Contemporary Postcolonial Discourse: A Dalit Feminist Critique

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is a bonafide record of research work done by me and that no part of this dissertation has been presented earlier for any degree or diploma elsewhere.

Hyderabad (J.INDIRA)

DEDICATION

For

All those Dalit men who stand by their Dalit women as Fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, friends and as fellow community people.

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Ms. Indira.J worked under my supervision for the P.D. degree in the political science. Her thesis entitled " **Contemporary Postcolonial Discourse: A Dalit Feminist Critique"** represents her own independent work at the University of Hyderabad. This work has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of any degree.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The present chapter probes casteism/casteist patriarchy as a political challenge confronting the contemporary postcolonial (PC from hereafter) academic mission. PC project's rejection of grand (liberal, Marxist) theoretical and methodological paradigms has been accompanied by an urge to reconfigure versions of the nations and formulate a new set of theoretical paraphernalia. Many of their theoretical inventions are casteised, gendered and more importantly gendered on caste lines. The penchant to characterize mainstream Indian nationalist discourse in terms of "autonomous nationalist thought" obscure both caste/ caste patriarchal underpinnings of the discourse and the violence (epistimic, physical, material) that targeted Dalits. They often use culture to determine meanings of nationalism/nation / home. The PC discourse on such concepts as nation, nationalism and postcoloniality is setting new political parameters along the repudiatory lines of caste, gender and so on. The centrality of caste/ caste patriarchy to mainstream Indian culture and nationalist discourse is evident. This realization does not seem to match understandings of nationalist discourse reflected in PC literature, which give no attention to caste/caste patriarchal dynamics. There is a need to consider these dynamics very seriously. But the PC project seems to be immune to such realizations. The present dissertation thus tries to register Dalit feminist frustration over this immunity.

They tend to project the Hindu nationalist course as the mainstream one. Such attitudes relegate Dalit nationalist fights/discourse to the margins. It thus privileges *upper caste* hegemonic domination in the field of scholarly production. Moreover, it also accords unquestionable vitality to certain ideological streams that are prejudiced. The present work engages it self in deconstructing this prejudiced literature. This is not only to point out at the Dalit concerns but also to challenge the politics of accepted language and concepts like "nation", "nationalism", "family" etc. These omissions are particularly hitting in the emerging contexts where Dalits' contribution to nationalism and nation building, and their alternative discourses have been put to debate.

The present work concentrates on PC theory, drawing attention to ways and methods in which "the nation" is predicated on specific *caste* identities. It tries to reveal the limitations of PC theory. The conclusion is that Dalits do not find space in this theory. They don't appear as nationalist subjects. No committed scholar writing about nationalism can ignore the *caste/caste* patriarchal dimensions of Indian nation. The question is not whether the PC literature is "dalitist" enough. The scrutiny is more towards understanding the implications of PC literature to the Dalits. Their notion of "peasants", "masses" or "subalterns" is incapable to present us with their *caste* background. It is also time to challenge the artificial divide that they formulated between the inner and outer domains. Dalits energetic involvement in numerous reform and nationalist movements throughout the British colonial period would rise questions on their status as nationalist subjects; the victory of *upper caste* nationalists in the so-called "inner domain" and the *caste* dimensions of PC literature itself. PC scholars seem to subscribe to the notion of nation-as-kinship/family. It is evident in their unequivocal endorsement to Hindu religious nationalist discourse.

The present work specifically deals with the exclusions of the Dalit woman in PC literature. It is not an exaggeration to ascertain that their very historiography is based on excluding her. Therefore the present study is particularly designed to focus on the casteised gender dimensions of politico-cultural constructions of "the" nation. For them boundaries of "the" nation are fixed and eternal. Dalit woman does not serve as idealized image or boundary of the nation. Their biological status as social reproducers is not claimed by the nation. They are therefore not given the place of "battlegrounds" in nationalist conflicts. They do not symbolize national collectivity. Their children are not treated as the natural heirs of nation. PC scholarship does not debate all the exclusions in their theory. Moreover, they continue to manufacture their very theory on these exclusions. Therefore the present work examines ways in which ideas about insiders and outsiders are constructing the meanings of the nation. It also draws attention to the self-other dichotomies within PC discourse. PC school takes up the cultural approach to nationalism and operates as a site of ideological production. It has so far never looked at how *caste* patriarchy and nationalist projects are politically embedded.

The concept of Caste:

One methodological issue that is to be considered seriously is the parallel application of the terms Dalit and *caste* by all most all the scholars reviewed here. Unfortunately it has become a settled practice to use these two terms interchangeably. It sounds too paradoxical to find that the Dalit movement, which fights against *caste,* is often addressed as a *caste* movement. Certainly the researcher is aware that the Dalit movement has made large departures from its *anti-caste* path to that of consolidating the *caste* identities in order to fight against hierarchies existing in the name of *castes.* Such attempts at consolidation are also should be understood as a kind of fight against the same *caste* oppression and the usage of '*caste'* here as a matter of strategy. Thus the terms *caste* and "Dalit movement" cannot be used interchangeably. If the Dalit movement can be termed as a *caste* movement how does one address the violence's launched in the name of *caste*? How does one understand the aggressive invasions of the *upper castes* against the *lower castes? Caste* by definition is casteist, that means oppressiveness is its essential core. Therefore it is absurd to treat the Dalit movement as a *caste* movement and anti-Dalit movements as casteist movements.

However, by the 1990s with the emergence of identity politics, *caste* has come to be understood not only as an oppressive apparatus but also as a social identity. This social identity is again located in the body of a person since *caste* attaches itself to a person from his/her birth. It is a paradoxical situation where *caste* has become both a system that has to be eroded and as a marker that should be cared for as an identity. It has become a marker of persons and of communities. But it is apolitical to apply the term in these ways. Therefore, in the present work the term is used in 'italics' to indicate its oppressive core, its constructedness and also the difficulty of avoiding the term altogether.

There is a trend towards the transvaluation of the term *caste*. 'Dalit' is coined as a term to indicate power, and dalitness is to be acclaimed not ignored. The opinion was that perceiving Dalits as part of a *caste* is a strengthening element. Such negative potential drawn from *caste* identity only subverts the idea of *caste*. Such efforts only conceal the jaundiced implications of *caste* and fail to counter its real purposes and violent nature. It is necessary to use the term for the purpose of consolidation, and at the same time to be careful enough to see how it operates in the hands of the Dalits.

Caste is defined by various people in various ways. The present work sees it as a system of stratification that places people in hierarchies according to certain artificial parameters (which range from birth, culture, religion etc.) which is premised on the division of occupations into respectable and demeaning. Any-body's place in the *caste* system is defined by the accident of his/her birth and therefore by the societal status that follows.

Casteist Patriarchy:

Dalit women are ruled by this system of casteist patriarchy. It is not always exercised by *upper caste* men alone. All the kinds of oppressions, which are exercised on Dalit women, can be said to emanate from this system because of Dalit woman's location as a woman and as a Dalit. It does not simply double the oppression but multiplies it and manifests itself in numerous ways. This oppression can arise from two counters; one, because she is by birth situated in this plane and the other because the world which relates itself with her also operate in the same plane of casteist patriarchy. Thus even the Dalit women who are in a slightly better position are understood as being under its subjection since society always comes to terms with them through this structure.

This structure is maintained with much keenness since women are the permeable edges through which social relations are reproduced. They are the potential frontiers, which can result in the mixture of *castes* if they are not kept in their *right* place. Since the nation is imagined as the possession of the *upper castes'*, it is necessary to see that only the *upper caste* progeny inherit it. During the great transitional times of British colonialism, there was an enormous fretfulness about preserving these traditional boundaries. It was thus deemed important to reproduce the *caste* consciousness both at the mind and the institutional levels since the modern laws and rules would soon have un-stigmatized the interactions between the *castes*. While they were trying to both liberate their women and preserve their homes with this precautionary care, rejuvenating the old casteist patriarchy became an essential strategy. This rejuvenation or giving a democratic face-lift to this system necessitated the deployment of various tactics. Writing and speech thus assumed enormous importance, which took up the meaning-making task. From literary to academic writings and speeches everything was soaked in casteist patriarchy. The fifth chapter "Religious Nationalism as Epestemic Violence" specifically explains how this task had been carried on by the religious nationalists, a legacy they inherited through their ancestors and from religious scriptures. They keep

producing such ideologies and they have different strategies for doing so. The refusal to offer an equal status to subjectivity in their writings and speeches is one such effective method. They produce their theories as if the *others* do not exist.

Such a refusal to give subjectivity to the Dalits is the main feature of postcolonial theory. This strategy of denying subjectivity to the Dalits in general and to Dalit women in particular happened primarily by branding the Dalit movement and its discourse as a mere community oriented one. The continuous practice of denying the space of nationalism to the Dalit discourse and movement that extends to this date is part of the programme of denying a nationalist subjectivity to them. The present thesis tries to examine how this practice is being reproduced by the postcolonial school and also by those schools who stick to the "Cultural Studies" approach. This can be found in the first chapter "Postcolonial Theory and the Dalits".

Dalit Movement as Nationalist:

A cryptic code of nationalist language came in hand for them to reach this end. A particular jargon became standardized and it also became an effective tool to achieve certain ends without being responsible for specifying who gets what, how much and when. The nation and Hindu became identical at one phase. The nation was sanctified and became a generic entity in almost all streams of nationalist thought and it was anathema to think of the specificities of communities. The Dalit movement is not considered as a nationalist movement precisely because it was premised on the primacy of these specificities and because it posed the question of the allocation of values and resources. Even today, the query, 'Is the Dalit movement a nationalist movement?' has not gained any momentum. It is assumed to be a movement, which strived to work for the Dalits. Is not the Dalit question then a national issue? If Dalits are citizens of the nation, why are their issues not national questions? Why does not their liberation amount to the nation's liberation?

For someone to understand that the Dalit question is a nationalist question also, it is important to realize the continuation of caste cruelties in the British colonial period also. One of the central hypotheses of this work is that the rule by the *upper castes* during and before British colonialism was actually a first wave of colonialism. In this sense the liberation of Dalits from the caste system should be understood as a liberation of the nation. Then it will become clear that the Dalit liberation movement too is a nationalist movement. Such an argument does not violate the traditional definition of colonialism where it is defined as a system of establishing colonies in the land which is not their own. The dwelling places of the Dalits were nothing but the colonies of the *upper castes*...eventheir bodies. Since the Dalit movement tried to target the caste system which is oppressive and has been settled essential feature of the land, it is evident that any movement which tries to purify the nation from such anti-human systems ought to be considered as nationalist movements.

Central to Ambedkar's nationalist thought was the equal importance he accorded for Dalits to be liberated from both the British and the *upper castes.* He is one among the very few who thought that even if the *nation* was liberated there was every chance for the Dalits to remain unliberated. What kind of liberation or independence is it that cannot free some of its people? And also can such independence be of any importance for the Dalits who are not freed from *caste* oppression? Many scholars do not take these questions seriously since they feel complacent with the existing imagination of the Indian nation.

Postcolonial Theory:

It is in this context that the importance of Subaltern Studies (SS hereafter) lie. Unlike the earlier scholarships this school claimed that it would look into various *subaltern* voices so far submerged by the dominant academic practices. Initially it looked like a big promise, which would look into the fissures of the nation that Ambedkar had pointed out to. But even after the almost twenty years of research the SS has not yet come across a name called Ambedkar, leave alone the gaps that he wanted us to look at in the body of the nation.

"Caste", the term itself is denied by these scholars and very often they pull a nomenclature like folk communities, popular classes, discreet categories and so on to address this system. Thus this term has lost all its political meaning, which the Dalit movement had so laboriously tried to give to itself. For instance, Dalits underwent the painful experiences with the politics of naming by making the *upper caste* world use the term 'Dalit' instead of *harijan* to address them. The SS's refusal to respect this historic struggle of the Dalits in naming themselves is fundamentally done by their attempts to promote the idea of *caste* as a cultural system rather than as a real souci-economic and political one. Such an extremely erroneous messages carries wrong information to the world academic body about this supremacist structure of caste and misconstrues the ways of looking at it.

The main problem that they see is not in Indian nationalism and its claims but in how they are portrayed by academicians whose knowledge frames were influenced by western Reason. As a result, they tend to possessively try and preserve those ideologies, which are basically predicated on non-western, *native* ideas. Whatever little theory exists on the *caste*/Dalit in their volumes is thus either marshaled to justify conservative *upper caste* versions of the nation or to negate any unified integrated theory on caste/Dalit. When the possibilities of any integrated theory of *caste/Dalit* become impossible, constructing any single theory of liberation and resistance also becomes unimaginable. It is to be seriously noted here that the requirement for one integrated theory of *caste* need not necessarily rely on the total rejection of the heterogeneity of the *caste* system itself. What the scholar tries to argue is that the force and strength of the *caste* system predicates essentially on this heterogeneity which is manifested in the form of

segregating the communities by a principle of hierarchy. In other words, dividing the people into various caste communities is the very strength of this system. Thus considering the reality of heterogeneity is extremely important both to understand it as an essential manipulation of the *caste* system and also to pay keen attention to how it further divides and hierarchies the *lower castes.* But SS does not see this feature of heterogeneity as a fundamental diving feature and tends to portray it as proof of the flexibility of the system (this point is exemplified in Dipankar Gupta's concept of "discreet castes" which can be found in the third chapter 'Caste Studies').

The end result of this postcolonial theoretical praxis even appears to be manipulative to a Dalit feminist. With this, the very conceptual paraphernalia of deconstruction that was inherited by the emergence of progressive ideologies of the world become an imperialist ethnocentric paradigm. The Dalit question basically lost two grounds, there is no space for it in the SS academic mission and it was also bereaved of the theoretical baggage gathered from negotiating with the liberating theories emanated in the west. More than denying the rightful space for the Dalit question in its mansions, what the SS does is to horrendously delegitimize the very conceptual ground that the Dalit movement has constructed to assert its identity and rights. This is done mostly as argued elsewhere in the dissertation through the backdoor policy i.e., by denying western Reason. This backward revivalism set by SS/Postcolonial Studies, consequently attributed a new pro-human colour (they may not allow the word 'democratic' here since it is the contribution of western Reason) to hindutva nationalism.

What is resurrected without fail in the name of peasant studies, the autonomy of nationalist thought and of giving agency to the *subaltern classes* (on the pretext of denying the monolithic notion of one ideologically neutral Truth set by western historiography) by Indian Postcolonial writers (who call their project Subaltern Studies) is hindutva. Their generic usage of the "subaltern" has given rise to more problems than it has set out to solve. This school also depicts politics or history in installments, in a broken fashion. Their defense of the *native* argument, archives and forces peep out throughout their articles and make feeble struggles against the more sophisticated and democratic western Reason. Most of the time this leaves the Dalit reader in what can be called the postmodern wonderland.

The direct questions now are, "If the ideology of the West is inherently ethnocentric and thus inimical to the understanding of any reality of the colonized, what is the state of the politics of pre-British colonial India? Was politics in this land completely neutral and apolitical in the pre-British colonial times?" In the pre-British colonial past politics and culturc\religion were conglomerated. When the modern nationalists of the past tried to evade this past as essentially backward, there were certain leaders who tried to incorporate this past as an essential core of the nation. And finally, incorporating the past as an essential feature of the Indian nation was time and again done by the collective work of mainstream and hindutva nationalists. It is this category of politics and people that SS tries to re-understand and re-legitimize. The SS's main task, therefore, is not only to criticize western Reason but also to give a new life, meaning and legitimacy to hindutva and to pre-British colonial Indian past. The present thesis thus

tries to examine the implications of postcolonial theories on the nation and to realities like caste and gender. Such a deconstruction obviously deals with the concept of the nation.

Chapterization:

The first chapter gives a general introduction to postcolonial studies and its claims. Apart from deconstructing certain concepts specific to this discourse the chapter also tries to register various criticisms existing against this discourse. The second chapter tries to unravel how the postcolonial discourse deals with the concept of *caste* and Dalit politics. It criticizes the *upper caste* solipsism of PC theories, which ignored the theoretical and practical contributions of Dalit movement to the making of the nation. It points out at the coercive energy of certain exclusionary practices and assumptions within the PC theory. It tries to combat the modes of thought which offer stereotypical images of Dalits as mere agents who pursuit for *artha.* The third chapter explains the major trends of omission that mainstream Indian feminism, Cultural Studies and Postcolonial Studies tend to make against the Dalit woman. A few major texts are deconstructed here for this purpose and the chapter also tries to present concepts of postcoloniality regarding the issue of gender and nation. Some of the studies though they do not claim directly to be postcolonial texts are also put to scrutiny (for example feminist texts) here only in order to prove the collaboration between postcolonial and dominant feminist ideologies. It examines the repercussions of these practices and collaborations on the Dalit women community. The fourth chapter culls Hindu nationalist discourse on both Hindu and *lower caste* women. It is very difficult to find out many direct references to Dalit women in this discourse. The silence on the Dalit woman in this discourse carries two meanings. One is that she is not a full national subject to deal with and the other that such silence explains the very degree of the violence against them. Most of their prejudiced views can be deciphered from what this discourse usually thinks and preaches to the Hindu woman on how to become an ideal national woman. But the silence or *lack* of evidences on the Dalit woman in the Indian historical sources is not a virtual silence at all. This silence speaks! The congruence between these religious scriptures and *mainstream* or hindutva nationalist thought is examined in order to prove how casteist patriarchy was as essential input in the imagination of the Indian nation and for banishing the Dalit woman from its domain by reviving traditional casteist patriarchal strategies and ideology. The last chapter deals with the mainstream Women's Movement for rights during the British colonial period. It presents the collisions of the Hindu women with their male nationalists and their consistent rejection of the claims to Dalit rights as legitimate political rights.

It was during this period that the battle for hegemony over nation itself arose from the side of *upper caste* women's movement. Which women and which politics would be defined as "nationalist" in this historical configuration? What broad alliances were advanced and what caused their break down? How do contemporary feminists assess this so-called "first wave of Indian women's movement? And, importantly, how does this legacy continue to influence the contemporary *upper caste* women's fight for

reservations? This chapter tries to look at all these queries. Broadly this chapter is a narration of the systematic betrayal of organized *upper caste* women's movement. Apart from general registration of the apathy that they showed to the community of Dalit women what surprises one is the continuation of the same tendency even in the so-called postcolonial India. Contemporary feminist currents towards the present "women's reservation" issue is enclosed as an evidence to explain that *mainstream* women share the caste patriarchal politics and ideology of their men.

What is Dalit feminism?

Understandably the frame of the present dissertation can be called Dalit feminist. The purpose is not to claim any chronological account or lineage to this theory. It is not that such a motivation is not necessary; it is that the present work attempts to define what is this "ism" and what does it hold? Here is an attempt to tell what it is, what it means to Dalit women, and what it holds for social science academics. As mentioned before Dalit feminist thought emerged out of the sheer necessity that the realities and views of Dalit women were not seen and would not be in the future either, unless and, until they are able to tell what they feel about a particular theory, about a reality and about history. It is all about what they need, what do they stand for, what is near to them or what is not available, what is true for them and what makes something untrue for them.

One may easily pose a question on the heterogeneous nature of the Dalit women community. As argued elsewhere in this thesis the dichotomies between the touchable and untouchable women are not only stratified but also multiple whereas it is not the same case with the different *castes among the* Dalits. To reiterate, it is always a political necessity to address the question of heterogeneity of Dalit women only in relation to the hierarchical heterogeneity with which they are situated vis-a-vis the *upper caste women.* This is a political necessity because all the hierarchical power relations among the Indian women are neatly fixed within the *caste* system. Moreover, digging only on the aspect of heterogeneity among the Dalit women would portray it more as an intra-community feud thus making one forget the role of *caste* patriarchy, which is the creator of this segregating system. Caste patriarchy's role here should be understood not merely as categorizing women into various *castes* and thus determining their status but also by keenly guarding the level of segregation between them.

The present brief notes tries to, thus to (as one of the initial steps towards such attempts) formulate a Dalit feminist theory in the light of which the research of the present work can be earned on. Like any incipient theory, which can have lapses, this theory also may come up with obvious lapses between what it is and what it aims at and so on.

First of all Dalit feminism need not always take up studies on the issues of Dalit women only. It is not mature enough to declare all that it stands for since like any other responsible political theory Dalit feminism also subjects itself to changes. Over time it

will try to enrich itself by absorbing meaningful features of other theories and by contributing its own political sensibilities to the former. It is an integrated ethico-political standpoint, which is capable of studying various issues from its own perspective. It believes that every aspect of the Indian nation is gendered on caste ways. It is therefore an attempt at re-writing most of the theories, and dismantling most of the methodologies, and *facts* and rejecting the neutral claims of truth of many mainstream theories (even those theories which address themselves as having emerged from the dismantling of such claims by earlier grand theories).

It is not a mere retaliation to dominant theories, which are built on the exclusions of Dalit women nor does it intend to carry simplistic macro-level studies with mechanical questionnaires which ascertain only 'yes' or 'no' responses. It is a theory by itself, a self-conscious, and integrated one. It resents such versions, which see Dalit women as an extra or additive subject, which can be added or discarded at the wish of the academicians.

For instance, the studies on poverty, according to Dalit feminism should not start with what the grand theories lay out, but with what she explains as her reality; what she feels of as the real poverty line. It means that the study should start from the periphery to the center, not the other way round. It implies making the periphery the center of analysis. Some theories on Indian realities are faulted because they carry the views of those who are not subjects of the issue in question. Then, "Does Dalit feminism claim that only those who are the subjects have the right to talk about them?" Ideally, such an idea of making the Dalit women's issues a monopoly of Dalit women is not suggestible (for that matter reserving any subject for any community since it is their own community issue is politically undesirable for it may result in the production of closed theories). But as the third chapter has proved, it is not only desirable but also inevitable for the Dalit women to produce her own theories with her own experiences otherwise her point of view would never see the light of day.

And finally it should be acknowledged here that it is not practically possible to draw a conceptual boundary to what the Dalit feminism can be in all the contexts and regarding every thing that implies the Indian nation. The main intention is to acknowledge that this thesis is based on Dalit feminist ideology. It means that this work tries to see all the issues that come across in the study with a Dalit feminist point of view, where researcher's own commonsensical point of view (inherited from Dalit feminist sensibility) counts for more than all the rest. Such a realization strings the arguments throughout the thesis.

Methodology:

This work adopts descriptive and analytical method. The sources of the information include both the primary and the secondary texts. The primary sources include mainly archival material. Secondary sources include books and articles.

CHAPTER I

TRACING THE POSTCOLONIAL PEDIGREE

This chapter examines the debate on postcolonial theory, specifically produced by the Indian scholars, which has taken deep roots in the name of cultural studies, subaltern studies, and even in some areas of feminist studies. It would be necessary to review the existing debate on the term "postcolonial" as well as the various departures that it makes at the level of theory and issues. Postcolonial theory is generally defined as a reaction to the inadequacies that the western theory set through its postulations on the theme of nationalism and particularly of eastern, anti-colonial nationalism. Therefore, the idea of inserting a brief debate on the dominant streams of thought on the issue of nationalism has been considered. The chapter therefore tries to start with presenting the main ideas of these western schools and then shifts to what postcolonial theory holds for the Dalit feminist perspective and its implications for the Dalit politics as a whole.

Contemporary Debate on Nation:

To unravel the debate on nation is cumbersome. The first part of the present chapter makes use of the demarcation already made between the views of primordialists/ nativists and modernists to make the debate wieldy. The contemporary debate on the nation has almost deserted old perspectives on the divinity and necessity of the nation. The debate in the contemporary times has been, shifted to more complex studies of the nation. These modern groups of scholars can be placed in two schools; the "primordialists" and the "modernists". The first school alleges that ethnicity and ethnic history played a major role in carving out the modern nations and the second school holds that modern capitalism, industry, and communications have been completely responsible for the appearance of the nations. The contradictions between these two schools of thought are still considered relevant in the academic world.

Kedourie's text *Nationalism* (I960)[1] can be identified as the text which inaugurated the contemporary epoch of scholarship on the nation. He treated it with a great amount of skepticism due to his resentment towards German Nazism. He also traces most of the noteworthy contributions to nationalist theory in German Romantic philosophy. For him nationalist politics is "ideological" in the sense that they are based on a search for anidealized social coherence and an Utopian community rather than on the everyday social obligations of self-defense, distribution of justice, and adjudication of law.

The fundamental argument of the modernists' is that there is an analytical reality at the back of the modern nation's emergence, from the end of the eighteenth century to the present that depends on particular socio-economic, bureaucratic and industrial innovations. The nation, according to this version is thus essentially a creation of the uniquely modernizing, and industrializing capitalist West. It is communication, market and education which play the key roles, not the ideological gadgets or political manipulations. In the modern times Earnest Gellner is considered as one of the prominent voices that adopted the modernist versions of the nation. His text *Nations* and *Nationalism* (1983)[2] expresses faith in industrial society, and its economic and technological forces, which emerged in Europe at the end of the 18th century, as launching the process of making the nations. He sees that agrarian society is incapable of adopting the nationalist principle. He sees a relation between nationalism and the processes of colonialism, imperialism and de-colonization also. The motives behind the European conquest of the world is industry and trade and not political expansions of the empire. Military orientation of conquering the nations was totally absent. Colonialism is merely an upshot of economic and technological superiority. The European imperialism lasted only between 1905 and 1960. It collapsed with the decline of their technological and economic strengths.

Gellner then comes to what he calls the weaknesses of nationalism. For him nationalism is defined as something which tries to bring polity and culture together. Here culture is an entity, which is often recognized by language. The old agrarian cultures, or the ruling cultures of the dominant groups become futile and yielded to the industrial

civilization. Thus, it is not the case that nationalism imposes homogeneity (as Kedourie argues) but that it is the objective requirement of homogeneity, which emanates due to industrialization that is replicated in nationalism. It is a new culture all together.

Gellner does not think that nationalism is altogether an ideological artifact. Neither, he says, is it the waking up of a dormant force, which was always there. According to Gellner, if we accept the idea that nation always existed, we are accepting the social metaphysics that it is created by some other force (for example God) and its driving wheel is not in the hands of human beings. For him, nationalism is in reality the consequence of a new form of social organization based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state. Further it uses some of the pre-existent cultures, generally transforming them in the process, but it cannot possibly use them all. He divides the cultures into savage and cultivated varieties, and analogizes into agrarian and the industrial man. National education and communication systems are necessary to keep this industrial man alive and only an effective state can do it. He acknowledges that it is not feasible to have a single cultural and educational 'gold fish bowl for the entire globe'. He also explains the old and the new, the agrarian and the industrial need not be merged together now. This is because the 'arrival-time of industrialism in various communities " was different and also the application of the elements of the agrarian world made these differences more severe. He concludes that not internationalism as the world scholars of Left and Right predicted, but it's, opposite i.e., nationalism emerged because: "The differential timing of its [industrialism] arrival divided humanity into rival groups very effectively."

To a oft-repeated, "What is a Nation ?", he explains both 'will' and 'culture' which are considered as crucial determinants of a nation are important to grasp but not sufficient. In this debate also he moves his analysis to nationalism. He asserts that nationalism creates nations not the other way round. The cultures that it claims to revitalize or preserve are its own inventions. He declares that the popular opinion of nationalism as "essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society" is the

basic deception and self-deception practiced by nationalism. Whatever romantic ideals may mushroom, he feels that nationalism is simply the modernized form of political life.

The other primordialist school advances the idea that the power of ethnicity and ethnic history is vital in understanding the modern nation-state. They explain that the modern nation-state is unimaginable without its ethnic foundations, though they agree that such foundations could be largely romanticized or exaggerated. Anthony Smith is the leading exponent of this school and poses a challenge to the modernists that if the nation is most important of all "invented traditions", "why does this 'invention' so often and in such different cultural and social settings appear to strike such a deep chord and for so long?...Clearly there is more to the formation of nations than nationalist fabrication, and 'invention' must be understood in its other sense of a novel recombination of existing elements."[3] Smith concentrates on *ethnic,* or pre-modern ethnic community. *Ethnic,* as a concept comes up with its legends of collective descent, common memories, common culture and love for homeland. He proposes two brands of *ethnics.* The first one is the lateral aristocratic *ethnics* that assimilate outlaying and lower-class cultures through expanding bureaucracy. The "old" nations like England, France, and Spain are the examples of this first kind. The second kind includes the more numerous vertical demotic *ethnics.* They are passive, religiously defined communities, motivated by intellectuals into a political state. Most of the new nations liberated by recent de-colonization come under this group.

It is important to notice that Smith, like various other scholars who insist on ethnicity, does not believe in the "primordial" essence of national communities claimed by ethnic and racial nationalists. He argues that the ethnic communities are in reality constructed and are consolidated by the modern state, but analyses that they are built by successive generations of a population out of shared memories of the past and visions of the future. They are not made-up by intellectual demagogues out of thin air. Nations are fabricated from bits and pieces of history that remains stuck in collective life. The segments are then put together in new ways by modern nationalists in search of an

independent state. Ethnicity is thus a constantly evolving one. This continuous state of evolution does not, however make it a fiction any way.

Gellner's modernist thesis, with its focus on issues of industrialization has been quite effective in deflating the major claims of ethnic nationalism. On the other hand, the primordialists stress on the ethnic rudiments of nationalism is vital in understanding the inviolability of the anti-colonial nationalisms waged against the west. But, still, Smith's division between the demotic (mostly non-western) and civic (mostly western) forms of ethnic coherence could be applied to defend the popular western opinion of non-western nationalism as illogical, spontaneous and communal and the western as the moderate and ideal one.

Benedict Anderson has changed Gellner's original thesis by proposing that "imagining" and "creation" are more appropriate terms than Gellener's "invention" and "fabrication". This is because there may ultimately be no community, national or otherwise that is not imagined, and hence invented in some sense. The "deep, horizontal comradeship" that is able to generate personal sacrifice for the sake of nation-state may be quite modern and constructed. It is definitely different from any earlier sense of community. Anderson, thus completely accepts the modernist perspective that the nation-state is a function of specific socio-economic conditions, like print capitalism. But he also perceives that the national sense of community that appears contains ethnic themes. These ethnic themes are as valid as any other elements that constitute it.

In his most renowned text *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991)[4] Benedict Anderson defines the nation as an imagined community, which has seen light with the collapse of feudalism and the rise of capitalism. Feudal hierarchies allowed bonds to exist across national or linguistic boundaries. The bourgeoisie shared interests across the class lines within a bounded geography. Thus a community was created which never met and never necessarily had similar interests. Novel forms of communication like books, journals became conduits for creating such shared culture, jargon and interests. 'Print-capitalism' made possible

the emergence of 'mechanically reproduced print languages', which led to the creation of certain standardized languages. These languages reached varied/diverse sections of people. Anderson writes thus, 'the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation' (1991: 46).

However, Anderson says that in the case of those nations like new American states of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, language did not play a role in their imagination of nation. They were first to define themselves as nations. The Spanish-speaking creole communities of South and central America improved the idea of nation-ness and absorbed the native exploited non-Spanish speaking people into their idea of imagined community. Why should these landowning classes do this? Anderson says that the Creoles were denied a rightful place in the imperial administration and therefore wanted improvement of their status. Also the Creoles enjoyed certain privileges of European culture as the metropolitans. In the words of Anderson, Creoles were 'simultaneously a colonial community and an upper class' (1991: 58). Thus their nationalism had seen light out of both dispossession and privilege.

In Europe, language played a key role in creating national consciousness. Literate middle class and intelligentsia played a crucial role. It assumed an all-inclusive and popular shape predicated on language identity. It also deployed a democratic rhetoric. It was then taken away by the ruling European dynasties. The rulers forged this nationalism. This Anderson called 'official nationalism.' The rulers attempted to forge the new identification with the subjects they ruled. This 'official nationalism' was, according to Anderson, an 'anticipatory strategy' by the rulers who took away this kind of nationalism into their hands due to the fear that they might be excluded from new communities struggling to be born (1991: 101). This is a 'reactionary and conservative nationalism', which also spread to Asia and Africa. In these colonies the rulers and the ruled were to participate in the ruling where 'Indians Anglicized.'

Nation-state was the final form that nations took, which were born after the First World War and ended after the Second World War. Nation-states born out of anti-colonial struggles come into this category. They drew from the European models already existing. By this time the American and European experiences were everywhere modularly imagined. This was partly because the European languages-of-state they employed were the legacy of imperialist official nationalism (1919: 113). The native bilingual intelligentsia played a crucial role in forging national consciousness because they were bilingual and also since they enjoyed access 'to modern Western culture in the broadest sense, and in particular, to the models of nationalism, nation-ness, and nation-state produced elsewhere in the course of the nineteenth century' (1992: 116). Briefly the anti-colonial nationalism saw light and was structured by European political and intellectual history. Thus it is a creation of the colonizer's language and ideas.

Postcolonial scholars found all these theoretical propositions immensely dissatisfying and contradictory to the truths that the eastern nation states and nationalisms upheld. In this present thesis the scholar tries to look at what postcolonial studies have to say and then verify whether such claims are genuine. The rest of the chapters are based on the explorations made to find out the veracity and repercussions of such overwhelming claims. The present chapter is thus a kind of introductory one that attempts to register the capabilities and incapabilities of the same. This is done mainly by what is traditionally called the review of literature.

Debating PC Studies:

First of all, it becomes imperative to look at some of the ideas existing on colonialism before entering into the debate on postcolonial studies. Since modern colonialism is an extremely vast phenomenon it is impossible to make any hasty summaries. *The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* defines colonialism as "The establishment by more developed countries of formal political authority over areas of Asia, Africa, Australia, and Latin America"[5] But this definition forgets that colonialism existed before the modern time and also fails to make any qualitative differentiation

between the colonialisms operated in these different lands. New colonialism is different in the sense that it was accompanied by capitalism, which changed the economic structures of both the colonized and the colonizers. Earlier, colonialisms were apparently-- characterized by extracting gifts, heavy revenues or by looting the land. But the new colonialism was more enormous and more encompassing. People were made to move as slaves or indentured laborers, riches of the colonized land reached the metropolitan cities of the colonized as raw material and the colonized lands became markets for the consumption of these finished goods. As a result the native raw material, people and markets were subjected to exploitation. It was industrialization, which had operated as a catalyst of these transformations. Eventually, new economic-imbalances replaced the old ones. Naturally new socio, economic, legal set-ups were introduced which would assist such domination both practically and ideologically. Thus, colonialism of modern times is associated with the radical change of both the economic and social settings of the colonized land. So, it can be said that colonialism facilitated capitalism and vice versa.

The term imperialism is also often used as synonym for colonialism. *A Dictionary of Sociology* explains this development thus: "More recently, it has been used increasingly (now almost exclusively) to refer to the domination of colonial by more developed countries, and hence as a synonym for colonialism."[6] So, Ania Loomba writes that it is "best to understand not by trying to pin down to a single semantic meaning but by relating its shifting meanings to historical processes."[7] Thus, the purpose of the existing study is not to re-present the fights between the colonized and the colonizer in a chronological order. It is to winch various foundational questions about the postcolonial (PC from henceforth) literature produced by the Indian scholars and put into question the authenticity of their concepts and theories. Such an attempt craves for a radical prerequisite namely the re-definition of colonialism itself. It is in this context that the Dalit feminist scholar sees the importance of considering the question of internal fissures seriously. It is quite crucial if we do not want to restrict the meaning of the term postcolonial as a state existing in the once colonized societies after the mere technical transfer of power, which is generally called independence. For this purpose it is argued in this chapter that casteism in India, which preexisted the British colonial rule, is in fact the

first wave of colonialism, which was able to survive even after the end of the distant colonialism, that is the British colonialism. Addressing these fissures becomes inevitable since the postcolonial condition did not result in the automatic liberation of the dalits. It is useful to adopt the understanding that Ania Loomba forwards that, "Colonialism is not just something that happens from outside a country or a people, not just something that operates with the collusion of forces inside, but a version of it can be duplicated from within" (120). Such a broadened definition of colonialism would equip the Dalit feminist theory to address the facts and implications of contestations that took place historically between the differently colonized people.

It is possible to perceive the Dalit question in a non-conservative fashion only when we can also see the issues of internal fissures, colonialism and questions of nation and caste patriarchy from angles set by these re-definitions. When one becomes aware of caste oppression as the first wave of colonialism, then the Dalits' fight against caste oppression can be understood in broader terms. Their struggles can no more be relegated as mere *caste fights.* In this sense the fights of the Dalits against the caste oppression can be treated as nationalist fights and Dalits as national subjects.[8] And now it is definitely time to question why and how the anti-caste Dalit fights have not, so far. been treated as nationalist fights by the Indian social scientists?[6] Is it because their fights are mostly mistaken as colluding with the foreign colonizers? Or is it because these fights are interpreted as fights that merely target a fragment of the problems of the nation? In other words, is it because they are seen as making quarrels only with one problem that the nation faces when the *nation as a whole* is struggling for *bigger* causes? Is it because the leaders of such movements are dominantly presumed as fake leaders and *false gods?* All these myths are in circulation regulating the psyche of Indian supremacist social science praxis. Hence, such re-definitions as proposed above, predictably, would give rise to many anxieties. One among them could be that such a re-definition of viewing the dalit movement, as a nationalist one, would liquidate the very definition of nationalism and colonialism. The intention of the chapter is precisely to snatch the banner of nationalism that the *upper castes* religiously hoist and take possession for themselves.

The Origin of PC Theory:

Coming back to the issue of the origin of postcolonial theory, it is the essential contradiction between the propositions of the two western streams of thought, namely, modernists and primordialists, which is sited as a reason for the surfacing of postcolonial theory. The PC writers themselves start their apologia for their theory by showing the inadequacies of western theories, the babies of Enlightenment (both liberal and Marxist and their various tributaries). They try to prove that it is quite impossible to understand the non-western nations and nationalisms within the theories set by the schools, which are the products of Enlightenment Reason. Replicating the mode of argument set by the text *Orientalism*, they even tell us that it is difficult to understand eastern nationalisms with the aid of western theories because even the interpretations of the same are structured within the ambit of western ethnocentric theorems.[10] Thus the term postcolonial is applied not only to indicate a certain periodization but more importantly to a methodological revisionism. Thus this academic project has projected itself as a blanket term for the critique of western knowledge and power, especially those that emanated from the Enlightenment period. It is also projected as an all encompassing term that envelops various critical approaches which target Euro-American thought in areas as wide-ranging as Political Science, Anthropology, Literary Studies, Sociology and so on. It can also be said to have displaced what is known as Commonwealth or Third World literature.

Western studies on the nation predominantly assume that both the nation-state and nationalism are offshoots of western Reason and originally emanated in Europe.[11] Thus the issue of non-western tendencies to the nation and nationalism has become specifically crucial for the non-western postcolonial scholars who have surfaced since the 1950s. Franz Fannon's work *Black Skin and White Masts* [12] is said to have instituted the postcolonial theory. *Wretched of the Earth* of the same author is also treated as very important. Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha brought out postcolonial theory basing on the Jacques Derrida's philosophic deconstruction. These theorists interpreted this theory of representation to include identity (whether personal, racial, national or linguistic).

They focused on the socially and textually imagined and constructed characters of race, nationality and ethnicity. By the late 1980s, the first volume of *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* surfaced.

Verifying the Applicability of PC Theory in India:

It is with the launching of the Subaltern Studies that the PC theory made its grand entry into the Indian social and political theory. They are committed to more or less the same aims as other PC intellectuals. It is the complicity and resistance of the Indian nationalist thought with the western knowledge system, which is deconstructed by the postcolonial writers of India (but mostly settled as NRls (Nonresidential Indians) in the West or shuttling between the West and India on academic junket). They remain in many ways reliant on the very structures they are interested in dismantling. Thus they tend to often subvert the dualisms and binaries without questioning the validity of these dualisms and binaries themselves. In their studies of nation-states and nationalisms, they declare that they reject both the western interpretations of eastern nationalisms and eastern nationalist theories themselves. What they therefore claim is to deconstruct the very foundations of western philosophy.

Homi Bhaba argues that "the term postcolonial is increasingly used to describe that form of social criticism that bears witness to those unequal and uneven processes of representation by which the historical experience of the once-colonized Third World comes to be framed in the West."[13] Thus, for him postcolonial is only an intellectual exercise to direct the focus on imbalances in modes of representation. But Aidoo, on the other hand, sees the concept as a 'pernicious fiction' and 'a cover-up of a dangerous period in our people's lives.'[14] It is mainly projected as an umbrella term that includes various critical perceptions, which deconstruct European ideological and theoretical suppositions on the east. There are, however, extremely conflicting views about this term and the theory that goes with it. At the same time the glamour of this field does not seem to surcease so easily. Due to the continuing craze for PCS it is important to interrogate

postcolonial theory as Hazel Carby has proposed it as a sign and as a 'locus of contradictions.'[15]

Therefore it is apt to start this discussion by looking at Edward Said's work *Orientalism,*[16] a seminal text which came to be known as a foundational text of postcolonial theory (which deals in a more profound manner with the ideology of colonialism than Fannon's text, *Black Skins and White Masks).* His main emphasis is that Orientalism is a discourse by which "European culture was able to manage- and even produce- the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period."[17] For him Orientalism is embedded in the very structures and circumstances that made European colonialism and imperialism possible. Many texts of Orientlaism constructed the Orient and established control over it. Said explains that these cultural texts play a crucial role in the deployment of colonial ideology. *Orientalism* generated an analysis of literary, cultural and other texts which forgrounded their foundations in the sociopolitical worlds in which they were born. Said drew from Michael Foucault's "discourse" and Antonio Gramsci's "hegemony" to analyze the development of European power Vs knowledge archetype and their western epistemologies, which he jointly addresses as "Orientalism". These western paradigms and epistemologies are fed in various forms and modes of representation. Said describes fiction and journalistic writings as exhibiting these critical features. They reflect the European's image of the East. They do not really represent the Orient but, as Said says, "In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation. The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of a written statement about the Orient therefore relies very little...on the Orient itself (21). Such an imperialist perception about the east is internalized by the non-western people and there is a threat that the east's view of itself is changed- Said warns!

A series of texts saw light following the formula that *Orientalism* set the colonized's subjective experiences ought to be saved from the knowledge frames of the west. PCS emerged as an approach following this methodology. As part of such a

realization Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhaba came up with the volumes titled *Europe and Its Others* in the first part of 1980. In 1982, a volume *The Empire Strikes Back* was produced. In 1988 the first volume of *Subaltern Studies* was produced which claimed to clean off the 'elitist bias characteristic of much research and academic work'[18] in South Asian Studies. All this meant a fundamental reassessment of modes of knowledge production in the academic disciplines.

Thus, the task of deconstructing the existing western theories and concepts occupied the greatest attention of the so called third world intellectuals. The major challenge that they posed to the West was in the area of modernity, a post-Enlightenment ideology. The earlier critiques of colonialism tried to focus their theoretical analysis on economic plunder and based their analysis on dualisms of self/other that shaped knowledge in areas such as literature, history, anthropology etc. But these theories failed to understand various dimensions because they mostly remained within the imperial epistemological structures that they wanted to dismantle. Nationalism also, a narrative which posed the greatest threat to colonialism, nevertheless, attached to the narratives of modernity as a liberating force and accepted the universal notions of freedom, liberation etc. produced and determined by western Reason. It grew to depict the nation-state only as a better replacement of the colonial state. Postcolonialists see this phenomenon as a problematic thing. They see even nationalism as being ensnared by the same structures and ideologies against which it is believed to have been fighting. Thus, the PC mission is to understand the 'link between the structures of knowledge and the forms of oppression of the last two hundred years'.[19] Thus, the mission of PC theory is to deconstruct western philosophy, a deconstruction of the very ways and terms by which its knowledge has been erected.

Another explanation (adjacent to the above reason) that is often cited for the emergence of PCS is the inadequacy of political concepts and their inability to cope with contemporary realities. The belief in western Reason, and notions like progress, community, nation-state etc seems to be disintegrating with the growing pressures like increased mobility of the people, fundamentalism, secessionist movements etc. This

preset agonizing history of the east is pre-determined by the models given by the west. They thus try to explain the sad stories of how the east has been perpetually bounded and fed on western Reason, which poses itself as the only fate and haven for the world's nation states. Gyan Prakash for instance describes PC criticism as critiquing the 'historicism that projected the West as History'[20]. Subaltern Studies take up the studies of colonialism and nationalism seriously and claim to offer an anti-foundationalist historiography. They claim to go beyond the colonial, nationalist and the Marxist historiographies, which resort to foundationalist arguments. As an alternative they rely heavily on the multicultural argument, which some suspect to be a baby of postmodernism.

Study of Culture:

In contemporary times, the study of the culture of the postcolonial world has assumed great importance by extending Fanon's definition of culture as an aesthetic expression of the spirit of the given people. Culture has become a central intellectual concern around which postcolonialists try to flesh out their theory. Thus, postcolonial and cultural studies have become identical and have begun to have specific approaches towards the issues of nation, nationalism, gender, postcolonial identities and so on. These approaches are outlined by the imperialist and the cultural rather than the political or economic dynamics of colonization. They focus on historical or sociological versions of specific anti-colonial nationalist struggles. The problem of hegemony is another dimension, which is not adequately attended to in this shift to multicultural expressions and interdisciplinary scholarships. Thus hybridity becomes both a determining feature and the theme of postcolonial theory.

Gender, however, occupies a respectable place in PC studies. With the emergence of the feminist studies, the relation between gender and nation, its interdependence, exclusions etc have become a fascinating area within this field. It is curious to realize how the category called *Indian woman* so neatly fits into the PC frames. Insertions of the study of *Indian woman* appear to be (though not very often, since there

are not many essays written on this in the *Subaltern Studies Volumes)* smooth, though often, gender seems to be an additive or an extra added to the project. Though not all the texts, which deal with gender and nation, can be identified as postcolonial studies, it is an interesting trend to note that both the Indian feminists and the PC studies share almost the same beliefs (as it is indicated, for instance, through the deconstruction of the text like *Women Writing in India* or *Recasting Women* in the following chapter). It is true especially in the case of those feminist writings, which deal with the intricacies of colonial history and *Indian women* predominantly from the Cultural Studies angle. Their theory shuffles between the counters of culture and colonialism, leaving the vast area of caste and economic relations of production. As a result caste patriarchy, a system, which sets the rules for survival for millions of Dalit women, is, not put to analysis. More fundamentally, they tend to ignore the fact that the Hindu patriarchy, which they try to deal with in their text is essentially caste patriarchy. There is no such thing as patriarchy in India, which has no caste dimensions anywhere in its operations. Therefore, when they slice away an analysis of castedness, the determining force of Indian patriarchy, what they do is ignore the collaborations that they *{upper caste women)* have historical made with it. They also expurgate what it has meant for the *rest* of the Indian women.

Limitations of PC Theory:

As mentioned above colonialism is a vast, heterogeneous phenomenon, which negates any hurried attempts at generalizations. But, unfortunately, this precaution is not heeded by most of the scholars of PC theory. More importantly, they pick up the argument of heterogeneity of colonial or postcolonial experiences, and regional variations whenever they have to make excuses for their work for exclusively writing *upper caste* versions and their histories, for excluding the versions of the marginalized communities like dalits, for not inserting their realities even when there is a real need to do so. For instance, they go on producing bulky essays on their respective communities with the excuse that they are only the histories of those particular communities and therefore *obviously* have nothing to say about the *others.* Here, the concepts of heterogeneity and regional variations become handy justifications. But they do not follow the same

rationale when they make grand theoretical generalizations, which bring all the colonial and postcolonial experiences of the much less privileged people like those in African nations or Dalits and *other* women onto the same rubric. Here what they apply is the logic of homogeneity. In other words they make convenient use of both heterogeneity and homogeneity. To put it briefly, heterogeneity becomes an excuse to write exclusive histories on the *upper* castes without bothering about the *interruptions* that the *other* voices make and the cause of homogeneity becomes handy to bring all the people of the land (even all the other once colonized countries) into the fold of PC studies. Thus the Dalit women, though not imparted any recognizable subjectivity becomes the PC subject and she is granted of no other identity. Ultimately, it is the *upper caste* narrations and their valor which passes for the national.

This penchant for the claims of superiority of oppression is very much visible in the following texts. For instance, the editors of "*Recasting Women*" or *"Women Writing in India"*, or Partha Chatterjee in his '*Derivative Discourse* ', base their arguments on the theoretical generalizations related to colonialism or postcolonialism without bothering to explain why their works do not include the voices and realities of the Dalits. The argument here is not that there cannot be any general theory on western colonial rule/thought. But the point is that these generalizations must match with the pre-colonial particularities and multiple authenticities (which are on the verge of extinction) of the colonized land. Does the PC projects offer this space to barred subjects like the Dalits? Can it take in studies that explore those ways in which caste oppressions of the pre-British colonial era managed to seep through the British colonial period and sustain intopostcolonial times? How does it address the clefts created through caste, gender, and *other-genders* (both men and women of exploited communities)?[21] Will such an *adjustment* wither away the postcolonial project itself since it shifts the burden of the onus of proof of oppression on the *upper castes* along with the British colonialists? The Indian PC theory is by default unequipped to do this. Thus, in this work what the scholar has tried to do is to deconstruct some of the writings of the PC scholars (which deal with caste, gender and nation) in order to prove this point. The effort has, also been to record the skepticism of Dalit feminism towards the same.

According to Dalit feminism, the aftermath of British colonialism can be described as a dialectical concept that marks the broad historical facts of decolonization and the achievement of independence, and also the nation coming to terms with the economically and politically supremacist imperialist powers of the world. Throughout this process caste, gender and casteist patriarchy finds new expressions; they are thoroughly reconstituted through all of these phases. They are adjusted and, re-formulated. The implications of such reformulations during the British colonial period bear upon the present: the so-called postcolonial era. Thus 'postcolonial' does not mean that the nation in question is completely broken away from its pre-foreign colonial set up. It means that, the postcolonial does not necessarily hold a transformed historical or cultural situation. For a Dalit feminist, the term postcoloniality comes to mean only the physical liberation of the Indian subcontinent from the alien colonialists. The old oppressive caste and casteiest patriarchal systems nevertheless continue and are reconstituted to fit the new political needs.

Postcolonialism is often portrayed as tricontinentalism, as a specific historical happening, which occurred in the three continents, Africa, Asia and the Americas. Though they are ready to acknowledge the differences that exist among the colonial experiences of all these nations, they do not see these differences as fundamental or specific to that particular continent or nation. These differences would not be thought of as hurdles in drawing generalizations. Postcoloniality, from the beginning, is situated between very simplistic parameters, but claims to embody a rich theory that coalesce epistemological, and politico-cultural interests. The more enormous it became the hazier became the traces of the realities of the *-others within/* internal others. Thus caste/caste patriarchy, which is intrinsic to the British-colonial experience, became a muddled memory for the nation. Nation is imagined and re-imagined on the forgetfulness of these realities. Dalit feminist critique of postcolonial theory now implies, according to this logic, a travel towards the integrated province of political theory related to nation, colonial experience, caste, caste patriarchy and the notion of independence. It demonstrates that each dimension of colonial/postcolonial experience is casteised in a

gendered way and gendered in a castiest way. It challenges the whole political thought process, which presumes that the nation is an innate body.

The overwhelming presence of this theory in the academic world can be understood by the fact that some intellectuals project postcoloniality as a universally applicable formation. In *The Empire Writes Back* the three Austarlian authors applied the term postcolonial 'to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day'.[22] This is too simplistic an argument since these authors have put USA on the same register along with the other Asian and African countries. It is impossible to think of colonialism as having produced the same and equal effects on USA and Africa. Hence, the definition of 'postcolonial' should be as varied as are the nations. One more limitation is that this term is increasingly applied to address the marginalized constituencies in the first world, hence hijacking all specific forms of local dissent. One more point is that even if one feels that 'postcolonial' should ideally address the combinations of material, economic, social and cultural practices that the native people hold after the elimination of the physical presence of a colonizing nation, it would be a simplistic formula because the dominant colonizing nation may continue its control over the freed nation even after its physical removal. For instance, as is explained in the text *Orientalism,* the West inscribed its codified knowledge about the populations under colonialism even after it actually left the colonies .

Can the Subaltern Speak?

The question of agency is still an unsolved riddle for the postcolonialists. Spivak for instance declared that it is impossible to retrieve the agency of the subaltern. Benita Parry charged Spivak for having maintained 'deliberate deafness to the native voice where it is to be heard'.[23] She accuses Spivaks's theory of mounting itself from a 'theory assigning an absolute power to the hegemonic discourse in constituting and disarticulating the native'.[24] Parry writes, "Since the native woman is constructed within multiple social relationships and positioned as the product of different class, caste and cultural specificities, it should be possible to locate traces and testimony of women's

voice on those sites where women insrcibed themselves as healers, ascetics, singers of sacred songs, artisans and artists, and by this to modify Spivak's model of the silent subaltern."[25] Parry's provocative essay has generated a host of responses. Spivak, in response, pointed out the dangers of the 'identitarian ethnicist claims of native or fundamental origin'.[26] What is the point of having separate plans of native historiography if the SS\PCS sets itself against the idea of invoking a native voice? They are supposed to accommodate as much authentic specificities as are feasible since they argue from a multicultural and multirepresentational terrain. Also it should be noted that what Benita Parry means by 'native voice' is not that of fundamentalism in the hindutva sense. This native voice means the voices of the of those who are not heard so easily; for instance Dalits, Tribals or Hindu widow women lurking in pilgrimage camps etc. One more reason for which one can probably consider Spivak's response to Parry as inadequate is the example that she has taken as the subaltern subject, namely that of the *sati,* in her essay where she talked of the impossibility of salvaging the agency of the subaltern.[27] *Sati* is virtually a silent subject (in a sense that a woman becomes a *sati* only when she ritually ascends her husband's pyre and eventually dies) and therefore it is quite problematic to project *sati* as an example in order to establish the mute status of the subaltern.

Taking yet another PC scholar for analysis; Bhabha argues that the colonial text transmits the voice of the native. Accoridng to him, the colonial text is essentially hybrid, in the sense that it already contains the voice of the subaltern, though, ambivalently. The discursive text is already fissured in the act of enunciation and it is in these gaps that the voice of the subaltern can be found. The method of tracing out these subaltern voices is by deconstructing the texts and languages of the colonialists. Ray Chow concludes that what Bhabha restores in the name of deconstructing the colonial text to trace the subaltern voice in their gaps is nothing but the mere revival of an old functionalist notion of equilibrium.[28] Now the Dalit feminist contemplation can be as follows: "How does Spivak endorse the Subaltern Studies project without sharing a belief in their essential theme of retrieving the subaltern to its agency?" Another problem that immediately rises is not only whether the subaltern can speak or not, but also if the subaltern's speech will

be read properly by the PC intellectuals who are mending it and theorizing upon it? Also, why should anybody believe that it is the subaltern's true voice especially when there are a multiple range of gaps? Is not it finally a wilful interpretation of the PC intellectual at work? Both the claims of Spivak and Bhabha that the subaltern cannot speak and that the subaltern speaks but in the gaps of the discursive text of the colonizer fulfills two unsettled but absolute tasks object constitution and subject configuration. Thus, it would be ultimately the PC intellectual who is left with total sovereignty over the historic material he/she interprets.

Postcolonial Status as a Privilege and the Danger of New Orientalism;

At this juncture the PC project is charged with dodging the specificities of identity. Aijaz Ahmed argued that the term postcolonial is "simply a polite way of saying not-white, not-Europe, or perhaps not-Europe-but-inside-Europe".[29] If such is the definition the un-migrated native subaltern, who has not yet managed to escape colonial or postcolonial treacheries (by, for instance, settling away in the west) becomes disqualified from being enumerated in the ambit of PCS. Aris Dirlik makes this point clear by attributing postcolonial theory to the third world intellectuals who have entered the western academia.[30] Though it is true that some first world intellectuals also deal with this field of study, it is necessary to remember that PCS is predominantly forwarded by the third world intellectuals. It may be absurd to argue that Dirlik's view essentialises third and the first worlds since, after all PCS itself is predicated on the binary of the west as dominating and the east as postcolonial.

We come across some precautions also given to those who are doing PCS. Among these the precaution given by Spivak deserves immense attention. The concept the "Third World" has attracted attention in this context. It is Spivak who made strong resistance to the usage of the term 'Third World.' All the marginalized regions are bunched into a single 'generalized margin' as the 'Third World.' Constructing all these countries as the Third World and therefore as a 'new object of investigation' for the purpose of 'institutional validation and certification' would, she argues, 'complicities in

the perpetration of "new orientalism"'.[31] Such a fear sounds genuine since PCS is situated in the western academia (though it claims to target the west) and carries the potential possibility of being re-subjected to the western academic gaze. Appiah is unkind to the PC intellectuals unlike Spivak and argues that 'postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a *comprador* intelligentsia: a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery'.[32]

PCS as a Babe of Postmodernism?

Many of the intellectuals who oppose PCS arc also apprehensive about postmodernism. Appiah is one who has voiced the fear that postcolonialism is actually a postmodern project. He explains that the 'post' in both postcolonialism and postmodernism operates as a 'space-clearing-gesture' in order to create the market for cultural products that offer themselves as new. Thus, for them, PCS remains a part of cultural intellectual commodification.[33] Arun Mukherjee explains that those PC texts which are pampered by the western academy are the ones which share the ideology of postmodernism.[34] A question such as "Is postmodernism an inadequate methodological, political and theoretical tool?" craves for another context to be answered. But a question that can be posed immediately is-"Why does PC disguise its postmodern credentials?" The Dalit feminist scholar does not want to be caught up in the capricious fights of classical Marxism and postmodernism. She would rather try to understand the implications of such cryptic collaboration between PC and postmodernism.

The Question of World Capitalism

It is unsurprisingly, the Marxist scholars who reacted to the PC apathy towards the material realities. Dirlik and Ahmad posed their theories against PC theory and its sites of production. The metropolitan academy encourages PC projects since the

contemporary PC theory refuses to tackle its relation with **global** capitalism. For **Dirlik,** much of the PC theory does not attribute to capitalism a determining status, and thus evades applying Marxian tools to infer truth. PC theory is patronized by the western academy due to its apathy towards Marxism. He concludes that the intellectuals who propagate PC theory arc the beneficiaries of global capitalism and hence they don't want to critically address it. They deploy PC theory in ways which disguise these motives.[35] Aijaz Ahmad also tries to explain the relation between manufacturing PC theory and the sites of its production. All the metropolitan PC theory is already compromised due to its association with the first world.[36] Terry Eagleton also declares that postcolonial thought permits one to "talk about cultural differences, but not - or not much - about economic exploitation".[37]

The Question of Native Intelligentsia:

What is important in the works of Fanon is his sensitivity to the question of what he prefers to call the "pitfalls of national consciousness"[38] which has led to the emergence of the newly oppressive class divisions within new nations. He also addresses the racial bases of the nationalist thought in the colonial world. It was again Fannon who contributed the concepts "comprador" class or "intellectual native bourgeoisie" to describe the elite class of natives who collaborated with the economic and socio-cultural practices of the white colonizers in his text *Black Skin and White Masks.* Said also refers to Fanon's "critical nationalism" which explains how "the future would not hold liberation but an extension of imperialism."[39] If the elite class of the native land take no part in the liberation struggle. But Fannon has taken a sympathetic view of the native elite class. The hegemonic classes' complicity with colonialism should be understood as more than mere vulnerability. As the proceeding text tries to analyze it is not the result of pitiful ensnarement of the elite of the colonized between "double consciousness"as W.E.B. Dubois has noted in the context of Africa. But in the context of India this collusion is to be understood as a willful employment of both the old (caste) and new (modern) hegemonic ideas by the dominant castes in India. Thus Fannon fails to

adequately address the question of social and economic cleavages preexisting the advent of colonialism.

There are very few intellectuals of the day who have problematized the question of pre-British colonial inequities. This dimension is exclusive to the Indian context, which have been having the unique system called caste. For instance, Partha Chatteerjee's defense of the hindutva nationalists as the true nationalists to put forth the indigenous brand of nationalism could be offered as a proof that the Indian elite did not collaborate with the colonial masters. With this Hindu nationalism can easily pass for true Indian nationalism. But the Dalit feminist contention is that the nationalist fights did not take place during the historical nationalist period between the pure categories of western colonizers and the *Indian* colonized. At least in the Indian context, the pure categorization of the colonizing west and the colonized, *innocent* east would not bring the social scientist closer to many realities. There is a need to turn PCS to the internal colonialism namely caste colonialism which is not yet "post". In other words PC theory should be rigorously inward looking and introspective. The question then is whether post-colonialism can still serve as a relevant and legitimate theoretical frame to the Indian context.

Evading Specificities and the Politics of Nativism:

Moreover, the Indian PC writer needs a humble, collaborating native but not a questioning one. For instance, Partha Chaterjee was trying to prove that the *Indian nationalists* tried to, and became successful to an extent, in producing an autonomous nationalist thought. Any other reality, which challenges such an assumption, is chased out of the boundaries of these texts. A native sample that is not pure (because it does not yield to the frames set by PC theory) is therefore an impure specimen. It is doomed only towards two fates; one to be branded as a betrayer (of the nation and the nationalists) or as an incapable category which cannot resist western Reason. For this reason alone, we do not find a place given to Ambedkar in Partha Chatterjee's text *Nationalist Thought & The Colonial World* though Ambedkar tried to offer nationalist thought within the

indigenous frames of *dhamma* also. If indegeniety of thought is the parameter for Chatterjee to consider the first two Hindu nationalists in this text (Bankim and Gandhi) then Ambedkar could have easily *qualified,* given that Partha did try to respect this category also. But the PC writer is extremely alert. Ambedkar, a man whose place rightly is in the *inner domain* becomes a corrupt sign, who broke up the innocence, the virginity of his identity because he transgressed the boundaries set by the *inner domain.* It is the Hindu natives who are given the privilege of subjectivity which equips them with ontological consistency with which to combat the dominant western images about themselves. But the Dalits are denied such subjectivity and therefore are not given the chance of gathering the 'surplus value of the oppressed'[40] the way the *upper caste nationalists* are freely allowed to. In other essay "Nation and its Outcastes" Chatterjee includes only those historic Dalit voices which could not assert in the contemporary language and therefore were never destined to break with the *inner domain.* The logic is that a questioning or challenging category of Dalit cannot represent an absolute totality of the *other* like the non-resisting traditional category of Dalit. Thus, in the PC articles written on caste and caste patriarchy, whatever snatches of theory we get are fabricated around the *rudimentary subjecthood* of the *others;* full fledged subjecthood is given short shrift. The Dalits are allowed only this rudimentary status in the sense that they are made to stick to only the fringes that this *inner domain* offers them while the *upper caste nationalists* always emerge from the colonial and postcolonial green room with fresh make ups as true nationalist subjects and agents.

Simon During's bold definition of post-colonialism as "the need, in nations and groups which have been victims of imperialism, to achieve an identity uncontaminated by universalist or Eurocentric concepts and images"[41] would ignore the greatest historical nationalist struggles that the Dalits and Tribals in India have been do(ing)ne for the land both against the alien (neo)colonialists and the internal colonialists mostly with the help of the very universalist ideologies of equality or justice produced by western Reason. What the *nativist* argument does for the Indian reality is to legitimize the anti-human codes, impressions and images that casteism has produced time to time. Certainly, in the debates of PC, it is the *upper caste* nativism that is taken into account, not the more

diverse Dalit or tribal nativisms, which could be. translated as authentic Indian nativism. For instance, the self-styled *Subaltern Studies* ways of writing history declared its aim to be that of bringing out native voices but ends up by doing contrary to what they claim. For example, what Ranajith Guha does is to produce a series of Kashmir Sanskrit texts in the name of invoking the native historiography. Dirks writes on this, "...I do not share all of the proposals of Ranajit Guha, whose resort to Sanskritic sources for indigenous political theory and historical consciousness seems to betray a general commitment to writing subaltern history against the grain in most other contexts."[42] The search for the *imcontaminated self* thus carries the potential of exhuming the fossils of some aspects of the caste structure, which the Dalit movement of the yester-years buried with greatest efforts. Thus the very central claim of SS, that it would talk for the 'subaltern' essentially failed on two plaines one, when Spivak categorically argued that it is not feasible to retrieve the subaltern voice but that it can only be represented. The second plane where the SS intellectuals failed is clearly self-evident - the writers more often than not failed to do what they promised in their project.

Chatterjee's two essays on 'Indian women'. for instance project only *upper caste* hindu women. If the intention is to portray this category of women as one of the 'native female communities', then why did he place them under the titles 'Nation and Its Women' or 'Women and the Nation"? If he merely wants to explain that it is a writing focused only on the *upper caste* women, then, he should have titled the essays as essays on *upper caste* women but not as 'The Nation and Its Women" or "Women and the Nation".[43] The problem is that they do not try to incorporate the multiple histories as much as they claim to. As a result, they end up re-producing or substantiating the Hindu revivalists and the *upper caste* women as the true subaltern voices. It is difficult not to appreciate this cunning.

Hybridity:[44]

Hybridity is introduced in PCS as a vital notion to address what is called the fractured or conflict-ridden subjectivities. But still they habitually deal with the

'postcolonial condition' in a generic sense. Identities still remain nonspecific like the postcolonial subject, postcolonial woman or the subaltern. Such definitions do not allow space between divergent kinds of colonial contexts and categories whose forms have been reconstituted by the British colonial rule or kept relatively intact and untouched by it. Another privilege that Postcolonial studies enjoy is its non-recognition of the importance of location. It does not count the specificities of locale as crucial. Too much dependency on poststructuralism, literary and cultural criticism, stress on the individual, a tendency of ruthless homogenisation is, to a degree, responsible for this vagueness. Chrisman thus warns, "It is as important to observe differences between imperial practices- whether it be geographical/ national…or historical…as it is to emphasize what all these formations have in common." But PC theory does not pay attention to the implications of differences between the colonial practices in the lives of different colonized subjects. Thus the privileged *upper* caste Indian who occupies a prestigious NRI position transfigures himself as a disadvantaged postcolonial hybrid subject in their literature.

Coming back to the meaning of hybridity, it is Mary Louise Pratt who proposes a term 'transculturation' to analyse the process of inter-cultural negotiation and selection that takes place between the colonized and the colonizer. They have meeting points, which she calls the 'contact zones'. According to this argument the colonized and the colonizer do not fit into the opposite fixtures of self and the other. She depicts these 'contact zones' as the social daises where 'desperate cultures meet, clash, grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.'[45] Such contact zones are also guarded by some colonial arrangements to discourage the same in order to prevent any hybridization. It is true that the upper caste intellectuals tried to claim lineage with their colonial masters through the help of these 'contact zones' and understandably such attempts were resented by the latter. The essential point of Bhabha's argument lies here. He believes that such contacts have actually transformed the colonized subject into a hybrid one. But unlike Pratt, Bhabha celebrates this 'inter-cultural negotiation' as a conscious game-play of the colonized, which need not always be regulated by the principle of domination and subordination. But what Aime Cesaire

believes is totally opposite. He says "has colonialism really placed civilizations in contact? ...I answer no...No human contact, but relations of domination and submission..."[46]. It is evident that hybridity should mean different things for the African and the Indian lands. Cesaire's view of hybridity mirrors the Dalits' experience not that of the privileged *upper castes*. Thus the issue of 'coming into contact' with the colonized and thus honing split subjectivities is not true for all the colonized people. It is rather interesting to observe the similarities between the colonized people of Africa and dalits regarding hybridity. It is important also to note that Cesaire's tone infers that having such 'contact zones' is in fact a privilege. This privilege was available to the upper castes in India and not available to the dalits and to most of the Africans.

There are also two kinds of hybridities at our disposal set through the texts 'Intimate Enemy' and Bhabha's writings. According to Nandy it is a willful phenomenon consciously carried on by a super intellectual like Gandhi. Bhabha holds a view exactly opposite to this. He conceptualizes hybridity as a flow in due to the contact of the colonized with the colonizer. It is not a painful experience either, as Fannon explorations would suggest, but it is a kind of partly pleasant process. Such opposing views on hybridity, on the one hand indicates the looseness of the concept and on the other hand its unmatchability with dalit realities. The problem becomes more severe due to the absolute frames that both the authors use, and their depiction of them as absolute happenings. They do not portray these hybridities as relative phenomena or as one happenings among many. They see all the colonized and postcolonial experiences through this prism.

Ultimately, (and predictably) both land up offering us un-'Reason'able excuses for their failures to answer many gripping questions. This is not due to the rigidity of the concept. They acknowledge, in an indirect tone, from the beginning, the incompetence of the concept to withstand various emergent challenges that would come. It is also not due to the little-ness of the concept to take on mega questions, which obviously crop up in dealing with an enormous subject like colonial encounters. Bhabha links up his version of hybridity to the mind (as an occurrence taking place in the mind). Nandy's excuse is more elusive. He does not care to answer certain questions because they emanate from

the knowledge frame that he denies. His answer sounds 'beyond' Reason. The ahistoricity, which surface throughout his text thus cannot make his intellectual exercise a convincing one. (This is actually a more refined inference that the scholar tries to extract from Nandy's excuse. His tone does not give any meaningful reason how he could write such a text without offering the reader any convincing answer). Myth, ahistoricity, unprovability (therefore un-contestability), psychological reductionism etc become legitimate paraphernalia of Nandy's political theory. Ultimately the text sounds as if it is meant to pass time (a more detailed analysis of Nandy'd ideology can be found in the following pages).

Bhabha has insisted on the concept of hybridity to explain postcolonial subjectivity to describe the fundamental effects of colonialism and colonial discourse. He insists on the mutuality of subjectivities that spot the relation between the colonizer and the colonized. For him all the cultural structures and standpoints are constructed in the ambivalent and opposing space that he addresses as the "Third space of enunciation"[47]. Identity is untenable because it emerges from this "Third Space" which is both ambivalent and opposing. He perceives it as an empowering identity because it "displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination" (p. 112). He defines hybridity as " 'a problematic of colonial representation...that reverses the effects of the colonialists disavowal, so that other "denied" knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority'" [48]. Hybridity of colonial discourse thus reverses the structures of domination in the colonial situation. It depicts a process in which the single tone of colonial authority weakens the operation of colonial power by engraving and unveiling the sketch of the other so that it discloses itself as double-voiced: "The effect of colonial power is seen to be the *production* of hybridizaion rather than the noisy command of coloinialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions". Thus when the effects of colonial power is seen as the production of hybridization, Bhabha continues that it "enables a form of subversion...that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention" (154). Thus Bhabha perceives hybrid as a vigorous moment of challenge against a dominant cultural power. He translates this moment as a 'hybrid displacing

space' which divests 'the imposed imperialist culture, not only of the authority that it has for so long imposed politically, often through violence, but even of its own claims to authenticity'.[49] Later he has extended his concept of hybridity to include forms of counter-authority, which intrudes to effect: "the 'hybrid' moment of political change. Here the transformational value of change lies in the re-articulation, or translation, of elements that are *neither the One* (unitary working class) *nor the Other* (the politics of gender) *but something else besides* which contests the terms and territories of both."[50] Thus, here he poses hybridity as cultural difference itself. Its 'hybrid counter-energies', in Said's terms, challenge the central cultural norms with their unstable bewilderments bred out of their 'disjunctive, liminal space'.[51]

Bhabha's version of hybridity has privileged the idea of migrancy and exile against the non-migrant one. The experience of migration became emblematic of the fluid and porous identities. This notion of hybridity has liberated the frame of colonial discourse from the binary oppositions between self and the other. Thus the colonial got an autonomous space within the boundaries of hegemonic discourse. And also naturally Bhabha's notion of hybridity privileged migrated intellectual over the un-migrated, *stagnant* postcolonial subject. Aijiz Ahmad points out that it would release the hybrid subject from markers of any gender, class or race.[52] He explains that Homi Bhabha's view of hybridity carries the dangers of ahistoricity and aspecificity of a hybrid subject.

Many PC writers brought hybridity as a concept to address the issue of inert mixturing. They argue that the colonised always tried to hybridise the European ideas with their own indigenous views. Here they applied hybridity as a powerful anti-colonial tool. In responding to Fannon's psychoanalysis of the black traumatic subjecthood Bhabha writes about the 'disturbing distance in between' the colonized and the colonizer. Against Fannon, he argues that the division between black skins and white masks is not neat and clear. He writes: "It is not the Colonial Self or the Colonised Other, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness- the White man's artifice inscribed on the Black man's body. It is in relation to this impossible object that emerges the liminal problem of colonial identity and its vicissitudes."[53] Thus

for Bhabha, this image of black skin and white masks presents an ambivalent identity, it is the way colonialism operates and colonized people' respond. In other words when Fannon explains that the colonial experience of the subject, where he is impelled to mimic the coloniser is a traumatic experience, Bhabha believes that the act of mimicry operates to undercut colonial hegemony.

As noted, the act of mimicry is another conceptual idea that Bhabha applies to understand the relation between the colonized and the colonial masters. He interprets this act as exercised by the colonized. It both aids the colonizer and creates a "menace". It aids the colonizer because it helps create "a recognizable Other." It also becomes a threat because it highlights the colonial subjects difference from the colonizer. Thus a gap or "slippage" is produced by this difference that ultimately fixes the colonial subject as an incomplete "partial presence" which menaces the colonial power by producing another knowledge of the colonizer's cultural norms that the colonizer is rejecting to acknowledge. Thus this "partial presence" operates as a menace to the " 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers." The colonized may not be conscious of this effect. Thus, the postcolonial writing is not a menace due to its opposition to colonial discourse but because of its disruption of colonial authority.

Bhabha also extended the same argument against Said's *Orientalism*. He resists Said's argument that Orientlaism is overwhelmingly dominant over its subjects. For Bhabha, colonialism is a *relational one* where the colonizer and his counterpart affect and influence each other. This relation is not a stagnant one but undergoes a constant change. They interact from unstable terrains. Bhabha thus addresses the complex dynamics of colonial relations and discourages both the colonialists' and nationalists' claims to a unified self. He rejects that there is any unified self either for the nationalists or colonialists. But ultimately, Bhabha also claims universality and homogeneity for this hybrid and ambivalent colonial subject. He solves this contradiction by locating hybridity as a characteristic of a person's inner life. In the outside world he\she is placed in the mega identities of gender, class etc. When this process of hybridization is located as a characteristic of individuals inner self, the claims of the nationalists or the colonialists for one 'unified self becomes possible. Thus Bhabha is able to easily

universalize the colonial subject's hybrid status because of his semiotic and psychoanalytic approach to the problem.

But hybridity was also used by the upper caste colonized subjects against the oppressed of *within.* Clearly then, the colonial experience of all subjects would not fall into the category of hybridity. In the ever-growing cosmopolitan trends in transnational politics, hybridity definitely offers luxurious benefits to the more privileged hybrid people than the unhybridized colonized subject. Hybridity practically and technically transforms the colonized into preferable and unpreferable subjects. Colonized subjects need, therefore, to be shifted from the psychoanalytical terrain to the *outdated* terrains of class, caste, gender and caste patriarchy to include the unhybirdized experiences of the unhybridized subjects like Dalits. Bhabha's psychoanalytical approach is rendered reductive and irrelevant when called upon to explain the experience of Dalits. All theexperiences of colonization need not be hybrid. Certain populations are exempted from the process of hybridization and often unevenly hybridized if they ever had the fortune to be so. Is not the hybrid identity after all a privileged one which not many marginalized communities of the nation can afford? The realities of Dalits are drowned in the verbose postcolonial psychoanalytic approach of the hybridized NRI intellectuals. Benita Parry describes Bhabha's work thus: "what he offers us is The World according to the Word."[54] Hybridity should be located properly by situating it in ideological and institutional structures in which they were originally placed.

The postcolonial dislocations, fissured identities, and alienations and psychological agonies of the migrated people should be taken care of by the academics. They deserve their share of sympathies and theoretical interpretations. But due to the extremely privileged access of the Indian *upper caste*\class intellectuals to the western academia, the postcolonial academic field is overflowing with *their* own experiences, narrations and histories. Their transnational privileged experiences came to be largely believed as the true postcolonial testimonies. The majority of the Indian people, at least the Dalits and Tribals (from whom the fruits of modernity were forcibly snatched time and again by the hindutva ruling sections) dwell *outside* the boundaries of the nation and

trans-nation. Since they were not allowed to forge their indigenous identities into the hybrid identities they remained aloof from the transnational experience about which the PC writers argue and fight for with great amount of dramatic passion.

Moreover, diasporic experiences are to be signified by the markers of class, caste, gender and castieist patriarchies. The PC theorists prioritize the elite hybrid identities to the indigenous ones. Moreover it is completely invalid to compare the transnational experience of the Dalit woman who migrates to the Gulf countries to work as domestic workers to that of the *upper caste* woman who moves to the US with her green card holding husband. True, both of them undergo alienation and, loneliness. But the PC writers have to keep in mind that there are oceans of differences between these two types of 'daughters of independence.' In other words, the experiences and agonies generated by the migration of Dalits as labourers to the Gulf are quite dissimilar from another enormous migration, that of Hindu castes from *independent* India to western dreamlands like US or U.K. If there are Dalits who migrated to the West, their diasporic experiences too would carry the caste tag with it…it will also have caste dynamics and the PC writers should take note of that fact too! But the experiences of the Dalit women in the Gulf countries is too far for the PC intellectuals to place in the ambit of transnational hybrid postcolonial theoretical frames. They may protest that the Gulf is not an ex-colonial power. But in that case USA also never ruled India directly. If they take the question of migration seriously they have to take the Dalit women's migration also. Such an attempt would obviously sketch a different theory for them.

The Indian PC writers constructed their hybrid experiences over the less privileged peoples of India. They, however, forgot to place them in the discourse of postcolonial dislocations. Ashcroft correctly notes: 'the assertion of a shared postcolonial condition such as hybridity has been seen as part of a tendency of discourse analysts to de-historicize and de-locate cultures from their temporal, spatial, geographical, and linguistic contexts, and to lead to an abstract, globalized concept of the textual that obscures the specificities of particular cultural situations." [55] Also the current propositions of hybridity fail to address the colonial experience of those sections who

actually received the major brunt of colonialism\postcolonialism and who never had the chance to negotiate with the colonizers like their privileged upper caste co-colonised communities. They were not enrolled and represented in the *nationalist* projects of the upper castes. Thus they are always depicted as having uniform, levelled colonial experiences as against the *ambivalent, hybrid* upper caste\class experiences.

Another reality is that the historical accounts of the former (the hybrid postcolonial subject) outnumber the latter (the *stagnant* subject) in the PC theory. There is an immediate need to address this gap. At the same time one should be careful to prevent the hijack of the anti-colonial movements in the name of one true national self. Another issue that assumes great importance in this context is the ways in which the *upper caste* performed their hybridities and mimicry. The advantages of hybridity and mimicry are posed against the indigenous people. For instance the chapter "Women" in this dissertation would explain how Sarojini Naidu, as capable person at mimicking, can be seen as a perfect example of the hybrid subject (for she studied in the West, never knew her language despite the fact that she was valorized as the symbol of Indian womanhood and culture) was able to divert the women from the chambers of women's movement for political rights on the basis of protective discrimination to that of mainstream nationalist fight (which refused to entertain any question on women's rights till India gets independence) the moment the un-hybridised Dalits also started to fight for preferential treatment. But this question of the misuses of hybridities and the capacity to mimic the *upper caste* at the political plane against the Dalits and other exploited sections is not found place in the theories of postcolonial hybridities. Bhabha, finally, connects this violation of the historical integrity of the theoretical tradition in his texts to his attitude of 'reckless historical connection'.[56] Such recklessness appears too costly for dalits.

Bhabha evokes a series of discussions on the act of mimicry. He sees it as a way of escaping control. Communication always carries slippage, gaps between what is said and what is heard. The process of replication is never complete. Bhabha suggets that colonial authority is rendered 'hybrid' and 'ambivalent' by this process of replication,

thus unwrapping spaces for the colonized to subvert the master discourse. Thus a text can produce only a changed meaning.[57] Robert Young notes that Homi Bhabha does not address the question *of* gender in his idea of hybridity. Young Writes that Bhabha" ' 'seems to regard the troubled structures of sexuality as a metaphor for colonial ambivalence"' and his arguments on colonial desires "invoke the structures of desire without addressing the structures of sexuality"'[58]. Such analogies between gender and the colonial subjects tend to erase the specificities of diverse caste specific colonial experiences among the women. The colonial subject is usually embodied as Hindu male, Hindu woman, *upper caste.* In the analogies that are often drawn between them the existence of Dalit women get blurred. The growing tendency of drawing parallels between the Dalit, the colonized and upper caste women are done at the cost of Dalit women. It also ignores the fact that she suffers,multiple forms of oppression. Bhabha's hybridity would not be able to address the casteist misogyny, for that matter any act of direct violence, because such an understanding cannot accommodate ambivalence but starts its scrutiny by first overthrowing any such ambivalences.

The concept of hybridity in 'Intimate Enemy':

Nandi's text 'The *Intimate Enemy"* is where he deals with hybridity. Modern colonialism won its greatest victories through its secular hierarchies which are incongruent with the traditional order. And in the very next sentence he writes "These hierarchies opened up new vistas for many, particularly for those exploited or cornered within the traditional order. To them the new order looked like-and here lay its psychological pull-the first step towards a more just and equal world." (IX). Is it that the Dalits were too ignorant to understand the deeper implications of modernity? Or were they less patriotic and selfish to not deny the lure of modernity? Such a realization that the marginalized sections put their faith in modernity does not prevent Nandy from valorizing the Indian tradition and its vulnerabilities during British colonialism.

And only after the emergence of the Second World War did it become obvious that "the drive for mastery over men is not merely a by-product of a faulty political

economy but also of a world view which believes in the absolute superiority of the human over the nonhuman and the subhuman, the masculine over the feminine, the adult over the child, the historical over the ahistorical, and the modern or progressive over the traditional or the savage." So, hierarchy is something brought forward by this western Science and Reason. This realization set the people to criticize the Universalism offered by the West and look for "plurality of critical traditions" in defense of "non modern cultures and traditions." Nandy does not explain why these non-modern Indian culture and tradition did not offer liberation for those who were cornered within the traditional order till Western Reason launched it. And also to what extent we can call these practices as 'traditions' when they are able to compete with contemporary western Reason by offering solutions to the big contemporary questions of human domination and so on.

The West has become the model everywhere for the world's people. This is the second colonaiztion where it enters through the minds of the people. Thus the conventional anti-colonialism could also be an "apologia for the colonization of minds." So, Nandy explains that his text is not a story but a "cautionary tale." Thus like many postcolonial intellectuals of India he also deconstructs the criticism of colonialism which are themselves infected by the western Reason which sustains colonial domination. Nandy, expectedly says, "The West has not merely produced modern colonialism, it informs most interpretations of colonialism." (XII). A brilliant exploration indeed! But what Nandy brings as his essential justification for such a seemingly brilliant academic proposal is "innocence". He applies this in the notion of "authentic innocence" explained by Rollo May according to which the child uses its innocence and also colludes with evil. According to Nandy it is actually this 'innocence', which has ultimately defeated colonialism not the historical forces or the internal contradictions of capitalism. And just before explaining this concept of "innocence" Nandy inserts a few words on internal colonialism. "I have said at the beginning that these pages justify innocence. This statement should be amplified in a world where the rhetoric of progress uses the fact of internal colonialism to subvert the cultures of societies subject to external colonialism and where the internal colonialism in turn uses the fact of external threat to legitimize and perpetuate itself." (XII). Thus he takes refuge in psychoanalysis and inserts an abrupt

departure. Foucault's great contribution that 'knowledge is not innocent' becomes invalid in this awkward juxtaposition of child's innocence's with fully matured self conscious *upper* caste ideologues political warfares.

Therefore, like Anderson who recognized only the elite class as the true imitators of the western nationalism, and Partha Chatterjee who fought against Anderson's postulation and proceeded in his argument to prove the upper castes struggles as the true nationalist fights not the mere imitations of the west (analysis regarding this can be seen in the next chapter), Nandy also sees the internal colonialism as the true fight against the external colonialism and its leadership which fought with *innocence* is the real nationalist fight (it is also surprising to notice that both Partha Chatterjee and Nandy claimed 'innocence' to the Hindu subject they were studying, i.e., to the views that their subjects expressed, to the activities they have taken up etc.). Nandy, also like Partha Chatterjee, did not care to look at who were oppressed in this internal colonialism and what were their fights and pathos. He continued to justify the *complicity of innocence with that of evil.* Thus he is able to see hinduism as Indian-ness and forgives its sins*its child-like complicity with evil.* Thus it is unnecessary to clarify every time in this chapter that what he is talking about is an upper caste story, about them alone.

He labels those nationalists who took recourse to western universalism as 'ornamental dissenters.' The Dalit ideologues who relied on the western liberal ideology are not even mentioned here for, their fights are first of all not admitted as nationalist fights at all. Thus they are not counted as even ornamental or even as fake dissenters. By this time Nandy becomes aware of the lopsidedness of his argument and makes a statement "I do not therefore hesitate to declare these essays to be an alternative mythography of history which denies and defies the values of history'." If one has to combat these myths, she has to, the author says resurrect 'more convincing myths.' (XVIII). He also comes up with the biases of his own myths which are as follows:

1. His version of hybridity or the 'dialect' between the classical, pure and on the other the folksy and 'low-brow' is the first myth. This attempt is ‘an unheroic Indian coping with the might of the West'.

2. He has taken many aspects of Indian selfhood for granted. He has also tried to make claims for an alternative universality.

3. Finally a facility that he made use of is the language which suffers from sexism and rejects to correct it because he is too old for that. That means he does not want to correct any pitfalls that the standardized language carry with it.

Attaching innocence to their readings, or making reckless, mythical accounts of history becomee an inevitable task for Nandy, Bhabha, and Partha Chatterejee since they are aware that their versions are prejudiced. Otherwise nobody would understand how Nandy (even Partha Chatterjee in his essay on ‘Bankim’s moment of Departure' where the nationalist is justified for having criticized the colonizers for portraying the Hindu religion as a singular faith and also making use of such facility to propose his nationalist scheme of *national religion)* can see Hinduism as one religion and also as a hybrid religion.

/. *The Psychology of Colonialism: Sex, Age and Ideology in British India*

Nandy defines colonialism as a "shared culture" and tries to discover some of the psychological forms of colonialism in the rulers and the ruled. First certain codes which both the parties can share will be created. These codes will change the original cultural priorities on both sides. These codes will remove the subcultures which were considered important to each of these cultures previously. Thus new priorities will be formed. In this way colonialism as a state of mind unleashes "an indigenous process released by external forces" (3). Secondly, the culture of colonialism deduces a different style of administering dissent. It sets a culture in which the colonized will feel obliged to resist the colonizers within the psychological limits created by the latter. The first essay titled

'The Psychology of Colonialism' examines, in the context of these processes, how the colonial ideology of the Raj was premised on the cultural meanings of two significant categories of institutionalized discrimination in Britain, sex and age. And also explains how these meanings fought their traditional Indian counterparts and their new personifications in Gandhi.

He first draws a homology between sexual and political supremacy with which he explains Western colonialism's domination of the colonized. Colonialism matched with the sexual stereotypes of the West and their psychology. Such a culture created a kind of cultural consensus in which the socioeconomic and political dominance denoted the inequality between the sexes. He explains that colonialism proper can be said to have started "once the two in the British-Indian culture of politics, following the flowering of the middles-class British evangelical spirit, began to ascribe cultural meanings to the British domination" (6). This had started particularly, Nandy explains, when the British and the 'exposed sections of Indians' digested the colonial role definitions and started desiring for reforms. When the homology between the sexual and political dominance, was drawn the 'battle for the minds of men' was won by the Raj. Identification with the oppressor is crucial to this cultural co-optation. Thus civilizational mission is an inherent strategy for colonialism by which it makes the colonized feel as the other.

Then he comes to the homology between childhood and the stage of being colonized. New definitions of childhood (which saw light in seventeenth century Europe) conceptulaized the latter as an inferior version of the adult. This according to Nandy had a direct relationship to the doctrine of civilization and progress prominent in Europe. Like a child, the colonized also should be taught and directed towards destinations set by the adult\colonizer. According to Nandy Modern Europe also delegitimized old-age. The un-productive, un-performing old person is seen as socially irrelevant. Thus the old-India or the 'past' of India becomes irrelevant. Thus the European Orientalists explorations of India as having glorious past is solved. The old/past becomes irrelevant.

But the Indian Hindu scriptures had already supplied demeaning definitions of woman, childhood and old age. They define woman as essentially inferior to man and the Dalit as naturally inferior to the *upper* castes. They say that the upper castes should treat the Dalit of even seventy years as a child (detailed debate regarding the Hindu scriptural sanctions for such treatments can be seen in the chapter "Hindu Religious Nationalism and the Dalit Woman"). The inferior versions of childhood must have entered only in 17th century in Europe but in India they were already so old at the time of British colonialism that such notions became so embedded in the mind-set of Hindus. More fundamentally such notions cut across the caste planes also. The postcolonial intellectuals need not slog to master the western texts in order to explore various dimensions of *fake* universalism, or the treachery of Reason of the West. A more introspective view towards their own Hindu texts will offer them more rich material to be deconstructed. Nandy would be able to see more horrifying homologies built between lowercasteness and sex and child. In fact it is misguiding to even explain that there is a homology between sex, childhood and lowercasteness. According to the Hindu scriptures the lower caste people are too low even to be equal to their women and children. Thus, it is more truthful to first subject the Indian "Reason' to scrutiny before finding faults with western Reason.

Since Nandy's major argument is that "colonialism is first of all a matter of consciousness and needs to be defined ultimately in the minds of men"(63). He argues that colonialism resulted in a cultural and psychological pathology in both the colonizers and the colonized. He writes that anti-colonial fights took two shapes in India; one was, Marxist which was caught in the West's own auto-critique and the other was psychological resistance where an alternative ideology and strategy to the West was constructed. Nandy recognizes this second form of psychological anti-colonial warfare as Gandhism (what Partha Chaterjee identifies as *inner domain).*

After critically evaluating various Hindu ideologues (except one, the Indian Christian Michael Madhusudan Dutt) and how their views have internalized the colonial ideology Nandy finally comes to show Gandhi as an incarnation of "transcultural protest

against the hyper masculine world view of colonialism". It insists on the hybridity and psychology in Gandhi's ideology and his political strategies. Nandy invokes Gandhi's idea that Indians subjection to the glittering of modernity is the root cause for the nation's colonial subjection. He tries to reinterpret the Gandhian problematic in Adorno's terms. Gandhi escaped from the seductions of modernity due to the *non-complicit innocence of non-violence* in his strategies like *Satyagraha*. Nandy perceives these Gandhian ideas of resistance taking place in mind of an individual. This psychological resistance is alien to the colonizers and thus succeeded in disorienting them. Now the problem is what all would go into the formation of such alternative strategies and fights? For this Nandy does not offer a total revival or going back to the past. He looks at modernity from a dialectical view and offers the creation of counter-modernity through the transformative potential of the transculturations of gender and hybridity. This creation of counter-modernity can be done by establishing a new tradition drawn from a dialectical mixture of classical and folk knowledges, the pure and the mixed, the high and the low, the masculine and feminine or modernity in a hybridized from as an answer. He points out that Gandhi applied this new tradition by adding politically incompatible forces. This is a political philosophy specific to Gandhi. Nandy explains Gandhi's success of demonstrating a critical awareness of Hinduism and colonialism from the culturally authentic view: "The alternative to Hindu nationalism is the peculiar mix of classical and folk Hinduism and the unselfconscious Hinduism by which most Indians, Hindus as well as non-Hindus, live. It is that liminality which Kipling resented. It is that liminality on which the greatest of Indian social and political leaders built their self-definitions as Indians over the last two centuries." (104).

'Liminality' according to Nandi is not only the condition of being the diasporic postcolonial migrant as Bhabha suggested but amounts to an authentic state of Indianness itself. Thus Nandy tries to see the authentic nationhood as an unselfconscious hinduness. We find no answer to: How can he club all other non-Hindu communities into this unselfconscious Hinduism? Why should all other communities feel bound to this unselfconscious Hinduism? Nandy's opinion, actually unconstrained by the cleavages of caste or the effects of communal liminality on religious minorities, that all Indians,

irrespective of religious and caste backgrounds, dwell in an 'unselfconscious Hinduism', poses the question of the collusions of postcolonial discourse with Hindutva ideology even if it looks superficially hybrid or secular. Nandy explains his intentions behind such conceptual priorities, 'I do not therefore hesitate to declare these essays to be an alternative mythography of history which denies and defies the values of history' (1983: XV).

2. The Uncolonized Mind: A Post-Colonial View of India and the West

The second essay examines four sets of polarities, which according to him have informed most discourses on the East and West in colonial and post-colonial times. These polarities are the universal Vs the parochial, the material (realistic) Vs spiritual (un-realistic), the achieving (performing) Vs the non-achieving (non-performing), the sane Vs insane. He also touched upon a fifth set which cuts across these four: a self-conscious, well-defined Indianness Vs a fluid open self-definition. On one plane he tries to show that the two ends of these polarities meet if the central problem is coping with or resistance to oppression. On another plane he tries to show that the parochial, the spiritual, the non-performing and the insane can sometimes turn out to be better versions of the universal, the realistic, the efficient and the sane.

His argument is that when the psychological and cultural survival is at risk all these polarities shatter and become partly immaterial. At that time the victim gets a fuzzy awareness of the larger whole. This awareness transcends the system's analytic categories and strands them together. Thus, the victim may become aware that, under oppression, the parochial, spiritual, and non-achieving could protect some forms of Universalism, non-oppressive world, civilizational goal of freedom and autonomy than the opposite polarities. These paradoxes are inevitable because the dominant idea of rationality is co-opted by institutionalized oppression. When such a co-optation takes place both resistance and survival demands some access to the larger whole. This process may look self-defeating in the light of conventional reason. But this could be another way of restating the ancient wisdom.

Thus this attempt of finding space in the larger whole is a hybrid attempt. Though the victim realizes the sanctity of one side of the polarities with which he identifies, and the villainy of the other side that he opposes, he has to, as Nandy writes somewhere try to get place in the larger whole. This may appear self-defeating but results in the restatement of ancient wisdom. But doesn't this self-defeat define the newly gained meaning of this re-stated 'ancient wisdom'? One may not be able to measure, naturally the ancientness and wisdom-ness of this restated wisdom when the victim enters into this sphere with this 'vague awareness' where the existing analytic categories are stranded To put it simply, when everything becomes so mixed up in this process, and by the time of the entrance of the victim into this 'larger whole' the 'ancient wisdom' may change its form and content as well.

Conclusion:

Modes of thinking of the PC ideas are borrowed from practices of western theory writing. Even when they subvert the ideas of the former they tend to do it according to these modes. Also, this theory is mostly taught in western educational institutions. Always their theory is constricted to the colonial past. They linger always in the history of colonialism than the postcolonial, global or neocolonial present. World history is fixed in the context of colonialism. Contemporary world realities are often interpreted in pure cultural terms and most of the times their work delimits itself to the critical review of English literatures.

One more serious criticism is as Dirlik concludes 'Postcoloniality is the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism.'[59] In this essay Dirlik develops on Jameson's idea that, postmodernism is a 'cultural logic' of late capitalism. In this sense postcolonialism which builds itself on it is also congruent with capitalism. Dirlik argues ferociously that postcolonialism is another name for postmodernism which tries to camouflage the activities of world capitalism. One more spurious feature of PC theory of India is that the Indian PC writers try to give new life to Hindu revival ideology with the

application of postmodernism as their theoretical frame. They celebrate this post-material disgust by overthrowing all the feasibilities of economic analysis in the interpretation of the political and the cultural. So. Dirlik writes, "While capital in its motions continues to structure the world, refusing it foundational status renders impossible the cognitive mapping that must be the point of departure for any practice of resistance...."[60] The Dalit feminist persuasion thus suspects the Postcolonial writers as agents of global capitalism and Hindu xenophobia.

Through this ideological system they are building a space for the cultural supremacy of the upper castes. In order to transfigure the dominant hindutva ideology into a legitimate form they carefully filter matter and archival sources. Thus they openly reflect the Hindu supremacist ideologies, encode the frustrations, and tensions within the colonized situations but maintain absolute silence about internal hierarchies. Without banning all the meaningful interventions that dalit and other movements made to the nationalist politics, it is not feasible to dump on the readers of the world a uniform picture about the Indian nationalist struggle or thought. Such a neat and tight segregation of the Dalit subject from the postcolonial discourse is not possible without a trained faith in the hindutva imagination of the Indian nation. Thus PC theorists' obsession to aver to patent *tradition* is a major area of contention for Dalit feminism.

The Indian upper caste social scientist scholars make use of the provision created by Gayatri Spivak: "unlearning once privileges as one's lose." They have perhaps unlearnt too much. The PC writers especially those who are settled in the West are equipped with double-edged privileges. One is to make use of the material privilege that emanates from recent-historical colonial past (by making use of most of the academic opportunities offered by the West to the *postcolonial* people like the Commonwealth), and the second is to take no note of their upper caste privileged identity in the native land. In other words, they maintain an ontological blindness. Thus, now a social science scholar, who wants to understand questions like caste and nation will no more be able to deal with them simultaneously. She will be able to see only nation *or* caste; she cannot see them together for they are erased in the postcolonial political texts.

It is also true that not all the people in the colonized land are equally colonized or for that matter equally liberated. The affinities and fights between the upper caste communities and all the 'others' are characterized by at least two realities, one how much each community is colonized and secondly, and more importantly, to what extent the communities in question want to come out of it. The fights of the upper castes with colonialism is certainly different from the fights that the *others* within this nation have had. The upper castes are not victims of long severe famines, political exclusion and cultural ostracizations of colonialism like the Dalits.

Consideration of internal colonization is important if 'post colonialism\independence' is to be anything more than a mere technical transfer of power. The postcolonial writers erase all the pre-British colonial history of the land. British colonialism should not be targeted as the cause for all the negative things existing in the 'postcolonial'nations. British colonialism did not come to act on a plain screen. By the time it entered, the land was already having a system of supremacy, legal codes, own modes of economic extractions everything structured by caste ideology with certain regional variations. Thus a pre\British colonial past and the search for it need not always be a romantic journey. What Spivak opines is also not always true. She explains that pre-colonial is re-constituted by the history of colonialism (of course she tells this with an intention of restricting the urge for 'lost origins'[61]). But such an assumption bears more problematic implications for dalit feminism since as Henry Louis Gates concludes that for Spivak, all discourse is colonial discourse (1991:466). It would be a too reductive reading indeed! PC writers perceive the world with a preoccupied idea that it is divided into colonized and colonizing. Aijaz Ahmad raises his objection correctly that ""colonialism"... becomes a transhistorical thing, always present and always in the process of dissolution in one part of the world or the other".[62] Thus colonialism becomes a self-ordained historical signifier to replace all other markers in the PC literature.

The Dalit question was, as a result, gravely under theorized within the nationalist discourse and therefore in the postcolonial discourse. Consequently, vital questions like-

how does the oppression on Dalit women hook up with the operations of British colonialism, and how the pre-British colonial realities tries to entangle with it remain imposed. The relation between these two systems of oppression cannot be understood unless caste and caste patriarchal processes are evaluated as severely as the nationalist ones are, and also as the nationalist questions.

Portrayal of the 'other' is central to the formation of Hindu culture and also to the PC theory. Now. the impetus to tighten the hold over academics and theory through the versions convenient to them also supply a new skeleton through which they interpret what they come across. Hence, Dalits are relegated to the lowest preference in their analysis both because of the Dalits faith and association with western Reason, and also because this furnishes a justification for imagining Dalits as outsiders of the *real* nation. Insisting on the centrality of hinduness to nation-ness is a mere renewal of the idea of Dalits as outsiders. Discourse plays a crucial role by processing the information about the communities in a new and convincing jargon. It is not possible to read the upper caste nationalist texts without keeping in mind that casteism, transfigured as true nationalist assignment. It was a pivotal part of the political representation of Hindu to the world, the PC literature endorses this.

Casteism also facilitated the process of colonial extraction of cheap labour from the Dalits. Economic disparities became acute and have been maintained by the ideologies of the caste. Indentured labour became a malicious site to extract both the sexual and physical labour of these communities. PC studies are incapable of taking up studies on such issues.[63] Under the dire conditions of colonialism, traditional occupations were destroyed and people were allowed to move to urban areas in search of money. But they have to always move with their caste tags. Colonialism thus does not override and dissolve caste differences but continues to nurture upon, and solidify them. That is why caste segregation allowed colonialism to expand and find the labour for cheaper wages with a virtual absence of any rights.

Thus the supposedly outdated extraction of labour continued to operate powerfully as an integral feature of the British colonial system. Caste is the foundation on which the division of labour is pressed into the British colonial system. The ideology of the racial superiority for the West found a ready match in caste. The task in front of the nationalists and the British colonialists was then to arrange the civil society in ways without rupturing this settled imagination. Forcing people into these altered setups became easy because the executioners or the supervisors of these tasks were not the distant enemies like Britishers but the intimate ones, the Indian upper caste people. Thus, the process of *identifying* the people and allocating roles became much easier. The *upper* caste people were hand in glove in exploiting the labour and sexualities of the Dalits. The changed socio, political conditions of the land made the *upper* caste people keen and intense in their attitudes towards the Dalit communities. Thus, unlike what Dirks argues, if caste was produced in modern versions during the British colonial period it was not due to the sole racist colonial interests of the British officials. It also, became feasible because of the *upper caste* peoples' aid and execution of the same. It is also to be noted that violence was readily opted for wherever necessary indicating the existence of *caste* rule in various parts of the land even during the British colonial times. British colonialism did not necessarily lead to an end or even to the decrease in the *caste* specific violence. Hulme feels that postcolonial is a descriptive but not an evaluative term.[64] But in the Indian context where the majority of the communities are located at the other end of postcolonial privilege, existing at the fringes of the nation, the application of the term postcolonial even in the descriptive sense is not feasible.

NOTES:

[1]Elie kedourie, Nationalism, 4TH edn, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

[2] Earnest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.

[3] Smith, D. Anthony. "Nationalism and the Historians," in Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthony D. Smith (ed), Leiden: E J. Brill, 1992, p.72.

[4] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso, 1983.

[5] Gordon Marshall (ed), Oxford Dictionary of Sociology; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, p.92.

[6]ibid, p. 300.

[7] Ania Loomba, Colonialism/Postcolonialism, London: Routledge, 1998, p.4.

[8] The scholar does not endorse the idea of the Dalits as the original inhabitants of the land in order to re-define the Dalit movement as a nationalist one. This is an idea, which was highlighted by the early dalit movement under the leadership of Gopal Baba Walangkar. The scholar, like Ambedkar, would believe that Indian culture is homogeneous, in the sense that it is non-contradictory to the democratic national culture. Such claims for the status of 'original inhabitants of the land' would seek to favor one caste against the other and thus result in justifying the caste logic of hierarchy again. Ambedkar rejected this myth because he believed that the status of Dalits in the Indian society is social and not of racial origin. See, Eleoner Zelliot, From Untouchable to the Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement, New Delhi: Manohar, 1992, pp. 56-58 and 156.

Such a claim for 'original inhabitants' would be antithetical to the ethic that the present thesis believes in. A postulation that caste is the first wave of colonialism is to make a point that caste operated as an overwhelming hegemonic and cultural power on the land, co-existed and surpassed the British colonialism and keeps on doing so. More importantly, such an argument is to establish a serious profile and centrality to the caste related oppression and fights against it in the realm of Indian academics. If fights against British colonialism are fundamental to the emancipation of the nation, liberation from its own internal bondage is also equally important. To interpret the release from the external colonization as the marker of complete independence and simultaneously denying the responsibility of purging the nation from inside can only be pseudo *Swaraj*. It is in this sense that caste is redefined as a first wave of colonialism. This explanation is in no way an apology for making such an adamant and severe claim. But it is only to emphasize that such a redefinition should be kept in mind in a strict literal sense.

[9] There is scanty literature existing on the question of the Dalit movement. Most of the works see the dalit movement as movements for social *upliftment.* Their approach to the problem is also piecemeal. See, for instance Ganshyam Shah, "Dalit Movements" in Social Movements in India: A Review of the Literature.

New Delhi: Sage Publications, , 1990, pp. 107-120. Some works see the dalit movement as important but fix it in the Marxist framework and thus depict it as a movement, which delimited itself to the constitutional boundaries. They agree the centralily of caste to the Indian society but do depict the class struggles as *real* movements, which posed threat to the colonial and bourgeois nationalist movements. This is because they tend to see only 'class' as the main contradiction between the colonized and the colonialists. Sec for instance, A.R.Desai's Peasant Struggles in India , Delhi: OUP, 1979. The other strong reason for the denial of nationalist brand for Dalit movement can be found in the historian Bipin Chandra's treatment of the nationalist question. In his well received text, India's Struggle for Independence, New Delhi: Viking, 1987, the story of Indian nationalism revolves around the charismatic leadership of Gandhi, Nehru and so on and on the fights waged from the dais of Congress against the British. The Dalit politics, thus according to Bipin Chandra is a pro-colonial politics. Such assumptions do sanctify not only the Congress and its fights but also take the notion of nation for granted. Dirks though, in his recent book, Castes of Mind, Permanent Black, Delhi: 2003, finds caste as a product of the encounter between India and British colonial rule, tend to see the Dalit movement as a movement committed to the cause of the *caste* only.

It is perhaps the work of Eleanor Zelliot, From the Untouchable to the Dalit: Essays on the Ambedkar Movement, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1992, and Gail Omvedt's, Dalits and the Democratic Revolution, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1994 which portray the Dalit movements as producer of counter nationalist discourse. They understand Ambedkar as raising nationalist questions and doing politics along those lines and therefore portray him as a nationalist. Omvedt sees the Dalit movement as part of the democratic revolution in India along with the nationalist, peasant and socialist moments. But she tries to establish the nationalist tinge that the Dalit movement carried; "Ideologically and organizationally, it both overlapped and contended with these movements" (13). More importantly, in the following paragraph she tries to explain the present Dalit movement making nationalist claims. These new assertions emanated in the form of Dalit discontent can be understood as the fissures that the Indian nationalism failed to grapple with during the colonial period. This she addresses as the crisis of nationalism. Such a point indicates that the Dalit movement did wrestle with the nationalist issue and present itself as a nationalist movement but its claims were not heeded. Also see, Vidhu Verma, "Colonialism and Liberation: Ambedkar's Quest for Distributive Justice", *EPW* Sep 25, 1999, pp. 2804-2810. Verma powerfully argues that it is in the theory of socio and distributive justice of Ambedkar that one can find his main nationalist thought.

[10] This argument can be found in Partha Chatterjee's texts, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: Derivative Discourse?, London: Zed Books, 1986, and also in his Nation and It's Fragments. Delhi: OUP, 1997. The very base of Subaltern Studies is undoubtedly and singularly predicated on this excuse.

[11] See (apart from already discussed Kedourie, Gellner, Smith and Anderson) G.W.F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, trans. J. Sibree, New York: Dover Publications, 1956; J.S. Mill, Considerations on

Representative Government, Currian V. Shields (ed.), Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs Merril Educational Publishing, 1958; Earnest Renan, "What is a Nation", in Homi Bhabha (ed.), Nation and Narration, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1990.

[12] Frenz Fannon, Black Skin, White Masks, trans. CL. Markmann, New York: Grove Press, 1967.

[13] Homi Bhabha, "Caliban Speaks to Prospero: Cultural Identity and the Crisis of Representation", in *Critical Fictions*, Phil Mariani (ed), Seattle: Bay Press, 1991, p.63.

[14] Ama Ata Aidoo, 'That Capacious Topic: Gender Politics', in *Critical Fictions*, p. 152.

[15] Hazel Carby, Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist. New York: OUP, 1987, p. 15.

[16] Edward Said, Orientalism, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

[17] ibid, p.3

[18] Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chkravarty Spivak, (eds) Selected Subaltern Studies, New Delhi: OUP, 1988, p. 35.

[19] Robert Young, White Mythologies: Writing History and the West, London: Routledge, 1991, p.2.

[20] Gyan Prakash, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism", *American Historical Review* 99.5, December 1994, p. 1475 n. 1.

[21] By addressing the issues of *others* as fissures or clefts, the scholar any way do not attribute any secondary status to these questions.

[22] Bill Ashcroft *et.al*, The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures, New York: Routledge, 1989, p.2,

[23] Benita Parry, "Current Problems in the Study of Colonial Discourse", *Oxford Literary Review* 9 (1-2) p.34.

[24] ibid, p.34.

[25] ibid, p. 35.

[26] Spivak, "Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value", in Literary Theory Today, Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-Rayan (eds), Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990, p.225.

[27] Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice", *Wedge*, Winter/Spring, 1985, pp. 120-130.

[28] Ray Chow, "Where have all the Natives Gone?", in Angelika Bammer (ed.), Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question, Indiana University Press, 1994.

[29] Aijaz Ahmad, "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality", *Race and Class*, 36.3, 1995, p.8.

[30] Arif Dirlik, 'The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism', *Critical Inquiry 20*, Winter 1994, p329.

[31] Spivak, Outside in the Teaching Machine, New York: Routledge, 1993, p.56.

[32] Appiah, "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial ?" *Critical Inquiry* 17, Winter 1991, p.348.

[33]K.A.Appiah, "Is the Postodernism the Post in Postcolonialism?", in Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader, (ed) P. Mongia, London: Arnold, 1991. pp. 62-63.

[34] Arun Mukherjee, "Whose Post-colonialism and Whose Postmodernism", *World Literature Written in English* 30.2, 1990. pp. 1-9.

[35] Arif Dirlik, 1994. pp. 328-56.

[36] Op.cit., Aijaz Ahmad, 1995, pp. 1-20.

[37]Terry Eagleton, "Goodbye to the Enlightenment"", *The Guardian, 5* May, 1994.

[38] Frenz Fannon, Wretched of the Earth, trans. C. Farrington, New York: Grove Press, 1968, pp. 148-205.

[39] Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism,New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993, p. 323.

[40] Ray Chow defines "surplus value of the oppressed" as something which results from exchanging the defiled image for something nobler. See, "Where have all the Natives Gone?" in Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question, Angelika Bammer (ed.), Indian University Press, 1994, p. 124.

[41] Simon During, "Postmodernism and Postcolonialism Today", *Textual Practice* 1.1, 1987, p.33.

[42] Nicholas B. Dirks, 2003, p. 313.

[43] See Partha Chatterjee, 1997.

[44] Young Roberts, Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race, London: Routledge, 1995,p. 10.

[45] Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation. London and New York: Routledge, 1992

[46] Cesaire Amin, "Discourse on Colonialism' New York and London", *Monthly Review Press,* 1972, pp, 11-12.

[47] Bhabha, Location of Culture,New York: Routledge, 1994, p.37.

[48] Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817", *Critical Inquiry*, 12:1, 1985, p. 156.

[49] Bhabha, 'The Postcolonial Critic', pp57-8. Cf. also 61.

[50] Bhabha, "The Commitment to Theory", *New Formation,* 5, 1988, p. 13,

[51] Said, 1993, p.406; Bhabha, "DissemiNation", in Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration,* London: Routledge, p.3I2.

[52] op.cit., Ahmad, 1995, p. 13.

[53] Bhabha, H.K, "Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialsim", in F.Barker, P.Hulme, M.Iversen et. al (eds.), The Politics of Theory, Colchester: University of Essex Press, 1983 pp. 194-211.

[54] Benita Parry, "Signs of Our Times: Discussion of Homi Bhabha's The Location of Culture", *Third Text* 28/29, Autumn/ Winter 1994, pp. 5-24.

[55] Aschcroft, Bill, Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies, New York: Routledge, 1998, pp. 118-19.

[56] Bhabha, 1994, 199.

[57] Bhabha, "Remembering Fannon" in P.Williams (ed.), Colonial discourse and Postcolonial Theory. 1994, pp. 112-123.

[58] Robert Young, White Mythologies: Writing History and the West, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 119.

[59] Dirlik, 1994, pp. 328-356.

[60] ibid, 356.

[61] Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds), Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988, pp 211-313.

[62] Aijaz Ahmad, "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality", in *Race and Class*, 36.3, 1995, p. 9.

[63] There is a very interesting article on Dalit sexuality and indentured labour in plantations. This article unravels how the colonial mode of extraction intersects with the caste specific patriarchal oppression. See, Brij V. Lal, "Kunti's Cry: Indentured Women on Fiji Plantations", in J. Krishnaurthy (ed.), Women in Colonial India: Essays on Survival, Work and the State, Delhi: OUP, 1989.

[64] P.Hulme, "Including America", *Ariel 26* (1), January 1995, pp. 117-123.

CHAPTER II

CRITIQUE ON THE POSTCOLONIAL THEORY OF CASTE AND DALIT POLITICS

Analyzing the veracity and adaptability of postcolonial theory (PC from hereafter) to the Dalit discourse and reality is the aim of the present chapter. The chapter argues that postcolonial theory is incapable to locate the *caste* problem at the level of theory and practicality and therefore demonstrates a great deal of escapism towards the same. This chapter is thus an exploration of how theory on *caste/Dalit* has been constructed in the PC scholarship. As the chapter reveals, there are various similarities between the Hindu fundamentalist ideology and the PC theories on *caste*. It seems time to bring specific attention to ask how these fundamentalist ideas have been perpetuated into contemporary times through the PC project. In this context one has to ask the question how a theory of *caste* is directly related to the studies of Dalit women. Dalit feminism indicates that Dalit women are Dalits first. Their status as inessential women in Indian society emanates due to their position as Dalits. Thus the theory of *caste* is very much directly related to the Dalit women studies. Thus, before entering into other chapters, it is felt necessary to examine the existing PC theories on *caste/Dalit.*

It was during the British colonial period that the Indian system of *caste* got intellectual attention in a modern sense. Britishers naturally showed this as a feature of the backwardness of India and the incapability of the Indians to rule themselves. The first reaction of the Indian *upper caste* intellectuals to this British colonial accusation was varied. The hindutva responded to it with an argument of *golden age,* according to which India was a wonderful land during the earlier times where Aryans ruled. Equilibrium was maintained between different communities due to the existence of *varnashramam dharma.* It is the invasion of foreigners into India, which converted this *golden age* into a dark one. Dayananda Saraswathi, Vivekananda, Savarkar and later

Gandhi argued on these lines though with little differences.[1] Though Gandhi attributed the corruption of this system to modernity, this school of thought as a whole did not vacillate to defend and propagate that *caste* system, as a whole is amicable to Indian kind. These hindutva inklings are found in the theories of contemporary academicians also, For instance Ghurey[2] (though not contemporary, but his ideas are endorsed strongly by his dissidents) M.N. Srinivas[3] etc belong to this school.

The other streams of thought include Marxists, Liberals and Socialists who not only readily accepted the British criticism in the case of *caste* system but also with the same ease they believed that it could be eradicated with the implementation of modern rational principles and systems. When the liberals believed that *caste* whisks itself away once the nation enters into the modern forms of ruling, the Marxists on the other hand viewed it in lighter terms. For them it is only one of the facets of superstructure[4]. Most of the literature that has been produced till now within the orbits of these predominant perspectives proves them to be failures to address the growing complexities of the *caste* system and its increasing centrality in Indian politics. For instance, *caste* system did not disappear with the mere importation of the western modes of rule as most of the liberals and Marxists have guessed. But has taken more deeper roots with the emergence of identitarian politics (which has both positive and negative manifestations) and the nation's increased and unexpected proclivity for Hindu fundamentalist nationalism from early 1990s.

There is another school of thought-which see *caste* as a re-creation of British colonialism. This thought needs a little more elaboration here because of its commonality of argument with PC theory. Nicholas B. Dirks argues that modern form of *caste* system is especially a modern phenomenon created by colonialism. He claims that it was under the British colonial rule that *caste* emerged as a single term capable of :

> expressing, organizing, and above all "systematizing" India's diverse forms of social identity, community, and organization. "This was achieved through an identifiable (if contested) ideological canon as the result of a concrete encounter with colonial modernity during two hundred years of British domination. In short, colonialism made caste what it is today.[5]

This sounds true when one looks at the manifestation of *caste* mainly in the outer world i.e., in the domain of political society. But expressions of *caste* in the civil society are extremely different and very often contradict with the observations drew considering only the political society. Dirks was able to strongly advocate his view in absolute terms because he looked at only the reservation scenario and excluded the role of *caste* in the civil society where it still appears to the common Indian with its traditional, almost unchanged dynamics. It is possible to consider full view of the *caste* system only when one is able to understand its materialization both at the civil and political societies. A major problem that emanated with Dirks proposition is that he was continuously confusing Dalit with *caste* which amounts to the mixing of *caste* violence and the Dalits' resistance to that violence. In other words, he has put the question of *upper caste* oppression and issue of reservations (where the Dalits are able to make assertions and thus contribute for the dialectics of Indian politics) in the same register. But in civil society *caste* operates not only in more archaic terms where Dalit assertion is very difficult but also in an extremely implicit terms and indirect terms also. It is settled as a state of mind and neither its articulation nor rejection is too easy to recognize.

Sudipta Kaviraj is another scholar who argues that earlier "fuzzy" sense of the community was diminished and then an "enumerable" sense of community has emerged during British colonialism. He emphasizes that community did not claim to symbolize all the layers of selfhood of its members, secondly, it was not aware of how many of its members exist in the world.[6] He seems to argue that *caste* became a conscious reality of the people in the land only with the sytematization that it underwent under the British rule due to its politics of enumeration. It is underestimating the pervasiveness and power of *caste,* which operated as socio-political treatise for many communities of the land. *Caste* was able to rule this land for centuries before the emergence of the British colonialism as a systematizing force simply because it was able to manage the communities in their *right* places. It is time to recognize that *caste* system has its own terms of systematization much before the advent of British.

Dirks tries to extend this argument. While rejecting Dumont's idea that the superior position of the Brahmans is the ideological evidence of the hierarchical nature of the *caste* system, Dirks argues that "Brahmans may have been necessary, both for a great many aspects of Hindu thought and practice and for the ideological maintenance of Hindu kingship, but they neither defined nor provided the principles that organized hierarchy for the entire Indian social order throughout all time" (71). He exemplifies it with the case of *Kallrs* of *Pudukottai*. First of all it should not be too easy to dismantle a truth that most of the Hindu treatises are written by the Brahmans where they projected themselves as the superior *caste* and givers of law without failure. Secondly, it is also very clear that all the *other castes* which are depicted as free from the Brahman influence clearly follow the models set by the Brahmans as Partha Chatterjee finally has to agree in his article "Nation and Its Outcastes"[7] which is discussed below. This is because though these *castes* tried to make anti-Brahman assertions they failed because of at least two reasons, 1. They mainly operated within the limited sphere of the logic of the *caste* system, 2. They failed to thus come up with an alternative, independent discourse. Reason for this could be the Brahman's supremacy to suppress these assertions both through physical and epistemic violence. Therefore it is one-dimensional to portray examples like *Kallars* to disprove the hegemonic, violent role that the Brahmans played in imposing their mode of dominance.

It could be right to argue that *caste* underwent a different kind of systematization under the colonial rule to suit the modern democratic contexts. But it is absolutely wrong to deny the kind of systematization that it carried before the British colonial rule. To elucidate more clearly, in the remote areas of the civil society it is the old order of systematization, not the new one (which was born in due to the efforts of colonial world) that still regulates the lives of millions of *lower caste* people. People still strictly follow the rules of endogamy, religious prostitution, unsociability or *vet hi* according to the regulations set by *caste* much before the British colonial state counted and systematized them. There neither the dalit nor the *upper caste* need to know how many their fellow *caste* people are there in the world and also that they are very keen to safeguard every layer of their selfhood from food habits to whom they should talk to in what mannerism

they should talk. In other words *caste* did not get into a completely new radical form under the British colonial rule but continued to remain many of its essential old features. Otherwise it is difficult to understand why and how *caste* continues to manifest itself in very ancestral ways still in intensely unbridled manner in many parts of India.

Dirks text also reflects a western scholar's sense of guilt in studying the colonized worlds when the author tries to take all the burden of domination to British colonialism and give too much benefit of doubt for the Indian *upper caste nationalists.* This sense of guilt is evident in Dumont's theory' also who attributes *the failure* of the westerners to understand *caste* to their individualist theoretical limitations. This point is elaborated elsewhere in this chapter. Dirks puts too much emphasis on the hegemonic character of British colonial rule and its tactics of seducing the colonized with modernity which anyway could not be achieved under the conditions of colonialism for obvious reasons. The kind of *understanding* and respectable tone that Dirks showed towards the Hindu nationalists is absent when he deals with the Dalit intellectuals. For instance he calls the "caste politics" (by this he meant Dalit politics) as developed with "particular vengeance" (237). But when he deals with V.D. Savarkar's text on Meerut mutiny Dirks does not pass any comment on the over sentimental tone that Savarkar applied to describe the mutiny and the Hindu heroes and heroines who fought in it. Determined to show modern frames of *caste* as designed by colonialism, Dirks concludes his chapter, "Towards a Nationalist Sociology of India: Nationalism and Brahminism" fry assessing a few Indian sociologists views on *caste* and the process of Sanskritization. This is done in a way where the Indian *upper caste* sociologists escape from the total burden of being brahmanocentric. He writes:

> Under the conditions of colonialism, internal critique was very different from external condemnation. But this is not the end of the story. For Sanskritization was not only description of a natural social process that valorized Brahmans and Brahmanism across India, it also entailed the naturalization of a specific history in which colonial transformations displaced themselves into (even as they relied upon) "native" sociologies (254).

So, finally the sin of seeing the *lower castes'* upward mobility as cheap imitation of the *upper castes* no more rests with the *upper caste* Indian sociologist.

It is right to argue here that the difficulty in understanding the *caste* system is as much a academic failure as much as it is political. This failure is enormous in the academic arena where Dalit discourse and movement did not enjoy any due response and recognition for a considerably long time. On the whole there seems to be a great lack of acceptance for Dalit discourse as a complete and integrated one. The failure of the Dalit political discourse in acquiring a nationalist status can be attributed to this *upper caste* academic nepotism which is rampant both at the level of recruitment (by restricting the entrance of the Dalits into academic spheres) and production of theory.

It is important to notice here that there are very few works that have considered Ambedkar's thought seriously in their theorization of *caste.* What we are left with is the school of scholars who are sympathetic to the Dalit cause. Their theories of the *caste* system are to be considered seriously because at least they are the one who try to respond to the phenomenon from a contemporary, realistic point of view. It is very difficult to find even in their texts an analysis of Ambedkar's thought regarding the *caste* and nation problem in any complete sense. Most of the writings on Ambedkar by *upper caste* academicians of this school deal with his thought from piece- meal approach not as a thought, which is capable of offering a comprehensive and consistent critique. It is not that such an approach is altogether wrong. But it also shows that they cannot do more justice than this. In other words what the researcher would try arguing is that except the Dalits and some of the very few sympathetic academicians,[8] comparing and diagnosing Ambedkar's ideas into the contemporary politics and developing an argument to demonstrate the Ambedkar's nationalist thought as an integrated one are almost rare.

It should be acknowledged here that it was Ambedkar who represented an authentic insider radical critique of caste/nation[9] from the modern perspective. What is more important is that one can easily find many of his historic predictions of the nation coming true to this day. It is also Ambedkar who severely and continuously perceived and presented *caste* in relation to the nation. *Caste* as a concept and reality occupied his every analysis and prediction on nation[10].

PC Theory on Caste:

To begin with, theory produced on the problem of *caste* is very scanty in the Indian PC literature, especially when compared with the enormity and centrality of the problem. The researcher would try to prove the following points by deconstructing some of the PC texts. The points that the researcher tries to establish are 1. *Caste* (in its present form), in the PC theory appears as a riddle posed by the western historicism. 2. Since the main concern of the PC writers is to re-write Indian history from an authentic (i.e., native) historiographical base, they see *caste* more as a conceptual challenge than as a living problem. 3. Immunization of the *native* knowledge frames from the western ethnocentric theories is also their prime concern. 4. So, the authentic Dalit criticism, which found base mainly in the knowledge frames set by the West, remains as illegitimate outsider. A Dalit researcher comes across not even any single explanation for this elimination of Dalit (as a concept and term) in the PC theory. She has to search for the answer to this elimination in the general argument of this school of thought. Therefore Ambedkar, a name does not appear anywhere. Usually these PC writers (Subaltern Studies) take up the views of the writers of a particular school when they try to establish the pitfalls of that particular theory. For instance when they explain the limitations of Indian Marxist thought they obviously put to debate the views of the prominent theoreticians of that school. But in the case of their treatment of *caste\subaltern castes* it is impossible to find the name of Ambedkar at least as an ideologue whose ideas deserve to be deconstructed and disowned. Therefore it is no exaggeration to tell that Ambedkar is considered still as an untouchable in the Subaltern\PC academic operations. Another serious limitation of this group is their constant rejection to the question of internal fissures or pre-British colonial peculiarities and their continuing cruciality in the contemporary Indian national realities. Ruth Frankburg and Lata Mani's essay explains that while the diasporic identity assumed political prominence in the west in the postcolonial sites, like India, the nation states and its exclusions are more important.[11] But such an understanding is completely absent in the Indian Subaltern School.

I.Partha Chatterejee's Text: Nationalist Thought & The Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?;

This text here superficially looks like a critique of western Reason and a native effort to establish the Indian suzerainty in the domain of nationalist thought. But it is for a Dalit feminist actually a neo-caste methodology of scaling new consent for old trajectory of *caste* thought. So, she sees this text deeply as a treatise of *caste* and therefore of Hindu nation. This text is a response to Anderson's postulation that nationalism\nation in the colonized countries of the East is largely an imagination downloaded from the west. The author examines the views of some western and Indian scholars and finds their views on eastern and western nationalisms as a result of what he calls the 'liberal-rationalist dilemma' (2). So, Chatterjee tries to attack the very base of the world view of the western intellectualism, its idea of development, and its cunningness behind setting such a worldview in front of the non-western world. Chatterjee's argument is that East (India) is of course influenced by the western ideology of nationalism but it also produced its own version of nationalism. This version was according to him produced in the *inner domain.* In order to prove this hypothesis he divided the colonized world into two neat divisions, the inner and the outer. He explains that the nationalists kept the inner\cultural sphere intact. He analyses how they applied an ideological sieve through which nationalists strained British impact. In the inner sphere the nation retained its autonomous subjectivity and it is in this sphere, according to Chatterjee, nationalism or the true imagination of the nation really took place. It is the *upper caste* ideologues like Bankim, Gandhi and Nehru who are counted as constituents of the autonomous Indian nationalist thought. All these three incorporated extremely anti-dalit views in their writings. Chatterjee censored most of such excerpts of the texts and included only those ideas, which would not sound anti-other *people*\nation. All their views were especially made to suit the field where contest of power was taking place not just between the British and India but also between different communities of the land. Chatterjee has laboriously sanctified the political thoughts of these ideologues as something very sacred and situated them *above* political contest. He did not care to explain the following certain gaps in his theoretical propositions. For instance he does not answer the following

questions: 'How these nationalists make neat divisions between *inner* and *outer spheres*'? 'What were the reasons for them to not to mix up both'; and 'Why these ideologues did not see the attempts of the *others* who tried to merge these both domains to produce a wholesome critique on the politics of the *upper caste* nationalists?' For instance the Dalit leaders during the anti-British colonial times based most of their critique on the *upper caste* society by connecting its politics to culture (inner domain/hinduism)[12]. They certainly tried to influence the outer sphere with the same logic and philosophy of *inner sphere.* In other words the *inner* was always trying to control *outer fringes* of the *inner domain* as well as the complete *outer domain.* In other words it is the inner sphere which is the core of the Hindus and the Dalits rejection of the Hindu dominance is essentially predicated on their attack of this sphere. That means they were successful in recognizing this sphere as the main ideological feed back of the Hindus which regulated the steering of the outer domain.

Anderson considered only elite sections and certain modern material conditions as the makers of the nationalism (for instance he sees print capitalism, bilingual intelligentsia etc. as the contributive elements of nationalism which emanate primarily from *upper caste* middle class area). Zillah Eisenstein correctly points out that "He [Anderson] does not recognize that nationalism is an instance of phallocratic construction, with brotherhood, rather than sisterhood at its core. Nor does he recognize racism as part of the historical articulation of the nation."[13] Partha'a response to Anderson is framed within the parameters set by Anderson which sees men, that too the most privileged *upper caste* men as the real imaginators of the nation. It is his next book called *Nation and its Fragments* (1997) that he includes women as those communities, which are kept away from the contours of this imagination. Dalits and peasants come together in the shape of formless *masses* that he calls with generic title *peasants.*

What he resurrected in the name of native nationalism is an *indigenous* replica of Anderson's model where, as cited above the *upper caste* male community becomes the representative and catalyst of bringing the nation into a shape. Thus when for Anderson it is the western material prosperity, industrial revolution and the dominant intellectual

groups **which** were midwives of nationalisms and nation states all over the world, for Chatterjee it is the *upper caste* male community which played this role in India.

Chatterjee tried to build his hypothesis around the Gramscian concept of passive revolution. Gramsci analyses it in terms of three moments or levels of the 'relation of forces'. The first is the objective structure (it exists independent of human will), second moment is the relation of political forces, (the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness, and organization attained by the various social classes are important here). This is purely a political one. The third moment is the relation of military forces consisting of the technical military configuration and the 'politico-military' situation. In conditions of a relatively advanced world capitalism, a bourgeois aspiring for hegemony in a new national political order cannot hope to launch a 'war of movement' (or 'manoeuvre')\ a frontal, military assault on the state. Instead it must engage in a 'war of position.' Its strategy is to attempt a 'molecular transformation' of the state. Undertaking economic reforms in a limited scale so as to appropriate the support of the masses is also part of the strategy. But the masses are not allowed to make any direct participation in the process of governance. This is called 'passive revolution.' This 'war of position' does not pose serious challenge to the capital.

Partha Chatterjee claims to give ideological unity to the nationalist thought in this text. This he did by applying the concept of passive revolution. He tries to explore the historical formation of this unity in terms of *moments.* Each of these *moments* has a specific form of amalgamation of thematic and the problematic. They bear distinct historical possibilities in terms of the relation of 'subjective forces'. Chatterjee also believes that it is not possible to spot out different ideological streams or 'subjective forces' in nationalist thought by simply applying the binaries of elitist\populist, progressive\reactionary or direct\indirect. The Dalit scholar fails to find the Dalit movement in this **list** of 'subjective forces' or 'ideological streams'. What appear here, as opposing ideological tendencies is the same *upper caste* views on nationalism again. They are segmented into three varieties in order to make a sense that they are different and the ideological conflicts between these streams are genuine. He does this

demarcation while agreeing that a strict identification of any two 'subjective forces' is in fact not possible. Therefore he breaks up the nationalist movement into three moments to explore its ideological unity namely, departure, manoeuvre and arrival. Thus it is justified from his side to make an odd match of Gandhian thought with the moment of manoeuver. He explains: "The argument is that for nationalist thought to attain its paradigmatic form, these three are *necessary* ideological moments" (50). He also makes a prediction that the asymmetry between the subjective forces can be deposed only when the antithesis acquires the political ideological resources to match the universal consciousness of capital. But it is difficult to come across any such possibility. This is because first of all there is no asymmetry between the subjective forces that are presented here because finally all these are the Hindu forces. Next limitation is that it is wrong to offer a status of antithesis to these subjective forces because they are doomed to fail to acquire the status of political ideological resources to match the universal consciousness of capital. They are doomed to fail because they are lopsided and extremely backward. They cannot match themselves with the more sophisticated universal consciousness of capital.

These moments not only emanate superficially contradictory ideologies but also the first two are absorbed in the last one. This absorption makes the antithesis ultimately appear in a feeble form. It is feeble because it is based itself on the universal consciousness of capital not on the rejection of it. But one can raise no further point at the moral lack of the hindutva nationalist thought if the author finally concludes that it is a result of an unresolved contest of history, the Cunningness of Reason. His rejection to offer a space for Dalit discourse a status of subjectivity thus leaves all the stage of nationalist drama to the British colonizers and the colonized *upper castes.*

A.The Moment of Departure: Culture and Power in the Thought of Bankimchandra:

Partha Chatterjee analyses Bamkimchandra Chatterjee as one of the first systematic expounders in India of the principles of nationalism. In this particular essay Chateerjee

tries to explain how Bankim's ideas connect culture to power in the colonized context. Historicizing the Hindus' past according to Chateerjee is the first project taken up by Bankim to relate culture to power. As part of portraying Hindu as an exclusive nation having its own history Bankim tried to historicize the Hindus past. This is done despite the realization on behalf of Bankim that Sanskrit literary texts were filled with mere myths. But still such texts are seen as being sources of information about history. Since Banakim himself premised on a western rational terrain and was trying to see history as a repository of rational truth. And the validation of this rational truth had to be predicated on the rational demonstration of its historicity. So here the author tries to explain two things: 1. How Bankim plays a crucial role in constituting autonomous space for the nationalist thought? 2.How that liberating project itself was in a way also fixed on the terrain by which the westerns were oppressing the Hindus. Thus Bankim does not offer any epistemological or even methodological critique of western knowledge system. The author explains:

> 'Thus, Bankim's devotion to what he regarded as the fundamental principles of a rational science of economics makes it impossible for him to arrive at a critique of the political economy of colonial rule, even when the evidence from which a critique may have proceeded was, in a sense, perfectly visible to him(6.3).

Thus, at the *moment of departure*, nationalist consciousness fights with the help of framework of knowledge created by western rationalist thought. It becomes aware and acknowledges the essential cultural difference between East and West. But the nationalist's claim is that this backwardness is not a historically absolute character. It can be altered by the nation acting jointly by adopting all those modern features of European culture. But if it adopts certain features of the west how will it retain its essential nationalist culture? Chateerjee explains that Bankim has found an answer to this question by inverting the Orientalist problematic within the same general thematic. This answer is a fundamental characteristic of nationalist thought at its moment of departure. Bankim searched for a specific-subjectivity for the nation within the essentialist typology of cultures. This was done according to Chatterjee by accepting that west's supremacy lies in its materiality of its culture where as the superiority of east lies in the spiritual aspect of culture. True modernity of the non-European nations would lie in combining the superior material qualities of the western cultures with the spiritual prominence of the

east. This is an elitist programme for the act of cultural synthesis only is performed by whom Chatterjee calls a "supremely cultivated and refined intellect" (73). Thus his doctrine of power is basically an elite mission. This was essential for the regeneration of *national* culture as "national religion". Thus religion is the soul of the nation and this religion is Hinduism.

Why only Hinduism should be the very essence of the thematic of mainstream nationalism and a national religion? Bankim highlights two features as answer to this: one is the large popular base and the other is the superior spiritual quality of Hinduism. Bankim also according to the author does not yield to the fraudulent western ethnology that Hinduism is a singular stream. He in reverse confirmed his argument with what Chateerjee calls "brilliant reversal of the anthropological problem of cross-cultural understanding" (p.76). The author continues to appreciate how Bankim proceeds to combine a rational theory of power with a *non-selfish* spirituality of Hinduism. It is also difficult to understand how Bankim can both accuse the West for portraying the Hindu as a homogeneous entity and also make use of the same hypothesis to propose the idea of homogeneous 'national religion'. Chatterjee also does not address this contradiction. [14]

Bankim thus finally comes with an idea of national religion/Hinduism as a solution to the problems of the nation. But Partha does not want *caste* to bear all the responsibility for Bankim's parochialism. Therefore he writes, "It is perfectly possible that apart from the prevalent cultural prejudices of the upper-caste Hindu Bengali elite of his time, Bankim's opinion was also shaped to an extent by the stereotypes of the post-Enlightenment European historiography" (77). Thus according to the author, Bankim was an unconscious victim of these western prejudices from his resentment towards the *lower castes* and the Muslims.

A thorough elitist project of education is necessary through which national religion will be stabilized. So, Bankim has expressed his views on who should be educated which may sound as a reckless explanation for any Dalit scholar:

> The argument is that it is only necessary for the upper classes to be educated; there is no need fof a separate system of instruction for the lower classes...The porousness of the newly educated class will guarantee that the ignorant masses will soon be soaked with knowledge!...We do not, however, have much faith that this will happen (77-78).

According to Bankim it is the upper classes that carry the right to rule in this new culture. Chateerjee tries to justify, "The intellectual-moral leadership of the nation was based not on an elitism of birth or caste or privilege or wealth, but of excellence. The leaders were leaders because through *anusilan* they had attained an exemplary unity of knowledge and duty" (79). Partha Chateerejee however does not tell us how the *other* people become leaders and acquire *excellence* when the very gates of their educational institutions (that play the pivotal role in creating an exemplary unity of knowledge and duty in a person as a ruler) are closed for them.[15]

Partha Chateerjee concludes that this blatantly spiritualist turn in Bankim was not due to emotionalism or not even due to conservatism. Chatterjee poses very important proposition here. He tries to explain that it is wrong to interpret such conservative trends as emotional and also such construction misses what he calls "the most crucial point of tension in all nationalist thought" (80). According to this author, such a realigning of these streams of politics as backward looking emotionalism would overlook its very source of ideological strength. This ideological strength is nothing but its proclamation of a rational and modem religion suitable for the nation. Chatterjee also concludes that it was not the liberal reformers of 19th century who relied on the administrative and legislative powers of the colonial state, but "it was the so-called 'conservative' or 'revivalist' trend which confronted for the first time the crucial question of power in the historical project of nationalism" (80). And also the author writes, "Theoretically, the modern and the national could be synthesized only in the ideal of the complete man, the true intellectual. But it is hardly possible to devise programmatic steps to achieve that ideal in the realm of politics" (80). Without bothering to address the *caste* configuration of his *true intellectual* Chattejee diverts his argument towards the yet un-resolved contradiction between modernity and *nationalism* and the impossibilities of merging the ideal true intellectual man with that of the modern national. For Partha ostracization of the Dalits and minorities like Muslims from the conservative Hindu *nationalists*

imagination of nation is not a serious problem and such a limitation cannot abate its 'ideological strength' or the 'question of power' that it displays against the British colonizers.

Bankim tried to construct a nationalist identity along repudiatory (exclusionary) *caste* and religious lines. His argument always included tirade not only against the British and *foreigners* like Muslims but also against the *distant insiders* like *lower castes.* If one argues that colonialism was instrumental in systematizing the communities through the enumeration and thus created *caste* and communal cleavages it is also equally true that the hindu nationalists grabbed this opportunity to project the Indian nation as essentially Hindu as understood in the deconstruction of Bankim's ideas here.

It was in the period of Gandhi that Chatterjee sees the nationalist thought being freed from snares of west's modernity. Before entering into the next chapter he gives a clue of what he attributes to the peasantry who occupies central space in a marginalized fashion (this is since as he himself argues the peasantry "would be represented, but of which they would not be a constituent part. In other words passive revolution"(81).) After defining the Indian *masses* as peasantry, the author talks about the 'intellectual-moral leadership" (expectedly Gandhi). Automatically these *masses* (because of their backwardness) come to stand in opposition to the nationalist elite who was adhered to the western rationalism. So, there was the historic task of merging the modes of thought characteristic of a peasant consciousness with the rationalist forms of an enlightened nationalist politics. It is part of the assimilation of peasant support for the historic cause of creating a nation-state. As it is said in this *passive revolution* the *peasantry/masses of India* is not be an essential part of it. In the next chapter Gandhi enters as an intellectual-moral leader who exercise organic functions of new intelligentsia in manufacturing a national consensus for self-government by using the *masses\peasants.*

B. The Moment of Manoeuver: Gandhi and the Critique of Civil Society:

Chatterjee highlights *moment of manoeuvre* as a stage, which combines war of moment and position in one inseparable process. It also engages itself in the creation of historical block to achieve passive revolution. Its historical consolidation of the nation is based on non-modern model. In the previous chapter itself the author immunizes his intellectual-moral leader from criticism. In order to understand the greatness of this 'moment of maoeuvre' in the historical context he writes, "we must extricate the problem from questions of subjective motivations, influences, manipulations, who used whom to gain what, etc. Those are valid historical questions, but they lie at an entirely different analytical level" (81). The author also takes another precautionary step in order to insulate Gandhi from any criticism. He therefore inserts another quotation of Gandhi; "My language is aphoristic, it lacks precision. It is therefore open to several interpretations" (85).

Chatterjee considers Gandhi's *Hindi Swaraj* (1910)[16] as a text, which consists his systematic ideas on state, society and nation. The author prefers to read this text as a source of Gandhi's fundamental critique on civil society. Gandhi's idea of nationalism is based on this critique of civil society. To the question why India was subjected for such a along time, Gandhi puts the blame (like Bankim) on India rather on British. For Gandhi the failure or weakness is not due to lack of modernity or presence of backwardness. The reason is that Hindus are seduced by the glitters of western modernity. The alternative is *Ramarajya.* The author encapsulates what all this *rajya* covers:

> In its form, this political ideal is not meant to be a consensual democracy with complete and continual participation by every member of the polity. The Utopia is *Ramarajya,* a patriarchy in which the ruler, by his moral quality and habitual adherence to truth, always expresses the collective will. It is also a Utopia in which the economic organization of production, arranged according to a perfect four-fold *varna* scheme of specialization and a perfect system of reciprocity in the exchange of commodities and services, always ensures that there is no spirit of competition and no differences in status between different kinds of labour. The ideal conception of *Ramarajya,* in fact, encapsulates the critique of all that is morally reprehensible in the economic and political organization of civil society (92).

Thus this *Ramarajya* does not need any consensus of the people and there is no question of political citizenship. A super man will decide what is good for the *people* and keep them in their places in **the** *caste* hierarchy and the subjects will act like machines without any spirit of questioning/competition. Chatterjee also carefully excluded the most inhuman comments of Gandhi made on *lower castes* in this particular text. Chatterjee subscribes to Gandhi's ideas on *caste* and considers them as more progressive than the western law, "the colonial state in India, by projecting an image of neutrality with regard to social divisions within Indian society, not only upholds the rigours of those divisions, such as the ones imposed by the caste system, but actually strengthens them" (91). The author proceeds:

> it is only when politics is *directly* subordinated to a communal morality that the minority of exploiters in society can be resisted by the people and inequalities and divisions removed. As a political ideal, therefore, Gandhi counterposes against the system of representative government an undivided concept of popular sovereignty, where the community is self-regulating and political power is dissolved into the collective moral will (91-92).

Neither Gandhi nor Chatterjee explains how a collective moral will can find place when this *Ramrajya* which is not based on consensual democracy and the continuous participation of people. How undivided concept of popular sovereignty would reign when the concept of communal morality is induced by *varna* system which professes unequal division of labour? More importantly, how doe such an immature ideology would succeed in forming the historical block?

Chatterjee tries to prove that Gandhian politics was assimilated by coercive state structre and also by different streams of politics. According to the author Gandhian politics is morally superior. It lacked only ideological means to transform that morality into practical politics. Another feature that he puts to analysis is the absorption of the consciousness of peasant into the nationalist politics of the elite. Facilitating this process is another fundamental characteristic of Gandhian politics. The author writes:

> the working out of the politics of non-violence also made it abundantly clear that the object of the political mobilization of the peasantry was not at all what Gandhi claimed on its behalf, 'to train the masses in self-consciousness and attainment of power'. Rather the peasantry were meant to become willing participants in a struggle wholly conceived and directed *by others* (124).

Untouchables further alienated from mainstream nationalist politics for they were not even considered part of the peasantry. Gandhi explains that his politics directed for the liberation of peasantry does not include the Dalits. Chatterjee continues to justify:

> Whether this idiom of solidarity necessarily referred to a cultural code that could be shown to be 'essentially Hindu', and whether that in turn alienated rather than united those sections of the people who were not 'Hindu', are of course important questions, but not strictly relevant in establishing the ideological intent behind Gandhi's efforts (110).

Gandhi appears again in the next chapter, 'The Moment of Arrival" as an intellectual moral leader equipped with a special knack. He used this knack to mobilize the peasantry to work for nationalist elite politics, which would never represent them. What is there to feel proud about such politics? In this chapter Chatterjee tried to explain how Gandhian politics was transformed into the moment of manoeuvre in the passive revolution of capital. It is thus necessary to look at the limitations in applying the concept of passive revolution to all these three moments presented in the text. Thus, the Gramscian concept of passive revolution is put to analysis after a brief discussion on the chapter 'The Moment of Arrival'.

C. The Moment of Arrival: Nehru and the Passive Revolution:

In Chateerjee's opinion Jawaharlal Nehru was "one of the foremost leaders of the Congress Left which consistently demanded that nationalism be given a more definite "economic and social content"' (131). This "moment of arrival" is seen as the fullest development of the nationalist thought. It is now a discourse of power, and glasses over all the earlier contradictions. It tries to actualize this ideological unity of the nationalist thought in the integrated life of the state. Nationalist thought\passive revolution reaches its final stage in the moment of arrival.

In Nehru's Autobiography and The Discovery of India one can find the key ideological elements and relations of nationalist thought at its moment of arrival. Chatterjee takes Nehru's views on communalism and industrialization for analysis in this chapter. Nehru an ardent modernist was motivated by western Reason in his analysis of communalism and thus sees it as a lack of modernity, and that industrialization is

inevitable to solve the problems of the society. The reason for the failure of the development of India was due to colonial rule. By taking up the modern ways of development, it is easy to surpass the difficulties produced by colonialism. Nehru renounced both dogmatic Marxism and metaphysical politics of Gandhi. He came up with his idea of 'mixed economy', through industrialization. All this would be done with the supervision of the state. So, at this final stage of moment of arrival nationalism arrives in the form of state and appropriates the nation. It is the destination set by the Reason, which fixes itself in the equations set by the global realities of power. Thus the great moment of maneouver is absorbed by the moment of arrival.

Nehru's Ideas on Caste System:

Nehru's radical socialist failed to influence his views on *caste* system. Nehru's ideas on *caste* system are not only mixed but also conservative. He perceives it mainly as a system of segregation brought forward in order to keep the *Aryans* and *non-Aryans* into different hierarchized spheres. But even in such a hiearchized system he sees the possibility of "a good deal of flexibility"(246)[17]. In this whole discussion he does not put the then dalit movement's fight against *caste* system. But without failure he also explains that 'innumerable Hindu reformers' raised their voices against it. He does not anyway list it out who these innumerable reformers were. He sees the ongoing economic changes posing a great threat to the existence of this system. He explains that what is at stake due to these economic changes was the fundamental approach to the problem of social organization. Now he tries to effectively locate the problem as a tension between the eastern and western approaches towards the theme of social organization. He writes, "The conflict is between the two approaches to the problem of social organization, which are diametrically opposed to each other: the old Hindu conception of group being the basic unit of organization, and the excessive individualism of the West, emphasizing the individual above the group" (246). This analysis bears Gandhian resonance. It is quite strange that Nehru an ardent believer in modernity has to relegate the issue to the area of essential differences between the east and the west. Such an approach is hardly visible in any of his other views except the issue of *caste*. Though he makes frail attempts to

address the problem within the conceptual frames of Marxian superstructure and base, finally he warns the Indians to search for the feasibilities of keeping this system intact. For instance he writes:

> It has ceased to be a question of whether we like caste or dislike it. Changes are taking place in spite of our likes and dislikes. Rut it is certainly in our power to mould those changes and direct them, so that we can take full advantage of the character and genius of Indian people as a whole, which have been so evident in the cohesiveness and stability of the social organization they build up (247).

Nehru also quotes Sir George Birdwood's racist endorsement of *caste* system, which makes India a "glorious peninsula". Nehru while trying to draw a balance between his modernist and essentialist perceptions explains that though such a changes in the *caste* system are inevitable in a phase of transition, it may result in creating a vaccume in the society. Without giving us any modern, practical solution he stops this brief discussion abruptly by drawing a demarcation between the good old type of *caste* system and the degraded contemporary one. Thus it is clear that like his predecessors Bankim and Gandhi, Nehru was also clearly guided by the Hindu Reason but not the western Reason in the case *of caste* system and the Dalit politics[18].

Absorption of nation by the state:

In the last paragraphs of this chapter Chatterjee brings back his essential argument about the merging of the 'nation into the life of the state'. Blending of nation into the state becomes inevitable and this appropriation of the nation by the state is according to the author "a particular manifestation of the universal march of Reason" which believes that "World History resides Elsewhere" (161-2). The history of Indian nationalism is only a struggle to find its place in this pre-determined universal scheme of things. Thus, the Indian nationalism traveled towards reaching a modular form that was set by the western Reason. The author now focuses on the leak outs of the nation-state namely various ethnicity struggles etc. These fissures are inevitable. A fundamental question that he raises is how such nationalism would supersede itself. So. the question is has the history of nationalism reached its destiny and thus drained itself totally? The author finally concludes that though nationalism in India has yielded to the modes supplied by the

Reason of the West this surrender was not without struggle. Chatterjee examined and fixed the three nationalists in a nationalist thought which he claims as autonomous to prove that they did not succumb to the west's Reason so easily. So, this text is a registration of the heroic fights of the Hindu men against the western Reason.

What is there to Celebrate?

What happened to the Hindu Reason when the western Reason with its modernity has emerged? These were contest as the text proves. What about the casteist Reason which ruled the land before the advent of the British, which still continues to rule? If the western Reason has traveled on 'piggy back' in search of capital the Hindu Reason has traveled on cow's back in search of various kinds of free-labour and extraction of economy from the *lower castes.* Pre-colonial Indian land has witnessed as much brutal oppression on the innocent people as the colonized India has faced in the hands of Raj (colonial experiences are also to be viewed from the *caste* lines). All this is done in the name of Reason. If the western Reason and its ideology and structure have to be sneered as a negative one the *native* Reason has also to be equally sneered, rejected and hated. If Western Reason's motive was capital, the Indian Reason was *caste* + capital. What does *caste* stand for? Certainly it stands for more than the capital. When the Hindu nationalists submitted to the West, it was not that wonderful village economy of the land was sold out to the logic of brutal capitalism. What the Hindu nationalists did was to negotiate with their *caste*\feudal\ mercantile Reason with western more mobile, enterpreneual capitalist Reason. The cause for the submission of the *caste* Reason to the capital Reason was due to the change of world politics and objective conditions. They could no longer do the *caste* specific extraction so openly. For the *caste* reason was under check. Chatterjee writes: "The political success of nationalism in ending colonial rule does not signify a true resolution of the contradictions between the problematic and thematic of nationalist thought. Rather, there is a forced closure of possibilities, a 'blocked dialectic'; in other words, a false resolution which carries the marks of its own fragility." (169). Though the author excludes the term *caste* from the list of "fissures" that appear on the body of the nation due to this 'forced closure' it is now clear that Dalit

question was one along with the other questions like cession, or minority question which was blocked.

Finally, a direct question could be - If nationalist imagination took place in inner domain in this anti-*lower caste* fashion what is there to celebrate and feel proud of this? Why only Bankim, Gandhi and Nehru ? Why not Ambedkar, Phule or Ikbhal also? Ambedkar in his final stage of political life took to Buddhism and tried to analyze the Indian realities from that plane. In this phase he even questioned the western notions and tried to give an authentic Indian point of view. Why even such views were not considered? Dirks comments:

> The history of the production of colonial difference does not license all expressions of nativist fundamentalism, even when it helps to explain their rise. Similarly, the writing of the history of nationalist mobilization and resistance in colonial conditions need not celebrate the promotion of an increasingly Hindu nationalist ideology that excludes women, Muslims, and lower-caste "others" from the inner circle of the national "we" (314).

If a considerable number of historically humiliated, mutilated, and oppressed population is hating even to rethink that any possible good would be fetched from *inner domain* then there should be something very fundamentally wrong about that. Many *upper caste* academicians don't care to consider *lower castes'* rejection of the *inner domain* and its Reason as serious political questions. For this reason if any movement in India during British colonial period was autonomous nationalist movement it was the Dalit movement. For it has not only criticized the colonialism of the west but also the colonialism of the Hindu *caste* people. The mainstream nationalism and the contemporary propagators of that school have launched their voyage from inside and wanted to collapse the *outside* in the *inside* itself. The Dalit movement's nationalism, on the other hand starts with a severe indictment of this *inner domain.* Thus it is the dalitism which gave "a death blow to its blatant slogans of colonialism as a civilizing mission" (of xnh external and internal) not the Hindu nationalism.

Homogenizing the third world:

Homogenizing the third world is another limitation of PC theory. Chatterjee believes that in all the anti-colonial nationalisms that took place in Asia and Africa, this formula of divided spheres as political/outer and cultural/inner operated. Apart from leaving the fact of cultural specificities, and differences in the colonial experiences of Indian and African nations such sweeping generalization also ignores the inter-continental racism that exist between the African nations and India. For instance, *upper caste* Indians in South Africa fought against native Zulus. It is wrong to identify Indian mainstream nationalism either with African nationalism or with the oriental objectification suffered by Muslims in the Middle East. There is also a very little theory on Gandhi's complicity with the colonizers in their war against Africans during his stay in South Africa. G.B.Sigh writes: "In 1906 Gandhi participated in a war against blacks…Not a single black newspaper ever mentioned Gandhi's Satyagraha."[19] Suniti Kumar Gosh writes: "…Gandhi's Satyagraha completely ignored the indigenous population of South Africa—the Zulus and other Negroes, who constituted the overwhelming majority of the population. Rather, his experiments with truth permitted him to join the British in their unjust war against the Zulus."[20]

Problems of Applying the Concept of Passive Revolution to the Indian Context:

Gramsci's notion of Passive Revolution:

Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* emanates a fragmented nature and sometimes inconsistent with one another. Gramsci used the concept of passive revolution in somewhat contradictory ways. He explains it as a form of political struggle, which is possible in the period of relative equilibrium between the fundamental classes where war of manoeuvre is not feasible. This state of passive revolution should necessarily be followed by war of manoeuvre. He derives his concept of passive revolution\war of position from two fundamental notions of Political Science, 1. no social formation disappears as long as the productive forces which have developed within it still find room for further forward movement; 2. a society does not set itself tasks for whose solution the

necessary conditions have not already been nurtured. Therefore for the passive revolution to take place these principles must first take place.

Gramsci's views on Gandhi:

There are at least two contexts in Gramsci's Prison Notes to prove that Gramsci estimation of Indian freedom struggle was not only contradictory but also not based on any first hand information. For instance he describes Gandhian nationalist politics in a very confusing manner, "Gandhism and Tolstoyism are naïve theorisations of the "passive revolution" with religious overtones. Certain so-called "liquidationist" movements and the reactions they provoked should also be recalled, in connection with the tempo and form of certain situations (especially of the third moment)" (108). The following footnotes of the editor explain that Gramsci was keen to warn about the "liquidationist" who make passive revolution into a programme and discard the revolutionary standpoint (which means war of manoeuvre\ military frontal attack). This could be perhaps one example to explain that Gramsci himself had had a confused idea about what was really happening to Indian nationalism under the leadership of Gandhi. Otherwise how would he call Gandhian nationalism both as a *naïve theorization of the* passive revolution and also perceive it as provoking "liquidationist" movements and reactions? To remind again, for Gramsci this concept of "liquidationist" is very serious which refers to at least to one possible major betrayal: converting passive revolution into a mere programme and abandon its revolutionary standpoint which is war of manoeuvre. This means a phase of passive revolution or war of position should be followed by a war of frontal attack. We are at least by now clear that Gandhian nationalism was operating as a strong deterrent towards any amount of military warfare against colonialism.

There is one more context, which clarifies us how remote the idea of Gramsci on the Indian nationalism led by Gandhi. In his attempt to understand the anti-colonial fights Gramsci writes:

> ...India's political struggle against the English...knows three forms of war: war of movement, war of position, and underground warfare. Gandhi's passive resistance is a war of position, which at certain moments becomes a war of moment, and at others underground warfare. Boycotts are a war of position, strikes of war of movement, the secret preparation of weapons and combat troops belongs to underground warfare (229-230).

This explains that Gramsci has no first hand information about Gandhi led Indian *nationalist* movement. Otherwise how would he bunch the underground war of attack as along with the *non-violent movement* of Gandhi? Even if one put all the efforts to understand Gandhi led politics as contribution to passive revolution one would have to soon realize that this revolution did not reach its ultimate end i.e., the war of maneuver\frontal attack. Thus one has to but conclude that gandhian nationalism was a failure not a completion of passive revolution. Thus to portray gandhis' brand of nationalism as passive revolution is to betray both Gramsci's original ideas about the notion and also Gandhia's faith in (however superficial it may be) non-violence.

Hegemony:

A. Consensus:

Hegemony (historical block) also is another concept that Gramsci used to explain the passive revolution. It refers to the need to combine at a political level all groups and aims of the working class into a greater whole with a single unified objective. This would be done by intellectual moral leadership. This should also transcend the inherent divisiveness of economistic trade union consciousness. Intellectual and moral unity (which goes beyond immediate and practical economic problems), productive communication and assimilation of the friendly groups, and homogenization are the essential features of his concept of hegemony. So, before winning governmental power it is necessary to establish leadership by this intellectual and moral leadership. This hegemonic social control ought to be consensual. Gandhi's ways of mobilization with *knack* or *Ramaraya* did not allow any consensual role for the *masses.* They were often mobilized to make their politics of spontaneity and sporardicness attuned to the more mundane, moderate politics of the elite nationalists.

B. Question of Economics:

For Gramsci's concept of passive revolution or hegemony, a common economic goal was compulsory between the elite leadership and the masses that they lead. Paul Ransome writes:

> Although the interests of the various groups which make up the new alliance are principally concerned with structural or 'economic-corporate' issues, these concerns will inevitably be reflected in the political and moral spheres. The successful emergence of an alternative hegemony must therefore develop a new economic, political and moral 'leadership', which recognizes and is prepared to engage with practical and ideational issues, within both the economic structure and the political superstructure.[21]

Thus, hegemony necessarily means a sate of having crossed the immediate economic needs and also reflection and development of the same. In other words, hegemony/ intellectual moral leadership does not mean a total denial of the economic realties but a persistence and advancement of the understanding of the same. Gandhian nationalism fails on these accounts, one is that his politics was not consensual on the other hand there is no mentioning of any ways of mobilization of the lines of economic objectives. As Chatterjee himself writes it was politics for which masses were mobilized but were not represented. Such a kind of politics can be anything but certainly not passive revolution. Chatterjee's application of this concept with the total disjunction of economics thus amounts to the misusing of this concept. Quintin Hoare and G.N.Smith for instance write, "his [Gramsci's] constant preoccupation was to avoid any undialectical separation of "the ethical-political aspect of politics or theory of hegemony and consent" from "the aspect of force and economics"(207). Chatterjee's analysis of the passive revolution thus is not based on the fundamental characteristics of passive revolution. Main features of Passive Revolution are: 1.There should be consensus between the elite moral and intellectual leadership and the masses 2.War of position should necessarily be followed by war of military frontal attack and 3. There should be a continuous dialectical relation between politics and economics. None of the ideologues that Chatterjee inserted in this text were capable to furnish all these three features. Bankim's *moment* does not deserve the application of this concept because it was based on segregation of the elites from the *masses.* Nehru's *moment* on the other hand marks destination of the nation, and

thus pulls a closure to passive revolution and his theories and plans of economics thus cannot form part of it but an end. Chatterjee's main focus was on Gandhi in whose reign the former thinks that passive revolution was trying to take place. All this passive revolution is illustrated by the author as if the whole nation was spellbound by Gandhi and followed him in a hypnotic state. What is more exasperating is Chatterjee's praise of Gandhi's politics of knack and using the masses without allowing them to represent. Alosius thus observes (especially in the case of Gandhi):

> The Gramscian hegemonic process of building the national-popular is certainly not a process by which the masses are lead into believing something that is not in fact there. Hegemony is a conscious and consensual political process for all the parties involved; it is a process of dovetailing the different interests in the realm first of economics, politics, then, and only then, of culture and superstructures. It is for the same reason that the highest form of Gramscian hegemony, moral and intellectual leadership by the leading class is not to be equated with the Gandhian call for moral reform. The former is a process by which the economic and political interests of different contending parties are unified and universalized into a new form of secular-national morality or popular religion. The latter, on the other hand was a call to revert to the community-based morality of traditional Indian society with hierarchical ascription, denying the crucial role of the economy and politics as the universal arena of all individuals equally (223).

2. Dipanakar Gupta's essay "Continuous Hierarchies and Discreet Castes":

Gupta in this essay "Continuous Hierarchies and Discreet Castes"[22] tries to formulate his critique against Dumont. According to Gupta, Dumont has tried to resurrect terms like stratification and hierarchy to give a more positive meaning to them. He introduced modern structuralism with its notion of binary opposition as a part of his methodology. Gupta's major problem with Dumont are mainly on the following methodological formulations made by the latter: 1.Castes can be hierarchically arranged with universal validity, 2. Politics and economics are not constituents of the pure hierarchy of the caste system but enter into its domains surreptitiously and that too at the interstitial level.

Dumont defines hierarchy in the following lines, "a hierarchical relation is a relation between larger and smaller, or more precisely between *that which encompasses and that which is encompassed".*[23] He explains that *caste* system is a state of mind. It is thus through ideology that one can understand the essence of the *castes* and come to realize the true principle of *caste* system. This single true principle is the opposition of

the pure and impure. This opposition triggers hierarchy. This hierarchy is the cause for the linear order of the arrangement of *castes* from A to Z (Brahmin to an *untouchable).* This true hierarchy does not give space to power. He tries to justify this idea, that in true hierarchy "that which encompasses is more important than that which is encompassed" (116). Thus for the development of pure hierarchy power should be absolutely inferior to status. But his hierarchy is not a linear order but is a series of successive dichotomies and inclusions.

Gupta comes up with his own formulations on *caste* mainly those, which militate against Dumont's theory. Gupta explains that Dumont powerfully and intentionally marginalized certain realities as anomalies or as happening of those regions where *caste* system is not very strong. He therefore tries to build his paper on these anomalies in order to demonstrate the speciousness of Dumont's theory. Gupta raises a series of queries into Dumont postulations here: If power enters only at the interstitial levels, then how certain forms of violence exist to inflict dominance? Precisely he puts his question like this, "In short the major problem is: Why do people who believe in the caste system not follow the dictates of the true hierarchy?"(1957). Gupta then puts his question more blatantly "Is there a true hierarchy at all in the sense that Dumont has explicated it with reference to caste system?"

Now Gupta tries to come up with his own definitions. A true hierarchy is an unambiguous linear ranking on a single variable. Authority can also be a valid criterion for a true and continuous hierarchy. This authority increases or decreases basing on the position of the individual in the hierarchy. Gupta brings up his notion of 'discreet classes' here. He explains that *castes* are separate units into exclusive categories. The principle that separates discrete categories\classes cannot be simply understood by the presence or absence of any one criterion or characteristic. It is only a question of level or plane, at which one or the other form of differentiation becomes relevant. He writes, "social classes are parts of different systems and are never unambiguously participants of any one system" (1957). Thus peoples participation or membership in the *caste* system is not only non-absolute but at the same time they belong to other different systems also.

Thus *caste* system for Gupta is not the only authoritative system which rules the peoples lives.

Here Gupta comes up with his main idea that there is no one-caste ideology, but multiple ideologies. These castes may share some principles in common but they also exhibit contradictory ideologies also. In effect, therefore, the *rule* of caste is obeyed only when it is accompanied by the *rule* of power. The author explains, " One can then perhaps say with a degree of certitude that a hierarchy breaks, unites, encompasses and excludes, on the strength of its own principle, be it power, land or money" (1957). But what about those *castes* which do not have any of these tools of power? How do they make their own attempts of breaking, uniting, encompassing and excluding in the hierarchy? In other words what is the 'strength of its own principle' in the case of *lower castes?* But instead of explaining how the *lower caste* do this mega feet in the absence of both ideological and power tools he ends up in making a hurried conclusion. Thus in his theory ideology jumbles hierarchy and therefore, Gupta tries to argue, "contrary to Dumont, it is the hierarchy of power and economics where we believe that hierarchy is naked" (1957). It is not sheer ideology, which makes hierarchy naked but also the monopoly of ideology and power by the *upper castes.* It is too much absurd to think of *lower castes* as equal or as participants of this.

Another proposition that Gupta makes is that between the discreet *castes* of A to Z there are various other *classes* which are not completely defined by the parameter of purity and pollution. Here Gupta prefers to look at the ideology of purity and pollution instead of looking at hierarchy of purity and pollution. He explains that ideology separates *castes* into discreet entities in a most 'self-centered way'. Because of this separation (on the basis of self-centeredness) *castes* rarely accept the notion of impurity attributed to them. If they accept such definitions attributed to them by the ideology of some other *castes,* he explains, "it is because of the conjoint working of the principles of economics and / or politics, both of which are amenable to hierarchy ranking". This, Gupta accuses was denied by Dumont in his construction of the notion of true hierarchy. Thus Gupta tries to prove that ideology separates what an absolute and continuous

hierarchy tries to unite and encompass. In other words hierarchy in Dumont's sense is an innate arrangement where everybody obliges naturally. But in Gupta's view it is an autonomous and multiple exercise. Thus the *castes* do not subscribe to the true and continuous hierarchy proposed by Dumont.

Gupta clarifies that the following characteristics of *caste* as false: 1.A uniform hierarchical ideology, 2. Occupational specialization, and 3. The concept of purity and pollution as the principle instrument for separation. Dumont believes that there is one ideology of *caste*, and for the amplification of this point he relies on ancient Brahman lawgiver, Manu. According to Dumont every *caste* naturally yields itself to this ideology. Gupta accuses Dumont for having neglected what the *subaltern castes* think of their *caste* status and the system of *caste* as a whole. But the realities of endogamy or strict *caste* rules specific to each *caste* appear as a challenge to Gupta's opposition to singular and continuous *caste* hierarchy. Gupta tries to therefore argue that one should not mix up values with ideology.

In the second part of his paper Gupta tries to explain how ontology becomes an important feature of all discreet *caste* ideologies. Here he inserts many myths of origin that are in the existence within the circles of certain *castes.* These myths not only refute the dominant derogatory myths of origin attributed to them but also claim equal status with the *upper castes.* The *subaltern castes* have their own versions to tell about their origin and they are not shameful in the way that the Brahman scriptures recorded. And Gupta also explains that the *subaltern castes* do not always perceive the *upper castes* as their role models. Secondly, he also takes up the example of taboos and restrictions that exist around the concept of food. Here he makes a highly contentious statement, "it is difficult to say according to any one ideology who is regarded as an untouchable by whom" (2004). Finally he comes to the area of hypersymbolisim where he deals with rituals, symbols, rites and so on. He writes that the notions of purity and pollution do not always influence these signifiers. The author without fail denotes that within the *caste* groups also endogamous *jatis* are separated by divergent customs. The existence of different customs is the evidence of the *subaltern castes* urge for self-pride and respect.

Thus Gupta tries to prove that the idea of the pure hierarchy of the Brahmanism is not shared by all other *castes* and thus Dumont's idea of one continuous true hierarchy is false.

In the third part of the article he deals with the issues of *jajmani* system, Sanskritization and so on. He defines the *jajmani* system as a "sporadic empirical reality" (2004). He explains that the sacred texts do not specify the occupational specifities of each *caste* and also that these texts do not mention many *jatis (castes)* which exist now. Thus the *jajamani* system for him is existent only at a very slight level. Therefore hereditary occupation is not the fundamental feature for the *caste* system. He also brings the concept of Sanskritization. For him "Sanskritization is a reassertion in an extraverted form of what was till then an introverted expression of the caste's overall rejection of the position given to it by the hierarchical *rule* governed by the principles of economics and politics" (2004). He comes with the idea of non-brahmanical model of Sanskritization also. It is difficult to understand here how the so-called *subaltern castes* feel the need to give reassertion to this introverted expression? How such a reassertion on *caste* lines becomes obvious when they are after all subjected to the hierarchical rule governed by the principles of economics and politics and not by the caste ideology?

Gupta explains that history has liquidated many features of *caste* system. Hereditary occupations, notions of purity and pollution, and the power of encompassing can no longer are counted to make an essential definition of *caste.* For him the only strictures, which guide towards a definition of *caste* system are then principle of endogamy and multiplicity of rituals. Multiple hierarchies and hypersymbolism are also other constituent features. This alternative hierarchical rankings happen allover the Hindustan. But are these alternative hierarchical rankings continuous and powerful? He acknowledges that there can be only one hierarchical order in effect at once. But which hierarchical order is in effect at once and why so? He does not answer this. This particular hierarchy is again not the essence of *caste* system but expression of politico-economic power. He concludes "an alternative hierarchy can also effectively come into practice with a change in the political and economic strength of certain castes- a

reshuffling, that is, of *jatis* on the secular plane" (2051). Thus *caste* emerges as a creation of politico-economic powers.

He also believes that untouchability is a notion historically added. He makes this statement though in the above lines he acknowledges that the *lower castes* like *Nishadas, Ayogava, Paulkasas* were despised, he insists, 'but were not considered to be untouchables." He does not care to explain the difference between untouchability and the state of being despised by the *upper castes.* Thus untouchability no more exists as a brutal practice. It only operates as a marker of difference between the *castes.* It has become according to the author an enriching elements of *lower castes* in their self-glorification. Each *jati* also enjoys relative freedom to drop or adapt or include new rituals if it helps them in their secular and economic spheres. Thus the *castes* are not passive actors in caste system but agents who are capable of reflexive action. He concludes that understanding the 'vivacity and dynamism' of *castes* in India is largely denied. He also assumes that the fundamental unity that exists between "men across different cultures with divergent systems of differentiation" is also largely ignored. Thus Gupta concludes his essay with an undaunted faith in the *caste* system.

Though Gupta's critique of Dumont and occasional attack on M.N.Srinivas in this article appear to equip the *subaltern castes* assertion with an amount of self-respect, this theory is premised on a more cryptic and dangerous argument. Most of the ideas of Gupta severely dispute with the Dalit theories on *caste.* Gupta is absolutely wrong in saying that hereditary occupations are not prevalent. If they are not prevalent how do one explain the predominant reliance of the Dalits on agricultural or other kinds of labour oriented or demeaning jobs? Older forms of labour must have slowly decreased in its prevalence but it did not result in the automatic elevation of the Dalits or release from the demeaning occupations. Notions of purity and pollution exist in many areas of the country in the literal sense. In the urban areas where recognition of the *caste* status of an individual is difficult, *caste* is still signified in various forms. Endogamy is still a prominent feature for which the notion of purity and pollution is the backbone. Though Gupta appears to bring the notion of power, he nevertheless ends up in delinking the economics or politics

from the *caste* system. It appears finally, as if, he was trying to explain that politico-economic power exist independent of *caste.* His final resort to hypersymbolism is a too much reductionism. His idea that unity exists between "men across different cultures with divergent systems of differentiation" is also an embarrassing idea in the context where *caste* system has not metamorphosed itself so much.

Despite intra-regional dissimilarities, the mode of stratification is astonishingly uniform all over India. Though some parts of the land do not have this system, it does not discount the overwhelming presence that caste made on a major chunk of the land. Though one has to believe that untouchability was a recent (one thousand years old) phenomenon, one has to understand that one thousand years of oppression on people is not a silly reason to not to consider. The old political order was symbiotically interlinked with Brahmin supremacy accompanied by physical force. More importantly Gupta's essay deals with contemporary scenario where he seems to believe that *caste* really underwent radical transformations and therefore it is no more an oppressive system. According to him it is nothing but an amicable arrangement where each *caste* would live happily (with the help of self-woven definitions, rituals and meanings) without being interrupted by other *castes.* Though he argues that at one time there would be mostly only one hierarchy at work he does not take back his idea of the existence of multiple hierarchies. Like most of the SS theories, Gupta also in his eagerness to argue for existence of multiplicity and democracy of *caste* system failed to take note of various violent manifestations of *caste* system.

3. Partha Chatterjee's Essay "Nation and Its Outcastes":

It is the Gupta's idea of 'discreet castes' that Partha Chatterjee applied to explain his theory in this essay written to condemn most of the ideas of Dumont on *caste.* His text, *Nation and its Fragments* starts with the argument of dividing the nationalist world into two domains. Chatterjee came down heavily on Anderson's idea that anti-colonial nationalism is simply a derived discourse from west. It is basically from this plain that he tries to treat the questions of *upper caste* women and *subaltern castes.*

In the first sentence itself the author has acknowledged the centrality of *caste* system to India. He has highlighted two nationalist arguments that emanated in response to colonialists criticism. One is that *caste* is a matter of superstructure not an essential feature of the land. The Marxists have taken this position. They have not seen *caste* as a significant system but only as a feature of superstructure therefore with out much hesitation they become the torchbearers of legal-political principles of modern state. The other sees *caste* as an essential feature of Indian society but would not agree that it is antithetical to human kind. Orientalists and religious fundamentalists subscribe to this idea. For them it does not stand against the universal principles of freedom, equality etc. He says that this is "achieved by distinguishing between the empirical-historical reality of caste and its ideality" (174). Both the theories accept the premise of modernity and also contain criticism against the other. The former agrees that there is a need to reform and eradicate *caste,* whereas the latter disagrees for the extinction of *caste.* Therefore it has to build what the author calls "the synthetic theory of caste". He reminds that this theory has the same form as any synthetic theory, which propagates *caste* as an essential feature of the unity of Indian society. Chatterjee's problem with any theory of *caste*, which professes unity of Indian society, is that such theories arc artificial in a sense that in India there is no such one-*caste* ideality. So, the problem of Chatterjee is not that Dumont did not take the realistic view of the *caste* (for instance its violent form, faith in inequality of people, extreme segregation of people on the base of birth etc.). Chatterjee's main problem with Dumont is with his assumption *of caste* as having been premised on single unitary ideology. He has taken Dumont's book *Homohierarchicus* as a more influential construction of the synthetic theory of *caste.* Does Chatterjee try to explain the limitations of this perception by unifying the empirical-historical reality of *caste* (its violent manifestations) with its ideality and prove that the realities essentially contradict with its ideality? This essay does not take any such task but only explain that *caste* is not a homogeneous system and there were resistances to it from the *subaltern castes.* These resistances of the subaltern groups find place in this essay as legitimate fights since they have emanated from 'immanent critique' though they are doomed to fail precisely because of that reason.

As mentioned above Chatterjee has started his essay with the review of major streams of thought on *caste.* But what is very surprising is he did not bother to include what the Dalits themselves think of the caste system. For instance, those views expressed by Phule, Ambedkar and so on are not given space. They are not included even in the as-a-matter-of-fact manner. It is only in the concluding paragraph we come across a passing line which caricatures all the emancipatory ideology and strategics of the Dalits as pursuit for *artha.* His main presumption is that any theory, which seeks to establish the one *caste* ideality is false. Such a blatant conclusion effectively debases the Dalit critique of *caste.* This is because the Dalit discourse also makes its core of analysis on the fact of *caste* having single *dharma/essence.*

The reason for the resurrection of immanent critique of *caste* is according to the author is that the critique of the synthetic theory of *caste* should not rely on any perception emerged from outside. So, first he tries to focus on what he calls the "immediate reality of caste." What he meant by this is the existence of particular *jatis* with specific characteristics and each of these *jatis* is operated by the peculiar quality of definition-for-self (definition of itself) and definition-for-another (by which they distinguish other jatis from itself). These qualities are limited and also therefore changeable. Partha brings out the question of regional and temporal variations of *castes.* It should be noted here that the author does not bring the same question of these spurious *variations* when he deals with the issue of women. He uses the title 'woman' to describe the *upper caste women's* issues. But in the case of *caste* he brings out all these variations. In the case of women's question his essay moves in the direction of finding a singular solution for a singular problem. In the case of caste he brings all theses problems of variations, which potentially inhibits any unified theory of *caste* and solutions to it. Another clarification that has to be made here on the part of the researcher is that by posing this specific question of variations the researcher does not mean that there are no such variations existing. But they should not be raised to curb any single unifying emancipatory ideology and action for the Dalits. The question of variations serves more meaningful purpose if it is applied to the issue of gender. This is because Indian women are divided on *caste* lines and *castes* are not divided on the lines of gender.

Therefore the concept of 'multiplicity of qualitative criteria' that the author explores to establish the multiplicities of *caste* idealities are actually more useful to the issue of gender.

According to Dumont's hierarchy is the most vital parameter to *casteness.* Through this hierarchy, quantity of *casteness* is fixed. Now the *castes* become determinate and fixed. Accodring to Dumont thus hierarchy serves is an universal standard of *casteness.* Thus status of each caste is fixed quantitatively in the hierarchy and therefore became comparable. Chatterjee explains that by this "the move is made from the unintelligibility of immediate diversity to an identification of the *being-for-self* of caste" (176). Secondly, according to Dumont hierarchy also contains a paradoxical essence, an ideology, namely, the opposition between purity and pollution. But still *castes* continue to exist in the system according to these parameters since they cannot do without the other. Thus the unity of identity and difference (purity and pollution) forms the base of caste as a totality or system. Dumont dedicates most of his text to prove this point. Thus the total system appears, as being constituted by different parts unified by a whole. The relation between the parts is the result of contradictory unity of similarity/ identity and dissimilarity/difference. He writes that according to Dumont, the principle that keeps together the different castes\parts within the whole of the *caste* system is the ideological force of *dharma.* This dharma supervises the *caste* to be in their place. Chatterjee explains that this dharma would "assign to each *jati* its place within the system and defines the relations between *jatis* as the simultaneous unity of mutual seperateness and mutual dependence" (177). The main argument of Dumont according to Chatterjee is that the ideological force of *dharma* integrates the mediated being of *caste* with its ideality. Thus this ideal construct of *dharma* is actualized in the immediacy of social practices and institutions. According to Chatterjee this argument is pivotal not only to Dumont but also to all the synthetic constructions of the theories of *caste.* This is because all such theories must claim that the all the *castes* are basically integrated by a single principle/force of dharma. Then only it becomes possible for the *caste* system to reproduce itself.

By now it looks that Chatterjee is absolutely dissatisfied with this artificial theory of *caste* produced by Dumont. He calls Dumont's determination to understand the *caste* system as a 'structure' and not as a 'dialect and also his decision to not criticize the caste system but only understand it as an effort of "anthropologist's luxury" (178). Dumont's open acknowledgement on the westerner's *failure* to understand the east has not succeeded in appeasing Chatterjee's mistrust in western researchers. According to Dumont West's excessive individualism and commitment to the modern democratic principles affects its theory and understanding of the non-western world. He tries to understand hierarchy as a natural foundation to *caste.* He also tries to trace the ideological roots of *caste* system by relating it to the spiritual world, other wordliness of Indian. Such an approach resonates the old Orientalist nostalgia for the Indian past.

Chatterjee's central problem with Dumont's hypothesis is that he denies any history to India. Though Dumont was posing criticism to the western political theory he is criticized as having reproduced the ideology of colonialism by denying any history to India. It is this limitation which attracted the wrath of Chatterjee's criticism. He condemns Dumont's idea that caste is a system "given once and for all" (178). Chatterjee borrows Gupta's concept of 'discrete castes' in order to dismantle most of Dumont's central propositions. Chatterjee takes Gupta's main argument that there is no single *caste* ideology (dharma) or a single universal ideality of *caste* but there are several. When Gupta digs out various *anomalies* to explain this point, Chatterjee gives life to various *bhakti* movements, which incorporated retaliations against the Hindu *dharma* though within the same power structure.

But in his rush to prove the point of multiple ideologies Chatterjee also commits the same mistake that Dumont has done. For instance, Chatterjee also starts his hypothesis by distinguishing the ideality of *caste* from its reality. Or in other words, Chatterjee concentrates only on one area of realities in order to glorify another set of idealities. For instance, when Dumont highlighted a singular notion of dominant dharma, Chatterjee comes up with the argument of multiple *dharmas.* What both the scholars effectively denied to do is to distinguish the ideality\idealities of *caste* from another set of

its realty/realities namely, its violent manifestations, material extractions etc. If there is no single ideality of *caste* but multiple, then its manifestation into realities are also various and need not be uniform also.

Moreover Chatterjee theory also imagines a mythical autonomous space enjoyed by *subaltern castes.* Such an assumption is more brutal than Dumont in the sense that it results in a total bankruptcy of any complete, total critique against the *caste* system. It also denies seeing *caste* fundamentally as a violent scheme. What it ultimately does is to ruin all the existing theories of criticism, which frame *caste* as a powerfully unified system, which is based on the totality of ideology and operation. Thus according to Chatterjee's account not only the feeble Marxist criticism of *caste* (which presumes *caste* only as a feature of superstructure) but also the Dalit criticism (launched from liberal rationalist paradigm) become utterly invalid. More (nastily 'Dalits' criticism of *caste* system also finally appears, as synthetic one since it also does not see *caste* system as a dialect (in the artificial sense that Chatterjee proposed in this text). The problem is not that *caste* system did not undergo changes or that the Dalits failed to make any powerful attempts to alter it. But the problem is with poststructural argument, which denies a legitimate place for such modern historic attempts of the Dalits in theory.

Chatterjee tries to disprove Dumont's hypothesis that ideality lies united with actuality in the immediate reality of *caste.* It is here that Chatterjee makes use of Gupta's criticism of Dumont. Gupta's idea is that there is no one *caste* ideology but many and also that these *caste* ideologies some times even oppose each other. These are the points that received appreciation from Chatterjee. He thus proposes to look at 1.An implicit critique of dominant *dharma* existing in popular beliefs and practices of *caste,* 2.Their claims against dominant *dharma* arc conditioned by power relations of the times, 3. These deviancies (existing in the form of various *bhakti* movements) from dominant *dharma* are limited by the conditions of subordination, 4. Due to this they ultimately fail to construct an alternative universal to the dominant *dharma.* What Chatterjee tries to do in this text is to rearrange these scattered oppositions in order to develop what he calls a critique of Indian tradition. He finally explains that all these *bhakti* cults failed to build a

an alternative universal to the dominant *dharma.* According to him this failure is inevitable to the subaltern politics. Thus for him the destiny of these subaltern castes dissents and politics is sheer hopeless. First it was historically unable to make a total fight against dominant *dharma* since its fight was conditioned by the power relations of the time. But after frankly disclosing the historic limitations within which *subaltern castes* dissent took place in those pre-modern days, the scholar seems to be content with bringing a closure to this dialect. For he leaps his theory to suggest how the immanent critique of *caste* was displaced by a monolithic modern Dalit movement and discourse, which could not expand itself beyond the cheap pursuit for *artha.*

Such a conclusion reflects the ending that he drew in the text *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World.* Like the Indian nationalists (read *upper castes)* failed to compete with the superior Western Reason, the Indian *popular sects* also fail against their *upper caste* opponents. But the difference is that the former own the battle secretly in the inner sphere. The kind of vehemence that he applies in the case of defending the mainstream hindutva nationalists in the text of *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* is absents in his treatment of the topic *subaltern sects.* It is written with a genre of *as a matter of fact.* His impatient rush when he comes to the question of modern Dalit politics leaves many gapes open. Me does not at least tell us on which grounds he is justified to call the modern Dalit politics a pursuit for *artha.*

He also does not care to tell us how a *caste* system, which was brimming with various idealities. was able to restrict powerful subaltern dissent in such potential and permanent ways. Here he seems to make a breach of his own conviction by making use of notions, multiple idealities *of caste* and also the notion of singular dominant *dharma.* What he implicitly tries to establish is also that the *subaltern caste* dissent of yester years cannot be viewed as natural precursor of the modern Dalit politics. It thus also implies that the latter is not a legitimate successor of the former. It also implies that western modernity pulled a forcible closure to the dialectic of *subaltern caste* and the Dalits simply adopted it either due to their selfishness or out of *ignorance.* Whatever the reason could be, the argument seems to be that Dalit politics is not capable of contributing any dialectic to the Indian history.

He made a somewhat detail notes on different popular beliefs on some sects in Bengal. Finally he sees these oppositions ultimately unsettled. If they are unified it is not at the level of the "self-consciousness of "the Hindu" but only within the historical contingencies of the social relations of power" (181). The reader would be doubtful whether Chatterjee is feeling sad that these oppositions are not unified at the level of the self-consciousness of "the Hindu". This is because, finally, after an elaborate description and analysis of these sects Chatterjee sneers at the destiny of these sects in the modern bourgeois world. This sneering is what perhaps he preferred to call "a critique of bourgeoisie equality". He sees the liberal or modern critique of *caste* as "external critique" (197). The nation, in the form of state has replaced this unifying force of *dharma* in the postcolonial society. He indulges to argue:

> The force of dharma, it appears, has been ousted from its position of superiority, to be replaced with a vengeance by the pursuit of *artha,* but, pace Dumont, on the basis again of caste divisions. On the other hand we have the supremely paradoxical phenomenon of lower-caste groups asserting their very backwardness in the caste hierarchy to claim discriminatory privileges from the state, and upper caste groups proclaiming the sanctity of bourgeois equality and freedom (the criterion of equal opportunity mediated by skill and merit) in order to beat back the threat to their existing privileges. This was evidenced most blatantly in the violent demonstrations over the adoption of so-called Mandal Commission recommendations by the government of India in 1990 (198).

Thus Chatterjee groups the *anti-caste* struggles into cheap fights for *artha.*

Chatterjee is perhaps absolutely right when he explains, "Dumont's posing of the principles of *homo hierarchicus* against those of *homo equalis* is a false, essentialist, positing of an unresolvable antinomy" (198). But what the author proposes as an alternative to it is an extreme example of the mystification of both the problem and the solution. After recording the inevitability of the death of *subaltern caste* dissent and, negation of the modern Dalit politics as being essentially structured to bargain for material shares, he was left with no option but to mystify the problem and its solution. He mumbles, "We must assert that there is a more developed universal form of the unity of seperateness and dependence that subsumes hierarchy and equality as lower historical moments." (198). He offers the following suggestion as a solution: "a criticism of "commonsense" on the basis of "commonsense"; not to inject into popular life a "scientific" form of thought springing from somewhere else, but to develop and make

critical an activity that already exists in popular life" (199). This he feels would enable Indian **politics, which** has been searching to find a universal form of community. But how does it take place? What are the strategies and means of going about it to reach at this new universal form of community? We find no answers to this. Like any of his text, this particular essay of Chatterjee also is very slippery not because of its theoretical eloquence but due to its obtrusive prejudices.

Though t Chatterjee's essay on "Women and the Nation" concludes with a title 'A Pessimistic Afterword' he did not leave a cynical conclusion to the question of women and **nation as he** did in the case of *caste*\Dalit. The questions he raises in the case of "Women and the Nation" is also according to the modern measures which he denied to the issue of *caste*\dalit. For instance, in his essay on woman, after establishing that nationalism often won in the *inner sphere*, he raises a tiny set of very sensible questions of writing Indian history with a radical historiographical base and, argues that "This discovery **will** open up once more the question of who led and who followed, and of when it all began. It will introduce, in short, an agenda to rewrite the history of nationalism with different actors and a different chronology" (156). This luxury is anyway reserved for the historiography of *upper caste* women and totally denied to the Dalits. Though the essay on *Indian women* concludes with exemplifying the case of Binodini, a sex-worker cum actor (who could be a *lower caste* also), it finishes the essay by opening gates into an extremely wide area of nationalist politics i.e., its 'ethical domain'(157). In the case of *caste*\Dalit the author does not sec such a feasibility, for him the question of modem Dalit politics is a brat of western Reason and thus completely gone case. Their politics does not deserve any rightful space in the ethical domain of nation-state because these *subaltern castes* are as much part of this spoil game as their *upper caste* oppressors. It is now context for the Dalit feminist to make a point that it is rather an awkward amalgamation, to tie both the dominant and the dominated to the same pole.

Conclusion:

By the early 19th century the Indian *upper caste* nationalists were forced to answer both the colonizers and the Dalits about the system of *caste.* They were unable to *solve* the Dalit question *from within* as they were able to do efficiently in the case of Hindu women. Neither they were allowed to remain silent. Regular scrutiny from the Raj and persistence from Dalits themselves always pressurized the Hindus to open up their *inner domain* and its *enigmas.* This happened in the case of Hindu woman also. In fact, *resolution of women's question,* according to the depiction of Chatteerjee demonstrates colonizers' impact and the defeat of the *inner domain.* In the case of Hindu women also, Hindu nationalists were not capable to remain immune to the influences of Raj. Though they have resolved the question according to the logic of the *inner domain* they had to make many compromises like allowing their women to enter the *outer domain* through education, jobs etc. It is also wrong to assume that there were no dissents from the *upper caste* women towards this kind of resolution. When they had to obey to this colonialist urge, then where was still the question of sovereignty *of inner domain, which* Chatteerjee claims on behalf of Hindu nationalists?

Unlike Hindu women Dalit is a confronting community. So, how did Hindu nationalists respond to this confronting community? Such a politics from the Dalits forced the Hindu nationalists to open up their *inner domain.* First of all the conversion of *chandala* into Dalit during the time of the British colonialism, meant a disastrous collapse of the *inner domain* and its dominant language. If there is any true brand of nationalism it is that which recognizes this demise of the centuries, rotten *inner domain* of Hindus. A true narration of a true nationalism starts with the description of how the prison walls of the *inner domain* hid from view- Hindu women who lurked as young brides to old bridegrooms who were on the verge of death; who were raped to death in the name of legitimate heterosexuality, who ascended pyres along with their diseased husbands. The inner domain was also the place where the Dalits were relegated to an inhuman life, where the countless Dalit women were humiliated, maimed and killed, where Dalit

children became bonded laborers for the parasitic *upper castes* and where they suffered the highest mortality rate. If nationalist ideological sovereignty rests in this devils' den, of Hindus' *inner domain,* one should immediately curse it, and feel ashamed that such an *autonomy survived* more democratic and humane theories. Nationalist ideology was not only the space/moment where the *upper castes* had re-declared their sovereignty but also a space/moment where the same sovereignty faced the greatest challenges perhaps for the first time in this land's history.

It is impossible to entertain any claims of innocence of any hindutva scholarship. Their texts are rested upon the assumption that *non-upper castes* are cheap, primitive, and always different from the communities created by the hindutva culture. The PC scholarship pleads that their ideologues are not guilty despite the fact their brim with *caste* prejudices. These classic nationalist texts are notoriously insensitive, and their generalizations are premised on *caste* chauvinism. Far from being an *innocent* domain, the hindutva nationalist texts were deeply implicated in the production of casteist ways of imagining the nation. Despite this fact the PC writers portray these orthodox texts as *above* politics altogether and also depict them as if they are only spiritual, cultural and ideological constructs.

More fundamentally, the PC theory projects the self-representations of the *upper caste nationalists* and ignores the resistances to them. By doing so, they develop a static model of nationalist relations in which power to dominate is located entirely with the British colonizer, thus allowing no space to put pre-colonial power relations for inquiry. As a result, the historical experiences of Dalits themselves under the British colonialism inextricable as it is with the *caste* colonialism of *upper castes* hold no autonomous existence outside the hindutva texts. At the level of theory, then, the PC writers give themselves the privilege of refuting the feasibility of any alternative descriptions of the Dalit and any agency to them.

One point that has to be understood in all this is that casteism is not just replicated in the hindutva nationalist texts; *caste* is not just a frame of its production, but its very essence. The hindutva nationalist writings were not the first encounters between the Hindus and

the Dalits. But these texts do mark a new ways in imagining in deed, in fabricating these two communities as binary opposites. The nationalist writings were one method of creating the Hindu's specialized projections of itself in relation to the Dalits. The definition of the nation and its outside rested on their production of incompatible differences between Hindu and Dalit, the self and the other. Their myths about the Dalits (as betrayers, selfish, non-spiritual) not only expressed all manners of cultural anxieties, but also sometimes overlapped with the images of the colonizers. Hindu nationalism thus based itself upon *caste* distinctions, which demarcated Hindus from Dalits. Consequently, these peculiarities rationalized a belligerent nationalism that continue to stimulate the political psyche of Hindus even today. What the PC theory offer to this archaic ideology is to interpret it in the frames of what can be fashionably called a new historicism.

Thus PC theory is more than merely one more stream of theory; it manufactures a naval way of justifying the hindutva. It seeks to widen the scope of studies of Hinduism to suit modern theory. Thus this theory can be seen as emanating from the modern need of legitimizing the hindutva ideology of the past. PC theory appears to tailor Hindutva to suit the present political contexts of the modern world. Thus PC theory is nothing but the justification of the epistemic violence renewed during the British colonial period by the *upper castes,* which has now been reconstructed to suit the changing global contexts.

Notes:

[1] Dayananda Saraswathi, Light of Truth, translated by Dr. Chiranjiva Bhardwaja, New Delhi: 2003. The national renaissance meant, for Dayananda, a coming back to the *Vedic golden age;* Vivekananda, Complete Works Vol VI, Calcutta: Advita Ashram, 1965; J. Leopold, "The Aryan Theory of Race", *Indian Economics and Social History Review* 7, 2 June 1970. p. 275; V.D. Savarkar, Hindutva- Who is a Hindu?, Bombay: 1969; Gandhi, Varnashrama Dharma, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1962.

[2] G.S.Ghurye, Caste and Class in India, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1957.

[3] M.N. Srinivas, Caste in Modern India and Other Essays. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962.

[4] See, E.M.S.Namboodripad, A History of the Indian Freedom Movement, Trivendrum: Social Scientist Press, 1986.

[5] Nicholas B. Dirks. Castes of Mind. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003, p.5.

[6] Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Imaginary Institution of India," in Partha Chatterjee and Gyanendra Pandey (eds.), Subaltern Studies VII . Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 1-39.

[7] Partha Chaterjee, Nation and its Fragments, Delhi: OUP, 1997.

[8] Eleaner Zelliot, Gopal Guru, Gail Omvedt, Kancha Iliah, Aloysius are some of the scholar who gave a very serious attention to the facts of internal fissures and linking the question of caste to the intricacies of nation.

[9] Using the concepts "caste" and "nation" in this way is to not to indicate that both arc same. This usage only denotes the necessity of viewing these two concepts and issues as intersecting.

[10] B.R. Ambedkar, Annihilation of Caste, with a reply to Mahatma Gandhi, Bombay: Bhushan P.Press, 1936;What Congress and Gandhi have done to Untouchables,Bombay; Thacker & Co, 1945; Who were the Shudras?, Bombay: Thacker, 1947; The Untouchables, New Delhi: Amrit Book Co, 1948.

[11] P. Mongia (ed.), Contemporary Postcolonial Theory : A Reader, London: Arnold, pp. 347-364. Though this suggestion sounds liberal enough, it too carries a gap. Apart from the issues of pure Diaspora there are certain other identities, which also come into scene in the context of first and third world politics. The Dalit women are extremely affected by the politics of globalisation, and due to international transactions like importation of cheap medicines, contraceptives etc and due to the international relations itself. Even the question of Diaspora can be Dalit women's issue and NR1 Dalit women are also to be counted.

[12] See for instance, Jotirao Phule, Collected Works of Mahatma Jotirao Phule,Vol II, Bombay: Educational Department, Government of Maharastra: 1991; Ambedkar, Collected Works, Vols. III & IV. Bombay: Government of Maharastra, 1987.

[13] Zillah Eisenstein, "Writing Bodies on the Nation for the Globe", in Sita Ranchod- Nilson and Mary Ann Terreault (eds.), Women States and Nationalism; At Home in the Nation?, London and New York:Routledge, 2000, p. 42.

[14] This argument is often used to portray the colonizers as responsible for introducing communalism in India. It must be true that the colonizers had tried to bunch the people in the land on the community lines for their convenience through their various administrative policies. But it is an undeniable truth that the caste system was operating as a linking chain to maintain stratification in the society. The nationalists in India had made ultimate use of it by taking the entire nation to the hindus and also at the same time by shifting all the sin to the colonizers. Such an accusation that the construction of hindu\Hinduism as a homogeneous unit was a byproduct of British colonialism is always taken for granted. Shifting this sin from the western writers (however at guilt they must be at) to hindutva politics itself may result in different arrival points of truth.

[15] Its useful to keep in mind that Gandhi and Dayananda also expressed the ideas about the education for the *others* and the right to rule. Issue of birth and merit are as old as *nationalist* times which are very political questions. Refer to the fourth chapter.

[16] Gandhi, Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1938.

[17] J. Nehru, Discovery of India. Indraprastha Press, N.Delhi, 1946, p.246.

[18] Peter Robb points out how Nehru's ideas on national identity resemble the views of V.D. Savarkar. See, Peter Robb eds, The Concept of Race in South Asia. Delhi: OUP, 1995, p. 69-70.

[19] G.B.Singh, "Gandhi the Racist", The Dalit, Mar-Apr 1 '03, p. 13.

[20] Suniti Kumar Gosh, India and the Raj 1919-1947: Glory, Shame and Bondage, Vol. One. Calcutta: Prachi, 1989, p. 157; Peter Robb (ed.), The Concept of Race in South Asia. Delhi: OUP, 1995, p. 7-8.

[21] Paul Ransome, Antonio Gramsci: A New Introduction, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992, p. 136.

[22] Dipanakar Gupta, "Continuous Hierarchies and Discreet Castes", *Economic and Political Weekly* 19, nos. 46-48, 17 and 24 November and 1 Decmber 1984: 1955-58, 2003-5, 2049-53.

[23] Louis Dumont, Homo Hierarchicus. Translated by Mark Sainsbury, London: Paladin, 1972, p. 24.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF SKIPPING:

THE P0L1TCS OF MAINSTREAM THEORIES ON INDIAN WOMEN AND NATION

The main objective of this chapter is to catalogue the intrinsic inadequacies of the mainstream theory produced by both feminists and post colonialists (PC from hereafter) on the subject of Indian woman and nation. The main problem usually emanates from their refusal to acknowledge the heterogeneous character of Indian women. Such a negation consequently results in highlighting the priorities and the realities of *upper caste* Hindu women. As a result only privileged women are projected as Indian women and all the theories as well as national policies and images get centered on them. Most of the celebrated theories and studies on the Indian woman suffer from this crucial limitation. Historically they have evolved various techniques to produce this kind of lopsided theories. One prominent among them is the 'method of skipping'. With this academic strategy they tend to skip various realities of Dalit women even when they make explicit appearances in the processes of culling the archives or in their itinerary of academic consciousness. Such a practice is painfully evident even from the times of the political processes of mainstream nationalist movement (this argument is elaborated in the next chapter). The present feminist and postcolonial scholarship are inclined to nurture most of their sophisticated theories from such epistemic legacy. As a result they remain repudiatory and empty for Dalit women

The present chapter is designed to combat this academic practice by deconstructing some of the prominent texts, which make use of this method of skipping. The main aim is to uncover how *upper caste* scholarship has been denying a rightful place to Dalit women as a national subject both at the level of theory and politics. The core aim of this chapter is to prove that the main theoretical projects of postcolonial studies are untrustworthy. The prime concern of post colonialists has been to target the western theoretical equipment as essentially false and inadequate to address eastern

realities. They tend to exhume what they call *native* tools of historiography to come up with their own theories which they argue can better represent the Indian reality. The mains aim of the Dalit feminist scholar is to explain how such *native* claims and academic strategies are predicated on excluding certain *inessential others* like Dalit women.

Mainstream Theories Existing on Indian women and Nation:

There are various feminist theories existing on nation produced from the PC angle. Nation for most of the authors implies an aftermath of the colonial phase. A basic feature of most of the mainstream writers on women and nation is that they essentially locate the problem in the so-called domestic sphere. Many have explored how the idea of family is extended to the idea of nation. In other words they tried to explain how the idea of home\nation are put together to achieve the purpose of stabilizing the family and also the dominant notion of the nation. Many of the mainstream feminists have tried to explain the politics of seeing nation and family as identical by the male nationalists. They have argued that this served the preliminary purpose of imagining the women of the nation as women of the family. Their main argument is that women were glimpsed as the reproducers of the nation[1].

Some have tried to look at the women's participation in nationalist movements. Some of these writers elaborated the participation of women in nationalist movement. But they include only *upper caste* women's struggle as women's and nationalist struggles[2]. Jana Everett Mattson gave a comprehensive picture on the Indian women's movement where, she observes that it was led and dominated by the *upper caste* women. However, she does not look at the implications of such politics on the *other* women in any detail. Her work is more mostly a chronological compilation of the Hindu women's movement than a critique of it. Such preferences leave no room for other equally important dynamics of colonialism like its caste and class configurations. Such texts thus fail to take serious note of the absence of Dalit women in the nationalist historiography. This is much rampant in the literature produced by the Indian women. Such explicit

partialities have given rise to the most ironic features of the mainstream feminist literature in India. Crucial among such features is that even those women writers who express unequivocal faith in liberal theories of women's emancipation first and foremost make it a point to acknowledge M.K. Gandhi as the forerunner of the Indian women's rights, though, in fact he stood firmly against any such idea. He never entertained the idea of any rights for women in the modern liberal sense. Why and how a majority of the Indian writers on the subject of women, who express ardent faith in liberal values, acknowledge Gandhi as a champion of women's rights defies comprehension. This is especially so because Gandhi not only never believed in women's emancipation and rights but also time and again suggested to women that 'home' is their rightful place. Curiously these women never take note of Ambedkar's contribution to the Indian *upper caste* women's movement despite the fact that he went to the extent of resigning his ministerial post because the then cabinet was not passing the bill on women's rights which was promised before independence[3]. There is also another section of Indian women's writers namely the Marxist feminists. They are very keen to prove that Gandhi was very much against women's interests but they too do not acknowledge Ambedkar's involvement. Because allowing such space for Ambedkar would be like giving centrality to the *caste* question instead of class[4]. Thus both Ambedkar and the Dalit movement are denied due acknowledgement and gratitude from the *upper caste* feminist\women community of India.

Feminism and PC Theory:

Collaborations that feminism makes with PC theory is very fluid since it happens at the level of theory, which is abstract. Recently *upper caste* feminist scholarship has agreed about the reality of this understanding. Santhosh Gupta thus writes that the Indian feminists are making a two fold strategic interventions. One is that they inspect PC theory that is being posed in universalist form and also scrutinize the universalist feminist conceptualization of the Euro-American brand that pushes postcolonial women into the western woman's *others*, Though this article starts with Spivak's meaningful rejection of West's monolithic conception of a Third World, the essay fails to see the question of

heterogeneity of **the** third world in a detailed way. It has consciously focused on the dangers of the western feminists perceiving the third world woman as their object of study and consequently as their *other*. The second part of the essay deals with the feminist interventions, which explore the socio cultural concerns of women writers in terms of serious aesthetic principles. The final part of this small essay explains the use of postmodern frame for the PC feminist interventions. Thus nowhere in this essay do we find a criticism against the major assumptions that PC feminism transmit. Spivak warns against the production of a new object of knowledge- the third world woman in the western academy. She warns that the third world academicians should not be collaborative with the process of a new Orientlaism. She focuses her attention on to the appeasing methods of the West, which allows the aspiring elites of the third world to have a pinch of the center. This is done in a novel way, by lending disciplinary support for the theories of the elites.[6] This is a rather revolutionary and direct attack and confession that many PC intellectuals never would like to acknowledge openly. Sara Suleri reads the multiplying subjectivities of *mothered* women as inseparable from the mechanisms of metropolitan academy. She investigates the 'uneasy selfhood' accorded to postcolonial woman. She argues that postcolonial feminism recommends a substitute that is conceptually parochial and scales down the postcolonial condition in order to envelop it within North American academic terms.[7] On the whole it is difficult to find a feminist theory that lists itself as particularly postcolonial. But it is also equally important to realize as argued above that, the contemporary mainstream feminist theory goes hand in glove with Indian PC theory, in the sense that they make use of almost the same conceptual baggage. Studies on nation became a major site of academic proclivity. Almost all of the recent feminist literature deals with the question of nation. Even so there is very little literature on Dalit woman in these stories of nation building as if she is recalcitrant to this nation\mother\inner sphere analogy (this is the analogy which most of the PC and feminist thinkers apply to analyze the women's question vis-a-vis the nation). Consequently it is almost settled as a norm to see the Dalit woman neither as a national subject nor as one who participated in nation building. What is more tragic about the mainstream feminists and post colonialists of India is that they, usually, establish their theories by nullifying certain truths regarding Dalit woman. The present chapter would be

focusing on some of these theories and how they construct the notion of Indian woman by posing truths in a neutral sense regarding the issue of *caste.* In other words this chapter tries to explain how the *upper caste* theories on theme of 'Indian women and nation' flushed the academia with theories built on the complete negligence of *caste* factors. When *caste* as a central system occupies a marginalized status in their theories, most of the truth claims that they make become largely predicated on the marginalisation of the Dalit communities or end up in being totally false. Deconstruction of the following texts would explain how the 'method of skipping' in the writings of PC and feminist texts deny the rightful status for Dalit women in their theories.

1.Women **writing in India**[8]:

The editors start this introduction by explaining the problems that a woman face in bringing out a literary text in a male dominated world. The editors elucidated the case of Bangalore Nagaratnamma. They elaborately discussed her difficulties in bringing out a text called *Radhika Swantanam.* Nagaratnamma's case is neatly laced by various historical facts. But finally the main contradiction is located in the category of gender, in [he discrimination between men and women, and thus in biology. One should have no objection to any of these arguments but the problem rises when the mainstream feminist ideology seeps into the texts as *ultimate truths.* They narrate it in a *down-to-earth* tone and take most academic notions for granted. Another very common point that most of the *upper caste* scholars on colonialism make is to depict colonialism as a harbinger of various unwanted changes in the traditional terrain. They emphasize the emergence of a new rigidity especially regarding certain practices with which people were earlier complacent. The demarcation between the *wanted* and *unwanted* women, they explain, emerged with the arrival of the Victorian purrinical ideology that accompanied colonialism. They do not try to focus simultaneous[1]/ on the more serious and rooted problems like the heterogeneity and segregation that existed between the women of different communities in India. The grand myth, which was fed into the conscience of the Hindus, the infamous *Sita Vs Surpanaka* model, is forgotten forever by them.

The editors try to illustrate only the sad *fall* of versatile women like Muddupalani with the surfacing of redefined moral standards embellished with the economic plunder of the country by the colonialists. Their argument goes like this "Large numbers of women artists, mainly folk singers and dancers, who depended on wealthy households for patronage, but also court artists like Muddupalani were driven into penury and prostitution"(8). However, the remaining text proceeds to focus more on the tragedy of the demise of the rich (probably *upper caste) devadasis* than on the *lower caste women* artists (the editors do not explain to the reader about the *caste* backgrounds of these women). This is evident when they included the autobiography of Rasundari in the Bengali Literature section but not Binodini. Binodini's case certainly craves for some space in these texts because it's more direct and brutal testimony to Indian patriarchy (in the sense that she was subjected to more brutal form of patriarchy for being a woman from the lower class and a prostitute).

In the next paragraph they write on the politics of retrieving the *golden-age* myth unleashed by the Oriental scholarship. The editors agree that the Aryan golden age of India is a myth, which was deliberately manufactured by the empire and the nation. But the editors do not try to tell us that such changes did not result in altering positions of the women in the social hierarchy. Well, it does not mean that there were no remarkable changes at all during the British colonial period, which affected the Indian women. There took place all the natural changes that happen due to the occurrence of a totally different political regime. But the changes are not meant to be the same for all communities of women. More precisely the argument here is that British colonialism meant different things to different communities of women and any generalization premised on the denial of *caste* factor thus proves to be totally prejudiced and false.

Another point that they try to clarify is that though the Hindu women of that age were not exempt from the dominant ideologies of class and *caste* still these categories of women deserve separate attention. They explain, in a rather detached tone:

> Middle-class women, white women, upper-caste Hindu women might find that their claims to "equality" or to the "full authority" of liberal individualism are at the expense of the working classes, the nonwhitc races, dalits, or Muslims. For, as we shall see, given the specific practices and discourses through which individualism took historical shape in India, these groups had to be defined as *other* in order that the Self might gain identity (35).

Thus the problem is located by the editors in the inherent pitfalls of liberal individualism. Thus they evade the *upper caste* women's responsibility for the constant resistance that they showed towards the Dalit woman in their politics and theories. The other feature of this academic project is the strategy of snatching away the banner 'Indian women' for them and still not bothering to include and make the realties of *other* women also central to their themes.

They editors also perceive Orientalism as a field by which the nation and the empire tried to produce some ideology. They reviewed the ideas of Max Muller, Clarisse Blader, James Mill and Katherine Mayo. They disclaimed both the romanticist views of the Ideologists (they prefer to call the Indian Orientalists as ideologists) and the incensed accounts of Indian culture given by ideologues like James Mill or Katherine Mayo. Both of the accounts are created to gratify western imaginations. They look at Only the historiographical prejudices, imperialists' interests and patriarchal rivalries behind such accounts. Therefore the editors write, "[T]he women's question remained fixed into remarkably similar schemes as one patriarchy confronted the other" (49). Thus the problem for them is again the problem resulted by situating the *Indian women's* question as an issue of contestation between the Indian and the British imperial patriarchies. Their reading of the texts of Altekar, R.C.Dutt reveals that these editors' ways of writing history *can* only remain *untouched* by the realties of Dalit woman. Otherwise they would not have been able to produce such huge volumes without considering the implications of the pejorative perspectives that these two male hindutva nationalist historians applied against the *other* women. The editors manage to exclude the painfully dominant notions that these nationalists expressed in their texts. They only care to point out the notion of the 'golden age' of Hindu women that the Hindu nationalists propound and the male politics underpinning it. For instance in the case of the text of Altekar they write, "Altekar traces a steady decline from this golden age to the shadowy valleys of the period before the Muslim invasions" (49). The editors have effectively skipped Altekar's attack on Dalit women as the main reason behind the great *fall* of Hindu women. They had seen the Indian nationalists fight as a mere cultural contestation against the superior imperial

patriarchy. They failed to also see it as a *caste* fight launched against the *other* communities to curb their new attempts for liberation. But unfortunately instead of being faithful to their own feminist ideology the editors also very often are get lured by the sentiments of mainstream nationalism. Though such a tilt towards the sentiments of nationalism has saved them from being simply branded as reproducers of the western feminism, it made their theory float away from the Dalit women who have different versions to narrate about Indian nationalism and the ideologues mentioned here. Altekar and Katherine Mayo's views on *lower caste* women are deconstructed in the following chapter. It shows various crucial realties that these editors effectively skipped in their deconstruction of the same texts.

They continue their skillful exclusions of *other* women throughout the text by saying "we would have liked, had space permitted to introduce" (XXV, 1). The problem here is not of space. Seeing the issue of locating the Dalit women in the theory as a problem of space is to relegate her question and identity as additive to *the* women's question. It also supports a notion that the histories of *upper caste* women can be produced without touching the historic realities of Dalit women. But the historic facts present us with totally different realities, which very often situate these two communities in contradictory and clashing planes.

Volume 2:

The second volume focuses on the notion of the nation. The editors acknowledge hat English education played a determining role during the British colonial period in liberating women. They wrote on the "doubly other" condition of the Hindu women faced during colonialism and the specific tensions that arise due to her ensnarement between public and private realms and the eventual effects of these tensions on their writings. According to them the overwhelming presence of Orientalism has resulted in marginalizing the most recent native literatures.

It is also not to be forgotten that most of the nationalists drew heavily upon Orientalists' views for their arguments.[9] Therefore one should suspect the hands of the *upper caste* not the imperialists behind it.

A great portion of the introductory part of this volume is again dedicated to the politics that surrounded the text *Radhika Swantanam.* They write. "Within the span of twenty years *sadir* and its lower-caste practitioners had been replaced by a sanitized, ancient, almost mystic dance-force, which provided the spiritual basis of Indian femininity and nationhood" (14). Are the rich *devadasis* and the *lower caste* practitioners mentioned here the same? Were the art practices of the *lower caste* women getting equal patronage and respect like their *upper caste* counterparts? Definitely no! It is impossible to imagine a respectable outlook and patronage for the Dalit women in a land, which is ruled by cheap politico-religious ordinances. If the editors had focused on the pre-colonial status of Dalit woman vis-à-vis the Hindu society then they would have escaped the lure of sounding nationalist here and there by putting all the responsibility for the degradation of *Indian women* on British colonialism. This would also have explained that colonialism not only plundered but also shuffled traditional boundaries causing some of its socio-political set ups to disappear not necessarily with bad results. The editors failed to connect the realities of the pre-British colonial India with that of British colonialism. Like the PC theorists these editors also start their narrations abruptly. They either totally ignore the pre-British colonial Indian realities or portray them as acquiring completely negative characteristics due to the negative impact of British colonialists. Though there are occasions where they could not escape mentioning oppressive pre-British colonial realities, they tend not to emphasize them much. This is where lies the most crucial difference between a Dalit feminist theory and the mainstream feminist or PC theory.

Lower caste women are brought here to explain the degree of deterioration but the actual story and the subjects of the story continue to be the *upper caste* women. The relative proportion of *lower caste* women (who had to degrade themselves into demeaning occupations) to those of *upper caste* women (in the same occupations) is still to be researched. Moreover, it is too hasty to compare the art forms and practices of the

lower caste women with the *upper caste* women for both categories did not share the same kind of respect and patronage. This argument is proved in the following deconstruction of the essay of Sumantho Banerjee on *lower caste Vaishnava* women. The deconstruction of this essay also proves that these practices were derogatory and that they were creations of the *upper castes.* Another important point that the deconstruction would try to prove is that they were created by the *upper castes* much before the British colonialists launched their cultural mission.

If the issues of *upper caste* women were different the treatment that they met with would also be different. For instance, both the categories of women would have witnessed the demise of the old patronages (however humiliating and demeaning these may have been for the *Dalit women)* but it did not automatically result in the same changes. The *upper caste women* would have shifted to the acceptable art fields like drama, movie or mystified dance forms or carefully treaded into domesticity. But the *Dalit* women did not necessarily meet with the same fate. Unlike the *upper caste devadasis* the Dalit *devadasis* were not as potent rivals to the monogamous and endogamous families of the middle classes. Therefore it is unlikely to believe that the Dalit women also faced the same amount of release or *fall* that the *upper caste devadasis* experienced.[10]

What surprises a Dalit feminist is the way they started their chapter on nation without raising foundational questions like: 'Why the Indian nation is defined in the way it has been defined'? The second volumes contain a discussion on nation, which explain us how the editors proceed in their argument. They agreed with Ambedkar's view that nation defines both fellowship and anti-fellowship. Nation is always continuous imagined. In this process the state, the editors write, after independence selected anthropology as the language in which it set to sort out the problems of the people. They observe that due to this the nation shouldered the baggage of imperialism. In this process nation also re-empowered it, reproducing in its policies and authorities the same manipulative imperialist purposes. They conclude that, 'The *politics* of caste as well as the *politics* of gender were not only denied by the new dispensation; they were also

contained" (60). Though *caste* is treated on these lines it became inevitable for the Dalit communities to learn to negotiate within these boundaries. Impeccable political solutions were not available to the Dalits.

Usually most of the writings, which deal with the postcolonial state and the Dalits, argue that *lower castes* (read SCs or STs) were contained\systematized by a policy of enumeration. Secondly they believe that Dalit movement is relegated to the politics of reservation (this attitude is evident at least in the texts that are mentioned in the present dissertation). This is what all they want to say about it. Apart from cheapening the Dalit movement's historic efforts to get even this small portion of rights (reservations) what they overlook is the Indian academia's failure to offer centrality to the Dalit movement. If the Indian nation-state has taken to anthropological language and attitude in order to *attend to* the *lower caste* question, how else could it have done so powerfully and fundamentally except through education and academics?

One can also come across a brief but detailed record of the *Indian women's* movement that was launched by the *upper caste* women during the British colonial period in this volume. But startlingly there is not a single line on the *caste* prejudices and the cheap comments that these women passed in their anxiety to secure privileges for themselves. There is no single line about how this movement and its notions of women's rights were premised on the ostracism of the Dalit women as political subjects in this volume. Such a cool reading of this movement looks more conspicuous since this volume is a recent one and there already exist a few texts, if not many, which had already proven that this movement was a particularly *upper caste* and class one. This text's overlook on the *caste* and class configuration of *first first wave of Indian women's movement* shows a total lack of introspection and self-critique of feminist politics in India.

In the concluding paragraph the editors write that they have taken up the study of this movement (women's movement) as one of the three strains in the cultural politics of 20th century India (the remaining two being the Swadeshi movement and the Progressive Writer's Association). They write that this configuration allowed them "to chart the

narrative and the symbolic prefiguring of what became a new executive centrality and its constituency" (116). By this time it has become clear from their inference that the women's texts\politics both fed the "course of dominance" (initiated by and through male-led nationalist politics). The editors try to claim that these *upper class* women apart from feeding the course of dominance through their texts/ politics have also "deflected and refigured that course" (116). It is definitely a fascinating experience to learn that the *upper caste* women's movement was both a participant in the course of dominance and a force that operated to avert and redirect that very course. But the "domain of the Imaginary" that they have tried to sometimes "endorse" and some times "dismantle" is too blurring to understand. One will be able to understand their version of this "Imaginary" only when it is clear what they were standing for and what they were not standing for. It is very clear that some of them were standing for the *upper caste* women's rights (the group led by Ms.Subbarayan). But one is not able to grasp what they (both the groups of women who joined mainstream nationalist politics and the one, which bonded to women's rights politics) were not standing for in this text. Only the non-bigoted reading of the archival sources unfolds the dimensions of what they were not standing for. Such a question and enquiry occupies a decisive space in one of the chapters of this thesis, "Understanding Protective Discrimination". The attempt is to put to question the *upper caste* women movement's capacity to deflect the ascendant nationalism. The point is not that this movement did not enjoy any autonomy but that they employed this autonomy neither to deflect nor to resist but to collaborate with the *upper caste* imagination of the nation. Both the groups of women (led by Radhabai Subbarayan and Sarojini respectively) contributed almost the same versions of imagination, and never contradicted each other, at least regarding the issue of caste. For instance the Mrs.Subbarayan group resented and opposed the idea of the *lower castes* being entailed to the same right of reservation, which they were fighting for. It does not need reminding that the major bone of contention between the mainstream nationalists and the Dalit nationalist movement was over the issue of political rights. The editors failed to mention these prominent anti-Dalit tendencies displayed by this so-called first wave of Indian women's movement. The 'methods of skipping' that is adopted in these volumes thus finally lands these texts in unfair and abstract conclusions. The only solace

is that this excerpt of the Volume II is tiled "Women's Organizations and Liberal Nationalist Feminism" by which a Dalit feminist can console herself that it carried all the natural limitations that any liberal politics perforce does, so why feel betrayed about it.

2. Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History (1989):

This text is another example of writing cultural history on the British colonial times from a mainstream feminist point of view. The contributors have concentrated on the exclusions of women in the cultural histories of India. They have analyzed to what extent patriarchal colonialism and anti-colonial struggles restricted women's entrance into politics, and how the dominant historiographies debarred women subject from their enterprise. They insist that they would produce feminist histories since every aspect of truth, they explain, is gendered.

Sumantho baneerjee:

Sumantho Baneerjee in his nostalgic essay, "Women's Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Bengal" writes how the rift appeared in the cultural homogeneity of Bengali women of lower and middle classes with the introduction of education in the colonial period. By the end of the 19th century a new generation of women emerged with education and cultivated new cultural norms and displaced the Bengali women's popular culture. Bengali men's attempts to prove their sexual morality to the British had thus swept the popular cultural forms of common Bengali women, and pushed the upper class women into certain cultural *bhadralok* modules. In this way it affected the concept of women's emancipation. Baneerjee understands this popular cultural property of lower class women as a rich asset, which addressed women's problems. He elucidates how such a culture gradually came to be perceived as vulgar in the eyes of the *bhadraluk* educated men and women. Baneerjee concentrates on this cultural realm to prove how colonialism and modernity had displaced them. Like many postcolonial studies thus Beneerjee also locates the problem of the extinction of certain cultural forms in modernity, which accompanied colonialism."

Though the author offered due acknowledgement to the reality of the heterogeneous nature of the Bengali women communities in the initial part of his article he soon diverts the article to insist more on the liberal essence of these cultural forms and how they bonded women of different classes. In his own words:

> The old popular culture which had rested on the social ties binding together women from different classes was discarded, and retained only by women of the lower social strata who did not relinquish their commitment to it as rapidly as the others. But finally, even they had to grasp the logic of an altered social world, and the old forms of women's popular culture withered.

The women who found their occupations in this culture were the *vishnavite* women who included widows of *kulin* Brahmins, prostitutes to *outcastes.* We need not go further to search whether *lower caste* women were there or not. *Naturally* they were there! Before we attempt to know how these forms were withered it is important to know why only these categories of women were exercising such cultural forms? Widows of *kulin Brahmins, prostitutes* and other despised women were never respected in this land's history. Why did the *lower caste* women have to be bunched with women like widows of *kulin* Brahmins who would be immediately cursed the moment they were seen, or the sex workers who were scared by the *householders* or the otherwise despised women? Why did the *outcaste* women have to choose their livelihoods along with the women of these much-hated categories? By definition *lower caste* women are not widows or prostitutes. Then how can one see their presence in such occupations as natural? Some more realities beg further examination in this essay.

First of all the author ought to problematise the overwhelming enumeration of *outcaste* women in such demeaning occupations. Let us assume that this degree of humiliation was attributed only with the advent of western Christian modernity and that these pre-modern cultural forms were rich forms in which these women took resort to castigate the sexual hypocrisies and male domination in the society of their times. Then why did not the non-widowed, non-prostituting hindu women also take to such occupations? If the author has to answer this question he has to shift the crux of the essay from how these forms disappeared to the question of internal fissures, which always

existed among the women of the land from the pre-British colonial period. He has then to proceed to know that all these pre-British socio, economic and political forms had powerful and violent intentions and dynamics attached to them. When we observe the nature of these cultural forms we can understand that such occupations were *made available* only to those *inessential* women who were less privileged than those who were allowed to enact only those roles, which were *apt for essential women.* That means there was already a negative and demeaning signification structured into such occupations even well before colonial Victorian values crept in. It could also be argued that such humiliations are encoded into these occupations since they are *left* for the *lower caste* women to perform.

Another level of enquiry should be how the vulgarity implicit in these art forms became a point of hatred for the *upper castes* in this particular moment of history. This was because the Hindu ruling class men became accountable to the colonial masters. They were in need to prove their moral credentials that they were capable to rule the land. They could thus gradually withdraw their support for these cultural practices. Since they were the deciders who *left* such jobs to *lower caste* women, they could have, when they banished it from their corridors, also extinguished these forms. This change was not genuine but a lopsided and carefully selected choice. They were careful in determining what was to be changed and what not, which people to be changed and which people not to be changed, which occupations to be reformed and which not. Still one more question peeps out here. Why were only such occupations left for the people who took to *Vaishnavism*? The answer is obviously that *Vaishnavism* too was an abandoned one.

Perhaps Baneerjee could not have written this article in any other fashion. The intellectual project of this book does not allow writing in the fashion that a Dalit feminist longs for. In the introduction of the book the editors have inserted a humble statement:

> The essays are confined to the dominant Hindu community, largely in the north of India, and deal mainly with the middle classes. We feel that the exclusion of all other religious communities and of marginalized groups (dalit and tribal, agricultural and bonded labour) and the slender representation of women belonging to peasant and working class groups is a serious limitation because it is not possible to understand a dominant class or religious community without locating its relationship to other strata and religious groups (4).

As they have themselves accepted, it is definitely a serious limitation. It couldn't allow the *lower caste* woman to assume a central subject role in this intellectual writing-even when it is her own history or *about* her, as is the case of this specific essay.[12] Even if they try to excuse themselves by taking resort of a generalization that "no anthology or even generalization about Indian women could hope to be representative"[13], it is evident that dalit woman could not have been represented in any other way than this in such lopsided versions.[14] Any way the realization that no generalization about Indian women could be representative enough does not hinder them from committing certain generalizations always present in *upper caste* women's scholarship on Indian women.

Coming back to the question of internal fissures there is a more serious critique that Benarjee's essay has to face. It is Partha Chatterjee's article "Caste and Subaltern Consciousness"[15] which has an illustration on Vaishnava women. Most of the minor sects in Bengal are called Vaishnava or semi-Vaishnava sects and the followers were predominantly from the *lower castes.* Partha Chatterjee gives a detailed time period of when all these sects got systematized as orthodox Vaishnavism. He writes, "Ramakrishna Chakrabarty suggests that caste rules began to be strictly applied after the historic festival held in Kheturi (Rajshahi) sometime between 1576 and 1582, which was attended by representatives of nearly a hundred Vaisnava groups from all over Bengal" (187). Soon after this festival this religious sect received the devotion of *upper castes.* The *upper caste* religionists grew angry about the deviant ways existing within it. They sought to reformulate it to suit their cultural practices. There appeared, as a result two groups, one, the *Gaudiya Vaisnavas* and the other, the *low-caste J at Vaisnav* (Vaisnava by caste). Partha Chatterjee examines the result of such segregation:

Indeed, a whole series of stereotypes of the *jat vaisnav,* combining the familiar prejudices of caste impurity with aspersions on their sexual morality, emerged to condemn the lower-caste converts beyond the pale of the orthodox Gaudiya Vaisnava sampraday. The sexual aspersions, in particular, derived from the simplicity of the marriage ceremony practised by the followers of most minor sects which explicitly rejected **the injunctions of the *Smritis;*** upper-caste Vaisnavas refused to regard these as proper weddings. Further, the sects were looked down upon for the refuge they often provided to widows *[upper caste]* and

abandoned women; it was believed that the women were engaged in illicit liaisons with cult-followers and used in orgiastic rituals, and the ranks of the sect were swelled by the children of such unsanctified unions" (188).

A footnote from the same essay goes on like this. "The slurs on the sexual reputation of the women followers of Vaisnava sects are legion. A popular saying has a Vaisnava woman declaring; 'I was a prostitute first, a maid-servant later, and a procuress in between; now at last I am a Vaisnavi.'" (188).

According to this particular document it was between 1576 and 1582 that this religion got acceptance by the *upper castes.* A typical social process of separating these two streams of *vaishnavism* was launched immediately after this. This historical account thus explains that the resentment of the *upper caste* households against the *lower caste Vasinava* women was an explicit result of casteism of the *upper castes.* Many horrifying myths about the nature of the lower caste women got life as an integral strategy of this demarcation of women on caste lines as "moral" and "immoral". Therefore, cheapening of these women started much earlier than the British cultural mission. It is not colonial feminine values impinging on the upper caste minds or the upper caste middle classes realizing the need to prove themselves as good boys fit to rule that was responsible for the demeaning *of lower caste* women. Thus Beneerjee's hypothesis and observations are not only inaccurate and mismatched with historic realities but his conclusions also lead to a myth that before the advent of British colonialists everything went well between the *upper* and *lowercaste women* and that caste made no big skirmishes.

Uma Chakravarthy:

In the same book Uma Chakravarthy also writes a brilliant article on how the project of inventing tradition took place during the mainstream nationalist period. She argues that Indian nationalism had taken the role of religion and gave only a permitted role to *upper caste* women. They relegated their women to traditional roles. They were insensitive to the causes of all *other* women and even the identity of *new* women was predicated on the exclusion of *other* women. She hints at a crucial gap:

> Vast sections of women did not exist for the nineteenth century nationalists. No one tried to read the ancient texts to see what rights the Vedic dasi and others like her had in the Vedic golden age. Recognizing her existence would have been an embarrassment to the nationalists. The twentieth century has continued to reproduce, in all essentials, the same kind of womanhood that the nineteenth century has so carefully, and so successfully constructed as an enduring legacy for us.[16]

This reminder is definitely a powerful one but she also does not try to probe what indeed happened to the dasi in this essay. She only succeeds in strongly insisting upon the **vitality of this** question in the nationalist context. A reality that this *dasi* woman is still struggling to find a place in the Indian academy, as a subject is not noted in this essay. Unfortunately the dasi acquires only a footnotes *status* in this work though the title is oriented more towards her. But it definitely is an appreciable thing that Chakravarthy was able to at least mention it.

Partha Chatarjee:

Chatterjee's essay is a response to the self-posed question of the author: 'Why did the women's question get diminished in the last decade of 19th century?' Chatterjee explains that the nationalists (like the question of nationalism) too resolved the women's question by posing it as a question of difference than a question of identity with the West. He writes:

> 1 will argue, therefore, that the relative unimportance of the women's question in the last decades of the nineteenth century is to be explained not by the fact that it had been censored out of the reform agenda or overtaken by the more pressing and emotive issues of political struggle. The reason lies in nationalism's success in situating the "women's question," in an inner domain of sovereignty, far removed from the arena of political contest with the colonial state.[17]

This question is also resolved like the question of autonomy of nationalist thought, by putting it in the *inner domain.* Thus the ideology of inner domain is the "sieve" through which the nationalists filtered western ideas. The colonialists perceived this as a problem of the backwardness and therefore the white man's burden or civilizing mission.

Chatterjee explains Hindu men's response to such colonialists' claim, "Indian nationalism, in demarcating a political position opposed to colonial rule, took up the women's question as a problem already constituted for it: namely, as a problem of Indian tradition" (119). In this sphere of tradition\inner domain the nationalists declared their sovereign area. In the materiAoutside domain they had to fight and imitate. But at the same time they had to preserve the *inner core* of the national culture, its spiritual essence. Chatterjee says that it was not a total rejection of the West or modernity, but "an attempt to make modernity consistent with the nationalist project"(121).

Thus, according to the author, the Indian women's question was a question positioned between the competing patriarchies of the colonized and the colonizers. So, here again the Hindus (the author does not use the term Indians here but he uses Hindus) were the victims of the colonialists' Reason as they were in the case of the discourse and politics of nationalism. The 'women's problem' thus became a problem of Indian tradition. Subjecting this tradition/inner domain to a certain degree of reform could liberate Indian women. Thus the subject of women's liberation was totally transferred into the hands of the Hindus (the Hindu male community) themselves. Since it is a matter of Indian tradition/inner domain, the hindu men declared their sovereignty with great ease and thus confined the question of hindu women's liberation within the fringes of the tradition/inner domain. Finally, they had to come up with an agenda, which looked, at least superficially, to be new though at the core it remained one that did not challenge the old system of patriarchy. The new woman, which was the creation of the new patriarchy, thus should be in constant contrast with not only the western woman but also with the native *lower class-caste* woman. The authorities to formulate his argument around this hypothesis.

Thus after confining the Hindu woman to the *inner domain* she is subjected to a *new* patriarchy. This 'new woman' was not only contrasted with the western but also to the indigenous *lower class* woman. He writes:

> The new patriarchy was also sharply distinguished from the immediate social and cultural condition in which the majority of the people lived, for the "new" woman was quite the reverse of the

"common" woman, who was coarse, vulgar, loud, quarrelsome, devoid of superior moral sense, sexually promiscuous, subjected to brutal physical oppression by males (127).

He continues:

It was precisely this degenerate condition of women that nationalism claimed it would reform, and it was through these contrasts that the new woman of nationalist ideology was accorded a status of cultural superiority to the Western women of the wealthy parvenu families spawned by the colonial connection as well as to common women of the lower classes. Attainment by her own efforts of a superior national culture was the mark of woman's newly acquired freedom. This was the central ideological strength of the nationalist resolution of the women's question (127).

Thus Chatterjee tries to locate the question of Hindu women's liberation as a bone of contestation between the British and Hindu men. The more unfortunate result of this author's argument is that the hindu male community has won the game and this victory is unambiguous. First of all it is wrong to put the *upper caste* women' question as a question of Indian woman. Though he recognizes the element of heterogeneity present in the Indian women population, he does not give it due importance through out the text. As a result, he fails to take note of how the *other* women's question of liberation was addressed in the *other* discourses. Apart from preserving and reassigning the banner of 'Indian woman' to the upper caste women the present essay carries various other limitations. One has to keep in mind while understanding this phenomenon that all these limitations are very intimately attached to each other and it is not feasible to pull one out of the web and understand it in isolation. Thus the author's occasional acceptance of the imposition of segregation between the upper caste and *lower class* women by the *new patriarchy* could not do more than token justice to the *other* women.

Portraying "tradition" as a result of the cunning manipulation of the colonialist discourse is another major limitation of the essay. What Partha Chatterjee poses as the new patriarchy (which was a culmination of British colonialism) was not actually new (though in his tone he implies that it was not totally new the article also hints at such results which were new). These kind of differentiaion between the Hindu and the dalit women were definitely prevalent even before the colonial encounter. More fundamentally the women of all communities were carefully guarded since they are the frontiers through which contamination of caste could happen. After elaborating on the dichotomy that was

reinforced between upper caste and lower caste women he writes that the nationalists promised to change this state of women. But the reformation of the lower caste woman was never part of the *nationalist'* manifesto. One thing anybody who deals with Indian patriarchy should keep in mind is that the Indian *nationalists* never promised to change the status of *lower caste* women. It was never, part of their agenda. Right from the days of Rajarammohan Roy to Gandhi what was time and again promised was the liberation of the *upper caste* women (the terms of liberation always depending on the particular perception of the ideologue) not the *lower caste* women. From the issues of Sati to child marriage, female infanticide and devadasi system, every issue that they took up was absolutely the *upper caste* women's.

Chatterjee also writes that in the field of education she was given a chance to prove her autonomous subjectivity. The last sentence he makes on *upper caste* women is that she should prove herself by attaining this culture. Such a statement contradicts his entire analysis. His argument has been that the careful reconstruction of the demarcation of women took place during this period and that there was a simultaneous pushing of *women's* issue into the inner domain. All these safeguards were made to separate the women on community lines. Therefore no upper caste woman needed to exert herself to attain that culture. It was, on the other hand, offered to her. She will only inherit it if she belongs to a *legitimate* social category. When she is already fixed into that elevation what is there for her to attain? Thus the statement that the "attainment by her own efforts of a superior national culture was the mark of woman's newly acquired freedom" is paradoxical to his hypothesis.

In order to save *upper caste* women from proselytization new educational institutions were opened. Formal education occupied a significant place in the nationalist construction of reform regarding women. Chatterjee observes, "It was this particular nationalist construction of reform as a project of both emancipation and self-emancipation of women ...that also explains why the early generation of educated women so keenly propagated the nationalist idea of the "new woman."" Such an explanation simplifies the fact of collusion of hindu women with their men in nationalist

politics. Education is definitely a small motivation to make them collude with their men. But exclusive focus on this undermines the caste motivation, which has historically played a greater role in hierarchising the women of this land. Education definitely played a considerable role in making her appear as a new woman. It is true, as Chatterjee has written, that the "new" patriarchy advocated by nationalism awarded upon women the honor of a new social responsibility, and by connecting the task of female emancipation with the historical goal of sovereign nationhood, tied them to a novel, and yet entirely legitimate subordination. But this subordination is a graded one. Chatterjee seems to agree that this emancipation is graded according to the *castes.* But the problem is that this gradation of women, or conferring of honor to this *new woman* was a heritage of *caste* and thus became an integral part in the reconstitution of nationalism and new patriarchy.

Among the new features, which this *new patriarchy* acquired, it is the emergence of the new dress code that occupied a prominent position. The dress code is one of many things, which underwent changes during this time. The new *badramahila* came up with new ways of attire. Chatterjee writes, "Here too the necessary differences were signified in terms of national identity, social emancipation, and cultural refinement- differences, that is to say, with the memesahib, with women of earlier generations, and with the women of the lower classes" (130). This is again a too simplistic generalization. It could be true that such new dress codes for the *new* women were introduced and accepted and also that they were designed in ways to differentiate this new respectable women from the memsahib and also the women of older generations. But it should be clear that such differences at the level of dress codes always existed between the *upper caste* and the *lower caste* women even prior to this innovation. Whether it is the new women or the women of the older generations, they culturally differentiated themselves very particularly and emphatically from the women of the *lower castes.* And the dress code had a very hegemonic and symbolic relevance in this context. The dress code was one area that *upper caste* communities were very keen to maintain since it would keep the women visibly (therefore immediately) also different. Cloyhing was a caste signifier both in the pre-British colonial period and during it. Producing an *upper caste* woman

according to the new nationalist needs has deep ideological similarities with British colonialism. Himani Bannerji for instance writes:

> The virtuous attire designed for the gentlewoman of Bengal is a reworking of existing and incoming social and cultural forms. This convergence, negotiation and fusion on grounds of cultural common sense and ideology between colonial and indigenous patriarchal class values can only happen because the European forms and norms are not dissimilar to those prevailing in Bengal...The pre-existing social organization thus provides enough ground for weaving in or reworking colonial misogyny, elitism and racism. Fundamentally patriarchal, brahminical rationalism and ascetism is also characterized by a basic hatred and contempt towards women (as natural, physical entities) and the lower castes/ classes as unreconstructed body or nature, and thus collapse;; the woman and the *sudra* (low caste) (127).

Though the above statement makes a problematic analogy between the *lower caste* and *women* (such an analogy blurs the realities of lower caste women and her existence as a specific category) it also carries a powerful argument that the pre-British colonial *Indian* social conditions very much mirror the social ideology of British colonialism. More than this, what the article hints at is the difference that the Brahman classes tried to reimpose especially in the area of attire. The 'unreconstructed body' here is neither that of the *upper caste* women of the older generations nor of the *memsahibs* but of the *lower caste* women. Himani Bannerjee bunches *upper caste* women along with *lower caste* people in the category of what she calls the 'unreconstructed body'. But the problem is that she tries to explain the changes that took place in the attire of the *upper caste* women not that of the lower caste people. The *lower castes* were not expected to change their modes of attire. Thus it is wrong to assume both these categories of people as equally unreconstructed. For instance, this article starts with an epilogue of a Bengali *bhadramahila* Rasundari (whose works have now been extensively exposed in the contemporary writings of feminism) which explains the *bhadramahila*'s painful experiences with *purdha.* Such a veil was not recommended for the *lower caste* women nor was this the new dress code. Though the new dress code differentiated the women of older generations from the new *badramahilas*, they nevertheless did not make the differences that existed in the dress codes of the *lower caste* women and the Bengali upper caste women of the older generations disappear. Thus it is not the difference between the old and new woman but the *upper* and *lower caste* women which deserves real scrutiny. Thus it is totally wrong on the part of Partha Chatterjee to make a

generalization on the conditions of the new *upper caste* woman without feeling the same responsibility towards the *unrecontituted* category called the *lower caste* woman.

The *upper caste* woman is also imagined as an exaltation of woman as goddess. She is also adulated as an embodiment of nation. These two metaphors are often used interchangeably. Such images also served to wipe off the sexuality of this category of women. The *upper caste* thus becomes an asexual and predominantly spiritual being. Chatterjee proceeds to explain important implications of such constructs. Unlike middle class employment which is a major field of competition between the various *cultural groups*, "in the entire period of nationalists and postcolonial politics in India, gender has never been an issue of political contention" (131). Without addressing this gap properly or giving any historical account, he moves to point out how suffrage rights were readily given to women after 1947. This he shows as an example to point that the *upper caste men* efficiently managed to relegate the *Indian women 's* question to the *inner domain* and that neither the *upper caste* women's participation or their resistance counted much in the process. In the following chapter "Women and the Nation" he in fact tries to argue that women did resist to confine themselves to the *inner domain.* But he denies any autonomy to such resistances because finally he locates this resistances again in the realm of the *inner domain.* The moral domain of this inner sphere rejects the instance of Binodini's resistance as illegitimate. Thus it cannot be lined up along with the resistances of the *upper caste* women). It is not true that gender has never been an issue of political contention during the nationalist period. Apart from Sarojini Naidu's sudden jump into the Gandhi led Congress, there were women like Subbarayan etc; who tried to keep the women's rights movement an autonomous one. It was during the time of constitutional debates in the Constituent Assembly that a few educated *upper caste* women with the complete support of Ambedkar tried to cany this legacy forward. The chapter "The Politics of Protective Discrimination and the Postcolonial Theory" would explain how energetically gender stood as an issue of political contention and also operated as a powerful force in blocking the political contentions of the *other cultural groups.* Mainstream gender politics during nationalist period (especially in the field of political rights) does not look as vehement as the politics of the Muslims or Dalits. This because

the mainstream women's movement sharing the political agendas and sentiments of the mainstream nationalist movement.

How did *the* women's question succumb to nationalist tactics so easily? It is because this "new" patriarchy was not so new after all. The only thing that happened was the adjustment of the existing hindu patriarchy to the needs of modernized patriarchy. The other more interesting point that the Chatterjee makes, is that the reform of the *inner domain* could only be carried out by the concerned community and that the state would not take up this task. The nation thus fails to represent the minorities since "the formation of a hegemonic "national culture," was in turn defined by a system of exclusions" (134). This in turn excluded a vast masses of people from the new life of the nation. Therefore when the "new" patriarchy was built as a cultural construct, the author finally repeats that the nationalist discourse not only differentiated its cultural essence as distinct from that of the West but also from that of the mass of the people, During the nationalist construction of the 'new woman[1] a competition between the colonialist and the nationalist discourses took place and the dichotomies of spiritual/material, home/world, feminine/masculine etc; remained ensnared within its framework of bogus essentialisms. The story of false essentialisms is doubtless true. But did not gender struggle take place outside the domain of the dominant *inner domain?* They did taken place. After all it was not only the Hindu woman who had participated in anti-colonial fights. Sangari and Vaid focus on the participation of *other* women in political movements: "Democratising movements were potentially more revolutionary not only because they brought women of the most oppressed strata, who constitute the majority, into a struggle for their rights, but also because in fighting for their class rights women did attain an enhanced sense of self-respect..."[18]

In the following essay "Women and the Nation" Chatterjee sees *inner domain* as the main archival source to inscribe the history of struggles of women. As the above observation clarifies various tribal, Dalit and lower class women have participated in these struggle and to register their participation one needs to move away from the narrow *inner domain* hypothesis. Such a move also demands the very dismantling of the inner domain as a legitimate sphere for politico-historical investigations. Therefore,

Chatterjee's idea of *inner domain* as the main archival source to write the history of struggles of women cannot be suggested to those scholars who decide to write about the struggles of *other* women.

In another of his essays, "Women and the Nation" Chatteerjee affirms that the inner domain provides the best sources to understand the women's issue therefore he presents five autobiographies of women. Through these he hopes to trace the history of struggles and subordination that these women have undertaken. Chatteerjee has treated mainstream nationalism as the only type of nationalists struggle, which has operated and succeeded in bringing independence. He has analyzed the various betrayals that it is guilty of while doing this kind of nationalism. Even so he fails to consider the other types of nationalisms and nationalist struggles that were operating during that time. If he had taken them also into consideration he would have had to include how *other* women responded to the nationalist false essentialisms and also their brand of nationalism.

He explains that education made the *upper caste* women *"new"*. Partha Chatterjee writes of Bankim Chatterjee's ideas of women, "In the past, women were uneducated, and therefore coarse, vulgar, and quarrelsome" (135). However, the *"new" upper caste* women did not easily succumb to this new patriarchy. Partha Chatteerjee writes that it is a *history of struggle.* All the archives that deal with women depict them as contributors to nationalist politics (not as doers). Thus Partha explains that it is in the inner space of middle class *upper caste* homes that one can find sources of autonomous subjectivity of "women". Thus he looks into five autobiographies of such educated women. Shanta Nag, Rasundari Debi, Saradasundari Debi, Kailasbasini Debi, Prasannamayi Debi were the five *badramahilas* whose autobiographies Partha Chatteerjee has included for study. He explains that the *upper caste* home is the original site in which the hegemonic project of nationalism was launched. But their complicity with the nationalist project carried public implications.

The insertion of the autobiography of Binodini, a prostitute and a theatre artist is very crucial here (she is most likely to be from a lower caste, for she hailed from a slum

and her mother had hired her to the theatre). He writes, betrayal was the "...central theme of Binodini's autobiography". (152). However much she tried she could not get respectability like the *badramahila*.

A pessimistic Afterword:

In this concluding part of the essay Chatteerjee refers to Said's focus on an unresolved tension between the fixed identity as it is provided by affirmative agencies like nationality, education, tradition etc and the anti-systemic forces on the other hand. In the Middle East a great range of violence took place in the name of patriotic affirmation of identity. Therefore it is important on the part of the intellectuals to maintain some amount of suspicion, and distance from such projects. Chatterjee finds a kind of liberal paradox in Said's suggestion and therefore denies it.

But in trying to avoid such a paradox what Partha Chatterjee does is to negate the possibility of any such 'all-too-easy identification' claimed by every nation-state. According to Partha this 'easy identification' is not a reliable task. This is because for him most of the historical achievements of nationalism were achieved outside the realm of the state. Moreover, this was completed much before the actual transfer of power took place. He also suggests that such a realization involves the act of re-writing the history with new actors, new chronology and so on.

It is here he explains that the cultural history of nationalism held many possibilities for genuine, creative and plural growth of social identities. He argues that these identities were violently dislocated by the political history of the postcolonial state that was trying to duplicate the modular forms of the modern nation-state. Official liberality of the new domain of the postcolonial state easily appropriates the marginalized voices\identities like Binodini's. But still she enjoys no respectable space within the ethical domain of the national community. So, he concludes that the ethical domain of the nation **is still** a contested area. This conclusion is also a replica of postcolonial theory's general tendency to draw controversial conclusions without any concrete theoretical

possibility **and** solution. If Binodini is unacceptable in the national community it is the ethical standards of it, which need to be looked at. As Partha Chatteerjee himself has suggested this ethical domain is not where the ideology of the new state (which always tries to follow the modular forms of the West) rules. But this ethical\inner domain is kept intact by establishing the sovereignty of the upper castes. When the inner domain is already immune to the interferences of the state then how can the state's pursuit of modular forms of ruling becomes a point of intellectual scrutiny here? The real emphasis should be on *upper caste's* prejudiced code of morality, which enclosed the ethical domain of the nation. Therefore the point of contest here is more than the liberal paradox that emanates due to the appropriation of marginalized identities by the state in its haste to imitate the western modular forms of ruling. Re-writing the history of the inner domain in more inclusive ways is desirable but such a project does not lead us anywhere when one is not ready to acknowledge the real decisive actors behind it. This is because the problem here is not with an 'all-too-easy identification' but with the meaning-making mechanism that structures the parlance of identities. Here it is this mechanism structured in the inner domain, which denied any respectable place for Binodini.

What the scholar tries to argue is that this 'all-too-easy identification' in itself does not carry any ideological mission. Its prominence relies on how one uses it. For instance, Binodini has found a place at least as a veteran artist in the public domain due to this mechanism of 'easy identification'. The state should be praised for its tactics of appropriations, because such honorable appropriations are unimaginable in a state, which does not follow the modular forms (set by the west) and also an apparatus of readymade identification. In other words, resisting historic voices like Binodini's has got a place of acclaim in the realms of public domain simply because the state was able to at least seek the modular form of the west. As the inner domain of the nation restricted the state's intervention, the state also at least superficially restricted the nation to intervene in its outer domain. This was in order to maintain that it (the state) is not prone to be effected by the nation (the *upper castes).* Binodini got a place of reverence especially due to this state's attempts to seek the modular forms set by the west and its determination to maintain a democratic face vis-à-vis the marginalized communities. But such a plain

inclination towards the state's ways of managing the marginalized identities from the researcher's side should not be understood as her unequivocal support of the state. Such a plain preference of the state blurs the amicable correspondence that exists between the inner domain of the nation and the state. What the researcher is trying to point out is that the denial of all the aids of the state in preference to the loosely constituted nation (with an intention of producing a more authentic, *indigenous* history) is itself an *upper caste* academic luxury.

Other limitations of the text includes an overemphasis on the undaunted victories of the *inner domain.* For instance, in this text all the times the *upper castes* appear as the winners over the *others.* Though Partha Chatteerjee agrees about all the politics behind its composition, his repeated suggestion is that all history of the nation and nationalism lurks in this domain. This, as has been demonstrated, is highly contestable. Such excessive highlighting of the *inner domain* denies the autonomous role that the *other women* have played in Indian history. Though he tries to record the stories of betrayal as embodied in Binodini, there are other histories, which unlike Binodini, are denied space even in the neutral public domain of the state. If the state is situated to maintain a liberal *outer domain* which can appropriate supposedly disreputable identities like that of Binodini's, it is not due to its love for marginalized identities. Such appropriations, on the other hand marks the success of the fights of *others* in forcing the state to divulge such possibilities. Another fundamental feature of the politics of the *other,* besides the fact that they quit the standards set by the sneaky *inner domain,* is that they continuously negotiate with the *outer domain.* The measures of these fights are not set by either the inner or the outer domains of the land, which are structured by the caste logic but by the rational logic developed by centuries of human struggle against oppressive sections. It matters very little whether such rational logic for human liberation is developed in the East or the West.

It is also to be noted that the generic use of the term "subaltern" and "masses" by the postcolonial scholars is as problematic as the 'all-too-easy identification' that they allege of the modern nation-state. It is a wrong hypothesis to believe that the *masses* were

carried away by the charisma or the intellectual fake moral leadership of the hindu nationalist elite. It must then be the same case with the *other* women as well. The *other* women too have resisted being ostracized by the fake essentialist dichotomies that were being regularly reproduced by the hindu male nationalists. If, the history of the subjection of women to this new patriarchy must be a history struggle as Chatteerjee explains, then the struggle of the *other* women must also be counted as an equally vital issue. If the elevated hindu women were able to grasp the fakeness of the resolution offered to their question, the *other* women must also have been keen to register their politics of resistance. The author has tried to record this by exemplifying Binodini's case. But for Binodini the *upper caste* morals and merits (in the art field) were the standards. As explained above her case endorses Chatterjee's version of upper castes as the sole winners of the nation. It is because of that that Binodini's story of resistance or subordination finally remains a story of utter betrayal. The question of the *other* women was solved outside the *inner domain* of the Hindus. Unlike Binodini, for them acceptance in the *inner domain* was not the final destination, conversely their liberation was visualized on the very destruction of it.

Well, more than the problem of liberating Indian nationalism from the modular forms given by the west what troubles the Dalit feminist is whether the author himself has really re-problematized the *all-too-easy identification* so openly claimed by the Indian hindutva state? As the above-analyzed articles show it is clear that Chatterjee did not problematize their identification. What is worse is that he has applied these identities as they were and gone on to justify them. He has only liberated the conservative nationalist thought of the upper castes from the grand narratives of western Reason like liberal, Marxist etc. He has taken almost a decade to include the others like *peasants*, Dalits, and upper caste women as some quarters where the nationalist activity have taken place. Nevertheless, the text reveals that he has not made use of the epistemological tool of re-problematizing the *all-too-easy-identification* that he had raised when studying the modern nation's rush to appropriate certain marginalized voices.

Such a deliberate identification of *upper caste* people as full-pledged national subjects has performed more than one purpose. First, as the text itself reveals, Indian nationalism is freed from any modern rational examination. By liberating their activity from the frames of western modern knowledge they are also saved from any possible sense of guilt for being anti-*others*. A critique that is raised by the dalits that native thought only rejuvenates parochial traditional practices is rubbished as a critique coming from western liberal thought or as an argument, which lacks 'commonsense'.[19] Such a criticism would also face the danger of being labeled as anti-autonomous nationalist thought. Consequently, Dalit nationalist thought, which draws its criticism both from its own knowledge system and also from western Reason would become an anti-nationalist thought. Once the oppressive traditional thought system is relieved of critiques from a counter epistemology, any critique against it becomes impossible. In other words hindu nationalist thought does not leave its critique any epistemological ground to prepare a criticism against it. A criticism ought to come only from the total negation of it. Thus it is impossible to consider the proposal of *re-problematizing the all-loo-easy identification* within the terrain of the *inner domain* as preferred by this author.

Chaterjee's views have resonance with Franz Fannon's idea of how Algerian nationalism veiled and unveiled the Algerian women.[20] The difference is that Fannon's Algerian woman was asked to unveil herself to launch a warfare on the colonialists. But in the case of Chatteerjee's analysis the *upper caste* woman was unveiled to prove to the colonialists that the *inner domain* was already under reform in its own terms and that it was beyond the reach of the colonialists. Like Franz Fannon, Chatterjee also sees gender as a nationalist question and both of the writers resolved it only as a nationalist problem. In the analysis of both these writers the nation overpowers gender by embracing it. As in the case of Indian nationalist thought, in the case of 'Indian women' also Chatteerjee has followed the postcolonial tradition of writing only the selective history' of the dominant sections. For instance, unlike the case of hindu women, the dalit woman as a category is not merely overpowered but completely consumed in his analysis of the nation and its women.

In the essay "Nationalist Resolution of Women's Question" Partha Chatteerjee incorporated only direct, and easily yielding national categories. Hindu gender was considered as the prime category that dissolves into the nation, whereas the category Dalit does not. If he had taken caste instead of gender to show that the imagination of nation in India followed true indigenous lines, this work would have been self-defeating for him. When Chateerjee was following this mode of framing history it was obvious that Dalit as a category of analysis would be omitted. The Hindu *gender* was one consisting of the non-resisting constituents of the *inner domain* (even when it resisted radically it did not reject the caste logic of the inner domain entirely) whereas the Dalit was a resisting autonomous sphere whose politics was aimed at the dismantling of the *inner domain.* For Partha Chatterjee, to proceed with his scheme of the inner domain needed a humble and loyal or a readily yielding constituent of the inner domain. The Hindu women became handy for this purpose.

It is in the illustration of the partial liberation of this readily yielding element of the Hindu *inner domain,* namely the Hindu woman, that the *other woman* finds a place. She comes to perform a role as a glaring contrast to the Hindu woman. When he wanted to indicate the false liberation of the Hindu woman, he needed a contrasting background upon which to highlight the oppressive liberation and re-ensnarement of the Hindu woman within the boundaries of the "new" patriarchy. The *other* woman enters here as a dark background against which the oppression of the *upper caste* women could be measured and tallied. It is difficult to criticize Chatteerjee for not placing the lower caste women in his analysis, for he did place her in mainstream academic literature. But she comes as a maidservant, as a *background* to make the portrayal of the Hindu women complete and perfect and gloriously visible. Partha Chatteerjee acknowledges that the Hindu woman was made to stand on a pedestal. When he had to portray how she ascended that pedestal he had to inevitably mention the footstool, which came *handy* for the Hindu woman's ascendancy. Here, in the context of portraying the Hindu women's ascendancy as a legitimate, female subject, the Dalit woman's role as footstool comes into the scene. This ascendancy was a renewal and re-confirmation of the old ascendancy. Conspicuously Chatteerjee has not used the phrase "lower caste" as much as he has used

"lower class". Thus we don't come across a term "caste patriarchy", it obtains only a generic title 'indigenous patriarchy'. In Partha Chatterjee's theory the reality of caste patriarchy is overshadowed by the intersection of supremacist notions of nation and dominant accounts of gender. Thus though the *lower caste* woman makes her entry into the academic analysis, she has to content herself with being in the fringes of its texts.

As Dalit woman could not be addressed as a 'pure' inner domain, she could not be also addressed as a 'national' item. She is not connate to the national culture, therefore she cannot be addressed as a national question. Like many post-colonial theories, which eclipse the category Dalit, Chatteerjee's articles on gender and nation consume the category called Dalit woman. Also it should be equally noted that the dubious usage of 'class' to denote this specific phenomenon *of* women and nation should be dropped. Unless and, until the postcolonial scholars decide to consider these epistemological issues, the Dalit woman would be kept aloof from appearing in their theory. It is precisely due to this inaccuracy that the Dalit woman is present as not more than a footnote in the postcolonial text of nation and *its* women.

Hindu women, as illustrated in the chapter "Understanding the Protective Discrimination", became willing partners to the extension of hindutva rule in India during the *nationalist* period. Though Gandhi in later years tried to *absorb* Dalits as he has done the women, the already politicized Dalit community did not succumb. Chatterjee does not mention that Hindu nationalists tried and failed to absorb the Dalits. His texts narrate only the heroic victories of the Hindu nationalists. Colonizers had seen women and also Dalits in the colonized lands as oppressed. They were readymade proof of the degeneration of *upper caste* rule on the land. Whenever the British wanted to prick the ruling class of the natives, the caste question along with the gender question used to be deployed by them. Chatteerjee has partially responded to the myth of the white man's burden when he poses Hindu woman as those who were in the list of the white man's burden. It would have been fatal for his PC theory to deal with the Dalit in the same way as he dealt with the *Indian woman.* Also his willful negligence to address how the upper caste have responded\not responded to the Dalit question from a pragmatic point of view

(not from the usual mystical or spiritual point of view) makes one doubt the veracity of his theory. For instance, nowhere does he take up other axis of analysis like class or the violent nature of caste ordinances etc. in his theory.

If the nation is an imagined community, that imagination is also intensely gendered…on caste lines. Caste patriarchy is central to the imagination, conceptualization and expression of nationalist fights and relations that brought it into being. Hindu nationalist fantasies were predicated on the expulsion of Dalit women from the counters of legitimate femininity. At the level of analysis Dalit women sometimes appear as a setting for the demonstration of the more *real* nationalist forces like Hindus and their women. It is finally soothing to the dominant Hindu woman to understand that even when she is re-'caste'd, she is neverd e-'caste'd.

Partha Chatteerjee takes a celebrative tone in these texts. This is unsurprising for him, since after all his aim was to declare to the West that Indian nationalism was not totally an imitative imagination of the west. Since he has already taken the position of resistance to western knowledge frames, he cannot now accuse Indian nationalism of having reproduced indigenous patriarchies without jeopardizing his basic argument that the national imagination took place in the inner domain in an autonomous scale and that it was democratic enough. Either the West's modernity/ colonialism or India's tradition/autonomous nationalist thought/the ideology of inner domain have to be retained and Partha Chatteerjee decides to keep the latter. Thus the collusion of this postcolonial text with the dominant entities of gender and caste has chased out Dalit women from the academic sphere of today.

Dirks argues:

> If, as Partha Chatterjee has suggested, the "women's question" thus disappeared from nationalist discussion, the same was true of the "caste question." Indeed, in some ways caste was an extension of the "women's question," given the extent to which caste values-in particular upper-caste values-**were** implicated in the issues that were targeted by social reformers concerning the treatment of **women,** such as sati, widow remarriage, and the age of consent. By the early twentieth century, a growing number of nationalist figures were less concerned that caste might be antipathetic to nationalism than they were with the possibility that a preoccupation with caste reform would retard nationalist mobilization, or give moral support to Britain. Either nationalism would transcend caste identities, they thought, or caste problems would be addressed later, after independence (232).

Though, apparently Dirks argument looks convincing in its conclusion that caste disappeared like gender from the nationalist quarters, the idea that caste is an extension of the gender question is a mistaken one. *Caste/dalit,* as the above analysis tries to prove, (Dirks unfortunately uses *caste* for Dalit. Therefore read Dalit for *caste* here) is unlike the category of *upper caste* women who did not readily yield to the inner domain. The greatest victory of the Dalit movement lies here, that it did not succumb to the idea that it was one of the categories of the inner domain. Such a rejection registers two resistances. One is that it demands us to treat this inner domain as a public one and therefore a potently political domain. Secondly, that the dalit movement is capable of defying its conspiracies of assimilations and despicable patronization. Moreover the steering wheel of the *caste*\Dalit question or movement was not in the hands of *upper caste* nationalists. It rather operated and continued independent of the nationalist's strategics for *independence.* The very beauty of the Dalit movement in fact lies in its ceaseless fight against the *upper caste* nationalist tactics of snubbing or deferring the question of the Dalits as well as in its resistance to be absorbed by the hindutva elements. Thus Dirks argument that the "caste question" disappeared from nationalist discussions just as the "women's question" did, confer only a passive status on Dalit politics which is not true.

The other major limitation of Dirks analysis lies in his idea that the caste question was an extension of women's question. This is also an absolutely problematic proposition since as the present thesis has been trying to prove; women *(upper caste)* never entertained the *caste*\Dalit question to operate as a continuation of itself. This is because their movements were constituted separately and directed against the Dalits. Chronologically also it is the Dalit movement and its assertions that appeared first not the *upper caste* women's movement. More fundamentally it is the Dalit movement under the leadership of Ambedkar, which tried to give life to the women's rights movement after independence. It is appropriate to include an observation of Aloysius here, "The society and history of pre-modern India cannot be reduced to the dialectics of castes; several other contradictions such as gender, class, ethnic-region., etc were operational throughout its long history. However the overarching form of contradiction, providing a scaffold for

all others, suffusing both base and superstructure of society was *caste.* Within this framework the different contradictions aligned and jostled for primacy. Gender oppression appeared as a function of caste-patriarchy…Conversely, attempts to rescue these different contradictions- gender, class and ethnic-region- were invariably part and parcel of most anti-caste movements." (p. 30). Therefore, to see the Dalit question as simply surrendered to the inner domain or as a continuation of the 'women's question' is to put the cart before the horse.

Himani Bannerjee:

Himani Bannerjee explains that Bengali *upper caste* women participated in the creation of the "new woman".[21] Such a view contradicts with the positions taken by Partha Chatterjee and Sumantho Bannerjee (Himani Banerjee inserts a critique to Sumantho Banerjee's book "The Parlour and the Streets"and this criticism can be extended as well to his article "Women's Popular Culture in 19th Century Bengal", which is deconstructed in this chapter), She interprets various social reform projects of the 19th century as moments in the battle of hegemony. Thus she calls this dominant Hindu castes' attitude to take control of the rest of society through the reformative efforts as passive revolution which attempts at the changing of the commonsense of classes. This idea of attributing the Gramscian concept of passive revolution to this phenomenon can be thoroughly problematized as done in the previous chapter titled "Critique on the Postcolonial theory of Caste and Dalit Politics". But apart from this, her text can be seen to be making more meaningful and deeper inroads into the concept of women's liberation in the 19th century unlike the two authors discussed above. She explains that the issue of *upper caste* women's liberation was taken up by the *upper castes* as part of changing morals. This was necessary, the scholar explains, because the hegemonic agenda was necessarily a moral one. Education of women thus acquired a status of the chief moral ideological tool. She rightly explicates that these women were seeking a leadership role in the larger society "as 'women' members of propertied classes" (137). Consequently, she sees the upper caste women of Bengal's predilection for education "as one of the hegemonic agendas advanced by competing agents for their roles and places within

nationalist politics" (144). Himani Bennerji rejects the notion of the *badramahila* as one that was meekly absorbed into the inner domain set by the upper caste as Partha Chatterjee has argued. Such a conception confining the women's question to the raise, growth and development of nationalist development is a serious fallacy of Chatterjee's theory.

Bannerjee explains that new typologies had been formed in the political process of sorting out the Hindu women's question. But she too docs not spare space for examining how the images of the *other* woman were reproduced in the construction of these new typologies. The major outcome of this typology, she perceives, is the mother figure. She continues to examine how women's education was sought in the same dominant structure of emergent nationalism. The *upper caste woman* was caught in ideologically interpellated forms of subjectivities. However, the Hindu women's dependence on the colonialists for emancipation posed a threat to Bengali masculinity. The author explains:

> The point of conflict rages not around the fact that women 'come out', or that they are literate and so on, but against the very terms and conditions for their own emancipation...The fragile masculinity of Bengali middle class males, 'feminized' by the colonial relations and discourse, felt fundamentally threatened by the epistemologies, social views and demands of such women, and saw them as emasculators (171).

The author makes note here of another important dimension that *upper caste* women's emancipation was carried by these women beyond the limits of control of the *upper caste* male and also of nationalism. But this subjectivity, partly borrowed from the modes of the colonizers is both motivating and circumscribing. Thus finally this category has to come back to the moral cultural code of class-caste hegemony set by nationalism.

What this essay shares with the other writings of PC scholars is a general, passing comment on the existence of *internal fissures.* Like most of the texts (deconstructed in this chapter), this article also does not spare space for what these fissures are. To reiterate, Bannerji does not include even a mention of the *other woman* even when she

explains that the objective of women's education was to construct typologies and socialize women (through the strategy of commonsense).

Ashis Nandy:

Ashis Nandy is mainly responsible for setting an apolitical psychoanalytical trend in the study of Indian nation and sexuality. He excuses himself for his irresponsible, apolitical writing by using the strangely specific alibi of being a psychologist. According to him power, activism and, aggression, in India are not so particularly associated with masculinity. In the folklore and mythologies of India these powerful qualities are very often associated with women. Nandy thus unproblematically bunches together all hindu nationalists like Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Gandhi together as a nationalist group which was trying to give a new sacredness to the concept of national woman in an essentially apolitical society like India. In his words "Even Gandhi tried to give a new dignity to women by making a new equation between womanliness and political potency". [22]Ashis Nandy was one of the first in modern times to celebrate 'the homology between sexual and political dominance' (4), which he says western colonialism has used invariably. Some of the contemporary writers have later developed their theories based mainly on this hypothesis.[23] Nandy argues that Indian nationalists had developed an alternative definition of masculinity, which related in a way to the western stereotype of the feminised Indian man. It borrowed its elements from masculinity, femininity and androgyny, which he considers intrinsic to Hindu culture. This emphasis of Nandy on androgeneity becomes possible only by labeling western sexual culture as culturally and morally inferior to that of colonized India. Such a notion essentializes the sexual typologies of the East and the West besides also setting up an unsustainable binary of the East and the West. According to Nandy, Gandhi was the one who most successfully took up the task of forging an alternate masculinity. He did it by drawing resources from native gendered cultural forms. Gandhi brought psychology as a means of agency for anti-colonial political practice. He took up feminine strategies like *Satyagraha,* inspired on the principle of *shakthi.* According to Nandy, Gandhi is almost a divine person who was able to become an embodiment of incompatible sexual forms like

femininity, masculinity and androgenity. He displayed various realities to various communities, to the western people he was a feminised person, to the Indians he was a saint. But considering woman as inferior to man/political world is new to this land. It was much prevalent even before the British launched its hegemonic mission. Elaboration of this point can be seen in the next chapter, "Hindu Religious Nationalist Ideology and the Dalit Woman".

Sudhir Kakar:

Sudhir Kakar in his article "Feminine Identity in India" argues for a singular feminine identity in India based on the prescriptions lay out in the Hindu scriptures. He writes "Whether her family is poor or wealthy, whatever her caste, class or region ...an Indian woman knows that motherhood confers upon her a purpose and identity that nothing else in her culture can."[24] By prioritizing biologically determined motherhood to culture Kakar refuses to understand the caste and class specificity of motherhood. He further writes, " Her identity as a Hindu woman has evolved out of the dailiness of her relationships as daughter to her parents' family, as wife and daughter-in-law in her husband's family, out of the universals of the traditional ideals of womanhood absorbed by her from childhood onwards"(44). Perhaps Kakar could explicate what the universals of the traditional ideals of the Dalit woman are. Though Kakar spares one and half pages for his "rural sisters" what he immediately takes up for examination are the *upper caste* mythical images of Sita, Damayanthi, Savitri, Satyabhama, Sandhya, Shakunthala, Parvathi etc. Kakar sees motherhood as empowering to the Hindu woman. He writes, "...it is through their children's instrumentality that the injustice done to the mothers is redressed and they assumed their rightful positions." What happened to the mothers of Ekalavya, Sambhuka, Surpanaka and Thataki? Why did these mythological characters fail to be instrumental in doing justice to their mothers? Why did only sons like Lava, Kusa, or Dushyantha "succeed" in being instrumental for their mothers assuming "rightful" positions like becoming queens? Is it not because the author had taken examples of mythological Hindu women who belonged to the *winning* community?

Conclusion:

The above analysis explains the various spillovers in the mainstream literature **on 'Indian** women', written by postcolonial writers and mainstream feminists who share more or less the same academic sentiments. The entire nationalist debate on woman was concerned with the re-definitions of Hindu woman and her tradition. What was at stake was not Dalit woman but a generic Indian woman, that is Hindu woman. There is only a silence and absence where the Dalit women should be. How does one theorise this? Her subjectivity has never been put to discussion, she has never been represented. Thus, nobody knows how they lived, what they thought, how they suffered, how they labored and how and in what all ways they were humiliated. This silence and absence of Dalit woman in the nationalist discourse, then and now, in post-colonial debates is particularly emblematic of the uninterrupted continuation of *caste* patriarchy. In sell-styled post-colonial studies, identities like that of the Dalit failed to assume even a place of reference, leave alone that of subject.

All the dimensions of colonialism whether economic or political definitely touched the Dalit woman. The fact is simple: she is also a subject in this land. Moreover she, was more victimized by colonialism and casteism than any other community. Their subservience and free appropriation of their labour was decisive to the most lumpenised *upper caste* community and the Hindu society which fed on the labour of the Dalits for ages. Thus, despite other clashes and contests, Hindu men and women often colluded to keep the Dalit woman in her place throughout history and specifically during the British colonial period. The phantom of her real liberation haunted them. The complicity of Hindu women with their men was fundamental to the making of the politics related to nation and *caste.* When Hindu women were called upon to play the symbolic role of mother to the nation, Dalit women were recalled for their old role of *dasi*-the inessential woman. Any attempt of liberation from their side was signified as an encroachment whereas the *upper caste* women came to mark the boundaries of the nation. Thus Dalit women became objects of extreme hostility. They were not asked to act on behalf of the nation. Their names were not enrolled in the nationalist script. The Hindu nationalist leadership, be it male or female, never showed any ambiguity to the Dalit women's

question. They were very clear. They never theorized their relation with the Dalit women since such an act would have acknowledged the existence of Dalit woman as an academic and political subject. The principle of universal equality explicit in their theories did not offer her any specific rights based on her most oppressed status. Their language and script was inclusive and liberal to a limited extent but their real politics have been completely exclusionary and hierarchical.

The concept of third world woman is always employed by the mainstream Indian women writers to effectively shut the western white women's ethnocentric arguments. Why did they invent this generic term the 'Third world women' when social categories like *caste* and religion operate so relentlessly in India'? Chandra Talpade Mohanty comments on western feminist writings notes that they "discursively colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/ re-presenting a composite, singular "Third World Woman" -an image which appears arbitrarily constructed, but nevertheless carries with it the authorizing signature of Western humanist discourse."[25] Asian women and African women are depicted in stereotypical ways. bell hooks (she writes her name in small letters) notes this; "I became fascinated by how a lot of the stereotypes for the Asian women ("•passive," "nonassertive," "quite") are just the opposite of the stereotypes that plague black women ("aggressive", "loud", "mean"). It's like we exist in two radically different poles in the economy of racism. And it's those positioning that make it hard for Asian women and black women to come together..."[26]. bell hooks would be able to find the equivalent of black woman in the Asian Dalit woman not in the Asian Hindu woman.

Another limitation of PC theory is that it portrays sexual and colonial relationships in analogous terms. They develop their theories on how the colonized women and the colony can be seen as identical. But there is a difference. There is also a subversion of the logic, some women are not seen eligible to be possessed but only are seen as objects of sheer ravishment. The next chapter on "Hindu Religious Nationalist Ideology and Dalit woman" explains how Dalit women were seen as unfit to be essential orientals. Unlike the upper caste woman the Dalit woman was not an enigma. She is a labourer handy for any kind of labour. Clearly then, caste and gender are not distinct but

mutually intensifying categories. These crucibles of caste, class and gender are not additive but serve and intensify each other. As the case of indentured labour suggests,[27] it is not merely that the Dalit women were sexually subjected but that their labour and sexual services were used to feed the very economic system of colonialism. Swasthi Mitter explains that colour and sex arc "the main principles behind the most recent international division of labour".[1] In the Indian case it is the Dalit woman who is the source of this labour. But it is very difficult to find Indian theories on the nation focusing their main premise on this dimension.

Notes:

[1] Andrew Parker et.al. (eds.), Nationalisms and sexualities, New York: Routledge, 1992; Ann Mary Tetreault, "Accountabity or Justice? Rape as a War Crime," in Laurel Richardson, Verta Taylor, and Nancy Whittier (eds.), Feminist Frontiers IV, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997; Deborah Gaitskell and Elaine Unterhalter, "Mothers of the Nation: A Comparative Analysis of Nation, Race and Motherhood in Afrikaner Nationalism and the African National Congress," in Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (eds.), Women N at ion and State, London: Macmillion, 1989; Kathryn Manzo, Creating Boundaries: The Polities of Race and Nation, Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner, 1996; Spike Pereson, "Gendered Nationalism", Peace Review, 6: 1: 77-83, 1994; ;Yuval-Davis, N. and Anthias, F (eds.), Women-Nation-State, London: Macmillan, 1989; Zillah Eisenstein, The Color of Gender. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994.

[2] Kumari Jayawardene, Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World, London: Zed Books, 1986; Gail Pearson, "Reserved Seats-Women and the Vote in Bombay," in J.Krishnamurthy (ed.), Women in Colonial India, Delhi: OUP, 1989, Jana Lverett Mattson, Women and Social Change in India, New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1979.

[3] An article written by Nanditha Gandhi and Nanditha Shah is a good example of this. While tracing the lineage of the movement they write that by the 1930s many women participated in the Non-Cooperation and Civil Rights movement launched by Gandhi. They write "many leaders forged strong links between the two movements." They cite no background for the major shifts that took place due to this involvement in the Gandhi-led movements. And there is no mention of Ambedkar's support to this movement in their essay. See, Nandita Gandhi and Nanditha Shah, The Issues at Stake: Theory and Practice in the Contemporary Women's Movement in India, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1993, pp. 15-16; also see "Introduction" in Nanditha Gandhi, When the Rolling Pins Hit the Streets: Women in the Anti-Price Rise Movement in Maharastra, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996. There are numerous examples like this.

[4] H.C.Upadyaya, Status of Women in India, Vol.1, New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1991, p.64.

[5] Santhosh Gupta, "Feminist Interventions in Postcolonial Theory". in Jasbir Jain and Avadesh Kumar Singh (eds.), Indian Feminisms, New Delhi: Creative Books, 2001.

[6] Spivak. Outside the Teaching Machine, New York: Routledge, 1993.

[7] Sara Suleri, *Critical Inquiry*, 18, Summer 1992, pp. 75-69.

[8] Tharu, Susie and K. Lalitha, 1991, Women Writing in India, vols. 1&2, New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York.

[9] Even a radical liberal like Jawaharlal Nehru was not exception to this. Despite his apparent faith in modernity he was motivated by a sense of an essential India in his nationalist foundational fiction *Discovery of India*.

[10] Almost similar accounts on the demise of devadasi system during the British colonial period can be found in— Janaki Nair, "The Devadasi, Dharma and the State", EPW, Dec 10, 1994, pp. 3157-3 167.

[11] Sumantho Banerjee, "Women's Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Bengal", in Recasting Women, Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (eds), New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989, pp. 130.

[12] An essay on "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi" is another one, which falls into this category.

[13] ibid, pp.4.

[14] There is a sentence in this book where Banerjee describes how many of the female writers came from "respectable homes". See pp.160. Indian intellectuals should stop writing in this manner at least in these 'deconstructed' days if only to respect the women who don't hail from such respectable domains.

[15] Partha Chatterjee, "Caste and Subaltern Consciousness", in Subaltern Studies VI, (ed) Ranajit Guha, Delhi: OUP, 1992, pp. 169-209.

[16] Uma Chakravarthy, "Whatever Happened to Vedic Dasi?", Recasting Women, Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (eds). New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989,pp.79.

[17] Partha Chatterjee, "Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question", in Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History, Kumkum Sangari and Sudhesh Vaid (eds.), New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990, p. 117.

[18] op.cit. Sangari and Vaid, 20.

[19] In his essay "Nation and its Outcastes" Partha Chatterjee portrays the reservation struggles of dalits as fights for artha and not for dharma. Therefore, he suggets that the 'universal dharma' be raised by the common sense of the masses. What this means is that he considers the dalit intellect that was invested in making the fight for reservation as lacking in commonsense.

[20] Fannon. A Dying Colonialism, trans. H. Chevalier, New York: Grove Press, 1965.

[21] Himani Bannerji, Inventing Subjects: Studies in Hegemony, patriarchy and colonialism, New DelhiL: Tulika, pp. 100-178.

[22] Ahis Nandy, "Women Versus Womanliness in India: An Essay in Social and Political Psychology", in Women in India, Rehana Ghadially (ed), p.78.

[23] For instance see Mrinalini Sinha's "Colonial Masculinity: 'The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effimate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995.

[24] Sudhir Kakar, "Feminine Identity in India", in Women in Indian Society, Rehana Ghadially (ed), New Delhi:Sage Publications, p.44.

[25] Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse", in Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, (ed) Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, New York: Columbia UP, 1994, pp. 196-220.

[26] bell hooks, Outlaw Culture,: Resisting Representations, New York: Routledge, pp.218.

[27] Brij V. Lal, "Kunti's Cry: Indentured Women on Fiji Plantations, in J.Krishnamurthy (ed.), *Women in Colonial India: Essays on Survival, Work and the Slate*, Delhi: OUP, 1987.

[28] Swasti Mitter, Common Fate, Common Bond: Women in the Global Economy, London: Pluto, 1986, p.6.

CHAPTER IV

HINDU NATIONALIST IDEOLOGY AND THE DALIT WOMAN

Postcolonial (PC from henceforth) theory premises itself on the notion that everything underwent a radical transformation with the advent of British colonialism. Their theory also goes to the extent of suggesting that everything was quite alright in the pre-British colonial period in India. The third notion that they stick to is that the pre-British peculiarities of the land have not much to do with the British colonial and postcolonial realities. The present chapter tries to prove the falsities of such notions by exploring the areas of congruence between the ideologies of ancient Hindu scriptures and mainstream nationalism regarding the Dalit woman.

This chapter is an explanation and extension to the criticism made in the previous chapter of the PC and dominant feminist theories. It tries to dismantle all the three suppositions that have been cited above. This is done by deconstructing the extremist Hindu fundamentalist ideologies of Dayananda,Savarkar, Altekar and Gandhi. Thus, this chapter tries to explore how the images of Dalit women have been constructed by ancient Hindu scriptures, mainstream nationalists and how these are being renewed by contemporary mainstream Indian scholarship of the postcolonial school. PC academic project tend to renew this epistemic violence cither by maintaining complete silence about her or by dealing with her in a partial fashion.

The main concern of this chapter is to prove that *caste* was a powerful ideology and system that existed during the pre-British colonial period and which bore significantly upon the nationalist processes. There is hardly any serious work done on this aspect despite the fact that their effects have been rampant and long. The main hypothesis that this chapter tries to prove is that *caste* patriarchy is essential to the very configurations and reconstructions of the socio-economic-political and cultural systems during the British colonial period as well as in the existing postcolonial times. The academic developments in the last few decades have not succeeded in bringing this dimension under scrutiny. More damagingly, most of their theoretical narrations on nation, caste, gender *(caste* patriarchy is something too far for them to even consider) are premised on the very gaps and exclusions of Dalit women. The present effort is therefore

to understand **the enormity of the role** that *caste* patriarchy has played in regulating **and** directing **political** processes during colonialism. More importantly, the fact that *caste* patriarchy has continued to survive this long indicates its power, durability and brutality.

Though there are numerous books on the congruence of Hinduism and mainstream nationalism there is still a great need to take up this for study. This is fundamentally important because most of the works done in this field either do not explain its implications to the Dalit woman or completely ignore her. They have left a strong impression on the students of social academics, so much so that Indian archives and scriptures appear almost devoid of any information on Dalit woman. However a vast and immense presence of information about Dalit women surprises anybody who sincerely tries to excavate historical sources. Leave the question of an exclusive study on Dalit women, why there is no mentioning of Dalit women even on those occasions when she really deserves it! It is extremely disheartening to realize that unless the Dalit women talks and writes about her own politics and history nobody would do it. It is precisely for this reason that it becomes correct to assert that only Dalit women should write their histories.

The present attempt is also to shift the burden of guilt to Hindu society. This is specifically felt to be crucial since most of the postcolonial texts, which deal with colonialism, and the construction of the nation go on erasing the socio-political features of pre-British colonial state of India and put all the burden on the British colonial process. Consequently, many differential experiences that Dalit woman had faced before the advent of British colonialism and during and after it are not considered worthy to be put for academic examination anymore. The dominant versions of the nation, colonial experience and 'postcolonial' realities would thus appear as the only legitimate ones. Such postcolonial missions have actively deterred the Dalit woman's emergence as a national subject in the field of theory. All this would effect the Dalit woman's negotiations with the nation and vice versa.

Congruence between Prejudiced Hindu Legal Sanctions and the Ideology of Mainstream Nationalism:

Dalit Woman as Pollution:

Menstruation:

Caste brands people as pure and impure, as pure and impure by increasing degrees. Thus some people are touchable, some reluctantly touchable and others less touchable and untouchable. It is a fixed expression of status differentiation. Demarcation of the female population into *chaste* and *unchaste* categories occupies great attention in patriarchal society since women are the ones through whom caste is reproduced. This has led to a more rigorous control of bodies and selves of women of all categories. Any code relating to the female body has thus become a closely guarded matter and stringent punishments have been meted out to those who transgress prescribed codes of behavior. Two areas were to be protected: 1. *False blood* should not be allowed to contaminate *pure blood.* For this purpose the *pure* castes ordained against marriages between the ***lower*** **and the** *upper castes.* 2.*Upper caste women* were to be saved from *lower caste* **men** and simultaneously. Dalit women should be sexually available to Hindu men. Thus an extremely clashing set of standards were needed. The Hindu society applied a great range of tricks to define the women of different castes on these terms of disparity. The higher the status in the caste system the less bad she became.

Since sexuality was an area of anxiety for Hindu men they did not want to leave even the most private matters of a woman unlegalislated. Everything from menstruation to childbirth was to be scrupulously administered. This politics of surveillance came through religion and thus carried legitimacy. It was by administering bodies that, selves became most effectively impinged on. Since a Dalit woman was both a woman and a dalit her oppression became not just additive and double but multiple and continuous. It is during the phase of menstruation that Hindu society usually makes its entry more strongly in a woman's life (In one sense the Hindu society involves itself from the very birth of the female child. When the female child enters a biologically mature phase, it becomes more keen and alert). According to religious scriptures the Hindu woman is seen

as one who becomes impure in the time of menstruation or childbirth. During this period *tamasic* process and matter is seen to adhere to the Hindu woman. This impurity is seen as temporary and moreover it would be transformed into generative power. The husband is the agent who transforms this destructive power into generative power. Once the *upper caste* woman becomes *impure* there is always a possibility for her to become *pure* again. This facility is not available to the Dalit women. They are placed not only as "opposite others" but also as "*stratified others*". For instance they are not Hindu woman/Dalit Woman but

Hindu woman/

/Dalit woman

This re-dichotomisation is very clearly laid out in the following Hindu revelations of *truth:*

" On the first day [of the menses], she is a Chandala woman, on the second, she is the murderess of a brahmana; on the third, she is called a washer woman; and on the fourth day, she becomes purified."[1]

"A barren woman should be known as a vrishali; a woman who gives birth to a dead child is a vrishali, a sudhra woman is to be known as a vrishali, and similarly a maiden in her mensus."[2]

"She, who, renouncing her husband, desires for the company of another man, is to be known as a vrishali."[3]

Thus the connotation is: a *lower caste* woman is equal to an *upper caste* woman in her first day of menses (when she is supposed to touch ultimate levels of *impurity*), to a woman who is not faithful to her husband, to a barren woman, one who has given birth to a dead child and to a servant woman who is in menstruation. She is equal to all of these at once not to any one of these categories. She is thus defined as a combination of the fractures of different *inauspicious* selves of desirable women. The identity of the *lower*

caste woman is thus fabricated on the occasional impurities of the *upper caste.* However, unlike the *upper caste* woman, the Dalit woman would not have a state of purity anywhere in her life cycle. There is no such relaxation; she is always an impure category, she can never escape it since she is *born* so. Throughout the texts the Dalit woman is portrayed in connection with pollution, vrishali (a bad woman), an unfaithful one and so on. Her caste makes her not just a site of pathology but pathology incarnate. She is not just an untouchable but she herself is untouchability. One has to pay attention here to how the Dalit woman is superimposed with one negative image after the other in a simultaneous manner.

It is difficult to find a direct reflection of these notions in mainstream nationalist thought. But the idea that the *lower castes* are originally *impure* is very much in circulation through the ideology of the. One thing, which the scholars who search for such ideology do, is to look at the implications *of nationalist* ideology as a whole rather than to examine direct references. It does not in any way mean that the nationalists were democratic enough to not make direct use of such ideology. The idea that *lower castes* are *impure* is central to the definition of the nation as a home for *pure insiders.* We come across various superficially progressive ideas, which would seem to hinder an easy conclusion that mainstream nationalists considered the *lower castes* as impure and thus as lesser citizens. There are numerous examples of mainstream nationalist generosity, which allowed the lower castes to become entitled to education, employment and so on. Despite Nehru's socialist reputation, he was incapable of including the name of Ambedkar in his foundational fiction of the nation, *Discovery of India.* It is rather surprising that this radical nationalist was able to see even extreme Hindu nationalists as participants in the "discovery of the nation" but not the *lower caste* Ambedkar. Thus it is apt to conclude that the Dalits as an impure population is central to the ideology (both liberal and hindutva), which inscribed the Indian nation. Most of the hindutva and liberal ideologues of nationalist times had fabricated their versions of women's liberation on the basis of the supposed superiority and purity of *upper caste* women.

Motherhood and Pure Race:

Hindu religious texts reflect a strong set of exclusive Hindu feminine values about Hindu womanhood premised on the exalted notion of the Hindu woman's procreative role. The ancient pundits had defined the home as heaven and had glorified the principles of docility, domesticity and home-centered motherhood as the zenith of Hindu womanly achievement. In hindutva ideology in general, motherhood necessitated a rigid affiliation of *upper caste* woman to her *caste* community. It added the realm of *sakthi* or power to this role. Lastly, the mother transmitted a promise of fulfillment, by linking Hindu womanliood with nationality thus asserting that *caste* superiority was crucial in defining citizenship. *Caste*-centerdness became a prominent dimension of the new nationalist maternal discourse. When Hindu men increasingly participated in the *outer domain* of anti-colonial politics, the duty of protecting their culture actually fell into the hands of `their' women. A notion that the nation is an enlargement of the family became deep rooted. The image of the mother as the main character of national womanhood was promulgated alongside this emerging definition of the Hindu religious nation. Since Hindu *caste* communities were clearly perceived as a would be nation, non-casteness or dalitness implied a space that was either non or anti-nation. In this context the female womb became the site of a major contest and of considerable disquiet to Hindu men.

Home, where the legitimate procreation of the *upper caste* species takes place is now eulogized as one of the main spaces of Hindu women's privilege. A spate of both vernacular and English literature depicting the holiness of the Hindu home mushroomed in all regions of pre-India. It meant that a woman who did not hold a home according to caste rules is not a *national woman* and therefore that she could not make legitimate claims to nationhood. The *core women* were pulled into the presumed national territory and the *peripheral women* were pushed further from any protective territorial boundaries, be it home, caste, religion or nation. Dalit women were thus denied all possible, practically respectable identities, which would allow her to be enumerated within the nation. The *inner woman* symbolized fertility and was admonished from time to time to keep herself at the disposal of her men, because serving at home was equated to serving

the nation. Gandhi's ideas of home as the right place for Hindu women correlates to these sanctions.

The first behavioral necessity for the Hindu mother was that she should hold herself aloof from *other* woman. The second requirement was that she should not transgress caste rules. Endurance, abstinence from 'evil' and, masochism were spoken of as essential features of perfect or true mothering. The character of the compassionate mother is always presented with a blend of *sakthi.* Aurobindo's ideas of motherhood are centrally built on this. Hindu motherhood is defined in terms of being both preserver and destroyer. It is visible in the two feminine principles that Hindu's call upon; destructive mythical goddesse like Kali and of *matrubhumi*, who is also the maternal principle in terms of *amma.* Liberation of this mother/*sakthi* is often conceived in terms of her children (mostly sons) coming to her rescue by fighting against the colonizers.[4]

Hindu women who were boosted up by the false prestige offered by this hindutva rhetoric actively participated in the hindutva patriarchal hegemonic warfare launched against all women in general, and Dalit women in particular. They were thus able to translate their subjugated domesticity into caste based superior femininity available only to Hindu women. Legitimate motherhood was possibly the strongest rhetoric of femaleness at a time when injections of liberal notions of individualism, anti casteism, equal rights and accesses threatened to blockade the existing casteism in society. The image of the national mother was then a renewed image of the familiar Hindu mother who married and procreated children according to *caste* rules.

The Hindu nationalists resurrected these notions, which revolved not around Hindu woman's productive function but rather her reproductive production. By the time of Hindu nationalism, a new facet was added to the Hindu woman's maternal role: procreator and nurturer of a *superior, pure, essentially national* progeny. The Hindu mother was then expected to train herself and her children in proper citizenship. This hindutava motherhood was premised on the same old presumptions of quantitative gaps between the races symbolized by their different civil functions. Hindu and *untouchable* women were addressed as different cultural species, with Hindu femaleness denoting nationhood and Dalit woman nonnationhood. The norms set for national motherhood

necessitated the re-inscription of caste rules on both Dalit and Hindu female bodies. The Hindu nationalist discourse took every precautionary care to keep primordial identities attached to the *lower caste* female biology alive. It would be useful to look at how such notions have been sanctioned by the Hindu scriptures.

Rights of Progeny:

As the above discussion explains, the children of Dalits are generally subjected to all the inequalities that impinge upon the Dalits. For instance Sankha Samhita says "The name of a brahmana child should be a term of blissful signification ...while that of a shudra child should be of a lowly import."[5] There are also ordinances and stringent restrictions on the children of *lower caste* women who are born by *upper caste* men to discourage any legitimate relation between the two categories. This also shows how caste system is a tightly built class establishment. There are a set of rules to deprive children of *lower caste women,* who are married to Hindu men of any progenitor rights: "A maiden who is bought, should never be taken as a wife; the sons, begotten on her, are not qualified to offer funeral cakes to their departed Manes."[6] "Even, he, who is foremost of all virtuous men...is degraded to the status of a sudhra by having the thirteen sraddas done unto him by (such) a sudra son."[7] Gautama Samhita writes, "A son of an idiotic father shall take a share like a son begotten on a sudra mother."[8] While any child is addressed and identified after the father, in the case a child born to a *chandala* woman and an *upper caste* man, this rule does not pertain.

Deconstruction of the views of the below ideologues would prove the compatibility between Hindu religious ideology and the mainstream nationalists. Imanigining the Dalits as the outsiders is centra] to both the *caste* ideology and the *upper caste* nationalist stream. The below analysis try to focus on this dimension.

Dayananda Saraswathi:

We can find the ideological twin of these ordinances in the area of mainstream nationalist thought. It is Dayananda Saraswathi, the forerunnerof this stream of hindutva who proved to be even more far sighted than many of the ideologues of hindutva. He did not even entertain the idea of *lower caste women* as mothers. Dayananda Saraswathi dealt

with the women's question as part of his project of reforming Hindu society and taking it back to the Vedas in order to purify itself. Most of the ideas of Dayananda on "Indian" woman are identical to the dominant views of his age. He believed that they enjoyed great freedom in the public sphere and that it was the Muslims who relegated them to the status of objects of concealment. He believed that it was the procreation of Aryan sons which could make the land acquire its lost glory. It is in the context of procreating the correct breed of *Aryan* men for the rejuvenation of the nation that the question of the hindu woman come in.

He perceives marriage as essentially for the purpose of procreation, particularly for the procreation of *Aryan* sons. It is in the second chapter of his *Satyarthaprakash* that he gives detailed prescriptions for Hindu mothers. His suggestions go like this, "The mother should suckle the child only for the first six days, thereafter the wet-nurse; but the parents should see that the wet-nurse gets good food and drink. If the parents be too poor to afford a wet-nurse, cow's or goat's milk diluted with an equal quantity of water should be used; ...When neither the wet-nurse nor milk (cow's or goat's) can be procured, the parents should do what they think best at the time; but they must remember the child's body is made up of the elements derived from the body of the mother, which fact accounts for the mother getting weaker after each confinement. It is best, therefore, for the mother not to suckle her child. Plasters should be applied to the breast that will soon dry up the milk. By following this system the woman becomes strong again in about two months. Till then the husband should have thorough control over his passions, and thus preserve the reproductive element. Those that will follow this plan will have children of a superior order, enjoy long life, and will be of high mental caliber, strong, energetic, and devout" (21-22).

All the following inferences can be drawn from the above: a wet-nurse is a *non-upper caste* woman. Her motherhood was available in the market. What about the milk for her child if she uses it to nurture the *upper caste* child? Clearly, *her* child is not relevant here. She does not need to preserve her strength in order produce children of a "superior order". Her children need not "be of high mental caliber, strong, energetic, and devout". Her rights as mother and her child's rights are not considered. She and her child

need not live a long healthy life because they are *naturally* not fit to be the national subjects. The *lower caste* woman is equal to cows and goats, her motherhood can be bought. She is unproblematically bestialized.

The real task of the *upper caste* woman starts when the child attains the age for learning. She becomes the first instructor. He quotes a statement from *Shathapatha Brahmana*, "He alone is said to have a mother whose mother is devout and learned."" (20). Thus a *lower caste* woman who is not devout (at the most she could be religious and ritualistic but not devout in the way that the *upper caste* woman is since, according to Hinduism, even devotion is hierarchized) and not learned is not a mother. In this sense the *upper caste* woman's role is equal to her male counterpart's. Apart from giving birth, and preparing herself for continuous reproductive functions she is seen as a learned person like an *upper caste* man.

Like most of the ideologues of hindutva, Dayananda was also caught up in legitimizing the essential teachings of Hinduism and of projecting it as having a humanitarian face. Such a feat obviously had to cram a great many explicit contradictions. One can grasp these contradictions especially in his re-readings of Hindu texts. To the question whether *lower castes* were entitled to read and preach Vedas he quotes *Yajur Veda,* "*...Brahmans,Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras,* women, servants, aye, even the lowest of the low, so should you all do, i.e., teach and preach the *Veda. "* Soon such a radical suggestion is severely contradicted when he tries to sketch his ideas mainly around the text *Manusmrithi.* For instance he quotes Manu ii, 168. "A Dwija as well as his children who, instead of studying the *Veda,* wastes his time in doing other things soon goes down to the level of*Shudra*" (47). But how do we still categorize people along caste lines when not the caste but *merit* is the parameter? Rejecting *caste* as the base for the segregation of people and also at the same time accepting it as a legitimate supporting structure for merit is a cunning feature of all the hindutva theories, which try to both argue for the restoration of the land on *caste* lies and also balance a democratic profile. As mentioned above such a contradiction is evidently there in Dayananda' s ideology. For instance, after quoting the Hindu scripture's sanctioning of education for sudras, he moves on to define merit, "Wherever it is declared (in the books of *Rishis)* that the

Shudras are debarred from the study of the *Veda,* the prohibition simply amounts to this that he, and name is one among them. These names include those denoting "low origin", "servility" etc. The footnotes carry an explanation for these terms, the first of which is *Kali* (Black), and the second *Chandali* (an *out caste).* After strictly restricting inter-caste marriages between the lower caste woman and the upper caste man. he again tries to propose his redefinitions of castes according to merits, this time in a more confused manner. He seems to be borrowing heavily from Plato's notion of Philosopher King, common property and children. After trying to somehow prove that the *vedic* hierarchisation of castes was on the basis of merit and not on birth he proposes that even women are to be defined on these terms. Thus if a *lower* caste woman manages to enter into an *upper class* then she is no more a *lower caste* but she automatically becomes an *upper caste* woman and her *uppercasteness* again depends on how much she ha achieved. In other words, how much she has ceased to be a *lower caste* woman and how much she has become capable of pulling herself to the level of the *upper caste* woman. Thus whoever exists as lower castes are virtually the lower types. Practically, it is clear that Dayananda's demarcation of castes according to merits is wrong that does not learn anything even after a good deal of teaching, being ignorant and destitute of understanding, is called a *Shudra.* It is useless for him to learn, and for others to teach him any longer" (79). But immediately in the next page he stoops down to demarcate the meritorious status of women of different castes on pure caste lines. After citing Gargi as a lustrous icon of learned Hindu womanhood, he allocates *respective* tasks for women according to their castes. Here again the issue of *upper caste* women's education creeps in as the need to make her compatible with her *learned* husband ensures *peace* at home and the nation (he uses the term state here for nation). He goes on, "The *Kshatriyas* women in ancient India, used to be well-acquainted even with the military science, or how could they have gone with their male relations and fought side by side with them in battle-fields, as *Kekai* did with her royal husband *Dasaratha.* Therefore it behoves *Brahman* and *Kshatriya* women to acquire all kinds of knowledge, and *Vaishya* women to learn trade, and the mechanical arts and the like, and *Shudra* women, the art of cooking etc." He then explains the need of all these educations for women. All these can prevent people from going astray.

Now the question that repeatedly poses itself before a Dalit feminist is, 'Which comes first for a hindutva like Dayanada ? Merit or *caste?* If, as he has been arguing caste is something, which is determined by merit, then how could he allocate tasks for the women of different *castes* on *caste* lines? How could he ordain that the *lower caste* woman should resort to lesser jobs without checking whether she is capable of a more meritorious job? And also, how does he presume that the *upper caste* homes would be able to maintain total equilibrium from the matters of art, medicine, house construction to food and drink? But what about the *lower castes'?* The inference is naturally that their homes need not be ideal sites for the upbringing of their children as national subjects. *Lower caste* women should serve as wet nurses, cooks and do all kinds of menial jobs for the *upper castes.* Dayananda, like Gandhi, professed that there are no degrading meanings traditionally attached to such jobs.

Dayananda is very keen that marriage should take place only between the same castes. He quotes Manu iii, 4, "Let a twice-born man *{Brahman, Kshatriya,* and *Vaishya)...* return home [after seminary] and espouse a maid, of his own *Class,* endowed with excellent qualities" (82). He quotes Manu III, 9, to explain that the *upper caste* man should shun any material relations with the girls from categories below him. He gives various measurements to understand whether the bride is of a respectable background and that such demarcation had taken place quite definitely on the basis of birth. The *upper castes* on the other hand were projected as the true nationalist subjects and the Dalits were seen as a *lower stock, which* remained so due to their incapability to be meritorious. The Dalit women, therefore, has no reason to feel bad and betrayed if she remains as mere wet nurses or servants to the *upper castes.* What exists as lower caste women is in fact a mixture of females from various communities who failed to make grade; which failed to become *upper castes* women. Dayananda thus managed to target many birds with one shot.

Savarkar is one who lived in that phase of hindutva nationalist times when he had to compromise with his exclusionist notion of the Hindu nation. According to his original imagination, the Indian nation was essentially constituted by, for and according the superior *Aryan* race. But soon he had to make a major shift in his adamant notion in order

to make **the** hindtuva imagination of the nation palatable to the changing world politcs.[9] The threat of the *minority* became a determining factor. During that time Savarkar had to make heavy compromises and come down to other caste like the *sudras* in order to visualize India as a Hindu nation. Even so, he was not able to include the *mletchas (the lowest castes)* as part of the nation. The notion of cultural unity and intercaste marriages were shown as reasons to include the *non-Aryans* into the imagination of the nation. There is, purportedly, common blood flowing in the bodies of all the Hindus. But the *mlethchas* are listed with the foreigners, the potential enemies of the nation. Intercaste marriages also took place among the four *above varnas.* Thus the blood of the *lower caste* is not seeped in the blood of the essential *upper caste* citizens. He could not extend his thesis about intercaste marriages unifying the *blood of the* Hindus to the *lower castes.*

Savarkar also holds on to the view that the Hindu woman should be the biological link joining the castes of generations. Therefore, in a letter he wrote to his family, one woman called Shanta appears. He wrote about her in a letter dated 5 Aug 1917, from Port Blair: "…the first and foremost consideration of a young lady should be her health. It is a trust she holds for others, a debt she owes to generations not yet born. Every atom of health that a young lady dissipates is so much that is taken away from the strength of souls that are yet to rise. She is golden link that joins the Yesterday to the Morrow; a promise that holds in it the possibilities of her race. Therefore, the first care of a wife should be her health that would harmonise the beauties of her body and mind and soul. So **neither** study nor pleasure should entice her away so as to tax her energy too much, but both should be indulged in only so far as to render that Health perfect and that Beauty transparently pure." So, this is a woman who is either newly married or an unmarried one. Vahini is another woman, the wife of his deceased brother, who often appears in his letters. He writes: "Scanning thus thy thoughts, discriminating thus, continue, dear Vahini to uphold the traditions of our family and stand faithfully by the Cause." He writes that "Uma practicing severe austerities in the snowclad Hymalayas" should be her ideal.[10] Thus Savarkar warns the two women to follow two different paths, one that of a would be mother and the other that of a widow.

Altekar:

Dalit Woman as the Bad woman and the Betrayer:

There are strict rules for ostracizing the *upper caste* man who involves in any respectable relation with a Dalit woman. Sexual abuse of the Dalit woman would not invite the wrath of caste patriarchy upon him. But anything, which would offer the Dalit woman some respect in society, for instance, marriage, owning and growing up the children born out of such a relation, offering any amount of protection to her, are all strictly prohibited. Unlike the general rule for Hindu kinship which specifies that a child bears the name of the father and naturally comes under his ownership, the relation between the Dalit woman and the *upper caste man* is embedded in the reversal of this logic. Below are some injunctions regarding this:

If one cohabits with a woman in [her] menses or with lowcaste woman, he is known as being obliged to perform a panacea; he should [take his] bath before that"" "Having gone to a she-animal, prostitute, she buffalo, she-camel...one should practice a prajapatya panacea.[12]

Thus sodomy is equal to cohabitation with dalit woman. Dalit woman is a mere animal.

To reiterate, none of these *Sastras* actually prohibit any Hindu man from exploiting a Dalit woman sexually. But they made extremely stringent rules against a hindu man marrying a Dalit woman. For instance *Sankha Samhita* writes, "Even in distress a twice born one should not wed a sudra girl, in as much as a son begotten by him on her person will never find his salvation."[13] *Gautama Samhita* writes "A house-holder should marry a wife of his own caste..."[14] Ostracizing is another way of punishing, "[one should not feed] a hurtful person, a deceitful person...one who is a servant, one who is a tawny-coloured, a deaf...and one who has married a vrishali."[15] (The list of vrishali women includes a *lower caste* woman also, as mentioned in the above reference).

On the other hand dreadful threats are given by the same samhitas against any possible *intrusion* of Dalit men against Hindu women. *Gautama Samhita* writes, "A sudhra detected in the act of sexually knowing a brahmana woman, or guilty of that offence should be punished by cutting of his genitals."[16] *Gautama Samhita* is particularly cruel in dealing with sexual relations between a Hindu woman and a Dalit man. In its own words "A woman, of a superior caste, having been found guilty of illicit intercourse

with a man of an inferior caste, the king of the country shall caste her to be torn alive by dogs at a public space, or the guilty man should be dealt with the same manner."[17] The marital status of dalit woman is also not respected. As she is addressed as a vrishali, she cannot hold any legitimate right to have any decent personal life- declares the *dharma.* In *Sankha Samhita* there is a description of rites that ought to be performed by the bride. For instance it says the Brahman girl at the lime of marriage should hold a mendicant's cup, a *Kshtriya* girl an arrow and a *Vaishya* girl a stick.[18] There is no mention of any rite that should be performed by the Dalit bride.

Katyayana Samhita orders a keen observation of difference among the women of different castes married to a single Hindu man: " Many wives of the same caste and of other castes existing, the rite of churning, for producing the fire, should be done by the chaste wives of the same caste, on account of the superiority of birth.... fin it] one should not employ a sudra wife, or one who tries to injure her husband or is jealous of him, or one who does not perform religious observances, or one who lives with other men."[19] Thus again the equation is drawn between the *lower caste* woman, one who is jealous, and causes injury to her husband, one who is not religious and one who is not faithful to her husband. *Daksha Samhita* writes, "A woman who forsakes her poor or diseased husband, is repeatedly born either as a bitch, a vulture, or a shark."[20] This *truth* implies that all the existing *lower caste* women were born so due to their disloyal attitude to their husbands in their previous lives. Thus the Dalit woman by definition is a woman who has bewitched her husband.

Satatapa Samhitha links terrible diseases like leprosy and biological sexual deformity with cohabitation with a Dalit woman. "By cohabiting with a chandala woman one is born without testes."[21] "For cohabiting with women, who should not be known, originates the disease of dharuvamandala (a kind of leprosy). Having made image of a cow…one should duly present it unto a vipra, and recite the Mantram "May the mother of surabhi, daughter of Vishnu, destroy my sin."[22] This mother of Surabhi and daughter of Vishnu is an *upper caste* woman who is capable of curing the *upper caste* man who is infected from his sexual interactions with a *lower caste* woman.

Altekar's text is exemplary of the kind of ideology, which laboriously tries to illustrate the Dalit woman as bad and betrayers. He examines at length the historic betrayals of the *lower caste* woman who transgressed her limits in order to claim privileges for which she is not naturally entitled. Such transgressions had apparently jeopardized the fate of the *nation* and of *innocent upper caste* women. Curiously, *lower caste* women occupy the place of Muslims and other foreigners who are often portrayed as the betrayers of the Hindu nation by traditional historians. Chasing away the foreigner was seen as the means to liberating the nation. Thus for Altekar also configuring the nation included keeping the Dalit woman *in their place* by chasing them away into their original ranks. Altekar writes "From about the beginning of the Christian era we begin to come across passages, which were deliberately written for the purpose of blackening the character of women" (320). Needless to say, the "women" this historian refers to is the hindu women. Therefore his intention seems to *whiten* the character of hindu women. It is in intercaste marriages that took place between the upper caste man and the lower caste woman that he tries to locate all the reasons for the degeneration of the Hindu woman's status. Altekar freely goes on:

> In the age of Rigveda, we do not come across any cases of Arya Sudhra marriages. The Brahmanas and the epics, however supply ample evidence to show that the Aryan chiefs were freely marrying non-Aryan princess as in the latter period. Arjuna married Udupi, a Naga princess regent. Bhima married Hidimba, a sister of Rakshasa chief. The sage Kavasha, who plays an important part in the Aitereya Brahmana, was the son of a slave girl. ...It is important to note that the early Dharmasastra writers have no objection to an Aryan marrying a Sudhra woman, provided he had another Aryan wife; it was only latter writers who proceeded to interdict such a procedure with a great vehemence (344-5).

Altekar goes on legitimising this ruthless hypothesis:

> The introduction of the non-Aryan wife into the Aryan household is the key to the general deterioration of the position of women, that gradually and imperceptibly started at about 1,000 B.C., and became quite marked in about 500 years. The non-Aryan wife with her ignorance of Sanskrit language and Hindu religion could obviously not enjoy the same religious privileges as the Aryan consort. Association with her must have tended to affect the purity of speech of the Aryan co-wife as well. Very often the non-Aryan wife may have been the favourite one of her husband, who may have often attempted to associate her with his religious sacrifices in preference to her belter educated but less loved Aryan co-wife. This must have naturally led to grave mistakes and anomalies in the performance of the ritual, which must have shocked orthodox priests. The first remedy they must have thought of was to declare the non-Aryan wife to be unfit for association with her husband in religious rituals. The black non-Aryan wife may be her husband's associate in pleasure, but not in religious rituals say several authorities. But a mighty king mad with love for his non-Aryan beloved, was not to be dictated to by a priesthood dependent upon him for its

subsistence. He would insist upon having his own favourite wife by his side at the time of his sacrifices, no matter her race or caste.

How then was the situation to be retrieved? Eventually it was felt that the object could be gained by declaring the whole class of women to be ineligible for Vedic studies and religious duties. There would then be no question of rejecting admission to a non-Aryan wife and granting it to an Aryan one; all would be ineligible and none need be offended. It is Aitisayana who is seen advocating this view by about 200 B.C (345-6).

Altekar seems to be very much moved by the sorry state of his community's women. Hence, he tries to warn his fellow men about the need of co-opting their women by allowing them to take to the glorious roles that vedic Hinduism has offered them ages ago. Now the innocent Hindu woman has to be saved not only from the aggressive lower cast women but also from the conservative rules of hinduism. He has crossed the boundaries of Hindu patriarchal conservatism in order to save their women from being perpetually lost to the lower caste community. Altekar gives a reason for how the lower castes have swelled in number. He writes:

...it clearly shows that lapses of men were leniently treated, while women had no chance if they had committed a single mistake...Hundreds of women of misdemeanor, are becoming eternally lost of **Hindu** society, because it refuses to treat them with human sympathy. This again led to a considerable swelling of the non-Hindu and low class population in India. We must once more begin to follow the liberal lead of Vasishta, who has recommended the acceptence of such women, provided they show genuine repentance (314).

Thus for him the entire *lower caste* community is a bastard population.

In his "history" the author, like any other nationalist hindutva of the British colonial time has attempted to construct the history of the Hindu woman by making the Dalit woman a footstool. Using this footstool the Hindu woman was made to get atop the pedestal. He writes:

In the Vedic literature it is pointed out that a woman ought not to be killed. Rama very reluctantly killed Tatika, only when he was convinced that there was no other alternative open for him, he had to protect the sages, hundreds of whom had been already killed by the ogress. It is interesting to note that even in spite of the universally accepted divinity of Rama, there were critics like Bavahuti in later times who ventured to fearlessly censure his conduct in killing Tatika (349).

With the example of Tatika, Altekar seems to suggest that strategy of elimination as a remedy to inhibit the *lower caste* women from entering the *upper caste* domains.

***Savarkar** and women:*
Upper Caste Widows need not commit suttee:

Savarkar describes a chain of causes for the 1857 mutiny in his text, *Indian War of Independence: National Rising of 1857*[23]. The first cause is the lack of heirs for the kings and queens. It is the question of the Hindu's accession to the throne. In 1853, when Raghoji Bhonsla (the owner of Nagpur *Gadi)* died childless Dalhousie tried to annex it. Savarkar writes about the rights of the Hindu widows here: "Even if he died without a child, the right of adopting passed at his death to his legal wife"(20). Savarkar does not advocate the widowed queens to commit suttee. He was trying to negotiate with colonialism to draw a balance of power between the distant rulers and the native rulers.

Here gender becomes a site, on which he tried to work some benefit. Thus, instead of suttee, adoption rights for the Hindu widow becomes important. Moreover, such a claim for widow's rights was seen as legitimate, not as anti-tradition. This is despite the fact that in the fifth chapter of the same text he sees the abolition *of suttee* by the British as an *injustice* and also as a perfectly legitimate reason for the emergence of the revolt. He has, in the case of the widows of the ruling Hindu order, compromised with his patriarchal beliefs. Here the cause of *nationalist* succession emerges as more important and this would not take place smoothly unless the reliable mother of the infant future king is alive to protect him. So, he sacrifices his faith in suttee for the nationalist cause. Clearly, it is the *upper caste* women whom he appoints as the legitimate supervisors of the nation in the absence *of upper caste* men. Thus the regent of the *upper caste* male rulers were their female partners.

*Why Was Laxmi Bai **of Jansi** not a Suttee? :*

Savarkar gave a bulky chapter to Laxmi Bai. Laxmi is equated to a precious stone *kaustubha,* which is said to be worn by the mythical Hindu god, *Vishnu.* And Laxmi is the name of the wife of this Vishnu. Thus this warrior Laxmi becomes identical with the goddess Laxmi. In fact she said to be a devotee of the same goddess. She is attached to her "bride's jewels" and also to her husbands precious jewels. Thus in the first page itself

the author invoked the marital status of the already widowed Laxmi of Jansi. This is to hint to the Hindu reader (mostly the male) that this 'nationalist woman' has no inauspiciousness attached to her even in her widowed state. Her patriotism compensated her widowhood. When Savarkar wrote this text, Laxmi was already dead so she became an 'unproblematic' widow, or since she has already reached heaven, she was no longer a widow. Therefore, the Brahman male author had only one task left: to plead with his readers to receive this role as a legitimate woman's role *though* she was a widow. The portrayal of this role as a *nationalist warrior* should not surpass her role as an *authentic* woman. Thus, first she is presented as a goddess Laxmi, who symbolizes eternal auspiciousness and as a woman who has an indissoluble love for her bridehood-like any other hindu woman!

Freedom for her is equated with the freedom to hold on to her everlasting bridedom. Thus "She wore close to her heart the jewel of liberty." Loosing her kingdom was thus to be equated to the loss of bridedom. Her daily routine has also been described to serve the same purpose. She used to wear a "faultless white" saree during her *puja.* She would first drop the necessary water as a *Prayaschitta* for keeping her hair even after the death of her husband and then start "Parthiva Puja." After this she would put on male attire and go to the *durbar.* In this attire she looked like a Hindu godess, "Gouri herself. She never wore *nath* or similar jewels after the death of her husband. She never was seen by the members of the Durbar. She did not lack the kind heart, which is *natural* to the *woman.* Her generosity is also described vividly. She gave black and white blankets to the "thousands of beggars" who blocked the passage to the temple. (We will not be answered how it could be an ideal kingdom when there could be thousands of beggars around a single temple itself). Her presence soothed their wounds. Thus her male attire did not change her heart, the essential self of a person...inside she was very much a woman. Thus Savarkar drives the image of Laxmi through all the pre-requisite tests of bridehood, womanhood and, motherhood before she can pass for a warrior. After thus making a balance between the two incongruent identities of the Hindu woman and warrior (in order to satisfy the ego of the *upper caste* reader and his own) the narrator slowly transfigures this character into a 'nationalist fighter' who can invoke a sense of nationality in these 'subjects' (were they, i.e., these beggars citizens?).

Now after tasting this motherly love from the *ranee,* these subjects filled with gratitude would be ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the Ranee. the epitome of the nation. She is presented as riding both in a palanquin and a horse and even in palanquin she is under curtains, and on horseback she is covered by batti. She and goddess *Laxmi* move "at the same time." In the reader's mind Laxmi Bai has by now become goddess Laxmi in whom people put their trust and plead for various kinds of liberations. Independence was what "all were asking for." Laxmi Bai, who assumed the status of goddess would assure them, both male and female: "None can have my Jhansi, he who dares may try!" This goddess further transfigures into another goddess, *Swaraj.* She is now a "central idea", and an "incarnation of liberty." By now Laxmi Bai ceases to be a person, a female body. Therefore a need to convince the reader of the odd juxtaposition of Bai as a 'female who is equivalent to a man' no longer exists. Thus Bai was impersonalized into an idea, she becomes the very imagination of the nation. At this stage the tussle between the author and his *upper caste* reader is resolved. Bai would not be a participant in the imagination of the Hindu nation but she herself becomes an essence of it; she (the Hindu woman herself) becomes the nation.

Even so this Brahman author had to acknowledge the fact that this goddess was defeated. How can a goddess ever be defeated? The reason for this was attributed to the cowardice of the army, of effeminate men. But Bai was fighting for death. Now cruelty in Bai, one important charecteristic of war has to be justified. Savarkar in a timely manner provided himself with another image, that of the well-known goddess of war *Kali.* Thus Bai also_becomes *Kali* at this point in the narrative. And again motherhood, and *essential feature* of an *essential woman* is invoked here as a justification for her vigor. Thus she becomes a "tigress to avenge her cubs." When she lost *her* kingdom to the British, she becomes a mourner, another *natural* image of a *reasonable* woman. She preferred to die in the battle field, but was scared that the enemy would insult her person. The durbar would answer that who touches her sacred person would be killed by them. The author felt the need to refer to her sacredness to assure the reader that her chastity, a potential cite for women's oppression, was kept intact, even after the war. She is finally a woman who would tremble at the idea of loosing her chastity. In the writing of Savarkar, a brahman male, Laxmi Bai had but to say these dialogues. In the battlefield she runs to

protect the "vanguard". This inspired the soldiers to fight back the British-at least for some time. She killed until she died. And she was cremated according to her dying instructions. These instructions are both nationalist and *womanly-thai* the enemy should not "defile even her dead body" (407-442). Thus in her death both the nationalist and the womanly desires were merged together! Her death was also according to the expectation of the Hindu. She goes to heaven, to reach her husband, the final destiny of a *real woman* and the nation reaches the hands of the upper caste male community.

In the last chapter of Savarkar's work, Baskar Rao Babasaheb's wife who was both beautiful and spirited would decide to fight against the British since she was refused the right to adopt. When her husband dies she commits suicide and thus becomes suttee by jumping into the waters of Malaprabha. The reason is that why should she be alive when her husband died and also there was no *nationalist* task of adopting a male child to ascend the throne.

Ranees as embodiments of the nation:

Savarkar goes on to describe the annexation of Nagpur by the British: "While the pure Ranees were weeping themselves hoarse, a loud knock came on the palace gate...Horses were let loose from the stables, elephants- after forcibly pulling down the Ranees riding on them- were taken to the bazzars for sale...The necklace that adorned a queen was lying in the dust of the bazzars...and no Ranee had a single jewel left on her person" (21). Now he describes the entrance of the British into the bedrooms of the Ranees. Here, he puts extra adjectives, exclamations and a tone of suspension as in a detective novel to attune the reader to identify with the sorrows of the Maharanee Anna Poorna Bai, and to translate this into a nationalist anger or *dharma krodha.* This Ranee is finally shown dying in agony for the insults tossed at *her* ancient dynasty. Thus the first and foremost cause of 1857 according to Savarkar was the destruction of royal families. This queen on her deathbed is applied as the symbol for the *bar at mat a.* A old, hapless woman, bereaved and dead. He does not bother with what must have happened to the *other* women in this process. After all the queens in the palaces would have been the last community to be touched by the alien men. How many *other* women had been molested during the journey of these British and native soldiers from the outskirts of the

kingdom (which is the dwelling place of the Dalits, historically) to the queens' cloisters? Their sufferings did not provoke the nationalist sentiments of the author since they had always been subjected to such oppressions in the hands of these rajas and ranees. It was the Hindu woman who symbolized the nation and the Dalit woman is nothing, her suffering is not to be counted as one of the causes for the arousal of freedom fights Savarkarmeantit!

*Assertion of **Freedom** by Scavenger as the last Nail on the Cow's back:*

"Adding fuel to fire" is the title of the Ch V. Interestingly this chapter starts with a direct discussion on religion. He questions: "What religion is there which has not condemned dependence and slavery?' (46). Swaraj is for the sake of religion-he concludes at the end of the paragraph. He had stated a list of reasons, which operated to add fuel to fire-the fire being the one of 1857:

> To-day law regarding Suttee only had been passed. Who could say that, when this injustice was allowed by the people, what other laws the company would not pass? ...One injustice begets another...Railways had already been constructed and carriages had been in such a way as to offend the caste-prejudices of the Hindoos (50).

Savarkar proceeds to describe the immediate reason for the explosion of the mutiny:

> One day a Brahmin sepoy belonging to the village of Dum-Dum very near Calcutta, was going to military barracks with his lota full of water. At that instant a scavenger came and asked to drink from the lota. The Brahmin replied that his lota would be rendered unclean by his touch. The scavenger replied, "Enough of caste pride now! Do you not know that soon you would bite with your teeth the flesh of the cow and the fat of the pig?... When he heard this, the Brahman ran wild with excitement towards the camp, as if the very devil was in him! And in a few minutes the sepoys became excited, a crowd of mad men! And horrifying whisperings were in the air.

This was the immediate reason which this text highlights! And this chapter ends with a call given for mutiny: "Rise, then 0 Hindustan, rise! "Die for Dharma; while dying kill all your enemies and win back Swaraj; while killing; kill well!" Murmuring such sentiments to himself, every sepoy in India began to sharpen his sword for the fight of Swadharama and swaraj!" (56-7). Thus the hindutva version of *swadharma* and *swaraj* do not include the liberation of Dalits and women. The scavengers remain scavengers and the widows must become *suttees.*

Savarkar had dedicates one chapter to Mangal Pandey whom he introduces as **a** Brahman. When he was caught by the British, Savarkar writes that the other sepoys shouted "We would not even touch the hair of this sacred Brahmin." (p.88). Mangal Pandey was according to Savarkar able to mesmerize his audience so much that, "Not even a low class man could be found in the whole of Barrackpurto to act as executioner. At last four hangmen were to be brought from Calcutta to do that dirty work! " (89). Thus, it would appear that the first war of independence was a spontaneous insurgence that provoked when a sweeper warned them about the immediate dangers to established caste order, and gained momentum when a "sacred Brahmin" spilled his blood. The archetypal defender and fighter of the "nation" was thus a Brahman and the nationalist fight was as much against the *lower castes* as it was against the British.

Fate of 'Traitors':

In the chapter titled "Meerut", he writes that sepoys used to burn the houses of traitors. In his own words: "Every night the houses of tyrants and traitors used to receive the unwelcome visit of fire" (91). These fires spread soon to all over 'Hindustan.' Who were these traitors? We would get an answer to this in the chapter titled "Havelock." His narration goes like this: "Neil hit upon a new plan for the defence of Cawnpore. He formed a corps of Mahars and gave the town in their possession. The trick of inciting the low class men against the higher classes succeeded wonderfully. When the division among Hindus and Muslims vanished this caste difference was thus made use of (281.) (we find no reason for why the *division* between the Muslims and Hindus vanished suddenly). Savarkar includes "Pariahs" as one of the "raw recruits" in the list of the loyal armies to the British (396-7). Thus Dalits were the "traitors" and their ascendancy to power inevitably marked the fall of the Hindus. Though few isolated figures of Brahmans come in his text occasionally as traitors, it was always the *others*, as a community who occupied the place of the traitor. Gurkhas, Sikhs are also listed along with the Dalits. And they, as cursed by Savarkar, would not find place even in the bottomless pit of hell like the queen of Banka (who colluded with the British)!

Savarkar included sudras in the list of the patriots but not the '*panchamas*. Being **an outcaste meant** being a 'traitor' and being a traitor meant being anti-national. He

writes, "Those who persisted in Government service were excommunicated by their caste; no one would eat with them; the Brahmin refused to do Puja for him…The service of the foreigner, of the Feringi, was considered matricide!" (245.). A traitor is treated as an outcaste. Nobody would eat with him as nobody eats with an untouchable. Thus being an outcaste means being an out-nation also! Any cruelty against these 'traitors' was appreciated. Burning houses meant the total destruction of women, children and property. The lower caste women die along with their men for being part of a *trait or caste.*

***'Caste'ing** the Nation:*

One should remember that Savarkar was writing this text after fifty years of the mutiny. By that time the political understandings had become different and had radically changed. At that time Dalit politics was not on the political dais of the nation. Then why did Savarkar have to construct the Dalits as being anti-'nation.' An irresistible urge to see the *lower caste* as being the punished is the instinct behind such a portrayal. His treatment of *respectless* people is an extension of his idea of destroying unwanted communities. For instance see how he fantasies about the juridical administration of Nana Saheb: "Nana Saheb first began the work of giving justice and protection to the inhabitants. The prominent citizens of Cawnpore were called together and men were elected by the majority of them." The orders that Nana gave to these men were to "protect the citizens from…bandit villagers," disgrace the "vagabonds" and "people convicted of small thefts" 198). Punishments were severe like cutting the limbs. This was the romantic idea of Savarkar, where nameless thieves, vagabonds and bandit villagers would be cruelly punished to protect the *citizens.* Who were these "prominent men" elected to execute justice and the citizens? Who were these vagabonds, village bandits and thieves? It is not far fetched to suggest that the former is the *upper caste* and the later is the *lower caste.* At the time of writing this text Savarkar was guided by an impulse to essentialise the Dalits as anti-national, thus justifying the crimes of the *upper castes* against the Dalits in the process of keeping them out of the nation both imaginatively and virtually.

One can see western impacts on Savarkar's ideas on the nation. The following statement, shows Renan's influence on resurrecting the past: "The nation that has not

consciousness of its past has no future. Equally true it is that a nation must develop its capacity not only of claiming a past but also of knowing how to use it for the furtherance of its future" (i). Throughout his book Savarkar thus uses Hindu religious idioms to invoke a sense of a hindutva past. The whole narration of history is paraphrased as fights by the Hindus against their enemies who range from Alexander and the, British to the *lower castes.* Savarkar's idea of claiming the past in order to take hold of the future is transparently hindutva! The publisher of this text Mayuresh, refers to the 1857 mutiny as the "Gita of Indian Revolutionary Movement" and Savarkar's own role as that of "Krishna" writes this "Gita" (vii). The wheels of this chariot\nation are in the hands of *upper caste* Hindu men who often would not mind *their* women riding it. Thus Altekra's perception of Dalit woman as traitor of *upper castes/home/nation* coincides with Savarkar's view of Dalits as betrayers. Both the ideologues believe that elimination of Dalits/Dalit woman from home/nation/nation/upper *caste* as a solution effective solution.

Gandhi's Views on rape:

The Notion of the Virtuous Woman

Hinduism essentialises women as bad and good. Through the matter underlying it is now almost clear that all the *upper caste women* are essentially *virtuous* and all the *lower caste* women are depraved. Thus the Dalit woman is defined as the negative of the Hindu woman. It is in the ideas of Gandhi that one can find an exemplary instance of this essentialising mission. He completely endorses the binary by which the *different* woman are also the *bad* women.

Gandhi held conservative views on the question of gender and caste. It is difficult to trace his views on Dalit woman directly. The following incidents which indicate his ideas would be able to explain what is in store for Dalit women in the Gandhian worldview. On 29-12-1945 a group of workers of Mahishabad met Gandhi and asked him whether they were supposed to remain silent even when their women were being humiliated. To them Gandhi replies, "After all who protected Sita from Ravana ? The poet tells us that her purity was such that Ravana dared not compass his end without her consent".[24] In another context he says, "While it was true that no one could touch a woman who had the purity... of Sita, it was hard to find a Sita in this age" (201). As it is

well known Gandhi only propogated passive methods of protest for the oppressed people, he says, "The enslaved people should inflict more suffering on themselves to convert their so called enemies the imperialist, capitalist and landlords into their friends. If the oppressed people themselves become pure and just, nobody will be there to oppress them"[25]. During the times of partition of India he is reported to have suggested to the victims of sexual violence, "They ought to learn to die before a hair of their head could be injured. He asserted that it was possible for a woman to put an end to herself by choking or biting the tongue" (196). There is nothing that is particularly about the Dalit woman here. But when one observes the implications of Gandhi's conservative views on women and on the other oppressed sections, it is clear that they have dreadful implications for the Dalit woman. When Gandhi suggests that the oppressed should not fight against oppression, but should remain *pure and just*, and should not be "envious"[26], and when he suggested that a woman should not fight against her rapist, what could be the possible implications for a Dalit woman who is a labourer, Dalit and a woman? Should she retaliate with her natural weapons like nails and teeth (Gandhi allows a woman to use only these two natural weapons against her oppressor) because she is a woman or should she yield without even this feminine mode of retaliation because she is a laborer and a Dalit?

Analogies Between Lower Caste and Bad Women:

Gandhi on Religious Prostitution:

It is Gandhi who drew major analogies between the *bad* women and the *lower castes*. In the Hindu scriptures we come across here and there equations drawn between the status of Hindu women and the sudras. Gandhi went further and drew parallels between the *lower caste* women and the *bad* devadasis of the *upper castes* (it is impossible to think of lower caste women devadasis meeting the "mahatma"). It is in his ideas on devadasi women that one can decipher his hatred for the women of *lower castes*. Gandhi met (as he writes) devadasis in Cocanada in Andhra Province. He called them in his self-righteous style "fallen sisters." He discouraged them from seeking office in the Congress Committees. When the question of their survival came he told them to become "true sanyasinis of India" and told them that they need not dream about

marriage. He suggested that they spin and weave to their heart's content.[27] When he was told that two "fallen sisters" took to spinning he reacted thus: "These were not young girls but women over forty who could no longer sell their shame but who would, but for spinning, have lived on begging. They were, therefore, strictly speaking, weaned from begging and not from their original trade."[28] Thus Gandhi was not ready to easily believe that these women could become *good.* He does not pause to think who he is to pass such judgments on those women. He thus projects himself as the moral instructor of the nation though his sexual moral credentials themselves were in question.

The *devadasi* women of Barisal had been gathered into a welfare scheme where they were expected to look after the poor, nurse the sick and to give musical training and so on. In his coercive fashion Gandhi writes, "To say the least. it is putting the cart before the horse. These sisters are advised to do humanitarian work before reforming themselves. The idea of giving higher musical training will be accounted as extremely funny, if it was not tragic in its consequence. For let it be understood that these women do know how to dance and sing. And they may join all the organizations which have *Satyagraha* and non-violence as their creed all the time they are, by their trade, doing violence to truth and non-violence!" He called their manifesto obscene. He continued his overreaction and equates them with "professional murderers." He is repelled by their enrollment in the Congress,"…I would prevent by all the power at my command an unrepentant professional murderer from signing the creed." Even when he tries to maintain a balanced reaction and some equanimity. "My whole heart is with these sisters", he fails to hide his intolerance and immediately. He goes back all too quicklyto his hateful tone, "These sisters have acquired a status which for the sake of the moral well-being of society they must not have. We will not incorporate an association of known thieves for the purpose for which these women have formed their association. There is keen warrant for this association, for these are more dangerous than thieves. The latter steal material possessions, the former steal virtue."[29] After putting all the burden of keeping the morals of the society on these women he tends to make comparisons between the *lower castes* and these women.

Equating Dalits with devadasis was the routine practice of Gandhi. He writes that there: "are some women, like the *panchamas,* born to a life of degradation." He calls this "moral leprosy". A Dalit feminist can only contemplate, "What *is* moral leprosy?". He does not clarify whether being a *panchama* or being a *devadasi* is moral leprosy?- Another question is whether being bom in a community of *devadasi\panchama (*where they have no option) amounts to moral leprosy. Or is it moral leprosy when they are not able to get rid of these identities (where they have chance to leave it but stick to it due to various *personal incapabilities)* ? As usual he does not care to specify. There is also a tendency in Gandhi to treat the devadasis as actually the *lower castes.* There is an article in "Women and Social Injustice" where Gandhi consents to an overenthusiastic correspondent's view that *devadasis* are *almost like Harijans.* The correspondent (who himself belongs to a devadasi community) writes: "Harijans and *devadasis* are the only two communities which are almost in the same degree of depravity. Of course they will have to help themselves to moral elevation. Still a teacher like you would educate them and the society more quickly than they can do it for themselves. These are two sister movements. Please don't forget the sister community in your enthusiasm for the Harijans." Gandhi does not clarify to this young man that *lower castes* were not by definition morally wretched.

Implications of Orientalism for the Dalit Woman:

Orientalism as an ideology is prevalent in most of the writings of the foreigners whether they glorified or laughed at India. Though most of the Orientalists were in praise of India there are a few foreign writers and thinkers who pointed out its *caste* and gender systems of oppression. But the aesthetic spirit that Orientalism had injected into the general intellectual air of those times seems to have effected most of the foreign writers even when they took a critical outlook towards the backwardness of India. The point is that Orientalism as an ideology was operating as an unconscious guide in forming the intellectual opinion of those times. This, whether individual writers were defending or rejecting Indian culture. It was Max Muller who thought till his death that 'caste' is what India can teach to the rest of the world. In other words, if there is anything the world has to learn from India it is the organization caste, according to Max Muller.[30]

There are other writers who did not blindly valorize the crooked systems of Indian patriarchy and caste system. Yet, it is evident from their writings that they were certainly influenced and motivated by such Orientalist constructions. The following text elucidates how even those western writers who rejected caste as a meaningful system were preoccupied with the scholarly instincts structured by the theory of Orientalism, which saw only the *upper castes* as the real Orientals. The *lower castes* were almost entirely ignored in these formulations.

***Katherine Mayo's** "Mother India ": A "Drain **Inspector's** Report "or an **Important** Archival Source of Orientalism?*

There are very few academic works, which have tried to focus on the realities presented in this book. It was not even been given an archival status. Nationalists and post-colonialists are united in despising it as an ethnocentric work. They see it as a writing that, plotted to ridicule Indian nationalism and to discourage their efforts to gain self-rule. They have not even tried to extract useful information, which has been incorporated about Hindu women. The chapter "Method of Skipping" elaborated on this dimension. But for a Dalit feminist this text offers very crucial historical information both about the conditions of *upper caste* women in general, and the failure of colonial scholarship to imagine the *lower caste* women as indispensable Orientals. This is despite the fact that Mayo predicated her text on the denial of any Orientalist presumptions. It shows how powerful the caste ideology was in injecting even those foreign thinkers, who vehemently refused to see any good in the native culture.

Mayo's *Mother India* is dedicated to describe the pathos of the Indian woman, particularly the Hindu women. But interestingly, she makes scattered references, through out the text to the *lower caste* women as well. The Indian legislature was preponderantly Hindu. She tries to discuss various problems that Hindu women face due to this. What is striking in the illustrations of these two categories of women is that they are set as contrasting figures. The *upper caste* woman is Mayo's object of study and gets all the due sympathies from the writer where as, the Dalit woman gets severe sneers from her. The former makes collaborations with the people like men, Hindu priests or a cruel mother-in-law in oppressing the Hindu woman. In the whole text only on one occasion, does the

lower caste woman appear as a figure who deserves a mild treatment, which is due to a *real* woman. The text exhibits that it is the *upper caste* woman who is the perfect sign of Orientalism and that the *other* woman is incompetent to fit into it. The ideology and politics behind Orientalism could be out of ethnocentric (this became a powerful ideological tool for the hindutvas and many other mainstream people of today) preoccupations of the author also, but the present analysis tries to understand Orientalism as holding more than ethnocentrism for the *lower caste* women. The scholar tries to argue that more than ethnocentrism it is the caste ideology which was crucial in framing the ideas of Mayo towards the *Indian* women.

About the torture related to procreation, she writes that child-bearing and procreation are the women's subjects "be her caste high or low" (30). Such an over emphasis on procreation and her refusal to give priority to other socio-economic factors reflects her commitment to liberal (to some extent radical biological determinism also) western feminism. In fact her entire text pivots around this phenomenon. Mayo makes blanket statements like: "Rich or poor, high caste or low caste, the mother of a son will idolize the child" (79). In the chapter titled after the title of her text "Mother India", Mayo gives an elaborate description of how Indian women suffer during childbirth. Here the legitimate victim is again the Hindu woman. The Dalit woman enters only as a "bazaar dhai" a name given by Mayo. She writes, "According to the Hindu code, a woman in childbirth and in convalescence there from is ceremonially unclean…contaminating all she touches. Therefore only those become *dhais* who are themselves of the unclean, 'untouchable' class, the class whose filthy habits will be added by the orthodox Hindu…" (90). Mayo gives elaborate description of the torture that a Hindu woman suffers during her delivery. Mayo often sides with the suffering woman as a perfect and helpless victim and shows great hatred toward this *untouchable* midwife. She writes: "Sweeper-girl or Brahman, outcaste or queen, there is essentially little to chose between their lots…" (99). Despite also observing how *lower caste* women are left to do these unclean occupations, she goes on villainising the former. In the next scene the *dhai* is depicted as colluding with the parasitic male Brahman priest to lead the helpless pregnant Hindu woman to a torturous death. In the very next scene the *lower caste* woman again appears as a murderer of the helpless woman in labour. A woman

who dies before delivering the baby is said to bring evil to the family. Therefore, the burden of saving the family from that evil falls on this *dhai*. Mayo now sets about describing the devilishness of this *lower caste* midwife:

> First **she** brings and rubs it [some spice] into the dying eyes, that the soul may be blinded and unable to find its way out. Then she takes two long iron nails, and, stretching out her victim's unresisting arms-for the poor creature knows and accepts her fate- drives a spike straight each palm fast into the **floor (102-3).**

Thus the Dalit woman is seen to collude with Hindu families to kill those Hindu women who are incapable of becoming mothers of a hundred sons. Mayo's ethnocentricism and the caste background of the "medical witnesses" (those who gave such versions to the writer) portray the Dalit woman as a direct agent through whom the Hindu patriarchs execute their violence.

However, it is more important to look at the real position of the Dalit women that peeps through to the reader from this text. It is not necessary to give more space to unravel the whiteness of Mayo since after all, it was Hinduism which had oppressed Dalit women historically not white ethnocentricism. Mayo shows some sympathy for the helplessness of the Dalit woman, "It would be unjust to assume, however, that the *dhai*, for all her monstrous deeds, is a blameworthy creature. Every move that she makes is a part of the ancient and accepted ritual of her calling. Did she omit or change any part of it, nothing would be gained; simply the elder women of the households she serves would revile her for incapacity and call in another more faithful to the creed" (102). Mayo kindly focuses a tiny fraction of her scholarly light on the miseries of Dalit midwife also:

> **Her services include** attendance at the time of confinement...during which no member of the family will approach the patient because of her uncleanliness. During this time the *dhai* does all that for the **sick woman and** the infant. At its end she is expected to clean the defiled room and coat with cow-dung its floor and walls (102).

Mayo explains what all the Dalit woman gets for doing such degrading jobs:

> She receives her pay in accordance with the sex of the child that was born... The poor pay the *dhai* for her fortnight's work the equivalent of four cents for a son and two to three cents for a daughter. Herself the poorest of the poor, she has no means of her own...None are anywhere provided for her. And so, the slaughter goes on (103).

Now she proceeds to write about the selfishness and ignorance of this *dhai.* These women will refuse to leave this tradition since it is the source of income for them. . She will also not cut the cord unless a coin already falls into her hand. She therefore becomes a very chap person, in Mayo's description, one who trades in the life *of* a *fellow* woman for a mere coin. She is also depicted as a woman who quarrels with men "about the size of the coin that he should lay in her palm, on which to cut the cord without which coin already in her possession no canny *dhai* will operate" (104). Apart from this vulgarization of the role of Dalit women, what such ethnocentric texts do is to totally deny the experience, and medicinal knowledge that these women possessed due to their forcible historic commitment to this field of work for generations.

Mayo cites Abbe Dubois[31] in this text. For both it is the *upper caste* woman who is the object of study. A Brahman woman's state is compared to the Brahman man's not with the *lower caste* woman's. The point of reference and concern of the study is thus the Brahman woman not the *lower caste* one. The lower caste woman comes into the picture when they have to measure how much the Brahman woman is degraded in relation to her male counterpart. The oppression of the *lower caste* woman is never measured against the oppression of the *upper caste* woman. The logic is that matters of different *qualities* cannot be compared.

Mainstream feminists must definitely recognize the differences in the ethnocentric or oriental outlook of western intellectuals. Hindu women succeeded in getting the position of a legitimate and complete subject or object in these ethnocentric studies. Why did Dalit women fail to attract the ethnocentric gaze of these intellectuals? The reason is that, the Dalit woman unlike the Hindu woman is not a *complete* woman, a symbol of the victim of misogyny. A victim of Hindu patriarchy should be the opposite of a dalit woman, namely she should be a tender looking, meek, slender woman not a *lower caste* woman who labours outside the home. Her victimhood is multiple and mixed unlike the

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Hindu woman's who is oppressed exclusively because of her gender. Moreover, to the oriental, ethnocentric, objectifying academic desire of western intellectuals like Mayo, the Dalit woman, with all her intersecting identities as a *lower caste,* laborer etc, cannot become a complete female victim.

Likewise for Mayo only *upper caste* devadasis were visible. She sees these hindu women as victims of the Hindu religion. But in case of the 'untouchable caste' she writes that they had prostitution as a second industry'. Though Mayo attributes this to the general social degradation of the people in this land, the figure of the Dalit woman does not seem to invoke the same kind of sympathy that the figure of the Hindu woman so easily raised. Moreover, this issue is discussed in the chapter which primarily discusses the caste question not in the rest of the chapters where she has elaborately discusses various kinds of women's problems. The *lower caste* woman is thus according to Mayo's understanding a *lesser* woman.

CONCLUSION:

Liberation of the "Indian" Woman was an Upper Caste Affair;

Early Hindu male reformers placed faith in the westerners as the liberators of their women and the British too were able to perform such roles. As Spivak puts it (in an ironic way) the action of "White men saving the brown woman from the brown men"[32] was a completely the *upper caste affair* (Spivak does not see this as an *upper caste* affaisr any way). But this existed only in the early 19th century when the *upper caste* men still believed in the goodness of their colonial masters or when they were still under the impression that it was feasible to convince them of their common ancestry. But still when it became evident that the British colonizers were ready only to operate as civilizing agents not as liberating forces the Hindu male community became alert. At this juncture only the Hindu woman was pulled back to the *inner domain.* Her status altered from being an exchangeable terrain to being a possessed and encompassed terrain again. The British man could no longer claim access to the *upper caste.* In other words the Hindu woman could no longer offer herself as exchange to the British man because the British

men clarified by this time that there existed no *qualitative equality* (Spivak's term[33]) between them. In such an altered situation it was no more possible for the Hindu man to make exchanges with the british male community by allowing them to interfere in their *internal subject* namely the Hindu woman. When the *upper caste* women stopped fetching profits, the subject of female liberation was put off till the achievement of independence from the British. In other words, this eternal procrastination of the *liberation of the Indian woman* became inevitable because the Hindu woman was no more allowed by the British colonizers as fit for the barter. Since the Dalit woman is not an item for barter between the relatively less powerful *upper caste* and the more sophisticated British colonialists her liberation was not accounted for as national liberation by the nationalists or as an objective of the civilizing mission by the British.

What Does all this Mean to the Dalit Woman ?

It is by now an uncontested reality that there exists a great amount of congruence between hindutva ideology and the ideology of the mainstream nationalists. Broadly, such a congruence manifests itself in oppressing the Dalit woman in multiple ways. The above are some of the implications, which were renewed to suit the mainstream nationalist purposes of imagining the nation with the *core women* and the women of *periphery.* For the reasons already mentioned, postcolonial theory, which could not make any constructive criticism on *native nationalism,* turns a blind eye to all these facts and thus remains prejudiced about the Dalit woman as national subject.

Notes:

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[1] *Angirasa Samhitha, Vol.II,* Chp 1 (38), tran. Manmath Nath.Dutt, New Delhi:Cosmo Publications, 1979, pp.272-3; also see Parasara Samhita, Chp 7 (19).

[2] *Yama Samhitha,* p.279.

[3] **ibid, 28.**

[4] Sisirkumar Mitra. The Liberator: Sir Aurobindo, India and the World, Delhi: Jaico, 1954, p.48.

[5] *Sankha Samhita,* Chp 2 (3), p.612.

[6] Atri Samhitha,p. 331.

[7] *Sanka Samhitha*, Chp.4, p. 10.

[8] *Gautama Samhitha,* Chp.XXIX, p.720.

[9] See Christophe Jaffrelot, "The Ideas of the Hindu Race in the Writings of Hindu nationalist Ideologues in the 1920s and 1930s: A Concept between Two Cultures, in Peter Robb (ed.), *The Concept Race in South Asia,* Delhi: OUP, 1995, pp. 325-353.

[10] See Appendix in V.D.S, p.598-9 & 630.

[11] *Atri Samhita* Vol.11 (270), p. 338; *Samvartha Samhitha,* p.348-350; *Parasara Samhita* . Chp. 10, p.5, 8.

[12] *Parasara Samhita,* Chp.X (15), p59.

[13] *Sanka Samhita,* Chp. 4 (9), p.617.

[14] *Gautama Samhita,* Chp. 4, p.663.

[15] *Atri Samhita,* pp. 326; also see *Parasara Samhita*, Chp. 7(9), p.569. This samhita says that a brahmana marrying a girl who achieved puberty, should be ill treated as the husband of a sudhra wife (vrishalipati). He should not be addressed, nor accepted to sit at the same row with other brahmanas at a dinner.

[16] *Gautama Samhita,* Chp. 12, p.683.

[17] ibid., Chp. 24, p.710.

[18] Sanka Samhita, Chp.IV (14), p. 617.

[19] *Katyayana Samhita,* Chp.8,(6&8), p.372.

[20] *Daksha Samhita,* Chp IV (18), p. 447.

[21] *Satatapa Samhita,* Chp. 5 (1), p. 475.

[22] ibid., Chp. 5(24-25), p. 477.

[23] V.D.Savarkar, Indian war of Independence: National Rising of 1857, Bombay: V.D.Savarkar Foundation, 1957, p.i.

[24] M.K.Gandhi, Women and Social Injustice, Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1942, p. 201.

[25] G.Haragopal, *Gandhian World View: A Civil Liberty Perspective,* Shillong: North Eastern Hill University, 1995, p. 27.

[26] M.K. Gandhi, Hindu Dharma, Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1978, p. 1.

[27] *Young India,* 15-9-1921.

[28] *Young India,* 28-5-1925, p. 132.

[29] *Young India,* 25-6-1925, p. 133-4.

[30] Muller, Max, 1974, My Autobiography. Varanasi: Varanasi Chaukambalia.

[31] Dubois, 1983, Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies. Henry K. Beachamp (ed.), Delhi: OUP.

[32] Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (ed.), Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Basinstok, Macmillian, pp.296.

[33] Spivak, "The Post-Colonial Critic", Sarah Harasym, New York and London: Routledge, 1990, p.85.

Chapter V

The Politics of Protective Discrimination and Postcolonial Theory

The issue of reservation of seats for disadvantaged sections has always been a bone of contention both at the level of theory and practical politics. Dalits have seen it as a vital political strategy for their liberation whereas the *upper caste* intellectuals have seen and depicted it from different angles. The present chapter's concern is to examine the historic importance of protective discrimination and its inevitability as a political strategy for historically exploited communities. Postcolonial theorists have never paid adequate attention to understanding its centrality to dalit movement in particular and to Indian politics in general. Their apathy towards the issue of reservations has to be dealt with in relation to their overall rejection of dalit politics and theory as legitimate ones. Since it is the dalit woman who is the subject of the present work, it is the *upper caste* women's politics for reservations, which is put to examination in this chapter. It seeks to explain that upper caste women have been locating their politics within the purview of their caste, class boundaries. So, as the postcolonialists and many other cultural thinkers argue, caste is not simply a social system with specific cultural features compatible to Indian society but it is a system of oppression. Whether the people of the dominant castes agree or not, caste also continues to be a conscious tool of coercion exercised willfully by the exploiting castes. Postcolonialists rush to ambush western Reason and this brings in its wake a stampede by all the repressive arrangements *of native* Reason.

As this chapter tries to explore, the issue of reservations has had a long struggle and the *upper caste* women in India have tried to build their struggle for equal rights on the basis of this logic during the British colonial period. By 930s it had become a powerful claim of the Dalits as a liberating tool. The aim of the chapter is to unravel how differently the issue of reservations has been treated and understood by the Indian intellectuals. The point is that the Dalits' claim to reservation has been received with less respect and has often been ridiculed where as the *upper caste* women's claims to the same has received greater sympathy and respect. More than this, the base on which

upper caste women make such claims reveal extremely surprising dynamics of Indian gender politics. For instance, they do not extend the same logic of reservation that they use for their own advantage to Dalit politcs. Such paradoxical attitudes have unknowingly challenged the artificial cleft of the land into the colonial and postcolonial, as proposed by the postcolonialists. The postcolonialists end towards a loose usage of the term 'subaltern', unhesitatingly mix up the historic political rivalries that exist among different communities in the modern political world. Such a formulation also serves to present India as empty of heterogeneties. The more a significant reason to build a chapter on these lines is the great range of prejudices which the postcolonialists demonstrated when dealing with caste and gender questions. As it has been argued in the previous chapters they have treated the "Indian" women's question with some care and respect and give it milder treatment even as they rejected a similar respectable treatment to the dalit question. It is precisely the purpose of the present chapter to reaffirm most of the findings and criticisms that have been proposed in the first three chapters.

This chapter starts with a brief portrayal of the mainstream women's movement, its struggles for political rights, and its specific, almost exclusive focus on *upper caste* women. It will examine how these women have constructed their politics on the lines of omission, thus disallowing, any possibility of others like Dalits, muslims and *other* women from putting forth their ideas of liberation based on the same political logic. In other words, the *upper caste* women have guarded their theory so closely and have so constantly removed all such provisions as would allow any united action or thinking along with others. This chapter titled "The Politics of Protective Discrimination and Postcolonial Theory" tries to reveal the casteist gender dynamics of this movement. It starts with the early phase of the women's movement and concludes with a critical assessment of the contemporary women's movement for reservations. As has been explained, the whole chapter is structured around a dalit feminist critique against the Postcolonial theory.

Many writers on the Indian women's movement believe that it was born out of the hindu male reformers' efforts in the19th and early 20th centuries.[1] H.C.Upadyaya writes, "It was a bourgeoisie feminist movement involving middle class women who campaigned for the extension of educational opportunities and acting rights and later property rights. The reformists of the last century infused in their women relatives their favourite ideologies and encouraged them to participate in public life through forming associations and holding conferences. The idea was to project a progressive image to impress Britain in order to win more political power."[2] A great number of upper caste, educated women identified with organizations like the All India Women's Conference.[3] Thus it is evident that the class-caste combination has everything to do with the very political nature of this movement.

*A Brie/Account of Upper Caste **Women's** Fight for Political Rights:*

Margaret Cousins of the Women's Indian Association formed a women's delegation to meet Edwin Montague, Secretary of State for India in 1917.[4] The purpose of the delegation was to discuss the issue of enfranchisement of (elite) women. The women's delegation comprised of 18 Indian women and 4 European women. They took this initiative under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu. They went and met Montague on December 17th of 1917 when he came to India to implore popular opinion on the subject of a new Indian constitution. The delegation submitted a memorandum asking for women's franchise. The Indian men disagreed with these demands initially, but after two years they came forward to support them. The British showed were less than enthusiastic about the demands and did not even mention it in the Montague-Chelmsford report. Southborough Franchise Committee and the Indian Provincial and Central Governments also rejected the women's claim in 1918 and 1919.[5] Southborough Committee took a tour in India to assist the Montague-Chelmsford reforms by framing a list of electoral regulations. It emphasized on the conservatism and social cleavages in Indian society and cited this as the main reasons for rejecting women's franchise. The Montague-Chelmsford report of 1918 also expressed the same views, "The immense masses are

poor, ignorant and helpless... [there] runs through India a series of cleavages... which constantly threaten solidarity."[6] But still Montague-Chelmsford set up property qualification as a basis for enfranchisement. This had discouraged many Hindu women whose community did not allow them to own property. As a result of their agitation the Montague-Chelmsford Reform Act of 1919 gave the Hindu women the right to vote in elections to all state legislatures but not to the Council of State for electing the Governor-General. But to secure this right, Hindu women had to bargain with the British and assure them that this right need not be extended to the *other* women. In other words, only those women who had educational and property qualifications were able to secure- this franchise and they did not make any appeal that the same right to expanded to include all *other* women. Such a claim would have equated 'the' women with *other* women at least apparently. But by this provision only those women of the land who already had the privileges of certain rights based on their caste-class status were able to earn more rights on modern lines. This phase was truly a quasi-hindutva phase for the Hindu women's movement in India. Very soon, instead of becoming more liberal or radical on democratic lines, this movement withdrew into an anti-people, Hindu-revival phase.

Upper Caste Women get the right to Vote:

The period between 1917 to 1919 was crucial for Indian *upper caste* men also. *Upper caste* educated males now came forward to support the Hindu women's demand because they understood by then that the women's demands for political rights and their own political strategies went hand in glove. It also boosted the moral-esteem of the elite Hindu men in their interaction with British imperialist men. It became an opportunity to show the British that they were more progressive than the latter, who had given franchise to their women only recently, and that too after an agitation of fifty years. Though the Indian elite rejected the issue of women's suffrage when it was initially proposed by a delegation of women in 1917, by 1919, all the crucial political groups sent their representatives to the Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill in 1919 to testify support.[7] After the Joint Select Committee hearings, the Government of India Act 1919 left the issue to the Indian provincial legislatures to decide.[8] Due to the endorsement they had secured from the elite Indian male, the Joint Select Committee was

able to favour women's suffrage and thus appeared more democratic than the Southborough Committee. Elite women's groups had also become more organized by 1919 and had set up protests against the Southborough Committee and had even sent four women representatives to London.[9] They clarified that special arrangements need not be made for women's polling. This was the response they offered to the British objection that women's polling involved extra expenses. Thus they were seen as stepping out of the thresholds of their *homes* without any extra arrangements or protection; this was seen as a legitimate act in the new politics of liberation. The elite Indian women displayed their disappointment when the decision was finally left to the Indian legislatures. They lobbied with the members of the legislative councils and insisted that they pass resolutions in favor of women's suffrage. Since the elite men evinced a positive attitude to the issue, the women did not face many skirmishes in pursuing their aim. By the 1920s many Indian state legislatures had given the right to franchise to women. *Stri Dharma,* readily attributed the reason for the speedy resolution of the elite women's suffrage by Indian men (this was in the context of the U.P Legislative Council) to Hindu religion: "The high tone of the debate and the democratic attitude toward women are the natural result of the freedom for women seen in the pilgrim centers of this religious province."[10] P.S. Sivaswami Aiyer's critical comment discloses another hidden dimension in the easy resolution of the issue of women's suffrage. He argues (as mentioned somewhere in the chapter that the desire to appear progressive before the British was the driving force behind the elite male of India passing the pro-women resolution sanctioning suffrage." The nucleus of the ideological base of the movement is thus carefully knitted around hindutva interests.

The arguments of the women involved in the politics for enfranchisement of Indian women reveal the dominant ideology underwriting the Hindu women's movement. Since it was the time of the Khalifat movement, Sarojini Naidu made skillful appeals to Hindu Muslim unity. She declared that women's franchise would assure Hindu Muslim unity because "of the solidarity of the women in India."[12] It is clearly Gandhi's support of **the** Khalifat movement and his interpretation of it, which supplied the conceptual jargon of unity between hindus and muslims. Annie Besant, in her turn, applied Hindu

revivalist ideas and stated that sex-based discrimination emerged from the West and that those who opposed women's franchise in fact "objected to the revival of the old Hindoo custom of recognizing women's place in public life."[13]

Congress under Gandhi and the turn in the women's movement:

Congress withdrew from legislative politics after officially supporting women's suffrage in 1918. Gandhi's entrance into Congress resulted in a shift of the naming in Congress politics. The *upper caste* people who believed in legislative politics left the left the Congress. Those who remained in the Congress were named as "no-changers". Gandhi disapproved of women's suffrage from the beginning and put the Congress's national politics through great changes. A new version of nationalism, which can be called the *native* or hindutva stream, became more legitimate. What was more dangerous, this version of nationalism acquired moral and spiritual tones. Nationalism emerged as a moral force and any resistance to it by any individual or community was open to easy misunderstanding and also to their subsequent ostracization. It took almost a decade for the Dalits and the muslims to realize its real strategic political intentions. Though many *upper caste* women who had been in the women's movement were easily lured by the Gandhian version of nationalism and resisted separate political activities for women's liberation, there always remained a group of women who stubbornly adhered to the earlier idea of women's liberation and political rights. A great common feature uniting both these sets of women was that both groups vehemently rejected extending the principle of reservation or protective discrimination to Muslims and Dalits.

Simon Commision:

Women's rights issue came to the forefront again in the late 1920s. The India Statutory Commission (also called Simon Commission) was set up in 1928 to suggest when a responsible government could be set up in India. The Congress opposed the Commission since it was constituted entirely by British men. The Congress also declared complete independence to be its aim. An All-Parties Conference met and produced the "Nehru Report" in August 1928. Under its Declaration of Fundamental Rights the Report granted equal rights to women as citizens.[14] The Statutory

Commission suggested an increase in the proportion of women voters by 33.5 percent of the total electoratel[5]. (The *mainstream* womens'movement of to day has also put forth the same demand of 33.5 percent reservation in the political bodies. Why 33.5%? Why cannot it be fifty percent? Or to make it more sensible why cannot it be proportional to the female population in the country? These questions demand serious enquiry). The Commission also declared wifehood as a qualification (whereby both widows and wives above the age of twenty five would be allowed to vote). It also set up educational qualifications by which women over the age of twenty one years could vote[16].

The Civil Disobedience Movement:

In 1930 Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience movement in response to all-white Simon Commission. This was to protest the then Viceroy's refusal to conduct a Round Table Conference (RTC from here after), in order to work out a plan to grant Dominion Status to India. Women under the leadership of elite hindu women, participated in this movement in a massive scale. Though Gandhi opposed women's participation in the salt *Satyagraha,* many women had taken a very active part in the Disobedience Movement. While the Gandhi-Irwin talks were taking place in 1931, the Congress organized its Karachi session in April. Here it formally adopted the final principles of the new constitution. When the 2nd Round Table Conference failed, the Congress recommenced Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932. Ambedkar shifted his demand from adult franchise to separate electorates for the Dalits for a period of ten years during the time of 2nd RTC.

Some of the upper caste women participated in the RTC:

The elite Hindu women did not see the joint electorates proposed by the Nehru Report as deterring the pursuit of their political aims. Muslims and later Dalits (by the time of the Second Round Table Conference) opposed the idea of joint electorates. The *upper caste* women, however, did not show any interest collaborating with these *other* marginalized communities to make the base of their politics broader and more inclusive. This also meant that they rejected learning anything from these movements. If they had

shown even a little inclination to understand the political importance of separate electorates they would have comprehended the importance of asking for separate electorates on the basis of gender as well. Their political methods, however, were not likely to tread such a radical trajectory since their aim was not the enfranchisement of all women of the land, much less their elevation to the legislatures. In this they resented the incorporation of the political interests of the *others.* The early phase of 1930s was a period of political turmoil for many communities.

Participating in the first RTC was understood to be an anti-national activity since the *whole nation* was interpreted as participating in the *nationalist fight* of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Any step that deviated or opposed this line of action was an anti-patriotic one. But not all Hindu women were against the Commission. Women like Rani of Mandi, Mrs. Ahmed and Mrs.Chitamber met the Commission and asked for the extension of franchise for women and for reservation of seats.[17] The Women's Indian Association refused to send its delegates to the RTC. Interestingly, Nawaz Begum and Mrs.Subbarayan came forward to represent women in the RTC. They claimed that reservation of seats should be allotted to women so that they would be able to lobby and fight for special representation for the other depressed social groups like *lower castes.* They wrote that " a fair field and no favour" at the present time as an illusory one"[18] for even with a franchise which produced equal voting power with men, we doubt very much whether, at first set off, it would produce a real quality of opportunity in the political arena. Muthhulakshmi Reddy resigned her seat in the Madras Legislative Council and joined the Congress. The Rastriya Stree Sabha and the women in Congress arranged protest meetings against these two women. They called these two women traitors of the nation's cause and declared that they were not the real representatives of Indian women because they were not elected by them [19].

Upper caste ***Women's*** *Attitude towards* ***Dalits'*** *rights:*

One group of the women's movement under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu came **forward to** support the claim of political representation on the basis of adult suffrage and not on reserved seats. Rani of Mandi, Mrs.Chitamber and Mrs. Ahmad went

and met the Simon Commission to present their views for the increased participation of women in the legislatures. This group of the women's movement, mainly under the leadership of Radhabai Subbarayan, insisted on special franchise qualifications and reservation of seats for women. Radhabai Subbrayan and Begum Shah Nawaz attended the 1st RTC and supported the idea of wifehood becoming a qualification for franchise and argued for the reservation of seats for women in the legislatures. But they rejected the idea of reserving seats on a community basis. Their support was only for reservation on the basis of gender. The only difference that existed between these two groups of women was on the issue of whether *Indian women* should work for 'national emancipation' or whether they should try for gender emancipation first. The Sarojini Naidu faction opted to prioritize *national politics* and the Radhabai's faction gender politics.

But surprisingly both these groups of women showed a similar attitude towards the question of allocating political privileges on the basis of community. The former (who prioritized the *nation's emancipation)* became increasingly busy with Hindu male nationalist politics and ignored the fact that the caste question had to be dealt with autonomously. They extended the same argument of reservation as a threat to national unity when it came to the gender question also, since it was not possible for them to argue one way in the case of dalit politcs and its contrary when it came to gender politics. They thus failed to understand that aligning with political groups of other historically oppressed communities like Dalits opened up greater possibilities for gaining political privileges than their collusion with dominant *upper caste* men. The Sarojini faction failed to secure any significant democratic space for the women of the land after independence since it aligned with nationalist politics where the interests of the Hindu male community were given first priority. The second faction of Rahadabai failed to secure any long-lasting rights for the women due to their failure to align with the dalit politics. Both these groups failed to develop an integrated theory and position about women's politics. It is wrong therefore to call these instances of women's political participation as liberal feminism since they failed to develop any consistent ideology about Indian women, and also because their ideas never encompassed all the women

communities of this land. Their politics was spurred by a desire to broaden the space for Hindu women and at the same time to stabilize the status of their male community vis-à-vis the British colonizers and all the *others* who were involved in various political fights against *upper caste* men.

They insisted on preserving essential Hindu womanhood and retaining Hindu rule because they did not want their community's age-old political power to be destabilized. They wanted the newly emerging dalit political power to be destroyed. Since this movement exhibited more hindutva facets it would be more apt to call it a kind of hindutva women's movement than a liberal one.

Congress Re-entering into Negotiations with the British and ***'Others':***

When the issue of dominion status seemed impossible and when the *others* like Dalits and Muslims seemed intent on pursuing *seperatist* political paths, the Congress became alarmed enough to compromise on its demand for dominion status and become more realistic. This re-entery into negotiations with the British and also the *other* contesting communities, marked the failure of the Civil Disobedience Movement. By this time many had got disillusioned by Gandhi's tactics of civil disobedience. A more practical strategy was urgently required. More than the realization of the meaninglessness of such tactics, what was more alarming to the Congress was the swiftness with which the *other* communities were moving. At this juncture Congress under the guidance of Gandhi again entered into the field of negotiations both with the British and the *others.* This also meant compromise of the Congress from dominion status for limited rights within the colonial frame. When the Congress was caught between its demand for dominion status and the more compelling contemporary realities (mainly posed by the growing politcization of the Dalits and Muslims), the *upper caste* women were trying to make their own inroads. It also looked as if it meant little for the *upper caste* women (who were asking for women's rights) whether the dream of the Congress for dominion status got realized or the British idea of limited power came into effect. This showed their lack of any integrated idea of liberation. Their occasional but timely collaborations with mainstream nationalist politics on the one hand and their total

aloofness from the dalit and Muslim politics on the other, expressed their limited perception and also opportunism.[20] But it is also clear that the same amount of wrath that the Dalits and Muslims received due to their *seperatist* bargains with the British was not received by the *upper caste* women who mobilized for political rights irrespective of mainstream nationalist political moods.

Hindu women of both the groups, under these circumstances became actively receptive to Hindu nationalist politics. As part of the Congress session in April 1931, leaders of WIA, AI WC and NCWI met to frame suffrage demands in order to support the Congress principles of adult suffrage and joint electorates. Under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu, they came out with a joint Memorandum 1.[21] Sarojini Naidu attended the 2nd RTC and presented this Memorandum. Radhabai presented her views that women definitely needed reservation. She asserted that it was far from reality to presume that women can enter into the legislatures by competing on equal terms with the men.[22] Many vocal Hindu women appeared before the Lothian Committee time and again and argued against the principle of preferential treatment. They even vehemently combated the idea of reservation of seats for women (which was a favorite demand for most of the elite women in the initial phase of the women's movement) in order to hinder the Dalits' demands. They argued that such reservations of the basis of community would "create a spirit of communalism amongst women."[23]

Hindu women under the leadership of Congress declared, "To seek any form of preferential treatment would be to violate the integrity of the universal demand of Indian women, for absolute equality of political statue."[24] This shift of the Hindu women's movement to the Congress can be understood as Hindu women's collaboration with Hindu nationalism and as a statement against the dalit movement which was strongly fighting for such rights. Naidu, Begum and Subbarayan prepared to attend second RTC. Subbarayan and Begumm repeated their demand of Dominion Status for India. Sarojini Naidu and Muthhulakshmi Reddy put forward the majoritarian argument saying that a few safeguards given to a minority section of people will not open the doors of freedom for the nation. Reddy stated, "...the only way to bring the Brahmans, the women and the

Pariahs together on a common platform is by enfranchising the women and the depressed classes on equal terms with others. If the women and the depressed classes have freedom, power and responsibility, I am sure that they would very soon learn how to rectify the present social evils."[25] Understandably, Congress withdrew any cooperation for the Committee. The 2nd RTC could not come to a conclusion about the issue of political representation of the Dalits. Therefore, British appointed the Indian Franchise Committee (Lothian Committee) to survey and study the issues related to electoral politics. The Lothian Committee published its report in May 1932. It declared that women should be treated "as one of the main sections of the community" and should be represented in a method identical to the depressed classes , Muslims and Sikhs[26]. The Communal Award recommended communally classified electorates for the women.

This context again opened the space for Hindu women to express their views in terms of equality vs. justice, larger interest vs. sectarian interests, nation vs. community and so on. Begum and Mrs.Subbarayan who had been arguing for the reservation of seats for women also differed on the issue of communal representation. Begum issued a paradoxical statement that sacrifices would have to be made for the common good.[27] The Madras Brahman, Subbarayan regarded taking the benefits of the Communal Award as a criminal offence. She stated, "It is inconceivable how woman can play her part as an educated and influential citizen if she is to enter political life by the communal door and with a communal outlook."[28] The myth of the "national" interest was so prevailing that even the Muslim women yielded to it. In the 1932 National Conference at Lucknow, the All India Women's Conference including its Muslim members condemned the Communal Award[29]. But this confusion existed for the muslin women only for a short while. Muslim minorities reasonably argued that the qualifications of wifehood and literacy would enfranchise more Hindu women than Muslim women.[30] The Communal Award had finally seen light in August 1932. Women led by Sarojini Naidu, showed great outrage to both the Lothian Committee and the Communal Award. Gandhi's fast invoked a wave of sympathy among the Hindu women. The Dalits finally had to compromise due to this heavy moral blackmailing and had to make do with the small provisions they got through the Yeravad or Poona Pact.[31]

Government of India Act 1935:

Reasonably, the only woman who attended the 3rd RTC was Begum Shah Nawaz. It was held in the winter of 1932. Since the political atmosphere had become very sensitive, the British became apprehensive about expanding women's franchise. Prominent women from AIWC, WIA, NCWI gathered to draw a second common memorandum-Memorandum II. But they failed to come to a single agreement about joint electorates. Begum Shah Nawaz by this time had learnt to represent the Muslim League's view and supported separate electorates.[32] In 1935, the Hindu women issued a joint statement and declared that they had sacrificed "all special privileges for ourselves for the sake of the common good."[33] Though the demand for reservation on the basis of gender was not incorporated in the Government of India Act 1935, they decided to participate in elections on a non-reservation basis. But the Standing Committee of AIWC realized that it lacked both organizational and monetary expediency to withstand elections. Therefore, they decided not to let its members stand for elections.[34] Various parties had anyway nominated women to stand in the 1937 elections. Thus on the whole the women's movement could not play a powerful role in electoral mobilizations due to lack of structural support though the women's turnout increased over time in 1930s.

What does this imply?

Congruence Between the Social background and the Ideology of the Women in Politics:

The numerical strength of the first phase of the women's movement was very low but it nevertheless enjoyed great access to the native elite and British authorities due to the social status of its members. Due to the same reason, that is, due to their upper status in society as *upper caste,* urban and English educated, they failed to mobilize women from rural areas, and also the women of the *other* communities. It must be noted that

they made little effort to reach the un-enfranchised women of the *lower castes.* They opted for limited, elite politics to the politics of mass mobilization.

Women under Sarojini Naidu insisted on urban adult franchise. They claimed that the urban elite educated were entitled to represent the illiterate, rural and poor women. Amrit Kaur for instance said, "I hold that [it is] the women in the urban areas who are voicing the sentiments... of women as a whole."[35] The first point to be noted here is that the *upper caste* women of this period effectively applied the concept 'Indian woman' in a generic sense. Equating Hindu womanhood with Indian womanhood has been a strategy evolved by the Hindu women to hijack the privileges that modernity offered to all women of India. For instance, Sarojini Naidu delivered a lecture when she was made Congress President in 1925 where she sees her presidency as "a generous tribute to Indian womanhood and a token of your loyal recognition of its legitimate place in the secular and spiritual counsels of the nation."[36]

Both Sarojini Naidu and Begum held many similar views about the role of woman and her place as a wife, mother etc. But interestingly they took opposing stances regarding the issue of reservation for women. Begum stood for the demand of reservation of seats and special constituencies, put up by the Muslim League. Being a Congress candidate, Sarojini Naidu opposed both of these demands as the Congress had opposed them. It is thus clear that they have prioritized their communities' interests first to the women's cause. It is curious to note how they from time to time constructed these particular political motivations. For instance, the period of 1930s was a period where all the political groups and social movements stood on their toes to fight for their rights and futures in the forthcoming independent nation. The Congress under the leadership of Gandhi introduced the "equality" argument to justify its anti-preferential treatment stand. It was Sarojini Naidu who carried this Congress view into women's politics. She vehemently argued that there was no need for preferential treatment of women. She gave mainly two reasons for this, one was that "Indian" women were always treated as equals with their men, and second was that they even participated in politics and battles. She . .

argued therefore that the acceptance of preferential treatment for women would be an acknowledgement of their inherent weakness as women[37] Naidu's argument carried three elements which have been reinforced as strong concepts in making the anti-reservation discourse of the present day. One is that the myth of equal treatment was once again reiterated. It made use of the twisting rhetoric of the equality vs. justice. This assumption expresses that any preferential treatment would amount to injustice to the "majority" people. This argument was powerfully used throughout the *nationalist* period.

Begum on the other hand personified the insecurity of a minority Muslim community. Begum's demand for reservation for women should not be understood as her real fight against gender inequality that exists in the Muslim community. The over-romanticized version of the Hindu woman's status by Naidu also should not be understood in its literal sense. These two women ideologues who emerged during the nationalist period were in fact operating as the embodiments of the messages that the Muslim and Hindu communities were sending to both the British government and the masses *of Indian* people at that time. It does not mean that these women ideologues were mere passive agents in the hands of their communities. It is to say that these women prioritized their community interests over gender interests and it was a deliberate and conscious act. These two women shared the same conservative notions while defining the roles and status of women. But when it came to their community these two women unhesitatingly operated as the mouth-pieces to their community politics.

The only commonality these women shared was their elite, ruling class status. Due to this commonality they shared the same kind of views about the position of women in this piece of land. Preservation of *race* through the *right* seed has always been the area of both fear and also the agenda for almost all ruling classes in human history. Glorification of the woman as mother, and as docile wife had been formulated to see that no *other* castes would be mingled in the ruling castes. That is why womanhood is always equated to the sexual purity, correct race, motherhood and so on. Most of these women also lacked an integrated point of view of women's liberation. Begum Shaw Nawaz of

Lahore and Sarojini Naidu in Bombay for instance often expressed views, which contrasted with the principles of feminism. They argued vehemently that the right place of the Indian woman was her home. Both of them valorized the status of Indian woman in glorious terms. Begum Shaw depicted the woman as occupying a powerful role, like being in charge of finance at home. In her own words "In that little kingdom she is not only in charge of finance and of home and foreign affairs, but she is also the custodian of the future generations"[38]. Sarojini Naidu expressed that "woman" is the highest priestess of home"[39] Both of these women perceived the woman primarily in terms of motherhood. Sarojini Naidu repeatedly argued that franchise would educate and inspire a woman to inculcate the spirit of nationalism in her children.[40] Thus it is clear that the women's movement in British colonial period was not structured or based on any liberating gender-oriented perceptions or notions.

*Absence of **'other'** Women:*

The whole phenomenon of the women's movement in *India* demands enquiry because of the conspicuous absence of the *other* women in this movement. A few epistemological questions can be justifiably framed relating to the differential participation of women in the womens' movement in *India*. The primary question would be to ask what it is that can be named as the women's movement? If elitist women like Begum and Sarojini Naidu prioritized their respective community interests to their gender interests and still called their politics women's politics (or, are named so by the modern scholars) why cannot the Dalit and various tribal movements also be called as women's movement, especially where innumerable Dalit and tribal women participated throughout the British colonial period and even after that? The overwhelming presence of the dalit and the adivasi women in their movements tempts a dalit feminist to name them also as women's movements. If one consents to an argument that the women's movement of elite women was both a women's and a nationalist movement, by the same logic one should accept that the adivasi and dalit movements were equally engaging in women's movements. Like these Hindu and elite Muslim women the Dalit and the

adivasi women knew that their future depended on the success of their community movements.

Conclusion:

The moral basis of the women's movement, which was predicated on the principle of reservation/protective discrimination, had been dismantled due to *upper caste* women's sudden subversion of the whole women's political agenda when they suddenly jumped into the Congress led nationalist politics. The political future of women's politics became quite unpredictable and their political vision became severely mutilated. Gender sensitive theories, which probably sprouted for the first time on this soil were rendered futile in such a reactionary state of affairs. It was for certain that the women's politics in India completely collapsed into the Gandhi led nationalist politics and its fate fell into the hands of Hindu male ideologues of the Congress. Thus the women's movement in India lost whatever semi-autonomous status it might have enjoyed in its initial phase (the dalit feminist calls it semi-autonomous because the establishment of women's politics became possible due to their status as wives and daughters of elite Hindu , western educated men). Worse, it became prey to the extremely ambiguous Gandhian conceptual circus.

This further compromised the conceptual luggage of women ideologues, who had already flooded the political domain of women's politics with backward hindutva jargon. In other words, the spiritualisation of women's status in politics and the investment of mythical powers to her became a common symptom of all streams of hindutva politics. Sarojini Naidu feels, "The true standard of a country's greatness lies…in the undying spiritual ideals of love and sacrifice that inspired and sustained the mothers of the race."[41] The other characteristic that they attributed to the Hindu women was that of being "sakthi." Such statements reveal only the overconfidence that the hindutva revivalists already injected in the nationalist atmosphere to camouflage the Hindu women's real and, brutal subjugation. What they wanted the Hindu women to do was to remain as mother-citizens and wife-citizens. It meant that these women were valued and valorized as "real" women only when they lived out the roles of sacrificial mother and docile wife, imposed on them by Hindu religious texts. The national identity

of a woman in India had acquired dangerous overtones like the above and this outcasted every *other woman* who could not fulfill these requirements. Since the dalit women's married and maternal status were never respected and counted, they failed to become national subjects either during the anti-British colonial times or in the present.

These Hindu women, like their male counterparts did not forget to link the freedom of India with the revival of hinduism. The Rani of Baroda in her presidential address claimed, "Here with the rising tide of revival of Indian culture, here at the beginning of what may rightly be regarded as an Indian renaissance, we are assembled to discuss those things which are essential for the education and general well being of the future of mothers of the race."[42] Sarojini Naidu writes, "We must realize with thrilling pride how farreaching was the influence of women in bringing political and spiritual unity in ancient India."[43] Besant also feels, "Indian greatness will not return until Indian womanhood obtains a larger, freer, fuller life, for largely in the hands of the Indian women must be the redemption of India."[44]

Thus since Hindu women did not want to rectify any of their sanctioned ignorances, deconstruct the ideological inputs that flowed from the caste minded hindu nationalist men (it does not mean that were acting as sponges to absorb whatever flowed from the mouths of their men. It only indicates the general male domination of their circumstances and also the readiness with which these women yielded to) or introspect their own status as hindu women, they had to face a very bitter experience from the same "male nationalists" who encouraged these women to fight for their rights along with men and convinced them that once independence was achieved everything would be set right. When the Hindu men finally resolved *the* women's question, the issue retained all the pre-modern characteristics. All these hindu women intellectuals who showed a complete blindness in case of the womanhood, motherhood and so on did not demonstrate the same level of ignorance when it came to the question of property rights or domestic violence. This is evident in the well-known controversies that occurred through the debates over the Hindu Code Bill.[45]

Lobbying and appealing were the main strategies employed by the Hindu women. Since the majority of the "other" women were mobilized under various social movements like the peasant, tribal, anti-caste movements etc., the interests of the Hindu women were not rendered sufficiently appealing for these sections of women. The *upper caste* women could have made use of *other* women's groupings within their respective community politics. This would have stretched out into political alliances with them. But the Hindu women openly rejected to initiate any such steps themselves.

The Hindu women's failure in the politics of mass mobilization is the main cause for these women's recession from electoral politics after independence. Only those social groups which could command a good amount of mass and social base and an autonomous identity during the British colonial period, and those who could stay aloof from *upper caste* politics succeeded in participating in the constitution making process and in reaping whatever small constitutional benefits that were possible at that historical juncture. *The* women's movement due to its lack of adequate mass base and its moral inability to question Hindu society's anti-social order failed terribly in all the constitutional negotiations. Because it accompanied the Hindu patriarchs in propagating and nurturing the ideas about women in accordance with the essentially anti-women hindutva worldview, they failed to extract any pro-women democratic stand by the same men after independence.

Although the Dalits' contribution to the civil rights campaign is rarely acknowledged and written about, the Dalits, including Dalit women, had shown a more progressive attitude toward civil rights and political rights than Hindu women. Dalits throughout the British colonial period maintained a consistent political philosophy of political rights, while the Hindu nationalists, including Hindu nationalist women, propagated a narrow suffrage and limited civil and political rights. Dalits also hardly demonstrated any resistance towards women's voting and to their entrance into legislatures, thereby questioned their traditional role.

Moreover dalit men as a community supported and laboured for more political powers for women. From Phule to Ambedkar they took every possible step to advocate equal political rights for women. The issue of women's rights was brought forward by Ambedkar after independence during the making of the constitution. This is proof that the Dalit movement was very keen about the liberation of women and that it exhibited a great maturity towards the *upper caste* women's movement, thought it never cooperated with the former throughout the British colonial period. Another important point that is to be noted here is Ambedkar's sudden and increased interest in *the women's* rights. It is clear that most of the proposals that he and the two women present in the Constituent Assembly (namely Amrita and Hansa Mehtha) put forward were not very much in the interest of Dalit women. This is not due to some political strategy of Ambedkar whereby he decided to dedicate his energy and time, at this historic juncture, to the issue of the rights of *upper caste* women. It cannot be denied that his marriage with an *upper caste* woman would have led him to give such an excessive importance to the exclusive rights *oi upper caste* women, going so far as to even resign his post as Law Minister. This was definitely at the cost of Dalit movement.

What is more surprising is the constant refusal of the *upper caste* women of today to accept this historical support that the dalit movement offered the women's movement. *Upper caste* women took a very powerful part in the anti-Madal agitation. The issue of women's reservation in political bodies also is replete with the same old arguments that it would divide the women, that it would allow less meritorious women to enter political bodies and lead to its lumpenisation, etc. As Hindu women feel and believe, the Dalit woman also believes that equal political opportunities will be an answer to most of the oppressions that they face. For instance Rekha Thakur writes, "The serious issue of violence against women would be successfully dealt with if women came to power.. .Bhanwari Devi was raped because being a dalit woman she has dared to challenge the Savarna (caste hindu) men. Oppressed caste women have been exploited in similar fashion by the men of oppressor castes. If these women come to power: the status of women who come from the lower strata would rise.. .the culprits to a certain extent remain under check:...[lower caste women] will play a role in the machinery that is

responsible for punishing the criminals."[46] Since the Dalit women are more oppressed, it is obvious that they need more political rights to participate in the decision making of the nation than anybody else. As most of them are daily wage earners their labour and economy needs the protection of the legislature.

As the Dalits have long been realised , it is not just caste politicians who pose obstacles to the reservation within reservation. Hindu women, including intellectuals who should have been their natural allies, frequently turn out to be their most formidable foes.[47] Now all the hindu male politicians take advantage of this anti-dalit sentiment which is theoretically reproduced by the descendents of Naidus and Rajkumaris of the *nationalist* times.. Brinda Karat (CPM), is one of the opponents of the caste-based women's reservation. She argues that gender discrimination has nothing to do with caste. The opponents of caste based reservation mainly use the below listed reasons to oppose caste-based reservation:

1.It (caste based reservation) divides the women

2.Such a demand for caste based reservation shows the lack of trust in the capabilities of *other* women.

3.Men who are asking for it are actually male chauvinists. They don't want any women's reservation. They put forward the caste based reservation only an excuse to hinder women's political empowerment.[48]

On the other hand MPs like Bhagwathi Devi, Phoolan Devi, Kanti Singh, Uma Bharathi (though she is in the Right wing which opposes any kind of reservation) have demanded it. A close observation of the debate will reveal that Hindu women like Brinda Karat are following on the footprints of their foremothers who fought for political rights in British colonial period. In fact her argument resembles that of Mrs.Subbarayan, when she argued for women's reservation but rejected the same preferential treatment for *others*. Those hindu women who rejected any preferential treatment for women were better than women like Mrs.Subbarayan and Brinda Karat, who will not feel embarassed to argue for more rights for themselves but do not support the rights of other and more

exploited sections. This phenomenon also raises serious questions about the kind of Marxist politics that is operating in India. Gail Omvedt also, instead of questioning the prejudices of the *upper caste* women, portrays this issue as having become one of the Women versus OBCs. She argues, "The issue has taken on the colour of women versus OBCs- because the mainly rural "backward caste" politicians who have been gaining representation in the Lok Sabha in the last couple of decades fear that they will lose their seats to sophisticated, urbanized upper-caste women. The lack of education among Dalit-Bahujan women makes this a genuine danger."[49] Thus, she greatly fails to locate the problem within the historic frame of the caste prejudices of *upper caste* women and of the Dalits' resistance to it. Measuring political competence in terms of education is too simplistic an interpretation of the issue. What she endorses as an acceptable solution for this is to make political parties reserve one-third of their tickets to women, an idea originally proposed by Mulayam Singh Yadav. But here too the question of caste based reservation is not resolved. For it is still not clear which women will benefit by such measure. Omvedt, anyway, does not attempt to address the issue of caste based reservation even after she inserted such a blunt conclusion on the dalit-bahujan claims for the same. More frustratingly, her views subscribe to the mainstream myth of merit Vs. Protective Discrimination.

The Dalit feminist theme is that it is identity that should be the criterion for the vote. Leaders who are against caste based women's reservation are putting forward two generalization: one is that gender is the sole identity for women and the other is the rule of meritocracy. The rule of meritocracy is especially argued from the liberal feminist terrain where women's backwardness is viewed in terms of lack of opportunities rather than as a result of structural malady. The Hindu community has noticed the strategic value of Hindu women's reservation as a counterbalance to the dalit and other political forces, and as a strong means of structurally preserving Hindu supremacy in India. More powers to Hindu women will give more supremacy to the Hindu community. Thus Hindu political leaders, Left and Right, have found common cause for an alliance in this regard. The commonality of arguments for non-caste based women's reservation between Hindu fundamentalist parties and the Left parties is because of the same reason.

Since it is a gender question, their apparent support to the issue of women's liberation would fetch them a liberal profile. The most ironic feature of the Indian politics of reservation is that when it is claimed as precious by the Dalits it is ridiculed as a claim that comes out of inefficiency and lack of merit. And yet, when it is lifted as a major political banner of the *upper caste* women it is treated with respect and attention. This is one of the major areas where the Indian *upper caste* intellectuals classes have to introspect.

Oppression against Dalit women works in a more rampant way through Hindu women rather than through the Hindu men since the former moves in more intimate circles with Dalit women than the latter. The intimate enemy of the *other* women is thus the Hindu woman. The dalits could not secure greater political rights due to the inclination of Hindu women towards their men, due to their apathy towards the dalit cause and their parochialism. In this way the dalits have suffered more betrayals from Hindu women than from any other sources. The Hindu identity has added more impetus to Hindu women's reservation. They don't bother to pause and introspect that dalit women are debarred from nearly all places of respectable employment. They don't count that Dalit women are brutally victimized by the hindu male community, they don't re-think that it is Dalit women who are in need of political power more than anybody else in this land. The Dalit women's political empowerment is a question of national concern, a question of the completion of the process of nation-making, it is more importantly, a question of allowing her to acquire total peoplehood.

Postcolonial theories failed to locate the politics of reservation in a serious historical frame. It has denied a respectable space for this sream of dalit movement in their theory. More dangerously they have interpreted this movement as a cheap pursuit for *artha*. This is a major limitation which makes it incapable of matching up its theory with contemporary realities.

Notes:

[1] See, Gail Omvedt, "Women in Rural India", *Social Scientist,* Vol, 6, Nos. 1 and 2, Aug-Sep, 1977.

[2] H.C.Upadyaya, "Status of Women in India" Vol.1, Anmol Publications, 1991, p.64.

[3] See B.K. Vashishta, ed., "Women's Welfare Organisation", Encyclopedia of Women in India, New Delhi: Praveen Encyclopedia Publishers, 1976, Part II, PP.3-19.

[4] Margaret E. Cousins, Indian Womanhood Today ,Allhabad: Kitabistan, 1941, pp. 32-33; and James H. Cousins and Margaret E. Cousins, We Two Together, Madras, Ganesh& Co, 1950, pp. 308-3 14.

[5] Parliament Papers, 1918 [Cmd. 141] XVI, pp. 3-4; ibib, 1919 [Cmd, 176] XVI, p. 1.

[6] P.P., 1918 [Cmd. 9109] **VIII. P.** 132.

[7] **ibid, ii. Pp. 109, 122, 130,** 211, 228, iii. Pp. 18,21.

[8] P.P., 1919 (203) IV, 1, p. 7.

[9] A Short Sketch of the Indian Women's Franchise Work, (n.d.), pp.6-8.

[10] Quoted in Modern Review, March 1923, p. 384.

[11] P.S. Sivaswami Aiyer, Indian constitutional Problems, Bombay, 1928, p. 302.

[12] PP, **1919** (203) **IV, ii.p.75.**

[13] PP, 1919 (203) IV, ii.p.75.

[14] **See** B.Shiva Rao, "The Nehru Report", p.60.

[15] Indian Statutory Commission 1927-30, vol 2, pp.91,92 and 94.

[16] Indian Statutory Commission , vol 2, p.93.

[17] Great Britain, Indian Statutory Commission Report, Vol. 16,pp.334-337.

[18] Mrs Subbarayan and Begum Shaw Nawaz, `Memorandum of the Political Status of Women Under a New Indian Constitution, (proceedings of sub-committes, part 2) 1st Indian Round Table Conference 12 November 1930-19 January 31, cmd. 3772.

[19] Bombay Cronicle 23 Sep. 1930,p.1; SA 1930, para 1797; BC 4 Oct. 1930,p.1

[20] The dalit movement could not be termed as opportunistic for its *seperatist* politics the same way as the ucw's movement because it always tried to address and cooperate with the politics of marginalized communities like women and muslims.

[21] PP., 1931-32 **[Cmd. 3997] III.pp.** 100-102.

[22] **See** ibid, p.98.

[23] AIWC, Proceedings, Seventh Conference, p. 380.

[24] Memorandum representing the view of a number of Indian Women's organizations presented by Naidu and Begum, Indian Round Table Conference Second Session,7th Sep-1st Dec 1931, cmd. 3997, Appendix 4, p.100; Report of the All India Women's Conference, Madras, Dec 1931; Origin of All India Women's Conference, Indian Annual Register, 1935, Vol. 1, pp.378-379.

[25] Muthhulakshmi Reddy to Eleanor Rathbone, 29 July 1931, E.R. Papers.

[26] Parlimen Papers, 1931-32 [cmd.4086] 8, pp.83, 85-87.

[27] Bombay Cronicle, 20 Aug, 1932,p.16

[28] BC, 22 Agu, 1932,p.12.

[29] Hansa Mehtha at the 7th session of the AIWC. Lucknow,28-31 Dec 1932, Indian Annual Register, 1932, p.358.

[30] PP., 1931-32 {Cmd.4086} VIII. Pp. 197-199.

[31] B.R.Ambedkar, Poona Pact: AN Epic of Human Rights. Jallandhar: Buddhist Publishing House, 1982.

[32] Shaw Nawaz, Father and Daughter: A Political Autobiography; a short sketch of India women's Franchise Work , p. 148-9.

[33] AIWC Proceedings, 9th Conference, 1935, p. 137.

[34] AIWC, Proceedings, 11th Conference, 1936, p.59.

[35] PP., 1932-33 (112) VIII. P. 2304.

[36] Indian Quarerly Register, 1925, II, p. 316.

[37] Sarojini Naidu,Presidential Address, AIWC, 20 Jan 1930, Indian Annual Register, 1930, p.363.

[38] Begum Nawaz Shaw Proceedings of Sub-Committees Part 2, Franchise Sub-Committee Meeting , 30 Dec, 1930, Indian Round Table Conference 12 November, cmd.3772.

[39] Sarojini Naidu's speech in 1918 in Speeches and Writtings, Madras, G.A. Natesan, p. 199.

[40] ibid

[41] Spee and Wri of Saro, Madras:G.A Natesan, 1925,p.16.

[42] The Maliarani of Baroda,The Indian Social Reformer, Januaryy 8, 1927, p.282.

[43] S&W ,Saro,p.196.

[44] S&W, Besan, p.79.

[45] See, Lotika Sarkar, "Jawaharlal Nehru and the Hindu Code Bill," in B.R.Nanda (ed.), Indian Women: From Purdha to Modernity, Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1990.

[46] Rekha Thakur, *the dalit,* March-April 2002, p.49.

[47] Tanika Sarkar and Urvasi Butalia, Women and the Hindu Right, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1995.

[48] *The dalit,* Marxh-April 2002, p. 50.

[49] Gail Omvedt, "Women and Political Power", *The Hindu,* May 20, 2000.

Conclusion

More than two decades have passed since the postcolonial/subaltern theory (PC from hereafter) occurred. It presented an illusion that it has indeed succeeded in retrieving the subaltern voice, in designing an alternative historiography or in creating an autonomous space for the postcolonial (Indian) subject in the world academics. But illusion it proved to be many loopholes reoccupied the center-stage with unprecedented swiftness. Postcolonial theory, instead of giving birth to an alternative body of knowledge, proves to have delivered more distorted versions of Indian realties. At the politico-academic level, we come across on the one hand, demands for the acknowledgement of the pre-British colonial realities and on the other hand, the pull towards the integration of those realities with contemporary theories. The present dissertation tried to register these inadequacies of the PC theory.

The present work is thus a critique of the un-contextualized, monolithic reading of the Indian nation/gender/caste. PC theory is presented as insensitive to the *caste* and gender variations. The study of nation and gender has been the exclusive preserve of the mainstream theorists. PC scholars narrated the story of nationalism leading victoriously to the formation of autonomous thought. Here the *upper caste* men become sole actors and thus emerge as natural riders of the nation. The *upper caste* women are passively absorbed in this process. PC project displays only a scant concern for Dalit theory and politics. The outcome of the arguments is that PC theory can no more claim relevance to the realities of the Dalits.

There are various kinds of loopholes in this theory especially regarding the Dalits. Their selective mentioning of pre-British colonial realities can be stated as the first limitation. Most of the time they bring only the cultural factors of *caste* system to scrutiny. One can hardly come across PC study on the violent manifestations of *caste* system. They do not even look at the violent core of Hindu culture. Indian/Hindu culture is never apolitical and therefore never non-violent. During the British colonial period

Dalits tried to liberate themselves both from the British colonizers and the native Hindu *caste* supremacists. Therefore it is not an exaggeration to depict the various Dalit movements as effective fights against both native and British colonial oppressions. The following narration on Channar rebellion *{Melmundu Samaram)* explains the fusion of culture and *caste* and also explains that for Dalits nationalist struggle meant a liberation from *upper caste* domination also:

> "The breast cloth struggle, or Channar rebellion, which continued in South Travancore for years together was for the rights of Channar (Nadar) women to cover breasts. When some Channar women who had converted to Christianity came to public places covering their breasts, dominant caste men in Namboodri and Nair communities attacked them...In 1828, under the leadership of revenue inspector Eswaran Pillai, dominant caste men tore the blouses of Channar women and expelled their children from schools. The rebellion, which commenced following this, could be curbed only with the entry of the army from Quilion...When the Channar community did not get any reply from the Government for their appeal to be allowed to wear a breast cloth, they approached the Madras Government in 1855. Though the reply from Madras was negative, the women wore breast cloth. This again led to further struggles. The church at Mekkod was burnt. Many squabbles started in the bazzar. The residency bungalow and chapel were also burnt. Two mission schools were also destroyed. In Thittavella, a Channar couple were attacked. Their house and twenty seven adjoining houses were burnt and destroyed. Many women and men were from the community were caught and tortured in secret chambers in dominant caste houses. Their houses were also looted...
>
> There re many stories of torture which the women who covered their breasts had to face. A Channar woman who covered their breasts had to face. A Channar woman in Kayamkulam who was caught with her breasts covered by the upper caste men, was tortured. They her blouse and poured molten on her breasts. They peeled of the cloth from an Izhava woman who was caught with her mundu which went beyond her knees. ...Rape, cutting of breasts, cutting of years... these are some of the torture mechanisms reserved for lower caste women who dared to defy caste rules."[1]

It also explains that modernism (which accompanied British colonialism) has imparted ideology of liberation and self-respect for the Dalits. But the PC scholarship does not look at these dimensions. It mainly bases itself on the critique of western theory. For them any theory emanated in the west is essentially ethnocentric. Its study of Indian culture thus results in merely marking its difference with west. Their recurrent reliance on Hindu scriptures and historic documents (which are also mostly religious sources) do not lead them to focus on the *caste* dynamics of Indian political history. These texts are the powerful repositories of casteism and *caste* patriarchy. Most of the PC literature that is discussed in the present work seems to enjoy its ideological compatibility with this Hindu fundamentalist ideology. Partha Chatterjee's *Nationalist*

Thought and the Colonial World is a good example of this. One must connect his notion of 'autonomous nationalist thought' (his main hypothesis in this text) with institutionalization *of caste* misogyny that upholds *upper caste* domination over Dalit men and women. The cultural glorification of this narrow autonomous nationalist thought includes a glorification of *caste* misogyny against Dalit woman. Any critical interrogation of the legacy of this hindutva nationalist thought that does not call attention to the *caste* related oppression that condoned the exploitation of the Dalits is only a prejudiced version. For PC scholars to condemn the imperialism of the British without critiquing internal *caste/caste* patriarchy is a strategy that seeks to delete the particular ways *caste/caste* patriarchy determines the specific forms of violence. PC writers merely re-produce this *caste/caste* patriarchal legacy when they re-legitimise these Hindu scriptures and ideology (through PC academic politics) that perpetuate Dalit/Dalit women's subordination. If their notion of nationalist thought and nationhood tolerate and celebrate Dalits'subordination via the perpetuation of this epistemic violence, then demands for a re-imagination of nation, re-writing history or retrieving the voice of subaltern will never be attached to a politics of commonality. Thus PC literature fails to make transformative intervention since it attacks only the British colonialism and seeks to preserve the *caste/caste* patriarchal domination.

The PC scholars' alliance with postmodernism is to be noted here. PC intellectuals (like the postmodernists) seek to dismantle the 'binary opposition' of concepts that exist in hierarchical dualistic pairings. They oppose this kind of binarisms as part of their project to deny the universal theories. They believe that it is impossible to find universal principles that explain the *caste/caste* patriarchy. Dipanker Gupta's propagation of the notion 'discrete classes' (and Partha Chatterjee's support of it in his essay "Nation and its Outcastes") has to be understood in this context. The Dalits on the other hand would try to see *caste* as an essentially oppressive and extremely unified system. Such an understanding forms the very base of Dalit politics. PC project undermines many of the concepts that Dalits themselves continue to propagate and apply in their politics and theories. Most of the politics of the Dalits can perfectly be located as 'modern' rather than postmodern, for they rely on western politico-philosophical

frameworks premised on the Enlightenment Reason. It is undeniable that they construct their politics on the modern notions of individual rights, justice, equality and so on. Dalits, long denied these rights, clearly realize that postmodernism seeks to delegitimize these notions. Thus PC project's overwhelming reliance on postmodernism, their rejection to see Indian caste/culture as system of power and violence are some of the major reasons which invoke Dalit suspicion.

The call for commonality structured around notion that Indians constitute a community with common British colonial experiences made contestation difficult. Such theories of commonality re-center the experiences and versions *of upper castes* in ways and methods that deny *caste/gender* differences. Partha Chatterjee's book *Nationlaist Thought and the Colonial World* begins with the resurrection of a genealogy in which Indian nationalism is evoked as a legacy handed down from one generation of *upper caste* nationalists to the next. Thus Gandhi, Nehru become the natural heirs to Bankim but never Ambedkar or Ikbal. Consequently PC literature leaves us with no understanding of historic ways Dalits challenged *upper caste* violence as part of their nationalist struggles.

It is time to call attention to differences that could not easily be reconciled by sentimental evocations of Indianhood. The present work tried to combat this hegemonic academic process by pointing out the fact of variations and differences. It is not an exaggeration to conclude that PC theory has not yet recognized the category 'Dalit and Dalit woman' as full pledged national subject. We do not come across a term 'Dalit' in their bulky literature. Dalits are denied a role of subjectood for the reasons mentioned above. Thus it is not a hasty thing to conclude that the Dalits and the PC streams stand in opposite to each other both at the politico-academic plane.

The present work basically revolves around Dalit woman and the implications (all those discussed above) of PC theory to her. It tried to look at how the PC literature operates as a conduit of the epistemic violence inscribed in the Hindu religious

texts/ideology and mainstream nationalist fights (the fight of *upper caste* women for political rights is incorporated). Deconstruction hindutva texts and mainstream nationalism explain that Dalit woman has figured to an astonishing extent in these two streams. It is astonishing in the sense that it is frequently assumed that Dalit woman has been largely invisible in these streams. Yet, she appears in the margins of these streams. These margins are nevertheless the foundations of these streams. In other words her status as margin is central to their discourse and politics. The above analysis proves that PC literature mirrors the above oppressive streams. The researcher tried to understand how PC project took up this task and its net results to the Dalit woman.

Dalit woman is still identified in the Hindu common psyche by the equation of Dalit woman with outsider and outsider with Dalit woman. This negative image has been pumped into the popular mindset of the *Indians* by various channels which include Indian academics as well. PC literature continues to endorse this construction of Dalit/Dalit woman as outsiders. It evolved itself as an oppressive politico-academic system and emerged as cite for perpetuating this image academically. Dalit woman have been located in these margins in much more demeaning ways as distinctively different from other historically oppressed communities like Dalit men and *upper caste* women. He marginalized status can only be totally grasped as the legacy of *caste* patriarchy working over centuries. It was during the British colonial period that this image of Dalit woman as outsider was re-injected into *upper caste* nationalist mythology, It is at least now time to ask how this image of Dalit woman as outsider has been perpetuated into the contemporary world. At this juncture it became important for the scholar to pay attention to the role of the PC theory as a tool of transmission of this image.

As the study analyses, PC discourse has by no means been exempt from caste mythology. Partha Chatterjee's three essays on 'woman' are good examples of how Dalit woman is imposed with a prefabricated theory. His generic use of the concepts like nation and Indian woman relegates Dalit woman to the margins of his theory. She appears only as a footnote. In Sudhir Kakar's illustration Dalit woman (or rural sister) first makes her appearance *along* with her *upper caste* counterpart. Slowly she fades

away into margins when the *upper caste* woman occupies the status as a substance of the text. The texts produced by the *upper caste* feminist intellectuals also share almost same patterns of writing regarding the theme 'woman and nation'. This essentially backward-looking body of knowledge continues to endorse *caste* patriarchal mythology by reproducing the ancient image of Dalit woman as an outsider to nation/theory.

As the PC school exclaim nation failed to emerge. This body of nation clearly exhibits numerous fissures. But the PC literature never showed *caste/caste* patriarchy as one of these fissures. They end up in flooding the academic arena with romantic versions of Hindu nationalist thought as *the* anti-British colonial thought. Its attachment to the pre-British colonial cleavages is effectively camouflaged. Such versions highlight only one set of fissures or one brand of nationalism and nullify others. Thus, broadly this work is about the complicity of the PC academic project with the epistemic violence launched by the Hindu religion and the *upper caste* nationalist discourse.

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[1] C.S. Chandrika, "Keralathinte Streecharitram", (The Women's History of Kerala), in Samakalika Malayalam Weekly, Special Issue, January, 2000, pp. 196-226.

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