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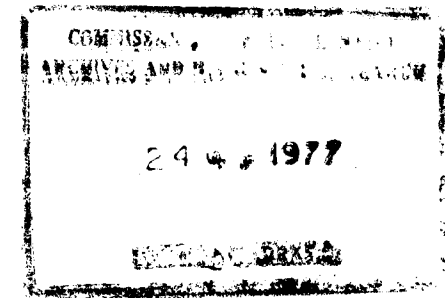
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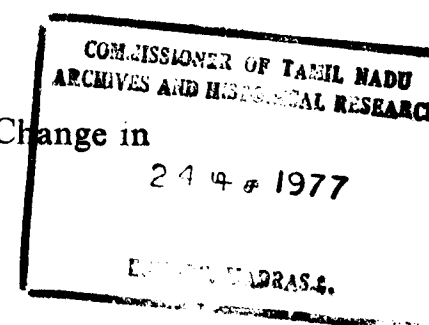


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**Political Authority and Structural Change in
Early South Indian History***

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University of Chicago



It has often been said that pre-modern south Asian states were in certain vital respects timeless, and sometimes even that Indian society had no real social history before colonial intervention. Most prominently, theories of oriental despotism have provided a lens for viewing traditional Indian polity and society. This lens goes in and out of focus in endless succession, not in response to any essential changes in the political structure, but rather due to the cyclic manifestation of a despotic superstructure overlaying a persistently discernible social infrastructure. The two social theorists perhaps most responsible for promulgating this already widely held view were H.S. Maine and K. Marx. It is curious that despite their many differences they agreed on the two basic tenets of what might be called the nineteenth century colonial sociology of India: they shared a reified conception of the organic and integral Indian village community, and they believed in its essentially changeless autonomy from the political superstructure.¹

Recently, Indian historians have begun to provide alternative frameworks for understanding pre-modern Indian history. They have gone beyond analyses of the variable base-lines for structural change in the nineteenth century, and have asked whether structural changes can be said to have occurred long before the effects of British rule were ever felt. The work of Irfan Habib and other Mughal economic historians stands out in this regard.² These historians have been revo-

* I am deeply indebted to Kathi Rose for her many suggestions. Also, I am thankful to Arjun Appadurai, Carol A. Breckenridge, Ronald Inden, Donald Nelsen, Ralph Nicholas, and Burton Stein.

¹See D. Thorner, 'Marx on India and the Asiatic Mode of Production,' in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, IX, 1966, and L. Dumont, 'The Village Community from Marx to Maine,' in *ibid.* For a most interesting reappraisal of the old method, see E. Stokes, 'The First Century of British Colonial Rule in India: Social Revolution or Social Stagnation,' in *Past and Present*, February 1973.

²See I. Habib, *The Agrarian System of the Mughal Empire*, London, 1963; and a review by T. Raychaudhuri, 'The Agrarian System of Mughal India,' in

lutionizing our views of the Indian economy before the nineteenth century: e.g. with respect to its responsiveness to broad regional and even pan-Imperial trends and influences, its early development of infrastructures associated with capitalist or pre-capitalist economic structures, *inter alia*.

However, pre-modern Indian political history still shows many traces of the nineteenth century sociology which economic historians have been so quick to renounce. There are notable exceptions, but theoretical attempts to understand political structures and the relation of the 'political' to the 'social' have been for the most part inadequate. Even the worthwhile attempts of scholars such as R. Fox and B. Stein to propose such alternative models as the 'segmentary state' fail to provide a suitable analytic for grappling with the question of structural change.³ The segmentary state model is neither sufficiently well calibrated to index changes in political or social relations, nor is it culturally sensitive enough to identify the differences between East Africa and India, or even more particularly between north and south India.

Part of the problem is a general lack of theoretical attention to what is meant by 'social structure' and 'political system' in early Indian history. Indeed, the very term 'structural change' presupposes an understanding of structure, and yet there is little clarity and even less agreement on what exactly 'structure' is.

This paper represents an initial attempt to view social and political structures as integrally related. That is, the assumption of Marx and Maine that social structure can be understood as autonomous from the political superstructure will be vigorously contested. Here, cultural notions of the 'authoritative' will be considered to underlie both the political and the social, and will be implicitly assumed to relate to the economic as well, defined as the mode and relations of production.

Structure, here defined loosely as the set or sets of formal relations of the constituent elements of social phenomena, will thus be seen as articulated on the basis of a unified conception of authority. This formulation has ramifications both for a consideration of political leadership, dominance, and superordination of any sort, as well as for an analysis of relations and roles throughout 'political society.' Changes in the conception of authority will be seen to have repercussions for the total set of social relations.

Enquiry, New Series II, I, Spring 1965. Also, for a critique of Western Marxist analyses, see I. Habib, 'Problems of Marxist Historical Analysis,' in *Enquiry*, New Series III, II, Monsoon, 1969.

³See R. Fox, *Kin, Clan, Raja, and Rule*, Berkeley, 1971; and B. Stein, 'The

In my understanding of authority, as well as of pre-modern Indian political systems, I owe much to the work of A.M. Hocart.⁴ Hocart's writings have already been recognized by analysts such as C. Levi-Strauss and L. Dumont for their contribution to the study of caste systems in south Asia. However, his work on kingship has been largely ignored by Indian historians.

Following Hocart, I analyze political systems in the same terms as ritual systems. However, by viewing these systems as analytically homologous rather than as evolutionally derivative (political from ritual), this argument avoids the problematics of Hocart's historicism. The heuristic value of Hocart's scheme begins with his understanding of ritual as an arena for the positing of systems of transformative equivalences. The central actor of the ritual is the principal. In the ritual this principal is made equivalent to the natural and moral world of the kingdom. The transformative action of the ritual therefore not only effects a change in him, but also that with which he is homologized. The primary goal of the ritual is the generation of prosperity.

So it is with kingship. In Hocart's scheme, this ritual principal is the king. Hocart uses this definition to demonstrate the usual arbitrariness of the classification of 'political leaders' in pre-modern context.⁵

The principal of the ritual, if he is human, is the head of the community. In a small tribe of low degree we call him the headman, in more advanced or larger communities we call him the king. Sometimes we hesitate between chief and king. Our use of these words is rather arbitrary: we translate the native word one way or the other, according as the state kept by the principal comes near to our idea of a king, or falls short of it...

For Hocart, then, the important classificatory unit is the ritual system, the head of which is the king.

By emphasizing ritual systems, Hocart thus points to the importance of conceptual features for understanding different political structures. For instance, Hocart contrasts states in terms of such features as polytheism and monotheism. A polytheistic world-view accompanies a type of kingship which can be called 'incorporative.' In such a system, 'kings include in their divinity the divinities of their

Segmentary State in South Indian History,' MS.

⁴See A.M. Hocart, *Kingship*, London, 1927; *Caste*, New York, 1968; and *Kings and Councillors*, Chicago, 1970.

⁵Hocart, *Kings and Councillors*, p. 86.

chieftains.⁶ A converse type of incorporation, not discussed by Hocart, is manifest in a state where chiefs share in the sovereignty of the ritual principal. Such systems could be contrasted with Hocart's characterization of a monotheistic, feudal system in which 'kings... are one indivisible and only god, and where chieftains consequently cannot be different gods, but only dimmer reflections of the same god as their liege.'⁷ Service here replaces the identity and incorporation of the former system.

The usefulness of this typological scheme lies in Hocart's analysis of political structures from the perspective of his exegesis of ideas about ritual authority. Given this perspective, however, it is important to understand that ritual, though susceptible to an autonomous analytic, is itself situated in larger social and cultural fields. Hence, ritual cannot in the final analysis be considered to represent the totality of social relations, nor can it be used to suggest the full set of meanings accompanying social action. Nonetheless, the particular importance of ritual for kingship in India is that it has a constitutive function, and as such is culturally a primary, though not exhaustive, locus of meaning and action.

In order to understand the formulaic meanings of ritual it will be necessary to consult textual materials which may not seem either historically or geographically relevant. Furthermore, in order to characterize the relation of ritual to cultural meanings and social interactions, the argument will at times consist of certain generalizations which might overlook important details. However, the value of such an attempt to correlate early political structures with seemingly systematic conceptual systems is that relationships within structures and changes from one structure to another might be better highlighted and more logically interpreted.

This paper, then, represents a general attempt to trace, and to characterize, the history of kingship in south India from the first and second centuries B.C. up to the rise of the Colas during the tenth century A.D. The principal locus for these developments in the Deccan was the Satavahana empire, which probably began to be of major significance sometime during the first century B.C.⁸ Other

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁸The dating of the Satavahanas has provided the grist for much historical debate: here I generally accept the suggestions of D.C. Sircar in *The Age of Imperial Unity: The History and Culture of the Indian People*, II, edited by R.C. Majumdar, Bombay, 1951, pp. 191-210. The earlier dating of the Satavahanas (by such historians as G. Venkat Rao and K.A. Nilakantha Sastri) was based on, firstly, doubtful paleographic determination by Bühler that the Nanaghat inscription should be dated at 200-150 B.C., and secondly, reference

roughly contemporaneous dynasties were the Cedis of Kalinga and the Ksarata Ksatrapas of western India. A number of successor states appeared upon the collapse of the Satavahanas sometime around the end of the second or the beginning of the third century A.D., many of which appear to have previously been political units subordinate to the Satavahanas or to one or another of their collateral branches. These states included the Abhiras in the northwest, the Cutus in southern Maharashtra and western Mysore, the Salankayanas of northern Andhra, and the Ikshvakus in the Vengi region of Andhra.⁹ It should be noted that these successor states reflected a political geography that had been in evidence throughout the Satavahana period: the distribution of the coins issued by the so-called feudatories of the Satavahanas demarcates this geography.¹⁰

The Pallavas can also be considered as a successor state. Their origins are even more unclear than the above-mentioned ones, but plausible theories of scholars such as S.K. Aiyanger, R. Sathianathaier, D.C. Sircar, and T.V. Mahalingam suggest that the Pallavas arose in connection with the web of alliances centring on the Satavahanas.¹¹ According to these scholars, the Pallavas emerged in or near the area with which they were later associated, that of Tontaimantalam, what is now the northeastern section of Tamil Nadu. The Pallavas played a prominent, though intermittent role in the development of political systems in south India during the first millennium A.D.

In discussing the origins and history of the Pallavas the approach in this paper will of necessity be highly selective. Most conspicuously, there will be little mention of the ideas expressed in the Tamil Cankam literature (of the first several centuries A.D.) relating to kingship. The reason for this lack of emphasis is that the Pallavas seem to have been influenced more by the Deccan dynasties of the

to a certain Dimita (Demetrius) in a Cedi inscription of Kharavela which is thought to be contemporaneous with Satavahana's rule. On this second point, Sircar noted that this Dimita (if in fact that is the proper reading) was probably a later Indo-Greek ruler of the Punjab, not the son of Euthemios who was known to have retreated from the Deccan in 175 B.C.

⁹For information on these dynasties, see D.C. Sircar, *Successors of the Satavahanas*, Calcutta, 1939.

¹⁰*The Age of Imperial Unity*, pp. 191-210. Also see Rapson, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Andhra Dynasty...*, London, 1908, p. ixx.

¹¹See S.K. Aiyanger, *Evolution of Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India*, Madras, 1938; T.V. Mahalingam, *Kancipuram in Early South Indian History*, Delhi, 1969; C. Minakshi, *Administration and Social Life Under the Pallavas*, Madras, 1938; R. Sathianathaier, 'The Pallavas,' in *The Classical Age: The History and Culture of the Indian People*, III, pp. 255-262; and Subramania Aiyar, *Historical Sketches of Ancient Dekhan*, Madras, n.d.

second century B.C. through the third century A.D. than by the forms of polity represented in the Cankam literature. The Cankam poems contain no reference to the Pallavas, nor do the Pallavas refer to any of the kings mentioned in the poems. Moreover, the most plausible theories about the origins of the Pallavas suggest that they had initially been a ruler-cum-warrior group which had entered into subordinate relations with the Satavahanas. And finally, the ritual performances of the Pallavas are better explained by looking north, not south.

Nonetheless, though the Pallavas apparently looked north, they were firmly implanted in the south. Therefore, before beginning the rest of my analysis, it would be worthwhile to briefly characterize certain social structural conditions which, as expressed in the Tamil literature, can contribute to our understanding of the early Pallavas. The few examples that I will mention are only illustrative of the rich potentiality of these texts for this kind of socio-political analysis.

In Pallava inscriptions there are manifold references to battles, both military confrontations with far-off hostile dynasties and internal skirmishes with recalcitrant chieftains. But we are told next to nothing about the armies, aside from occasional eulogies and panegyrics about generals or the king himself. Cankam literature provides us with some clues about the constituency and organization of armies of the time. This question is of particular importance in south Indian history because there was no kin system like the Rajput clans and lineages in north India, the groups upon which military organization was based. The generals were usually important velalas (the highest ranked agricultural caste) and were honoured, and presumably selected, by the king.¹² Many of the warriors came from castes which have long had a martial reputation, such as the maravar, the paratar, and the kallar.¹³ The poems are replete with references to the ferocity and valour of these warriors, many of whom apparently earned their reputation in bands of robbers and plunderers, and were known as dwellers of the hills and forests.¹⁴ The poems suggest sustained and rather profound tension and hostility between these 'wrathful and furious' hill folk and the settled agricultural groups, and scholars have speculated that these hill tribes had in fact constituted the Kalabhra threat.¹⁵ However, these scholars have underestimated the extent to which the mercenary armies of south Indian

¹²Cilappatikaram, XXVI, 4; V. 157-160. Also see N. Subramanian, *Sangam Polity*, Bombay, 1966, p. 142.

¹³Cilappatikaram, V. 55; Subramanian, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

¹⁴Subramanian, *op. cit.*, pp. 142, 143; B. Stein, 'Brahman and Peasant,' in *Adyar Library Bulletin*, 31-32, 1967-68, pp. 229-69.

¹⁵Stein, 'Brahman and Peasant,' p. 249.

kingdoms had the function of defusing the threat of hill domination by effecting some integration and acculturation of the hill groups and by harnessing their military power for cooperative purposes.¹⁶ In brief, political systems in south India played a strong role in providing opportunities and structures for cooperative alliances among discrete social groups. As will be seen, the capacity of the Pallavas to fashion alliances with warrior groups and their chieftains appears to have been a major factor in the establishment and continuance of Pallava rule.

Conversely, these groups were reliant on systems of alliance formed in the framework of political cooperation because of their own localized territorial base. The high degree of territorial segmentation in the south is suggested by the five conventionalized ecological and symbolic landscapes (*tinai*) which served as basic frames for all poetic expression in the Cankam corpus. On a more sociological level, the word used for tribe, *kuti*, seems to have had as its major defining feature the notion of territoriality.¹⁷ Hence, we might suppose that perhaps the most important constitutive element of tribal community was a shared locality, and by extension that the so-called tribes were territorially bounded sets of relationships.

This same kind of territorial segmentation has been well documented for modern south India. Although local communities are large and complex, perhaps more so than in any other region of south Asia, caste networks themselves are not very extensive. According to Inden and Marriott, firstly, 'endogamous castes here tend to become very small and close, to divide into numerous smaller circles by the preferred repetition of reciprocal, protective marriages among cousins and other known kin,' and secondly, 'the relatively small spread of each caste leaves it available to be ranked consistently by its members' exchanges with other castes in just a few nearby localities.'¹⁸ Both of these characteristics appear to be derivative of the *kuti* principle of social organization, and further confirm these suggestions about the high degree of territorial segmentation in early south India.

¹⁶In 'Brahman and Peasant,' Stein refers to E. Leach's study of highland Burma to document the venerable tradition of hostility between lowland peasant folk and highland tribal groups. While I accept this basic notion, it should also be noted that Leach refers to a number of cross-cutting ties which often mitigate the extent and degree of conflict. Such cross-cutting ties existed in south Indian history, and in fact were manipulated by successful imperial systems. See Leach, *Political Systems in Highland Burma*, Boston, 1965, pp. 1-61.

¹⁷A.K. Ramanujam suggested this interpretation of *kuti* in a lecture at the University of Chicago, Winter 1974.

¹⁸R. Inden and M. Marriott, 'Caste Systems,' in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1974.

Pallava history has traditionally been divided into three periods according to the language of the inscriptions. The earliest plates were in Prakrit and have been assigned to the period 250-350 A.D.; the intermediary period, the evidence for which has been found in Sanskrit copper plates, has been put at roughly 350-600 A.D.; and lithic and copper plate records in Sanskrit and Tamil demarcate the final period from the beginning of the seventh century to the early tenth century.¹⁹ The earliest Prakrit inscriptions, though issued from Kanci, all referred to areas to the north or northwest of Tontaimantalam proper. The intermediary period of the Sanskrit charters has baffled scholars for generations for two basic reasons: firstly due to the mysterious incursion from c. 400/450—c. 550 A.D. of a much feared group generally known as the Kalabhras; and secondly, the probable, though long unrecognized, existence of a collateral branch of the Pallava family which ruled from Andhra (and whose capital town apparently was Palakkada, from whence many of the grants of this period were addressed) from c. 375/400—550/575 A.D.²⁰ The coincidence of these two factors makes sense when they are analyzed together; the Kalabhras apparently dominated the area of Tontaimantalam at approximately the same time for which we have some records of the Andhra Pallavas. Unfortunately, the evidence is still more complicated and does not allow one to go beyond, if even to sustain, this rudimentary chronological suggestion. This intermediary period is generally conceded to have been brought to a close in the latter half of the sixth century by the military prowess of Simhavarman and his son Simhavisnu. These monarchs are said to have been the first of the Greater Pallavas who ushered in a 'new epoch' of Pallava history.²¹

This epoch, according to historians such as Mahalingam, extended down to the early tenth century, when the accession of the Cola monarch Parantaka presaged the new reign of Cola hegemony throughout the south.

None of these traditional factors of periodization entails any notion of structural change. However, Pallava history is particularly fascinating because it presents the historian with major transformations, for example, both in its generalized conception of sovereignty and in its expansion of the scale of the political system. Burton Stein has correctly criticized the tendency of south Indian historians to view Pallava history as a unity which is on the one hand juxtaposed against the earlier 'clan-tribal' Cankam society and on the other hand

¹⁹*The Classical Age*, pp. 275-83.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Mahalingam, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

representative of an only slightly less glorified version of the later Cola period.²² However, Stein's work too has neglected the significance of transformations in the Pallava period by associating many of these changes with their later expression in the Cola period or by simply referring to the slowly evolving changes of the Pallava period. Conspicuously, previous work in general has not noted the importance of differential modes of the constitution of sovereign authority for this period.

Briefly, sovereign authority was initially constituted in the royal sacrifice, whereas in the later Pallava period the sacrifice receded from importance and divine genealogies began to posit the base of sovereignty for the family of kings. The royal gift, while always important, became an autonomous arena for the proclamation and expression of authority. As will be seen, such a change in the base of authority had profound correlations with changes in the political structure of south Indian kingdoms, in their scale, their capacity for the incorporation of new elites, and their elevation of the particular families associated with such genealogies to positions of long-standing importance in south Indian history.

KINGSHIP AND THE ROYAL SACRIFICE

The royal sacrifice was important in south Indian history from the beginning of the period under consideration, the second century B.C., up to the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. These royal sacrifices, when performed, were the kingly arenas *par excellence*. It was through the sacrifice that the king both transformed himself and the kingdom. Gonda remarks that the great royal sacrifices were considered as *samskara* rituals, or rather as transformative sacraments which effected the purification of the sacrificer through the mechanism of rebirth.²³ It was also through the sacrificer that the king became identified with the gods. One persistently important model for the positing of equivalences of king and god is found in the notion of the *lokapalas*, the guardians of the world. As expressed in the Manu Dharma Sastras:²⁴

A king is an incarnation of the eight guardian deities of the world, the Moon, the Fire, the Sun, the Wind, Indra, the Lords of wealth and water (Kubera and Varuna), and Yama.

²²B. Stein, 'Brahman and Peasant,' p. 231; also see Stein, 'Agrarian Integration in South India,' in *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, edited by Frykenberg, Madison, 1969.

²³J. Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View*, Leiden, 1966, p. 100.

²⁴Manu Dharma Sastra, V, 96.

These particular equivalences not only provide insights about the functions of a king, primarily with respect to his task of protection, but also express a great deal about the conceptual system underlying both the idea of kingship and more general ideas about the nature of the world.

First, we must accept Gonda's caveat that the king is a *deva* in the sense that he is one of a 'class of powerful beings, regarded as possessing supernormal facilities and as controlling a department of nature or activity in the human sphere.'²⁵ That is, the homologies of the sacrifice must be contextualized: first, in terms of Hocart's notion of a polyarchic system which attributes godly substance to more than one repository or source, and second, in light of Gonda's insistence that the qualities and attributes of a king be seen in terms of the king's earthly sphere of influence.

With this in mind, we can analyze the equivalence of the king with the lokapala deities in terms of both the activities and the attributes of kings.²⁶ The king is the sun in that he is luminous, he dispels darkness, is splendid and majestic yet burning and scorching; he is the moon (king of the planets) because he is gentle, beneficent, a cause of vegetation and fruitfulness; he is the wind in that he is unbound, swift and violent; he is fire in that he is beneficent, a protector, the dispeller of demons, cleansing, purifying, as well as a mediator between the people and the gods; he is *Kubera* (the lord of the north) because he is the norm of inexhaustible wealth, who is united with *Rddhi* (prosperity) and a possessor of *Sri* (a goddess of productivity and fertility); the king is *Varuna* in that he protects *ṛta* (the moral and natural order of the Vedas) and the upholder of *dharma* on earth, and of the order of the seasons and of nature; he is *Yama* in that he is a controller, a judge, a punisher, and a gatherer of people.

Perhaps most importantly, the king is *Indra*, the god who archetypically represents kingship in the Vedic period. *Indra* is a god of growth, vitality, rainfall, vegetation, fertility, in short, of energetic action in nature.²⁷ Moreover, *Indra* is associated with war, and is most prominently known for his brave battles against the evil powers and enemies of the gods and of mankind. The king was expected to secure the prosperity of his people in *Indra*-like manner, by regulating the powers of fertility and of nature, and by vanquishing the enemies of the people. A number of ancient Indian festivals centring

²⁵Gonda, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²⁶This discussion derives from Gonda, *op. cit.*, 1966, p. 25ff.

²⁷Gonda, *Ancient Indian Ojas*, Utrecht, 1952, p. 18ff.

around *Indra* express the god's relation to fertility and prosperity.²⁸ Such a festival figures in the Tamil epic, the *Cilappatikaram*.²⁹ In this version the ritual chant of the dancers sounded: 'May the king and his vast empire never know famine, disease, or dissension. May we be blessed with wealth—and, when the season comes, with rains.' *Indra*'s quintessential expression of the nature of sacrificial kingship will be referred to later when we note a change in the cosmic underpinnings of kingship in the *Puranic* period.

One of the most important Vedic rituals is the *Rajasuya*, the consecration of a king. The sacrificer becomes (is reborn as) a king, and as such becomes identified with the world. To quote from Hocart's account:³⁰

The king at his consecration is dressed in robes that represent the womb and the placenta from which he is to be reborn. In order to complete his identification with the world he is given a mace which stands for the thunderbolt; a gold disc is placed on his head to represent the sun.

A more recent scholarly monograph by J. C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, has confirmed much of Hocart's exegetical interpretation. Heesterman notes that the cosmic implications of the ritual are apparent throughout. As he states:³¹

...the scene of the unction is a replica of the universe: the king standing in the center and stretching his arms to the sky impersonates...the cosmic pillar; round him the officiants are standing and confer on him his new body from the four points of the compass; moreover each officiant...imparts the king the quality of one of the gods mentioned in the unction formula: Soma's glory, Agni's brilliance, etc. ...

Heesterman agrees, then, with Hocart's sense of the meanings of the various equivalences made in the course of the ritual, as well as with his emphasis on the unction (*abhiseka*) as an enactment of rebirth, and as the central and most crucial part of the whole ritual.

As the kingdom is the 'universe' of natural and moral relations which centre on the king in the ritual, we might also speculate that

²⁸Gonda, *op. cit.*, 1966, p. 39.

²⁹Quoted from *Shilappadikaram*, translated by A. Danielou, New York, 1965, pp. 19, 20. I thank K. Rose for pointing this out.

³⁰Hocart, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

³¹J. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, Gravenhage, Mouton, 1957, p. 120.

the chiefs and dignitaries, or subsidiary principles, will participate in the ritual in a special capacity. This can be seen in the oblations to the *ratnins* (jewels) of the kingdom in preparation for the royal unction. Hocart describes this part of the ritual as a process of absorption, or appropriation.³²

At one stage of the consecration the Vedic king goes to the house of the general and makes an offering to the fire-god whom the general represents. Thereby he makes that officer of the state 'bound to himself'. Then the king goes to the chaplain's house and makes an offering to the priestly god with whom the chaplain is identified, and so makes the chaplain 'bound to himself'. And so he successively appropriates the twelve court personages.

Gonda essentially agrees with this analysis, noting that the *ratnins*, 'by their very presence and qualities add to the power of their royal master'.³³ According to the *Taittiriya Brahmana*,³⁴ the twelve *ratnins* are the *purohita* (the king's priest), the *rajanya* (the royal prince), the chief queen, the favourite wife, a discarded wife, the commander of the army, the *uta* (the charioteer and bard), the *gramani* (village headman), the chamberlain, the treasurer, the tax collector, and the superintendent of gambling.

The king, then, is not simply a king in his own right, but is godly in that he incorporates the godly substance of his *ratnins*. The king thus represents the totality of the political system. We may view this aspect of ritual equivalence in the sacrifice as complementary to the ideas expressed by the identification with the *lokapala* deities. Both of these formulations—the personages represented by the *ratnins* and the constituent elements of the *lokapalas*, particularly the inclusion of earth, air, fire, and water—suggest a localized, territorial set of ritual relations.³⁵ The *rajasuya* sacrifice, in which the king is identified with the kingdom in terms of the *lokapalas* (in spite of the cosmic symbolism), represents a relatively bounded structural event. Perhaps the only *ratnin* not integrally based in and connected with the king's court is the *gramani*, and the village level of his constituency suggests that the principal 'locality' chieftain is the king himself.

The sacrifice was an arena in which not only the respective (and

³²Hocart, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

³³Gonda, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

³⁴*Taittiriya Brahmana*, 1, 7, 3.

³⁵This idea about the relation of territoriality to the symbolic system represented by the *lokapalas* was developed through conversations with K. Rose.

representative) members of the local political system (i.e., the *ratnins*) were included in the conferral of sovereignty, but in which larger confrontations of discrete political systems took place over the conferral of public honours.³⁶ These confrontations were predicated on the relative smallness of scale of each separably organized unit, since there was as yet no larger institutional unit which could submit the segmentary units to the arbitration of a single system of authority.

The other most important type of Vedic royal sacrifice is the *Asvamedha*, the horse sacrifice. This was usually performed by kings to establish their universal status (as *samrajyas*) after a series of military conquests. The performance itself should not be looked upon as merely celebratory, for the right to perform such a ritual sacrifice could be contested. The sacrifice endowed the sacrificer with 'royal sway'.³⁷

Verily, the *Asvamedha* means royal sway: it is after royal sway that these strive who guard the horse. Those of them who reach the end become (sharers in) the royal sway, but those who do not reach the end are cut off from sway. Wherefore let him who holds royal sway perform the horse sacrifice; for, verily, whosoever performs the horse-sacrifice, without possessing power, is poured (swept) away. — Now, were unfriendly men to get hold of the horse, his sacrifice would be cut in twain, and he would become the poorer for it. A hundred men clad in armour guard it for the continuity and uninterrupted performance of the sacrifice...

The guardians of the horse are apparently identified with the guardians of the quarters: 'The guardians of the quarters are a hundred princes born in wedlock: to them he commits it (the horse)'.³⁸

At the beginning of the new year a horse, said to represent the king, is set out to roam. This homology of king and horse is enacted in several ways, for instance in the enforced celibacy of both for the entire year (the king must refrain from intercourse though he is enjoined to lie every night between the thighs of his favourite wife). The horse is not only identified with the king, but with Yama (the god of death), Aditya (the sun) and Soma (king of the gods). The horse, when sacrificed, is offered to all the gods, so as not to exclude any from his proper share.

The *asvamedha* also has territorial implications; the horse

³⁶See *Mahabharata*, II, 2.

³⁷*Satapatha Brahmana*, XIII, 1, 6, 3.

³⁸*Ibid.*, XIII, 1, 6, 2.

circumambulates the territory of the kingdom and thereby asserts royal dominance over it. Oldenberg asserts that the whole country was brought into contact with the divine power of the animal in the course of its roamings.³⁹ Moreover, the royal queen is apparently homologized with the earth of the kingdom.⁴⁰

The generative implications of the sacrifice are apparent throughout. As the wife is made equivalent to the earth, it is enjoined that 'the centre of her body prosper,—the centre of royal power, doubtless, is glory: glory (prosperity), food, he then lays into the very centre of royal power (or, the kingdom).'⁴¹ In preparation for the sacrifice, the king's wives, who are referred to as a form of prosperity, anoint the horse, so that 'neither fiery spirit, nor energy, nor cattle, nor prosperity, pass away from him (the sacrificer).'⁴² When the horse is killed at the end of the year of roaming, the queen is made to lie down near the horse, covered by an upper cloth, after which she says, 'May the vigorous male, the layer of seed, lay seed,' for 'the completeness of union.'⁴³

Thus, the asvamedha is performed with the explicit goal of prosperity for the king and his kingdom. The *Satapatha Brahmana* states that:⁴⁴

Where they perform this sacrifice, there Parganya, indeed, rains whenever they list, — "may our fruitbearing plants ripen," — there the fruitbearing plants indeed ripen where they perform this sacrifice;—"may security of possession be assured for us,"—(it) indeed is assured.

Jan Gonda, on the basis of a consideration of all the Vedic and Brahmanic literature on the horse sacrifice, has written that, 'the objects pursued by the horse sacrifice... are cows, horses, sons, and all-nourishing possessions, and in addition to these ritual and moral purity. That means, from the point of view of an ancient Indian prince, in short, unqualified welfare.'⁴⁵ Here again, the roles of the ritual and political head are one and the same: to generate prosperity for the kingdom by generating it for oneself.

The early history of kingship in south India can be seen as a sacrificial system in which the role of kings was to act as ritual principals with the goal of generating prosperity. Sacrifices were

³⁹Gonda, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴¹*Satapatha Brahmana*, XIII, 2, 9, 4.

⁴²*Ibid.*, XIII, 2, 6, 7.

⁴³*Ibid.*, XIII, 5, 2, 2.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, XIII, 1, 9, 10.

⁴⁵Gonda, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

usually mentioned in ways which portrayed them as generating prosperity, manifested most directly in the wealth and munificent gifts of the king. For instance, mention of the sacrifices of Santamula in Ikshvaku inscriptions (third century A.D.) were immediately followed by phrases such as '...whose gold was great in quantity, the giver of hundred thousands of ploughs (of land) and cows and the giver of many crores of gold.'⁴⁶

Numerous Vedic sacrifices were performed by kings of the early Deccan states (from c. 100 B.C. to c. 250 A.D.). For instance, Satakarni, one of the first Satavahana kings, performed the rajasuya, two asvamedhas, and fifteen other kinds of Vedic sacrifices.⁴⁷ Sacrifices, in particular royal sacrifices such as the rajasuya, asvamedha, and the vajapeya, were often performed at the commencement of a dynasty, usually after some considerable measure of military success had asserted the dominant power of a king and his ruling group. For example, Kharavela of the Orissan Cedis, though already anointed as the king, performed the rajasuya after his first five years of battle had proven his military prowess.⁴⁸ And Santamula I of the Ikshvakus performed the asvamedha and the vajapeya, *inter alia*, apparently to proclaim his overthrow of Satavahana hegemony.⁴⁹ An initial performance of one or several sacrifices could elevate the subsequent line to kingship in addition to the actual performer, as can be seen from the bunching of sacrificial references toward the early years of dynasties and the continuing references to the sacrifices of the respective primordial kings. The capacity of the sacrifice to have cross-generational effect was particularly important because there was no independent attribution of divine origin to the kings either in the genealogies or in the eulogistic epithets, nor did the kings have any ksatriya base which would have endowed them with the substance of kingship.

The sacrifice was important because it was the defining feature of sovereignty during this period. In the inscriptions, kings often proclaimed their kingship primarily in terms of the sacrifices they performed, and secondarily in terms of the gifts they made, gifts which were often given as *daksinas* (offerings) for ritual services in the sacrifices. For instance, one of the Nagarjunakonda inscriptions of the Ikshvakus, in which a princess is recorded to have given a gift, begins by identifying her father as the 'Maharaja Vasithiputa Ikshaku Siri-Chamtamula' as 'the offerer of Asvamedha, the giver of many

⁴⁶*Epigraphica Indica* (hereafter cited *E.I.*), XXXIV, pp. 17-22.

⁴⁷Burgess, *Report on the Elura Cave Temples: Archaeological Survey of Western India*, V, pp. 60-64.

⁴⁸*E.I.*, XX, p. 72ff.

⁴⁹See *E.I.*, XXI, pp. 62-63; XXXIV, pp. 17-22; XX, pp. 17-25.

crores of gold...⁵⁰ Another such formulation is found in the Hirahadagalli grant of the Pallava Sivaskandavarman (c. 300-325 A.D.), which begins by stating:⁵¹

Success! From Kamchipura—the righteous supreme king of great kings of the Pallavas Sivakhamdavama, a Bharaddaya, an offerer of Agnishtoma, Vajapeya and Asvamedha (sacrifices) issues the following orders:

Later generations of Pallava kings continued to base their sovereignty on the sacrifices performed by the earliest Pallavas. For instance, the Uruvapalli Grant of Visnugopavarman, probably of the late fifth century, begins with a formula that is found in many Pallava charters of the fifth through the seventh centuries.⁵²

Victory has been achieved by the holy one! From the glorious and victorious locality of Palakkada, at the command of Sri-Vishnugopavarman, the pious Yuvamaharaja of the Pallavas, who are the receptacles of the royal glory of other kings that have been overcome by their valour, and who have prepared for celebration horse-sacrifices according to the proper rites... (italics mine)

The absence of specific sacrificial references in these later inscriptions suggests that the primordial performances constituted the basis for such statements. It is noteworthy that this last inscription contains within it a reference to the lokapala model. Visnugopavarman's ancestor, Sri-Skandavarman, is referred to, *inter alia*, as one 'who was skillful in protecting his subjects, who was the fifth Lokapala of the Lokapalas...'⁵³ In this period, this was a common epithet among the Pallavas.

Gifts (*danas*) were usually given as offerings in the sacrificial context, but they were sometimes given independently as well. In conjunction with his many sacrifices, Satakarni of the Satavahanas made lavish gifts, including villages, cows, horses, and elephants.⁵⁴ Outside of the sacrifice, his successors continued liberally to grant gifts to sramanas and brahmanas.⁵⁵ The case of Kharavela, of the Cedis, suggests that gifts to such a variegated lot of recipients could be linked to a sacrifice; Kharavela performed a fire sacrifice to make

⁵⁰E.I., XX, pp. 17-25.

⁵¹E.I., I, pp. 2-10.

⁵²Indian Antiquary, February 1876, p. 50ff.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Burgess, n. 47.

⁵⁵E.I., VIII, pp. 52-96.

his many gifts 'acceptable'.⁵⁶ So what might be viewed as a trend towards the increasing separation of the dana from the sacrifice (*yajna*) cannot be interpreted as simply a reflection of increasing religious eclecticism, since such eclecticism accompanied gift-giving contexts which were sacrificial.

Royal gifts were made meaningful in terms of a conception of sovereignty which was at its root connected with the performance of royal sacrifices. This can be seen in the role of royal women of the Satavahana and Ikshvaku lineages as munificent givers, whose gifts were particularly important due to their royal substance. While Santamula I of the Ikshvakus was performing Vedic sacrifices and giving gold, and 'hundred thousands' of land and kine, the royal women (his wives and daughters) were giving gifts to brahmanas, sramanas, and the poor, as well as constructing pillars and caves dedicated to the Buddha. The merit accruing from these gifts was credited to the women's two families, natal and affinal, as well as to the world. An example can be cited from another of the Nagarjunakonda inscriptions.⁵⁷

She, the great mistress of munificence, devoted to all the virtuous, having due regard for the past, future, and present (members) of both the houses to which she belongs, for the attainment of welfare and happiness in both the worlds and in order to attain herself the bliss of Nirvana and for the attainment of welfare and happiness by all the world, has erected this pillar.

The reference to both houses should be seen in light of first, the use of matronymics in naming, and second, the prevalence of cross-cousin marriage in the royal houses. It should also be noted that during this period gifts of major political significance were only made by members of royal families.

Not only were gifts often associated with sacrificial contexts, but they had parallel teleological structures as well. An endowment for the construction of a *deva-kula* (shrine) is said to have the result of dharma in one Ikshvaku inscription.⁵⁸ As noted in the quote above, grants by royal personages of the Ikshvakus are said to effect, or facilitate, the attainment of welfare, happiness, and bliss for the individual donors and for the world. In Pallava inscriptions of the early period, gifts are accompanied by phrases which refer to them as 'means of the increase of the merit, longevity, power, and fame

⁵⁶E.I., XX, p. 72ff.

⁵⁷E.I., XX, pp. 17-25.

⁵⁸E.I., XXXIV, pp. 17-22.

of (their) own family and race.⁵⁹ The benefits of the gifts are said to accrue only to the family (*kula*) of the Pallavas; the sovereignty of the Pallavas was based on their performance of sacrifices and their distribution of gifts in the framework of this mode of self-reference. That is, it was through the sacrifice that first, the Pallava family became kingly, and second, they were able to then bestow royal gifts.

Although the sacrifice was in some special sense constitutive, it cannot be viewed apart from the full set of conditional pre-requisites of kingship in this period. To perform a sacrifice, a king had to prove his munificence as a redistributor of resources, as well as his military prowess, a necessary skill if he were to garner those resources. However, the performance of a sacrifice had more than a legitimating function; the sacrifice should be regarded as an efficacious ritual. It did not make a powerful king into an authoritative king; rather, it made a leader into a king, or a little king into a big king. That is, the position, or office, of kingship was itself constituted by the ritual act, even though that ritual act must be seen in terms of the variable attributes and activities of kings.

Similarly, the personages of the political systems had positions which were constituted, whether on a temporary or permanent basis, by the king, the ritual principal. In this early period, the personages who filled the categories and bore the titles of royal conferral were as various as the wives, daughters, and princes of the royal families; the so-called officials who participated in the sacrifices, engaged in military action, and executed royal gifts; and the local kings and chieftains who had subordinate relations with more powerful kings. In analytic terms it is possible to liken these types to different kinds of ratnins.

First, there was the group of royalty whose position was based on their kin relation to a royal figure who successfully performed, or whose ancestors performed, a royal sacrifice. Included in this category would be crowned and uncrowned princes, queens and daughters of kings, as well as generals and/or other kings who had affinal ties with the kingly house. As mentioned above, one of the primary roles fulfilled by this group had to do with royal *danas*, gifts that were often themselves unrelated to particular sacrifices but rather linked in a more general sense to the sacrificial arena by royal substance, which in turn worked to orient the nature and distribution of the merit accruing from them.

Second, not necessarily mutually exclusive, there was the group of so-called officials to the court. This might include generals

⁵⁹See *E.I.*, I, pp. 2-10.

(*senapatis* and *dandanayakas*), as well as divisional commanders (such as *ghumikas*, *tuthikas*, *nayakas*, etc.) who had military responsibilities to the court and control over the mobilization and organization of the armies. It would also include individuals who were given particular titles in the context of their performance of certain 'administrative' tasks, such as transmitting the information of a grant and overseeing it with the authority of the king (as implied by the titles *ajnapti* and *vyaprita*), or executing the details of the grant at the village level, for instance an official such as the *pariharatha pariharapetha* (the root here is *parihara*, which refers to the remission of a particular tax in connection with a grant, or more often the recirculation of a particular cess rather than remission).

Third, and again not exclusive, was the category of chieftain, or village/locality headman. These personages were variously labelled *mahatalavaras*, *rastrikas*, *nattars*, *desadhikadikas*, *madyasthas* etc. These were the chiefs who themselves did not participate in the royal sovereignty of gift-giving in the king's or king's family name, but who did participate in so far as they expressed subordination to the king by acknowledging his right to make gifts and perform sacrifices.

These categories are only typological; and they are not mutually exclusive. With the *Iksvakus*, for instance, one character could be a son-in-law of the king, a general, and a *mahatalavara* all at the same time. The typological value of this scheme is that it illustrates, first, various potentially independent criteria of involvement in the political systems of the period, second, the major criteria of appropriateness for particular kinds of 'political' activity, and third, the distinctive feature of sovereignty which oriented all involvement, namely, the sacrificial base of kingship.

The administrative character of the early Pallava period for the most part appears not to have been very complex, and it was relatively small-scale in direct application. There were 'chiefly' types in the system, but their importance was not yet major, nor were they consistently singled out. The sharing of royal sovereignty, illustrated both in the capacity to give royal gifts and in the tenor of the inscriptional rhetoric, was apparently limited to consanguineal and affinal kin of the sacrificial king. Other modalities of exchange solidarity had not yet been articulated in the system.

In conclusion, kingship in a sacrificial universe is constitutive by virtue of the sacrifice. That is, the king himself is constituted by performing the royal sacrificial rituals. Similarly, and simultaneously, the relations of the kingdom are constituted in the dramatic arena of the sacrifice, by virtue of the nature of and criteria for individual and corporate participation. Royal gift-giving, in the framework of this constitutive system, is an integral part of this primary sacrificial

world-view.

FROM YAJNA TO VAMSA: THE GIFT AS RITUAL

The transformations of Pallava kingship had primarily to do with a change in the conception of what constitutes sovereignty. In the late seventh century, two inscriptions proclaimed that the Pallava kings traced their descent from Brahman, Brihaspati, (Samyu), Bharadvaja, Drona, Asvatthaman, to the eponymous Pallava and so on.⁶⁰ The shift was not abrupt, since both Paramesvaravarman I (c. 669-690) and Rajasimha (or Narasimhavarman II, c. 690-728), the issuers of these two grants, issued other grants which were much more like the earlier charters in their general style of composition and in their reference to Pallava sacrifices.⁶¹ But the trend was firmly established with the accession of Nandivarman Pallavamalla c. 731 A.D., after which no grants of the earlier style have been found.

References to the performances of royal sacrifices did not appear in inscriptions which began with these mythical charters. Instead, the claim to sovereignty of the Pallava kula was predicated on divine origin, and on their identification with the great personages of their

⁶⁰See the Kuram Plates, *South Indian Inscriptions* (hereafter cited *S.I.I.*), I, p. 144ff.; and the Vayilur Plates, *E.I.*, XVIII, pp. 145ff. The genealogy in the Kuram plates does not include Samyu. There are two earlier grants which have similar genealogical charters, but they have been dated much later for paleographic reasons, and so we can assume that the original inscriptions when re-inscribed were modified to conform with the later style. See, e.g., Pallankovil Plates, *Annual Report of Epigraphy* (1958, 59). At this point in the narrative, certain caveats should be proffered. First, the divine genealogies should not be seen as distinctly Pallava in style, but rather as part of the developing Puranic tradition. The Pallavas were not the only dynasty to adopt this style in their inscriptions, though they were certainly among the very earliest to do so. Second, the lack of references to the sacrifice does not suggest the demise of sacrificial activity, but instead its recontextualization. For instance, many of the gifts, particularly the mahadanas made by kings, were accompanied by references to and performances of various sacrifices, e.g., the hiranyagarbha. Finally, it might be pointed out that the shift of sovereignty does not represent a classical sociological case of movement from recruitment via achievement to that via ascription, though it will be seen that the shift did signal the increasing salience and importance of particular kingly lines in south Indian history.

⁶¹The continued promulgation of old-style inscriptions is not difficult to explain; for instance, they might have been drafted by lower officials of the king according to the standard formulas. In any case, such a major transition in both the form and the content of inscriptional rhetoric would not be so abrupt as to exclude some overlap.

ancestral past. For instance, Asvatthaman (not always presented as a salubrious character) provided them with a mix of Brahman birth and Ksatriya conduct. The various Pallava kings were given epithets such as *su-racita*, the source of prosperity, and they were described as luminous with splendour, full of learning, endowed with noble conduct, etc.⁶²

The Pallava kings continued to describe themselves as munificent givers. However, the kings no longer identified the particular purpose of each grant, as they did earlier when they proclaimed that the gifts would add to the welfare, merit, and general prosperity of their race and family. Rather, their welfare and prosperity was predicated principally on their divine origin and their inherent noble conduct. The particular grant now appeared more as an expression of their sovereignty than as the generative principle of it, and yet as an expression it was still thought to promote prosperity.

Because of this, the royal dana took on a new and different character. It was no longer a natural extension of the sacrificial system, in which the dana was either given as *daksina* or in the constitutive framework of the sacrifice. Rather, the gift became an emanation of sovereignty, in which the endowed institution or individual(s) became actualized expressions of sovereignty, and in that sense made equivalent in ritual terms to the king. The identification of a king with his gift was not new, but the system of equivalences was re-situated in terms of a new conception of sovereignty.

Again, Hocart can contribute to a formulation regarding this system of equivalences. He postulated the structural similarity of the temple and the sacrifice because he saw both as conceived to promote prosperity. In this sense, Hocart viewed temples and other public works in the same way.⁶³

It would be an error to put such works in a category by themselves as 'utilitarian' in opposition to 'religious' works such as temples. Temples are just as utilitarian as dams and canals, since they are necessary to prosperity; dams and canals are as ritual as temples, since they are part of the same social system of seeking welfare. If we call reservoirs 'utilitarian' it is because we believe in their efficacy; we do not call temples so because we do not believe in their efficacy for crops. What we think has nothing to do with the matter, but only what the people we are studying think.

It is thus not surprising that what we call public works, irrigational projects and the like, were usually connected with and administered

⁶²See *S.I.I.*, I, p. 144ff.; *S.I.I.*, II, p. 253ff.; *E.I.*, XVIII, p. 121ff.

⁶³Hocart, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

under the auspices of temples in south India, from the middle Pallava period through at least the Vijayanagar period.⁶⁴ It is also quite consonant with this scheme that in ritual terms there are many parallels between the temple and the sacrifice. For instance, the central purifying (rebirth) ritual of temples consists of an unction (*kumbabhiseka*) of the temple towers, paralleling the unction of the king in rajasuya sacrifice. (Hocart noted that, 'Since temple and man are interchangeable they are treated alike in the ritual. They are consecrated in the same manner.'⁶⁵) Also, the title of a temple-donor is *yajamana*, the same title as that assumed by the sacrificer.⁶⁶

It must be noted that these structural parallels are not homologized quite as Hocart would have it. They must be viewed in the context of a new conception of the constituents of sovereign power. The temple, like the sacrifice, did create prosperity. However, the gift of a temple or of a *brahmadeya* (endowment for the support of brahmanas) did not confer sovereignty in the sense that the performance of a royal sacrifice had.

The Pallava charters attained their fullest expression during the reign of Nandivarman Pallavamalla (c. 731-796).⁶⁷ In two of his important charters, Visnu appears as the primordial ancestor of the Pallava race, whereas before they had begun with Brahma. In the Kasakudi plates, the genealogy begins with a statement of adoration to Sri, wife of Visnu and goddess of prosperity. Then the full genealogy (*vamsa*) begins.

First, from the lotus which rose from the navel of Visnu, was born the creator, whose origin is the (supreme) Brahman; who is self-existent; who fully knows the meaning of the sacred texts; (and) who has performed the creation of the whole world.

From there, the genealogy proceeds through Angiras, chief of the seers, Brihaspati, guru of Indra and Visnu, Samyu, who resembles the sun and destroys sin, Bharadvaja, the sage who founded the race of Pallavas through his austerities. Drona, preceptor of the Kurus, Asvatthaman, the powerful one who terrifies Krsna, Arjuna, and Bhima, and then the glorious eponymous Pallava. This Pallava, though born from a race of brahmanas, is said to possess 'in the highest degree the valour of the kshatriyas.'

⁶⁴See C. Minakshi, *Administration and Social Life Under the Pallavas*, Madras, 1938; also Stein, 'The Economic Functions of a South Indian Temple,' in *Journal of Asian Studies*, February 1960, pp. 163-76.

⁶⁵Hocart, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

⁶⁶C.A. Breckenridge brought this to my attention.

⁶⁷See *E.I.*, XVIII, p. 121ff.; *S.I.I.*, II, p. 253ff.

The Pattattalmangalam grant has a similar genealogy:

From the navel-lotus of Narakari (i.e. Visnu) was born Brahma; from him was (born) Angiras; from him Devaguru (i.e., Brihaspati); from him (came) Samyu, the best of sages; from his son Bharadvaja (was born) Drona who was renowned as an archer on the battlefield; from him came Drauni (Asvatthaman) who was of irresistible great power, and from him came Pallava.

In addition, both of these grants are prefaced by invocations to Visnu. The Kasakudi plates invoke Brahma and Siva as well. Regarding Visnu, it states: 'May that blessed Trivikrama (Visnu) grant you prosperity, who, at the sacrifice of Bali, deceitfully asked only for three steps (of land), but suddenly expanded (and) strode thrice, (thereby) appropriating the world!' The Pattattalmangalam plates begin thus:

Hail! Prosperity! Let that body of the husband of Sri (i.e. Visnu), which is resplendent with the kaustabha jewel on its chest and which with a hundred marakata-like arms is lying on the ocean, resembling a collection of clouds lustrous with the interspersed lightning and settling on the waters of the ocean to imbibe (its waters) grant you welfare.

In addition, the Kasakudi plates liken the race of the Pallavas to a 'partial incarnation of Visnu, as it displayed unbroken courage in conquering the circle of the world with all its parts, (and) as it enforced the special rules of all castes and orders...'

The sacrificial world-view was replaced by one that might in general terms be characterized as Puranic (or, as Gonda says, Hinduistic). Visnu (and at times Siva) replaced Indra and the other Vedic gods, particularly with respect to kingship.⁶⁸ As Gonda notes:⁶⁹

In the ancient literature Visnu is his (Indra's) friend and assistant; in later texts this god, assuming a superior position, becomes the typical fighter of the gods. Hence also the remarkable change in the relation between kingship and these gods. In later times it is Visnu who maintains intimate relations with the royal dignity in the earth.

⁶⁸I am grateful to K. Rose for her comments regarding the symbology of Visnu in the Puranic period.

⁶⁹Gonda, 1966, p. 29.

The rising importance of Visnu, both in the Puranic system of post-Vedic 'religion' and 'mythology,' as well as of the developing *agam*ic system of temple worship with which Puranic gods were increasingly associated, can be understood partly as the correlative to an increasingly universalistic world-view. Again, we can refer to the work of Jan Gonda, who notes that:⁷⁰

There is much truth in the time-honoured Indian interpretation of the god's (Visnu's) character as representing pervasiveness. The quality expressed by the term *viraj-*, i.e. the idea of extending far and wide, which is at the same time regarded as the totality or sum of all existence and often identified with Sri-, or 'prosperity' point in the same direction as Visnu's famous striding activity which enabled him to transverse the worlds and cover the universe... The universe being tripartite the act intimates, in a way, the god's universal character. All beings reside in these three steps... Being concerned with the axis, the navel, the descent of celestial light and the transmission of the heavenly blessings to the world of mankind, assisting Indra in destroying and warding off the powers of evil. Visnu was in a natural manner considered a protector who rendered services of the utmost importance to gods and men, developing (often, but not always, as Indra's successor) a fighting spirit, and being regarded as invincible... Visnu was, often in cooperation with other gods, intent on promoting the processes and maintaining the phenomena connected with vegetation, fecundation, and fertilization, with the means of supporting life and with the continuance of the human race in general. Hence, the intimate relations with kingship which become manifest in later times.

We have seen precisely these intimate relations with the later developments of Pallava kingship. The inscriptions, referred to above, note the story of Visnu's three steps, thereby clearly displaying the association of Visnu's pervasion of the universe with the Pallava's own conquests. We also saw the origin of the Pallavas from Visnu's navel, from which they derived all their substantial attributes. And finally, we noted the association of this divine origin with the Pallava epithets relating to prosperity.

Thus, it is not coincidental that Visnu is closely associated with the period that witnessed the growing consolidation by the Pallavas of a trans-regional system of kingship, the most extensive system yet developed in south India. The Vedic notions of 'incorporative' kingship were transmuted, and the new basis of sovereignty for the

⁷⁰Gonda, *Aspects of Early Visnuism*, Delhi, 1969, pp. 172-73.

later Pallavas can better be characterized in terms of the development of 'shared sovereignty' relations between Pallava kings and local chieftains.

The primary constitutive ritual of the early south Indian kingdoms had been the sacrifice. In the later period, the ritual of the royal *dana* became primary, since it represented the arena in which authority and authoritative relations were constituted in reference to the newly developed theory of divine origin.

First, royal *danas* provided public occasions for the composition of hymns of praise which inscribed the genealogical legacy of the kings and described their particular exploits. Secondly, whereas in earlier grants there had been variously classified but essentially unidentified personages participating in the execution of grants, in the late seventh century, certain persons were praised for their own qualities and identified by their personal constituencies as local big men or chiefs. The first examples of this had to do with the category of *ajnapiti* (executor), which had previously been one of a number of intermediary titles. In grants of the late seventh century, (grants which were stylistically similar to grants of the early Pallavas, but which apparently recognized the newly developing political system in their references to these officials) the *ajnapiti* was singled out as the major category or title for officials who were vitally concerned with the execution of the grant at the level of mediation between the court and the village. In a grant of Paramesvaravarman I, of c. 680 A.D. the *ajnapiti* was identified as the ruler (*nripesvarah*) of a particular *kurram* (locality, or group of villages).⁷¹ And in the Reyuru grant of Pallava Narasimhavarman, of c. 700 A.D., the *ajnapiti* was called Isvara (lord) of Nandakurra, and was said to equal *Rajaditya* in valour.⁷²

Perhaps more importantly, in the grants of this and the later period which expressed the shift in the notion of sovereignty, an altogether new category appeared, that of *vijnapti* (petitioner). The first reference to such a figure is found in the Kuram plates of Paramesvaravarman I (c. 669-690), the same plates that contain the first *bona fide* mythical charter.⁷³ A gift of a brahmadeya was made by the king at the request of Vidyavinita, 'the lord of the Pallavas.' There is also mention of the *ajnapiti* who executed the terms of the grant. What is important about this grant is that a lord of the

⁷¹E.I., XXXII, pp. 5-1.

⁷²E.I., XXVIX, p. 89ff.

⁷³S.I.I., I, p. 144ff.

kingdom, apparently not of the Pallava kula, participated in the making of the grant in more than an executive capacity: in this and later grants, the *vijnapti* provided the impetus for gift giving.

Similar personages appear in the three major inscriptions of Nandivarman Pallavamalla. In the Kasakudi plates, the *vijnapti* was Brahmasriraja, 'who is a friend of men: who is filled with all virtues, as the ocean with a heap of gems': — The eulogy continues:

who is famous (but) modest, handsome (and) long-lived, of soft-speech (and) the best of men; who just as Brihaspati (is the minister) of (Indra) the lord of heaven, and is the chief of the handsome Nandin, the lord of the earth (and) chief of the Pallavas; who is refined both by nature and through education; who is the first of the wise, firm (and) brave; who possesses the full splendour of the Brahmana and Ksatriya castes, and a loyalty to the glorious Nandipctaraja (Nandivarman), which does not cease as long as the moon and the stars endure; who supports (his) family; who is the chief of (his) family; who is an eldest son; who resembles the moon in beauty; who excels in all virtues; (and) who is an eldest grandson.

In the Udayendirum plates, the *vijnapti* was Udayacandra, chief general of Nandivarman Pallavamalla and fighter of many battles surrounding Nandivarman's problematic accession (he was the first of a collateral branch—the descendent through Hiranyavarman of Bhimavarman, the younger brother of Simhavarman, the crowned son of Simhavisnu, the first of the greater Pallavas who reigned in the mid to late sixth century). Much of this grant proclaims the praises of Udayacandra, lord of Vilvalapura, 'the wealthy, who gave a kingdom to Pallava from many a battlefield, the benevolent, the punisher of foreign armies, the ornamental fore-head of the Puchan race, and famous throughout the world...' Finally, in the Pattattalmangalam plates, the *vijnapti* was called Mangalarastrabharti in Sanskrit (lord of the district, or *rastra*, of Mangala) and Mangalanalvan in Tamil. The royal order (*tirumukam*) for the grant was issued at the request (or petition) of this lord to the *nattar* (residents of *natu*, a locality term) of Arvalakurram in Cola natu. In the Sanskrit lines of praise (*prasasti*) he was lavishly eulogized:

The servant of this (king Nandivarman) who was the storehouse of austerity and virtue, who was heroic, highly distinguished, respected by the good, whose wealth was honour, whose spreading fame enveloped the interior of all quarters, and in whom, who was the relative of the world, the name Mangalarastra became well known, gave to a concourse of Brahmans (their) desired object, having repeatedly petitioned the king.

The last lines suggest that the *vijnapti* petitioned the king for the right to give the grant himself.

These eulogies suggest that these personages represented an order of magnitude previously embodied only in the king and his family. The expansion of the political system was such that the king was now able to establish relations with individuals who either did not exist before, or who had previously been either rivals or allies. These chiefs are said to be independently virtuous and deserving of honour. They received honour by participating in the granting of royal *danas*, and in that capacity they entered a relation with the Pallava king predicated on 'shared sovereignty.' That is, they became active and apparently necessary participants in the central royal ritual, and the sovereignty of the Pallavas which was predicated on their origin was shared with the chieftains who embodied similar virtues on a lesser scale. It is in this capacity that the ritual of the royal *dana* proclaimed the basis of sovereignty and then, by sharing the royal perquisites of that sovereignty, established authoritative relations which loyal subordinates. Again, we must recall that in the earlier period these perquisites were restricted to members of the royal family.

The set of relations established during the late seventh and eighth centuries continued to exist through to the end of Pallava rule. In the Bahur plates of Nripatungavarman (c. 855-899 A.D.; the plates can be dated c. 867 A.D.)⁷⁴ the earlier pattern was replicated. The *vijnapti* in this grant was Martantan of the family of Vesali:

a descendant of the family of Kuru, and intent on affording refuge to his subjects. An ornament to the world like the moon, (and) resembling the ocean in profundity, etc. (this) ruler of men (became) the resort of the people by protecting the people as if (he were) the sun. Therefore the surname Nilaitangi (i.e. the support of the world) was as suitable to this ruler as (unto) a god.

Again, the chief had many of the attributes of the Pallava kings themselves, and was even likened to a god. As with the Pattattalmangalam grant, the chief petitioned for the right to give the grant, albeit in the king's name.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE

The inclusion of both a new level in the political system and a new modality of relations between the chiefs and the king represents the expansion of a regional system to a trans-regional system. This larger

⁷⁴E.I., XVIII, pp. 5-15.

system included chiefs who were themselves ritual principals with their own retinue of retainers. The new system of sovereignty, associated as it was with the universalism of Visnu and the primordality of the family's own sovereign constituents, was well-suited to accommodate the larger political system.

As more and more networks of chieftains and their subjects became tied to the Pallava king, the particular institutions that were spreading as a result of the royal *danas*, also added to the depth and scale of the central polity. Temples were becoming increasingly important, both as institutions with constituencies and organizational capacities and as symbolic centres in which the growth of *puja* (worship) was responsible for transmitting new cultural and mythological formulations to larger and larger groups of people. Temple worship was overshadowing Vedic practices and replacing them with the new *agamic* codifications of rules for worship. Further, it might be suggested that honours (*mariyatai*) garnered in temple worship were becoming more important than those which had previously been gained in sacrificial contexts, and perhaps that, even this early, temple honours had a particularly important function with respect to kingship.⁷⁵ Further, the growing importance of temples can be seen as a reflection of, if not as at least in part, a stimulus to the elaboration and consolidation of local communities, making their rulers sufficiently powerful to necessitate (or to make possible) their incorporation into royal relationship in hitherto unprecedented ways.

Neither should the importance of brahmadeyas be underestimated for this period. In later Pallava times brahmadeya settlements began to develop the social infrastructures and the cultural centrality that characterized them in later Cola times.⁷⁶ Brahmins acted as the ritual specialists of temple worship in addition to carrying on their role as domestic ritualists. It has further been suggested that Brahmins developed a series of alliances with dominant agrarian groups during this period,⁷⁷ and their early participation in locality assemblies sug-

⁷⁵See A. Appadurai, 'Honor and Conquest: Warrior-Kings and Vaisnava Sectarianism in South India,' MS., 1975; and C.A. Breckenridge, 'Betel-Nut and Honor: Exchange-Relationships and Temple-Entry in a South Indian Temple,' MS., 1975.

⁷⁶The most famous and well-studied of all brahmadeya villages is Uttaramerur, which may have been initially endowed as early as the late seventh century (though the date is subject to great debate) and was highly developed throughout the late Pallava period. See K.V. Subramanya Aiyer, *Historical Sketches of the Ancient Dekhan II*, Coimbatore, 1967, pp. 209-88; and K.A.N. Sastri, *Studies in Cola History and Administration*, Madras, 1932, pp. 96-175.

⁷⁷See Stein, 'Brahman and Peasant.'

gests the extent of their influence in agrarian politics. The gift of a brahmadeya was the gift par excellence of the kingdom. Whether gifted by the king himself or by a chieftain, the brahmadeya had an importance which made the right to earn merit from its gifting the most valued resource in the kingdom. The usual procedure for endowing a brahmadeya consisted of the redirection (*parihara*) of royal cesses (a certain portion of the crop, the *melvaram*, and the allotment of services that were owed to the king) and the allocation of a plot of land. The appointed land was circumambulated by the village headman—the royal order held over his head—at the time of the transmission of the details of the grant to the relevant locality.

Indeed, the expansion of the political system cannot be discussed without reference to the full system of transactions revolving around the king. Very few of the royal cesses mentioned in the inscriptions seem actually to have found the way to the central court of the king. The proliferation of tax-exempt Brahman land settlements, temples and temple land, and their accompanying corporate institutions as well as the seemingly great number of personages referred to as *bhoga gramyakas* (in the enjoyment of villages), all suggest the above conclusion when viewed in light of the fact that the relevant areas for such complex socio-economic organization were limited to the relatively small riverine and coastal areas. Records of local provision for other 'intermediary' recipients, such as warriors in some way connected with the centre, further confirm the vast number of short-circuits which existed in the transactional system. The inscriptional rhetoric which posited a royal claim on all these goods and services was in no sense vitiated by the decentralized functioning of the system, at least as long as the ideological coherence of the king's centrality was maintained by the subordination of these various units to the Pallava dynasty. However, the initiative for the re-allocation of certain resources to recipients such as Brahmins and temples appears to have diffused throughout the higher echelons of the system over time.

Some direct inscriptional evidence suggests that at least some royal income was garnered in war; for instance in the Pattattalmangalam plates it was noted that the Pallavas went about accumulating fame, 'by giving largesses to suitors after having made the wealth their own by conquering enemy kings.'⁷⁸ This is consistent with Burton Stein's suggestion that in the Cola period for the most part:⁷⁹

⁷⁸E.I., XVIII, p. 123.

⁷⁹Stein, 'Agrarian Integration in South India,' pp. 186-87.

'royal' income came from looting expeditions against neighboring peoples who had developed something like the complex economic and social structure of the nuclear areas of Cholamandalam and Tondaimandalam. These peoples were the Pandyan and the Sinhalese in the South and a few centers of Telegu- and Kannada-speaking peoples to the north. To the same predatory category belong the expeditions to South-east Asia. These looting wars were a source of wealth... and the wars appear to have had no other purpose than the extraction of wealth either through looting or ransom; conquest and settlement were rarely undertaken.

The scale of military operations under the Pallavas, as well as later under the Colas, suggests that some kind of service obligation to provide the centre with troops might well have constituted a major linkage between locality and centre. However, the inscriptions are silent on this issue. An early Pallava inscription does note that localities had certain customary obligations to support the army, at least when a military contingent was in the particular area. In the Mayidavolu inscription four of the five *pariharas* referred to obligations toward the army: (1) the supply of food to soldiers; (2) the right of entry of soldiers; (3) the supply of bullocks (presumably to the army); and (4) the necessity to render periodic assistance to the provincial guards.⁸⁰ So the army itself constituted one of the major repositories for local cesses. However, the army was run on a decentralised basis, and only coalesced at the royal level for wars of a predatory or defensive sort.

The full range of intermediary recipients, or trustees, of these cesses might have had certain reciprocal obligations to the villages who supported them, but this cannot be established by the inscriptional data, unless the construction of irrigation facilities and the availability of priests and temples can be interpreted in this way. The kinds of cesses, however, remind one of the formal system of transactions involved in the so-called *jajmani* network of 'patron-client' relations. The extent to which this ancient 'tax structure' involved some sort of formal exchange network, in which the kingdom was an exchange unit structurally similar to modern accounts of Indian villages, is difficult to ascertain.

A list of some of the *pariharas* will illustrate the degree and nature of the penetration of the political system into the local levels; and an analysis of clues about the way in which these cesses were redirected might better suggest the way in which this local-level

⁸⁰E.I., VI, pp. 84ff.

⁸¹Minakshi, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

transactional network was integrated into the political system. There were cesses on the manufacture of salt, on toddy tappers, on cattle breeders, on Brahman priests, on marriages (Minakshi notes that: 'even to this day the custom prevails and the headman of the village collects from the principal parties in charge of the performance of a marriage, a small tax known as Raja-Sambhavana'),⁸¹ on the potters, goldsmiths, washermen, traders, oil presses, cloth sellers, fishermen, ghee, fines from adjudication, and an unspecified tax which was payable to the *viyavan* (headman). Almost all of these cesses appear to have been in kind; a dearth of references to money in the inscriptions and an absence of major coin finds for this period suggest a low level of monetization. Not only were goods transferred, but services as well. For example, the major epigraphical reference to the tax on the runners of oil presses (*sekku*) notes that the brahmadeya village enjoyed the free services of oil presses as a special privilege granted by the king.⁸² In other words, one might say that the intermediaries of the king (i.e., those sanctioned by the king), like the high-caste landowning families of the *jajmani* system in modern India, were 'provided services and products by the various lower castes such as carpenters, potters, blacksmiths, watercarriers, sweepers and laundrymen.'⁸³ Again, there is no direct evidence to suggest that these groups were incorporated into a system of customary rewards, in which these same intermediaries, or agents thereof, were the chief arbitrators. The resemblance, however, is striking, and further made plausible by Hocart's suggestions regarding the structural homology of the Royal State and the *jajmani* system in early Sri Lanka.⁸⁴

The way in which cesses were re-channelled to newly created groups or institutions is illustrated in the Velurpalaiyam plates.⁸⁵ The community which had been attached to this village was evidently occupied by fishermen. The grant recorded the transfer of the right to the fishery for a sum payable to the temple. Also, the case noted above in which the brahmadeya was serviced by the oil pressers suggests the way in which services were allocated in this context. For all of the cases noted, the important ideological statement is consistently in evidence, namely, that no matter how resources were initially allocated, it was the king who was the ultimate recipient.

The king was also the ultimate doner. This was the case with grants to Brahmans and temples, and this also seems to have been

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁸³P.M. Kolenda, 'Towards a Model of the Hindu Jajmani System,' in *Tribal and Peasant Economics*, edited by Dalton, New York, 1967, p. 287.

⁸⁴Hocart, 1968, p. 68.

⁸⁵Minakshi, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

the case with the redistribution of resources in such areas as irrigational facilities. C. Minakshi has collated a list of major tanks, canals, and wells that were built under the aegis of Pallava rule, and has suggested that this represented a rather major investment.⁸⁶ These investments were heavily concentrated in riverine or coastal areas relatively close to the capital area.⁸⁷ Such activities should be seen in light of Burton Stein's suggestions that settled agricultural tracts constituted a far smaller area during this period than even in the subsequent Cola period, and that attempts to expand these settlements were not only designed to expand the resource base, but to challenge the power of tribal warriors from the neighbouring hill areas.⁸⁸ The temples and brahmadeya communities established by the ruling kings doubtless facilitated the integration and the agricultural development of these settled tracts.

A consideration of the inscriptional evidence over time suggests an increasing expansion of this system of transactions. But, even as penetration from centre to periphery became more pronounced, decentralizing developments also took place. More and more intermediaries — persons who had local constituencies and control over local institutions such as temples and locality assemblies — arose in the system. However, because of the mechanism of shared sovereignty relations it was possible for the political system to expand as a single cultural entity. These relations with the central king were apparently highly valued and mutually advantageous. Otherwise, we could not explain the extraordinary pertinacity and stability of the Pallavas. The modalities of royal relations established under the later Pallavas functioned as adaptive institutions, and were well-suited to accommodate the growing scale and complexity of the political system.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I began by defining social structure as the set or sets of social relations which have as their central constituent feature a conception of authority. Following from this, I posited that there was a definite relation between the modes of social and political relations on the one hand and ideas and ritual expressions of authority on the other. The correlations are impressive for this period of south Indian history. Moreover, it seems clear that an approach which considers structural change from the twin lenses of social

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 94-111.

⁸⁸Stein, 'Brahman and Peasant.'

relations and political authority allows for a uniquely holistic mode of analysis.

More specifically, I have made a general plea on behalf of pre-Cola south Indian political systems. A study of the Pallavas is essential for understanding the background and origins of trans-regional kingship, the forms of political authority in medieval south Indian history, Brahman settlements and agrarian institutions, as well as the rise of temples and temple-related beliefs and rituals. In this latter regard, the transformations in the system of royal equivalence, from one in which kings were identified with the guardians of the quarters to one in which they became identified with Visnu, the Puranic god of protection, fecundity, and victorious expansion, can be understood as a part of a total systemic transformation in which the symbology of temple worship was an integral part. The king's divine origin made it possible for him to be worshipped as the other Puranic deities were being worshipped in temples. Gonda notes that, 'the honour shown to a sovereign is, in Hinduistic times, in many respects similar to the marks of veneration conferred on the images of the gods.'⁸⁹ In fact, in Tamil the word for temple means the place of the king: *kovil*. Perhaps this vindicates Hocart's suggestion that there were kings before gods, but this question of historical precedence may be of little consequence.

In conclusion, ideas of kingship and authority developed in concert with ideas of cosmology and with myth and ritual. Hocart was certainly correct to suggest that one must not separate ritual from politics in the study of ancient government. For, throughout the period under study in south Indian history, ritual played a constitutive role for political authority, and hence for social relations. And, curiously enough, a study of ritual may even provide the key for discerning structural change.

⁸⁹Gonda, *op cit.*, p. 56.

Bullion for Goods : International Trade and the Economy of Early Eighteenth Century Bengal*

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This paper seeks to analyze the impact of the European companies' trade on the economy of Bengal¹ during the seventeenth and the first two decades of the eighteenth century. This impact was generated by the free play of market forces, unlike in many other parts of Asia where the Europeans already had a significant political and economic lien. Thus, soon after its first contacts with the Malay-Indonesian archipelago in the early years of the seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company obtained monopsonistic, monopolistic and other privileges in parts of the archipelago by the treaties it forced local princes to enter into with itself. As part of its attempt to monopolize the spice trade by making smuggling by Asian merchants more difficult and by limiting the total output itself, the Company decided to confine the production of cloves to Amboina. This involved the mass destruction of clove trees in Ceram and other places.² No European trading body or individual merchant could have taken such action in any part of the Indian subcontinent (except Malabar) until after the battle of Plassey in 1757 when the English managed to wrest power from the Mughals in Bengal. In the pre-Plassey period, then, the nature of the impact of the Europeans' trade in Mughal India was determined largely by market forces.³

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¹'Bengal' or 'Bengal region' denotes the territory now covered by Bangladesh and the Indian states of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The 'province of Bengal' includes Bangladesh and West Bengal.

²M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630*, The Hague, 1962, pp. 212, 218, 220.

³The fact that in the pre-1757 period, the European companies were granted certain concessions by the Indian authorities in the matter of customs — and

The selection of the Bengal region for this analysis was dictated by the extremely important role that trade conducted from this region played in the complex of the intra-Asian and the Euro-Asian trade carried on by the European companies. As is well-known, the Europeans initially came to Asia in quest of exotic spices, but their commercial interests later became diversified with textiles and raw silk emerging as major items of trade. The position in respect of the Dutch East India Company—a representative case—is presented in Table I. Bengal was a major supplier of both fine textiles and raw silk. Thus 55 per cent of Asian textiles sent to Holland in 1697 originated in Bengal;⁴ raw silk bought in the region constituted 83 per cent of the total Asian raw silk sold in Amsterdam between 1697 and 1718.⁵ Goods bought in Bengal accounted for 36 per cent of the total Asian cargo exported to Holland at the end of the seventeenth century and for 39 per cent of it in the second decade of the eighteenth century.⁶ This made the factory in Bengal the most important Dutch trading establishment in Asia in the early years of the eighteenth century, when Dutch trade in India was probably at its peak. Similarly, the Bengal factory was by far the most important English trading establishment in Asia around this time. Statistical data for analysis in this paper have therefore been drawn from the early years of the eighteenth century.

transit—duties payable by them does not alter the basic picture. The undeniable naval power superiority enjoyed by the Europeans during this period enabling them to formally impose the so-called 'passport' system on Indian shipping and, in the process, to exercise a certain amount of leverage with the Indian authorities also leaves this hypothesis practically unaffected. The Europeans were obliged to carefully balance the possible benefits from the use of this leverage against the certain negative results of the displeasure of the authorities earned in the bargain on the smooth functioning of their trade. For details, see my 'Asian Trade and European Impact: A Study of the Trade from Bengal, 1630-1720,' Delhi School of Economics Working Paper No. 133, June 1974, forthcoming in B.B. Kling and M.N. Pearson (eds.), *The Age of Partnership: Europeans in Asia before Dominion*, University of Hawaii Press.

⁴Calculated from K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620-1740*, Copenhagen/The Hague, 1958, p. 144, Table 27. This percentage has been rounded off to the nearest complete number.

⁵Calculated from 'General statement of the goods sold, outstanding debts and the unsold goods in the various chambers,' Koloniaal Archief, Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague (hereafter K.A.), 10236-10241. The data are in value terms. The ratio has been rounded off to the nearest complete number.

⁶Figures of the annual value of the total Dutch exports from Asia are available in G.C. Klerk De Reus, *Geschiedtlichen Ueberblick Der Administrativen, Rechtlichen und Finanziellen Entwicklung Der Niederlandisch-Ostindischen Compagnie* (Batavia, 1894), Appendix V. The value per annum of the Dutch exports from Bengal was calculated from the export invoices in the letters from the chief Dutch factory in Bengal at Hughli to the governor-

The analysis is confined to the trade—both Euro-Asian and intra-Asian—carried on from Bengal by the Dutch and the English East India companies. The French company's trade from Bengal was insignificant until the close of our period while the Ostenders were yet to make their appearance. Of course, among the Europeans, there were also the individual traders, some of whom were the employees of one or the other of the companies. A limited amount of qualitative information relating to their trade suggests the possibility of its volume being fairly substantial at the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁷ But since no firm information on its volume or composition (which, as we shall see, is of crucial importance to our analysis) is yet available, we have not included it in our analysis. Its inclusion would merely tend to enhance the impact of the Europeans' trade on the economy of the region.

It may be noted that the trade flows via the ports of the Bengal region reflected, almost entirely, the trade in the produce of the region alone and for consumption within the region. In other words, entrepot trade was negligible.

The principal distinguishing characteristic of Euro-Bengal trade (as indeed of Indo-European trade in general) during the seventeenth and the early eighteenth century was that the companies paid mainly in silver for the textiles, raw silk and other goods they bought in Bengal. This implied that Bengal had an export surplus. Section II of this paper analyzes the implications of this surplus for prices, output, income and employment in the economy. It is shown that during 1709-10 to 1717-18, the trade by the Dutch and the English East India companies sustained an increase of approximately Rs 34 million per annum in the output and income in the economy of the region. As for employment, it is estimated that the procurement by the two companies sustained between 8.69 per cent and 11.11 per cent of the work force in the textile manufacturing sector of the province of Bengal. Section III deals with the impact

general-in-council at Batavia. The percentages have been rounded off to the nearest complete number.

⁷Thus the papers of the Dutch East India Company contain numerous references to a large volume of trade carried on from Bengal illegally by the company's servants. In fact, in 1679 the chief of the Dutch factory at Hughli, Jacob Verburg, constituted in the name of his wife a so-called 'small company' with the specific purpose of carrying on illegal private trade. (For details, see my *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal 1650-1717*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Delhi, 1967.) The records of the English East India Company also contain references to the effect that in the early years of the eighteenth century, the total volume of trade carried on from Bengal by private English merchants matched that by the company (I am indebted to K.N. Chaudhuri for this information).

of the companies' trade on the organization of manufacturing production and procurement in the region.

II

An important issue that must be settled before one can proceed with the analysis is whether the companies' trade represented a net contribution to the growth of trade from the region or only a diversion—total or partial—from other agencies of trade. A part of the goods the companies procured in Bengal was for sale in Europe, the rest being intended for sale within Asia. The procurement for Europe can, for all practical purposes, be regarded as a net contribution to the trade from the region for the displacement, if any, caused to the overland trade to Europe (which in any case had always been limited in volume) does not appear to have been significant. Within Asia, trade with markets such as Japan, which were opened up by the Europeans, would also represent a net contribution to the trade from Bengal. The position is somewhat more complex in respect of the other Asian markets in many of which the companies competed with Indian and other Asian merchants operating from Bengal. According to evidence in the shipping lists in the Dutch records, towards the close of the seventeenth century, Asian merchants' trade increased along certain routes such as Bengal-Maldives and declined along others such as Bengal-Southeast Asia. A study of the Bengal-Southeast Asia trade suggests that the decline in the Asian merchants' trade along this route is not directly attributable to the trade or 'pass' policies of the Dutch East India Company, the principal European trading body on this route.⁸ Therefore, an analysis of the impact of the companies' trade can proceed on the assumption that their trade constituted a net contribution to the growth of trade from Bengal.

During 1709-10 to 1717-18, the average annual value of the cargo procured in Bengal by the Dutch East India Company was Rs 2.27 million⁹ and that by the United English East India Company Rs 1.88 million¹⁰ giving us a total of Rs 4.15 million per

⁸See my 'Asian Trade and European Impact: A Study of the Trade from Bengal, 1630-1720,' *op. cit.*

⁹Calculated from the export invoices in the letters from Hughli to Batavia. The years 1709-10 to 1717-18 were selected for this computation because over the first two decades of the eighteenth century, comparable information for the Dutch and the English East India companies was available to me only for these years.

¹⁰Calculated from 'Bengal General Journals and Ledgers Series,' Range 174, Vols. 83-99, India Office Library. A £ sterling has been assumed to be equivalent to f. 11.2 = approximately Rs 8.

annum for the two companies. Among the items imported by the companies into Bengal, the most important was treasure—mainly silver bullion and coins. Thus between 1708-09 to 1716-17, treasure accounted for as much as 92 per cent of the value of the total exports from Batavia to Bengal by the Dutch East India Company.¹¹ Comparable information for Bengal is not available to me for the English East India Company, but treasure formed 76 per cent of the total English exports to the East Indies between 1707-08 and 1715-16.¹² The heavy dependence of the Indo-European trade (and of Euro-Asian trade in general) on precious metals was essentially an outcome of the inability of Europe to supply goods which could be sold in India in reasonably large quantities at competitive terms. Europe at this time had an undoubted overall superiority over Asia in the field of scientific and technological knowledge, but as yet not the distinct cost advantage that came with the Industrial Revolution in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This put the Indian producers, with their considerably lower labour costs and a much longer history of sophisticated skills in handicrafts of various kinds, in a position of considerable advantage over their European counterparts in the production of a variety of manufactured goods.¹³ Europe was fortunately in a position to export precious metals because of its large imports of these metals in the sixteenth century from the Spanish possessions in America.

Given our belief that the trade carried on by the European companies represented a net contribution to the growth of the foreign

¹¹Calculated from the invoices of exports from Batavia representing presumably the value of goods f.o.b. Batavia. Over the period 1663-64 (when information regarding exports from Batavia to Bengal first becomes available) to 1717-18, the proportion of treasure to total exports from Batavia was 87 per cent. It should be noted that a part of the goods and treasure the Dutch company sent to Bengal used to be obtained within Asia. These proportions, therefore, are not necessarily a true indicator of the pattern of the imports by the company from Europe.

¹²Calculated from K.N. Chaudhuri, 'Treasure and Trade Balances: The East India Company's Export Trade, 1660-1720,' *Economic History Review*, Second Series, Vol. 21, No. 3, December 1968, pp. 497-98. Chaudhuri's figures show that over the period 1659-60 to 1719-20, the proportion of treasure to total English exports to the East was 79 per cent. (For this calculation, the following years were left out because of inadequate information: 1690-91, 1702-03, 1703-04, 1704-05 and 1705-06.)

¹³It has also been suggested that the higher value commanded by silver in terms of goods in Asia compared to Europe was an additional factor prompting the Europeans to export silver, rather than goods, to Asia. (See K.N. Chaudhuri 'The East India Company and the Export of Treasure in the Early Seventeenth Century,' *Economic History Review*, Second Series, Vol. XVI, 1963.)

trade of Bengal, exports equivalent of the value of the precious metals imported represented an export surplus generated in the economy.¹⁴ In terms of the national income identity $Y = C + I + (X - M)$, an increase in the export surplus ($X - M$) could be effected either through a decline in consumption (C) or/and Investment (I) or/and through an increase in income (Y).¹⁵ The decline in domestic consumption could either be of the export goods themselves or of other goods which would release resources for the production of additional export goods. Such a decline could be associated with a rise in the prices of wage goods (movements in which can be regarded as indicative of movements in the notional 'general price level') or a redistribution of income in the economy in favour of the richer sections, who ordinarily have a lower propensity to consume.

Our existing knowledge regarding the price history of Mughal Bengal is confined to Moreland's assertion that '... there is definite evidence of a large and sudden rise in food prices between the years 1650 and 1660...' ¹⁶ Apart from the fact that the 'definite' evidence provided by Moreland is too fragile to bear the weight of a major deduction,¹⁷ the assertion pertains to a decade when the Europeans'

¹⁴We take the view that since the precious metals were continually imported in large quantities over a long period of time, the imported bullion is appropriately treated as a means of settling the balance of payments rather than as an item of consumption.

¹⁵To put it differently, $X - M$ will equal $S - I$ where S is the savings in the system. The question, therefore, is how would this excess of savings over investment arise. This could be through a rise in the rate of savings given a level of income or given the rate of savings, through a rise in the level of income.

¹⁶W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, London, 1923, pp. 178-79.

¹⁷The 'definite' evidence cited by Moreland was a petition in December 1658 by the English factors stationed at Hughli asking for an increase in the allowance for housekeeping charges on account of an alleged trebling in the prices of provisions over the preceding few years (Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 179). The desirability of refraining from accepting such casual and motivated pieces of evidence as conclusive is suggested by the following statement of an essentially similar variety. In November 1661, the English factors stationed at Madras wrote, 'Neither may you ever expect that the commodity [taffetas] can be made here to be afforded as reasonably as in Bengal, for all provisions of victual, when at the cheapest is here three times dearer than in Kasimbazar and Hughli, where these taffetas are made' (Spellings modernized and emphasis added) [William Foster (ed.), *English Factories in India*, 1661-64, p. 65 (hereafter *English Factories*)]. This statement might, of course, be totally unreliable since it too might have been motivated by an attempt on the factors' part to conceal their inefficiency (or corruption) in not being able to procure textiles locally at reasonable prices. But taken at its face value in conjunction with the statement by the factors at Hughli, it suggests the highly unlikely situation of the prices of provisions in Bengal in, say, 1650 being on the

trade from Bengal was still in its infancy¹⁸ and, therefore, not particularly relevant for our purposes.

One can reconstruct the broad movements in the prices of provisions in Bengal from evidence found in the records of the Dutch East India Company. For example, letters written by the chief of the Dutch factory at Hughli to the governor-general-in-council at Batavia occasionally contained information regarding these prices. But the principal source of information on prices are the invoices of goods sent from Hughli to Batavia and other places. These invoices often contained, in addition to the usual physical quantities, the commodity-wise value of the consignment, enabling one to calculate the unit values for the relevant years. Since Bengal was the principal supplier of provisions required by the large Dutch establishments at Batavia and Ceylon, rice, wheat and other provisions often figured in the invoices. It would be reasonable to assume that the quality of the provisions procured by the company for self-use did not vary a great deal between one year and another making the unit values obtained from the invoices broadly comparable over time. Also, in the case of each of the provisions, the amount purchased by the company was insignificant in relation to the total marketed output making their prices relatively insensitive to variations in the company's own purchases. An analysis of the price information for the period 1657-1714 revealed that the prices of none of the four major provisions considered—rice (1658 to 1707), wheat (1661 to 1714), sugar (1657 to 1707) and clarified butter (1658 to 1706)—displayed a statistically significant upward or downward trend. This suggests a broad stability in the prices of wage goods during the period.¹⁹ This may appear surprising in a situation of continually growing imports of significant quantities of precious metals by the companies. In the somewhat similar case of sixteenth century Europe,

average only one-ninth of those in Madras, assuming, of course, that the Madras prices did not rise between 1650 and 1661. The purported rise in the Bengal prices in the 1650s may indeed never have taken place. One is then forced to conclude that in order to establish a significant change in the prices of provisions in Bengal in the 1650s, one needs evidence more solid than that provided by Moreland.

¹⁸Moreland was wrong in suggesting that the value of the Dutch exports from Bengal had reached the Rs 2 million mark by 1661 (Moreland, *op. cit.*, p. 181). This mark was, in fact, not reached until about the end of the century. The English trade from Bengal in the 1650s was considerably less than that by the Dutch.

¹⁹Over the sixty-one-year period 1657-1717, the observations available were 20 for rice, 24 for wheat, 17 for sugar and 29 for clarified butter. The trend lines were fitted on the basis of first and second degree polynomials on ordinary and log scale.

the inflow of precious metals from the Spanish possessions in America has indeed been causally linked, through an increase in the supply of money, to the so-called price revolution on the continent.²⁰ The presumed absence of a similar price rise in Asia in response to the import of precious metals there by the European companies has been ascribed by some to the 'oriental penchant to hoard gold and silver,' which allegedly prevented the necessary additions to the money supply in Asian economies.²¹ But in fact, the precious metals imported into Bengal, for example, were soon exchanged by the companies into coins either through the royal mints (the Mughal system being one of 'free' coinage) or through the shroffs, for investment in the procurement of export goods. This increase in money stock, however, did not raise wage good prices over time due to offsetting movements in the velocity of circulation in the context of a growing volume of monetized transactions. A part of the savings, which made possible the export surplus, may have been hoarded²² which would have the effect of lowering the velocity of circulation of money. Also, as argued below, the additional savings arose primarily from an increase in income and output which would raise the volume of transactions. Further, the proportion of total transactions taking place in the monetized sector is likely to have gone up.

There is also nothing to indicate that the distribution of income in Bengal became more unequal in the latter half of the seventeenth and the first two decades of the eighteenth century because of a regressive system of taxation or for any other reason. One can, therefore, rule out a reduction in the propensity to consume as the source of the export surplus associated with the companies' trade. Again, there is no evidence of a decline in investment.

Ruling out a systematic decline in consumption and/or investment leaves only an increase in output and income as the source of the export surplus associated with the companies' trade. This increase could have been achieved through (a) an increase in productivity per unit of input through technological change, (b) a reallocation of resources in a way that more of the high value export goods were

²⁰Earl J. Hamilton, 'American Treasure and the Rise of Capitalism, 1500-1700,' *Economica*, No. 27, November 1929, pp. 333-57.

²¹Earl J. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, and Rudolph C. Blitz, 'Mercantilist Policies and the Pattern of World Trade, 1500-1750,' *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 27, No. 1, March 1967, pp. 39-55.

²²It is a moot question whether the increased hoards were a response to an alleged (implicitly irrational) 'penchant for hoarding gold and silver' or reflected a desire to hold savings in a liquid form in the context of the virtual absence of deposit banking facilities and other reasonably liquid channels of investment with a positive return.

produced, and (c) a fuller utilization of existing productive capacity and an increase in the capacity itself.

Historically, the pressure of export demand on domestic capacity has stimulated technological change. For example, the development in steel of the Bessemer process in 1856 and of the Siemens-Martin process ten years later were results of export pressure. Kindleberger's review of evidence on Britain's growth in both the late eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century also credits much to technological innovation associated with opportunities to enter foreign markets. But in the case of Mughal Bengal, the evidence in the voluminous company records does not point towards any significant developments along the technological front in the export or any other sector of the economy. This seems to have been essentially the result of the absence of a strong enough motivation for change given the structure of factor endowments in the economy. A situation characterized by a relatively abundant labour supply and a relatively scarce capital supply did not provide a particularly fertile ground for labour-saving technological change which historically has been the most important variety of technological change. In the manufacture of textiles, for example, the principal differential advantage enjoyed by the Indian industry over its European counterpart consisted in the considerably lower labour costs which it had to bear and a substantially higher level of achievement in sophisticated skills in the production of high quality and artistic textiles available to it. These two circumstances together put the superior quality Indian textiles in an almost unchallengeable position in the world market until the Industrial Revolution in Britain in the latter half of the eighteenth century robbed the Indian textile industry of its cost advantage. Until this time, therefore, there was hardly any pressure for technological change.

That leaves us with (a) a reallocation of resources, and (b) a fuller utilization of existing productive capacity and an increase therein as the factors accounting for an increase in the output of export and other goods. It is important to realize that while the prices of wage goods did not register a statistically significant increase or decrease during the latter half of the seventeenth and the first two decades of the eighteenth century, the prices of major export items such as textiles and raw silk did in fact respond to the growing imbalance between the Europeans' demand for these items and their supply. As for textiles, a reasonably large number of observations were available in the Dutch records for only four varieties procured by the Europeans—the *khasas* (fine muslin), *doreas* (fine calico), *gerras* (ordinary calico) and *armosins* (silk).²³ While no price trend emerged

²³The number of observations available for *khasas* was 16 over 1658-1702,

in the case of khasas, there was an upward trend in the case of all the other three varieties. The average annual rate of price increase in doreas, gerras and armosins was 1.88 per cent, 0.68 per cent and 1.48 per cent respectively. In raw silk, the *tanny* variety, introduced by the merchants from Agra in 1669, was the principal variety the Europeans procured from the early 1680s onwards. Our information on this item for the period 1683 to 1717 shows an upward trend with an average annual rate of price increase of 0.89 per cent. In the case of the other variety of raw silk, namely the *tanna-banna*, a statistically significant trend emerged only on the basis of a second degree polynomial showing a decline until about 1675 and a rise from about 1683 onwards.²⁴ This overall increase in the prices of textiles and raw silk would have constituted a clear signal for reallocating resources to increase the output of these goods. Bengal was one of the most fertile regions of Mughal India and the granary not only for several other parts of the country but also for neighbouring countries such as Ceylon. The availability of a food surplus over and above subsistence created a margin within which a relative shift from food to commercial crops in response to changing demand conditions²⁵ could be effected without a significant upward pressure on the prices of wage goods.

A fast-growing European demand for Bengal raw silk and textiles would have induced a fuller utilization of existing capacity and subsequently an expansion thereof. Of the principal factors of production, additional land would have been available in abundance and

for doreas 10 over 1674-1702, for gerras 16 over 1658-1710 and for armosins 13 over 1658-1701.

²⁴The number of observations available for the *tanny* variety was 15 over 1683 to 1717 and for *tanna-banna* 17 over 1646 to 1702.

²⁵An example of the responsiveness of the Bengal farmers to the changing demand conditions is provided by the following case. In 1706, while urging the imperial authorities to withdraw their order banning the Dutch from trading in Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan, the central diwan in the province, wrote to say that following the closure of the Dutch factory at Kasimbazar in 1704, the Hollanders' demand for raw silk had registered a considerable decline leading to a substantial shift of land away from mulberry into rice and pulses. This had had an injurious effect on the exchequer's income from land revenue (it is well-known that land revenue accounted for the bulk of the total state revenue in Mughal India) in so far as mulberry lands were assessed at Rs 3 per *bigha* (in Bengal, the *bigha* was one-third of an acre) while the corresponding rates for rice and pulses—being lower value crops—were only Rs 0.75 and Rs 0.37 per *bigha* respectively. This could be reversed only if the fresh ban on Dutch trade was withdrawn immediately and the company persuaded to reopen their factory at Kasimbazar. [Enclosure to the letter from the Dutch factors at Hughli to the governor-general-in-council at Batavia (hereafter H.B.), 9.10.1706, K.A. 1622, ff. 63-68.]

the strictly moderate amounts of capital required to manufacture new spindles, wheels, looms and other equipment was unlikely to have posed a serious problem, particularly in a situation where the companies provided advances of cash against orders placed by them. As for labour, artisans engaged in the production of raw silk and textiles on a part-time basis may have increasingly severed their links with land and become full-time artisans.²⁶ It is true that the spinning of high-quality yarn, the weaving of this yarn into high-grade artistic textiles and some of the processes involved in 'finishing' them were highly skilled and partly caste-based occupations. However, since the time period over which the growth in the companies' demand for textiles took place was quite long (the increase in demand began in the 1670s), one would expect some demographic response in the relevant castes and categories of the work force to have followed the continuous growth in demand.

The increase in output through a reallocation of resources and the fuller utilization of a growing capacity would, however, appear to have failed to fully match the increase in the Europeans' demand for textiles and raw silk. It is this growing imbalance between demand and supply that would explain the rise in the prices of these items²⁷ in a situation of overall stability in the prices of wage goods.

To estimate the increase in income and output due to the generation of the export surplus associated with the companies' trade from Bengal in the early years of the eighteenth century, one would need to know the value of the export surplus, the value of additional investment occasioned by the companies' demand for export goods and the marginal propensity to save in the economy. (A formal model establishing these relationships is set out in the Appendix.) We estimate the value of the annual export surplus over the period 1709-10

²⁶For example, in the 1650s, the Dutch established a silk-reeling unit in their factory at Kasimbazar. When operated at its maximum capacity, the unit employed over 3,000 workers. The company's records do not refer to any particular problems being faced in manning the unit at the prevalent wage rate even though it represented a departure from the established practice of the artisan working in his cottage, free from discipline and supervision and keeping his own hours.

²⁷Of course, the bulk of the increase in the value of textiles and raw silk exported by the companies from Bengal was nevertheless accounted for by an increase in the physical exports of these goods. Thus, the number of pieces of textiles exported by the Dutch increased from 26,640 in 1665-66 to 2,538,000 in 1717-18 (Export invoices in the Dutch records). Similarly, the number of textiles ordered from Bengal by the court of directors of the English East India Company increased from 243,000 in 1669-70 to 2,450,000 in 1717-18 (Letter Books, India Office Library).

to 1717-18 at Rs 3.32 million.²⁸ Since reasonably precise estimates are available for neither the annual average additional investment generated by the companies' export trade nor the marginal propensity to save in the economy, we are obliged to postulate broad orders of magnitude. A characteristic feature of pre-modern economies is a large textile industry with a very low capital-output ratio.²⁹ If one assumed a capital output ratio as low as 0.5: 1 for Bengal, the lower bound of the annual average additional investment necessitated by the companies' trade works out at roughly Rs 34 thousand.³⁰ For the marginal rate of saving in the economy, the evidence for pre-industrial societies suggests rather low rates of

²⁸A proper measure of the export surplus in any year would be the value of bullion that was used to settle the difference between the value of goods exported from Bengal (f.o.b. Bengal) and the value of goods imported into Bengal (c.i.f. Bengal). Our information on imports, being based on the invoices of exports from Batavia, however, relates to values at the Batavia prices rather than at the prices realized in Bengal so that the proportion that bullion constituted in Batavia's exports (92 per cent over the years 1708-09 to 1716-17) would be an inappropriate guide to the extent of the export surplus which would be settled by bullion imports into Bengal. If, however, we express the value of bullion (as recorded in the invoices of exports from Batavia) as a proportion of the value of the Dutch company's exports from Bengal (f.o.b. Bengal) in the following season, that would set a lower bound (on the reasonable presumption that on the average they would not make losses in this transaction) to the extent of export surplus. We find that this proportion averaged 78 per cent over 1709-10 to 1717-18. Adding a small margin for transport costs and profit mark-up, one can take this ratio to be 80 per cent. We apply this ratio of 80 per cent to our estimate of the annual average value of exports by the companies (Rs 4.15 million) to obtain a figure of Rs 3.32 million as the annual value of export surplus generated by Bengal on account of the trade by the two companies in the early years of the eighteenth century.

²⁹Thus about the British cotton textile industry, Deane and Cole write, 'Until the spinning inventions of the end of the eighteenth century increased the rate of spinning so vastly, most looms were inadequately utilised and a weaver was typically a farmer who gave only part of his time to his loom.... In such circumstances the amount of new fixed capital required was quite small in relation to the output it would generate.' (P. Deane and W.A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688-1959*, Cambridge, Second Edition, 1969, p. 277).

³⁰This figure has been arrived at on the following basis. If one compared the annual average value (f.o.b. Batavia) of the bullion imported by the Dutch into Bengal during the period 1678 to 1687 (which is the first decade during which information is available for all the ten years) with that during the period 1708 to 1717, and then divided the difference by the number of the intervening years, one would get the lower bound of the annual average increase in the export surplus associated with the Dutch company's trade from Bengal during this period. This figure works out at Rs 37,476. The figure for the Dutch company was next converted into that for both the companies in the ratio of 2.27:4.15 on the basis of the Dutch share in the two companies'

capital formation,³¹ and one might assume a figure of 10 per cent of national income,³² i.e. a value of 10 for the multiplier. An annual average export surplus of Rs 3.32 million together with an annual average additional investment of Rs 0.034 million will then generate an increase in income of the order of Rs 33.54 million per annum attributable to the Dutch and the English companies' trade in the early years of the eighteenth century. An increase in income of this magnitude would have involved a probably significant increase in economic activity in Bengal. But then the resources base of the region appears to have been sufficiently rich for this to be accomplished relatively smoothly.³³

export trade from Bengal. The figure thus obtained was Rs 68,513 which on the basis of a capital output ratio of 0.5: 1 gives a figure of approximately Rs 34,000 as the annual average value of the additional investment associated with the companies' trade.

³¹Thus for Britain, Gregory King's estimates suggest an annual rate of capital formation at the end of the seventeenth century of between 3 per cent and 6 per cent of national income (P. Deane and W.A. Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 260). Even for the second half of the nineteenth century, Kuznets' evidence shows that net national savings as a percentage of NNP was 10.9 per cent for Britain and only 3.4 per cent for Japan and 3.1 per cent for Italy (S. Kuznets, *Modern Economic Growth, Rate Structure & Spread*, Yale, 1966, Table 5.5, pp. 248-50).

³²This figure would in fact seem to be on the liberal side. For it is important to realize that the admittedly highly unequal distribution of the national product in Mughal India was accompanied by a significant amount of conspicuous consumption by the upper strata of the society.

³³In a recent work (S. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Commercial Organization in Bengal 1650-1720*, Calcutta, 1975, pp. 238-39, 247-48), it has been argued that the bulk of the bullion the European companies imported into Bengal was transferred out of the province to northern and western India mainly through the increased appropriation of surplus by mansabdar officials who came to the province on temporary assignments. This mechanism of transfer is used to rationalize the absence of a rise in the price level in the province consequent upon the additional import of precious metals.

Leaving aside for the moment the empirical validity of the proposition, such a purely monetarist line of reasoning hides the real phenomenon of the generation of an export surplus (which makes the import of precious metals possible in the first place) and the effects of this process on output and employment which are of significance. Note further that for the empirical validity of this proposition, the mere existence of an appropriation and transfer of surplus from Bengal by whatever agency is not enough. Since, as is well-known, this was not a new phenomenon, what is required is an increase in the extent of such transfers year after year to account for the increased inflow of bullion on account of the companies' trade. An illustration of the existence of such a transfer at a time when the inflow of precious metals by the companies was admittedly negligible would be the confiscation (and transfer out of the province) in 1658 by Subahdar Shah Shuja of the bullion several Gujarati merchants of Kasimbazar and the Dutch factors had earlier

The employment effect of the companies' trade would be that generated by additional production to meet the export demand less that caused by a decline in domestic production as a result of import substitution. As we have seen, goods accounted for only a small proportion of the imports by the companies and many of the imported goods (such as spices like cloves, nutmeg and mace) had no domestic substitutes. The employment reduction effect of the companies' imports would, therefore, have been quite small. In view of this, if one estimated the employment implications of the export of textiles and raw silk alone, which together accounted for nearly 85-90 per cent of the companies' exports in the early years of the eighteenth century,³⁴ one would obtain a reasonable approximation of the net employment effect of the companies' trade. Given the limitations of the data available to us, we have estimated only the *direct* additional employment generated by the companies' export of textiles and raw silk ignoring the linkage effects and the multiplier effects.

According to Table II, the number of looms required on a full-time basis to produce for the Dutch and the English companies would have ranged between 15,124 (on the criterion of square yardage handled) and 16,634 (on that of the number of pieces exported). The number of full-time job-equivalents in the textile industry (defined to include spinning, weaving, bleaching, finishing, printing and embroidering) associated with the employment of these looms would, of course,

depleted at the Rajmahal mint for being minted into coins. The subandar needed funds for use outside the province in his campaign for the Mughal throne and had asked these merchants and the Dutch for a loan of Rs 400,000 and Rs 100,000 respectively. It was the refusal to meet this demand that led to the aforementioned confiscation of the bullion [H.B. 27.10.1658, K.A. 1117, ff. 178-79; letter from the Dutch factors at Hughli to the Board of Directors in Amsterdam thereafter H. XVII, 12.5.1659, K.A. 1119, f. 891-vo; letter from the governor general-in-council at Batavia to the factors at Hughli, 7.7.1659, K.A. 786, ff. 121-22; H. XVII, 25.8.1659, K.A. 1120, ff. 286-vo]. Therefore, the cases cited by Chaudhuri while demonstrating the continued existence of such transfers do not constitute an adequate basis for establishing an increase of the required order.

Finally, it is clearly seen that our basic analysis is unaffected even if there indeed was such an increase in the transfer out of Bengal. Assuming that this increased appropriation of surplus left the savings rate unchanged, the only consequence of such an increase would be a corresponding reduction in the amount of bullion that would otherwise have gone into hoards in the region.

In 1701-02, for example, raw silk accounted for 47.5 per cent and textiles for 39.4 per cent (making a total of 86.9 per cent) of the Dutch company's exports from Bengal (calculated from the export invoices in the Dutch records). Corresponding figures, provided by S. Chaudhuri, for the English East India Company were 22 per cent for raw silk and 71 per cent for textiles (making a total of 93 per cent) (S. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, Appendix B, Table 3).

depend on the assumption one makes regarding the number of workers in the industry per loom. The available evidence suggests that one could proceed on the assumption that the full-time job-equivalents per loom ranged from 5 to 6—1.5 to 2 for weaving,³⁵ 2.5 to 3 for spinning³⁶ and 1 for bleaching, finishing, printing and embroidering. On this basis, the full-time job-equivalents attributable to the Dutch and the English companies' procurement of textiles works out at between 75,620 and 99,804. The corresponding number for raw silk works out at 11,347 (Table III) giving us a total of 86,967 to 111,151 full-time job-equivalents associated with the companies' procurement of textiles and raw silk in Bengal.

In order to form a broad idea of the relative significance of the companies' procurement of textiles and raw silk, we have related in Table IV the full-time job-equivalents attributable to the procurement by the companies to the probable total size of the work force in the textile manufacturing sector (defined to include the production of raw silk) in the province of Bengal. For this purpose, the province of Bengal appears to be a more appropriate unit than the Bengal region as a whole, for raw silk was procured exclusively and textiles

³⁵The Textile Enquiry Committee, 1954, suggested a figure of 1.25 weavers per handloom (GOI, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, *Report of the Textile Enquiry Committee*, 1954, Delhi, Vol. I, pp. 16-17). The same figure was suggested by the Pakistan Fact-finding Committee on Handlooms, 1956 (Pakistan, Ministry of Industries, *Report of the Fact-finding Committee on Handlooms*, Karachi, 1956, p. 21), though a member of the Committee, Dr A. Sadeque, suggested an alternative estimate of 2.25 weavers per loom (p. 217). (I am grateful to J. Krishnamurty for drawing my attention to these references.) But these figures apparently relate to all cotton textiles while the European procurement in early eighteenth century Bengal was confined largely to the relatively superior varieties where the weaver-loom ratio seems to have been substantially higher. Thus discussing the cotton manufactures of India, Edward Baines wrote, 'When chequered muslins are wrought, three persons are employed at each loom: the *lungri* pulls the thread to form the pattern, the *dobarah* twists the thread, and the *binkarai* weaves' [Edward Baines, *History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain*, London, 1965 (first printed in 1835), p. 71]. The ninth report of the Select Committee 1783 also suggested a figure of three weavers to a loom producing Dacca muslins (Appendix 51, summarized in K.N. Chaudhuri, 'The Structure of Indian Textile Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. XI, Nos. 2-3, June-September, 1974, p. 162). And then, of course, there were silk and mixed textiles for which contemporary information is not available. Taking all these facts into account, the average figure of 1.5 to 2 weavers to a loom for the varieties procured by the companies would, if anything, appear to be an underestimate.

³⁶The ninth report of the Select Committee 1783 mentioned a figure of 80,000 women spinners for a total of 8,400 looms giving us an average of 9.5 spinners to a loom. But these figures relate exclusively to Dacca muslins and the women spinners may have been working only part-time. Evidence per-

overwhelmingly in the province. Bihar supplied only small quantities of relatively coarse cotton chintz produced at Patna while the procurement in Orissa was confined to small quantities of mixed piece-goods manufactured at Pipli and Balasore. Following the procedure explained in the notes to Table IV, we estimate the work force in the textile manufacturing sector at one million. Since this is the key figure in the exercise, we independently checked its broad validity against the population's consumption requirements of cloth. On the assumption of five to six workers to a loom, the number of looms consistent with an estimated million workers would be 167 thousand to 200 thousand. Assuming that the Dutch and the English East India companies together accounted for a third of the total value of the textiles exported from the province in the early years of the eighteenth century, the number of looms producing for the export trade would have been between approximately 45,000 and 50,000 (vide Table II, Columns 4 and 7). The remaining 117 thousand to 155 thousand looms would have produced for domestic consumption, which evidently consisted primarily of the coarser varieties. Assuming that the annual output of cloth of the varieties consumed domestically was 1,237 square yards per loom on the average,³⁷ an estimated 117 thousand to 155 thousand looms would have produced approximately 143 million to 192 million square yards of cloth. Since the total population of the province at this time has been estimated at 20 million, this would give a per head availability of 7.25 to 9.6 square yards per annum (an average of 8.41 square yards per annum).

taining to pre-industrial Britain where the textile technology on the whole was not very different from that in early eighteenth century India (see for example, Irfan Habib, 'The Technology and Economy of Mughal India,' *The Dev Raj Chandra Lectures*, 1970, mimeographed) suggests that the number of spinners to a loom ranged between 3 and 6. [For example, 'Spinning had always been the slowest of the textile processes, and, while the treadle-wheel increased the speed slightly, three to five spinners were still required to keep one weaver supplied with yarn' (Charles Singer et al. (eds), *A History of Technology*, Oxford, 1957, Vol. III, p. 161). Again 'We know that a single loom provided work for five or six spinning wheels' (Paul Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*, New York, 1961, p. 208)]. In order to ensure that there was no over-statement of the employment implications of the companies' trade, we have assumed a figure of 2.5 to 3 full-time spinning job-equivalents to a loom.

³⁷According to the *Report of the Fact-finding Committee (Handlooms and Mills)* 1942, the average daily output of a throw-shuttle loom was 2½ square yards for fine cotton saris of 100 x 100 and 80 x 80 counts, 5½ square yards for grey dhotis of 20 x 20 counts and 7½ square yards for khaddar [GOI, *Report of the Fact-finding Committee (Handlooms and Mills)*, 1942, Appendix XXIII, p. 294. The figures in column 6 have been converted into square yards on the basis

In order to evaluate the plausibility of this level of domestic consumption of cloth per head per annum, one can use recent evidence on per head availability of cloth. The National Sample Survey evidence for West Bengal for the early 1960s shows that this figure was 11 square yards.³⁸ In carrying this estimate backward to the beginning of the eighteenth century, note that over the intervening two and a half centuries the per head consumption of cloth has risen sharply because of the availability of cheaper mill-made cloth.³⁹ Therefore, the per head per annum consumption of cloth at the beginning of the eighteenth century must have been much less than 11 yards and is unlikely to have been larger than 8.41 square yards. This would imply that the figure of a million workers in the textile manufacturing sector is not an under-estimate, and the relative significance of the companies' trade is not being overstated. As shown in Table IV, the full-time job-equivalents created by the companies' trade accounted for between 8.69 per cent and 11.11 per cent of the total work force in the textile manufacturing sector—by no means an altogether insignificant proportion. Of course, the two companies had reached this position after they had been trading in the province for over sixty years.

In assessing the overall employment effect of the trade carried on by the Dutch and the English East India companies in Bengal, account should also be taken of the linkage and multiplier effects on employment in other sectors of the economy. For example, the companies' trade provided substantial additional job opportunities to the merchant-middlemen dealing with them. But for lack of information, we are unable to quantify these effects.

III

The trade carried on by the Dutch and the English East India companies from Bengal also affected the organization of manufacturing production and procurement in the region. For one thing, the

of the dimensions indicated in column 3]. On this basis, we have assumed that the daily output of cloth per loom of the varieties consumed domestically in Mughal Bengal was 4½ square yards on the average. On the further assumption of 275 work days a year, the average annual output per loom works out at 1,237 square yards.

³⁸This figure was 9.76 square yards for rural areas and 16.92 square yards for urban areas. Attaching weights of 80:20 to the rural and the urban areas respectively, one gets the figure of 11 square yards as the average availability per head per annum (NSS, 17th Round, September 1961 - July 1962, No. 184 'Tables with Notes on Consumer Expenditure,' pp. 69-71 and 137-39. The figures for mill-made cloth, handloom cloth and khaddar have been combined).

³⁹Thus it has been estimated that the average annual consumption of cotton

process of the localization and specialization of production was intensified. Since a concentration of weavers and other artisans in the *arangs*—localized centres of manufacturing production—enabled the middlemen to reap a variety of external economies,⁴⁰ they did everything in their power to promote such a concentration. A corollary of this was the emergence of a pattern of specialization as between different *arangs* in a given area.⁴¹ This trend was particularly marked in the district of Malda in north Bengal where in the 1680s one *arang* already produced only one particular variety of a given category of textiles.⁴²

The European companies' trade was also instrumental in the development of a number of comparatively minor trading centres in the region—such as Kasimbazar—into major commercial emporia and in the founding of at least one town which, in course of time, became the largest city in the subcontinent. The English founded Calcutta in 1690 after the conclusion of their conflict with the provincial government; within 25 years or so, the new town had become a major centre of production and commerce. Its inhabitants, besides the English of course, were mainly middlemen and artisans who had come there from places as far off as Dacca seeking employ-

per head in Akbar's time was only 6 to 11 kg as against 22.1 kg in 1961-62 (Ashok Desai, 'Population and Standard of Living in Akbar's Time,' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. IX, No. 1, March 1972, Table 5, p. 56).

⁴⁰The middleman would now have to operate over a smaller geographical area involving considerable saving of time and effort. The facilities of bleaching and printing of textiles—operations usually undertaken after the textiles had been collected from the weavers—available at these centres at fairly standardized rates, further added to the profits of the middleman (Report submitted by Dutch factor Cansius who had been deputed to procure textiles in Malda, 7.9.1670, K.A. 1168, ff. 2173-74).

⁴¹Thus in the district of Pipli in Orissa, the *arang* of Mohanpur specialized in the production of *hamhams*, *gerras* (both ordinary calicoes), *sologazis* (fine calico) and *adathis* (fine muslin); that of Danton in doreas (fine calico) and *soosies* (silk); that of Olmara in *chaklas* and *rumals* (both fine calicoes) and *alachas* (silk) while the *arang* of Casuri produced only super-fine cotton textiles (Instructions by director De Haze to Van den Hemel, the new chief factor at Pipli, 1.2.1675, K.A. 1202, ff. 79-81-vo).

⁴²Thus the *arang* producing *malmals* (fine muslin) was reported to be at a distance of two days' journey on foot from that specializing in the production of *hasas* (fine muslin), while the one producing doreas (fine calico) was another 1½ days' journey further up (H.B. 11.1.1684, K.A. 1273, ff. 419-20). It might be mentioned here that before the Europeans came, the district of Malda specialized in the production of textiles for Persia. Thus the trend towards specialization of production existed—though to a much smaller extent—even before the Europeans arrived on the scene (Cansius Report, 7.9.1670, K.A. 1168, ff. 2173-74).

ment and the protection the English settlement afforded against the oppression of local officials.⁴³

The tremendous increase in the Europeans' demand for Bengal textiles from about 1670 led to an increase in the bargaining strength of the artisans vis-a-vis the merchants and that of the merchants vis-a-vis the companies. For example, the Dutch factors made the following statement in the year 1700, 'The middlemen inform us (and on investigation we find that they are speaking the truth) that because of the large number of buyers in the weaving centres and the large sale of textiles, the weavers can no longer be coerced. They weave what is most profitable for them. If one does not accommodate oneself to this situation, then one is not able to procure very much and the supplies go to one's competitors'.⁴⁴ An instance of the growing strength of the middlemen vis-a-vis the companies is provided by the refusal, in 1709, by middlemen dealing with the Dutch to accept fresh contracts unless the company (a) gave them an assurance that henceforth in the event of only a limited variation between the quality of the sample given out and of the pieces actually supplied by them, there would be no deduction made from the price mutually agreed upon at the time of the contract and (b) repaid the price deductions made on this count on textiles supplied during the preceding season.

The system of procurement in vogue in Mughal Bengal, which obliged the companies to obtain supplies of export goods by giving out advances to middlemen, gave rise to a whole host of problems. Two of the most serious of these problems were the poor quality of the goods supplied and the emergence of bad debts. With a view to solving the latter problem, so-called joint stock companies were formed at the initiative of the English. (The Dutch, who had taken the initiative in forming these companies on the Coromandel coast, did not get very far in this regard in Bengal.) This experiment represented an innovation in the commercial structure of the region but it unfortunately proved to be abortive. The problem of the poor quality of the raw silk supplied to them prompted the Dutch to establish a silk-reeling unit in the 1650s in their factory at Kasimbazar. When operated at its maximum capacity, the unit employed over 3,000 reelers. In the context of the development of the capitalist system of production in the region, the Dutch silk manufactory was a significant experiment. Manufacturing production on this scale

⁴³Explanation by the Dutch factors why the orders were not supplied in full, 1710, K.A. 1688, f. 205.

⁴⁴Explanation by the Dutch factors why the orders were not supplied in full, 1700, K.A. 1530, f. 17.

under one roof on a regular wage-employment basis was rare in Mughal Bengal (and for that matter in Mughal India).⁴⁵ The imperial workshops (*karkhanas*) were not fully comparable with the Dutch unit for two reasons. In the first place, the goods manufactured in the *karkhanas* were intended largely for use by the royalty, nobility and the army rather than for sale in the market. Secondly, many of the big *karkhanas* appear to have operated on the basis of under-paid drafted labour⁴⁶ rather than on the basis of free contract labour. Both these factors make the *karkhanas* somewhat ineligible to be treated at par with the Dutch silk manufactory as a significant milestone in the development of the capitalist system of production.

To conclude, the trade carried on by the Dutch and the English East India companies from Bengal during c. 1630-1720 (prior to the emergence of a colonial relationship) generated a significant increase of income, output and employment in the region. Our estimate of Rs 34 million per annum provides some idea of the magnitude of the increase in income and output on this score. The companies' procurement of textiles and raw silk would have sustained approximately 87 thousand to 111 thousand full-time job equivalents accounting for 9 to 11 per cent of the total work force engaged in the textile manufacturing sector of the province of Bengal. This rather impressive increase in income, output and employment took place mainly because the Euro-Bengal trade was not a 'normal' trade involving an exchange of goods for goods, but one involving an exchange of precious metals for goods, implying an export surplus for Bengal.

⁴⁵It is true that a large number of workers had to be assembled for the purpose of constructing forts and other big buildings, as well as ocean-going vessels. But in these cases, as Moreland (*India at the Death of Akbar*, pp. 173-74) has pointed out, the organization brought into being did not survive the completion of the particular project for which it had been assembled.

The royal mints in the various parts of the empire were undoubtedly fairly big units. But it should be obvious that the implications of the production of coins by individuals employed on a salary basis by the government were somewhat different from those of the production of goods in a manufactory of the type of the Dutch silk-reeling unit at Kasimbazar.

⁴⁶H.B. 11.1.1684, K.A. 1273, f. 427; Diary kept at the Kasimbazar factory of the English East India Company, 1.12.1681, F.R. Kasimbazar, Vol. 2, f. 1.

TABLE I

EXPORTS FROM ASIA BY THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY

	1648 - 50 (% of total exports)	1668 - 70 (% of total exports)	1698 - 1700 (% of total exports)
1. Pepper and other spices	68	43	23
2. Textiles, raw silk, cotton, etc.	14	36	55
3. Other items	18	21	22
Total	100	100	100

SOURCE: Calculated from K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620-1740* (Copenhagen/The Hague, 1958), p. 13, Table I.

NOTE: The percentages have been rounded off to the nearest complete number. The figures for 1668-70 do not include Ceylon.

TABLE II

NUMBER OF LOOMS REQUIRED TO PRODUCE TEXTILES EXPORTED BY THE DUTCH AND THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANIES FROM BENGAL PER ANNUM (1709-10 to 1717-18)

Category of textiles exported	Number of pieces	Output of pieces per loom per year ²	Number of looms required to produce the pieces of textiles exported	Square yardage per piece ³	Total square yardage	Number of looms required to produce the yardage of textiles exported ¹
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
A. Dutch East India Company						
1 Fine muslins	49,355	15	3,290	30	1,480,650	
2 Fine calicoes	33,822	36	939	15	502,330	
3 Ordinary calicoes	163,213	80	2,040	9	1,468,917	
4 Silk piece-goods	35,072	45	779	12	420,864	
5 Silk and cotton mixed piece-goods	19,929	45	443	12	239,148	
6 Total	301,391		7,491		4,111,909	
B. English East India Company¹						
7 Fine cottons	172,184	24	7,174	24	4,132,416	
8 Ordinary cottons	61,838	60	1,030	15	927,570	
9 Silk piece-goods	15,639	45	348	12	188,268	
10 Silk and cotton mixed piece-goods	26,588	45	591	12	319,056	
11 Total	276,239		9,143		5,567,310	
12 Grand Total	577,690		16,634		9,679,219	15,124

SOURCE: Col. 2, Rows 1 to 5: Calculated from the export invoices for the period in the Dutch records. Col. 2, Rows 7 to 10: Calculated from the Bengal General Journals and Ledgers Series, Range 174, Vols. 83-99.

Bullion for Goods

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NOTES:

¹The figures for the English East India Company are for the average amount procured in Bengal per annum during 1709-10 to 1717-18. The difference, if any, between this and the actual exports is unlikely to be large.

²The following procedure was adopted to arrive at the figures in this column. According to Francis Buchanan-Hamilton, in the early years of the nineteenth century, the average annual output per loom of pieces of *tanzebs* and *malmals* (both fine muslins) of dimensions comparable to those exported by the companies during our period was 24 each. The pieces, manufactured in the arang of Maghra in Bihar, were valued at Rs 5.25 and Rs 5 each respectively (*An Account of the Districts of Bihar and Patna in 1811-12*, Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Vol. II, Table 43, p. 775). Buchanan-Hamilton also suggested that there was an inverse relation between the quality of a piece, as indicated by its price, and the average output per loom. (Thus in Table 42, p. 774, the average monthly output per loom of *solegazi seatra* valued at Rs 2.25 is shown to be four pieces while that of a *solegazi* of a comparable size but valued at Rs 3 to be only three pieces.) Another source of information on the average output of pieces of different varieties of muslins per loom is a 1776 estimate of 'Dacca Cloth Manufactures for Exportation' contained in the Ninth Report from the Select Committee 1783, Appendix 51 and summarized in K.N. Chaudhuri, 'The Structure of Indian Textile Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,' *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. XI, Nos. 2-3, July-September, 1974, pp. 162-63. According to this source, the average output per loom of *cora tanjebs* valued at Rs 10 per piece was 10 per annum and that of fine mulmuls valued at Rs 29 per piece, 9.4 per annum. While all this information is clearly inadequate to establish a definitive figure or even a range of annual output per loom, it nevertheless would appear to support an assumption of an output of 15 pieces of muslins of the general quality the companies exported from Bengal per loom per annum.

The corresponding figures for the remaining varieties of cotton textiles, for silk piece-goods and for the mixed piece-goods have been arrived at on the basis of the average price (assuming a generally inverse relation between price and output) and the average size of the pieces of these varieties of textiles relatively to that of fine muslins.

³The figures in this column have been arrived at on the basis of the extensive information available in the records of the Dutch and the English East India companies regarding the sizes of the piece-goods procured in Bengal. In the Dutch records, the range is from 24 to 36 yards for the length and $\frac{3}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{4}$ yards for the width of a piece of muslin. The corresponding figures for a piece of calico are 15 to 18 yards for length and 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards for width except for varieties such as dorea whose sizes were the same as in the case of muslins and the *dasjen* which was an unusually small sized textile—at times only 2 square yards per piece. (The different sizes assumed for the Dutch 'fine calicoes' and 'ordinary calicoes' follow from the good weightage of *dasjens* in the latter category.) For silk and mixed piece-goods, the usual length per piece was 15 yards and the width between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ yards except for varieties such as soosy where the length of a piece was usually as much as 24 yards and the *charkhana* where it was $17\frac{1}{2}$ yards. The dimensions found in the English records broadly correspond with these figures. For example, the sizes of the *tanzebs*, *khassas* and *malmals* (all muslins) mentioned in these

records were 30 yards for length and between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $2\frac{1}{4}$ yards for width.

The Dutch records mention the dimensions in *cobidos* or *ells* while the English recorded them in *covids*. The *cobido* or *covid* (Portuguese for cubit) was a measure with large local variations. According to F.W. Stapel (ed. Pieter van Dam's *Beschryvinge van de Oost-Indische Compagnie*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 451) the *cobido* was the equivalent of 27 inches which was also the size of the Flemish ell. The *cobido* figures have, therefore, been converted into yards at this rate. The figure of 18 inches to a Bengal *covid* suggested by Moreland (*From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, reprint, Delhi, 1962, p. 338 and *Indian Journal of Economics*, Vol. V, Part 3, January 1925) and by T. Bowrey (*A Geographical Account of the Countries Round the Bay of Bengal 1669-1679*, Cambridge, 1905) appears to be too low.

⁴ The figure in this column has been arrived at on the assumption of an average annual output per loom of 640 square yards of cloth of all varieties exported by the companies. No contemporary estimates of square yardage per loom per annum are available, but according to the *Report of the Fact-finding Committee (Handlooms and Mills)*, 1942, Appendix XXIII, p. 294, the average daily output of cotton saris of 80 x 80 to 100 x 100 counts per throw-shuttle loom per day was $2\frac{1}{2}$ square yards. Assuming that this figure of daily output per loom is valid on the average for the cloth exported by the companies from Bengal and assuming further a work year of 275 days, we get the per annum per loom output of 642 square yards which has been rounded off to 640 square yards.

TABLE III
FULL-TIME JOB EQUIVALENTS CREATED BY THE DUTCH AND THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANIES'
EXPORT OF RAW SILK FROM BENGAL (1709-10 to 1717-18)

The company	Amount of raw silk exported per annum (in bales) (1 bale = 76 kilograms) ¹	Full-time reeling job equivalents ¹	Full-time complementary job equivalents in the raw silk manufacturing sector ⁵	Total full- time job equivalents
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Dutch East India Company	1,544 ²	3,191	4,786	7,977
(2) English East India Company	652 ³	1,348	2,022	3,370
(3) Total	2,196	4,539	6,808	11,347

SOURCE: Col. 2, Row 1: The Bengal export invoices in the Dutch records.

Col. 2, Row 2: Bal Krishna, *Commercial Relations between India and England, 1601-1757*, London, 1924, pp. 143-44; Orders lists sent by the Court of Directors in London to their factors in Bengal, Letter Books.

NOTES:

¹ These amounts included small quantities of *mochta* silk (florette yarn).

² The figure 6,000-7,000 bales (600,000-700,000 lbs. at the rate of conversion indicated) given by Tavernier for the 1670s was wide off the mark [J.B. Tavernier, *Travels in India* (ed. V. Ball), London, 1889, Vol. II, p. 2].

³ The figure for the English East India Company is for the average annual amount ordered from London during these years and not necessarily for the actual average amount exported per annum though the difference, if any, between these two figures is unlikely to be large.

⁴ The figures in this column have been arrived at by multiplying those in column 2 by a factor of 2.066. The Dutch silk-reeling unit at Kasimbazar, when operated at its maximum capacity produced, at the close of the seventeenth century, around 1,500 bales of raw silk per annum and employed over 3,000 reelers (the precise number is not indicated). If one assumed that this number was 3,100, the figure one gets is 2.066 reelers per bale reeled.

⁵ The figures in this column have been arrived at by multiplying those in column 3 by a factor of 1.5. According to Pieter van Dam, the workers who prepared the raw material (called *patani*) necessary for a seer (1 seer = 2.057 lbs. avoirdupois) of reeled tanny raw silk were paid a wage bill of $6\frac{1}{4}$ annas (16 annas = 1 rupee). As against this, the reelers who reeled this raw material into tanny raw silk got 6 annas. The corresponding figures in the case of tanna-banna raw silk were $3\frac{3}{4}$ and 3 annas respectively [F.W. Stapel (ed.), op. cit., Vol. II, Part II, Appendix IV B, pp. 68-71]. If one assumed that the wages of a reeler were somewhat higher than of a worker engaged in a pre-reeling operation, the assumption of full-time complementary labour of 1.5 in the raw silk manufacturing sector seems justified.

TABLE IV
PROPORTION OF FULL-TIME JOB EQUIVALENTS ATTRIBUTED TO TOTAL WORK FORCE IN THE TEXTILE INDIA COMPANIES' PROCUREMENT OF TEXTILES AND RAW SILK TO THE PROVINCE OF BENGAL (1709-10 to 1717-18)

Population in 1801 (in millions) ¹	Population in 1711 (in millions) ²	Total work force (in millions) ³	Work force in manufacturing sector (in millions) ⁴	Work force in the textile manufacturing sector (in millions) ⁵	Proportion of 86,967 to 111,151 full-time job equivalents to the work force in the textile manufac- turing sector
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
28.055	19.99	10.00	2.00	1.00	8.69-11.11

SOURCES AND NOTES:

¹ This figure is based on D.P. Bhattacharya, *Population in India, 1801-1961* (Based on 1941 area) (unpublished), Appendix I.

² According to the unpublished estimates of Bhattacharya, the compound rate of growth of population in the province during the pre-census period 1801-1871 works out at 0.37 per cent per annum. Assuming that population grew at the same rate in the eighteenth century, the figure one gets for 1711 is 19.99 million. While there was a major famine in 1776, which reportedly killed one-third of the province's population, we are unable to determine its impact on the average rate of growth of population over the eighteenth century.

³Definitive information on participation rates is available only for the census period. The all-persons participation rate for undivided Bengal in 1911—which was a normal year, a reasonably efficient census and the first one in which makers and sellers were adequately differentiated—was 36.1 per cent (unpublished estimate prepared by J. Krishnamurty). This ratio was probably somewhat higher two centuries earlier. This is because some industries with a considerable female work force participation (such as hand-spinning) have declined in the meantime, probably driving some female workers out of the work force. Moreover, in order to ensure that the employment implications of the companies' trade are not overstated, it is vital that the size of the work force is not understated. We have, therefore, used the relatively high participation rate of 50 per cent to obtain the figure in this column.

⁴The census evidence for 1911 for undivided Bengal shows that the proportion of the work force in the manufacturing sector (all persons) to total work force was 8.4 per cent (unpublished estimate of J. Krishnamurty). It is believed that the nineteenth century was characterized by a fairly marked decline in the proportion of the work force engaged in the manufacturing sector to the total work force (described as the process of de-industrialization). In order to ensure that there is no under-estimation of the work force in the manufacturing sector, we have assumed that in early eighteenth century Bengal, work force in this sector accounted for as much as 20 per cent of the total work force.

⁵The census evidence for 1911 for undivided Bengal shows that the work force (all persons) engaged in the manufacturing of textiles (excluding jute textiles) accounted for 14.2 per cent of the total work force in the manufacturing sector (unpublished estimate of J. Krishnamurty). There is a large body of evidence to indicate that the textile industry was highly developed in Mughal Bengal, catering to a large Indian and foreign market. The nineteenth century witnessed a considerable increase in output of cloth per worker because of the emergence of a large cotton textile mill industry in the country. We have, therefore, assumed that the textile industry in early eighteenth century Bengal accounted for as much as 50 per cent of total employment in the manufacturing sector.

APPENDIX

The Model

$$\begin{aligned}
 Y &= C + I + (X - M) \\
 C &= a + cY \\
 s &= (1 - c) \\
 Y - C &= I + (X - M) = I + B \\
 S &= I + B \\
 \Delta S &= \Delta I + \Delta B \\
 \Delta Y &= \frac{\Delta S}{s} = \frac{\Delta I + \Delta B}{s} \\
 \Delta Y &= \Delta Y' + \Delta Y'' \\
 \Delta I &= \Delta'I + \Delta''I \\
 \Delta B &= \Delta B' + \Delta B'' \\
 \Delta Y'' &= \frac{\Delta'I + \Delta B''}{s}
 \end{aligned}$$

where

Y	=	Output and income
$\Delta Y'$	=	Change in output resulting from factors other than the companies' trade
$\Delta Y''$	=	Change in output resulting from the change in the companies' export demand
C	=	Consumption
c	=	Propensity to consume
I	=	Investment
ΔI	=	Total change in investment
$\Delta'I$	=	Change in investment not arising from the companies' trade
$\Delta''I$	=	Change in investment induced by the companies' export demand
S	=	Savings
ΔS	=	Change in total savings
s	=	Propensity to save
X	=	Exports
M	=	Imports
B	=	Bullion received against export surplus
B'	=	Bullion received against export surplus associated with the non-Europeans' trade
B''	=	Bullion received against export surplus associated with the companies' trade

Indigenous Enterprise in the Indian Coal Mining Industry c.1835-1939

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THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDIGENEOUS SECTOR

Indigenous entrepreneurial involvement in the modern coal mining industry dates back to the pioneering career of the remarkable Dwarkanath Tagore (Rabindranath's grandfather). Tagore's interest in the coal trade had been stimulated by the introduction of the steamship into India during the late 1820s, and in 1835 the firm of Carr-Tagore¹ purchased the old Raneegunge colliery from the assignees of the bankrupted mercantile house of Messrs Alexander and Company for Rs 70,000, and, two years later, a Mr Betts was persuaded to part with his property at Cheenacoory for Rs 40,000.² Besides obtaining the contract to supply the Marine Board with coal for the East India Company's own flotilla of steamers,³ Tagore was himself in the process of building up two steamship lines, viz. the Calcutta Steam Tug Association (which provided a tugging service for the ocean-going vessels that plied up and down the Hooghly between Calcutta and the Bay of Bengal), and the Indian General Steam Navigation Company (for inland waterways).⁴ With the help of over seven hundred vividly descriptive letters covering the decade 1838-48 (which have survived in the archives of the Bengal Coal Company at Sanctoria),⁵ we can chart the vigorous growth of the

¹The Englishman Carr was only a 'sleeping' partner in the firm; Tagore needed his name (i.e., nationality) to gain access to the business community of contemporary Calcutta. See N.K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal 1793-1843*, Vol. III, Calcutta, 1970, p. 118ff.

²L.J. Barraclough, 'A Further Contribution to the History of Development of the Coal Mining Industry in India,' *Trans. M.G.M.I.I.*, 47, No. 1, April 1951, p. 4ff.

³H. Bernstein, *Steamboats on the Ganges 1819-1840*, Bombay, 1960, p. 117.

⁴B. Kling, 'The Origin of the Managing Agency System,' *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXVI, No. 1, November 1966.

⁵Following the nationalization of Andrew Yule in 1974 these records have been acquired by the Coal Mines Authority. It is likely that they will be given a permanent home in the proposed Coal Mining Museum soon to be established

mines under the management of the energetic Captain C.B. Taylor.

During the latter part of the 1830s and the first three years of the 1840s we can detect a bitter—and often violent—struggle between Carr-Tagore and the (English) owners of the nearby Naraincoory mine for the hegemony of the emergent coalfield. Realizing that this sort of competition was spoiling the market for both firms, Tagore proposed that the two rivals should merge their collieries and establish a joint stock company. Agreement was reached in 1843 and the Bengal Coal Company was floated in the same year with a first capital issue of eleven lakh rupees. This was divided into 11,000 shares, seven hundred of which went to Carr-Tagore. Of the fourteen listed shareholders of Carr-Tagore ten were Indian and, of these, four were members of the Tagore family itself, five others were Bengalis and the last a Parsi.⁶ Barely five years after this amicable arrangement had been made, however, Carr-Tagore had collapsed—it was one of the first casualties of the 1847 financial crash—and all of the original Indian shareholders were forced to sell off their stock.⁷ By July 1858, the greater part of the ownership (and management) of the company had passed into British hands: only eight of the eighty-six listed shareholders were Indian, and they possessed only 26½ of the 16,000 shares (the capital base had been increased in 1848) between them.⁸ Over the next century, the Bengal Coal Company—which had owed so much of its ante-natal and early infant growth to the inspiration of Tagore—remained an almost exclusively British concern.⁹

Apart from Tagore, the growing steamship demand for coal had attracted the attention of several other Indian parties, and in 1845 we find a Mr A.G. Mackenzie of the Bengal Coal Company writing of 'three different natives' endeavouring to open up adjacent areas of the Raniganj field.¹⁰ Although Mackenzie confidently asserted that 'we do not have anything to fear from opposition there as we are in possession of the only good coal lands on the Barakar' his judgement

in Dhanbad. For further details of their content see my 'Towards a Primary Source Bibliography for the Study of the Indian Coal Mining Industry,' *Bengal Past and Present*, XCI, Part II, No. 173, July-December 1972.

⁶Directors' Minute Book of 1844.

⁷*Ibid.*, 1847-48.

⁸Affidavit of the Supreme Court on the Registration of the Bengal Coal Company dated 16 July 1858, Record Office of the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Calcutta.

⁹The Board of Directors retained its entirely European character until the termination of the First World War.

¹⁰Letter from A.G. Mackenzie to Macpherson (both employees of the Bengal Coal Company), dated 13 March 1845. Record Room of the Bengal Coal Company, Sanctoria.

was a little faulty since one Gobin Pundit, a deputy collector of the 24-Parganas, had already successfully commenced mining operations at Searsole, a few miles to the north of Raneegunge.¹¹ D.H. Williams, who carried out the first geological survey of the Damodar Valley in the late 1840s, was rather contemptuous of Pundit's open-cast mine, 'With the system of mining now in operation together with the absence of common intelligence bearing on the subject, no real good can be expected from this mine.'¹² But Williams was no less mistaken than Mackenzie because, by 1859, Searsole was producing eighteen lakh maunds of coal a year and was second only to the Bengal Coal Company which was producing thirty-four lakh maunds.¹³ In that year too, Oldham records that besides Gobin Pundit there were nine other indigenously owned mines (of the thirty-seven collieries at work), but these were small affairs producing only seven lakh maunds between them out of a total field production of just over ninety lakh maunds.¹⁴ By the time the next returns are available, in 1867, Searsole had increased its output to 24.28 lakh maunds and was still in second place—though other European competitors had by now appeared on the scene and were growing at a much faster rate.¹⁵ The remaining indigenous collieries had not made much progress, however, and Oldham dismissed them as mere 'diggings.'¹⁶ Pundit's concern seems to have failed some time in the 1870s, and though a Bengali by the name of Shib Kristo Daw began production at Charnapur and Seebpur in 1876 and continued to expand until the early years of this century, there was little Indian production of any note until the early 1890s.¹⁷ Thus in 1886, the Government of Bengal stated that 'the smaller coal mines are mostly worked by natives ... and are on a very petty scale and more like badly made tanks [sic] than anything else.'¹⁸ It is interesting to note in passing that an Armenian firm, Apcar and Company, (who had purchased the Calcutta Tug Company in 1846 from Carr-Tagore), began to buy

¹¹T. Oldham, *A Report on the Raneegunge Coalfield with Special Reference to the Proposed Extension of the line of Railway*, Calcutta, 1859, pp. 18-22.

¹²D.H. Williams, *Geological Report on the Damoodah Valley*, Calcutta, 1853, p. 32f.

¹³Oldham, *op. cit.*

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵T. Oldham, *The Coal Resources and Production of India*, Calcutta, 1867, pp. 29-32.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁷F.J. Agabeg, 'A History of Mining in Bengal: Apcar and Company,' *Trans. M.G.I.L.*, XI, 1914, p. 19.

¹⁸Letter from the Secretary of the Govt. of Bengal to the Revenue and Agriculture Department of the Govt. of India dated 28 April 1886. *Procs. Rev. and Agr. Dept.*, No. 31, April 1886, W. Bengal State Archives, Calcutta

up some properties in the Sitarampur area in the late 1850s. Within three decades or so Apcar's had built up a secure medium-sized colliery business that was to prosper until after Independence.¹⁹

Contrary to the traditional view that Bengali capital and enterprise was proverbially shy of industrial ventures,²⁰ the period between the early 1890s and the depression of 1925 to 1926 witnessed a flourishing interest in the coal industry by this section of the indigenous public. This was dramatically demonstrated by their response to the opportunities presented by the penetration of the railway into the Jharia field in the early 1890s: by 1897, sixty-two mines had been opened up by Bengalis.²¹ This dynamic growth was apparently self-financed since less than half a dozen of these ventures were other than owned (and managed) by private individuals; for some reason joint stock companies did not make much progress among the Bengalis who preferred to work small pits as individual owners.²² In the older Raniganj area the Bengalis were the overwhelmingly predominate entrepreneurs: of the forty indigenous collieries at work in 1897, thirty-eight were Bengali.²³

One of the most remarkable of these Bengali firms was Laik-Banerjee and Company (Private). A. C. Laik, a petty zamindar of the Dishergarh *mouza*, entered into what was to become a significant partnership with Jadav Banerjee some time in the late 1870s.²⁴ Both men had been clerical employees of the Bengal Coal Company (Banerjee was a time-keeper) and must have seen at first hand the growing potential of the industry. From the mid-1880s they began to acquire the leasehold of virgin areas on the western bank of the Burrakar River—a speculative venture at that time because the rail-head stopped on the eastern side. They were among the first entrepreneurs to see the commercial possibilities of the hitherto

¹⁹Agabeg, *op. cit.* There is an Apcar Gardens in Asansol today. Agabeg himself, also an Armenian and formerly Apcar's colliery manager, began a colliery business of his own just before the First World War.

²⁰For the most authoritative statement of this argument see N.K. Sinha, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-18. For the beginnings of an alternative assessment see J.H. Broomfield, 'The Rural Parvenu: A Report of Research in Progress,' *South Asian Review*, 6, No. 3, April 1972, pp. 181-95.

²¹S.K. Sen, *Studies in Economic Policy and Development of India 1848-1925*, Calcutta, 1966, p. 69.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 71. This reluctance was confined neither to the Bengalis nor to the coal industry. See P.S. Lokanathan, *Industrial Organisation in India*, London, 1935, p. 153f.

²³S.K. Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

²⁴Indian Mining Federation, *Golden Jubilee Souvenir 1913-1963*, Calcutta, 1963, p. 17f. For detailed information about this firm I have been forced to rely upon a verbal interview with N.G. Laik, the grandson of the founder, formerly the Estates Officer of the Bengal Coal Company.

unexploited Jharia field. The firm reached its peak during the last few years of the nineteenth century and its properties included the rich deposits at Lodna, Bhalgora, and Jharia Khas. By 1896 the firm was in possession of ten working collieries and headquarters were established at Bigunia near the new Burrakar Bridge. They had been one of the original members of the Indian Mining Association (I.M.A.)²⁵ and, at the time, were the foremost indigenous concern. Their prominence, however, was relatively short-lived since in 1911 the firm was declared insolvent. It is not altogether clear how this came about. One factor seems to have been a second generation variant of the 'Buddenbrooks thesis' in that the respective sons of the original founders—who had inherited the enterprise in 1906 and 1908 respectively—appear to have been more interested in purchasing non-coal-bearing zamindaris (in Birbhum) for 'prestige' reasons than pursuing the colliery business so painstakingly built up by their fathers. Another explanation runs along more sinister lines; the European companies—at last realizing the value of Jharia—began to exert pressure on the firm to make over their leases. Lack of capital made this an unequal contest so that eventually Laik-Banerjee began to give way. Whatever the truth of the matter, the two sons seem to have had a violent quarrel in 1910, and a year later, the official receiver disposed of the bulk of the remaining colliery properties to outsiders.²⁶

Undoubtedly one of the most successful of the Bengali entrepreneurs was N. C. Sircar. Born in 1855 at Sitarampur (the son of a rent collector), Sircar joined the clerical staff of the Bengal Coal Company in 1879.²⁷ He soon began to contract for the sale of coal to Calcutta for the company and by the 1890s, had managed to accumulate sufficient capital to take out a short lease of a property at Ondal. To open up the area Sircar needed an experienced mining engineer and, with this end in view, he persuaded Mr R. Bernard, the English manager of Bengal Coal's Gargotia colliery, to enter into partnership with him in 1899. This combination almost immediately began to prosper: Sircar organized the selling side of things and Bernard the actual mining. There was a fortuitous strike of the valuable Dishergarh seam and this encouraged the partners to extend their lease and sink new shafts. By 1908, four public joint stock

²⁵First Ann. Rep. I.M.A. (1892-93). List of Members.

²⁶By 1921 K.D. Laik (A.C. Laik's son) was in the possession of only three small collieries at Hutnol, Ergacoor and Ergaroor Khos producing rather less than 15,000 tons per annum. Rep. Prod. Consum. of Coal, 1922, Table 2, pp. 11-23.

²⁷*Liberty*, Calcutta, 16 July 1932. Article entitled 'Worthy Son of Bengal.'

I am indebted to B.B. Sircar, the only surviving son of N.C. Sircar, for much of the background information about the family firm.

community began to shift away from the Bengalis.³⁹ The slump of 1925 to 1928 and the Great Depression immediately thereafter spelt bankruptcy for many indigenous collieries and only a rump of the hitherto dominant Bengali element managed to survive.⁴⁰ After nearly three decades of optimism the sudden and protracted downturn came as a rude shock to many of them, and it certainly seems to have irredeemably scared off a great deal of Bengali capital and entrepreneurial talent. This disenchantment enabled the new immigrant trading communities from Rajasthan (Marwar, Maheshwari and Jhunjhun districts), Gujarat (especially Kutch), Sind, and the Punjab to establish a foothold in the industry. Prior to the depression their stake in the coal trade was marginal, and they must have seen the contracting Bengali interest as a great opportunity to extend their colliery holdings. The earliest Marwari migrations to eastern India began in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and there is evidence that a few Marwari families had set up trading and shop-keeping businesses in the coalfields prior to the 1914 to 1918 war.⁴¹ In January 1921 the chairman of the I.M.A. accused the Marwaris of being partially responsible for causing general unrest amongst the miners—which culminated in a series of strikes—by the 'excessively' high prices they charged in their retail stores. In a circular sent to all members of the association, the secretary noted that

In the different coalfields there are a number of shops from which labour draw their supplies of rice, cloth and other essential commodities of life. These shops are, for the most part, managed by Marwaris who are incidentally assisting the present agitators. It is of little consequence to these shopkeepers whether or not the labour is adequately paid; and the only inference to be drawn by their interference is that they hope to get more money out of the miner, their sole object being to line their own pockets at the expense first of the local trade and then of the miner.⁴²

The secretary then recommended the members to establish company owned fair-trade shops to break the Marwari monopoly—taking due care that 'only actual customers get the goods and not others who

³⁹First Ann. Rep. of the I.M.F. (1913), pp. 3-16. A.L. Ojha, a Kutchi, was the only non-Bengali office-holder; he was made a Vice President.

⁴⁰Among the survivors were the Maharajah of Kasimbazar, B.K. Roy, Roy-Dutt and Company, S.B. Banerjee, R.N. Bagchi and Brothers Limited, W.C. Banerjee and K. Pal Chowdhury. Rep. Prod. and Consum. of Coal (1937), Table 2, pp. 21-53.

⁴¹Ann. Rep. I.M.A. (1921), pp. 13f.

⁴²Circular No. 14-R., 20 January 1921, *Ibid.*, p. 150

might be servants of the Marwari shop dealers who would buy only to get the stocks again into their own hands for the purpose of raising prices.⁴³

Before long the Marwaris began to take an interest in acquiring coal mines for themselves. As early as 1902 we find that two Marwari colliery owners figure in the returns for the Jharia coalfield.⁴⁴ In the 1911 Census nine Agarwallas appear as colliery proprietors in Jharia, and there is one Agarwalla listed in Raniganj.⁴⁵ By 1923 we can easily identify at least thirty Marwari coal owners in the two fields, and their combined output amounted to approximately 400,000 tons.⁴⁶ Although the Marwaris could no more escape the ravages of the depression than the Bengalis, it is significant that some of the most well-known Marwari business houses of the post-independence period began to take a financial interest in the coal industry during the second half of the 1920s: thus S.K. Karnani penetrated the European agency house of H.V. Low, and the Jatia family acquired an important stake in the coal companies of Andrew Yule and Kilburns. The Goenka and Podder families seem to have directly entered the coal industry as producers in the early 1920s,⁴⁷ and later on they too started purchasing European colliery stock. In terms of actual entrepreneurship, however, the career of Agarwalla Brothers (Private) is one of the best examples of the enterprising Marwari family firm.⁴⁸ The founder member of the firm, Ramjash Agarwalla, arrived in the new boom town of Jharia during the early 1900s (from Rajasthan via Calcutta), and opened a cloth merchandise shop in the bazar. Extending his retail business to general provisions, he managed to accumulate sufficient capital to purchase some colliery property in the vicinity of Jealgora (Chandrabad, Futtehpur, Harilodih, Khas Jharia and Sonibad) just prior to the Great War.⁴⁹ Lacking the experience to fully open out the mines, he sent his eldest son, J.K. Agarwalla, to work in Andrew Yule's Katras Jherriah Coal Company. After the war J.K. Agarwalla became the largest raising contractor for the company and, as this proved so lucrative, the family business was neglected. Like most of the other Marwaris, it was not so much the eclipse of the Bengalis as the exodus of British capital

⁴³*Ibid.*

⁴⁴Note Prod. and Consum. of Coal (1907), Table 2, pp. 12-24.

⁴⁵Census of India 1911, Vol. V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by L.S.S. O'Malley, Calcutta, 1913, Part 2, Table XVE, p. 350, and Part 3, Table XVE, p. 230.

⁴⁶Rep. Prod. and Consum. of Coal (1923), Table 2, pp. 21-53.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*

⁴⁸I owe much of the following information to B.P. Agarwalla, the eldest grandson of the founder.

⁴⁹Note Prod. and Consum. of Coal (1911), Table 2, pp. 12-21.

from the coal industry during and just after the Second World War which made their fortune. By the early 1950s the firm had become one of the leading colliery producers of the Jharia field, and B.P. Agarwalla, the eldest of J.K. Agarwalla's four sons, had been honoured with the Presidentship of the (original) indigenous trade association.

The second of the immigrant groups to displace the Bengalis were the Gujaratis and Kutchis. Between 1906 and 1910 four separate Patels (Patel and Company, U.B. Patel, L.B. Patel and S.B. Patel) are returned as coal owners in the Jharia field,⁵⁰ and over the next decade these were joined by a number of other proprietors originating from these two provinces. The Gujaratis were originally interested in the up-country marketing of coal, particularly to Cawnpore and Ahmedabad, but they very soon came to consider it prudent to acquire their own units of production. At the end of the First World War several medium-sized collieries were in the hands of the Gujaratis, and among the more important proprietors we can single out K.D. Worah (the largest), Narayan Chowra, Chaturbhai Sangjibhai, Haitibhai Patel, Khora Ramji, Jagmal and Malia Raja, the Patel Brothers, Kesavji Pitamber, and Amritlal Morarjee.⁵¹ Of the Kutchi contingent, A.L. Ojha and N.H. Ojha were the outstanding colliery entrepreneurs.⁵² Both had entered the industry just before the Great War (Amritlal Ojha was a founder member of the I.M.F.) and were unusual in that they both established private limited companies during the course of the depression—A.L. Ojha in 1931 and N.H. Ojha two years later.⁵³ In fact, the Kutchi community as a whole must have substantially added to their colliery possessions during this depressed period since the Deshpande Committee estimated that at the end of the Second World War, they, together with the Marwaris, owned more than half the total number of mines in Raniganj and Jharia.⁵⁴

The Punjabi and Sindi involvement in the coal industry followed a very similar pattern to that of the Marwari and Gujarati. A sprinkling of Punjabi and Sindi names begins to appear in the returns for the pre-1914 period.⁵⁵ M.K. Khanna, for example, must have been one of the first Punjabis to open a colliery (at Bagdigi) in the Jharia field. In 1907 he established a private limited company, and the *Investors India Year Book* indicates that between 1917-24,

⁵⁰*Ibid.*

⁵¹*Rep's Prod. and Consum. of Coal* (1912-39), Table 2.

⁵²*Ibid.*

⁵³*Ibid.* (1937), Table 14, pp. 65-68.

⁵⁴*Deshpande Report*, p. 15.

⁵⁵*Note Prod. and Consum. of Coal* (1913), Table 2, pp. 13-20.

the company was able to declare a dividend of fifteen per cent per annum.⁵⁶ K.C. Thapar and Sons and Waliram Taneja—two of the most important Punjabi business firms of the post-Independence era—interested themselves in the coal industry during the early 1930s, and by 1936, the six mines owned by Thapar (including those of the Oriental Coal Company Limited, a public joint stock company, floated in 1935) were producing 198,000 tons per annum, and Taneja's two mines, 75,000 tons.⁵⁷ The most prominent Sindi colliery entrepreneurs during our period were H. Kalyani, G.R. Tikmani (both of whom entered the industry during the Great War), and, later on, the Chanchani family.⁵⁸ We may also mention in this context the small element of Parsi entrepreneurs. Although the Parsis in general did not take to coal mining in anything approaching the same way as they did to the textile industry, during the first two decades of this century it is rare for a year to go by without at least half a dozen Parsi colliery owners being listed. The depression, however, seems to have put an end to their relatively ephemeral involvement.⁵⁹

The creation of a second indigenous trade association in 1934—the Indian Colliery Owners Association—highlights the decline of Bengali influence on the one hand, and the rising importance of the immigrant groups on the other. During the early 1930s there were a number of disputes within the I.M.F. which closely followed community lines.⁶⁰ These disagreements were ostensibly about issues of policy, but their underlying cause was undoubtedly the Bengali resentment of the newcomers' success, and the immigrant dismissal of the Bengalis as a spent force. Rather than attempting to capture the executive posts of the Federation, a group of non-Bengalis decided to form a rival body of their own. In March 1934 forty colliery proprietors including N.H. Ojha, J.K. Agarwalla, K.C. Thapar, Waliram Taneja and representatives of the Chanchani and Goenka families convened the inaugural meeting of the Indian Colliery Owners Association (I.C.O.A.).⁶¹ Over the next few years the I.M.F. and the I.C.O.A. often publicly clashed on a number of important subjects. Probably the most damaging of these internecine quarrels was over the output restriction scheme which the I.M.F. and the I.M.A. had

⁵⁶*I.L.Y.B.* (1917-25).

⁵⁷*Rep. Prod. and Consum. of Coal* (1937), Table 2, pp. 21-53.

⁵⁸*Ibid.* (1913-39), Table 2.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰*Ann. Rep's. I.M.F.* (1929-33). I have been kindly instructed in this matter by M. Das, N. Mukherjee, and N.K. Sanyal, all former secretaries of the Federation.

⁶¹*First Annual Report of the Indian Colliery Owners Association*, Calcutta, 1934.

been jointly preparing since 1933. The I.M.A. were quite ready to recognize the new body and offer them representation on the proposed committee to administer the scheme.⁶² This incensed the Federation who at first refused to even admit the existence of the break-away group let alone allow them to take a seat on the committee.⁶³ This recalcitrance led the I.M.A. to approach the I.C.O.A. (who were quite prepared to work with the Federation on the Committee) with the suggestion that the scheme should be put to the government irrespective of whether the I.M.F.—whose output was significantly smaller than that of the I.C.O.A.—would agree to take part.⁶⁴ The I.M.F. responded by writing to the Government of Bihar and Orissa that they were adamantly against the scheme on this ground (of hurt pride?) alone.⁶⁵ Ultimately the government rejected the entire package, but it is interesting that one of the reasons they gave for their decision was this disunity within the trade.⁶⁶ Towards the very end of our period the attitude of both the I.M.F. and I.C.O.A. to one another softened somewhat, and an unofficial working agreement was evolved whereby the former looked after the interests of the Rani-ganj proprietors and the latter their Jharia counterparts.

THE POSITION OF THE INDIGENOUS SECTOR WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

Although this historical sketch of the emergence of the indigenous sector has necessarily dwelt upon its diversity, and, more particularly, its ethnic heterogeneity, this should not blind us to the fact that the great majority of the indigenous collieries occupied only a very subordinate place in the coal industry as a whole. In the pre-1939 period, indigenous entrepreneurship was typically confined to small-scale individual or family proprietorships mining second class (i.e., high ash, low volatile) coal from very shallow depths. This can be partly gauged by the fact that in 1911, all but thirteen of the 155 privately owned coal mines in the Bengal Presidency were in Indian hands, and a decade later, though the total number of such

⁶²Letter No. 534-R from the I.M.A. to the Dept. of Labour and Industries, Govt. of India, 26 March 1934. *Ann. Rep. I.M.A.* (1934), 'Correspondence.'

⁶³*Ann. Rep. I.M.F.*, p. 42.

⁶⁴Letter No. 621-R from the I.M.A. to the I.C.O.A., 13 June 1934, *Ann. Rep. I.M.A.*, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵Letter from the I.M.F. to the Govt. of Bihar and Orissa, 23 June 1934. *Procs. Rev. Dept. (Commerce Branch)*, Nos 24-42, January 1935, State Archives of the Government of Bihar, Patna.

⁶⁶Letter No. M-76 from A.G. Clow, Joint Secretary to Dept. of Industry, Govt. of India, to all Provincial Governments, 28 January 1935, *ibid.*

collieries had more than doubled (to 325), only fifteen were in the possession of non-Indians.⁶⁷ By contrast, the indigenous entrepreneurial presence in the joint stock sector was only of a modest dimension. Only seventeen of the 176 private and public coal companies recorded in the Census of 1911 had a board of wholly Indian directors, and though a further twenty-six companies had at least one Indian director in their boardrooms, this does not necessarily imply any entrepreneurial activity whatsoever.⁶⁸ By 1921—probably the acme of indigenous enterprise throughout the whole of the inter-war period—only forty-eight of the 243 listed private and public joint stock companies were entirely Indian (an additional thirty-eight companies had some indigenous directors).⁶⁹ Over the next two decades indigenous investors gradually came to acquire a majority holding of the equity stock of the public coal companies but we must, of course, draw a sharp distinction between capital investment and entrepreneurial functions. It was the (predominantly British) managing agency houses who performed the role of entrepreneurs to the public corporate sector, and the indigenous investors were little more than passive shareholders. Only a tiny handful of indigenous colliery enterprises organically reached a large enough scale-size to warrant adopting public status; N.C. Sircar, M.K. Khanna, K.C. Thapar and Sons, Ranjas Agarwalla (the New Kusunda Coal Company registered in 1920) and R.N. Bagchi and Brothers were very much the exceptions to this general rule.

The collective indigenous share of total annual coal production was about one-fifth at the turn of the century⁷⁰ and nearly one-third at the time of independence.⁷¹ This had not been a steady or continuous growth, however, since the intervening four decades had witnessed cyclical fluctuations of no small order. The period immediately after the Great War, for example, was a boom time for the indigenous collieries, and in the early 1920s just over one-third of the total output was mined by them.⁷² When the demand for second class coals began to weaken from the mid-1920s as a result of the substantial fall in the price of the first class product, the

⁶⁷*Census of India 1911*, *loc. cit.*, and *Census of India 1921*, Vol. V, Bengal, by W.H. Thompson, Calcutta, 1923, Part 2, Table XXII, p. 416, and Vol. VII, Bihar and Orissa by P.C. Talents (Patna, 1923), Part 2, Table XII, p. 221.

⁶⁸*Census of India 1911*, *ibid.*

⁶⁹*Census of India 1921*, *loc. cit.*

⁷⁰*Ann. Rep. Chief Insp. of Mines* (1901), p. 20.

⁷¹*Deshpande Report*, p. 15.

⁷²Indian Mining Federation, *Golden Jubilee Souvenir 1913-1963*, Calcutta, 1964, p. 42.

TABLE
NUMBER AND OUTPUT OF COLLIERIES PRODUCING

Year	(1) All Collieries		(2) Collieries Producing up to 5,000	
	A No.	B Output (in tons)	A No.	B Output (in tons)
1920	687	17,962,214	248	504,225
21	806	19,302,647	301	637,521
22	870	19,010,314	366	756,273
23	882	19,655,612	388	695,156
24	795	21,174,029	286	536,890
25	762	20,904,352	292	507,097
26	683	20,999,167	277	417,980
27	591	22,082,336	206	367,247
28	527	22,542,872	171	310,289
29	536	23,418,734	176	299,344
1930	547	23,803,049	176	305,829
31	526	21,170,435	167	302,686
32	507	20,153,387	164	255,202
33	493	19,789,163	160	221,537
34	481	22,057,447	135	202,310
35	476	23,016,695	123	216,607
36	494	22,610,621	138	217,693
37	564	25,036,586	197	303,293
38	617	28,342,906	212	342,440
39	587	27,769,112	190	322,075
1940	577	29,386,494	176	258,754
41	602	29,463,742	194	273,980
42	724	29,433,252	255	357,819

SOURCE: Derived from the *Mahindra Report*, Appendix VII, p. 343.

relative position of the indigenous concerns declined.⁷³ The minor recovery of 1929 to 1930 was sufficient to push up their proportion to slightly under 30 per cent,⁷⁴ but the onset of the Great Depression led to a catastrophic fall in the price of all grades of coal—particular-

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴*R.C.L.*, IV, Part 1, p. 242

UP TO 10,000 TONS PER ANNUM 1920-42

(3) Collieries Producing between 5,001 to 10,000 tons per annum		A No.	B Output (in tons)	C Share in the total no. of colli- eries (%)	D Share of the total output (%)
C Share in the total no. of colli- eries (%)	D Share of the total output (%)				
36.1	2.9	127	904,474	18.5	5.0
37.2	3.3	133	950,655	16.5	4.9
42.0	3.9	140	979,562	16.2	5.2
44.0	3.5	145	1,052,649	16.4	5.4
35.9	2.8	143	1,031,310	18.0	4.9
39.0	2.4	105	747,565	13.3	3.6
40.5	2.0	78	551,442	11.4	2.6
35.0	1.7	73	523,527	12.2	2.4
32.4	1.4	62	466,558	12.0	2.1
32.8	1.3	53	395,947	10.0	1.7
32.3	1.3	50	361,732	9.0	1.5
31.7	1.4	50	365,674	9.6	1.7
32.4	1.3	56	415,248	11.0	2.1
32.5	1.1	54	386,603	11.0	2.0
28.0	.9	52	384,171	10.8	1.7
25.5	.9	50	374,751	10.8	1.6
28.0	1.0	57	408,948	8.5	1.8
35.0	1.2	58	411,376	10.2	1.6
34.4	1.2	61	432,769	10.2	1.5
33.8	1.2	53	385,081	6.6	1.4
30.5	.9	61	441,498	11.7	1.5
32.2	.9	57	418,931	9.4	1.4
35.2	1.2	82	568,829	11.3	1.9

ly the second class varieties—and this once again eroded their share of the total output.⁷⁵

We have attempted to disaggregate these sectoral figures by identifying two broad categories of indigenous collieries with respect to their average yearly outputs. After a careful examination of the

⁷⁵*Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, op. cit., p. 43.

detailed returns published in the *Annual Reports on the Production and Consumption of Coal in India* (Calcutta, 1907-1940), we have come to the conclusion that virtually all the collieries with a production range of up to 10,000 tons per annum were indigenously owned—and the great majority of these were single mine enterprises. This first category has been tabulated for the period 1920 to 1942.⁷⁶ We can immediately see from this table that nearly half of the total number of collieries at work (adding together Columns 2.C. and 3.C.) during the inter-war period were producing little more than five per cent of the total output (Columns 2.D. and 3.D.). Many of the mines in Column 2 were often referred to as 'wagon mines' because they failed to produce more than a couple of wagon loads of coal (100 tons) in the month. The Mahindra Committee estimated that in 1942 there were 133 such establishments out of the 725 mines at work.⁷⁷ These small units enjoyed only a rather precarious existence on the periphery of the industry—their number wildly fluctuating with the prevailing selling price. During the boom of 1907 to 1908, for example, the chief inspector of mines noted that

The richness of the deposits outcropping on the surface in Bengal has made it possible for mining to commence without much scientific knowledge, with a total lack of experience, and yet with a considerable amount of financial success.⁷⁸

On the other hand, when the price turned down, these collieries were unable to survive for any length of time. Between 1923 and 1924, for example, over one hundred of the smallest mines went out of business as a result of the very first sign of depression. The relative ease with which these small producers were able to commence (and re-commence) mining at such short notice, especially in the Jharia field, can be partly explained by the willingness of the local zamindars to parcel out sections of coal-bearing land to the highest *salami* bidder—irrespective of longer-term considerations of 'rational' boundary organization. It was not only the zamindars who were responsible for this state of affairs, for according to the *Mahindra Report*:

The worst offenders in this matter were, however, intermediary lessees who, with the object of obtaining a quick return, had sub-leased portions of their holdings, eventually producing areas of

⁷⁶See *supra* pp. 202-3.

⁷⁷*Mahindra Report*, p. 143.

⁷⁸*Ann. Rep. Chief Insp. of Mines* (1909), p. 7.

such small dimensions and fantastic shapes that it was quite impossible to work the coal satisfactorily.⁷⁹

This situation inevitably led to an excessively fragmented field structure and its corollary—the locking up of considerable quantities of coal as barriers.

The fact that many of the seams outcropped or were found at only shallow depths meant that once a lease was obtained it was relatively inexpensive to begin mining. Furthermore, labour was attracted to such enterprises, partly because of the miners' natural reluctance to work deep underground, and partly on account of these mines having to close down during the monsoon—which coincided with the transplanting season in agriculture. Labour's preference for small mines caused the Government some alarm during the course of the Great War since it was alleged that the mushrooming number of small mines had the effect of drawing labour away from the larger producers, and hence resulted in a diminution of the total output of the premier grade coals which were required for the war effort.⁸⁰ This led the coal controller to place some restrictions on the raising and despatch of second class collieries which lasted from December 1917 till January 1919, and this, not surprisingly, caused a storm of anger in the trade.⁸¹ The number of small collieries which operated in this way, i.e., without the aid of any steam or mechanical power for either haulage or pumping operations, was very large—as can be seen from Table II. Even at the very end of the period just over one-third of the total number of mines and quarries registered under the Mines Act of 1923 were without any mechanical power.

It is much more difficult to generalize the production parameters of the more substantial indigenously owned colliery enterprises. As a rough approximation we have taken those collieries producing between ten to fifty thousand tons a year as our basic core. Very few indigenous firms—and fewer still indigenous collieries—had an annual production exceeding this upper limit in the period before independence, and of those that did, the greater number were not in a sufficiently high production range to make very much difference to the following analysis. The more serious caveat of Table III is the fact that a number of European owned collieries (though very few companies or, still less, agency houses) fell within this category, and this has undoubtedly inflated the figures of both the total number

⁷⁹*Mahindra Report*, p. 148.

⁸⁰Memorandum of C.E. Low, dated 4 August 1917 in the *Procs. Dpt. of Commerce and Industry*, No. 20 Filed 'A', July 1917, N.A.I.

⁸¹*Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, *op. cit.*, p. 36ff.

TABLE II
NUMBER OF MINES AND QUARRIES IN BRITISH INDIA WORKED
WITHOUT THE AID OF ANY MECHANICAL POWER 1902-35

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Total Number of Mines and Quarries Registered under Act VIII of 1901 ^a	Number Worked without the Aid of any Mechanical Power	Percentage of Mines and Quarries Worked without Mechanical Power
1902 ^b	305	72	23.6
3	295	64	21.7
4	289	72	24.9
5	280	69	24.6
6	307	63	20.5
7	414	153	36.9
8	510	248	48.6
9	511	297	58.1
1910	433	160	36.9
11	450	174	38.6
12	527	251	47.6
13	602	288	47.8
14	610	284	46.5
15	583	249	42.7
16	565	233	41.2
17	694	342	49.2
18	719	352	48.9
19	741	348	46.9
1920	783	362	46.2
21	884	418	47.3
22	953	467	49.0
23 ^c	942	448	47.5
24	846	359	42.2
25	810	330	40.7
26	722	269	37.2
27	644	219	34.0
28	556	150	26.9
29	548	166	30.3
1930	549	168	30.6
31	540	158	29.2
32	515	154	29.9
33	501	146	29.1
34	490	143	29.2
35	494	141	28.5
36	504	149	29.5
37	604	236	39.0
38	665	277	41.6
39	619	239	38.6

NOTE: ^a The reasons why these statistics differ from those presented in Column (1)A of Table I *supra* are, firstly, the dissimilarity of coverage (all India and

British India), and secondly, the non-uniform definitions of 'mines' and 'collieries' used by the two collecting authorities.

^b Between 1902 and 1922 the statistics do not include those enterprises mining at a depth below 20 feet.

^c The Indian Mines Act of 1923 brought all workings in British India within its jurisdiction irrespective of depth.

SOURCE: Derived from the *Annual Reports of the Chief Inspector of Mines* (1902-40).

of collieries and their share of the total output over time. Although Table III exaggerates the absolute importance of the indigenous collieries, it is useful in that it tends to confirm our a priori expectation that the larger units had a greater resilience than their smaller counterparts, particularly during times of depression. Nonetheless, in keeping with the sentiments of gloom expressed at the annual gatherings of the I.M.F. throughout the latter half of the 1920s, the table brings out the growing number of bankruptcies (or collieries failing to produce more than 10,000 tons) which took place after 1924 to 1925. Thus in 1929 there were sixty-eight fewer collieries in this category than in 1925, and the aggregate share of the total product had fallen by nearly ten per cent. It is also clear from this table that most of the weaker units must have failed in this quinquennium because, during the course of the Great Depression, there was no wholesale reduction of either their number or their proportionate share of the annual output.

On account of their relatively small average scale size and the market constraints imposed by the type of coal they produced, the indigenous collieries encountered a number of specific sectoral problems. In the first place, it was often alleged that the indigenous mining enterprises were denied access to the financial resources, particularly working capital, that their European counterparts enjoyed as a result of their greater standing in the (European dominated) Calcutta money market. It was argued before both the Indian Industrial Commission (1916-18)⁸² and the Indian Fiscal Commission (1921-22)⁸³ that the indigenous collieries were starved of loan finance and that as a result, their potentiality for expansion was severely limited. The chief difficulty seems to have been the failure of the smaller concerns to convince the banks that fixed colliery assets—their only real collateral—commanded a viable enough cover in the event of bankruptcy. A.C. Banerjee

⁸²Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, Calcutta, 1919, II, pp.286-290.

⁸³Report of the Indian Fiscal Commission, Calcutta, 1923, II, paras. 7300 and 7334-39.

TABLE III
NUMBER AND OUTPUT OF COLLIERIES PRODUCING BETWEEN
10,001 TO 50,000 TONS PER ANNUM 1920-40

Year	(1) Number	(2) Output (in tons)	(3) Share in the total No. of collieries (%)	(4) Share of total output (%)
1920	220	5,358,837	32.02	29.9
21	275	6,544,628	34.12	33.9
22	265	6,304,615	30.46	33.2
23	248	6,125,929	28.12	31.2
24	258	6,417,491	32.45	30.3
25	252	6,060,700	33.07	29.1
26	223	5,652,530	32.65	27.0
27	201	5,115,133	34.05	23.4
28	178	4,795,052	33.78	21.3
29	184	4,818,247	34.33	20.5
1930	196	4,977,070	33.83	21.0
31	195	4,873,318	37.07	22.5
32	179	4,551,078	35.31	22.6
33	178	4,646,361	36.11	23.5
34	175	4,443,525	36.38	20.1
35	183	4,811,004	38.45	20.9
36	174	4,345,745	35.22	19.2
37	184	4,792,127	32.62	19.2
38	197	4,988,288	31.93	17.6
39	205	5,377,388	34.92	19.0
1940	193	4,949,624	33.45	16.8

SOURCE: Derived from the *Mahindra Report*, Appendix VII, p. 343.

representing the interests of the I.M.F. before the Holland Commission stated that:

Our difficulties in raising capital are very great...the banks generally do not give loans on the security of our colliery property however substantial they may be....The small collieries are sometimes put to such straits that they have to borrow at a rate of interest varying from 36-84% p.a.⁸⁴

No doubt part of the reluctance of the organized money market—especially the joint stock banks—to extend credit facilities to the indigenous branch of the industry was their suspicion that such

⁸⁴Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, II, p. 288.

relatively small concerns did not come under the category of being 'sound.' They did not inspire the kind of confidence that appealed to the conservative bankers, not only because of the highly illiquid nature of colliery block (which applied to all colliery undertakings irrespective of size), but also because in comparison with many of the large European enterprises with a more diversified market, perhaps an excellent dividend record, and backed by the prestige of a well-known agency house, they 'objectively' carried a much greater element of risk. As Michael Kidron has argued:

Many of the difficulties of which Indian business complained throughout the first half of the century—the inaccessibility of banks and of credit, the high cost of loans, the privileges granted to foreign borrowers and much else—were a perfectly normal response by British banks to business conditions of the time...If they dealt, by preference, with British clients and on easier terms, it was because they had a surer knowledge of their credit worthiness, and because they had close links with them at home.⁸⁵

Yet, on the other hand, Kidron does not deny that 'there was substance in the charge of racial discrimination,'⁸⁶ and at least one economic historian maintains that virtually all branches of indigenous industry in this period experienced great difficulties in obtaining loan finance simply because they were Indian.⁸⁷ A.L. Ojha may have been hinting at this when in 1921 he complained that 'the small colliery owners have not got sufficient influence to make the banks advance money....I am a colliery proprietor but they wouldn't recognise me, that is the difficulty.'⁸⁸ Later, during the Great Depression, when it was a matter of survival rather than growth, the chairman of the I.M.F. opined that many of the members were rapidly approaching insolvency because of an acute shortage of working capital. He went on to say that:

The great difference between the Indian Mining Association and us is this:—we, the Indian colliery owners, mostly do not have the advantage which our fortunate brothers have got in the matter of securing loans and overdrafts.⁸⁹

⁸⁵M. Kidron, *Foreign Investment in India*, London, 1965, p. 9.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*

⁸⁷A.K. Bagchi, 'European and Indian Entrepreneurship in India 1900-39' in E. Leach and S.N. Mukherjee (eds), *Elites in South Asia*, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 230-34.

⁸⁸Report of the Indian Fiscal Commission, op. cit., para. 7338.

⁸⁹Chairman's Speech at the A.G.M. of the I.M.F., 1933, Ann. Rep. I.M.F. (1933), p. 3.

Although these remarks need not necessarily be interpreted to mean that racial factors *per se* were at work, we would be rash to minimize the influence of prejudice on loan criteria. Nevertheless, we are more inclined to take the view that the banks would not readily turn their backs on the possibility of earning profits from any quarter. Certainly as far as the capital and new-issues market is concerned there is little evidence that European investors deliberately shied away from Indian stock. N.C. Sircar, for example, was able to attract substantial British investment, and long after Sircar had parted company with his original English partner Bernard. At least three of his public joint stock companies (Royal, Imperial and Phularitand) had Englishmen on their boards throughout the entire period of their existence.⁹⁰ Moreover, the Indian colliery owners also found it very difficult to tap the indigenous money market for loans. In 1917 the representatives of the I.M.F. rather sadly informed the Holland Commission that 'Bengali capital is mainly employed in financing people engaged in trade—jute, rice, etc.—and also advancing loans on landed property.'⁹¹ Only S.K. Karnani's Industrial Bank seemed prepared to extend credit to indigenous collieries, and then at very high rates of interest.⁹² After the war the difficulties were apparently no less since the same body informed the Central Bank enquiry committee that the indigenous collieries had to 'borrow money from indigenous bankers for the periodical development of their collieries at so high a rate of interest as 12 to 18 per cent, and in some years 24 per cent had to be given.'⁹³ In the Jharia field, the only organized indigenous banking group was the Chota Nagpur Banking Association, and they stated in their evidence before the enquiry committee that they charged 12 per cent per annum interest on loans to 'small colliery properties.'⁹⁴ This, of course, was at a time when the bank rate was only 3 per cent. We would therefore conclude that it was the high fatality rate among the small collieries, and the limited collateral they were able to offer that were the principal reasons why both the European and the indigenous money markets were reluctant to pump even short-term funds into the sector.

Another major problem faced by the Indian entrepreneurs was the limited nature of the market for the type of coal they produced. Most of those areas in the Raniganj field which contained the high quality seams had been leased out to European companies in the

⁹⁰I.L.Y.B. (1913-1927).

⁹¹Report of the Indian Industrial Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

⁹²Report of the Indian Fiscal Commission, *op. cit.*, para. 7339.

⁹³Report of the Central Bank Enquiry Committee, Calcutta, 1931, II, p. 504.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, II, p. 61.

nineteenth century—before the indigenous involvement in this industry began to fully materialize. In the case of Jharia the situation was a little different, and as we have seen, one enterprising Indian firm, Laik-Banerjee, originally held the lease of some of the most valuable sites some time prior to the quickening of European interest in the field. By the end of the first decade of this century, however, the Europeans had managed to gain a virtual monopoly of the better coal lands by buying out the original lessees. It has been alleged that one of the principal reasons for this transfer was the shortage of development funds that the early entrepreneurs had complained about; K.N. Dutta, chairman of the I.M.F. in the early 1930s, was not being wholly nostalgic when he lamented that

A very large number of the finest coal properties in the Jharia field were at one time initially exploited by pioneer Indian coal owners....Lack of finance and of marketing facilities led these early owners to make over their fine properties to European houses.⁹⁵

The indigenous proprietors were therefore left to concentrate upon producing the second class coals (which being closer to the surface required less capital investment), whose market potential was naturally more restricted than that of the higher quality grades. Furthermore, whenever the general demand for coal weakened, the price of the second grade product invariably fell more sharply than that of the superior. It was for this reason that from the middle 1920s the European firms steadily began to reduce their output of the less remunerative, high ash, coals. Thus in 1920, a quarter of the total production was of the inferior variety, but by 1928 this had fallen to only 10 per cent (falling further in the early 1930s to less than 5 per cent).⁹⁶ In an attempt to extend the outlet for this type of coal the indigenous entrepreneurs were at all times keen to popularize the use of soft coke for domestic consumption. In this respect they were belatedly following the advice given to the coal trade a century earlier by Dr. David McClelland who had strongly criticized the rural practice of burning cow dung (for cooking purposes) on the grounds that agriculture was thereby starved of manure.⁹⁷

⁹⁵*Ann. Rep. I.M.F.* (1931), p. 46.

⁹⁶*Burrows Report*, p. 243.

⁹⁷*First Report of a Committee for Investigating the Coal and Mineral Resources of India*, Calcutta, 1838, Part I, p. 18. McClelland was trying to explain why West Indian sugar had captured the imperial market; he argued that sugar production in Bengal was inefficient because of the low measure of manure inputs.

One of the very first acts of the I.M.F. (in 1914) was the preparation of a scheme for the establishment of a marketing organization which would conduct a programme of propaganda aimed at persuading the public to switch from dung (and wood) to soft coke.⁹⁸ The war and the subsequent period of boom weakened the imperative of the scheme, but in 1926, when depression loomed, the idea was rekindled. Initially, the Federation seemed to have had the wholehearted support of the I.M.A., but their joint negotiations broke down over the question of financing the suggested selling syndicate. The I.M.F. argued that a cess on the despatch of all coals should be levied but the I.M.A. was prepared to shoulder a tax on soft coke alone.⁹⁹ The Federation was therefore compelled to proceed on its own, and in 1928 they sponsored a bill in the Legislative Assembly for the statutory creation of a Soft Coke Committee. In the following year the Soft Coke Cess Act became law, and a committee consisting of seven I.M.F. and one I.M.A. representatives sitting under a government chairman was formed with power to levy a cess on all soft coke despatches.¹⁰⁰ A certain amount of publicity work was attempted and an up-country office was opened (at Cawnpore), but the problem of reaching even the bulk of the urban consumers was immense, and in the village heartland of India, dung and wood were 'free' goods. Ten years after the Act had been passed the annual consumption of soft coke had risen by little more than a lakh tons (889,000 tons in 1939 compared with 754,000 in 1929).¹⁰¹ Indeed, the fastest rate of growth of soft coke production had occurred in the decade prior to the legislation—a seven-fold increase between 1920 and 1929.¹⁰²

The nature of the vital railway service posed the indigenous entrepreneurs problems of a rather different (but equally serious) order than those experienced by their European counterparts. In fact, one of the main reasons behind the establishment of the wholly indigenous trade association in 1913 was a clash of interest between the Indian and European branches of the industry in the matter of the distribution of scarce wagon capacity.¹⁰³ The indigenous proprietors argued that whenever there was a tightening of the wagon supply situation, the railway authorities tended to favour the larger enterprises by sending them a disproportionate share of the daily allotments. From 1907 until the mid-1920s, a period when demand for wagons generally exceeded the supply, the three types of wagon¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸Golden Jubilee Souvenir, op. cit., p. 39f.

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 73ff, and the Ann. Rep. I.M.A. (1927), p. 39ff.

¹⁰⁰Procs. of the Third Legislative Assembly, Fourth Session, 1929, p. 447ff.

¹⁰¹Mahindra Report, Appendix IX, p. 345.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³First Ann. Rep. I.M.F. (1913), p. 6.

distribution schemes that were tried out, viz. the Rake System (1907 to 1917), the Special Indent System (1917 to 1922), and the Preferential System (1922 to 1925), all aroused angry opposition from within the indigenous sector since it was felt that all three, and especially the first, guaranteed the larger collieries the first call on wagon supplies.¹⁰⁴ This was never really denied by the Railway Board who defended the allotment systems on the grounds that the great profusion of small mines, each demanding a regular supply of wagons, imposed an impossible strain upon their limited resources. During, and immediately after the First World War, the entire railway network was under great pressure from many competing demands, and at such a time, the railways felt justified in concentrating their attention on those collieries which produced high outputs of the best grade coals so as to minimize the difficulties the major customers would suffer.¹⁰⁵ This line of argument was also deployed to counter the charge made in the early 1920s that the policy of railway siding provision operated unfairly and to the detriment of the smaller units. Indeed, feelings ran so high on this point that during the 1920-21 annual meeting of the I.M.F., N.K. Choudhury saw more than an element of racial prejudice at work:

Our Mr. J.N. Ghose stated that after years of trying he couldn't get sidings for his Dharmaband Colliery. He felt it might be due, his English dress notwithstanding, to his dark colour. A Mr. Pringle offered to get him the siding if he would part with half his property. Ghose followed the adage that "when the loss of the whole is threatened the wise will part with half to preserve the remainder," and made a gift of half his property to Pringle. Within six months he got the sidings. I mention this to you that you might follow the noble example of Ghose when you are in difficulty of getting a siding.¹⁰⁶

A similarly explicit charge was levelled against the Railway Board during the (public) hearings of the Ackworth Committee of 1922 to 1924, and this caused something of a stir in the daily press.¹⁰⁷ This particular grievance, however, began to subside once the post-war boom had ended, and this seems to lend a measure of support to the

¹⁰⁴Procs. of the Second Legislative Assembly, First Session, 1924, p. 881f, 912, 1138. Also Golden Jubilee Souvenir, op. cit., pp. 44-47.

¹⁰⁵Report of the Indian Coal Committee (Calcutta, 1925), I, Chapter IV.

¹⁰⁶Ann. Rep. I.M.F. (1920), p. 9.

¹⁰⁷Amrita Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, 5 February 1924. The matter was also raised in the Legislative Assembly. See the Procs. of the Second Legislative Assembly, First Session, 1924, pp. 922, 1138.

assertion of the Railway Board that it was the sudden increase in the number of small collieries between 1916 and 1922 which was chiefly responsible for the backlog of siding claims, rather than any racial explanation.¹⁰⁸

In addition to the almost daily round of altercations between the railways and the I.M.F. on the subject of the rail service (such as freight charges, handling facilities and weightment disputes), the Indian entrepreneurs were crucially concerned with the coal purchase policy of the railways. A very large proportion of the so-called independent indigenous collieries were wholly dependent on the custom of the railways. Many such concerns had no formal selling organization of their own since they disposed of their entire output directly to the monopsonistic Railway Board, and can therefore be considered as little more than raising contractors.¹⁰⁹ The chief mining engineer to the Board—the executive responsible for all aspects of coal purchase—wielded considerable power, therefore, and was in a strategic position to influence the terms of the yearly contracts. It is significant that in 1921-22, when there was a sellers market, a suggestion was made to the I.M.F. standing committee that in future, the indigenous collieries should negotiate the railway contracts as a united organization in the hope that this might counter the near absolute power of the Railway Board. The committee, however, reluctantly turned down this proposal since they had long been aware that collective action was impossible given the large number of contracting mines. The Federation felt that—at best—it might be able to persuade the mining engineer to agree to take his 'opinion' when the yearly tenders were called, but even this modest suggestion was rejected out of hand.¹¹⁰

The railways were constantly seeking to reduce their fuel bill by effecting price cuts when the time appeared opportune, and, to this end, wished to stimulate price competition for their contracts. In the depression year of 1936, for example, 'with a view to improving prices' the Federation (almost as a last resort) 'quoted pact prices' when tenders were submitted for the annual contracts. The attempt ended in chaos, however, firstly because the railway authorities, 'by allotting only small quantities of the total purchases to those owners quoting the pact prices' forced a situation of 'price cutting,' and secondly, because they threatened to reduce their open market consumption and make up their coal needs by increasing the

¹⁰⁸Golden Jubilee Souvenir, *op. cit.*, p. 61f.

¹⁰⁹J.B. Ross, Presidential Address to the Mining, Metallurgical and Geological Institute of India, 1939, *Trans. M.G.M.I.I.*, 36, 1940, p. 4.

¹¹⁰Golden Jubilee Souvenir, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

output from their own mines.¹¹¹ Once again, in 1938 and 1939 (when the market had considerably improved), the monopsonistic power of the railways was further demonstrated when a number of indigenous proprietors tendered to supply Kajora and lower grade Jharia coals at a common rate of Rs 4-12 and Rs 4-4 per ton, respectively. The chief mining engineer made it known that he intended to refuse to even consider accepting such prices, and once the ensuing panic had settled, the price finally quoted was under Rs 3-0 for both seams.¹¹² In fact, it was the stated aim of the railways to spread their purchases of coal over 'a wide number of collieries to give the whole industry a chance to secure tenders'¹¹³—a policy which though intended to equitably distribute orders, had the effect of virtually eliminating the possibility of any selling combine emerging.

Whatever the structure of the selling market, however, the large number of separate units which comprised the indigenous sector of the industry meant that an inherent lack of unity was always inevitable. This was clearly recognized by the Indian entrepreneurs themselves, especially during the periods of depression. In 1927, for instance, the Federation in its memorandum to the Government of Bihar and Orissa calling for an enquiry into the causes of the depression, noted that :

The industry is fragmented into numerous ownerships and managements. No other important Indian industry is confronted with this problem. The obvious result of this over-multiplication of independent mines is that it renders corporate action impossible.¹¹⁴

As the situation became more desperate the I.M.F. became increasingly conscious of this structural weakness. In 1929, M.N. Mukerjee began his presidential address with the revealing observation that, 'Our own output is being kept up in inverse ratio to the ruling price,' and went on to say that :

I am disposed to ask myself whether 90 per cent of the troubles we suffer from cannot be met by a proper organisation of the industry. Few Indian colliery owners realize today that no industry can be stabilised if individual producers each pursue their own policies independent of the industry as a whole. A trade combination is of paramount importance under modern conditions.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹*Ann. Rep. I.M.F.* (1936), p. 53.

¹¹²J.B. Ross, Presidential Address, *op. cit.*, p. 4f.

¹¹³*Procs. of the Fourth Legislative Assembly*, Third Session, 1932, p. 2165.

¹¹⁴*Legislative Council Debates*, March 1927, XV, p. 316.

¹¹⁵*Ann. Rep. I.M.F.* (1929), p. 16.

It is perhaps significant that the first concrete proposal for a statutory restriction on output came from the ranks of the Federation; they had recognized that unless the government were to be brought in to administer and regulate such a scheme, failure would be certain given the number of collieries involved.¹¹⁶ As A.C. Banerjee pointed out in 1932, a united selling organization could not be expected to emerge on a purely voluntary basis—there were too many individual interests.¹¹⁷ Yet, it was precisely because such a proposal demanded active government participation that the chance of it being effected was quite remote.

CONCLUSION

Although the development of the coal industry prior to independence was largely the result of European capitalist initiative, there has always been an important—but subordinate—indigenous entrepreneurial and financial involvement. From the time of Dwarkanath Tagore the mining of the 'black diamond' has presented opportunities for enrichment which Indian businessmen and speculators have not been averse to exploiting. Partly because of their geographic proximity to the main coal-bearing areas, it was the Bengalis who were the first of the indigenous elements to be attracted to the industry. The widespread notion that they displayed an antipathetic attitude towards industrial ventures is clearly erroneous in regard to coal mining. Between 1890 and 1920 Bengali entrepreneurs played no small part in the dynamic expansion of output that signalled the industry's coming of age; and some of their number—the most notable examples being Laik-Banerjee and Company, and N.C. Sircar and Sons—established colliery enterprises which rivalled the powerful British managing agency combines—albeit for relatively brief periods. The depression that followed the First World War, however, was so severe and protracted that a great many Bengali concerns were forced into liquidation. The asset vacuum that resulted enabled immigrant trading groups such as the Marwaris, Gujaratis, Kutchis, Punjabis, and Sindis—who had already established a foothold in the industry before and during the war¹¹⁸—to substantially extend their interests. By the end of the inter-war era it was these communities who dominated the indigenous sector: the Bengalis were all but a spent force.

¹¹⁶*Ann. Rep. I.M.F.* (1932), pp. 48-52.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹¹⁸The crucial role of war profits earned by the Marwaris has been partially explored by T.A. Timberg in 'Three Types of the Marwari Firm,' *I.E.S.H.R.*, X, No. 1, March 1973.

At the turn of this century approximately one-fifth of the total output of coal was mined by Indian owned enterprises, and four decades later this had increased (though not steadily) to one-third. The great majority of indigenous collieries, however, occupied only a secondary place in the coal industry as a whole. Before 1939 the typical Indian firm consisted of an individual or family proprietorship, relatively small in scale size (producing less than 50,000 tons a year, and more frequently less than 10,000 tons) and mining second class coal from very shallow depths. With minimal investment in fixed plant, these enterprises were able to quickly respond to any change in demand, and this explains the wild fluctuations in the number of working collieries over the period. By virtue of these structural characteristics the indigenous entrepreneurs encountered some specific sectoral problems. The most damaging and intractable of these included, firstly, the extreme difficulty of raising loan finance from the organized (and unorganized) money market of Calcutta. Secondly, the limited and conditional nature of the demand for the high-ash, low-volatile coals that they specialized in producing (the quality grades are generally found at lower depths than the second class varieties, and hence require much greater capital investment). Thirdly, the sector did not possess sufficient economic muscle to counter the railway authorities in their dual capacity as (monopolistic) suppliers of transport services on the one hand, and as purchasers of the mineral on the other. Finally, despite the endeavours of both indigenous trade associations, it proved impossible to reconcile the conflicting interests—subjective as well as objective—of several hundred independent colliery owners in the face of economic depression.

In the last analysis, however, the essential weaknesses of the indigenous colliery entrepreneurs stemmed from their subordinate position vis-a-vis the European corporate concerns. The finest colliery properties, the most remunerative markets, the prestige and standing of the managing agency firms in the capital and money markets, their greater resources of managerial personnel, and finally, the strength of their political lobby, were the basic factors which ensured European hegemony. It took the cataclysm of independence to alter the fundamental balance of power within this industry.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ann. Rep. Chief Insp. Mines	<i>Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Mines in India</i> (Calcutta, 1894).
Burrows Rep.	<i>Report of the Coal Mining Committee</i> (Delhi, 1937).
Deshpande Rep.	<i>Report of an Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in the Coal Mining Industry</i> (Delhi, 1946).
I.I.Y.B.	<i>Investors India Year Book</i> (Compiled by Place, Siddons and Gough; Calcutta, 1911-1940).
I.M.A.	Indian Mining Association. This was a predominantly European trade association which published Annual Reports from 1892/93 onwards, printed in Calcutta.
I.M.F.	Indian Mining Federation. This was the original indigenous trade association which published Annual Reports from 1913 onwards, also printed in Calcutta.
Mahindra Rep.	<i>Report of the Indian Coalfields' Committee</i> (Delhi, 1946).
N.A.I.	National Archives of India.
R.C.L.	<i>The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India</i> (H.M.S.O., 1931).
Rep. Prod. Consum. of Coal	<i>Report on the Production and Consumption of Coal in India</i> (Calcutta, annually 1907-1950). N.B. The word "Notes" was used between 1907-1911, and after 1931 the series was renamed <i>Indian Coal Statistics</i> .
Trans. M.G.M.I.I.	<i>Transactions of the Mining, Geological and Metallurgical Institute of India</i> (Calcutta, 1906-1940).

Marvari Historical Chronicles: Sources for the Social and Cultural History of Rajasthan

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Having won the great battle, Rao Tido returned to Maheva with great wealth in train. Upon arrival, he divided up the wealth and property. To the Carans and Bhats he gave many cows, many female camels and buffalo. And there were noble songs (*vada git*) and exalted poems (*vada kavitt*) recited of the glorious battle and the renowned victory.¹

The poets are the chief, though not the sole, historians of Western India; . . . they speak in a peculiar tongue, which requires to be translated into the sober language of probability. To compensate for their magniloquence and obscurity, their pen is free: the depotism of the Rajpoot princes does not extend to the poet's lay, which flows unconfined except by the shackles of the *chhund bhojunga*, or 'Serpentine stanza'; . . . On the other hand, there is a sort of compact or understanding between the bard and the prince, a barter of 'solid pudding against empty praise,' whereby the fidelity of the poetic chronicle is somewhat impaired. The sale of 'fame' as the bards term it, by the court-laureates and historiographers of Rajasthan, will continue until there shall arise in the community a class sufficiently enlightened and independent to look for no other recompense for literary labor than public distinction.²

Among the most important primary sources for the study of the social and cultural history of medieval Rajasthan (c. 1500-1800) are the traditions, clan histories and genealogies of the Rajputs. These prose sources, known in Rajasthani as *bat*, *khyat*, *vigat*, *pidhiavali*, and *vamsavali*, are written predominantly in *Dimgal bhasa* or West-

¹Vat Tidai Chadavat ri, in *Vatnam ro Jhumakho*, ed. M. Sarma, Bisau, Rajasthan Sahitya Samiti, n.d., Part 3, p. 43. This translation and those from following Marvari texts are mine.

²J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Calcutta, Society for the Resuscitation of Indian Literature, Coronation Edition, 1902, I, iii.

ern Rajasthani.³ They represent a segment of a wider body of Rajasthani literature in both prose and poetry which has its base in oral tradition,⁴ and which was preserved and transmitted in Rajasthan by Caran, Bhat, Rao, Motisar and other specialist castes.⁵

Much initial cataloguing and analysis of these kinds of materials was done in the early twentieth century by L. P. Tessitori.⁶ Following him, a growing number of Indian scholars, knowledgeable in the dialects of Rajasthan and Western scholars concerned with oral traditions, have been involved in more extensive analysis of these sources and their use for historical writing. Because of the increasing interest in and importance of these sources, I have two purposes in writing this essay. The first is to present a detailed description of the Marvari prose materials from Jodhpur dating from the seventeenth century, with which I have been working, and of the specialist castes traditionally involved in their preservation and transmission. The second is to discuss briefly the way in which I have approached these mate-

³The term Dimgal designates the Marvari or western Rajasthani dialect of the late medieval period in Rajasthan (fifteenth to eighteenth centuries). Both it and what is understood under the term 'Gujarati' have their base in post-Apabhramsa, and were at one time the same language, termed by Tessitori 'Old Western Rajasthani' or 'Old Gujarati.' Only in the fifteenth century did Marvari or Dimgal develop its own characteristics which mark it today as a regional dialect in its own right. See L. P. Tessitori, 'Notes on the Grammar of the Old Western Rajasthan with Special Reference to Apabhramsa and to Gujarati and Marwari,' *The Indian Antiquary*, January-February, 1914, p. 21; and, S. Lalas, 'Rajasthani Bhasa ka Vivecan,' *Rajasthani Sabd Kos*, Copasni, Rajasthani Sodh Samsthan, I (1962), 1-10.

⁴For a discussion of these and other forms of Rajasthani literature, see (a) N. S. Bhati, 'Bhumika,' *Parampara*, Copasni, Rajasthani Sodh Samsthan, Part 11, 1961, pp. 9-13; (b) 'Rajasthani Sahitya ka Adikal,' *Parampara*, ed. N. S. Bhati, Copasni, Rajasthani Sodh Samsthan, Part 12, 1961; and (c) 'Rajasthani Sahitya ka Madhyakal,' *Parampara*, ed. N. S. Bhati, Copasni, Rajasthani Sodh Samsthan, Parts 15-16, 1963.

⁵For an introductory discussion of these particular castes and their roles in the preservation and transmission of oral traditions, see M. Menariya, *Rajasthani Bhasa aur Sahitya*, Prayaga, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, V.S. 2017, pp. 31-40.

⁶L. P. Tessitori, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Bardic and Historical Manuscripts*, Section I, Parts 1 & 2; Section II, Part 1, Calcutta, 1917-18; 'A Progress Report on the Work done during the Year 1916 in Connection with the Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana,' *J. Asiatic Society of Bengal*, N.S. 13 (1917), 195-252; 'A Progress Report on the Work done during the Year 1917 in Connection with the Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajasthan,' *J. Asiatic Society of Bengal*, N.S. 15 (1919), 5-79; 'A Progress Report on the Work done during the Year 1918 in Connection with the Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana,' *J. Asiatic Society of Bengal*, N.S. 16 (1920), 251-79; 'A Scheme for the Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana,' *J. Asiatic Society of Bengal*, N.S. 10 (1914), 373-410.

rials and provide some illustrative examples of their value for the social and cultural historian. These examples will be given in the context of work in which I am currently engaged on Mughal period Rajasthan.

The bat (*vat*) or 'tale' is a specialized form of the Dimgal prose narrative. The term itself is derived from Sanskrit *varta*, meaning 'account, tiding or word.' In Rajasthani, the word bat is often used interchangeably with the terms *kahani* (story, fable) and *lok-katha* (folk tale). But as a genre of literature, the bat has developed its own form and content which differentiates it from both of the above.⁷ In contrast to them, it is essentially an 'inspirational biographical narrative' which deals either with the life history of an important individual, such as the leader of a particular Rajput clan (*kul*), or with particular episodes in his life, which are seen to be significant. Some even take the form of a diary of events, often with dates included. This is particularly true of *batam* (tales) of more recent origin, indicating influence from official written records.⁸ *Batam* also concern themselves with important events, such as a battle, the settlement of hostilities (*vair*) between two different Rajput groups, the conquest of land, or with a marriage and relationships within a family. Many times partial genealogies are included in such narratives, around which the stories are themselves shaped.⁹

The recitation of *batam* was traditionally the domain of learned specialists of the caste of Maru Carans, who maintained hereditary attachments to particular Rajput families. Although there were no special occasions set aside specifically for the recitation of tales, recitations did take place frequently at the homes of Rajputs before their families. At such times, Carans would be summoned specially for the purpose of relating family traditions. In addition, *batam* would be recited on religious holidays and at festivals, such as Holi and Divali. On these occasions, gatherings called *afim gali* (opium giving) took place at the homes of local rulers (Rajas) and prominent nobles (*Thakurs*—lit. 'God, master, sovereign'; title of both a ruler or one of his subordinates). At these gatherings, the presentation of opium was always preceded by a Caran's recitation of a poem or a story, referred to in Rajasthan as *amal nai ramg denau* (to give

⁷M. Sarma, 'Bhumika,' *Vatam ro Jhumakho*, Part 1, pp. i-vii, Part 3, p. 1, and Bhati, 'Bhumika,' *Parampara*, Part 11, 1961, p. 10.

⁸See for example 'Rao Candrasen ri Bat,' and 'Rao Udaishimgh ri Bat,' *Parampara*, Part 11, 1961, pp. 78-90 and pp. 91-93, respectively. See also Bibliographical Note No. 3 at the end of this essay.

⁹See for example *Nainsi ri Khyat*, ed. P. V. Muni, Jodhpur, Rajasthan Pracyaviddhya Pratisthan, III (1964), 153-59, 'Vat Mohilam ri,' and III, 239-46, 'Vat Camdravatam ri.'

thanks). The poems and stories offered here honoured not only Rajputs, but also other great men and warriors, sages and benefactors, with no special distinction made regarding the caste or status or the person so honoured. The presence of a Caran was considered essential on such occasions, for without him, the festival could not proceed.¹⁰

The recitation of such tales generally began with a poem (*doha*, *git*)¹¹ praising the characters of the tale, stating a moral or making an observation about the cultural or geographical peculiarities of the area with which the characters were connected. This introduction was followed in turn by short praises of God before the actual narrative commenced.¹² Recitations of this kind, particularly those done in the homes of Rajputs, served an extremely important function in Rajput society for batam were one of the major media through which young Rajputs were traditionally educated. It was through this medium that they were brought into the history of their families, lineages and clans, were schooled in the moral values of their fathers, and were tutored in their future roles in society.¹³

The Caran specialists who acted as the primary preservers and transmitters of these tales received instruction in the specialized knowledge of their profession as bard and poet from learned members of particular Caran families with whom they associated themselves. An elderly Caran would usually act as instructor for young boys from a number of different families, teaching them the basics of composition, poetry and narration. Instruction continued at home by precept and example, where the father and older male relations recited poems and tales and further schooled their sons in the various poetical forms, while stressing memorization and oral recitation. Subjects studied included not only history and literature, but also religion, astrology and omen reading.

¹⁰Following such recitations, opium mixed with water and placed in the palm of the hand in the form of a ball was offered to those present. The senior Thakur always offered the first palm to the Caran, out of honour and respect.

¹¹Songs and poems of praise or edification. Git is a major form of Dimgal poetry, having a specific metre of its own, and generally consisting of 84 lines, though there are variations. Doha (or *duho*) is a rhymed couplet of Dimgal poetry, also with its own special metre.

¹²Bhati, 'Bhumika,' *Rajasthan Bat-Samgrah*, Cqasni, Rajasthan Sodh Samsthan, n.d., pp. 13-14.

¹³See G.M. Carstairs, *The Twice Born*, Bloomington, Indian University Press, 1967, p. 111, for his comments on the ways such tales were used in the education of young Rajput boys. While in Rajasthan, I also heard tales recited by elderly Rajputs while they sat around a fire in the evening in their villages, before an audience of male relations, friends and other villagers who had come to smoke a pipe with the Rajput or simply to pay court.

Young Carans in turn recited before interested audiences, constantly improving upon narration and style. More ambitious and talented students looked to a few Caran villages for more comprehensive instruction and guidance, where masters accepted both close relatives and others as pupils. In order to learn languages other than Dimgal, bright pupils also attached themselves to different masters teaching Sanskrit, Urdu and Persian, and to men who had specialized knowledge of music, history, astrology and other subjects.

For the majority of Carans, the art of recitation and poetic composition was only a hereditary pastime, subordinate to primary occupations such as horse and cattle trading, military service or agriculture.¹⁴ But a small number made this art a full-time profession. Many of the latter maintained hereditary associations with particular Rajput families, whose histories and traditions they were responsible for preserving. Among a few distinguished bards and poets, there was also competition for the favours of local Rajas and prominent Thakurs. A few of the most prestigious Carans were also accepted in the royal *darbars*, attaining the rank of *Kaviraja* or 'court-laureate,' and assuming positions of great influence because of the power of their words. Such Carans were generally given the honorary title of *barhat* (lit. 'guardian of the gate').¹⁵ These Carans were also, in part, responsible for the composition of poems and official histories of the royal line and of prominent cadet branches. All Carans who maintained attachments to Rajput families were traditionally rewarded with grants of land called *sasan*,¹⁶ which were

¹⁴T.N. Dave has written that sons had to follow their fathers' profession as bard, irrespective of whether they had their fathers' talents or not, but this does not seem to be the case. See T.N. Dave, 'The Institution of Bards in Western India,' *Eastern Anthropologist*, IV, No. 4, June-August, 1951, p. 167.

¹⁵Barhat was a title given by Rajput rulers to Caran bards held in great esteem. The title *polpat* which also means 'guardian of the gate,' was given to other Carans attached to the thikanas of prominent Thakurs. Generally, *polpat* Carans and their families maintained very close hereditary relationships with particular families of Rajputs, the title being given only to the most trusted and faithful. It was their duty to see to the defence and safety of their Rajput benefactors, and under siege, they would be the first line of defence at the gate of the fort. Barhat and *polpat* Carans also held the right to be first in line (ahead of Brahmans) at weddings of their Rajput patron families to receive the *neg* or traditional offerings of money by the bride's side. See Lalas, *Rajasthan Sabd Kos*, III (1970), Part 1, p. 2619.

¹⁶The word *sasan* comes from the Apabhramsa term *svasasan*, meaning 'self-rule,' and was applied to special land grants made to Carans because a local ruler's writ against fugitives did not operate in such territory. See K. S. Ujwal, *Bhagavati Shri Karniji Maharaj: A Biography*, Jodhpur, Jodhpur University Press, n.d., p. 16.

held in perpetuity by the descendants of the Caran receiving the original reward.¹⁷

The importance of the Caran in medieval Rajput society is set forth in one passage from a seventeenth century Marvari chronicle. The passage below deals with certain Caran bards who migrated into the land of the Rathor ruler of Jodhpur, Rao Maldeji (1532-1562) and took up positions at his court.

Raval Maldeji¹⁸ had given the two villages of Bhadresro and Kor to the Carans, Barhat Isar Suravat and Barhat Aso Ditavat. But, seeing the rising power of Rao Malde [of Jodhpur], Aso [left Jaisalmer] and came to Jodhpur in great hope and expectation. He sang many songs of praise [*git*], and he composed and recited a special poem [*gun caurasi rupak*] for Kumvar Candrasen. During this time, the Raoji captured Nagaur from the Khan.¹⁹ Prior to Malde's conquest, the Khan had given Barhat Aso the two villages Tikau and Ghughariyali. It is said that the Raoji revoked all *sasan* grants given to Carans by the Khan, and included among these were Aso's. In response, Aso had an entreaty made to the Raoji: 'We had great expectations that we would receive much [land], but instead, villages have been taken from us which were our fathers' and grandfathers' [*bap dada ra*]. Why has the Raoji acted in this manner?' Those who came before the Raoji asked him about this matter and he replied: 'I will not agree to sanction land given by the Khan. I am offering new *sasan* villages in their place. Go and occupy them.' In response, the Carans, Aso and Raghav—all five sons of Dit, assembled. With them also was their sister, Depu. They sat and performed *dharna*²⁰ before the door of the Raoji, but he remained unmoved for several days.

Finally, he relented and said: 'Alright! Take those villages also if that is what you want. I grant them to you.' But Aso and Raghav

¹⁷I am grateful for much of the above information about Carans to Kailasdan Ujval, a prestigious Caran poet and writer, and member of the IAS from Jodhpur, and to Narain Singh Samdu, my Caran assistant in Jodhpur while I was doing my Ph.D. research in 1971-72, under a grant from the Fulbright-Hayes Graduate Fellowship Committee.

¹⁸Raval Maldeji Lunkaranot Bhati, ruler of Jaisalmer, 1550-1561. *Tavarikh-Jaisalmer*, ed. Mumhata Nathmalji, Ajmer, Rajputana Gazette Yamtralaya, 1885, p. 52.

¹⁹Malde's capture of Nagaur from Muhammed Daulat Khan took place around 1595. See Nainsi, *Marvar ra Parganam ri Vigat*, ed. N.S. Bhati, Jodhpur, Rajasthan Pracyaviddhya Pratisthan, II (1969), 421; and V.S. Bhargava, *Marwar and the Mughal Emperors*, Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1966, p. 22.

²⁰Dharna—the act of sitting doggedly before the house of someone and fasting in order to extort favours or force compliance with a demand.

replied: 'Such an incident has never happened before. If we accept these villages from you today, and tomorrow Nagaur comes under someone else's authority, then he may also say—"Now take these villages in gift from me." This we cannot endure.' So Aso, Raghav, Cago, Mehajal—all five brothers and their sister, Depu, slashed their throats at Jodhpur.²¹ Afterwards, the Bhatiyani, Umade,²² had them taken and cared for, and their wounds cleaned and bound. Umade also gave them new clothing to wear, and after their wounds had healed, she bid them farewell. Having received the generous hospitality and sincere affection of Umade, they said: 'Raj!²³ You have given us new life.' In turn, Umade entreated: 'If you have been pleased by what I have done, I would ask this much of you, that you do not speak ill of or abuse the Raoji.' They answered: 'We will not do so.'²⁴

Two points are of interest in this passage: one regarding the relationship between the Rajput and the Caran, referred to by Tod as involving the 'barter of solid pudding against empty praise,'²⁵ and a second concerning the inviolate nature of the Caran himself as a person. With respect to the first, there has been a tendency on the part of historians to malign the Caran and to consider the content of the traditions he preserves as grossly distorted. Tessitori has remarked, for example, that 'there is probably no bardic literature in any part of the world, in which truth is so marked by fiction, or so disfigured by hyperbole, as in the bardic literature of Rajputana.'²⁶ While this may be so, it must be remembered that the role of the Caran is not that of an 'objective' historian, but that of a seer, a guardian of legend and a conservator of tradition. As a seer, he is not a conscious manipulator of 'truth' and historical fact, but a preserver of the truth of what he sees.²⁷ This truth lies less in the realm of

²¹The rite of traga or suicide by cutting one's throat, the ultimate weapon held by a Caran to force compliance with his wishes. Responsibility for the death of a Caran was considered one of the greatest sins, comparable to the killing of a Brahman.

²²Umade Bhatiyani was the daughter of Raval Lunkaran Jaitsinghot Bhati, the ruler of Jaisalmer, 1529-1550, and the second wife of Rao Maldeji. See *Tavarikh-Jaisalmer*, p. 50; and Nainsi, *Marvar ra Parganam*..., I (1968), 55.

²³Raj—lit. 'ruler or sovereign'; a form of address conveying respect and deference.

²⁴Nainsi, *Marvar ra Parganam*..., I (1968), 53-54; see also 'Rao Malde ri Bat,' *Parampara*, Part 11, 1961, p. 75.

²⁵See n. 2, p. 30, above.

²⁶Tessitori, 'Progress Report for the Work done during the Year 1916...', p. 228.

²⁷See A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

objective fact than in religious values and social ideals, the means of attaining life and happiness.

This role is closely connected with the sacred and inviolate nature of the Caran's person, and relates to the particular powers the Caran is seen to possess.²⁸ In Rajasthani society, the Caran caste (*jati*) (and that of the Bhat, also) ranks directly below the Brahman and above the Rajput.²⁹ Like the Brahman, the Caran is considered to possess the power of the 'word,' the corpus of sounds by which the moral order of society is maintained and altered. His name itself means 'transmitter of fame and renown.'³⁰ As this suggests, it is essentially the Caran who supports the caste ranks of individuals and groups in society. As bard and poet, he possesses not only the *git* and *doha* (songs and poems of praise) and the *varta* and *bat* (inspirational historical narratives), 'sounds' which exemplarize the Rajput and his actions, and in turn support his rank and the order of society itself, but also the *bhumd* (a form of ridicule),³¹ the power of which is seen capable of altering the social order and the ranks of individuals in it. These powers were traditionally employed both in the courts and *thikanas* (estates) of the Rajputs, and on the battle fields, where Caran bards accompanied their patrons and 'transmitted' valour, bravery and heroic idealism to them through their words. Their ultimate weapons for obtaining redress and for maintaining the social order and tradition were the *bhumd* (ridicule) and the rite of *traga* (death by suicide), which were seen to cast an irrevocable curse upon the person against whom they were used.³²

1964, pp. 28, 220, for his remarks regarding the bard as historian and seer. My Caran informants in Jodhpur always stressed the high personal honour of Carans which was involved in the accurate preservation and transmission of traditions.

²⁸See A. M. Shah and R. G. Shroff, 'The Vahivanca Barots of Gujarat: A Caste of Genealogists and Mythographers,' in *Traditional India: Structure and Change*, ed. M. Singer, Philadelphia, American Folklore Society, 1959, pp. 43-44. Shah and Shroff consider that the sacredness of the Caran and the Bhat in Gujarat stems from their position as *Deviputta* (lit. 'son of a goddess') or worshippers of the mother-goddess (*mata*). In Rajasthan, Carans and Bhats are also generally worshippers of Siva-Mahadev's female consort, the *sakti* or the *kuldevi* (clan goddess). However, the name *Deviputta* is not mentioned in any of the texts from the seventeenth century, nor was it mentioned in conversation with Carans as being of particular importance.

²⁹Carans and Bhats rank below the Brahman because they do not possess the Veda, the corpus of sounds out of which the universe and all in it are seen to have been created.

³⁰Menariya, *Rajasthani Bhasa aur Sahitya*, p. 32. *Carayamti kirtim iti Carana*—'they transmit fame and renown, therefore they are Carans'. See also 'Marvar ki Kaumom ka Itihas...', *Report Mardum-sumari Raj Marvar, babat san 1891 isvi*, Jodhpur, Census Press, 1895, Part 3, pp. 328-29.

³¹*Bhumd*—a specialized form of ridicule in poetic metre, which is recited only.

³²Another approach to the understanding of the position of the Caran and

The bat (prose narrative or tale) is one of the basic forms of oral tradition in Rajasthan. The other basic forms among the literature with which I am concerned are the *pidhiavali* (lit. 'series or line of generations') and the *vamsavali* (lit. 'line of descendants'), both forms of the genealogy.³³ The primary feature which distinguishes them is the manner in which they are preserved. The *pidhiavali* is maintained by members of the Bhat³⁴ of genealogist caste for particular families of other castes (in this case Rajput) with whom they have hereditary relationships of service. Such genealogies are kept in large *bahis* (registers) and are considered the property of the Bhats themselves. They are recited on periodic occasions when a Bhat will appear at the home of the family whose genealogy he keeps in order to make appropriate new entries into his *bahis*. These occasions do not coincide with any special events, but take place only after long intervals of up to several years, when there has been time for new births, deaths, and marriages since the last entries were made.

When a Bhat appears at the home of his *yajamana* (patron), he spreads out his *bahis* in front of the home and begins to recite the genealogy of the family in order to identify himself as the genuine Bhat genealogist of that particular family. Upon acknowledgment of this fact, the new entries are made and are followed in turn by a full recitation of the genealogy. The making of new entries is always done in the presence of family and village elders as well as curious onlookers, who assemble when the Bhat recites the genealogy.³⁵ These recitations are also accompanied by a celebration in honour of the Bhat, during which he is offered specially prepared foods and gifts of clothing, jewelry and money.³⁶ The elaborateness of such celebra-

his 'power' is a structural one, similar to that employed by Victor Turner in his book, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company, 1969, especially Ch. 3, pp. 94-130, 'Liminality and Communitas.' My approach does not contradict Turner's, but is rather intended to be consistent with the categories of thought present in Rajasthani society.

³³Bhati, 'Bhumika,' *Parampara*, Part 11, 1961, p. 11.

³⁴The word Bhat (from Sanskrit *bhatta*) originally meant 'one with knowledge of prayers, eulogies and invocations.' But it has come to refer to those with specialized knowledge of genealogies. There are Bhats for all castes, known by different names depending on the caste they serve. Those for the Rajputs, for example, are called 'Varva.' See Menariya, *Rajasthani Bhasa aur Sahitya*, p. 37.

³⁵Dave, 'The Institution of Bards . . .', p. 168. See also Shah and Shroff, 'The Vahivanca Barots . . .', pp. 48-49, for a discussion of the manner in which entries are made by genealogists in Gujarat.

³⁶I have not personally witnessed any recitations of genealogies by Bhats, but was informed about such procedures and formalities by Rajput informants in Jodhpur. I was also told by Kumvar Gopal Singhji, a Ratansinghot Jodha Rathor of Thikana Bhadrarjun, Marvar, that two different families of Bhats

tions is indicative of the important position which Bhats, like Carans, have traditionally held in Rajput society, for it is they who are resorted to in matters of inheritance, adoption or defence of rights to land. It is also they who possess the 'power' of the pidhiavali, the corpus of sounds which trace descent and heredity, and which legitimize a proper order among castes and men. This importance is shown by the title of these specialists, 'Bhat Raja'.³⁷

In contrast to pidhiavali, vamsavali are kept by and are the property of families themselves. They are maintained by genealogists who come to the home to make new entries.³⁸ Vamsavali are generally found only for particular prominent families, such as those of local rulers or important land holders. In addition, while both pidhiavali and vamsavali record descent, that is, ties or association by male blood to a particular ancestor (*vadero*), the vamsavali are generally more elaborate, including in conjunction with the names of ancestors reaching back to clan founders or to the immediate founders of a particular line, descriptions of important events which occurred during the time of members of the family.³⁹ Such descriptions take the form of recorded oral traditions in prose and poetry about the exploits of more distant ancestors,⁴⁰ and short biographical sketches with information on grants of land, battles, or service for a local ruler for members of the more recent past, often with dates supplied.

A typical example of this type of genealogy is the *Rao Malde ri Pidhi* (Genealogy of the Sons of Rao Malde), found in the Rathor Rajput clan history of Kaviraja Murardanji and written in the reign of Maharaja Jasvamsinghji of Jodhpur (1634-1678). The following is a short excerpt:⁴¹

were associated with his family, one of which maintained a genealogy of the male line, and the other of which kept lists of the female line, of both daughters of the family and their places of marriage, and of women who came into the family through marriage.

³⁷Nahta, 'Rajasthani Aitihasik Batom va Khyatom ki Parampara,' *Paramapara*, Part 11, 1961, pp. 114-15.

³⁸R. Tripathi, 'Madhyakalin Khyat ka Sahitya,' *Parampara*, Part 15-16, 1963, p. 289.

³⁹This distinction is only a general one, and fairly elaborate pidhiavali, often included in larger clan histories, are also found.

⁴⁰See, for example, *Rathaur Vams ri Vigat evam Rathauram ri Vamsavali*, ed. Fatehsingh, Jodhpur, Rajasthan Pracyaviddhya Pratisthan, 1969.

⁴¹Kaviraj Murardanji ki Khyat ka Tarjuma, MSS No. 25658, No. 1, Rajasthan Pracyaviddhya Pratisthan, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, pp. 591-92. See also C. von Furer-Haimendorf, 'The Historical Value of Indian Bardic Literature,' in *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, ed. C. H. Phillips, London, Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 90. Furer-Haimendorf has remarked that the genealogies are in large measure simply bare lists of names without dates. While this statement is true of genealogies giving the names of very early

18.⁴² *Ram Maldeot* [Ram, the son of Maldeo]—

Ram was the eldest son, but Rao Malde had him driven out of the land [*dharti*],⁴³ even over the protests of his wives [*raj lok*].⁴⁴ Candrasen⁴⁵ was then designated successor to the throne [*patvi*].⁴⁶ Later, when Rao Malde died, Rao Ram went before Patsah [*Akbar*] and brought an Imperial army [to help him regain his position]. Jodhpur was then taken from Candrasen, and Ram was granted Sojhat⁴⁷ [by the Patsah]. After some time, he was given Siriyari village⁴⁸ [in exchange], and this village became his seat of rule [*thakurai*].⁴⁹ The Sayyids meanwhile came and took possession of Sojhat. Ram died in *Vikram Samvat* 1630, *Jeth, vadi* 3 [1573 A.D.].

19. *Karan Ramot*—

The eldest son [of Ram]. Karan succeeded his father first. But on the day of succession, he presented a *siropao*⁵⁰ to Rathor Surajmal Prathirajot before the others, and thus offended Rathor Mahesdas Kumpavat and Rathor Askaran Deidasot.⁵¹ They sided with Kaloji [the second son of Ram], and they said to Karan: 'We refuse to grant the throne [*tiko*]⁵² to you.' At this time, Patsah [Akbar] came

ancestors of particular lines, or of those tracing descent from mythical Puranic ancestors, it is not true of those dealing with later historical periods.

⁴²This number (18, 19, etc.) indicates the number of generations in descent from the founding male ancestor of the Marvar Rathors, Rao Sihoji Setramot (d. 1273).

⁴³Dharti—lit. 'the earth, land (which has been conquered and is ruled by a king)'; from the Sanskrit *dharitri*—'a female bearer, supporter.'

⁴⁴Raj lok—lit. 'ruling people.'

⁴⁵Ruler of Jodhpur, c. 1562-1581.

⁴⁶Patvi—lit. 'one of the throne (pat).'

⁴⁷Sojat is located on the left bank of the Sukri river (a tributary of the Luni river) not far from the western edge of the Aravalli hills, and about 45 miles due south-east of Jodhpur City. The town is situated around a high sand-stone butte which rises from the surrounding plains, making it one of the few defensible sites on the eastern edge of Marvar and one of the 'gates' to this region. The district around is also one of the more fertile in Marvar. See *Rajputana Gazetteers, Volume III-A, The Western Rajputana States Residency and the Bikaner Agency*, ed. Major K. D. Erskine, Allahabad, The Pioneer Press, 1909, pp. 221-23.

⁴⁸Siriyari village is located not far from Sojat town, in Marvar.

⁴⁹Thakurai—lit. 'of the Thakur'; hence, sovereignty, rulership, seat of rule.

⁵⁰Siropao—lit. 'head and feet'; a dress or piece of clothing, such as a cloak, reaching from the head (*sir*) to the feet (*pao*): an honorary gift, or favour.

⁵¹All three of these Rajputs are great-great-grandsons of Rao Rinmalji Rathor, ruler of Mamdor (near Jodhpur City), c. 1428-1438. Surajmai Prathirajot and Askaran Deidasot are also paternal cousins, their grandfather, Jaitsi Udavat, being a grandson of Rao Rinmal. Mahesdas Kumpavat is descended from Rinmal's eldest son, Akhairaj, and one of his sons, Mahiraj.

⁵²Tiko (or tilak)—the red mark placed on the forehead of a ruler at the

to Ajmer, and some [of the Rathors] went to him and entreated: 'The Patsah should decide the succession and apply the *tiko*.' [Akbar] agreed to do so. Later, others came before the Patsah, and then, the Patsahji asked Mahesdasji: 'Who is the eldest brother?' The Thakur replied: 'Karan is the eldest, but we are all servants [*cakar*]⁵³ of Kaloji.' Afterwards, the Patsah confirmed the succession of Kalo, and retained Karan in his own service. Akbar then proceeded to Gujarat, and there Karan died in battle [*kamm ayo*].⁵⁴ 20. Bhimv Karanot—

He received the grant [*pato*]⁵⁵ of Camvalod village from the Ranoji [of Mevar].

21. Kanji Bhimvot—
[No information]

Both the pidhiavali and the vamsavali are written forms of the genealogy. But their oral counterparts are even today preserved in the villages by members of different service castes of particular Rajput families. Often an elderly *kamdhar* (administrator) of a thikana will know the genealogy of his Thakur in fair detail. However, a full recitation can generally only be given by a particular member of a lower caste of the village, whose family has for generations been closely associated with that of the Rajput, and this function designated as his hereditary specialization. In most cases, this is a member of one of the following castes: the Raika (or Rebari), a caste of transhumant herders of camels, sheep and goats; the Dholi, a caste of drummers; or the Dharhi, a caste of singers and players of musical instruments. Traditionally, members of the latter two castes also followed Rajput armies into battle, playing their instruments and singing songs in praise of the Rajput and his dedication to battle.

Genealogies of this kind are generally minimal, containing only lists of the names of senior male descendants from father to successor. They are often recited along with songs of praise at festivals, such as Holi and Dasera, when the Dholi and Dharhi come to the homes of the Rajputs. They may also be recited on the birth of a son, at a

time of his succession. In Dimgal, *tiko* is used interchangeably with *pat* for 'throne.'

⁵³Cakar—in the broadest sense, 'servant,' but in a more restricted sense, as used here, 'military retainer, one who performs military service in return for access to land.'

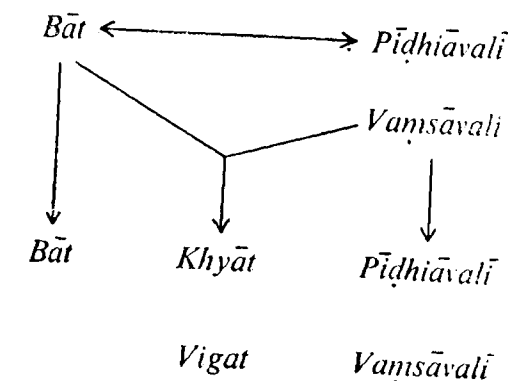
⁵⁴Kamm ayo—lit. 'to fulfil one's appointed task or duty (dharma) of fighting and dying in battle in the service of one's master.'

⁵⁵Pato means both 'land grant' and 'the written document acknowledging and authorizing such a grant.' A *pato* was theoretically given only on the condition of military service and allegiance.

wedding or at the time of successorship to the headship of the family. These genealogies are thus widely known in the villages and play an important role in the support of both the rank and the rights to land of the Rajputs in control of the village.⁵⁶

The khyat and vigat, the other forms of Rajasthani literature with which I am concerned, are in large measure derivative of and elaborated forms of the bat (tale) and the pidhiavali and vamsavali (genealogies), themselves closely related. Their interrelationships are set forth in the following diagram:

DIAGRAM 1
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GENRES OF ORAL LITERATURE



The term khyat comes from the Sanskrit *khyati*, meaning 'fame, renown or glory.' But its meaning in Dimgal has evolved in the sense of both 'that which is told or proclaimed' and 'account or description.'⁵⁷ As a form of literature, the khyat concerns itself primarily with the history of particular Rajput clans (*kul*) and their branches (*sakham*, *khampam*), such as the Rathors of Marvar or the Sisodiyas of Mevar.⁵⁸

The oldest extant khyat in Rajasthan, the seventeenth century *Nainsi ri Khyat*,⁵⁹ is essentially a collection of tales (*batam*) and genealogies (*pidhiavali*) arranged in sections by clan and lineage. The stories and genealogies of each section deal with the origin and history of the particular clan or lineage (and also with important

⁵⁶Much of this information about oral genealogies was supplied by my Rajput informants, Kumvar Sri Gopalsinghji Rathor of Thikana Bhadravun, Marvar, and Thakur Bhavanisinghji Rathor of Thikana Pal, Marvar.

⁵⁷Tripathi, 'Madhyakalin Khyat ka Sahitya,' p. 289.

⁵⁸Bhati, 'Bhumika,' *Parampara*, Part 11, 1961, p. 10.

⁵⁹*Nainsi ri Khyat*, ed. P. V. Muni, Jodhpur, Rajasthan Pracaviddhya Pratisthan, I (1960), II (1962), III (1964), IV (1967).

cadet lines of a ruling house) from its founding male ancestor (vadero) up until the time the traditions were committed to writing in the form of the khyat between 1648-1666. The material for this compilation was drawn from a wide variety of informants including Carans, Bhats and others. It is often noted, for example, that such and such a tale was recorded from the recitation of a particular Caran bard, was 'heard' in the manner recorded, or that a genealogy had been noted down from information supplied by a certain Bhat genealogist, or other knowledgeable person.⁶⁰

The term vigat (lit. 'gone away, departed; deceased') can mean both 'list' and 'description or account.'⁶¹ In the sense of 'list,' vigat are found appended to sections of batam (tales) and simply supply names. Depending on the context, these lists may deal with the wives and children of an important man, warriors who fought and died in a battle, villages given to Brahmans or Carans, or attached to an individual, or with the names of administrators who served under a local ruler. Generally, though not always, some information is included about the individuals in the list.⁶²

However, both meanings are combined in the literary form of the vigat, which, like the khyat, is a clan history (usually of only one clan), including lists of the names of rulers, their descendants, and descriptive stories about important events relating to the history of the clan or lineage. Other descriptive information in the vigat may take the form of a daily diary of events in the life of a particular local ruler, recorded by an official attached to the court. In addition, both the khyat and vigat may include along with the historical portions, descriptions of clan and lineage territories, which were noted down by observers at the time of the writing of the khyat or vigat. Such descriptions will contain information on roads, villages and large towns, crops and forms of taxation and revenue.⁶³ One general distinction between khyat and vigat is that while the khyat may retain much of the oral quality of the original stories, the vigat is more often written as a narrative history (administrative and political) of the past and thus most of the original oral form is lost.⁶⁴

⁶⁰See bibliographical notes at the end of this essay for more specific details on this khyat.

⁶¹Bhati, 'Bhumika,' *Parampara*, Part 11, 1961, p. 12.

⁶²See, for example, *Sri Maharaj Sri Jasvantsinghji ki Khyat*, MSS No. 15661, Rajasthan Pracyaviddhya Pratisthan, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, pp. 11-12, 19-20, 31-41.

⁶³See, for example, Nainsi, *Marvar ra Parganam...*, I (1968), pp. 186-89, 204-05.

⁶⁴This distinction is true only of the earliest records. Later khyats from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have generally lost all indications of oral origin, and are written in the past tense as official histories of particular royal houses.

While the earliest extant examples of the above kinds of historical materials in Rajasthan date from the seventeenth century, Rajasthan scholars agree that there were well-developed indigenous traditions of preserving stories and composing descriptions of important events (often appended to vamsavali or kept in the form of a diary) as early as the latter half of the twelfth and the start of the thirteenth century. The few examples which are available are written in Sanskrit and are found preserved in Jain temples and monasteries in Rajasthan.⁶⁵ However, it is not until the fifteenth century that batam (tales) written in Dimgal begin to appear in miscellaneus form, modelled after their Sanskrit predecessors.⁶⁶ By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the bat, khyat, and vigat appear alongside the pidhiavali and vamsavali as major literary forms.⁶⁷

Most Rajasthan scholars argue that this development of written clan histories in the form of the khyat and the vigat as they are found by the mid-seventeenth century, matured only under the influence of the Mughal court and the examples set by the Persian chronicles of this period.⁶⁸ It is known that librarians and other men of literature from the Delhi courts did seek attachments in the darbars of Rajasthan as well. Mulla Surkh is one example of a former librarian of Humayun's court who served in Jodhpur in the time of Rao Maldeji (1532-1562).⁶⁹ The Mughal Emperor, Akbar's efforts in the historical field are also considered of particular importance. Under Akbar's direction, Abu'l-Fazl contacted many of the Rajas and prominent Thakurs of Rajasthan and had them submit their own histories, from which sections of his *Akbar-nama* and *A'in-i-Akbari*

⁶⁵Tripathi, 'Madhyakalin Khyat ka Sahitya,' pp. 117-18. See also Tessitori, 'A Progress Report on the Work done during the Year 1917...', pp. 20-21. Tessitori remarks that the bards and genealogists of this early period were Brahmans called 'Bhattas,' who composed both panegyrics and eulogies in Sanskrit.

⁶⁶Nahta, 'Rajasthani Aitihasik Batom va Khyatom ki Parampara,' p. 18. Nahta considers that the initial entrance of the Muslims into Rajasthan, prior to and during the fifteenth century, was responsible for the destruction of much old literature. See also C. von Furer-Haimendorf, 'The Historical Value of Indian Bardic Literature,' p. 80. Furer Haimendorf places the efflorescence of these texts in the period between 1400-1800, which coincides with the popularization of epic poetry in local vernaculars. The composition of this poetry also became open to castes other than Sanskrit-speaking Brahmans, such as the Carans, at this time.

⁶⁷Lalas, 'Rajasthani Gadhyah Sahitya,' *Rajasthani Sabd Kos*, I (1962), pp. 189, 196.

⁶⁸See, for example, Lalas, 'Madhyakalin Rajasthani Gadhyah Sahitya,' *Parampara*, Parts 15-16, 1963, p. 248.

⁶⁹V. S. Bhargava, *Rajasthan ke Itihas ka Sarveksan*, Jaipur, College Book Depot, 1971, p. 135.

were composed.⁷⁰ The fact that many Rajput rulers and nobles spent much of their lives at the imperial court in the service of the Mughals, where Mughal emphasis on historical writing and record keeping was in great evidence, is in turn felt to have induced the compilation of local clan histories. Scholars additionally date the entrance of many new Arabic and Persian words into both speech and writing in Rajasthan from this period.⁷¹

Central to these arguments is the basic assumption that Rajputs and others concerned with the development of historical traditions desired to imitate or copy 'superior' Mughal textual materials, and by extension the Mughals themselves. It cannot be denied that Mughal forms and manners had great impact on Rajasthan. But arguments based on this assumption neglect consideration of either the social and political milieu or the social structures which initially gave rise to this literature.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were periods of considerable internal conflict and change in Rajasthan. They encompassed both the rise of particular Rajput clan segments and ruling houses to positions of great local authority and centralized rule, and the imposition of Mughal dominance throughout this area. Significantly, the rise of this literature coincides with the increasing authority and prestige of Rajput ruling houses and indicates a greater effort on the part of local rulers to collect and preserve their traditions and histories. Many of the genealogies, such as those of the Rathors of Marwar, which trace Rathor ancestry back to the illustrious Gahadavala dynasty of Kanauj and farther back to mythical Puranic beginnings, also appear in the early part of this period. D. P. Henige has recently argued with respect to these Rathor genealogies, that their primary aim was to 'elevate the status of the Jodhpur ruling line in the eyes of its suzerain [the Mughal, Akbar].'⁷² Illustrious ancestry was an important and necessary tool used to gain favour and position at the Mughal court, given Mughal, and especially Akbar's, emphasis on ancestry.⁷³ Growing vested interest and the desire to insure and further rights and positions by meeting the expectations of authorities clearly seem prominent motivations behind the emergence of the Rajasthani literature. Such motivations are common to many emergent state societies.⁷⁴ However, it should be recognized that these

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 30; and, Bhati, 'Bhumika,' *Parampara*, Part 11, 1961, p. 13.

⁷¹Lalas, 'Rajasthani Gadhya Sahitya,' *Rajasthani Sabd Kos*, I (1962), p. 194.

⁷²Henige, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition: Quest for a Chimera*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974, p. 202.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 53, 202-03.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 4-5. Henige remarks with reference to genealogies, that there are generally great differences between those found in centralized 'state'

materials were as much, if not more, for internal consumption as for external. As such, they are concerned not only with ancestry, but also with rank and caste order, rights to control local territory, and with values and customs of the Rajputs, many of the latter of which were under challenge. I would, therefore, argue further that the rise of the khyat literature can be seen as an adaptive response engendered by the need for re-interpretation and re-emphasis of basic values, rights and ideals in a changing society responding to Muslim conquest and domination.⁷⁵ Regarding this matter, I will have more to say presently.

II

The value of these sources for the study of Rajasthani social and cultural history has been much questioned. Indian scholars such as G. H. Ojha, N. S. Bhati, A. Nahta and others view them with great scepticism and all generally consider the khyat materials of little real use for the writing of 'pure history,' that is, an accurate chronological accounting of events.⁷⁶ One mildly dissenting view from the above is that of V. S. Bhargava, who does see importance in their genealogical content and life-like description of events.⁷⁷ The scepticism these scholars display is in many cases justified and points to problems inherent in the nature of the sources themselves.

All these materials can be characterized, following Vansina, as

societies and in decentralized, kin-based 'stateless' societies. In the latter, genealogies tend to be quite shallow, while in the former, one finds the greatest efforts to create and remember a continuous past.

⁷⁵Other scholars have also remarked upon this renewal of interest in indigenous forms of literature in response to the Muslim invasions. R. Lingat, for example, argues in his work on classical law in India, that: 'In reality the flowering of treatises and digests during the Muslim period seems to have been due to the need for a renewal of that literature, or rather for a new effort on the part of interpretation to adapt law to the changes that must have come about in Hindu opinion and manners as a result of the Muslim conquest.' R. Lingat, *The Classical Law of India*, transl. from French by J.D.M. Derrett, Los Angeles and Berkeley, University of California Press, 1973, p. 260.

⁷⁶G. H. Ojha, 'Mumhata Nainsi,' in *Ojha-Nibamdh-Samgrah*, Udaipur, Sahitya Samsthan, Rajasthan Visva Vidhyapeeth, III (1954), 74; Rajputane ka Itihas, Ajmer, Vedic Yamtralaya, IV (1938), Part 1, pp. 229-31; Bhati, 'Bhumika,' *Parampara*, Part 11, 1961, pp. 13-14; Nahta, 'Rajasthani Aitihasik Batom va Khyatom ki Parampara,' p. 116.

⁷⁷Bhargava, *Rajasthan ke Itihas ka Sarveksan*, p. 28. Although Bhargava has reviewed the khyat literature, he has himself done little actual work on social and cultural aspects of medieval Rajasthan, his interests being more confined to political history. Regarding other writers on these aspects of Rajasthani history, such as D. Sharma, G.N. Sharma, and M.L. Sharma, I have not referred to them specifically for reasons of space.

free form, public or official testimonies, which are recited by specialists over whom there are a minimum of controls safeguarding the accuracy of transmission.⁷⁸ As such, they are prone to many kinds of biases and distortions. In the case of batam (tales), these distortions arise not out of deliberate manipulation, but more out of a process of acculturation to which they are subject over time in response to the critical interaction which takes place between the reciter of a tale and his audience.⁷⁹ They are also individual testimonies, in which the informant plays a central role in the determination of content. In most cases, the only official control of recitals involved forms of social pressure—the use of ridicule or the withholding of largess. Improper recitation or misrepresentation might call for both forms of sanction. In addition, disputed testimony could be checked with other specialists or argued in public debate, allowing for the correction of fact or the supplying of necessary detail.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, there is much room here for alteration in time sequences, the confusion of people and events and the infusion of contemporary values and ideals.

In the case of genealogies, distortions present stem not only from deliberate manipulation in response to vested interest, which is most common,⁸¹ but also from the manner in which genealogical bahis (registers) are preserved within particular Bhat families and bequeathed to sons. Division at the time of inheritance can mean actual division of bahis themselves, necessitating subsequent recopying of portions. This process can in turn lead to mistakes, the leaving out of names and information (telescoping), and to outright falsification.⁸² In addition, genealogies are also subject to alteration over time in response to changing cultural values, such as for example, the em-

⁷⁸J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, transl. from the French by H. M. Wright, Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company, 1965, p. 22, for Vansina's distinction between free and fixed forms of oral tradition, and pp. 49-50, for his distinction between public and private traditions.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 91; Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, p. 220.

⁸⁰My Caran informants in Jodhpur indicated that such procedures for the correction of disputed testimony were traditionally followed, both in the royal darbars and in the thikanas.

⁸¹Vansina notes that genealogies, being for the most part merely lists of names, are among the most easily falsified of documents. Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, pp. 151-54, for his discussion of 'Lists.' See also Bhargava, *Marwar and the Mughal Emperors*, p. 44, n. 1, for his remarks concerning the deletion of the name of one ruler of Jodhpur from the official chronicles of Marwar in the mid-sixteenth century.

⁸²Nahta, 'Rajasthani Aitihasik Batom va Khyatom ki Parampara,' p. 115. See also Shah and Shroff, 'The Vahivanca Barots of Gujarat...', pp. 46-52, for a discussion of the manner in which Gujarati genealogists preserve and bequeath their records, and of the distortions to which they are prone.

phasis on primogeniture over collateral succession.⁸³

One general qualification regarding distortion in these materials is that information for periods after the mid-fifteenth century is reasonably reliable. This reliability extends not only to the genealogical lists, but also to the stories, many of which are buttressed by information from official written records and often supply dates and other chronological data.⁸⁴ In addition, cross-checking with Mughal and other written documents of this period does corroborate much internal evidence and further supports this reliability. This fact is not altogether surprising, given the rising prestige and authority of Rajput ruling houses, and indicates an increasing vested interest in both the content and accuracy of the traditions. In this period, the traditions cease to be the private concerns of small families and lineages, but become public concerns as well.⁸⁵

Thus, while biases and distortions are present, they by no means render these Rajasthani materials unusable. There is a body of 'objective' historical data present. In addition, the biases and distortions in themselves comprise an important body of data. It is important to recognize not only that the types of materials a society chooses to preserve are related to its social organization, but also that distortion will reflect biases inherent in such organization. Because of their oral nature, these materials do present events and ideas in an idiom compatible with the expectations of a contemporary, seventeenth century audience. They also more importantly fulfil central social and political functions. Both the tales and the genealogies serve the broad political ends of the Rajput, in his defence of rank and rights to land obtained by conquest, grant or inheritance, and in his claims of legitimacy to positions of authority based on descent. They also record status, and thus have social functions directed toward the support and preservation of the social order and the hierarchy of castes. In addition, they provide an ideological framework, a set of ideals and

⁸³For an excellent discussion of this problem with regard to the Marvari genealogies of the ruling house of Jodhpur, see Henige, 'The Jodhpur Chronicles,' *The Chronology of Oral Tradition*, pp. 201-06. Henige notes that early genealogies are often no more than king lists which have been turned into ascendant genealogies of father/son succession.

⁸⁴Ojha draws basically the same conclusion from his exhaustive work with Rathor khyat materials of both the royal line and important cadet branches for his history of Marwar. *Ojha, Rajputana ka Itihas*, IV (1938), Part 1, pp. 230-34.

⁸⁵Vansina has remarked that the more a tradition 'is associated with vested interest, and the more this interest is a concern of the public as a whole and is functionally important, the more exacting will be the control over its recital, and the better the guarantee against distortion.' Vansina *Oral Tradition*, p. 42.

a system of significant cultural symbols,⁸⁶ with reference to which all social and political relationships are explained, sustained or altered. As such, they are statements (symbolic and otherwise) about social order, about what is 'proper,' what is and what should be.⁸⁷

These traditions are, therefore, of great potential value in providing insights into a range of social questions dealing with the structure of loyalties, the nature of legitimacy and authority, caste interaction and ranking, mechanisms of dispute settlement and control and a wide range of others. The following brief examples are offered by way of illustration of the above points. They deal firstly with aspects of political culture in Rajasthan, that is, with the system of cultural beliefs and categories of thought which are subjective in orientation, and which define situations in which political actions take place,⁸⁸ and secondly, with aspects of caste ranking and the articulation of rank.⁸⁹

The importance of Rajput alliances with the Mughals forms a dominant motif in much of the writing on Mughal India. From the perspective of the Mughals, these alliances symbolized a departure from the earlier, racially more exclusive policy of the Delhi Sultans, and the incorporation of prominent Hindu elements within the ruling nobility of the empire. They also provided an important element of stability which greatly facilitated both internal consolidation and expansion. With regard to the Rajputs, two general themes have emerged in the writing. One stresses the fierce independence of the Hindu Rajput and his unwillingness to submit to Muslim domination. The other emphasizes continuing Rajput loyalty to the Mughal throne and Rajput willingness to serve under the Mughal banner both against other Rajputs and in distant parts of the empire. This paradox is 'explained' by suggesting that those Rajputs who entered

⁸⁶This expression comes from Geertz's definition of culture in human society. See C. Geertz, 'The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man,' in *Man in Adaptation: The Cultural Present*, ed. Y. A. Cohen, Chicago, Aldine Publishing Company, 1968, p. 24.

⁸⁷E. R. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1954, pp. 15-17; D. Schneider, *American Kinship: A Cultural Analysis*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968, p. 1.

⁸⁸S. Verba, 'Comparative Political Culture,' in *Political Culture and Political Development*, ed. L. W. Pye and S. Verba, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1965, p. 513.

⁸⁹Much of the following analysis is informed by the cultural style of analysis employed by David Schneider in his work on American kinship. Schneider's approach emphasizes cultural categories of thought and cultural assumptions, the 'units' of a cultural and social order, which are the subjective concerns of individuals and groups in the society and which to a large extent pattern his interactions and the order of relationships he seeks to establish. Schneider, *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*.

into alliances were collaborators, co-opted out of political and economic necessity, or by a desire for prestige, wealth and position, while those who remained in revolt sought to preserve the integrity of their cultural heritage.⁹⁰ The Sisodiya rulers of Mevar in particular have been held up as ideal Rajputs, for they were never forced to attend upon the Mughal emperors, nor to give their daughters in marriage to them. This latter act has been considered especially degrading for a Hindu Rajput. The pre-eminent status of the Sisodiya house among Rajputs is also attributed to this fact.⁹¹

This general argument assumes firstly, a fundamental socio-cultural opposition between Hindu and Muslim in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and secondly, that wealth and power, and/or desire for cultural purity were dominant motivations behind Rajput-Mughal relations. However, a very different view emerges from consideration of the subjective values and beliefs of the Rajputs which shaped and directed political actions in this period.

One of the basic cultural assumptions present in the Marvari chronicles is that Muslim warriors of north India (including Mughals, Pathans and others) were, like their Hindu counterparts of Rajasthan, also Rajputs, the jati (caste) of Rajput itself being divided into Hindu and Muslim sub-divisions.⁹² Outside of a few references to antipathies caused by conversion attempts, there are no indications of overt

⁹⁰See, for example, Bhargava, *Marwar and the Mughal Emperors*; R. P. Vyas, *Role of the Nobility in Marwar*, New Delhi, Jain Brothers Publishers, 1969; and A. C. Banerjee, *Lectures on Rajput History*, Calcutta, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962.

⁹¹This interpretation of Sisodiya status appears to be a nineteenth century development stemming from Tod's work on Rajasthan. Tod's opinions (if not all of his data) have gained wide currency and acceptance both among Rajasthani scholars and among the local people of the area. (Most literate Rajputs whom I met and interviewed on aspects of Rajasthani history would suggest Tod as a basic reference.) Tod states, for example, that 'With the exception of Jesulmeer, Mewar is the only dynasty of these races which has outlived eight centuries of foreign domination, in the same lands where conquest placed them. . . This circumstance adds to the dignity of the Ranas, and is the cause of the general homage which they receive, notwithstanding the diminution of their power. . . [The Rana] is universally allowed to be the first of the "thirty-six royal tribes"; nor has a doubt ever been raised respecting his purity of descent.' Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 15. However, this view finds no currency in the seventeenth century Rajput chronicles. To the contrary, Sisodiya pre-eminence appears to derive from the fact that the line from which they claim descent was originally Brahman, having become Ksatriya and then Rajput after migrating into the area of Mevar in the seventh century A.D. For some interesting comments regarding this problem, see Lt. Col. A. F. Pinhey, *History of Mewar*, Calcutta, Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1909, pp. 1-5.

⁹²Nainsi ri Khyat, III, 70; Parampara, Part 11, 1961, p. 61.

cultural conflict between Hindus and Muslims, nor any indications of degradation inherent in a Hindu Rajput giving his daughter in marriage to a Muslim. To the contrary, a real joint culture appears to have emerged in this area very early. Conflicts between Muslim and Hindu groups over land and control are no different in substance than similar rivalries between different Rajput clans and clan segments, expected in an area subject to inroads from the outside. They are also balanced by much evidence of close mutual relations between Hindus and Muslims, of friendship and brotherhood established by turban exchange,⁹³ and of political alliances which were often affirmed through the giving of daughters in marriage (*sagai*).⁹⁴ Evidence from the chronicles indicates that such marriages occurred not only during the Mughal period, but also prior to it, and were in no way initiated by Akbar.⁹⁵ Marriage was itself a central mechanism in Rajput society for the building of alliances and the settlement of *vair* (hostilities).⁹⁶ One's *saga* (those to whom one gave daughters in marriage and from whom one received wives)⁹⁷ were obligated to provide support and assistance, and they formed the most important group upon whom one depended outside one's *bhaibamdh* (lit. 'tie or bond of brothers') or close relations by male blood.

Of equal importance for understanding Rajput-Mughal relations is the question of rank maintenance within an order of castes, which is of central concern in all the chronicles. The maintenance of rank is generally defined in terms of two axioms basic to Rajput dharma (code for conduct): the avengement of the death of one's father (and by extension, members of one's brotherhood) (*bap rai vair lenau*), and performing one's appointed duty of fighting and dying in battle in the service of one's master (*dhani rai kamm anau*).⁹⁸ Avenging the death of one's father (or brothers) was important because the death of any member was felt to weaken the collective body of the brotherhood and thereby reduce its power (*bal*). This revenge took the form of acts of equalization.

⁹³Brothers, whose relationship has been established in this manner are referred to as *paqri badabna bhai* (lit. 'brothers through the exchange of turbans').

⁹⁴*Sagai* means both 'alliance' (political) and 'betrothal' in Rajasthani. See Nainsi, *Marvar ra Parganam* . . . , I, 40, for an instance of a daughter of the royal house of Jodhpur being married to the Muslim Khan of Nagaur in the early fifteenth century; and, *Rathorom ki Khyat Purani Kavirajji Murardangh ke Yahan se Likhi Gai*, MSS No. 15672, No. 2, Rajasthan Prachyaiddhya Pratishthan, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, pp. 141-45, for an example of Rathor daughters of the royal house being married to the ruler of Gujarat and the Nagauri Khan in the middle sixteenth century.

⁹⁵*Vair* can mean both 'hostility or enmity' and 'heroism and bravery.'

⁹⁶*Saga* from Sanskrit *sagarbhak*, meaning 'having the same womb.'

⁹⁷Nainsi *ri Khyat*, II, 270-71.

Equally important for the maintenance of rank was the service of one's master (*dhani*). The master was seen as the Thakur, who was the clan god or goddess (*kuldevta/kuldevi*), the ruler or sovereign (raja) of a kingdom, or an individual at a lower level (also referred to as Thakur), who was a subordinate of the Thakur as Raja and to whom the Raja had transmitted power and authority. Status and rank in this system were defined not in terms of purity, but in terms of power to protect and to give sustenance and rewards. The latter took the form of food, land and authority, and the presentation of them indicated an ability to effect and alter the ranks of individuals and groups at lower levels in the hierarchy. The warriors who initially conquered kingdoms (*raj*) in areas of Rajasthan were themselves seen to have been granted the power (*bal*) necessary for such conquests as a boon (*var*) from their clan deities,⁹⁹ the kingdoms thus being favours (*prasada*) bestowed in return for service and devotion (*cakri/seva*). The Thakurs as rulers were in turn seen as the worldly deputies of the earthly kingdoms of these masters.¹⁰⁰

What is significant about this scheme of values and ideas for understanding Rajput-Mughal relations is the fact that the Emperor (*Patsah*) was also included. In the chronicles, he is likened to Rama, the Ksatriya hero of the Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*.¹⁰¹ Service on the part of a Hindu Rajput for the Thakur (God) or for the Thakur (raja) was thus no different from service for the Patsah or one of his subordinates. In comparison to local Rajput rulers, the Patsah also had greater rank, because of his greater power to protect and ability to grant favours and rewards.¹⁰²

The issue of rank maintenance and the performance of dharma is also central to understanding instances of conflict between Rajputs and Mughals. Generally, these conflicts were generated over questions relating to control of land, both in the period of initial Mughal penetration into Rajasthan under Akbar, and later, during the time of Aurangzeb. Those instances in which Rajputs were dispossessed of their lands and often spent as much as ten or twenty years fighting in the hills against Mughal armies are all described in the chronicles as periods of *vikhau* (lit. 'distress'), during which there was not only a decrease in power, but also doubt about rank. This doubt was caused primarily by confusion and disorder, and the impossibility of preventing mixing and of maintaining a hierarchy in its pure form. Under such circumstances, it was necessary for the Rajput either to regain his kingdom and reassert a proper order among castes and indivi-

⁹⁹Nainsi, *Marvar ra Parganam* . . . , I, 22-23;

¹⁰⁰Nainsi *ri Khyat*, I, 1-11.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, I, 220.

¹⁰²Needless to say, there are many instances in the chronicles of Rajputs

duals, or to die fighting in the fulfilment of his appointed task, which was to protect and sustain the kingdom. In both cases, rank was assured, on the one hand by the reassertion of order, and on the other, by the fact that the bards would transmit fame and renown (and thus rank) to him and immortalize his name.¹⁰³

The importance which the Rajput chronicles place upon the maintenance of rank within an order of castes, and upon the concept of *vikhau* (distress) brings an interesting psychological dimension to our perception of the medieval Rajput. There is another aspect to this set of ideas and related behaviours which concerns the larger question of the emergence of the Rajput *jati* (caste) in the early medieval period and the widespread sociological effects of the Muslim conquest and domination of north India. The following brief remarks regarding this matter are tentative and speculative in nature, given the state of research in this area. But they are meant to indicate the value of the Rajput chronicles for our understanding of aspects of this question. Hopefully they will stimulate additional research, particularly on a comparative regional basis.

Most of the writing on the early Muslim period in India assumes the existence of the Rajputs at the time of the Muslim invasions in the tenth-twelfth centuries. However, this situation does not seem to be the case, and a few scholars have noted that the term 'Rajput' does not come into use until shortly before and during the Mughal period.¹⁰⁴ Epigraphic evidence from the Sisodiya Gehlot dynasty of Mevar supports this supposition, and indicates that the term, used in the sense of *jati*, does not appear until the fifteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, the early Gehlots of Mevar (and other dynasties of Rajasthan) appear originally to have been Brahmans or Brahma-Ksatriyas.¹⁰⁶ D. C. Sircar has also remarked that 'Rajput' (from Sanskrit *rajaputra* — 'king's son') had various meanings in the period before the Muslim invasions, including 'horse-soldier,' 'trooper,' 'headman of a village,' 'subordinate chief' or 'subordinate officer of a king.' In addition, he

taking service under Muslim rulers and nobles before the Mughal period. See for example, *ibid.*, III, 239-49.

¹⁰³For a more detailed development of this series of ideas, see N. P. Ziegler, 'Action, Power and Service in Rajasthani Culture: A Social History of the Rajputs of Middle Period Rajasthan' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, Department of History, August, 1973).

¹⁰⁴For example, see M. Habib, 'Introduction,' in *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, by K. A. Nizami, Delhi, Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delhi, 1974, 2nd edition, p. xiii.

¹⁰⁵Pinhey, *History of Mewar*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 1-5; D. C. Sircar, *The Guhilas of Kiskindha*, Calcutta, Sanskrit College, 1965, pp. 1-13; D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, Delhi, S. Chand and Company, 1959, pp. 9-11.

notes that individuals or groups with whom the word was associated were generally considered to be products of *varna-samkara*, of mixed caste origin, and thus inferior in rank to Ksatriyas.¹⁰⁷

What is indicated from this body of objective data is a widespread change in the subjective perceptions and attributions of rank to groups and individuals who emerged in Rajasthan and north India as local chiefs and rulers in the period roughly from the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries.¹⁰⁸ These groups were not Ksatriyas, but lower ranked Rajputs. This change is supported by material from the Rajput chronicles. The histories of all the Rajput clans of Rajasthan contain traditions of the initial loss of kingdoms and forced migration, in many instances from areas which had come under Muslim domination. The traditions also speak of these as periods of confusion and distress (*vikhau*), when rank was in doubt and mixing occurred. In addition, they emphasize the importance of re-establishing kingdoms and re-asserting rank, already noted as an important psychological drive throughout the Mughal period.

This sociological change in response to the Muslim invasion and subjugation has other ramifications in the area of rank articulation among different caste groups on local and regional levels. For example, Ronald Inden has found from his work with Bengali oral traditions and genealogies of the Brahman and Kayastha castes dating from the late medieval period, that there are indications of a change in the mechanism of ranking as a result of the Muslim conquest. This change appears to have been a result of the loss of Hindu kings, who before had decided caste disputes about rank. In the absence of local Hindu kings, caste groups turned to the institution of marriage as a means of determining rank of individuals and groups, and the elaborate system of hypergamic marriage found in Bengal appears to be an outcome of this shift.¹⁰⁹

Rajasthan, however, shows significant variation from Bengal. This variation appears due primarily to the fact that most of this area remained under Hindu kings. In the Marvari traditions, there is no mention of marriage being important in the determination of rank as such. Rather, with respect to Rajputs, emphasis is placed almost solely on 'action,' such as the performance of service and the settle-

¹⁰⁷Sircar, *The Guhilas of Kiskindha*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁰⁸For a discussion of rank as a subjective concern, see M. Marriott and R. Inden, 'An Ethnosociology of South Asian Caste Systems' (paper presented at the American Anthropological Association convention, Toronto, December 1, 1972).

¹⁰⁹R. Inden, 'Rank and Marriage in Bengali Culture: A Social History of the Brahmans and Kayasthas in Middle Period Bengal' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1972).

ment of vair (hostilities).¹¹⁰ Instances in which marriage is mentioned as being important for individual Rajputs indicate that it acted as a confirmation of status already established by other means.¹¹¹

It is interesting that there appear to be changes in the method of rank articulation in the modern period in Rajasthan, since the beginning of British rule. Marriage now seems to be a much more important mechanism in this articulation. For example, one now meets with the terms *ekevra* and *bevra* among Rajputs and other castes, such as the Carans, which are nowhere mentioned in the seventeenth century materials. *Ekevra* is the term applied to groups from whom brides will be taken, but to whom none will be given (indicating a uni-directional relationship). *Bevra* applies both to whom brides will be given and from whom they will be taken (indicating a bi-directional relationship).¹¹² The earliest evidence I have seen of the use of these terms comes from old khyat records of the Ratan-simghot Jodha Rathors of Thikana Bhadrarjun, Marwar, which date on paleographic grounds from the late nineteenth century. In these records, lists were appended of Rajput clans and clan segments which were either the *ekevra* or the *bevra* (and therefore the inferior or the equal) of the Ratansimghots of Bhadrarjun.¹¹³

I have tried in the above discussion to give some indications of the value of the Marvari chronicles for the writing of social and cultural history of Rajasthan. Needless to say, I have neglected many areas of importance, such as those dealing with organizational administrative changes within Rajput clans and states in the Mughal period. The lists and genealogies, many of which are quite detailed, and some

¹¹⁰I would expect to find differences among Rajputs in the areas of the Gangetic plain, which were more directly under Muslim rule. For some references to hypergamy in this area, see R. Fox, *Kin, Clan, Raja and Rule*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1971, pp. 37-43, 170.

¹¹¹*Nainsi ri Khyat*, II, 292, 333.

¹¹²For a more extensive discussion of these terms and their meaning, see H. Stern, 'Power in Traditional India: Territory, Caste and Kinship, A Theoretical Approach and Regional Study (Rajasthan)' (paper presented before a South Asian History Seminar, University of Chicago, 1973). Stern has noted that 'These categories are defined in reference to the clan, the most inclusive named exogamous group, whose members are dispersed. The informants never give an exhaustive list; one does not state to whom one is inferior. The fact is important, and probably points to regional variation. We are not dealing here with an overall scale of ranked status uniformly valid for the whole of Rajasthan, but with an apposition that allows either actualization or neutralization of difference of status between bride-giver and bride-taker from the point of view of each localized segment of the clan.' (p. 24)

¹¹³These records were kindly made available to me for inspection by Kumvar Gopal Singhji Rathor of Thikana Bhadrarjun and Kumvar Arjun Singhji Rathor of Omkali village.

of the stories, are of great value here and provide an opportunity for small scale, disaggregated studies of local groups over several generations.¹¹⁴ In addition, demographic and economic information about the seventeenth century can supply important baseline information for developmental studies of local areas over time. Given the range of material available in these sources, they present the historian with a unique opportunity to investigate aspects of many questions, for which other, more 'objective' data are unsuited.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

(1) *Nainsi ri Khyat*, ed. P. V. Muni (Jodhpur: Rajasthan Pracyavidhya Pratisthan), I (1960), II (1962), III (1964), IV (1967). The compilation of this khyat was begun around 1648, under the auspices of Mumhata Nainsi Jaimalot.¹¹⁵ an Osval Jain in the administrative service of Jodhpur under Jasvamsingh I. Its completion took place during Nainsi's tenure as Divan of Jodhpur between 1658-

¹¹⁴The importance of disaggregated studies which concentrate upon small scale, intensive analyses of particular local groups and areas over time, is discussed by B. S. Cohn, 'Society and Social Change under the Raj,' *South Asian Review*, IV, No. 1, October 1970, pp. 28-29, 33-36.

¹¹⁵Mumhata Nainsi was born in 1611, the eldest of five sons of Jaimal, an Osval Jain *mutsaddi* (court administrator) under the Jodhpur Maharajas, Sursingh and Gajsingh Rathor. Jaimal was himself a prominent official in Jodhpur, being appointed *Nizam* or Governor of the *pargana* of Jalor in Marwar, in 1621, by Gajsingh. In 1627, when Shah Jahan presented Nagaur *pargana* to Rao Amar Singh Rathor, the elder brother of Jasvamsingh I, Jaimal was transferred there, and within three years of this time, he became Divan of Jodhpur.

Nainsi and his younger brother, Sumdardas, both followed their father into the administrative service of Jodhpur under Gajsingh and eventually rose to high office. Nainsi distinguished himself early as both a soldier and an administrator in a campaign against the Mers of the Mugra (Mervara) in 1633, and later in campaigns against the Bhatias of Jaisalmer for control of the areas round Pckaran and Phalodhi. He received his appointment as Divan from Maharaja Jasvamsingh I in 1658. In later years, when Jasvamsingh was serving in the Deccan under Shaista Khan, both Nainsi and his brother, Sumdardas, who held the rank at this time of *Khamgi Divan* or chief minister of the royal household, accompanied the armies to the south. However, for some as yet unexplained reason, they were both dismissed from office and imprisoned while still in the Deccan. At the end of two years, they were finally released and fined one lakh rupees, but rather than pay the demand, they allowed themselves to be imprisoned again and then committed suicide in 1670, while en route to Jodhpur.

Nainsi was referred to by the titles *Mumhata* or *Muhnnot* and *Mehta*. The latter is an official title of respect given to non-Rajput administrative dignitaries known as *mutsaddi*, who are mostly of the Jain and Vaisnava communities

1666.¹¹⁶ It is the oldest extant work of its kind in Rajasthan, and in contrast to many other old Rajasthani sources has the unique characteristic of being precisely datable. The *khyat* is a large work and includes the histories of all the major ruling houses of Rajasthan from the time of their entrance into the area up to the middle of the seventeenth century. In addition, it contains the history of many of the more important cadet lines of these ruling houses, and of minor affiliated or allied groups. It also incorporates in gazetteer fashion, brief survey reports on the various territories (excluding Marvar) of these ruling houses, including information of cropping, income, forms of taxation, roads and important landmarks. The historical portions on the Rathors of Marvar extend only up to the middle sixteenth century and the reign of Rao Malde, the later period being dealt with in another of Nainsi's major works, *Marvar ra Parganam ri Vigat* (see below), and in other sources from this period.

The work has the other unique feature of containing many of the names of its contributors, which are listed along with the given entries. For example, it is noted at the end of the story (bat) about the Rathor, Rao Jodhoji's capture of the land of Chapar-Dronpur (an area of north-central Rajasthan) in the middle sixteenth century, that the events which took place were recorded in a poem (*be-akhari-chamd*) composed by Rathor Ramdevra.¹¹⁷ In another instance, the notation 'Written by [the Caran] Vithu Pana, the son of Simghthal—Greetings from Jai Sri Rughanath to the *sirdar* who reads this' is placed at the end of the section on the Sonagara rulers of Jalor.¹¹⁸ Nainsi himself also notes that he has 'heard' a story, or 'heard' different versions of the same story about a past event or personality,¹¹⁹ in this way attempting to include all possible data at hand.

The names of contributors of survey reports on various areas or towns are among the more valuable notations, for most of these contain dates. For example, it is noted that Rao Ramcamd Jagnathot

of Osvals, Simghavis, etc., and to Kayastha administrators of importance, such as the Pamcolis. Mumhata or Muhnot is a family title meaning 'son of Mohan, the progenitor of the family line.

¹¹⁶For more information on Nainsi, see *A Brief Family History of Muhnot Sardarmal*, Jodhpur, Ram-Shyam Press, 1940; this book and other personal papers of the Muhnot family were kindly made available to me by Umrao Malji Muhnot of Jodhpur City; Nainsi *ri Khyat*, IV, 25-36; Ojha, 'Mumhata Nainsi,' *Ojha-Nibamdh Samgrah*, III, 69-72; Ojha, *Rajputana ka Itihas*, IV (1938), Part 1, pp. 229-230; and K. R. Qanungo, 'Muhnot Nainsi: The Abul Fazl of Rajasthan,' *Studies in Rajput History*, Delhi, S. Chand and Co., 1960, pp. 80-95.

¹¹⁷Nainsi *ri Khyat*, III, 166.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, I, 226.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, I, 51.

had the detailed account of the country of Bumdi (*Bumdira Des ri Hakikat*) written in *Jeth* of *Vikram Samvat* 1721 (May, 1664 A.D.);¹²⁰ that a servant (*cakar*) of the Bumdela, Subhkaran, named Catrasen, had a list of the lands under the Bumdelas made in *Vikram Samvat* 1710 (1653-54 A.D.);¹²¹ and that Mumhata Lakho had the detailed account of the country of Jaisalmer written in *Vikram Samvat* 1700, *Mah, vadi* 9 (December, 1644 A.D.) while stationed at Merta, in Marvar.¹²²

It seems clear from inspection of the text that Nainsi not only requested and collected oral traditions from a large number of contributors throughout Marvar and Rajasthan as a whole on the histories of the ruling houses of different Rajput clans, but also solicited genealogies from Bhats and others knowledgeable of them. In addition, he obtained materials such as the survey reports from Qanungos and other local administrative officials, as well as information from family and friends.¹²³ The actual writing of such a compilation was the preserve of a group of hereditary scribes, called in Marvar 'Pamcoli.'

(2) Nainsi, *Marvar ra Parganam ri Vigat*, ed. N. S. Bhati (Jodhpur: Rajasthan Pracyaviddhya Pratisthan), I (1968), II (1969).

This *vigat* is the other major work completed under the supervision and direction of Nainsi. It is primarily a detailed survey of the seven parganas granted to Jasvantsingh I by Shah Jahan within two years of his succession to the throne of Jodhpur in 1638. The *vigat* was completed in 1664, just six years prior to the death of Nainsi.

The parganas included are Jodhpur, Merta, Sojat, Jaitaran, Phalodhi, Pokaran and Sivano. All are treated in separate sections of the work, which include fairly detailed historical accounts of each pargana, and the manner in which they were first conquered and settled by the Rathors. In addition, each section contains a description of the major towns, roads and administrative boundaries, and a complete list of all the villages in the pargana, accompanied by information on crops, wells, people occupying specific villages (i.e., caste groups), and detailed revenue statistics with valuations (*rekh*) and actual collection figures for the years *Vikram Samvat* 1715-1719 (1658-59—1662-63 A.D.). There is also a good deal of information on other forms of revenue and taxation besides the *hasal* (revenue from crops).

The section of the pargana of Jodhpur, for instance, traces the his-

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, I, 113.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, I, 127.

¹²²*Ibid.*, II, 6.

¹²³Ojha, 'Mumhata Nainsi,' *Ojha-Nibamdh-Samgrah*, III, 74.

tory of the ruling house of the Rathors from the initial migration of Rao Sihoji (d. 1273) into western Rajasthan up to the reign of Maharaja Jasvantsingh I. Historical surveys of other parganas contain brief information about early history, but are more concerned with relating the history of the occupation of these areas by Rathor cadet lines and by the ruling house of Jodhpur. There is a good deal of duplication of material in the vigat with the historical sections of Nainsi's khyat, for the period up to the reign of Rao Malde, but the vigat contains much additional material not found in the khyat on the period from Rao Malde up to and including the reign of Jasvantsingh. Many of the portions dealing with this later period take the form of a diary of daily events which took place during the reigns of different Maharajas, much of which appears to have been supplied by Nainsi himself. For example, there is a detailed description of the battle which took place at the fort of Pokaran in 1649 with the Bhatias, at which Nainsi was present,¹²⁴ and another detailed accounting of the march of Jasvantsingh's army against Prince Aurangzeb in 1657.¹²⁵ This historical material is supplemented with an exhaustive amount of economic information on the area of Marwar as a whole and its different administrative divisions.¹²⁶

- (3) 'Aitihāsik Batam,' *Parampara*, ed. N. S. Bhati (Copasni: Rajasthan Sodh Samsthan), Part 11, 1961, pp. 17-99.

This edition of *Parampara* contains short historical narratives about all of the Rathor rulers of Jodhpur from Rao Malde (1532-1562) through Maharaja Suraj Singh (1595-1619), and also includes stories about Rao Jodho, the founder of Jodhpur City, and his father, Rao Rinmal. It is considered that all of these batam (tales) were written down in 1646, a date which is noted at the end of one of the stories. If this dating is correct for all of the stories, they were probably written under the direction or supervision of Nainsi, for the writer of the story which supplies the date has also noted that Mumhata Sumdardas, Nainsi's brother, had ordered him to prepare it. All of the stories also come from the same old bahi (register), and are written in the same hand.¹²⁷ As a whole, the narratives complement the khyat of Nainsi by filling in material between the reigns of Rao Maldeo and Jasvantsingh, and they coincide with much of the later historical sections of the vigat of Nainsi. From the contents, these narratives are clearly official histories, written with the aid of state records.

¹²⁴Nainsi, *Marwar ra Parganam* . . . , II, 298-307.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, I, 170-186.

¹²⁶For additional information of the vigat, see D. Sharma, *Lectures on Rajput History and Culture*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1970, pp. 141-52.

¹²⁷Bhati, 'Bhumika,' *Parampara*, Part 11, 1961, p. 16.

- (4) *Khyat-Bat*, MSS No. 231, Rajasthan Sodh Samsthan, Copasni (Jodhpur), Rajasthan.

This manuscript consists of a large number of stories about various historical figures important in the history of Marwar. There is, for example, a large section on Rao Malde, and shorter narratives on less well-known figures, many of whom were soldiers in the armies of Rao Malde. Most of the contents concern the period of Rao Malde's reign, and it appears that at least some of the material, particularly that relating to Maldeo himself, was copied from other manuscripts and is very similar in content to accounts found in Nainsi's works. The script of the work is late seventeenth century Rajasthan (Devanagari with changes in some of the characters due to local styles). A note at the end of the text states that 'the Caran Bhairumdas had this manuscript copied from his books for Kumvar Akhaisingh.' No date is given.

- (5) 'Tin Rathaur Vir,' *Vatam ro Jhumakho*, ed. M. Sarma (Bisau: Rajasthan Sahitya Samiti, n.d.), Part 3, pp. 38-62.

This selection consists of three stories about well-known Rathor warriors. Manohar Sarma, the editor of the stories, has noted that the original text is to be found in the library of Agarcamd Nahta in Bikaner, Rajasthan, in a large bahi (register) which is dated on paleographic grounds, middle nineteenth century. On the basis of language and content, however, these stories appear to have been originally transcribed much earlier, around the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.¹²⁸ The stories are didactic in nature, and recount important events in the lives of these warriors.

- (6) (a) *Kaviraj Murardanji ki Khyat ka Tarjuma*, MSS No. 25658, No. 1;

(b) *Rathorom ki Khyat Purani Kavirajji Murardanji ke Yaham se Likhi Gai*, MSS No. 15672, No. 2;

(c) *Rajputom ki Khyat, Kavirajji Murardanji ki Khyat ka Tarjuma*, MSS No. 15671, No. 3;

Rajasthan Pracyaviddhya Pratisthan, Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

These three manuscripts form part of one large volume which was discovered in the wall of an old house in Jodhpur in the late nineteenth century by the father of Kaviraj Murardanji. A statement in the beginning of MSS No. 15672 reads: 'This old khyat of the Rathors was written by the family of Kavirajji Murardanji. The father of Kavirajji found the khyat in the wall during the time of Kotal

¹²⁸I have spoken to Sri Sobhagyasingh Sekhavat, Assistant Director of the Rajasthan Sodh Samsthan, Copasni, about the dating of these stories. He noted that on the basis of language, they were probably initially written down, before Nainsi's khyat. See also N. Sarma, 'Bhumika,' *Vatam ro Jhumakho*, Part 1, p. i, Part 3, p. 38.

Sri Karanji' (my translation). The three MSS contain a history of the Rathors of Marwar up to the end of the reign of Jasvantsingh I, and thus must also have been written during or shortly after the time of Nainsi. Much of the narrative material is very similar to that found in Nainsi's khyat and vigat.

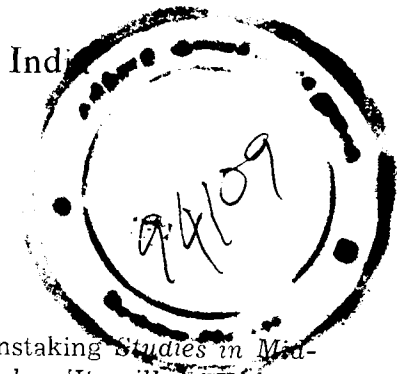
However, this work is of particular interest because of the lists and genealogies it contains. The lists are of two types: first, those which include the names of all the wives of different Rathor rulers and their offspring, which are detailed, giving the names of families from which wives came and also often the names of men to whom daughters were married; and second, those which give the names of warriors who died in particular battles fought in the army of a particular ruler. The genealogies begin with Rao Jodhoji and trace the descendants of a number of Jodhpur rulers and the members of cadet lines which branched out from them. There are genealogies, for instance, of the 'sons of Rao Jodho' and of the 'sons of Rao Maldeji,' etc. These are also quite detailed and include a good deal of biographical information about given individuals.

The present MSS were recopied by the family of Murardanji with some translation from Rajasthani into Hindi, but the majority is in Dimgal, presumably favourable to the original.¹²⁹

Mid-Victorian Anti-Imperialists and India

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Towards the close of his pioneering and painstaking *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism*, C.A. Bodelsen remarks: 'It will have been observed that the questions connected with British rule in India (and still more those connected with the Crown Colonies) attracted comparatively little attention from the Imperialists of the 'seventies and 'eighties, who were mainly concerned about the possibility of a closer union between England and what would now be called the Dominions, just as the Separatists had mainly concentrated on the latter, because [the] self-governing colonies offered an easier target for their arguments than the possessions proper.'¹ This article is intended to be a commentary, with particular reference to India, on the latter half of Bodelsen's remark.

Let us begin by recapitulating the main arguments of the so-called separatists or anti-imperialists of the mid-Victorian period. The fundamental proposition from which most separatists, both 'active' and 'passive,' started was the supposed lesson of the loss of the thirteen colonies under painful and humiliating circumstances and the emancipation of large parts of the Spanish and Portuguese empires, for they justified, in their opinion, the truth of Turgot's² remark, that colonies were like fruits which cling to the tree only till they are ripe. The contemporary current of British colonial history—the perpetual assertion of the right to self-government³—pointed to the same moral. The very success of the experiment in responsible government in the British colonies, because it led to the gradual crumbling away of the remnants of imperial control, weakened the faith in the retention of the colonies, or even in its desirability. 'These wretched colonies,' wrote Benjamin Disraeli⁴ to

¹C.A. Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism*, Copenhagen, 1924, p. 168.

²B. 1727; French economist; d. 1781.

³C.B. Adderley, *Review of 'The Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration,' by Earl Grey, 1853, and of Subsequent Colonial History*, London, 1869, p. 3.

⁴B. 1804; statesman and man of letters; prime minister of Britain 1868, 1874-80; created Earl of Beaconsfield 1876; d. 1881.

¹²⁹See also Shri Ram Sharma, *A Bibliography of Mughal India, 1526-1707 A.D.*, Bombay, Karnatik Publishing House, n.d., pp. 147-52.

dependency and the Indian empire no contradiction in terms. 'The self-governing colonies are not an empire at all,' wrote Goldwin Smith, but the 'British Empire in India is empire in the true sense of the term, since Hindustan is governed with imperial sway.'¹⁵ Britain did govern India, and India paid 'British' taxes, obeyed 'British' laws, and fought 'Britain's' battles. She added not only to the prestige, but also to the power of Great Britain. While the inevitability of disruption of the colonial empire haunted many reflecting Britons, Fate seemed to have willed otherwise in India, where the British East India Company's dominions went on increasing, often in spite of its wishes to the contrary.

While the mother country incurred huge sacrifices for the sake of the colonies, India was self-supporting in administration and defence. India paid for her own conquest and she continued to pay handsomely for being ruled by the British. Unlike the colonies, she paid for 'her army' and 'her wars.' James Mill,¹⁶ the peace-loving philosophical radical, who considered the colonies to be a fruitful source of wars and of little use to their possessor, was as anxious as the militant pro-consul Lord Wellesley¹⁷ that 'every inch of ground within the limits of India were subject to [British] sway.'¹⁸ Cobden noted with regret in 1853: 'Public opinion in this country has not hitherto been opposed to any extension of our dominion in the East. On the contrary, it is believed to be profitable to the nation, and all classes are ready to hail with approbation every fresh acquisition of territory, and to reward those who bring home title-deeds, no matter, I fear, how obtained, to new Colonial possessions. So long as they are believed to be profitable, this spirit will prevail.'¹⁹

India probably purchased more of British goods at this time than all the self-governing colonies put together. Nor did she practise—in fact, she was not allowed to practise—the protectionist heresy. It was easy for the separatists to argue with an air of plausibility that Britain's trade with the colonies would not suffer even if they became independent. But the same could not be said of India. As Charles W. Dilke²⁰ pointed out: 'Were we to leave Australia or the Cape, we should continue to be the chief customers of those countries: were we to leave India or Ceylon, they would have no customers at all; for falling into anarchy, they would cease at once to export their

¹⁵G. Smith, 'The Empire,' *Essays on Questions of the Day*, New York, 1893, p. 127.

¹⁶B. 1773; utilitarian philosopher; d. 1836.

¹⁷B. 1760; governor-general of India 1797-1805; d. 1842.

¹⁸See P.E. Roberts, *India under Wellesley*, London, 1929, pp. 109, 136.

¹⁹R. Cobden, *How Wars Are Got Up in India*, London, 1853, p. 59.

²⁰B. 1843; politician and author; d. 1911.

goods to us and to consume our manufactures.'²¹ The flag followed the trade in India, but if the trade was to be maintained the flag must continue flying!

Nor could it be argued in the case of India that the British connection was retarding her intellectual, political and material growth. 'The principle of Colonial Emancipation does not apply to India,' said Goldwin Smith, 'because it is a conquered country, not a Colony: and to throw up the government without making any provision for the preservation of order when we are gone, would be to do a great wrong to the people in addition to those which we have already done.'²² There were few qualms of conscience on the part of the British with regard to their possession of India, because they considered it necessary for her own civilization. Exeter Hall and Manchester represented the two most powerful groups interested in India in the mid-Victorian period. The one wanted to civilize India by making her accept Christianity, the other by making her grow more cotton. But both were agreed that India should continue to be ruled by the British for a long, long time to come.

But, however unique, India was a part—probably the most important part—of the British empire. No significant trend of imperial thinking in Britain could, therefore, fail to take her into account or to affect her. India did not offer an easy target for the arguments of the mid-Victorian separatists, but she did not entirely escape their attention either. This point can be easily proved by referring to the writings and speeches of Richard Cobden, John Bright,²³ Richard Congreve,²⁴ and Charles W. Dilke.

Cobden believed that England had undertaken a perilous and hopeless task in governing India. God and nature had opposed visible and insuperable obstacles to the success of such a rash and audacious scheme.²⁵ He always watched the affairs in India with a jealous and critical eye and condemned 'the deeds of violence and injustice which have marked every step of our progress in India.'²⁶ The Indian government was a military despotism and the seat of unsafe finance.²⁷ He saw no advantage in the possession of India either to the rulers or to the ruled.²⁸ England had been constantly violating the moral law

²¹G.W. Dilke, *Greater Britain*, London, 1868, vol. ii, p. 394.

²²G. Smith, *The Empire*, p. 292.

²³B. 1811; orator and statesman; d. 1889.

²⁴B. 1818; positivist philosopher; d. 1899.

²⁵Morley, *op. cit.*, pp. 206, 208.

²⁶Cobden, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

²⁷Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

²⁸*Ibid.*

in that country; she could not continue doing so for all time with impunity.²⁹ 'And if it be true,' he wrote to Bright in 1857, 'as even Voltaire believed it to be, that there is "*un Dieu retributeur et vengeur*," the deeds perpetrated by the British in times past, and still more the bloody deeds now being enacted, and which all arise from our original aggression upon distant and unoffending communities, will be visited with unerring justice upon us or our children.'³⁰ He could see no point in England's possession of India. It was unconnected with free trade and put a challenge to British virtue that could never be met, for no men were that virtuous.³¹ He had said all this in 1853 when the Company's charter was under discussion and in his pamphlet, *How Wars Are Got Up in India*. The revolt of 1857 confirmed him in his gloomy and rare wisdom. He despaired of reforming Indians, who 'after a century of intercourse with us...suddenly exhibit themselves greater savages than any of the North American Indians.'³² He also despaired of his own countrymen in India who were 'descending to a level with these monsters.'³³ He saw increased difficulties in the future, for he feared that the revolt had placed an impassable gulf between the two peoples and that India might become a financial and military liability to England.³⁴ He wished the company abolished, because it was a screen between the English nation and a full sight of its awful responsibilities in India, but he doubted the wisdom and the feasibility of the Crown governing India under the control of Parliament. Not only was it impracticable, it might even impair English liberty and character.³⁵ 'How are we to maintain despotic sway in future over 1,000,000,000 of Asiatics and preserve our freedom at home?'³⁶ 'Is it possible that we can play the part of despot and butcher there without finding our character deteriorated at home?'³⁷ 'It will be a happy day,' Cobden thought, 'when England has not an acre of territory in Continental Asia.'³⁸ 'They are doing the people of this country the greatest service who tell them the honest truth according to their convictions, and prepare them for abandoning at some future time the thankless and impossible task.'³⁹

²⁹Cobden, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

³⁰Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 206, 213-14, 216.

³²*Ibid.*, pp. 206, 207, 208, 213.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 212.

³⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 208, 209, 210, 213.

³⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 207, 210, 216.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 210.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 216.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 213.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 208.

But Cobden knew full well that his opinions did not 'harmonize with the views and prejudices of the British public.'⁴⁰ In 1853 he had realized 'the difficulty of arousing the attention of the English public' to the wars in India, for they were 'carried on at the expense of the people of India' and were considered to be profitable by all classes in England.⁴¹ Nor did the employers, who supported him in his free-trade campaign, agree with him over India. He lamented: 'How few of those who fought for the repeal of the Corn Law, really understand the meaning of Free Trade principles! If you talk to our Lancashire friends they argue that unless we occupied India there would be no trade with that country, or that somebody else would monopolize it, forgetting that this is the old protectionist theory which they used formerly to ridicule. India was a great centre and source of commerce for the civilised world before Englishmen took to wearing breeches, and it was the renown of its wealth and productiveness which first attracted us there. I am by no means so clear as some people, that we have added greatly to its commerce. Certainly the trade of European countries has increased in a greater ratio than that of India during the last century.'⁴² Cobden knew the way the tide of public opinion in England was flowing at the time of the revolt of 1857 in India and he considered it fortunate that he was out of Parliament. 'I bless my stars,' he wrote, 'that I am not in a position to be obliged to give public utterance to my views on the all-absorbing topic of the day, for I could not do justice to my own convictions and possess the confidence of any constituency in the kingdom. For where do we find even an individual who is not imbued with the notion that England would sink to ruin if she were deprived of her Indian Empire? Leave me, then, to my pigs and sheep, which are not labouring under any such delusion. . . .'⁴³ The revolt suppressed, Cobden was disgusted to find London political circles in 1858 talking only about the chances of turning out one ministry and bringing in another, with 'scarcely a word about the best mode of governing the millions of India.'⁴⁴ In March 1858 he had written to a friend: 'What a pretentious and hypocritical people we are in our dealings with the outside world! How we abuse and bully King Bomba because he will not govern his lazzaroni according to our notions of constitutionalism! But when you propose to apply a little of our love of liberty to our own fellow-subjects in India, "Oh! Oh!" is the reply you meet with in the House. Yet you would have no difficulty in

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁴¹Cobden, *op. cit.*, pp. 56, 58.

⁴²Morley, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 217.

carrying the cheers of the said House for any proposal to put the slaves in America or Cuba immediately on the same political level as their masters. This nation will meet with a terrible check some day, unless it makes a little better progress in the science of self-knowledge.⁴⁵

With Bright, too, India was a great problem—the greatest any nation had ever to solve—of politics and morality, which would try all the intelligence and virtue in England. Edmund Burke⁴⁶ had called the government of India by Britain a 'trust' and remarked: 'There we are, there we are placed by the Sovereign Disposer; and we must do the best in our situation. The situation of man is the preceptor of his duty.'⁴⁷ To him India was a moral challenge, a test of national character. So was it with Bright, 'our great and terrible moral responsibility.'⁴⁸ India had been acquired by unrighteous means; 'grave errors—if not grievous crimes—had been committed in that country.'⁴⁹ Its development had been neglected and its finances squandered. Indians were taxed oppressively. The administration of the country was faulty and expensive. The Indian government often engaged itself in unjustifiable aggressions.⁵⁰ Bright wanted all this to change. He demanded a better, juster and more humane government for that country. 'What we want with regard to the government of India,' he said in the House of Commons on 24 June 1858, 'is that which in common conversation is called "a little more daylight." We want more simplicity and more responsibility.'⁵¹ The edifice reared in India was too vast and cumbrous. He advocated decentralization, a reduction in military expenditure, a conciliatory and moderate government, with sound finances, a union of the government with the governed by means of an increasing association of Indians in administration and legislation. He wished for no mere change in machinery, but 'a new feeling in England, and an entirely new policy in India.'⁵² 'The good of England must come through the channels of the good of India.'⁵³ He strongly condemned racial arrogance on the part of Englishmen and the calumnies uttered against the people of India. Indians had so far known 'England in its worst form in that

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶B. 1729; statesman; d. 1797.

⁴⁷E. Burke, *Works*, London, 1826-27, vol. iv, p. 41.

⁴⁸J.E. Thorold Rogers (ed.), *Public Addresses by John Bright, M.P.*, London, 1879, p. 448.

⁴⁹J.E. Thorold Rogers (ed.), *Speeches on Questions of Public Policy by the Right Honourable John Bright, M.P.*, London, 1880, p. 19.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 1-32.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵³*Ibid.*

country' as invader and conqueror.⁵⁴ It was for Englishmen to strive assiduously to correct that impression. He invited Parliament 'to a glory not "fanned by conquest's crimson wing," but based upon the solid and lasting benefits' which it could confer upon the people of India.⁵⁵ He accepted the possession of India 'as a fact,' but added: 'There we are; we do not know how to leave it, and therefore let us see if we know how to govern it.'⁵⁶ The people of India were 'sheep literally without a shepherd' who scarcely know 'where to turn if we left them.'⁵⁷ He warned Parliament: 'They are people whom you have subdued, and who have the highest and strongest claims upon you—claims which you cannot forget—claims which, if you do not act upon, you may rely upon it that, if there be a judgment for nations—as I believe there is—as for individuals, our children at no distant generation must pay the penalty which we have purchased by neglecting our duty to the populations of India.'⁵⁸

Bright's interest in India began in the late 1830s and it ceased only with his death. He always remained dissatisfied with the government of that country. It was partly because he considered it to be incorrigible that he refused to take up the secretaryship of India when it was offered to him in 1868.⁵⁹ He did not advocate the policy of abandoning India, because it would have been criminal in his eyes to do so in the existing helpless condition of the country,⁶⁰ but he continued reminding the English people of their duty and solemn responsibility in India. In 1877 he remarked at Manchester: 'I believe that it is our duty not only to govern India well now for our own sakes and to satisfy our own conscience, but so to arrange its government and so to administer it that we should look forward to the time—which may be distant, but may not be so remote—when India will have to take up her own government, and administer it in her own fashion.' He was 'no statesman,' he said, 'no man actuated with a high moral sense,' who was 'not willing thus to look ahead, and thus to prepare for circumstances which may come sooner than we think, and sooner than any of us hope for, but which must come at some not very distant date.' In this manner alone, he said, could the British people 'make amends for the original crime upon which much of our power in India is founded, and for the many mistakes which

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁹See J.L. Sturgis, *John Bright and the Empire*, London, 1969, pp. 67-68.

⁶⁰J.E. Thorold Rogers (ed.), *Public Addresses by John Bright, M.P.*, pp. 448, 502-3.

have been made.' It was their duty to strive to give to the people of India 'that good government and that freedom which He, who is supreme over all lands and all peoples, will in His own good time make the possession of all His children.'⁶¹

Richard Congreve, the most celebrated of the British Comtists, took a keen interest in India. Before 1857 he had contented himself with protesting against the British Indian empire, but 'accepted it as a fact.'⁶² As he wrote in 1857: 'Not blind to the wrong means by which it was acquired, not blind to the inherent evils of its ultimate retention—evil both to England and to India—I had yet hoped that the hour of its fall might be adjourned for some time. And I had rested my hope on the conviction that the English Government, by the enforcement of order, the furtherance of material improvements, and by the lessons of Western punctuality and honour, was in some measure redeeming its origin, and if not in principle justified, was in its practical results offering to its Eastern subjects some perceptible compensation for its conquest. In this feeling I waited patiently for the day when either the energies of the native population should make our further hold impossible, or, what was more desirable, the spread of a purer moral feeling on such subjects should lead the English nation voluntarily to abandon that hold, and of itself retiring from India, after having done everything possible to secure the country it had so long ruled, order, good government, and external security.'⁶³ But the revolt of 1857 in India dispelled all such ideas and Congreve began to preach that 'we [the British] withdraw from our occupation of India without any unnecessary delay, within the shortest period compatible with due regard for the security of European life and property, and with such measures as shall be deemed advisable in the interests of Indian independence and good government.'⁶⁴ In his view, the great object was the British withdrawal from India and the cessation of the British dominion. Though the British had neglected it, their best claim to their position in India had always been as trustees and representatives of the civilization of the West. 'Let us in the spirit of this claim, secure, as we may easily do, a guarantee on the part of all the great European Powers that the empire we retire from shall not be considered open to the ambition of any of them, and that no extra-European Power shall have a right which we renounce ourselves.'⁶⁵ He even suggested the

⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 448.

⁶²R. Congreve, 'India,' *Essays: Political, Social, and Religious*, London; 1874, p. 72.

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 77.

establishment of a mixed commission, similar in principle to the one appointed to investigate the question of the Danubian principalities, consisting of the representatives of France, Portugal, Denmark, Sardinia, Turkey, and Britain, which would 'act in concert with any Government established or to be established in India' and 'settle the terms on which the interchange of the Western world with India could be continued.'⁶⁶ This might form the basis of a European protectorate of India, but the objects of British policy should remain: 'the withdrawal of English occupation; the securing the independence of India; the retaining a wholesome commercial and moral connection between the East and the West.'⁶⁷

Congreve believed that, though Britain had occupied India in 'rashness,' the spirit she should 'bring to its relinquishment is that of the calmest judgment, of the most absolute self-denial.' 'Like an unskilful physician, we interfered with the course of nature, and suspended its healing action. The confession of this error constitutes a demand for the highest exertion of skill in meeting its consequences.'⁶⁸ There could be no permanent union between Britain and India. 'Open any map of the world, and see the relative position of the two countries: it constitutes a strong presumption against their union. Then estimate their relative population, their differences of climate, language, religion, manners and customs, and have you not so many additional presumptions? Ask yourself under what conditions a conquest is either justifiable or admissible; and then ask yourself whether in the case of India, any one of these conditions is realized. Treat the question either on moral or political grounds, I have no fear of the answer.'⁶⁹

Congreve did not subscribe to the view that the possession of India added to the strength of Britain or that its retention was necessary for the sake of British commerce. Britain's commercial intercourse with India existed even before India was conquered, and it would continue to exist after her withdrawal. As the example of the United States of America showed, Britain's commerce was as profitable or even more so with an independent or actually hostile country as with one that was dependent.⁷⁰ India was not a source of strength to Britain, but a source of political weakness. What would have happened if the revolt of 1857 in India had come when England was engaged in a war with Russia. 'No! the cry for colonies or dependencies is at any rate a delusion, so far as it is thought that they

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p. 80.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 85.

increase our strength. They are incumbrances on our finances, and a drain on our military power. We are great, not by virtue of them, but in spite of them; they are burdensome outworks, from which we should retire for concentration. We were great when no dream of Indian acquisitions had occupied any adventurer. We shall be great again, when the energies of the nation shall have a great government to give them a wholesome direction, a noble expression.⁷¹

The plea that England held India for the sake of civilization and that released from the English hold India would fall into disorder and barbarism, carried no weight with Congreve, because, as he wrote: 'I have gained a respect for that ancient polytheistic civilization with which our own social order is but a child in point of duration.'⁷² He even deemed it 'unwise to press on India the adoption of the progressive, yet still anarchical civilization of the West.'⁷³

Congreve not only did not see any hope of Indians accepting Christianity in large numbers in the foreseeable future, he was even inclined to think 'that it would be, not a gain, but a loss to the Hindoo nation, were it persuaded to accept Christianity.'⁷⁴

Congreve believed that England's original title to be in India was bad, her subsequent government had not been wholly defensible, and her ultimate tenure was uncertain at the best. 'More distant than ever will be the day of our leaving, if it is left to us to judge the proper moment.'⁷⁵ It was certain that sooner or later India would be torn from England. She should, therefore, clearly indicate the probable date of her withdrawal, for 'the only real glory she can hope to gain by India is by its voluntary restitution to its inhabitants.'⁷⁶

Congreve, however, had no illusions about the reception of his ideas in England. He knew that he was arguing 'in support of a line of policy alien in conception and results to the thoughts and wishes of the upper classes of England.'⁷⁷ 'I am aware,' he wrote, 'that I stand in comparative isolation.... But as I hope for no immediate acceptance, in my country or time, of such political doctrines as I have expressed, so in the future I am confident of their prevalence.'⁷⁸

When after the suppression of the Indian revolt of 1857-59, the

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 89-91.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

British government ordered the Thanksgiving for 1 May 1859, Congreve publicly protested against it, 'believing the cause of the English in India to be unjust, that of the Hindoos just, as the legitimate effort of a nation to shake off an oppressive foreign yoke; believing, consequently, the English success to be the triumph of force over right.'⁷⁹

Congreve continued to hold these views in later years. In 1872 he reprinted without any alterations his pamphlet *India* written in 1857. In the same year he reflected on the 'Moral and Social Questions Connected with our Indian Empire' and remarked that the Indian revenue vitiated England's intercourse with China; it acted as an oppressive weight on her European policy; it warped the views of many in England and controlled the action of the British government in regard to Gibraltar (which, he advocated, should be returned to Spain). Congreve reiterated his conviction that England's tenure in India was uncertain in duration and that it was bound to end in ultimate failure unless she obviated the failure by wise retirement.⁸⁰

The great Indian nationalist leader Dadabhai Naoroji⁸¹ made the following entry in his diary after meeting with Congreve in London on 15 April 1886: 'Called at Dr. Congreve's.... He thought the connexion between England and India should be severed; it was injuring England; it was doing harm to the whole English character.... I was of a different opinion that the connexion should continue for the sake of India and that if certain reforms, which were sorely needed by India, were made, the connexion would be a blessing to both. I stated about poverty and the remedy of the substitution of Native agency. This, he said, was just the thing which the statesmen would not dare to do. The English agency in India is an immediate benefit and they would not give it up.... A separation must come in time when the people generally are sufficiently advanced for self-government and political knowledge. Statesmen like Salisbury⁸² and Hartington⁸³ were, he said, afraid of this very thing, that Ireland

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁸⁰R. Congreve, 'Moral and Social Questions Connected with our Indian Empire,' *Essays: Political, Social, and Religious*, pp. 417-49.

⁸¹B. 1825; journalist and businessman; first Indian member of British Parliament 1892-95; president of Indian National Congress 1886, 1893 and 1906; d. 1917.

⁸²B. 1830; secretary of state for India 1866-67, 1874-78; prime minister of Britain 1885, 1886-92, 1895-1902; d. 1903.

⁸³B. 1833; chief secretary for Ireland 1870-74; secretary of state for India 1880-82; secretary of state for war 1882-85; lord president of council 1895-1903; d. 1908.

being separated, India would come next for something similar, and this they consider the destruction of the Empire.⁸⁴

Dilke was probably more interested in India than in the self-governing colonies. In his *Greater Britain* (1868) he argued that the retention of the colonies did not pay, but this was, in his view, not true of India and the other dependencies. We have already noted his views about the necessity of keeping the British flag flying in India if trade with that country was to continue. Further, the dependencies formed 'a nursery of statesmen and warriors' and England would 'irresistibly fall into national sluggishness of thought' were she not required to govern and educate the inhabitants of backward countries.⁸⁵ 'The possession of India,' he wrote, 'offers to ourselves that element of vastness of dominion which, in this age, is needed to secure width of thought and nobility of purpose....'⁸⁶

Dilke believed that as India could not within a reasonable future govern herself, England must govern her 'in the interests of the people of Hindostan.'⁸⁷ England's mission in the East was 'to plant free institutions among dark-skinned races.'⁸⁸ 'The only justification for our presence in India,' wrote Dilke, 'is the education for freedom of the Indian races.'⁸⁹

Dilke found fault with 'our somewhat blind love for "progress",'⁹⁰ and 'our levelling rule'⁹¹ in India, which had humbled the old upper classes without raising a new middle class to take its place. British rule in India was 'the best example of a well-administered despotism,'⁹² but its 'one great fault' was over-centralization,⁹³ and its tendency was 'to become an imperialism, or despotism exercised over a democratic people such as we see in France, and are commencing to see in Russia.'⁹⁴ The British government in India was too rigidly Western and suffered from lack of adaptability and elasticity. It was unacquainted with the feelings of the people and lamentably ignorant about the facts of their life.⁹⁵ It had created a numerous class of educated Indians, but offered them no chance of

⁸⁴Quoted in R.P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India*, London, 1939, pp. 229-30.

⁸⁵Dilke, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 407.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, p. 389.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 407.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 381.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 376.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁹²*Ibid.*, p. 388.

⁹³*Ibid.*

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 380.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 207.

any but subordinate career. This not only created discontent but enfeebled Indian character. 'That such men as Madhava Rao⁹⁶ and Salar Jung⁹⁷ should be unable to find suitable employment in our service is one of the standing reproaches of our rule.'⁹⁸ He strongly advocated the increased employment of Indians in all services and greater encouragement of the English language. The great advantage of the latter, he said, would be that 'its acquisition by the Hindoos will soon place the government of India in native hands, and thus, gradually relieving us of an almost intolerable burthen, will civilize and set free the people of Hindostan.'⁹⁹

'If India is to be governed by the British race at all,' Dilke insisted, 'it must be governed from Great Britain. The general conditions of our rule must be dictated at London by the English people, and nothing but the execution of our decrees, the collection of evidence, and the framing of mere rules, left to our subordinates in the East.'¹⁰⁰ For Dilke was of the opinion that 'India, as a whole' was 'far better understood in England than in any presidency town.'¹⁰¹

Dilke believed that the presence of the British in India for the time being was justifiable. Were they to quit India, they would leave her to Russia or to herself. A Russian occupation of India, besides being a blow to British prestige and trade, would be a disaster for the people of India themselves, for the Russians were, according to him, a barbarous horde who would surpass even Eastern tyrants in corruption, cruelty and oppression. If India were to be left to herself, 'unextinguishable anarchy would involve our Eastern trade and India's happiness in a hideous and lasting ruin.'¹⁰² But English rule should gradually prepare the Indian people for freedom. Dilke did not believe that self-government could only exist where the snow would lie deep upon the ground and that despotism followed the palm-belt round the world. 'If freedom be good in one country,' he wrote, 'it is good in all, for there is nothing in its essence which should limit it in time or place....'¹⁰³ 'We should know that the Sikhs, Kandians, Scindians, Marattas, have fought bravely enough for national independence to make it plain that they will struggle

⁹⁶B. 1828; *diwan* of Travancore 1958-72, of Indore 1873-75 and of Baroda 1875-82; d. 1891.

⁹⁷B. 1829; *diwan* of Hyderabad from 1853 until his death in 1883.

⁹⁸Dilke, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 373; also p. 379.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 368-69; also pp. 383-86.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, p. 386.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, p. 382.

to the death for liberty as soon as they can be made to see its worth. It will take years to efface the stain of a couple of hundred years of slavery in the negroes of America, and it may take scores of years to heal the deeper sores of Hindostan; but history teaches us to believe that the time will come when the Indians will be fit for freedom.¹⁰⁴

India was fast changing, noted Dilke, a nation was being made out of what was ten years ago but a continent inhabited by an agglomeration of distinct tribes, and no Englishman who left India for ten years was competent even to advise, much less to share, in the government of that country.¹⁰⁵ In a memorable passage in *Greater Britain* we read: 'The greatest of the many changes in progress in the East is that India is being made—that a country is being created under that name where none has yet existed; and it is our railroads, our annexations, and above all our centralizing policy, that are doing the work. There is no reason to fear that this change will be hastened by the extension of our new codes to the former "non-regulation provinces," and by government from at home, where India is looked upon as one nation, instead of from Calcutta, where it is known to be still composed of fifty; but so rapid is the change, that already the Calcutta people are mistaken in attempting to laugh down our phrase "the people of India," as we were during the mutiny, when we believed that there was an "India" writhing in our clutches. Whether the India which is being thus rapidly built up by our own hands will be friendly to us, or the reverse, depends upon ourselves.'¹⁰⁶ The British people, he wrote, had rejected the principle of holding India for the sake of prestige and trade and deliberately decided 'to govern India in the interest of the people of Hindostan' and the task of statesmanship was to think out methods by which this accepted principle was to be worked out.¹⁰⁷ And Dilke prophesied: 'If, when India has passed through the present transition stage from a country of many peoples to a country of only one, we cannot continue to rule her by the consent of the majority of her inhabitants, our occupation of the country must come to an end, whether we will or no.'¹⁰⁸

The views expressed by Cobden, Bright, Congreve, and Dilke about India have a sort of family likeness to those expressed by the other contemporary anti-imperialists who confined their attention mainly to the self-governing colonies. This likeness is better

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 384-85.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, p. 388.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, p. 389.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 257-58.

appreciated if due allowance be made for the peculiar position of India in the British empire and the circumstances prevailing in the country at that time. The arguments used by the mid-Victorian anti-imperialists differed, but their message was the same. They were all trying, in effect, to tell their fellow-countrymen this: the empire is changing and cannot last for ever; it is not an end in itself, but a means to an end; think nobly but realistically about it.

BOOK REVIEWS

C. R. BOXER, *Mary and Misogyny, Women in Iberian Expansion Overseas, 1415-1815, Facts, Fancies and Personalities*, London, Duckworth, 1975, Pp. 142, £3.95.

This little book, containing four lectures delivered originally to Bryn Mawr College, is, arguably, the finest and most enjoyable piece of historical reconstruction to come to us in the International Women's Year. Professor Boxer's central contention is that for four hundred years of their glorious history, men of the Iberian peninsula thought little of their women. They carried this misogyny with them to their settlements in the Americas, in Africa and in maritime Asia. Occasionally it would be expressed with some emphasis. Parish priests of the Philippines, for instance, were given to understand in a manual of instruction published at Manila in 1745: 'Woman is the most monstrous animal in the whole of Nature, bad-tempered and worse spoken. To have this animal in the house is asking for trouble in the way of tattling, tale-bearing, malicious gossip and controversies; for wherever a woman is, it would seem impossible to have peace and quiet.' Admittedly such forthrightness was not always in evidence and occasionally a perverse voice would be raised pleading for the women, but the fact was that Iberian men believed firmly in keeping women in their place. To this end the cult of the Virgin Mary was much utilized, at home and abroad, inculcating virtues of chastity and submission. As an ideological weapon the cult was not always an unqualified success. Amerindian males, for instance, even after they had seen the light and accepted Christianity, failed to see the advantage of marrying virgin wives. They preferred experience.

After an urbane, guided tour through the depressed feminine world in the more important of the Iberian colonies, the reader is left with a wholesome respect for at least some of the women he encounters. Neither Mary nor misogyny kept them down. To some extent, of course, this was due to the fact that the colonists lived dangerously, fighting moors and Indians of different hues much of the time. Iberian women often fought alongside their men and occasionally they fought better. Religion was another route to renown and several case-histories illustrate the importance of being devout. Particularly edifying is the account of a seventeenth-century Bengali woman who, kidnapped from home as a child by Portuguese pirates,

ended her life 'in an odour of sanctity' in Mexico. While a girl, she preferred poisonous snakes to boys for playmates and remained a virgin although she married. The spiritual progress she attained in later life enabled her to visit heaven frequently. These visits, however, proved embarrassing as 'God and the Virgin Mary constantly quarrelled over who would do her the greatest spiritual favours.' The Catholic Church, regrettably, denied her canonization on the plea that her stories were improbable.

Not many of course fought in battles and few endeavoured to be saints. But some women acquired undying distinction through sheer strength of character. Such was Dona Ignez, a powerful landowner of Mozambique, who married Antonio Menezes, ex-governor of Macao. Six months after their marriage Dona Ignez threw Menezes out of her house as she wished to marry another. She then decided that Menezes dead would be even better than Menezes outcast. Menezes fled. Several people died in attempting to succour him, including some women and a high official of the Portuguese crown who tried to keep the peace. Menezes however escaped. 'He next appears,' Professor Boxer informs us, 'as Governor of Timor, with the width of the Indian Ocean between himself and his estranged wife.'

Dona Ignez owned vast properties and so did other women in Mozambique. As in India, the Portuguese crown supported women colonists with 'dowries,' which were either official positions given to their husbands or some kind of landed property. In the Portuguese province of the north in India, that is the coastal strip in the neighbourhood of Bassein, the properties were small villages, *aldeias*, which came to be much sought after as the Portuguese share of the Indian Ocean trade declined in the seventeenth century, thus taking away the value of such official positions as remained. The scramble for the *aldeias* was probably fierce in the early eighteenth century as trade came to be dislocated in the Arabian Sea and the loss of Bassein to the Marathas in 1739 must have been more tragic than has been generally appreciated. Professor Boxer indicates the necessity of working on the records of these *aldeias* and important clarification may indeed come to the Indian maritime historian from a study of this kind.

One great virtue of *Mary and Misogyny* is that, while itself slim and elegant, it presages voluminous research on important problems. Professor Boxer warns the reader several times that he has neither the data nor the scope to attempt an in depth analysis. Much of what he has to say concerns the Iberian aristocracy. One tends to substitute 'ladies' for 'women' as one reads. This of course is inevitable given the character of the surviving documentation. What is interesting is that on some occasions—to go by the evidence Boxer cites—

the attitude to women was the same as the attitude to the working class. The Iberian Church, for instance, thought it inadvisable that women and workers should practise spiritual concentration. In that case the cobbler would spoil the shoes, the cook would burn the meat and women would allow babies to fall into fires. It is possible that, to an extent, behind the evident 'dislike' of women lay the natural tendency of the Iberian aristocracy to protect property of various kinds.

ASHIN DAS GUPTA

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ANAND CHAKRAVARTI, *Contradiction and Change: Emerging Patterns of Authority in a Rajasthan Village*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1975, Pp. xii + 234, Rs 55.

The book under review, originally a doctoral dissertation, is concerned with the process whereby the distribution and exercise of power in a Rajasthan village has undergone a major structural change in the course of a lifetime. The event that initiated this process was national independence in 1947. One of its notable consequences for the village has been the emergence of a new economic and political order based on a notion of legitimate authority different from that which previously existed.

Chakravarti spent a year (1964-65) in the village of Devisar (Jaipur district) and also paid short visits to neighbouring villages. He collected with obvious care an impressive body of materials, both quantitative and qualitative. He concentrated on events pertaining to the actual exercise of power by two village leaders in particular situations of clash of interests. Both of them were at various times involved in these events as actors and in some cases as decision-makers.

The data presented in the book include 39 case studies. Most of them refer to events in the 1950s and 1960s, though one goes as far back as 1914 and another is dated 1924. The author was perhaps overcautious in not tapping his informants' memories of more distant times. The case studies, generally rather brief, are employed to compare the village during the pre-independence (Rajput) and post-independence periods, with a view to describing (i) the 'rules' operative in it, (ii) the 'relationships' between the village and the outside world, (iii) the 'reactions' of the villagers to political changes imposed on them from the outside, and (iv) the 'roles' of the leaders. The author explains that he has employed what has been called the

'extended case method' in anthropological literature. He also clearly outlines his conceptual framework borrowed from Weber's well-known analysis of power and authority and of the types of authority and legitimacy.

After introducing the theme, the methodology and the village (chapter 1), Chakravarti outlines the historical background (chapter 2) and the pattern of traditional authority (chapter 3). He proclaims at the very outset that for his kind of concern the conceptualization of his village in terms of the caste system would be both inadequate and misleading. This is by now a familiar argument and one wonders whether it is not being turned into an uncritical judgment. Thus, I was struck by the fact that in his analysis of the traditional system, Chakravarti does not probe beyond the *obviously* economic and political dimensions of village life. In dealing with intercaste relations, traditional ritual obligations are slurred over. The word *jajmani* is never used nor patronage either, though the *kamin* appear once. We are told nothing explicitly about the entailments of lineage solidarity among the Rajputs or the implications of kinship obligations among the other castes. The book does, however, conclude with a single-sentence bow to the persistence, though in a new framework of rules, of 'considerations of kinship, caste and community.' This comes rather as a surprise. Such a degree of specialization (if that is the word) seems to me unfortunately crippling and militates against the spirit of intensive fieldwork. This is a great pity because, judging by the material presented in the book, Chakravarti is obviously an excellent fieldworker.

The next two chapters deal with the abolition of *jagirdari* (chapter 4) and the introduction of the statutory *panchayat* (chapter 5). These represent the exogenous factors of change introduced into the village after independence. Detailed data are presented to show that the Rajputs of the village now own considerably less land than in the past and that consequently qualitative changes in the organization of agricultural production have occurred among them. Thus, since 1954, most of the Rajputs have been performing agricultural work themselves. More importantly, the abolition of *jagirdari* provided a basis for the redistribution of power in the village though this is still in the process of being realized. Chakravarti thus maintains that, contrary to what even such a sensitive observer of the Indian scene as Daniel Thorner believed, the consequences of land reforms in Rajasthan have been quite significant. As for the redefinition of power relations, it is convincingly argued that the statutory *panchayat* succeeded in linking the village to outside political agencies, though these agencies did not always provide support for its decisions.

Chapters 6 ('The emergence of a new leader') and 7 ('The new pattern of power and authority') are of absorbing interest. Here we see the village drama of the gradual displacement of the traditional order by the modern through the struggle for power between two Rajputs. The older man, a father-figure, almost sponsored the younger man in earlier stages but almost inevitably they emerge as opponents. They are not really bargaining for the position of the leader on the same stage: it is not a conflict between persons but rather a contradiction between two types of political and social order, viz., the feudal and the democratic. It is also a contradiction between different notions of legitimacy underlying authority.

Chakravarti does an excellent job of showing the manner in which the above contradictions have developed without completely destroying all the elements of the traditional systems. Thus, there is a coexistence of two types of legitimacy, the traditional-feudal and the modern-legal; in the circumstances a successful leader is one who can draw upon both these sources. The author also clearly demonstrates the gap between legitimate authority and actual power. One might say that, though the village is increasingly acquiring the characteristics of a para-political community (encysted in a larger political system), it is also still a village.

The persistence of tradition is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that, as already stated, the leader of the new age is a Rajput just as the older leader is. The author reports a conversation between the old leader and some lower caste people (page 172) in which the former is confronted with a Gujar, an Ahir and a Kumhar, each of whom presses the claims of a fellow lower caste (Dhanka) man against a Rajput. And the old leader asks them repeatedly what *they* know of *nyaya* (justice). It is indeed ironical that the leader of these interlocutors is a Rajput too, one who has traditionally known about such matters.

Chakravarti brings together the threads of discussion in the concluding chapter, in which he also presents the findings of his brief visits to four other villages. He seems to suggest that objective conditions for change in the political order are rather hard to define and emphasizes the mutual necessity of local political entrepreneurship and a favourable political environment. The abolition of *jagirdari*, the institution of statutory *panchayat* and the rise of a village leader opposed to the traditional order are, then, recognized as the principal agents of change. It seems to me that he overstresses the altruistic motives of the new leader: having employed the notion of entrepreneurship, it is rather surprising that the author does not pay enough attention to personal profit.

Within its self-imposed limits, *Contradiction and Change* is an ex-

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cellent book, a job done painstakingly and thoroughly. There are no unnecessary flourishes of theory here and no trivialities of fact. It is a model of quiet and lucid exposition, and the case-study method enables the author to present fascinating vignettes of village life. There is also a narrowness of scope, however, which comes out in the nature of the case material itself, which is mostly concerned with disputes over property: women and children occur in less than half a dozen cases. The pursuit of political power and economic advantage is a time-honoured *purushartha* but there is certainly more to living than it. A final minor point, if only to underscore the perversity of reviewers: the book should have had a different title—perhaps *Power and Authority*, or something else. 'Contradiction' is a loaded concept and the closest that Chakravarti gets to Marx or Mao is to follow Bailey's use of the term.

It is a pleasure to recommend *Contradiction and Change* to students of contemporary Indian society. Not every sociological work that is published these days is welcome though it certainly augments the pile; of the present book it may truly be said that it is a welcome addition to the corpus.

T. N. MADAN

Institute of Economic Growth
Delhi

P. C. JOSHI, *Land Reforms in India: Trends and Perspectives*, Institute of Economic Growth and Allied Publishers, Rs 15.

In India almost everybody has some kind of interest in land and invariably has something to say on agrarian questions. In between the actual cultivator and the so-called owner—the proverbial range of fifty intermediaries—come the economists and sociologists to camouflage the interest of some group or the other. Volumes have been written and countless dissertations submitted, mostly posing lackadaisical questions and providing euphemistic answers to a practical problem like agrarian relations. The monograph under review explores the trends and perspectives of land reform in India on the basis of a comprehensive survey of agrarian studies. There is a section listing problem-areas to be investigated by social scientists and a bibliography with which one wishes the author had been more selective.

There are sections devoted to 'Agrarian Reconstruction and the Processes and Patterns of Modernisation'; 'Agrarian Structure and Economic Development'; and 'Evaluation of Land Reforms.' Throughout the survey the attitude has been to sidetrack the core of

the problem in terms of the power structure by the generalized contention that 'the situation is not uniform,' 'the conclusion depends on detailed empirical investigation,' etc.

Dr Joshi has taken Indian economists to task for cornering agrarian studies into their arena and not giving enough consideration to the sociological, historical, political, and ecological factors in a society. To a layman, the study of agrarian relations is a study of the conflict of interest. Has any competent study of this been done by political scientists in India? How many formal studies of the countless cases of agrarian unrest in India do we have? Have Indian anthropologists bothered to take up serious studies of the material life of the tribals and consequently the possibility of institutional transformation of peasant society in India? A mere pretence of interdisciplinary study leads to its characteristic failing—an enterprise which often seems to merit definition as the process by which the unknown areas of one's own subject matter are multiplied by the uncertainties of some other sciences.

Dr Joshi has repeatedly raised the question of the utility of Western values and institutions and the concurrent formal theories for studying the problems of Indian peasantry. He has attempted to construct a typology of agrarian sub-systems in India. Here the comments of Marshall Sahlins seem to be apt, 'So the well-known methodological reservation of a well-known social anthropologist remains pertinent: "What is the use" he asked, "of putting into comparison a society you have not first thoroughly understood?" To this a colleague of mine once replied, as we walked along a dim academic corridor: "How can you understand a society you have not first compared?"'

The monograph has an exhaustive and useful if repetitive and mundane list of 'less explored areas in agrarian studies.' One is surprised to find the emphasis Dr Joshi has put on the efficacy of the historical process of administrative reforms and the possibility of a fusion of voluntary and spontaneous institutional adjustments in the social framework. A teenager from a peasant family would tell you that the land reform laws had been ineffective in their application, allowing in many cases the development of counter-measures which have frustrated their basic purpose. He would also tell you that the effects of the abolition of intermediaries were different from what was expected and the ceiling laws have also failed. One agrees with Dr Joshi that we do not need social scientists to tell us what is happening but we expect them to unearth why it is happening. We need critical analysts of the structure and the process of change in Indian rural society.

D. GADAS MUKHOPADHYAY

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