



Reclaiming Sanskrit Studies - 5

A Swadeshi Critique on Videshi Mīmāṃsā

Proceedings of Swadeshi Indology Conference Series

General Editor
Dr. K. S. Kannan D.Litt.

Senior Editor
Dr. H. R. Meera

Infinity Foundation India

In continuation with the previous volumes in the series, this volume deliberates on two issues primarily – Mīmāṃsā and “desacralisation”, upon which themes Prof. Sheldon Pollock has spilled much ink. Pollock is considered by some as the very guardian of India’s cultural, literary, and social past. “He who controls the past controls the future” says the enigmatic statement of Orwell. Blame Mīmāṃsā for the lack of history in India; blame Mīmāṃsā for the Nazi holocaust; blame the *śāstra*-s for all the ills of India – is the *mantra* of this maverick scholar, who brushes aside abundant evidence to the contrary furnished by genuine scholars and itinerants of East and West.

The *etic* misinterpretations of Pollock who can weave a tangled web are an inspiration only to the intellectual saboteurs that comprise the Breaking India forces who need to be urgently and effectively neutralised. The nine papers in this volume expose the hollowness of the arguments of Pollock.



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(Proceedings of the Swadeshi Indology Conference Series)

Selected Papers from the Conferences

(held in July 2016 (Chennai) & February 2017 (Delhi))

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Scheme of Transliteration (IAST)

a	अ	ā	आ	i	इ	ī	ई
u	उ	ū	ऊ	r̥	ऋ	r̄	ॠ
lṛ	ऌ						
e	ए	ai	ऐ	o	ओ	au	औ
m̐	ॠ	ḥ	:				

k	क्	kh	ख्	g	ग्	gh	घ्	ṅ	ङ्
c	च्	ch	छ्	j	ज्	jh	झ्	ñ	ञ्
ṭ	ट्	ṭh	ठ्	ḍ	ड्	ḍh	ढ्	ṇ	ण्
t	त्	th	थ्	d	द्	dh	ध्	n	न्
p	प्	ph	फ्	b	ब्	bh	भ्	m	म्

y	य्	r	र	l	ल्	v	व
ś	श्	ṣ	ष्	s	स्	h	ह
kṣa	क्ष	jña	ज्ञ				

Shown in **bold** in this chart are letters that require diacritics, and the few that are confusibles (owing to popular spelling).

About Infinity Foundation India



॥ इच्छन्ति देवाः सुन्वन्तं
न स्वप्नाय स्पृहयन्ति ॥

“The *deva*-s love the performer of *yajña*,
not the one who slumbers” — *Rgveda* 8.2.18

Infinity Foundation (IF), USA, has a 25-year track record of mapping the Kurukshetra in the field of Indology, and producing game-changing original research *using the Indian lens* to study India and the world.

One of the goals of **Infinity Foundation India (IFI)**, an offspring of IF, in organising Swadeshi Indology Conference Series is — to develop, fund, and groom scholars who can methodically respond to the Western worldview of Indology.

We are proud to say that within one year of the birth of the Swadeshi Indology Conference Series, we have conducted two high impact conferences with quality output for publications, as well as two impressive monographs. These monographs will be published and distributed in academia worldwide. They will be used in platforms for academic debate by our scholars.

We have begun to build a team of young scholars with *swadeshi drishti*. Our mission is to build a home team of 108 scholars who will form the basis for developing a civilizational grand narrative of India.

Our Key Partners

The organisers of the conference are indebted to the various institutions and individuals for the invaluable help rendered by them, without which this work would just not have been possible. It is a pleasure to thank them heartily for the same.

We are indebted to our individual and institutional sponsors: Sri Mohandas Pai and Foundation for Indian Civilization Studies, Sri MV Subbiah and Vellayan Chettiar Trust, Sri J K Jhaver, Sri Kiron Shah, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Sri Rakesh Bhandari, and Sri Nagesh Bhandari and Indus University. Without all their financial support and help we would not have been able to attract the high level of scholarship that has contributed to this volume.

We are grateful to IIT-Madras and IGNCA, New Delhi for organizing the Swadeshi Indology Conferences 1 and 2 respectively. In particular, we are thankful to Prof. Devendra Jalihal and his colleagues at IITM, Sri Ram Bahadur Rai, Chairman IGNCA, Sri Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary IGNCA, Sri Aravinda Rao, Smt. Sonal Mansingh and their team at IGNCA. The teams at these institutions put in enormous efforts to make the conferences a success and we owe them a huge debt of gratitude for the same.

Acknowledgements

Our conferences could not have happened without the active support and participation of our volunteers and well-wishers.

We wish to thank Sri Udaykumar and his team from the Vande Mataram Student Circle at IIT-Madras for their help in making full arrangements for the first conference at Chennai. Sri Jithu Aravamudhan and Smt. Lakshmi Sarma of the IFI group of volunteers also deserve our hearty thanks for their active participation. Ms. Ruchi Sood and her team of volunteers as also Smt. Shilpa Memani, Sri Abhishek Jalan, Sri Roushan Rajput and Sri Divyanshu Bawa made no small efforts in making the New Delhi conference a success.

Our gratitude is due to Sri Ramnik Khurana, Sri Sanjeev Chhibber, and Sri Chetan Handa who have kindly offered to bear the expenses of bringing out these volumes in print. We wish to thank Sri Sunil Sheoran who has been a long-time supporter of our work. His help in coordinating the printing of these volumes is deeply appreciated.

We are grateful to all the paper-presenters and the keen audience for maintaining a high academic standard and decorum at the conference. There of course are many more who have helped us and guided us behind the screen and deserve our thanks.

IFI Team

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Series Editorial

It is a tragedy that many among even the conscientious Hindu scholars of Sanskrit and Hinduism still harp on Macaulay, and ignore others while accounting for the ills of the current Indian education system, and the consequent erosion of Hindu values in the Indian psyche. Of course, the machinating Macaulay brazenly declared that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India, and sought accordingly to create “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” by means of his education system – which the system did achieve.

An important example of what is being ignored by most Indian scholars is the current American Orientalism. They have failed to counter it on any significant scale.

It was Edward Said (1935-2003) an American professor at Columbia University who called the bluff of “the European interest in studying Eastern culture and civilization” (in his book *Orientalism* (1978)) by showing it to be an inherently political interest; he laid bare the subtle, hence virulent, Eurocentric prejudice aimed at twin ends – one, justifying the European colonial aspirations and two, insidiously endeavouring to distort and delude the intellectual objectivity of even those who could be deemed to be culturally considerate towards other civilisations. Much earlier, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) had shown the resounding hollowness of the *leitmotif* of the “White Man’s Burden.”

But it was given to Rajiv Malhotra, a leading public intellectual in America, to expose the Western conspiracy on an unprecedented scale, unearthing the *modus operandi* behind the unrelenting and

unhindered program for nearly two centuries now of the sabotage of our ancient civilisation yet with hardly any note of compunction. One has only to look into Malhotra's seminal writings – *Breaking India* (2011), *Being Different* (2011), *Indra's Net* (2014), *The Battle for Sanskrit* (2016), and *The Academic Hinduphobia* (2016) – for fuller details.

This pentad – preceded by *Invading the Sacred* (2007) behind which, too, he was the main driving force – goes to show the intellectual penetration of the West, into even the remotest corners (spatial/temporal/thematic) of our hoary heritage. There is a mixed motive in the latest Occidental enterprise, ostensibly being carried out with pure academic concerns. For the American Orientalist doing his “South Asian Studies” (his new term for “Indology Studies”), Sanskrit is inherently oppressive – especially of Dalits, Muslims and women; and as an antidote, therefore, the goal of Sanskrit studies henceforth should be, according to him, to “exhume and exorcise the barbarism” of social hierarchies and oppression of women happening ever since the inception of Sanskrit – which language itself came, rather, from outside India. Another important agenda is to infuse/intensify animosities between/among votaries of Sanskrit and votaries of vernacular languages in India. A significant instrument towards this end is to influence mainstream media so that the populace is constantly fed ideas inimical to the Hindu heritage. The tools being deployed for this are the trained army of “intellectuals” – of leftist leanings and “secular” credentials.

Infinity Foundation (IF), the brainchild of Rajiv Malhotra, started 25 years ago in the US, spearheaded the movement of unmasking the “catholicity” (- and what a euphemistic word it is!) of Western academia. The profound insights provided by the ideas of “Digestion” and the “U-Turn Theory” propounded by him remain unparalleled.

It goes without saying that it is *ultimately the Hindus in India who ought to be the real caretakers of their own heritage*; and with this end in view, **Infinity Foundation India (IFI)** was started in India in 2016. IFI has been holding a series of Swadeshi Indology Conferences.

Held twice a year on an average, these conferences focus on select themes and even select Indologists of the West (sometimes of even the East), and seek to offer refutations of mischievous and misleading misreportages/misinterpretations bounteously brought out by these Indologists – by way of either raising red flags at, or giving intellectual responses to, malfeasances inspired in fine by them. To employ

Sanskrit terminology, the typical secessionist misrepresentations presented by the West are treated here as *pūrva-pakṣa*, and our own responses/rebuttals/rectifications as *uttara-pakṣa* or *siddhānta*.

The first two conferences focussed on the writings of Prof. Sheldon Pollock, the outstanding American Orientalist (also of Columbia University, ironically) and considered the most formidable and influential scholar of today. There can always be deeper/stronger responses than the ones that have been presented in these two conferences, or more insightful perspectives; future conferences, therefore, could also be open in general to papers on themes of prior conferences.

Vijayadaśamī
Hemalamba Samvatsara
Date 30-09-2017

Dr. K S Kannan
Academic Director
and
General Editor of the Series

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Volume Editorial

"I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts."

– Virgil

"That meddling in other people's affairs...is now openly advocated under the name of intervention"

– T S Eliot

"Civilised men arrive in the Pacific armed with alcohol, syphilis, trousers, and the Bible."

– Havelock Ellis

*"O What a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive!
But when we've practised for a while
How vastly we improve our style!!"*

– Walter Scott

"But Lord! To see the absurd nature of Englishmen that cannot forbear laughing and jeering at everything that looks strange."

– Samuel Pepys

This volume, being the fifth in the Proceedings of the Swadeshi Indology Conference Series, deals with various issues. This is somewhat in contrast with the previous volumes which had major single issues. Issues pertaining to Mīmāṃsā and desacralisation form the bulk here. While four papers pertain to the discipline of Mīmāṃsā, two pertain to the problem of desacralisation. Three miscellaneous papers — on Philology, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the *śāstra*-s also figure here. Over half a dozen authors, ranging from the very old to the very young, have contributed the papers. One of the papers is in Sanskrit (as in the previous volume), and one in Hindi. An overview of the papers is

desirable in this prefatory portion. (For the Hindi and Sanskrit papers, brief overviews are provided in Hindi and Sanskrit respectively as well).

The opening paper entitled “History in India: a Critique from the Perspective of Mīmāṃsā” (Ch.1) is authored by Prof. **Shrinivas Tilak**, a veteran scholar in Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy. The paper begins with the signal warning provided by George Orwell viz. “He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past.” — which tells it all about the inevitable need of the enterprise of Swadeshi Indology: for, the West, through its own brand of Indology, is all out to take full control of the past of India, and towards what ends it remains best unsaid.

The Indian perspective on history is not in alignment with that of the West, and *is by no means obliged to be*. Macdonell squarely blames the theory of *karman* which nullified, according to him, all initiative to keep track of historical events. His skepticism, so typical of the jaundiced West, is well-reflected in his smug and dictum of cynicism nonpareil that early India wrote no history because it never made any. From Macdonell to Pollock, it is only a more ornate and sophisticated contempt continued that one encounters. Prof. Pollock has, especially of late, emerged as it were, Tilak notes, the very “guardian of India’s cultural, literary and social past”. Prof. Pollock does not come across by any means as an innocuous and inoffensive scholar, as one merely curious about India’s past. His brand of Orientalism dons newer jargons and spews more polished garbage empowered enough “to influence public policy in India and project its image to the world.”

The paper sets an excellent model of the tripod on which Swadeshi Indology would do well to be erected viz. (a) *pūrvapakṣa* (b) *uttarapakṣa* and (c) *siddhānta*. The three respectively stand for (a) a factual presentation of the opponent’s thesis; (b) a critical examination and refutation of the thesis; and (c) a statement on the outcome of the exchange.

As Pollock notes too, history as a discipline is essentially a product of Western scholarship and ideas. Yet historical and historiographical awareness was not absent in India prior to the advent of the invaders from the West.

For Pollock, the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā declaration of the Veda-s as timeless and authorless (leading to what he labels as Vedicization) deprived Indic texts of their historicity. The importance attached to Mīmāṃsā is because of its stature and role as a pedagogically and culturally normative discipline of Brahminical learning. The ritual discourse that this discipline was, it turned into a discourse of social power, and into a scheme of domination that has bedevilled Indian society for over two millennia.

It was in order to maintain their infallibility that the Veda-s were declared, Pollock argues, as authorless (*apauruṣeya*), hence timeless, hence immune from historicity. It was Mīmāṃsā that divested the Veda-s of all historical consciousness, and even of historical referential intention, which came to serve as the archetype for all the later literary production as well. A lack of historical referentiality was henceforth professed too. Brazen statements such as these, of Pollock are only surpassed by Fisher, for whom Mīmāṃsā is an epistemologically violent enterprise, not a hermeneutical one: it cannot be claimed that Kumārila understood the Veda-s any better than Max Mueller, the Western Orientalist who denounced the mythological excursions in the Veda-s as but “a disease of language”.

To state the Pollockian *pūrvapakṣa* succinctly; The cyclic concept of time, the regressive theory of *yuga* prevalent in India, negated the difference between myth and history; the notion of *mokṣa* transcends and even denies history, and is life-negating; the emphasis on *ākṛti* as against *vyakti* in Mīmāṃsā is symptomatic of the general attitude of the Vedic as against that of the Itihāsic; it was Mīmāṃsā that led to modes of domination such as caste hierarchy, untouchability, and female heteronomy.

Prof. Tilak commences his *uttarapakṣa* with a reference to Pollock’s own acknowledgement - that the norm of Indologists has been to generalise Western experience as a *scientific* description of Eastern lifestyles: the deployment of Western tools in grasping the East thus constitutes a most serious cultural impediment. It is an irony, but more correctly an atrocity, that Pollock himself is impelled by a blind Euro-centrism. This rank prejudice inhibits Pollock from showing what the interpretive protocols of Mīmāṃsā intellectuals were in their own comprehension of the Vedic. It is Western branding that Pollock practises when he pronounces texts as mystical or literary, all impelled

by Western criteria. The Indologist's adversary stands in respect of the universality of cyclicity and non-contradiction between cyclicity and linearity have been strongly contested by Jan Houben and Romila Thapar though on different counts.

Prof. Tilak takes a deep look into the apposite hermeneutical principles so as to lay bare the hollowness of the claims of Pollock. Events alluded to in the Vedic literature have a precise function – to serve as *arthavāda*-s, set forth in order to illustrate the specific purpose of particular Vedic injunctions. Serving the role of the preamble of a statute, an *arthavāda* has no legal force by itself, yet helps to clarify possible ambiguities in *vidhi*-s or injunctions. *Vidhi*-s can be couched as *arthavāda*-s too. Comparable is the doctor's prescription which invariably indicates his license number etc., ensuring thereby the validity of the prescription.

Tilak brings out half a dozen Mīmāṃsā principles bearing on the sound criteria of interpretation. For Tilak, the Vedic episodes and the episodes in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, are respectively typically the *apauruṣeya* and *pauruṣeya* types of *Itihāsa*. As against Pollock's pitching upon only one specific meaning of *Itihāsa* (*iti ha āsa* – “thus it was”) as akin to history, Tilak shows how “*Itihāsa* has a far richer, and wider-ranging, and comprehensive, meaning and purpose: as discernible in the sense occurring in early Upaniṣad-s. Tilak also alludes to the eighth and ninth days of the ten-day Pāriplava Rite (a part of the Aśvamedha Yajña) wherein the *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa*-s were recited. The words *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa* and *Ākhyāna* are often used interchangeably. For Yāska (800 BCE), *Itihāsa*-s impart the philosophy of life - with supporting reference to *pāramparika-kathā*-s, relevant traditional narratives, and to *dharma*, as enveloping both *kratvartha* and *puruṣārtha* (respectively, the performance of *yajña*-s on the one hand, and the performance of duties prescribed for the four *varṇa*-s and the four *āśrama*-s on the other). This constitutes *vedopabṛṃhaṇa* (as set forth by Manu and other writers of *smṛti*-s) which repudiates and invalidates, to use the words of Pollock, “the process of Vedicization, the cornerstone of Pollock's thesis of the Mīmāṃsā denial and suppression of ‘history’ in ancient India”.

The Hindu approach towards *Itihāsa* has its parallel, if faint, even in Carlyle's Heroes and Hero-worship. Pollock could have asked himself why Buddhists and Jains (who spurned the Veda-s) too attached little

importance to Pollock's concept of history which, as a discipline, is hardly a century old! Pollock's intolerance of other approaches to history has little to commend itself.

The Dharmaśāstra-s recommend performance of selfless actions which links *dharma* to *mokṣa*, the temporal thus harmonised with the timeless – which all is grounded in classical Indian epistemology, all grossly missed by Pollock, intentionally or otherwise. The relevance of the theory of *Karman*, as set forth in the *Gītā* and as an evolute of the Vedic *karman*, is utterly ignored by Pollock. Tilak summons the discussions of Raimundo Pannikar, Roy Perrett and Romila Thapar to indicate the flaws of Pollock's adjudications. Tilak alludes to the magnificent role of Nīlakaṇṭha, the commentator of the *Mahābhārata* in continuing the tradition of Mīmāṃsā, which would all be anathema to Pollock and Co. Tilak alludes to Minkowski's verdict on Nīlakaṇṭha, nakedly exposing how tightly Western academics "control the exegesis of the Veda-s". Tilak has no hesitation in cautioning Swadeshi interpreters of the Veda to be wary of the perverse Pollockian and maverick Minkowskian approaches.

Finally, as to the *siddhānta*: That the "history" espoused by Pollock is easily subsumable under the *itihāsa* of the Hindu tradition altogether escapes Pollock's attention. Gadamer showed how pre-understanding prejudices a reader's interpretation. It was Jan Gonda, among others, who noted how Indian civilisation stands in striking contrast to the Western. The taunt of Pollock's thesis that "India is without history" is ably met with a counterpoise "So what? The West is without *Itihāsa*!" Prof. Tilak's treatment is almost mathematical in approach, and dignified in its conscious restraint.

The fulminations of Pollock are thus without foundation, and bespeak of his own rank prejudice and sophisticated presentation of malice. What an excellent model Pollock is of how not to do criticism!

The second paper entitled "The Science and Nescience of Mīmāṃsā" (Ch.2) is by **T N Sudarshan**. It analyses the *etic* interpretations of Mīmāṃsā focusing on fundamental issues of Western hermeneutics. Western epistemologies are ill-equipped to handle issues of Mīmāṃsā or allied Indian knowledge systems. Serious accusations by Pollock abound even in his earlier writings (of 1989, 2004 etc.). Misinterpretations and fantastic theorisations of the origins, motives,

and goals of Mīmāṃsā have been a recurring feature among Western Indologists even prior to Pollock.

Citing often from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Sudarshan goes to the very roots of Western hermeneutics which begins with the Homeric epics – with the issues of *allegorisis* and *hyponoia*, ‘what is stated differently’ and ‘what the underlying sense is’. The Middle Ages brought to the fore “the heptad of questions” in interpretation. Texts manipulate their content, and need to be manipulated in turn in order to be seen through. The actual sense is often beyond or below the surface. The Hermeneutic Circle proposes to discover the spirit of the whole through the individual, and access the individual through the whole. Hypothesizing meaning in an incremental piecemeal fashion without an awareness of the fuller picture is a problem that besets the hermeneutic approach. The interpretive praxis can take on multiple forms and can take place according to diverse aims.

Attributing motives, and mean socio-political ones at that, to the writings even of sage-like figures such as Pāṇini or Vālmiki, is a standard practice with the execrable Western Indologists. Text interpretation aims at identifying the meaning of a text by virtue of reconstructing the nexus of meaning that has arisen in connection with the text. Western Indology has spouted vast amounts of spurious nexus of meanings shelving aside standard practices, the *śāstra-paddhati*, of traditional norms practised through centuries, in respect of Indian knowledge systems. Improving upon Ricoeur’s famed “Hermeneutics of Suspicion”, Western Indologists have only cultivated a vile “Hermeneutics of Derision”, a handy tool of colonial expansionism.

The attempt of the West to interpret Dharmaśāstra-s (typified by William Jones’ translation of *Mānava-dharma-śāstra*) also saw the beginnings of the Western interpretation of Mīmāṃsā. Rather than attempting to comprehend the underlying principles of *dharma* and *karman*, expletives aplenty (such as “atheistic”, “oppressive”, “ritualistic” and “divisive”) were heaped on Mīmāṃsā. Shelving aside the Indian epistemological framework, Western socio-anthropological approaches were applied. The hubris of othering has sidelined the vital issues of *karman* and *punar-janman*, *puṇya* and *pāpa* etc. The standard Western enterprise of “discovering” iniquity everywhere can only be an *a-dharma-jijñāsā* in respect of a discipline that sought to

evolve principles on the foundation of *dharma-jijñāsā*! A veritable parody nonpareil!

Pushing dates thither sensibly or insensibly is a fad with Western Indologists (one ironically noted even by Pollock himself); and toeing the same line nevertheless, Pollock imperiously pushes Jaimini to a date centuries later than the Buddha. The Mīmāṃsaka sought to assert, for him, what the Buddhist rejects viz. the eternality of anything in general, and of the Veda-s in particular. An offshoot of the timelessness of the Veda-s that the Mīmāṃsā was the lack of the sense of history. History was not so much to be unknown as to be denied. Vedicization is for inspiring ahistoricity, and even *itihāsa*-s were diverted of historical contents. *Smṛti*-s are thence accused of being the fabrication of the Mīmāṃsaka-s, and so with the concept of *puruṣārtha*. The pursuit of *dharma* accordingly would have little to do with the pursuit of Brahman. The agenda of desacralisation and secularisation of the Vedic is thus nothing but a Hermeneutics of Derision.

Pollock is not a practising Mīmāṃsaka or Vedāntin, but can pass verdict on them, or on any, on grounds of his academic credibility. No Indologist is seriously concerned with *dharma*. After all, the funding of the South Asian Studies Departments is governed essentially by geopolitical demands. The dictum (perhaps the diktat) is: the more the othering, the more the funding.

Those steeped in the Judeo-Christian postmodern frame are thus the least of the *adhikārin*-s to interpret texts and practices of Mīmāṃsā. Pollock bases his views on history on the theories of Vico, for whom everything everywhere had to happen the way it supposedly happened in Europe, the exemplar. It is to counter this that Karl Popper had to tackle the fascist and communist belief in the “inexorable laws of historical destiny”.

The potential of history to manufacture and control power is its most critical value. Otherings and cultural genocides are its offsprings. Historicising is a subjective act. Every historian of every hue can claim that trends of history betray the aims and goals of society *as he espouses* them.

Using historical incidents to serve current agenda is the Western historians' idea, his passion and purpose. Using the episodes, on the

contrary, as a context for an elucidation of abiding *dhārmic* principles is the approach of *Sanātana Dharma*. The fantastic details in the *Purāṇa*-s are metaphorical, and they function in symbolic ways, and have hidden meanings.

Western historical approach is well-designed and sophisticated so as to justify colonialism, to buttress slavery, to inflict genocides. History is an academic tool of the colonialist to present his sordid plunder and tyranny as favour and benefaction.

Mīmāṃsā is actually “sacred discussion”. The very Mīmāṃsā concept of letters, words, sentences, and meanings and the actions that they ultimately inspire especially in the Vedic context – are all unique to the Indian context.

Right interpretation of sentences, more particularly the Vedic, which elucidate *dharma* and right performance of actions, so as to conduce to *dharma* constitute the burden of Mīmāṃsā. The opinions of those to whom *dharma does not matter* do not matter.

The works of Rajiv Malhotra inaugurate a modern *mīmāṃsā*, a novel dialectic Dharmism.

The next article is by **Alok Mishra** (Ch. 3) entitled “*Sheldon Pollock evam Mīmāṃsā*” (in Hindi). Alok gives a brief overview of the utility of the Mīmāṃsā *śāstra*, placing firmly the centrality of *yajña* in *Sanātana Dharma*. Quoting from authorities like Śabara Svāmīn, he brings out the concept of the *pramāṇa* (valid means of knowledge) and discusses the characteristics of *dharma* – viz. that which brings *śreyas*, linking it to an examination of the means of knowledge itself. That Mīmāṃsā posits that all cognitions must be accepted as true until otherwise proved via other cognitions is considered through giving a detailed description of what constitutes a *pramāṇa*.

Pollock has dismissed the arguments by the Mīmāṃsaka-s advanced to prove that the Veda-s are *apauruṣeya* such as - that the names that have been associated with the Veda-s are of those who specialised in the transmission or the exposition of the texts, and not the composers; or the ones pertaining to the Vedic language and the style; and that there is inconsistency in the *bhāṣya* regarding the beginninglessness of the Veda-s; etc.

Alok has attempted to respond to the issues raised by Pollock such as - the issue of transcendence of the Veda-s; the issue of the validity

of cognitions; the anonymity and the beginninglessness of the Veda-s; and the eternality of the Veda-s. The relation between *śabda* and *artha*, sound and sense, has also been discussed bringing in the various views – of Mīmāṃsaka-s, Vaiyākaraṇa-s, and others. The traditional position has been explicated on these diverse issues.

On the issue of the priority of the times of the Buddha and Jaimini, the opinion of Prof. G. V. Devasthali has been cited. The issue raised in the context by Pollock has already been answered in Devasthali's writings decades earlier.

The next paper entitled “*Mīmāṃsā, Bhāratīyānām Anaitihāsikatvaṃ Ca – Pollāka-Kumārasvāmi-matayor Abhivikṣaṇam*” (Ch. 4) is by **K S Kannan**, and is in Sanskrit. The paper starts with the statement of a paradox: If you do not study Western Indology you are uninformed; and if you do, you are misinformed.

Indological studies started by the West are of course flourishing, and there are many Indians toeing the path trodden by Westerners. Not all among the Western Indologists are prejudiced. The present article aims to analyse Prof. Sheldon Pollock's 1989 article viz. “Mīmāṃsā and the Problem of History in Traditional India”, and contrast in fine his views with those of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy in general.

Pollock approvingly cites George Larson who says “In a South Asian environment, historical interpretation is no interpretation. It is a zero-category”. Friedrich Nietzsche's quote comes in handy for Pollock: The beast lives unhistorically. How he loves, Pollock loves, to damn Indians as beasts! If the Greek too did not draw sharps lines between history and myth, that is no count for him. Pollock himself cites Boer: “It is not that gods appear in myth and men in history [in Greece], but both appear in time and in history,” but then, Pollock knows so well what to relegate to footnotes and what to highlight in the main text. Who can beat him in his sleights of tongue?

Pollock brings in Steitencron's record of a point in art history where the conquest of Gangas by Pallavas is enshrined in sculpture. After all, this is only a sort of picturesque *paronomasia*, whose counterpart is quite common in literature where *double entendre* would be equally deftly employed towards similar ends.

The absence of historical details in Sanskrit works are, for Pollock, to be attributed to the influence of Mīmāṃsā, for Mīmāṃsā despises

history. The focus of Mīmāṃsā is the supernatural. Nirukta comes in handy for the Mīmāṃsaka-s, for even historical personages in the Vedic are only representative of the eternal. The Veda-s are infinite, and the later śāstra-s are as it were subsumed under the Veda-s. History is not much absent as is repudiated. System is evaluated as above process. The social system is highly valued rather than human enterprise. Novelty and creativity are effectively killed. So go the assertions of Pollock.

Many historians have grieved about the lack of history in India – of the irony about the most ancient civilization with very few original histories about its past, as Tiruvengkatachari says. Auboyer remarks that royal chronicles repeatedly convert historical facts into myth and legend. Naudou notes how historians of India have had to rely upon, of all, grammatical examples for reconstructing history! Prof. Ingalls, the rare sane scholar in the West, notes how poets and kings here have only melted into the types of poet and king.

Even though nothing is, for Pollock, unexploitative in South Asia, Prof. A L Basham draws a contrary picture – that nowhere else in the world was the mutual relation among citizens, and between the state and the subjects, as humane as was in India. Nowhere else were human rights so well protected as in Kauṭalya's *Arthaśāstra*, and nowhere else would be found even a trace of the *dharmayuddha* pattern as set forth in *Manusmṛiti*. Prof. U N Ghoshal cited with approval the statement of Aurobindo that the first feature of Indian civilization is its spirituality, and the next is its zeal for life – concerns alike of the here and the hereafter.

Pollock may be opposed to allegorical interpretation of Hindu scriptures, but he (can afford to pretend that he) is unaware that such interpretations are available in respect of scriptures of even other traditions. Again, arguing that only the battle chapters constituted the original *Mahābhārata* (as does Weber), is but a case of what is called "arguing from Homer": Heehs has shown how Europe's literary criteria are not applicable to India. As to the historical records themselves, Hindus were keen on preserving the meaning of events, not a mere record of events, as Organ notes well.

D C Sircar records, nevertheless, how over 90,000 inscriptions have been discovered in different parts of India and more are being

discovered. Basham lists over a dozen Eras that were current in different parts of India.

Prof. Arvind Sharma draws attention to the details given in Akṣapaṭalādhyaṃya of Kauṭalya's *Arthaśāstra*, and Basham has shown how systematically documents were preserved in the Coḷa kingdom. Hiuen Tsang's testimony is referred to by Beal. All these hold a mirror to the meticulousness with which documents had been maintained.

The sordid story is that it is with the advent of Muslim marauders that documents got destroyed on a large scale – as Witzel himself testifies to in regard to the situation in Nepal. No manuscript prior to 1500 CE is available in Kashmir, and the nasty Moghuls of the religion of peace and their narcissism were undoubtedly responsible for this – to paraphrase Sharma.

What is more, the destruction and devastation wrought by the degenerate and diabolical Moghuls, the curse of India, is borne out by Albiruni himself. *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* too testifies to this. Sharma refers to the “perfect genocide” that these Islamists murkily wrought.

It is with Coomaraswamy that we find many of the issues raised by Pollock answered as though in uncanny anticipation. As against Norman Brown, Coomaraswamy refers to the ideas of Maurice Bloomfield for whom the *Mantra* and the *Brāhmaṇa* are only two different modes of presentation of the self-same ideas, while none would of course contest linguistic change from the Veda-s to the Upaniṣad-s. Vedic material is extensive, yet infallibly consistent within itself. Bloomfield notes that the *mantra*, *brāhmaṇa* and *sūtra* are all different modes of literary activity, but largely contemporaneous. For Franklin Edgerton every idea in the Upaniṣad-s is already foreshadowed in the Vedic. The consistency within the Vedic corpus is, as per Coomaraswamy, extraordinary. Finally, Coomaraswamy arrives at the very ideas of Mīmāṃsā, though independently, taking the wind out of the sails, anticipatorily as it were, of Pollock's verbiage unlimited nonpareil.

The next paper entitled “The Science of the Sacred” (Ch. 5) is by **T N Sudarshan**. The various Indian knowledge systems and related practices can be ill-comprehended by one unequipped with an understanding of the notion of the sacred. Western scholarship is fundamentally and inherently limited when it comes to grasping this

- owing to its very origin, structure, and evolution. Western Indology in its current status has pressed into service Marxist, philological, and post-modernist approaches to the Indian knowledge systems, only to befuddle issues and effectively mislead all students of Hindu culture. The sense of the sacred as it obtains in the West is one which is centralised, institutionally enforced and artificial - so against the Indian which, in contrast, is a natural efflorescence. The West is obsessed ironically with “liberating” India, and appropriates for itself the right to desacralise it in various ways wantonly and arbitrarily.

There is no activity of humans as per the Hindu view that is not animated by a sense of the sacred – as is well-illustrated in works like the *āhnika-grantha*-s (such as in *Śrīvaiṣṇava sampradāya*).

The desacralising subversionists have modern strands and strains of neo-Orientalists, Marxists, post-colonialists, subalternists and post-modernists - as well-explicated by Rajiv Malhotra. Neo-Orientalists have brought in new theoretical methods, inference techniques and argument frames. And the neo-Orientalist par excellence is Sheldon Pollock who propounds the idea of an innate dichotomy of the sacred and the non-sacred. Pollock is a past master in introducing schisms (what with his unflinching and unfailing sleight of tongue) – such as between the *pāramārthika* and the *vyāvahārika*, between the *śāstra* and the *kāvya*, between the Sanskrit and the vernacular literatures, between the oral and the written, between the Pāṇinian and the non-Pāṇinian, and so on and so forth. He is also an adept in introducing new confusions by way of drawing false parallels between the Hindu and the Christian traditions, and is generally capable of generating “facts” at will to buttress his weird theories woven out of nothing but sophistry and casuistry.

The idea of the sacred is best analysed in the works of Mircea Eliade in modern times, and Eliade openly acknowledges the influence of Indian philosophy. The profanation of life has been so extensive and deep in recent times that a life erected on sacred fundamentals is inconceivable for the modern man. Eliade’s approach must be made use of in dispelling modern misrepresentations. As S N Balagangadhara has shown, the academia has been dominated exclusively by questions that Europe has asked. Western presuppositions and epistemologies have dominated the academic discourse. Balagangadhara’s “Root Model of Order” needs

to be explored and deliberated over. On similar lines, the ideas of “embodied knowing” and “history-centrism” introduced by Rajiv Malhotra need to be expatiated upon. The Indic heritage (including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism) has developed a range of inner sciences and experiential technologies (“*adhyātma-vidyā*”) in order to access higher states of consciousness *to be experienced first hand*, and this “embodied knowing” is utterly lacking in the West. The Abrahamic religions have a heavy dependence on historical events (actual or contrived), which fixation of history-centrism Indic faiths are utterly free of. Dharmic faiths never witnessed the psychological, religious and social conflicts that history-centrism has all along inspired.

The functionalism of Durkheim, the sociology of Max Weber, and the materialism of Karl Marx have ensured a major removal of sacrality embedded in family and marriage, in festivals, and in worship etc., which are religion-instituted.

The ubiquity of the sacred is explored and expounded through centuries of texts in the Indic tradition, and the very geography and history of India exude the fragrance of the sacred.

The enterprise of desacralisation in its latest version of neo-Orientalists consists in attributing all social ills (poverty, illness etc) to *dharma*, “excavated” through the philological methods deviously designed by Pollock and the like. The *leitmotif* of the “White Man’s Burden” has all along inflicted and justified slavery, the crusades, the genocide of natives etc.; and the novel guises of world peace, human rights etc. are no less jeopardising.

The anthropological and sociological discourses of the West, and even the so-called objective discourse of science, as too the Abrahamic faiths – have all proved inimical towards the sense of the sacred which has been propounded, propagated, and practised by the Indic faiths. The prevailing academic discourse is so designed as to assert control and co-opt the dharmic into the Western Universalist discourse. Pitted against the all-encompassing dharmic perspective, the Western understanding of the essential nature of the human as well as a comprehensive understanding of reality would appear extremely constricted.

Speaking from a *dhārmic* standpoint, it cannot be gainsaid that the worldviews of Western religions, the methods of Western science, the rhetorics of Western humanities and social sciences - at all stages of their evolution and function - have never shed their proselytizing nature directed against non-Western orders in general and *dhārmic* faiths in particular. The sense of the sacred that the Hindu genius is naturally endowed with has withstood Western onslaughts for long, yet needs to be strengthened especially in its intellectual dimensions, in order to effectively counter the civilizational threat it encounters.

The next chapter entitled “On Desacralization of Sanskrit” (Ch.6) is by two authors viz. **Manogna Sastry** and **Megh Kalyanasundaram**. The relationship between culture and power in pre-modern India is a veritable obsession with Pollock. And what characterise his writings are, typically - being rather selective in his collection/presentation of data, applying anachronistic socio-political models, and a facile indulging in sweeping generalisations.

In his massive 2006 work bearing the title *The Language of Gods in the World of Men*, Pollock demonstrates his intent to explain certain Asian linguistic phenomena as parallel to the European ones, to the vernacularisation there in particular. While his predecessors sought to Europeanise the very character of India, Pollock in his stride attempts to purge it of all native and formative elements. It was given to but a few Westerners such as Will Durant and Paul Brunton to overcome Western prejudices, and get to recognize the genius of India.

For Pollock, Sanskrit never functioned as an everyday medium of communication; and Sanskrit grammar was but a tool of hegemony. He gives a bizarre picture of India’s past, where her chief pursuits for millennia was limited to the religious and ritualistic, coupled with, of course “Brahminical oppression”, what else: their standard “historical” stick to beat with. This is pitted against the *kāvya* with its fabricated non-sacred liberating role, and as a clear break from the older order: thus embodying desacralisation.

Manogna and Megh note certain features in Pollock’s writings such as internal inconsistencies in his scholarship *vis-à-vis* his own positions, distortions through mistranslations or unsubstantiated claims, clear biases and dicey models (even as evidenced in Rajiv Malhotra’s 2016

book *The Battle for Sanskrit*). Some of the above charges have been well-illustrated with citations. His changing stands as to the supposed transition of Sanskrit from purely liturgical to mundane usages: *kāvya* as a “direct descendent” of Vedic *mantra*, and yet its break from it (else than the *apauruṣeya* and *pauruṣeya* aspects); he translates *dṛśya* and *śravya* respectively as “something seen” and “something heard”, but later complains that there is no category for “literature as something read” – a case, indeed one among many, of misleading via mistranslation (contrast this with the better renderings supplied long ago by M Krishnamachariar). (Of course one may ask whether Pollock has not come across the usage *yaḥ paṭhed rāma-caritam* in the very *Rāmāyaṇa* he has translated. Pollock himself refers to the sinister predilection of the old Orientalism “to gratuitously debunk claims to antiquity for Indian culture... in a way that pained Indian intellectuals from an early date”, yet acts in a most ungenerous fashion with regard to the beginnings of writing in India - portraying it as an importation in the third century BCE, whereas the testimony of Richard Salomon (whom Pollock himself quotes, too), shows it as “ranging from the sixth to the early fourth century BCE”. Subhash Kak (1994) had shown it as sixth century BCE (Kak 2015 cites BB Lal referring to Brāhmī of 800 or 900 BCE). Pollock’s devious efforts to undermine the enormous presence and significant role of the oral transmission of valuable knowledge are also transparent. Pollock is eager to mark the arrival of Śaka-s (Indo-Scythians) as ushering in a new era (or at least reinforcing one) – a cosmopolitan era, whereafter ritualisation and monopolisation of Sanskrit gave way to a new sociology and politicisation of the language – all conjectural superstructures erected upon little else than conjectural foundations.

Pollock is fond of his pet phrase “Nothing suggests...” as though he has surveyed all *available* literature, leave alone all unpublished manuscripts (“over thirty million”, a fact he is not unaware of!), plus all literature destroyed (and who knows how many millions?). What gives away the mischief of the supposed movement “from liturgy to literature” postulated by Pollock is the very word “*kavi*” used for seers in the Veda, and for poets, later. The nexus Pollock works out between *kāvya* and *rājya* is flimsy if not also silly. The presumptive Pollock shows himself when he says “poets eventually decided to shatter this seclusion and...to commit them to writing”, mouthing his grand and generous speculations about events ten centuries ago: what could

at best be but wild guess is presented, confidence unlimited, as an eye-witness account as it were!). Pollock, the (mal)adroit, “tries to cover in ornate language and diffuse style of writing the absence of any substantial basis for his claims.” The wilful obfuscations of the imperious scholar who is at ease in blatantly biased theorisation turning a blind eye to facts staring in the face stand well-exposed.

Pollock’s unconcealed contempt for Sanskrit in the context of his unfounded claims on Sanskritisation betray his meanness and warrantless self-assurance. For wilful fabricators such as Pollock, there is nothing like a common vision of a culture such as the Indian. Who cannot admire the boldness of Pollock who spins theories not on account of, but in spite of, facts galore? What joy hard facts in front of theories conjured up with designs (pun intended)? Could a scholar, leave alone an Indologist, be more flippant and frivolous than one who could ejaculate: Indeed a stable singularity called Indian Culture, so often conjured up by South-east Asian indigenists, never existed? Ultimately, it is Pollock’s that is a crude sort of teleology. Who, else than Pollock, can take but a freeze frame for the whole story? But for the well-paid proselytiser, who would so smugly proclaim than Pollock: “[T]he South Asian knowledge South Asians themselves have produced can no longer be held to have any significant consequences for the future of the human species”? It would be difficult to believe that scholastic hubris can so well overtake sanity, or that “intellectual” pogrom can be so calculated and cold-blooded.

The next paper entitled “The Science of Meaning – Explicating the Nature of Philology and its Implications to *Videśī* (Foreign) Indology” (Ch. 7) is by **T N Sudarshan**.

Philology is, to note its origin and growth briefly, the multi-faceted study of texts, languages, and the phenomenon of language itself. Philological scholarship was actuated by motivations of colonialism and racism. Philology lost its importance with the maturing of the scientific method. With the Greek it was the ability to argue skilfully in public. Sir William Jones added the idea of race to the prevailing political halo. With this commenced Indology, which expanded European perspectives on the history and civilisation of the world. For Nietzsche, philology was an absurd combination of inconsequentiality and hubris. In the nineteenth century, it was used to justify the horrors of racism, slavery, and colonialism.

Neo-Orientalists led by Pollock have invented newer versions such as Political Philology and Liberation Philology. After Edward Said's critique on Western anthropological and social science scholarship, the study of the East had to be reinvented with new methods, and Pollock came out with a new mint of Philology, based on spectacularly speculative theories: it was the study of Sanskrit that affected the subconscious of German Indologists, and the Holocaust can in fine be traced to the divisiveness and hatred that Sanskrit spells, which he labels "Deep Orientalism", laden with his own cultural biases and hegemonic filters. The roots of Pollock's Philology can be seen in Giambattista Vico, the father of modern social science, for whom human truth is like a painting, which can persuade us through the most evident falsehoods that she is pure Truth.

As Rajiv Malhotra notes, there are pernicious motives to Pollock's seemingly academic theories – which is why Malhotra presents Sacred Philology as against Pollock's Liberation Philology, for the latter is directed towards a re-engineering of Indian society using Western paradigms, and worse, subserving Western hegemonic ends.

The Western and Indian theories of language present a great contrast. The Western tools of philology and hermeneutics do not suffice. America is a modern-day cultural coloniser, and the demands of dual-use anthropology via Area Studies demands an exploitative scholarship, as fundings are governed by geopolitical requirements. The semantic theory and foundational theory of meaning proposed in the West (including the Gricean approach that speaks of the communicative intentions of language coupled with consideration of beliefs) of even the non-mentalist theories do not go deep enough.

In the Indian approaches to meaning, the role of three *vedāṅga*-s (*śikṣā*, *chandas*, and *nirukta*) are given their due emphasis in their appropriate contexts. The architecture of the Indian conception of meaning is well laid out by Prof. Kapil Kapoor. The multi-millennia-long tradition of interpretation has been duly enriched by contributions from the streams of Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, and Vedānta. That India is an interpretive community is indicated by the fact that the Brāhmaṇa, the Bauddha, and the Jaina schools share many methods of interpretation. Apart from these, interactive traditions of *kathā* and *pravacana* constitute collective institutionalised reading. The vast exegetical scholarship via *bhāṣya*, *vṛtti*, *vārttika*, *ṭīkā* etc.

conduces to refinement and extension of the various lores. The Western scholar, however knowledgeable, hardly attains to the level of a true *adhikārin*.

In the computational approach, Artificial Intelligence systems utilise manipulation of symbols employing an axiomatic approach, involving propositional and first-order predicate logic, where the basic problems of representation and reasoning are yet to be solved. The statistical approach to meaning and intelligence fares no better. The availability of trillions of data sets training mathematical engines in pattern recognition but masks the actual fact that machines do not indeed understand what they are handling in regard to issues of image processing, natural language processing, or speech recognition etc. It is only recently that some of the best minds of today have begun to admire the deep insights into language and thought available in Sanskrit since ancient times.

Given the vast repertoire of interpretative methods and approaches made available in Sanskrit, blindly resorting to Western philological tools is no more than a parody, an extension of intellectual colonisation. The aesthetically camouflaged and strategically positioned philological methods of the Neo-Orientalists cannot hide their pernicious motives.

Westerners regularly used Buddhism as a wedge against Hinduism, and the neo-Orientalists use the Mughals as a wedge against Hinduism, so as ultimately to lead to an admiration of the Greek – exactly as per the essentially Euro-centric agenda of the West. The Pollockian programme of linking Sanskrit or Mīmāṃsā to Nazism is only to pave the way in effect for tracing all ills of the West to some definite or indefinite Indic roots.

The academic verbosity, dense and deliberate, of our champion of neo-Orientalism verily holds a mirror to his deep disdain for Sanskrit knowledge systems, and even more so for *dharma* as such. Rather than getting to be a *science* of meaning, the new philology is gotten to be a veritable *nescience* of meaning. This unscientific and dishonest scholarship, contumely unlimited, must needs be countered effectively.

The next paper entitled “Samskr̥ti in Context” (Ch. 8) by Dr. **Charu Uppal** shows how the Pollockian grasp or interpretation of the

Rāmāyaṇa is utterly inapposite. The *Rāmāyaṇa* continues to be a source of inspiration to Indians, and many others, to this day: we have television serials and cinemas, music and dance performances, present continuous, on *Rāmāyaṇa* themes. *Rām-līlā* continues to spellbind massive audiences. As Edward Said says well, in effect, a European or American studying the Orient is a European or American first, an individual next.

In neither role he, as an outsider, would understand, much less feel, what a Hindu understands or feels when the name of Lord Rāma is uttered, when *Rām-līlā* is enacted; or even what happens prior to *Rām-līlā*, or after it.

For Pollock, the *Rāmāyaṇa* demonises non-Hindus in its language, story, and characterisation, and its revival results in violence (what else), against Muslims in particular (oh who else!). The plot of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is linked to power structures (what is not to him linked to that, by the way?). This degenerate desacralisation, a major flaw in Pollock's methodology, stands out as horror unadulterated.

As Joseph Campbell points out, myths are clues which direct us towards the experiencing of the spiritual potentialities of human life. In the words of Rajiv Malhotra, myth uses fiction to convey truth. In contrast with the frozen idea of 'history' in the West, *itihāsa* comprises history as well as myth. The double standards of the West are evident – in their application of sociological methods and tools while studying Jewish and Christian tales, whereas while studying others anthropological tools are to be made use of; their own groups are referred to as communities, others as tribes: here, by the way, are the bloodthirsty initiators of othering. As against such debased Western patterns, *itihāsa*-s are construed essentially as instructional.

The continued impact of the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the Indian populace is evidenced by the fact that even to this day children are named after the characters therein, and thousands of *Rām-līlā*-s are performed around the world: the recitation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is deemed sacred.

Rām-līlā is enacted as a ten-day ritual culminating on the Tenth Day of Victory, the day of Vijayadaśamī, when the effigy of Rāvaṇa is burnt. The "fluidity" of *itihāsa*-s is well-illustrated in the way the script keeps improvising year to year in "Our Rām Līlā" being staged in Delhi, and in the way the audience too sometimes takes part. Pollock discloses no knowledge of things such as these.

Pollock's strategy of forwarding his theory of "aestheticization of power" consists in first desacralising the text he studies: the academic blasphemy of divorcing the object of study from its context. The theories of Vico for which Pollock attaches high importance are criticised by many, including Christians and Carey, who show how the natural science model is inapplicable to the social sciences. Culture and related symbols are complex and multi-layered, and need to be understood in a multi-dimensional context. Pollock forgets that Rāvaṇa is himself a Brahmin when he accuses others. Those for whom "religion is the opiate of the masses" can after all be expected do no justice to a text like the *Rāmāyaṇa*. As Malhotra points out, Pollock goes against his own mentor Prof. Ingalls who stressed dropping the Western lens in the study of Sanskrit traditions and *kāvya*-s. The avowed purpose of the *kāvya* is to communicate *dharma* to the lay in an aesthetically pleasing manner (to paraphrase Ingalls).

The very language Pollock employs is opaque. If his individual points are at times murky, murkier still are the links amongst the dots necessitated if one were to make sense of his pictures. Pollock is only adding stuff to the new brand of atrocity literature. He cherry picks statements from Sanskrit works just to generate distorted pictures of their originals. Pollock would do well to speak to the participants of Rām-līlā to understand their own feelings towards the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

The last paper entitled "The *Śāstra* of Science and the Science of *Śāstra*" (Ch. 9) is by **T N Sudarshan** and **T N Madhusudan**. The thrall of technology and the narrative of science lie at the base of the current sense of the superiority of the West. Under the guise of peer reviews and by multiple references to each others' works, Western Indologists have developed a cabal. Over the years, their theories get accepted as taken for granted. In his hegemonic discourse (as Rajiv Malhotra describes it), Pollock states his political goals for India: to intervene on behalf of "the oppressed". Pollock creates newer tools such as three-dimensional philology, creative chronology, and socio-political hermeneutic lenses — all in order to undermine *Sanātana Dharma* and Indian civilization.

Śāstra-s are, for Pollock, incapable of creativity and progress, as the Veda-s are deemed eternal and perfect; and *śāstra*-s can only restate and extrapolate what is contained in the Veda-s. *Śāstra*-s are regressive as they cannot utilise fresh insights from the empirical world.

Before answering the above charges, one must dismantle the Western narrative of science itself where it exercises control. In Western historiographies, Greece is extolled as the source of all science, an idea strongly contested today. Much of what we call Greek philosophy is largely a legacy stolen from Egypt. Prof. C. K. Raju adduces proofs of the Western colonization of science and mathematics. The number system and calendrical system of the Greeks speaks poorly of any claim to a discernible knowledge of astronomy on their part (leave alone original discoveries). Centuries of dishonesty and falsehood of Western historians stand exposed in the writings of Prof. Raju. The non-originality of Copernicus and Co. has been laid bare.

Colonised by the West for a few hundred years, India continues to remain in thrall of the West, and the fabricated history of science being Western in origin etc. only serves the interests of the hegemony of the West. Raju has shown how current science and mathematics are deeply influenced by Christian theology. The essentially non-empirical axiomatic proof approach and deductive methodology, and proof-based mathematics lead to conceptual bottlenecks.

The four-fold logic of the Buddhists and the seven-fold logic of the Jains afford different and deeper perspectives, and are considered superior to the two-valued truth-functional logic of the West. The Christian whitewashing of the history of science also undermines the Islamic and Hindu contributions to logic and mathematics. The non-universality of Western logic, the absence of a clear definition of science itself, the disunity of science, the success of science owing to its closeness to sources of political power etc. – are all factors not usually reckoned with, or rather wilfully and skilfully withheld from, mainstream study/criticism of science. The Leftist narrative in India has only reinforced this in full force.

Angus Maddison, Dharampal, and others have provided the alternative picture, and a deep study of the *śāstra*-s remains a desideratum in this direction. *Śāstra*-s have always allowed for adaptation, re-discovery, re-interpretation etc., and are far from being history-centric, and always have scope for additional *śāstra*-s. *Śāstra*-s conduce to *dharma* and *mokṣa* for the individual and the welfare of the society in general. The perception of “social ills” in the *śāstra*-s is essentially a Western prejudice and a projection.

The modern sciences have nothing comparable to the comprehensive and holistic understanding of life that the *śāstra*-s generate, and provide guidelines, for an attainment of the high goal of life as elucidated in the fourteen (or eighteen) *vidyā-sthāna*-s. It is in no wise essential in terms of conceptualisation or execution that the *śāstra*-s ought to resemble modern science.

From a superficial point of view, science and technology have improved the condition of humanity in general; but it cannot be gainsaid that they have also subserved as powerful instruments of plunder and exploitation of nature and of fellow-beings (slavery/apartheid). This is very well borne out by causation, not coincidence, of colonisation keeping pace with the growth of science and technology. Current practices of science are only leading to indiscriminate exploitation and depletion of natural resources, threat of nuclear holocausts, environmental disasters (including extinction of very many species and consequent damage to biodiversity etc).

In sum, science may be profoundly successful in addressing a very narrow set of problems, but vital issues in life, always complex, are not easily or successfully handled by current science. The world-view that science presents is utterly limited, and it indeed pales into insignificance when pitted against the *śāstra*-s; *śāstra*-s are not static and limited, nor do they lack an empirical approach. *Śāstra*-s can inspire many new things (including providing new/additional perspectives to science itself). Yoga as a *śāstra*, for example, has made many positive contributions in correcting many ills of society.

Against the above analysis, all the allegations and misrepresentations of Pollock in respect of *śāstra*-s stand repudiated; and on the other hand, the highly beneficiary role of the *śāstra*-s also becomes patent.

* * *

An important reason for taking up Pollock's works for critical study is the fact that he is held in very high esteem among the the modern Orientalists. Worse, few dare to criticise him, and there is a great deal of growing hagiography around him. Some samples: "Extraordinary even among the already extraordinary tribe of Sanskritists, he (=Pollock) has taken the study of Sanskrit to a new level, engaging historical, comparative, and theoretical issues with a range and sophistication that is unusual and in many respects unprecedented"

(Dirks 2016:ix). This statement is preceded by a reference to his “scholarly breadth, erudition, originality and commitment”, and succeeded by a reference to “his eloquence, erudition and efficiency” (Dirks 2016:xiii). Again, “Sheldon Pollock remains a leader in the fields of Sanskrit Philology, Indian intellectual and literary history, and comparative intellectual history (Bronner *et al* 2016:xv). There is an unending laudation of his “innovative scholarship”, referring to how “Pollock’s influence within and beyond the field of South Asian studies has risen to new heights...” (Bronner *et al* 2016:xxi)

“Pollock’s work will likely play a dominant role in shaping the wider public image of pre-modern India, especially Sanskrit, language and culture along with the forms of polity related to them, *for years if not decades to come*”

(McCrea 2013:117) (*italics ours*).

The Battle for Sanskrit by Rajiv Malhotra outlined the immense damage to the academic realm by the malafide writings of this famed scholar. The present series of books on Indology (especially against the Neo-Orientalist brand), is only a first step aimed at remedying and rectifying the situation. (Needless to say, the authors of the papers here hold themselves responsible for their respective papers.)

* * *

To end with words of caution of the wise:

“*nigiranto jagat-prāṇān udgiranto mukhair viṣam ।
dūrataḥ parihartavyā dvijihvā jihma-vṛttayaḥ ॥*”

* * *

Śrāvaṇa Śukla Pūrṇimā
Vikṛti Saṁvatsara
(15-Aug-2019)

Dr. K.S. Kannan
Academic Director
and
General Editor of the Series

[Hindi Synopsis of the Hindi Paper]

॥ सम्पादकीयम् ॥

वेद की अपौरुषेयता को दृष्टिपथ में रखते हुए आलोक मिश्रा का शोधपत्र 'शेल्डन पॉलॉक एवं मीमांसा' लिखा गया है। इस शोधपत्र की आवश्यकता इसीलिए हुई क्योंकि इस विषय में वैदेशिकों जैसे शेल्डन पॉलॉक इत्यादि तथा भारतीयों का आपस में मतभेद है।

अतः वास्तविकता को अवगत कराने की दृष्टि से यह शोधपत्र अत्यन्त आवश्यक है। शेल्डन पॉलॉक की विचारों को खण्डन करते हुए वेद की अपौरुषेयता की सिद्धान्त को आलोक मिश्रा ने स्थापित किए हैं।

उदाहरणार्थ - पूर्वाग्रह से ग्रसित होकर पॉलॉक ने यह प्रतिपादित किए हैं कि वेद की अपौरुषेयता मूलतः वैदिकसंस्कृति से नहीं जुड़ा है, अपितु बौद्धों के प्रश्नों का समाधान किस प्रकार किया जाए इसीलिए जैमिनि ने तथाकथितरूप से वेद की अपौरुषेयता की सिद्धान्त को बताया, तथा उसका प्रामाण्य को प्रश्नातीत किया।

“... It also seems like that at least some of the most salient articulations of the world, what we now tend to think of as its foundational principles, may have first been conceptualized as a defensive, even anti-axial, reaction to Buddhism... It is self evident that no one would elaborate propositions of the sort we find Mīmāṃsā to have elaborated, such as the thesis of the authorlessness of the Veda, unless the authority of the Veda and its putative authors had first been seriously challenged.”

(Pollock 2005:402)

मीमांसासूत्रों को सूक्ष्म दृष्टि से परीक्षण करते हुए यह दिखाया है कि जैमिनि बुद्ध के पूर्ववर्ती हैं। बुद्ध ने कर्मकाण्ड को प्रयत्न द्वारा खण्डन किया है। अतः जैमिनि यदि परवर्ती होते तो निश्चित रूप से उनका ध्यान इधर आकृष्ट होता। किन्तु मीमांसासूत्र में बुद्ध का उल्लेख प्राप्त नहीं होता है। मीमांसासूत्र में एकत्र बुद्ध शब्दका उल्लेख है परंतु यह शब्द सामान्य अर्थ में प्रयुक्त है — “बुद्धशास्त्रात्”। बुद्ध यदि पूर्ववर्ती होते तो इस पद को सामान्य अर्थ में नहीं प्रयुक्त होता।

प्रकारान्तर से आलोक मिश्रा स्वमत को पुष्टि करते हुए कहते हैं कि ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि निरुक्तकार यास्क तथा जैमिनि समकालिक थे। क्योंकि दोनों में बहुत साम्य है जैसे - जैमिनिसूत्र “भावार्थाः कर्मशब्दाः”, और यास्क “भावप्रधानम् आख्यातम्”।

वेदों की अर्थहीनता के समाधानार्थ जैमिनि ने नव सूत्रों से समाधान किए हैं। आलोक मिश्रा कहते हैं कि उनमें से ५ यास्क के समान है। अतः इनमें से कोई भी पूर्ववर्ती या परवर्ती होते तो निश्चित रूप से एक दूसरे के सिद्धान्तोंका खण्डन-मण्डन करते। किन्तु न यास्क जैमिनि का उल्लेख करते हैं, न जैमिनि यास्क का। अतः इससे ज्ञात होता है कि दोनों समकालिक थे, किन्तु एक दूसरे का ज्ञान नहीं था। सभी विद्वानों ने ऐकमत्य होकर स्वीकारा है कि बुद्ध से पूर्व, लगभग ई.पू. ५०० वर्ष यास्क थे। अतः यह फलित हुआ कि बुद्ध से पूर्ववर्ति जैमिनि थे।

अतः पॉलॉक के द्वारा प्रदर्शित किए गए आक्षेप निराधार तथा दुराग्रह से ग्रसित दृष्टिगोचर होते हैं।

अन्य उदाहरण - अपने पेपर “Mīmāṃsā and the Problem of History in Traditional India” में शेल्डन पॉलॉक यह कहते हैं कि एक प्रमाण से ज्ञात हुई वस्तु अन्य प्रमाण से नहीं जानी जा सकती, ऐसा केवल मीमांसक कहते हैं। “Second – and this is the basic epistemological position of Mīmāṃsā: all cognitions must be accepted as true unless and until they are falsified by other cognitions.” Pollock (1989:607)

आलोक मिश्रा कहते हैं कि पॉलॉक की यह बात हास्यास्पद है। भारतीय षड् दर्शनों में विस्तार से दर्शाया है कि एक प्रमाण से ज्ञात हुई वस्तु अन्य प्रमाणों से नहीं ज्ञात हो सकती। यह सिद्धान्त केवल मीमांसा का नहीं है। न्याय में प्रमाण शब्द का निर्वचन “प्रमाणं प्रमाणम्” “असाधारणम् कारणम् कारणम्। किं नाम असाधारणत्वम्? लक्ष्यताऽवच्छेदकसमनियतत्वम् असाधारणत्वम्”। ऐसे ही अन्य वैयाकरणादि भी स्वीकार करते हैं।

अतः इस प्रकार से पॉलॉक के विचारों को आलोक मिश्रा के शोधपत्र में तथ्यसहित खण्डन किया गया है। जिस प्रकार से पॉलॉक ने द्वेष भाव से वैदिक संस्कृति को नीचा दिखाने का अथक प्रयास किए हैं वह अतिनिन्दनीय है।

[Sanskrit Synopsis of a Sanskrit Paper]

॥ सम्पादकीयम् ॥

भारताधीत्यु(Indology)पजीविष्वेकतमः पोह्लाकाख्यः प्रथितो विद्वान् भारतीयसंस्कृतिप्रदूष-
णपरायण इतिहासीयघटनावलिविलेखनविषयदर्शितप्रायःपाराङ्मुख्यानां भारतीयानामधिक्षेपणाय
मीमांसाशास्त्रनिमित्तकतां पाराचीन्ये तस्मिन्नारोप्य हेत्वाभासपरम्पराभिर्भूषितान्नालेखानाबहोः
कालाट्टङ्कयँलुक्ष्यते । उल्लेख्यविषयाभावैकहेतुकी भारतीयेतिहासनैयून्यस्थितिरिति स्वतःपरिहा-
सास्पदे परिहास आत्मानमयमुद्योजयति । ग्रीकश्लाघनभारतगर्हणाख्यनिरवग्रहपूर्वग्रहगृहीतोऽयं प-
ण्डितस्वकीयलेखनिदर्शितग्रीकेतिवृत्तलक्ष्यमाणदोषसाम्यसद्भावेऽपि विराजिततद्विषयकोच्चैस्त-
मत्पूष्णीम्भावो भारतीयेतिहासप्रतिक्षेपे पुनः प्रकटीकृतबहुलजिह्वाव्यापाररुचिश्चिरत्राय वर्वर्ति ।
आभीक्ष्येन हेतुकुर्वता मीमांसाशास्त्रं भारतीयानामनैतिहासिकत्वे धर्मस्यैव परा धिक्कृतिर्यत्कारार्हा
हि वावदूकेनाऽमुनाऽऽसादिता ।

मीमांसाप्रतिपादितवेदापौरुषेयत्वसंभावनाप्यैतिहासिकांशप्रत्यादेशनार्थमेव प्रक्रान्तेत्यास्थितमेतेन ।
वेदानामानन्त्यसार्वज्ञ्य आधारीकृत्य समस्तविधनावीन्यावज्ञानप्रत्याख्यान एव समासादिते
मीमांसकैरन्ततोगत्वेति च विकटं फलु च व्याहरत्यसौ । साधारण्येन भारतीयसमुदाये संलक्ष्य-
माणमैतिहासिकविषयकपाराचीन्यमधि स्वेनैव गुरुणेङ्गाल्साख्येन (Ingalls) सम्यक्तयैवावबोधि-
तेन सतापि पोह्लाकेन पुनरदभिनिकृतिपरत्वमेव प्रकटीकृतमनारतमरालधिषणेन । अदोषविषमीभूतं
किन्नामास्तु वस्तु कथङ्कारं वा भारतीयसंस्कृतावस्य मलीमसमानसस्यावालोके ? परन्तु प्रजानृ-
पालयोः प्रजासु च परस्परं सम्बन्धस्समीचीन एव विरराज, प्रजानामधिकांशं सम्यक्संरक्षिता
विलेसू, रणाङ्गणेषु धर्मयुद्धप्रकारोऽपि परामानर्ह प्रशंसामिति प्रतिजानाति बाषामाख्यो (Basham)
ब्रिटन् (Britain)देशीयो भारतैतिहासिकः ।

आस्तां तावदाक्षेपपरम्परा कौतस्कुतरस्यास्याऽत्यन्तमेव प्रतिकेपणीया । नवतिसहस्राधिकशि-
लादिलेखानामद्भुतं विस्तृतं च लोकं भारतीयं पुरस्तान्नः प्रस्तौति सर्काराभिध (Sircar) ऐति-
हासिकाग्रगण्यः । शकादिसंवत्सरविक्रमादिसंवत्सरादिकानि द्वादशाधिककालगणनाप्रकारकाणि
प्रदर्शयति बाषं स्वतः । कौटलीयाक्षपटलाध्यायगतनिबन्धपुस्तकपत्रिकाविलिख्यमानरक्षणीयां-
शपरामर्शनतोऽधिगम्यमाना सौराज्यव्यवस्था कस्य वा सचेतसो नावहति विस्मयम् ? चोलरा-
ज्यगताक्षपटलिकापद्धतिरद्भुतासीदित्याह नाम बाषमस्स्वयम् । प्रतिपुरलभ्यमानलेख्यराशयुल्लेखो
जुवनजाङ्ग (Zuanzang)विहितो हि कस्य न जनयत्याश्चर्यपरम्पराम् ? तुरुष्कैः पुनरधर्मिष्ठा-
ग्रगण्यैर्न केवलं देवतायतनानि परमैतिहासिकांशसमुज्जृम्भितनिबन्धपुस्तकस्तोमाश्च कथमखण्डं
विध्वंसनघोषणादिकभाजनमभवन्नित्यपरोक्षमेवेतिहासचुञ्चूनां विशेषेण । विट्जेल (Witzel)

प्रभृतीनामप्यत्र विषये निरूपितकानि समुल्लेखमर्हन्ति । राजतरङ्गिण्यामपि – सेकन्धरधरानाथो यवनैः प्रेरितः पुरा । पुस्तकानि च सर्वाणि तृणान्यग्निरिवादहत् ॥ – इत्येव विस्पष्टमुद्बुधम् ।

अवसरे चारिमन्त्रानन्दकुमारस्वामि(Ananda Coomaraswamy)नाम्नो विदुषोऽभिप्रायास्स-
ङ्ग्रहणीया वर्तन्ते । मन्त्रब्राह्मणारण्यकोपनिषत्सूत्रसाहित्यसाकल्यगतहृदयसंवादो ब्लूमफील्ड
(Bloomfield) प्रभृतिभिरपि समधिगत एवेति संसूचयन्त्रानन्दकुमारस्वामी वैदिकेष्वारख्यानेषु नाम
तात्त्विकांशनिरूपणस्यैव सारभूततां विभावयन्भङ्ग्यन्तरेण मीमांसाशास्त्रौदग्र्यमेव हेतुनिकुरुम्बोप-
न्यासपुरस्सरं प्रतिपादयन्पोल्याकप्रभृतीनामनृजुमनीषाणामपसव्यव्याहारैकव्यापृतानां वैकट्यं
प्रतीक्ष्यैवेव तत्त्वार्थसौषम्यममोघं प्रतिपादयति ।

अर्हणार्हस्यापि संस्कृतसंस्कृतिवितानस्य विषये प्रदर्शितगर्हणैकप्रावण्यप्रागल्भ्याः परिपन्थिनो
नाम नितमां निबर्हणीया एवेत्यत्र शङ्काकलङ्को वा सन्देहस्पन्दो वा मा भूदित्याशयेन परिश्रमेण
भूरिणा प्रणीतस्यास्यास्मभ्यस्य विषये सविश्रम्भा जातुचिदविप्रलम्भास्सद्यन्तगुम्भाश्च भवन्तु
भवन्तस्सचेतस इति शम् ॥

तन्द्रालुजनजागरणप्रवणाः प्राहुर्हि प्राश्नो विपश्चितः -

“मण्डूकराविणं सर्पं गोमुखं च मृगादनम् ।
असुहृत्त्वेन मन्येत मानयन्तं च वैरिणम् ॥”

श्रावणशुक्लपूर्णिमा
विकृतिसंवत्सरः

- इति विनिवेदयन्
के.एस्.कण्णन्
प्रधानसम्पादकः

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Chapter 1

History in India: A Critique from the Perspective of Mīmāṃsā

– Shrinivas Tilak*

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Introduction

“He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past” famously wrote Eric Arthur Blair (better known by his pen name George Orwell) in his novel 1984.¹ History no doubt is a powerful tool that makes available a storehouse of information about how people and societies behave. History helps us understand change and how the society one lives in came to be. Though this statement has global significance and application, cultures and societies perceive and relate to history differently.

The differing perspectives on history between the West and India therefore raise some difficult questions: How to recognize the historical sense of a society like India’s whose past is recorded in ways very different from Western conventions? Arthur A. Macdonell went so far as to declare that early India wrote no history because it never made any. He blamed the doctrine of *karma*, which gave Brahmins

*pp 41–72. In Kannan, K. S. (Ed.) (2019). *Swadeshi Critique of Videshi Mīmāṃsā*. Chennai: Infinity Foundation India.

(“whose task it would naturally have been to record great deeds”) no incentive to record historical events (Macdonell 1996:10-11).

Sheldon Pollock, the Arvind Raghunathan Professor of Sanskrit and South Asian Studies, Columbia University, New York and General Editor of the Murty Classical Library of India, has raised similar questions and comments. With his involvement as participant in the Sanskrit Knowledge System on the Eve of Colonialism Project, he has emerged, as it were, the guardian of India’s cultural, literary, and social past with considerable power to influence public policy in India and project its image in the world. His writings therefore deserve careful scrutiny.

What follows critically examines his views on the status of history in India using the traditional Indian format of public debate: *Pūrvapakṣa* (factual presentation of opponent’s thesis), *Uttarapakṣa* (critical examination and refutation of the thesis), and *Siddhānta* (statement on outcome of the exchange).

Pūrvapakṣa

Professor Pollock (hereafter Pollock) is graceful enough to acknowledge that history perhaps is not an appropriate expression to use in the context of India, because ‘history’ as a disciplinary subject is a product of Western scholarship and ideas. He frowns upon the search for instances of a sense of history by non-Western historians and intellectuals in their own traditions that typified European modernity, of its sense of skepticism, its individualism—the search for the Indian Vico, the Chinese Descartes, the Arab Montaigne (Pollock 2007:380). Historical and historiographical awareness was not absent in India prior to the arrival of a European knowledge system under colonial rule. One would therefore expect a fair treatment of this topic in two very widely read and influential articles by Pollock dealing with history and historical consciousness in India.

The burden of his thesis may be summarized here: (1) By declaring the Veda-s as ‘authorless’ and ‘timeless’, the Pūrvā Mīmāṃsā thinkers deprived Indic intellectual, literary, and ritual texts of their temporality through a process Pollock calls ‘Vedicization’ and (2) ‘Vedicization’ in turn deprived these texts of their historicity (see Pollock 1989, 1990). While such views have been received with

welcome acceptance by left wing intellectuals in India and beyond; nuanced correctives have been suggested by other scholars - Dunkin Jalki (2013), E. M. Jan Houben (2002), Roy Perrett (1999), and Romila Thapar (2002, 2013), to name a few.

After factually presenting below these findings of Pollock as *Pūrva-pakṣa*, my *Uttarapakṣa* seeks to demonstrate that Pollock's verdict on history in India is at variance with how the past is understood, recorded, and contextualized as Itihāsa in India by Indians themselves.

I. Mīmāṃsā Imposed Vedicization

Indologists routinely invoke one or more of the six traditionally recognized *darśana*-s in their quest to discover factors that positively or negatively influenced the ancient Indians in their attitudes towards life, their psyche, and socio-cultural ethos. Pollock selected the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā *darśana*, which he describes as 'a pedagogically and thus culturally normative discipline of Brahmanical learning' as a tool to gain insights into the status of history in ancient India (Pollock 1989:607). The burden of his thesis is that the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā *darśana* (**hereafter Mīmāṃsā**) successfully mediated the transformation of the ritual discourse into a discourse of social power to sustain the relations of domination constitutive of traditional Indian society, which are characterized by the systematic exclusion from property, power, and status of three-quarters of the population for more than two millennia (Pollock 1990:316).

According to Jaimini, author of the foundational text of the Mīmāṃsā (the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra*-s = **MS**), Veda-s are not the work of divine or human authors (*apauruṣeya*) (MS 1.1.5). Pollock interprets this claim to mean that the Veda-s were deemed to be authorless because otherwise they might be fallible, like other authored texts familiar to humanity. Since they are not a product of historical persons the Veda-s are also deemed to be timeless. He then uses this unique feature of the Veda-s to posit a timeless, uniform, and overarching system of Indic thought that was immune from the normal vicissitudes of temporality and historicity (Pollock 1989:607ff).

Pollock's next logical step is to hold the Mīmāṃsā system responsible for emptying the Vedic canon of all historical consciousness as well as historical referential intention in India. The result was all other

sorts of Sanskrit intellectual practices seeking to validate their truth-claims by their affinity to the Veda had perforce to conform to this new, special model of what counts as knowledge, and so to suppress or deny the evidence of their own historical existence. Such suppression took place even in the case of the discipline of Itihāsa, ‘history’ (Pollock 1989:609). Subsequently, virtually all Brahmanical learning in classical and medieval India came to view itself in one way or another as genetically linked to the Veda - a process, which Pollock calls ‘vedicization’ (Pollock 1989:609).²

History, concludes Pollock, is not simply absent from or unknown to Sanskritic culture; it is denied in favor of a model of truth that accorded history no epistemological value or social significance. Sanskritic culture lacks historical referentiality. There is not even a single passing reference to a historical person, place, or event. There is nothing in the ancient Sanskrit texts that, historically speaking matters, declares Pollock brazenly (Pollock 1989:606).³

Standing on Pollock’s shoulders another scholar goes one up on him:

“Mīmāṃsā scholarship [is] utterly irresponsible by any post-structuralist standards of cultural sensitivity, and could well be impeached as an epistemically violent enterprise, in that it effectively erases the worldview of the Vedic and Brahminical literature by reinscribing on it the presuppositions of classical sastric discourse. Mimamsa is not a hermeneutical enterprise, as scholars such as Othmar Gächter [*Hermeneutics and Language in Pūrva Mīmāṃsā: A Study in Śābara Bhāṣya*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983] would have it... No responsible historian could claim that Kumārila understood the Vedas any better than Friedrich Max Muller who valorized the poetic essence of the Rg Veda while infamously denouncing its mythological excursions as a “disease of language.”

(Fisher 2008:8-9)

II. Mīmāṃsā Denied/Suppressed Historical Consciousness

Pollock’s empiricist understanding of ‘no history’ in ancient India is based on his adherence to the scientific notion of time as a straight line that is constituted by succession of abstract ‘nows’ and distinguished by the intervals between them. He deems these two sets of relations sufficient to declare that there is no way of knowing

(1) *when* something of importance happened in early India, (2) what came *earlier* or *later* and (3) *how long* this or that dynasty lasted. Under Pollock's influence, the view that India and (especially) Hinduism have been largely devoid of historical writing and historical consciousness has become axiomatic in the fields of Indology and Indian history in the West as well as within India itself.

Pollock asserts that the cyclic concept of time (*yuga*) negated the difference between myth and history as well as negated the possibility of unique events (which form a precondition to historical time). For him, the *yuga* theory of time is regressive (not progressive) in its teleological move from the Age of Kṛta to the Age of Kali. The notion that time, place, and causality merge with Brahmā at the end of each *yuga* rejects individuality (*ahaṅkāra*) as a causal factor. For Pollock the notion of *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa* transcends history, or it even denies history in a realm where the aim of life is to leave this material world. This philosophy of life-negation added to 'anti-historical' tendencies of ancient Indians (See Hossain 2016).

In sum, Pollock holds the Mīmāṃsā *darśana* responsible for 'vedicizing' the ancient Indic thought system and suppressing Itihāsa (which originally simply meant 'what has actually taken place') into mere textualization of eternity. Like language, which in the Mīmāṃsā view expresses the general (*ākṛti*) and not the particular (*vyakti*), Itihāsa became a reference for something that is eternally repeated. It was no longer contingent, the localized, and the individual: that is, the historical (Pollock 1989:610). What is worse, Mīmāṃsā ultimately furnished the Dharmaśāstra-s a meta-legal framework for an explicit program of power to inculcate and legitimate such concrete modes of domination as caste hierarchy, untouchability, and female heteronomy (Pollock 1990: 336).

Uttarapakṣa

In his *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India* Pollock acknowledges that there is a natural tendency in social and cultural theory to generalize Western experience and familiar forms of life and experience as scientific descriptions, and as modes of understanding life tendencies across cultures (Pollock 2006:259; 19). Elsewhere in the same book he

grants that one of the most serious conceptual impediments in understanding South Asian culture comes from the fact that tools deployed to understand it are shaped by 'Western exemplars' (Pollock 2006:274). A closer examination of Pollock's various writings on history and culture in India, however, suggests that wittingly or unwittingly he reproduces in his writings some of the very same Eurocentric formulations of the writing of history and modernity that he claims are not applicable to the situation in India.⁴

Also implicit in Pollock's philosophy of history is G. W. F. Hegel's argument that India had no history, which Hegel had predicated upon finding a necessary connection between history writing and history doing/making. History combines objective and subjective meanings (*historia rerum gestorum* and *res gestae*). It is not two different things that happen to have been given the same name. Rather, the two meanings are deeply connected, for the unity of history [writing] and the actual deeds and events of history make their appearance simultaneously, and they emerge together from a common source. This common source is the state, argued Hegel, which supplies a context for history writing and helps produce it. History is the realm of self-conscious free choice and directional change creatively making the new and unprecedented; and the main locus of this creative making is the state (see Trautmann 2012:193).

As Pollock brings to bear on his accounts an outsider's perspective, he is unable to show what ancient or pre-modern Indian readers themselves understood to be the interpretive protocols employed by the Mīmāṃsā thinkers in order to understand and present the Veda-s and the horizon they project. Where Pollock purports to know when a text is mythic or literary and not historical, he must warn his contemporary readers that this is his categorization that is being imposed on ancient texts that belong to an alien thought system. If not, Pollock's assertion that some discourse is 'mythic and not historical' tells us more about Pollock, the interpreter, than about 'historical consciousness of Indians in ancient India (based on Pollock 2007:379, see also Chekuri 2007).

Pollock is convinced that he can explain ahistoricity in the Vedic worldview and in the Indic tradition by reference to a generally accepted indigenous theory of cyclic time. True, the shape and accounting of time is essential to the writing of history of any nation.

Like other Western Indologists he makes much of the alleged lack of history in India linking it to a cyclic concept of time, which is contrasted (consciously or not) with the linear time of the Judeo-Christian tradition. A sharp dichotomy of linear and cyclic time that Pollock posits, however, is contestable because elements of each do overlap. Jan E. M. Houben, for instance, acknowledges that the cyclic calendrical temporality presaged in the ritual system placed the ritual actor in a timeless reality, which did not stimulate any interest in detailed history. Yet, the narrativity and historicity of the world, he observes, is only temporarily set aside and that too in the case of the Brahmin priests and a few others directly involved in the performance of *yajña* (Houben 2002:472).

Romila Thapar, on her part, is at pains to point out that linear and cyclic notions of time co-existed in ancient India, and were used according to the context. Even in cyclic time the present is not a repetition of the past, as has been maintained. Each cycle records change. The linear and cyclical views of time are not mutually exclusive — provided only a segment of the cycle is regarded or described. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, of course, time was regarded as cyclical. While cyclic notion of time was included in *Mahābhārata*, *Dharmaśāstra*-s, and the *Purāṇa*-s; linear time was used in genealogies (*vaṃśāvali*), biographies (*carita*-s), and dynastic chronicles (Thapar 2002:26-45, Devy 1998:11). There is now growing recognition that cultures have their own versions of history which, however fanciful, reflect their particular perception of the past (Chakraborty 2016).

III. Mīmāṃsā Hermeneutics Sustains Itihāsa

Mīmāṃsā hermeneutical principles

If mathematics is the source of all science in the West; in ancient India critical reflection (*mīmāṃsā*) was the major source of hermeneutics and interpretive enterprise. The *Mīmāṃsā darśana* arose in response to the need for an exegesis of Vedic *yajña*. Out of an analysis of the institution of *yajña* came into being the Aitihāsika tradition of an indigenous school of history and historiography quite different from anything produced in the Western world (see below). Main philosophical inquiries of *Mīmāṃsā* have similarly developed out of Vedic exegetical themes. Its foundational text, the *Mīmāṃsā*

sūtra attributed to Jaimini (perhaps 200 BCE), is probably the most ancient philosophical *sūtra*. It has been commented on in *Śābarabhāṣya* (possibly 3rd to 5th century CE), which was again commented on by Kumārila and Prabhākara (700 CE?).

From the Mīmāṃsā perspective the events or stories to be found in the Veda-s serve to illustrate a specific purpose of the injunction associated with them (technically called *arthavāda*). *Arthavāda* is like the preamble or statement of objects in a statute. A statement of *arthavāda* type has no legal force by itself, but it is not entirely useless since like a statement of objects or preamble it can help to clarify an ambiguous injunction (*vidhi*), or give a justifiable reason for it. Sometimes a *vidhi* is also seen couched in the form of *arthavāda*. A physician's written prescription, for instance, comes with his license number entered as proof of his qualification to practice medicine. This assures the patient who then buys the prescription and gets well in course of time. A descriptive statement (*arthavāda*) may be attached to a Vedic injunction for similar reasons (MS 1:2.1ff).

A statement of *arthavāda* is divided into three sub-types. First, the descriptive part of *arthavāda* is called '*guṇavāda*,' which often seeks to enhance the meaning of a *vidhi* statement with resort to metaphor. Second, '*anuvāda*' means elaboration of something previously known, as in the phrase, 'fire burns.' Everybody knows fire burns—experientially. *Anuvāda* implies putting this empirical truth formally as a proposition. The third is *bhūtārthavāda*, which in the above example would mean listing the ingredients of the medicine that is being prescribed along with details of dosage etc. In other words, the purpose of *bhūtārthavāda* and *guṇavāda* is to narrate a convincing account (centered on truth iterated by *anuvāda*) to motivate followers to observe a prescribed rule or injunction. Consider for instance the injunction "Do not drink liquor" whose purport (or moral) is that one must not drink. To narrate the 'story' that 'a man who got drunk was ruined' in order to expand this purport is *arthavāda* (based on Subramanian 2010).

The Liṅga principle

The Mīmāṃsā theory of interpretation is based upon an analysis of the imperative mood (*lin*) because the core of the Veda-s is defined

by commands to perform yājñic acts accompanied by recitation of sacred *mantra*-s. In most cases the meaning of a Vedic injunction is clear on face value (see *Śābarabhāṣya* on MS 3.3.14). However, when the meaning of a word or expression is not clear on the face of it, its latent force or suggestive power is brought out with recourse to the suggestive power of some other word or expression associated with the injunction. This is called *liṅga*, which Kumāṛila Bhaṭṭa pithily describes in one phrase — declaratory power of words (*ukti-sāmarthyā*). If Śruti (= the Veda) offers the clear and obvious meaning of a word, *liṅga* is recovery of a word's obscure meaning by implication (Sarkar 1909:126 citing Laugākṣī Bhāskara).

The Vākya principle

Vākya (a matter of syntactical arrangement) is called for when the word of a sentence needs to be read along with other words in the sentence in order to make the entire sentence meaningful. This procedure may involve (i) supplying ellipses (*adhyāhāra* and *anuṣaṅga*) and/or (ii) moving subordinate clauses in a sentence up or down (*upakaṛṣa* and *apakaṛṣa*) in order to provide proper context (Sarkar 1909:141). According to the *Śloka-vārttika* of Kumāṛila Bhaṭṭa, one derives a special sense of the sentence upon examination of the structure of the sentence by using the principle of *vākya*. Thus, in 'vākya', the emphasis is on the inter-relationship between the words and clauses of a sentence (*samabhivyāhāra*). The modern rule of *noscitur a sociis* is also based on the same approach (Sarkar 1909:109-110).⁵

The Prakaraṇa principle

Laugākṣī Bhāskara defines *prakaraṇa* as the inter-relationship between passages (*ubhayākāṅkṣā prakaraṇam*; Jha 1964:220). It is based on the recovery of the latent or implicit relation of ideas, which must have been present to the mind of the author (Jha calls it the principle of context; see Sarkar 1909:106). Thus, a paragraph or clause when read by itself, does not clearly indicate its purpose, yet becomes clear when read with paragraphs belonging to another topic in the same text (or even in other texts) being discussed.

The Atideśa principle

The method of performance of most *yajña*-s is given in clear and extensive details in the Brāhmaṇa texts. These are known as Prakṛti-*yajña*-s. However, there are other *yajña*-s whose rules are not given anywhere, and which therefore are known as Vikṛti-*yajña*-s. The *atideśa* principle was created to resolve this difficulty according to which the Vikṛti *yajña* is to be performed according to the rules of the Prakṛti-*yajña*-s (See MS 7:1.12; Katju 1993).

Application of Mīmāṃsā principles

Application of the *liṅga* principle (also called *lakṣaṇārtha* = the suggestive power of the words or expression) can be illustrated with reference to a decision of the Supreme Court in U.P Bhoodan Yagna Samiti vs. Brij Kishore Case where the words ‘landless persons’ were held to refer to landless peasants only and not to landless businessmen (Barhi-nyāya). In Sardar Mohammad Ansar Khan vs. State of U.P.¹⁵, the occasion was as to which of the two clerks appointed on the same day in an Intermediate College would be senior, and hence entitled to promotion as Head Clerk. Controversy arose because there was no rule to cater to this situation. Recourse was therefore had to Chapter 2, Regulation 3 of the U.P. Intermediate Education Regulations, which states that where two teachers are appointed on the same day, the senior in age will be senior. Using the principle of *atideśa* it was held that the same principle which applies to teachers should be also applied to clerks, and hence the senior in age would be deemed senior (Katju 1993).

Yuga: the temporal principle of itihāsa (apauruṣeya and pauruṣeya)

A *sūkta* from the *Ṛgveda* affirms that the world issues forth periodically by the will of Vidhātā (Ordainer) as creation (*sarga*) just as it did previously (*dhātā yathāpūrvam akalpayat*; *Ṛgveda* 10.190.3). The concept of ‘period’ is elaborated in the *Manusmṛti* in terms of *yuga*: worlds arise and dissolve and arise again and again through the four *yuga*-s. *Yuga* also configures the relation of time and ultimate truth and reality (*brahman*) that is deemed to be invariable (*nitya*). Duration of each

of the *yuga*-s is a decreasing number of human years in thousands: Kṛta 1,728,000 human years, Tretā 1,296,000, Dvāpara 864,000, and Kali 4,320,000 human years. The twelve thousand divine years (which are the total of four human ages) make one age of the gods, a *mahā-yuga* ('great age'). One thousand of these ages of the gods make a day of Brahmā the Creator, whose night is also of equal length. Known as Kalpa, this period comes to twelve million years of the gods, or 4.32 thousand million human years. Waking at the end of his day-and-night, Brahmā creates [his] mind, which brings forth creation by modifying itself, impelled by Brahma's creative desire (*Manusmṛti* 1:68–80).

Invariable (*nitya*) truth is realized (and revealed to humanity) through the *yuga*-s by *devatā*-s (such as Agni and Vāyu) and by *ṛṣi*-s and *muni*-s. Their realization of truth is recorded in the form of episodes or dialogues, and preserved in a seed or root form⁶ (I venture to suggest, as *apauruṣeya* Itihāsa). Though there are references to past events in the Veda, Veda-s are not themselves historical because these events may be repeated as such across the *yuga*-s. Humans, too, migrate through a particular *yuga* in which they were born from life to life, body to body, seeking *mokṣa* to escape from the rounds and cycles of time. In this they receive guidance and instruction from heroic actions performed by *avatāra*-s of Viṣṇu (Rāma and Kṛṣṇa for instance) whose deeds are recorded as *pauruṣeya* Itihāsa (please note that the categories of *apauruṣeya* Itihāsa and *pauruṣeya* Itihāsa are my suggestion; they are not so described in the traditional texts).

In his commentaries on major Upaniṣads, Śāṅkarācārya analyzes and brings out salient facts about Itihāsa from the various episodes featured in them. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, for instance, features an episode involving Vājaśravas, and his son Naciketas who received instruction from Yama. Śāṅkarācārya explains that this episode functions as *arthavāda*, that is, it pertains to an event that may actually have happened or not. The first part of the proposition—'an event that may actually have happened' refers to the *bhūtārthavāda* component of *arthavāda* (see above); it also comes closest to the Western notion of history because it occurs in time that is measurable, is connected to a probable causal factor, and is verifiable against an empirical criterion such as an inscription or a written record. The second part of the proposition is closer to what in the West is known as myth, legend, or fiction. This episode is nevertheless instructive, insists Śāṅkarācārya,

in that there is something to learn from the behavior or actions of characters involved (such as Naciketas) (based on Subramanian 2010).

It should be noted here that Śaṅkarācārya does not vitiate the distinction between ‘Vedic (i.e. *apauruṣeya*) Itihāsa’ and ‘worldly (i.e. *pauruṣeya*) Itihāsa.’ He distinguishes episodes from the Śruti from those occurring in texts of worldly (*laukika* or *pauruṣeya*) Itihāsa such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* or the *Mahābhārata*, which are known products of recognized composers and authors like Vālmīki and Vyāsa that belong to a specific period: the Tretā-yuga and Dvāpara-yuga respectively. He distinguishes them in the manner an injunction (*vidhi*) is distinguished from didactic material pertaining to the injunction (*arthavāda*) in the Mīmāṃsā hermeneutics (discussed above).

Itihāsa: a broad and inclusive category

Pollock seizes on the distinction Kumārila Bhaṭṭa made between the transcendent disciplines that were ‘independently authoritative’ (*adṛṣṭārthaka*) from those that were not so (*drṣṭārthaka*) to assert that Itihāsa belonged to the *drṣṭārthaka* category and as such had no role to play in the teaching of *dharma* (Pollock 1990:320). Accordingly, he abstracts from Itihāsa only one specific meaning that is akin to the meaning of ‘history’ he has in mind: ‘thus it was’ (*iti ha āsa*). In the Indian tradition, however, Itihāsa has a far richer, wider-ranging, and comprehensive meaning and purpose as discernible from the allusion to Itihāsa in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (7.1.2).

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* includes Itihāsa as part of learning and recitation during the performance of the ten-day Pāriplava Rite that was part of the Aśvamedha Yajña. The very first ten-day period commenced on the day the horse was set free to roam unchallenged through territories of the rival kings for a period of one year (Hence, it is that there are thirty-six Pāriplava rites in one Aśvamedha *yajña*). During this ten-day period, a different Ākhyāna (narrative) was recited every day to a particular group of individuals. The logic behind the rite is that kings lording over various domains (the world of humans, ancestors, aquatic creatures, birds, etc) and their subjects must be brought to vest in the *yajamāna* (the king commissioning the Aśvamedha Yajña). The eighth and ninth days are particularly interesting because the Ākhyāna pertained to Itihāsa

he talks of Itihāsa and includes under its rubric the Purāṇa, Itivṛtta (past record), Ākhyāyikā (tale), Udāharaṇa (illustrative story), and even the Dharmaśāstra-s (Shamasastri n.d.:14). It is in this broader sense that the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the Purāṇa-s are included under the category of Itihāsa — record of exploits of heroes who could be king, poet, or priest according to the kind of *varṇa* [class] or world a hero was born into. Their exploits were kept alive as narratives to be told to successive generations. The reading of relevant texts of Itihāsa was ordained for the kings and the administrators. Shivaji (1630-1680), the legendary king of the Marathas, was a product of this practice (Sathe n.d.). This understanding of *itihāsa* was in vogue till the end of the 18th century when Sir William Jones, a pioneer among the British scholars, advised colonial authorities to restrict study of ancient Indian history based on the Purāṇa-s in the schools established and operated by the East India Company.

Itihāsa and the Aitihāsika School of interpretation

The *Nirukta* of Yāska is a commentary on the *Nighaṇṭu*, a lexicon of Vedic words and terminology, of hoary antiquity. Yāska, who lived probably during 800 BCE, refers to an Aitihāsika School of interpretation, which serves to (1) connect a given *mantra* with its deity in a comprehensible way — by acting as an anchoring story to put forth an argument for the transcendent nature of *mantra*-s and *mantra* users, (2) explain obscure Saṁvāda *sūkta*-s of the *Ṛgveda* by offering a ‘key’ to the myths and dialogues alluded to therein, (3) provide extended genealogies or biographical pedigrees of *ṛṣi*-s, (4) present or resolve conflict, (5) mediate between the *laukika* (*pauruṣeya* = worldly) and *lokottara* (*apauruṣeya* = Vedic) worlds (see Patton 1996:211).⁷ Yāska thus understands the role of Itihāsa to be the teaching of the philosophy of life with supporting references to relevant traditional narratives (*pāraṁparika-kathā*).

Role of Itihāsa: spreading dharma through vedopabṛṁhaṇa

Pollock acknowledges that there was a growing trend among those who performed the acts of *dharma* required by the Veda to also perform acts that were counted as *dharma* but that were not directly based on Vedic injunctions. Mīmāṃsaka-s, custodians of Vedic

dharma, addressed and acted upon such expansion of the realm of *dharma* beyond the limited ritual realm.⁸ Towards that objective they assumed that the authority for these other actions was conferred not by directly perceptible Vedic texts, but by [*Smṛti*] texts inferentially proven to exist or to have once existed.⁹ The concept of *puruṣārtha* (human need/goal) was first conceptualized within the domain of Mīmāṃsā to accommodate for this widening scope of *dharma* (MS 4.1.1ff.; Pollock 1990:323).

Subsequently, Manu and the other *Smṛti*-s began to treat *dharma* both as *kratvartha*, that is, regular performance of such *yajña*-s as the Agnihotra and other rites/obligations, as well as formal study of the Veda; and as *puruṣārtha*, that is, performance of the whole range of duties prescribed for the four *varṇa*-s and four *āśrama*-s (Endnote # 22; Pollock 1990:323). It does not occur to Pollock that he is describing here *vedopabṛṃhaṇa*, a process (sponsored by the Mīmāṃsā system) of expanding the Vedic teachings by bringing Itihāsa into service to spread the *puruṣārtha* component of *dharma* among those who did not have direct access to its *kratvartha* component—women and *sūdra*-s (see below). *Vedopabṛṃhaṇa* thus invalidates the process of Vedicization, the cornerstone of Pollock's thesis of the Mīmāṃsā denial and suppression of 'history' in ancient India!

The foregoing suggests that in many cultures history was/is understood in the sense akin to Itihāsa: record of significant actions in which great heroes (male and female) are often implicated and are variously recognized as instruments of providence, justice or the spirit of times (*Zeitgeist*) destined to accomplish a definite plan and purpose. In his *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Carlyle outlined one such way of conceptualizing history that is reminiscent of Itihāsa:

"Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at the bottom the history of the Great Men who have worked here".

(Hook 1965:14)

Pollock does not seem to have entertained Carlyle's vision of history. If he had, he would not declare 'India has no history'! Such a summary verdict sounds unconvincing because it fails to explain why Buddhists and Jains (who spurned Veda-s), too, did not attach great importance to 'history' as Pollock conceptualizes it. Moreover, Pollock attaches undue importance to Mīmāṃsā (which is but one

of the six major *darśana*-s) in selecting it as a guiding light in his search for history in India. As against the Mīmāṃsā view of the Veda-s as authorless, the Nyāya and Yoga attribute the authorship of Veda-s to God, and the Vedantin-s consider *brahman* (not the Veda) as ultimately real and eternal. Pollock is also unperturbed by the fact that though he abides by modern, objectivist notions of history in the West, the underlying belief in the opposition of ‘factual’ (true) history and ‘fictive’ literature, on which it is based, is itself relatively new. Until nineteenth-century, history in Europe was considered a form of literature with no prejudice as to its truth value (See Perrett, 1999:315; Hossain 2016). While one may agree with Pollock that all narratives necessarily manipulate time by rearranging it to configure a meaningful pattern, it must also be remembered that there can be different modes of configuring temporality in different times and cultures (even within a single culture). These modes, again, can be linear or distinctly nonlinear (See Thapar 2002:26-45).

IV. Mīmāṃsā Fosters *Dharma* and *Vedopabṛmhaṇa*

In his commentary on the *Mīmāṃsā sūtra* Śābarasvāmin laid out a comprehensive and useful framework for studying *dharma*: what is *dharma*, its nature and characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*-s), its sources (*sādhana*-s), what appear as, but are really not, its sources (*sādhanābhāsāni*), and what is the ‘other’ (*para*) [i.e. that to which *dharma* relates or reaches out; later identified with *mokṣa*]. In a practical sense, *dharma* is that which (1) sustains the universe, (2) supports, and (3) upholds all human efforts to live in virtue, goodness, and mutual expectancy (*sāpekṣatā*) (*Śābarabhāṣya* on MS 3:3.14).

The fact that Mīmāṃsā philosophical thinking emerged out of exegetical concerns means that the Mīmāṃsā is not exclusively concerned with ontology as Pollock presupposes. In company with most contemporary Western scholars he considers metaphysics and ontology as the first elements of philosophical thinking and accordingly transposes this model onto the Mīmāṃsā system. The fact is, such is not quite the case for Mīmāṃsā where the main focus is on the Brāhmaṇa portion of the Veda-s, which are primarily action-oriented, prescriptive texts. Since Mīmāṃsaka-s accord the Veda

a specific epistemological place and role, the Veda is the source of transcendental knowledge only. In all other fields (including what Pollock calls ‘history’) ontological and empirical perspectives are accepted and encouraged.

Itihāsa: bridging Dharma and Mokṣa

Dharma with its concern for right action in the material and phenomenal world of men and women has a temporal dimension while *mokṣa*, the ultimate goal of life, transcends temporality. Hindu poets and philosophers have traditionally espoused the bridge provided by Itihāsa and Purāṇa texts to make the passage from *dharma* to *mokṣa*. The metaphor of bridge acts as a linking function which, among other things, brings together elements that are different temporally, spatially or in other ways. The bridge is not a stable habitat, you are not expected to stand or stay on it for long periods. It is rather, ‘being on the way’ from somewhere to somewhere.

This idea of the connectedness of *dharma* (operating in the mundane, material domain) and *mokṣa* (the transcendent domain) is central to Mīmāṃsā. For this reason Jaimini considers alienation from the omnipotent Supreme Being (Pradhāna) to be imperfection (*doṣa*). Hence all beings are asked to be in relation to Pradhāna (*abhisambandhāt*; MS 6:3.1-3) and the act of relating to Pradhāna is part of the goal of performing *yajña* (Organ 1970:243). The Dharmaśāstra-s similarly claim an essential continuity between *dharma* and *mokṣa*: performance of selfless action (*karma*; initially discussed in the Vedic notion of *karman*) as prescribed for one’s *dharma* leads to *mokṣa*. Thus the timeless ideal of *mokṣa* cannot be so easily separated from the temporal ideal of *dharma* as Pollock chooses to do (See Perrett 1999). For this reason, the alleged lack of importance placed on history in India (and Hinduism) may be attributed to classical Indian epistemology rather than to the ‘authorless’ and ‘timeless’ quality of the Veda as alleged by Pollock.

Karman and Temporal Awareness

Though Pollock holds the system of Mīmāṃsā responsible for suppressing history, he conveniently ignores the close connection

the Indian tradition posits between the doctrine of karma, the Vedic concept of *karman* (actions involved in the performance of *yajña*), and awareness of the three time frames (past, present, future). The concept of *karman* is alluded to in various *sūkta*-s of the *Rgveda* (1:22.19; 2:21.1; 3:33.7 for instance). The Mīmāṃsaka-s undertook the scrutiny of all actions enjoined in the Veda-s by dividing the Vedic corpus into two broad divisions: sacred formulae (*mantra*-s) and injunctions (*vidhi*-s). These commands also guide everyday acts, which constitute the very essence of human existence. Without action knowledge is fruitless and without action happiness (whether worldly or transcendent) is impossible. In Vedic thinking human and cosmic fullness is reached only through the performance of *yajña* which, among other things, re-enacts the primordial creative act by which the world came into being and remains extant during the current *yuga*.

For Jaimini reality, therefore, is ordered according to the institution of *yajña*, and all Mīmāṃsā categories are shaped to focus on *yajña*, which is so essential that all its components are significant only insofar as they serve its performance. The words (*śabda*-s) of the Veda-s are meaningful solely as a set of injunctions for *yājñic* action. The Mīmāṃsā provides a framework that permits actions to express both diversity of interests and an underlying authority. *Dharma* arises from the Veda and the *dharma* of any entity is a function of the way an entity is treated, acted upon, and related to, during the *yajña* and in relation to *yajña* (Clooney 1990:124,153). *Dharma* is formally defined as that which motivates people to do right actions that are conducive to highest goal or welfare (*niḥśreyasa*) and that are indicated by commands or injunctions (*codanā lakṣaṇo'rtho dharmah* MS 1:1.1-2).

In post-Vedic thought *karman* becomes that which remains as the subtle structure of temporal reality once the *prima facie* elements have faded away or have been transformed, as that which all existing beings have in common and in which they share. For the *Gītā*, *karman* is the constitutive element of the human being (BG 8:3) and the theme of *karman* is discussed at length in chapters two and three (Panikkar 1972). It is therefore surprising that Pollock does not take into account the possible relevance of the doctrine of *karman* in his discussions of the status of history in ancient India.

Karman and Kāla

Raimundo Panikkar observes that in Indian way of thinking the locus of *karman* is the temporal existence of reality, the temporal existence of this world and, above all, the human being (Panikkar 1972:35). It is in this line of thinking that the concept of historicity and historical consciousness finds its place.¹⁰ *Karman* is the crystallization of actions past, as well as of the results of acts which are no longer in the past, but which emerge and are present in the contemporary situation of the bearer of that particular *karman*. The forces that energize an action leave their mark on the agent as well as on the world. Within the agent these energizing forces leave a residual effect (*karmāśaya*) that shape and direct future actions and carry the combined influence (*saṃskāra*-s) of past actions forward into the agent's future. Some of the internal effects of actions show up directly in the habits and character of the succeeding generations (Panikkar 1975:86-87). From the Vedic perspective, an isolated [individual] being is an abstraction; an artificial and unnatural separation from the common reality of which it is part. Human being therefore is karmic, temporal, and historical (Panikkar 1972:42). The law of *karman* gives expression to this fundamental human condition, yet at the same time allows for its overcoming—to *mokṣa*.¹¹ Through their commitment to this background theory of *karman* and *kāla*, Hindus are able to temporalize and historicize consciousness rather more comprehensively and deliberately than Pollock would care to admit (adapted from Pertt 1999:607).

In the Indic context historical consciousness is bound with the recognition that events produce effects and consequences (both external and internal) to the authors and agents of these events, and their community. Itihāsa as a record of meaningful and inspiring heroic actions (*nārāśaṃsī*) was already spelled out in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (13:4.3.12; see Singhal and Gupta 2003:23), and the *Mahābhārata* recommends that actual doings of great kings and seers are to be analyzed within the parameters of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* (Shendge 1996). The *Mīmāṃsā Paribhāṣā* of Kṛṣṇa Yajvan refers to two main categories of narratives: individual heroic action (*parakṛti*) and collective heroic actions (*purākalpa*) (Swami Madhavananda 1987:70-71).¹² Once performed, an individual heroic action can be detached from its remarkable performer to let it

develop legacy and consequences of its own. Itihāsa invests such memorable and autonomized acts (individual or collective) with cultural and social dimensions, which succeeding generations are invited to emulate.

Pollock nevertheless does not regard purāṇic genealogies and historical biographies (*carita*-s) as historical (even though they evince historical consciousness; e.g., Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*) because they do not conform to 'Enlightenment' conceptions of historical consciousness. Against this assertion of Pollock, Thapar insists that historical consciousness is present in all societies, which may or may not produce direct history writing. In searching for historical consciousness in Indic literary texts, for instance, she came across embedded history (as in epics, myths and genealogy) where historical consciousness has to be prised out and externalized history such as familial, institutional, and regional chronicles or biographies (where the text makes deliberate use of the past)(Thapar 2013:59-61, 683; Hossain 2016).

V. Spreading Dharma Using Mīmāṃsā Hermeneutics

In the light of the above discussion it may be posited that Dharmaśāstra-s and Purāṇa-s presuppose that a proper understanding of Itihāsa is crucial for fulfilling *dharma* and the other ends of life. This is because Itihāsa acts as a storehouse of the past for what needs to be remembered, i.e., values that guide fulfillment of four *puruṣārtha*-s through the four stages of life (*āśrama*-s) using the power of language and narrative.¹³ The sense of time and culture in a given tradition is conditioned by the language(s) and linguistic conventions operating in that tradition. The manner in which a tradition internalizes temporal modalities of its collective existence is determined by its language/s. Here, grammarians play a major mediating role between language and tradition.¹⁴ Literary texts, on their part, depict the idealized *āśrama* model of the four life stages, which Kālidāsa describes in the life history of two kings of the Raghu dynasty: Dilīpa and Raghu pointing out that the householder's stage (*grhastha*) is the one that sustains and makes possible the three other stages (*Raghuvaṃśa* 5.10).

Mantra-rāmāyaṇa of Nīlakaṇṭha

The mediating role of Itihāsa in the fulfilment of dharma can be illustrated with particular reference to the *Mantra-rāmāyaṇa* of Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara, a Marathi-speaking Brahmin who flourished in the second half of the seventeenth century in a family established in Karpuragrāma (modern Kopergaon); a town on the banks of the River Godāvārī in what is now the state of Maharashtra. Nīlakaṇṭha moved to Vārāṇasī where he undertook the study of Veda and Vedāṅga, Mīmāṃsā, and Advaita Vedānta in the era when Aurangzeb was the emperor (1658-1707). Nīlakaṇṭha is better known for his commentary on the *Mahābhārata* (*Bhāratabhāvadīpa*), which is now recognized as a necessary companion volume to read and understand the *Mahābhārata*. He also wrote two other popular works for the purpose of illuminating the hidden meaning of Vedic *mantra*-s: the *Mantra-rāmāyaṇa* (MR) and the *Mantra-bhāṅgavata* by arranging the select *mantra*-s drawn from the *Ṛgveda* in such a way that they reveal the story centered on Rāma or Kṛṣṇa and the teaching of *dharma* - the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Bhāṅgavata* respectively.¹⁵

Here, Nīlakaṇṭha's purpose is different from that of other retellings of the *Rāmāyaṇa* he is familiar with. Vedic commentarial tradition for reading *Ṛg*vedic *sūkta*-s/*saṁvāda*-s initiated by Yāska and others were oriented toward the explanation of the proper performance of the Vedic rituals. Nīlakaṇṭha's explanation is derived from (1) semantic elucidation of Vedic *mantra*-s (*nigama-nirukta*)¹⁶ and (2) adoption of the Mīmāṃsan injunctive perspective to shape and frame his own message and philosophy using Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's argument (perhaps following Kautīlya) that considered the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* to be Dharmaśāstra-s and as such sources of instruction in the four ends of man (*puruṣārtha*-s)(Fitzgerald 1991).

Nīlakaṇṭha is able to expand the horizon of the Veda-s and realign it with the horizon of the Vedāntic scholarly milieu in which he lived (Vārāṇasī of the 17th century) thanks to the basic fluidity of the Vedic texts, and indeed Śruti itself. By relating the past to the contemporary situation through the process of *upabṛñhaṇa* he was able to add new material covering immediate past to the existing corpus. This is in line with Mīmāṃsan hermeneutical stance that 'canon' is not rigidly demarcated on the basis of particular Vedic texts (Patton 1996:425).

Thus, commenting on MS 2:4.9 Śābarasvāmin writes, ‘all branches of the Veda and all Brāhmaṇa texts communicate to us about the same [ritual] activity’ thereby implying that the Vedic canon is not the closed and fixed entity (Patton 1996:425 FN # 33).¹⁷

The above stance enables Nīlakaṇṭha, the commentator, to consider all the texts from the compendium of the Veda as ‘one’ in order to make sense of its part (see the *prakaraṇa* principle discussed above). The basis for this strategy also came from Kumāṛila’s statement that “One can create one large sentence on a particular subject out of several independent sentences of the *vidhi* or *arthavāda* type” (Kumāṛila Bhaṭṭa *Tantra-vārttika* on MS 1:4.13.24). Nīlakaṇṭha next selects *mantra*-s from the *Ṛgveda* and identifies in them elements of the Rāma story on the basis of the Mīmāṃsā principles of *liṅga*, *vākya*, and *prakaraṇa*. He then adds other *mantra*-s which are not so explicit, but which can be relevant by context or by narrative connection, as Nīlakaṇṭha sees it (*ekavākyatā*, *liṅgaviśeṣa*; Dwivedi 1998; MR verse # 22).

The *sūkta* entitled ‘Vamro Vaikhānasaḥ’ (*Ṛgveda* 10.99) is traditionally attributed to a sage named Vamra Vaikhānasa. Nīlakaṇṭha stipulates that Vamra is none other than Vālmiki. Then, by clever use of the principles of *liṅga* and *prakaraṇa*, he posits that the first five verses of this *sūkta* are by Vamra/Ādikavi Vālmiki and that they encapsulate the Rāma story. The *Mantra-rāmāyaṇa* accordingly begins with a reading of these five verses as a telling of the whole Rāmakathā in a seed/root form. He then offers their rereading from the *ādhyātmika* perspective suggesting that the rest of the work will proceed in the like manner (See Dwivedi 1998; MR verses # 15, 19).

A *pūrvapakṣin* (Pollock in the present context) might object that the use of the *liṅga* or *prakaraṇa* principle is used in a restricted sense in Mīmāṃsā because a fundamental tenet of that philosophical position holds that not every *mantra* or *vidhi* from the *Ṛgveda* can be interpreted on every level of meaning. Some are simply about ritual action. In reply, we may assert with Nīlakaṇṭha that the meaning of texts can be different for different readers of the texts. Attention may be drawn to Yāska’s practice of explaining the same word in a variety of meanings and commenting on the same verse in either (or both) *ādhyātmika* and *aitihāsika* sense (see Dwivedi 1998; MR verses # 12, 43). To the objection that Nīlakaṇṭha follows Purāṇic and not orthodox

interpretation, Nīlakaṇṭha can draw attention to the fact that Rāma's divinity was understood and expressed in different ways by different narrators (see Minkowski 2002, FN # 93).

Another *pūrvapakṣin* might object that since the Rāmakathā is nowhere mentioned in the Veda-s, Nīlakaṇṭha's approach to find this wholly new meaning in the *mantra*-s from the *Ṛgveda* departs from the Mīmāṃsā's typical hermeneutical approach to analyze and interpret the Veda-s. In response, Nīlakaṇṭha invokes the maxim that a post should not be blamed if a blind man walks into it: that no one has read the Rāmakathā as the primary meaning of the Vedic verses before does not mean that such an interpretation is wrong¹⁸ Nīlakaṇṭha's innovation lies in the way existing techniques and repositories of knowledge are taken together in the service of the task he chose: *vedopabṛmhana*. Though an Advaitin in philosophical outlook; Nīlakaṇṭha brings inputs in his thinking from the tradition of devotion to Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. His innovation lay in stating that the Veda-s also refer to Viṣṇu as the *saguṇa-brahman*, i.e., to Viṣṇu in his incarnated action as Rāma in a narrativized *kāvya* form of *Rāmāyaṇa* (See Minkowski: Forthcoming). The *Rāmāyaṇa*, in turn, holds in high esteem all that is found in Veda because such expressions as *vedoktam* (spoken about in the Veda) and *vedopabṛmhitam* (described and discussed in the Veda) occur often in it.

Western insensitivity to works of Itihāsa

Pollock's writings lack sensitivity to the peculiarity of understanding India's past in terms of India's own cultural context. Christopher Minkowski (a noted Sanskritist and collaborator of Pollock in the Sanskrit Knowledge System on the Eve of Colonialism project) concludes his article on Nīlakaṇṭha's *Mantra-rāmāyaṇa* with an assessment of Nīlakaṇṭha's creativity with all the smugness a Western Sanskritist and Vedist can summon:

"The study of Nīlakaṇṭha's works might be useful in learning about the later destiny of Vedic literature. But the question might still be raised about his usefulness to studies of the Vedas "in themselves." Are we likely to revise our translations or interpretations of any verse of the *Ṛgveda* based on Nīlakaṇṭha's contributions? Probably not. Do his glosses preserve any precious linguistic archaeological specimens that might shed some light on Vedic language? Probably not. What then is

the use of Nīlakaṇṭha's work for those of us studying the Veda today? Theodor Aufrecht, a Vedist of note in the last century, already dismissed Nīlakaṇṭha's work, saying that it "perverted" the Vedic verses into a reference to Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. And although we probably would not say it quite that way today, I doubt that we would take Nīlakaṇṭha's texts any more seriously. But there is at least this second order value: a reading of Nīlakaṇṭha's Mantrarāhasya works can remind us of the assumptions we make today in doing our work, the location of our own disciplinary boundaries, the distinction that we make between the Vedas' destiny and the Vedas' meaning."

(Minkowski Forthcoming:28)

Minkowski's musings on the *Mantra-rāmāyaṇa* reveal how tightly Western academics control exegesis of the Veda-s. Swadeshi interpreters of the Veda-s, on their part, need to proceed in their work keeping intact the integrity of the Vedic texts without bracketing out their 'mythic' or didactic portions as Pollock and Minkowski would like to suggest. It is necessary to view *Mantra-rāmāyaṇa* as a holistic work produced by Nīlakaṇṭha's use of myth, rhetoric, and Itihāsa as discernible in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which thematically is connected with the heroic narratives and genealogical tendencies of the Itihāsa-Purāṇa tradition as explained by Rājaśekhara (see Devy 1998; endnote #7). Nīlakaṇṭha's work can be legitimated using Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's argument that traditional literature may be acceptable as authoritative insofar as it exhibits the property of 'being rooted in the Veda-s' (*veda-mūlatvam*)—even if that means, in some cases, inferring the reality of a no-longer-accessible Vedic text (*Tantra-vārttika* 1.3.1. ff).¹⁹

Siddhānta

Itihāsa: the fifth Veda

The fact that 'history' as is understood in the West, is subsumed in the broader, inclusive category of Itihāsa (deemed to be the 'fifth Veda') in the tradition of India altogether escapes Pollock's attention. One probable reason for this lacuna might be that a range of possible answers that can be elicited out of a given tradition/texts/action depend upon the questions that are asked of it. Any scholar inevitably determines and comes with his/her own agenda of such

an inquiry (as Pollock indeed does). German hermeneutist Hans-Georg Gadamer formalized this phenomenon into the general notion of pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*), which is an integral part of the interpreter's own horizon, and which is informed by the effective history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) that emanates from the given text/action. The possibility for understanding is therefore conditioned because the interpreter must engage and negotiate with the history of the text/action he/she is studying (Bilimoria 2008:70).

In this effort the interpreter may attempt any understanding of the text/document/action by approaching it purely from the prevalent perspective of its original authors/actors from the outside in (i.e. etically) or from the inside out (i.e. emically). Thinking with Indians, i.e. from the inside out, noted Vedicist and Sanskritist Jan Gonda observed (unlike Pollock) that Indian civilization, in the main, stands in striking contrast to Western, modern '*mentalité*.' Without being one-sidedly intellectual, it gives free scope to the emotional and imaginative sides of human nature against which distinctions between the subjective and the objective, reality and appearance are almost meaningless (Gonda 1975:8).

Instead of simply extracting whatever he had wanted from the selected texts from ancient India and then casting the rest aside, Pollock should have remembered that his sources relate to India's past in various ways (an acknowledgment with which he started his quest of 'history' in ancient India). In this quest he ignores the fact that his sources reveal not just 'data' or information, but also consciousness of the understanding of the past, and what it means to think about the past. 'Historians rarely heal themselves,' laments Pollock; 'they rarely historicize their own reading.' It is therefore not surprising that there is no acknowledgment here of the role of Pollock the interpreter's *present* in his interpretation of India's *past* (see Pollock 2007:370). He conveniently sidesteps the 'emic' view on the past treating his sources as mere informants. As Thapar has observed, this move perpetrates violence against Itihāsa leaving Pollock's central thesis 'India is without history' an ideological affront (Thapar 2013). India's response should be: So what? The West is without Itihāsa!

The Vedic tradition was more concerned to address the central paradox of human existence: on the cosmic scale the duration of human life is insignificant. This passage, albeit brief, is the source

of all reflection of any significance. The disparity between the lived time and cosmic time is the source of all human anxiety and suffering. Yet, it is also the *raison d'être* of the Vedic thought and quest that seeks to provide relief from pain and suffering, relief in the form of various injunctions (and the supporting explanatory material described as *arthavāda*) pertaining to dharma. They lie 'atemporally' and in 'seed/root form' (i.e. as *apauruṣeya* Itihāsa) in the Vedic canon as myths, eulogies (*praśasti*), heroic tales, and genealogies awaiting to externalize and sprout in the flow of time in every *yuga* through the process of *upabṛñhaṇa*. The *pauruṣeya* Itihāsa/Purāṇa tradition acts as its medium and agency in order to extend and expand Vedic teachings on *dharma* for the benefit of all those who do not have direct access to the Veda-s. This gives the lie to the process of 'Vedicization' invented by Pollock to hold the Mīmāṃsā system responsible for suppressing 'history' and depriving the rights of disadvantaged masses.

Nīlakaṇṭha's *Mantra-rāmāyaṇa* is a prime instance of how *Vedopabṛñhaṇa*, a process based on the hermeneutical principles of Mīmāṃsā, continued until the pre-modern times. His innovation lay in affirming once again that Rāma's *avatāra* was understood from the very beginning as bringing forth the ethical and spiritual teachings of the Veda centered on dharma to the masses. In this, Nīlakaṇṭha was emulating Vālmīki himself who introduced the Veda-s to Lava and Kuśa (the two sons of Rāma) and then elaborated on their teachings by reciting the *Rāmāyaṇa* to them (*Rāmāyaṇa* 1:4.6).

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Notes

¹Orwell was an English author and journalist who had also served as a police officer with the Indian Imperial Police in Burma (now Myanmar) from 1922–1927."

²In his 1990 article Pollock called it 'Vedicization' (Pollock 1990:328)

³The last sentence of the abstract of the paper, however, ends with this line: 'History, consequently, seems not so much to be unknown in Sanskrit India as to be denied' (Pollock 1989:603)."

⁴For an in depth critique of Pollock on this point see Jalki 2013.

⁵Ganganath Jha calls it 'syntactical connection' (Jha 1964:220).

⁶Commenting on *Rgveda* (1:1.1) Sāyaṇācārya states that at the end of every yuga the great sages obtained the hidden Vedas along with itihāsa (see Singhal and Gupta 2003:23).

⁷Pollock notes that no textbook of Aitihāsika interpretation has been preserved (Pollock 1989:608).

⁸A popular collection of *subhāṣita*-s includes one with this ending: "Who on earth but the Mīmāṃsakas respectfully guard the Veda?" (*bhinnā mīmāṃsakebhyo vidadhātī bhuvī ke sādaram vedarakṣām. Subhāṣitaratnabhāṇḍāgāra*, p. 43; Note # 46 Pollock 1990).

⁹Śābarasvāmin commented: it is not unreasonable to hold that the knowledge of these texts is remembered, while the texts themselves (that is, their actual wording) have been lost (*Śābarabhāṣya* 7.7.7-8); Pollock 1990 endnote # 27.

¹⁰This line of interpretation of karman as source of 'history' and historical consciousness is based on Panikkar 1972.

¹¹This line of interpretation is suggested by Panikkar 1972:41ff.

¹²For Rājaśekhara (renowned 10th century poet and literary critic), Itihāsa is of two types: of a single hero (nāyaka = protagonist; the *Rāmāyaṇa*) and of many heroes (the *Mahābhārata*) and identifies them as Parakriyā [Parakṛti] and Purākalpa respectively. The awareness that Itihāsa is a narrative about the past as well as the past itself brings Rājaśekhara to modern historiographical concerns (Dev 1998:17).

¹³One popular verse puts it as follows: *dharmārthakāmamokṣāṇām upadeśasamanvitam; purāvṛttam kathāyuktam itihāsam pracakṣate* (Sathe n.d.:22).

¹⁴French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, for instance, observed that it is Sanskrit grammar and the system of its verb tenses that have been decisive in India's sense of time than the Sanskrit vocabulary designating time (Ricoeur 1975 Introduction.)

¹⁵Nilakaṇṭha insists that the Rāmakaṭhā is as present in the Veda as is the Ūrvaśi-Purūravas saṁvāda (dialogue) in (*Rgveda* 10.85; Dwivedi 1998:15).

¹⁶For Nilakaṇṭha's explanation of 'nigamanirukta' see Kahrs (1998).

¹⁷See also Kumārila Bhaṭṭa *Tantravārttika* on MS 2:4.9.

¹⁸*nanu rāmāyaṇīyakathā kasyām cid api śākhāyām vṛtravadhādivanna dṛśyate'to'syāhāḥ śrutimūlatveva nāstīti cet naiṣa sthāṇoraparādho yadenamandho na paśyati iti nyāyena tvayi vedārthānabhijñe sati na rāmāyaṇamaparādhyati.* (See Dwivedi 1998: 11. The maxim of the blind man and the post is found in *Nirukta* 1.16, in exactly these words; also Minkowski Forthcoming FN # 65).

¹⁹*Smṛtyadhikaraṇa* of the *Mīmāṃsā sūtra* (1.3.1-2); see Minkowski 2005:240-41, where he cites relevant remarks of Nilakaṇṭha.

Chapter 2

The Science and Nescience of Mīmāṃsā

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Abstract

The interpretations in this paper of Mīmāṃsā by Western (*etic*) scholars are critically analyzed with a focus on the fundamental issues in Western hermeneutics, and the applications to alien (alien, that is, to Western methods) bodies of knowledge like Indian texts. Mīmāṃsā has been analyzed and critiqued by Western philosophers and scholars using flawed understandings and techniques rooted in various Western epistemologies. The modern (neo)-Orientalists proudly continue this tradition using their tools of preference viz. political philology and historiography based socio-political analyses – relying on biased and flawed re-creations of historical events and their ascribed motivations. Prof. Sheldon Pollock’s thesis on Mīmāṃsā is critically appraised with a firm basis in the traditional perspectives and vocabularies of the *vidyā*-s relating to Mīmāṃsā and its major interpretations. It is proposed that the neo-Orientalist theses on Mīmāṃsā derive from a deep ignorance (**nescience**). The primacy,

*pp 73–101. In Kannan, K. S. (Ed.) (2019). *Swadeshi Critique of Videshi Mīmāṃsā*. Chennai: Infinity Foundation India.

non-dilutability and non-negotiable nature of a sacred perspective (*saṁskāra*) whilst interpreting Sanskrit texts of Vedic knowledge systems is reinforced. The limitations of the scientific method in interpreting Mīmāṃsā are also discussed. The kind of hermeneutics that is practiced on Sanskrit texts is discussed - we posit a new type - a ***hermeneutics of derision***. This is followed by a discussion on the Western notions of history and the accusations of ahistoricism ascribed to Indian civilization. The non-empirical, non-verifiable and unscientific nature of methods used by Pollock to make his erroneous claims is highlighted. The aim, purpose and science of Mīmāṃsā is to lead the practitioner to examine and critically analyze his actions (*karman/dharma*) in life while on the path to a holistically (nature included) harmonious existence. The scope and role of Mīmāṃsā is beyond that of Science, Social Science or Religion (as the West currently knows/interprets these terms). Unless this is acknowledged and more importantly reinforced and realized by its practice - Western *etic* scholarship will continue to provide nebulous and incorrect interpretations of Indic knowledge systems driven by nescience.

Introduction

The Indian “hermeneutic” tradition has been interpreted in various ways since the beginnings of Indology - when Sanskrit and its associated knowledge systems became objects of analysis and scrutiny using Western techniques of study. Sheldon Pollock has discharged serious accusations on the Mīmāṃsā system of thought and its methods in multiple contexts in Pollock (2004), Pollock (1989) and Arnason *et al.* (2005) to cite a few. Pollock’s interpretations of Mīmāṃsā’s origins, motives and goals exemplify the characteristic trademarks of his style: political philology, creative use of chronology, dubious dating of texts, formulation of spurious historiographical narratives and speculative theorizations. Prior to and contemporaneous with Pollock, various other Indologists have also fantastically theorized about Mīmāṃsā (Bronkhorst 2012), Asko Parpola (1994), Max Mueller – one could go all the way back up to Sir William Jones.

The notion of interpretation (according to Western traditions) is briefly examined in this paper and then it is sought to be shown how such an understanding influences the *etic* approach to

interpret Mīmāṃsā. This section aims to highlight the fundamental limitations of the Western hermeneutic approach whilst attempting to understand Indian knowledge systems and the Mīmāṃsā tradition in particular. This is followed by a section discussing specifically Pollock's approach to interpreting Mīmāṃsā. The next section discusses the critical issue of historicity - the Western approach and definition of history and the marked lack of such efforts in the Indian traditions. The oft-repeated accusation of the Western scholars - including those of Pollock on the ahistoricity of Indian tradition in a Western sense is examined anew, followed by the possible reasons for this apparent "weakness" of Indian tradition. The section on the science of Mīmāṃsā gives the traditional perspective of what it is and how it is closely linked to other systems of Indian thought - or rather - how it underpins most of them. In the section on Pollock's hermeneutics (of **derision**) Mīmāṃsā is juxtaposed with the traditional perspective on Mīmāṃsā highlighting the nescience (ignorance) of the Western approaches in understanding Mīmāṃsā. The concluding section discusses Mīmāṃsā and its critical role in defining global *dharma* and its use as a basis for universal peace and harmony.

On the Notion of Interpretation

The act of interpretation (both voluntary and involuntary) is an essential condition of the human state both for human communication and understanding — both at an individual and (the more so at) the group level. Interpretation at an individual level is conditioned by the social and shared meanings as also those interpretations collectively curated via culture, civilizational behaviors and social systems (law and ethics). The Western history of interpretation (which, like most Western histories, "originates" from the Greeks) is discussed in brief. The notion of interpretation with regard only to text, and not to speech or other symbol mechanisms, is specifically examined.

Western Notions of Interpretation (Hermeneutics)

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) entry for Hermeneutics, informs us that ancient hermeneutics began (as usual) with the Greeks (the Homeric epics).

“The most remarkable characteristic of ancient exegesis was *allegorisis* (*allegoría*, from *alla agoreuein*, i.e., saying something different). This was a method of nonliteral interpretation of the authoritative texts which contained claims and statements that seemed theologically and morally inappropriate or false... Such exegetical attempts were aiming at a deeper sense, hidden under the surface—*hypónoia* i.e., underlying meaning. Allegorisis was practiced widely from the sixth century BCE to the Stoic and Neoplatonistic schools and even later... In the Middle Ages the most remarkable characteristic of the interpretative praxis was the so-called *accessus ad auctores*; this was a standardized introduction that preceded the editions and commentaries of (classical) authors. There were many versions of the *accessus*, but one of the more widely used was the following typology of seven questions...

- Who (is the author) (*quis/persona*)?
- What (is the subject matter of the text) (*quid/materia*)?
- Why (was the text written) (*cur/causa*)?
- How (was the text composed) (*quomodo/modus*)?
- When (was the text written or published) (*quando/tempus*)?
- Where (was the text written or published) (*ubi/loco*)?
- By which means (was the text written or published) (*quibus facultatibus/facultas*)?”

(Mantzavinos 2016)

From the Greek obsession with *saying something different*, to the middle-ages when one encounters the importance given to creational context - what is revealed is the Western obsession with **treating text as something that manipulates and that (as a consequence) which needs to be manipulated in order to understand it**. The reaction to the influence of the Abrahamic theologies (the obsession with a unique final text and final interpretation) is very apparent in the evolution of hermeneutics as a Western academic tool/discipline. The

close linkages with biblical philology - a theological text-analysis tool of power wielded by the church - which was used to interpret the word-of-god, though not acknowledged as such explicitly, are also discernible.

The modern evolution of the act of interpretation is described (in Skinner 1972) in no uncertain terms

“If we grant that the main aim of the interpreter must be to establish the meaning of a text, and if we grant that the meaning may to some extent lie “beyond” or “below” its surface, can we hope to frame any general rules about how this meaning may be recovered? Or are we eventually compelled to adopt what Hirsch here calls the “resigned opinion” that “our various schools and approaches” are *no more than dogmatic theologies, generating a corresponding “multitude of warring sects.”*”

(Skinner 1972:394) (*italics ours*)

Peculiar to the entire evolution and discussion surrounding hermeneutics is the theme of “The Hermeneutic Circle”

“The hermeneutic circle is a prominent and recurring theme in the discussion ever since the philologist Friedrich Ast (1808: 178), who was probably the first to do so, drew attention to the circularity of interpretation: “The foundational law of all understanding and knowledge”, he claimed, is “to find the spirit of the whole through the individual, and through the whole to grasp the individual.”

(Mantzavinos 2016)

Posed either as an ontological issue or as a logical or methodological problem, the deep discussions on the **hermeneutic circle** and the vast related literature examining various perspectives, only reinforces (from my perspective) the flimsiness of the hermeneutic discourse. The process of hypothesizing meaning in an incremental piecemeal fashion without awareness or consciousness or a preliminary need to understand the whole (big picture) is the key problem underlying the hermeneutics approach.

It is well acknowledged within the discipline that the empirical approaches taken by hermeneutics are fallible. The application of these techniques in specific narrow text areas like theology and jurisprudence evolve close to the domain of discourse, and these closed domains have their related hypotheses and methodologies.

Text interpretation is the key praxis, the purposes and motivations behind this is what is interesting and leads to spurious applications like those of the Western Indologists.

“The process of text interpretation which lies in the center of hermeneutics as the methodological discipline dealing with interpretation can and has been analyzed empirically with the help of testable models. The question whether there are certain normative presuppositions of the interpretative praxis—like specific principles of interpretation that are constitutive of this praxis and indispensable rationality principles—is a focal issue of obvious philosophical importance (Detel 2014). Regardless of the position that is assumed with respect to this issue, it is hardly possible to deny that the interpretative praxis can take on multiple forms and can take place according to diverse aims.”

(Mantzavinos 2016)

Ascribing motives to authors of text – socio-political ones at that — is a favorite methodological pastime of Western Indologist, especially those practicing the peculiar brand of neo-Orientalism exemplified by Pollock. Deeply suspicious motives are ascribed to Pāṇini, Patañjali, Vālmiki, Vyāsa and Jaimini just to cite a few examples. What are the reasons and where does this strange and peculiar obsession come from, and more importantly, how does all of this pass for scholarship? The answers very possibly lie in the tools of Western academia themselves. Mantzavinos lays it out bare.

“Whereas the *notion of intention* is certainly useful in providing a methodological account of interpretation, its use is surely part of a later development; and it has been largely imported into hermeneutic methodology from discussions in philosophy of mind and language that took place in the analytic tradition.

...

A *nexus of meaning*, connected with a specific linguistic expression or a specific text, is construed by the author against the background of his goals, beliefs, and other mental states while interacting with his natural and social environment: such a construal of meaning is a complex process and involves both the conscious and unconscious use of symbols. Text interpretation can be conceptualized as the activity directed at correctly identifying the meaning of a text by *virtue of accurately reconstructing the nexus of meaning that has arisen in connection with that text.*”

(Mantzavinos 2016) (*italics ours*)

Unlike the notion of interpretation in Indian knowledge systems - wherein the *śāstra paddhati* of interpretation is based on the sciences of grammar and various other related *śāstra*-s - **the free-for-all that ensues when one applies Western tools is readily apparent in the voluminous (250 years' worth) bodies of spurious interpretive (nexus of meanings) genre of academic scholarship produced by Western Indology.**

Ricoeur, the influential 20th century French philosopher, coined a phrase called the *hermeneutics of suspicion*. He distinguishes two forms of hermeneutics, one of faith which aims to restore meaning to a text, and one of suspicion, which attempts to decode meanings which are disguised.

The Western Indologists (since the 1750s) for the most part seem to be not only indulging in the hermeneutics of suspicion but also what one could only characterize as a *hermeneutics of derision* - this can be seen in the early phase of Indology where it was a tool of colonial policy and expansion. In recent times it is especially apparent in the case of extreme theses (ex: the *Deep Orientalism* thesis by Sheldon Pollock seen in (Breckenridge 1993)) originating in the Neo-Orientalists typified by those of Sheldon Pollock.

Western Understanding of Mīmāṃsā

The Western interpretations of Mīmāṃsā began with the efforts of Sir William Jones to interpret the *dharmaśāstra*-s. The *dharmaśāstra*-s could not in any way be interpreted without the aid of the *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*-s. This was the standard procedure. The attention to syllabic detail and injunction supposedly drove William Jones to translate the *Mānava-dharma-śāstra* (Murray 1998).

The analytical approach followed by subsequent Western Indologists was to remove *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra*-s from the context of practice and the larger play of the continual exegesis as is the wont of the Indian tradition. Attempts were made to freeze text and place the content in an independent context. The requirement of the Western hermeneutic approach to discover a “fixed” subjective motive to text produced various hypotheses on the notion of Mīmāṃsā and its role in the Indian civilizational praxis. Generally speaking, Mīmāṃsā has been variously characterized as non-godly, ungodly, atheistic,

oppressive, ritualistic, segregative, socially divisive (Pollock 1989), racial, ahistoric - a few choice descriptors used over the centuries by Western Indologists. There was no attempt (howsoever sincere) to understand the core principles (which have no Western counterpart) of *karman* and *dharma* - the motivations behind the Mīmāṃsā exegesis of text. The underlying framework of Indian epistemology and its reality in the lived lives of the *sanatanic* practitioner is for all practical purposes completely and utterly disregarded. This genre of hubris is routine in Western socio-anthropological approaches to “othering” and is considered normal Western scholarship.

Concepts (alien to Western civilisation) of *punya*, *pāpa*, *apūrva*, *punarjanman*, *ātman*, *phala* and many others which govern the *karma-siddhānta* (again totally alien to Western civilization) which influence the *dharma-jijñāsā* (the primary *prameya* and *prayojana* of Mīmāṃsā) are blatantly ignored and are not considered in the analytic framework of the Western approaches. The free-for-all, “anything goes” (large degrees of interpretive freedom) nature of analysis allowed by the Western constructs of hermeneutics and philology delivered from institutions of power and prestige have taken center stage in the recent (two centuries) interpretations of Mīmāṃsā. From a traditional perspective, such an approach could be characterized as a *manodharma-jijñāsā* (pursuit of the fanciful and imaginative) at best or possibly *adharma-jijñāsā* (wanton pursuit of falsehoods and the unethical) at worst.

Pollock’s Interpretation (Hermeneutics of *Derision*) of Mīmāṃsā

Sheldon Pollock takes aim at Mīmāṃsā as a part of multiple theses that derive from his well disguised methods of political philology. Pollock (2004), Pollock (1989), Arnason *et al* (2005) are his primary expositions on Mīmāṃsā. Malhotra alludes to Pollock’s obsessions with manipulating dates to suit his formulation of thesis.

“Likewise, the date of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā scholars such as Jaimini is moved to a period centuries after the Buddha whereas tradition puts it prior to 800 BCE.”

(Malhotra 2016:453)

The rather ludicrous dating notwithstanding, Pollock goes on to theorize the “oppositions” between Buddhism and Hinduism - Mīmāṃsā being the wedge to differentiate and forming the basis for the fanciful hypothesis.

“What was at stake for the Mīmāṃsaka in asserting the uncreated, eternal nature of language was the possibility that vāṇmaya, or a thing-made-of-language – that is, a text, like the Veda – could be eternal too, something the Buddhists sought fundamentally to reject.”

(Malhotra 2016:385)

Pollock takes aim at the Veda and Mīmāṃsā ascribing to them the fundamental ills (as he sees it) of Indian civilization. He builds an elaborate thesis on the existence of asymmetrical relations of power. A response to these claims is given in the next section. We highlight pertinent sections as Pollock proceeds to build his arguments based on his own (imagination) *manodharma* mechanisms.

A sense of history (in a Western sense) is, according to him, lacking in Indian society, and this is primarily because of the claims of timelessness of the Veda-s. Mīmāṃsā supposedly represents this ignorance of the past.

“The primary cause for the marked lack of a sense of history and the resulting ignorance of the past is Mīmāṃsā as Mīmāṃsā depends on the timelessness of Vedas for its authority.”

(Pollock 1989:603)

Malhotra throws light on how Pollock uses these claims to further his “Buddhism vs Hinduism” political thesis.

“He believes that the Mīmāṃsaka thinkers considered the eternal nature of the Veda to be dependent on the eternal, uncreated nature of Sanskrit. Hence, the Buddhist rejection of the uncreated nature of Sanskrit led to their rejection of the Vedas. He says Buddhists invented Pali as their language for writing and alleges that there was a similar rejection of Sanskrit by the Jains, who adopted Ardha-magadhi as their language. He says that Vedic thinkers criticized these new languages because they undermined the doctrinal authority of Sanskrit.”

(Malhotra 2016:385)

Continuing in the same vein, Pollock theorizes that all *śāstra* is influenced by this Mīmāṃsā notion of timelessness and is the root-cause of the deliberate (systematic and by design) denial of the past.

“Mīmāṃsā makes the authority of the Veda dependent on its timelessness, and thus must empty the Veda of its historical referentiality. Since learned discourse (śāstra) in general is subject to a process of “vedicization,” it adopts the Veda’s putative ahistoricity; and the same set of concerns comes to inform the understanding of the genre itihāsa (“history”) and the interpretation of itihāsa texts. History, consequently, seems not so much to be unknown in Sanskrit India as to be denied.”

(Pollock 1989:603)

Taking recourse to the Hermeneutics of Suspicion - Pollock makes sweeping claims regarding the Veda-s, the practice of Vedic life, and the lived civilization of India.

“.. when the Vedas were emptied of their “referential intention,” other sorts of Brahmanical intellectual practices seeking to legitimate their truth-claims had perforce to conform to this special model of what counts as knowledge, and so to suppress the evidence of their own historical existence - a suppression that took place in the case of itihāsa, “history,” itself.”

(Pollock 1989:609)

Extending the hermeneutics approach to one of **derision** - Pollock ups the ante accusing India, rather Sanskrit India as fundamentally a nation of “deniers of the past”.

“History, one might thus conclude, is not simply absent from or unknown to Sanskrit India; rather it is denied in favor of a model of “truth” that accorded history no epistemological value or social significance.”

(Pollock 1989:610)

The theorization (hermeneutics of derision) reaches the expected socio-political climax - the denial of history provided by the Mīmāṃsā helps in serving the cause of the brahmins - in usurping power and maintaining it aided by the Mīmāṃsā.

“To answer these we would want to explore the complex ideological formation of traditional Indian society that privileges system over process - the structure of the social order over the creative role of man in history - and that, by denying the historical transformations of the past, deny them for the future and thus serve to naturalize the present and its asymmetrical relations of power.”

(Pollock 1989:610)

In Pollock (2004), Pollock's attempt at a supposedly scholarly summary of Appayya Dīkṣita's *Purvottara-mīmāṃsā-vāda-nakṣatramālā*, he makes remarkable claims based on his limited translation of Appayya Dīkṣita's work.

"The most remarkable attempt in Sanskrit intellectual history is the arresting of the process of subversion of meaning of *dharma* by delimiting in the strictest possible terms what does and does not count as *dharma* and to defend the proposition that the sole source of *dharma* is the Veda."

(Pollock 2004:772)

Smṛti is accused as being a fabrication of the Mīmāṃsaka-s

"The very idea of *smṛti*, for instance, originated with Mīmāṃsā as a Vedic text no longer extant, no longer actually still being 'heard' (*śruti*) in its original wording during recitation, but existing only as a 'memory' (*smṛti*) of the original, and in new wording – and migrated thence to the wider intellectual universe."

(Pollock 2004:773)

The theme of fabrication is extended to *dharma* and that of *puruṣārtha* itself

"Precisely the same thing could be demonstrated for other expressions and ideas, such as that core component of *dharma*, *puruṣārtha* itself."

(Pollock 2004:773)

"This mantra from the *Kathavalli* [KU 2.14] is concerned with three things, agent, end and means, that are different from the action constituting *the means of producing perishable and non-ultimate end-results*, the end-results themselves produced by those means, and the actor active with such means."

(Pollock 2004:792) (*italics ours*)

Pollock very glibly concludes that the pursuit of *dharma* has nothing to do with the pursuit of *brahman* – as, according to his understanding, since *brahman* has been repudiated the means of attaining it also stands repudiated.

The rhetorical/theoretical mechanization of secularization and de-sacralisation of the Indian Vedic systems is thus completed in Pollock's thesis. The hermeneutics of **derision** is seen in action. In conclusion, the Veda-s are not about *brahman*. They are non-sacred. As the associated sacred practices have also been repudiated, there is nothing like a (sacred) notion of *dharma*.

This is a foundational claim¹ aimed to deconstruct (break and falsify) the primary edifice of the *sanātanīc* system. Based on the reactions (from practicing Sanatanists) to these interpretations, these theses do not read like those of a decorated academic scholar but are indicative of a deeply disturbed mind. *Dharma*, *Brahman* and *Puruṣārtha* - the basic constructs of the civilizational epistemology - are claimed to be **fabrications** of Mīmāṃsā.

Discussion - Flaws in Method and Assumptions

For those unfamiliar with Pollock's methods and scholarship, the theses on Mīmāṃsā might seem to be based on sufficiently credible academic basis, and possibly look to be argued out effectively by the author. The deeper agenda — of the (multi-decade) highly influential polemic powered by Pollock's innovative usage of his three dimensional philology, where claims can be made on any basis, without being anywhere close to the truth - is guaranteed academic credibility as the academicians purportedly use an approved "method". Pollock, for all practical purposes, is not a practicing Vedāntin or a Mīmāṃsaka.

Mīmāṃsā is about pursuit of *dharma* - the last thing a Western (Indology) academic scholar will attempt to pursue. The funding of research in South-Asian studies departments (Price 2016) are mostly if not completely governed by geo-political demands. Purely from a primitive perspective - the more outlandish and effective the othering of the region (South Asia), the more creditable purpose such research serves.

Pollock's methods are **not** based in practice – which is the fundamental focus of Mīmāṃsā and also of all of Indian *darśana*-s. Mīmāṃsā is a theory of action, and to even experience the most rudimentary aspect of it, it should be based on an experiential basis. Would any Western Indologist (including Pollock) have performed any *yajña*? Would he have been part of any *yajña*? Would he have experienced any form of *dharma-jijñāsā*? Steeped as most Western Indologists are in a Judeo-Christian post-modern mental consciousness (like most Western academia) – such "personas"- are from a traditional perspective fundamentally ineligible to discuss and critique something like

Mīmāṃsā. With regard to interpretations of Sanskrit text - whatever be the credentials in the Sanskrit language - if any Western Indologist (Pollock in this case) makes interpretations of a Sanskrit text - they should at least minimally indicate on what Sanskritic (*sūtra*) basis such theses are posited. As is known, the science of (grammar) Vyākaraṇa and the understanding of meaning are far more advanced in Sanskrit than in any other language.

“Among various systems of Indian philosophy, Vyākaraṇa, Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya are considered to be essential for the complete understanding of the concept of *śabda* and its different forms. They are called Padaśāstra, Vākyaśāstra and Pramāṇaśāstra, respectively. A scholar who has got the knowledge of all these Śāstras is called *pada-vākya-pramāṇajña*.”

(Subrahmanyam 2008:vi)

If any Western Indologist (Pollock) cannot make arguments based on the framework of the tradition of interpretation, the ***pada-vākya-pramāṇajña***, such theses should ideally not be given any credibility by any practitioner of *sanātana dharma*. As is known - the problem is not of one or two theses but of the overarching supporting framework built over decades of nurture - its deep roots and multidimensional attack on the fabric of Indian civilization via Western Indology's influential discourse and grooming of the intellectual sepoy army. For a more detailed perspective of the underlying issues, see (Malhotra 2016), Ch10 - “Is Sheldon Pollock Too Big to Be Criticized?”

On the Notion of History

The claims made by Pollock (in Pollock (2004)) are from a traditional perspective, bizarre and **do not** have any basis in the Sanskritic tradition. The comments and provocative theses on Indian methods (ahistoricity) in Pollock (1989) though do deserve an analysis. We provide a *pūrvapakṣa* on the Western (method) notion of history. The origins of history as a human pursuit are examined below. So too Western critiques of the idea of history are examined. Further, the Indian approach to history (*itihāsa*) both in an Indian sense and in a Western (misunderstood) sense are discussed and juxtaposed.

A key underlying foundational metaphysical primitive is that of the notion of time. The notion of history is very much influenced by

the notions of time. We shall not discuss this aspect here as it will only serve to distract from the essential focus. For curious readers the book *Eleven Pictures of Time* (Raju 2013) discusses these aspects in a fascinating style. Approaching the problem of history via the perspective of time will destroy many assumptions of social science and decimate the edifice of discourse built by its methods. It is a deep and provocative approach; it will be an epistemological attack and will not help address the issue of the flaws in Western methods in a normative fashion.

The History of History

History as discussed by Pollock and by academia (*the prevailing dominant global discourse is Western*) is originally a European construct. The framing of the problem space, the description of the problems, all of its aims, the elucidation of the goals and methods employed therein — are all West-centric. The continual (academic and otherwise) discourse on the nature and role of history, as a European creation and then later on as an Anglo-American exercise, is pretty much closely tied to the colonial and expansionist urges of the Anglo-Saxon (Judeo-Christian) collective conscious.

In a general summary on “history” from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (SEP) entry (Little 2016), Little says that for historians, their explanations need to be grounded on available records. The historian then hypothesizes and provides interpretations and explanations for the “records” giving them social and cultural meaning. There are two fundamental issues in this whole process in regard to the relationship between actors and causes. Is history really as the historian makes it out to be? Was the causality in actual reality as suggested by the historian? The other very important issue is the issue of “scale”. What are their interrelationships among perspectives of the nature of the historical processes at work and their actual dimensionality? How are these different relationships (the micro, meso and macro) and perspectives reconciled — if at all?

Is history a universal human concern or nature? This is as yet unanswered. There are many competing views on this. Pollock’s thought model is influenced and inspired by Vico – as acknowledged by himself. So what does one make of Vico’s theories on history?

According to Little: Vico simplified and homogenized the explanation of historical actions and processes. Everything everywhere had to happen the way it supposedly happened in Europe. In his words - The common features of human nature give rise to a **fixed series of stages of development** of civil society, law, commerce and government: universal human beings, faced with recurring civilizational challenges, produce the same set of responses over time.

Herder, Hegel and Nietzsche had different views on this supposed universality. Herder argued for historical contextuality. According to Herder, human-beings act differently in different periods of development. Hegel's approach to history is well-acknowledged to be one of the most developed (though as we can see below still pretty limited and biased).

"Hegel regards history as an intelligible process moving towards a specific condition—the realization of human freedom. Hegel constructs world history into a narrative of stages of human freedom, from the public freedom of the polis and the citizenship of the Roman Republic, to the individual freedom of the Protestant Reformation, to the civic freedom of the modern state. *He attempts to incorporate the civilizations of India and China into his understanding of world history, though he regards those civilizations as static and therefore pre-historical.*"

(O'Brien cited in Little 2016) (*italics ours*)

The other approaches to history - narrative history, hermeneutic approaches to history etc. are varying approaches to the problem and affect the events they acknowledge as part of the narrative and deem fit to describe.

What has to be appreciated here is that even in the Western views of history - there is no harmony or universality of purpose. It is well known that there are no well-known laws of history in a scientific sense. History is well-known to be a **non-scientific** pursuit (See (Donagan 1964) for the non-scientific nature of history). As to the matter of objectivity it is well known that history by its very nature isn't so. See (Donagan 1964) for a treatment of the issues with "historical explanation".

The most scathing critique on history is provided in *The Poverty of Historicism* of Popper (1964). Popper seeks to persuade the reader of both the danger and the bankruptcy of the idea of historicism. It was dedicated to the victims of "history".

“In memory of the countless men and women of all creeds or nations or races who fell victim to the fascist and communist belief in Inexorable Laws of Historical Destiny.”

(Popper 1964:v)

Popper in his inimitable style illustrates the limited nature of “history” as a tool to understand the human condition. This should put in perspective Pollock’s claims of India being ahistorical and many similar claims made by Western scholars. Popper exposes and explicates fundamental issues in the theory of historicism. Historicism of any sort is limiting as it deals with finite perspectives of infinite realities. Knowledge of the past need not help to know the future – there is no physics or physical principles at work here. The considerable variety of human nature and human psychology cannot lead to anything predictable or anything else principle-wise – which can be claimed to be universally valid across even one culture – leave alone all cultures. It is also logically impossible to know the future course of history as that course critically depends on the course of scientific knowledge (which is unknowable by definition *a priori*).

Historians, historicists and the history-based narratives that pervades almost all disciplines that comprise the humanities have serious flaws and these are just glossed over – simply because of the relationship of history to those in power. History’s ability to manufacture and control power is its most critical value; that is undeniable. History has served the purposes of the state and for the purpose of enabling power – its use for the well-known *othering* and genocide of cultures is widely known. It is also well acknowledged that it hardly has been used without any manipulative motives of history.

Some other critical arguments against the “method” of history by Popper: Historicists require the remodeling of Man and his nature, as the arguments of history require such remodeling. Any “modeling” of causation or trends (supposedly) identified historically can be used to “interpret” events way before or past their actual influence on events. The historian’s need to make laws, are flawed and are not based on realities. Much of this flawed interpretation is also mistaken for “theories” – the very act of historicizing is a subjective act. Historicism by definition does not allow for plurality of valid interpretations. This theorizing runs so deep that almost all historians and all of history related scholarship foster the idea that the aims and goals of society

are discernible in the trends of history (that they have uncovered). This hubris is unquestioned and passes for scholarship and the truth.

Popper's devastating exposition is very important for heirs to Indic civilizational ethos. One needs to internalize Popper's views and observations and formulate arguments against India's supposed lack of history.

This (lack of history) is a very powerful dialectic in the arsenal of the Neo-Orientalist and the sepoy (leftist) academic discourse. Do we, in India, need to justify or defend such unscientific and hegemonic methodologies? Are such **unscientific** practices (history writing) needed in the first place – What practice did the tradition pursue? Why did our traditional scholarship not allow this kind of interpretive scholarship? Is it not commendable that such dubious methods (historiography) are lacking as part of our civilizational ethos? These are all questions that need to be addressed seriously. It is also worth noting that even after 50 years of the publication of his writing, there is no credible critique of Popper yet. Why so?

The Nature of *Itihāsa*

The traditional Indian genre of *itihāsa* (that which happened) is closest to the Western notion of a narrative of past events, peoples and places. The focus of *itihāsa* is to record events from the past and weave them around the core principles of *sanātanic* living and present the narratives as exemplars. This is markedly different from the Western notions of re-creating history driven by the present needs or requirement. The recording of events, records of dynasties are present in various forms via edicts, texts of lineages – though in disparate forms. The Western notion of motives of history as a hegemonic narrative builder has never been the Indian (*sanātana*) way. Monarchy was never absolute, no one or no institution ever was – unlike the European / Western experience of absolute excesses. The genocidal pre-occupation of Europe driven by the exhortations of the Abrahamic religions, political desires of monarchy comprise the primary strand of history – a documentation of power and conquest.

The *itihāsa* – the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* for example – weave historical events around the core notions of *āśrama*, *dharma*, *varṇa*, *puruṣārtha* and the like. The *itihāsa*-s serve as an interpretive

framework/dialectic for the core principles. The characters and events are embellished in no uncertain manner for their primary purpose - the education and elucidation of *dharma* for differing levels of intellect. The *itihāsa*-s are deep carriers of foundational principles of cultural and civilizational ethos (unlike Western history which is primarily a hermeneutic, political (power-brokering) exercise).

The Purāṇa genre combines narratives from the oral tradition with contextual embellishments and also serves as a guide to *sanātanīc* living. Events in the *purāṇa*-s because of the fantastic nature are generally not considered to have actually happened – are to be considered to be metaphorically recreated or extrapolated from events of actual occurrence. The key to unlocking the riches of the *purāṇa*-s is to understand to decode the multiple levels of deep symbolisms attached to the various representations and characterizations. The multi-layered encoding and possible readings that the Sanskrit language provides is also an additional dimension that is to be appreciated. Much of *Purāṇic* and *itihāsa* (not to mention the Vedic *sūktā*) text have masses of hidden meanings, much of which are still being uncovered.

Discussion

The focus of Western history - to reflect back the present societal goals, political needs of current polity (e.g., justify colonialism, justify slavery, justify genocide, posit civilizational narratives (American-Exceptionalism), build nationalist grand-narratives into a coherent and powerful narrative) – is distinctly different from the goals of *itihāsa*. **The multi-dimensional play out of the *karman*-s of the militarily powerful or of the materially wealthy has never been the fascination of the Indian consciousness.** Histories have been written of saints, seers, spiritual seekers in much more excruciating detail than those of kings and conquerors. The focus on the continual cultivation of the *sāttvic guṇa* in the collective ethos of society has always been the primary focus - unlike the relentless Western preoccupation with the asymmetric (victor's view) recording of the (vulgar materialistic) more sordid genres of human experience.

Bhārat (India), when viewed as a sacred geography (a land of infinite sacred places), has a living, continually embellished sacred history

of each and every such place (*sthala-purāṇa*), this is something unique to the Indian civilizational experience. The distributed nature of history creation, its recording and local dissemination and local markers are in distinct opposition to the Western way of institutionally and centrally controlled narrative creation (church, royal commissions, universities, journals etc). For the purposes of this discussion it suffices to understand that the Indian and Western approaches to history are radically different and have different goals and motives. They also have different methods and styles of creation and dissemination. For Western academia (exemplified by Western Indologists like Pollock) to expect some sort of universality of a sense of history is not only naive but also arrogant - it only serves to expose the deep institutionalized hubris underlying the continuing attempts by the West (via academic nexuses) to control local, and thereby global, narratives.

The Science of Mīmāṃsā

We now briefly discuss what Mīmāṃsā actually means in a traditional sense. Without delving too deep into the technical details and meta-analysis of history and evolution of Mīmāṃsā, we will take an objective look at the focus of Mīmāṃsā. All the branches of traditional learning have Vedic texts as their foundation (Ramanujan 1993). Knowledge relating to the four-fold objectives (*puruṣārtha*) of morality, material gain, worldly desire and spiritual liberation is contained in all of Vedic literature. These Veda-s were propagated along with a detailed set of *śāstra*-s to aid in their understanding. The Vedic texts are in poetic, prose and mixed forms in different sections like the *Samhitā*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka* and *Upaniṣad*. The branch of Mīmāṃsā is meant to devise a means of analysing and interpreting Vedic texts/passages with a view to ascertain their tenets viz. *dharma*. The word Mīmāṃsā literally means ‘sacred discussion’.

The notion of the sacred is critical to the entire discourse. Western academia in general, especially scholars like Pollock, Bronkhorst and many others are scholars of the non-practicing variety. Based on the generally outlandish nature of their theses, they seem to simply have no clue as to how to approach these texts. The “sacred” approach cannot be *hand-waved* away nor can it be *faked* as is being done

currently by majority of Western Indologists. These types of non-practicing scholars have fundamentally no *adhikāra* to discuss these texts. The only valid objective scientific approach to understand these texts is the “sacred” disposition - nothing less. What the Western Indologists (Pollock for example) are attempting, using their non-sacred approach can be compared to someone trying to critique quantum theory without acknowledging the basic axioms of mathematics and logic.

According to Ramanujan, Jaimini provided the necessary methodology for interpreting Vedic texts in the application domain, the *yajña*-s (sacrifices). The *kalpa-sūtra*-s (one of the *vedāṅga*-s) and *dharmasāstra* are closely related bodies of knowledge. The applications specified by the *kalpa-sūtra*-s are arrived at on the basis of the generic principles established in *Mīmāṃsā*. In order to address the problem of Vedic text interpretation, the *sūtra*-s of Jaimini try to assign various functional roles to various sentences, disambiguate word and sentence meaning in terms of context and commonsense reasoning, and fix and correct the exact *yajña* to which the sentence belongs, and also the position. This discussion presumes another classification of Vedic text i.e. functional classification. The details of the various principal, subordinate, coordinate or supplementary acts, their sequence, filling ellipsis, extensions and modifications while applying the *Prakṛti yajña* details to the *vikṛti* (evolute) sacrifices also comprise *Mīmāṃsā*.

The functional classifications of Vedic text are *vidhi*-s (injunctions), *mantra* (hymns), *nāmadheya* (technical terms), *niṣedha* (prohibitions) and *arthavāda* (illustrations). *Vidhi*-s are classified into *utpatti*, *vinīyoga* and *adhikāra*. *Vinīyoga* has *apūrva* (applications), *guṇa* (accessories) and *viśiṣṭa* (composite) forms. With the help of *Mīmāṃsā*, the various parts of a text are arranged in the order of the objective and a complete sequence of all activities involved in detail pertaining to each topic. See Ramanujan (1993) for a brief exposition. The *Mīmāṃsā sūtra*-s (2617 in number) are arranged in 12 chapters, 60 quarters and 907 topics deal with sources of knowledge, distinctions, auxiliary dependencies, purpose, utility, ordering sequence, authority, general extensions, special extensions, extrapolation guessings, exceptions, commonality and incidence including universality.

The closest abstraction that can be used to understand *Mīmāṃsā* from a “computational” perspective is that of a multi-dimensional

constraint network - Mīmāṃsā heuristics and guidelines help in goal directed traversal of this network for the “goal” (*dharma jijñāsā*) (*yajña*) in associated context.

Theory of Meaning and Discourse

As part of the process of providing heuristics for the derivation of proper sequence of actions, Mīmāṃsā also provides its own unique theories of meaning to aid coherence of discourse. There are two distinct theories of meanings proposed by Mīmāṃsā regarding the function of words in a sentence (this is limited to the language of Sanskrit which is itself based on seriously advanced scientific basis of grammar). The *anvitābhīdhāna-vāda* meanings are not in isolation of words but as connected meanings as parts of a sentence. The *abhihitānvaya-vāda* takes the approach of word granular meaning.

“Both the theories have practical applications. With the aid of *kāraka* theory (*vyākaraṇa*) the former (*anvitābhīdhānavāda*) is more convenient.”

(Ramanujan 1993)

The Mīmāṃsā and its sacred foundations are key cornerstones of the Vedic knowledge system. The notion of “*śabda*” as an unquestioned and eternal source of knowledge has also a basis in the Mīmāṃsā. Notions of *apauruṣeyatva* (authorlessness) and timelessness have an axiomatic presence. Jha describes the relationship of words, meaning and discourse as per the Mīmāṃsaka-s (Jha 2016). The letters are considered eternal; the relationship between word and object is permanent and this relation is not a product of human creation.

“‘A word consists of letters which are eternal. It denotes a class or genus, and not an individual. It denotes an individual indirectly through a class denoted by it.’ It is impersonal. It is not created by God also. Prabhakara says that testimony gives us the knowledge of super sensible objects depending on the knowledge of words. The super sensible object is *apurva* or duty. We may know this *apurva* by the Vedas. *Apurva* is the object of Vedic testimony.”

(Jha 2016:6) (*italics ours*) (*diacritics as in the original*)

The key role of testimony is alluded to here by Jha,

“Without testimony we cannot know *apurva* by any other source of knowledge. That means, testimony is the only means of knowledge of the

apurva or moral command. As the Vedas are not created by any person or by God, so Vedic sentences manifest their meanings by their inherent powers. *The Vedas give us the knowledge of moral law or duty and the sentence of the Vedas which give us the knowledge of moral law are intrinsically valid.*"

(Jha 2016:6)(*italics ours*)

This fundamentally deep (and to be noted by readers - fundamentally different from the Western ideas of language) understanding of letters, words, sentences and meanings is what gives us the ability to interpret and understand the Veda-s – this understanding is the key to *dharma*, the *sanātana saṁskṛti* and the Vedic civilization.

The Mimamsakas believe in the intrinsic validity of knowledge. 'Vedic sentences are intrinsically valid, and always yield valid cognitions, since they are impersonal and devoid of human origin. The entire Vedas which prescribe the Moral Law are intrinsically valid. The Moral Law is Ought or Duty, which is realisable by human volition.'

(Jha 2016:6) (*diacritics as in the original*)

Theory of Action

The Mīmāṃsā "ideology" is one of action. It is a theory of action closely intertwined with the principles of appropriateness - the right action for the context. The highly developed theory of action based on contextual constraints - without being prescriptive - but only suggestive - is unique to the Indian civilizational experience. Sufficient freedom is given to the interpretations and course of actions. Every possible "context" in the universe of possibilities cannot be accounted for in any theory. The Mīmāṃsā sūtra-s provide a beautiful conceptual structure in presenting the domain of choices and rules in a graded topical fashion.

All too often Indian *darśana*-s or thought systems are blamed for being theoretical in approach and found to be seriously limited in terms of aids and conceptual structures when interpretations are needed on the practical plane. The Mīmāṃsā system is a framework that is common to all these *darśana*-s. Though identified to be an independent *darśana* (Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā) according to some classifications - Mīmāṃsā is actually considered by many to be the principal underlying interpretive ethos of all Indian *darśana*-s. Without pursuit of right action (*dharma*) human life is futile. The

Mīmāṃsā principles (*nyāya*-s) are the core intellectual structures that help determine the right action.

The Notion of *Dharma* and Right Action

The notion of *dharma* (fundamentally alien to Western civilization) is the central overriding pursuit and theme of Mīmāṃsā. It is not just ethics, morals, justice, commandments, rightness, goodness etc. Any number of synonyms does not do justice to the deeply transcendental idea of *dharma*. The cosmology that *dharma* is derived from is alien to Western thought - this is something that *etic* scholars will never acknowledge – and expectably so. *Dharma* cannot be comprehended unless it is lived and practiced (via *sanātanic* living). (Kane 1974) is a comprehensive compendium in English of the various approaches and the subject matter of the *dharmaśāstra*-s.

“The central point of Mimamsa philosophy is Dharma. To the Mimamsakas the Vedic injunction is the proof for the existence of dharma. To explain the meaning of Vedic injunctions and secular or laukika sentences, the Mimamsakas have developed their own philosophy of language.... The universal is eternal. And the relation between a word and its meaning is also eternal. Jaimini in his Mimamsasutra 1.1.5 says that the relation between word and meaning is “non-derived” or “uncreated” (autpattika). Both Jaimini and Katyayana used two rather difficult words, autpattika and siddha, which do not have any transparent sense. Both are however explained by their respective commentators, Sabara and Patanjali in the sense of eternity or permanence. Sabara states clearly that autpattika means ‘not created by human convention’ (of apauruseya)”

(Jha 2016:7) (*diacritics as in the original*)

Without the contextual understanding of *dharma* - attempts to interpret the focus of Mīmāṃsā are doomed. The true nature of *dharma* is not completely knowable by the human senses or methods. This reality has to be acknowledged - with humility as a preliminary step. Without this preliminary requirement no understanding of Vedic systems is possible. The only true source of knowledge of *dharma* is the Veda. Once this has been acknowledged and internalized - we then come to the problem of ascertaining the appropriate notions of contextual *dharma* from the massive volumes of Vedic (and related) texts - which is the role that Mīmāṃsā plays.

Most if not all approaches by Western-style Indologists over the centuries have side-stepped this fundamental issue. Indian “philosophies” are lived and experienced, and they evolve with this living experience. To expect Western “objective” methods devoid of *saṁskāra* to explain and interpret *dhārmic* systems is foundationally limiting.

The Nescience of Mīmāṃsā

Pollock’s theses on Mīmāṃsā exemplify the widely prevalent nescience of Western scholarship. The primacy of *Śabda* has not been understood. *Śabda* as *pramāṇa* also has not been understood. *Dharma* obviously has not been understood. *Dharma jijñāsā* is as a result not understood either. *Yajña* as materialistic ritual is a very limiting perspective. The nature of *karman*, the principle of rebirth, the cycles of causation, fundamental Vedic cosmology that is inherent in the most basic tenets of the texts - all of these are completely ignored.

A heady combination of arrogance and nescience are the only possible causes for this genre of well-funded scholarship that is continuing unabated (more than 200 years) since its inception. Such scholarship is being perpetrated, not just as machinations of Western institutions, but also due to the pro-active participation of large numbers of intellectually co-opted and colonised scholars of Indian origin (sepoys) and their sponsors (intellectually colonised Indian capitalists). They are helping grow this genre of flawed scholarship by offering their services and intellect in the dissemination of the Western Universalism discourse.

Mīmāṃsā and the Future of Humanity

The future of humanity and of planet earth is in danger. Left to the amoral scientists and academics, short-sighted technologists, weak politicians, corrupt bureaucrats, greedy capitalists and the teeming masses of materialist consumers looking for gratification - between them it is just a matter of time before planet earth is laid to waste. In less than 300 years of the pursuit and spread of the Western models of society and self - the planet is nearly close to extinction. Fundamental issues in morality, ethics are well acknowledged but nothing gets done simply because nothing can be. The Western models of the individual and the society and the relationship between them are flawed and are

the primary reason for the relentless exploitation and degradation of our planet. This has been acknowledged/discussed by many modern Vedic masters; all of these Western models **have been formulated by people and societies of a lower consciousness**. This has been well articulated and formulated by Sri Aurobindo, by Srila Prabhupada, by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and many others - supreme Vedic thinkers in the modern era.

Unless a higher consciousness is developed, we are on the path of global self-destruction - that much is a given. The material pursuit that results from anthropocentric science powered by capitalist greed and hegemonic power causes mindless destruction of ecosystems, mind-numbing avocations of a reptilian nature and relentless pandering to the lower senses - these are the only global forces shaping humanity today.

To evoke a sense of higher consciousness, a sense of the “greater” beyond, an awareness of the all-pervasive nature of the Supreme, the removal of the false fascination with the ego-centric self, a marked reduction of the selfish nature of societies and individuals is the only way forward. This is not possible if we continue to base our lives and lifestyles on Western models of society and self.

Mīmāṃsā’s recommended pursuit of *dharma* - the *dharma-jijñāsā*, though formulated in a saner and civilized age is very much a possible solution. What is *dharma* for the universe? What is *dharma* when interacting with nature? What is *dharma* when interacting with self, family and society? None of these questions have been addressed using a *dharmic* lens in the global context. Though wonderful universally valid formulations have been given by the modern masters - these have not yet taken hold of the popular consciousness. Academia - supposedly interested in the furtherance of the humanity - is, not surprisingly, the least interested in the evolution and dissemination of these ideas. With respect to the state of Indian social sciences, the hold of Western scientific and sociological models is very strong. The caliber of intellect that pursues the “social-sciences” in India is not the highest either - this is also well known. To shake off these influences - to begin anew on *swadeshi* models of individual and society and to disseminate them globally is the only way forward to save humanity from self-destruction. Understanding the science of Mīmāṃsā is the first step.

Much of the work of Rajiv Malhotra is to be understood in this context. Though seemingly disparate areas of work, one can see a “critical focus” and commonality underlying the entire body of work (spanning more than two decades). One could possibly characterize it as the beginnings of a modern *mīmāṃsā*. Methods of critical investigation of not only text but modern channels/modes of information/knowledge are in fact being provided. It is pretty obvious that they are aiding a pursuit of dharma (help analyse global issues in dharmic terms) in the modern context. Deeper discussions and articulation of this “*Dialectic Dharmism*” is definitely needed and should be addressed by future scholarship.

Conclusion

The intrigues of Western academia - the flawed hermeneutics of Western Indologists especially the hermeneutics of **suspicion** and the hermeneutics of **derision** were discussed in the context of Sheldon Pollock’s interpretation of the Indian science of *dharma* viz. *Mīmāṃsā*. That there is no such equivalent thought formulation in the Western models is reason enough for it to be derided and attacked using the well-honed techniques of “othering” practiced by Western Indologists. The limitations of the Western notions of interpretation were discussed and juxtaposed with the Indian approach of *Mīmāṃsā*. The principal claim of ahistoricity ascribed to the Indian civilizational ethos - has been examined and sufficiently discussed in the context of the evolution of the Western idea of history and the Indian nature of *itihāsa*.

The Science of *Mīmāṃsā* was also discussed in brief. The nature and origins of Nescience of *Mīmāṃsā* as exhibited by the theses of Sheldon Pollock and Indologists interpreting *Mīmāṃsā* was also posited. Taking a universal perspective (*dharma jijñāsā* in a universal context) - the role of *Mīmāṃsā* in the future of humanity has been explicated.

All this requires deeper thought and more critical evaluation for global applicability. This, one feels, is the only way forward for the survival of this planet and for the evolution of humanity to a higher awareness (consciousness).

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Notes

¹Though based on Appayya Dikṣita’s work, there is no “global” perspective provided on the “actual” prevailing traditions of interpretation. Is such over-generalization warranted?

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Chapter 3

शेल्डन पॉलॉक एवं मीमांसा

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शब्दप्रमाणका वयम् । यच्छब्द आह तदस्माकं प्रमाणम् (महाभाष्यम् 4.1.3)

भूमिका

वेद भारतीय संस्कृति की बुनियाद है । सत्यसनातन वैदिक धर्म एवं वैदिक संस्कृति का मूल एवं आधार स्तम्भ वेद को विश्व का अत्यन्त प्राचीन एवं आदिवाङ्मय माना जाता है । हमारा ज्ञानस्रोत वेद है । वेद सर्वज्ञानविज्ञानराशि है । इसमें ब्रह्मविषयक विचार विज्ञान और शास्त्रशिल्पादि विषय भी है । मानव जाति के लौकिक एवं पारलौकिक अभ्युदय हेतु सर्गारम्भ में नैसर्गिक रूप से आविर्भूत एवं प्रकाशित होने के फलस्वरूप वेदज्ञान को अनादि नित्य एवं अपौरुषेय कहा जाता है । परन्तु कितने ही वाक्य परस्पर विरुद्ध से प्रतीत होते हैं तथा कहीं कहीं वाक्य व्याहृतार्थ से दृष्टिगोचर होते हैं । इस समस्या के समाधानार्थ वेदवाक्यों के अर्थ निर्धारण के लिये मीमांसाशास्त्र प्रवृत्त हुआ ।

“पूजितविचारवचनो हि मीमांसाशब्दः” –इन पङ्क्तियों के द्वारा वेद में संभावित संदिग्ध अर्थ का निश्चायक शास्त्र मीमांसा है । अतः मीमांसा की गणना वेद के उपांगों में की गई । जैमिनीय मीमांसा सूत्रों पर आज उपलब्ध समस्त व्याख्याओं में मूर्धस्थानीय प्रामाणिक भाष्य यदि है तो वह शबर स्वामी का ही है । जिसके द्वारा विद्वान् लोग मीमांसा के गूढ़ रहस्यों को भली-भांति समझ पाते हैं ।

*pp 103-127. In Kannan, K. S. (Ed.) (2019). *Swadeshi Critique of Videshi Mīmāṃsā*. Chennai : Infinity Foundation India.

मीमांसा का मुख्य उद्देश्य उन नियमों को बताना है जिनके आधार पर वैदिक वाक्यों एवं कर्मकाण्ड की व्याख्या हो सके। ब्राह्मणों एवं श्रौतसूत्रों ने भी वेदवाक्यों की उचित व्याख्या को अपना लक्ष्य बनाया था। मीमांसा उसी का आगे विस्तार कर रही है। मीमांसा वेद को नित्य, अपौरुषेय एवं स्वतः प्रमाण प्रतिपादित करती है। परन्तु जिन तर्कों के द्वारा वेद की अपौरुषेयता को मीमांसा शास्त्र में दर्शाया गया है, उन तर्कों को शेल्डन पॉलॉक अपने पेपर “Language of the Gods in the World of Men” में निराधार बतलाते हैं।

अतः अपने इस पेपर में मैं शेल्डन पॉलॉक की इस बात को खण्डित करना चाहता हूँ तथा यह स्थापित करना चाहता हूँ कि जिन बातों को वे निराधार कहते हैं वे बिल्कुल सटीक तथा सत्य हैं।

पूर्वमीमांसा की दृष्टि

भारतीय संस्कृति यज्ञ-संस्कृति है। ऋग्वेद के प्रथम मन्त्र में अग्नि का वर्णन ऋत्विक् तथा होता के रूप में किया गया है। पूर्वतन ऋषियों के द्वारा अग्नि की पूजा की गई है और भविष्य में भी किया जायेगा “अग्निः पूर्वे भिः ऋषिभिः ईड्यः नूतनैः उत” (ऋग्वेद 1.2)। पुरुषसूक्त में भी कहा गया है “यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजन्त देवाः तानि धर्माणि प्रथमानि आसन्” (ऋग्वेद 10.90.16)। गीता में भी कहा गया है “सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः” (भगवद्गीता 3.10) इससे सिद्ध होता है कि धर्म यानी यज्ञ है। वेद धर्म को सृष्टि का आधार स्तम्भ बताता है।

धर्मो विश्वस्य जगतः प्रतिष्ठा (तैत्तिरीय-आरण्यक 10.63.7)

श्रेयो रूपं अत्यसृजत् (शतपथ-ब्राह्मण 14.4.2.26)

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः।

यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ (भगवद्गीता 3.14)

इससे यह प्रतीत होता है कि यज्ञ प्रारम्भ से ही हमारी संस्कृति में समाहित है। मीमांसा के अनुसार धर्म यानी यज्ञ है अर्थात् लौकिक एवं पारलौकिक अभ्युदय का हेतु एकमात्र धर्म है। अतः सूत्रकार भगवान् जैमिनि ने मीमांसा शास्त्र का प्रमेय वस्तु निर्धारित करते हुये कहते हैं “अथातो धर्मजिज्ञासा”, वेदाध्ययन के अनन्तर, वेदाध्ययन समाप्त करने के कारण धर्म-विषयक विचार करना चाहिए।

मीमांसासूत्र के प्रथमपाद यानी तर्कपाद में सम्यक्तया धर्म का विश्लेषण किया गया है तथापि शेल्डन पॉलॉक इन बातों से संतुष्ट नहीं है। निराधार ही मीमांसको ने धर्म का प्रयास अलौकिक बताया है यह उनका अभिप्राय है।

“First - this is where we encounter the essential *a priori* of Mimamsa - dharma is stipulatively defined, or rather posited without argument, as

a transcendent entity, and so is unknowable by any form of knowledge not itself transcendent”

Pollock (1989:607)

अतः शेल्डन पॉलॉक की इन विचारों को सदोष दशनि के लिये सर्वप्रथम हम धर्म के लक्षण तथा धर्म की प्रमाण को प्रस्तुत करेंगे ।

धर्म का लक्षण

शबर स्वामी कहते हैं “स हि निःश्रेयसेन पुरुषं संयुनक्तीति प्रतिजानीमहे । तदभिधीयते-चोदनालक्षणोऽर्थो धर्मः” (जैमिनि सूत्र 1.1.2) । वह धर्म ही पुरुष को निःश्रेयस से संयुक्त करता है, ऐसी हम प्रतिज्ञा कर रहे हैं । उसी को सूत्रकार बता रहे हैं- चोदनालक्षणोऽर्थो धर्मः - प्रवर्तक शब्द को ‘चोदना’ शब्द से कहा जाता है । प्रवर्तक शब्द को ही ‘विधायक’ कहते हैं । यद्यपि ‘विधि’ सम्पूर्ण वेद का एकदेश है तथापि वह प्रधान है । इसलिये सूत्रकार ने “प्राधान्येन व्यपदेशा भवन्ति” इस नियम के अनुसार उक्त धर्मलक्षण में ‘चोदना’ शब्द का प्रयोग ‘सम्पूर्ण वेद’ के अर्थ में किया है, केवल विधि के अर्थ में नहीं । तब सूत्रार्थ हुआ-वेदबोधित होकर जो अनर्थ से सम्बन्धित न हो, वह ‘धर्म’ है । क्रिया के प्रवर्तक वचन (शब्द) को ‘चोदना’ शब्द से कहते हैं । “आचार्य के द्वारा प्रेरित (प्रवर्तित) होता हुआ मैं कर रहा हूँ” इस प्रकार लौकिक व्यवहार प्रचलित है । जिससे कोई वस्तु (पदार्थ) जानी जाती है, उसे ‘लक्षण’ कहते हैं । “धूम अग्नि का लक्षण है” ऐसा लोग कहा करते हैं । उस चोदना (विधि से सम्बन्धित अंश-चतुष्टयात्मक सम्पूर्ण वेद) से जो श्रेयःसाधन (अनर्थ सम्बन्ध शून्य) अर्थ बोधित किया जाता है वही (अर्थरूपधर्म) पुरुष को निःश्रेयस से जोड़ता है, ऐसी प्रतिज्ञा हम कर रहे हैं ।

“चोदना हि भूतं भवन्तं भविष्यन्तं सूक्ष्मं व्यवहितं विप्रकृष्टम् इत्येवंजातीयकमर्थं शक्नोत्य-वगमयितुं, नान्यत् किञ्च नेन्द्रियम्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.2) (Musalgaonkar 2004:6) यह चोदना (वेद) ही निश्चित रूप से भूत, वर्तमान, भविष्यत् सूक्ष्म व्यवहित और दूर स्थित सभी प्रकार के अर्थ को बताने में समर्थ है । इस चोदना शब्द (वेद) के अतिरिक्त अन्य कोई अनुमानादि प्रमाण इतना समर्थ नहीं है इतना अभिप्राय ‘नान्यत् किञ्च’ से प्रकट किया गया है । अर्थात् शब्द प्रमाण में ही तादृश अर्थ के बोधन कराने का सामर्थ्य है, तद्व्यतिरिक्त प्रमाणसामान्य में वह सामर्थ्य नहीं है । अपने इस कथन में हेतु बताते हैं- ‘नेन्द्रियम्’ -क्योंकि इन्द्रिय (प्रत्यक्ष) ही जब असमर्थ होंगे तब अन्य प्रमाण तन्मूलक (प्रत्यक्षमूलक) होने से कैसे समर्थ होंगे । अर्थात् शब्दातिरिक्त सभी प्रमाण सब कुछ बोधन कराने में असमर्थ हैं । चोदना से होने वाला ज्ञान, किसी भी काल में, किसी भी पुरुष को, किसी भी अवस्था में, किसी भी देश में विपरीत नहीं होता, इसलिये चोदना (शब्द) से उत्पन्न ज्ञान को सत्य कहना ही होगा ।

लौकिक वाक्य (पुरुष-वाक्य) प्रमाण तथा अप्रमाण दोनों प्रकार के उपलब्ध होते हैं। जो लौकिक वचन (व्यवहार में लोगो द्वारा उच्चारित शब्द) है, वह यदि आप्त (प्रत्ययित-विश्वस्त) पुरुष के द्वारा उच्चरित हो, अथवा इन्द्रिय के द्वारा जिसे जाना जा सके) हो तो वह सत्य (अवितथ) ही है। और यदि अनाप्त (अविश्वस्त, अप्रामाणिक) पुरुष के द्वारा उच्चारित हो अथवा अनिन्द्रिय विषय वाला (इन्द्रिय के द्वारा जिसे न जाना जा सके) हो, तो वह (शब्द) पुरुष की दूषित बुद्धि से उत्पन्न होने के कारण अप्रमाण है। वैदिक शब्द के बिना धर्म का ज्ञान होना किसी भी पुरुष को सम्भव नहीं है। यदि यह कहें कि अन्य किसी पुरुष के वचन से धर्म का ज्ञान हुआ हो तो वह भी उसी के (पुरुष की दूषित बुद्धि- से उत्पन्न के) समान होगा। अतः इस वाक्य के पुरुष बुद्धिप्रभव तथा अनिन्द्रियविषयक वस्तुओं (अर्थो-पदार्थो) में पौरुषेय शब्द का प्रमाण नहीं माना जाता। जैसे-जन्मान्ध पुरुषों का वचन 'रूप विशेष' के सम्बन्ध में प्रमाण नहीं माना जाता है।

सामान्यतो दृष्टानुमान से भी वेदवचन को मिथ्या समझना ठीक नहीं है, क्योंकि पौरुषेय वचन से वेदवचन भिन्न है। किसी अन्य के मिथ्या होने पर किसी अन्य को भी मिथ्या समझ लेना उचित नहीं है, क्योंकि वे दोनों एक-दूसरे से अन्य हैं। अतः अन्य होने से ही वे एक-दूसरे जैसे नहीं रहते। श्यामल वर्ण के देवदत्त को देखकर मनुष्य की समानता के आधार पर यज्ञदत्त को भी श्यामल वर्ण का समझ लेना उचित नहीं माना जाता, क्योंकि वे दोनों परस्पर भिन्न व्यक्ति हैं। तात्पर्य यह है कि सामान्यतो दृष्टानुमान के द्वारा वेदवचन को मिथ्या नहीं कह सकते और वेदवचन के मिथ्या न होने पर एक कारण और वेदवचन से होने वाला ज्ञान प्रत्यक्ष है। अतः प्रत्यक्ष से विरोध करके अनुमान का उदय होना सम्भव ही नहीं है।

मीमांसक के मत में ज्ञान अनुमेय है। अतः आपका अनुमान प्रत्यक्ष से बाधित हो जाता है। एवञ्च प्रत्यक्षविरोधी अनुमान को प्रमाण से बोधित अर्थ श्रेयस्कर है। शबर स्वामी कहते हैं-“तस्माच्चोदनालक्षणोऽर्थः श्रेयस्करः” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.2) (Musalgaonkar 2004:9)। उपक्रम और उपसंहार का ऐक्य होना चाहिए यह नियम है। भाष्यकार ने “को धर्मः, कथं लक्षणः” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.2) (Musalgaonkar 2004:10) - इस प्रकार धर्म शब्द से उपक्रम किया है, तब उसी शब्द से उपसंहार भी करना चाहिए था, किन्तु श्रेयस्कर शब्द से उपसंहार करने में भाष्यकार का अभिप्राय क्या होगा? यह जिज्ञासा होनी स्वाभाविक है। विचार करने पर, भाष्यकार का अभिप्राय यह प्रतीत होता है कि “पदार्थधर्मः”, “पक्षधर्मः” इत्यादि प्रयोग के अनुसार “वृत्तिमत्” के अर्थ में भी धर्म शब्द का प्रयोग होता है। अतः धर्म शब्द के अनेकार्थक होने से किस अर्थ में धर्म शब्द को यहाँ पर लिया जाय? इस शंका के समाधानार्थ “श्रेयस्कर शब्द से उपसंहार किया गया है अर्थात् जो श्रेयस्कर हो वही धर्म शब्द से यहाँ ग्राह्य है, अन्य नहीं। जो निःश्रेयस से पुरुष को संयुक्त करता है उसे लोग धर्म शब्द से कहते हैं। यह व्यवहार केवल लोक में ही नहीं अपितु वेद में भी इसी प्रकार का व्यवहार किया गया है। “यज्ञेन यज्ञमयजन्तदेवास्तानि

धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन्” (ऋग्वेद 9.90.16, शुक्ल-यजुर्वेद-वाजसनेयि-संहिता 39.16) इन्द्रिय देवताओं ने ज्योतिष्टोमसंज्ञक यज्ञ से यज्ञ पुरुष वासुदेव का यथाविधि यजन किया, इस कारण वे प्रथम (मुख्य) यजनरूप धर्म हुए। उक्त वेदवाक्य में भी “यज्” धातु के वाच्य (मुख्य) अर्थ याग को ही ‘धर्म’ शब्द से कहा गया है।

अतः उपसंहार करते हुये यह कह सकते हैं कि यह सूत्र वाक्यद्वयरूप है, अर्थात् इस एक सूत्र में दो वाक्य अन्तर्निहित हैं। अतः सूत्रान्तर्गत रहने वाले दो वाक्यों से ही दो अर्थों की प्रतीति हो रही है। इससे यह स्पष्ट हुआ कि अर्थत्व विशिष्ट होकर ही जो चोदनालक्षण हो वह धर्म है, और अर्थ भी चोदनालक्षणत्वविशिष्ट होकर ही धर्म है।

प्रकारान्तर से भी द्वितीय सूत्र का अर्थ बताया जा सकता है। “अर्थस्य सतः यद्धर्मत्वं तच्चोदना-लक्षणस्य” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.2) (Musalgaonkar 2004:11) इत्युच्यते। इस द्वितीय सूत्र का ‘यो धर्मः स चोदनालक्षणः’ जो धर्म है, वह चोदनालक्षण (शब्दप्रमाण) है - यही अर्थ करना होगा।

धर्म में प्रमाण की परीक्षा

अपने पेपर “Mīmamsa and the Problem of History in Traditional India” में शैलडन पॉलॉक यह कहते हैं कि एक प्रमाण से जानी हुई वस्तु अन्य प्रमाणों से नहीं जानी जा सकती। ऐसा केवल मीमांसक कहते हैं।

“Second - and this is the basic epistemological position of Mīmāṃsā : all cognitions must be accepted as true unless and until they are falsified by other cognitions.”

Pollock (1989:607)

पॉलॉक की यह बात हास्यास्पद है। भारतीय षड् दर्शनों में विस्तार से दर्शाया है कि एक प्रमाण से ज्ञात हुआ वस्तु अन्य प्रमाणों से नहीं ज्ञात हो सकता यह बात केवल मीमांसा की नहीं है। न्याय में प्रमाण शब्द का निर्वचन ‘प्रमाकरणं प्रमाणम्’ ‘असाधारणं कारणं करणम्’। ‘किं नाम असाधारणत्वम्? लक्ष्यताऽवच्छेदकसमनियतत्वम् असाधारणत्वम्’ मीमांसको ने धर्म के ज्ञान होने में असाधारण निमित्त एकमात्र चोदना (वैदिक शब्द) को बताया है।

अर्थात् धर्म का एकमात्र शब्दप्रमाण से ही ज्ञान हो सकता है। वह कथन केवल प्रतिज्ञारूप से ही था। युक्ति से उसे सिद्ध नहीं किया था, किन्तु अब हम उस धर्म के निमित्त की परीक्षा करेंगे- क्या चोदना ही धर्मज्ञान में निमित्त है, अथवा तदतिरिक्त कोई अन्य प्रमाण भी धर्मज्ञान कराने में निमित्त है? परीक्षण करने से पूर्व यह निश्चय नहीं हो पा रहा है कि चोदना से लक्षित होने वाला अर्थ ही धर्म है। परीक्षण करने पर धर्म के निमित्त का ज्ञान अनायास हो जायेगा उसी के

लिये परीक्षा करने की प्रतिज्ञा करते हुये सूत्रकार जैमिनि मुनि कहते हैं- “तदुच्यते सत्सम्प्रयोगे पुरुषस्येन्द्रियाणां बुद्धिजन्म तत् प्रत्यक्षम् अनिमित्तं विद्यमानोपलम्भनत्वात्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.4) (Musalgaonkar 2004:13) - इन्द्रियों का विद्यमान वस्तु के साथ सम्बन्ध होने पर पुरुष के ज्ञान की उत्पत्ति होती है। उसे प्रत्यक्ष कहते हैं। वह प्रत्यक्ष विद्यमान वस्तु का ज्ञान कराता है इसलिए धर्म का ज्ञान कराने में निमित्त नहीं हो सकता क्योंकि प्रत्यक्षात्मक ज्ञान की उत्पत्ति के समय धर्म की सत्ता नहीं है। वह तो भविष्यत्कालिक है।

“तस्य निमित्तपरीष्टिः” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.3) (Musalgaonkar 2004:13) इस सूत्र में कर्तव्य रूप से प्रतिज्ञात परीक्षण का आरम्भ किया जा रहा है। चोदनासूत्र द्वारा प्रदर्शित ‘चोदनैव धर्मे प्रमाणम्’ इत्याकारक प्रतिज्ञा उचित नहीं प्रतीत हो रही है। इस प्रकार की आक्षेप की प्राप्ति होने पर प्रकृत सूत्र से प्रतिपादित सिद्धान्त बताया जा रहा है। धर्मज्ञान के प्रति ‘प्रत्यक्ष’ अनिमित्त है, अर्थात् निमित्त नहीं है। इस पर प्रश्न किया कि धर्म के प्रति निमित्त न हो सकने में क्या कारण है? वह प्रत्यक्ष एवंलक्षणक है, अर्थात् धर्म के प्रति अनिमित्तता जिस लि ‘से लक्षित होती है, उस लक्षण वाला वह प्रत्यक्ष है। उसी लिङ्ग को “सत्सम्प्रयोगे पुरुषस्येन्द्रियाणां बुद्धिजन्म तत्प्रत्यक्षम्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.4) (Musalgaonkar 2004:13) “सतीन्द्रियार्थ सम्बन्धे या पुरुषस्य बुद्धिर्जायते तत्प्रत्यक्षम्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.4) (Musalgaonkar 2004:14) सूत्रस्थ ‘इन्द्रियाणाम्’ इस पद का ‘सत्सम्प्रयोगे’ इस पद के ‘सम्प्रयोगे’ के साथ और ‘पुरुषस्य’ पद का ‘बुद्धिजन्म’ पद के ‘बुद्धि’ के साथ सम्बन्ध है। ‘सत्सम्प्रयोगे’ इस पद में ‘संश्चासौ सम्प्रयोगश्च’ सत्सम्प्रयोगः। ऐसा कर्मधारय समास करना है। तथा च इन्द्रियों का अर्थ (विषय, वस्तु, पदार्थ) के साथ सम्बन्ध होने पर “पुरुषस्य बुद्धिजन्म” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.4) (Musalgaonkar 2004:14) के अवयवार्थ को भाष्यकार स्पष्ट करते हैं- “या पुरुषस्य बुद्धिर्जायते” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.4) (Musalgaonkar 2004:14)। तथा च ‘जन्म’ शब्द कर्तृवाचक होता हुआ बुद्धि शब्द का समानाधिकरण प्रदर्शित किया है। तब अर्थ यह हुआ - पुरुष की उत्पन्न होने वाली (जायमाना जो बुद्धि (ज्ञान) वह (ज्ञान) प्रत्यक्ष कहलाता है। जबकि उक्त रीति से सत् सम्प्रयोगज है, अतः उसकी विद्यमानोपलम्भनता है, अर्थात् वह विद्यमान-वस्तु का उपलम्भक है। विद्यमानोपलम्भनत्व की सिद्धि के लिये सत्सम्प्रयोगजत्व को बताया गया है और धर्म के प्रति प्रत्यक्ष के अनिमित्त होने में ‘विद्यमानोपलम्भनत्व’ ही प्रयोजक है। तथा च सूत्र और भाष्य के द्वारा तीन प्रयोग प्रदर्शित किये गये हैं - तथा हि -

1. “प्रत्यक्षं धर्माऽधर्मगोचरं विद्यमानोपलम्भनत्वात्”
2. “प्रत्यक्षं विद्यमानोपलम्भनं (विद्यमानार्थोपलब्धिरूपं) वर्तमानेन्द्रियार्थ-संयोगजन्यत्वात्”
3. “प्रत्यक्षं सत्सम्प्रयोगजं प्रत्यक्षत्वात्”।

विद्यमान अर्थ के अवगाहक प्रत्यक्ष की धर्माऽधर्मागोचरता का उपपादन “भविष्यंश्चैषोऽर्थो न ज्ञानकालेऽस्तीति” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.4) (Musalgaonkar 2004:14) के द्वारा भाष्यकार कर रहे हैं। स्वकालिक अर्थविषयक प्रत्यक्ष में स्वकाल में अविद्यमान धर्माऽधर्मविषयकत्व का होना सम्भव नहीं है। ‘विद्यमानोपलम्भनत्वात्’ इस सूत्रावयव के अर्थ को “सतश्चैतदुपलम्भनं नासतः” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.4) (Musalgaonkar 2004:14) भाष्य से स्पष्ट किया गया है। “अतः प्रत्यक्षमनिमित्तम्” इस भाष्य से सबका निष्कर्ष बताया कि धर्मज्ञान के प्रति ‘प्रत्यक्ष प्रमाण’ निमित्त नहीं है।

उपर्युक्त अनुमान-प्रयोगों में योगिप्रत्यक्ष को ही ‘पक्ष’ रखा गया है और अस्मदादिप्रत्यक्ष को ‘दृष्टान्त’ किया गया है। उसी से साध्य का साधन करने के कारण ‘दृष्टान्तासिद्ध’ नहीं है और न ही सिद्धसाध्यता है।

इस रीति से यागादि को फलसाधनत्वरूप से ही ‘धर्म’ माना गया है। निष्पन्न अवस्था में याग का स्वरूप प्रत्यक्ष रहने पर भी फलसाधनत्व जो याग का विशिष्ट रूप है उसका प्रत्यक्ष होना कभी भी सम्भव नहीं है। क्योंकि विशेषणीभूत फल कालान्तरभावी है, और ‘अपूर्व’ तो स्वभावतः ही अप्रत्यक्ष है। यह समझना चाहिए। बुद्धि (ज्ञान) अथवा बुद्धिजन्य हानोपादान बुद्धि अथवा इन्द्रिय और अर्थ का सम्बन्ध (सन्निकर्ष) - इनमें से किसी एक को प्रत्यक्ष कहते हैं-इस अवधारण (निर्णय/निश्चय) के लिये यह सूत्र नहीं है।

तात्पर्य यह है कि इन्द्रिय आदि, या इन्द्रियार्थ संयोग आदि, अथवा तत्तदर्थकविषय बुद्धि, अथवा तज्जन्य हानोपादानादि बुद्धि, का प्रमाण फल भाव के विषय में अनादर सूचित किया गया है। ‘इन्द्रिय और अर्थ का सम्बन्ध होने पर ही प्रत्यक्ष होता है, और इन्द्रियार्थ का सम्बन्ध न होने पर प्रत्यक्ष नहीं होता। प्रत्यक्ष का धर्म के प्रति अप्रमाण्य-समर्थन करने से ही तत्पूर्वक होने वाले अनुमान, उपमान, अर्थापत्ति प्रमाणों का सुतरां अप्रामाण्य प्रदर्शित हो जाता है। अर्थात् अनुमान-उपमान आदि अन्य प्रमाण प्रत्यक्षपूर्वक हुआ करते हैं। इसलिये उन प्रमाणों को भी धर्म के प्रति कारण नहीं समझना चाहिए, क्योंकि अन्य प्रमाण प्रत्यक्ष के ही आश्रित रहते हैं। जब प्रत्यक्ष ही धर्मज्ञान कराने में समर्थ नहीं है तो उसके आश्रित रहने वाले अन्य प्रमाण उसका ज्ञान कराने में कैसे समर्थ हो सकेंगे।

जगद्वैचित्र्यान्यथानुपपत्तिरूप अर्थापत्ति के द्वारा दृष्ट कारणभिन्न अदृष्ट कारण का आक्षेप हो सकने पर भी “इदमस्य साधनम्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.4) (Musalgaonkar 2004:14) - यह इसका साधन है - इस प्रकार विशेष रूप से आक्षेप न कर पाने के कारण उसका भी अप्रामाण्य स्पष्ट ही है। शबर स्वामी कहते हैं “अभावोऽपि नास्ति। यतः औत्पत्तिकस्तु शब्दस्यार्थेन सम्बन्धस्तस्य ज्ञानमुपदेशोऽव्यतिरेकश्चार्थे - अनुपलब्धे तत्प्रमाणं बादरायणस्याऽनपेक्षत्वात्” (सूत्रभाष्य

1.1.4) (Musalgaonkar 2004:14) । शब्द का अर्थ के साथ सम्बन्ध औत्पत्तिक (स्वाभाविक) है, उस धर्म का ज्ञान, साधन-अर्थात् ज्ञापक उपदेश (विधिघटित वाक्य है) । उसका कभी अव्यतिरेक विपर्यय) नहीं होता है । इसलिये वह विधिघटित वाक्य अनुपलब्ध अर्थ में भी प्रमाण है ।

बादरायण आचार्य के मत में भी, “अनपेक्षत्वात्”-प्रत्ययान्तर की अथवा पुरुषान्तर की अपेक्षा न होने से वह स्वतः प्रमाण है । भाष्यकार सूत्रावयव ‘औत्पत्तिक’ शब्द का अर्थ ‘नित्य’ बता रहे हैं । औत्पत्तिक-नित्य इस प्रकार अर्थ करने में उपपत्ति बताते हैं कि “उत्पत्तिर्हि भाव उच्यते लक्षणया” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:15) । ‘औत्पत्तिक’ शब्द की व्युत्पत्ति से यद्यपि नित्य अर्थ प्राप्त नहीं हो रहा है तथापि लक्षणा से नित्य अर्थ कि प्राप्ति हो जाती है । इसी बात को कहा है कि ‘उत्पत्ति’ शब्द लक्षणा से भाव (सत्ता) स्वभाव अर्थ को बतलाता है । तथा च औत्पत्तिक का अर्थ है- ‘स्वाभाविक’ । इसी अर्थ को और अधिक स्पष्ट करते हैं- “अवियुक्तः - शब्दार्थयोर्भाविः सम्बन्धो नोत्पन्नयोः पश्चात् सम्बन्धः” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:16), शब्द और अर्थ का सम्बन्ध अवियुक्त ‘भाव’ है तथा च ‘औत्पत्तिक’ शब्द से ‘नित्यत्व’ अभिप्रेत है । एवञ्च शब्द का अर्थ के साथ जो प्रत्याय्य-प्रत्यायकलक्षण सम्बन्ध है, वह नित्य है । यहाँ भाष्यकार ने औत्पत्तिक शब्द के द्वारा कारणगत दोष से होने वाले अप्रामाण्य का निराकरण कर दिया है । यदि शब्दार्थ का सम्बन्ध कृतक होता तो तद्द्वारा भी पुरुष दोष के प्रवेश की आशंका से अप्रामाण्य होता है, लेकिन यह कुछ नहीं है ।

शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध स्वाभाविक रहने से पुरुषाधीनता नहीं है । उत्पन्न हुए शब्द और अर्थ का पीछे से किसी के द्वारा सम्बन्ध जोड़ा नहीं गया है । उन दोनों का सम्बन्ध तो औत्पत्तिक (स्वाभाविक, नित्य) है । वहीं सम्बन्ध, प्रत्यक्षादि प्रमाणों से अनवगत (अज्ञात) अग्निहोत्रादि रूप धर्म का निमित्त है । इससे निष्कर्ष यह निकला कि लोकव्यवहार में प्रमाणान्तरमूलक जो हो उसका प्रामाण्य और प्रमाणान्तरमूलक न हो उसका अप्रामाण्य यद्यपि देखा जाता है तथापि ‘प्रामाण्य अन्यसापेक्ष नहीं है । अपितु स्वतः ही है । अनाप्तवाक्य का अप्रामाण्य मूलाभाव के कारण नहीं है जिससे आप्त वाक्य का प्रामाण्य मूल के अधीन कहा जा सके । अनाप्त वाक्य का अप्रामाण्य तो उसका दूषित मूल होने के कारण । शब्द के दूषित हो जाने से उसके अपने स्वाभाविक प्रामाण्य का बाध हो जाता है । अपौरुषेय वेद यद्यपि आप्तप्रणीत नहीं है तथापि प्रामाण्य का प्रयोजक आप्त-प्रणीतत्व न होने के कारण और अनाप्तस्पर्शनिमित्त दोष भी न होने के कारण उसका (वेद का) प्रामाण्य अबाधित ही बना रहता है । शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध को औत्पत्तिक सिद्ध करने की आवश्यकता इसलिये हुई कि पुरुष का सम्बन्ध तीन प्रकार से होने की सम्भावना की जा सकती है - (1) पद-पदार्थ सम्बन्ध के द्वारा (2) वाक्य-वाक्यार्थ सम्बन्ध के द्वारा (3) रामायण-महाभारतादि ग्रन्थ के समान ही पौरुषेय होने से । किंतु यहा (वेद में) तीनों ही नहीं हैं, क्योंकि सूत्रकार जैमिनि मुनि इस सूत्र के

द्वारा पद-पदार्थ सम्बन्ध को औत्पत्तिक (नित्य, स्वाभाविक) शब्द से बता रहे हैं। वाक्यार्थज्ञान पदार्थमूलक होता है और वेद अपौरुषेय है, यह आगे बताया जायेगा।

अतः स्वतः प्रमाणाभूत चोदनात्मक शब्द के अप्रामाण्य में कारणदोषज्ञानरूप हेतु की सम्भावना किसी तरह भी नहीं की जा सकती है। सूत्र के अवयवभूत “अर्थेऽनुपलब्धे” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:16) का विवरण “औत्पत्तिकस्तु-शब्दस्यार्थेन सम्बन्धस्तस्याग्नि-होत्रादिलक्षणस्य धर्मस्य निमित्तं-प्रत्यक्षादिभिरनवगतस्य। कथम्। उपदेशो हि भवति। उपदेश इति विशिष्टस्य शब्दस्योच्चारणम्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:16) भाष्य के द्वारा किया गया है। इस प्रत्यक्षाद्यनवगतार्थत्व के बताने में अनुवादरूप अप्रामाण्य का निराकरण हो जाता है। यह जो कहा गया था कि ‘शब्दार्थ का स्वाभाविक सम्बन्ध, प्रत्यक्षादि प्रमाणों से अज्ञात अग्निहोत्रादि- रूप धर्म का निमित्त हैं उसमें हेतु बताने की इच्छा से भाष्यकार ‘कथम्’ शब्द से प्रश्न कर रहे हैं अर्थात् उक्त सम्बन्ध अग्निहोत्रादि का निमित्त किस प्रकार है? उसके निमित्त होने में हेतु यह है कि ‘उपदेशो हि भवति’। उपदेश इति विशिष्टस्य शब्दस्योच्चारणम्। श्रेयः साधनभूत उस अग्निहोत्रादि धर्म का ज्ञान कराने वाला “अग्निहोत्रं जुहुयात् स्वर्गकामः” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:16) इत्यादि विधिवाक्य का उपदेश है। ‘उपदेश’ शब्द का अर्थ है-विशिष्ट शब्द का उच्चारण, अर्थात् श्रेयःसाधनत्वादि अर्थ का प्रतिपादक होने से अभ्यर्हित शब्द (अग्निहोत्रं जुहुयात् स्वर्गकामः) का उच्चारण किया गया है। इस कथन से विधिवाक्य में ज्ञानानु-त्पादकत्व अप्रामाण्य का भी निरसन हो जाता है। उसी तरह “अव्यतिरेकश्च ज्ञानस्य” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:16) विधिवाक्य (चोदनाशब्द) से होने वाले ज्ञान का कभी व्यतिरेक नहीं होता है। इस भाष्य से बाधक ज्ञानरूप अप्रामाण्य कारण भी नहीं है, यह बता दिया गया है। ‘अव्यतिरेक’ शब्द का अर्थ बतलाने के लिये कहते हैं कि - “न हि तदुत्पन्नं ज्ञानं वि-पर्येति” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:16) - विधिवाक्य से उत्पन्न हुआ कभी भी विपर्यय (मिथ्यात्व) को प्राप्त नहीं होता। अर्थात् अग्निहोत्रादि वाक्य से हुये ज्ञान का बाधक अन्य ज्ञान (प्रत्ययान्तर) (न अग्निहोत्रहोमः स्वर्गसाधनम् इत्याकारक ज्ञानम् (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:16)) कदापि किसी भी प्रमाण से उत्पन्न नहीं होता है।

“यच्च नाम ज्ञानं न विपर्येति, न तच्छक्यते वक्तुं नैतदेवमिति” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:16) - इस भाष्य से यह बताया जा रहा है कि विपर्यय ज्ञानरहित चोदनाजन्म ज्ञान का अप्रामाण्य कहना कथमपि शक्य नहीं है। अर्थात् वह वैसा नहीं है यह नहीं कह सकते। बाधक-ज्ञान से रहित विधि-वाक्य-जनित-ज्ञान का प्रामाण्य भी स्वीकार न करने पर अनिष्ट-प्रसंग होगा। इस आशय को “यथा भवति - यथा विज्ञायते न तथा भवति। यथा एतन्न विज्ञायते तथा एतदिति। अस्य हृदये अन्यत् वाचि स्यात्। एवं वदतो विरुद्धमिदं गम्यते”।

“अस्ति नास्ति वा इति” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:16) । उक्त भाष्य से स्पष्ट किया गया है । यदि जैसा ज्ञान होता है (जैसा जाना जाता है) वैसा नहीं होता है और जैसा ज्ञान नहीं होता है, उसके विपरीत वैसा यदि जाना जाता है, यह स्वीकार करने पर इसके हृदय (मन) में अन्य बात है । वाणी में अन्य बात है यह कहना होगा । मन में कुछ और बाहर (शब्द में) कुछ कहने वाले का कथन विरुद्ध समझा जाता है । अर्थात् “है” और “नहीं है” यह कथन नितान्त विरुद्ध है । निष्कर्ष यह है कि प्रतीयमान अर्थ का परित्याग कर अप्रतीयमान अर्थ की कल्पना करना, मन में कुछ और बाहर कुछ (“अन्यत् अस्य हृदये अन्यद् वाचि” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.5) (Musalgaonkar 2004:16)) रहने से प्रतारक मनुष्य के वचन के तुल्य ही वेदवाक्य) प्रमाण है, क्योंकि वह निरपेक्ष है । अर्थात् प्रमाणान्तर की अपेक्षा न रखने के कारण वह स्वतः प्रमाण है । तात्पर्य यह है कि स्वतःप्रमाणभूत वेदवचन को अप्रमाण कहने के लिए कारण दोष, बाधक-ज्ञान, अनुवादकत्व और ज्ञानाऽनुत्पादकत्वादि कारणों में से कोई एक भी कारण नहीं है । अतः उस वैदिक शब्द (विधिवाक्य) का निजी स्वारासिक प्रामाण्य निर्बाध रूप से सिद्ध हो जाता है ।

वेद की अपौरुषेयता

“अनुविद्धमिव ज्ञानं सर्वं शब्देन भासते” (वाक्यपदीय 1.123)

शेल्डन पॉलॉक यह कहता है कि मीमांसको ने जिस प्रकार वेद की अपौरुषेयता को सिद्ध किया है, वह समीचीन नहीं है ।

“It is... argued that the Vedas are transcendent by reason of their anonymity. Had they been composed by men, albeit long ago, there is no reason why the memory of these composers should not have been preserved to us. Those men who are named in association with particular recessions, books, hymns of the Vedas-Kaṭhaka, for example, or Paippalāḍaka are not to be regarded as the authors but simply as scholars specializing in the transmission or exposition of the texts in question. Texts for which no authors can be identified have no authors, and this applies to the Vedas and to the Vedas alone”.

Pollock (1989:608)

“Other arguments are offered, such as those based on the language and style of the Vedas... For example, in answer to a *pūrvapakṣa* averring that (whereas words may be external) sentences can only be composed by men, Śābara claims the argument has been refuted by the anonymity of the Vedic texts, when that has yet to be proven.”

Pollock (1989:607-8fn)

“The claim for the beginninglessness of Vedic recitation is nowhere clearly sustained in the *Bhāṣya*...”

Pollock (1989:608)

“A final example is the argument advanced by Śābara... that I find to be patently circular: The truth of the content of the Vedas depends on their being *apauruṣeya*; *apauruṣeyatva*, however, is made to depend on the fact that they discuss metaphysical matters - i.e., to depend on the truth of their content.”

Pollock (1989:608)

“If the Veda is eternal, it cannot communicate information about non-eternal things; nor can it do so even if it is not eternal, for then no absolute authority (would attach to any of its communications ?)”

Pollock (1989:608)

अतः अभी वेद की अपौरुषेयता की सिद्धान्त को स्पष्टतया वर्णन करेंगे। प्रथमतः भगवान् जैमिनि “उक्तं तु शब्दपूर्वत्वम्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.29) (Musalgaoonkar 2004:119) इस सूत्र पर विचार करेंगे।

‘उक्तं तु शब्दपूर्वत्वम्’ - यहाँ पर ‘शब्द’ - शब्द से शब्द जन्य अध्ययन विवक्षित है। तथा च सूत्रार्थ यह हुआ कि सभी पुरुषों का अध्ययन अध्ययनान्तर पूर्वक हुआ करता है, यह बात औत्पत्तिक सूत्र के आरम्भ में कह आये है। वेद के अध्ययन करने वालों की शब्दपूर्वता अर्थात् अविच्छिन्न परम्परा है। प्रत्येक वेदाध्येता के अध्ययन से पूर्व अन्य अध्येता का अध्ययन था। इस रीति से शब्दाध्ययन की अविच्छिन्न परम्परा है। निष्कर्ष यह है कि सभी लोग अपने गुरु ने जिस प्रकार अध्ययन किया उसी प्रकार अध्ययन करना चाहते हैं वेद का स्वतन्त्रतापूर्वक अध्ययन करने वाला कोई भी प्रथम अध्येता नहीं हुआ है। जिसे उसका कर्ता कहा जा सके। आज प्राचीन से भी प्राचीनतम वेदाध्येता का ज्ञान हमें है किन्तु उसके कर्ता का ज्ञान नहीं है। अतः कर्तृस्मरण के अभाव में वेदों को अपौरुषेय ही समझना चाहिए।

काठक, कालापकम् इत्यादि समाख्या के आधार पर वेदों को कठादिकर्तृक आक्षेप उठने पर यह समाधान किया जाता है- इस प्रकार कर्ता की कल्पना करना ठीक नहीं है क्योंकि कभी कभी लोग किसी ग्रन्थ के साथ किसी विशेषता को देखकर कर्तृभिन्न किसी अन्य व्यक्ति का नाम भी जोड़ दिया करते हैं। उदाहरणार्थ- ‘सिद्धान्तकौमुदी’ ग्रन्थ के कर्ता श्री भट्टोजी दीक्षित हैं, तथापि काशी के श्री देवनारायण तिवारी जी ने सिद्धान्त कौमुदी को ऐसी अद्भुत विशिष्ट शैली से आजीवन पढ़ाया, जिस कारण लोग कौमुदी के साथ तिवारी जी का नाम जोड़कर ‘तिवारी जी की कौमुदी’ कहने लग गये। वह अद्भुत विशिष्ट शैली श्री तिवारी जी की अपनी ही थी। वैसी शैली भारत वर्ष

में अन्य किसी भी वैयाकरण की नहीं थी। अतः यह सम्भव है कि जिस ग्रन्थ का कर्ता न भी हो, तथापि उसकी किसी विशेषता के कारण उसका नाम उस ग्रन्थ के साथ जोड़कर लोग उसके नाम पर भी उस ग्रन्थ को कह सकते हैं। इस सम्भावना के आधार पर यहाँ भी कह सकते हैं कि कठादि महर्षियों ने भी अपनी निजी उत्कृष्टतम शैली अपनी वेद शाखा का अध्यापन अवश्य किया होगा। कभी कभी इस प्रकार की उत्कृष्टतम शैली से अध्यापन करने वाले भी होते हैं। जैसे कि उदाहरण के रूप में ऊपर निर्देश कर चुके हैं।

इस प्रकार की अनन्य साधारणता अनेक प्रकार से प्राप्त हो सकती है। ग्रन्थकर्ता के रूप में ग्रन्थ के व्याख्याकार के रूप में, ग्रन्थ के अध्यापन कर्ता के रूप में इत्यादि अनेक प्रकार हैं। निष्कर्ष यह है कि मूलग्रन्थकार ही अनन्य साधारण नहीं होगा, ग्रन्थ व्याख्याकार भी, ग्रन्थ का अध्यापक भी अनन्यसाधारण समझा जा सकता है इस कारण वेदशाखाओं के साथ काठक आदि जुड़े हुए विशेषण सप्रयोजन हैं। वेदाध्यायी सभी लोगों को अच्छी तरह से स्मरण है कि वैशम्पायन महर्षि ने यजुर्वेद की समस्त शाखा का अध्ययन-अध्यापन किया था। अतः बहुशाखाध्यायी पुरुषों की अपेक्षा एक - एक शाखा का अध्ययन-अध्यापन करने वाले कठादि महर्षियों के प्रवचन (अध्यापन) में असाधारणता रहना स्वाभाविक है। अनेक शाखाओं के अध्यापन करने वालों के समक्ष केवल एक ही शाखा का अध्ययन करने वाला यह कठ महर्षि था। इन्होंने दूसरी शाखा का अध्ययन नहीं किया। अतः अपनी उस विशिष्ट शाखा में प्रकृष्टता प्राप्ति करने के कारण उसकी शाखा के साथ 'काठक' यह जो असाधारण विशेषण जोड़ा गया है, वह उचित ही है।

प्रावाहणि, बवर इत्यादि के माध्यम से वेदों का अनित्यदर्शन जो कारण बताया तदर्थ-“जनन मरणवन्तो वेदार्थाः श्रूयन्ते” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.28) (Musalgaonkar 2004:119) इस प्रकार की आक्षेप की प्राप्ति होने पर उसके समाधानार्थ ऐसा कहेंगे- किसी भी पुरुष का नाम 'प्रावाहण' हो ऐसा आज तक श्रुत नहीं है। जब 'प्रावाहण' नामधारी ही कोई नहीं है तब उसका अपत्य प्रावाहणि बताना कैसे संगत हो सकता है? प्रावाहणि, बवर आदि शब्दों से प्रतीयमान यौगिक अर्थ की पर्यालोचना करने पर 'प्रावाहणि' शब्द 'प्रकर्षेण वाहयति' अर्थ को बताता है अर्थात् प्रकर्षेण वहन क्रिया कर्तृक है। उसी तरह बवर शब्द नित्य सिद्ध वायु आदि का वाचक है। एवं च 'प्र' शब्द प्रकर्ष के अर्थ में प्रसिद्ध है और वह धातु प्रापण पहचाना, ले जाना के अर्थ में है। किन्तु इन दोनों शब्दों का समुदायरूप 'प्रावाहण' कही प्रसिद्ध नहीं है। 'प्रावाहणि' में इज् प्रत्यय, जैसे अपत्य अर्थ में सिद्ध है, वैसे ही वह कर्तृविशिष्ट क्रिया में भी सिद्ध है। अतः 'प्रावाहणि' का अर्थ यह हुआ कि जो उत्कृष्ट रीति से वस्तु को ले जाए। 'प्रावाहण का पुत्र' (अपत्य) यह अर्थ नहीं। उसी तरह प्रवहमान वायु की ध्वनि का अनुकरणमात्र 'बवर' शब्द है। वायु के शब्द की अनुकृतिरूप यह बवर शब्द, नित्यार्थ का अभिधायक होने से तद्धटित वाक्य “बवरः प्रावाहणिरकामयत” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.28) (Musalgaonkar 2004:119) नित्यार्थ के ही अभिधायक (वाचक) सिद्ध हो रहे हैं (एवं च ये

दोनों शब्द (प्रावाहण और बवर) नित्य अर्थ को ही बता रहे हैं। अनित्य अर्थ को नहीं। इसलिये सूत्रकार ने कहा कि ये शब्द केवल श्रुतिसामान्य मात्र हैं, अर्थात् उनसे केवल अव्यक्त ध्वनि की समानता का बोध होता है।

“वनस्पतयः सत्रमासत । ‘सर्पाः सत्रमासत’ । गावो वा एतत् सत्रमासत” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.32) (Musalgaonkar 2004:122) इत्यादि उन्मत्त बालप्रलाप सदृश सुनाई देने वाले असंगत वाक्य की प्राप्ति होने पर उसके समाधानार्थ जैमिनि मुनि कहते हैं “कृते वा विनियोगः स्यात् कर्मणः सम्बन्धात्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.32) (Musalgaonkar 2004:122) ‘कृते’ कर्म में ‘विनियोगः’ स्तुति के द्वारा उपयोग हो सकता है ‘कर्मणः’ कर्मप्रतिपादक वाक्य ‘सम्बन्धात्’ परस्पर साक्षांक्ष पदघटित होने से। तात्पर्य यह है कि कर्मप्रतिपादक वाक्य (विधिवाक्य) परस्पर साक्षांक्ष पद घटित होने से ‘गावो वा एतत्सत्रमासत’ इत्यादि वाक्यों का कर्म में स्तुति द्वारा उपयोग होता है। निष्कर्ष यह है कि ‘गावो वा इत्यादि वाक्यों का स्वार्थ में तात्पर्य नहीं है। किन्तु गो आदि जड़ पशुओं ने भी जब कर्मानुष्ठान किया तो विद्वान् लोग कर्म का अनुष्ठान करें इसमें सन्देह ही क्या है ? इस प्रकार उन वाक्यों का कर्म की प्रशंसा करने में ही तात्पर्य है। अतः सभी वाक्य ठीक हैं।

“ज्योतिष्टोमेन स्वर्गकामो यजेत”, “सोमेन यजेत” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.32) (Musalgaonkar 2004:122) इत्यादि वेदवाक्य परस्पर सम्बद्ध अर्थ के ही दिखाई देते हैं। क्योंकि वे साध्य-साधन इतिकर्तव्यता विशिष्ट अर्थभावना विषयक विधि यज्ञनिषेध के ही प्रतिपादक हैं। अर्थात् ‘वेदवाक्यानि परस्पर-सम्बद्धार्थ-पराणि साध्य साधनेति-कर्तव्यता-विशिष्टार्थ भावना-विषयकविधिनिषेधप्रतिपादकत्वात्’ अतः इन वाक्यों को उन्मत्त बाल वाक्यों के तुल्य नहीं कहा जा सकता। ज्योतिष्टोमादि सभी वाक्य क्रियापरक हैं अतः परस्पर सम्बद्धार्थक ही दिखाई दे रहे हैं। क्रिया को ही ‘भावना’ शब्द से भी कहा जाता है। प्रत्येक क्रिया के साथ (उद्देश्य) साधन (उपाय करण) और इतिकर्तव्यता (क्रिया करने की पद्धति अर्थात् कर्तव्य विशेष) ये तीन अंश होते हैं, इसलिये वह (क्रिया) कभी निरर्थक नहीं हुआ करती।

अन्यत् ‘वनस्पतयः’ इत्यादि वाक्य भी असंगत (असम्बद्धार्थक) नहीं हैं। क्योंकि आगे कहे जाने वाले सत्रयाग को स्तुति की अपेक्षा (आवश्यकता) है, तब ये वाक्य, उसकी अपेक्षित स्तुति का समर्पण करके सार्थक हो जाते हैं, और उसका प्रामाण्य सिद्ध हो जाता है। अभिप्राय यह है कि ये वाक्य साक्षात् क्रियाप्रवर्तक नहीं हैं किन्तु सत्रयाग के (स्तावक) अर्थवाद है। सत्रयाग की स्तुति करने का प्रकार ‘वनस्पतयो नाम अचेतना’ है जबकि अचेतन (जड़) वनस्पतियों ने भी इस सत्र (याग) का अनुष्ठान किया तब विद्वान् ब्राह्मण यज्ञानुष्ठान करें, क्या इसे कहने की आवश्यकता होगी ? जैसे लोकव्यवहार में कहा करते हैं कि सायंकाल के समय मृग (पशु) भी नहीं चरते, तब विद्वान् ब्राह्मणों के विषय में तो कहना ही क्या होगा ? अर्थात् कर्तव्य-अकर्तव्य के विवेक से रहित रहने वाले पशु भी सायंकाल के समय अपने स्वच्छन्द विहार का त्याग कर स्वस्थ होकर चुप-

चाप खड़े रहते हैं, इसलिये विद्वान् ब्राह्मण (विचारशील ब्राह्मण) को भी सायंकाल के समय स्वस्थ शान्तचित्त होकर परमेश्वर की आराधना करना चाहिए, क्या यह कहने की आवश्यकता होगी ? अर्थात् नहीं । किञ्च वेदों का जो उपदेश हैं, वह वेदाध्ययन करने वाले (अनिन्दित) शिष्टों की परम्परा से जाना जाता है, तथा सन्मित्र के उपदेश (परामर्श) के समान होने से सर्वथा अनाशङ्कित है अर्थात् दोष का लवलेश भी उसमें नहीं है । अतः उसे उन्मत्त बालवाक्यसदृश कहने की धृष्टता कैसे की जा सकती है । एवञ्च उनके प्रति किसी प्रकार भी दुष्ट आशंका नहीं करना चाहिए । तस्मात् चोदनावाक्यों के अपौरुषेय होने से उनका प्रामाण्य सिद्ध हो जाता है ।

प्रकारान्तर से भी हम वेद की अपौरुषेयता को सिद्ध कर रहे हैं । प्रथमतः शब्द क्या है तथा अर्थ क्या है, शब्द और अर्थ दोनों का परस्पर सम्बन्ध क्या है, इस पर हमें विचार करना चाहिए । सम्बन्ध दो सम्बन्धियों को अपना आधार बनाकर रहता है । जब तक उन आधारभूत सम्बन्धियों को अर्थात् उनके स्वरूप को न बताया जाय तब तक सम्बन्ध का निरूपण (सम्बन्ध के बारे में कुछ कहना) करना सम्भव नहीं है । इसलिये सम्बन्ध के आधारभूत शब्द का स्वरूप क्या है ? उसी का प्रथमतः विचार कर लें - इस अभिप्राय से भाष्यकार “अथ गौरित्यत्र” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.1) (Musalgaonkar 2004:45) भाष्य का आरम्भ कर रहे हैं । शब्द के स्वरूप का निर्धारण करने के पश्चात् शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध की नित्यता को सिद्ध करेंगे ।

शब्दस्वरूपविचारः

प्रथमतः यह विचार ले कि ‘गौः’ ऐसा उच्चारण करने पर हम ‘शब्द’ के रूप में किसे जानते हैं ? भगवान् उपवर्ष तो ‘गौः’ में गकार औकार, विसर्जनीय को शब्द कहते हैं । क्योंकि श्रोत्र (कर्ण) से ग्रहण किये जाने के अर्थ में ‘शब्द’ शब्द का व्यवहार लोक में प्रसिद्ध है । वे गकार-औकार और विसर्ग श्रोत्र से ग्रहण किये जाते हैं । पूर्व-पूर्व वर्ण के सुनने पर उनसे एक-एक संस्कार उत्पन्न होता जाता है । उन उत्पन्न हुए संस्कारों के सहित जो अन्तिम वर्ण रहेगा, वही वर्ण ‘अर्थ’ का बोधक होता है । निष्कर्ष यह है कि ‘ग’ वर्ण के सुनने पर उससे संस्कार उत्पन्न होगा, उस संस्कार के सहित जो ‘औ’ वर्ण का श्रवण होगा, उससे भी एक संस्कार उत्पन्न होगा, उन दोनों संस्कारों के सहित जो अन्तिम वर्ण विसर्ग का श्रवण होता है उससे अर्थ का बोध होता है । इस रीति से शब्द को अर्थप्रत्यायक कहने में कोई दोष नहीं है । अर्थ यह है कि ‘गौः’ इस प्रकार उच्चारण करने पर गोत्वरूप अर्थ का प्रत्यायक कहा जाने वाला जो शब्द है, वह क्या गकारादि वर्णरूप है ? इस प्रकार शब्द का स्वरूप क्या है, यह पूछकर वृद्धसम्मति प्रदर्शित करते हुए अपना स्वयं का मत (गकारादि वर्ण ही शब्द का स्वरूप है) ऐसा बतायेंगे । शब्द का वर्णरूप होना जो उपवर्ष के नाम पर बताया गया है वह स्वमत की पुष्टि के लिये वृद्धसम्मति के रूप में बताया गया है । प्रत्यक्ष और अर्थप्रत्यायकत्व के आधार पर मीमांसको ने यह सिद्ध किया है कि शब्द का स्वरूप गकारादि

वर्ण ही है। पहले वह प्रत्यक्ष के आधार पर वर्णों की शब्द स्वरूपता को बताने के लिये किया गया है कि “श्रोत्रग्रहणे हि अर्थे लोके शब्द शक्ति प्रसिद्धः। ते च श्रोत्रग्रहणाः” भाष्य उपस्थित किया गया है। इस भाष्य से यह बताया गया है कि श्रोत्रेन्द्रियजन्य प्रत्यक्ष का विषय होने वाले (अर्थ) में ‘शब्द’ इस शब्द की प्रसिद्धि सर्वत्र है अर्थात् लोग उसे (शब्द को) वाचक कहते हैं। वे गकारादि वर्ण ही श्रोत्र से ग्राह्य होते हैं। एवं च लोकव्यवहार में ‘श्रोत्रग्राह्यत्वं शब्दत्वम्’ इस लक्षण से लक्षित को ही शब्द नाम से कहा जाता है। अतः गकारादि वर्ण ही शब्द का स्वरूप है, यह समझना चाहिए।

अक्षरों में अर्थवान् के प्रति जो निमित्तता निमित्तभाव है, उसे गौण नहीं कह सकते, क्योंकि “तद्भावे भावात् तदभावे चाभावात्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.1) (Musalgaonkar 2004:47) अक्षरों के होने पर अर्थप्रतीति होती है और अक्षरों के न होने पर अर्थप्रतीति नहीं होती है। अतः अर्थप्रतीति कराने में अक्षरों को गौणरूप से निमित्त नहीं कहा जा सकता। गो शब्द में गकार आदि के अतिरिक्त अन्य किसी गो शब्द का प्रत्यक्ष नहीं हो रहा है, अर्थात् ग, औ तथा विसर्ग के सिवाय अन्य कोई गो शब्द से प्रत्यक्ष नहीं है। अतः भेदज्ञान के न होने से अभेदज्ञान हो रहा है। गकारादि अर्थात् ग औ तथा विसर्ग तो अक्षर हैं, वे ही पद (शब्द) हैं। अर्थात् वर्णों की ही ‘शब्द’ यह संज्ञा है। अतः उनसे (गकार, औकार, विसर्जनीय) (इन अक्षरों से) भिन्न अन्य कोई नहीं है। जिसे पद (शब्द) कहा जा सके।

तथा च अन्यव्यतिरेक के देखने से यह अवगत होता है कि अर्थप्रतिपत्ति के होने में अक्षर ही निमित्त है। एवं च अर्थप्रतिपत्ति में अक्षर स्वव्यापार के द्वारा हेतु है। उससे भिन्न अन्य किसी प्रकार का हेतुत्व कहीं पर भी दिखाई नहीं देता और जो हेतु होता है उसके व्यापार का व्यवधान तो सर्वत्र ही नियत रहता है। संस्कार तो शब्द का व्यापार ही है। अतः उसका जो व्यवधान है, वह अव्यवधान ही है। इसलिये अक्षरों में ‘शब्द’ शब्द का प्रयोग गौण नहीं हो एवं च वर्णों में ‘शब्द’ शब्द का मुख्य प्रयोग है गौण नहीं है, अर्थात् वर्ण ही शब्द है।

शब्द के अर्थ का विचार

“अथ गौरित्यस्य शब्दस्य कोऽर्थः ? सास्नादिविशिष्टाकृतिं ब्रूमः” गौः इत्यादि प्रश्नभाष्य का आशय यह है कि गोत्व इत्यादि सामान्य-रूप आकृति का निरूपण करना बड़ा कठिन होगा। अतः आकृति नाम की कोई वस्तु प्रसिद्ध न होने कारण अगोव्यावृत्तिरूप ‘अपोह’ को यदि शब्दार्थ कहें तो अपोह नाम की कोई वस्तु ही नहीं है, तब उसको आधार मानकर उनका (शब्द-अर्थ का) सम्बन्ध नित्य कैसे हो सकेगा ?

अतः प्रत्यक्ष-प्रमाण से 'अयमपि गौः 'शाबेलयादन्यो-बाहुलेयः' शाबेलय नामक गौः से बाहुलेय नामक गौः भिन्न है, इस प्रकार की प्रतीति होने के कारण भिन्न-अभिन्न रूप से प्रतीत होने वाला गोत्व आदि सामान्य सिद्ध हो जाता है। इसलिये वार्तिककार ने कहा है-

“प्रत्यक्ष-बल-सिद्धस्य सामान्यस्य कुतर्कतः ।
न शक्योऽन्हवः कर्तुं सर्वं विजयते हि तत् ॥”

इत्यादि रीति से उसका (गोत्वादि सामान्य का) अपोह (छिपाना) करना शक्य नहीं है। यतः गोत्वादिरूप सामान्य ही शब्दार्थ है, इस कारण उसका (गोत्वादिरूप सामान्य का) आधारभूत सम्बन्ध भी नित्य है, यह सिद्ध हो ही जाता है, इस सिद्धान्त को निश्चित करके सिद्धान्तभाष्य- “सास्नादिविशिष्टाकृति” कहा गया है। “जातिमेवाऽऽकृतिमप्राहुर्व्यक्तिराक्रियते यथा” वार्तिककार के इस वचन से जाति को ही आकृति शब्द से कहा जाता है। आक्रियते का अर्थ है - निरूप्यते। इसी अभिप्राय से भाष्यकार ने “सास्नादिविशिष्टाकृतिः इति ब्रूमः” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.1) (Musalgaonkar 2004:50) कहा है, अर्थात् एक गोपिण्ड (गोव्यक्ति) में समुच्चित रूप से रहने वाले सत्तादिरूप अनेक सामान्यों के मध्य में से गोशब्दवाच्य सामान्य का अलग से निर्देश करने के लिये अर्थात् उसके साथ (गोत्वरूप-सामान्य के साथ) एक ही अवयवी व्यक्ति में असाधारण रूप से विद्यमान रहने वाले उपलक्षणभूत सास्नादि अवयवों के द्वारा अन्य अवयवों से अलग निर्देश करने के लिए सास्नादिविशिष्टाकृति कहा जाता है।

शब्द और अर्थ दोनों का परस्पर सम्बन्ध

शब्द और अर्थ दोनों में जो सम्बन्ध है, वह पुरुषनिर्मित नहीं है, अर्थात् अपौरुषेय है। अतः धर्माऽधर्म के बोधन में वेद का प्रमाण सिद्ध है। शब्दार्थ के परस्पर सम्बन्ध जोड़ने वाले पुरुष का अभाव होने से हम जानते हैं कि शब्द और अर्थ का परस्पर सम्बन्ध पुरुषनिर्मित नहीं है यानी अपौरुषेय है।

यदि कोई पुरुष शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध का निर्माता हुआ रहता तो अवश्य ही किसी न किसी को उसका प्रत्यक्ष हुआ होता, किन्तु किसी को भी उसका प्रत्यक्ष कभी भी नहीं हुआ है। अतः प्रत्यक्ष प्रमाण के अभाव से हमने यह जाना कि शब्दार्थ को जोड़ने वाला कोई पुरुष नहीं है। अनुमानादि अन्य प्रमाणों से भी शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध जोड़ने वाले व्यक्ति का ज्ञान नहीं हो सकता क्योंकि अनुमानादि अन्य प्रमाण भी प्रत्यक्ष प्रमाणपूर्वक ही हुआ करते हैं। जबकि जोड़ने वाले व्यक्ति का ज्ञान प्रत्यक्ष प्रमाण से ही पता नहीं चल पाया तो प्रत्यक्ष पूर्वक प्रवृत्त होने वाले अनुमानादि अन्य प्रमाणों से उसका ज्ञान कैसे हो पायेगा।

यदि यह कहा जाय कि बहुत समय बीत जाने के कारण जैसे उसका प्रत्यक्ष नहीं हो रहा हैं, वैसे ही दीर्घतर काल बीतने से उसे स्मरण भी नहीं हो पा रहा है। चिरवृत्त होने से उसका स्मरण न हो, यह भी नहीं कह सकते। चिरवृत्त हुए युग के युग बीत गये, किन्तु आज तक अविच्छिन्न रूप से राम, बुद्ध, कुमारिल, प्रभाकर, शंकराचार्य प्रभृति लोगों का स्मरण सभी को है। शब्दार्थ व्यवहार अविच्छिन्न (अटूट) परम्परा से चला आ रहा है। यहा पुरुषों का शब्दार्थ व्यवहार का अभाव नहीं हुआ है। इसलिये शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध करने वाले पुरुष का विस्मरण होने का कोई कारण ही नहीं है। महाकवि कालिदास, भारवि, भवभूति की तरह शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध निर्माता का स्मरण अविच्छिन्न परम्परा के कारण अवश्य ही रहना चाहिए, किन्तु किसी को भी वह आज तक स्मरण नहीं है। इसलिये कहा जा सकता है कि शब्दार्थ के सम्बन्ध का निर्माता कोई भी नहीं था। वह सम्बन्ध अपौरुषेय है और अपौरुषेय होने से वह नित्य है।

यदि कोई पुरुष किसी शब्द का अर्थ से सम्बन्ध जोड़कर अन्य लोगों से उस शब्दार्थ का व्यवहार चलाया होता तो प्रत्येक व्यक्ति को व्यवहार करते समय शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध करने वाले उस व्यक्ति का स्मरण अवश्य ही हुआ होता। सम्बन्धकर्ता और व्यवहारकर्ता दोनों का ऐक्य अर्थात् समान ज्ञान होने पर ही दोनों का प्रयोजन सिद्ध हुआ करता है। विरुद्ध ज्ञान यदि दोनों का रहें तो व्यावहारिक प्रयोजन सिद्ध नहीं हो पाता। जैसे - उदाहरणार्थ व्याकरणसूत्रकार पाणिनि मुनि के व्यवहार को न जानने वाले लोगों को पाणिनिकृत पारिभाषिक 'वृद्धि' शब्द से 'आदैच्' अर्थात् आ, ऐ, औ का ज्ञान नहीं हो पाता अथवा पाणिनि के मत को न मानने वालों को 'वृद्धि' शब्द से आ, ऐ, औ की प्रतीति नहीं होती। वृद्धि शब्द से आदैच् का ज्ञान उन्हीं को हो पाता है जिन्हें सम्बन्धकर्ता पाणिनि का स्मरण है क्योंकि पाणिनि ने ही 'वृद्धि' शब्द और 'आदैच्' में परस्पर सम्बन्ध स्थापित किया है। उसी तरह का दूसरा उदाहरण 'मगण' कहने पर छन्दः सूत्रकार पिङ्गल के व्यवहार को न जानने वाले लोग उस त्रिक को समझ नहीं पाते जिसमें तीनों अक्षर गुरु हुआ करते हैं। अथवा पिङ्गल की कृति- अर्थात् 'मगण' और सर्वलघु त्रिक के सम्बन्ध को न मानने वाले लोगों को 'म' कहने से सर्वगुरुत्रिकरूप की प्रतीति नहीं हो पाती क्योंकि उन्हें या तो 'म' शब्द और त्रिकरूप अर्थ के सम्बन्धरूपकर्ता का स्मरण नहीं है, या उस छन्दः सूत्रकार पिङ्गल के सिद्धान्त को ही वे नहीं मानते। मगण कहते ही सर्वगुरुत्रिक का उन्हें ही स्मरण होता है जिन्हें उन दोनों का समान ज्ञान हो जाता है दोनों का समान ज्ञान आवश्यक है। अर्थात् सम्बन्धकर्ता और व्यवहर्ता दोनों का ऐक्य होना नितान्त आवश्यक है। उपर्युक्त विवेचन से यह स्पष्ट हो रहा है कि वैदिक व्यवहार करने वाले अर्थात् वेदार्थ वक्ता भी शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध और व्यवहार के निर्माता का स्मरण अवश्य ही करते। 'वृद्धिरादैच्' सूत्र के कर्ता का विस्मरण होने पर "वृद्धिरस्याचामादिस्तद् वृद्धम्" (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.1) (Musalgaonkar 2004:50) सूत्रगत 'वृद्धि' शब्द से कुछ भी ज्ञान नहीं हो पायेगा अर्थात् सूत्र की अर्थ को समझ ही नहीं सकेंगे। इस विवेचन से यह समझ में आता है कि किन्हीं

पुरुष ने शब्दों का अर्थ के साथ सम्बन्ध निर्माण करके उनका व्यवहार कराने के लिये वेदों की रचना की हो, यह सम्भव नहीं है। यद्यपि शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध के निर्माता का विस्मरण सम्भव हो सकता है, तथापि किसी प्रबल प्रमाण के अभाव में सम्बन्धकर्ता की कल्पना नहीं की जा सकती। यह बात सत्य है कि कभी-किसी के विद्यमान रहने पर भी उसका प्रत्यक्ष नहीं हो पाता तथापि उसको आधार मानकर हम बिना किसी प्रबल प्रमाण के शशविषाण की सत्ता को स्वीकार नहीं कर सकते अर्थात् विद्यमान वस्तु की अप्रत्यक्षता के आधार पर अविद्यमान को भी विद्यमान नहीं बनाया जा सकता क्योंकि जिस प्रकार अप्रत्यक्षत्व और विद्यमानत्व में कोई व्याप्तिसम्बन्ध नहीं है, उसी प्रकार विस्मृतत्व और सम्बन्धों के अस्तित्व में भी व्याप्ति-सम्बन्ध नहीं है। अतः शब्द और अर्थ का सम्बन्ध अपौरुषेय है।

शब्द का उपदेश (कथन) सिद्ध अर्थात् पहले से ही विद्यमान पदार्थ के समान होता है। उनमें अर्थबोध कराने की शक्ति पहले से ही निहित रहती है। इसी अभिप्राय को बताने के लिये भाष्यकार “सिद्धवत् उपदेशात्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.1) (Musalgaonkar 2004:59) कह रहे हैं। इस कथन से यह स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि सूत्र का ‘उपदेश’ शब्द सम्बन्ध-करण को नहीं बता रहा है, अपितु प्रसिद्ध सम्बन्ध का ही उपदेश कर रहा है। एवं च शब्दार्थ-सम्बन्ध का कथन ही किया जाता है, उसे (शब्दार्थ-सम्बन्ध को) जोड़ा नहीं जाता। यदि यह वस्तुस्थिति रहती की शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध के निर्माता को स्वीकार न करने पर नियमतः अर्थ का ज्ञान नहीं होता, तो शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध के निर्माण को अर्थापत्ति प्रमाण से मान भी लिया जाता, किन्तु शब्द से अर्थ की प्रतीति होने का अन्य उपाय भी है। वह उपाय है - व्यवहार। अतः सम्बन्ध को स्वाभाविक (अपौरुषेय) स्वीकार करने पर भी अर्थ का ज्ञान व्यवहार से भी हो जाता है। उसी को उदाहरण के द्वारा सिद्धान्ती के मुख से भाष्यकार बता रहे हैं - अपने किसी प्रयोजन के उद्देश्य से शब्द प्रयोग रूप व्यवहार करने वाले वृद्ध के (द्वारा कहे जाने वाले) शब्दों के अर्थ को समझते दिखाई देते हैं। ये शब्दप्रयोक्ता वृद्ध भी जब स्वयं बालक थे तब उन्होंने अन्य वृद्धों से उन्होंने भी अन्य वृद्धों से - इस परम्परा का कोई आदिकाल नहीं है। इस प्रकार की ‘अनादि-वृद्ध-व्यवहार-परम्परा’ से शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध के ज्ञान होता आया है। शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध के ज्ञान का उपाय जबकि वृद्धव्यवहार है, तो उसके रहते हुए अर्थापत्ति प्रमाण के सहारे सम्बन्ध निर्माता की कल्पना नहीं की जानी चाहिए। हम देखते हैं कि किसी शब्द का किसी अर्थ के साथ सम्बन्ध जोड़ने के लिये कुछ शब्दों के अर्थों का ज्ञान अवश्य अपेक्षित रहता है। उदाहरणार्थ उत्पन्न हुए शिशु का नामकरण करने के लिये कतिपय सार्थक नामों का ज्ञान रखना पड़ता है। यदि आरम्भकाल में किसी शब्द का किसी अर्थ के साथ कोई किसी प्रकार का भी सम्बन्ध नहीं था तो उसे जोड़ा कैसे गया? अतः यही स्वीकार करना होगा कि वृद्धव्यवहार से ही शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध को जाना जाता है। इस प्रकार अनादि-वृद्ध-व्यवहार से ही अर्थ-प्रतीति की अनायास उपपत्ति हो जाती है तब अनुपपत्ति के अभाव में उसकी महिमा के सहारे सम्बन्धकर्ता की कल्पना नहीं कर

सकते। कोई देश ऐसा नहीं है जो शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध से रहित हो। जिस प्रकार इस देश में सास्ना (गल-कम्बल) वाले पशु में गो शब्द का प्रयोग किया जाता है, उसी प्रकार समस्त दुर्गम स्थलों में भी सास्नावाले पशु में ही गो शब्द का प्रयोग होता है। शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध के निर्माता अनेक लोगों का परस्पर सम्मिलन दुर्गम स्थानों में कैसे सम्भव हो सकता है? यदि किसी एक को ही सम्बन्धकर्ता कहें तो उस एक व्यक्ति के लिए सब जगह जा-जा कर सार्वजनीन व्यवहार की शिक्षा देना सम्भव नहीं है। अतः न तो अनेक सम्बन्धकर्ता हैं और न एक ही सम्बन्धकर्ता है। एवञ्च शब्दार्थ के सम्बन्ध का कर्ता कोई भी नहीं है। “अव्यतिरेकश्च” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.1) (Musalgaonkar 2004:59) पद की व्याख्या इस प्रकार भी करते हैं-शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध से रहित कोई काल नहीं है। जिसमें कोई भी शब्द किसी भी अर्थ से सम्बद्ध नहीं था अर्थात् सभी भूत, भविष्यत् एवं वर्तमान तीनों कालों में शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध सदा विद्यमान है। यह शब्दार्थ सम्बन्ध तो अनादिकाल से चला आ रहा है।

अतः शब्द का अर्थ के साथ अपौरुषेय सम्बन्ध है। इसी कारण “तत् प्रमाणम् अनपेक्षत्वात्” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.1) (Musalgaonkar 2004:59) - यह भाष्य बता रहा है कि वह शब्द निरपेक्ष होने से प्रमाण है। इस विवेचन से यह स्पष्ट है कि वैदिक शब्द न तो किसी ऐसे अन्य पुरुष की अपेक्षा रखता है, जो शब्द को प्रमाणित करें और न ही उसे समर्थित करने के लिये किसी अन्य ज्ञान की अपेक्षा है। इसलिये “चोदनालक्षण एव धर्मो, नान्यलक्षणः” (सूत्रभाष्य 1.1.1) (Musalgaonkar 2004:59)। अतः निष्कर्ष यह हुआ कि वेद से ही धर्म का ज्ञान होता है, किसी अन्य प्रमाण से उसका ज्ञान नहीं हो सकता।

बुद्ध तथा जैमिनि के काल का विचार

शेल्डन पॉलॉक अपनी पुस्तक ‘Language of the Gods in the World of Men’ में यह प्रतिपादित किये हैं कि वेद की अपौरुषेयता मूलतः वैदिक संस्कृति से नहीं जुड़ा है, जैमिनि मुनि के द्वारा इस सिद्धान्त को प्रथमतः स्थापित किया गया। वेदों पर किसी भी प्रकार का प्रश्न न उठ सके इसलिये जैमिनि मुनि ने वेद को अपौरुषेय बताया तथा उसकी प्रामाण्यता को प्रश्नातीत दर्शाया।

“...it also seems likely that atleast some of the most salient articulations of this world, what we now tend to think of as its foundational principles, may have first been conceptualized as a defensive, even anti-axial, reaction to Buddhism... It is self-evident that no one would elaborate propositions of the sort we find Mīmāṃsā to have elaborated, such as the thesis of the authorlessness of the Veda, unless the authority of the Veda and its putative authors had first been seriously challenged”

Pollock (2005:397)(italics ours)

“The explicit formulation of what are now rightly viewed as axioms that naturalized the social world and the world of discourse — restrictions on the right to sacrifice and on the originary relationship of word and meaning (the *adhikāra* and *autpattika* doctrines discussed earlier) as well as the notion of an authorless and eternal Veda existing entirely outside of history — were likely developed in response to the Buddhist critique: neither make sense without the arguments to the contrary.”

Pollock (2006:53)

“What was at stake for Mīmāṃsā in asserting the uncreated, eternal nature of language was the possibility that *vānmaya* or a thing-made-of-language — that is, a text like the Veda — could be eternal too, something the Buddhists sought fundamentally to reject.”

Pollock (2006:52-53)

बुद्ध के पूर्ववर्ती जैमिनि मुनि

जैमिनिसूत्रों की रचना का काल निर्णय करने में पाश्चात्य विद्वानों ने अपनी बुद्धि का अपव्यय ही किया है। डा. कीथ (Keith) तथा डा. दास गुप्ता (Das Gupta) ने इन सूत्रों का रचनाकाल ईसा पूर्व 200 वर्ष बताया है। डा. राधाकृष्णन् (Radhakrishnan) ने इन सूत्रों की रचना के काल की कल्पना ई.पू. 400 शताब्दी तक की है, इसके आगे नहीं बढ़ पाये हैं। इसी प्रकार अनेक ऐतिहासिकों ने अनिश्चित आधार पर भिन्न-भिन्न कल्पनाओं को जनता के सामने उपस्थित किया है। उसका परिणाम यह हुआ कि सर्वसाधारण जनता के मस्तिष्क में भ्रम उत्पन्न हो गया, क्योंकि इन काल्पनिकों की कल्पनाओं में ऐक्य नहीं है। अतएव मैकडानल (Macdonell) नामक पाश्चात्य विद्वान् का कहना है कि भारतीय ऋषि-महर्षियों के अथवा उनकी रचनाओं के काल का निर्णय करना आकाशपुष्पों को तोड़ने के समान है। इस प्रकार के काल्पनिक कालनिर्णय में मैकडानल का किञ्चिन्मात्र भी विश्वास नहीं है। इस तथ्य की जानकारी भारतीय विद्वानों को पहले से ही था। अतएव भारतीय शिक्षा-दीक्षित विद्वानों में से किसी ने भी ऐसी निराधार अटकले बांधने में अपनी बुद्धि का अपव्यय नहीं किया है।

जैमिनि के नाम पर अनेक ग्रन्थ पाये जाते हैं। जैसे - जैमिनीय शाखा, जैमिनीय ब्राह्मण, जैमिनि कोशसूत्र, जैमिनीय निघण्टु जैमिनिपुराण, जैमिनि भागवत, जैमिनिसूत्र, जैमिनि सूत्रकारिका, जैमिनिस्मृति, जैमिनीय श्रौतसूत्र, जैमिनिगृह्यसूत्र आदि। अतः जिस जैमिनि ने मीमांसासूत्रों की रचना की है उसके काल का विचार जैमिनि के सूत्रों के आधार पर विचार करने की अत्यधिक आवश्यकता है।

महाभाष्य में 'मीमांसक' शब्द का उल्लेख बार-बार किया गया है, जिसे दर्शाते हैं 'अथेह कस्मान्न भवति यात्रिकश्चायम् वैयाकरणश्च कठश्चायं बड्वृचश्च औक्थिकश्चायं मीमांसकश्च' (महाभाष्य 2.2.29) इन उल्लेखों से स्पष्ट होता है कि पतञ्जलि के समय मीमांसा का प्रचार पर्याप्त हो चुका था। अतः सहज अनुमान होता है कि मीमांसा सम्प्रदाय के प्रथम सूत्रकार जैमिनि का अस्तित्व भगवान् पतञ्जलि के पूर्व ही था।

'अथ गौरित्यत्र कः शब्दः ? गकार-औकारविसर्जनीया इति भगवान् उपवर्षः (शाबर भाष्य प्रथम भाग) शबरस्वामी के इस लेख से अवगत होता है कि जैमिनीय मीमांसा सूत्रों के वृत्तिकार उपवर्ष थे। अतः कथासरित्सागर के अनुसार पाणिनी के सूत्रों पर 'वार्तिक' की रचना करने वाले कात्यायन के समकालिक 'उपवर्ष' को मानना होगा। तब व्याख्याकार की अपेक्षा मूल ग्रन्थाकार को पूर्ववर्ती कहना होगा। इसलिये उपवर्ष के पूर्व ही जैमिनि को मानना होगा और उपवर्ष के समकालिक वार्तिककार से भी प्राचीन 'जैमिनि' को कहना चाहिए। इतना ही नहीं व्याकरण सूत्रकार पाणिनि भी क्रमादिगण में 'मीमांसा' का पाठ कर स्वयं अपने को जैमिनि का पश्चाद्वर्ती होना बताया है।

तैत्तिरीय प्रातिशाख्य में 'मीमांसक' शब्द का उल्लेख प्राप्त होता है। 'मीमांसकानां च मीमांसकानां च' (तैत्तिरीय-प्रातिशाख्य 5.41) इस प्रातिशाख्य के तीन भाष्यों में से एक का कर्ता (वररुचि) को बताया जाता है। 'व्याख्यानं प्रातिशाख्यस्य वीक्ष्य वाररुचादिकम्'। कृतं त्रिभाष्यरत्नं यद् भासते भूसुरप्रियम्'। (तैत्तिरीय-प्रातिशाख्य त्रिभाष्यरत्नोपक्रम) यह वररुचि यदि वार्तिककार वररुचि है तो तैत्तिरीय प्रातिशाख्य की रचना के समय ही 'मीमांसाशास्त्र' ने अत्यधिक प्रसिद्धि प्राप्ति कर ली तथा 'पाणिनि' को वररुचि के समकालिक यदि मानते हैं तो पाणिनी, वार्तिककार और भाष्यकार तीनों की अपेक्षा मीमांसासूत्रकार महर्षि जैमिनि अत्यन्त प्राचीन सिद्ध होते हैं।

मीमांसासूत्रों को सूक्ष्म दृष्टि से परीक्षण करने पर यह ज्ञात होता है कि बुद्ध का उल्लेख कहीं पर भी प्राप्त नहीं होता है। महामहोपाध्याय पी.वी.काणे (Kane) तथा डा.कीथ कहते हैं- "There is absence of any express reference to Buddhist dogma and Philosophy" (Devasthali 1939:65) परन्तु मीमांसासूत्रों में बुद्ध का उल्लेख क्यूँ नहीं है ? इसका समाधान करते हुए वो कहते हैं कि बुद्ध का उल्लेख करने के लिए मीमांसा शास्त्र में न उसकी आवश्यकता है न प्रसंग। यह बात स्वीकार योग्य नहीं है। बुद्ध ने आत्मा को क्षणिक बताते हुये कर्मकाण्ड को बलवत् रूप से खण्डन किया है, यदि जैमिनि बुद्ध के पश्चाद्वर्ती है तो उन्होंने निश्चित रूप से बुद्ध की इन बातों को खण्डन किया होता, किंतु कहीं पर भी बुद्ध का प्रसंग नहीं उठाया है। जहाँ जैमिनि ने बुद्ध शब्द का प्रयोग किया है वो सामान्य अर्थ में है। 'बुद्धशास्त्रात्' (1.2.33) इस सूत्र में बुद्ध शब्द का निर्वचन (कर्म को जिसने जाना हो) यह है। यदि जैमिनि के समय में बुद्ध सुप्रसिद्ध थे तर्हि वो इस पद को सामान्य अर्थ में नहीं प्रयोग करते। इससे यह सिद्ध होता है कि जैमिनि बुद्ध के पूर्ववर्ती ही है। जी.वी.देवस्थली कहते हैं- "The absence of any reference to Buddhist

doctrines would thus appear to be a clear proof of the *Mimamsa sutra-s* belonging to a date prior to the rise of Buddhism in India.” (Devasthali 1939:65)

और तो और भगवान् उपवर्ष की बातों में बुद्ध के आक्षेपों का समाधान दिखाई देता हैं। अतः उपवर्ष के समय में प्रायः बुद्ध की ख्याति हो चुकी थी। इससे स्पष्ट होता है कि जैमिनि के पश्चाद्वर्ती और उपवर्ष के पूर्ववर्ती बुद्ध थे।

प्रकारान्तर से स्वमत की पुष्टि के लिये अन्यत् हेतु

ऐसा प्रतीत होता है निरुक्तकार यास्क तथा जैमिनि समकालीन थे, क्योंकि मीमांसासूत्र तथा निरुक्त में बहुत सी बातें समान दिखाई देती हैं, तथापि एक का दूसरों को परिचय था यह भास नहीं होता है। उदाहरणार्थ-निरुक्त 7.5 में मन्त्र तथा यागों में जिन देवताओं का उल्लेख किया है, उनके स्वरूप का विचार किया गया है। उन्हीं बातों को मीमांसा सूत्र 9.1.6 से लेकर 9.1.10 तक विचार किया गया है।

अन्य उदाहरण-जैमिनि सूत्र “भावार्थाः कर्मशब्दाः” (2.1.1) तथा यास्क के “भावप्रधानम् आख्यातम्” (1.1) इन दोनों सूत्रों के विचार में अत्यन्त समानता दिखाई देती है। जैमिनि कहते हैं “सर्वेषां भावोऽर्थ इति चेत् येषामुत्पत्तौ स्वे प्रयोगे रूपोपलब्धिः तानि नामानि... येषां तूत्पत्तावर्थे स्वे प्रयोगो न विद्यते तान्याख्यातानि...” (2.1.2. से 4)

यास्काचार्य कहते हैं ‘तद्यत्रोभे भावप्रधाने भवतः पूर्वापरीभूतं भावमाख्यातेनाचष्टे व्रजति पचतीत्युपक्रमप्रभृत्यपवर्गपर्यन्तं मूर्तं सत्वभूतं सत्त्वनामिर्ब्रज्या पक्तिरिति। (1.1) एवञ्च पूर्वपक्षी याज्ञिक ने वेद को अर्थहीन बताया है, इसके समाधानार्थ जैमिनि तथा यास्क ने समर्थ रूप से खण्डन किया है, जैमिनि ने नव सूत्रों में (1.2.31 से 39) तक पूर्वपक्ष का खण्डन किया है, उनमें से पाँच सूत्र यास्काचार्य के समान हैं। तथा मीमांसा के उन्ही नव सूत्रों में से और दो सूत्र “अविद्यमानत्वात्” तथा “अचेतनेऽर्थ बन्धनात्” इन दो सूत्रों में यास्क के “अनुपपन्नार्था भवन्ति” (निरुक्त 1.15) इस सूत्र में देखा जा सकता है।

यास्क तथा जैमिनि के सिद्धान्त समरूप हैं, यदि जैमिनि यास्क के परवर्ती होते तो निश्चित रूप से उनके सिद्धान्तों का अध्ययन किया होता, तथा उनका उल्लेख मीमांसासूत्रों में दिखाई पड़ता, परन्तु न यास्क का उल्लेख करते हैं न यास्क जैमिनि का। इससे यह ज्ञात होता है कि दोनों प्रायः समकालीन थे। सभी विद्वानों ने एकमत से स्वीकारा है कि यास्क बुद्ध के पूर्ववर्ती थे लगभग 500 ईसा पूर्व अतः जैमिनि भी यास्क के समकालीन होने से बुद्ध के पूर्ववर्ती सिद्ध होते हैं। निष्कर्ष यह है पॉलॉक के आक्षेपों का कोई आधार नहीं है।

उपसंहार

वेदा वा एते, अनन्ता वै वेदाः । (तैत्तिरीय-ब्राह्मण 3.10.46)

कृत्स्न एव हि वेदोऽयं परमेश्वर गोचरः । (न्यायकुसुमाञ्जलि 1.5.680)

भूतं भवत् भविष्यच्च सर्वं वेदात् प्रसिध्यति । (मनुस्मृति 12.97)

मीमांसाशास्त्र में यागादिरूप वेदार्थ का प्रतिपादन किया गया है अतः वेदवाक्यों के अवगमनार्थ इस शास्त्र का अद्वितीय योगदान है । शेल्डन पॉलॉक अपने कई लेखनों में इस विचारधारा को सदोष दर्शाते हैं समाज के कई विकृतियों का कारण यह मीमांसाशास्त्र है ऐसा भी वो कहते हैं ।

अतः अपने इस लेखन में हमने पॉलॉक के आक्षेपों का समाधान करने का प्रयास किया है । सर्वप्रथम हमने धर्माऽधर्म के विवेक में एकमात्र वेद को प्रमाण बताया है तदनन्तर वेद की अपौरुषेयता को युक्ति तथा तर्क के माध्यम से प्रतिपादित किया है । परन्तु शेल्डन पॉलॉक यह कहते हैं हि अपौरुषेयता औत्पत्तिक इत्यादि वास्तविक में वेदों का स्वधर्म नहीं है, बौद्धों के आक्षेपों के प्राप्त होने पर मीमांसकों के द्वारा सिद्ध किया तर्क है ।

अतः अपने इस पेपर में हमने सम्यक्तया इस बात को समाधान करने का यत्न किया है । अतः आशा करता हूं कि मेरा यह पेपर पॉलॉक के प्रश्नों का समाधान करने के लिए एक साधन है ।

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Chapter 4

मीमांसा, भारतीयानाम् अनैतिहासिकत्वञ्च

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सङ्ग्रहः

लेखनेऽस्मिन् परिमितेतरपूर्वग्रहपरिपीडितपोल्लुकाख्यपाश्चात्यपण्डितोपस्थापिता
अधिक्षेपा भारतीयसंस्कृतिविषय इतिहासविषय एवं मीमांसाशास्त्रविषये च प्रस्तूय पूर्व-
पक्षसाद्विधाय प्रेक्षावत्प्रदिष्टप्रत्यग्रप्रतितर्कप्रतिष्ठापनपुरस्सरं प्रतिपङ्क्तिं प्रत्याख्याताः ।
आदावितिहासमधिकृत्य भारतीयानां पाश्चात्यविद्वज्जनविहितानि दूषणान्युदीर्य पश्चा-
न्मीमांसादिशास्त्रनिकुरुम्ब दूषणैकरुचेः पोल्लुकाख्य मतान्युपस्थाप्य विशेषतश्चारवि-
न्दशर्मख्याधुनातनविद्वज्जनेन तथा चानन्दकुमारस्वाम्यभिधगतशताब्दकविद्वत्तल्लुजेन
च पुरस्स्थापितानां सत्तर्काणामुपन्यसनेन च कृतः कण्टकोद्धार इति मत्वा कार्तार्थ्यं भा-
वयत्ययं जनः ।

अज्ञोऽसि यदि नाध्येषि पाश्चात्य-विदुषां मतम् ! ।

भ्रान्तोऽसि यदि चाध्येषि पाश्चात्य-विदुषां मतम् !! ॥

– कण्णन्

*pp 129-149. In Kannan, K. S. (Ed.) (2019). *Swadeshi Critique of Videshi Mīmāṃsā*. Chennai : Infinity Foundation India.

“Even God cannot change the past !
But historians can !!”

- Samuel Butler

“तुरुष्कयवनादिभिर्जगति जृम्भमाणं भयम्”

नापरोक्षमिदम्प्रेक्षावतां यच्छतकद्वयाद्यावदिण्डालजी(Indology)त्यभिधानेन प्रथितं भारतीय-सर्वस्वाध्ययनं पाश्चात्त्यैर्विद्वद्भिः प्रस्थापितं सुप्रतिष्ठापितं वरीवर्तीति । परस्सहस्रं विद्वांसोऽध्य-यनेऽस्मिंस्तद्वर्षितमयनमेवानुरुन्धाना अनारतं तत्र व्यापृता, यानन्वेव भारतीया अपि कतिपये विद्वांस उद्युक्ता उद्युज्जानाश्च दरीदृश्यन्ते । पाश्चात्यास्सर्वेऽपि दुष्टैरेवाभिसन्धिभिरतिमात्रमीरिता इति यद्यपि न सुवचं, भूयांसस्तत्र परं मलीमसमानसाः कृतमनस्कास्वकपरम्परैकप्रागल्भ्यप्रसा-धनप्रतिपादनयोरेवञ्च भारतीयपरम्परायाः पुनर्नैच्यस्थापनैकचक्षुष्कतया संलक्ष्यमाणाः ।

भारतीयेतिहासे न्यूनताः

दुर्विदग्धेष्वीदृग्विधेष्वेकतमः शेल्डन् पोलाक्(Sheldon Pollock)-नामा, यो हि नानाशास्त्रेषु कृतपरिमितेतरपरिश्रमस्सन्नपि पौरोभाग्यैकभाग्येषु प्राप्यः प्रथमपि पृथुलां समासाद्य विदुषो नैकान्प्रस्थाने विलक्षणे स्वकीये प्रस्थापयन्नमेरिकादेशस्थकोलम्बिया(Columbia) विश्वविद्या-लये लब्धप्रतिष्ठस्सम्भारतीयसर्वकारेणापि पद्मश्र्याख्येनाग्र्येण बिरुदेन विभूषितश्च । अलङ्कार-मीमांसादिशास्त्रेषु बहुधाबहोः कालादध्ययनादिष्वात्मानमुद्योजयन्नेष लेखान्नैकान्ग्रन्थांश्चानेका-न्विततवानस्ति । प्रकृते मीमांसाशास्त्रमधिकृत्य सप्तविंशतिवर्षेभ्यः प्राग्विलिखितमेतस्यैकं लेखं परामर्ष्टुं प्रयत्नः कश्चनात्र विहितो वर्तते । “पारम्परिकभारतेतिहाससमस्या मीमांसा च” (“Mīmāṃsā and the Problem of History in Traditional India” 1989) इत्यभिधानकस्तदीयस्स लेखः । इतिहासशब्देन चात्र नहि महाभारतादयो ग्रन्था निर्दिश्यन्ते किंतिर्हि “history” इत्याङ्ग्लेन शब्देन निर्दिश्यमाना ज्ञानशाखा प्राग्वद्विदितानि रूपान्तराणि द्विमर्शनकृत्य-जाततात्पर्यवती ।

भारतीयाः खल्वीदृक्षेतिहासविषये लक्षितपाराङ्मुख्या इति तु विदितचरमेव । पण्डितेन लार्सन्(Larson) नाम्ना प्रोक्तमेवेदं यद् भारतीयचिन्तनप्रणाल्यामितिहासाख्यं कल्पनमेव स्फुटं न स्थानं कञ्चन लभते, प्राङ्मनवमदशकात् । ऐतिहासिकं च विवरणं दक्षिणैष्याभागे तावदसमासादितपरिस्फुटास्पदम् । लार्सनोक्तमुल्लिखतीत्यं पोलाकः -

“History is a category which has no demonstrable place within any South Asian ‘indigenous conceptual system’ (at least prior to the middle of

the nineteenth century)... South Asians themselves seldom if ever used [a historical] explanation... In a South Asian environment, historical interpretation is no interpretation. It is a zero-category”.

Larson (1980) cited in Pollock (1989:603)

उक्तिमिमामनुमोदमानः पोल्डाको नात्रातिरेकिनीमुक्तिं काञ्चिद् विभावयति, किन्तर्हि निष्प्रतिद्वन्द्वं भाषितमिदमित्यव्यभिचरितं सत्यमित्येव वा ।

इतोऽग्रे च मेक्डोनेल्स्य(Macdonell)वाक्यमिदमुद्धरति पोल्डाको यत्प्राक्कालीने भारत इतिहास-
सानुपलब्धेर्निदानं नामेदं यत्तत्रोल्लेखाहो विषय एव नाभात्कश्चिदपि

“Early India wrote no history because it never made any”

(Macdonell (1900) cited in Pollock (1989:607))!

सिद्धान्ततया चोपस्थापितमेतन्मेक्डोनेल्सेन ! कुल्के (Kulke) नामापरः पुनः पाश्चात्यो हेतुमत्रे-
त्थमूहाञ्चक्रे यद्ब्राह्मणकायस्थयोर्यो विभागस्समजनि सामाजिकस्स एवेति । तद्यथा ब्राह्मणैर्बौद्धि-
कानि साधनान्यात्मसात्कृतानि, कायस्थैस्तावत्लेखभण्डारस्य (archives) साधनानि वशीकृ-
तानि (Pollock 1989:607) । एवमेव लेफेव् (Lefebvre) नाम्नोऽपरस्य मतमप्यसावुपस्था-
पयति यज्जगतो महत्याश्चाक्रियया वृत्तेर्मात्रस्य सर्वदाकलनमित्येतद्वेतुक् एवेदक्षस्य व्यतिकरस्य
यदन्वेवेतिहासस्य समग्रस्यापि पौराणिककथास्वेवान्तर्भाव इत्यपि च (Pollock 1989:607) ।
प्रचुरोऽप्ययमभिप्रायो न तावांस्तृप्तिकर – इति पुनःप्रब्रुवाणःपोल्डाकस्स्वकीयमौदार्यमप्युपस्थाप-
यन्निव लक्ष्यते । अपरमपीदृशमेवौदार्यमस्याधिभारतान् यन्नाम नीट्शे(Neitszche) नाम्नश्चि-
न्तकस्य लपितस्योपन्यसनं यच्च तावज्जीवन्ति नाम पशव इतिहासपराङ्मुखाः, मनुष्य एव खलु
पराकुर्यात्प्रतिक्षणमभिवर्धमानं प्राचीनकालीनं भारमिति (Pollock 1989:603) । अर्थाच्चित्रम-
त्राक्षिप्यते यन्नात्यन्तम्भिन्ना भारतीयाश्चतुष्पाद्भ्य इति ! ।

नातिभिन्ना नाम ग्रीककथा

भारतीयानां विषय इत्थमपलापपरम्परामेव प्रभूतां परिवाहयन् पोल्डाकोऽस्मदीयचिन्तनावर्तनीतो
नानतिरिक्तां सुतिं दधतां ग्रीकाणां विषये तावदल्पामेवापलापिकां बाङ्गर्नी झर्नी वाहयतीति तु
चित्रमेव । लाग्निनसस्तु (Longinus) भेदमेव न विदध इतिहासकारनाटककारयोर्मध्य इत्यु-
ल्लिखत्यपि स्वयं पोल्डाक एव (Pollock 1989:605)! जनगृहीतिस्तावदयथार्था यतो हि प्राक्तने
काले ग्रीकदेशे ऐतिहासिकं वस्तु न तत्त्वज्ञानस्याभूद्विषयो, नापि मतचिन्तनस्य, न वा सांस्कृतिक-
परिशीलनस्य । नाप्नोति स्म तात्त्विकचिन्तनप्रसङ्गे वा साधारणजनचिन्तनप्रसङ्गे वैतिहासिकी का-
चिद् विचारणेति भाषितिःपोल्डाकस्यैवेति वेदनीयम्¹ । न चेदमविदितं यद्ग्रीकरोमकानामैतिहासि-
कीषु कथासु स्वेषां दैवतानामपि विलसितानि नाल्पीयस्सु स्थलेषु सन्दर्भेषु च गोचरीभवन्त्येवेति ।

मेकिन्टैर् (MacIntyre) नामक ऐतिहासिकोऽपि अरिस्टाटल्- (Aristotle)-प्रभृतिषु ग्रीकचिन्तकेषु निश्चिततयैतिहासिकमिदमिति शृङ्ग्राहिकया दर्शयितुं किमपि न पार्यत इत्याहेति पोल्डाक एव सूचयति (Pollock 1989:605)! एवमेव बोएर्- (Boer)-अभिधोऽप्यनयैव भङ्ग्याऽऽह – पौरणिकैतिहासिकयोर्भिदा न स्फुटा ग्रीकलिखितेषु । पुराणेष्वेव देवा इतिहासेष्वेव मनुष्या इतीदृशो विषयविभागोऽपि नाभिलक्ष्यते नामेति (Pollock 1989:605 fn “It is not that gods appear in myth and men in history, but they both appear in time and in history”) । पोल्डाकः परमधोगतटिप्पण्यामेव निक्षिपति विषयानीदृग्विधानिति यत्तस्य जागरमभिवीक्षणीयम् ननु !

अत्रान्तरे विषयान्तरं शाखाचङ्क्रमणन्यायेन प्रविविक्षुः पोल्डाकः स्टैटेन्क्रानस्य (Steitencron) सिद्धान्तमावाहयति (Pollock 1989:606) । यश्चेत्थम् – सप्तमाष्टमनवमशतकेषु कैस्ताब्देषु पल्लवशिल्पेषु शिवस्य गङ्गाधरमूर्ते रूपाणि “झडिति लभ्यानि” संलक्ष्यन्ते । तच्च कुत इत्याकाङ्क्षामुत्थापयन् स्वयमेवोत्तरयति स्टैटेन्क्रान् ।

गङ्गान् (इत्युक्ते गङ्गाभिधान् महीभृतः) पल्लवनृपा यन्निर्जितवन्तस्तत्स्मारणार्थं प्रक्रान्तं सत्, पल्लवैतिहासमेव तच्छिल्पं विलिखतीव भाति – इत्याह स्टैटेन्क्रान् । वस्तुतस्तत्त्वनेके कवयोऽपि पर्यायोक्तभङ्ग्या वा समासोक्तिनिरूपितकेन वा तथाविधानि स्वकालिकानि घटितानि श्लोकेषु रूपया-मासुरेव । राज्ञोऽग्निमित्रस्य वृत्तमेव स्वीये मालविकाग्निमित्रे नाटके कालिदासो निरूपितवानित्यपि किल सम्भाव्यते ?

किं चातः ? ऐतिहासिकं विषयं कमपि प्रकाशयितुं न पारयेयुर्भारतीया इति मन्वानस्य पोल्डाकस्य मनो यच्च प्रतीयात् तद्धि परीक्षणीयत्वेनावशिष्यत इति ।

लौकिकमपि विषयं दैविकघटनान्विततयैव भारतीयाः प्रतिपादयन्तीत्याक्षेपणीयत्वेनाभीक्ष्णं विलिखति पोल्डाकः । अत एव च भारतीयसंस्कृतेर्निगूढ ऐतिहासिको भारोऽवतारणीयः इति च स घोषयति ।

संस्कृतग्रन्था हि भूयस्त्वेनाश्चर्यकारित्वेन च ग्रन्थकर्तुर्नामादिकं न बिभ्रति । यद्वा कर्तृभिर्च नामान्तरमपि दधति ! एवं चार्थशास्त्रकामशास्त्रालङ्कारशास्त्रवेदान्तशास्त्रादिग्रन्थास्सर्वेऽप्यैतिहासिकीं परिस्थितिमननुलक्ष्यैव प्रमेयाणि स्वकीयानि प्रतिपिपादयिषन्ति । अतो हि हेतोः परस्सहस्रं पुटानां पठन्तोऽपि संस्कृतग्रन्थराशावितिहाससंबद्धतया तत्तत्पुरुषाणां तत्तत्स्थलानां तत्तद्वटितानां वा परामर्शो न लोचनगोचरीभवतीति भणत्येषः (Pollock 1989:606) ।

मीमांसामधि

स्वेलेखे विषयानीदृक्षान् परिलक्ष्याधिमामीमांसाशास्त्रं शास्त्राहतिविधाने प्रवणतामेति पोल्लाकस्य मान-
सम् । स च ब्रूते यत्पारम्परिकसंस्कृतसंस्कृतौ नामेतिहासस्य साधारण एवाभावो दरीदृश्यते यच्चा-
नुपमितं विस्मयावहं समस्यात्मकं चेति । निदानं पुनरस्य सर्वस्य मीमांसाशास्त्रगतत्वेन स विभाव-
यति । तस्य तर्कस्तावदेवम्प्रकारकः — ब्राह्मणानां शास्त्रमिदं यन्मीमांसा नाम, सांस्कृतिकान्विधि-
निषेधांश्च सैव विदधाति ; यश्चेतिहासोऽस्माकमधजिगमिषाया विषयस्तस्यैव प्रत्याख्यात्री सा ।
इतिहासाध्ययनमेव व्यर्थमिति वा ज्ञानविरोधीति वात्यप्रस्तुतं तच्छास्त्रज्ञानसम्पादनलिप्सोरिति वा
प्रतिपादयति सा । वाक्यार्थविचारो मीमांसाया लक्ष्यम् । तत्रापि धर्मो हि विषयो मीमांसायाः ।
धर्मश्च पुनः प्रत्यक्षानुमित्योरविषयः । धर्मनियमा यत्रोदितास्ते हि ग्रन्था अतीन्द्रियाधारत्वेन नाम
जगदुस्तत्त्वानि । शब्दार्थयोस्सम्बन्धनित्यत्वं वेदानामपौरुषेयत्वं श्रुतेरनादित्वमाम्नायानामविदि-
तकर्तृकत्वमित्यादयस्सर्वे विचारा मीमांसकैः प्रस्तुताः । तेषां तर्हीदृशप्रस्तावोऽपि लक्ष्यं च कि-
ञ्चिदधिकृत्यैवेति सम्भावनीयम् ।

वेदेषु सन्ति हि नामान्यृषीणां विविधसूक्तैः सम्बद्धानि । किन्तु ते मन्त्ररचयितार इति न गण्यन्ते ।
किंतिहि वेदग्रन्थपरम्पराक्षका इत्येतावन्मात्रम् । न सन्ति वेदेषूल्लेखा ऐतिहासिकानां पुरुषाणाम् ।
निरुक्ताख्यश्चोपायो मीमांसकानामत्यनुकूलस्सञ्जातो यतो हि तत्रत्या ऐतिहासिका उल्लेखा अपि
सदातनानां सत्यानामेव निर्देष्टृत्वेन व्याख्यातुं शक्यन्ते निरुक्तसाचिव्येन । निरुक्तग्रन्थेऽपि
यद्धि पुनरैतिहासिकं व्याख्यानमिति निरूपितं तदपि नाममात्रेण विहितम् । आध्यात्मिकदृशा
सामासोक्तिकश्लेषिकरूपितकमेव प्राधान्यमापन्नं तत्रेति ।

इदमाकूतमस्य पोल्लाकस्य यद्वेदेष्वैतिहासिकोल्लेखानां रिक्तीकरणं यर्हि संसाधितं तर्हीतिहासस-
म्बद्धविषयतिरोधापनानुगुणमेव सत्यख्यापनं कर्तव्यतयाऽपन्नमिति । (Pollock 1989:609)
यद्यपि वास्तविकघटितकान्येवाधारीकृत्य निरुक्तस्था ऐतिहासिका व्याख्यातुं प्रायतन्त, तथापि
तेषां न कोऽपि ग्रन्थोऽवशिष्टोऽक्षिसाक्षात्क्रियते ।

यावती वै संस्कृतिस्तावती वेदमयत्वेनैव निरूपिता वर्तत इत्याह याचयावतीचत्वेन पोल्लाकः
(Pollock 1989:609) । नयेन ह्यनेन, विद्याजातं समस्तमपि भारतीयानां वेदानुगुणतयैव
निरूपणीयतया प्रतिपन्नम् । मनुस्मृतौ चापि सर्वज्ञानमयो हि स (मनुस्मृतिः २.७) इति
वचनेन वेदानां सर्वज्ञत्वं प्रतिपादितम् । वेदानामनन्तत्वं चानन्ता वै वेदा इति तैत्तिरीयसंहिताया
वचनेन (3.10.11.4) समाम्नातम् । उत्तरोत्तरे च काले भवास्सर्वेऽपि ग्रन्था नानाशास्त्रका
वेदराशन्तर्भविततयैव विभाविता वर्तन्ते । तच्च तैस्स्वस्यैव वेदत्वप्रख्यापनेन यद्वा वेदसंक्षेपकत्वेन
यदपि वा वेदोदिततत्त्वजातनिष्पादितत्वेन । अग्निपुराणं वा भवतु रामायण-महाभारतादिकं
वा भवतु नाट्यशास्त्रं वापि भवतु पञ्चमवेदत्वेनैव व्यपदिदिक्षन्त्यात्मानमेते । वेदानां वेदमिति

छान्दोग्योपनिषदीतिहासपुराणे समकक्ष्यतया लक्षिते स्तो ननु (छान्दोग्योपनिषत् ७.१.२) । न्यायसूत्रभाष्य (४.१.६१) इतिहासशब्देन वास्तविकघटितजातमेव यद्यपि निर्दिष्टं, तथापि यद्धि सदातनं तस्यैव ग्रन्थरूपेणाविष्करणत्वेनैव पर्यवसन्नं तत् । मीमांसा हि व्यक्त्यपेक्षयाऽऽकृतिमेव ननु पुरस्करोति । इदमपि च तत्तत्कालघटितत्वापेक्षया सना पौनःपुन्येनोक्तस्यैव तत्त्वस्य तुलनामारूढम् । रामायणमहाभारतादीनां व्याख्यानमप्यध्यात्मपरत्वेनैव साधारण्येन विवक्ष्यते ननु ? यथा नाम नीलकण्ठेन महाभारतव्याख्याप्रसङ्गे । चतुर्दशविद्यास्थानानां तात्पर्यं समग्रस्यास्य भारतकाव्यस्य च तात्पर्यं च सारतोऽभिन्न एवेत्येकाशयत्वमनयोरविप्रलपनीयम् । महेश्वरतीर्थगोविन्दराजौ श्रीवैष्णवपरम्परापरावप्यधि रामायणमित्थमेव प्रवृत्तौ लक्ष्येते (Pollock 1989:610) ।

अयं तर्हि पोल्लाकस्य सिद्धान्तो यदितिहासोऽपि नाम नात्यन्तमनवस्थितस्संस्कृतवाङ्मये निरूपिते भारते (Pollock 1989:610) । किन्तुर्हान्यसत्यापेक्षया तिरस्कार्यत्वमापन्नो यत्रैतिहासिकस्य सत्यस्य नाम न मौलिकं किमपि ज्ञानदृष्ट्या प्रयोजनम् न वा सामाजिकं किञ्चन प्रयोजनम् । एवञ्च तस्य सिद्धान्तो यद्भारते system (“व्यवस्था”) इत्यस्यैव स्थानम्, न पुनः process (“क्रिया”) इत्यस्य । अर्थात् सामाजिकी या व्यवस्था तस्या एव स्थानं, न पुनर्मानवस्य सर्जनात्मिकायाः प्रवृत्तेरित्याकृत्याभिहितम् । अस्य चानुगमश्चेत्थं यदैतिहासिक्यः परिणतयः (transformations) पूर्वकाले चोत्तरकाले च निराकृता भवन्तीति ।

विमर्शनमनैतिहासिकतारोपस्य

इत्थं पोल्लाकवादजालं पुरो विन्यस्य तद्विमर्शनकार्यं आत्मानमधुना व्यापारयामः । ऐतिहासिकं नाम वाङ्मयं भारतीयानां न भूयस्त्वेन लभ्यमिति विषये विप्रतिपदनं विद्वद्भिर्न कैरपि साधारण्येन क्रियते । इतिहाससम्बन्धिनीमिमां परिस्थितिं भारतस्य परिदेवयन्तो दृश्यन्तेऽपरेऽपि पण्डिताः । तद्यथा मधुराविजयनामकैतिहासिककाव्यसम्पादनसन्दर्भीयपीठिकायां खिद्यति तिरुवेङ्कटाचारी -

“It is an irony that the country with the most ancient civilization should have very few original histories about its past”

(Tiruvengkatachari 1957:6)

भारतीयानामहरहर्जीवनं वर्णयन् आबोयर्-नामा संशोधकश्च पुरातनकालीनानामितिहाससमुद्भि-
खितकानां सरणिं साधरणीमित्थमवतारयति -

“During the entire period of ancient history, royal and local chronicles, when they exist, repeatedly convert historical facts into myth and legend. This complicates considerably the task of the modern historian and occasionally reduces him to the expedient of basing his hypotheses upon deduction alone.”

Auboyer (1961:xi)

नौडौनामा शोधकोऽपि वैयाकरणोदीरितोदाहरणभणितकमाधारीकृत्य कदाचिदिमे भारतीयास्व-
मितिहासं निर्मित्सन्तीति सहस्रमाह –

“The historians of India (4th BC) are reduced to the expedient of
constructing history on a foundation of grammatical examples !”

(Naudou 1956:1454 cited in Auboyer 1961)

नहि सर्वे भारतशास्त्रविदो (Indologists) भारतीयनागरिकताविषये न्यक्करणतत्पराः ।
पोल्लोकगुरुरिङ्गालसोऽत्रोलेख्यो यद्वचांस्यधिकेपगन्धविदूगानि –

“We know nothing of the personal lives of Sanskrit poets, just as they tell
us nothing of the personal lives of their patron. The persons here have
melted into the types of poet and king.”

Ingalls (1965:24)

परं दोषानाविद्धं किमपि नास्त्येव पुनर्भारतीयनागरिकतायां पोल्लोकस्य दृष्टौ प्रायेण । दक्षिणेष्वाभाग
एष सर्वोऽपि सर्वमनुष्यशोषणभूमिरमुष्य मते । परन्तु शृण्वन्तु बाषाम् (Basham) इत्यस्य
व्यतिरेरिचानं वचनमिदं यज्जगत्पुन्यत्र न कापि प्रजासु मध्ये पारस्परिकस्सम्बन्धः प्रजानां
राज्यस्य च सम्बन्धश्चैतावान् न्याय्य आसीदेतावांश्च मानुष्यभरश्च (humane) । नान्यत्र
नागरिकतायां दासानां सङ्ख्या तावत्यल्पा वासीत्तथाच न काप्यन्यस्यामाद्यायां नागरिकतायां
कस्यामपि जनानामधिकाराणां (rights) तादृक्षं समीचीनं संरक्षणं यथा अर्थशास्त्र इह कौटलीय
इति । रणाङ्गणे धर्मयुद्धप्रकारश्च यथा मनुना घोषितस्तथा न काप्यन्यत्रापीषदपीति (Basham
1967:8-9) ।

यत्तु पोल्लोकः साक्रोशमुदगिरत्सर्वं वेदसाद्विहितमत्रेति (Pollock 1989:609), यच्च क्रैस्ता
मतान्तरकरणपरायणा जगर्जुर्दुर्भिक्षदूरोग(वर्णव्यवस्थाख्य)दौर्जन्यप्रभृतिभिश्शोषितास्सम-
भवन्दुःखदौर्मनस्यभरिताश्च प्रजा अत्रत्या इति तस्योभयस्यापि प्रत्याख्यानं बाषामेनैव प्रतमस्ति
(Basham 1967:9) यजनारस्सम्यगेव नूनमनूनं सौख्यमन्वभवन्नैन्द्रियिकाणाम् अतीन्द्रियिका-
णामुभयेषामपीति ।

अथ च स्वीये भारतीयार्थशास्त्रमतानाम् इतिहास(History of Indian Political Ideas)
इत्यभिधे पुस्तके घोषलाख्यो जुघोष(U N Ghoshal) यत्प्राचीनभारतीयवैलक्षण्यनिरूपकल-
क्षमत्रयमभिलक्ष्य प्रोक्तमरविन्देन महर्षिरिति व्यपदिष्टेन (Aurobindo) यन्नाम प्राथम्येनाध्यात्मि-
कता भारतीयानाम् यच्च तेषां चित्तस्य वैशिष्ट्यस्य द्योतकम् ; द्वितीयं तेषां जीवनोत्साहोऽदम्यो
यदुत्था प्रभूता सर्जनशीलता ; तृतीयमन्तिमं च दृढा मनीषिता यत्र नाम प्रागल्भ्यमार्दवे सहैव
स्तस्सारल्याढ्यत्वे चापि सहैव स्त इत्यादिकम् (Ghoshal 1959:3) ।

वेदराशिरितिहासश्च

यत्तु पोल्हाकेन लपितं वेदस्य यत्प्रामुख्यं प्रक्तं तेन धर्मज्ञानस्यान्यद्वाराणि निरस्तानि सन्तीति तदपि व्युदस्तं वेदेनैव । यदाह श्रुतिस्मृतिः प्रत्यक्षमैतिह्यमनुमानश्चतुष्टयम् (तैत्तिरीयारण्यकम् १.२.१) इति । वचनेनानेन वेदोक्तमात्रस्य प्रामाण्यं प्राधान्यं वा, प्रत्यक्षादिकस्य नावकाशप्रसङ्ग इति वा वादस्तस्य पोल्हाकस्य समस्तो निरस्तो भवति । एवं चैतिह्यस्यापि स्थानं दत्तमस्तीति हेतुना यच्छब्दोक्तं तस्यापि प्रामाण्यमूरीकृतं लक्ष्यते यदाह सायणो भाष्ये स्वीय ऐतिह्यं विवृण्वन्नैतिह्यं नामेतिहासपुराणमहाभारतब्राह्मणादिकमिति । एवं ज्ञानद्वाराणां समेषां स्थानं यथोचितमुपपादितमेव लक्ष्यते । मन्त्रस्यास्य भावं विवृण्वान आह सायणस्तदेतत्स्मृत्यादिचतुष्टयं धर्मयाथार्थ्यावगतिकारणीभूतं प्रमाणमिति ।

मार्क्स(Marx)वादानुयायी पोल्हाको मार्क्सवादाभिघातकमभिप्रायमेवमभिलषतीत्यपि विस्मय-स्यैव विषयः । “यद्धि नाम तार्किकं तद्धि स्वस्मिन्नेवेतिहासिकमन्तर्भावयति (The logical contains within itself the historical) इति बत मार्क्सवादिनां सूत्रम् (Frolov 1984:174) । इत्युक्ते मार्क्सवादिनामयमाग्रहो यन्मार्क्सवाद एव वस्तुतो वस्तुतत्त्वानुसारी । आतश्चेतिहासस्सर्वोऽपि मार्क्सवादिनां नयमेवानुसृत्य घटिष्यत इति । मार्क्सवादसिद्धान्तानुसार-मेव खलु जगति सर्वं सर्वदा प्रसिद्ध्यतीति ! मार्क्सर्कस्य महिमाऽयं यद्राज्यं समाज इत्यादिकं सर्वमपि मार्क्सर्कमेवानुरुणद्धीति । पश्चात्काले तु धनिकाराधनरूपः (capitalism) सिद्धान्तो नङ्क्ष्यति समाजवादश्च विराजत इत्यादिकं सर्वं मार्क्सवादादेव सेत्स्यतीत्याह फ्रोलोव् (Frolov) नामकः । वस्तुतस्तु तत्सर्वं नैव जगति जघट इति पामरैरपि परिज्ञातमेव ।

इतिहासपुराणानां यदान्तरिकार्थपरिकल्पनं तात्त्विकार्थविभाजनं वा (यदेव allegorical interpretation इति कथयन्ति) तदधिकृत्य स्वामसम्पत्तिं दिशति पोल्हाकः । वेदमन्त्राणामर्थत्रयमा-हुर्वेदव्याख्यातार आधिभौतिकमाधिदैविकमाध्यात्मिकं चेति तावदास्ताम् । नानास्तरीयव्याख्यानं तावत् क्रैस्तेष्वपि वर्तत एवेति (क्वचिच्च स्तरसप्तकात्मकमपीति च) पोल्हाको ज्ञापनीयः ।

कुतः खलु हिन्दुभिश्चैनैरिव(Chinese)घटितलिखितिनैव विहितेति मर्मोद्घाटनमार्गनाख्येन विदुषैवं न्यरूपि ।

“Hindus did not preserve records as diligently as the Chinese did, “what the Hindus felt worth preserving was the meaning of events, not a record of when events took place.””

Organ (1970:30-31)

कीथोऽपि कारणमेवमूहाश्चक्रे यत्कालतत्त्वस्यैव भारतीयैस्सङ्ख्यावद्भिर्गौणस्थानपरिकल्पितकं हेतुरत्रेति ।

“Indifference to chronology is seen everywhere in India, and must be definitely connected, in the ultimate issue, with the quite secondary character ascribed to time by philosophies.”

(Keith 1920:146-147)

इतिहासविषये पाश्चात्यानामाग्रहविशेषो लक्ष्यते यदनुसारं च ते महाभारतमूलकथा नामाहवमा-
त्रिकेति प्रतिपिपादयिषन्ति । परन्तु नहि पाश्चात्यानां मानदण्डा एव मानार्हताभ्युपेयाः । यथाह
हीहसाख्यो विद्वान् ।

“Europe’s literary criteria were not applicable to India. Albrecht Weber’s idea that the original *Mahābhārata* consisted only of the battle chapters was a case of ‘arguing from Homer’.”

(Heehs 2003:177-178)

हेगेलोक्तं(Hegel) सर्वज्ञप्रमाणमिति मन्यन्ते नैके विद्वांसो यच्च हाल्बफासो वा रंजनघोषो वा
नोररीकुर्युः । हेगेलोक्तं पाश्चात्येतिहासमात्रान्वयीत्याह हाल्बफासः ।

“Hegel’s scheme of the history of philosophy is primarily designed to deal with the history of European thought from Thales to Kant and Hegel himself... where in this scheme does Asia, and India in particular, have its place ?”

(Halbfass 1988:88)

पाश्चात्यानामैकदेशिक्यः प्रतीतयस्सर्वदेशिकतया न निभालनीया इति, स्वानुकूलानिर्वर्तकत्वेन
परिकल्पितानां क्रमाणां नहि सर्वान्वयित्वमित्यप्याह घोषाख्यो विपश्चित्² । भारतीयाश्चिन्तन-
प्रणाल्यः पेषां प्रक्रिया अवश्यमतिशेरेत इत्येव घण्टाघोषं घोषयति घोषः ।

“Compared to other civilisations that view history in term of thousands of years, the Indians – Buddhists, Jains and Hindus – narrated it in terms of billions of years...”

(Ghosh 2007:213-4)

अपि च नैतिहासिकत्वमेव गरीयस्तत्त्वं, विशिष्टातिरेकि हि सामान्यमित्यादिकमपि तस्यैव
भणितिः³ ।

नीट्शेप्रोक्तपशुमानवभिदायाः प्रतीपत्वमेव प्रतीयत उक्तावस्याम् । “नृपशुश्चवा पशुपतिः” “स
योगी ह्यथवा पशुः” इत्याद्युक्तिवदत्रापि बहीरूपसाम्यमवालोक्ष्यते । (अधुनन् मूर्धानं नृपशुश्चवा
पशुपतिरिति जगन्नाथोक्तिः ; सुभाषितेन गीतेन युवतीनां च लीलया । मनो न भिद्यते यस्य स योगी
ह्यथवा पशुः ॥ इत्येवंरूपके सुभाषिते चात्रोल्लेख्ये ।)

इतिहासप्रज्ञा हिन्दुषु किं नासीदेव ? इति प्रश्नमेव स्वलेखस्य शीर्षिकात्वेन प्रतिपद्यमानोऽरविन्द-शर्मा (Arvind Sharma) तावद् भारतीयानां रुचिविषये सामर्थ्यविषये च नैकानि सत्यान्य-धीतिहासं प्राचीकटत् । तत्रत्याः केचनांशा अवश्योद्ग्रेख्या अत्र । शिलाशासनानां प्रामुख्यं भार-तेतिहासे विशदीकुर्वन्कांश्चन मुख्यानंशानेवं स द्योतयति ।

यद्यपि सन्ति नानाप्रकारा इतिहासविलेखने, शिलाशासनानि ताम्रपत्राणि च परं भागं गृह्णन्ति भारतीयेतिहाससन्दर्भे । कियन्त्यासञ्छिलाशासनानि कुत्र च कुतश्चेति विवेच्यमेव । दक्षिणभारते नवतिसहस्रं शिलाशासनानां लभ्यत इति विलिखति सर्कारः (Sircar) इति तन्मतमादावाविष्करोति ।

“The favoured medium in which the rulers of India left behind their records are inscriptions. About 90,000 inscriptions have so far been discovered in different parts of India...Many of these inscriptions have not yet been published. Every year new inscriptions are being discovered.”

(Sircar 1977:91)

शकवर्षगणन उपयुज्यमानैः प्रकारैरपि भारतीयानामितिहासप्रज्ञा स्पष्टीभवति । त्रयोदशगणनाप्र-कारानुल्लिखति बाषम् (Basham) । बाषमस्य पट्टिकैवम्प्रकारिका – (अल्बिरूनी(Al Biruni) चापि किञ्चिद्विन्वांश्चतुर्दशप्रकारान्निर्दिशति ।)

“A. L. Basham lists [these eras]

- 1 Era of the Kaliyuga (3102 BC) ;
- 2 Śrī Lankan Buddha Era (544 BC) ;
- 3 Era of Mahāvīra (528 BC) ;
- 4 Vikrama Era (58 BC) ;
- 5 Śaka Era (78 AD) ;
- 6 Licchavi Era (110 AD) ;
- 7 Kalacūrī Era (248 AD) ;
- 8 Gupta Era (320 AD) ;
- 9 Harṣa Era (606 AD) ;
- 10 Kollam Era of Malabār (825 AD) ;
- 11 Nevār Era (878 AD) ;

12 Era of Vikramāditya VI Cālukya (1075 AD); and

13 Lakṣmaṇa Era of Bengal (1119 AD).”

(Sharma 2003:208 fn)

सुराज्यव्यवस्थासु निबन्धपुस्तकपत्रिकास्वारोप्य रक्षणीयानंशानक्षपटलनिरूपणप्रसङ्गे कौटल्यस्सू-
चयति ।

अक्षपटलप्रक्रिया कौटलीयप्रोक्ता तावदवश्यमविगणनीया ।

“अक्षपटलम् अध्यक्षः प्राङ्मुखमुदङ्मुखं वा विभक्तोपरस्थानं निबन्धपुस्तकस्थानं कारयेत् । तत्र अधिकरणानां सङ्ख्यां, प्रचारसजाताग्रं, क्रमान्तानां द्रव्यप्रयोगे वृद्धिक्षयव्ययप्रयामव्याजीयोग-
स्थानवेतनविष्टिप्रमाणं, रत्नसारफल्गुकुप्यानामर्घप्रतिवर्णकप्रतिमानमानोन्मानावमानभाण्डं, देश-
ग्रामजातिकुलसङ्घानां धर्मव्यवहारचरित्रसंस्थानं, राजोपजीविनां प्रग्रहप्रदेशभोगपरिहारभक्तवेतन-
लाभं, राज्ञश्च पत्नीपुत्राणां रत्नभूमिलाभं, निर्देशौत्पातिकप्रतीकारलाभं, मित्रामित्राणां च सन्धि-
विक्रमप्रदानादानं, निबन्धपुस्तकस्थं कारयेत् । ततः सर्वाधिकरणानां करणीयं सिद्धं शेषं आयव्ययौ
नीवीम् उपस्थानं प्रचारचरित्रसंस्थानं च निबन्धेन प्रयच्छेत् ॥”

कौटलीयार्थशास्त्रम् २.७.१⁴

चोलराज्येष्वक्षपटलपद्धतिः कियत्यद्भुतासीदिति बाषमनिरूपितकमवलोकनीयम् । स आह -

“To transmit the royal decrees a corps of secretaries and clerks was maintained, and remarkable precautions were taken to prevent error. Under the Colas, for instance, orders were first written by scribes at the king’s dictation, and the accuracy of the drafts was attested by competent witnesses. Before being sent to their recipients they were carefully transcribed, and a number of witnesses, sometimes amounting to as many as thirteen, again attested them. In the case of grants of land and privileges an important court official was generally deputed to ensure that the royal decrees were put into effect. Thus records were kept with great care, and nothing was left to chance; the royal scribes themselves were often important personages.”

(Basham 1999:100)

चीनदेशीययात्रिकेन जुयन् जाङ्गेन (Zuanzang = Hiuen Tsang) पुनः - प्रतिपुरं (every district) लेख्यराशेरुल्लेखः कृत - इति वदति बीलाख्य इतिहासवित् । (Beal 1969:78) । परन्त्वधुना तानि लेख्यानि नैव लभ्यन्ते ! साधारण्येन जुयन् जाङ्गेन दत्तेषु ह्युल्लेखेषु प्रत्ययः महत्तरः वर्ततेऽन्यदतोऽल्लेखापेक्षया ।

वंशावलिविलेखन एव प्रधान आदरो भारतीयानामिति थापरपि निरूपयति यश्चाद्यावध्यनिरुद्ध इति च ।

“The core of historical tradition in India was the genealogical records. These have remained constant in the Indian scene throughout the centuries and in fact up to the present day”

(Thapar 1978:278)

यच्च शास्त्रेषु पूर्वाचार्यादीनां स्मरणानि कृतानि तान्यपीतिहासदृष्टिमेव भारतीयानां स्पष्टीकुर्वन्ति । अरविन्दशर्मा उल्लिखति प्रकृष्टानाकरान्कांश्चनावलम्ब्य यन्महर्षिणा पाणिनिना पूर्वाचार्याणां चतुष्पष्टिरुल्लिखिता वर्तत इति । एवमेव चरकाचार्येण पञ्चाशदधिकाः पूर्वे विशेषज्ञा भरतमुनिना पुनश्शताधिकाः पूर्वाचार्यास्स्मर्यन्ते । अर्थशास्त्रेऽप्यनेकेषां पूर्वाचार्याणामुल्लेखः कृतः । (Sharma 2003:215)

न केवलं काव्येषु शास्त्रेषु चापि तु कलास्वप्यैतिहासिकांशानिरूपणमप्रतिहतमासीत् । अत्रसन्दर्भे स्टैटेन्क्रान्त्यनेन प्रतिपादिताः कलाकृतिषु लभ्याः ऐतिहासिकांशा आद्रियन्ते । पल्लववृत्तिका-लीनगङ्गाधरमूर्तिरूपणं समुद्रगुप्तस्यावदातकर्मणो शिल्पद्वारा निरूपणमुदयगिरौ चोलोखमत्रार्हतः (Sharma 2003:216) ।

अत्र सन्दर्भे गवेषणीयोऽपरोऽशोऽपि वर्तते । तच्च कुतः खलु दक्षिणभारत इयन्ति शिलाशासनानि पत्राणि लभ्यन्ते न पुनरुत्तरे भारत इति । स्पियराख्यविदुषोऽभिप्रायं सङ्कलनरविन्दशर्मा वक्ति -

“[That inscriptions] relatively abound in those areas where Islamic rule took longest to penetrate, invites the proposition that they may also have suffered iconoclastic destruction, in keeping with the pattern of the relative paucity of such evidence from the Hindu period available from areas under prolonged Islamic rule”

(Spear (1994) cited in Sharma 2003:13)

तुरुष्कैः परधर्षणतत्परैर्विनाशकार्यमतितरां विततमिति सूचयति विट्जेलपि । स आह -

“In Nepal the temperate climate and the *almost complete absence of Muslim incursions* worked together to preserve these old mss.”

(Witzel 1990:9) (*italics ours*)

विट्जेलवाक्यमनुमोदमानश्चारविन्दशर्मा तुरुष्कविहितध्वंसकार्यैकान्तिक्यं सुष्ठु स्फुटयति ।

“An extreme case of the conspiracy of negative forces in relation to the manuscript tradition is provided by Kashmir, where ‘no mss. older than c. 1500 AD remain. Local Hindu and Muslim chroniclers agree in blaming the Sultans Sikander and Ali (1389-1419/20) for their wholesale destruction by burning and dumping them in the Dal Lake’.”

(Sharma 2003:212)

दौर्जन्यैकनिलयैस्तैस्तथाविहितं तुरुष्कैरिति तुरुष्कैतिहासिकैरपि प्रतिपन्नमिति चात्र स स्पष्टं सूचयति ।

भारतीयं विज्ञानं तैरेव नाशितमिति अल्बिरूनीनामकेनैतिहासिकेन स्वतः प्रोक्तमिति सचौमतमु-
दाहरत्यरविन्दशर्मा ।

“As a result of Maḥmūd’s devastating raids ‘Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places where our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares, and other places.’”

(Sachau cited in Sharma 2003:212)

यथा देवालयस्तथैव भारतीयकलाकृतयोऽपि तुरुष्कैर्नाशिताः इति विट्जेलप्यङ्गीकरोति

“...Hindu historiography suffered serious obscuration during the period of Islamic occupation, as this period also involved the destruction of holy images and temples which were one form of material in which such history was preserved.”

(Sharma 2003:220)

अत्र श्रीवरस्य राजतरङ्गिण्यां विद्यमानमेतद्वचनमुत्तेखाहं यत्र ग्रन्थालयानामेवाग्निसात्करणं
नीचैस्तुरुष्कैर्विहितमिति स्पष्टमुद्घुष्टम् –

सेकन्धरधरानाथो यवनैः प्रेरितः पुरा ।

पुस्तकानि च सर्वाणि तृणान्यग्निरिवादहत् ॥ (१.५.७५)

उपसमाप्तिं लिखत्यरविन्दशर्मा स्वलेखे सम्पूर्णध्वंसकार्यस्य तुरुष्कनिष्पादितस्य स्वरूपं निरूपयन्
यत्तद्विद्ध पूर्णत्वं ध्वंसविजृम्भितस्य यद्ध्वंसकार्यं सञ्जातमित्यपि सूचिकाः नावशेष्यन्ते ।
अर्थादीदृग्विधनिःशेषप्रमार्जनपटवस्तुरुष्का इति ।

“The perfect genocide is one which never occurred, because no one was left behind to tell the story. The point to be made is that the scale of destruction can be such as destroys the very evidence of that destruction. One then faces what might be called an evidentiary “black hole.”

(Sharma 2003:220)

तक्षशिलानालन्दाख्यविश्वविद्यालयद्वयविध्वंसनं विहितं खलु तुलुचैः । तादृक्षाधुनिकविश्वविद्यालयस्य आक्स्फर्ड्-केम्ब्रिड्ज्जालयस्य सग्रन्थालयस्य विध्वंसनं यद्यद्य विधीयते का तर्हि कथा स्यादाङ्ग्लेतिहासनिर्मितिशास्त्रस्येति प्रष्टव्यं भवति ।

“By the end of the 12th century the two major universities of ancient India, those of Takṣaśilā and Nālandā had disappeared...What prospect would we hold out for British historiography in the future, if the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were utterly destroyed today along with all the libraries.”

(Sharma 2003:222)

एतादृशमहत्तरग्रन्थराशिनिशानोत्तरकालेऽप्यद्यापि कोटित्रयाधिकहस्तप्रतयः प्राधान्येन संस्कृत-भाषया लभ्यन्ते इत्युक्ते (गोयलप्रभृतयः Goyal et al (2012)) कियान् पर्वताकारो ग्रन्थस्तोमः भारतैर्विरचितस्यादित्यूहनेकविषयः ।

स्वेतरसर्वसंस्कृतिविद्वेषिभिर्मुस्लिमैरेतादृक्कुत्सितधिकरणीयकृत्येषु नित्यमुद्धृतं प्रवृत्तैः पाश्चात्य-ग्रन्थालया न पश्चात्काले नाशयिष्यन्त इति के नामाशंसीरन्प्रेक्षावन्तस्सप्रत्ययम् ?

विमर्शनं मीमांसामतदूषणस्य

अथ पोल्याकेनोत्थापितानामनेकेषां वेदमीमांसायामधिकृतानां प्रश्नानामुत्तमानुत्तराण्यनन्दकुमारस्वामिनो (Ananda Coomaraswamy 1877-1947) लेखेषु लभ्यन्ते । वेदा वा तदङ्गभूतानि शास्त्राण्यन्यानि वा तत्समकक्षानि भगवतो निःश्वसितानीति वा व्याहृतय इति वा निर्दिश्यन्ते ननु (Coomaraswamy 1934:175) । ते चादावृषिभिः श्रूयन्ते । ऋषीणामपि श्रवणं स्वमतिस्फूर्तिनिबन्धनतापेक्षयाप्यन्तरसमाहिततानिबन्धनमेवेति विषये न विशेषते विद्वन्मणयः । वाल्मीकिरपि सर्वं रामायणं योगदृष्ट्या विलोकयति स्म यत्र चिरनिर्वृतानि वृत्तान्तान्यपि प्रत्यक्षमिव दर्शितानि भवन्ति । तादृक्षस्य प्रतिभानस्य मूलं चर्वेदेऽप्यक्षिलक्षीभवति । सन्दर्भेऽस्मिन् ब्लूमफील्डस्या(Bloomfield)भिप्रायमानन्दकुमारस्वामी पुनरुचरति । मन्त्रब्राह्मणे भिन्नकालिक इत्याधुनिकानामाग्रहः खलु । तयोर्भिन्नकालिकत्वमकिञ्चित्करम् । वस्तुतस्तु ब्राह्मस्यैव वाङ्मयस्य प्रकारद्वयदेश्य एव ते । तच्च प्रकारद्वयं समकालिकतयैव विभावितमा च बहोः कालात्परम्परायां भारतीयायाम् । एतच्च सर्वं तु ब्रौनाभिमतानात्यन्तं भिन्नम् (Norman Brown) यस्तावदाह यद्वेदे वस्तुतोऽनुलिखितानामेव विषयाणां प्रसरणमुत्तरस्मिन्काले लोचनगोचरीभवतीति (“The later material is so liable to follow ideals not really in the R̥gveda” Brown 1931:108) । एतत्प्रतिद्वन्द्वितयोपनिषत्स्वपि नूतनास्सिद्धान्ता नाविष्क्रियन्त इत्याह कुमारस्वामी, किंतर्हि नूतना विभिन्ना वा शब्दावलारेव तत्र प्रयुज्यमाना लक्ष्यत इति । उदाहरणार्थं यं वरुणमाहुर्वेदे तमेव ब्रह्माणमुत्तरस्मिन् काले जगदुः ।

एतावता भाषिकी विभिन्नता परिष्कृतता वा नास्त्युपनिषत्सु वैदिकापेक्षयेति नोररीकरणीयापतति ।
तथा त्वास्थानुं प्रेक्षावता केन नाम प्रक्रम्येत ।

“It is not, of course, intended to deny that there is a linguistic development in the Upaniṣads, when we compare them with Ṛgveda, which denial would be absurd...”

(Coomaraswamy 1935a:411)

साहित्येतिहासोऽपरस्तत्त्वशास्त्रीयेतिहासोऽपरः । यदेव वेदेष्वधियज्ञतयाभिहितं, तदेव ब्राह्मणेषू-
पनिषत्सु चाध्यात्मपरतयोपदिष्टं भवति । न ह्यधियज्ञे निरूप्यमाणे साहित्येऽधितत्त्वमपि तावत्यैव
स्फुटतया निरूपितं भवत्वित्याग्रहो ग्रहीतव्यः । वैदिकं नाम वाङ्मयमतिविस्तृतं सदपि नह्यन्तरिकः
कोऽपि विरोधस्तत्र कुत्रचिदधिगम्यत इति न गरीयसो विस्मयस्य विषयः ।

“It is true that the material is so extensive, and so infallibly consistent with itself... it is by no means impossible to extract from the mantras the doctrines assumed in them.”

(Coomaraswamy 1935a:412)

यथा ब्लूमफील्ड आह — वेदस्य सर्वोऽपि भागः सर्वमितरं भागं सम्यगेव वेत्ति, सर्वस्सर्वेण च
सुसम्बद्ध एव संलक्ष्यत इति । अतो यज्ञेभ्यस्तत्त्वानि तत्त्वेभ्यश्च यज्ञानवसातुं न न पारयन्ति
मनीषिणः ।

“[I have] a growing faith in the synchronism of *mantra*, *brāhmaṇa* and *sūtra*...*mantra* and *brāhmaṇa* are for the least part chronological distinctions; that they represent two modes of literary activity, and two modes of literary speech, which are largely contemporaneous, the *mantra* being the earliest lyric and the *brāhmaṇas* the earliest epic-didactic manifestation of the same cycle of thought. Both forms existed together, for aught we know, from earliest times; only the redaction of the *mantra* collections in their present arrangement seems on the whole to have preceded the redaction of the *brāhmaṇas*...”

(Bloomfield 1893:144)

एड्जर्टनोऽप्याद्यासूपनिषत्सु निगदितानां तत्त्वानां समेषां निदानस्याम्नायवाङ्मयानुपलम्भनीय-
त्वस्य निराकरणं कण्ठोक्तं प्रवक्ति (Edgerton 1916:197)।

“The more I study the Upaniṣads, the more I become impressed... [that] every idea contained in at least the older Upaniṣads, with almost no exceptions, is not new to the Upaniṣads, but can be found set forth, or at least very clearly foreshadowed, in the older Vedic texts.”

अर्थाच्चे हि नाम मन्त्रकृतो मानुषा वा अतिमानुषा वा स्वोक्तिभिरसेयानंशान् सम्यगेव प्रत्यपद्यन्तेत्येव वक्तव्यं भवति । (Coomaraswamy 1935a:412) नो चेद् गणितसूत्राणि बहूनि केनचन कथञ्चिदज्ञात्वैव विलिखितानीति ब्रूवतो वचने यस्साहसस्स एव वक्तव्य आपतिष्यति । तथापि च तस्य भाषिकी तात्त्विकी चान्तरस्फूर्तिरभ्युपगन्तव्या भविष्यति (Coomaraswamy 1935a:412) ।

“what in fact the consistency proves is that those who composed the *mantras*, whether human or superhuman beings, must have been fully aware of all their implications, or if not it would be as if we had come upon a series of elegant mathematical formulae, and yet believed that they had been written down blindly, which is as much to say under verbal as well as theoretical inspiration.”

वेदेषु ताक्षिकं ज्ञान(knowledge of carpentry)मभिलक्ष्यत इत्यनेन हेतुना, लोकेऽपि तादृशस्य ज्ञानस्य पश्चादेव तथा वचनं शक्यसंभवमिति हेतोश्च तत्रत्यं साहित्यं काथञ्चित्कं मानुष्यकमिति चैतिहासिकमिति चाभ्युगन्तव्यमेव । (Coomaraswamy 1935a:412)

“it is impossible to suppose that the Veda in its present form could have antedated, let us say, a knowledge of carpentry, which means that the *ipsissima verba* of the Veda, as distinct from their references, must be thought of as in some sense of human and temporal origin.”

सनातनस्य धर्मस्य सनातनत्वं नाम नहि वेदगतानां शब्दानां तथात्वेनाभिसन्धानं किंतर्हि तत्रत्यानां तत्त्वानां चिरन्तनत्वम् (Coomaraswamy 1935a:412) । वैदिकसाहित्यकालसंसूचनमात्रा-देव वेदानां सनातनत्वं न विहन्यते ।

“It is not with respect to the words in which it is recorded that the *sanātana dharma* is eternal; the “eternity” of tradition has nothing to do with the possible “dating” of a given scripture as late as the first millennium BC.”

ऐतिहासिकस्य क्रमस्य विषयेऽप्यानन्दकुमारस्वामी वक्तुमेवमभिलषति यत् तात्त्विकं नाम विभावनं पाश्चात्यैरादृतेन क्रमेण तावद् विवर्धमानं लक्ष्यते । किञ्च साधारण्येनोच्यमाने, बहुत्र चापि, पारम्परिक्युक्तिरिवाक्काले स्वस्या उल्लिखिततामेव सूचयति, न पुनस्वस्या ऐदम्प्राथम्यमाविष्कारस्य, यतस्ततोऽपि पूर्वं तस्या मौखिकः प्रचार एव वरीवर्ति स्म, येन च हेतुना तस्य चायमेव कर्तेत्यास्थातुं प्रायेण नैव शक्यं स्यात् । विषयेऽस्मिन् रेने ग्वेनोन् (Rene Guenon) इत्यस्य मेधाविनोऽभिप्रायाणां साङ्गत्यं स निरूपयति (Coomaraswamy 1947:73)।

“On the limitation of the historical method, Cf. Rene Guenon, *Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, 1945 pp. 18, 20, 58, 65, 237, 300. Historical

method is only of limited value here, partly because metaphysical doctrines, 'do not 'evolve' in the Western sense of the word,' and partly because 'in a general way and in most instances a traditional text is no more than a recording, at a relatively recent date, of a teaching which was originally transmitted by word of mouth, and to which an author can rarely be assigned'."

नैरुक्तिकैतिहासिकमताभिवीक्षणं ब्लूमफील्डेनापि पोष्टागभिप्रेतोच्चाटकत्वेनैवेव विहितमिति विदा-
ङ्कुर्वन्तु विद्वांसः (Bloomfield 1893:186)

"The Indian *nairuktas* and *aitihāsikas*, and after them the commentators, never hesitate to urge the primary naturalistic conceptions which they have established somewhere or the other, correctly or incorrectly, through every legend which they have occasion to present. Western interpreters have... largely fallen into the error of marking pretty nearly every legendary narrative the *corpus vile* of naturalistic anatomy."

अन्येभ्यो देशेभ्य आगता "आर्या" इति कश्चन पाश्चात्यो वादोऽपि वर्तते खलु ! यमधिकृत्य ब्रुवन् कुमारस्वाम्याह यत्तादृशं लौकिकीकृतं व्याख्यानं (यस्य च euhemeristic interpretation इत्यभिधानं वर्तते) तावन्मात्रं स्यात्, यस्य तु वस्तुतः ऐतिहासिकस्सारो न कश्चिद् वर्तते इति (Coomaraswamy 1935b:vii) । वैदिकोक्तकथानामनुहारिण्य ऐतिहासिक्यो घटना न जात्वसम्भवा इति नास्माकमभिप्रायो यतो ह्यैतिहासिकमपि नाम वस्तु तात्त्विकमेवानुहरेत्तत्र तत्र । नेदमप्यतथ्यं यत्तत्त्वैकपरेऽपि हि साहित्य ऐतिहासिका अंशा दुरूहा इति । यज्ञकार्याणि कुर्वाणैर्मन्त्रगानं च कुर्वद्भिर्वैदिकैश्वा वा रथा वा न विदिता इति वक्तुं न पार्यते नाम, न वा तैर्नानुभूतं नदीनां समुद्राणां वा तरणमिति, न वा कृषिस्तैरविदिता चेति ।

कुमारस्वामिना तावदिदमास्थितं यदृग्वेदादिषु मूलग्रन्थेष्वैतिहासिका एव विषया निरूपिता इति न वक्तुं पार्यते । किंतर्हि "अग्ने" इत्युक्तदिशा तात्त्विकेन प्रकारेण । "अग्ने" इति तु तात्त्विकं वचनं न वास्तविकद्व्यर्थनम् । जीवनं हि नाम सर्वदा तरणमेव, सर्वदापि कुतश्चिदिहागमनमेव, इतश्च परमं पदं प्रति प्रस्थानमेव । पूर्वमीमांसाया आशयो नामेदृश एव, परन्तु स्वतन्त्रेण प्रकारेणात्र निरूपित इति लेखं स्वं समापयति कुमारस्वामी (Coomaraswamy 1935b:25) ।

इतीत्थं नामोत्तरकालीनानां पोष्टाकवादानामुत्तमान्युत्तराणि स्वतःपूर्वपक्षीकृत्येव पूर्वकालीनेन कुमारस्वामिनापूर्वयोक्तमया भङ्ग्या प्रतानीति शम् ॥

"निष्कारुण्यतमैस्तुरुष्कयवनैर्निष्कारणद्वेषिभिः"

आकरग्रन्थाः

Arthaśāstra. See Venkatanathacharya (1960).

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- Manusmṛti***. See Shastri (1983).
- Nighaṇṭu and Nirukta***. See Sarup (1967).
- Nyāyasūtras and Bhāṣya***. See Joshi (1922).
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Notes

¹("contrary to accepted belief, the idea of history did not constitute in itself an important philosophical, religious or cultural question in antiquity, and that history was largely marginalised in both philosophical and popular thought" Pollock (1989:605)

²"To categorize the Indian concept of history as prehistory within Hegelian principles or strategic British historiographic imperialist schemes is cutting down the richness

of possibility as “historicality shrinks in scope to enable a narrowly constructed historiography to speak for all of history.”(Ghosh 2007:216)

³“Indian history can flaunt the luxury of achronicity and ahistoricity... The Indian mind would prefer the “general to the particular”, and meaning to chronology.”(Ghosh 2007:213)

⁴“An office of very great importance, situated in the capital, is the Akṣapaṭāla. It is a sort of records-cum-audit office. There is an adhyakṣa in charge, with a special building of his own with many halls and record rooms (2.7.1). The records to be maintained there pertain to

- (1) the activity of each state department,
- (2) the working of state factories and conditions governing production in them,
- (3) prices, samples and standards of measuring instruments for various kinds of goods,
- (4) laws, transactions, customs, and regulations in force in different regions, villages, castes, families and corporations,
- (5) salaries and other perquisites of state servants,
- (6) what is made over to the king and other members of the royal family, and
- (7) payments made to and amounts received from foreign princes, whether allies or foe (2.7.2). A more comprehensive record-house can hardly be thought of.”

(Kangle 1988, Vol.3:201)

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Chapter 5

The Science of the Sacred

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Abstract

The profound notion of the sacred (*pavitratā*) is critical to understand the variegated Indian knowledge systems (*śāstra*-s) and their associated practices. Modern *sanātana dharma* embodies these knowledge systems and is reified in its practices and various *dharma*-s. The fundamental and inherent limitations of Western scholarship arising mostly due to its origins, structure and evolution cannot grasp or confront the existence of such a conceptualization as a core structural and governing principle. The origins of Indological scholarship entwined with the colonial obsession of “othering” and its use as a tool to aid oppressive regimes has been well-discussed and documented. The neo-Orientalists (Sheldon Pollock and others) have redefined post-colonial Indology, using creative and sophisticated applications of Western (combinations of Marxism, philology, and postmodernism) methods and theories to Indian systems of knowledge. The roots of the obsession of neo-Orientalist desacralisation (and of *videśī* Indology in general) and its echoes in Indian secular discourse - the irreverence for *sanātanīc* conceptualizations of *pavitratā* are explicated in this paper.

*pp 151–168. In Kannan, K. S. (Ed.) (2019). *Swadeshi Critique of Videshi Mīmāṃsā*. Chennai: Infinity Foundation India.

The notion of the **sacred** - as defined by Western systems of knowledge - religious (Abrahamic), (Western) secular and (Western) scientific are discussed and juxtaposed with the *dhārmic* notion of “sacredness”. The role of science and the associated discourse replacing the “sacred” in Western collective conscience and ideology is illustrated. The distributed and natural sense of Indian *pavitratā* and the centralized, institutionally enforced artificial sense of sacred of the West are contrasted. The flawed understanding of the sense of sacred and the obsession with Westernizing (liberating) India is established as the root cause of the neo-Orientalist obsession with the desacralisation of Sanskrit, *saṁskṛti* and *saṁātana dharma*.

Preliminaries

The notion of the sacred is essential to the praxis-driven “discourse” of *dhārmic* living. The sense of sacred underlies all human activity and is embedded in the consciousness of *dhārmic* civilizational ethos. Every human activity, even the most mundane (from waking up to falling asleep), has deep sacred connotations. The bodies of knowledge specific to various *sampradāya*-s (ex: the *āhnikā grantha*-s in Śrīvaiṣṇava *sampradāya*) which specify the context and performance of these activities are well known. Though very few communities practice these strictly today, the fact that the “sacred” dimension has (since millennia) had such a deep influence on every conceivable human activity vis-à-vis *dhārmic* living, and has had the requisite textual and practical evidence to support it has to be understood as a prior cultural baseline. This baseline “sociological” state has to be the background before any serious discourse on the “attempts” at its desacralisation (in a *dhārmic* context) can be attempted.

The Neo-Orientalist Discourse

The neo-Orientalists are the latest (academic grouping) amongst multiple (five) waves of post-independence Indologists (Malhotra 2016b). The others being the Marxists, post-colonialists, the subalternists and the postmodernists. Assuming one was to agree with this overall characterization, all the five (one can possibly view them as a co-existing continuum) have (relentlessly) attempted to desacralise the (*dhārmic*) underpinnings of Indian society. These attempts are currently very

much alive and active across various channels (electronic media, publishing, other channels). It takes various guises and primarily aims to “weaken” the unifying (*dhārmic*) ethos of India (primarily in a political and cultural sense).

The contributions of the neo-Orientalists have been significant - new theoretical methods, inference techniques and argument “frames” to aid and accelerate these collective efforts at desacralisation. The synthesis of these methods by media channels and academic wielders can be seen proliferating via the “left liberal” discourse. A complete analysis of the use of these interpretive methods is beyond the scope of this paper. Attempts shall be made to give a broader understanding of the underlying issues and the nature of the motivations of the scholars being discussed.

The *dhārmic* sense of sacred is closely tied to the Sanskrit language and the embedded cultural matrix (the *saṁskṛti*). As outlined in (Malhotra 2016a), Pollock has attempted to undermine the *dhārmic* civilization via “scholarly” methods during an academic career of more than 30 years. These “researches” postulate various theses, primarily by “theorizing” about the role of the language of Sanskrit. A significant milestone of this “research” is the 2006 book, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*. The aims of the book are to “explore” supposed historical re-invention (*desacralisation*) of Sanskrit.

“This book is an attempt to understand two great moments of transformation in culture and power in pre-modern India. The first occurred around the beginning of the Common Era, when Sanskrit, long a sacred language restricted to religious practice, was reinvented as a code for literary and political expression.... The second moment occurred around the beginning of the second millennium, when local speech forms were newly dignified as literary languages and began to challenge Sanskrit for the work of both poetry and polity, and in the end replaced it. Concomitantly new, limited power formations came into existence.”

(Pollock 2006:1) (*italics ours*)

The fundamental assumption behind the theorizations in this book is that the split between the sacred and the non-sacred was *already* part of the *saṁskṛtic* tradition. Many of Pollock’s theses depend on this assumption of natively present sacred *versus* non-sacred dichotomies. This book and various other succeeding theses are based on this sleight. The *pāramārthika* and *vyāvahārika* categories (these are well-acknowledged categories (though not in the sense that Pollock

portrays them) in the Advaita traditions but are not acknowledged in all Vedantic traditions) do not apply to all of Indian *darśana*-s and *sampradāya*-s and, strictly speaking, cannot be used as a basis from which to generalize and formulate divisive theses. Refer (Pollock 2006:3). The other sleight is misrepresentation and forceful separation of the categories of *śāstra* and *kāvya*. The origins of *kāvya* are posited based on doubtful dating techniques and sweeping generalizations (*kāvya*'s dichotomies with *śāstra*) made on their basis. Pollock states as fact that there is broad agreement on these differences – but amongst whom? (Pollock 2006:3,4). With the aid of none-too-innovative story-telling, assuming nonexistent parallels to the experiences the West had with the Church, and ignoring the non-centralized nature of Indian society, Pollock rather lamely posits evolutionary reasons (those based on the influence of political-power and its centralization) for the sacred nature of Sanskrit. (Pollock 2006:28,29).

Pollock befuddles and with the aid of incorrect characterizations makes sweeping claims on the role of Sanskrit. The oral tradition – the backbone/basis of “*Samśkṛti* – as practiced” is rather conveniently, ignored. Acknowledging that the oral tradition would hinder chronology based manipulations and the creation of falsely ascribed origins and events, Pollock rather slyly generates facts to justify almost all of his theses. (Pollock 2006:50). The 2006 book, a winner of many awards, is filled with such dubious characterizations. The Kātantra school of grammar is used as a wedge to introduce the divisive thesis of native desacralisation (Pollock 2006:62,70). A supposed lack of epigraphic evidence (no proof offered) is used to posit native attempts at desacralisation (Pollock 2006:170). We find similar observations about Pollock's innovative theories aimed at excavating non-existing native schisms and characterising them as native attempts at desacralisation (Malhotra 2016a:224,226,249).

The Sacred Discourse

Is the notion of sacred universal? Western anthropological and sociological approaches (the Western-universalist discourse) to this question have yielded many theses over the past few centuries. This question pre-supposes a “*without-centric*” nature of the sacred, in contrast to the “*within-centric*” formulation of the *dhārmic* conceptualizations. Any modern discussion of the sacred is incomplete without discussing

the work of Romanian philosopher and religious historian Mircea Eliade. The influence of the Vedic civilization and Indian philosophy is apparent (and is also acknowledged by Eliade) in his work. Eliade proposes the term “*hierophany*” to connote the manifestation of the divine, inherent to the nature of anything sacred (Eliade 1959:11). He also notes that the modern West (circa 1957) finds this idea rather difficult to accept. The situation today (60 years on) has only exacerbated. (Eliade 1959:10). The sense of the sacred and the essentially “*inner*” nature of its experience are acknowledged (Eliade 1959:11). The nature of divinity (which he identifies as “*power*” and “*being*”) is, according to Eliade, the reason (anthropologically) for man’s deep desire to make the sacred a reality (Eliade 1959:12).

The essentially non-sacred nature of Western modernity and the lack of this existential dimension in modern living are also articulated. The non-modern is labeled as being societally primitive and archaic by Eliade; this is only to be expected as the originating perspective is the West. From a *swadeshi* perspective, one would need to essentially redefine and reclaim these dissonant categories and reframe Eliade’s articulation.

“Religious man attempts to remain as long as possible in a sacred universe, and hence what his total experience of life proves to be in comparison with the experience of the man without religious feeling, of the man who lives, or wishes to live, in a desacralized world. It should be said at once that the completely profane world, the wholly desacralized cosmos, is a recent discovery in the history of the human spirit. It does not devolve upon us to show by what historical processes and as the result of what changes in spiritual attitudes and behavior modern man has desacralized his world and assumed a profane existence. For our purpose it is enough to observe that desacralization pervades the entire experience of the nonreligious man of modern societies and that, in consequence, he finds it increasingly difficult to rediscover the existential dimensions of religious man in the archaic societies.”

(Eliade 1959:13) (*italics ours*)

The fundamentally irreconcilable natures of the two modes of experiencing reality – sacred (non-Western, traditional) and profane (Western-modern) – are made explicit. Eliade calls it “an abyss”. The “ephemeral” nature of modernity and material identification of experience are also alluded to (Eliade 1959:14). Eliade’s categories and influential discourse has not had much impact, in the sense of leading to a deeper anthropological analysis of modernity and the

West, though his ideas have been applied variously in other disciplines of Western academia. *Swadeshi* scholars should attempt to formulate new critiques based on Eliade's framework to help reverse the gaze.

Understanding S.N. Balagangadhara's becomes critical in this context, especially so when one discusses Western "religious" categories (such as sacred and profane). From a recent review of his seminal works

"S. N. Balagangadhara argues that it is *necessary to dissect how the West experiences the world in order to clear the ground before the contribution of Indian culture can be assessed. For the last few hundred years, academic contexts have been dominated by questions Europe has asked. This way of asking questions means that it has not asked questions in other ways. Whether adopted by Western intellectuals or non-Western intellectuals, who parasitically formulate problems according to it, that way is tied to Western culture. Only by understanding this can we discover how Indians can ask different questions, and what contribution Indian culture can make. His work establishes how little we understand Western culture. Speaking a Western language does not mean we understand what it is.*"

(Shah 2014) (*italics ours*)

There are fundamental epistemological issues relating to the current discourse on India, which is seriously "skewed", being driven on Western assumptions and presuppositions. This is another "focus-area" for *swadeshi* scholarship: control of epistemology thereby leading to control of the discourse. Many fundamentally flawed definitional notions need to be questioned and be laid to rest once for all, the notion of "Hindu religion" for one. In his book (Balagangadhara 1994), he provides the basis for his arguments for the (Western) sense of universality of religion referencing the various Western fields of study. Accordingly, religion is a Western conception. How flawed is the Western argument for religion and its universality? **Immensely** flawed. In 11 chapters, he systematically demolishes the Western narrative of religion as espoused both by the Westerner and the colonized non-Westerner. In his own words -

"My aim is to show that a *provincial experience of a small segment of humanity does not become universal by decree. Nor does a specific group become 'the universal audience' by merely pretending to be one.*"

(Balagangadhara 1994:8) (*italics ours*)

As to the target audience of this book, from an Indian perspective, if one were to use recently coined terminology, it would be aimed

at all of Macaulay's children and more so the intellectual sepoys. Balagangadhara stresses on the Western nature of the discourse, the questions posed and frameworks used. The evolution of religion in Europe and its influence on everything about the West, including Science is explicated.

He goes so far as to say that religion is a European notion: India **does not** have religions in the Western sense. Science, he implies is also a new Western form of religion sharing much of the same assumptions and proselytizing zeal as Christianity. He introduces the concept/notion of a **Root Model of Order**. The root model of order is that which enables structuring of knowledge and learning in a culture. (Balagangadhara 1994:400).

The influence of this root model of order on the evolution of a society (in this case, the "Western") is apparent once we acknowledge the existence of a root model of order. The pursuit of knowledge, the organization of knowledge and the structures of learning are influenced by the root model of order (Balagangadhara 1994:401). Science too has been influenced by this root model of order resulting in accumulations of theoretical knowledge (Balagangadhara 1994:403). He goes so far as to say that religion was a necessary condition for science to develop the way it has in the West (Balagangadhara 1994:406). The so-called scientific attitude is only a continuation of the religious attitude (Balagangadhara 1994:407). On the effects that the religion based root model of order has on learning structures, he effectively identifies the dominant process of learning as the *theoretical* (Balagangadhara 1994:410). What would a different root model of order look like? What would be the configuration of such a "different" culture? How is the "Indian" experience different when it is compared with the "Western"? Balagangadhara (1994:411) characterises it as a practical approach — *Ritual*.

"We can now take the crucial step towards *identifying the entity that could structure another configuration of learning. It is a structured set of generic actions; it could be described as a-intentional, agent-less, and goal-less. Does such an entity exist? Yes. Where? In Asia. What is it? Ritual.*"

(Balagangadhara 1994:415) (*italics ours*)

According to Balagangadhara, the performative and practical nature of knowledge is unique to the *dhārmic* civilisation and is fundamentally different with the Western structures of knowledge and society

(Balagangadhara 1994:415). It should be noted that this scholar has been attacked and vilified by Western academia for his deep scholarship and ideas. This should provide sufficient basis as to why his constructs have been used in the current context. This, in my opinion, is possibly another focus-area for *swadeshi* scholarship — a scholar whose ideas need to be engaged with more constructively.

The understanding of Western religions – of the Abrahamic variety – has been dimensionally enhanced by scholars like Malhotra. In his book, *Being Different* (Malhotra 2011), he introduces new juxtaposed categories “Embodied Knowing” vs “History-centrism” which highlight the stark differences between *dhārmic* and Abrahamic approaches to the sacred.

“Dharma and Judeo-Christian traditions differ fundamentally in their approaches to knowing the divine. The dharma family (including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism) has developed an extensive range of inner sciences and experiential technologies called ‘adhyatmavidya’ to access divinity and higher states of consciousness... Their truth must be rediscovered and directly experienced by each person. I have coined the term embodied knowing to refer to inner sciences and adhyatma-vidya.”

(Malhotra 2011:5,6) (*italics ours*)

The limited nature of the Abrahamic (Western) approach to religion (and hence to the sacred) and their dependence on events (actual or contrived) is explicitly characterised by Malhotra as “History-centrism”. The discussion of the nature of the sacred is deeply affected by this History-centric baggage that the West carries. Relevant as it is to our discussion, it is important to note that all scholarship and “realities” emanating from the West (culturally), including the “sacred” discourse, are compromised because of these civilizational (ideological) realities. Malhotra describes this situation thus:

“I have coined the term history-centrism to refer to this fixation on specific and often incompatible claims to divine truth revealed in the course of history. I regard this historical fixation as the major difference between dharmic and Judeo-Christian paths and as a problem which can breed untold psychological, religious and social conflict.”

(Malhotra 2011:5,6) (*italics ours*)

The “Western” Discourse

The post-enlightenment, imperialistic expansion of Europe, which brought along with it the Industrial Revolution, changed fundamentally, the way in which Europe engaged with its past and with the rest of the (non-European) world. The “West” was defined in a sociological sense during this period.

“The West...is not to be found by recourse to a compass. Geographical boundaries help to locate it, but they shift from time to time. The West is, rather, a cultural term, but with a very strong diachronic dimension. It is not, however, simply an idea, it is a community. It implies both a historical structure and a structured history....*The West, from this perspective, is not Greece, and Rome and Israel but the people of Western Europe turning to the Greek and Roman and Hebrew texts for inspiration, and transforming those texts in ways that would have astonished their authors.* (Berman 1983: 2-3; italics in the original.)”

(Balagangadhara 1994:396) (*italics ours*)

The modern discourse of the West through the construct of Science, creative Western historiography, the functionalism of Durkheim, the rational sociology of Weber and the dialectic materialism of Marx slowly but surely removed any discourse of sacrality associated with the religion – (Judeo-Christian) – influenced structures (family, marriage, worship, food, festivals etc.) in society. The core structures that religion had created remained as they were and were not dismantled. The modernity in the Western discourse replaced one universal (Christian) worldview with other universal worldviews.

Marshall Sahlins in his (scathing) 2008 book on the Western understanding of human nature, viz. *The Western Illusion of Human Nature*, explicates the arrogance of the West in historical perspective.

“For more than two millennia, the peoples we call “Western” have been haunted by the specter of their own inner being: an apparition of human nature so avaricious and contentious that, unless it is somehow governed, it will reduce society to anarchy. The political science of the unruly animal has come for the most part in two contrasting and alternating forms: either hierarchy or equality, monarchical authority or republican equilibrium: *either a system of domination that (ideally) restrains people’s natural self-interest by an external power; or a self-organizing system of free and equal powers whose opposition (ideally) reconciles their particular interests in the common interest.... I claim it is a specifically Western metaphysics, for it supposes an opposition*

between nature and culture that is distinctive to the West and contrastive with the many other peoples who think beasts are basically human rather than humans are basically beasts—for them there is no “nature,” let alone one that has to be overcome.”

(Sahlins 2008:1,2) (*italics ours*)

The *Dhārmic* nature of the Sacred

So much has been written (and much yet to be written) on the sacred nature of the *dhārmic* civilization that it is impossible to discuss all its varied perspectives. The Vedic civilization is built on the fundamental basis of the Veda-s, the oral-signified chants of primordial origin that encapsulate the “vibrational” basis of cosmological existence. Currently around 12 *śākhā*-s of 1131 branches (~1%) are extant. The *śāstra*-s (basis-knowledge) and *śrauta* (practice-centric) literature form the basis of the *śruti* – and are of divine origin. The *smṛti* genre of interpretive literature, the *darsāna* texts and meta-texts also describe this immanent “sacred” in variegated dimensionality. All of the *upāsanā* (praxis) genres (*stotra* and *mantra*-s) of literature are experiential entry points to the sacred dimension. The *darsāna*-s and associated related literatures are also based on this “essential” sense of the sacred and attempt to discuss and describe this essence multi-dimensionally. This all-encompassing sacrality of the *dhārmic* nature of knowledge and its vast literatures is unquestionable to anyone living in this land. The geography and history of this land are also considered to be sacred. The deeply practical culture of learning and embodied living that is unique to *dhārmic* living has at its core - **the sacred**. To even postulate that the sacred is an externally manifested man-made attribution (the nature of *pavitratā*) is impossible to conceive, unless of course, one has the requisite motives to do so. It is the very nature of the cosmos. Any uninhibited, motive-free human in his natural state will acknowledge its presence. To deny this essence is neither groundbreaking nor innovative. It can be at best considered a willful display of hubris and derision masquerading as scholarship.

The Sociological Dimension

A critical discursive dimension of the desacralisation narrative is to focus on the social ills of society and attribute them to the core tenets of the *dhārmic* society. The manufacture of causation attributable to

the core structures is a standard academic trope. Poverty, illness, colonization, social stratification etc. — all of these are generally attributed to the nature of *dharmā*. This discourse normally entails that *dharmā* and its sense of the sacred make society weak. The stronger way for a society is violence and conquest – the recommended Western way. The philological methods of Sheldon Pollock aim at excavating (via political philology) sociological ills through creative analysis of texts. A prescriptive application (via Liberation Philology) of Western sociological constructs is presented as “solution” to these ills. This in short - is the essence of the neo-Orientalist discourse.

Programs of “liberation” (*The White Man’s Burden*) have been the standard colonial socio-experimentation used by the colonial powers of Europe to justify the excesses of primitive violence and greed. During the past two millennia, similar “programs” were used to justify slavery, the crusades, native-American genocide and various other violent enterprises sponsored by the Church and the West in its various forms – and forms of it are seen today in its (that of West) interferences across the world (in the guise of world peace, human-rights etc.). Aurobindo’s essay on Social Reform is one of the earliest and is possibly one of the more coherent responses to the Westernization discourse.

“Reform is not an excellent thing in itself as many Europeanized intellects imagine; neither is it always safe and good to stand unmoved in the ancient paths as the orthodox obstinately believe. Reform is sometimes the first step to the abyss, but immobility is the most perfect way to stagnate and to putrefy. Neither is moderation always the wisest counsel: the mean is not always golden. It is often a euphemism for purblindness, for a tepid indifference or for a cowardly inefficiency.”

(Aurobindo 1890-1910:Social Reform) (*italics ours*)

This (in my opinion) is to be acknowledged as Aurobindo’s prescient response to the exercise of Liberation Philology - which prescribes the import of Western societal constructs as solutions to ills of *dhārmic* society. Solutions need to be wrought using internal mechanisms, not imported.

“Neither antiquity nor modernity can be the test of truth or the test of usefulness. All the Rishis do not belong to the past; the Avatars still come; revelation still continues.”

(Aurobindo 1890-1910:Social Reform)

Manu has been the primary target of this “liberation” discourse - the principal target of the subalterns, the postmodernists and the favorite whipping boy of the dalit-studies programs. *Smṛti*-s need to be rewritten contextually - there definitely is a need to recalibrate “details” of practice in cognizance of changes in society. The role of specific customs also need to be questioned and if possible re-contextualized without losing sight of the underlying motivation and intent. Aurobindo gives a veritable prescription to address societal ills in the Indian context via Indian sociological frameworks. Does blind following of customs constitute *dharma* or is the opposition to all of it *dharma*? What is the balance? How do we seek evolutionary harmony? What then, is the direction of social reform? Aurobindo has sagely advice.

“Men have long been troubling themselves about social reform and blameless orthodoxy, and orthodoxy has crumbled without social reform being effected. But all the time God has been going about India getting His work done in spite of the talking. *Unknown to men the social revolution prepares itself, and it is not in the direction they think.*”

(Aurobindo 1890-1910: Social Reform) (*italics ours*)

Discussion

The preceding sections help understand the nature of the sacred in a Western sense and also in the *dhārmic* sense. The Western experience with Christianity has influenced almost all of its anthropological and sociological discourse. Even the supposedly objective discourse of Science is influenced at its core by the experiences of Western religion. Both Balagangadhara and C.K.Raju have reached similar conclusions using distinctly different approaches - the deeply (Christian) religious nature of modernity and science. Though not apparent in external trappings, surface structures and symbols, the root model of order (to use Balagangadhara’s terminology) governing Western society today is the same - *religion* (Christianity) - since nearly two millennia. Even the superficially secular socio-models of Marxism have primarily been theoretical constructs with relatively shallow practical impact (the reign of the USSR notwithstanding). None of these Western models have yet to shake off their “religious” core. The structures of power, influence and (most importantly) **learning** - all derive from the same root model of order.

The perspectives that are allowed by the introduction of the construct of a *configuration of learning* are exceedingly illuminating. Any society governed by the book requires theorization as essential basis for any sort of knowledge. The “written” has supremacy over experience and empirical proof. Western science at its core is a religion. Most of the “fundamental” learning is theoretical; all of mathematics is theoretical and axiomatically biased (assumptions of the nature of logic and inference are peculiar to the West). The theories of science too are of similar nature. Technology, driven by the materialistic and consumptive nature of capitalism, ignores most of the “biased basics” which govern science and mathematics. Its role is of an “applied” nature, limited to manipulating in the best possible manner (profit motives of capitalism) some principles (however incorrect) derived from *theoretical* science. Technology does not promise or guarantee perfection or universal correctness, but performs within well-defined limits. The relentless cycles of consumption and waste that drive capitalism also drive the ever improving (but forever imperfect) cycles of technology.

The *dhārmic* nature of knowledge and learning is of a fundamentally different nature. How? It is about understanding and acknowledging the *complete* nature of reality (and the *limited* nature of human senses). Techniques and practices developed by Vedic masters over millennia to help understand the dimensions of reality (in the *dhārmic* systems, consciousness is the fundamental reality, not materialism) require, as a result, a learning culture that is experiential having a practical — not theoretical — basis.

Traditional learning is achieved through a personal *guru* (*gurukula*-s), wherein the teacher imparts knowledge that is contextual to the learner and is primarily on the experiential plane. As Indian learning is mostly around the planes of practice (including those activities which involve the transcending of the physically apparent dimensions), it depends on ritual as its primary carrier. The notion of ritual is central to the Indian “*learning*” experience. ***The notion of the sacred thus becomes much more important to a practical culture than to a theoretical culture.***

In the Western system of Religion, control is centralized and the notions of knowledge and identifications of the sacred are by “*consensus & decree*”. Similar underlying structures and phenomena

can be seen in the praxis of Science (academic journals, the Nobel Prize etc.) too. The *dhārmic* notion of sacred is essential for “*practice*” and underlies all human action. Without it, the learning (practice) culture will not have survived. Oral tradition is one among multiple modes of knowledge transmission (textual, oral and other modes (the *śaktipāt*). The sacred underlies all of these transmission modes. The configuration of learning and practice is a fundamental structural difference. Once one grasps this, it becomes all the more obvious why the notion of the sacred is essential in *dhārmic* societies.

The neo-Orientalists are (as should be apparent by now) only continuing the theoretical exercises driven by the religion-centric root model of order governing the West. The desacralisation that has happened in the West via Science has only succeeded in transferring the “theoretical sacred” notions from religion to the edifice of Science. The deeper structures – learning configuration and root models of order – are essentially the same. The need to desacralize is important in theoretical cultures, and especially so when there is any encounter with an “*other religion*”. Orientalism of the preceding centuries was precisely this reaction. Indology and its school under discussion (neo-Orientalism) are only continuing this exercise. Academic discourse is the “intellectual” mechanism provided by Western structure to enable systematic engagement with the *other*. The framework needed to assert control and co-opt (digest) the *dhārmic* other into the prevalent Western universalist discourse is thus made possible. In the light of this new understanding, Indology can be seen to be a peculiar form of (structural) anthropology – to explain a ***distributed, practice-oriented learning culture*** in terms of a ***centralized theoretical learning culture***.

Implications

From a *dhārmic* perspective, the essential nature of the human as conceived by the West is very limited. The understanding of the complete nature of reality is also limited. The structure of learning that underlies the West is theoretical in its essential nature. The peculiarity of the (Western, Christian) assumptions that underlie Western Mathematics and Science is well known. The material artifacts that signify the superiority of the Western worldview in recent centuries (mostly driven by need for conquest and plunder) is the primary reason that the dominant discourse today is Western

in nature. The academic structures of the West lie at the forefront of this conquest. The role of the neo-Orientalists is critical for continuing the Western-universalist world-view. India's core *dhārmic* structure has been under theoretical onslaught since the inception of Indology. Even after centuries of European colonization, the *dhārmic* structures have not succumbed to these frontal attacks. Not only does *swadeshi* scholarship need to address the arguments of the West but also address those of the (West-trained) ethnically Indian (*sepo*y) scholars. As recently conceptualized, 70 years of independent India has produced five "waves" of sepo-y-assisted Western interpretation of *dhārmic* systems. Should these waves of Western interpretation be allowed to interpret events and influence media and other channels (academia) unopposed? Is it not time that these theories be analyzed from a *swadeshi* perspective and dealt with on our own terms? Should these Western ideas continue to influence the *dhārmic* discourse? It is thus appropriate, now, that we reflect on Sahlins' succinct description of the Western understanding of human nature.

"It's all been a huge mistake. My modest conclusion is that *Western civilization has been largely constructed on a mistaken idea of "human nature."* (Sorry, beg your pardon; it was all a mistake.) It is probably true, however, *that this perverse idea of human nature endangers our existence.*"

(Sahlins 2008:112) (*italics ours*)

Conclusion

The discussion of the nature of the desacralisation attempted by neo-Orientalist scholarship required investigation of the conceptual structures that underlie Western civilization. Interesting core structures which have a basis in the Western idea of religion are revealed. The intellectual evolution of the West via the path of Science required the creation of alternative discursive structures that would transfer the Western notion of the sacred (along with many other structures) from religion to science. The theoretical process of desacralisation, via the rhetorical devices of the humanities and the (anthropological) social-sciences has been evolving over centuries. These devices have been innovatively used by Western scholarship to intellectually dismantle other civilizations historically. The Indian experience of this "scholarship" via the schools of Indology in its various *avatars* is slowly being acknowledged to be a civilizational threat.

This academic discourse and the resulting “practical” process of desacralisation will continue, for, it is part of the proselytizing nature of the Western root model of order. From a *swadeshi* perspective, it is important to acknowledge this reality. Scholarship, which acknowledges these realities and provides coherent narratives, based on *dhārmic* root models of order, practice-centric configurations of learning and the *dhārmic* ethos, are essential. The variegated conception and perception of the “sacred” based on practice-oriented (ritual) *dhārmic* knowledge systems must be the **primary basis** for the *all-encompassing syncretic nature of dhārmic society*. There should be no compromise.

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Chapter 6

On Desacralization of Sanskrit

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Abstract

Among the primary themes Prof. Sheldon Pollock explores in his work, the relationship between culture and power in pre-modern India remains the linchpin of his arguments to build a case for many of his rather startling theories. Upon a closer examination of his thesis, one observes his proclivity to base ideas on a rather small subset of data, but build upon them sweeping generalisations that address the largest of questions. Thusly, Culture becomes equivalent to the set Language and to a narrower subset Literature – *kāvya*. Similarly, even though he briefly mentions Power in context of *rājya* only once at the very beginning of his magnum opus *The Language of Gods in the World of Men*, the former is not seen through the lens of traditional paradigms even once thereafter, but finds itself explored through anachronistic socio-political models of legitimization, socialisation and communication. His complete devaluation of the place and value of the *pāramārthika*, his

*pp 169-208. In Kannan, K. S. (Ed.) (2019). *Swadeshi Critique of Videshi Mīmāṃsā*. Chennai: Infinity Foundation India.

casual dismissal of the entire oral tradition that precedes written documentation, and hence, positioning *kāvya* as something that was ‘invented’ at the beginning of C.E; his imperious assertion that ‘writing claims an authority oral cannot’ and its association with power while his seasonable use of linking the oral tradition of Vedic recital with oppression; his further dismissal of any metrical, thematic or lyrical creation that doesn’t fit his arbitrarily defined parameters for what constitutes *kāvya*, all show a predisposition to select and fit time-honoured features of a native culture into his pre-defined models, of which the model of Desacralisation of Sanskrit is one that the authors of this paper seek to explore.

1 Introduction

One of the great keys of the ancient Indian spiritual wisdom has been the recognition, understanding and development of a supremely profound relationship among the triptych – *svarāj*, *samrāj* and *svadharma*. To agnize the true nature of the Self, its sovereign power and truly master it – *svarāj*; to discover and decipher the relationship between the Within and Without and hence mould and govern the world outside – *samrāj*; and to do so, in harmony and concord with one’s own *pneuma* and *esse* – *svadharma*, constitute the rungs of the triad, be it for an individual or for a collective. It is this *svadharma* that lends the characteristic signature, especially to the collective soul and distinguishes it from other sets. One has seen this in what every culture has uniquely contributed to the progress of the human race. In the very choice and manner in which a culture frames its biggest questions and seeks to pursue them, one can see the distinctive traits of its peoples. If the ancient Graeco-Roman culture used the intellectual and mental planes as primary expressions of their marrow, India, in her odyssey, aspired not only for tellurian happiness of man but also sought the path to it through the loftiest and grandest of conceptions. The infinite world of the Spirit has been India’s domain to discover and manifest in forms that have been innumerable grand and precise and beautiful. As Sri Aurobindo writes (Sri Aurobindo 1997:56),

“India’s central conception is that of the Eternal, the Spirit here incased in matter, involved and immanent in it and evolving on the material plane by rebirth of the individual up the scale of being till in mental man it enters the world of ideas and realm of conscious morality, *dharma*. This

achievement, this victory over unconscious matter develops its lines, enlarges its scope, elevates its levels until the increasing manifestation of the sattwic or spiritual portion of the vehicle of mind enables the individual mental being in man to identify himself with the pure spiritual consciousness beyond Mind. India's social system is built upon this conception; her philosophy formulates it; her religion is an aspiration to the spiritual consciousness and its fruits; her art and literature have the same upward look; her whole dharma or law of being is founded upon it."

Any study of a culture needs to recognize the essential characteristics of its object of study, and it can be no different for studies about India. While canons and staggeringly huge volumes of works spanning the widest range of domains, including not only new creations but also penetrating and incisive analysis and commentaries — have been produced as a part of her oeuvre by her people, exchange and conflict with the Occident has seen, especially in the last millennium, interpretations and reviews that have often repeatedly painted radically different, and at times, inimical and hostile, pictures of India. In this time worn conflict, Europe, with its increasing turn towards and eventual consumption by materialism, has repeatedly cast its trademark lens to dissect and fractionate Indian tropes. The imperialistic hegemony it foisted across India and the rest of Asia typifies the pinnacles of its utilitarian and avaricious outlook. The peril this *idée fixe* with materialism poses has taken new forms and shapes with the rise of capitalist America, which perpetuates the old order with new morphology.

Sheldon Pollock represents the best of this new affixation. In using models of power to analyse culture, Pollock does not venture too far away from his European predecessors, though his conclusions as seen in his work "Deep Orientalism" and on the *Rāmāyaṇa* are outright shocking and asinine. Through the theories he discards and templates he uses to construct the history — a new history — of Sanskrit, as well as his explicit motives that we will consider in this paper, Pollock clearly demonstrates his intent to see Asian phenomena explained in terms of parallels with European vernacularisation on the one hand and his construct of Cosmopolis — one clearly cannot escape the Greek/Latin significance of even this word — on the other, even though he professes to be the one who will give us a different theory of pre-modern India.

If Pollock's predecessors sought to Europeanise and thoroughly colonise the very character of India, Pollock himself seems determined to give us a version of our story that is cleansed of native, formative elements, separated as far away as possible from intuitive, instinctive features of our distinct culture and is replete with influences of the 'good' Outsider. One wonders if his learning of Sanskrit has no other purpose except to facilitate this irresponsible theorization.

The clash of ideas between the West and the East on what constitutes the sacred is a manifestation of the deeper lack of understanding between them about the fundamental difference that drives the very mind and soul of the two natures. There can be no doubt that some of the greatest achievements of the mind have emerged from Western thinking that has championed Intellect, Reason and Rationality – fine organs of the Mind. Western philosophies and her sciences, politics and economics are testament to this, while the models and categorization they employ bear this out repeatedly. For such a mind to recognize that a people seek to base their life on something that transcends its highest and most valuable force, requires a sincerity that is willing to set aside its passion and prejudice and approach that which is dissimilar to it. And, there have been several such sympathetic minds which have trod that path, be it Will Durant or Paul Brunton, or even Swami Vivekananda who powerfully carried the ideas of the East to the West. The eastern soul recognizes that the mind itself is an instrument of the Spirit. It champions man's search for happiness beyond sensory and intellectual pleasures. It is this ethos that drives its external reflections as well, in her philosophies, religions, arts and sciences. This difference between the two approaches has at times led to enriching exchange of ideas and influences, just as there have been prolonged periods of clashes that have played out in arenas of the intellect and culture as well as that of the political and economic. What the West sees as sacred, what it considers corporeal and the separation between the two finds different base in the Indian thought process, where the *pāramārthika*, *vyāvahārika* and *prātibhāsika* conceptions profoundly capture this distinction in a very MECE (mutually exclusive, collectively exhaustive) way, several millennia before McKinsey even coined the acronym.

2 Desacralization of Sanskrit

In his 2006 book *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, Pollock presents a picture of contrast between the use of Sanskrit in ancient India before and after the Common Era, separated by events purported to have occurred around the onset of the new millennium. His portrayal of ancient India is one that is boilerplate, charged with Brahmanical oppression and ritualization. He is determined in depicting Sanskrit as a language which had no worldly use apart from the sacerdotal, an especially absurd and unbelievable charge, considering the sheer range of work that exists in matters apart from sacred material from the period.

“Sanskrit probably never functioned as an everyday medium of communication anywhere in the cosmopolis — not in South Asia itself, let alone Southeast Asia — nor was it ever used (except among the literati) as a bridge- or link- or trade language like other cosmopolitan codes such as Greek, Latin, Arabic, and Chinese. And aside from the inscriptions, which have larger purposes, there is little evidence that it was ever used as the language of practical rule; tasks such as chancery communication or revenue accounting seem to have been accomplished,”

(Pollock 2006:14).

Insisting that grammar was a tool of this hegemony, Pollock is very clear in establishing a temporal gulf between the use of Sanskrit for sacerdotal elements alone during BCE and for worldly affairs during the advent of the first millennium CE, even as he implicitly locates its origins outside India. The conception of a unity and ancient India’s philosophy, religion, arts and sciences and aspects of Life emerging from her chief pursuit of the Spirit is not even given a passing thought and thusly, Pollock creates a very bizarre picture of India’s past, where her chief pursuits for millennia seem to be exclusively limited to the religious and ritualistic. This intentional colouring with the sacred alone of India in BCE goes in tandem with Brahmanical oppression and excessive ritualization and its significance becomes apparent when Pollock uses this backdrop to focus on the non-sacred, liberating role of *kāvya* during the CE. Thus, in Pollock’s work, it is never the co-existence of both, and perforce sway of one over the other, but a clear absence of *kāvya* in the earlier parts of BCE.

As one wonders how such a divide is possible in light of the composition of the epics and other luminous material including

various *śāstra*-s composed during the BCE period, Pollock renders a story where he considers the *pāramārthika sat* and *vyāvahārika sat*, chooses to focus – on the latter with a near complete disconnect between the two to the point of not admitting any influence of the former on the latter, while comparing them to Vico’s concepts (Pollock 2006:2). With his interpretation that literature and non-literature were acutely separated from each other, Pollock mounts a case for treating literature and *kāvya* as that which represented a clear break from the older order and heralded the beginning of the use of Sanskrit for worldly matters (Pollock 2006:5)

“A sharp distinction between literature and non-literature was both discursively and practically constructed by those who made, heard, and read texts in premodern South Asia, and it is with that construction – out of a methodological commitment to *vyāvahārika sat*, to taking seriously what they took seriously – that a history of their culture and power must begin.”

Not only is this idea manifestly ill-founded and wrong but, in Pollock’s work, sets the ball rolling for ascribing to *kāvya* and *prāśasti*, features that enabled to exaggeratedly desacralize Sanskrit during the last centuries of BCE, and give him the platform to propound the Cosmopolis theory. His theorization is based on flimsy grounds as *kāvya* is not as divorced from Veda as Pollock would have one believe, though his peremptory tone is ever present (Pollock 2006:81)

“Inscriptions, *testimonia*, citations in literature, philology, the history of literary theory—every piece of evidence hard and soft thus requires locating the origins of *kāvya* in the very last centuries B.C.E., perhaps as much as a millennium after the Sanskrit language is believed to have first appeared in the subcontinent. Only an ideology of antiquity and the cultural distinction conferred by sheer age have induced scholars to move them back appreciably before this date—a move that requires conjecture every step of the way and the most fragile gossamer of relative dating.”

No doubt the themes and forms of *kāvya* are *laukika* too, but as seen from the traditionalist dating of the *ādikāvya Rāmāyaṇa* itself, neither is it the invention of the new order in CE nor is it a tool of power in the manner of Pollock’s description.

The pattern of desacralisation of Sanskrit in Pollock’s work thus begins with the clear demarcation between *kāvya* and the sacred, while characterizing the older Vedic order as oppressive and ritualistic;

relying on oral transmission and grammar as agents of the exclusivity they sought to guard. With the advent of writing and *kāvya*, the inventions of the new millennium in CE and the impetus provided by rulers who came from outside the Vedic order, Pollock believes Sanskrit was freed from the Vedic domination and could now be used by the common man. But what is more startling than these atypical hypotheses are the features Pollock attributes to the liberated, cosmopolitan Sanskrit – features of globalization – that enable him to make an open call for a secularized language that is cleansed of native, indigenous associations, and wearing only those intonations post colonialists such as Pollock see as convenient.

Desacralization of Sanskrit in *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men* is problematic, right in the book's Index. The detail for “desacralization of”, under the Index-item “Sanskrit language” reads 62, 73-74, 74n70, 101, 170 (Pollock 2006:677). This is erroneous on two counts:

1. “Desacralization” (or any of its forms) does not occur either on page 101 or in footnote 70 on page 74.
2. “Desacralization” occurs in page 70, perhaps one of the more, if not the most important occurrences contextually, which is not indexed.

These errors, which might be more typographical than intentional, of *detailing that which does not exist while missing that which exists*, is eerily symptomatic of Pollock's scholarship about Sanskrit: detailing that which did not exist (or existed to an extent much lesser than what he would like one to believe) – the Political, while missing or choosing to severely underplay that which exists – the Sacred.

The contexts of occurrences of “Desacralization” or any of its forms (Pollock 2006: 61-62, 69-70, 73-74, 170) are though, clear markers of Pollock's theorization of the “Desacralization of Sanskrit language” and are strikingly relevant and revealing for this targeted *pūrvapakṣa* effort. A thorough scrutiny of Pollock's work – including identifying internal inconsistencies in his scholarship vis-à-vis his own positions, instantiating distortions through mistranslations or based on unsubstantiated claims, clear biases and dicey models – are aided by the findings in Malhotra (2006), with regard to desacralization, i.e. removal of the Sacred from Sanskrit. Rajiv Malhotra's work (Malhotra 2016: 126-127, 204-207) demystifies Pollock's obfuscated writings, culminating in a neat tabulation 'kāvya

theory milestone' contrasting the 'Tradition's position' with 'Pollock's position for the First Thirty Years' and 'Pollock's Most Recent Position' across epochs marked by the Veda-s, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Abhinavagupta and Rupa Gosvāmin and outline the extent of ground already covered related to the study of the subject matter.

3 Addendum: Further analysis of Desacralisation

3.1 Internal inconsistencies in data

In the specific scope of Desacralization of Sanskrit, two clear inconsistencies present themselves on close examination, their significance to his conclusions being almost self-evident.

3.1.1 Restrictions – Yes or No?

Consider the very opening of Pollock's Introduction to his book (Pollock 2006:1); in just the first three lines of the Introduction Pollock theorizes, or rather declares, in language quite emphatic and admitting to little doubt, that Sanskrit was definitely "restricted to religious practice" until it was "reinvented as a code for literary and political expression" during a specific "moment" — precisely, the beginning of the Common Era — and that the whole point of his book, rather his attempt, is to understand this "moment", and another 72 pages follow with arduous topics and theorization — "Culture, Power (Pre)modernity", "The Cosmopolitan in Theory and Practice", "The Vernacular in Theory and Practice", "Theory, Metatheory, Practice, Metapractice", "Precosmopolitan Sanskrit: Monopolization and Ritualization", "From resistance to appropriation", "Expanding the Prestige Economy of Sanskrit" — before inclusion of a statement about desacralization, that seems to clearly undermine Pollock's own declaration in the first four lines of the Introduction:

"It may ultimately be impossible to decide whether long-standing discursive restrictions rather than religious preferences explain the absence of Sanskrit from early Indian epigraphy, or whether recently arrived ruler lineages were the first to break with *vaidika* convention and **desacralize** Sanskrit in the interests of a new cultural politics."

(Pollock 2006:73)

How exactly can one reconcile this belief with his earlier declaration that Sanskrit was long “**restricted to religious practice**”, which evidently becomes his basis and a prerequisite for that first ‘moment’ of transformation that he laboriously analyzes? Would Pollock hence at least concede that it may be proportionately “impossible to decide” whether his first “moment” of transformation really occurred the way he has proposed?

3.1.2 Veda and Kāvya – Does Difference mean Discontinuity?

After the above inconsistency, the chapters that immediately follow – “*From Liturgy to Literature*” and “*Literary Language as a Closed Set*” – is where Pollock locates bulk of his considerations specific to the “origin of” *kāvya*, and in the process presents another clear inconsistency. Consider these two passages in adjacent pages:

“To this degree, at least, it is correct to refer to *kāvya* as the “direct descendant of the Vedic mantra”...some commonalities with what preceded it must clearly be acknowledged”

(Pollock 2006:76)

“Accordingly, if we are to grasp what premodern Indians understood by *kāvya*—the *vyāvahārika* *sat* of the term—and reconstruct its particular history, we must be careful to not make *kāvya* a continuation of the Veda by this worldly means and must avoid incautious generalization about its “Vedic effect”, to which much *kāvya* anyway shows complete indifference.”

(Pollock 2006:77)

If a person endorses that *kāvya* can, to some degree, be a direct descendant of Veda, with which it shares commonality, how can the same person suggest that one must be careful to not make *kāvya* a continuation of Veda? A careful reading of the reasoning provided between the above two inconsistent positions, would show why it is less reasoning and more intellectual sleight:

“In the Sanskrit critical tradition itself *kāvya* came to be theorized as a species of discourse fundamentally different from the Veda, the consummate instance of this conceptualization being the account by the great synthesizer King Bhoja, discussed below (section 3). Both theoretically and pragmatically the tradition drew a clear and untranscendable line dividing Veda from *kāvya*, and in fact from every other kind of textuality. According to the influential tenets of *Mīmāṃsā* (the last centuries B.C.E.), the Veda was produced by no agent human or

divine; as such, it cannot have any authorial intention (*vivakṣā*, literally, desire to speak), which is a constitutive element of *kāvya*. The same strong distinction between Veda and *kāvya* was made pragmatically, too. Before the modern era, the Veda was never read as *kāvya*, never cited in anthologies, never adduced as exemplary in literary textbooks; in fact, the Veda was expressly denied to be *kāvya*: “It is not the mere capacity for producing meaning as such that enables a text to be called *kāvya*,” argued the philosopher Abhinavagupta in the early eleventh century. “That is why we never apply the term to everyday discourse or the Veda.” This is so, as Sanskrit theory takes pains to point out, because **the rhetorical, discursive, aesthetic, and affective purposes of *kāvya* are entirely different from those of the Veda.** Although Indian thinkers, like their Western counterparts, argued incessantly over how to frame an absolute and essential definition of this new and different kind of language usage—they were unsure whether this essence was to be located in figuration (*alaṅkāra*), style (*rīti*), suggestion (*dhvani*), aestheticized emotion (*rasa*), propriety (*aucitya*), or something else altogether—they all agreed that it could be specified within a system of contrasts. It is something different from *śāstra* (the discourse of systematic thought), from *itihāsa* (accounts of the way things were), and from *śruti*, the extant Vedic texts (those still available to be “heard”).”

(Pollock 2006:76) (*emphasis ours*)

When carefully observed, one notices that the key conclusion from the above is the emphasized portion. Pollock’s sleight is in the fact that he uses the basis that proves ‘difference’, in order to propose and justify ‘discontinuity.’ A simple example should suffice to make the point: A daughter is certainly ‘different’ from her father; there certainly is a ‘clear and untranscendable line’ (of physicality, at the very least) between a daughter and father. Can the ‘difference’ however become proof to propose emphatically that the daughter is not a continuation of her father? Isn’t Pollock’s position, in addition to being inconsistent with another position of his own, also forced and unnatural?

3.2 Instantiating Pollock’s Distortions

Two instances of translation-related category-level distortions – distortions clearly visible when read vis-à-vis the account of unarguably one of the more credible (published) Insider voices of the twentieth century with regard to Sanskrit Literature, author of the seminal book *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature* viz. M.

Krishnamachariar – are particularly striking and should be a clear indicator of Pollock’s motives. In addition to the two translation-related distortions, the distortions he induces about *Writing, Orality* and *Kavi* are addressed.

3.2.1 Translations of *Śravya* and *Dr̥śya*

Krishnamachariar’s English translation of the terms *Śravya* and *Dr̥śya*, in the context of one way of classifying *kāvya*, is as follows: “*Kāvya* is *Śravya* or *Dr̥śya*, literally audible or visible” (Krishnamachariar 1937:79). For anyone from an Indian language speaking upbringing and with only an elementary Sanskrit knowledge, these translations – *Śravya*: Audible and *Dr̥śya* : Visible – should be almost intuitive and hardly problematic. Note here that “Audible” and “Visible” are clearly mutually exclusive – they represent primarily, two distinct ways of perceiving, and reflect simply, nature as is visible to anyone willing to see it plainly.

Pollock’s English translations for these terms, and their context, make for interesting reading; for, it at once demonstrates not only a particular sleight in his method, ‘the *Pūrvapakṣa* trap’ (to give his method a name), but also a clue of his underlying motive:

“Consider first the old binary of Sanskrit literary theory — dating from the seventh century at the latest and never questioned in the tradition — that represents *kāvya* as one of only two types, something seen (*dr̥śya*, i.e., drama) or something heard (*śravya*, i.e., recitative);...”

(Pollock 2006:84)

Before getting to the translation of *Śravya* and *Dr̥śya* one finds in the quote above, the method he has employed here is quite remarkable. The whole quote, if one reads it carefully, is written in a form so that Pollock can claim that the quote is not his own *siddhānta* but just his *pūrvapakṣa*. In other words, Pollock gives the appearance that he is merely stating a fact from a tradition. While he does not make explicit his source, the greater sleight in his method is that as he builds the trap, by appearing to be simply quoting from a tradition, his own English translations of the categories are quietly sneaked in, in parenthesis. Given that Pollock does not make explicit in here his source, a common reader cannot actually check whether the translation is a motivated one or whether it is being faithful to the source from the tradition, the latter, a backdoor he appears to expertly

build for himself even while the translations get an academic sanction. Yet, there are at least three hints to believe these translations might indeed be motivated or at least something he upholds, and not just a translation-consequence of a faithful *pūrvapakṣa*: the translations also appear, outside the quote, in the Index; the phrase that completes the above quote – that “...there is no category for literature as something read.”; the actual translations of *Śravya*: as “Recitative” and *Drśya*: as “Drama”. Contrast Krishnamachariar’s intuitive translation for *Śravya* – Audible – with the translation Pollock has included – Recitative; while they may appear closely related when observed casually, they are actually markedly different. Including the distortion of *Śravya* as Recitative (roughly, Oral) and *Drśya* as Drama allows Pollock to lend a certain impact to his *Siddhānta* – that “there is no category for literature as something read” – because *Drśya*, having become ‘Drama’ instead of ‘Visible’, can effectively nullify any claim for tradition having factored in a category for ‘literature as something read’ (as ‘something read’ would certainly be encompassed in ‘Visible’); and *Śravya*, having become ‘Recitative’ (i.e. roughly, Oral) provides the necessary contrasting context to something that is read. It is important to acknowledge here that translating *Drśya* as Drama is not Pollock’s original handiwork. Yet, merely claiming innocence on that ground would hardly suffice, especially given Pollock is clearly aware of Krishnamachariar, whom he relegates, though, to a foot note.

3.2.2 Translation of *Mahākāvya*

Mahākāvya is translated as “Courtly epic” in Pollock(2006). The contexts of appearances of *mahākāvya* in his book (Pollock 2006:70, 86, 98–99, 302–303) are quite revealing, such as in the case of translations of ‘*Śravya*’ and ‘*Drśya*’, where Pollock sneaked in, as demonstrated earlier, translations while appearing to be doing *pūrvapakṣa* of a tradition, in the case of *mahākāvya* too, he does something similar: again, without providing the specific source of what he has referred to as “credible tradition”, he sneaks in a translation of *mahākāvya* – as “Courtly epics”. The extent of this distortion is easily grasped when the translation found in Pollock’s book is contrasted with the definition for *mahākāvya* deduced in English, by an Insider such as Krishnamachariar, from his translation of the characteristics of *mahākāvya*, as specified by Daṇḍin in his *Kāvyaadarśa* and Viśvanātha in his *Sāhityadarpaṇa*. Krishnamachariar, in summarizing, writes:

“Shortly stated, a *mahākāvya* is a writing of considerable length, varying description and elaborate conclusion, embracing a narrative, theological or historical and is divided into Sargas or Cantos for convenience of narration. A poem that falls short of the several particulars that are required to make up a *mahākāvya* is called *laghukāvya* or a Minor Poem. Among these Minor Poems many are lyrical or didactic and these are treated in later chapter. In the following chapters, the history of poetry is traced by a chronological mention of writers of *kāvya* and *rūpaka*.”

(Krishnamachariar 1937:81)

A direct association of *mahākāvya* with “Court”, as found in Pollock’s scholarship, is conspicuously absent in an Insider’s translation from primary sources. The implication of characterizing *mahākāvya* as “Courtly” seems to complement well, Pollock’s desacralization agenda and not the least, his theorization about the so-called invention of *kāvya*, but is clearly in variance with the characteristics of the *mahākāvya* as found in *Kāvyaādarśa* of Daṇḍin, who is acknowledged by Pollock himself, as being a key, influential part of Sanskrit *kāvya* tradition. Sanctioning the translation of *mahākāvya* as “Courtly epics” is distortive not only when compared to an Insider’s (Krishnamachariar) translation but also deviant from the translation of *mahākāvya* as “poetry of the major form”, sanctioned by the author of “*A History of Classical Poetry: Sanskrit—Pāli—Prākṛit*” (1984), Siegfried Lienhard, to whom Pollock refers to, almost as an authority (at least whose history he deems as “standard narrative”), in fixing a date of a Sanskrit *kāvya*, that date after which Pollock believes he can “say it unquestionably existed” (Pollock 2006:80). This deviation in translation from Lienhard is not an unimportant one because Pollock’s theorization of “a new secularization” (Pollock 2006:89) for *kāvya* seems more like an extension of Lienhard’s characterization of the then prevalent atmosphere – “strong secular atmosphere” (Lienhard 1984:57)) – when ‘poetic activities’, according to Lienhard, shifted away from ‘Vedic poetry’, “a clear break in tradition between Vedic and classical poetry” (Lienhard 1984:57). Pollock’s extension, though, is typically Pollockian: that is extremist and being conclusive without conclusive evidence. The period of the so-called invention of *kāvya*, which, for Pollock was conclusively a “cultural political transformation” (Pollock 2006:89), was for Lienhard, a period about which it was “scarcely possible to arrive at any definite conclusions” (Lienhard 1984:57).

3.2.3 Writing in India before CE, Orality and the Sacred

Another example where Pollock is Pollockian, in the sense used above, is his conclusion about writing being imported into India in third century BCE (Pollock 2006:59,78,87). The importance and utter significance of this to Pollock's theorization about the beginnings (according to him) of *kāvya*, and to his history of Sanskrit itself, cannot be overstated. While he believes that writing in ancient India saw its beginnings during the times of the Mauryan chancery (Pollock 2006:81), Pollock states that the creation of *kāvya* itself was possible because of the introduction of writing (Pollock 2006:83, 86). Pollock further historicizes *kāvya* and links with the “secularization” of Sanskrit language itself:

“The point of historicizing the invention of *kāvya* is not to gratuitously debunk claims to antiquity for Indian culture, as a certain old Orientalism sought to do in a way that pained Indian intellectuals from an early date. It is to enable us to grasp the novelty of the cultural form, its place in the wider developments of culture and power in the Śāka- Kuṣāṇa era, and some of its meanings and effects, including a new secularization—not too strong a word, and no anachronism—of the gods’ language, a new medium, and a new cultural politics. The worldly transformation of Sanskrit made the language’s enormous expressive resources available for describing the world of human action; writing preserved its new products and made possible the dissemination of Sanskrit culture across vast reaches of Asia. The new order of culture and power, dimly visible in the fragmentary inscriptional record of the new dynasties of western and northern India, set the fashion for an unprecedented way of using Sanskrit for political and literary ends that would dominate in the centuries to follow. We need not go as far as Lévi and Sircar, though inscriptional evidence published since their day tends to confirm their arguments, and **not one new find has contradicted them.**”

(Pollock 2006:89) (*emphasis ours*)

The last line of the last quote above is, again, quintessentially Pollockian. His claim, about inscriptional evidence post Lévi and Sircar, that ‘not one new find has contradicted them’ proves that either Pollock has not fully read Richard Salomon’s book of 1998 (from which Pollock quotes though) or he has wilfully chosen to not acknowledge/ignore findings (and theories thereof) – which Salomon has included – that might undermine his positions. In the chapter “*The*

antiquity of writing in India of the historical period” of his above mentioned book, Salomon, in writing about newly found evidence, writes:

“However, a new body of material has recently come to light that seems to support the older theory that Brahmi existed before Mauryan times, that is, in the fourth century B.C. or possibly even earlier. This is a small group of potsherds bearing short inscriptions, evidently proper names, which were found in the course of excavations at Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka in strata which are said to be securely assigned by radiocarbon dating to the pre-Mauryan period. Various dates have been proposed for these graffiti, ranging from the sixth to the early fourth century B.C. The more recent publications on the subject have tended to favor the later date within this range, but in any case, these inscriptions still seem to show that Brahmi did indeed predate the Mauryan period.”

(Salomon 1998:12)

“In conclusion, both the literary and the epigraphic evidence for the antiquity of historical writing in India are disappointingly inconclusive, since virtually all of the testimony is in one way or another vague or ambiguous. Probably the most cogent single piece of literary evidence for writing before the Mauryan period is Panini’s reference to script (lipi), although the uncertainties as to his date partially vitiate the value of this testimony....However, the recent discovery, mentioned above, of apparently pre-Mauryan graffiti in Sri Lanka has cast some doubt upon this point of view....Like other proponents of pre-Mauryan writing, Norman (279) attributes the absence of any surviving written records before the time of Asoka to the fact that early writing was primarily used for ephemeral documents. The practice of writing monumental inscriptions on stone was presumably an innovation of Asoka himself, possibly under the inspiration of the Achaemenian empire of neighboring Iran. Before Asoka, writing was probably used principally, if not exclusively, for economic and administrative, as opposed to literary and monumental, purposes; perishable materials such as palm leaves, tree bark, and (according to Nearchos) cloth, which have little chance of surviving the rigors of the Indian climate, were used. Thus, according to this view, we need not be surprised that no early specimens of Indian writing have survived, and their absence does not prove that they never existed.”

(Salomon 1998:13)

“In short, two schools of thought are dominant with regard to the problem of the antiquity of writing in historical India. One side sees no cogent archaeological or literary evidence for the existence of writing, and particularly of Brahmi script, before the Mauryan period.

The other camp finds this hard to accept on pragmatic grounds, and moreover now sees archaeological evidence of pre-Mauryan Brahmi in the Anuradhapura graffiti, which are allegedly datable to the early fourth century B.C. at the latest. The issue remains unresolved, though it may be hoped that further discussions and examinations of the new evidence may ultimately lead to a consensus.”

(Salomon 1998:14)

Even before Salomon’s 1998 book, Subhash Kak, in his 1994 paper makes some important observations about Brahmi script which Pollock surely would have found hard to reconcile with his narrative, if he had considered them:

“The Brahmi script as seen in the earliest surviving records was systematic, reflecting the theories of Indian grammarians. Literary evidence as well as signs on early punch-marked coins suggests that writing in India during the second urbanization goes back much before the middle of the first millennium B.C. The punch-marked coins use a Harappan weight standard. The coins appear to have been originally issued as silver blanks by traders and their weights were checked by traders who put their own marks on the coins. By the sixth century B.C. the kings began putting their own issuing marks on the coins.”

(Kak 1994:2)

In a book published 21 years after his 1994 paper, Kak further observes:

“According to B.B. Lal, some marks that are apparently in Brahmi on pottery in India go back to about 800 or 900 BC. The Indus script (also called Harappan or Sarasvati) was used widely during 2600-1900 BC. Its starting point has been traced back to 3300 BC and its use continued sporadically into the late centuries of the second millennium BC.”

(Kak 2015:82)

“We know that writing was used in India prior to 500 BC. Written characters are mentioned in Chāndogya and Taittiriya Upanishad, and the Aitereya Āranyaka refers to the distinction between the various consonant classes. The voluminous Vedic texts also contain hints of writing in them. For example, Ṛgveda 10.71.4 says...”

(Kak 2015:83) (*diacritics as in the original*)

Pollock’s heavy leaning on “scholarly consensus” (Pollock 2006:59) – which even the now-discredited Aryan Invasion Theory had at one point of time – to support his chronological assumption regarding

Brahmi syllabary, is symptomatic of one of his inherent biases, which he tries hard to mask, by claiming to be merely reading native sources – an effort which is, as is evident from the pattern of his scholarship, selective at best while being clearly insufficient and unscientific, given its heavy leanings on conjectural colonial chronology and its exclusion of results from truly modern fields such as 21st century archeology, DNA studies and computer-simulated literary astronomical evidence.

Asian countries have always valued orality as a powerful, faithful agent of not only knowledge dissemination but also a vehicle of cultural consciousness. The manner in which learning, from the oldest days of the Veda-s, has been preserved, enriched and transmitted through oral forms is a singularly remarkable accomplishment, representing the Asiatic genius. While this mode of transference has been very coherently used across domains, including Vedic and *śāstra* based creations, Pollock associates oral with the sole use for sacerdotal purposes alone and unconvincingly wields modern theories to project writing and introduction of the manuscript culture as the game changer that is simultaneous with the invention of *kāvya*. By thus adding another feature to his clearly demarcated pattern – Vedic/Brahmanic/oral/oppression-ritualization/old order-in-BCE as that which marked the realm of sacred Sanskrit, Pollock holds writing as the liberating agent that helped bring Sanskrit to the realms of worldly use.

With *kāvya* playing the role of introducing Sanskrit to usage in worldly domains, Pollock further narrows his already nominal and insufficient data and category set to a particular form of *kāvya* viz. *praśasti*, the Indian panegyric. Crediting the introduction of the *praśasti* to the influence of the Śaka-s, the outsiders (who are the typical heroes in Pollock's narrative), he begins the application of his trademark lens of power and its relation to culture to study the new role of Sanskrit in this non-sacerdotal world as well as its spread thus casting his seal on what constitutes a defining moment of change in the Indian history, when Sanskrit descended into the world of men from its sacred realms:

“The history of the Sanskrit language and its social sphere has long been an object of interest to Sanskritists, for this is a curious history that holds considerable theoretical interest. The Sanskrit cosmopolis did not come into being simultaneously with the appearance of the Sanskrit language. Its development was slow and tentative, and for it to come about at all the very self-understanding of the nature and function of the

“language of the gods,” as Sanskrit was known, had to be transformed. Chapter 1 delineates the circumscribed domain of usage and access that characterized the language from its earliest appearance in history to the moment when this field was dramatically expanded around the beginning of the Common Era. Ritualization (the restriction of Sanskrit to liturgical and related scholastic practices) and monopolization (the restriction of the language community, by and large, to the ritual community) gave way to a new sociology and politicization of the language just around the time that western Asian and central Asian peoples were entering into the ambit of Sanskrit culture. Whether these newcomers, the Śakas (Indo-Scythians) in particular, initiated these processes or simply reinforced those already under way cannot be determined from the available evidence. What is not in doubt is that it was then that a new era—a cosmopolitan era—began,”

(Pollock 2006:12)

3.2.4 ‘Nothing suggests’: How about the manuscripts, the destructions, the as yet unexcavated?

“Nothing suggests” is a usage that punctuates some of Pollock’s key statements (Pollock 2006:79, 81, 86). While more than one thing and one person, at least those shown in 3.2.3 above, clearly suggest a date of Indic writing before 3rd century BCE, unless Pollock has read all manuscripts believed to be extant, “over thirty million” (Pollock 2006:558) of them, unless Pollock knows exactly all that has been destroyed in India, naturally or otherwise and unless Pollock knows all that is yet to be excavated, isn’t the usage ‘nothing suggests’ only too suggestive of Pollock’s “objectivity”?

3.2.5 ‘Kavi’: Erased from the memory of Premodern South Asians

In the beginning of the chapter where Pollock claims to chronicle the movement “from liturgy to literature”, Pollock makes these incredible declarations:

“The beginnings of vernacular literatures are especially vexatious — in part because indigenist or nationalist thinking strives to find the deepest historical roots possible — and require separate theoretical discussion (chapter 8.1). But in the case of Sanskrit literature, too, most scholars resist acknowledging invention. Assuming the truth of the schoolmen’s tag *ex nihilo nihil fit*, they have long sought to provide an infinitely

receding history to Sanskrit *kāvya*, or at least a very long genealogy leading back into the Vedic period. From one perspective — though it was one never adopted or even registered by people in premodern South Asia — Veda and *kāvya* do share certain traits. The ancient seers of the Veda are often referred to as *kavi*, the term later adopted for poet;”

(Pollock 2006:75)

Notwithstanding Pollock’s inconsistency in his position towards the “indigenist” – here a reason for vexation, whereas in ‘*The idea of literature in Sanskrit thought*’ (Pollock 2003:41), a theoretical basis, a “turn” that “would seem to recommend itself easily” – Pollock declares that while “ancient seers of the Veda are often referred to as *kavi*, this was hitherto not ‘adopted or even registered by people in premodern South Asia’. If this is not an incredible distortion – that people of premodern South Asians did not even register that ancient seers of the Veda were referred to as *kavi* – what else is it? As counterintuitive this might seem to anyone familiar with *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*, and as ridiculous the need to disprove this with evidence might seem, here is one evidence: ‘*kavi*’ is used to describe a Ṛgvedic seer ‘Uśanas’, in the undoubtedly and incredibly popular South Asian, South East Asian, Indian text *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* (10.37):

vṛṣṇīnām vāsudevo’smi pāṇḍavānām dhananījayah |
munīnām apy ahaṁ vyāsaḥ kavīnām uśanā kavīḥ ||

What is more, the word *kavi* is translated as ‘poet’ in the translation of the same verse in book *Bhishma* (Book 6, Volume 1) of Clay Sanskrit Library (CSL) (Cherniak 2008), a library whose general editor is Sheldon Pollock himself, ironically. In the same CSL volume, the phrase “*kaviṁ purāṇam*” (Cherniak 2008:231) is translated as “primordial poet” (Cherniak 2008:232). Now, unless one makes the laughable, certainly unsubstantiated, assumption that *Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā* was not adopted or registered by Indian people in premodern South Asia, how can Pollock’s declaration – that those people did not adopt or register that ancient seers were referred to as *kavi* – be considered tenable and not a distortion?

3.3 *Kāvya* in Veda and *Nāṭya Śāstra*: More evidence

On the basis of the five points enumerated to expand on the topic *Disconnecting Kāvya from Vedas and Śāstras*, Malhotra concludes:

“Thus, Pollock tries to separate *kāvya* from the Vedas. He says there is a ‘clear and untranscendable line dividing Veda from *kāvya*’, and emphatically adds: ‘Before the modern era, the Veda was never read as *kāvya*, never cited in anthologies, never adduced as exemplary in literary textbooks; in fact, the Veda was expressly denied to be *kāvya*.’”

(Malhotra 2016:130)

As a response to Pollock’s position, he then includes the following:

“In response, K.S. Kannan points out that the Atharva Veda makes a reference to *kāvya* as something that never gets old, and never dies; the interpretations vary, some saying it is poetry, some saying it is the world that is metaphorically referred to. Kannan also points out that the Vedas have been designated as a *kāvya* in some inscriptions. Lord Shiva is praised as the poet whose *kāvya* is the triad of the Vedas, thereby implying that the three Vedas are Śiva’s *kāvya*. Kannan has also compiled other extensive material to support this view. Also, traditional Hindu dancers performing Bharata Nāṭyam assert that their art is based on Bharata Muni’s *Nāṭya Śāstra*, which in one of its first few verses (1.17) says it is based on R̥g Veda, Sāma Veda, Yajur Veda, etc.”

(Malhotra 2016:130)

To further expand the above corpus of evidence, and also in order to make available a ready reckoner for more detailed, actual textual analysis by traditionalists with expertise, 69 textual occurrences of the word *kāvya* (and its forms) are compiled below, as found in Veda-s (R̥g, Sāma) and *Nāṭya Śāstra*

Eight occurrences in R̥g Veda:

1.83, 1.117, 1.121, 5.39, 8.8, 9.6, 9.97, 10.144

Two occurrences in Sāma Veda (*Sāma Veda*, Kauthuma Śākhā, 4th Prapāṭhaka, 1st Adhyāya):

*vidhum̐ dadrāṇam̐ samane bahūnām̐ yuvānam̐ santam̐ palito
jagāra |
devasya paśya kāvyam̐ mahitvādyā mamāra sa hyaḥ
samāna ||* 325

*pra kāvyam̐ uśaneva bruvāṇo devo devānām̐ janimā vivakti |
mahivrataḥ śucibandhuḥ pāvakaḥ padā varāho abhyeti
rebhan ||* 524

Fifty nine occurrences in *Nāṭya Śāstra*:

5.21, 5.108, 5.135, 7.7, 7.119, 7.125, 14.23, 15.227, 16.17, 16.42, 16.53, 16.88, 16.89, 16.92, 16.97, 16.116, 16.118, 16.119, 16.123, 16.128, 16.135, 16.172, 17.41, 17.47, 17.57, 17.147, 18.5, 18.6, 18.9, 18.15, 18.23, 18.40, 18.42, 18.46, 18.50, 18.61, 18.96, 18.97, 19.32, 19.34, 19.53, 19.55, 19.66, 19.103, 19.105, 19.153, 20.22, 20.24, 20.29, 22.51, 25.88, 27.22, 27.26, 27.27, 27.33, 27.34, 27.35, 36.35

While 69 textual occurrences – 59 from *Nāṭya Śāstra* and 10 from Vedas (*R̥g-* and *Sāman-*) – have been collated above to facilitate further analysis, already existing scholarship specific to poetry in Vedas, such as *Atharvaved Ka Kāvya* and *Sanskrit Kāvyaśāstra aur Kāvya Paramparā* by Radhavallabh Tripathi, *Devasya Kāvya* by P.D. Mishra could be relevant inclusions for further analysis.

3.4 ‘Category’cal omission: Upaveda

The category “Upavedas” is conspicuously absent, rather surprisingly, in Pollock’s work. The preeminent and globally renowned Insider to and practitioner of Sanatana Dharma tradition Pujyasri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swami in his book *Hindu Dharma*, on the connection between Veda and Upavedas, wrote:

“The Vedas are of fundamental importance; the Angas and Upāngas derive their importance from them. Ayurveda, Arthaśāstra, Dhanurveda and Gandharvaveda are called Upavedas, subsidiary Vedas. The connection with the prime scriptures is thus obvious.”

(Sarasvati 2008:136)

The contents of Upavedas’ subcategory Gandharvaveda (in the chart titled “Caturdaśavidyāsthāna”, from his other book *The Vedas*) includes, among other key Kāvya texts like *Kāvyaādarśa* of Daṇḍin, *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra* of Bhāmaha, *Kāvyaṃimāṃsa* of Rājaśekhara, also *Śṛiṅgārāprakāśa* of Bhoja, the one Pollock so extensively uses for his theorisation on *kāvya*. Tradition’s view of the connection between *kāvya* and Veda should be unambiguously clear.

3.5 Pollock’s Use of Philology

Pollock’s writing is so well crafted, it leads one from sentences and thoughts that begin with ‘perhaps’, ‘maybe’ to those with

disproportionately “definitive” conclusions, making even far-fetched and contrived notions mainstream. Charging a culture that has existed for several millennia with periods of exclusive, confining sacerdotal use of a language and then, a sudden liberating secularizing move, especially when there is voluminous material to show the absence of any such temporal schism, is truly remarkable for its sheer absurdity and vacuousness. There is no doubt that different forms have dominated different eras, with literature indeed being the prepotent form of a people’s expression of an age, and that is certainly justifiable and accountable, considering how the fundamental essence and ethos through all these expressive forms and manifestations remains unchanged. But then any analysis that refuses to consider the very basis and defining framework of the system under study but purports to answer huge questions deserves to be scrutinized for the purpose of such overcharging.

Pollock has always considered philology an invaluable tool in studying the cultural and political conditions of the society, maintaining that critical philology can provide insights into creation of alternate models and theories, especially for pre-modern India, (Pollock 2006:36). Critical philology of his brand also sets the tone to enable him to read relationships between polity, kingship and *praśasti* (Pollock 2006:166) “No sooner had Sanskrit become the premier vehicle for the expression of royal will, displacing all other codes, than Sanskrit learning itself became an essential component of power. The figure of the learned king became quickly established, especially the king learned in Sanskrit philology (and we may with justice speak of “philology” since “grammar” is often found to be used metonymically, standing for knowledge of lexicology, prosody, and the like, including literature). In fact, the topos of the educated king can be found in *praśasti* discourse across the cosmopolis.”

Placing the origins of philology in the Vedic world, Pollock believes all its features including metrics and language analysis heavily influenced Buddhist and Jain works whereas the flow of energies was never both ways. But the role played by philology assumes new heights in Pollock’s cosmopolitan order, as the former lays the basis for power, even as political power enabled the flourishing of philological traditions outside the realm of the sacerdotal and the liturgical. Citing classics such as the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa and Kavibhoja’s works, Pollock believes that philology with its tools of *alaṅkāraśāstra* and

praśasti played a crucial role in furthering the political agency played by literary works. By the time this relationship weakened, Pollock believes the tradition of grammar assumed significance again, in the vernacular settings (Pollock 2006:368) “Given the powerful model of Sanskrit philology, with its full apparatus of grammars, dictionaries, treatises on the arts of literature (especially poetics and versification), and commentaries galore, a comparable set of instruments for disciplining and dignifying a language of Place was clearly essential if vernacularization was to be successful,” ensuring the connection between philology and the cosmopolitan order remains primary.

3.6 The Nexus between *Kāvya* and *Rājya*

Remaining faithful to his own modus operandi of using small subsets to focus upon and extrapolating from them to making catholic statements about the whole domain, Pollock narrows down the relationship between *kāvya* and *rājya*, again a smaller subset of culture-power interaction, as his linchpin, “*kāvya* and *rājya* were mutually constitutive; every man who came to rule sought the distinction of self-presentation in Sanskrit literature, typically in the permanent public form of the *praśasti*” (Pollock 2006:18). This is fundamentally problematic as the idea of power, in spite of being a universal concept, finds different approaches across cultures. In India, the pursuit of the highest standards of living called for self-mastery as well as its external manifestation, in all domains including statecraft. The word power itself is a loose translation of *śakti*, even though Pollock chooses to use the word *rājya*, which is a much narrower and specific subset. India has never been a country that has cast aside the role of power in the worldly affairs of man and has actively sought to give it a right and just structure by placing it in context of *dharma*, especially for men in positions of power, such as kings as seen in *rāja-dharma*. What Pollock is interested though, is using his post-colonial lens of culture-power interaction, to analyse the relationship between *kāvya* and *rājya*. Having separated *kāvya* from any connection to sacred elements and without studying *rājya* in terms of native structures, Pollock wants to understand typical Western elements of “domination, exploitation, violence” that arise from power.

Pollock believes that with the invention of *kāvya*, and *praśasti*, ‘political orders’ defined in terms of their connection to produce literary texts

underwent striking changes to reorient themselves and questions why the reordering entailed. Considering the politicization of culture, Pollock introduces (Pollock 2006:31) ‘two closely connected issues,’ concerning ‘the reproduction of power’ which he analyses through the lens of ‘legitimation of authority, ideology, hegemony, and like notions ‘ of Western social theories and ‘the constitution of power’. Setting up the Sanskrit Cosmopolitan order as the framework in which he would study the culture–power interaction, Pollock defines the order as being ‘territorially expansive,’ ‘politically universalistic,’ and ‘ethnically non-particularized,’ all notions that place Sanskrit on a global platform, even as he admits that territoriality and governance in the period remain indefinite concepts. Maintaining that the practice of political power was a practice in aesthetic form as well, Pollock believes (Pollock 2006:18) “that these aspirations were embedded in a set of cultural practices like *kāvya* and *prāśasti*,” attributing to literature a specifically political role. Pollock himself remarks yet that defining a relationship between *kāvya* and *rājya* in the manner in which he has, presents ‘interpretative challenges’ and existing ideas from legitimation theories only represent, “The single available explanation of the social function of Sanskrit cosmopolitan culture is legitimation theory and its logic of instrumental reason: elites in command of new forms of social power are understood to have deployed the mystifying symbols and codes of Sanskrit to secure popular consent.”

Thus, in firstly defining a new relationship between two disparate entities and then trying to find explanatory models that would fit the relationship and in finding little of the same within existing theories, Pollock arrives at a point where he believes his cosmopolitan model is the most suitable template.

4 Desacralisation to Globalisation of Sanskrit

Pollock’s tangled writing is rich in bold, sweeping generalisations with far reaching implications for several centuries of history, but what is more audacious is his confident assertions that he uses as starting points for his theories instead of established facts. There are lakhs of thousands of manuscripts, apart from the several thousand ones that were hauled away by the colonisers, that are yet to be collated and studied across the country to know more about the conditions

in the past millennia, especially that of BCE. Any unbiased scholar would readily admit how one is short of material to make aberrant theorisations of the sort Pollock makes in considering the period of India over the last 2500 years. Pollock's presumptuous statements include

"The very act of permitting Sanskrit to speak openly in the everyday world was itself a decision (on the part of the Śakas among others) made against the backdrop of centuries of its public silence."

(Pollock 2006:499)

"Even as poets eventually decided to shatter this seclusion and produce expressive and other non-sacral texts in Sanskrit and, equally important, to commit them to writing, participants in many other areas of Sanskrit culture reasserted archaic practices of orality and exclusivity. It is especially when juxtaposed to such conceptions, moreover, that the first public inscription of political poetry in Sanskrit recovers the element of audacity, even scandalousness that made history. The cultural political act of the Śaka prince Rudradāman in the middle of the second century — which, if not actually inaugurating a new communications model, at the very least affirmed its acceptability and perceived efficacy in dramatic fashion — must accordingly be seen, like all the others, as a choice."

(Pollock 2006:500)

It is incredible that the writer is so self-assured that he's able to remark upon the Śaka-s' "decision" of "permitting Sanskrit" to be spoken openly, against false claims of "centuries of its public silence," and it becoming a representation of "the first public inscription of political poetry in Sanskrit recovers the element of audacity, even scandalousness, that made history," all remarks that have such a strong tone to them, which is characteristically absent when Pollock adopts a language replete with "perhaps" and "maybe" and "suppose" while defining his data set. One can look hard in Pollock's labyrinthine work trying to find solid, unassailable facts that can naturally lead one to his conclusions but come up with almost nothing.

Several Western Indologists have certainly held Sanskrit to be the chief vehicle for sacred purposes in the ancient past, but, there has been study of the use of the language for several *vyāvahārika* disciplines as well, including the arts and sciences. But, none of this feature in Pollock's scheme as non-sacral fields except the *kāvya*, to which Pollock attributes the role of a great liberator. In

trying to explain his dismissal of existing theories in favour of his incongruous models, Pollock casts aside ideas from modern social theories, legitimation and functionalism, all the while betraying his clear motive and intent to globalize Sanskrit.

In trying to justify his ictus on writing as characterizing the non-sacral nature of Sanskrit while he holds oral transmission as typical of the sacred old order, Pollock brings in the ideas of Niklas Luhmann to see how “cultural change and ideational change” is steered by technology, such as printing for instance. Pollock considers writing and the manuscript culture in context of ‘communication dissemination’ and sees it as propelling the spread of *kāvya*, (Pollock 2006:498) “While admittedly remaining a cultural form that was fully realized only in public performance, *kāvya* was created through the power of writing,” dismissing any connection between the oral tradition and *kāvya*.

Such statements from Pollock, the Sanskritist, draw attention to the motives behind his wilful and explicit rejection of defining elements from the tradition while he tries to cover in ornate language and diffuse style of writing the absence of any substantial basis for his claims.

In considering ideas from modern social theory, Pollock traces the origins of linguism and the primeval role of language as “the core-factor in social-group identification” right upto the times of Dante, Franz Rosenzweig, Antonio Gramsci and Johann Herder (Pollock 2006:505). Pollock then introduces Clifford Geertz’s analysis of language being primordial to a culture in the sense of being a ‘first order “given” of social life’ and highlights his statements about India, as one where (Pollock 2006:506) “for some yet to be adequately explained reasons” the phenomenon was “particularly intense.” Pollock holds Geertz’ idea as an analytical concept that makes ‘social claims’ and not an ontological one, making a weak case comprising of a couple of lines that Geertz’s category has sociological claim but not his conclusions, especially those that apply to linguism in India. Favouring Max Weber’s constructivist account over Geertz, including maintaining that it is the dominant position held among academics, Pollock presents the case that aids his narrative, (Pollock 2006:507) “primordial sentiment with respect to linguism (not his term, of course) is generated through the “cultural work” of elites, producing a “belief in the exclusiveness of [a] language community”

that comes to seize the masses through the democratization of culture.” Using multilinguality and language plurality as evidence for the lack of a single ‘mother tongue’ for an individual in India, Pollock maintains that linguism was not native to pre-modern South Asia.

Even as one can give his theory credit to be able to hold some water in perhaps the second millennium of CE, one finds that it does not at all address the issues he speaks about in BCE as well as the first millennium of CE, a remarkably long period during which Sanskrit did function as the primary vehicle of thought and expression of an entire culture across a sub-continent. This methodology of Pollock, where he dismisses conflicting models even from European domains as those which are not native to Indian context and adeptly shifts the debate spatially and temporally to points of his own choosing in the grand narrative while seemingly trying to justify his positions is present across his work, making one wonder if it is wilful obfuscation.

In further considering theories from communication, socialization and legitimation, Pollock maintains,

“Unwarranted generalizations based on European particulars pertain not only to the sociality of language but also to the place of culture as such in relation to power.”

(Pollock 2006:511)

With no convincing explanation, Pollock dismisses with a casual mention the idea that Sanskrit could have been used for *vyāvahārika* purposes and spread across the Indian sub-continent, calling the spread as a real ‘enigma’,

“The weakest argument, and the most quickly dismissed, explains the role of Sanskrit across much of the cosmopolis but especially in Southeast Asia as driven by practical interregional communication needs. Unfortunately, there is no direct evidence that Sanskrit was ever used to fulfill these needs outside of certain scholastic and liturgical environments. There are undoubtedly some real enigmas here, such as Sanskrit’s massive invasion of the Javanese lexicon (upward of 40 percent, and penetrating to the most quotidian level), but these enigmas may be open to other kinds of solutions.”

(Pollock 2006:512)

It is imperious of Pollock to not even consider the factual history of a country where for centuries it maintained trade and economic relations with several south Asian nations. Even an outsider such as

Elphinstone has remarked upon the maritime trade of ancient India and the spread of Sanskrit culture across south Asia and dismissal of such genuine data will obviously lead to ‘enigmas.’ Such blatantly biased theorization, which would turn a blind eye to facts that paint a picture of a culture that embraced all aspects of life — sacral to non-sacral — so that one can create a temporal gulf between the two is what Pollock’s writing amounts to. And the resolution of these fantastic enigmas will surely emerge only through Pollock’s narrative.

The second functionalist argument that Pollock dismisses is the idea that Buddhists, Jains and outsiders turned to Sanskrit increasingly, after initially rejecting it, for its “technical precision.” Terming Sanskritisation as “a subset of social functionalism,” Pollock spurns it as a theory that carries little merit,

“Sanskritization is presented either as completely random or as a ceaseless process, without beginning or end, everywhere available to explain transculturation, as if Sanskrit culture were a higher form of life toward which lower forms inevitably aspire.”

(Pollock 2006:514)

One wonders how a critic who goes by the label of a Sanskritist could express this veiled disdain for a culture that has been held as the touchstone for all of the Orient for millennia and a language that has been the torch bearer of its loftiest and most beautiful conceptions. Such criticism that passes in the name of academic analysis hardly justifies itself and can only inspire similar writing in defense. Pollock’s motive inspires a response Sri Aurobindo rendered back in his own age (Sri Aurobindo 1997:316) –

“The fit parallel to this motive and style of criticism would be if an Indian critic who had read European literature only in bad or ineffective Indian translations, were to pass it under a hostile and disparaging review, dismiss the *Iliad* as a crude and empty semi-savage and primitive epos, Dante’s great work as the nightmare of a cruel and superstitious religious fantasy, Shakespeare as a drunken barbarian of considerable genius with an epileptic imagination, the whole drama of Greece and Spain and England as a mass of bad ethics and violent horrors, French poetry as a succession of bald or tawdry rhetorical exercises and French fiction as a tainted and immoral thing, a long sacrifice on the altar of the goddess Lubricity, admit here and there a minor merit, but make no attempt at all to understand the central spirit or aesthetic quality or principle of structure and conclude on the strength of his own absurd method

that the ideals of both Pagan and Christian Europe were altogether false and bad and its imagination afflicted with a “habitual and ancestral” earthiness, morbidity, poverty and disorder. No criticism would be worth making on such a mass of absurdities, and in this equally ridiculous philippic only a stray observation or two less inconsequent and opaque than the others perhaps demands a passing notice. But although these futilities do not at all represent the genuine view of the general European mind on the subject of Indian poetry and literature, still one finds a frequent inability to appreciate the spirit or the form or the aesthetic value of Indian writing and especially its perfection and powers an expression of the cultural mind of the people.”

Harping back to his pet lens of power-culture relations, Pollock further charges,

“The relations of culture and power so central to the choice to affiliate with the Sanskrit cosmopolitan order are entirely occluded; rarely is the general matter of cultural production even raised, let alone the specific question of what it meant to address a supralocal as opposed to a local audience in terms of either the sociality of the process or the aesthetics of the product. Emptied thus of both agency and the historical social worlds within which agency operated, the concept of Sanskritization ignores most of the critical aspects of the transculturation process; it has become a hindrance rather than a help to critical inquiry in the domain of literary-cultural change. Perhaps we should expect no more, however, for one can sift through the much deeper scholarship on Latinity (Romanization) and vernacularity and be equally disappointed.”

(Pollock 2006:514)

As highlighted earlier in context of his methodology, Pollock wonders why the kings of Khmer or people of Pagan wanted to adopt Sanskrit and having eschewed reasonable explanations, he bizarrely suggests the following,

“Yet isn’t it possible that people conceive of political and moral needs in the first place through such visions as Brahmanism and Buddhism, that these are not instruments for filling needs but might in fact create them, and that their appearance in one place and not in another is a consequence of entirely contingent factors, such as the presence or absence of certain itinerant religious professionals?”

(Pollock 2016:515)

Thus, Pollock finds theories that have been corroborated with facts over centuries unsuitable while peddling imaginative ideas such as these.

Considering ideas from legitimization theories, including those from Weber, Ricoeur, Guha and Giddens, Pollock states, (Pollock 2016:519) “It is patently false, for South Asia at least, that before the coming of colonial modernity there existed a single, unified, unblurred vision of either power or culture.” The concept of Dharma, it must be said in reply, in all its forms and interpretations – Vedic, Buddhist, Purāṇic – as well as its manifestation seen across the *śāstra*-s and canons including the *arthaśāstra* and *rāja-dharma*, has been uniquely Indian and pervasive in its spatial and temporal reach. Plurality in external forms of this core and defining essence of the Indian spirit has been an exemplary feature of the Indian culture. Dismissing the enormously congruent structures and templates that have existed not only to encompass but also master and subsume most aspects of the *vyāvahārika sat* of the day, by stating that there is no common vision of a culture such as the Indian is outrageous and willful fabrication and misrepresentation.

Further maintaining that, (Pollock 2006:520) “ideology as we have always understood it—as a discourse that reproduces domination—is “simply irrelevant” for domination in agrarian societies,” when Pollock says, “Our concern throughout has been with *vyāvahārika sat*, the subjective horizon of the actors involved,” it feels farcical because all he has done is disregard and overlook all relevant structures from within the tradition as well as historical evidence that undermine his theories while choosing to selectively retain elements from Western approaches. Repeating ad nauseum that *kāvya* and writing were tools of desacralising and unfettering Sanskrit from the domination of the Vedic oppression, Pollock sums up his case for rejecting prevailing Western models by declaring that models that present India primarily as a civilisation are hindrance to true analysis – while his own model that is entirely based on meagre data and inherent bias provides rare insight!

Pollock’s examination of the discourse on civilizationism is packed with arguments for rejecting any geographical claim over Sanskrit while he intends to see it globalized. Calling civilizationism ‘a conceptual and an analytical object,’ Pollock considers its interaction with nationalism,

which is ‘a category of practice.’ Pollock characterises his approach as one which would (Pollock 2006:526) “isolate some key themes and tendencies and focus on some representative positions, concentrating on the evidence offered by literary culture.” However, instead of considering evidence from Indian tradition for instance, where the geographical beauty of the land has been beautifully captured in *kāvya* to show that Sanskrit was not as rootless as he projects it to be or how the pluralism in India has been linked across time and age with the same essential ethos and belief systems, Pollock considers works of Herder, Fichte and the inapplicability of Heidegger’s analysis to Sanskrit. Clearly detaching Sanskrit from any geographical bounds, Pollock states, (Pollock 2006:528) “Place was irrelevant in a cultural political formation that saw itself as existing everywhere in general and nowhere in particular.” Considering aspects of civilizationism, Pollock maintains that, (Pollock 2006:529) “To an outsider looking in at the field of Southeast Asian studies, the history of the civilization problem appears to fall into two major phases of conceptualization. The first is what we may think of as the colonial-European and Indian-chauvinist stage,” (notice the tone used, such as the word chauvinist, for the indigenous voice repeatedly in his work). Further, “On the European side, the Indianization of Asia was seen as an antecedent to its own contemporary imperial project; on the Indian side, it was taken as a consoling reminder of India’s own triumphant colonial past in the face of a humiliating colonized present,” (Pollock 2006:529).

Having maintained throughout the book that the spread of Sanskrit throughout Southeast Asia was never in material terms but through the agencies of the Brahmin priests who carried the language with its customs, Pollock now quotes French writers on India’s colonizing role in Southeast Asia, (Pollock 2006:529) “The French art historian Alfred Foucher had argued in the 1930s that the Indianization of Southeast Asia was a matter not simply of influence but of “real colonization, in the full sense of the word.” French Orientalists evidently viewed what they interpreted as premodern colonization by Indians as a forerunner of their own well-known *mission civilisatrice*; George Coedes actually spoke in terms of the “civilizing activity of India,” while maintaining the following, (Pollock 2006:530) “The transculturation of Southeast Asia was the work of traders, adventurers, and itinerant religious entrepreneurs,” which in his own words, should indicate the presence of activities for which Sanskrit was used apart from the

sacerdotal, for instance in trade. Clearly, Pollock wants to build a case for a purely sacerdotal tradition based period in the BCE and a sudden, desacralized, globalized Sanskrit in the CE, even in the presence of evidence that would undermine his theory.

Further considering O. W. Walters work on Indianization in Southeast Asia, Pollock maintains that,

“It is very hard, for the Sanskritist at least, to identify the slightest Cambodian inflection in the Sanskrit inscriptions Wolters analyzes beyond the occasional localism with respect to gender relations or sectarian practices (chapter 3.1). This is entirely expected, of course, since a principal function of the Sanskrit discourse was to efface local difference in favor of the transregional standard.”

(Pollock 2006:513)

It is disconcerting indeed that the precision with which a language has been built is held with negative inflexion against it and instead, the language here is accused of ‘effacing’ regional standard, a charge which is baseless considering the sheer number and variety of vernaculars that existed along with Sanskrit in India itself. Having repeatedly ignored the fact that his theories are built on very little factual knowledge of pre-modern India, Pollock ironically remarks thus, (Pollock 2006:531) “The assumption that a historical thought world can be separated from the historical language in which it is embodied.. is very hard to justify or even to comprehend. Like many other scholars, Wolters was inclined to take Indian literary allusions in inscriptions as mere veneer, decoration, and metaphorization,” (Pollock 2006:531), even as this statement becomes very true for his own work. Given the socio-political as well as the cultural conditions that existed in pre-modern India, as gleaned not just from the small data subset of *prāsasti* but from several different sources across domains, Pollock’s models hold little water and his reading into the category of *prāsasti* and imputing it with extraordinary features of political power borders on the unbelievable.

Carrying forward his design for the case of a globalized, secularized Sanskrit, Pollock maintains that (Pollock 2006:532) “The foreign does not become such until civilizationalist thinking makes it so. Prior to that, the “foreign” is simply a cultural element circulating in the vast world, its origins undecidable and very likely irrelevant to the people who proceeded to make use of it,” sounding more like a line from a

book that justifies intellectually imperialism and colonization. Further dismissing indigenism as a viable theory, Pollock remarks,

“What the history of transculturation at work in the Sanskrit cosmopolis demonstrates every step of the way, however, is that all culture is really transculture. Indigenism is to the history of culture what creationism is to the history of the cosmos.”

(Pollock 2006:533)

Even as Pollock presents a considerable body of work that has been undertaken in civilizational studies until current times, his own arguments for dismissing the theory, especially in the case of Oriental nations such as the Indian, replete with distinctive nature, are flimsy. His very questions, for instance, (Pollock 2006:534) “What possible “conception of the world as a whole” could be said to characterize “Indian civilization,” which has witnessed struggles over conceptions of the world of the most incommensurable and irreconcilable sort for three millennia?” are incredulous, especially considering his caliber as a critic! Anybody with even a passable familiarity of Indic systems will recognize the uniqueness of its paradigms and templates with which it approaches matters, be it spiritual or worldly.

His declarations make more transparent his aims to globalize and secularise the language,

“Indeed, a stable singularity called “Indian culture,” so often conjured up by Southeast Asian indigenists, never existed. What did exist was only a range of cultural and political codes and acts, many recently developed (Sanskrit *kāvya*, public inscriptions, free-standing temple building, quasi-universalist political imagery, land-grants to Brahmanical communities, and so on) and undoubtedly generated out of various local practices,”

(Pollock 2006:535)

“Only gradually did all these practices coalesce into something like a cosmopolitan unity, one that was both “at home” and “abroad across this entire space. Not only is “Indianization” something of a empty signifier, since no unitary force ever existed to produce the process except in the trivial sense that the subcontinent provided one important source of new cultural flows to southern and eastern Asia; not only is it a crude sort of teleology, erroneously presupposing as cause what was only produced as effect; but equally remarkable, and almost always overlooked, is the fact that the Indianization of Southeast Asia was concurrent with, and no different from, the Indianization of India itself,” “From the processual

perspective, “culture” or “civilization” (as in “Indian Civilization 101”) becomes nothing but an arbitrary moment illegitimately generalized, a freeze frame in a film taken for the whole story,”

(Pollock 2006:539)

As he dismisses any unifying thread that may have created the very existence of this range in the first place.

Considering that a critic of Pollock’s acclaim and scholarship makes these statements, one cannot but regard them not as objective scholarship, but an enormous philippic against India, replete with biased and motivated design.

Ironically, it is in Pollock’s summary dismissal of the applicability of Western theories to Indic studies that one finds the truest statements of the book, that deem apropos to his own work:

“There is reason to doubt that culture is always and everywhere produced for the sheer legitimization of power, or for no social reason whatever but simply in the course of natural evolution,”

“Literature, the site where nations and regions and peoples insist on locating their real, continuous, primeval selves, may actually begin, and may do so by a process of continuous give and take from contiguous literatures. Present-day understandings of civilization may be based on indigenist conceptions that are unhistorical and reductive, while conceptions of the nation may be linked with views of culture in general that are anachronistic and simplistically functionalist. South Asian premodernity, and they in turn call that theory into question. If we are prepared to acknowledge the methodological fallacy of positing motives for action prior to determining those motives from the empirical materials, and if we can develop an openness to being surprised by the possible strangeness of the past, then we need to go back to the drawing board in trying to theorize the meanings of cosmopolitan and vernacular in South Asia before modernity.”

“It is instead a matter of resisting the prejudgments that such vocabularies entail, the categorizations that limit alternative possibilities, and the historical judgments based on accepting the terms of an argument that are inapplicable in the first place,”

(Pollock 2006:564-565).

5 Conclusion

In continuing the tradition from his European predecessors of ignoring the viewpoints of the traditional scholar in framing models to study Indological elements, Pollock writes in *What is South Asian Knowledge Good For*

“Are there any decision makers, as they refer to themselves, at universities and foundations who would not agree that, in the cognitive sweepstakes of human history, Western knowledge has won and South Asian knowledge has lost? That the rest of the world is ineluctably becoming the West, not the South? That, accordingly, the South Asian knowledge South Asians themselves have produced can no longer be held to have any significant consequences for the future of the human species?”

(Pollock 2014:4)

With such clear assertion of the victory of Western knowledge systems, one can only search in vain for a template that respects and actively considers the models and categorisations and studies from native, traditional systems, which, after all, constitute the very object under dissection.

A careful examination of Pollock’s oeuvre and especially the epilogue of *The Language if the Gods in the World of Men* lays bare the man’s overtly political bias and intention to secularise and globalize Sanskrit — bringing under scrutiny his role of being the Sanskritist Outsider. Pollock wants to see Indian history cleansed of any overtly native connections with India’s past as he calls for a revised writing, with scholars such as himself deciding which elements are worthy of making it through their final cut. In trying to project a temporal gulf between what he portrays as a solely sacerdotal Sanskrit in the Vedic epoch to a purely desacralized Sanskrit used in worldly domains, Pollock seeks to project newness in analysis which is factually hollow. For, the *pāramārthika* - *vyāvaharika* categorization has always existed simultaneously from the ancient times, with copious works being produced in both realms; what Pollock achieves is the explicit highlighting of the former during one epoch and the latter during a later epoch, to suit his theorisations. Against the backdrop of his stated intentions, his dismissal of indigenism and civilizationism as valid, applicable theories assumes a more causal connection with his designs as against objective scholarly analysis. Consider his remarks,

“Exhuming these anomalies as future potentialities, by decivilizing and denationalizing the Indian past where they were once lived realities, is something that might be achieved by a seriously historical account of Sanskrit in the world, one seeking not a return to roots but a “coming-to terms with our ‘routes,’” an unsentimental and nondefensive history, and one that is not merely, pointlessly erudite.”

(Pollock 2006:580)

Having begun the book with apparently modest aims of trying to understand a moment of rupture at the start of the CE, Pollock concludes by imperiously deciding that India indeed had a period where his Cosmopolitan model best captures the conditions of culture–power interactions, driven by literary inventions of the age such as *kāvya* and *prāśasti*, propelled by the bold impetus provided by the outsider kings. Have established his own imaginative vision of the past as the most authentic, felicitous, apposite and judicious model possible, Pollock openly laments the rise of forces in modern India that might not only challenge and debunk his claims but also revive Sanskrit studies in a manner that does not suit his project to declare Sanskrit a dead language that needs to be fossilized in a manner he sees fit.

Pollock’s open hostility and detestation towards right wing political parties in India seems to hold more so for the modern Hindu who is unapologetically comfortable, if not proud, of his identity that is not shaped by the narratives of the colonizer or the oppressor, but seeks to revive his ancient spirit in a new light. His remarks,

“India, for its part, is hardly immune now to bad choices. The worst at present is the choice between a vernacularity mobilized along the most fragile fault lines of region, religion, and caste, and the grotesque mutation of the toxins of postcolonial *ressentiment* and modernity known as Hindutva, or Hindu nationalism. The very names of the groups that make up the institutional complex of Hindutva—including the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People’s Party) and its ideological wing, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council)—bespeak what had never been spoken before, postulating in the one case a single Indian “peoplehood” (*janata*), in the other, Hinduism as an aggressive universalism. What is immediately clear from the history we have followed in the course of this book is that Hindutva is a perversion of India’s great cosmopolitan past, while the many new subnational movements (as in Assam and

elsewhere) represent an entirely new, militant vernacularism, indeed, a kind of Heideggerization of Indian life,”

(Pollock 2006:575)

Crosses the lines of academic scholarship and objectivity and responses to his views too would have to be in a similar vein, even as one is surprised that such content is a part of academic discourse.

If Pollock is truly concerned about the interaction between local, cultural norms and global forces in modern times, and wishes to bring forth wisdom from the past, it would be a better project for him to study the horrendous impact of the excesses unleashed by West's unbridled capitalism, instead of forcing unsubstantiated parallels with Europe, and tortuous and far-fetched theories on the role of *kāvya* onto the historical narrative of the land. And Pollock's distress at the rise of fundamentalist forces and need for secularist narrative as well would find a highly suitable subject in the repeated expressions of racist, xenophobic and sexist leanings in his own backyard of his country.

Indeed, it must be far easier to create and hand out these confounding conjectures to an unsuspecting people in the garb of academic writing than to watch with weariness the filling of the scale on the balance, even as one longs to cast aside all shackles of colonialism, in all its forms, and let the true voice of a people sing its own song.

Afterwards came the night and a temporary end of all political initiative and creation. The lifeless attempt of the last generation to imitate and reproduce with a servile fidelity the ideals and forms of the West has been no true indication of the political mind and genius of the Indian people. But again amid all the mist of confusion there is still the possibility of a new twilight, not of an evening but a morning Yuga-sandhya. India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the Occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable Shakti recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma.

(Sri Aurobindo 1997:444)

Appendix A

2. Categories that belong to the province of *Kāvya* proper, as found in Lienhard's 1984 book



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Chapter 7

The Science of Meaning

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Abstract

Philology is normally defined as the study of language in written historical sources. It is also likened to the science which teaches us what language is. The creative and novel approach to philology and its praxis, its usage as a trustworthy tool of scholarship by the (*videśī*-s) neo-Orientalists and its practitioners like Sheldon Pollock are examined in this paper for their veracity and scientific nature. A survey of philology as it has evolved and practiced in the West is presented. The notion of meaning, the *raison d'être* of philology, is then discussed as the principal focus of this paper. It is proposed that the understanding of the nature of meaning drives its methods and its study. What exactly is meaning in an Indian sense? What are the traditional approaches to explore meaning in Indian knowledge systems? What is meant by the meaning of a text (*śabda*)? These are juxtaposed with Western philosophical notions of meaning and also notions of meaning in the sense of modern techniques of representing and deriving meaning computationally, i.e. those used in areas of AI (Artificial Intelligence). Exploring the notions and ideas of meaning

*pp 209–239. In Kannan, K. S. (Ed.) (2019). *Swadeshi Critique of Videshi Mīmāṃsā*. Chennai: Infinity Foundation India.

as derived from “text” specifically, the limitations of the Western conceptualizations of textual meaning are explicated. The nature of study of such meaning via techniques such as Philology is shown to be absolutely flawed in a very fundamental way owing to the inherently limited understanding of meaning itself. That methods like Western Philology and its modern creative and agenda-driven avatars like Pollock’s rather ludicrous three-dimensional philology are inherently baseless and deeply flawed is posited. A fervent call is made (on the basis of a need to retain sanctity and restore sanity of academic scholarship) to question its (**philology**) existence as a tool of twenty-first century scholarship.

Consequences of philology: *arrogant expectations; philistinism; superficiality; overrating of reading and writing; Alienation from the people and the needs of the people....*

Task of philology: *to disappear.*

—Friedrich Nietzsche, “We Philologists” - Autumn 1874

Introduction

The nature of philology, its origins and the nature of its evolution as part of Western civilizational scholarship is briefly examined. The nature of the new avatars of Philology including that of Sheldon Pollock, their motivations and limitations, are also explored. We discuss the different origins, motivations and nature of the theories of language and the role they play in shaping the character of a civilization and its peoples. This is followed by a section discussing and dissecting the Western (up to present-day theories) as well as the traditional Indian theories of language. We then examine and try to understand the nature of meaning and the various theories of meaning according to Western (social-science) ideas and also those of the traditional Indian schools of thought. The nature of meaning - in a computational sense - is also examined and juxtaposed with scientific nature of meaning and the social-scientific sense of meaning. The brief comparative analysis of the nature of language and meaning leads us to the discussion of its implications. Are Western methods like philology, given their roots, valid academic tools to study Indian texts? And is it appropriate or academically sane to base civilizational commentaries on such dubious methods? The fact

that they are being used (since 250 years) says more about the deep motivations of the West and of Western scholarship more than anything else. The validity of philology in the context of modern science and the nature of its “scientific method” is also examined using Western sources and commentaries. The reasons why philology is a deeply flawed and untrustworthy method to base scholarship on - in a Western traditional (historical) sense, in a modern Western (humanities) sense, in a scientific sense and not surprisingly both in a traditional Indian sense and in a modern Indian sense — are briefly discussed. The implications of this discussion to neo-Oriental scholarship and to other such “schools” of academic pursuit are also discussed. We conclude positively, exhorting scholars, asking them to refrain from using such fundamentally erroneous and imperfect academic techniques and methods in the pursuit of theory-building, career growth and generation of divisive social/societal/civilizational commentary.

On Philology

The roots of philology and its deep influence on humanities, though known, has not been discussed in detail till the recent book by Turner (2014). Turner’s explicit thesis running throughout this book is that all of Humanities as we know it today traces its origins to philology, which he characterises as the multifaceted study of texts, languages and the phenomenon of language itself.

Turner also indicates that the nineteenth century avatar of philology gave birth to Comparative Linguistics - a pseudo-scientific pursuit used as basis for racist and imperial colonial goals by Europeans (colonialism via comparative linguistics) and by the Americans (slavery via biblical philology). The creation of pseudo language families and the theories of historical evolution of languages was deeply influenced by the methods of philology. The obsession with historical comparisons (historicism) more of which we shall discuss later - driven by the afore-said motivations of a colonial and racist nature underpinned non-empirical philological scholarship. The obsession with manufacturing history and interpreting past events is also highlighted by Turner. Whether we realize it or not, **all** of modern humanities is inherently colored by these deeply divisive motives.

With the advent of empirical approach to science and the notion of *experiment* as proof and with the maturing of the scientific method - philology lost its importance, as noted by Turner. Though supposedly defeated, humanities as a discipline still lives on, and so do the pseudo-sciences via the social-sciences. There have been enough reviews, articles, and scholarship discussing the relevance of humanities in modern education / society - but the fact that it is still living and breathing (in India) though it is supposedly dying in the West (especially so in the USA) shows that it is relevant (for whatever reason) and not redundant. For a deeper meta-perspective on the relevance of analysis of the humanities (vis-à-vis philology) read (Turner 2014):

“Because philology’s legacy survives in ways we build knowledge today, the excavation of the philological past becomes an effort at once of historical reconstruction and **present-day self-understanding**. When we see where our modes of knowing came from, we grasp better their strengths and weaknesses, their acuties and blind spots. I hope that a *broad view of the philological heritage will help us to detect these things more easily, to locate ourselves more securely on the map of knowledge, and thereby to improve our future investigations.*”

(Turner 2014:xiii) (*italics ours*)

Western Philology

As most of these “narratives” go, the origins of philology (not surprisingly) go to the Greeks. Along with their supposed speculations and achievements on language and its origins, what also arose in parallel was, “debate” or rhetoric and the ability to argue skillfully in public. As noted by Turner, Rhetoric was primarily political in nature and driven by individual fancy, noted even during these early times. Some European philologists also ventured eastward – these were the beginnings of Orientalism. The search for identity of national pasts was kindled all across Europe and philology was put to use in all these national past-times. Philology in its political avatar had truly come of age. Seventeenth and eighteenth century philology was influenced by British colonization of India. William Jones, in his third anniversary discourse to the Asiatic Society in 1786, commented on the nature of Sanskrit and recommended its study to advance European ideas of

language. Jones introduced a new dimension to philology in addition to the already existing pre-occupation with the political - that of race.

James Turner acknowledges this as a pivotal moment in the history of philology. For the people of the Indian subcontinent this was a critical moment too in their histories, the resounding echoes of which are still loud and clear, the neo-Orientalists.

“Out of the marriage of European philology and Indian texts, then, came two new fields of knowledge: Indology and comparative philology (or comparative grammar). The first offered no new methods; earlier scholarship had forged the techniques there applied. Its novelty lay in opening to European eyes a civilization previously obscure. Indology became the first field in which a *self-perpetuating cohort* of European scholars—not the odd missionary, merchant, or chronologer—worked systematically to uncover the riches of a non-European civilization across a wide front. In a narrow, academic projection, *Indology foreshadowed area-studies programs* in post-1945 universities. In a broad, cultural view, Indology immensely expanded European perspectives on the history and civilizations of the world.”

(Turner 2014:99) (*italics ours*)

In his 2009 book, *Representations*, Geoffrey Harpham discusses the so-called “Returning to Philologies” and quotes Edward Said, Paul De Man and Nietzsche where their deep disdain of philology is demonstrably well-articulated. Quoting Nietzsche, he writes

“In “We Philologists,” written in 1874, Nietzsche registered his contempt for most philologists, whose work impressed him as an ***absurd combination of inconsequentiality and hubris***.

“... Philology was, however, also understood in very different terms, not as an empirical study of a limited field, but as a speculative undertaking oriented toward deep time and distant things.”

(Harpham 2009:37)

This imagination (identified above) expanded and became all-encompassing as the philologist grew bolder and applied his speculations in what can only be characterized (to a scientific sensibility) as truly wild and unlimited ways. The dubiousness of the “method” and the inferences drawn based on these speculative and non-empirical methods was truly something to be dreaded.

“In short, the fear voiced by Said and de Man—that *critics unmoored from philology might indulge in statements about vast structures of power or the general context of human history*—was for nearly a century and a half proudly announced as the defining characteristic and entire point of philology itself.”

(Harpham 2009:40) (*italics ours*)

This speculative and dangerous “scholarly pursuit” was used in the nineteenth century to justify the horrors of racism (Mueller), slavery (biblical philology) and colonialism (comparative linguistics).

“Staking claims to the status of poetry, philosophy, and science—and to a transcendence of as such—*philology represented itself as an “untimely” form of knowledge that was completely independent of political or ideological ends...* The most telling instance was *the deep investment of philology in the concept of race.*”

(Harpham 2009:41) (*italics ours*)

Modern linguistics got itself rid of philology by becoming more objective by rejecting it altogether. *Humanities, though, are yet to be rid of it.* Philology has in fact returned in many new ways and is making its presence felt in many areas of the humanities. The neo-Orientalists led by Sheldon Pollock have invented their very own unique versions of philology such as political philology and liberation philology as part of the scholarship in their area-studies disciplines (South Asian studies) scholarship, which investigates and examines the civilization of the Indian subcontinent with modern versions of the deeply flawed and problematic techniques of philology.

Harpham’s sobering conclusion alludes to this fact that contemporary scholarship and humanities is yet to be rid of the deep flaws of philology and that all of its historical problems still remain unaddressed in modern humanities.

Pollockian Philology

The tools used by the principal proponent (Sheldon Pollock) of the (*videṣī*) neo-Orientalists is a version of philology reinvented as part of the pursuit of area-studies scholarship in the US academic system. After Edward Said’s influential critique on Western anthropological and social-science scholarship (Said 1978), the study of the East had

to be reinvented with new methods and techniques. Breckenridge (1993), in the 44th Annual South Asia Seminar at the University of Pennsylvania (1988/1989), in a way, marked a formal reinvention (in the opinion of many) of South Asian studies using neo-colonial lenses.

Sheldon Pollock's contribution to this volume was a paper ("Deep Orientalism") in which he demonstrates the newly minted version of his philology. Using creative techniques and spectacularly speculative theories based on philological readings of Sanskrit texts, Pollock was able to (supposedly) reason that the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazis to the pre-existing deep hatred and divisiveness present in Sanskrit (as a language). The thesis is that the study of Sanskrit by German Indologists affected their deep subconscious, creating ideas of Aryanism and justification for a sense of superiority.

Pollock thus uses his critical philological study of Sanskrit and Indian texts as a response to Said's critique in *Orientalism* - by characterizing Sanskrit itself as a carrier of the deep seeds of racism, hatred and power, and calling it "Deep Orientalism". Sheldon Pollock's philology is characterized (as seen earlier in the history of philology, this is nothing new) by political readings and fairly imaginative speculation, keeping alive the hegemonic discourse of Orientalism in the post-colonial era. H.H Devamrita Swami of the ISKCON notes in his review of Malhotra (2016)

"A salient point this book offers us is that the Western approach to Sanskrit is often weighed down by "political philology"—cultural biases, hegemonic filters."

(Malhotra 2016:Review page)

Sheldon Pollock's wide-ranging work on Sanskrit and Indian civilizational history over the past 30 years has been characterized by deep political readings into India's past and of its cultural artifacts - primarily the language of the Sanskrit and the associated texts of *sanātana dharma*. His own understanding of traditional Sanskrit text scholarship is colored, and according to him Sanskrit philology was mostly tied to practices of power. See Malhotra (2016:232) for details.

Influences on Pollockian Philology

In his 2009 paper, Pollock speculates on the future of philology. He offers his own definition/s of what philology is and what it should be

“Most people today, including some I cite in what follows, think of philology either as close reading (the literary critics) or historical-grammatical and textual criticism (the self-described philologists).

What I offer instead as a rough-and-ready working definition at the same time embodies a kind of program, even a challenge: philology is, or should be, the discipline of making sense of texts. It is *not* the theory of language—that’s linguistics—or the theory of *meaning or truth*—that’s philosophy—but the theory of textuality as well as the history of textualized meaning.”

(Pollock 2009:934) (*italics ours*)

The roots of Pollock’s philology can be seen in Giambattista Vico (Pompa 1975), wherein Vico (considered to be the father of modern social science, Descartes being generally considered the father of science) applies the ideas of Rhetoric to History. His ideas have been highly influential in the philosophy of history, sociology and anthropology, and had an influence on the so-called Enlightenment. Pollock acknowledges this influence and uses some of Vico’s constructs and applies them to Sanskrit study and his style of philology of history.

“I map out three domains of history, or rather of meaning in history, that are pertinent to philology: textual meaning, contextual meaning, and the philologist’s meaning. I differentiate the first two by a useful analytical distinction drawn in Sanskrit thought between *paramarthika sat* and *vyavaharika sat*— ultimate and pragmatic truth, perhaps better translated with Vico’s *verum and certum*... The former term points toward the absolute truth of reason, the latter, toward the certitudes people have at the different stages of their history and that provide the grounds for their beliefs and actions. Vico in fact identified the former as the sphere of philosophy and the latter as the sphere of philology.”

(Pollock 2009:950) (*italics ours*) (*diacritics as in the original*)

Opening the doors for free-for-all speculative academic scholarship based on this application of Vico’s categories to Sanskrit terminologies (glaringly out-of-context), Pollock adds

“... the philologist’s truth, balancing in a critical consilience the historicity of the text and its reception, adds the crucial dimension of the philologist’s own historicity.”

(Pollock 2009:951)

Motivations of Pollockian Philology

Given the background to the historical evolution of philology, the postcolonial predicament posed to Orientalism and Pollock’s creative reuse of Vico’s rhetoric-based ideas of philology and mapping them to Sanskrit categories of “truth” (*sat*), one is left bewildered. What could be the motivations of such devious exercises of intellect? Vico’s rhetoric is exposed in Bull (2013) where Vico’s analogies of the visual (painting) and the verbal (truth) lay bare the methods that he (Vico) espoused.

“According to Giambattista Vico, writing in 1710, human truth is actually “like a painting.” That is just what Liotard was referring to when he said that “painting... can *persuade us through the most evident falsehoods* that she is pure Truth.” But could painting ever be so persuasive as to persuade us that truth itself functions the same way?”

(Bull 2013:xi) (*italics ours*)

Vico explains how human truth is like a painting as opposed to sculpture - making truth as he calls it

“Divine truth is a solid image like a statue; human truth is a monogram or a surface image like a painting. Just as divine truth is what God sets in order and creates in the act of knowing it, so human truth is what man puts together and makes in the act of knowing it. The true is precisely what is made (*Verum esse ipsum factum*).”

(Bull 2013: Sec 12.98)

Bull questions these claims of Vico and juxtaposes Nietzsche

“... but Vico’s idea of *making truth* could easily be turned against itself, for how is made truth to be differentiated from *invented falsehood*?.. Nietzsche - Error is the precondition of thought, for “*we have need of lies... in order to live.*”

(Bull 2013: Sec 16.4) (*italics ours*)

Vico’s pursuits of *making truth* and inventing falsehoods could very well have been the basis of his rhetoric based philological methods.

That Pollock is inspired by Vico and uses techniques derived from such an intellectual disposition is something that needs to be underlined here.

Pollock's motivations for using **political philology** based on Vico's *making truth* principles, and its applicative usage to Sanskrit texts is not apparent to the lay reader. Malhotra (2016) explicates the motivations to the following –

1. primarily those which give control to English-speaking Indian elites who reintrepet their traditions using Western lenses,
2. the diversion of focus away from actual practices, and
3. an overall weakening of India's cultural foundations by Indians who are mostly trained using these Western methods. Refer (Malhotra 2016:313) for details.

To complement his Political Philology (a diagnostic philology), Pollock has theorized a new form of philology. It is what he calls Liberation Philology (a prescriptive philology) (see Pollock 2012) where Pollock eloquently makes the case for this kind of philology. Malhotra suggests an alternative, called Sacred Philology, to counter this “liberating” approach proposed by Pollock. Refer (Malhotra 2016:362,363) for details.

Suggesting broader sociological and geopolitical influences, Malhotra ascribes much deeper divisive and pernicious motives to Pollock's seemingly academic theories – those of re-engineering of Indian society using Western paradigms.

On Language

In the preceding discussion on philology, we skirted issues concerning language and the theories around its origins and evolution. In order to accurately understand the role of philology and its efficacy as a tool/method and to know whether philology is faithful to the notion of language, we need to understand **language** better. Philology's Western origins have been discussed in the previous section. In this section we shall discuss the Western theories of language, Indian theories of language and in the light of today's advances in machine learning and AI (Artificial Intelligence), we will also address what language means, in a computational sense. The discussion on language will help us place

in context, the relevance and veracity of methods such as philology, which, owing to its origins and legacies of evolution, is not sufficiently scientific enough to warrant its role as a tool of modern academic scholarship.

Western Theories of Language

The Western theories of language are primarily based on “discussions of origin”. As there is a lack of direct evidence, it is considered to be a very difficult topic of study. We will not discuss here the origins of language inspired by the philological (Biblical) lines of reasoning. The following quote suffices to illustrate the ludicrous nature of the approaches inspired by philology.

“The concept of language families formed by genealogical descent gave students of language a novel way to classify languages and track their development. *This fresh approach retained philology’s central dogma of historical comparison.... By doing so, philologists aspired to retrace the history of the languages and even to reconstruct tongues long vanished from the earth.* Seventy-five years after Jones introduced the idea of a language family comprehending tongues from India to Ireland, August Schleicher partly reconstructed the mother of them all, Proto-Indo-European. *Loose speculation about Adam’s language became rigorous science.*”

(Turner 2014:99) (*italics ours*)

Given this basic difficulty, Western theories of language take multiple approaches, based on different assumptions – Continuity Theories wherein it is assumed that there must have been simpler earlier forms of language, Discontinuity Theories which suggest that human language is a sudden event in the course of evolution and other theories which are the combination of the above. As of 2016, it is still unclear (according to Western ideas) what language is. In a recent article (Ibbotson *et al.* 2016) in the *Scientific American*, Chomsky’s modern revolution in linguistics is criticized based on recent evidence.

“Recently, though, cognitive scientists and linguists have *abandoned* Chomsky’s “universal grammar” theory in droves because of new research examining many different languages—and the way young children learn to understand and speak the tongues of their communities. That work *fails to support* Chomsky’s assertions.”

(Ibbotson *et al.* 2016) (*italics ours*)

The problem with these (Western) theories and similar others is acknowledged -

“As with all linguistic theories, Chomsky’s universal grammar tries to perform a balancing act. The theory has to be simple enough to be worth having. That is, it must predict some things that are not in the theory itself (otherwise it is just a list of facts). But neither can the theory be so simple that it cannot explain things it should.”

(Ibbotson *et al.* 2016)

The alternative to universal grammar and innate linguistics are usage-based theories based on meaningful generalizations driven by empirical studies and data. Theories of Universal Grammar can be considered mostly irrelevant.

Indian Theories of Language

The Indian (theories) notions of language are deeply intertwined to the cosmology and worldview of the Veda-s. This approach is fundamentally different from the Western approaches to addressing the phenomenon of language based on external structure. The role of language in establishing and upholding *dharma* (that which is veditically harmonious) is a principal concern in the *Mahābhāṣya* and is also seen in the Śāntiparvan (232-30) of the *Mahābhārata* - the proper use of language would lead the practitioner to final liberation (*mokṣa*).

The origins of Vyākaraṇa are hinted at in the Veda, the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* and in the *Ṛk-tantra* where Brahmā is listed as the first author of Vyākaraṇa (Subrahmanyam 2008). The tradition of language-science can be traced back to the Veda-s which according to oral traditions and recent archaeological evidences of Vedic cultures, conservatively dated to at least 10,000 BCE, if not earlier.

The earliest surviving formal textual work on Vyākaraṇa is by Pāṇini (dated to at least 500 BCE, if not earlier). Understanding of language and its minute analysis have been very comprehensive in the Sanskrit tradition.

“Language has been subjected to micro-analysis and macro-analysis both at syntactic and semantic levels right from *varṇa* (phoneme) through *mahāvākya* (discourse) by Indian intelligentsia, thousands of years ago.

Almost all the systems and schools of Indian philosophy, including Vyākaraṇa had discussed the concept of *śabda*. The term *śabda* (*vāk*) is untranslatable. It is used to denote many things, i.e. *varṇa* (phoneme), *prakṛti/pratyaya* (morpheme), *pada* (word), *vākya* (sentence), *avāntara-vākya* (sub-sentence), *mahāvākya* (discourse), the *śabda-pramāṇa*, *parā*, *paśyanti*, *madhyamā*, *vaikhari* and the ordinary sound. *Ṛk*, *Yajus*, *Sāma* etc. are synonyms of *vākya*.”

(Subrahmanyam 2008:vi)

Language scholarship in the Sanskrit tradition goes much deeper and involves not only mastery of grammar but also the mastery of the concept of *śabda* (word), *vākya* (sentence) and *pramāṇa* (knowledge-sources) i.e. ***pada-vākya-pramāṇa-jñāna***.

Subrahmanyam places Indian linguistic science in the context of the Western theories of language and expresses dismay at the lack of scholarship in the study of languages especially by Indian traditional scholars who have failed to analyse the Western theories of linguistics in the the light of the Indian systems.

“... *each and every unit in ancient linguistic science is defined clearly and unambiguously. No definition/rule/norm is revised. There are impeccable solutions to all the problems, both at syntactic and semantic levels.... On the other hand scholars of modern linguistic science are still searching for a definition of “word”. Scholars are divided on the concept of discourse/text/sentence. The theories that are proposed were revised time and again (sic).*”

(Subrahmanyam 2008:vii) (*italics ours*)

On the painful state of affairs of linguistics (as a humanities discipline) in Indian universities - he says

“... Meanwhile, the libraries are **dumped with books/theses/articles**, written taking the theories that were later stamped as untenable. The situation still continues.”

(Subrahmanyam 2008:vii) (*emphasis ours*)

A very important difference in Indian approaches to language has been the deep synthesis of language with metaphysics of the various Indian *darśana*-s. Vyākaraṇa has influenced and has been influenced by millennia of Indian thought on the nature of reality. Helārāja in his commentary on Bhartṛhari’s *Vākyapadīya* characterises Vyākaraṇa as having eight constituents under 4 principal categories of *śabda* (Word), *artha* (Meaning), *sambandha* (relation), and *prayojana* (purpose).

1. *Śabda* (word)
 - (a) *Prakṛti* and *Pratyaya*
 - (b) *Pada* and *Vākya*
2. *Artha* (meaning)
 - (a) *Prakṛtipratyayārtha* (meaning of root and suffix)
 - (b) *Padavākyaārtha* (meaning of word and sentence)
3. *Sambandha* (relation between *śabda* and *artha*)
 - (a) *Kārya-kāraṇa-bhāva* (cause and effect relationship)
 - (b) *Yogyatā* (capacity to render meaning)
4. *Prayojana* (purpose)
 - (a) *Artha-jñāna* (knowledge of meaning)
 - (b) *Dharma* (leading to *mokṣa*)

Śabda, *artha* and their *sambandha* are considered to be eternal and the structure bounded by *Vyākaraṇa* and meanings by *śāstra* and cannot be misinterpreted. Use of the right *śabda-s* acceptable to *Vyākaraṇa* would fetch *dharma* and usage of *apa-śabda-s* (wrong and imperfect) would only cause accumulation of *adharma*. In fact the **use and abuse of language is considered to be the primary domain of Vyākaraṇa**. It is considered to be the “only” subject-matter of *Vyākaraṇa*. Grammar as a translation to **Vyākaraṇa** does not capture the real connotation of *Vyākaraṇa*. For more details, refer the *Brahmakāṇḍa* of Bhartṛhari’s *Vākyapadīya* (Subrahmanyam 1992).

This brief discussion on Indian notions of language brings to light the fundamental differences in Indian approaches to language and those of the West. That Western techniques like philology based on the flaky foundations of Western theories of language are used to interpret Sanskrit text without heed to the rich tradition of language understanding in the Sanskrit tradition itself, which only serves to highlight the hubris and incompetency of Western scholarship more than anything else. The West will do what it wants to and it should; the deeper issue is the mindless import of these flawed knowledge systems (over the past 70 years) into Indian Universities via the Humanities and Social-Science departments and the so-called “modern” educational systems.

Computational Notion of Language

The engineering approach to understanding language in contrast to the theoretical approaches of the humanities is seen in the advances in the fields of AI and machine learning. A combination of rule based symbolic systems and statistical (data-driven) approaches to understanding language have been used successfully to understand language, and are put to use in specific applications as seen in recent successes of language agents like Siri. It is important to understand that some of the best intellects (currently) are engaged as yet in the pursuit of understanding language using the powerful tools of computation. The application-specific nature of the engineering approach has led to tremendous successes in niche areas of computational language understanding. The fundamental approaches to syntax representations and the semantic structures therein though are still dependent on the Western theories of sentence and phrase. The weak notions of Western approaches to grammar are reflected in the computational representations too. The most common representative structure is the CFG (Context-Free Grammar) and its probabilistic version the PCFG. These are derived from existing (massive) corpora of language usage. Though it is a simple model and results in efficient parsing there are still very many issues with syntactic ambiguity - present state-of-art parsing (for English) has levelled off at 90% constituent (recognising the parts of a sentence) accuracy. The problem of ambiguity though still remains and is severe.

The problems facing computational linguistics are similar to those faced by Western theoretical linguistics. The problem of ambiguity is very difficult to resolve as there are very many degrees of freedom. This only brings more perspective to the absolutely speculative nature of philological approaches to interpreting linguistic meaning. The issue of semantics in a computational sense and the engineering approaches to address the issue are many, and are addressed in the section on Meaning. See Schubert (2014) for more.

Discussion

In this section, I have tried to highlight fundamental issues in the understanding of language and the various theories of language. The Western theories of language influenced earlier by Biblical

preoccupations and later by motivations of imperialism and racism are limiting when we compare them with the theories of language already existing in the Sanskrit tradition. To allow Western philology to be a tool of academic scholarship to interpret Sanskrit texts, is not only deeply insulting to the civilizational heritage of Sanskrit but is also technically incorrect and flawed by any academic standard. That even in the 21st century we still need to discuss the appropriateness of philology is deeply disturbing at very many levels. What this means for (*videṣī*) Neo-Orientalist practitioners and their theses, originating both in Western and Indian Universities, is something that needs serious deliberation.

On Meaning

The section on language has highlighted some fundamental issues in the approach to understanding language. This section on meaning explicates these issues in a clearer and more robust manner. It becomes all the more apparent that the ideas of meaning and the dependencies on the much deeper lived philosophies of language in the Indian traditions require more robust tools of interpretation than those offered by the Western tools of philology and hermeneutics. Unless a scholar is embedded in the culture and understands the profound syncretic nature of Indian languages, his professing scholarship from Western universities which are far removed from the actual reality of usage of symbols and their interpretation is nothing less than abysmal scholarship. That this has been happening for more than 250 years is no rationale that it needs to be continued. That the realities of America as a modern-day cultural colonizer, and the demands of dual-use anthropology (Price 2016) via area-studies warrants and necessitates such dubious scholarship, is NOT widely known. Scholarship such as those of the Neo-Orientalists will be funded and will continue as long as there is a geopolitical need for it. It is time that Indian policy-makers realize this.

The Meaning of Meaning

Meaning has a wider connotation than the meaning in a verbal sense. The modern (Western) ideas of meaning have two approaches - theories of meaning (semantics) and a more foundational theory

(facts which provide semantic content for meaning). The idea of meaning is approached differently in Indian traditions. Meaning of words (*śabda*) and meanings from other *pramāṇa*-s (valid sources of knowledge) are considered to be distinct. The Vedic heritage provides for deeper notions of meaning and introduces *infinities*, *transcendences* and *consciousness* into the discourse of meaning. In Sanskrit, *vaidika* (Vedic) meanings of a given *śabda* are different from its *laukika* (worldly usage) sense. And whatever be the approaches, the idea of meaning as both an “input” to language and as an “output” from language is acknowledged.

Western Notions of Meaning

As indicated in Speaks (2017) there are two kinds of theories of meaning, answering to two different questions –

1. What is the meaning of this or that? and
2. In virtue of what facts about that person or group does a symbol have meaning?

This maps to a semantic theory of meaning and a foundational theory of meaning, correspondingly.

The semantic theories are either propositional (based on frames of reference and the context) or non-propositional (based on logical formulation via truth semantics). Either of these theories faces difficulties arising out of context sensitivity and the resulting ambiguities of meaning. There is still no clarity as to how meaning arises using these semantic models. This is possibly due to the weak underlying mechanisms in the understanding of language and the theory of language itself.

The second “sort” of theory is the foundational theory of meaning on the philosophical notion of meaning. As usual, one approach to this is to deny the existence of any such foundational theory; all meanings are explained in terms of mental states of users of the languages. Summarizing the mentalist theories of meaning:

“Since mentalists aim to explain the nature of meaning in terms of the mental states of language users, mentalist theories may be divided according to which mental states they take to be relevant to the determination of meaning. The most well-worked out views on this

topic are the Gricean view, which explains meaning in terms of the *communicative intentions of language users*, and the view that the meanings of expressions are *fixed by conventions which pair sentences with certain beliefs*.”

(Speaks 2017) (*italics ours*)

There also exist non-mentalist foundational theories of meaning, basing meaning on origins, usage and on causality. Those that base meaning on the principle of truth-maximization and on social norms also fall into the non-mentalist categories of theory.

Indian Notions of Meaning

As seen in the section on Indian theories of language, the notion of meaning is deeply embedded in the tight structure of *śabda* and *vākya*. There is very little scope for ambiguity between *śabda* and its *artha*. Vedic notions of sound as basis of meaning, the Veda-s being primarily an oral tradition, have different approaches to meaning than those seen in textual Sanskrit. *Śikṣā* (phonetics), *Chandas* (prosody, poetic meters) and *Nirukta* (contextual etymology) are unique to Sanskrit and exemplify the influence of interpreting meaning in Vedic Sanskrit. The science of *Nirukta* helps ascertaining meaning of words which are no longer in usage.

Meaning derivable from text is very well-structured by Pāṇinian grammar. The notion of *śabda* as a *pramāṇa* (knowledge source) which is different from other *pramāṇa*-s like *pratyakṣa* (observation) and *anumāna* (inference) is fundamental to Indian knowledge systems. Prof. Kapil Kapoor lays out the architecture of the Indian conception of meaning and its close association with the structure of the primordial Vedas (Kapoor 2005). The tradition of interpretation and disambiguation based on context is seen right in the Veda-s. He also discusses the various traditions of interpretation of meaning starting from the *Ṛg Veda* exegesis to the notions of meaning influenced by the various *darśana*-s like Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta. It suffices to know that there are distinct traditions stretching back millennia, which explain in painstaking detail how meaning is to be derived from text.

For a stupendous technical treatment of meaning the reader is referred to Tatacharya (2008), a four-volume treatise on the nature of

meaning derivable from text and speech, *śabda-bodha-mīmāṃsā*. From the colophon:

“An Inquiry into Indian Theories of Verbal Cognition, the author, assembling the view of different *śāstra*-s (Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Vyākaraṇa, Vedānta.....) examines the following theories and subjects: the theory according to which word is a means of valid cognition, the definition of word as a means of valid cognition, the nature of the sentence, its sense, and what makes it intelligible, the theories of *anvitābhīdhāna* and *abhihitānvaya*, the notions of syntactic unity and plurality, syntactic expectancy, logical consistency, phonetic contiguity and the general purport of the sentence, the *sphoṭa* theory: all views and notions the knowledge of which constitutes the first step in the analysis of verbal cognition.”

(Tatacharya 2008:blurb)

In order to examine the validity of Western philology as a technique to understand Indian texts i.e., the *śāstra*-s, *śruti* and *smṛti* works, it is appropriate to discuss the idea of interpretation of Sanskrit text as it has evolved in the multi-millennial tradition of shared interpretation, the notion of the *śāstra-paddhati*.

“The *paddhati* (customary practice), can be seen to have four parts 1. Formal organization of discourse in terms of *prakaraṇa*, *adhikaraṇa* 2. The logical mode of discussion and argument 3. *pramāṇas* or epistemology and 4. Strategies or instruments of interpretation. The presence of a shared *paddhati*, or mode of interpretation, employed by competing and opposing *sampradāya* schools, such as *brāhmaṇa*, Buddhist and Jaina define India as an interpretive community.

... There are two parallel interactive traditions - the popular tradition of collective institutionalised reading - the *kathā* and *pravacana* form. The learned tradition which forms the core of the popular tradition, seeks to analyse the meaning of the text by analysing the text according to the shared metalanguage.

... This imposes certain conditions on the interpreter. There is in the tradition the concept of *adhikāra* - the concept of **competence to interpret**. “A process of saturation, must set in before the eyes are ready to see and the mind to grasp”. This “process of saturation” involves mastering all the pertinent knowledge. The boundaries of this knowledge have been described by Rajasekara. He lists 22.

... Besides - each *śāstra* has its own vast exegetical scholarship (*bhāṣya*, *vṛtti*, *ṭikā*, *saṃkṣā*, *pañjikā*, *kārikā*, *vārttikā*) which is responsible for

refinement, extension, and increasing precision and profundity of knowledge. Any learned man who takes upon himself the task of interpreting *Śāstra*, has to have mastered all this knowledge - twenty two sciences and the commentary literature - if he is to make an enduring contribution to the Indian tradition.”

(Kapoor 2005:98-100) (*emphasis ours*)

I will not go into more detail as to what comprises the actual form and structure of textual interpretation. It would already be clear at this point as to what the traditional Sanskrit scholar normally considers Western philology to be and the theses propounded by 250 years of Western scholarship, as also those by Sheldon Pollock and others of the (*videśī*) Neo-Orientalist orientation. Whatever be the Western scholar's saturation, it certainly is not anything close to the expected levels of competence of a traditional *adhikārin*.

The Western anthropo-sociological notions of **etic** vs **emic** are extremely relevant in the context of interpreting Sanskrit texts. Unless the relevant expertise and competencies have been gained and achieved by decades of serious study in the relevant bodies of knowledge - *adhikāra* to interpret text is just not created.

Computational Notion of Meaning

Information theory exemplifies the mathematical view of information and meaning. It studies the quantification of information. Problems arising out of transmission of information via signals led to notions of information entropy. Meaning of information in terms of “data” is expressed via mathematical measures of entropy. A “**bit**” becomes the fundamental unit of information and thereby of meaning. The algorithmic information theory view of information is of it as a measure of computation. The more random a given string is - the more complex it is deemed to be. The Quantum world-view has its own version of Quantum information theory and its fundamental unit - the **Qubit**. Common to all of these views is the idea of data and the measures based on its varying representations (bits, qubits, strings etc.). Artificial systems (programs) which need to represent and reason about states of systems - either real or artificial - manipulate symbols which encode meaning of the states of a system via axiomatic systems based on propositional and first-order predicate logic. The

symbolic approach to encoding meaning and knowledge via logic and then reasoning about them via logic programs using techniques of inference forms the basis of symbolic AI systems. More than 70 years from the birth of these symbolic systems, the basic problems of representation and reasoning are still not solved. The “frame problem” is one such. What facts about the world do not change arbitrarily? Things which a human child can seemingly do effortlessly are impossible to achieve using current approaches.

The statistical approach to meaning and intelligence taken by machine-learning is to use as much data as possible about phenomenon (across as many capturable dimensions) and use mathematical techniques to derive causality and identify the nature of the phenomenon they represent. The modern solutions to the problems of speech recognition, image processing, natural language processing take these approaches. The availability of trillions of data sets with which to train mathematical engines to recognize patterns masks the fact that machines actually do not understand much about the phenomenon that they can recognize in the statistical approach. The compute intensive nature of deriving meaning based on data is the current dominant paradigm in the approach to machine based derivations of meaning. Manning (2015) sums up the state of art in computational linguistics thus:

“It would be good to return some emphasis within NLP to cognitive and scientific investigation of language rather than almost exclusively using an engineering model of research. ... However, *I would encourage everyone to think about problems, architectures, cognitive science, and the details of human language, how it is learned, processed, and how it changes, rather than just chasing state-of-the-art numbers on a benchmark task.*”

(Manning 2015) (*italics ours*)

The understanding of the state-of-art in the field of computational language and meaning which has been occupying some of the best human minds over the past century puts in perspective the stupendous achievements of the ancient masters of language and the magnitude of riches available in the works of the Sanskrit tradition. To negate and willfully ignore the existence of these wonderful formulations and theories and also to neglect their rich interpretive heritage is, to put it mildly, sacrilege.

Discussion

In this section, I have tried to highlight fundamental issues in notions of meaning. The limited Western notions of meaning based on philosophical notions of semantics and foundational meaning are juxtaposed with the broad and deeply scientific approach to meaning based on Vyākaraṇa (*śabda* and *artha*). The Indian tradition of text interpretation is juxtaposed with the speculative nature of Western philology. The computational notion of meaning (the state-of-art in computational linguistics) is also discussed in brief, primarily in order to highlight the magnitude of the riches that the Sanskrit linguistics tradition has in store.

Given all of this, having to resort to Western interpretive methods like philology to interpret Sanskrit text, is truly reflective of the pervasive intellectual colonization and the collective inferiority complexes of modern Indians more than anything else.

Implications

Is emic scholarship going to allow etic (outsider) perspectives and methods influence the understanding of the Indian traditions? The pernicious motives of Sheldon Pollock and the Neo-Orientalists, however aesthetically camouflaged and strategically positioned, need to be countered by a legitimate and valid understanding of the traditional (Sanskrit) methods and techniques.

Are we going to let Western Philology interpret Indian society (past, present and future)? The past and present are already being interpreted with these lenses; there were other lenses too (those of imperialism and racism) in use during the colonial period. Sheldon Pollock's political philology and liberation philology need to be countered by collective hard work and coherent arguments against it highlighting its invalidity and inapplicability as an interpretive mechanism. Echoing the thoughts of Rajiv Malhotra one must say that the future will depend on what the insiders of the tradition do with Sanskrit.

The Possible Future

As a directly discernible impact of the efforts of the Neo-Orientalists¹, the methods of Philology might be making a return academically with possible geo-political implications too. The recent efforts to analyze² Persian works on the Indian traditions would possibly give us interesting “interpretations” of Islamic history of India. The distinct lack of a genre of Indology attributable to the Islamic colonizers of India is well-known. From the looks of it, a possible “*Mughal Indology*” seems to be in the works, the foundations of such a genre are possibly being laid.

Another interesting dimension that is to be highlighted here, the academic attempts to deny and negate the influence of (Hindu) India on European thought. The Indian origins of so-called *European* mathematics and science is slowly being revealed and albeit limited – it is getting mainstream acknowledgement. The “Mughal” period can be used as a “wedge” (in ways similar to which the Neo-orientalists use Buddhism as a wedge against Hinduism) to negate Hindu influence on Europe. Any such influence could possibly be ascribed to the Mughals (Persians), who could then be connected to the Greeks etc.

We can see such motive too in Pollock’s attempt at discrediting Indian thought, by “suggesting” Sanskrit influence on Hitler and the holocaust. This would work toward possibly influencing “Western” academia to “instinctively” look for such “Indic” connections for all of “Western” malaise.

The “Zukunftsphilologie³” – Future Philology – attempts at resurrecting philology are also to be noted by interested scholars. A new journal, entitled *Philological Encounters*⁴, is intended to be the primary vehicle for the dissemination of the ideas and methods of Sheldon Pollock (as is acknowledged). As seen in the brief examples cited above, the influence of Sheldon Pollock and his *paramparā* of students (both Western and the Indian “sepoys” academics), is **non-trivial**. It is something that Swadeshi scholars need to be aware of. The multiple facets of this “*ku-rukṣetra*” are to be studied and responded to appropriately. Philology is very possibly an extremely important “front” in the larger battles that Swadeshi Indologists have to pursue in future.

The Nescience of Meaning

This discussion of language, meaning and a deep understanding of the speculative nature of methods like philology has very possibly served to highlight the serious limitations of Western methods of academic scholarship. Nietzsche, it would seem, was not vociferous enough in his call for philology to disappear; more than 125 years after his call for philology to disappear it still is around, more lethal than ever via its reinvention by Sheldon Pollock. Surely, it would not be too incorrect to make a claim that, in all probability, Pollock has not understood the true nature of meaning either in the Western sense or in the sense of the Indian tradition.

Based on individual rhetoric and non-empirical approaches to understanding text, building context, creative makings of the truth (inventing falsehoods), deeply flawed approaches to historicism and a deep revulsion of the sacred sensibilities prevalent in Indian thought very much characterise the “Pollockian”. Fantastic theses like *Deep-Orientalism* are exemplars of this approach.

Couched in fairly dense, deliberate and camouflaged academic verbosity, exemplified in the various theses (Pollock 1997), (Pollock 1998), (Pollock 2001), (Pollock 2003), (Pollock 2005), (Pollock, 2006), (Pollock 2009) and his latest thesis on Rasa (Pollock 2015), it is not too difficult to ascertain that Pollock harbors a deep disdain for Sanskrit knowledge systems and more so to the notion of *dharma* and most importantly its pursuit (which is the most important goal/aspect of “meaning” in the Sanskrit traditions).

What is revealed after this critical examination is Pollock’s **nescience** of meaning in most possible senses: The role of language as a (*dharmic*) liberator (*mokṣa*) has not been understood. The role of (*śabda-artha*) meaning in the pursuit of *dharma* has not been understood. The role of *śāstra-paddhati* in (Sanskrit) text interpretation has not been understood. The empirical nature of ascertaining meaning in the Western sense has also not been understood. The principle of truth maximisation as an approach to ascertaining meaning has not been understood. Inventing falsehoods, creative making of the truth, selective interpretation of text, misuse of quotes, use of false chronologies, self-contradicting positions, stupendous hubris and monumental disdain of Sanskrit and its cultural artifacts seem to be hallmarks of the Neo-orientalists, epitomized by Pollock.

Conclusion

Given the nature of subject areas covered, history and evolution of Western philology, Indian, Western and computational theories of language, Indian, Western and computational notions of meaning, the principal focus of this paper has been to highlight the misunderstandings of the nature of language, meaning and of the flawed and illegitimate nature of the methods of neo-Orientalist (*videṣī*) scholarship. That the nature of language and the nature of meaning have not been properly understood by Western scholarship (since the 1700s) has been highlighted and discussed. Indian theories of language and notions of meaning (that have evolved over millennia) are positively more scientific, better reasoned and are far less ambiguous. The well-acknowledged speculative nature and political/rhetorical roots of philology have been discussed and examined in detail. It must be clear by now that Sheldon Pollock's methods of re-invented philology are deeply flawed and cannot be the basis for any sort of credible scholarship. They need to be confronted and called out for what they are - **unscientific and dishonest** scholarship.

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Notes

¹<http://www.perso-indica.net/about-editors>

²<http://www.perso-indica.net/about-aims-method.faces>

³<http://www.forum-transregionale-studien.de/en/revisiting-the-canonns-of-textual-scholarship/about-us/profile.html>

⁴<http://www.brill.com/products/journal/philological-encounters>

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Chapter 8

Sam̐skṛti in Context

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Abstract

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is the older of the two Indian epics that has inspired essays, commentaries, movies, TV series, stage performances, music and poetry for centuries. Characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa* have lived on for centuries in the hearts of the Indian masses, and come alive even today when generation after generation children are named after its protagonists, or when the *Rāmāyaṇa pāṭha* (recitation of the entire epic) is observed in homes as a purifying ceremony, at occasions such as weddings, birth of child, and before moving into a new house. In a country that makes over a thousand films every year, enactment of the *Rāmāyaṇa* on makeshift stages (*Rām-līlā*) still finds a sizable following every year, testifying to its place in the Indian psyche. It is in that context that this paper critiques Sheldon Pollock's reading of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Using Rajiv Malhotra's work as the foundation, the paper elicits examples from both the texts and the lived experience in order to illustrate how Pollock misses reading the *Rāmāyaṇa* in its own context, because he gazes at the epic from his pre-conceived bias that, though understands the meaning, does not resonate with

*pp 241–264. In Kannan, K. S. (Ed.) (2019). *Swadeshi Critique of Videshi Mīmāṃsā*. Chennai: Infinity Foundation India.

terms such as *śraddhā* and *itihāsa*. In addition, making use of Campbell's definition of myth, and its role in its respective society, the paper also highlights how Pollock's understanding of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a myth is constructed outside of Indian context. Furthermore, the paper is informed by the author's association with a Rām-līlā committee that has run successfully for the last five decades by a community of volunteers, most of who hold white-collar jobs.

It is true that no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author's involvement as a human being in his own circumstances, then it must be true that for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of this actuality: that he comes up against the Orient as a European or American first, and as an individual second.

Edward Said in *Orientalism*

Hinduism is not just a faith. It is the union of reason and intuition that cannot be defined but is only to be experienced. Evil and error are not ultimate. There is no Hell, for that means there is a place where God is not, and there are sins, which exceed his love.

Dr. Radhakrishnan

Celebrating civilization perfection is nothing more than a blind abdication of self-criticism.

(Pollock, as cited in Gould, 2008:533)

Introduction

To this day we call them Ram Uncle and Ravan Uncle. We usually do not remember their names because Ram and Ravan were the roles they played on the local stage, year after year. And, we saw them mainly between July and October of every year, when they rehearsed, slipped into their respective roles and finally embodied those roles. From July of every year, after the first *pūjā*, called *Gana Bandhan*¹, most if not all of the actors and those associated with the Rām-līlā² would follow a vegetarian diet, refrain from alcohol, sleep on the floor and keep a low key in their social activities, until the day of the Dusshera when Ravan would be killed on stage, and after which the actors could resume their regular life. During the ten-day performance they became their roles, in the way they walk, the way they speak and the way they live. So much so, that on the last day of the performance, when Ram Uncle returned home, I was told, that his parents would do an *ārti*³,

like the one offered to a deity in a temple, for he had embodied the part/qualities of Lord Ram for the last six months.

To an outsider, who neither understands nor feels what a Hindu would naturally feel when Lord Ram's name is spoken, worshipping one's own son is nothing but the continuation of the drama, and at worst, a superstitious activity. To the uninitiated into living a truth, the ritual of *ārṭi* would seem pointless and without the sacred. Simply put, very few who have not lived or grown up with the concept of *bhakti* can understand how a parent turns into a devotee, and the son into a God. But as Campbell, who emphasizes the place of heart over rational faculties when a myth is lived, explains, 'a ritual is an enactment of a myth, - insofar, the myth is a revelation of dimensions of your own spiritual potential, you are activating those dimensions in yourself and experiencing them' (Maher and Briggs 1990:35)⁴. In that context, performing an *ārṭi* for their son, Ram Uncle's parents were living the core of the Hindu philosophy, that the divinity is defined by its '*bhāva*' (attitude and quality), and neither is restricted to any one form nor are other-worldly. And the performance of *Rāmlīlā* for centuries is a yearly ritual that allows the audiences to participate in an enactment of *itihāsa* as it informs their daily lives.

This paper critically evaluates Professor Sheldon Pollock's take on the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and its impact on Indian cultural and political life, with special focus on gaps in Pollock's methodology and sampling, which, due to their inconsistencies, would lead us to erroneous conclusions.

Why Pollock?

Presently, Professor Sheldon Pollock is one of the most revered professors of Indology, who has pointed at the *Rāmāyaṇa* among other texts, as a text that is guilty of using language, story and characterization as tools to demonize the non-Hindus, particularly Muslims, and has resulted in much violence against minorities, especially Muslims, again Pollock's study of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is essentially a study to link its plot, language and texts to power structures and put a political rather than a sacred lens on the epic. Pollock considers the *Rāmāyaṇa* a political tool to label all non-Hindus, especially the Muslims as the 'other', as one which has led to violence against the Muslim community (Pollock 1993). He attributes power and

hegemonic structures to both the plot and characters of the great epic⁵.

Scholars have contended that (for this very reason), Pollock's work will likely "play a dominant role in shaping the wider public image of pre-modern Indian, especially Sanskrit, language, and culture along with the forms of polity related to them, for years if not decades to come." (McCrea 2013:117; Gonzalez-Reimann 2006:204⁶). Some even suggest that Pollock's scholarship on India is "scholarship about the world" (Gould 2008:557) and that it "can and should transform contemporary understandings for the relationship between culture and power, the status of literature, and the state, ethnicity, and polity throughout history" (Gould 2008:534).

It would be unfortunate if a thesis of such significance as Pollock's, were founded on a methodology that use lenses and ideology that are far from appropriate for the subject used deconstruction. Especially since Pollock also, through his thesis, seems to have established that modernity or 'newness' (Gould 2008) can emerge by desacralizing the Indian texts (*śāstra*-s) without which they are incapable of being interpreted in a novel manner.

In this paper, I attempt at illustrating how this aspect of 'desacralizing' is a major flaw in Pollock's methodology, as the ground reality demonstrates. In desacralizing the texts, Pollock steps outside of the texts and views them as 'he wishes to see them' ignoring how they are regarded by those who have lived with the heritage for centuries, and ignores several crucial aspects which can challenge his ideas, in order to establish his pre-conceived theory; rather than allow the theory to emerge as a result of the scholar both regarding the text as those who live them; and then corroborating the evidence with the ground reality in India. The following sections first explain the difference between concept of myth and *mithyā*, and *itihāsa* and history, establish the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s role in Indian cultural life, and discuss how Pollock's method of desacralizing is flawed because it fails to view the gestalt of *itihāsa*, and how *itihāsa* is lived through yearly performance of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Myth, Mythos, Mithyā & Itihāsa

While myth is often implied to mean a lie, a fiction, or something untrue, as its derived meaning from the Greek word *mythos*, scholars have contested that meaning in the context of the Sanskrit word ‘*mithyā*’ which implies a reality in between truth (history) and untruth (myth), and points towards a reality beyond our worldly understanding. Joseph Campbell, the world-renowned mythologist considers myths as clues, which ‘direct us towards the experiencing the spiritual potentialities of the human life’ (Moyers 1990:5) for myth is a metaphor that is indicative of spiritual powers that lie within us (Maher & Briggs 1990).

Myths are narratives with multiple meanings that hold sacred value for the respective cultures and are carried out through their rituals. Therefore, these narratives are considered to be true from within the respective faith systems, and when regarded in context, lend themselves to expressing respective systems of thought and values. Although it is important to recognize that myths are usually regarded metaphorically and not literally, so myths can be both rooted in history and be fictitious (Carpentier’s Lectures on the Website, accessed May 15, 2016) e.g. Sun worship is not about worshipping the heavenly body as much as an acknowledgement of its life-giving quality to the entire planet. Which, it must be emphasized, has not changed since time immemorial. Therefore an ancient ritual of Sun worship is also an indication of ancient humans’ knowledge, however subconscious, of the influence of the Sun on our planet. Similarly Rāma and Rāvaṇa are qualities that bring us close to or distance us from the divine.

Myth, in the West, is used as the diametric opposite of history. But Rajiv Malhotra emphasizes, in his path-breaking book, *Being Different* (Malhotra 2013), that myth ‘uses fiction (story⁷) to convey truth’ (Kindle Edition, Location 1138), and can be enacted out via a ritual (Myers 1990). In addition, to contrast it with the frozen idea of history, as in the West, the Indian word for history ‘*itihāsa*’, sometimes translated as myth by those studying Indian texts, comprises both history and myth (Malhotra 2013). But the schism in the way the West sees others and itself is exemplified in *Being Different*, where Malhotra shares a story about a Journalism professor’s struggle to include myths of Western civilizations in a class on ‘World Mythology’.

“Western scholars unable to deal with the multiple renditions of *itihāsa*, tend to categorize it all as myth, and myth alone...their own myths are recounted as history. Indian spiritual texts are subject to interpretive methods, which are entirely different from those used to study the tales of Jewish and Christian religions. For example, the West is studied using sociological methods and tools, whereas so-called primitive societies through anthropology and folklore; European and American social units are always described as communities, never tribes.”

Malhotra (2013:L1139)

Since the West's own myths are taught as history, and the West does not have a category similar to *itihāsa*, Malhotra (2013) argues that Indologists are prone to misinterpretations when they use a Western lens to study *itihāsa*, which is more concerned with truth rather than history, and can be told through multiple perspectives - hence it is that we have myriads of *Rāmāyaṇa*-s.

“Parables abound in dharmic scriptures, too, but these inspire by the lessons they teach and not by claims of being the exact records of historical events. Hindus participating in rituals in temples do, for the most part, follow a received and codified tradition, and a minority might believe in the narratives they celebrate as literally having happened. Most Hindus tend to view the historical events in a fluid manner.”

Malhotra (2013:L1110)

Malhotra continues to highlight that history, in the context of *itihāsa*, is for the Hindus an instructional (and not a constitutive, as Pollock posits (1984:508)) tale which can be superseded by embodying the truth that the parable instructs to teach. For, a *dharma* practitioner who studies *itihāsa* -

“..explicitly aspires to bring about a change within, emphasizing the virtues illustrated in the narratives and not the historical facts. Lord Rāma and Lord Krishna are embodiments of *bhavas* (attitudes) and their historical significance is superseded by the values they convey.”

Malhotra (2013:L1114)

While Pollock acknowledges the power of myth, he interprets the way he chooses to (Pollock 1984:508)⁸. In that context, Pollock starts on a wrong note, when he limits his understanding of Rāma and Rāvaṇa merely as good and evil, divine and demonic. In fact, he attributes harmful intentions in upholding Rāma as the model King, an ideal man, when he suggests that the *Rāmāyaṇa*'s sole purpose has been

in creating and demonizing the ‘other.’ (Pollock 1984; Pollock 1993). Furthermore, Pollock demonstrates his inability to grasp the concept of *itihāsa* as he uses the word Euhemerization⁹ (ascribing historical basis to mythology) for the divinity of Rāma (Pollock 1984: 506). The *Rāmāyaṇa*, for Hindu society, is a metaphor, although Pollock treats it like a mystery, which he has attempted to uncover through his writings. If there is a mystery to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as a practitioner, the author can state, that it is this, that taking the example of Rāvaṇa, we can understand that most venerated of scholars can be proven wrong about the use of knowledge, and yet in academia today, scholars hold mind over heart and sometimes ethics, in the pursuit of understanding a system.

The *Rāmāyaṇa*: Popularity and Presence in the Indian Psyche

Considered as the *ādi-kāvya* (the First Poem) the *Rāmāyaṇa* is one of the oldest and longest epics in world literature (Embree 1972). Pollock is correct in estimating the impact of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and its characters on the Hindu mind and culture. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, written as *itihāsa*, is not merely a story, but an allegory that instructs and guides, through the use of philosophy and ethics, in matters of the ‘ideal’ — what constitutes an ideal king, ideal husband, ideal father, ideal wife (Embree 1972). Children are named after its characters, numerous television series and movies have been created depicting the *Rāmāyaṇa*, every year thousands of Rāmlīlās are performed around India and many other countries, and the recitation of the entire *Rāmāyaṇa* is used also as a purification ceremony for various occasions from pre-birth to post funeral rites. Interestingly, it is the *Rāmāyaṇa* that is given as a gift to newly-weds as a reminder of the life of an ideal couple, as opposed to the *Mahābhārata*, which is not held in the same regard¹⁰. It is after all, the greatest and most ideal love story of Gods who incarnated as an ideal couple, ideal human beings to act as models — to play out the *Līlā*¹¹.)

Pollock is also correct, although incomplete, in saying that Rāvaṇa is not viewed as the most positive character to emulate. However, as will be explained later that this does not equate to demonization of a character addressed as *Daśānan*, the one with (knowledge of) ten

heads. Neither is there any link, as will be illustrated through this paper, between widespread impact of and love for the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the violence against the non-Hindus.

Our Rāmlīlā

Rāmlīlā, the divine play, through which Rāma's life is told is enacted out as a ten day ritual throughout India culminating in a big celebration on Vijayadaśamī or The Victorious Tenth (lunar day), the day effigies of Rāvaṇa are consigned to flames. While this act might seem like, to someone like Pollock, another indication of the demonization of Rāvaṇa, the act of burning of the effigies, like a ritual, allows the audience to contemplate on the battle of good vs. evil that too often rages in our own hearts. It would surprise Pollock to know then that the people vie for the left over bamboos from the effigies, for it is considered sacred to keep the 'bones' of Rāvaṇa, the wise man, in the house.

Rituals such as these, once known, can question all of theorization that Pollock has created to impose his view of looking, rather than understanding the complex place of good and evil, right and wrong in Hinduism. While Hindus revere Lord Rāma for being the *puruṣottama*, the ideal man, their love is only increased for the butter-stealing Krishna. While the lived reality of Hinduism is too complex to be explained and understood by those who do not practice it, for it combines both the sacred and the secular, what is surprising is Pollock's absolute contempt, as evident in the following comment, for the tradition, that attributes divinity to all beings:

"Much of the argument against the divinity of Rāma, furthermore, is based on a sense of the "divine" that conceals an embarrassingly narrow and un-selfreflective ethnocentricity, and on the use of an inapplicable set of critical canons."

(Pollock 1984:508)

Throughout this paper there will be references made to one such Rāmlīlā that has been staged in Delhi for nearly seven decades. Rajendra Nagar Arts Club, formally known as Shri Rāmlīlā Committee, had humble beginnings in 1949 when a group of people started a local club that decided to stage a Rāmlīlā every year. All the actors were from the neighborhood, and the nominal entrance fee that was

charged funded the project. Over the years, the club has become a hallmark of the locality, and the Rāmlilā still draws large crowds. Throughout the years, though professional actors were hired to play some roles, the performances have been sustained by children and grandchildren of the initiates of the project. Most of the actors hold a day job, but are dedicated to the continuation of Rāmlilā, which since 1980 has dropped the entrance fee. Some years, attempts were made to broadcast it live through the local channel for the benefit of the elderly and those who could not attend in person.

An interesting aspect of Our Rāmlilā was that during its ten-day performance, usually one or more social plays completely unrelated to the *Rāmāyaṇa* were included to focus on issues such as promoting rural development and questioning dowry practices. Over the years, due to reduction in the number of holidays given to schoolchildren, social plays have been dropped. This inclusion of completely secular plays in a very sacred performance of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is an indication of self-reflexive ability of Hinduism and an indication that secular and sacred mingle in India on a regular basis.

The script used by the club is an amalgam of several *Rāmāyaṇa*-s and is especially known for the lessons that Rāvaṇa gives to Lakṣmaṇa as he lies dying. In an email communication, the author was apprised that the script has not remained static and has been improvised, modified several times since 1949, testifying to the freedom allowed in adapting the epic, as is the case with Indian storytelling, no matter how many times they are told:

“The precise story of Rāma can never be produced, and each attempt involves a combination of reproduction (by supplier), re-narration (often interactive), and re-presentation (by audience). Thus itihāsa changes, evolves and adapts to circumstances as per the prevailing consensus.”

Malhotra (2013: L1167)

In addition, to give actors a break, Sahitya Akademi actors are invited one day, to play a one-Act *Rāmāyaṇa*. Rajendar Nagar Arts club has become a classic example of *dharma*-s and *dharma*-related activities being intertwined with social life. True to its *dhārmic* nature of ‘upholding’ a community, Rāmlilā’s stage is not just about one story but for the ten days it becomes a collective stage to display local talent. In between scene-changes, children and adults alike are allowed to exhibit their talent in poetry recitation, skits, stand-up comedy,

singing and/or even dance to a Bollywood song. Wonder what Pollock would say about the fact that the Muslim mega star Shahrukh Khan got his first audience at this stage during a scene change. Khan was also an enthusiastic ‘*vānar*’ in Hanuman’s *senā*.

Over the years, audiences of Our Rāmlilā witnessed that settings and performances have changed with changes in technology, but more importantly because of its ‘live’ nature, Our Rāmlilā has remained unpredictable. The *Rāmāyaṇa* as Rāmlilā is the best example of the fluidity of *itihāsa*. Some scenes are exaggerated and get laughs; especially the one where the Hanumān on the stage in the process of desecrating the Ashok Vāṭikā hurls bananas at the audience, making it an interactive play. Or when Kumbhakarṇa is being woken up from his deep sleep slumber, and some *sainik*-s fall into the audience. Every year has a different flavor.

Pollock’s Out-of-Context Methodology

As explained above, the paper illustrates through the examples how Pollock’s analysis of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is not situated in the context of Hindu society, emotions, feelings and understanding of the epic and therefore must be evaluated.

Desacralizing-Decontextualization: Pollock’s strategy of forwarding this theory of ‘aestheticisation of power’ is to first desacralize the texts that he studies (Malhotra 2016a:L3462). In desacralizing the texts, Pollock commits academic blasphemy by divorcing the object of his study from its context as he tries to understand its impact. It is akin to the Californian version of understanding *karman* without a belief in reincarnation. Any qualitative research, especially one that deals with the understanding of systems, cultures and texts of cultures that one does not practice, or live with, has to be grounded in a research methodology that is appropriate for the topic and attempt to study its object being as close to its lived reality.

Appropriate application of research methods is crucial to a thorough consideration of the topic of study. The concept of *Rāma-rājya*, inspired by the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a prime example of a call to rulers and officers to sacrifice their personal motives for the larger good—by following the *dharma* of a king, who must be just. It is this aspect of the *Rāmāyaṇa* that guides, instructs through allegories for the *dharma* practioner

who reads it with ‘*śraddhā*’ and ‘*bhakti*’ that Pollock is missing in his lens.

Desacralization therefore, amounts to de-contextualization of studying the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which then, according to Pollock, is merely literature – freed from the “clutches of sacredness”. Pollock uses Vico’s theories as the reasoning for removing the sacredness from *śāstra*-s (Malhotra 2016a:L1366 & L1371) and therefore *itihāsa*, which uses story-telling to convey the teachings of *śāstra*-s. Not surprisingly, Vico’s ideas are very ethno(Euro)-centric and can be hardly considered universal. Vico places the philosophical, post-rational thinking, characterized by European (and by analogy, the West) societies, over what he considers poetic thinking, found in primitive societies (Malhotra 2016a: L1550).

“There are two key points in his lens, which are inspired by Vico: 1. The principle of treating the secular as separated from the transcendent, and the view that ancient texts and thinkers were pre-rational, mythically oriented, and emotional – and they lacked the rationality to develop and apply this principle to look at history clearly, a history driven by purely material acts.”

(Malhotra 2016a:L1656)

However, Christians and Carey (1989) argue against some of the ways of viewing the subject matter as suggested by Vico and those influenced by him (p. 355), and call for a more comprehensive approach. They question the ‘natural science model of the social sciences’, (p. 355) and argue against the idea that social sciences, like natural sciences are said to “...develop laws that hold irrespective of time and place, to explain phenomenon through causal and functional models, to describe relationships among phenomena in essentially statistical and probabilistic terms” (p. 354). Instead, placing a higher value on symbols and context, Christians and Carey provide four criteria that make for a valid and a thorough consideration of the topic of study: naturalistic observation, contextualization, maximized comparisons, and sensitized concepts (Christians and Carey 1989).

Naturalistic observation would require a researcher to understand the symbols and their context as the Hindus do:

“Symbolic activity is recognized as central to our personal and social experiences; symbols and symbolic patterns the irreducible socio-cultural data of qualitative research, getting an insider’s view takes it

for granted that to understand someone's thought one needs to think with the same symbols. The social scientist must study the human spirit as expressed through symbolic imagery. 'The Chicago School' taught us that social feelings (attitudes and sentiments) lifestyle are most fully expressed in actual situations, and must be recovered unobtrusively through participant observation, from personal documents, and by open-ended interviewing. To get inside the realms of lived experience, the natural processes of communication are especially valuable (such as correspondence, eyewitnesses accounts, songs, jokers, folklore, memoranda, diaries, ceremonies, citizen group reports, sermons), and methods must be avoided that disrupt the social process and thereby skew our vision."

(Christians and Carey 1989:361)

While Pollock, an esteemed and thorough scholar can be lauded for his vast scholarship, he fails to grasp the ideals that Hindus are asked to learn from the epic, essentially because he ignores how the text is being lived in daily lives whether in India or even Muslim majority countries like Indonesia. And once the concept of *pāramārthika* (the transcendent/sacred) is done away with, one cannot fathom the power of the epic in evoking qualities of justice, love, duty, and self-sacrifice among its followers.

Neither does Pollock pass the test of the second criteria, viz. contextualization, which we consider here:

"- a significant tool that allows a researcher to understand how his/her subject feels about and understands a phenomenon. As culture and related symbols are complex and usually have multilayered meanings, it is important to understand a text, an event, or a ritual, in a larger multi-dimensional context.

Contextualization is a vital dimension of interpretive studies. While extraordinarily complex, the guideline calls our attention to immediate, wider cultural and historical context if we are to interpret human interpretation accurately."

(Christians and Carey 1989:361)

While Pollock implies that widespread use of the *Rāmāyaṇa* can be owed to its use as a political tool, his analysis does not consider the idea that, in the Indian context, the rise and decline in worship of various *avatāra*-s, according to the *yuga*-s has been common. When he suggests that characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa* behave as puppets as though without any will, he is implying that the followers of epic might be driven

in the same robot-like manner to demonize non-Hindus and those of lower castes. But he conveniently ignores characters such as Khevaṭ and Śabarī who are not only from the lower strata, but who Rāma expresses gratitude to, for helping him in his journey. In addition, Pollock overlooks factors such as Rāvaṇa himself being a learned Brahmin, whose father was the venerated Sage Viśravas¹². Why does the *Rāmāyaṇa* create the other of a brahmin? Especially when Pollock implies that it was with the collaboration of the brahmins that the kings/rulers demonized the outsiders. Also overlooked is the fact that the author Vālmiki himself is supposed to be not of a higher caste, and Rāvaṇa a revered, learned one of a higher caste and a king, the very people Pollock suggests oppressed the ‘lower castes’?

If Pollock were interested in considering the context, he would have visited Our Rāmlilā (or any Rāmlilā for that matter), and interviewed (as this author has done) many of its actors. The one who plays Vibhiṣaṇa proudly stated that his favorite character and *guru* is Rāvaṇa, who he considers ‘wise, intelligent, a researcher, resourceful enough to make accessible the means to his *mokṣa*, someone with foresight and power’¹³ (Personal interview with the author, 2009). To corroborate this interview, the actor was contacted again in August of 2016 via email. The response he gave not only confirmed his earlier view, but he also stated that he has not only read the *Rāmāyaṇa* in its entirety, but also texts purportedly authored by Rāvaṇa such as *Uḍḍiṣa Tantra*.

It is important to mention here that on grounds that the text is sacred, it is not above criticism. Several essays, jokes and stand-up comedians have questioned, critiqued and laughed at the characters of *Rāmāyaṇa* without any restriction or condemnation thereby questioning the notion that the text has not been allowed to be critiqued. But instead, Pollock brings his own theories, provides slim, random and unsystematic evidence and weak links that do not consider the context of *śraddhā* which is how a Hindu approaches the *Rāmāyaṇa*, to support his ideas.

In context however, Pollock may arrive at what Hindus feel and have been taught through the *Rāmāyaṇa*, if he uses the sacred lens. But since he insists on using the lens that has been provided by an ideology that proclaims ‘religion is the opiate of the masses’, he is incapable of arriving clearly at the impact that the *Rāmāyaṇa* has had, and his

claims seem meaningless. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, as discussed above is *itihāsa*, both myth and history written in a form so that it can be used by people in their daily lives (*vyāvahārika* level) to connect with the transcendent (*pāramārthika* level).

Another dimension of the interpretive process, as suggested by Glaser and Strauss (as cited in Christians and Carey 1989) is to maximize the comparisons (Glaser and Strauss 1989:366). If Pollock wanted to strengthen his argument of demonization of the ‘non-Muslims’ he could have compared other countries such as Thailand and Indonesia where the *Rāmāyaṇa* still forms an integral part of cultural experience, there are the temples dedicated to Rāma and Rāmlīlā is performed regularly. If the text had such universal values, it would be interesting to see Pollock’s ideas on how the epic is received in other Asian countries.

And finally, Pollock fails on the last criteria, viz. ‘sensitized concepts.’ That is:

“Formulating categories that are meaningful to the people themselves, yet sufficiently powerful to explain large domains of social experience. Interpretive research seeks to capture original meanings validly, yet explicate them on a level that gives the results maximum impact.”

(Christians and Carey 1989:370)

Pollock problematizes the divinity of Rāma, a concept taken for granted by the Hindus, by stating that unlike the way it is revealed, Vālmiki intended Rāma’s divinity from the very outset¹⁴, and this is obvious by the fact that no one questions Rāma’s divinity.¹⁵ However, Gonzalez-Reimann(2006:207)¹⁶, argues that although Vaiṣṇava commentators, due to their love for the God King, cannot be expected to question the divinity of Rāma, yet unlike what Pollock thinks, this question has been asked in several instances, including the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*. By questioning whether or not Rāma is aware of his being an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, Pollock questions the very basis for which the *Rāmāyaṇa* is popular among the masses. It is obvious that he does not understand the term, ‘*Līlā*’ (divine play), that one word that explains so much for the Hindus. For the Hindus, Rāma is considered a ‘*tāraṇ-hār*’ the one who delivers *ātman* across the ocean of *saṃsāra*, however, whether or not he is aware of his divinity is not an important feature of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. As stated elsewhere in the paper, the epic is a metaphor, not a mystery¹⁷.

Furthermore, in context if Pollock had analyzed the performance of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, which is staged for the lay people, who then, according to him, get mobilized against non-Hindus, he would have found that unlike Aristotle's recommendations who is against portraying violence on stage, Bharata in *Nāṭyaśāstra* concerned more with style and beauty, allows/makes room for it, so long as it is presented aesthetically (Massey 1992:62)¹⁸.

Had Pollock visited 'Our Rāmlīlā', he would have witnessed a very moving scene, not present in Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* — Rāvaṇa's *śikṣā* (teachings) to Lakṣmaṇa. Rāma's equanimity and inclination towards utter justice and kindness is evident in how he deals with the dying King. During the act, when Rāma asks Lakṣmaṇa to seek life-advice from Rāvaṇa, Rāma instructs him to stand at the feet of the teacher. That scene always draws the most emotional and profound silence in the audience.

Pollock has completely ignored considering the views of those who have read the *Rāmāyaṇa* and embodied its message. In the context of the Rāmlīlā mentioned above, Rāvaṇa, a brahmin himself has been depicted as an intellectual, a learned man, well versed in various sciences of his time, but his fatal flaw is his 'ego', which is not redeemed by him being, either of a higher caste, or a king. This places Pollock outside of the context.

Insider/Outsider: Who is a Qualified Pupil?

Malhotra (2016a) talks extensively in his recent book *The Battle for Sanskrit* about the concept of insiders and outsiders, a concept he adapts from anthropology. And Malhotra cautions, that an insider is not just a Hindu, but rather someone who understands, and is willing to see study Hinduism from the eyes of those who practice it. The categories of contextualization and sensitized concepts, which make for a thorough more honest, close to the real reading of a culture, would come naturally to an insider. Pollock fails this requirement.

In his methodology of desacralization and de-contextualization Pollock ignores both his own mentor and the qualities needed for being a student - as prescribed by a Vedāntic text called *Vedāntasāra* (lit: the essence of Vedānta) authored by Sadānanda. Previous scholars have referred to the need for a special mindset while approaching

the *śāstra*-s, which should not be too enthusiastically academic or intellectual:

“...One may read this translated text precisely as one reads any essay of Locke, Hume or Kant, but it should be borne in mind that the stanzas were not intended to be assimilated this way. In fact, we are warned at the very outset by being confronted with the discussion of a preliminary question — ‘who is competent, and consequently entitled, to study the Vedānta in order to realize the truth. The question may be readily answered, so far as we ourselves are concerned: Not we Westerns. Not intellectuals.”

(Campbell and Zimmer 1956:51)

So then, who is the *adhikārin* (qualified) -and what are the qualities of his mindset? According to *Vedāntasāra*.

“The “competent student” (*adhikārin*), when approaching the study of Vedānta, should feel an attitude not of criticism or curiosity, but of utter faith (*śraddhā*) that in the formulae of Vedānta, as they are about to be communicated to him, he shall discover the truth (*Vedāntasāra*). He must furthermore be filled with a yearning for freedom from the encumbrances of worldly life, an earnest longing for release from the bondage of his existence as an individual caught in the vortex of ignorance.”

(Campbell and Zimmer 1956:51)

Instead, Pollock approaches the text with an ‘attitude of criticism and not with curiosity’ because he analyzes the text with a preconceived theory that he wants to map out combining some past evidence from history (“when Ram temples came into existence”) and the *Rāmāyaṇa*’s plot (“demonization of Rāvaṇa”). Despite his experience with Hindu texts, he fails to acknowledge that in Indian system, beings are divine by nature and everyone is a God in the making, and that *deva*-s and *asura*-s are relative and not absolute.

Some other qualities for a student of *śāstra*-s are patience, concentration, and endurance, which a reputed scholar like Pollock may possibly possess; however his open denial of the sacred and lack of *śraddhā*, restrict him from fully understanding the gist of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Pollock is placed as an outsider not because he is not an Indian; however, because he does not possess the qualities needed to contextualize the texts in the landscape of Hindu psyche.

“Pollock also goes against Ingalls, his mentor who stresses dropping the western lens for the study of Sanskrit traditions and the study of *kavya*.”

(Malhotra 2016a:L3354)

“Ingalls had insisted that Indologists like him must use the Sanskrit tradition’s own lens in studying *kavya*, at least to the extent Westerners were capable.”

(Malhotra 2016a:L3353)

A *kāvya*’s purpose, insists Ingalls, is to ‘communicate the *dharma* to the lay public in a friendly and aesthetically pleasing manner.’ (as cited in Malhotra 2016a:L3368). And while, like Pollock, Campbell states that the concept of duty in the Occident is different from what it is in the Orient (Campbell 1976:103), he says that it is important to note that a student in the West also does not develop the *śraddhā* the basic requisite for *guru-śiṣya* tradition. He suggests that what the Orient can instruct the West is in an inward journey – “the mystic inward way into themselves, and this if followed without losing touch with the conditions of contemporary life, might well lead in not a few cases to a new depth and wealth of creative thought and fulfillment in life and in literature and in the arts.” As Malhotra suggests, what Pollock ignores is that the very basis of creativity and innovation, is transcending the reality. It is this inward journey that Pollock refuses to take, ignores and shuns, when he separates the *laukika* from the *alaukika*, and refuses to acknowledge how the *pāramārthika* informs the *vyāvahārika*.

If Pollock did want to look for evidence of how it is that the Indian texts that have allowed for a harmonious political and social life for centuries in India, which neither of two nations that came out of India can claim, he would have mentioned Indian democracy as an intermingling, not only of languages, and cultures but also religions. Pavan Varma, an Indian diplomat writes:

“Indians do not like the disorder and unpredictability of system-less situations. They are past masters in the art of compromise, in stepping back from the precipice, in forging a *modus vivendi* that obviates the need to choose between extremes, and in finding solutions that accommodate conflicting interests. Such an approach has sanction of classical notions of statecraft. For instance, according to the *Digvijaya*¹⁹ theory of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, ‘vanquished kings were reinstated in the Kingdom as a matter of principle.’”

(Varma 2005:57)

Had Pollock been driven by looking at the ground reality, he would have known that in the capital city of India, the burning of Rāvaṇa's effigies every year is a metaphor for change or elimination of social evils, and every year there is a new name for what is called, 'Aaj Ka Ravan' (Today's Rāvaṇa) e.g. inflation, which affects Hindus and Muslims alike. Furthermore, growing up as a Hindu, the author often heard from grandmothers that while the *Mahābhārata* was narrated to tell people how they were, it was the *Rāmāyaṇa* that actually was written to show people how moral, kind, just and self-sacrificing they are capable of being.

Furthermore, like many other scholars Pollock has created a language that is not easily accessible to the people whose minds and actions he intends to scrutinize. If his writings cannot be comprehended by the ordinary people he accuses of being so influenced by the 'political insinuations in the *Rāmāyaṇa*', then who is Pollock writing for?

"To decode him, one has to read him multiple times. After you understand one theory of his, you need to go back and re-read the prior works you already went through. In places, only after connecting the dots with his other scattered writings can you realize what he wants to say. If his individual points are at times murky, murkier still are the links among the dots to make sense of the big picture. One gets the impression that only a few fellow-travelers subscribing to his ideology are meant to understand him."

(Malhotra 2016b)

Failing to understand his writings, those accused (i.e. those who live the tradition) are ill-equipped to defend themselves and their tradition. Not to mention that Pollock falls prey to the same 'elitism' that he has accused Indian texts to generate, when he constantly upholds his thesis above the concept of sacred. In a sense, being an outsider, Pollock is creating boundaries where the very persons who live the traditions, are considered 'outsiders' to its understanding.

Pollock's writings seem to be contributing to atrocity literature more than about understanding Hinduism. And Pollock, an esteemed scholar, does not shy away from using derogatory terms such as, "Temple cult, which is unique to North India." In mentioning the scarcity of temples dedicated to Rāma before twelfth century, Pollock reads meanings that do not exist in the scarcity of temples dedicated to Rāma because he misunderstands *itihāsa*. 'History after all occurs in cycles' (Malhotra 2013). Since documented history of the world is very

limited compared to the actual history of the world, the cycles may not have repeated yet. It is quite possible that as we move into Kaliyuga, Durgā worship may take more prominence over Rāma worship, would Pollock then come up with a new atrocity that must be related to Durgā worship being against non-Muslims, or may be all men?

It remains for the historians and Indologists alike to analyze the reasons for “the rise of Rāma worship” – was it merely organic, shift in the public consciousness, or was it because the *Rāmāyaṇa* started to be performed as Rāmlīlā? Did it become popular due to certain appreciation of the arts?

However it is clear that Pollock is more concerned with forwarding his ideas, creating atrocity theories desperately trying to make links with disconnected events. Malhotra critiques Pollock’s tunnel vision that is so focused on his own conclusions that he generalizes after cherry picking quotes, anecdotes, and sentences from certain texts, and ignores texts like the *Arthaśāstra* which explicitly lays down grounds for the king to look after the welfare of its citizens (Malhotra 2016: L3053). Malhotra quotes the following from the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself to demonstrate that Pollock has deliberately used certain sentences out of context, and linked them with events that have more socio-political reasons to support his ideas.

“As the king so the citizens. Hence, he must lead them by example of his own conduct.”

(*Rāmāyaṇa* 2.109.9) (Malhotra 2016:L3062)

“Citizens all abiding by *dharma*, had Rāma as their ideal.”

(*Rāmāyaṇa* 6.131.98)

On a closing note, the last time I attended ‘Our Rāmlīlā’, Ram Uncle had graduated to being the ‘Khewat’²⁰, the tribal who helped Rāma, Sitā and Lakṣmaṇa cross the Sarayū river. It was an emotional experience to see Ram Uncle now bow to a younger Ram, who is probably more versed in digital media, probably has his own twitter account, and yet, he chooses to take a vow of austerity during the months when he rehearses and performs, and never forgets to bow before he steps on the make-shift stage, for that stage after all is a metaphor for the world where our own stories of love, loyalty, loss and life are played/enacted out.

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Notes

¹Among other things in this *pūjā* ceremony, a vow of embodying the principles of *dharma* is taken, a sacred red thread is tied on the wrists of the participants.

²A ten-day enactment of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, that takes place all over India, before Dusshera/Vijayadaśamī.

³*Ārti*, a ritual used in temples, can be used both to express love, gratitude or prayer (depending on who it is directed towards). For example, it can be done as a form of love towards a child on his birthday, a mark of respect for a guest, or elders, prayer when performed to deities, and hope for a smooth life or performance when performed for homes or vehicles respectively. In this case however, the actors who perform the part of Lord Ram, having gone through the *tapas* of living a *brahmacharya* life despite being a householder, become synonymous with the divine incarnation.

⁴The complete quote is as follows: “...a ritual is the enactment of myth: by participating in the rite, you participate in the myth. Myths don’t count if they’re just hitting your rational faculties – they have to hit the heart. You have to absorb them and adjust to them and make them your life. And insofar as the myth is a revelation of dimensions of your own spiritual potential, you are activating those dimensions in yourself and experiencing them.” (Maher and Briggs 1990:35).

⁵In July of 2016, Harvard University offered a course via edX, titled, “Hinduism Through Its Scriptures.” Taught by Professor Neelima Shukla-Bhatt, of Wellesley College, the course seemed to be inspired by some of the theories propounded by Pollock. With questions such as,

“Using the online discussion forum, write a short paragraph that reflects upon or responds to the demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya.

Why do you think the location of the Babri Mosque caused such a controversy at the time?

Do you think the *Rāmāyaṇa*’s teaching about non-attachment — Rāma was not attached to his kingdom and accepted exile without argument — and ideals of behavior could have been used to avoid the conflict?” (context to which can be found in Pollock’s articles of 1984 and 1992)

are clearly not focused on understanding how Hindus understand their text or a complete understanding of the historical complexity of the issue. Instead, it tries to find fault within the character of Rāma for his attachment. However, the question could be turned towards the issue to ask,

“Why were (multiple) mosques planted atop multiple temples? Was it the intention to erase Hindu symbols and places of worship?” Instead of looking at what Hindus have suffered over the years, their claim to their own land is questioned.

⁶Gonzalez-Reimann (2006:204) “As a prominent and influential scholar, Pollock’s opinion carries much weight and has already influenced other scholars.”

⁷Author’s interpretation of fiction, as a story, in this context.

⁸Pollock (1984:521) “When I speak of “myth” here, I am referring to a patterned representation of the world, With continuing and vital relevance to the culture, which

furnishes a sort of invariable conceptual grid upon which variable and multifarious experience can be plotted and comprehended. It is this essential power imaginatively to interpret and explain reality, social no less than other aspects of reality, that seems to have gone unappreciated in previous treatments of the *Rāmāyaṇa* from the point of view of myth, which for the most part are carried out either so mechanically or reductively as to lose most claim to any meaningful heuristic value. Now, what to my mind constitutes the primary signification, the central explanatory moment, of this particular mythological map of experience as it pertains to the *Rāmāyaṇa* has so far not been truly illustrated in our survey (which has sought only to assemble the main building blocks of the myth). Just such an illustration, however, is provided in the last instance of the theme I want to look at.”

Although Pollock attributes some power of impact to myths, he does so, as is revealed in his publications such as “Rakshasas and Others” (1985), and “*Rāmāyaṇa* and political imagination in India” (1993) indicate, this understanding of myth is not in terms of *bhāva*-s or attitudes, or how Rāma instructs by his *sāttvic* behavior; instead, he understands it only so long as they can serve his theory of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a political tool and ignoring to understand the complexity of Rāvaṇa’s sees things in black and white.

⁹Pollock (1984:508): The deification of Rāma is attributed to a slow process of Euhemerization, whereby a hero of (quasi-historical) saga merges with a popular local divinity, the resulting demi-god finally coming to be reckoned an avatar of Viṣṇu.

¹⁰In some cases people are advised to read but not keep the copy of the *Mahābhārata* at home, but the *Rāmāyaṇa* is a prized possession in Hindu households, holding the same position as the Bible for Christian households.

¹¹*Līlā*, a non-translatable Sanskrit word that does not have an equivalent in English. But a loose definition of the word can be ‘divine play.’ However, it is regarded differently in non-dualistic and dualistic philosophical traditions of Hinduism. While in the former, it refers to all reality including the cosmos as a divine creative play of the Brahman, in the dualistic tradition *Līlā* refers to divine activities of God and his devotees on earth.

¹²I received an input at the Conference that Arvind Trivedi, who played Rāvaṇa in the first ever televised *Rāmāyaṇa* series (directed by Ramanand Sagar) took on the suffix Lankesh, after the series was over, expressing great admiration for Rāvaṇa.

¹³The author had intended to create a short documentary on Our Ramlila and its impact on its actors. While the documentary was stalled for several reasons, the transcript from the footage of the actor who plays Vibhīṣaṇa, when asked about his favorite character is as follows: “... Rāvaṇa knew so much about so many topics, more than anyone else till date.... I think of him as my guru.”

¹⁴Proving this allows Pollock to forward his theory of power and politics in the following years.

¹⁵It must be noted that all these assumptions are possible only after desacralizing the text, and considering the *Rāmāyaṇa* out of the context of Hindu society.

¹⁶Gonzalez-Reimann (2006:205) states: “...this is hardly a valid argument because religious traditions almost never question their fundamental tenets, and Vaiṣṇava commentators cannot be expected to cast doubts about Rāma’s divinity even if there were textual bases for doing so.”

¹⁷ However, if Pollock were to understand how Hindus have made sense of this, it is often said that, being only of 12 *kalā*-s, Rāma was not aware of his divinity he suffered in the world, very different from Kṛṣṇa, the owner of 16 *kalā*-s, who lived through the worst war and yet, delivered the message of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

¹⁸ “Unlike Aristotle, Bharat does not forbid the representation of violent action on the state, provided always that - however terrible - it is shown with control and beauty. Indian drama of Bharata’s time is not bound by the unities of either time or place quite as strictly as is classical Greek drama, and its idea of unity of action too is somewhat different. The aim is rather towards a general unity of impression.” (Massey 1992:62)

¹⁹ Means - The One who Conquers all.

²⁰ The character of Khewat, is not to be found in every *Rāmāyaṇa*, but it is clear that this character of the same community as Guha, mentioned in Vālmiki *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Chapter 9

The Śāstra of Science and the Science of Śāstra

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Abstract

The process of *pūrvapakṣa* of Prof. Sheldon Pollock's (1985) paper (briefly, "Theory of Practice and Practice of Theory") on *śāstra* in the First Swadeshi Indology Conference helped *emic* scholars understand and possibly for the first time grasp the nuances and contrived intricacies of the methods of Pollock – but in the entire discourse a key issue remained undiscussed – the *implicit* assumption of the superiority of Western Science, the scientific method and the superior rational nature of science when compared to the traditional body of knowledge viz. the *śāstra*-s. The inherent and unfounded sense of Western superiority exhibited by scholarship especially regarding topics of a comparative anthropological/sociological nature, more so those involving study of artifacts with a civilizational or cultural focus is well-known. Academic narratives based on the (post-Renaissance)

*pp 265–293. In Kannan, K. S. (Ed.) (2019). *Swadeshi Critique of Videshi Mīmāṃsā*. Chennai: Infinity Foundation India.

rise of colonial Europe in a material sense and also supposedly in a sense of reason have been the dominant narrative of scholarship in almost all of Western academia. Aided by the rise of the USA as a military and economic superpower, in the last century, the unquestioned myths of American Exceptionalism and its precursors, the narrative of White-European Greco-Roman origins of science and rationality remains deep-seated in the collective consciousness of the West and equally so in the deeply colonized mindsets of most Macaulayized (colonized/modern) Indians.

Our paper entitled “The Science and Nescience of *Śāstra*” (presented at the first Swadeshi Indology Conference held in 2016) touched, albeit briefly, upon these issues (Sudarshan 2018). Such deep-seated unquestioned assumptions harm an objective understanding of *śāstra* and also its applications to contemporary twenty-first century living. For a better understanding of *śāstra* in all its nuances, a deeper comparative analysis of science and *śāstra* is required. In this paper, the scientific nature of *śāstra* is discussed and juxtaposed with the so-called modern lifestyles driven by scientific understandings of man, society and the world at large. The *śāstra* of science is examined critically - its methods (logics/sources of knowledge) are examined (*pramāṇa*-s), the actual realities of what is knowable (*prameya*) by science are discussed and the goals (*prayojana*) of science are elucidated. Common misunderstandings (especially among scholars with a non-science background and also of those who have accepted the assumptions of such superiority unquestioningly and uncritically) are addressed. In short - *Is science really all that it is made out to be?* The key underlying questions about the nature of the relationship between praxis and theory in the Indian traditions way - exceedingly well articulated as a research meme by Pollock¹ - are answered.

Introduction

The Neo-Orientalist narrative on *śāstra* is very much an exemplar of the deep-rooted chauvinism and prejudices of the West. We examine the basis of this prejudice using Pollock’s theses on *śāstra* as an entry point. *What is the basis of the sense of the superiority of the West?* In all probability it is the discourse and narrative of Science and the thrall of the technology artifacts. We juxtapose *śāstra* and science across some critical dimensions of interest to highlight hidden nuances, and hope

to present a novel set of perspectives relevant to these discussions.

The paper is organized as follows: The ensuing section situates the context of these questions in the light of the Neo-orientalist narrative. The section on the narrative of science addresses the following: Is science really Western in origin? How is the narrative and discourse of Science controlled and manipulated by the West? What are the philosophical underpinnings and logical frameworks in Science? How is “Science” perceived as a process for both acquiring and managing knowledge in current Western thought? In the section on the narrative on *śāstra*, we provide an overview of the traditional viewpoints behind *śāstra*, its role in *dharma*, pursuit of the *puruṣārtha*. The lifestyles of the Indian civilization are discussed both in traditional terms and in scientific terms. We highlight the key points under discussion and refer the reader to the vast extant literature on *śāstra*. Finally, in the section on “Comparing *śāstra* and Science”, we compare the twain and attempt to understand science in terms of *śāstra* and of the traditional lenses. We conclude with a brief pointer to the possibility of a critical role for Swadeshi Indology as an interpretive movement (for and of Science) - to create and nurture an honest narrative in the dharmic tradition.

The Neo-Orientalist Narrative

Sheldon Pollock’s paper on Indian *śāstra* (Pollock 1985) - is what one could consider unique scholarship. Coming possibly at an early time in his academic career in South Asia area-studies - it is an early indicator of the genre of scholarship that Pollock would produce for the next three decades as he became a powerful and influential figure affecting the Indian discourse both inside and outside India. Chronicled in detail and with uncanny insight in (Malhotra 2016) - Malhotra calls it *hegemonic discourse*. Malhotra says that under the guise of peer reviews and by referring to each other’s works - a coterie or a cabal is formed, who are mutually supportive and perpetuate their own theories. He also adds that as this process continues over years, the need to reason and defend the theories and positions becomes minimal and their theories are taken for granted. Pollock for example via this hegemonic discourse has stated political goals for India - to intervene on behalf of those he declares to be oppressed. Interested readers can peruse Malhotra (2016:315).

Using a novel combination of hitherto unknown methods (3-dimensional philology, creative chronology and socio-political hermeneutic lenses) - various theses on the history of Sanskrit, the influences of Sanskrit and the associated bodies of knowledge and practice that comprise the basis of the *sanātana dharma* and Indian civilization - have been propounded. The hegemonic discourse can be seen in its early stages in this paper by Pollock.

Unpacking these verbose misrepresentations and theses derived via Pollock's creative hermeneutics, Malhotra lucidly describes Pollock's approach to *śāstra*.

The following words of Malhotra summarize the points Pollock makes in his 1985 paper:

- "Since the Vedas are considered eternal and perfect, they are assumed to be the repository of all knowledge. Therefore, shastras are incapable of fresh creativity and progress as they are limited to whatever is contained in the Vedas.
- Shastras can merely restate or extrapolate from what is already in the Vedas, but they cannot utilize fresh insights from the empirical world. He calls this 'regressive'.
- No historical advancement is possible in the Western sense because shastras are incapable of producing anything new.
- Shastras discourage individual agency, unlike in the West where individual agency is emphasized. This means the behaviour of Indian people is driven by codified rules that emanate from the Vedas."

(Malhotra 2016:115)

In order to examine the deep rooted chauvinism and prejudices of the West, that underpin the aforementioned observations by Pollock - we shall attempt to examine the veracity and validity of the roots of the claims of science as being Western in origin, the Western-ness of the discourse and the one-sided narrative. Science also includes Mathematics for the purposes of this discussion. The discipline of philosophy of Science is also used to examine theories of Science using the Western viewpoints themselves.

For purposes of comparing Science *vis-à-vis śāstra*, we first review each from the other's viewpoint and highlight key differences. To examine Science using traditional Indian theories we shall in a limited manner

use the Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā lenses. While examining *śāstra* - the basic methods that supposedly exemplify and comprise science - the limited nature of the scientific method and the critiques of the philosophy of science are used as tools to ascertain the overall scientific nature of *śāstra*.

The Narrative of Science

In this section, rather than providing a historical account of Science as it is assumed to have evolved, we highlight some of the key shortcomings of these documented histories. Our focus has been on highlighting the following key viewpoints regarding the Western edifice of Science -

1. Are the Greek origins of Western science and philosophy really true?
2. What was the role of Christian theology in the evolution of science as we see it now?
3. What are some of the limitations of problems that science has addressed and the tools that science has used - especially logic?
4. Finally, how is science perceived as a process for knowledge generation? What guides it and how does it evolve?

Having a proper background to the above questions is essential to refute the key points outlined in the earlier section on the limitations of *śāstra*. In the rest of this section, we discuss each of the above.

Greek Origins of Western Philosophy and Science

The discourse on the origins of science (and mathematics) has been controlled by the West till recently. As is the case with most such historiographies of the West, Greece is the undisputed source of all things Western (another hegemonic idea). Is this really true? Very little documented evidence that suggests the contrary is available. Consider the following remark on the book *Stolen Legacy* (James 2001),

In this work Professor James dares to contend and labor to prove, among others, that the *Greeks were not the authors of Greek philosophy*, that so-

called Greek philosophy was based in the main upon ideas and concepts which were borrowed without acknowledgement — indeed *stolen* — by a few wayward and dishonest Greeks from the ancient Egyptians.

(Hansberry 1955:127) (*italics ours*)

Why is this narrative not mainstream knowledge? If one needed a vivid example of institutionalized hegemony – this could be it. Published in 1954, the book has not been popularized nor reprinted until recently by Moefi Asante, an African-American scholar. The lack of institutional blessing to these views, dangerous as they are to the Western narrative and the hegemony of history is apparent. The author of the book (Dr. George James) has been literally erased from academic history.

Was there such a thing called Greek philosophy? Dr. James is vehement that there isn't really any such! Almost all of what is now considered "Greek" is actually (black) Egyptian in origin.

"The term Greek philosophy, to begin with is a misnomer, for there is no such philosophy in existence. The ancient Egyptians had developed a very complex religious system, called the Mysteries, which was also the first system of salvation."

(James 2009:7)

After the Persian invasion, from 60 BCE up to Alexander's conquest, the Greeks learnt most of all they could directly from the Egyptian priests. The plunder of books and entire libraries from Egypt and ascribing Greek origins to them (ex: a huge amount of books being attributed to Aristotle) is well known.

On the story of Plato and Aristotle, the relentless myth-building of these characters is also alluded to. The direct influence (he calls it "copy") of the Egyptian (black African) cultures and knowledge is seen. Alexandria (in Egypt) had the largest (then) known storehouse and library of (Egyptian) scientific books. Much of the knowledge that has been attributed to Aristotle, Socrates and also Plato has well-known Egyptian and other non-European origins.

On the plagiarism by Plato, James has this to say

"Similarly, every school boy believes that when he hears or reads the names of the four cardinal virtues, he is hearing or reading names of virtues determined by Plato. Nothing has been more misleading, for the Egyptian Mystery System contained ten virtues, and *from this source Plato copied what have been called the four cardinal virtues, justice, wisdom,*

temperance, and courage. It is indeed surprising how, for centuries, the Greeks have been praised by the Western World for intellectual accomplishments which belong without a doubt to the Egyptians or the peoples of North Africa."

(James 2009:8) (*italics ours*)

The philosophy of the West and its Greek origins are highly suspect. It is only the hegemonic nature of Academic Imperialism that is keeping these myths and untruths alive. It will take much serious work from the affected (those affected by Colonialism in the previous centuries and the more insidious, contemporary Academic Imperialism) peoples to set this right. The scholars who are pursuing these areas of research (Swadeshi scholars for example) have to realise their critical contemporary roles — if this continuing imperialism is to abate and for some sense of “truthful” balance to return to the global civilizational discourse.

We now continue the *pūrvapakṣa* of Western science and math based on the decades-long research of Prof. C.K.Raju.² Much of his work is not well-known in India, even among academics and supposed scholars both in the sciences and “social-sciences”. His well-researched critiques of the origins of Western math and science have had very few (if any) credible rebuttals and critiques. As a practicing (world-class) scientist and award-winning teacher, his theses have all the more veracity as they are wrought from experience of pedagogy in multicultural environments.

Note:

Prof. C.K. Raju is quoted extensively in the succeeding sections This is simply because he has been and still is the pioneer in the study of the Academic Imperialism in the math and sciences and has successfully researched and unearthed the deep colonial roots of math and science. He is at the forefront in the global fight against Western Academic Imperialism and has practically engaged with the West's machinery of hegemony both as a scientist and also as an Educator over decades. He has been addressing these issues both from a “general” non-West perspective (African, Buddhist, Islamic, Chinese among others) and also specifically from the Indian. In our opinion no other contemporary or past scholar or scientist comes anywhere close to the depth, range and clarity that Prof. Raju offers on the nature of colonization of math and science. Among his many works, we also quote from Prof. Raju's paper on using the “History and Philosophy of Science as a means of Decolonisation”.

This is an unpublished paper by him. The observations in the paper strike at the root of the colonisation in science and mathematics, exemplified by the journals themselves. A link to the paper at Prof. Raju's blog (for want of printed literature by him) is provided in the References. The page numbers for quotes from this paper will be the manual numbers of the pdf as none exist in the actual paper. The reference will appear as Raju, C. K. (?) in the quotes.

On the Indian colonial experience of science and math based on the supposed superiority of the Western methods, Raju makes these scathing remarks on the Indian perpetrators – especially referring to Rammohun Roy's fascination with Western science and education and his insistence on supporting Macaulay's ideas. Raju attributes it to Rammohun Roy being *conned* by the false history of Science.

The false history that is considered “truth” and which is part of the mainstream narrative of science – the “fabricated” Western origins of astronomy – is made explicit by Raju. He presents the example of Astronomy thus:

“There never was any serious Greek tradition of astronomy. The Greeks were hopeless at arithmetic, as demonstrated by the non-textual evidence of their (Attic) numeral system and their calendar, which was grossly inaccurate and in complete disarray like its more refined descendant, the Roman calendar.”

(Raju ?;1)

He cites the superstitious nature of the Greeks (with regard to astronomy) and alludes to Aristotle's death penalty for his contemplations on the nature of the sun and the moon.

Is there any proof to the Greek “expertise” in astronomy? Absolutely none. In fact, the proof conclusively points us in the opposite direction. According to Raju, much of what is taken to be “Ptolemy's work” can be considered to be fictitious and wrongly attested. There is sufficient evidence that much of the “numbers” were back-calculated. The text in question, *Syntaxis*, is translated from Arabic and not the other way round as is popularly portrayed. Raju openly challenges Western scholarship to answer his charges (on Greek astronomy) and feels that almost all of it is pure Western fantasy. For those who aspire to be decolonised – Raju suggests that they just move on *critically*. The West will not acknowledge their centuries of dishonesty and falsehood.

Role of Christian Theology in the Evolution of Science

After the initial attribution to the Greeks, the theater of Science advances nearly 10-15 centuries to the end of the Middle Ages. This was a period when the church was in ascendancy and controlled all intellectual discourse.

So, what about the fabled Copernicus and the great story of the inquisition and the rise of Science and all of that? Copernicus got his knowledge from Islamic sources (Ibn Shatir of Damishk, and the Maragheh school of Khwaja Nasiruddin Tusi). He was nothing more than a mere translator. The usual arguments of “independent discovery” are often offered as argument, but just as with other similar myths, this one too is of a perpetuated variety.

How about Newton, Tycho Brahe, Kepler or Euler? Well, sadly but not surprisingly, it turns out that not a single one of them is very original either. This claim might seem controversial and of the “crackpot” variety, but readers are advised to peruse Prof. Raju’s tome on the History of Calculus, *The Cultural Foundations of Mathematics* (Raju 2007). We would not like discuss more on the bogus histories, fictitious mathematicians and scientists. For the purposes of this paper, it suffices to say the depths of Western academia and related history writing are yet to be plumbed. The Western claims to the origins and ownership of Science are seriously in question. The core of Pollock’s thesis of the “superiority of the West” rests on this *bogus assertion that the West created Science*.

So, what are the implications of this false history of science? What purpose did such a fabricated history serve? What does it mean for us (Indians), colonized by the West for a few hundred years and still in the thrall of the West? What does it mean for science education? What does it mean for the future of math and science?

Raju summarises the “deep” issues and places Academia (and academics like Pollock) in perspective – that they serve only the interests of hegemony. Is there a way to address this deep problem? A majority of Indians including the so-called intellectual class are not even aware of these foundational issues. We continue to be slaves to these false histories. Prof. Raju is scathing in his analysis - the false

history is not only bad for us from a civilizational perspective, but is also affecting how math and science will evolve in the future. So, how does correcting the false history help? Raju details how a correction of false history and philosophy will improve pedagogy and lead to better maths and science. To know *how exactly* this will happen, readers are once again fervently advised to deeply assimilate Prof. Raju's work and also appreciate the "working" results from his real world (decolonised math and science) pedagogies.

With reference to the civilizational clashes and the hegemony of the West, Raju explicates his theses on the basis of some very real "truths" interpreted and analyzed as only he can - why correcting false history is important for future of Math in his paper, *Math Wars and the Epistemic Divide in Mathematics*.

It is well-known that the Europeans inherited math from two traditions the anti-empirical Greek and Egyptian, and the empirical Indian and Arab. How did the West reconcile these traditions? They did not. The Church found it convenient to use the non-empirical, axiomatic proof based system of math as more convenient for its goals of "expansion" and as a basis for its metaphysics. See Raju (2004) for a detailed treatment of the role of the Church and its use of "proof" based mathematics – the deductive method and axioms aligned well with the proselytising needs of the Church (every piece of knowledge had to have the approval of the Church). Sometimes it was done violently and is very possibly the reason for the famous missing work of Newton (he was a Christian theologian – with unpublished works on the history of the church).

How many of us are aware that today's math and science is deeply influenced by Christian Theology? This can be seen even today. Pure Mathematics is that which is practiced in a theologically correct way i.e., the axiomatic basis on which "proofs" are constructed without any means of calculating or verifying the claims.

The Logic of Science

Scientific Reasoning in the 17th century was powered by the evolution of *Empiricism* and more importantly *Logical empiricism* as science and math co-evolved. As indicated earlier, theory development was given precedence (involving the use of proofs) followed by possible

experimental validation, which is what is practised to date. As theory building became more important, it was important to bound the theory development using proof-based logical systems. Proof-based mathematics and its use in understanding the empirical world has led to a number of conceptual bottlenecks which are still being resolved.

So why is proof based mathematics unsound? The underlying metaphysics and axioms are not universal but are based on some peculiarities of the West. Why then should such math be considered universal - hegemony? For this we need to go deeper. We need to grasp the notions of logic, inference and deduction.

We again take recourse to Raju's work on Logic i.e., Non-Western Logic (2004). So, what is this Western logic - Is it universal? Can it be used as the basis for universal math and science? It turns that it is not universal and cannot be used as a basis for universal math and science.

".. proofs by contradiction are common in present-day mathematics. However, such a deduction would be invalid with a variety of logics that one can conceive of. The alleged certainty of deduction, therefore, rests on the belief that two-valued logic is universal or at least special in some way."

(Raju 2008:1230)

What about the logics used in India?

"However, the various logics used for inference in India, prior to even the historical Aristotle, were *neither two-valued nor even truth-functional*."

(Raju 2008:1231) (*italics ours*)

New Logics were formulated by each school/*darśana* as was deemed necessary by the metaphysical requirements underlying the peculiarities of each philosophical school. No logic was considered universal. All logics were in fact *considered limiting* as they were man-made. There were also supra-logical schools of thought and *darśana*-s based on the fact that (man-made) logics were limiting by definition (the *bhakti* and *nyāsa* traditions of the Vaiṣṇava-s for example). Modern masters like Sri Aurobindo also used these "supra" frameworks to elucidate and articulate new interpretations and theses on the possibilities for the future evolution of consciousness and of mankind.

On Buddhist Logic: There is much more to Buddhist Logic than alluded to by Raju below - but it is a good summary.

“Based on the Dīgha Nikāya – four truth cases are systematically used by later-day Buddhist thinkers like Nāgārjuna and Dinnāga who taught at the University of Nalanda. The latter developed a theory of (logical) quantifiers, “for all”, “for some” etc., based on this sort of logic. From the perspective of present-day formalist treatments of logic, it should be noted that *Buddhist logic is not a multi-valued but is rather a quasi truth-functional logic.*”

(Raju 2008:1231) (*italics ours*) (*diacritics as in the original*)

On Jaina logic: Again there is much to Jaina logic but these salients are sufficient to make the argument for non-Western logics.

“The Jains had a related but different logic called the logic of syādavāda (sic) (“*perhaps-ism*”), based on the idea of *anekāntavāda* (no-one-point-of-view-ism). Attributed to Bhadrabāhu, instead of four alternatives, this logic has a seven-fold judgment (*saptabhaṅgīnaya*) based on seven possible combinations of three primary values.”

(Raju 2008:1231) (*italics ours*) (*diacritics as in the original*)

How do these non-Western logics fit into semantics of modern logics?

“In terms of the present-day formal semantics of logical worlds, one might put things as follows. The *different possibilities visualized in Buddhist and Jaina logic refer not to multiple logical worlds assigned to different instants of time, but to multiple logical worlds assigned to a single instant of time.* In other words, Buddhist and Jaina logics relate to a world-view in which *time is perceived to have a non-trivial structure*, an (atomic) instant of time is perceived not as a featureless geometrical point but as a microcosm. Hence, members of a contradictory pair can well be simultaneously true.”

(Raju 2008:1231) (*italics ours*)

Recent work on Kripke logics (circa 1950) considers the issue of *multiple possible world semantics*. So now, mathematically and culturally, what does this entail? That Western logic is not universal. That it is a cultural choice and so are the mathematics and the methods based on it.

What about the notion of truth-value and its relationship to the empirical based on actual sensory experience? What are the effects on science and the way it is practiced?

“The possibility or necessity of determining logic empirically however strikes at the root of another fundamental difference between Western and non-Western perceptions of logic. In the West, logical truths are regarded as necessarily true, and are privileged over empirical facts, regarded as being

only contingently true. Hence, *present-day mathematical proof is required not to involve the empirical*, since that would diminish the sureness attached to a mathematical theorem. Hence, also, the *present-day belief in the philosophy of science, that when the conclusions of a physical theory are refuted by experiment it is the hypotheses that stand refuted, and not the process of inference which led from hypothesis to conclusion*. (Here it is necessary to distinguish between validity and correctness. The point is that it is believed that no empirical fact can invalidate a correct mathematical proof.)

(Raju 2008:1232)(*italics ours*)

What are the consequences if we were to actually make these fundamental “observations” mainstream? The power of Western institutionalization and the hegemonic “scientific” discourse will not let these views take hold, unless challenged vigorously. *Indian civilization is the only worthwhile challenge left -*

“Therefore, even if one were to go about trying to settle the nature of logic empirically, this would have consequences, startling from a Western perspective. Empirical observations are fallible, and subject to revision. So if the nature of logic is decided empirically, logical truth would have to be regarded as more fallible than empirical truth: deduction would have to be regarded as more fallible than induction, since the nature of the logic used for deduction could only be decided inductively. This would stand much of Western thought on its head.”

(Raju 2008:1232) (*italics ours*)

So, will it affect non-Western logic systems? Interestingly, no.

So, what should one do ideally to address this fundamental issue in the greater considerations of humankind? Raju suggests that much of Western thought will need to be reworked and recreated.

“Thus, there appears to be no serious way out of this dilemma about the nature of logic, and most of Western thought would hence need to be reworked in the future to avoid this incorrect assumption that two-valued logic is somehow universal.”

(Raju 2008:1233) (*italics ours*)

So, how did this flawed understanding of logic actually come about and how did it assume the status of (hegemonic?) Universal “truth”? Again, we see a similar pattern of events – Greek beginnings, church modulates and post-renaissance – it becomes hegemony.

The customary purported Greek beginnings, followed by “oppositon” of its use by the Church (as it questioned the doctrines of creation and apocalypse), the persecution by the Church of the logic philosophers,

their flight to Islamic refuge, the fine-tuning of the ideas of logic based on interactions with Islamic philosophers and then the movement of Arabic ideas and knowledge into Europe (which was considered heresy during the Crusades).

So, how was this Islamic import made theologically correct – the usual whitewashing of history by the Church and the creative falsehoods perpetuated by organized “educators” and Academia.

From the Indian perspective - the influence of Indian school of Nyāya has also been conveniently ignored and can be considered collateral damage,

“In the process of denying the Arabic-Islamic contribution, the Indian contribution from the Nyāya school, which used a similar system of syllogisms (with two valued logic), and was probably translated in the Bayt al Hikmā, may also have been denied.”

(Raju 2008:1234) (*italics ours*)

The Christianization continues unabated and is today considered *Universal* truth and is the basis of modern pedagogy - *Christian* Mathematics and Science.

The Philosophies of Science

The discipline of philosophy of science is a part of the limited Western framework of culturally and politically correct self-critique. Evolving in parallel with the practice of science over the past few centuries - the very assumptions of science are supposedly questioned. There is still no clear definition of what it actually studies. There are close to 2500 entries³ for “Philosophy of Science” in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, but no single definition of what it *exactly* is.

Simply because of this definitional epistemological anarchy, as a reaction, one can see deep specializations in specific areas and sub-disciplines of the philosophy of Science. There are philosophies pertaining to high-level areas such as physics, chemistry, biology and also philosophies attributed to specific persons like Einstein’s philosophy, Kant’s philosophy etc. The modern and postmodern critiques of science including the “science as a delusion” perspective in (Sheldrake 2012) only exemplify Feyerabend’s devastating foundational observation on the anarchy of science.

This narrative of Feyerabend, and other philosophers of science influenced by him, is basically a narrative of the *disunity* of Science, in opposition to the highly influential thesis of the unity of science.

*“Feyerabend sometimes also recognized that this is to present science as too much of a monolith. In most of his work after *Against Method*, he emphasizes what has come to be known as the “disunity of science”. Science, he insists, is a collage, not a system or a unified project. Not only does it include plenty of components derived from distinctly “non-scientific” disciplines, but these components are often vital parts of the “progress” science has made (using whatever criterion of progress you prefer). Science is a collection of theories, practices, research traditions and world-views whose range of application is not well-determined and whose merits vary to a great extent. All this can be summed up in his slogan: “Science is not one thing, it is many.”*

(Preston 2016) (*italics ours*)

Feyerabend was also, controversially, for the separation of Science and State, in lines similar to the separation of Church and State.

“.. science is much closer to myth than a scientific philosophy is prepared to admit. It is one of the many forms of thought that have been developed by man, and not necessarily the best. It is conspicuous, noisy, and impudent, but it is inherently superior only for those who have already decided in favour of a certain ideology, or who have accepted it without ever having examined its advantages and its limits”

“The separation of church and state should therefore be supplemented by the separation of science and state, in order for us to achieve the humanity we are capable of. Setting up the ideal of a free society as “a society in which all traditions have equal rights and equal access to the centres of power” ”

(Preston 2016) (*italics ours*)

Though considered controversial, these are serious observations made by a contemporary (Feyerabend died in 1994) philosopher of science.

From a Swadeshi perspective, some of Feyerabend’s unfinished work is critical and needs to be leveraged, not in the least to effectively articulate and synthesize the arguments for tradition.

“One of the projects which Feyerabend worked on for a long time, but never really brought to completion, went under the name “The Rise of Western Rationalism”. Under this umbrella he hoped to show that Reason (with a capital “R”) and Science had displaced the binding principles of previous world-views not as the result of having won an argument, but as the result of

power-play. Even nowadays, indigenous cultures and counter-cultural practices provide alternatives to Reason and that nasty Western science."

(Preston 2016) (*italics ours*)

We now briefly examine what one of the proponents of the Stanford School of "Philosophy of Science" viz., Nancy Cartwright says. Introducing Cartwright's philosophy and commenting on her book, *How the laws of Physics lie?* (HTLPL) (Cartwright 1993), Hoefer (2008:2) writes:

"Cartwright mounts her first sustained attack on two aspects of philosophy of science that she believes are deeply mistaken: its rejection, based on a tradition beginning with Hume and reinforced by Russell, of causality and causal laws and its claim that finding and applying true laws of nature (typically in physics) is central to the success of science."

(Hoefer 2008:2) (*italics ours*)

"HTLPL discusses laws of all sorts: fundamental physical laws, less-fundamental equations, high-level phenomenological laws, and causal laws. Cartwright's arguments go to show that only causal laws, and some high-level phenomenological laws in physics, can be held to be literally true, even in a restricted domain of application; and all true laws are to be understood as merely true ceteris paribus—all else being equal, or better: when conditions are right. Why is truth such a rare and hedged quality for the laws of physics?"

(Hoefer 2008:3) (*italics ours*)

Causality in phenomena is the casualty when one strictly applies the laws of physics and closely studies the experimental practice of physics vis-à-vis the "theories".

"The laws of physics do a lot of explanatory work for us, but that does not argue for their truth. Inference to the best explanation makes sense when one is inferring to the most probable cause but not when one is inferring to the alleged truth of a fundamental equation."

(Hoefer 2008:4) (*italics ours*)

Hoefer goes on to write about her second book, *The Dappled World* (DW)(Cartwright 1999):

"In DW, Cartwright goes beyond the view of science that she offered in HTLPL by offering a reconceptualized understanding of laws of nature (causal or otherwise) and a metaphysics (the dappled world) with which to replace the fundamentalist's reductionist world of particles moved

by laws. Laws, to the extent that we need them, arise because of, and are true only in, nomological machines: setups, usually made by us but sometimes found in nature, that combine a simple/stable structure and sufficient shielding from outside influences so as to give rise to regular behavior.”

(Hoefer 2008:5) (*italics ours*)

What are the implications of Cartwright’s theses? There are no credible critiques to her theses as yet. The contrived truths and false-universality of the discourse of Science are apparent for all those who question science with an open mind. Cartwright’s theses only add credibility (particularly as she is a mainstream acknowledged scholar) to the observations of James and Raju (seen earlier, both of whom would be considered outsiders to the Western narrative in many ways).

Given the discussion in this section (*the essentially hegemonic roots and the civilisationally biased nature of Western academia*), it is not surprising that the *mental paradigm that dominates Pollock’s assessment of the śāstra-s* is as outlined in the section on the Neo-Orientalist narrative.

The Narrative on Śāstra

The role of śāstra as a foundational construct of Indian civilizational existence has been discussed previously (Sudarshan 2018). The śāstra-s encapsulate continual learnings and primordial truths and make them available for scholarly access and interpretive dissemination via techniques unique to the cultural/civilizational tradition. Aurobindo, Gandhi, Tagore and various other modern masters have in their unique ways, articulated the role of śāstra in the Indian civilizational journey. The living role of śāstra is being re-contextualized on a daily basis across Indian homes and via the societal channels of interpretation and dissemination (various *sampradāya-s*, local temples, *guru-paramparā* traditions etc.)

The closest Western understanding to śāstra-s is a “-logy”, which itself is derived from Greek *logia* which means “communications of a divine origin”. They can be understood as *accretive* bodies of knowledge also – knowledge of topics of interest spanning the human experience (across the vast geographies of the Indian sub-continent) and encapsulated formally over millennia. There are śāstra for every conceivable human practice (at least there were, till the middle of the

2nd millennium of the Common Era). Conception and articulation of new *śāstra*-s have been somewhat rare since 1500 C.E.

Etymologically, “*śās-tra*” is “that which protects”. The traditional classification of *śāstra* (according to Yājñavalkya) are the 14 *vidyāsthāna*-s. There are other classifications too. For purposes of this discussion, we shall limit our discussion to these.

The recording of the material manifestations of the Indian Sciences and Technology (the material *śāstra*-s, if you will) have begun recently and are slowly being acknowledged as scientific heritage deriving from the traditional knowledge systems and civilizational experiences. Only recently has the history of the material achievements of the Indian material masters been documented or even acknowledged. These histories have been hidden from popular consciousness by years of foreign rule and by the overzealous leftist narratives of Indian history. Without doubt, all of this needs to be made mainstream knowledge.

The HIST series of books brought out by The Infinity Foundation exemplify this via specialized books, and showcase unparalleled achievements in specific areas of technologies going back millennia. The large numbers of cynical Western academics and critics of Indian civilization are referred to Balasubramaniam (2008), Chattopadhyay (2011), Dharampal (2000), Joshi (2008, 2009), Tripathi (2008) for proof of India’s civilizational achievements in the material plane, sciences and technology. Such readers are also referred to Dharampal’s record of Indian Science in the 18th century and data pertaining to India’s traditional education system based on the traditional *śāstra*-s (Dharampal 1983). The much well-known work on *Millenial Perspectives on the World Economy* by Angus Maddison (2003) only reinforces these facts.

Our narrative on *śāstra* in this paper is quite minimal in contrast to the earlier section, given our (unfortunate) deep familiarity with the Western hegemony. Much remains to be discovered, documented and disseminated about *śāstra*. The hegemonic Western *history* discourse has to be overturned. The process has just begun. We outline key summary features of *śāstra*-s that are relevant to this discussion.

The *Prayojana* of Śāstra

The principal śāstra-s deal with holistic harmonious living and assume the foundations of common tenets of Vedic cosmology. They act as a guide to traverse the well understood āśrama-s of life. The pursuit of *puruṣārtha* via the guidelines of the *dharma*-s is considered supremely important and the only worthwhile goal of the human (birth). Every (recommended) activity of the human is to be seen in the context of the universal and divine frame of reference in order to understand its real purpose. The purport of the śāstraic guidelines are the (demystification of the) *vidhi*-s or the recommended rules. The role of the *guru*-s (living masters) is to guide the individual and hence society toward stable and *dhārmic* living, leading the society to the right pursuits of the *puruṣārtha* via the proper interpretation of the śāstra.

The *pramāṇa* (source of knowledge) of the śāstra is primarily *śabda* (the *Veda*) only. The *prameya* (subject matter) of the primary śāstra-s is (access to) the (otherwise unknowable) knowledge of the Supreme. The *prayojana* of śāstra-s as indicated is the *dhārmic* pursuit of the material *puruṣārtha*-s (*artha* and *kāma*), finally leading to states of higher awareness, realization and consciousness. *Sanātana Dharma* (including Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism) has a large living repository of precepts and practices (*darśana*-s, *sampradāya*-s), applicable/suitable to a wide variety of *guṇa* configurations/needs of a particular society or individual. Achieving a state of Liberation via techniques leading to Oneness (in some form or the other) with the supreme consciousness is the underlying goal of all practice embodied by the śāstra-s.

Additional salient points to note with respect to śāstra in the context of this paper include

- Śāstra-s (though revealed) still allow for the fact that additional śāstra-s may be revealed even contemporaneously to the prepared seeker.
- Śāstra-s allow discovery/re-discovery, re-interpretation, adaptation depending on the context. They are not history-centric nor owner-/discoverer-centric.

- They depend on the practitioner. *Śāstra*-s do not distinguish between Western knowledge taxonomies such as science, humanities, sociology, morality, law etc.
- So, analyzing/classifying them according to Western knowledge systems is unproductive at best and leads to numerous limited interpretations. This *has to stop*.
- We need to treat *śāstra*-s as an alternative knowledge system with its own sources and machinery for maintaining/evolving that knowledge.
- Finally, all the *śāstra*-s are dhārmically compatible for the individual, the society (both human and others) and the world as it were.
- They are sacred and by definition do not embed any social ills as suggested by the Neo-orientalist perspective.

Comparing Śāstra and Science

Our ensuing comparison attempts to delineate the science underlying *śāstra* followed by an analysis treating Science as a *śāstra*. The discussion highlights the fundamental differences between these two constructs and also suggests various approaches to combating the destructive processes such as digestion outlined in Malhotra (2011).

The Science of Śāstra

We shall in brief attempt to understand the science of *śāstra*. Science as defined in the West requires foundational concepts that can be observed, measured and related with each other (for example, mass, gravity etc.). It requires theories that explain and predict interactions between these foundational concepts. Empiricism plays the fringe role of validating these theories via experimentation.

Śāstra has such foundational constructs and different *śāstra*-s elucidate various theories and practices. A few concepts are highlighted.

Śāstra-s acknowledge the existence of a primordial consciousness. Matter is not the ultimate reality. The various *darśana*-s, in own ways, acknowledge the primacy of consciousness to matter. The primary

elements of reality, though differently conceived in the various schools, have an acknowledgement of this duality. Matter is either considered to be an evolute of consciousness or considered to have an independent (lower) reality/existence. That there is something that can be described as supreme is acknowledged.

If one were to take a “causal” and utilitarian view of the *śāstra*-s, what does the scientific pursuit of *vidyā*-s ingrained in the *śāstra*-s help achieve? The scientific practice of the *śāstra*-s helps the materially (body) bound unique elemental piece of consciousness (*ātman*) identified (due to the ego) as “I”, understand its true identity. The pursuit of the paths leading to this understanding of true identity is the *praxis* of human life (according to *Sanātana Dharma*). The *śāstra*-s scientifically help in this pursuit.

The Vedic understanding - of time (via *Jyautiṣaśāstra*), space (vibrations via *Śikṣā*, *Chandas*, *Nirukta*), ego (via *Vedānta*), body/*śarīra* (via *Āyurveda*), valid practices (via *Kalpa*) and the external material manifestations of nature - is “scientifically” manifest in the *śāstra*-s. The “proper” contextual (time, space and other dimensions including *dharma*) practice of *śāstra* is the recommended “praxis” of human life.

The salient points again are the following:

- Foundational constructs exist and have been studied and analyzed as in the Western Sciences. However, these constructs are far richer and holistic than Western knowledge systems.
- Secondly, it is not required that these knowledge systems use a language, methodology or exhibit structure both in theories and concepts that are similar to current Western notions. There are potentially many ways to conceptualize and understand the world around us.

The Śāstra of Science

Based on the elaborate and perhaps enlightening discussion on the narrative of science, we attempt to answer the question - What could be the *śāstra* of science? What are the *puruṣārtha*-s underpinning the practise of science? What are the boundaries of science?

Science and technology at first glance seem to have improved the human condition on many fronts - empowering the individual and

the state. However, much of this has come at great cost to human life and natural resources. The use of science and its artifacts as instruments of human power and plunder also come to mind, given the rise in colonization with the early evolution of science and technology. Colonization and its concomitant bag of ills, such as apartheid, slavery, and many more, are still continuing and it is not some ancient memory. Furthermore, even with a view restricted to “Science as a knowledge generation mechanism”, many ills abound as discussed in the section on Philosophy of Science. There are many problems where current Science does not have answers (considering how its constructs and methodologies are limited). Though science is trying to expand its methodological toolkit by borrowing from *śāstra*-s, much remains to be done.

Overall, the pursuit of pleasure, power, and sensory experiences seem to be some of the most eligible *puruṣārtha*-s. Towards this end, indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources is the *prima facie* generator of advancement and wealth. From a “*Śāstra* of Science” viewpoint, the *net* effects of science as practised today have far more harmful effects than beneficial. Some major issues relevant to all humanity, include issues such as — human-induced species loss, the overall drop in quality of life and happiness, the rise of fundamentalist ideologies, and the imminent threat of nuclear holocausts - to name but a few. We briefly highlight a few issues here.

We use findings of the deeply disturbing paper on human-induced species losses in the journal, *Science Advances*, of AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science), to make the case against science.

“The rate of extinction for species in the 20th century was up to 100 times higher than it would have been without man’s impact, they said. Many conservationists have been warning for years that a mass extinction event akin to the one that wiped out the dinosaurs is occurring as humans degrade and destroy habitats.”

(Ceballos *et al.* 2016:1)

For a brutal reality check as to what the mindless pursuit of lifestyle models based on Western science is causing –

“Even under our assumptions, which would tend to minimize evidence of an incipient mass extinction, the average rate of vertebrate species loss over the last century is up to 100 times higher than the background

rate. Under the 2 E/MSY background rate, *the number of species that have gone extinct in the last century would have taken, depending on the vertebrate taxon, between 800 and 10,000 years to disappear.* These estimates reveal an exceptionally rapid loss of biodiversity over the last few centuries, indicating that a sixth mass extinction is already under way. Averting a dramatic decay of biodiversity and the subsequent loss of ecosystem services is still possible through intensified conservation efforts, but that window of opportunity is rapidly closing.”

(Ceballos *et al.* 2016:1) (*italics ours*)

For the critics and defenders of anthropocentric Western civilization there is data available here⁴. Any *sane* human would without hesitation acknowledge the effects of the amoral and destructive models of (scientific) Western living.

Assuming the primacy of the anthropocentric focus of Western science, can we ask questions on the role of science in improving the condition of humans at least? What has been the role of science in the progress of man, the individual? Is humankind better off after all this destruction?

Is the “Western (Westernized)” individual happier, living a better and more fulfilling life etc.? Social and psychological indicators from Westernized societies do not indicate any “positives” in this direction either. Summarizing the view of science from a *śāstraic* lens, we highlight the few points relevant to this paper:

1. Science is a subset of *śāstra*. It only decouples (for ease of morality) knowledge discovery from its use and applicability.
2. Science only addresses a narrow set of problems successfully. Problems that are complex, both natural and artificial, have not yet been amenable to the current scientific method.
3. Applying the current scientific method does not inherently ensure a valid or even workable conclusion.
4. Paradigms in science are limited.
5. *Śāstra* is a far bigger concept and construct than science.
6. Limiting our world-view through the lenses of science and its hegemony should be carefully avoided.

Remarks on the Neo-Orientalist Viewpoint

Given the aforementioned discussions thus far on the roots of Western science, our *śāstra*, and the inherent differences between the two, we can draw the following conclusions regarding the Neo-orientalist viewpoint (which are in italics) discussed in the section on the Neo-Orientalist narrative.

(a) *Śāstra*-s are “static” or limiting as compared to Western Science

We have highlighted that this is not even true nor a fair hypothesis even if it were one. Western Science is the one that is limited and quasi-static.

(b) Lack of empiricism in *śāstra*-centric approach

We highlight that current science/math is not even really empirical - being dominated by Christian theological foundations. *Śāstra*-s with the embodied approaches to knowledge acquisition are foundationally based on first-person empiricism.

(c) Nothing “new” can come from *śāstra*

It is predicated on the implicit assumption that everything new is relevant and beneficial. The notion of newness is relative to the observer. The recent adoption of *śāstraic* constructs into modern sciences (refer Malhotra) suggests the opposite.

(d) *Śāstra*-s as stifling individual agency

Śāstra-s fundamentally stress practise by the individual and the community at large. Knowledge gathering and validation are inherent in the individual’s rights rather than dictated via history centrism or any central organization.

Implications and the Way Ahead (Swadeshi-Indology)

Can Swadeshi Indology (as a modern societal inheritor of the knowledge of the *śāstra*-s) contextualize *śāstra*-s for modern harmonious living globally? The destructive nature of almost all lifestyle models based on modern science and technology (everything finally adds up to destruction of the biosphere) is well known – though not universally

acknowledged. Should future modernity be redefined – and be based on principles of living based on the *śāstra*-s? The global reach of Yoga is an example of a step in this direction – a harmonious world begins with a harmonious body (mind). What then can Swadeshi Indology do to articulate, interpret and disseminate the knowledge of the Vedic seers/ancients in a modern context? It would require enormous efforts; serious teamwork across multiple groups of people like Sanskrit experts, *saṃskṛti* experts, *śāstra* experts, practicing masters, experimenters, educators, gurus, scientists, doctors, and psychologists, just to name a few. The Swadeshi Indology genre of research and scholarship is uniquely positioned to undertake this multi-cultural cross-disciplinary synthesis across space (geographies) and time.

Is this possibly the way ahead for “*sanatan-isation*” – the global spread and practice of *dharma*?

Concluding Remarks

As a rebuttal to the flawed and deeply derisive frontal attack on the nature of *śāstra* and its practice by Pollock, we undertook a critical examination (*sans* the rhetoric of the humanities) of the “actual” nature of *śāstra* and science. We examined in detail the realities of Western science, its evolution, its foundational untruths, its bogus histories, flawed metaphysics, its limited nature and scope and also its (as manifested) fundamentally destructive *prayojana*. Given the deeply unsound nature of the *pramāṇa* (*anumāna*), the *prameya* (superficial limited knowledge of material structure) and the *prayojana* (annihilation) of science (see Ceballos *et al.* 2017) we posit that Western science is (if at all) a very limited *śāstra* – indeed extremely limited.

Though this paper refutes some of the key theses and assumptions of Pollock’s 1985 paper, three decades later, it is important to situate *śāstra* in the right context with respect to Western academic/scientific hegemony. We believe a proper understanding of these concepts is essential for continuing work on Swadeshi Indology by enlightening existing audiences – both colonized and uncolonized – on the actual boundaries and realities.

The bigger issue at hand is: How then can we, as inheritors of *dharma*, lead the way for a global renaissance and save our planet from destruction? We sincerely hope these exhortations are considered

seriously, and that this discourse is advanced to the next level of formulation.

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Notes

¹though (as seen earlier) rather poorly framed within a political context

²<http://ckraju.net/papers/Reading-list-on-religion-in-math.html> <http://ckraju.net/papers/Reading-list-on-history-philosophy-of-math.html> <http://ckraju.net/papers/History-philosophy-of-math.html>

³<http://plato.stanford.edu/search/search?query=Philosophy+of+science>

⁴<http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/1/5/e1400253.figures-only>

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Shrinivas Tilak

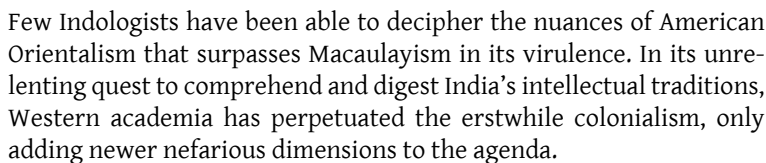
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Volume-1 Western Indology and Its Quest for Power



In this volume, eight scholars have sought to expose the deliberate distortions of the most formidable representative of American Orientalism viz. Prof. Sheldon Pollock of Columbia University, for whom Sanskrit is “dead”, and is/was yet a powerful abettor of German Nazism!

Volume-2 *Śāstra*-s Through the Lens of Western Indology – A Response



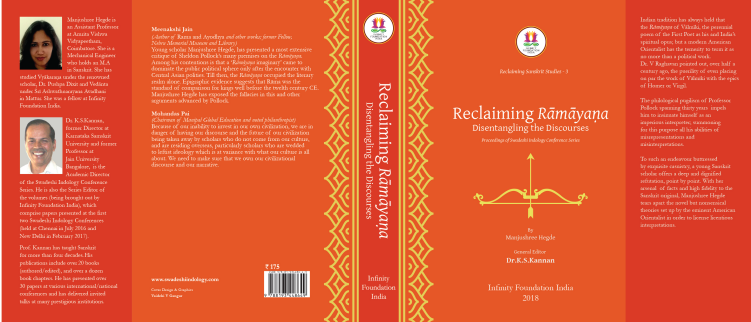
This publication of Infinity Foundation India examines the schema of misinterpretation wrought by Western academia, the American Orientalists in particular, on our *śāstra*-s (various disciplines of knowledge).

Seven scholars critique here the concept and the role of *śāstra*-s - a theme on which Prof. Sheldon Pollock has written over an extensive period of 30 years, yet which writing has largely not been critically looked into even by Western academics this long.

Our scholars give fitting rebuttals - with facts and figures, and analysis and arguments - to Pollock's charges against Hindu heritage: that *śāstra*-s have crippled creativity; that Vyākaraṇa was an instrument of political power; that India has had nothing to match the post-Renaissance modernity of the West; that *śāstra*-s have little to compare with the first-person empiricism of science; and more.

The academic fabrications of Pollock have also been laid bare incidentally.

Volume-3 Reclaiming *Rāmāyaṇa*: Disentangling the Discourses

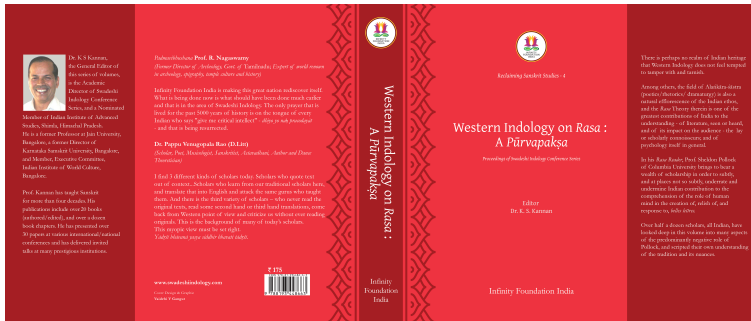


Indian tradition has always held that the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki, the perennial poem of the First Poet as his and India's spiritual opus; but a modern American Orientalist has the temerity to term it as no more than a political work. Dr. V. Raghavan pointed out, over half a century ago, the puerility of even placing on par the work of Vālmiki with the epics of Homer or Virgil.

The philological pugilism of Professor Pollock spanning thirty years impels him to insinuate himself as an imperious interpreter; summoning for this purpose all his abilities of misrepresentations and misinterpretations.

To such an endeavour buttressed by exquisite casuistry, a young Sanskrit scholar offers a deep and dignified refutation, point by point. With her arsenal of facts and high fidelity to the Sanskrit original, Manjushree Hegde tears apart the novel but nonsensical theories — set up by the eminent American Neo-Orientalist in order to license licentious interpretations.

Volume-4 Western Indology on Rasa: A Pūrva-pakṣa



There is perhaps no realm of Indian heritage that Western Indology does not feel tempted to tamper with and tarnish.

Among others, the field of *Alaṅkāra-śāstra* (poetics/rhetorics/dramaturgy) is also a natural efflorescence of the Indian ethos, and the *Rasa* Theory therein is one of the greatest contributions of India to the understanding – of literature, seen or heard, and of its impact on the audience – the lay or scholarly connoisseurs; and of psychology itself in general.

In his *Rasa Reader*, Prof. Sheldon Pollock of Columbia University brings to bear a wealth of scholarship in order to subtly, and at places not so subtly, underrate and undermine Indian contribution to the comprehension of the role of human mind in the creation of, relish of, and response to, *belles lettres*.

Over half a dozen scholars, all Indian, have looked deep in this volume into many aspects of the predominantly negative role of Pollock, and scripted their own understanding of the tradition and its nuances.

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