining characteristics of generational trauma is its transmission from one generation to the next. Children often receive trauma from their parents, sometimes without realising it. Learned habits, attitudes, and coping mechanisms developed in response to trauma are inherited, creating a vicious cycle. For example, a man raised in a home where the father showed emotional oppression follows suit, unknowingly passing on his grief to his children. A woman who has experienced sexual violence may consider it a normal part of a relationship and perpetuates the cycle in her family.

4.1 Intersecting Traumas

Patriarchal generational trauma intersects with other forms of systemic oppression, creating layers of trauma for individuals. For instance, women of colour can experience compounded trauma due to both racial and gender discrimination. Indigenous groups endure ancient trauma through colonisation, which interacts with patriarchal generational trauma in complex ways.

4.2 Healing and Breaking the Chain

Breaking the cycle of patriarchal generational trauma is not always a simple challenge, but it is crucial for the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. Techniques for recovery and dismantling this harmful legacy include:

- **Education and Awareness:** Acknowledging the existence of patriarchal generational trauma is the first step in healing. Educational programs and discussions can help raise awareness and challenge ingrained beliefs.
- **Empowerment and Support:** Initiatives that empower individuals can build self-esteem and confidence. Support networks, including therapy, counselling, and support groups, are essential for overcoming trauma.
- **Policy Changes:** Structural changes in society, such as implementing gender-neutral rules and promoting equal opportunities, are critical for dismantling patriarchal structures.
- **Intersectional Feminism:** Recognising the interaction of different forms of oppression, intersectional feminism advocates for justice and equality for all, considering race, gender, sexuality, and other factors.
- **Raising Empathetic Children:** Breaking the cycle of trauma starts with the younger generation. Teaching empathy, respect, and equality to children is crucial for creating a more equitable future.

4.3 Paternal Trauma

The idea of fathers causing patriarchal trauma to their children explores how paternal figures can contribute to the transmission of patriarchal values and behaviours within the family setting. This phenomenon underscores the notion that fathers, whether consciously or unconsciously, may perpetuate societal norms upholding traditional gender roles and expectations, influencing the development and experiences of their children.

- **Modelling Traditional Gender Roles:** Fathers can shape their children's perceptions of gender roles by modelling certain behaviours and attitudes. Strict adherence to traditional gender norms can inadvertently reinforce these expectations.
- **Emphasizing Authority and Control:** In patriarchal systems, there is often an emphasis on male authority and control within the family. Fathers subscribing to these beliefs may unintentionally foster an environment where their authority is unquestioned, potentially stifling independent thinking in their children.
- **Enforcing Strict Gender Norms:** Fathers may contribute to patriarchal trauma by imposing strict gender norms, discouraging children from pursuing interests perceived as gender-inappropriate.
- **Perpetuating Gender-Based Violence:** In extreme cases, fathers internalising patriarchal values may contribute to a culture tolerating or encouraging gender-based violence, profoundly affecting children's mental well-being.
- **Discouraging Emotional Expression:** Fathers may inadvertently contribute to patriarchal trauma by discouraging emotional expression, especially in sons. Promoting the idea that vulnerability is a sign of weakness can hinder the development of healthy emotional intelligence.
- **Expectations of Achievement and Success:** Some fathers may place disproportionate pressure on their children, particularly sons, to succeed in traditional, male-dominated fields, leading to feelings of inadequacy if expectations are not met.
- **Limited Household Participation:** Fathers adhering to traditional gender roles may not actively participate in household chores or childcare, reinforcing gender imbalances within the family.
- **Homophobia and Toxic Masculinity:** Fathers exhibiting homophobic attitudes or promoting toxic masculinity contribute to an environment suppressing diverse identities and orientations, causing feelings of shame or guilt in children.

It's important to note that these behaviours are often deeply ingrained and may not be intentional. Breaking the cycle of patriarchal trauma involves fostering awareness, open communication, and a willingness to challenge and unlearn inherited beliefs (McCormack & Lantry, 2022). Fathers can play a critical role in promoting healthier, more equitable family dynamics by engaging in self-reflection, embracing empathy, and creating an environment that allows their children to express their identities authentically.

5. Suffering of the LGBTQ Community due to Patriarchal Trauma

The suffering of the LGBTQ community due to patriarchal trauma is a profound and complex issue that demands careful examination. The intersection of patriarchal norms and heteronormativity often creates an adverse environment for individuals identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or with another non-heteronormative identity. There exist multifaceted ways in which patriarchal trauma manifests in the lives of LGBTQ individuals, impacting their mental health, relationships, and overall well-being.

One of the significant manifestations of patriarchal trauma in the LGBTQ community is the reinforcement of rigid gender norms. Patriarchal societies often dictate traditional expectations for how individuals should express their gender identity and sexuality, perpetuating the idea that heterosexuality is the norm. This not only marginalises non-heteronormative identities but also contributes to the stigmatisation and discrimination faced by LGBTQ individuals.

The imposition of traditional gender roles through patriarchal structures creates a binary understanding of gender that excludes the diverse spectrum of gender identities in the LGBTQ community. This exclusion can lead to a profound sense of alienation and isolation as individuals struggle to reconcile their authentic selves with societal expectations. Consequently, LGBTQ individuals may face internalised homophobia or transphobia, compounding the psychological toll of patriarchal trauma (McCormack & Lantry, 2022).

Patriarchal trauma also manifests in the form of systemic discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ community. Legal and institutional frameworks, often influenced by patriarchal norms, have historically marginalised and discriminated against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. Laws criminalising same-sex relationships, restrictions on gender-affirming healthcare, and discriminatory employment practices contribute to a hostile environment that exacerbates the suffering of LGBTQ individuals.

Moreover, the perpetuation of patriarchal values contributes to the prevalence of conversion therapies aimed at changing a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. These harmful practices, rooted in the belief that heterosexuality is superior, inflict severe psychological and emotional trauma on LGBTQ individuals. The enduring presence of conversion therapies highlights the deep-seated nature of patriarchal beliefs seeking to erase non-heteronormative identities.

The impact of patriarchal trauma on mental health in the LGBTQ community is profound. Elevated rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide attempts are documented among LGBTQ individuals, reflecting the systemic discrimination and societal rejection they often face. Internalising societal prejudices and struggling with self-acceptance in the face of patriarchal norms contribute to the high incidence of mental health challenges in the community.

Patriarchal trauma also intersects with other forms of systemic oppression, including racism and classism, intensifying the suffering of LGBTQ individuals belonging to marginalised groups. For instance, LGBTQ people of colour may experience compounded discrimination as patriarchal norms intersect with racial stereotypes and biases. This intersectionality highlights the need for an intersectional approach in addressing the complex web of oppression faced by LGBTQ individuals. In addition to mental health challenges, the suffering of the LGBTQ community due to patriarchal trauma is evident in the realm of relationships. The stigmatisation of non-heteronormative identities often leads to strained familial relationships, with individuals facing rejection or discrimination within their own families. The pressure to conform to traditional gender roles and expectations can strain romantic relationships and impede the formation of genuine connections.

Furthermore, the absence of legal recognition and protection for LGBTQ relationships in many societies exacerbates the challenges faced by individuals in the community. The denial of marriage equality, adoption rights, and other legal recognitions reinforces the marginalisation of LGBTQ individuals, hindering their ability to form strong and legally recognised family units.

The workplace is another area in which patriarchal trauma negatively affects the LGBTQ community. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity remains a pervasive issue, with individuals often experiencing unequal opportunities, harassment, or even job loss due to their non-heteronormative identities. The perpetuation of patriarchal values within corporate cultures contributes to an adversarial environment for LGBTQ individuals, hindering their professional growth and well-being.

Addressing the suffering of the LGBTQ community due to patriarchal trauma necessitates a multi-faceted approach that encompasses legal reforms, societal education, and cultural shifts. Legal frameworks must be reformed to ensure the protection of LGBTQ rights, including anti-discrimination laws, marriage equality, and access to gender-affirming healthcare. Advocacy efforts should be directed toward dismantling conversion therapies and promoting mental health support tailored to the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ individuals.

Societal education plays an essential role in challenging and unlearning patriarchal norms. Initiatives aimed at fostering inclusivity, tolerance, and acceptance of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations are crucial. Educational curricula should incorporate comprehensive sex education that goes beyond heteronormative narratives, promoting understanding and empathy for the LGBTQ experience.

Cultural shifts within communities are crucial to dismantling patriarchal trauma. Open conversations about gender identity and sexual orientation reduce stigma and create supportive environments for LGBTQ individuals. Media representation that accurately reflects the diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations is essential in challenging stereotypes and normalising non-heteronormative experiences.

Community support and allyship are essential components of addressing the suffering of the LGBTQ community. Establishing safe spaces, both online and offline, where individuals can share their experiences, seek support, and form connections is crucial. Allies within families, workplaces, and communities play a pivotal role in challenging discriminatory practices and advocating for the rights and well-being of LGBTQ individuals.

In conclusion, the suffering of the LGBTQ community due to patriarchal trauma is a deeply ingrained issue that permeates various aspects of individuals' lives. From mental health challenges to strained relationships and systemic discrimination, the impact of patriarchal norms on LGBTQ individuals is profound. However, by fostering legal reforms, societal education, and cultural shifts, it is possible to dismantle patriarchal trauma and create a more inclusive and accepting world for the LGBTQ community. Empathy and understanding are crucial in this ongoing effort to build a society that embraces and celebrates the rich diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations.

6. Bashing the Patriarchy and the Trauma associated with it

Bashing patriarchal trauma and breaking the cycle to prevent its passage to future generations is a noble and essential undertaking. Patriarchal trauma, rooted in systemic gender inequalities and oppressive norms, has long perpetuated a cycle of suffering that affects individuals and groups.

Patriarchal trauma is deeply ingrained in societal structures, perpetuating harmful gender norms and expectations. This trauma manifests in various forms, including restrictive gender roles, systemic discrimination, and the normalisation of power imbalances. As a result, individuals are often subjected to oppressive experiences that can lead to mental health issues, strained relationships, and limited opportunities.

Breaking this cycle involves a comprehensive understanding of how patriarchal trauma operates and a commitment to dismantling its impact. One crucial aspect of challenging patriarchal trauma is recognising the ways in which it is transmitted from one generation to the next. Families, as microcosms of society, play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' perceptions and behaviours. Parents, consciously or unconsciously, pass on societal norms and expectations to their children, contributing to the perpetuation of patriarchal values. Breaking this cycle requires a concerted effort to disrupt these patterns and instil more equitable and inclusive beliefs (Kian-Thiébaud, 2005).

Education is a powerful tool in challenging patriarchal trauma. By implementing comprehensive and inclusive educational curricula, we can provide younger generations with the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to question and challenge traditional gender norms. This includes promoting diverse narratives, representation, and discussions around gender and sexuality to foster understanding and empathy. Education serves as a catalyst for change, empowering individuals to reject harmful stereotypes and envision a more equitable society.

Furthermore, fostering open communication within families is instrumental in breaking the cycle of patriarchal trauma. Encouraging conversations about gender roles, expectations, and the impact of these norms on individual well-being creates a space for self-reflection and understanding. Parents can play a pivotal role in guiding their children toward a more expansive and inclusive worldview, emphasising values of equality, respect, and empathy (Baym, 1984).

Challenging patriarchal trauma also requires dismantling systemic inequalities and discriminatory practices. Advocacy for policy reforms that address gender-based discrimination, ensure equal opportunities, and protect the rights of marginalised communities is crucial. This includes advocating for equal pay, dismantling discriminatory laws, and creating safe spaces for individuals to express their gender identity without fear of persecution. By challenging the institutional roots of patriarchal trauma, we pave the way for a more just and equitable society.

Media representation plays a significant role in shaping societal perceptions and reinforcing or challenging patriarchal norms. By advocating for diverse and positive portrayals of gender and sexuality in media, we can contribute to a cultural shift away from harmful stereotypes. This includes supporting and promoting media that reflects the rich diversity of human experiences, dismantling harmful tropes, and showcasing positive role models who defy traditional gender expectations.

In addition to educational and cultural initiatives, dismantling patriarchal trauma requires fostering supportive and inclusive communities. Establishing safe spaces where individuals can express themselves authentically, share their stories, and find unity is essential. Community organisations, support groups and initiatives that promote inclusivity and acceptance contribute to creating environments where people can break free from the shackles of patriarchal trauma.

Empowering individuals to challenge patriarchal norms also involves dismantling toxic masculinity and promoting healthy expressions of masculinity. Men, too, can be victims of patriarchal expectations, facing pressure to conform to rigid norms that limit emotional expression and authentic self-discovery. By encouraging vulnerability, empathy, and emotional intelligence, we can redefine what it means to be a man and break free from the constraints of toxic masculinity.

Promoting gender equality in the workplace is another critical step in dismantling patriarchal trauma. Companies and organisations must actively work to eliminate gender-based discrimination, ensure equal pay for equal work, and create inclusive environments that value diversity. Implementing policies that support work-life balance, parental leave, and flexible schedules helps challenge traditional gender roles and promotes a more equitable distribution of responsibilities.

It is crucial to engage men as allies in the fight against patriarchal trauma. By fostering conversations about the negative impact of patriarchal norms on men and encouraging them to be active contributors in dismantling these norms, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment. Men can play a crucial role in challenging harmful stereotypes, fostering respectful relationships, and modelling positive behaviours for future generations.

In conclusion, bashing patriarchal trauma and preventing its passage to future generations is a collective responsibility that requires a multifaceted approach. By challenging harmful norms through education, fostering open communication, advocating for policy reforms, promoting inclusive media representation, creating supportive communities, and engaging men as allies, we can break the cycle of patriarchal trauma. This endeavour is not just about challenging oppressive systems; it is about creating a world where individuals are free to express their true selves, regardless of gender or sexuality.

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Book Review

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*How can India balance the Pakistan-China Nexus, edited by Rajesh Bhaskar, National Book Trust
India, January 2022, Pp.186, paperback edition*

“When it comes to Pakistan, the first word that comes to the mind of the Chinese is ‘iron brother’. To us Chinese, Pakistan is always a trustworthy friend who is as solid as iron.”

— **Li Keqiang**

Pakistan and China have professed to the world their long-standing & all-weather friendship. The bonhomie has, in the recent past, developed into a strategic nexus between the two, with geopolitical ramifications. This relationship has continued to grow since the 1960s furthering China’s strategic interests in the region while fulfilling Pakistan’s defence needs and the requirement for diplomatic support internationally.

This book studies the contours of the nexus between Pakistan and China and its effects on India. The book focuses on the various measures across the spectrum of local, regional and global engagement that India can take to balance and counter the effects of the strategic nexus.

The book is in three main parts. Part 1 deals with the collusion between China and Pakistan; Part 2 highlights the effects of the Pakistan-China collusion; and Part 3 brings out the various measures that can be taken to balance and counter the collusion.

The central theme of the book revolves around India's rise to regional and global power is synchronous with its growing economy and soft power internationally. In this Journey, India has had to counter two antagonists- Pakistan and China. Each of the antagonists has, time and time again, put India under duress through acts of war, simmering tensions along border areas and pursuing policies detrimental to India's interests. Both Pakistan and China have found in each other a perfect partner with the singular interest of stymying India and have thus colluded to perpetuate their aim.

In the context of the effects of the Pakistan-China collusion on India, The author argues prior to drifting away from India's neighbours towards China, it was India's geostrategic location and economy that gave it the advantage in the region. With China's economic rise and military strength increasing, it is but a natural shift of nations towards China. Thus, the long term solution to India is to ensure economic growth and to build matching military strength. However, in the short and medium term, India can leverage its strength through strategic partnerships to stem the rise and influence of China in the region. With China focussing on trade, energy security and containing Islamic influence in Xinjiang along with strengthening its military, India can look at these very aspects to upset the rise of China while leveraging the goodwill it has to ensure its own rise.

The author suggests in order to counter the Pakistan-China Nexus, India has to stress upon the factors that can spike the problems in the Pakistan-China relationship. For that, the author describes diplomacy as an important tool as a part of "Comprehensive National Power" (CNP), and it can be leveraged to play an important part in countering China, Pakistan and the nexus between the two. Both Pakistan and China have international compulsions which can be brought to bear on them via other countries or organisations of countries to benefit India. India will have to ensure that it continues to maintain friendly relations with these countries and organisations so that they are receptive to India's demands and sensitivities. India must leverage its soft power to diplomatically solve issues, which can cost her dearly in terms of growth and economy if the issue escalates to the military domain.

This book gives a comparative analysis of India and China in terms of economy, differential levels of development in China and India, the financial measures adopted by their governments from time to

time and the pressure points to maintain peace for India, for example- Tibet, Balochistan, Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), Durand Line.

Moreover, the book gives an interesting analogy of India's Foreign policy. The best India can hope to do is to deter China from engaging in military aggression. It is India's national aim to achieve economic development without compromising its security and strategic autonomy. To this end India must avoid war to enable India to achieve its aim of economic development. This is only possible with an assertive militarily backed diplomacy.

While delving deep into the complex tapestry of India, China and Pakistan interactions, the author skillfully navigates the geopolitical landscape, offering readers an enjoyable and nuanced understanding of our neighbours.

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