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# For SubContinental Political Theory: On the Non-Brahmin Self-Respect Critique of Gandhian Self-Rule

By

Matthew Hamilton Baxter

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Political Science

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Wendy Brown, Chair
Professor Pradeep Chhibber
Professor Lawrence Cohen
Professor George Hart

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Abstract

For SubContinental Political Theory: On the Non-Brahmin Self-Respect Critique of Gandhian Self-Rule

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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

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This dissertation documents and deploys the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule as a way to reconsider the once nascent but now growing field of comparative political theory. There are two audiences for this critique.

The first audience is composed of those interested in the field of comparative political theory. Many of this field's inaugural and subsequent methodological articulations have been wed to the figure of Gandhi and his demand for *swaraj*, suggesting that a self-ruling self is central to what it means to do political theory outside the Euro-Atlantic. Yet the Non-Brahmin members of the Self-Respect Movement (*Cuya-Mariyātai Iyakkam*) from the 1920s-1940s in Tamil-speaking South India were concerned that a priority placed on Gandhian *swaraj* would entrench, rather than erase, relations of hierarchy they called Brahminism. For Non-Brahmins, any meaningful self-rule would require a prior self, a self of self-respect, forged not in the opposition between colonial dependence and national independence but world-wide interdependence.

The second audience is composed of those interested in the history and politics of 20th century Tamil-speaking South India. EV Ramasami Naicker [EVR or "Periyar"], the founder of the Self-Respect Movement, persists as a central figure to the political parties of contemporary Tamil Nadu and remains associated with an ethno-linguistic separatism focused on Tamil language and Dravidian identity. This persistence, however, fails to grapple sufficiently with the internationalism behind his self-respect critique of self-rule and his subsequent investments in the wider world.

Focusing on Tamil archival sources related to the Self-Respect Movement as a way to appreciate the role of Tamil in the world and the world in Tamil, I suggest that the basic distinctions between regions or traditions presumed in demands for or of comparative political theory break down. Instead of framings involving encounter, I argue for a shared tradition of political theory forged across a long distance relationship between European Continent and Indian Subcontinent. This shared tradition involves *mariyātai* and Mission, *dharma* and Marx, Aryan and Pariah, Jew and Untouchable, Nazi and Congress, Palestine and Pakistan, secularism and love, householder and ascetic, Islam and equality, and innumerable other instances of embrace and refusal, translation and conversion, in order to challenge Brahminical forces of unfreedom in the world. I call this tradition "SubContinental Political Theory."

*For my parents, Sandra and Robert,*
*just like always.*

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**Acknowledgments**

In the spring of the year 2000 I made a decision. On the one hand, I had the opportunity to go to an excellent department with excellent faculty to pursue a PhD in political theory. On the other hand, I had the opportunity to go to a distant place I knew little about, make friends among people I had never met, and try to learn a very difficult language. I chose the latter in the hope that I could make that place central to a political theory project later. This dissertation is a product of that decision. And the place was Tamil-speaking South India.

That decision and this dissertation, however, were possible only because of the support shown to me and the investments made in me by so many people in so many places for so many years—often without very good reason. These acknowledgments, despite the length involved and despite how such length will always be all too short, are my effort to recognize some of these sources of support.

Prior to going to India, those sources were legion. I will never be able to fully appreciate the unwavering love of my mother, Sandra, and father, Robert, who managed to foster a sense of care, wonder, responsibility, imagination, and commitment in their children. They have listened to frequent phone calls from far away saturated with both hope and doubt, and my work would not have been possible without their continued faith in me. My sister, Darcy, and brother, Jeff, were not only able to endure their older sibling while growing up but able to remind me of what was valuable wherever I found myself in the world while working on this dissertation and, equally if not more importantly, when I returned home. Friends from childhood, like Mandip Dhamoon, now a doctor, and John Chajka, now a father, remain sources of inspiration, both serious and silly. High school teachers, like Ms. Button who cast me in my first play, Madame O'Hara who could energize a classroom, Mr. Conti and his blend of interest and wit, and the English department (Ms. Brown, Mr. DeForest, Ms. Tully) who helped me learn how to think through writing, all serve as models for what public education should be. Mr. Conti's resignation letter, which received national attention earlier this year, reminds us of the centrality of "[c]reativity, academic freedom, teacher autonomy, experimentation, and innovation" in good public education. At Oberlin College, I benefitted from dynamic faculty in the departments of philosophy and religion, as well as from the faculty who constituted the interdisciplinary law and society program. David Kamitsuka's course in theologies of the political, T.S. McMillan's class in transcendentalism, Ron Kahn's dynamic constitutional law course, Dan Merrill's seminar in Wittgenstein, and Harlan Wilson's seminar in contemporary American political theory all made a powerful impression on me and shaped the direction of my interests; Ron, Dan, and Harlan were kind enough to write recommendation letters for me not once but twice as I readjusted my own vision of what I thought I could do with political theory. It was in fact Harlan and his political theory seminar during my last semester at Oberlin that encouraged me to apply for graduate study in political theory.

Were it not for Emily Zeugner and her amazing family, I would never have considered applying to the Oberlin Shansi Memorial Association fellowship to go to India, and for that I am forever grateful. That application process began an effort to imagine alternative forms of philosophy or theory beyond "the West" that had, in part, directed me to courses in religion earlier. I thank Carl Jacobson and Deb Cocco, who decided to award me a Shansi Fellowship to live in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, from 2000-2002, and I hope this dissertation provides sufficient testimony to the impact such amazing opportunities can have. Though they would be surprised to hear it, my brief conversations with both Patchen Markell and the late Iris Marion Young

played a role in my decision to take the Shansi Fellowship, and I have continued to return to their work in subsequent years. Prior to departing for India, Kausalya Hart introduced me to Tamil in the summer of 2000 at Madison, Wisconsin, and she and her husband, George, were unbelievably supportive years later when I arrived at Berkeley—they have been unbelievably supportive ever since, and Kausalya deserves more praise and recognition than anyone could possibly give for the unparalleled devotion she shows to her students. I began studying Tamil that summer alongside Jennifer Clare, and we overlapped later in Madurai and then at Berkeley; I learned so much during our early semesters at Berkeley translating Sangam texts in cafes together, and her investments in translation and Tamil literature since continue to receive my admiration. While in Madurai as a Shansi Fellow from 2000-2002, The American College provided me with the space required to get my bearings, while Dinakar, Somu, Paul Love, Premila Paul, and G.B. at the Study Centre for Indian Literature in English and Translation, along with the college's faculty, particularly D. Samuel Sudanandha and Winfred Thomas, helped me figure out what that space was. During my first two years in Tamil Nadu, the staff and students of the University of Wisconsin program in Madurai (including Rachael Weiss, Ryan Germick, Ron Edwards, Aaron Page, and Anna Seastrand) and others (like Meera Pathmarajah) provided opportunities to recalibrate. Tom Pruiksma, the senior Shansi Fellow upon my arrival, gave me an incredible and insightful sense of what Tamil and Madurai could make possible. And Madurai did create possibility. The city's main bus stand is named "Periyar," a name I said just about every day of my life during my years travelling by bus without knowing what "Periyar" meant at first; "Periyar" is, of course, the affectionate title for the man who started and led the Self-Respect Movement that is the core of this dissertation. The students I had during those years in the Jivana Jyothi program also helped me see what was possible—and also taught me lots of Tamil cinema songs. I am indebted to everyone in the village of Vedarpulayankulam who made me feel at home during my year there, a year that witnessed elections, marriages, births, deaths, festivals, floods, possessions, and kindness. My neighbors there helped me negotiate fetching water, bathing in irrigation ditches, going to the toilet in open fields, using a kerosene stove, and innumerable other features of everyday life that someone like myself never before had considered. Finally, K.V. Ramakoti and his wife Amma endured my early and painfully slow efforts at Tamil with warmth and grace, all while feeding me some of the best food I have ever eaten in my entire life. Ever.

At Berkeley, my debts grew fast and wide. Wendy Brown has stood by me from my first incoherent remarks about Tamil and comparative political theory as a prospective graduate student up until my, perhaps still incoherent, remarks about Tamil and comparative political theory in this dissertation; inbetween, she has dropped off books and articles in my mailbox, bicycled out to cafes to help me with presentations, bought me lunch and tea and cocktails, taught me what it meant to be a teacher, and has provided me with innumerable subtle, close suggestions that I was, and perhaps at times still remain, too distant to see. I simply cannot believe how much Pradeep Chhibber has supported me from day one, often in ways that amaze me and probably in ways I will never fully understand; it was during his course on Indian politics in Fall 2004 that I became interested in the mass conversion at Meenakshipuram, which he insisted I pursue, and he has continued to take me for long walks providing direction and encouragement, sitting down to help me when needed, buying me coffee or frozen yogurt when unnecessary, and going over my work while inviting me to go over his, helping me not only to think and write but to get a better sense of what is worth thinking and writing about. Lawrence Cohen's energy, enthusiasm, thoughtfulness, and sheer capacity to imagine has provided me with

both motivation and model; during my last year of coursework he graciously created an independent, early morning tutorial for myself and one other student as a South Asian anthropology boot camp that I still draw upon, and in the years since he has been a compelling interlocutor, whether in his office or in bookstores or cafes or during commutes across the bay, and more recently, as a co-panelist. I have already mentioned George and Kausalya Hart, but they deserve mention again; I still have passages from Kamban's *Ramayana* memorized because of George's seminar during my first year at Berkeley, and he since took me for drives along the coast and provided desperately needed late night recommendation letters, while Kausalya's enthusiasm for my often bizarre concerns with figures of Tamil literature was without parallel. Mark Bevir was critical for much of my project's early iterations; he saw promise in archival approaches to theoretical work, shared an interest in South India, and provided an impressive, if not intimidating, model of sheer production. I thank him for suggesting I write an article for the *International Journal of Hindu Studies,* which helped me refine some of my thematic and regional investments early on. Hannah Pitkin's graduate seminar "What Is Political Theory?" posed impossible questions to myself and other first-year graduate students that needed asking; she also kindly read drafts of my master's essay in Spring 2004 that set out with the improbable goal of combining Daniel Lerner, Alexis De Tocqueville, and Friedrich Nietzsche to explore methodological approaches to "the operation in the world of something like a comparative political theory," which now sounds impossibly naïve. Part of that essay, which focused on the role of India and particularly the Brahmin in Nietzsche's work, persists in this dissertation.

I was remarkably fortunate to receive generous financial support during the many years it took me to build the skills, find the materials, and forge the elements of coherence required to write this dissertation. My coursework was made possible through Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships for Tamil, along with some Hindi. I received a Qayam Family Foundation Research Grant in the Summer of 2005 that allowed me to spend time by Meenakshipuram—time also made possible because of Kausalya Hart, Muthuchidambaram Shanmugam Pillai, and Sheik Mohadeen—and it was during this summer that I met M. Kannan at the French Institute of Pondicherry who not only has an encyclopedic understanding of caste politics and dalit literature in Tamil Nadu but who has since become a good friend, along with his wife Anupama. I received a Center for British Studies Pre-Dissertation Grant in the Summer of 2006 which allowed me to begin archival work at the University of Cambridge, the Henry Martyn Centre for the Study of Mission and World Christianity (my thanks to Sue Sutton and Brian Stanley), the British Library, and a short period at the University of Edinburgh's Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World (my thanks to Margaret Acton, Elizabeth Koepping, Duncan Forrester, Anderson Jeremiah, and others); also a thanks to Lou Cohen, Aly Pitts, Leon Digard, and Nick O'Donovan for making my time outside the archives memorable in Cambridge. I also met AR Venkatachalapathy of the Madras Institute of Development Studies while using archives at Cambridge's Centre for South Asia Studies, who would kindly anchor my subsequent trips to Chennai with lunches and conversation, as well as scholars like Susan Bayly and others, such as Sudipto Kaviraj and Chris Bayly, who participated in the conference "Religion and the Political Imagination" at St. Catharine's College and King's College. Blanket thanks to all the amazing archivists and librarians at Cambridge for their innumerable acts of assistance, along with Craig Jamieson. During the 2006-2007 academic year, I received an American Institute of Indian Studies language study fellowship that returned me to Madurai where I worked with Dr. Bharathy, part of the backbone in the training of US scholars on Tamil Nadu, and where I began my early efforts at translating EVR. Fellow students like Adam Brown, Aaron Page, and Gwen

Kelly were wonderful to study with. I also that year made friends at the Periyar Thidal, home to the Dravidar Kazhagam and the archives of EVR's Self-Respect Movement, such as the excellent librarian Govindan as well as cadre members like Raju, Kalai, Prince, and Udamalai with whom I remain friends. Participating in the Periyariyal Training Camp that summer (and another in 2009) was extraordinary, and thanks to all there who not only welcomed my presence but made me a part of the activities. Dravidar Kazhagam President Krishnasamy Veeramani allowed me to use the Periyar Thidal's resources then and later, and was always generous in our conversations. V. Anaimuthu also generously met with me, after a rally in Madurai, and provided kind words of encouragement. I spent the summer of 2008 living in south-east London on a UC Berkeley Graduate Division Summer Grant where I continued to make use of the resources at the British Library while extending my research into the archives at the School for Oriental and African Studies and the University of Birmingham. Thanks to all the archivists and librarians there, as well. It was during this time that I made friends with Raf Gelders, via the great researcher Justine Taylor, through whom I was in turn introduced to the critically committed students of Indian history and religion at the Centre Vergelijkende Cultuurwetenschap of Ghent University. Upon my return, in the Fall of 2008, I lived in New Haven on a UC Berkeley Normative Time fellowship, and I thank Karuna Mantena for inviting me to participate in the political science department activities and E. Annamalai for so generously providing me with feedback on my work; I regret that, despite our best efforts, Andrew March and I were not able to connect, though I was happy that I finally got to meet the formidable Tamil scholar Blake Wentworth. I spent most of 2009 in India on a Fulbright-Hayes Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad fellowship where the working title of my project was "Periyar, Ambedkar, and Gandhi: A Study in Comparative Political Theory," guided by AR Venkatachalapathy; my time here was spent largely at the Periyar Thidal archives and the Roja Muthiah Library, but also included several months in Delhi at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (Teenmurthi) (including some delightful meals with Leonard Gordon and Vasundhra Srinate and conversations with graduate students like Anjali Bohlken) and the Indian Archives, as well as a month in Bangalore at the archives of the United Theological College. During this time in India, particularly Tamil Nadu, I not only met Barney Bates, whose Tamil is still legendary in certain Madurai circles, as well as MSS Pandian who kindly met with me in his home, but also scholars like V. Geetha and SV Rajadurai, who showed a great interest in my work on the Tamil translations of *The Communist Manifesto*, and who, along with his wife Sagu, has repeatedly opened their home to me. Fellow Fulbrighters—like Claire Snell-Rood, Susan Johnson-Roehr, Dan Sheffield, David Alvarez, Connie Etter, Amber Abbas, and the executive director Adam Grotsky—made life a bit more fun and interesting. Along the way, the Center for British Studies provided much needed conference grants. I was particularly lucky to have my remaining time funded through teaching assistantships in the fields of political theory and international relations with incredible teachers from whom I learned important lessons, such as my advisor Wendy Brown and Amy Gurowitz, while the summer teaching assistantship I had with visiting professor Michael Mosher helped me make connections with American political theory that I had never before imagined. In the fall of 2012, James Martel allowed me to teach classes at San Francisco State University, from which I learned so much. Since the summer of 2012, I have had the pleasure of working alongside the amazingly talented editorial team at *Asian Survey* as the Associate Editor for South Asia, whose members—Professor Lowell Dittmer, Dr. David Fraser, and Bonnie Déhler—have graciously tolerated this dissertation's final stretch. Departmental support and the Mark Rozance Memorial Dissertation Award helped me pay the fees to actually file.

I was blessed to have extraordinary people alongside me during the seminars and working groups that marked my graduate career and whose influence I may never fully appreciate. Political theorists in my cohort like Jack Jackson and George Ciccariello-Maher pushed me to hit the ground running, while more senior political theory students like Jimmy Casas Klausen, Sharon Stanley, and Robyn Marasco helped me get oriented. Participating on the editorial team at *Critical Sense* was critical, too. Later important conversations were had with Asaf Kedar, Tim Fisken, Yasmeen Daifallah, Diane Anders, and the rest of Wendy Brown's dissertation working groups over the years, among others. Mi Lee helped keep things in perspective, Ray Orr made studying for the comparative politics field exam a bit more bearable, Nadia Marzouki and her family provided much needed encouragement, and the cohort of which I was a part amazed, and continues to amaze, me. Pradeep Chhibber's various South Asia colloquia incarnations were the perfect blend of food, friendship, sincere constructive criticism, and the committed pursuit of something called "the argument." Its members have endured my usual silence as well as verbose prose with sensitivity and panache while providing a vital place to explore ideas: Dann Nasseemullah, Vasundhra Srinate, Manoj Mate, Jennifer Bussell, Francesca Jensius, Susan Ostermann, Nafisa Akbar, Rahhul Verma, and others all deserve thanks.

Geetha Murali organized the panel, chaired by Eugene Irschick, on which I first presented in February 2005; the paper "The Ins and Outs of Political Theory: On Comparing Tamil and Greek Sources" gave me a chance to combine Hannah Arendt and ancient Tamil grammar in a comparative political theory frame whose distant echoes remain in this dissertation, and which originally appeared in a paper I wrote for George Hart in Spring 2004. My next presentation, "Subaltern Studies as Philosophy and History," encouraged by Mark Bevir, has echoes in this dissertation as well. Professor G. Koteswara Prasad gave me my first opportunity to present on Periyar and formulations of Gandhian critique in Spring 2007 at the University of Madras, and this forced me to solidify elements of my interest while facing an incredibly invested group of students and scholars; I continued this effort at formulation on a panel organized by Farah Godrej at the American Political Science Association meeting that Fall—I appreciated the interest in and comments on what was very embryonic work by those who attended the panel like Leigh Jenco and Jimmy Casas Klausen. The earliest recognizable chapter of this dissertation revolved around the first Tamil translation of *The Communist Manifesto*, and was first presented in Pradeep Chhibber's and then Wendy Brown's working groups in the Spring of 2008. Reformulations of that focus, in relationship to what I had begun to call Non-Brahmin political theory or thought, would be repeated: at the Rethinking Religion in India Conference in Delhi in January 2009; by invitation at the Einaudi Center for International Studies at Cornell University (my thanks to those who attended and provided feedback, including Ron Herring, Luisa Steur, Durba Gosh, Daniel Gold, Barbara Johnson); and at the World Classical Tamil Conference, Coimbatore, India (thanks here, again, to Venkatachalapathy for the invitation, and the generous sponsorship of the Government of Tamil Nadu). Versions of Part II, dealing with the relationship between the Self-Respect Movement and the London Missionary Society, benefitted from two sets of audiences in 2010: the Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missionary Movement and World Christianity at the University of Edinburgh (where I presented alongside Anderson Jeremiah on a panel chaired by Robert Frykenberg, with an amazing audience of scholars such as Lamin Sanneh, Rosemary Seton, Brian Stanley, Martha Smalley, Richard Fox Young, and others) and the 39th Annual Conference on South Asia at Madison, Wisconsin (where I presented alongside Sundar Vadlamudi and whose audience included

Venkatachalapathy, Jimmy Casas Klausen, Rupa Viswanath, Stephen Hughes, and Zoe Sherinian). Versions of Part V, involving the Pariah and Aryan and/or Gandhi and Buber, were presented thrice: at the Seventh Annual Tamil Conference at UC Berkeley in April 2011 on a panel chaired by Eugene Irschick, and whose co-presenters and audience members (such as Sascha Ebeling, George Hart, Kiran Keshavamurthy, Anne Monius, Blake Wentworth, Isabelle Clark-Deces, Padma Kaimal, Jennifer Clare, and an army of others) provided helpful comments then and have continued since; at an amazing conference at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, "Theory's Landscapes" organized by Daniel Kapust and Helen Kinsella, where I benefitted particularly from presenting alongside Michael Hanchard and our discussants, Richard Avaramenko and Michael Schatzberg, as well as from discussants and co-presenters like Mark Antaki, Katherine Gordy, Bronwyn Leebaw, Jennifer London, Jimmy Casas Klausen, Matthew Moore, Dan O'Neill, and Megan Thomas; and on the inaugural panel of the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life's exhibit "Global India," where I learned much from the curator Franceso Spagnolo and copanelists Blake Wentworth, Anna Schultz, Robert Goldman, and Lawrence Cohen.

And there are still yet so many more people to recognize, and so much more thanks to give.

This process of acknowledgment, always lengthy yet always falling short, is in many ways not simply about the following dissertation but is what the dissertation itself is about. Who should we acknowledge in, say, the development of political theory on the European Continent and the Indian Subcontinent? Those close by? Those far away? How should that acknowledgement be articulated? As acts of solid encounter? As acts of fluid sharing? Why should acknowledgment be an issue? To mark difference? To mark similarity? What should that acknowledgment look like? A sophisticated theoretical argument? A detailed historical effort? When should that acknowledgment take place? When partially formed, in vulnerable panel presentations? When fully refined, in secure university press books? Whatever else a more globalized study of political theory may be, whether called comparative political theory or otherwise, I believe there can be no better foundation for such study than a commitment to acknowledging, and to building up the skills required in order to acknowledge, the ways in which we all always already rely upon another in thinking about living, and living well, together. Such reliance can be startling, appearing where and when we least expect it, even in distant places, among unknown people, across difficult languages—perhaps, even, when we need it most.

# PART I. INTRODUCTION: OUR SUBCONTINENTAL POLITICAL THEORY

## CHAPTER 1. ORIENT

### PROJECT

From the late 20th century through the early part of the 21st, an interest in the limits and possibilities of "non-Western" political theory rose in size and scope. Such interest was eminently desirable; there was no good political nor theoretical reason to demand that certain texts, authored in one region, must provide the terms of concern for an entire world theoretically concerned with political life, with living well and living well together. This interest gave birth to the once nascent but now growing field of "comparative political theory." Yet many of this new field's inaugural articulations were anything but new, focusing in large part on the political thought of 20th century India and subsequently wedded to its resolute celebration over the figure of Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi and his demand for *swaraj* or self-rule. Such focus has served to suggest that the struggle for *swaraj* against British Raj—or, more broadly, for the national independence of self-rule from within, with its resounding democratically inflected demand for government of, by, and for the people, against imperial colonizers from without—is the most significant feature of political thought located on the Indian Subcontinent, and that such thought could, and perhaps should, serve as a model for comparative projects in political theory that hope to correct for a past enveloped in a provincially proud European Continent.

Despite the appeal of such claims, in this dissertation I argue that the most important contribution of 20th century Indian political thought to broader theoretical projects concerned with political life is not the struggle between Gandhian *swaraj* and the British Raj, but instead between self-rule and a principle widely translated in South Asia as "self-respect." By focusing on the self-respect critique of self-rule, I provide an alternative articulation of the field of comparative political theory. This alternative does not draw whatever merit it may have from a pronouncement of new methods required for studying political theory in a world gone wide, nor from an ancillary regret over a tradition that was and may ever yet be committed to the West's dominating neglect of the rest, but instead from a suspicion that at least one of political theory's contributions to a better appreciation of political life is to "find the ways in which we all always already rely upon each other"[1] in a world we all share. The sharing of concern in this dissertation travels across the field of "SubContinental Political Theory," attending to the ways in which European Continent and Indian Subcontinent have not been apart from one another by virtue of treacherous expanse but instead were, and remain, a part of a shared tradition of political theory across a long distance relationship.

The materials that form the basis of my concerns are the Tamil language weeklies, dailies, and monthlies of the *Cuya-Mariyātai Iyakkam* or "Self-Respect Movement" located in the archives of Tamil Nadu, India. The Self-Respect Movement was formed in May 1925 when a successful dry goods merchant with a fourth grade education from the trading town of Erode in

[1] Matthew H. Baxter, "The Silence of the South and the Absence of Political Philosophy," *The International Journal of Hindu Studies* 1:3 (2005): 22.

the Madras Presidency of British India broke from Gandhi's Indian National Congress party. This man's name was EV Ramasami Naicker [EVR, 1879-1973]. His break was the product of a growing concern in South India that the nationalist demand for *swaraj* was saturated with the upper-caste interests of Brahmin elites. EVR and others, who self-identified with the Non-Brahmin masses, saw Brahmin rule as no more desirable than British rule. The puzzle for EVR and the Non-Brahmin members of the Self-Respect Movement, then, was in how to imagine an alternative to the binary of colonial dependence and national independence that seemed to exhaust the political landscape of their present. The former and its British defense were intolerable because of its obvious economic exploitation from without. The latter and its Brahmin demand were unbearable as it promised to perpetuate widespread forms of social hierarchy from within. The solution, it may have seemed, must consist of attempts to imagine world-wide interdependence in order to achieve the object of EVR's thought and movement: self-respect.

This dissertation provides an account of how the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule was situated in a history of world-wide interdependence, providing evidence of a shared tradition of political theory across the long distance relationship between European Continent and Indian Continent, particularly that between Western Europe and Southern India, that pushes beyond binaries of dependence and independence. In so doing, I suggest that the relationship between India and Europe may run so deep and so long that any act of "comparison," however hermeneutically nuanced, demands separate, coherent, and contained self-ruling political theory wholes engaged in acts of "encounter" or "dialogue" that are profoundly misled. Such demands pull us away from an actual world constituted by its widths, a wide world, and into an abstracted and rarefied space of philosophical depth or empirical breadth whose clear demarcations cannot help us better understand ourselves or each other.

This introduction, Part I, is divided across three chapters and, by arguing for SubContinental Political Theory, unsettles standard narratives of the relationship among India, Gandhi, *swaraj*, and early articulations of the field of comparative political theory. Chapter 1, *Orient*, suggests that encounters between Germany and India have long given rise to projects of "comparison" and questions efforts that suggest "comparison" is an appropriate way to frame such encounters. Chapter 2, *Disorient*, troubles traditional links between hermeneutics and India, turning away from the fusion of Gadamer and Gandhi central in inaugural articulations of comparative political theory and towards the critique of Gandhi by another "philosopher of dialogue," Martin Buber. Chapter 3, *Reorient*, suggests that a self-ruling self has captivated comparative political theory imaginings, serving to impoverish, rather than enrichen, our appreciation of political life in the world. Most importantly, I argue, such captivation has served to encourage comparative political theory to colonize 20$^{th}$ century Indian politics and thought with Gandhian *swaraj*. In contrast, I here focus on a couple of imbricated events that would change the postcolonial history of India and trouble *swaraj*. Part II focuses on these events in order to make the word "Non-Brahmin" flesh, returning centrality to a place since made marginal to describe instances of what the Non-Brahmin was against and for: against self-rule as necessarily reinscribing rather than erasing caste hierarchy; for struggles to share in shared struggles elsewhere as a way to better demand justice at home. Part III argues for self-respect's material valence in its demands for justice, against ideational ones, through an account of Non-Brahmin self-respect's power of comprehension at multiple registers of proximity and distance, getting us away from concerns over brain-washed brown men that often form the backdrop of postcolonial worries. Part IV argues against an opposition between European theoretical

universals and Non-European indigenous particulars through an internationalist mobilization of *dharma*. Part V argues for the centrality of Non-Brahmin concerns with a world-wide Aryan threat as both marking a moment of being a part of that wide world as well as the need to be apart from that world. Part VI returns us to our mutually imbricated event couple that bookended the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, attending to articulations of romance and valor as persistent and central features of SubContinental Political Theory in South India. Part VII concludes by encouraging us to attend to shared traditions across long distance relationships, imagining ourselves as a part of rather than apart from one another and the possibility of "Non-Brahmin" as a theoretical position not bound to South Indians alone. Overall, I suggest that self-rule's critique, rather that self-rule's assertion, provides a rich and compelling point of departure for projects of political theory in our world, and that our location as a part of SubContinental Political Theory is one between, rather than within—a self-respecting self rather than a self-ruling one.

Understanding this shared tradition of Subcontinental Political Theory as standing in contrast to "comparative political theory," and the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule within it, requires two prior moves. The first is an appreciation of the power of redemption in acts of translation. The second is an appreciation of the silence about a shared past.

## REDEMPTION

On 28 August 1715, in the Danish colony of Tranquebar along the coast of Tamil-speaking South India, a 38-year old Lutheran missionary named Johann Ernst Gründler was worried. England's Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) had provided him with "Two Admonitions…of the greatest importance."[2] Such "Admonitions" needed to be taken seriously, as the SPCK had not only generously provided the Tranquebar missionaries with a printing press in 1712 but had and would continue to materially support them, shipping these missionaries items such as chests of beer, Cheshire cheeses covered in lead, firkens of butter, pencils, hard soap, gallons of linseed oil, caraway seeds, Plaster of Paris, borax, medicines, foreign silver, and books—lots of books.[3] The first admonition "relateth to a more frequent Converse with the Heathens," the second "to the Exactness which is required for framing a sound Translation of the divine Oracles into the Pagan language."

Gründler was at a bit of a disadvantage with respect to both. His colleague and the first, and at that time only, Protestant with sufficient expertise in the "Malabar language" of Tamil to translate or converse deeply about the New Testament, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, was back in Europe getting married.[4] Gründler subsequently replied to his "Most Honoured Benefactors":

> I agree with you sirs that the study of the Malabar Language and the frequent printing of Books in the same is far more conducive for the Propagation of the Gospel in those parts than the Portuguese Tongue can pretend to: But then I cannot quite cast off the latter as altogether useless in this

[2] To SPCK from Johann Ernst Gründler, Tranquebar, 28 August 1715. MS D1/G/39 (i). The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge [SPCK], Cambridge University Library [CUL] Archives.

[3] See: Henry Newman's "Catalogue of Goods Enter'd in at the East India House Mark'd BZ and ship'd on board the Prince Frederick Capt. Martin Cowd for the use of the Revd Mr. Ziegenbalg Feb 4 1715/6"; "Invoice of Goods NNN Holden Command for Fort St. George on Account of Danish Missionaries at Tranquebar 1717"; "Ledger, May 28 1717-April 20 1719." SPCK.MS D1. SPCK, CUL Archives.

[4] His bride was Maria Dorothea.

> undertaking. Tis time the Malabarian Youth do not learn the Portuguese in Order to comprehend the better the Principles of Christianity, for which their own native Language is fit and extensive enough: But then it gratifieth'em for other Purposes. It fits'em for converting and for settling a correspondence with others, that are not Malabarians by birth. [5]

It is remarkable to think of a German from a Danish colony in South India writing a letter, originally in Latin no less, to English-speaking "Benefactors" to justify his use of a then regionally pervasive Portuguese for the "Propagation of the Gospel," which was originally composed in Greek and Hebrew, to Tamil-speakers in South India. "The Portuguese Tongue" would of course, over the decades, lose its once unrivaled influence among the "Malabarians." But an evident and shared faith by both Gründler and his Benefactors would not be lost: the "Principles of Christianity" can and should be conveyed in Tamil, as "their own native Language is fit and extensive enough" for the task and thus demanded "Exactness" in "a sound Translation."

Two hundred years later, from 1911-1913, a Lutheran Missionary named Matthäus Ellwein based in the Madras Presidency city of Kumbakonam published his translations of the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John in Tamil.[6] Though he expressed reservations, claiming for instance that St. Mark "is not consistent, nor can it be correctly called 'colloquial,'" the Secretary of the Tamil Publication Committee of the Christian Literature Society for India writes of Ellwein's version that he "uses good Tamil; a more truly Tamil style than is used in the [then widely used] Union Version…"[7] For example, Ellwein used the word "'Kadavul[,] in harmony with all Tamil thought and speech[,]" to render "Deus" rather than its Sanskrit cognate "Deva" which "in Tamil indicates any god in the Sanskrit or Dravidian pantheon. To say that 'There is one "Deva"' or '"Deva" is one' is a contradiction in terms in Tamil."[8] The achievement of the "colloquial" was of great interest to Missionaries—necessary to "converse" as well as "translate" effectively, as the SPCK had been very much aware—and nowhere of more interest than when it came to translating "God."[9] Accordingly, like the Secretary of the Tamil Publications Committee on Ellwein's St. Mark, the 3 August 1912 edition of *The Christian Patriot* praises Ellwein's St. Matthew. The periodical wished to "congratulate Mr. Ellwein…for his adoption of the word *Kadavul* for God. Though [the originally Sanskrit term] *Tevan* is etymologically identified with the Greek *Theos* [given their shared Indo-European linguistic heritage], that is *not* the word used by Tamil people…Now that" this "good old Tamil term for God" has "found favor with at least one European scholar, there is hope for its universal adoption in future translations."[10] However, like the Secretary of the Tamil Publication Committee earlier,

> we must also point out that Mr. Ellwein fails in maintaining a consistent and uniform style—for in trying to be simple and colloquial he exposed himself occasionally to the change of vulgarism

[5] Johann Ernst Gründler, 28 August 1715.
[6] Letter dated 14 February 1912, Language Files, Tamil Files 1-6, E3/3/555/1-6, British and Foreign Bible Society [BFBS], CUL Archives. *The Christian Pioneer,* 17 June 1911, claims that Ellwein's version of St. Mark is "for the people rather than for the student." Ellwein was born 5 March 1864. E. Blochmann, *Evangelisch-lutherisches Missionsblatt* (Leipzig, 1891): 218. Matthaeus Ellwein published Mark's Gospel in 1911, Matthew's in 1912, Luke's in 1912, John's in 1913.
[7] Rev. AC Clayton, 12 June 1911, Language Files, Tamil Files 1-6; E3/3/555/1-6. BFBS, CUL Archives.
[8] Rev. AC Clayton, 12 June 1911.
[9] Letter dated 26 April 1912, Language Files, Tamil Files 1-6; E3/3/555/1-6. BFBS, CUL Archives.
[10] *The Christian Patriot,* 3 August 1912.

> while on the other hand unconsciously rises to the height of a dignified style…Words must be viewed from various standpoints—they are like delicate articles of furniture to be carefully and discriminately used in the places best suited to them.

It had taken several centuries, but it seems that Christian Mission—and Lutheran Mission in particular—was at least getting closer to arranging the "furniture" of the Gospel into Tamil, as it were, moving towards "the Exactness which is required for framing a sound Translation of the divine Oracles."

Two hundred years may seem like an awfully long time for Christian missionaries to settle on a Tamil term to translate so consequential an idea as "God" in the Bible. It would seem even longer if there was still controversy on this translation afterwards. There was. For example, an "Esteemed Contributor" saw virtue in Ellwein's St. Mark as an attempt "to produce a readable version in place of the archaic version now in the hand of our Lutheran Brethren" which was composed by Fabricius, built upon the work of Ziegenbalg conducted in the early 1700s, and published in its final form in 1798.[11] Yet, in opposition to those who congratulated Ellwein on his use of "Kadavul," the Contributor writes: "We find Mr. Ellwein drops the word *parāparaṉ* and used *kaṭavuḷ* [to translate 'God']. This is bold of him, for the older Lutherans would not part with *parāparaṉ*." Furthermore, against the praise given to Ellwein for his abandonment of "*Tevan*" or "Deva" for "God" we saw above, the Contributor writes,

> as if *tēvaṉ* is objectionable and *kaṭavuḷ* is not. *Kaṭavuḷ* means a guru or a sage, as well as the divine being; morally it means goodness, while tēvaṉ is used in the *Kaivalliyam*[12] for the Supreme Being. The truth is we have to redeem words from heathenism and make them convey a Christian sense…That is what St. Paul and St. John did. *Tēvaṉ* is better than *kaṭavuḷ* or *parāparaṉ*.

Two hundred years after the first Protestant Missionary had begun his efforts to translate the Bible into Tamil, there was still no consensus on how to translate "God."

The Esteemed Contributor's suggestion that one must redeem foreign words to make them convey a particular sense, rather than find a preexisting foreign term that already conveys that sense, is itself suggestive. Were this the case, that would certainly explain why it had taken more than two hundred years for Christian (here Lutheran) missionaries to not quite yet get the Tamil word for "God" right. They hadn't had such trouble for lack of trying, but rather, there was no Tamil word to which "God" corresponded; instead, one had to manufacture "God" out of a Tamil word. "Redeem" of course has a constellation of meanings itself. In addition to referring to broader ideas of *value* (one hopes to have redeeming qualities), redemption can refer to *improvement in the future* (setting free, release from blame, change for better) as well as a *return to the past* (to recover, repair, restore, reclaim), and can refer to this-worldly concerns of *property* (recovering ownership, converting into cash), as well as other-worldly concerns of *religion* (to save from sin, to atone for, to save/provide salvation perhaps in exchange for suffering). Translation as redemption[13] invites us to move not only beyond correspondence

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[11] "St Mark in Tamil by Mr. Ellwein of Kumbakonam" from an Esteemed Contributor, n.d., p 3. Language Files, Tamil Files 1-6; E3/3/555/1-6. BFBS, CUL Archives. The Lutheran Fabricius, claims the Esteemed Contributor, was more faithful to the Greek than Ellwein.

[12] An Upanishad, part of the most substantial or mysterious parts of the Vedas.

[13] For contemoraneous concerns with redemption and translation, see Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971 (1921)). Of Rosenzweig, one scholar writes: "The notion of redemption is probably the central category of Rosenzweig's thought. In his system, that term denotes not the

theories of translation, with the presumption that all languages say the same things in different words, but also beyond hermeneutic concerns that suggest that some dialogical, mutual understanding is the standard of translation. The use of the idea of redemption here suggests that translation provides an opportunity for fulfillment, that words in one language may only meet their maker in the words of another, and that these movements across tongues may not constitute moments of loss or damage but gain or repair.

Yet this appreciation of translation as acts of redemption broadly conceived—of value, both past and present, both progress and return, in short, as fulfillment and gain—was often lost in the "postcolonial" milieu of the 1990s, the period of the nascence of comparative political theory. This period saw colonization as creating inequalities of power and one-sided encounters, rather than see inequalities of power and one-sided encounters as giving rise to colonization. Tejaswini Nirañjana, for example, is concerned in her 1992 text *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* that translation marks a moment that shores up "the asymmetry and inequality of relations between peoples, races, languages."[14] Nirañjana's worry is that "[c]onventionally," without seeing such operations of power of the colonizer over the colonized, "translation depends on the Western philosophical notions of reality, representation, and knowledge" where "reality" is "unproblematic[ally]" "out there,"[15] and thus one may be lulled into thinking that there is no power operating in the production of knowledge achieved through translation. To take one example from India:

> Attempting to assimilate Saivite poetry to the discourses of Christianity or of a post-Romantic New Criticism, these [Indian] translators reproduce some of the nineteenth-century native responses to [European] colonialism. Accepting the premises of a universalist history, they try to show how the vacanas are always already Christian, or "modernist," and therefore worthy of the West's attention. Their enterprise is supported by the asymmetry between English and [the South Indian language] Kannada created and reinforced by colonial and neocolonial discourse. This is an asymmetry that allows translators to simplify the text in a predictable direction, toward English and the Judeo-Christian tradition and away from the multiplicity of indigenous languages and religions, which have to be homogenized before they can be translated.[16]

Nirañjana claims that such simplifications and appropriations are allowed by asymmetries and thereby allow the Hindu to be rendered in Christian terms. But, one may certainly ask, how can a Christian render a Hindu text in terms other than Christian ones? Does such rendering perpetuate or disrupt, modify, expand, enrichen, deepen, Christian terms? What would happen if, in attempting to translate Christian hymns, Indians suggest that they are always already Hindu? What would happen if, in attempting to translate Christian hymns, Europeans suggest that they are always already Hindu? Is there a thwarting of Christian meaning here, or of Hindu meaning here? Nirañjana wishes to replace mutually transformative engagements with static

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relationship between God and man, or between God and the world, but the relationship of man to the world, the movement of human initiative that turns to reality to act on it…Redemption is present in the forms of the language: it is through the first-person plural on the one hand and the future tense on the other that we express our nostalgia for a better world…a category of collective experience…[The] final state of the world…is always conceived as an ultimate limit of what is to be attained." Stéphane Mosès, *The Angel of History: Rosenzweig, Benjamin, Scholem,* trans. Barbara Hanshaw (Stanford: Stanford U P, 2009 (1992)): 49.

[14] Tejaswini Nirañjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992): 1.

[15] Nirañjana, *Siting Translation* (1992): 2.

[16] Nirañjana, *Siting Translation* (1992): 180.

concerns over power, concerns which *never* should be dismissed, but which may not always help us understand efforts of redemption.

To be more concrete, what would be the difference, to return to our Esteemed Contributor, between the redemption of the Tamil term *kaṭavuḷ* as a Judeo-Christian "God" by Europeans and the redemption of the English Judeo-Christian word "God" as *kaṭavuḷ* by Tamils—even under a colonial situation with asymmetries of power? Let us take an example from this dissertation's subject itself. The Self-Respect Movement's founder EVR, perhaps the most influential figure of 20th century Tamil culture and politics, is widely associated with the claim "*kaṭavuḷ illai*"—popularly translated as "there is no God."[17] One may wonder how Matthäus Ellwein would feel. Certainly, Ellwein may feel vindicated in a Tamilian himself using *kaṭavuḷ,* rather than *tēvaṉ,* for "God"; it seems that the required acts of redemption, making a word convey a sense, had succeeded. Yet certainly Ellwein's purpose was *not* to contribute to articulations of what we would understand to be atheism. What we may be tempted to do, rather than focus on Nirañjana's "asymmetry…created and reinforced by colonial and neocolonial discourse" in the act of translation, is to attend to the ways in which actions that cross languages are efforts to redeem words in order to make them convey sense. And it is in seeing translation as such *redemption* even under situations of colonialism, rather than see translation as nothing but *domination* under situations of colonialism, that opens ourselves up to questioning the ways in which a politics of independence of colonized from colonizer has defined, and continues to define, the ways in which we wonder about moments often rendered as "encounter" and the relationship between such moments and their power. Instead, one may need to redeem terms, while attending to the redemption of terms, from elsewhere in order to make them convey a particular sort of sense, to produce value, to take from an indigenous *past* in a colonial present in order to *improve* while *restoring* these terms so as to embrace a *future*.

What we will see in the chapters that follow is the way in which European ideas and events were redeemed by Tamil in order to serve Non-Brahmin efforts to critique the primacy of *swaraj,* or self-rule. Self-rule would not automatically result in self-respect; instead, self-respect was required in order to achieve self-rule. Such redemption, again, was about value, gesturing both to past and to future, caught between this-worldly limits and other-worldly possibilities. The importance of such redemption here across the divides of colonizer and colonized, whereby

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[17] The refrain runs: "*Kaṭavuḷ illai*, *kaṭavuḷ illai*, *kaṭavuḷ illaivē illai. Kaṭavuḷaik kaṛpittavaṅ muṭṭaaḷ, kaṭavuḷaip parappiyavaṅ ayookkiyaṅ, kaṭavuḷai vaṇaṅkukiṛavaṅ kaaṭṭumiraaṇṭi*."—"There is no God, there is no God, there is no God at all. He who invented god is a fool, he who propagates god is a scoundrel, he who worships god is a barbarian." This construction is clearly parallel to the Scot poet and rationalist William Drummond's (1585-1649) claim that "He that will not reason is a bigot; he that cannot reason is a fool; he that dare not reason is a slave." This particular quote was popular in the English language press from the late 1800s through the early 1900s, featuring prominently in Christian- and Jewish-related, as well as "free thinker" related, publications. For example, see: Rev. OH Tiffany, DD (ed) *Gems for the Fireside: Comprising The Most Unique, Touching, Pithy, and Beautiful Literary Treasures from the Greatest Minds in the Realms of Poetry and Philosophy, Wit and Humour, Statesmanship and Religion* (Springfield, Mass: Bay State Publishing, 1883) p 810; Rev. Raphael D'C. Lewin (ed), *The New Era: A Monthly Periodical Devoted to Humanity, Judaism, and Literature,* vol. II (New York: The New Era Publishing Company, 1872) p 34 (note the epigram:"The voice of reason is the voice of God" on the cover); Louis Klopsch, *Many Thoughts of Many Minds: A Treasury of Quotations from the Literature of Every Land and Every Age* (New York: The Christian Herald, 1896) p 243; Theodore Schroeder (comp), *Free Press Anthology* (New York: Free Speech League, 1909) p 87. Equally important, Drummond's quote appears on the cover of BR Ambedkar, *Annihilation of Caste with A Reply to Mahatma Gandhi and Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development* (Jullundur, Punjab: Bheem Patrika Publications, 1968).

translation provides a moment in which words from abroad are redeemed, made to convey sense, in order to address concerns at home often falls outside the purview of inaugural articulations of comparative political theory. Instead, comparative political theory has emphasized a politics of resistance between a colonizer imposing dependence and a colonized demanding independence, echoing Nirañjana's framework, rather than a politics of embrace attentive more to the long and short histories of interdependence across geographical divides, such as that between Europe and India. This emphasis has in part been possible, I argue, because of a silence during inaugural articulations of the project of comparative political theory from 1990-2010.

## SILENCE

In 1997, Fred Dallmayr provided an introduction to an issue of *The Review of Politics* that he hoped would "inaugurate...the field of 'comparative political theory'.[18] And it did. Dallmayr's own interest in such a comparative project had been taking shape for years, the product of the "deep impact on [his] thought and life" brought about by visits to India in 1984 and in 1991-1992 as a Fulbright Scholar.[19] The language of inauguration here makes a claim on the new, and the novelty of this "comparative political theory" project was further buttressed by claims of emergence. Dallmayr places comparative political theory in a new era, "the emergence of the 'global village'," [20] and it is such emergence that adds urgency to the project, for "one segment of the world's population cannot monopolize the language or idiom of the emerging 'village,' or global civil society."[21] Yet Dallmayr's efforts might be better understood within a longer history of encounter between Germans and India in the production of comparative projects. This is not to suggest that Dallmayr, a German himself and committed to related Continental philosophical projects, can be reduced to his German origins. Rather, this is to suggest that a silence on how Germans encountering India had historically produced comparative projects prevents us from seeing how comparative acts had *always already* given shape to political theory in the past, rather than political theory being in need of some *original* comparative treatment in the present.

The German Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg of the Christian mission at Tranquebar, mentioned earlier, did not produce the first Protestant attempt at a Tamil translation of the Bible simply by looking at texts. His translation was part of a larger immersive effort to understand the cultural context of Tamil, particularly with respect to "God." The crowning achievement of this larger effort was his *Genealogia der Malabarischen Götter* [*Genealogy of Malabarian Gods*] completed in 1713. Such efforts were not isolated from the world-wide movements of the age in which Europeans, particularly Protestant ones, had begun to play an increasingly prominent role.[22] The pamphlet extolling Ziegenbalg's efforts, titled *Propagation of the Gospel in the East: Being An Account of the Success of the Danish Missionaries Sent to the East-Indies*

[18] Fred Dallmayr, "Introduction: Toward a Comparative Political Theory" in *The Review of Politics*, vol 59, no 3, (Summer 1997): 421. The journal was a Special Issue titled "Non-Western Political Thought."
[19] Fred Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996): x.
[20] Fred Dallmayr, "Introduction: Toward a Comparative Political Theory" (1997): 421.
[21] Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory" in *Perspectives on Politics* Vol 2, no 2 (June 2004): 249.
[22] In recent years, Daniel Jeyaraj has been the most vocal scholar in establishing the importance of the mission at Tranquebar. See in particular his "Mission Reports from South India and Their Impact on the Western Mind" in Dana Lee Robert, ed. *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706-1914* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2008): 21-42.

*for the Conversion of the Heathen in Malabar* and published in 1714 London,[23] made an impression across the globe. For example, shortly after the Salem witch trials, Cotton Mather hesitated little in sending Ziegenbalg a letter from distant Boston in the colony of New England.[24] As he writes on 31 December 1717:

> The Report of your Mission and of your Diligence, hath reach'd from the Eastern even to the Western Indies. And what the Grace of Heaven has helped you to do, towards the producing of a Christian People among the ~~Heathen~~ Indians <sic>, is heard among the American Christians with the highest Praises offered up to God on the Occasion, and as cool waters to our thirsty Souls is the Good News from a far Country... [25]

Mather's letter would not arrive until after Ziegenbalg's death. However, Gründler's reply from Tranquebar on 10 December 1719 would not only reciprocate Mather's praise—addressing Mather as

> a Person adorn'd with a Mind agreeable to JESUS CHRIST, and suitably walking in the power of His Spirit; And One the Care of whose Heart it is, that the work of GOD for the Conversion and Salvation of Souls, may be well founded, and continually make Improvements, not only with you in the West-Indies, but also that the same work with us in the East-Indies, may be daily on the growing hand…[26]

—but additionally include, "[a]s a Remembrance of this Worthy Man," a copy of Ziegenbalg's own "New Testament in the Damulick Tongue." It is hard to image that this was not the first Tamil text to arrive in America.

It is not clear what influence this Tamil Bible had in "the West-Indies" of America. Probably none. However, the influence of these missionaries from Tamil-speaking South India was clearer in Europe. The Mission at Tranquebar was tied to the University of Halle in Germany, the center of Pietistic Lutheranism, and particularly that of its faculty member A.H. Francke who made great efforts to spread reports of the mission.[27] Encounters with India helped ratchet up levels of academic sophistication among Europeans at Halle; it is no coincidence, for example, that Friedrich Schleiermacher, influential in the field of Biblical Higher Criticism as well as one of the founders of the modern field of hermeneutics, both attended and was later a preacher and professor of theology at the University of Halle. And at about the time

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[23] *Propagation of the Gospel in the East: Being An Account of the Success of the Danish Missionaries Sent to the East-Indies for the Conversion of the Heathen in Malabar* (London: J. Downing in Bartholomew Close near West-Smithfield, 1714).

[24] For a discussion of the relationship between German Pietism and New England Puritanism, and the links between Mather and Francke (whom I mention later), professor at Halle to the missionaries at Tranquebar, see Ernst Benz, "The Pietist and Puritan Sources of Early Protestant World Missions (Cotton Mather and A.H. Francke)," *Church History* 20 (June 1951): 28-55; Benz, "Ecumenical Relations between Boston Puritanism and German Pietism: Cotton Mather and August Hermann Francke," *Harvard Theological Review* 54 (July 1961): 159-193.

[25] SPCK.MS D1/Z/8, SPCK, CUL Archives; see also *India Christiana. A discourse, delivered unto the Commissioners, for the Propagation of the Gospel among the American Indians which is accompanied with several instruments relating to the glorious design of propagating our holy religion, in the Eastern as well as the Western, Indies. An entertainment which they that are waiting for the kingdom of God will receive as good news from a far country.* By Cotton Mather, D.D. and F.R.S. (Boston: Bartholomew Green, 1721) pp 62-88.

[26] University of Cambridge Library, SPCK.MS D1/Z/8; see also *India Christiana.*

[27] It was through Francke that Tranquebar was linked to the SPCK in England and to Cotton Mather in New England. For more details, see Benz, "Pietist and Puritan Sources" (1951): 28-55.

Schleiermacher was studying and professing, particular interest in India was taken up by German Romantics, most significantly Johann Gottfried Herder, a figure subsequently influential in articulations of culture, nationalism, and recognition in West Europe.[28] Herder's own account of the Missionary Reports from Tamil-speaking South India provide both the romanticization of the upper-caste Brahmin as well as the coercive forces oppressing the outcaste Pariah:

> Let the reader observe the accounts in the Missionary Reports of Halle of the common sense and benign disposition of the Brahmins and the Malabars in their observations, questions, and answers, as in their entire conduct, and he will rarely find himself on the side of those who would convert them. The leading idea the Brahmins entertain of God is so grand and beautiful, their morality so pure and sublime, and even their fables when pervaded by reason are so refined and charming…
>
> This said, it must not be concealed, that in this….there is much that is oppressive. Not to mention the endless coercion, which the confinement of the different ways of life to hereditary castes necessary involves, as it all but completely precludes all free improvement and perfecting of the arts, there is the contempt with which the lowest of the castes, the pariahs, are treated.[29]

Given our earlier discussion, we see that Herder seems unaware of the challenges the term "God" had and would continue to pose to translating missionaries. More importantly, German idealization of India coupled with the acknowledgement of hierarchy that Herder acknowledges—that of "castes," bounded by the high Brahmin and the low Pariah—would be a common feature of the Romantics. For an example of the centrality of this hierarchy in Romantic articulations of India, in his ballad "The Pariah," Johann Wolfgang von Goethe would remark on "the Brahmins, high-estated" and "the gross and earthly passion of the Pariah" and write "Be he sunk in want and sorry/ Be he desolate, heart-broken,/Be he Brahmin, be he Pariah."[30] These Romantic articulations of India, of course, paralleled what would become influential articulations of culture and nationalism, in Germany and elsewhere.[31] They echoed the findings in and around subsequent reports from the missionaries in Tamil-speaking

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[28] Such wedding in the Anglo-American world is largely attributed to the "Counter-Enlightenment" interpretation of Herder provided by Isaiah Berlin in *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas* (New York: Viking Press, 1976). Berlin's treatment of Herder subsequently became central in Charles Taylor's work on multiculturalism, whose most prominent reference is Taylor's "Politics of Recognition" in Amy Gutmann (ed), *Multiculturalism and 'The Politics of Recognition'* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1992): 25-73. For a critique of Taylor's interpretation of Herder, see Fred Reinder Dallmayr, *Alternative Visions: Paths in the Global Village* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), especially chapter 1 "Truth and Difference: Some Lessons from Herder". For a critique of the concept of recognition articulated by Taylor through Herder, see Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003). For broader critiques of the idea that Herder focused solely on cultural authenticity rather than cultural diversity, or was an ethno-nationalist, evident in Berlin and scholarship drawing on Berlin, see Vicki Spencer, "In Defence of Herder on Cultural Diversity" in *The Review of Politics* 69 (2007): 79-105; Dominic Eggel, Andre Liebich, and Deborah Mancini-Griffoli, " Was Herder a Nationalist?" in *The Review of Politics* 69 (2007): 48-78.

[29] Johann Gottfried Herder, "India" in *On World History* (ed. Adler & Menze, trans. Menze & Palm) (New York: ME Sharpe, 1997): 242. Daniel Jeyaraj points out references in Herder's "Adrestea" [Adrastea] which claims that Tranquebar Missionaries are exempt from his critique of Mission in general. Jeyaraj, "Mission Reports from South India and Their Impact…" (2008): 38.

[30] Goethe, "The Pariah" in *Poems and Ballads of Goethe* (trans. Aytoun & Martin) (New York: Holt and Williams, 1871): 73, 80, 81.

[31] For the paradigmatic example, see Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995): 225-256. See also, Taylor "The Importance of Herder," pp 79-99.

Tranquebar[32] and were further fed by translations of Indian texts produced by the British, most importantly Kālidāsa's play *Śakuntalā* published in English by Sir William Jones of the East India Company in 1789 and subsequently translated into German by George Forster in 1791.[33] Such claims fed the German Romantics' visions of an ideal Indian past invested in a Brahmin sublime and served as part of the raw material out of which they manufactured their own theoretical visions. The oppression of the pariah, it seems, was simply a casualty of such romance.

The scholarship on the close connections between Germany and India from the 18th century onwards is massive and beyond the scope of this dissertation, let alone its introduction.[34] The importance of India, and particularly the opposition between Brahmin and Pariah, in the work of a handful of important political theorists should be sufficient to demonstrate the sorts and prevalence of related conversations despite their silence in comparative political theory's inaugural moments. We may briefly focus on two such articulations in Europe of political theory that were wed to India by way of suggestive illustration: genealogy and the Jew.

First, genealogy and its Brahmin partner. Ziegenbalg's *Genealogia der Malabarischen Götter* completed in 1713 would not be published in German until 1867.[35] It would precede a much more famous genealogy in German decades later which revealed an investment in Indology, the philologist Nietzsche's *Zur Genealogie der Moral* of 1887. The figure of the Brahmin would be central in Nietzsche's effort to imagine both the ascetic ideal that he felt curbed the sensuality so central to being human, despite the fact that this very same ascetic ideal is what deepened the human into an interesting creature:

> Think, for example, of…the entire antisensualist metaphysic of the priests that makes men indolent and overrefined, their autohypnosis in the manner of…Brahmins…For with priests everything becomes more dangerous, not only cures and remedies, but also arrogance, revenge, acuteness, profligacy, love, lost to rule, virtue, disease—but it is only fair to add that it was on the soil of this

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[32] For example, in 1740, in one of Missionary Reports of Halle, a Lutheran Missionary at Tranquebar named Johannes Lukas Niekamp would discuss the huge disparity between high-caste Brahmin and low-caste Pariah Jeyaraj, "Mission Reports from South India and Their Impact…" (2008): 27.

[33] Ronald Taylor, *The Romantic Tradition in Germany* (London: Butler & Tanner, 1970): 26. Jones called Kālidāsa the "Indian Shakespeare" and expressed awe at its composition during an age when Europeans were largely uncivilized. The most recent discussion of the *Śankutalā* is Romila Thapar, *Śakuntalā: Texts, Readings, Histories* (New York: Columbia UP, 2011).

[34] One of the most significant and rigorous of these efforts is Wilhelm Halbfass, *Indian and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (Albany: SUNY P, 1988). Others include: Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990); Jörg Esleben, Christina Kraezle, & Sukanya Kulkarni, eds. *Mapping Channels between Ganges and Rheine: German-Indian Cross-Cultural Relations* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008); Douglas T. McGretchin, *Indology, Indomania, and Orientalism: Ancient India's Rebirth in Modern Germany* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 2009); Robert Cowan, *The Indo-German Identification: Reconciling South Asian Origins and European Destinies, 1765-1885* (Rochester: Camden House, 2010).

[35] Daniel Jeyaraj catalogues the various editions of this book in *Bartholamäus Ziegenbalg, the Father of Modern Protestant Mission: An Indian Assessment* (Madras: ISPCK, 2006): 309. The first two editions were not clearly published in circulable form. Third edition: "*Beschreibung der Religion und heiligen Gebräuche der Malabarischen Hindous, nach Bemerkungen in Hinostan gesammelt*" (Berlin: Verlag der Königl. Preus. Akad. Kunst-und Buchhandlung, 1791). The fourth edition was edited by Wilhelm Germann, *Genealogie der Malabarischen Gōtter aus eigenen Schriften und Briefen der Heiden zusammengetragen und verfasst von Bartholomaues Zeigenbalg*… (Madras: J Higginbotham und Erlangaen, A. Deichert, 1867). The Fifth edition was in English, translated by GJ Metzger. *Genealogy of the South-Indian Gods: A Manual of the Mythology and Religion of the People of Southern India, including a description of popular Hinduism by Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg*...(Madras: J. Higginbotham, 1869).

> essentially dangerous form of human existence, the priestly form, that man first became in interesting animal, that only here did the human soul in a higher sense acquire depth and become evil—and these are the two basic respects in which man has hitherto been superior to other beasts![36]

Whether or not Nietzsche read Ziegenbalg is pure speculation, though one would be surprised if a philologist who was lifelong friends with one of German's pre-eminent Sanskritists of the age, Paul Deussen, could have gone completely unaware of the very first German ethnographic account of India just decades after its publication. In the 20th century, Michel Foucault would famously take up Nietzsche's "genealogy."[37] Yet Foucault, like Nietzsche, was closely associated with a scholar working on India: George Dumézil.[38] Foucault repeatedly acknowledged such influence, from the preface in his early work *Madness and Civilization*[39] up to his final Collège de France lectures in 1984.[40] Dumézil, in turn, played a key role in securing Foucault's employment for his first job at the University of Uppsala, Sweden and his election to the Collège de France. Dumézil was a structuralist scholar of comparative religion and Indo-European myths best known for his studies of sovereignty and his argument that all human societies bear a "tripartite ideology," or "trifunctional hypothesis," in the form of priests (i.e. Roman flamen & Indian Brahmins), warriors, and producers.[41]

Next, the Jew and its Pariah partner. The fusion between Jew and Pariah is a long one, evident in missionary reports across the 19th century in India and Europe alike. Perhaps the most salient academic articulation of the Jew and Pariah is found in Max Weber's *Ancient Judaism* (1919) and *The Sociology of Religion* (1920).[42] As Arnaldo Momigliano points out, Weber

> starts his monograph on Judaism by stating that "sociologically speaking the Jews were a pariah people, which means, as we know from India, that they were a guest people who were ritually separated, formally or de facto, from their surroundings." His question, therefore, is "how did

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[36] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy of Morals*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann and RJ Hollingdale. New York: Random House, 1967: 32-33.

[37] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1977) in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews,* ed. DF Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell U P, 1977)*:* 139-164

[38] The details for the following account in this paragraph are drawn from: James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (Cambridge MA: Harvard U P, 2000); Dean A. Miller, "Georges Dumézil: Theories, Critiques, and Critical Extensions" in *Religion* (2000) 30: 27-40; Árpád Szakolczai, *The Genesis of Modernity* (New York: Routeledge, 2003). For more on the relationship between Foucault and Dumézil, see Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge MA: Harvard U P, 1991); Didier Eribon, *Faut-il Brûler Dumézil? Mythologie, Science et Politique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992); Georges Dumézil, *Entretiens Avec Didier Eribon* (Paris: Gallimard: 1987). For Dumézil's relationship to Claude Lévi-Strauss, see *Discours de Réception de Georges Dumézil à l'Académie Francaise et Réponse de Claude Lévi-Strauss* (Paris: Gallimard, 1979). Bruce Lincoln has argued that Dumézil was involved in fascism: Bruce Lincoln, "Dumézil, Ideology, and the Indo-Europeans," in Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft. 6:2 (1998): 221–230.

[39] Miller, "George Dumézil" (2000).

[40] For a discussion of his 15 February 1984 lecture and Foucault's wholesale interpretation of Socrates's last words based on Dumézil's recent interpretation, see Szakolczai, *The Genesis of Modernity* (2003): 196.

[41] For just a few representative examples of his work, see George Dumézil, *L'idéologie tripartie des Indo-Européens* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1958) and George Dumézil, *Mitra-Varuna: An Essay on Two Indo-European Representations of Sovereignty*, trans. Derek Coltman (New York: Zone Books, 1988).

[42] Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism,* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1952) and *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff and intro. Talcott Parsons (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963). For a deeper analysis with far greater detail regarding the German scholarship, see Arnaldo Momigliano, "A Note on Max Weber's Definition of Judaism as a Pariah-Religion," *History and Theory*, 19:3 (1980): 313-318.

> Jewry develop into a pariah people with highly specific peculiarities?" Weber of course knows that the Jews were never inserted into a system of casts and never shared the religion of those who avoided them. The accent is therefore on the quality of "guest people" (Gastvolk), of Jews living on foreign soil. He emphasizes that the Jews deliberately chose to become pariahs—a choice arising from definite religious and moral beliefs and expressed by voluntary ritual segregation. As Weber says, the Jews segregated "voluntarily and not under pressure of external rejection."[43]

Hannah Arendt would bring Weber's claims further into the 20th century, publishing "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition" in 1944 where, in contrast to the assimilated *parvenu*, "Jewish poets, writers, and artists…evolve[d] the concept of the pariah as a human type—a concept of supreme importance for the evaluation of mankind in our day…Indeed, the concept of the pariah has become traditional, even though the tradition be but tacit and latent…"[44] For Arendt, the Jew as *pariah* was to "calmly enjoy[] the freedom and untouchability of outcasts," not participating in the "outward freedom" of the publicly assimilated *parvenu* but also not subjugated to the "inner slavery" of the *parvenu* unable to be publicly who he was in private. Yet this, and the subsequent widespread use of "pariah" in general, and with reference to the Jew in particular, lost the Indian reference provided by Weber—it would be those in Europe who would "evolve the concept of pariah as a human type."[45] Such articulations echo formulations of the Jew a century earlier in Marx's "On the Jewish Question" (1844), during the period in which the association of pariah and Jew was growing stronger, where one can only be given equal rights as an individual separated from community (Arendt's *parvenu* with "outward freedom" but "inward slavery") and not as part of a community that was distinct from the nation (Arendt's *pariah* enjoying "the freedom and untouchability of outcasts").

The central importance of Indian encounters to European thought, particularly German, was no secret in 19th century Europe. For example, in his Rede Lecture at Cambridge in 1875, Sir Henry Sumner Maine, a comparative legal scholar and academic historian with years of experience settling political and legal questions in India, claimed:

> No one can observe the course of modern thought and enquiry on the Continent, and especially in Germany, without seeing that India, so far from being regarded as the least attractive of subjects, is rather looked upon as the most exciting, as the freshest, as the fullest of new problems and of the promise of new discoveries. The fervor of enthusiasm which glows in the lines written by the greatest of German poets when the dramatic genius of the Hindoos first became known to him through the translation of Sakuntala, seems to have scarcely abated in the scholars of our day who

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[43] Momigliano, "A Note" (1980): 314.

[44] Hannah Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," *Jewish Social Studies* 6.2 (1944): 99-122.

[45] Jean-Paul Sartre could write, for example,

> For a Jew, conscious and proud of being Jewish, asserting his claim to be a member of the Jewish community without ignoring on that account the bonds which unite him to the national community, there may not be so much difference between the anti-Semite and the democrat. The former wishes to destroy him as a man and leave nothing in him but the Jew, the pariah, the untouchable; the latter wishes to destroy him as a Jew and leave nothing in him but the man, the abstract and universal subject of the rights of man and the rights of the citizen.

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and the Jew, an Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*. Trans. George J. Becker (New York: Chicken Books, 1995 (1948)): 57. Quoted in Shmuel Trigano, *The Democratic Ideal and the Shoah: The Unthought in Political Modernity* (2009): 112. This is just one of many among many formulations of Jew as Pariah/Untouchable.

> follow philological studies and devote themselves to the new branches of investigation constantly thrown out by the sciences of Comparative Philology and Comparative Mythology.[46]

The "comparative" disciplines that Sumner recognizes as created through the encounter with India, Comparative Philology and Comparative Mythology, are not incidental. As mentioned above, Nietzsche was invested in the project of Comparative Philology, while Foucault's mentor George Dumezil was invested in the project of Comparative Mythology.

Related observations elsewhere run deeper, suggesting not just an academic interest but a relational affinity—in fact, a genetic identity—between the German and the Indian. Maine would claim, drawing upon German scholarship, that "The Village-Community of India exhibits resemblances to the Teutonic Township which are much too strong and numerous to be accidental" and suggest that a study of India informs a study of the German past, with "the Teutonic group" partially "reconstructed by the help of observed Indian phenomena."[47] And the link between Europeans such as the Germans and India, through fields in the "world" such as Comparative Philology and Comparative Mythology, was the *Aryan*:

> India has given to the world Comparative Philology and Comparative Mythology…For India not only contains (or to speak more accurately, did contain) an Aryan language older than any other descendant of the common mother-tongue, and a variety of names of natural objects less perfectly crystallised than elsewhere into fabulous personages, but it includes a whole world of Aryan institutions, Aryan customs, Aryan laws, Aryan ideas, Aryan beliefs, in a far earlier stage of growth and development than any which survive beyond its borders.[48]

Such ideas developed across the 18th and 19th centuries out of encounter, particularly those linking the Jew with the Pariah and the Teutonic with the Aryan, would, of course, have dramatic effects upon the European sense of self in the 20th century.[49]

I suggest that there has been a deafening silence regarding both the long history of comparison as a product of German encounters with India and such comparison's subsequent importance to the articulation of political theory in Europe. This silence cripples our ability to appreciate the delicious circuitry involved in those moments when "European" influence—shaped by India—becomes evident in India, particularly in the Tamil-speaking South. For the purposes of this introduction, however, the point should be clear: a German encounter with India producing projects of comparison was not new in the 1990s, as Dallmayr's inaugural claims might suggest, but instead had a very long history. This history factored into the production of the very texts one would associate with "Western" political theory, bound to figures like Brahmins, Pariahs, and Aryans.

Most importantly, I suggest that such *silence* on this shared history during the inauguration of the comparative political theory project makes this project complicit in *presumptions* of—rather than arguments for—difference, separation, coherence, and containment with respect to bodies of "political theory" that can encounter, dialogue, etc. That is to say, if

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[46] Sir Henry Sumner Maine, *Village-Communities in the East and West* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1880): 205-206.
[47] Maine, *Village-Communities* (1880): 12, 18.
[48] Maine, *Village-Communities* (1880): 210-211.
[49] For a recent study of Maine, see Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberalm Imperialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). Mantena's detailed study, however, does not pull forward the reliance of Germany upon India for its theoretical articulation.

European political theory relied, at least partially, on Indian encounters for its very articulation in the first place, what could it possibly mean to suddenly find oneself in an emergent present demanding encounters between separate and distinct political theories in Europe and India? If comparative fields had historically been "given to the world" through European encounters with India, what could it possibly mean to demand a new comparative field for a new appreciation of political theory in a non-West that included India? Such presumptions of difference, despite so much evidence for a long term relationship of sharing across distances and colonial relations of power, are even more explicit in the *insistence* present both in comparative political theory's inauguration and in a variety of subsequent comparative political theory projects: Gandhi's demand for *swaraj* as a model for the project as whole.

## CHAPTER 2. DISORIENT

Comparative political theory was made possible not only by a silence regarding a long shared history implicated in both "political theory" and "comparative" projects themselves. Comparative political theory was also made possible through an insistence premised on presumed distinctions demanding dialogue in order to achieve understanding across encounters with difference, rather than to achieve justice through shared relationships.

### INSISTENCE

Dallmayr's inauguration of comparative political theory was not simply a product of his investments in India's political thought, but in a very particular strand: that of Gandhi and his demand for *swaraj*. As early as 1988, Dallmayr's investments are clear, claiming Gandhi to be an "eminently indigenous thinker" who "was and remains a source of immense ferment unsettling all kinds of (intellectual and political) complacency," "a modern-day Socrates…challenging ingrained habits and unleashing new vistas but transgressing philosophical boundaries," while "unsettling traditional dividing lines and dichotomies, including (above all) the polarity between East and West."[50] Subsequent investments in Gandhi across the 1990s make clear that his promise for comparative political theory derives, at least in part, from his ability "to articulate his views in the vernacular idiom of Indian languages and through appeal to indigenous traditions" such as in "the notion of *swaraj* (self-rule)…borrowed from the tradition of *arthashastras* but [which], in the context of our century, acquired the connotations of resistance to colonial hegemony and of local governance recalcitrant to centralized managerial control" along with "*ahimsa* (nonviolence)" which also drew on the indigenous yet revised for the demands of Gandhi's political present.[51] Moreover, Gandhi is important for an expansive idea of the indigenous or culture premised on a plurality that requires non-interference across differences. For example, Dallmayr praises Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* (1909) for decoupling "nationalism" brought by the British, which excludes diversity, from "nationality" which cultural unites through including diversity:

> Culturally, [Gandhi] argued, Indians were "one nation" (praja) before the arrival of the British, "nation" denoting a shared history and "mode of life." A shared mode of life, however, does not rule out ethnic and religious differences. A country, Gandhi stated, does not cease to be a nation

[50] Fred Dallmayr, "Gandhi as Mediator between East and West" in *Margins of Political Discourse* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989): 22-23.
[51] Fred Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 173.

> because "people belonging to different religions" live in it. This is particularly true of the Indian subcontinent, for there we find almost "as many religions as there are individuals." The important thing is that "those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with another's religion"; otherwise, "they are not fit to be considered a nation."

Moreover, into the 2000s, Dallmayr has insisted on "the continuing relevance of Gandhian swaraj" for the project of "dialogue among civilizations."[52] Taking Gandhian *swaraj* as "exemplary" for the project of "dialogue" is quite significant, given the terms Dallmayr sets for the project of comparative political theory as *the* project that moves "beyond monologue."

Dallmayr does not merely insist on Gandhi as a suitable subject but also on the coupling of Gandhi with a particular hermeneutical method as core to the project of comparative political theory. He weds this project to the approach of "the leading philosopher of dialogue in recent times," Gadamer. Gadamer's "hermeneutics" stressed "intensive dialogue, or encounter, between reader and text, between self and other, between indigenous traditions and alien life-forms" whereby meanings can be shared "only through concrete existential engagement."[53] Gadamer's own concerns were appealing to Dallmayr's stakes in the new encounters of an emerging moment requiring inaugural fields framed in terms of novel comparison. There is something fresh and emergent in Gadamer's approach to dialogue, whose emphasis on "understanding" requires a "fusion of horizons" between self and other in an act of "true conversation…seeking agreement," "rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other" which "is always more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning."[54] In short, Dallmayr insists that Gandhian *swaraj* is central to the project of comparative political theory with its emphasis on Gadamerian dialogue.

However, we may wonder, what guarantee is there that such an "understanding" will result in an encounter considered just by those involved? It is not clear that justice and understanding are synonymous. Moreover, given our discussion of silence, how does a philosophy of dialogue work when it is not an encounter with difference but a relationship with that which is familiar, all too familiar, that may be our condition in the world—at least with respect to the long history of European/Indian encounters? In such a condition, where what constitutes difference seems to be a matter of interpretation rather than difference constituting that which must be interpreted, could "understanding" even be our goal?

Furthermore, there is good reason to disagree with Dallmayr's insistence that Gandhian *swaraj* is transparently or automatically linked to a desirable philosophy of dialogue. Martin Buber, another figure arguably the leading "philosopher of dialogue" who preceded Gadamer, in fact found several features of Gandhi disconcerting. As, for many "Western" readers, the sort of critique of Gandhi and *swaraj* central to this dissertation may sound puzzling at first, I will introduce such a critique without the added haze of unfamiliar Tamil-speaking radical social reformers from the 1920s-1940s, but instead through the far more familiar figure of Martin Buber. In this section on *insistence*, I make three claims. First, I argue that Buber's critique of Gandhi extends beyond both Gandhi's failure to be sufficiently "Gandhian" in order to *challenge* some of the foundational features of *swaraj* itself. Second, as one might gather from the earlier discussion of *silence*, I argue that Gandhi and Buber were not engaged in some act of "encounter" or "dialogue" between the "indigenous" and the "alien," but in fact were drawing

[52] Fred Dallmayr, *Dialogue Among Civilizations: Some Exemplary Voices* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
[53] Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory" (2004): 251-252.
[54] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1989 (1960)): 303, 305, 375.

upon a *shared* "Indo-Germanic" lexicon through which each understood himself and each other. Third, and finally, I suggest that one way of framing Buber's critique of Gandhi, and subsequently of *swaraj* itself, would be to insist that, instead of the primacy of *self-rule* over *self-respect* in the pursuit of more just relationships, self-respect is a necessary precursor to self-rule. This final suggestion, joined with Buber's own concerns, primes the reader for the claims of the *Cuyamariyātai Iyakkam*, or Self-Respect Movement, central to this dissertation.

### *THE CHALLENGE: "YET BARREN OF ALL APPLICATION"*

The literature on Gandhi is peppered with apologetics for his article "The Jews," written in the immediate wake of *Kristallnacht* and published on 26 November 1938.[55] Despite claiming that "[m]y sympathies are all with the Jews," Gandhi reveals a position of frightening naiveté, claiming that the Jews of Germany should engage in non-violent resistance toward the Nazis. Such claims were based on Gandhi's longstanding conviction that the position of the Indians in South Africa was parallel to those of the Jews in Germany. The apologetic position usually focuses only on "The Jews" as a temporary or isolated moment in which Gandhi did not live up to his own methods, thereby leaving those methods intact. Martin Buber's letter to Gandhi in February 1939, critical of Gandhi's demand of non-violence as a viable strategy for the Jews, has occasionally featured in this apologetic approach.

This approach, however, misses two features of the Gandhi-Buber exchange. First, Gandhi's position in "The Jews" was premised on long-held beliefs and was subsequently quite rigorously defended against critics. This suggests something fundamental, rather than incidental, about Gandhi's "The Jews." Second, while Buber in part suggests that Gandhi is failing to live up to Gandhi's own methods, he elaborates far more on key points of disagreement with those very methods themselves. Such concrete disagreements, articulated by a "philosopher of dialogue" of arguably equal importance to Gadamer, in turn may lead us to question the extent to which Gandhian *swaraj* can provide a model for the sort of dialogue understood to be central to the comparative political theory project—and whether or not dialogue in the Gadamerian sense of understanding through true conversation during a moment of encounter is in fact an appropriate way to conceive of comparative political theory at all.

#### LONG HELD BELIEFS

[55] *Kristallnacht* took place from 9-10 November 1938. Gandhi wrote "The Jews" on 20 November 1938; it was published in *Harijan* on 26 November 1938. Gandhi, "The Jews," *Harijan* 26 November 1938. CWMG vol 74: 239-242. For details of the importance of Gandhi's personal Jewish encounters, see Margaret Chatterjee, Gandhi and his Jewish Friends (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992). An example of such apologetics includes: "Gandhi was unusually well informed during the 1930s and 1940s about the plight of Jews in Europe in the face of Nazi persecution…Maurice Frydman, a Polish Jew who fled Europe in 1935 to join Gandhi…claimed that he "never observed a trace of anti-Semitism in Gandhi." Dennis Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): fn 177, Chpt 4, pp135, 228. Another example includes: "What we can learn from this debate [between Buber and Gandhi] is the need to be consistent with the principles of non-violence. Gandhi had broken two of them. The first was that he did not do enough research to find out what exactly was the condition of the Jews in Germany. This was against his well-known principle of ascertaining the facts before proposing policies. The implementation of this principle was part of the secret of the success of his satyagraha campaigns. The second mistake was to demand heroic non-violence from the masses, which by his definition was capable only of civic non-violence." Anthony J. Parel, *Gandhi's Philosophy and the Quest for Harmony* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006): 126.

Gandhi's article "The Jews" was the product of long held beliefs that were subsequently defended against critics. Two such beliefs were the universal applicability of non-violence, even in situations of slaughter, and a mode of comparison reluctant to question such universal applicability, regardless of context. The apologetic position, one in part shared by Buber as we will see, claims that Gandhi simply was not being himself during such claims. Perhaps. Let us briefly take a look at some of those claims themselves, though they will be examined in more detail through Buber's critique.

"If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest gentile German may, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon; I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment."[56] Gandhi subsequently encouraged the "Jews in Germany" to undergo the "voluntary suffering" characteristic of *satyagraha.* Such claims were premised on an act of comparison, one that suggested to Gandhi that the experience of the Jews in Germany were analogous to that of the Indians in South Africa. As he writes in "The Jews," "in the Indian satyagraha campaign in South Africa" the Jews of Germany have "an exact parallel" for "[t]here the Indian occupied precisely the same place that the Jews occupy in Germany."[57] Both forms of "persecution" had a "religious tinge" with the superiors as God-chosen, the absence of "equality" written into the constitution, consignment to "ghettos," and various "other disabilities [of Indians in South Africa] were almost of the same type as those of the Jews in Germany." In fact, Gandhi claims, "the Jews of Germany can offer satyagraha under infinitely better auspices than the Indians of South Africa" because they are more "compact" and "homogenous" and have far more "world opinion behind them." Moreover, Gandhi's belief in the parallel between the Jews of Europe and the Indians of South Africa were longstanding. For example, in his *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*[58] of the late 1920s, Gandhi writes:

> The ancient Jews regarded themselves as the chosen people of God to the exclusion of all others, with the result that their descendants were visited with a strange and even unjust retribution. Almost in a similar way the Hindus have considered themselves Aryas or civilized, and a section of their own kind as Anaryas or untouchables, with the result that a strange, if unjust, nemesis is being visited not only upon the Hindus in South Africa, but the Mussalmans and Parsis as well, inasmuch as they belong to the same country and have the same colour as their Hindu brethren.[59]

Hindus suffer like the Jews, for both think of themselves as chosen "Aryas," or Aryans, and others as untouchable "Anaryas," or non-Aryans. It may seem odd to a Euro-American reader to see that the Jews are likened to Aryans; such equations will be discussed in Part V. And just as the Hindus Aryans must suffer, so to must Jew Aryans suffer—perhaps to the point of annihilation:

> The calculated violence of Hitler may even result in a general massacre of the Jews by way of his first answer to the declaration of such hostilities. But if the Jewish mind could be prepared for voluntary suffering, even the massacre I have imagined could be turned into a day of thanksgiving

[56] Gandhi, "The Jews," (1938): 240.
[57] Gandhi, "The Jews" (1938): 241.
[58] The essays constituting the *Autobiography* were published simultaneously in Gujarati and English from November 29, 1925 to February 3, 1929. CWMG vol 44: 88.
[59] Gandhi, *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth,* (1929) CWMG vol 44: 304. (Part IV; Chpt 14).

> and joy that Jehovah had wrought deliverance of the race even at the hands of the tyrant. For the godfearing, death has no terror. It is a joyful sleep to be followed by waking that would be all the more refreshing for the long sleep.[60]

Gandhi was willing to encourage massacre through non-violent methods among Jews in Germany, premised on an act of comparison between the Jews in Germany and the Indians in South Africa.

Gandhi's November 1938 article "The Jews" drew many criticisms. Gandhi replied to his critics up until May 1939, after which his discussions of Judaism returned to concerns with religious beliefs and practices, such as the impropriety of the use of wine in Jewish rituals.[61] Overall, his comparative method can perhaps be summarized in one such reply, in December 1938: "I have myself admitted my ignorance of European politics. But in order to commend my prescription to the Jews for the removal of their many ills, I did not need to have an accurate knowledge of European politics."[62]

Despite a reluctant willingness to modify small features of his position in response to the roar of criticisms,[63] in response to other critics Gandhi is insistent. One such critic was concerned that Gandhi was inattentive to the ways in which Jews were being treated as "subhuman" and that "a Jewish Gandhi in Germany" would last "five minutes"—Gandhi responds with an unwillingness to change despite protest ("I must say that I see no reason to change the opinion I expressed in my article"), an insistence in the timeless universal application of his views ("I did not write the article only for today. I flatter myself with the belief that some of my writings will survive me and will be of service…"), and the willingness to embrace

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[60] Gandhi, "The Jews," (1938): p 241.

[61] The following are the instances in which Gandhi discusses his article "The Jews":
- "Discussion with John R. Mott," *Harijan* 10 December 1938, CWMG 74: 270-277.
- "Letter to Margarete Spiegel," 5 December 1938, CWMG 74: 288 ("Did you read what I wrote about the Jews? Did you like it?")
- "Reply to German Critics," *Harijan* 17 December 1938, CWMG 74: 295-296.
- "Some Questions Answered," *Harijan* 17 December 1938, CWMG 74: 297-299.
- "Discussion with Christian Missionaries," *Harijan* 24 December 1938, CWMG 74: 307-313.
- "Letter to Amrit Kaur," 22 December 1938, CWMG 74: 338.
- "Is Non-Violence Ineffective?" *Harijan* 7 January 1939, CWMG 74: 391-393.
- "Letter to John Haynes Holmes, "18 January 1939, CWMG 74: 420.
- "Love a Universal Virtue," *Harijan* 4 March 1939, CWMG 74: 422-424.
- "No Apology," *Harijan* 18 February 1939, CWMG 75: 38-39.
- "The Jewish Question," *Harijan* 27 May 1939, CWMG 75: 415-416.
- "Withdrawn," *Harijan* 27 May 1939, CWMG 75: 416-418.

By September 1939, Gandhi had returned to more common discussions of Judaism, such as the propriety of the use of wine in rituals. See "Notes: Intoxicating Wines in Judaism," *Harijan* 16 September 1939, CWMG 76: 317-319.

Gandhi returns to the Jews a few months later briefly. For example, see Gandhi, "Opinions Differ," *Harijan* 11 November 1939, CWMG vol 77: pp 80-83. Here he insists again on birth, place, and nation: "According to my correspondent, the English, Egyptians, Americans, Japanese, etc., are not nations, but Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, Jews, Buddhists are different nations no matter where born. I am afraid my correspondent occupies very weak ground in maintaining that nations are or should be divided according to their religions." (82). See also Gandhi, "Letter from HSL Polak," 23 November 1939, CWMG vole 77, Appendix 1.

[62] "Reply to German Critics," *Harijan* 17 December 1938, CWMG vol 74: 295.

[63] Gandhi, "Withdrawn," *Harijan* 27 May 1939, CWMG vol 75: 416-418. The position he withdraws is his earlier claim that Jews are trying to involve America and England in a war with Germany on their behalf. Yet in the very same issue, as we'll see, Gandhi publishes an article which insists on his overall position in "The Jewish Question."

massacre ("I can conceive the necessity of the immolation of hundreds, if not thousands…").[64] With respect to the Jews, Gandhi insists on the timeless applicability of his position and, subsequently, the superfluousness of attending to differences of context: "Therefore it is that I have offered the prescription [of non-violence or *satyagraha*] which I know to be infallible when taken in the right manner."[65]

Such a gesture to the "right manner" may provide an element of sensitivity to difference. Yet Gandhi's criticism of the Jews for failing to be non-violent enough is fairly definitive. He continues in another article to criticize the Jews for having "violence in their hearts for their oppressors," for never having "practiced non-violence as an article of faith or even as a deliberate policy" given that the "stigma against them" is "that their ancestors crucified Jesus,"[66] and that Jewish "non-violence had and has no love in it. It is passive. They do not resist because they know that they cannot resist with any degree of success," "so fully of anger over the German atrocities" that they are incapable of "loving the enemy."[67] Gandhi further insists that "I make bold to say that if the Jews can summon to their aid the soul power that comes only from non-violence, Herr Hitler will bow before the courage which he has never yet experienced in any large measure in his dealing with men, and which, when it is exhibited, he will own is infinitely superior to that shown by his best storm troopers."[68] Likewise, elsewhere, Gandhi declares: "a single Jew bravely standing up and refusing to bow to Hitler's decrees will cover himself with glory and lead the way to the deliverance of his fellow Jews."[69]

We cannot but see here Gandhi's insistence.

It would be in September 1939, only months after concluding his responses regarding criticisms of his article "The Jews" that May, that Gandhi made a claim in response to concerns with his adamant position against India entering into a war on the side of the British against Nazi Germany. He writes:

> At the time of writing I never think of what I have said before. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth; I have saved

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[64] Gandhi, "The Jewish Question," 27 May 1939. CWMG vol. 75: 415-416. The critic here was Hayim Greenberg, published in *Jewish Frontier* in New York City. Note that Gandhi's small modification of position occurred on the same day as his insistence on his position above in "Withdrawn."

[65] "Some Questions Answered," *Harijan* 17 December 1938, CWMG vol 74: 297-298. See also "Discussion with Christian Missionaries," 24 December 1938, CWMG vol 74: 308. For another critic of the idea that Hitler would recognize non-violence as "infinitely superior" to his storm troopers, see "Is Non-Violence Ineffective?" *Harijan* 7 January 1939, CWMG vol 74: 391-393. *The Statesman* claims that Nazis only view courage among their supporters, "elsewhere it becomes the impudent provocation of Jewish-Marxist *canaille*."

[66] "Some Questions Answered," *Harijan* 17 December 1938, CWMG vol 74: 297-298.

[67] Gandhi, "No Apology," *Harijan* 18 February 1939, CWMG vol 75: 39. Note that Gandhi's article was written, though not published, on the same day (5 February 1939) as his article insisting that "the only script that is ever likely to be universal in India is Devanagri" suggesting, against, a rather imperial approach to the world rather than one attentive to textured differences. This would have profound effects in the Tamil-speaking south. "Roman Script v Devanagri," *Harijan* 11 February 1939, CWMG vol. 75: 37-38.

[68] "Some Questions Answered," *Harijan* 17 December 1938, CWMG vol 74: 297-298.

[69] "Is Non-Violence Ineffective?" *Harijan* 7 January 1939, CWMG vol. 74: 393. Another example of Gandhi's shortcomings as a "comparative" thinker in relationship to his article "The Jews" comes in reply to a critic who disagreed with Gandhi's suggestion that "the love that Jesus taught was a personal, not a social or collective, virtue." In reply to this, Gandhi agrees that Jesus's love was "not a mere personal virtue, but that it was essentially a social and collective virtue. Buddha taught and practiced the same thing six hundred years before Jesus." "Love a Universal Virtue," *Harijan* 4 March 1939, CWMG vol 75: 422-424.

> my memory an undue strain; and what is more, whenever I have been obliged to compare my writing even of fifty years ago with the latest, I have discovered no inconsistency between the two. But friends who observe inconsistency will do well to take the meaning that my latest writing may yield unless, of course, they prefer the old. But before making the choice they should try to see if there is not an underlying and abiding consistency between the two seeming inconsistencies.[70]

The quote has often been offered as a part of Gandhi's method—though often, disappointingly, out of context.[71] Thus, though the passages quoted above concerning Gandhi's article "The Jews" may reasonably give us some pause—how can one possibly offer up Gandhi as a model for those interested in comparative projects?—perhaps these passages should be dismissed in favor of his "latest writing" or, perhaps more seriously, reveal our own failure to make out some hidden "consistency." If a disturbed reaction produced by some gnawing feeling of inconsistency is a mark of the reader's failure, it is a failure shared by the company of Martin Buber.

It may be no accident that among the critics with whom Gandhi fails to engage in dialogue is one of the 20th century's "philosophers of dialogue" himself, Martin Buber. Buber wrote his "Letter to Gandhi" from Jerusalem on 24 February, 1939, responding not only to Gandhi's claims in "The Jews" but also to Gandhi's subsequent replies to critics.[72] Overall,

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[70] "Conundrums," *Harijan* 30 September 1939, CWMG vol. 76: 356**.**

[71] For example, see Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989): 283. This quote partially appears to justify her claim: "To those who complained that he was sometimes inconsistent, even inscrutable, he underlined his role as a truth-seeker, not as one who had a ready-made and unchanging philosophy." (282-283)

[72] All quotes from this letter are from the copy received by Gandhi himself, Buber to Gandhi, 24 February 1939, pp 1-16 (typed with hand-written edits), Misc Subject File #367, MK Gandhi Papers, Teen Murthi, New Delhi.

Republications of this letter are partial (e.g. Martin Buber, *Pointing the Way*: *Collected Essays* (New York: Harber, 1957): 139-147) and edit punctuation, sentence and paragraph separation, and even word choice and phrasing (Martin Buber, *The Letters of Martin Buber: A Life of Dialogue.* eds. Nahum Glatzer & Paul Mendes-Flohr. trans. Richard Winston, Clara Winston, & Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1991): 476-486). Often such edits do not change the meaning, but occasionally they do. Where such republications different in substantive ways, I will note so. It should be noted immediately that the edited republication in *Pointing the Way* begins with a phrase which does not exist in the original at all. This republished letter, which admits to being "about half" of the original reply, there begins: "Let the Nazis, the lords of the ice-inferno, affix my name to a cunningly constructed scarecrow" (139). The real letter does not contain a version of this phrase until the bottom of page 1, but more importantly, the word "Nazi" does not appear there or anywhere else in Buber's letter. The phrase instead reads: "The friendly appeal [of Gandhi's, however misconceived] achieves what the enemy's [presumably the Nazis] storming has failed to do: he must answer. He exclaims: Let the lords of the ice-hell affix my name to an artfully constructed bugbear…" Buber to Gandhi (1939): 1.

Most discussions of Buber and Gandhi claim Buber is replying to Gandhi's claims in "The Jews." Yet Buber's concerns address Gandhi's suggestions in his subsequent replies to critics, as well. Gandhi's discussion of the Jews killing Jesus or failing to be truly non-violent, for example, are present not in "The Jews" but in these replies, see especially "Some Questions Answered," *Harijan* 17 December 1938, CWMG 74: pp 297-299.

Buber's letter was not the only one to which Gandhi did not reply. Also in the archives is a letter from Judah Magnes (both Buber and Magnes's letters were first published in *Two Letters to Gandhi from Martin Buber and JL Magnes* (R. Mass, 1939)). Whether or not Gandhi replied is not clear; if he did reply, it was dismissive. Glatzer and Mendes-Flohr (1991) claim that Gandhi never replied to Buber (p 476, fn 1), whereas Crane claims that Buber wrote to his biographer Aubrey Hodes on 4 August 1957: "Gandhi replied to Dr. [Judah] Magnes [who also mailed a response to Gandhi] and myself only in a postcard, in which he told us he regretted he didn't have time to reply." Crane claims this is documented in M. Chatterjee, *Gandhi and his Jewish Friends*. Jonathan K. Crane. "Faltering Dialogue? Religious Rhetoric of Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Buber," *Anasakti Darshan* 3:1 (2007): 34-52.

there are two ways in which Buber articulates his critique of Gandhi's position. On the one hand, Buber turns Gandhi against Gandhi, as it were, suggesting that in Gandhi's discussion of the Jews with respect to Palestine and Germany he was not Gandhi enough. This echoes the apologetics in the literature, and preserves Gandhi's suitability as a model for projects of dialogue and comparison despite temporary, incidental failings. On the other hand, Buber articulates a disagreement with what we would think of to be fundamental Gandhian elements; Gandhi is not incidentally but essentially misguided. I would like to suggest that this latter critique of Gandhi articulates a number of core concerns shared by the Self-Respect Movement. These shared core concerns involve *feeling, faith, future*, and *force*.

Buber's long investment in, and admiration for, Gandhi and his demand for *swaraj* is evident in earlier writings, such as his 1930 essay "Gandhi, Politics, and Us."[73] Such admiration helps us appreciate Buber's utter horror upon reading Gandhi's discussion of the Jew in and subsequent to November 1938. For despite the fact that Buber considers Gandhi "a voice that he has long known and honoured,"

> what he hears—containing though it does elements of a noble and most praiseworthy conception such as he expects from this speaker—is yet barren of all application to his peculiar circumstance; these words are in truth not applied to him at all: they are inspired by most praiseworthy general principles; but the listener is aware that he, the speaker, has cast not a single glance at the situation of him whom he is addressing—that he sees him not nor does he know him and the straits under which he labors. Moreover, intermingled with the counsel and the comfort, a third voice makes itself heard drowning both the others—the voice of reproach.[74]

Gandhi fails to demonstrate sufficient sensitivity and attentiveness to context, and moreover, follows such failure with criticism. This shocks Buber: "But you—the man of goodwill—do you not know that you must see whom you address, in his place and circumstance, in the throes of his destiny!"[75] Such words from a philosopher of dialogue, of course, are not the ones one would expect to be directed at a figure held up as a model for a comparative project.

Buber is explicit about Gandhi's failed comparative project, namely, on the "similarities of circumstance" Gandhi claims between the Jews in Germany and the Indians in South Africa. In response to Gandhi's sentence claiming the "exact parallel" between the two, Buber writes "I read and reread this sentence…without being able to understand" and despite doing so "with all the attention and imagination at my command" "this did not help me to understand what you say about us."[76] He lists several instances in which such "exact parallel" breaks down—for example, the destruction of the sacred in Germany and the ways in which the Jewish experience is not simply about "rights," neither of which find correlates in the Indian experience in South Africa—but the big obvious one is, of course, the frenzied calculation of genocide:

> Now, do you know, or do you not know, Mahatma, what a concentration camp is like and what goes on there? Do you know of the torments[77] in the concentration camp, of its methods of slow and quick slaughter? I cannot assume that you know for then this tragic-comic utterance "almost the same type" could scarcely have crossed your lips…Of what significance is it to point out a

[73] See Buber's 1930 essay "Gandhi, Politics, and Us" republished in *Pointing the Way* (1957): 126-138.
[74] Buber to Gandhi, (1939).
[75] Buber to Gandhi: pp 1-2.
[76] Buber to Gandhi: p 2.
[77] Crossed out in the original: martyrdom.

> certain something in common when such differences are overlooked? It does not seem to be convincing when you base your advice to us to observe satyagraha in Germany on these similarities of circumstance.[78]

*Satyagraha* among the Jews in Germany does not face "insensible human beings on the ground in the hope of gradually bringing them thereby to their senses" as in South Africa but rather "a diabolic universal steam-roller" in Germany which cannot but result in "ineffective, unobserved martyrdom."[79] Not only does Gandhi fail to see, attend, imagine, observe, and respond to the texture of difference and circumstance, such failure is in fact symptomatic of the very forces in Germany which rob the Jew of conducting effective *satyagraha*. The fact that the martyrdom of Jews in Germany will go unobserved is likewise unobserved by Gandhi. Buber claims that "God alone accepts their testimony" when Jews are "persecuted, robbed, maltreated, tortured, and murdered,"[80] and suggests that God alone is insufficient to "demand" the testimony of massacre that would be offered by Jewish *satyagraha*. Gandhi, on the other hand, finds God sufficient: "For the godfearing, death has no terror."[81]

What is surprising, perhaps, is how little space Buber devotes to the unobserved and senseless slaughter that makes Gandhi's comparison between Germany and South Africa utterly absurd. Instead, Buber quickly moves in favor of "a yet more essential difference," a "difference" of which Gandhi must not have been aware "—great as it is—when you [Gandhi] drew the exact parallel" between Germany and South Africa.[82] That "fundamental difference" is having a motherland: Indians in South Africa had a motherland, Jews in Germany do not, and thus Indians had their "souls" "nourished" in a way Jews do not. Part of Buber's critique of Gandhi's views on a Jewish motherland, Palestine, is simply to reveal the ways in which Gandhi is contradicting himself. He does this, in order to preserve the Gandhi he for so long cherished so much, in at least five ways, at times conjuring up a figure he refers to as "a Jewish Gandhi."

First, Gandhi is concerned that Jews are asking for a "double home," wanting to have the option to remain nationals of France, England, or Germany *and* be nationals of Palestine.[83] Gandhi suggests Jews either should be compelled to go to Palestine or should "make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood," e.g. "Jews born in France

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[78] Buber to Gandhi, p 3.

[79] Buber to Gandhi, pp 3-4. Maurice Friedman has claimed that in Buber's "public letter" to Gandhi, Buber wrote: "Do you know what a universal steam roller is? No one could gather together and organize the way you did in South Africa." Friedman, "Martin Buber's 'Narrow Ridge' and the Human Sciences," in M. Friedman ed. *Martin Buber and the Human Sciences* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996): 13. Certainly the gist of Buber's sentiments are partially captured here, but this is more of a paraphrase than a direct quote from the letter Gandhi received from Buber. The passage Friedman must have meant to quote runs thus: "An effective stand may be taken in the form of non-violence against insensible human beings on the ground of the hope of gradually bringing them thereby to their senses; but a diabolic steam-roller cannot thus be understood. There is a certain situation in which from the 'satyagraha' of the strength of the spirit no 'satyagraha' of the power of truth can result." Buber to Gandhi (1939): 3-4. It is even stranger that Friedman left out "diabolic" entirely. Moreover, Friedman suggests that Buber's emphasis on "faith and love" in resolving the Palestine question is one of the great *strengths* of Buber's letter. Yet faith's *questioning* seems at issue here. The reader is left without an appreciation of elements in the letter which could—and perhaps should—be construed as far stronger, thereby doing more justice to the depth of Buber's thought.

[80] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 4, 2.

[81] Gandhi, "The Jews," (1938): p 241.

[82] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 4.

[83] Gandhi, "The Jews" (1938): 239.

are French in precisely the same sense that Christians born in France are French."[84] Buber interrogates this idea of the "double home": "Did you also say to the Indians in South Africa that if India is their home, they must accustom themselves to the idea of being compelled to return to India" or "that India was not their home" and they were instead South Africans?[85] If Indians can be Indian nationals but be born and earn their livelihood in South Africa where they demand citizenship, why cannot Jews be Palestinian nationals but born and earn their livelihood in Germany where they demand citizenship, e.g. have a "double home"? Just as Indians, so do Jews deserve a regional "living heart and centre" of their community, for "every nation has a right to demand the possession of a living heart."[86]

Second, Gandhi is concerned that Jews are mistaking the physicality of this "living heart" for its actual ideal: "The Palestine of the Biblical conception is not a geographical tract. It is in their hearts."[87] Buber responds by emphasizing reality over the symbolic, for should a Jewish Gandhi teach South Indians "as you teach the Jews: the India of the Vedic conception is not a geographical tract, it is in your hearts?"[88] Buber claims that "[a] land about which a sacred book relates to the sons of the land is never merely in their hearts," not a symbol, for "[i]t is in their hearts because it is in the world; it is a symbol because it is a reality."[89] If Gandhi can draw upon Vedic texts to understand the geographical tract of India as a reality rather than a symbol, why cannot Jews draw upon Biblical texts to understand the geographical tract of Palestine as a reality rather than a symbol?

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[84] Gandhi, "The Jews" (1938): 239.
[85] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 5.
[86] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 6
[87] Gandhi, The Jews" (1938): 242.
[88] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 5.
[89] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 5. The entire passage reads:

> "A land about which a sacred book relates to the sons of the land is never merely in their hearts—a land can never become a mere symbol. It is in their hearts because it is in the world; it is a symbol because it is a reality. Zion is the prophetic image of a promise to mankind; but it would be a vain metaphor if the Mount of Zion did not actually exist. This Land is called 'Holy'; but this is not the Holiness of an idea, it is the holiness of a piece of earth; that which is merely an idea and nothing more cannot become holy; but a piece of earth can become holy just as a mother's womb can become holy."

Note that Glatzer and Mendes-Flohr (1991) reproduce the original passage very differently, losing a bit of both Buber's emphasis on the claim that it is reality that becomes a symbol, the "relational," as well as his emphasis on Zion:

> "A land about which a sacred book speaks to the sons of the land is never merely in their hearts; a land can never become a mere symbol. It is in the hearts because it is the prophetic image of a promise to mankind. But it would be a vain metaphor if Mount Zion did not actually exist. This land is called "holy," but this is not the holiness of an idea; it is the holiness of a piece of earth. That which is merely an idea and nothing more cannot become holy, but a piece of earth can become holy just as a mother's womb can become holy." (479)

This is quite serious. Glatzer and Mendes-Flohr see a sacred book *speaking* to sons of the land, inviting Crane's suggestion that Buber emphasizes "commandment." Yet the letter which Buber sent Gandhi does not say this; Buber says that a sacred book *relates* to the sons of the land, which in turn underscores the *relational* aspect of Buber, so emphasized in *Ich und Du* as we will see. Martin Friedman's edited and translated collection of Martin Buber's essays, *Pointing the Way* (London: Routeledge & Kegan Paul, 1957) does a better job of adhering to the original, though the letter itself is edited and not reproduced in its entirety, but still unfortunately includes the phrase "a sacred book speaks to the sons of the land" rather than Buber's own "relates to the sons of the land." (142)

Third, Gandhi's suggestion that the Jews do not need a physical motherland in Palestine strikes Buber as hypocritical, for he denies the attachment of cultural substance to mother-soil with respect to the Jewish nation but not with respect to the Indian nation:

> And just as you, Mahatma, wish that not only should all Indians be able to live and work, but that also Indian substance, Indian wisdom and Indian truth should prosper and be fruitful, so do we wish for the Jews. For you there is no need to be aware, that the Indian substance could not prosper without the Indian's attachment to the mother-soil and without his ingathering therein. But we know what is essential, we know it because it is just this that is denied us or was, at least, up to the generation which has just begun to work a the redemption of the mother-soil.[90]

Again, as Buber phrases, it, "every nation has a right to demand the possession of a living heart."[91]

Fourth, Buber finds Gandhi's efforts to divorce Jewish traditions from a Jewish future—e.g. a once and again homeland in Palestine—as disingenuous: "You, Mahatma Gandhi, who know of the connection between tradition and future, should not associate yourself with those who pass over our cause without understanding or sympathy."[92]

Fifth, and finally, Buber refuses Gandhi's suggestion that true non-violent *satyagraha* is peculiarly failing among the Jews, whose "non-violence is of the helpless and the weak." This betrays Gandhi's ignorance of the years of Jewish strength evident in non-violent responses to "deeds of blind violence perpetrated against us, our wives and our children."[93] Equally important, the failure to be truly non-violent—a high bar for any human—is a failing shared by Jews and Indians alike. He quotes Gandhi in 1922:

> "I see that our non-violence is skin-deep…This non-violence seems to be due merely to our helplessness…Can true voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak?" When I read these words at that time, my reverence for you took birth—a reverence so great that even your injustice towards us cannot destroy it.[94]

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[90] These entire passages dealing with "substance" and surrounding passages are simply absent from Friedman's *Pointing the Way* (1957) with no elipses indicating the editing or removal of text. Friedman moves from a nation languishing on stepmother soil to the "command" and the "fulfillment" of the "promised land." He thus also skips over Buber's concern with Gandhi finding Biblical justifications, which Buber claims untrue, of a Jewish Palestine as unappealing.

[91] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 6.

[92] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 9.

[93] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 14-15.

[94] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 15. Though Buber does not provide the source of this quote, it comes from the sort of exceptionally lucid and spirited language that inspired the entire Subcontinent, including EVR. The quote appeared in *Young India* on 2 March 1922, and was written in response to the 22-23 February 1922 session of the All-Indian Congress Committee. The article acknowledges the Government's fear of the "huge majority I seem to command," Gandhi's fear not of "exploiting my 'dictatorship'" over this majority but of in "allowing myself to be 'exploited'" by that majority, the "haughty…disease of race superiority" among the English, and Gandhi's insistence, despite difficulties, that non-violence is the answer for "What is the alternative?" But Gandhi's doubts about the possibility of the "futile experiment I am conducting" comes with a clear distinction between the many and the few: "If the people in general keep passively non-violent and if only a few are actively, honestly and knowingly non-violent in intent, word and deed, we can reach the goal in quickest time with the least suffering." That is to say, Gandhi's *swaraj* takes the individual, a handful of individuals of resolute faith and discipline, as the *primary* unit of analysis, rather than Buber's insistence that a community of people whose faith is in crisis may provide deliverance. Gandhi, "The All-India Congress Committee," *Young India* 2 March 1922, CWMG vol 26: 260-264.

There is nothing peculiar about the helplessness and weakness of the Jews and the subsequent challenges for conducting *satyagraha*—it is among the Indians as well, and, perhaps, a feature of humanity itself.

In short, across these five points, Buber turns Gandhi against himself. So far, it may seem as if Buber invites us to see Gandhi's position articulated in "The Jews" and subsequent replies to critics as failing to be Gandhian enough. Gandhi seems to be insensitive at best, hypocritical at worst, but were Gandhi to have thought longer and harder about the position of the Jews in Germany and Palestine, Gandhi would have produced a more suitable, a more Gandhian, position. Such an invitation would find quick acceptance among those offering apologetics.

Yet Buber pushes further, challenging the very fundamental principles of Gandhi. At the heart of such principles is, arguably, Gandhi's demand for *swaraj*. Such *swaraj* was a two-fold concept, straddling the "self-rule" of personal discipline—in terms of diet (vegetarianism, fasting), desire (sexual abstinence), and devotion (sacrifice, commitment despite suffering)—and national independence from colonial forces. Such fundamental challenges move us beyond the apologetic position preserving Gandhi's essentials to a rejection of those very essentials themselves. Buber articulates this challenge in four ways: in terms of *feeling*, *faith*, *future*, and *force.*

FEELING

Gandhi believes that physical suffering "voluntarily undergone," even to the point of the massacre or immolation of "hundred, if not thousands," will "bring [the Jews] an inner strength and joy."[95] Such voluntary suffering is a feature of the personal discipline central to Gandhian *swaraj* and the very definition of *satyagraha*. It also reveals Gandhi's insistence on the denigration of the physical and the supremacy of the spiritual, substituting ideal fulfillment for material feeling. For example, in March 1939, during the period Gandhi is replying to critics of his "The Jews," Gandhi says to his volunteers:

> A satyagrahi may, however, not obey an order that offends his moral sense or hurts his self-respect even though it may cost him his life. Nay more, it may be one's duty to put an end to one's life, if that is the only way of protecting one's honour. Such an act would not be termed suicide. It would be the triumph of immortal spirit over the "muddy vesture of decay" that our physical body is.[96]

Buber disagrees with Gandhi's denigration of physical feeling and its privileging of the other-worldly over the this-worldly. For example, against Gandhi's metaphoric reading of Palestine as a spiritual symbol, mentioned above, Buber replies "It is in their hearts because it is in the world; it is a symbol because it is a reality."[97] Buber is concerned with "nations of the earth," their need for a physical "living heart and centre," an actual geographical space required for cultural "substance" to "prosper and be fruitful," a "land" that materially grounds "the life of a community."

Moreover, Buber's emphasis on the material rather than simply the ideal, on the physical feelings required for spiritual fulfillment, emphasized community. He thereby challenges Gandhi's emphasis on individualism present in claims that "I should not wait for the fellow Jews

[95] Gandhi, "The Jews," (1938): 240.
[96] "Talk to Satyagrahi Volunteers," 2 March 1939, published in *Harijan* 25 March 1939, CWMG vol 75: 134-135.
[97] Buber to Gandhi: p 5.

to join me in civil resistance," or that "if someone with courage and vision can arise among them to lead them to non-violent action, the winter of their despair can in the twinkling of an eye be turned into the summer of hope," or in his "plead for more suffering" by "a single Jew bravely standing up and refusing to bow" who will subsequently "cover himself with glory and lead the way to the deliverance of the fellow Jews."[98] Buber is far less convinced of the "solution to be found in the life of isolated and abandoned individuals," and instead invested in how "a way of life can be realized not by individuals in the sphere of their private existence but only by a nation in the establishment of its society."[99] Buber invests in the feeling of physical, this-worldly community, rather than Gandhi's investment in the suffering of spiritual, other-worldly individuals.

FAITH

Gandhi sees Jews as people of faith. He claims that through "voluntary suffering, even the massacre I have imagined could be turned into a day of thanksgiving and joy that Jehovah had wrought deliverance…For to the godfearing, death has no terror."[100] He suggests: "Let the Jews who claim to be the chosen race prove their title by choosing the way of nonviolence for vindicating their position on earth" for they "possess the strength of suffering given to them by Jehovah."[101] It is the particular faith of the Jews that Gandhi sees as giving them great power:

> No person who has faith in a living God need feel helpless or forlorn. Jehovah of the Jews is a God more personal than the God of the Christians, the Mussalmans or the Hindus, though, as a matter of fact in essence, He is common to all and one without a second and beyond description. But as the Jews attribute personality to God and believe that He rules every action of theirs, they ought not to feel helpless.[102]

Against Gandhi's investment in the faith of the Jews as central to the manufacture of their "deliverance," Buber positions a crisis of faith among Jews as equally productive. To extend passages quoted above:

> There is no solution to be found in the life of isolated and abandoned individuals, although one may hope that the spark of faith will be kindled in their great need. The true solution can only issue from the life of a community which begins to carry out the will of God often without being aware of doing so, without believing that God exists and this is His will. It may be found in this life of the community if believing people support it who neither direct nor demand, neither urge nor preach—but who share the life, who help, wait and are ready for the moment when it will be their turn to give the true answer to the enquirer. This is the innermost truth of the Jewish life in the Land, perhaps it may be of significance for the solution of this crisis of faith not only for Jewry but for all humanity.[103]

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[98] Gandhi, "The Jews" (1938): 240, 241; "Is Non-Violence Ineffective," *Harijan* 7 January 1939, CWMG vol 74: 393.
[99] Buber to Gandhi: 8, 6.
[100] Gandhi, "The Jews," (1938): 241.
[101] Gandhi, "The Jews" (1938): 241-242.
[102] Gandhi "The Jews" (1938): 240.
[103] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 8. My Italics.

Against the individual of resolute faith held up by Gandhi, Buber does not believe that faith is essential for "deliverance." Disbelief in God is not an obstacle. But "community"—a community possibly marked by a "crisis of faith"—is essential.

FUTURE

Buber questions the idea of belonging that seems to ground the national independence of Gandhi's *swaraj*, i.e. that of a particular population historically possessing a specific land, against the claim of current outsiders, by virtue of occupying it in the present. Here's Buber:

> What do you mean by saying that a land belongs to a population? Evidently you do not intend only to describe a state of affairs by your formula—but to declare a certain right. You obviously mean to say that a people, being settled on the land, has such an absolute claim to the possession of this land that whoever settles in it without the permission of this people—has committed a robbery.[104]

Buber suggests that "possession" is simply a cover for earlier acts of "conquest and, in fact, a conquest by settlement." Buber opposes this view of belonging as shoring up the status quo, and contrasts Gandhi's position mired in ideas of possession wedded to the past to his own ideas of a future committed to redistribution:

> Possibly the time is not far removed when—perhaps after a catastrophe the extent of which we cannot yet estimate—the representatives of humanity will have to come to some agreement on the re-establishment of relations between people, nations and countries, on the colonization of thinly populated territories as well as on a communal distribution of the necessary raw materials and on a logical intensification of the cultivation of the globe in order to prevent a new, enormously extended migration of nations which would threaten to destroy mankind. Is then the dogma of "possession," of the inalienable right of ownership, of the sacred status quo to be held up against the men who dare to save the situation? For sure, we are witnesses of how the feeling penetrating deep into the heart of national life that this dogma must be opposed, is disastrously misused; but do not those representatives of the most powerful states share the guilt of this misuse, who consider every questioning of the dogma as a sacrilege? [105]

Questioning the dogma of possession is not sacrilege, as Gandhi maintains and which seems to feature centrally in his own demand for *swaraj*, but is in fact a prerequisite for more just ways of being in the world, questioning the past acts of unjust conquest that have led to current possessions. Such just ways of being in the world are located in the future.

FORCE

Finally, Buber targets perhaps the central-most tenet of the personal discipline in Gandhi's *swaraj*: non-violence. Buber outright refutes the primacy of non-violence. He troubles Gandhi's claim that "a stigma" against the Jews is that "our ancestors crucified Jesus" by claiming

[104] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 10. I am not sure exactly where Buber locates this articulation of "a land belongs to a population" by Gandhi, though it is a general sentiment we may find in numerous places.
[105] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 11.

> I would deny, however, that although I should not have been among the crucifiers of Jesus, I should also not have been among his supporters. For I cannot help withstanding evil when I see that it is about to destroy good. I am forced to withstand the evil in the world just as the evil within myself. I can only strive not to have to do so by force. I do not want force. But if there is no other way of preventing the evil destroying the good, I trust I shall use force and give myself up into God's hands.[106]

Buber, unlike Gandhi, does not believe that force is never the answer; force may have a place, but it requires one to resign oneself ultimately to having no guarantee of God's forgiveness. He extends this insistence on the possibility, however reluctant, of violence in his own reading of Indian texts and history against Gandhi's interpretations:

> "India," you say, "is by nature non-violent." It was not always so. The Mahabharata is an epos of warlike, disciplined force. In the greatest of its poems, the Bhagavad-Gita, it is told how Arjuna decides on the battlefield that he will not commit the sin of killing his relations who are opposed to him and he lets fall his bow and arrow; but God reproach him saying that such action is unmanly and shameful; there is nothing better for a knight in arms than a just fight.[107]

Moreover, Buber is not simply claiming that force may be necessary, or that India is not as non-violent as Gandhi suggests based on the Bhagavad-Gita—a text which Gandhi considered the most central of "Indian" sacred texts. Buber is concerned with the primacy of the fusion, not between personal discipline and national independence as in Gandhi's *swaraj*, but with justice: "If I am to confess what is truth to me I must say: There is nothing better for a man than to deal justly—unless it be to love; we should be able to fight for justice—but to fight lovingly."[108]

What we see, then, is not simply a "philosopher of dialogue" challenging Gandhi on a *particular* position but on Gandhi's *universal* position: a *swaraj* which weds personal discipline to national independence through physical suffering, resolute faith, an idealized past, and non-violent action. And by "philosopher of dialogue" we do not mean some imagined philosophical agreement between *Gadamer* and Gandhi, as suggested by comparative political theory projects departing from Dallmayr's inaugural claims, but rather in the concrete and actual disagreement between *Buber* and Gandhi, which suggests a much more critical approach.

Moreover, such disagreement was not merely the product of an "encounter" or "dialogue" between Buber and Gandhi that began when Buber read Gandhi's words in admiration as early as 1922 only to find reasons to challenge Gandhi in 1939. Such disagreement was made possible through a shared lexicon between Europe and India that had been establishing itself for centuries.

### *THE SHARED*

Studies of Gandhi and Buber alike have often included a discussion, usually brief, of their encounter. Yet, in framing this as an encounter these studies suggest an instant or momentary engagement, thereby failing to do justice to the history of a long-shared "Indo-Germanic"

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[106] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 15. Buber initially wrote "enemies of Jesus" before correcting it to "crucifiers of Jesus." This is part, I suggest, of Buber's effort to remove "us/them" language from his letter, although he could not refrain from doing so, as we've seen, when it came to Jews/Arabs.
[107] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 15.
[108] Buber to Gandhi (1939): 16.

lexicon used by both Gandhi and Buber. European influences on Gandhi, including the *Bible* (Jesus, turn the other cheek, etc.), and authors who drew upon the Bible to articulate claims regarding social justice, such as Tolstoy (*The Kingdom is within You* (1894), non-violent resistance), and Ruskin (*Unto This Last* (1860), anti-industrial socialism), are well known. Attending simply to "The Jews" and subsequent articles responding to its critique, Gandhi claims that "the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules over all my actions, worldly and temporal"[109]—though he supplements this with a comparative claims vying for the chronological priority of India: "Buddha taught and practiced the same thing six hundred years before Jesus."[110]

Far more overlooked, however, is the centrality of India to Buber's own thinking, evident in his best known work, *Ich und Du*, completed in 1922—the very same year for which there is evidence of Buber reading Gandhi. One of Buber's fundamental claims in *Ich und Du* is the primacy of relationships over and above the identities being related—we are together before we are apart, not apart before we are together—and how such relationships in the world are bound up with God and yet distinct from God. Indian references not only are a part of such fundamental claims, but feature even more centrally in Buber's critiques of what he calls the "doctrine of immersion" wherein the distinction between self and God is lost. I suggest that the shared lexicon of Buber and Gandhi trouble comparative political theory's emphasis on "dialogue" in a moment of "encounter"—for, if "encounters" between civilization or cultures can be understood as lasting centuries or more, centuries in which such civilization or cultures share idioms in order to understand themselves and each other, what real, critical, descriptive purchase does "encounter" have on the world? Instead, it may be sharing across Buberian relationships, rather than comparing across Gadamerian encounters, that provides a more substantive philosophy of dialogue in doing political theory in our world.[111]

Martin Buber's *Ich und Du* claims that relationship, rather than the contained and coherent individuals that many imagine to do the relating, is the primary, most fundamental building block of human experiential life: "In the beginning is the relation" and "We may suppose that relations and concepts, as well as the notions of persons and things, have gradually crystallized out of notions of relational processes and states."[112] Two sorts of relating are possible: "I and You" or "I and It." In the former lie the spiritual, the open, and the creative; it is a place of possibility. In the latter lie the scientific, the closed, and the causal; it is a place of determinism. We are concerned here with how Buber invokes Indian tropes in order to illustrate and imagine both the primacy of relation as well as the processes of relating. For example, with respect to the primacy of relation, Buber uses the term "Brahman"—a common Hindu term referring to the Ultimate Reality (not to be confused with the upper-caste group that I spell in this dissertation as "Brahmin"):

> The originally relational character of the appearance of all beings persists and remains effective for a long time. This may help us to understand a spiritual element of primitive life that has been discussed a great deal in recent literature without having been adequately interpreted: that mysterious power whose concept has been found with all sorts of variations in the faith and science

[109] Gandhi, "Is Non-Violence Ineffective?" *Harijan* 7 January 1939, CWMG vol 74: 393.
[110] Gandhi, "Love a Universal Virtue" *Harijan* 4 March 1939, CWMG vol 75: 424.
[111] Martin Buber's concerns with fleeing into divine unity and away from a world of relationships took shape through establishing relationships elsewhere in "the East." For an early position with which he disagrees, see Buber "The Teaching of the Tao" in *Pointing the Way* (1957); p xi, 31-58.
[112] Martin Buber, *I and Though*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Touchstone, 1970 (1923)): 69, 70.

> (both are still one at this point) of many primitive peoples—that man or orenda from which we can trace a path all the way to the original significance of Brahman and even to the dynamis and charis of the magical papyruses and the Apostolic letters. It has been designated as a supra-sensible or supernatural force, in terms of our categories which do not do justice to those of primitive man.[113]

Though there are numerous other ways in which Buber relies on orthodox Indian terms to articulate his understanding of relation—such as paraphrasing parables from the Vedic text *Śatapatha-Brâhmaṇa* or "The Brahmana of the Hundred Paths"[114] and referring to the virtues of "Brahmanic sacrifice"[115]—I would like to focus here on how Buber relies on the Upanishads and the Buddha in his relational challenge to "doctrines of immersion." We see here not only the ways in which Buber and Gandhi were operating with a shared lexicon—a lexicon that we may perhaps call "Indo-Germanic," adopting a phrase from an encyclopedia entry contemporaneous with Gandhi and Buber which referred to Vedic literature such as the *Śatapatha-Brâhmaṇa* as "the earliest in the entire domain of Indo-Germanic speech,"[116] echoing observations by Sir Henry Sumner Maine above regarding the intimate coupling of the "thought and enquiry on the Continent, and especially in Germany" with India. Buber also here engages a concern shared by comparative political theory, the idea of "immersion" itself. Immersion has been important in discussing the comparative political theorist's task: going elsewhere, transforming oneself, gaining new perspectives from travel, and returning to engage both home and world. But it is not as if Buber, as a philosopher of dialogue, did *non*-comparative political theory to imagine immersion, and subsequently its critique, which then could be *applied* to or in comparative political theory. Keeping in mind Buber's relational emphasis, his articulation of "immersion," bound within a shared Indo-Germanic lexicon, was in itself "comparative" from the outset; he did not consider "immersion" outside a context of relationships with a wider world.

Buber imagines doctrines of immersion between two poles—one, the Book of John in the Bible, and the other, the Doctrine of Sandilya in the *Khandogya Upanishad*.

> The doctrines of immersion invoke the great epigrams of identification—one of them above all the Johannine "I and the Father are one," and the other one the doctrine of Sandilya: "The All-embracing is my self in the inner heart."
>
> The paths of these two epigrams are diametrically opposed.[117]

Buber claims that in John there is a "Christ whom God begets eternally in the human soul," whereas "[t]he formula of the coronation of the self in the Upanishads—'That is the actual, it is

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[113] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 71.

[114] "The Brahmana of the hundred paths relates that the gods and the demons were once engaged in a contest. Then the demons said: 'To whom shall we offer our sacrifices?' They placed all offerings in their own mouths. But the gods placed the offerings in one another's mouths. Then Prajapati the primal spirit, bestowed himself upon the gods." Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 110-111.

[115] The suggestion seems to be that Brahmanic sacrifices were better able to provide for salvation, liberation, and freedom than the dogmas of "this age" where man is seen as fated, doomed, controlled, and therefore unfree. Even if man is free in terms of these dogmas, he is actually unfree still. Buber invokes ideas of return and rejuvenation. Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 105-107.

[116] Daniel Coit Gilman, Harry Thurston Peck, & Frank Moore Colby, eds. *The New International Encyclopedia*, vol 20 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1905): 32-33.

[117] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 132. Kaufmann provides the citations: John 10:30 & the Khandogya Upanishad, III. 14. 4 with a passage translated by Max Müller, the edition most likely used by Buber. Max Müller, *The Upanishads* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900).

the self, and that you are' takes us far more quickly to the Buddhist's formula of deposition: 'A self and what pertains to the self are not to be found in truth and actuality."[118] Buber fleshes out these rather vague claims as he attempts to distinguish these two positions on immersion, of the Book of John and the Upanishads/Buddha. His conclusion is that both are wrong—for, as he puts it somewhat cryptically, "[a]ll doctrines of immersion are based on the gigantic delusion…that spirit occurs in man. In truth it occurs from man—between man and what he is not" which in turn avoids the "psychical delusion of the spirit."[119] Immersion suggests that spirit is *in* man, which is false because non-relational; spirit is in the relationship *between* self and other, where that self is "I" and the other is (hopefully) a "Thou," allowing an openness of possibility in the relation, rather than an "It," which would close down possibility through determinism. In the more detailed look at both of these doctrines to which we now turn, I suggest that Buber dismisses the Johannine as overly *erotic* and the Buddhist as overly *ascetic*, both destroying the self's capacity to relate.

As we turn to these two "diametrically opposed" "epigrams," we will see in Buber's emphasis on relation over identity further foreshadowings of his later critique of Gandhi, particularly when it comes to Buber's emphasis on the this-worldly and sensuous self in community rather than Gandhi's other-worldly and suffering spirit in the individual. Such an emphasis leaves open, again as we saw in Buber's critique of Gandhi, a productive place for faith's crisis rather than faith's resoluteness. Moreover, I suggest, such an emphasis primes us for a better appreciation of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule; *swaraj* suffers from the flaws of both these doctrines of immersion, seeing *swaraj* apart from the world, both "in" man in erotic "Johannine" fashion while requiring a turn away from the actuality of worldly existence in ascetic "Upanishadic" fashion.

THE BOOK OF JOHN

Let us start with the Book of John and its doctrine of immersion. Buber's first concern is that, superficially, John may suggest that God and man "are one," but "[t]here are truer things there [in the Book of John] than the familiar mystic verse 'I am you, and you are I.'"[120] Buber insists that John, by suggesting God and man as consubstantial, instead indicates a "forever Two" rather than an "are one." This indicates the "primal actuality of dialogue" rather than refer to the unity of some sort of "man's self-sufficient inwardness" where man can turn within to find God.[121] Of course, we've come to expect this emphasis from Buber: an insistence on the primacy of relationship between rather than some pre-existing self-sufficient unity. However, Buber, while desiring such a reading of John, is not convinced that this is the most popular nor even perhaps correct reading of John. For Buber finds himself responding to the mystic claim of "unity within duality" to which Buber is regretfully sympathetic, given that "I, too" allowed mysticism to confound "two kinds of events in which one is no longer aware of duality." Buber unpacks these events in turn.

"First, the soul may become one."[122] This way is the simple assertion of "[c]oncentrated…unity," an event that "occurs not between man and God but in man." One may

[118] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 133. Kaufmann again provides the citation of the Khandogya Upanishad quote, VI. 8.7 from the Max Müller translation, which is repeated elsewhere in VI.
[119] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 141.
[120] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 133.
[121] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 133.
[122] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 134.

think such glory in man should result in automatic exaltation. However, according to Buber, it does not. Something must be "decided deep down": man may of course "proceed to his encounter…with mystery and perfection," but he could also avoid "the supreme duty" and "return into distraction." Rather than unity resulting in deliverance, such unity simply unleashes what Buber calls the "primally secret decision" about whether to work further to achieve perfection through such glory or to allow himself to be distracted by it.[123] And as we've seen with Buber, the "primal" stands in for the open rather than the closed, the between rather than the within, relation rather than self-sufficiency. That is, the first sort of mysticism, where soul concentrates within man as unity, does not produce deliverance but still requires something supplemental—a commitment to maintain the duality of relationship. In sum, the first way of understanding "unity within duality" actually must retain such duality to be meaningful, a duality between men.

Second, there is "that unfathomable kind of relational act itself in which one has the feeling that Two have become One." With the introduction of the term "relational," we may presume that *this* sort of mysticism is the right sort. But it is not, either. "I and You drown," which, however elative, marks only the moment before one resurfaces into the world. "But when one returns into the wretchedness of daily turmoil, transfigured and exhausted, and with a knowing heart reflects on both, is one not bound to feel that Being is split, with one part abandoned to hopelessness?"[124] There is no use of a soul "transported again from this world into that unity, when this world itself has, of necessity, no share whatever in that unity."[125] By living "on earth," the "extravagantly rich heavenly Moment" is meaningless "as long as I still have to live on earth." Buber claims that this second sort of mystic "unity within duality" is simply evidence of being carried away in "the passion of erotic fulfillment…the miracle of embrace" where "I and You drowns in the feeling of a unity that neither exists nor can exist."[126] Yet what exists is not such miraculous, erotic drowning of man and God but instead "the dynamics of the relationship itself which can stand before the two carriers of this relationship…the relationship itself in its vital unity is felt so vehemently that its members pale in the process: its life predominates so much that the I and the You between whom it is established are forgotten" but not erased. And with such relations comes "the central actuality of and every-day hour on earth, with a streak of sunshine on a maple twig and an intimation of the eternal You."[127] In sum, the second way of understanding "unity within duality" also must retain such duality to be meaningful, a duality within the world.

What we have seen above is Buber describing two ways of exploding the mystic "unity in duality" claim many find in the Book of John. The first pulled inwards, where unity with God occurred within man. The second pushed outwards, where unity with God occurred in an erotic drowning. Against both the forms of "unity in duality"—pulling inward and pushing outward—Buber attempts to preserve the duality of I and Thou that is forgotten, but not erased, by the sheer power of what is primal, the relationship, which occurs in our material existence here, and only here, on earth. The Book of John, with its ecstatic, if not erotic, affirmations of "unity in duality" which are mystically located inwards or outwards, seems to erase the duality of I and Thou. Buber suggests instead that the actuality of the relational, when at its most powerful,

[123] Buber *I and Thou* (1970): 134.
[124] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 134.
[125] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 135.
[126] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 135.
[127] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 135-136.

merely makes one forget, but does not erase, such duality. With respect to the pulling inwards, man forgets the "primally secret decision" between perfection and distraction. With respect to pushing outwards, man forgets that such "erotic fulfillment" is a relationship which, if forgotten, would make the world, the daily, the earth appear as a place of abandonment and hopelessness but, if remembered, would make the hours on earth, with its sunshine and maple twigs, as a way to relate to such fulfillment.

## THE UPANISHADS & BUDDHA

To provide a contrast with the immersive doctrine in the Book of John, Buber turns to the doctrine in the Upanishads and the Buddha. Though contrasted with the Book of John, Buber finds John and the Upanishads/Buddha to equally threaten an appreciation of the primacy of relation by erasing duality in favor of a self/God unity. He claims that against the Johannine doctrine of immersion "stands the claim of the other doctrine of immersion that at heart the universe and the self are identical and hence no You-saying can ever grant any ultimate actuality."[128] Buber devotes more time to refusing this immersive doctrine than the Johannine one. Though Buber seems to place the Upanishads and Buddha together as one immersive doctrine in contrast to the immersive doctrine of the Book of John, he deals with them somewhat separately; such separation makes sense, given that the Vedic tradition of the Upanishads was challenged by the Buddha—a fact of which, in Buber's March 1937 edits to the original text, he seems to have been aware.[129] Despite a possibly mistaken historical account, Buber claims we are to presume that both the Upanishads and the Buddha declare the identity of rather than duality between self and universe, thereby eliminating the primacy of relation, and, moreover and hence, disavowing actuality, that is, denying the world in which *relations* are constitutive of the self, rather than the self being constitutive of relations. For our purposes here, as with the Book of John, both engagements with the Upanishads and the Buddha here help us develop a fuller picture of the history of India-Europe couplings whose snapshot we witnessed in Buber's critique of Gandhi's position on the Jew.

The Upanishads, though set up as the flag-bearer of this doctrine of immersion, are dispensed with rather quickly by Buber. Indra, "the prince of the gods," tries to learn from Prajapati, "the creator spirit," how to discover the true self. Prajapati tells Indra, after a century of waiting, that the self, the All-being, is what one finds when one is in a deep sleep without dreams.[130] Indra is concerned: we do not know either that I am nor that there are others in such a sleep—"We are gone to annihilation. I see no profit here." Prajapati simply replies yes, that is

[128] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 136.

[129] The Upanishad texts and the figure of the Buddha are not joined in India. In fact the influence of the Upanishads upon the Buddha is a matter of at times intense scholarly debate, the former associated with Vedic thought and practice and the latter with perhaps the most serious challenge to the Vedic. Yet they do share the fact that they play a central role in articulations of thought in India, and so perhaps can be joined. Yet Buber, at least in his 1937 revisions, seems aware of the distinction between the Vedic period and the Buddhist period, or at least pre-Buddhist and post-Buddhist thought. He writes "The same karma that appeared to earlier generations [March 1937: in pre-Buddhistic India as opposed to Buddhistic India] as a beneficial dispensation—for our deeds in this life raise us into higher spheres in the next—now is seen as tyranny" (Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 103-104). Buber here acknowledges, it seems, the ways in which Buddha *challenged* Vedic presumptions. Yet this was in 1937; given that Buber fuses the Upanishads and the Buddha in the early 1920s with his text *Ich und Du*, in his opposition to the Johannine tradition of immersion, it is unclear whether or not Buber was aware of the importance of such differences.

[130] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 136.

how it is. Buber is concerned, of course, that actuality on this account is "demote[d]…to the level of the merely illusory world." There is simply self annihilation, a non-duality that is not a unity. Against such a view, Buber suggests that actuality is not possible in some unity of being but only in activity between "the unified I and the boundless You"—positioning doing against being, and the between against immersive unity.[131] Such immersive unity wants only the "pure" and essential, whereas Buber is much more interested in the "impure, the sensuous…our emotions…everything must be included and integrated."[132] As Buber writes, "What is wanted is not the abstracted self but the whole, undiminished man. This concentration aims at and is actuality."[133] There is no pure thinking One without thinking about something, and that something is "actuality," the world. The sleep that Prajapati suggests reveals both the true self and All-being as false are, in Buber's language, "The supreme excesses of It-language," providing "an object of living experience but that cannot be lived."[134] At first blush it may seem that one can imagine the annihilation of a thing, and by extension of all things, but certainly one cannot imagine the annihilation of one's own consciousness; yet one's consciousness is a consciousness of the actuality that is the world, so one cannot in fact imagine the annihilation of all things. Buber's point is that the self as an "impure" subject, in the world, *is* the true self.

Buber then moves on to discuss the Buddha, "the 'Perfected' and perfecter."[135] The most striking feature of the Buddha is that he "asserts not," neither that unity does or does not exist, for either there are no "categories of thought" that can comprehend such perfection, or that "the unveiling of such truths would not aid salvation."[136] Using Buber's language, such assertions would pull unity into the deterministic "It-world" of objects and being, rather than the possibility of relations and becoming. In so far as the Buddha recognizes this by his refusal to make assertions one way or the other, "we may follow the Buddha."[137] The Buddha seems to recognize, at least so far, that "truth and actuality" is not "fetch[ed] from our own depths," as self-sufficient beings, but rather "has been inspired in us and apportioned to us," through acts of relation.

But the Buddha quickly moves into terrain with which Buber is far less comfortable. The Buddha's goal, according to Buber,[138] was "'the annulment of suffering'…salvation from the wheel of rebirth." Buber disagrees that getting off the wheel of rebirth should be a goal. In acts of rebirth—"the desire for existence and thus…the compulsion to become again ceaselessly"—Buber sees an opportunity for salvation rather than suffering. He notes, of course, that we do not know that there is the "recurrence" of rebirth. "But," Buber claims, "if we did know that there was recurrence, then we should not seek to escape from it: we should desire not crude existence but the chance to speak in every existence, in its appropriate manner and language, the eternal I of the destructible and the eternal You of the indestructible."[139] That is to say, recurrence should

[131] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 137.
[132] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 137.
[133] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 137.
[134] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 138.
[135] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 138.
[136] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 138. Kaufmann finds it important to note that the German *Heilsleben*, literally life of salvation, is merely being rendered as "salvation" here.
[137] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 139.
[138] Again, Buber's interpretation of the Buddha is simply that, an interpretation; such interpretations would differ from certain, though not all, Non-Brahmin assessments, and would differ dramatically from Ambedkar's interpretation of the Buddha which informed postcolonial articulation of Untouchable politics. See Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, *Buddha or Karl Marx* (Delhi: Siddharth Books 2009 (1945)).
[139] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 139.

not invite renunciatory acts in this life in hopes of hopping off the wheel of rebirth, but the embrace of this and all subsequent lives as moments in which I and Thou, man and world, self and All, can relate to one another in different manners and languages unimaginable in our present existence but possible in another.

Buber's critiques of the Buddha—and subsequently of his "doctrine of immersion"—go further than this matter of rebirth. He agrees with the Buddha's efforts to get away from the "jungle of opinions" in order to achieve "the unification of the soul."[140] But he disagrees with the Buddha that this requires an acknowledgement of the "deception of forms," for this dismisses the world as illusion whereas the world is "for us…not deception but…the reliable world."[141] The Buddha turns us away from "our sense-assured insight into the body" and, by doing so, aims "at the annulment of the ability to say You," that is, to annul the sensuous I located in the actuality of the world. This is not to say that the Buddha does not know how to say "You." It is clear from his "intercourse with his disciples" as well as in his "silence" that he knows "the You-saying to the primal ground," and "it was from a relational process that became substance that his deed came, clearly as an answer to the You"[142]—by which we presume Buber is referring to how the Buddha, as a prince named Siddhartha, renounced his royal lineage and the life of palatial luxury after encountering the suffering of his subjects, dedicating his life to the elimination of suffering itself. But the Buddha is silent on the matter of this relational primal You-saying, a silence that Buber understands to have lent Buddhism to misinterpretation "among the nations."[143] Against the idea that the world is an illusion and an obstacle to salvation, Buber insists "I know nothing of a 'world' and of 'worldly life' that separate us from God."[144]

Finally, Buber criticizes the Buddha for claiming that in the ascetic's body exist both the origin of the world and the annulment of the world. Such a claim "inheres in the It-relation" and removes the relational You: "The world and I include each other reciprocally."[145] Such concerns draw us into Buber's conception of the self more generally. There is a "self-sense" of the I, and a "being-sense" of the world, and "[n]o further 'reduction' is valid here: whoever does not honor the ultimate unities thwarts the sense that is only comprehensible but not conceptual."[146] As with the Book of John, unity is not to collapse duality, the self and the world, but is instead a relational moment in which such duality is forgotten but not erased. The Buddha, by suggesting the world, its origins, and its annulment are somehow within the self, erases such duality and thus the quality of relation that is contingent rather than factual:

> The origin of the world and the annulment of the world are not in me; neither are they outside me; they simply are not—they always occur, and their occurrence is also connected with me, with my life, my decision, my work, my service, and also depends on me, on my life, my decision, my work, and my service. But what it depends on is not whether I "affirm" or "negate" the world in my soul, but how I let the attitude of my soul toward the world come to life, life that affects the world, actual life—and in actual life paths coming from very different attitudes of the soul can cross.[147]

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[140] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 140.
[141] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 140.
[142] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 140.
[143] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 141.
[144] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 143.
[145] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 141.
[146] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 142.
[147] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 142.

It is actual life outside, and how one relates to that outside and how that outside relates to oneself, rather than some relationship of the world within oneself, a relationship that could include annulment, that is definitive. If the drowning of the Book of John suggests the erotic failings of immersive doctrines, such annulment here suggests the ascetic failings of these doctrines.

The preceding discussion of Buber's investment in the primacy of relation and rejection of immersive doctrines, whether Johannine erotic drowning or Buddhist ascetic annulment, provides just a window into the long history of engagement between India and Europe that preceded our "encounter" between Gandhi and Buber over the Jew. That window displays at least three features of a shared SubContinental landscape: sharing in the moment, the historical importance of such sharing, and disagreements over what was shared. First, it shows how Buber and Gandhi are using a shared lexicon involving the Bible, the Buddha, the Upanishads, Nation, Colonization, Salvation, etc. Second, this sharing is not merely idiosyncratic or recent but a structural feature of theoretical production across India and Europe historically, relying on a "Indo-Germanic" lexicon, involving, for example, *brāhmaṇas,* or theological treatises, such as Buber's "Brahamana of the Hundred Paths," which both illuminate "the sacerdotalism of ancient India" as well as provide early examples "of Indo-Germanic speech."[148]

Third, and central to our argument here, this discussion of *Ich und Du* does not merely reveal historical similarities but philosophical differences between Buber and Gandhi as they interpreted this shared Indo-Germanic lexicon, overlapping with while helping us supplement their disagreement later in 1939. Buber understands deliverance as coming from a community whose faith is in crisis, whereas Gandhi sees deliverance as coming from a select few whose faith is resolute. Buber seems invested in the world and the sensuality of it, whereas Gandhi's sense of personal discipline requires a strict renunciation of sensuality and, perhaps, of the world itself. Moreover, these differences reflect on a much larger vision of how people should live together; Buber emphasizes the primacy of relationality, and with it may come a sense of egalitarianism (however, perhaps, naïve with respect to Palestine), whereas with Gandhi there is an emphasis on personal sufficiency and overcoming, and with it may come a sense of superiority over that which is associated with the "'muddy vesture of decay' that our physical body is," perhaps even compatible with a hierarchy of elites capable of turning to the spiritual. Of course, such spiritual sufficiency was deployed by Gandhi in an effort to achieve freedom from or be treated equally by the British through *swaraj*. But our discussion of Buber also indicates how such sufficiency could be perceived as threatening freedom and equality

## SELF-RESPECT AND SELF-RULE

We have seen Martin Buber, a "philosopher of dialogue," disagree with Gandhi. This disagreement was prompted by the Jew but, I have argued, bled into a more general engagement over Gandhi's demand for *swaraj*. Moreover, we have seen that this disagreement was not the project of *philosophical imagining*, a sphere that has hitherto inflected the project of comparative political theory with its reasoned assertions about the compatibility of Gadamer, a philosopher of dialogue, and Gandhi. Instead, this disagreement was one of *historical actuality*, and, moreover, one not taking place in a moment of "encounter" but instead taking part within a long-standing shared lexicon across a long distance relationship. And yet, I've suggested that Buber's

[148] Gilman, Peck, Colby, *New International Encylopedia* (1905): 32-33.

disagreement with Gandhi was not limited to the *historically actual*, such as just what the relationship of the Jews to Germany or Palestine in the 1930s was, but rather involved differences over *philosophical imaginings*, namely over the role of feeling, faith, future, and force when approaching concerns of political life, of how to live well and live well together. Such differences were not the product of absent shared terms of concern between Gandhi and Buber, some being "Indian" and others "European," but because they provided different interpretations of a shared Indo-Germanic lexicon involving Jesus, the Jews, the Bible, Brahma, the Upanishads, and the Buddha.

What if we wanted to distill this disagreement over shared terms of concern even further—how would we phrase it? For such phrasing, let's use the words of Gandhi himself. If we were to do so, we might be less interested in the tension between *swaraj* and British Raj and subsequent issues of encounter that require separation to bring about justice, and more interested, I suggest, in the tension between self-rule and *self-respect* and subsequent issues of relationships that require engagement—mindful of the pitfalls of immersion, both erotic and ascetic—to bring about justice.

The claims Gandhi made in his November 1938 article "The Jews" and subsequent responses to his critics provides us with the central term of concern in this dissertation. Taking some of the quotes mentioned above, but placed within their larger context, Gandhi reveals a fundamental interest in *self-respect* and its preservation:

> Is there a way to preserve their [Jews] self-respect, and not to feel helpless, neglected and forlorn? I submit there is. No person who has faith in a living God need feel helpless or forlorn. Jehovah of the Jews is a God more personal than the God of the Christians, the Mussalmans or the Hindus, though, as a matter of fact in essence, He is common to all and one without a second and beyond description. But as the Jews attribute personality to God and believe that He rules every action of theirs, they ought not to feel helpless. If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest gentile German may, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon; I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment. And for doing this, I should not wait for the fellow Jews to join me in civil resistance but would have confidence that in the end the rest are bound to follow my example. If one Jew or all the Jews were to accept the prescription here offered, he or they cannot be worse off than now. And suffering voluntarily undergone will bring them an inner strength and joy…[149]

Gandhi's insists here on personal discipline, and in fact the action of an isolated individual of unparalleled resolve and faith. This would be repeated in his discussions of the ways in which the Jews can maintain their "self-respect."

In response to critics in January 1939, for example, Gandhi would again emphasize personal, radically individual discipline marked by suffering and faith—this time with respect to German Lutherans. A letter to Gandhi claimed that a Lutheran Pastor named Martin Niemoller, an anti-Nazi Protestant theologian, had been arrested by the Gestapo while other Lutheran Christians who "rejected Nazi militarism" had been for years "[b]uried in prisons and concentration camps." In light of all this, the author claims that Gandhi's "sympathy may do much for the comfort of the Jews, but seems likely to do less for their enlargement." The author, finally, suggested that Christ's own non-violence and "tortured death" did very little good "in a

[149] Gandhi, "The Jews," (1938): 240.

worldly and temporal sense."[150] To these Gestapo arrests and burying of Lutherans in concentration camps, Gandhi replies:

> I do not think that the sufferings of Pasto Niemoeller and others have been in vain. They have preserved their self-respect intact. They have proved that their faith was equal to any suffering. That they have not proved sufficient for melting Herr Hitler's heart merely shows that it is made of a harder material than stone. But the hardest metal yields to sufficient heat…[and] the hardest heart [to]…the heat of non-violence. And there is no limit to the capacity of non-violence to generate heat.

Again, Gandhi emphasizes "self-respect" as central. And, again, "self-respect" is fused with other-worldly considerations of faith, dismissing physical suffering.

We can, of course, engage in apologetics that reveal how Gandhi simply did not understand the possibility of radical evil; he would certainly not be alone in the late 1930s in presuming Hitler and the Nazis had some sort of moral limits.[151] True as that may be, my point is something else. Gandhi insists that the sorts of qualities he associated with *swaraj* and its achievement, with self-rule in terms of a mastery bearing only God as witness involving both personal discipline and national independence and joining suffering to faith, were required *in order* to preserve something he calls "self-respect." Self-respect is not possible *without* self-rule. One's "self-respect" requires the sort of *swaraj* that ensures "the triumph of immortal spirit over the 'muddy vesture of decay' that our physical body is" which may very well "cost him his life."[152] For Gandhi, that is, it is only through self-rule that one can preserve or achieve self-respect.

Let's say, then, that one wished to articulate opposition to Gandhi. Why in the world would someone want to oppose a figure committed to non-violence and national independence against imperial forces? One may be suspicious of the claim that self-rule is required to preserve self-respect or that self-rule leads to self-respect. Instead, perhaps, one may suspect that, in fact, self-respect is required for self-rule or that self-respect leads to self-rule. If we were to share in such suspicions, we would build a bridge over which Buber's disagreements with Gandhi could help make the Non-Brahmin politics of South India a bit more legible to those unfamiliar. Such a bridge, however, does not invite some sort of "cross-cultural" crossing. I have argued that Buber and Gandhi were not engaged in an "encounter" or "dialogue" involving "civilizations" or "cultures" but instead were entrenched in a debate which involved the interpretation of a shared lexicon of "Indo-Germanic" concerns cultivated over centuries. Instead, such crossing involves what we would call "*political theory*"; such crossing is *political* because it is articulating a vision of power's operations and the limits and possibilities of freedom in terms of this vision in the *world*; and it is *theoretical* in that it involves acts of journey and return, in fact involving acts of a long history of journey and return in the *world*, acts central to the word's roots in the Greek term *theoria*.

In South India, from the 1920s-1940s, I submit, the "Self-Respect Movement" articulated concerns Buber shared. Self-Respecters suggested that self-respect rather than self-rule was primary, using the importance of the this-worldly and the physical to trouble the

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[150] Gandhi, "Is Non-Violence Ineffective?" *Harijan* 7 January 1939, CWMG vol 74: 391-393.

[151] The more precise point, perhaps, is that Gandhi mistakenly presumed that settler colonialism was the only form of domination and persecution. My thanks to Wendy Brown for this formulation.

[152] Gandhi, "Talk to Satyagrahi Volunteers," 2 March 1939, published in *Harijan* 25 March 1939, CWMG vol 75: 134-135.

primacy of the other-worldly and spiritual (*feeling*), questioning the existence of God yet still invested in the right (*faith*), looking towards the construction of the future rather than merely resuscitation of the past in order to achieve social justice and material redistribution (*future*), and seeing the presence of forms of violence in Gandhian non-violence (*force*). Moreover, the most prevalent Tamil term that redeemed the "respect" of "self-respect" was *mariyātai*, the Tamil transliteration of the Sanskrit term *mariyāda* meaning border, frontier, limit, and boundary. That is, *mariyātai* literally captures the importance of the *between*, of those relationships which both unite and divide so central to Buber. I suggest that "self-respect" can be read as sharing in Buber's investments in the primacy of relation in giving rise to the self, a self produced through *mariyātai*. Having engaged with Martin Buber as a way of orienting ourselves to the possibility of a "philosopher of dialogue" challenging Gandhi, despite widespread insistence on Gandhi's commensurability with such dialogue's philosophy, we have crossed into the Tamil-speaking South of India. We are now close to this dissertation's subject as a project in SubContinental political theory, the thought and movement of EV Ramasami Naicker and the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule.

Though close, we still encounter resistance—we must encounter resistance. For it is resistance, and what I suggest to be its corollary of immersion, that largely defined the project of comparative political theory at its origins. Both resistance and immersion suggest a world constituted by regionally distributed separate and distinct self-ruling selves, which push outwards or pull within. It is my contention that the originating emphasis on Gandhian *swaraj* has led comparative political theory to demand corresponding definition. How has such resistance and immersion been articulated?

## CHAPTER 3. REORIENT

The previous two chapters suggest a need to reorient the project of comparative political theory [CPT] away from the inaugural, and I will argue persistent, emphases on Gandhian *swaraj* and Gadamerian dialogue. Chapter 1 portrayed the Orient as imbricated in relationships of redemption and silence. Meanings were not simply understood through hermeneutic fidelity but forged through acts of translation, redeemed and fulfilled in movements across tongues that offered moments of gain or repair rather than loss or damage. Yet there was a deafening silence regarding the long history of these movements shared across European Continent and Indian Subcontinent alike and the role of such movements in the articulation of political theory itself—a silence that invited an emergent present to inaugurate novel approaches called "comparative political theory." Chapter 2 provided a moment of disorient, where the transparency of Gandhian *swaraj* and Gadamerian dialogue insisted upon by inaugural articulations of comparative political theory were rendered opaque through complications in the demand for self-rule and alternative dialogical emphases on histories of shared relationships rather than encounters. Any subsequent reorientation in the project of CPT, I submit, would need to critically press forward on three fronts: first, interrogating framings of *resistance* between colonizer and colonized as a model of CPT; second, tempering the attraction of *immersion*, with the collapse of two into one, as a method of CPT; and third, exploring the limits and possibilities of *conversion* as a self-respect alternative to self-rule's demand in CPT.

### RESISTANCE

The self-respect challenge to self-rule focuses on the definition of the self, either in terms of *respect* or *rule*. This stands in contrast to the *swaraj* challenge to British Raj, which focuses on the definition of *raj*, in terms of the *self* (*swa*) or the *other* (British). That is to say, the self-respect challenge to self-rule focuses on the "how" of being oneself, not the "who" of ruling at stake in the opposition between *swaraj* and British Raj. The "self-how?" rather than "who-rule?" question helps push us beyond encounter between "2 whos," as it were, and towards "2 hows" of relationships—respect or rule.

The self-respect challenge to self-rule, as we will see in upcoming chapters, constituted a challenge to the binary inherent in the *swaraj* challenge to British Raj, substituting an appreciation for world-wide interdependence in place of the opposition between national independence and colonial dependence. And yet CPT, given its nascent conflation with Gandhian *swaraj*, has retained the national independence/colonial dependence framework. Despite gestures to the "cosmopolitan," this means CPT has often been more concerned with the divisions of *raj*, separating self from other so that they can better understood, than with what lies between the *self*, engaging each other so that they can be better related. Such concern is evident in CPT's self-definition in terms of a *politics of resistance* and, its corollary, acts of *immersion* between a contained and coherent self and a contained and coherent other. Such concerns are evident not only in arguments *for* but also *of* CPT.

### *FOR*

Arguments for CPT have often drawn their persuasive force from a politics of resistance and the desirability of self-rule. Such desirability relies on a presumed universal interest in a particular "self" defined by a rough fusion of people and place. Its appeal derives from nominally democratic commitments: a government of, by, and for the people. Its target is hegemonic control at home by non-demos agents from abroad.

In order to attend to this fusion, let us begin with Fred Dallmayr's efforts to explicitly inaugurate CPT in the 1990s and early 2000s.[153] These efforts "to inaugurate...the field of 'comparative political theory'" relied on the existence of "(more or less) segregated civilizations of cultural zones" (people) and resistance to the legitimacy of a "restricted geographical setting" in the Euro-Atlantic (place).[154] Dallmayr's concern with political theory is a concern that a geographically specific few (the Western) have dominated a geographically dispersed many (the Non-Western). He sees comparative political theory as a way of resisting "hegemonic and imperialist modes of theorizing"[155] and "the citadel of a global hegemony"[156] associated with "American and European intellectuals"[157] and "the canon of Western political thought from Plato

[153] He was, and remains, editor of the "Global Encounters: Studies in Comparative Political Theory" series which began in 1992 and provided introductions to journals and volumes which claimed an explicitly inaugural function for the field. See Anthony Parel and Ronald Keith, *Comparative Political Philosophy: Studies under the Upas Tree* (New Delhi: Sage, 1992), Dallmayr, "Introduction: Toward a Comparative Political Theory" (1997), Fred Dallmayr, ed. *Border Crossings: Toward a Comparative Political Theory* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 1999).

[154] Fred Dallmayr, "Introduction: Toward a Comparative Political Theory" in *The Review of Politics*, vol 59, no 3, Summer 1997: 421. The journal was a Special Issue titled "Non-Western Political Thought."

[155] Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory" (2004): 249.

[156] This is taken from the "Global Encounters: Studies in Comparative Political Theory" book series description published in Dallmayr, ed., *Border Crossings* (1999).

[157] "Global Encounters: Studies in Comparative Political Theory" book series description.

to Marx or Nietzsche"[158] or "from Plato to Rawls."[159] He places CPT in a new era, "the emergence of the 'global village',"[160] and it is this new place at this new time that adds urgency to a politics of resistance appealing to a democratic sensibility, for "one segment of the world's population cannot monopolize the language or idiom of the emerging 'village,' or global civil society."[161] Such resistance is part of CPT's "long-range political vision" which "supports global democratic cooperation over oligarchic or imperial control and dialogical interaction over hegemonic unilateralism and monologue."[162] Such resistance appears allied with "national independence, or 'liberation,' movements [which] have often been forced into retreat, eclipsed by the upsurge of multiple post- and neocolonial modes of tutelage and subservience"[163] wedded to "the spurious 'universality' traditionally claimed by the Western canon and by some recent intellectual movements"[164] such as " 'formal theory,' which imposes a general, universal 'form' on diverse phenomena, thereby revealing its debt to the universalist claims of the European Enlightenment"[165]; CPT is in alliance against "a Western-style universalism deriving from European Enlightenment thought (with its offshoots of free enterprise and political internationalism)" which marks "the figure between a hegemonic culture (of Western origin) and the array of not-yet-assimilated and perhaps inassimilable indigenous cultures." [166] Subsequently, Dallmayr has described comparative political theorists in almost heroic terms as those who move "beyond moral universalisms"[167] by joining "theory and praxis,"[168] distancing themselves from "uninvolved or neutral spectators," and "shoulder[ing] the task of being critics of the status quo, the task of challenging and resisting the powers that be which are bent on domination, exploitation, and mayhem." Dallmayr's inaugural remarks on CPT were heavily steeped in the politics of resistance and language echoing demands for self-rule.

By focusing on self-rule and resistance, I do not wish to detract from the rich nuances in Dallmayr's work. If anything, Dallmayr and subsequent arguments for and of comparative political theory are committed to resisting the "simple cancellation of Western categories" in interrogating "Eurocentrism."[169] For Dallmayr, this resistance requires moving "beyond the conundrums of total incorporation or expulsion," [170] away from an opposition between

[158] Fred Dallmayr, "Introduction: Toward a Comparative Political Theory" (1997): 421. The journal was a Special Issue titled "Non-Western Political Thought."
[159] Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory" (2004): 250.
[160] Fred Dallmayr, "Introduction: Toward a Comparative Political Theory" (1997): 421.
[161] Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory" (2004): 249.
[162] Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory" (2004): 254.
[163] Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory" (2004): 250.
[164] Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory" (2004): 253. He quotes Parel & Keith *Upas Tree* (1992) as the first book in the field: "As he noted in the book's introduction, scholarship in political theory has come almost exclusively to mean the study of modern Western political thought; it assumes that modern Western texts are 'products of universal reason itself.' However, this assumption has become dubious. In fact, Parel found 'mounting evidence' to suggest that Western claims of universality are 'questioned by other cultures, or at least by significant representatives of these cultures,' all of which renders comparative political theorizing today 'both opportune and intellectually satisfying.'" (20)
[165] Fred Dallmayr, "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory" (2004): 249.
[166] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 135.
[167] Dallmayr, "Political Theory: What Is It Good For?" Takashi Shōgimen & Cary J. Nederman, eds. *Western Political Thought in Dialogue with Asia* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008): 20.
[168] Dallmayr, "Political Theory: What Is It Good For?" (2008): 22.
[169] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 118.
[170] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 121.

"homogenized...identity" and "complete lack of cultural distinctiveness,"[171] towards a "cross-cultural encounter, which has to start 'from the ground up' and in a dialogical fashion, offering only the uncertain prospect of a learning experience,"[172] not "an 'anything goes' relativism or a 'melting pot' confusion, but rather an open-minded learning process across boundaries."[173] Dallmayr claims an "intellectual background...of Continental phenomenology" as leading him "to India and cross-cultural inquiry"[174] and thus is attentive to the difference between what he refers to as "context freedom and socio-political freedom or emancipation."[175] Dallmayr's phenomenological commitments to "life world" and the "context sensitive," rather than the "universally applicable," do anything but blind him to the dangers of the "lure of essentialism"; for example, Dallmayr resists "nostalgic traditionalism" where such tradition invites "discriminat[ion]...on the basis of 'birth, region, sex and creed'" in favor of "freedom."[176] Rather than suggest that "individual human emancipation can simply be canceled or suspended" by investing wholly and entirely in the life world of discriminatory tradition, Dallmayr believes that "there may be room for sustained reciprocal questioning of premises and objectives leading both to deepened self-understanding and to a more ready acceptance of cultural diversity."[177]

Yet why believe that the "encounter" or the "dialogical" or greater "diversity" will result in emancipation? As we have seen, Dallmayr does not draw only upon the nuances captured by the aims of "encounter" and the "dialogical" to animate his arguments for comparative political theory as a project of liberation from Western hegemony. At some level, perhaps Dallmayr is concerned that such rhetoric may be ineffective in marshaling support for the cause of comparative political theory. Instead, his inaugural claims draw upon the persuasive force, and the democratic sensibility at which these claims are directed, of the demand for self-rule and a politics of resistance.

Subsequent arguments for CPT have echoed Dallmayr's inaugural claims. These arguments have been underwritten by the logic of the demand for self-rule and the politics of resistance for much of their persuasive force, largely relying on a fusion of people and place opposing non-Euro-Atlantic particularity to Euro-Atlantic universals. Arguments have been made to avoid "frames of inquiry that turn on European categories," "Eurocentrism," and "modern Western epistemological debates, often those of post-Enlightenment critique" in order to argue that "foreign traditions, cultures, and practices may offer not only counterpoints to Western experience, but also additional means of undertaking inquiry."[178] Related arguments have been made against "a political theory in which ideas from non-Western civilizations remain contained within their own traditions, speaking only to and for their adherents" and the subsequent invitation to "self-consciously grapple[] with the admittedly difficult task of bringing ideas ['from the non-Western world'] into discourse," e.g. to "bring the idea of Gandhi or Confucius to bear on our discussion of freedom or justice, in the same way that we would use

[171] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 119
[172] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): x
[173] Dalmayr, "Beyond Monologue" (2004): 253.
[174] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 147.
[175] Dallmary, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 143
[176] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 136, 140, 143.
[177] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 147.
[178] Leigh Kathryn Jenco, "What Does Heaven Ever Say?" *The American Political Science Review* 101:4 (2007): 742, 741, 745.

Rawls, Marx, or Hobbes" which constitute "ways of understanding the political world that trouble settled Western ones."[179]

These arguments, which presume a difference of tradition (people) between West and Non-West (place) with respect to political theory, play out either when those differences are positioned within a traditional core or at the periphery of a tradition. Whether orthodox centers are emphasized—e.g. "what ought to be of interest to comparative political theory is the dispute between two fairly autonomous, more or less identifiable traditions of thought"[180]—or whether encounters at the margins are emphasized—e.g. "the most interesting and relevant guidance on matters of public life involving multiple traditions comes not from the orthodox doctrinal center of any given tradition but rather from thinkers and texts that dissent from orthodoxy, formulating hybrid and synthetic doctrines that lie at the blurry intersections of boundaries between traditions"[181]—in both cases the value of the tradition relies on an accurate historical account or a sound hermeneutic encounter which would shore up a particular "self" of self-rule to resist domination. The logic underlying the demand for self-rule and the politics of resistance has found echoes elsewhere, such as in warnings against the "domestication of fundamental differences" between traditions when doing comparative political theory (how are fundamental traditional differences recognized?), [182] or as in the claim that "comparative political theory...enables an approach toward cultural difference...in order to enlarge and make more complex an understanding of the dynamics of power at work within the political and its ongoing claims to sovereignty" (CPT as a focus on sovereignty, e.g. self-rule?).[183] Each of these descriptions of CPT echo the fundamental claims in Dallmayr's inaugural arguments for comparative political theory: a politics of resistance against domination which operates through the geographically restricted practice of political theory, positioning Non-Euro-Atlantic particularity against Euro-Atlantic universals, presuming distinct cultural traditions, arguments which derive their rhetorical force from a demand for self-rule.

### *OF*

The centrality of self-rule is present not only in arguments *for* but also in arguments *of* comparative political theory. Such projects tend either to focus on the explicit demand for "self-rule" itself and/or focus on a politics of resistance that presumes the demand for self-rule. Again, we may see such projects as following along Dallmayr's own investments in CPT during the 1990s which were inspired by the demand for self-rule: "Our contemporary global situation is in urgent need of....the imaginative reconceptualization and experimental testing of new political institutions and practices suitable to democratic self-rule in different contexts," which would be enabled by attending to diverse "cultural traditions" understood as "rich reservoir[s] of

[179] Farah Godrej, "Towards a Cosmopolitan Political Thought," *Polity* 31:2 (2009): 161.
[180] Andrew March, "What is Comparative Political Theory?", *The Review of Politics* 71:4 (2009): 554. March here is largely rearticulating the position of Parel in the allegedly first "comparative political theory" text published, *Comparative Political Philosophy: Studies under the Upas Tree* (1992). He further claims that "Comparisons are possible only between mutually recognized philosophical traditions" (14).
[181] Farah Godrej, "Response to 'What Is Comparative Political Theory?'" *The Review of Politics* 71:4 (2009): 572. The language of hybridity and the inbetween here echo much earlier concerns; see Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routeledge, 1994).
[182] Stuart Gray, "A Historical-Comparative Approach to Indian Political Thought: Locating and Examining Domesticated Differences," *History of Political Thought* 31:3 (2010): 391.
[183] Carlo Bonura, "Political Science, the Anxiety of Interdisciplinary Engagement, and Southeast Asian Studies" in *Knowing Southeast Asian Subjects* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007): 223.

alternative resources or sources of inspiration" which provide resources for "rethinking [the] central categories of modern politics."[184] Across a whole variety of "areas" of the world, projects associated with CPT have focused on the "self" and its "rule," ranging from studies of Gandhian "self-rule" tied to "ancient notion[s]" and "tradition"[185] where "it is the anti-traditional and universalistic pretensions or assumptions of modern western philosophy that...Gandhi...questions,"[186] across the Middle-East where it is a wonder over a "definition of legitimate rule" and resistance to "modern forms of sovereignty and the Western rationalist epistemology that justifies them,"[187] or to China focused on "how to establish a self-ruling community" through ideas "less Eurocentric" that enables appreciation of "a different theory" in which one can explore "indigenous traditions" rather than "Western traditions."[188] The field of CPT seems to revolve around the demand for self-rule and a politics of resistance premised on the *absence* of shared traditions across long distance relationships, a demand and a politics that echo the inaugural claims by Dallmayr and subsequent conceptualizations of the field.

As suggested earlier, however, it is not clear that the demand for self-rule and the politics of resistance that have driven both arguments for CPT and arguments of CPT are in fact what drive the project of CPT itself. Such arguments have been coupled with key ethical components, e.g. justice in the global village, and methodological components, e.g. a hermeneutics wedded to immersion, which may in fact suggest that self-rule and resistance, wherein a Non-Euro-Atlantic particularity opposes Euro-Atlantic universality, could be de-emphasized if not abandoned. Dallmayr's inaugural CPT claims were motivated by a belief that "theorizing in a comparative...vein may contribute to deeper cross-cultural understanding and hence to peace in the global village"[189]—a belief which, for Dallmayr and others, took on a heightened sense of

[184] Dallmayr, *Alternative Visions* (1998): 212-213. Dallmayr provides a balanced account of the use of culture. On the one hand he claims that "In opposition to both nation builders and central planners, culturalists assert the primacy of the lifeworld or culture, a diversified fabric of local customs and religious beliefs, over state-centered politicsl"which operatre "from the top down" and violate "popular self-determination and democratic self-rule (or *swaraj*)" (212) while on the other hand "culturalists must remember that, especially in modern times, culture cannot be a replacement of, or substitute for, politics; recourse to indigenous traditiosn cannot offer a dispensation from political thougth and action." Dallmayr is influenced by Herder and Gandhi. On Herder: "Herder's countermove to this comsopolitanism [where 'some intellectuals...speak on behalf of the human species or humanity at large without any concern for the agonies and aspirations of actual human beings'] was not antihumanism but Humanität seen as devotion to concreate human beings in their time and place. This concept—a close corollary of his populism or trust in popular self-rule" was part of his "kind of grassroots humanism, this accent on local and temporal concereteness, that has earned Herder the charge of ethical or cultural relativism" whereas in fact Herder "emphasizes the nonexclusiveness of local contexts and the importance of cross-cultural learning..."(39-40). On South Asia/Gandhi: "In opposition to both nation builders and central planners, culturalists assert the primacy of the life-world or culture, a diversified fabric of local customs and religious beliefs, over state-centered politics. The chief objection of this third camp is to the presence of public expertise manifest in the program of 'social engineerring' from the top down, which is felt to be in violation of the deeper aspirations of popular self-determination and democratic self-rule (or *swaraj*)" (212).

[185] Anthony Parel "Gandhian Freedoms and Self-Rule" in Parel, ed *Gandhi, Freedom, and Self-Rule* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2000): 7.

[186] Parel and Keith *Uppas Tree* (1992): 14.

[187] Roxanne Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999): 121, 8.

[188] Leigh K. Jenco, *Making the Political: Founding and Action in the Political Theory of Zhang Shizhao* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 16, 10, 9.

[189] Dallmayr, "Introduction: Toward a Comparative Political Theory" (1997): 427

importance after "the terrorist attacks of 9/11."[190] If CPT's purpose is to contribute to the establishment of "a just global peace,"[191] then self-rule and resistance may be instrumental, and not essential, to CPT.[192]

However, if CPT is driven by concerns to remedy injustice, and arguments of and for CPT demonstrate investments in demands for self-rule and a politics of resistance between Non-Euro-Atlantic particulars and Euro-Atlantic universals, one may conclude that CPT understands such concerns and investments to be related. This relationship may seem to be a genetic feature of CPT itself, given how the figure most associated with the demand for "self-rule," Gandhi, has not only prominently featured in arguments of and for CPT—as we saw above and as is present plentifully elsewhere[193]—but was in fact singularly influential upon Dallmayr himself, as we have seen.[194] The scale of Dallmayr's insistence upon Gandhi should not go unemphasized in justifying comparative political theory itself. Dallmayr believed during CPT's inaugural moments in the 1990s that "denounc[ing] elitist and exploitative structures both at home and abroad" was transparently synonymous with "seeking to reorient India along more Gandhian lines."[195] Dallmayr insisted that Gandhi was a model of the practice of justice—"Gandhi's conduct" was marked by "[a]ctive engagement on the side of the oppressed and underprivileged"[196]—and a culturally bounded indigeneity—"Gandhi sought to articulate his views in the vernacular idiom of Indian language and through appeal to indigenous traditions. Thus, the notion of *swaraj* (self-rule) was borrowed from....tradition...but, in the context of our century, acquired the connotations of resistance to colonial hegemony and of local governance"[197]—central to the discipline of comparative political theory. Dallmayr "harbor[s] a strong sympathy" with positions in which there are "healing powers latent or buried in indigenous traditions, especially powers like those mobilized in the Gandhian struggle for independence" which contrast with "modern (Cartesian) dualism and dichotomies."[198] Subsequent "provocation[s]" by others to go "beyond the boundaries of the Anglo-American world" and engage "comparative political thought" have likewise insisted upon Gandhi as

[190] Dallmayr "Beyond Monologue" (2003): 250. Godrej, "Towards a Cosmpolitan Political Thought" (2009) also emphasizes 9/11.
[191] Dallmayr "Beyond Monologue" (2003): 259
[192] This seems to be the suggestion in Godrej, "Towards a Cosmopolitan Political Theory" (2009): 138-139. On this account "it is important...to rely on the West/non-West distinction" merely strategically, not due to "an understanding of 'traditions' as bounded by geography or culture" but rather because of previous "patterns of privilege and exclusion." It is unclear how this squares with Godrej's investments in Gandhi.
[193] Aside from the work of Parel and more recently Godrej, Bhikhu Parekh's work provides another illustration. See, for example, his *Gandhi's Political Philosophy: A Critical Examination* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1989).
[194] See also Dallmayr, *Alternative Visions* (1998), Chapter 4 "Satyagraha: Gandhi's Truth Revisited," for a flavor of the praise: "As Gandhi's life amply testifies, abandonment of ideological blueprints does not in any way signal a retreat into apathy or sheer passivity, just as 'experimenting with truth' was not a recipe for cynicism or willful relativism...Shunning the vanity of managerial power and control thus implies an active and concrete engagement in the affairs of the world that releases the 'power of the powerless' beyond the pale of resentment, vengefulness or malice." (117)
[195] Dallmayr, *Alternative Visions* (1998): xii
[196] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 87
[197] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientlaism* (1996): 173.
[198] Dallmayr, *Alternative Visions* (1998): 234, 230. Dallmayr is referring to CSDS (the Center for the Study of Developing Societies), particularly the work of Ashis Nandy.

model, suggesting that, for example, "the political theory of Mahatma Gandhi provides us with a novel way to understand and arbitrate the conflict among moral projects."[199]

Regardless of the exact role of Gandhian self-rule in arguments of and for CPT, the following question arises. What can self-rule possibly mean when we live in a world of shared traditions across long distance relationships? In such a world, correct understandings through encounters may not bring freedom. Instead, feedom may be better achieved by pursuing past, present, and future ways of being together through just relations, relations which come before, rather than are produced by, "self-rule." Subsequently, we may not be interested in resisting "the citadel of a global hegemony," or believe in the sensibility behind pitting Non-Euro-Atlantic particularity against Euro-Atlantic universals. We may, in fact, instead be curious to know more about those that resisted, rather than endorsed, Gandhi himself.

### *IMMERSION*

The politics of *resistance* presumes a contained and coherent self and a contained and coherent other. Such presumptions need not entail resistance; such a self and other could instead become *immersed* in one another. In both cases, separate and distinct cultural pieces are placed in the world, but the later has a more feel-good vibe of inclusion rather than the former's discipline-&-mobilize one of exclusion. Immersion sounds…refreshing, where "literal or imaginative exposures to what is unfamiliar can inaugurate precisely the kind of dislocation from which it becomes possible to learn from other people and practices, gain critical purchase on one's own, and discern formerly unrecognized patterns and connections."[200] From a philosophy of dialogue perspective inflected by Gadamer, demanding better understandings through encounters—"[t]ransposing ourselves" which "involves rising to a universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other"[201]—might suggest the important possibilities of "immersion" in order to do comparative political theory.

Immersion has figured in different ways in recent projects of comparative political theory. There is the suggestion that "[a]fter serious study and immersion," one need not be distant from "otherness," but become one with it, operating "*within*...non-Western traditions" rather than remain outside.[202] There has been the subsequent critique that this idea of immersing and operating within some other may not be available for places where "[t]he symptoms of Eurocentrism are so pervasive that the goal of sanitizing scholarship from any sign of it simply by remaining immersed in a non-Western tradition of thought will soon throw up limitations."[203]

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[199] Farah Godrej, "Nonviolence and Gandhi's Truth," *Review of Politics* 68:2 (2006): 317, 287. This article would also be referred to in the essay and response between March and Godrej in *The Review of Politics* 71:4 (2009).
[200] Euben, *Other Shore* (2007): 23. See also Jenco, "What Does Heaven Ever Say?" (2007): 753.
[201] Gadamer, *Truth & Method* (1989): 305.
[202] Jenco, "What Does Heaven Ever Say?" (2007): 753, fn 12.
[203] Farah Godrej, *Cosmopolitan Political Thought: Method, Practice, Discipline* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 103. Godrej goes on to question our ability to identify the indigeneity and coherence of any tradition, of "the characteristics of autonomy and distinctiveness in each tradition." Yet Godrej still adheres to the actuality of the coherent and contained, of the "unique" and "indigenous." She turns to "Gandhi…as an exemplar of the ability to unearth a uniquely Indian theorizing about politics through excavation and revivication," "one of the few figures in modern Indian history—along with Tagore, Tilak, Aurobindo, Ambedkar—to attempt the operation of bringing *intellectual* life to premodern Indian concepts and categories," invoking Anthony Parel to claim Gandhi as thinking about politics in a "recognizably Indian" way and Bhikhu Parekh to claim that Gandhi was "one of the first non-Western thinkers of the modern age to develop a political theory grounded in the unique experiences and articulated in terms of the indigenous philosophical vocabulary of his country." Aside from whatever reservations we may have

In both cases, immersion, whether as a mandate for the possible "passage from conversation, to conversion" or the impossible "goal of sanitizing scholarship," are premised on the desirable fusion with something called the "non-West."

We will recall, of course, Buber's concerns with "doctrines of immersion," for they either fall into the Johannine tradition in which self and other become drowned in one another through erotic union or into the Upanishadic/Buddhist tradition in which unity is achieved through the ascetic annulment of the self altogether. We may be concerned that immersive demands framed in terms of operating "within" through "conversion" or the "limitations" of "sanitizing" may lend themselves up to Buber's worries with the erotic and the ascetic modes of immersion, respectively. In either case, Buber claims, as we've seen, that "[a]ll doctrines of immersion are based on the gigantic delusion…that spirit occurs in man. In truth it occurs from man—between man and what he is not" which in turn avoids the "psychical delusion of the spirit."[204] What may be required is not the ecstasy of drowning through conversion nor the self-flagellation of limited sanitization but instead a better, richer, more attentive appreciation toward, as Buber claimed, "the central actuality of and every-day hour on earth, with a streak of sunshine on a maple twig and an intimation of the eternal You." What is desirable in the non-West may in fact be a product of a shared tradition hidden, and yet made possible, by long distance relationships in the world, our world, a world we all always already share.

What was particularly significant about Buber's discussion of the "doctrines of immersion" is that his very terms of discussion—involving the Book of John, the Upanishads, etc.—were always already framed by what Dallmayr would understand to be "cross-cultural" terms, as it were. That is to say, an appreciation of immersion is not the product of the contained self (West) considering a union or unity within a contained other (non-West), but rather, immersion's appreciation is produced through simply dismissing the relevance of the idea "containment" altogether. Or, in other words, immersion may lose its capacity to refer to anything in particular, for it seems as if it could be immersion all the way down. Immersion creates, *pace* Buber, a "psychical delusion" that there is something other than relation, "between man and what he is not." The world may not be one inviting us into the "psychical delusions" of immersion, but rather to find the ways in which we all always already rely upon each other. Immersive projects, on the other hand, operate along the same self/other binary as do projects of resistance. Such projects, in other words, remain committed to a self-ruling self and thus a politics of "self-rule."

### *CONVERSION*

The above inflections of comparative political theory—"for," "of," and ""—have not simply been an innocent, though perhaps misled, bystander to our understandings of the world and historical events within that world. Their emphasis on self-rule, heavily inflected by a confrontation between *swaraj* and British Raj, has been the consequence of, and has had consequences for, understandings of 20th century Indian political thought and event. What we find is a tendency to impose colonial India's resistance to the world's largest empire, premised on "self-rule," upon postcolonial India's existence as the world largest democracy. Such

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at this point about such invocations of Gandhi, reservations deepened by her arguably narrow scope of relevant figures in modern Indian history (focusing only on those accessible to English speakers), Godrej still seems to hold onto an investment in "immersion" of oneself in the other, and thereby retains a distinction between coherent and contained traditions of political theory in the West and non-West. (108-109)

[204] Buber, *I and Thou* (1970): 141.

readings reinscribe the consequences of what I suggest to be seriously impoverished readings of India's place in the world and the world's place in India, and how such impoverished readings came not only to inform the nascent field of "comparative political theory" but, additionally, have come to distort returns to India itself.

One such distorted event—one that serves as the point of departure for this dissertation, to which we'll return in detail in Chapter 6 and further detail in Appendix A—is the mass conversion of untouchables to Islam in the village of Meenakshipuram, Tamil Nadu, on 19 February 1981. I argue that Dallmayr coopts this significant postcolonial event with Gandhian terms of concern, while, I suggest, it is the insistence on using such Gandhian terms of concern that is actually the problem, foreclosing rather than encouraging richer theoretical approaches to political life. Dallmayr in the 1990s, as he claimed to inaugurate the project of comparative political theory, was happy to glide from the framework of Gandhian *swaraj* to the event of Meenakshipuram's conversion. Yet, as we shall see below and in Part II, Meenakshipuram, as an event itself, was far more inflected by EVR's self-respect challenge to Gandhian self-rule—not concerned so much with *raj,* and whether it was to be constituted by *self* or *other*, as much as with *self*, and whether it was to be constituted by *rule* or *respect*. In this concluding section of Part I, we see once again that CPT thereby reveals its insistent investments in Gandhian *swaraj* and, subsequently, eclipsing the world itself.

Dallmayr's text *Beyond Orientalism* (1996), often associated with the birth of comparative political theory as a field, expresses an interest in "conversion." As we saw above in our discussion of "immersion," "conversion" has persisted in comparative political theory. Dallmayr understands conversion as bad and good. There are moments in which Dallmayr's concern with conversion is opposed to his ideal of "dialogue." As he refers to the chapters of his book discussing "cross-cultural encounter": "Following a path of normative-ethical ascent, the discussion ranges from strategies of conquest, conversion, and assimilation to more benign forms of interaction, culminating in a model of dialogical reciprocity and exchange."[205] Conversion is on the low end of his normative-ethical scale, writing that conversion and conquest, as "two modes of outreach[,] share one prominent feature: the denial of meaningful human difference."[206] Yet Dallmayr also sees promise in acts of conversion: "conversion does not always serve the purposes of colonizers or colonial rule, but may occasionally have oppositional and even subversive connotations."[207] However, I argue that this passage in which Dallmayr attempts to salvage conversion from its association with conquest by associating it with subversion is, in fact, far more damaging to the project of comparative political theory than his earlier dismissal.

Dallmayr's salvation of "conversion" turns centrally, as one may anticipate, on Gandhi and *swaraj*. Following up on his claim for conversion's occasional "oppositional and even subversive connotations," Dallmayr continues:

> That has to do with a central feature of religious faith: the ability of such faith to transcend prevailing social and political conditions and hence to become a resource for liberation rather than domination. Thus, in the case of India, Mahatma Gandhi was able to invoke the Hindu notions of "swaraj", "satyagraha" [soul-force, non-violent resistance], and 'ramaraja' ["Rule of Ram," the hero of the Sanskrit epic *Ramayana*] as guideposts in his struggle against British colonial

[205] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): xi.
[206] Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 9.
[207] Dallmayr *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 13.

> oppression. On the other hand, especially after the accomplishment of independence, various groups in Indian society disenfranchised by the prevailing caste system became willing targets of conversion to Islam and Buddhism (occasionally to Christianity), sometimes on a large scale...[I]n 1956 at least 3 million and perhaps as many as 20 million untouchables were converted to Buddhism in the state of Maharashtra alone. Again, during more recent decades, entire villages of untouchables have reportedly been converted to Islam, especially in the state of Tamil Nadu. Although in all these cases the role of political and financial manipulation cannot be entirely ignored, the deeper reason for these events was surely the desire of disadvantaged people for greater freedom and respect (however elusive this goal may be under the circumstances).[208]

On the one hand, we have colonial India led by Gandhi's "religious faith" defined by "Hindu notions" like *swaraj*. On the other hand, we have postcolonial India filled with "disenfranchised groups" converting to Islam, Buddhism, and, parenthetically, Christianity. Let us read this passage closely, for it is an example in a, if not the, foundational comparative political theory text where the colonial and postcolonial 20th century history of India—a region which Dallmayr found central and which led him to inaugural and subsequent claims, as we've seen—is juxtaposed.

We are, of course, unsurprised by the fact that colonial India is represented by Gandhi and "Hindu notions" regarding *swaraj*. That has been par for the course. But what is Gandhi and *swaraj* doing here in a discussion of conversion? Gandhi was famously opposed to religious conversion, particularly of untouchables to anything other than Hinduism. Gandhi and *swaraj* don't seem to be illustrating Dallmayr's claims about conversion as much as about his belief in the "transcending" feature of religious faith to push beyond current oppressive conditions. Yet there is a *particular* religious faith that Gandhi is invested in, of course: e.g. "Hindu notions." Now turn to "the other hand," which discusses Indian postcolonial history, "after the accomplishment of independence," that is, after the achievement of *swaraj*. "Hindu notions" are not mentioned. Instead we have conversion to Buddhism and Islam. Dallmayr seems to have a clear preference for which sort of notions—Hindu, Buddhism, or Islam—are, in a sense, purer. Dallmayr suggests the influence of "political and financial manipulation" with respect to conversions to Buddhism and Islam, despite people being "willing targets," thereby questioning the extent to which these are "faiths." Such "manipulation" does not seem to be attached to Gandhi's "Hindu notions" deployed "in his struggle against British colonial oppression," however. "Hindu notions" appear to be more like "religious faith" while conversion to Buddhism and Islam seem marred by the spectre of "political and financial manipulation."

Yet we may wonder about whether those concerned with "British colonial oppression" were the same as those "disenfranchised by the prevailing caste system." Or, in fact, were those caught up with "Hindu notions" against the British part of a class in colonial India that was, and would be in postcolonial India, separate and distinct from the classes converted to Buddhism and Islam because of caste oppression? That is to say, were Gandhi and those demanding *swaraj* really the same as, or did they even hold positions compatible with, the "disadvantaged people" who desired "greater freedom and respect" in postcolonial India?

No.

The 1956 mass conversion of untouchables to Buddhism Dallmayr mentions was led by, Ambedkar, the man considered to represent the Untouchables, who studied law in England, political science at Columbia, would be selected to lead the committee in charge of drafting a

[208] Dallmary, *Beyond Orientalism* (1996): 13-14.

constitution for Independent India, and was a long-time opponent of Gandhi. Ambedkar's 1945 polemic *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables* was the culmination of decades of vehement opposition to Gandhi, expressing concern that Gandhi and Congress were not interested in the uplift of Untouchables but instead wished to prevent them from becoming a separate class by demanding that they submit to upper-caste Hindu forces in Congress. He further expressed concern that Gandhism was a reactionary philosophy that would condemn India to life in backward villages rather than embrace possibilities for greater equality and technological innovation. Yet, Dallmayr's passage does not mention Ambedkar, and by so doing, he seems to suggest a continuous struggle involving conversion and religious faith against oppression that ran from Gandhi's "Hindu notions" such as *swaraj* through the mass conversion to Buddhism led by Ambedkar in 1956. Yet there is no such continuity. Ambedkar's Buddhism *opposed* Gandhi's Hindu notions.

The second postcolonial moment of conversion, demonstrating Dallmayr's transcending feature of religious faith, is the "reported" conversion of "entire villages of untouchables…to Islam, especially in the state of Tamil Nadu." Dallmayr is referring to the mass conversion of nearly 200 untouchable families to Islam on 19 February 1981 in the otherwise non-descript village of Meenakshipuram, Tamil Nadu. Following this mass conversion, which was widely reported in the media, other villages followed. But Dallmayr fails to discuss how this "other hand" is holding a very important set of cards. For right-wing Hindu organizations immediately seized upon this conversion as a new and direct threat to Mother India funded by oil-rich Islamic states in the Persian Gulf. The story's most dramatic articulation claims that these organizations consolidated around Meenakshipuram and from there set themselves on the path that would lead the Hindu right to national power in the 1990s, a decade marked by massive economic liberalization and the first major nuclear weapons' tests since 1974.[209] In the wake of the event, the media was flooded with concerns over Meenakshipuram's relationship to democracy: "Meenakshipuram has thus become the symbol of the continuing struggle for democracy and secularism because without equality, democracy cannot exist and without religious freedom, secularism is inconceivable and meaningless."[210] And scholarship about the world's largest democracy since has unanimously claimed "To understand current events...we must go back to 1981 when...Dalits [Untouchables] in Meenakshipuram, Tamilnadu, underwent mass conversion to Islam."[211] Something more than the "central feature of religious faith…to transcend…to become a resource for liberation rather than domination," and certainly something of far greater complexity than some mere *extension* of Gandhi's "Hindu notions" such as *swaraj* from the colonial to the postcolonial period, is going on here.

What I would like to suggest is that once again Dallmayr, and related projects of comparative political theory, share in a widespread failure to push beyond the primacy of "swaraj" in 20th century Indian political thought or its analogues elsewhere. In this failure, there are casualties caused by a certain casualness; figures of vehement opposition or events of great significance get washed out by the blinding spotlight on Gandhi. With respect to Meenakshipuram, this casualness is an effect of, rather than a cause of, widespread failings in the area studies literature itself. To take the most important failing, at the time of the conversion, the

[209] See also Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths* (New York: Berg, 2001) whose point of departure is these tests (1).
[210] Syed Shahabuddin, "Conversions: A Quest for Equality or a Challenge to Hindu India?" in *Indian Express* 6 September 1981.
[211] David Smith, *Hinduism and Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003): 184, 193.

President of the Tamil Nadu unit of the Jammaat-e-Islami Hind, an influential Islamic organization in South Asia founded in 1948, was reported to have "described it [Meenakshipuram] as the biggest conversion in the history of Tamil Nadu, about 2,000—and argued that it is easier to conduct such conversions in the South because of the movement against caste Hindus launched by EV Ramaswami Naicker as long ago as 1921."[212] The clear association with EVR, and with him the self-respect challenge to self-rule, has been lost in the area studies literature, Dallmayr's account that relied on that literature, and subsequent projects in comparative political theory themselves. Just as the postcolonial period focused on the rise of the Hindu Right rather than EVR, so too has the colonial period focused on Gandhi's "Hindu notions" such as *swaraj* rather than the self-respect challenge to *swaraj*.

In short, a pervasive focus on Gandhi and the primacy of *swaraj* has had not just theoretical but practical consequence. It has done, in my opinion, great injustice to the texture of theory and event in 20th century India—colonial and postcolonial alike—and the world of which India is a part. The remedy is for comparative political to push beyond Gandhi into the criticisms of *swaraj* that saturated 20th century Indian political thought. We have already seen Buber provide a template for how such criticisms of Gandhian *swaraj* could be articulated: this-worldly sensual feeling on earth in community over spiritual suffering of the individual for the other-worldly, faith's crisis over its resoluteness, the future rather than the past as the location of justice understood in terms of redistribution, and force as having a possible role in challenges to evil rather than a blind commitment to universal non-violence—all in order to question the primacy of the self and its other and instead train our attention on the primacy of relations between and the inflection of those relationships. All of this, I have suggested, can be articulated as a question about the relationship itself between self-respect and self-rule, thereby focusing on the constitution of the *swa* or self, rather than between *swaraj* and British Raj, thereby focusing on the constitution of *raj* or rule. In short, I argue that comparative political theory requires a better appreciation of a radical group of social reformers in the Tamil-speaking south of India, led by a successful dry goods merchant with a fourth-grade education, and their Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. We need an argument for Subcontinental Political Theory and the world-wide relationships that made such theory possible.

By arguing for an understanding 20th century Indian political thought as defined by the self-respect challenge to self-rule, rather than the *swaraj* resistance to the British Raj, this dissertation contributes both to area studies literature on South Asia as well as to the once nascent but now growing field of comparative political theory. Indeed, as I've suggested above, the two are inextricably linked: studies of places are linked to theoretical articulations in the world, and theoretical articulations in the world are linked studies of places. This argument takes shape over the course of five Parts. Part II articulates the figure of the self-respecting Non-Brahmin between two events, both within the same locale of Meenakshipuram: the 1911 assassination of a colonial official by an individual Brahmin and the 1981 conversion to Islam by an untouchable. The Non-Brahmin, and the self-respect critique of self-rule, I suggest, can be understood as pushing against the former and pushing for the latter, revealing a persistent, troubling logic that binds the voluntary to individual action and the coercive to action by the masses. Parts III-VI bear in mind Buber's critique of Gandhi in terms of feeling, faith, future,

[212] H.V. Seshadri, *Warning of Meenakshi Puram* (Bangalore: Jagarana Prakashana, 1981): 16. Though Seshadri does not cite this passge, it is a direct quote from the article "Islam's New Children" in *India Today* 16-30 July 1981: 74.

and force. Self-Respecters, too, were worried about a *swaraj* which: wed personal discipline with national independence through worldly renunciation rather than an appreciation of the importance of the physical if not sensual feeling; insisted on resolute faith rather than allowing for a crisis of faith; turned to an idealized national past rather than a hopeful investment in an unimagined future in the world; and insisted on non-violent action over the possibility of just force. Part III bears in mind Buber's critique of "feeling" and looks more closely at the articulation of Non-Brahmin self-respect itself. I argue that such self-respect is best understood through acts of comprehension at local, regional, and global registers involving conversion, Gandhi's nationalist movement, and Christian Mission, demonstrating political acts through acts of interpretation. Part IV bears in mind Buber's critique in terms of "faith" and looks at one such redemptive move that demonstrated a struggle to share in shared struggles in the world, translating Marx in order to achieve, rather than eliminate, the true *dharma*. Such translation provides both an example of and a means for sharing in traditions across long distance relationships. Part V bears in mind Buber's critique in terms of "future" and accounts for how being a part of the wide world began to encourage separatist demands among Non-Brahmins to be a part from it. World War II, saturated with familiar Subcontinental idioms of Aryan and Pariah refracted across Brahmin and Jew, suggested the world, rather than a place of refuge and the hope for a better future, was a source of threat and harbored elements of a hierarchical past. Part VI bears in mind Buber's critique in terms of "force" and moves from tracing such a shift, from international to national, to attending to elements of continuity across the Non-Brahmin critique of Gandhian self-rule, namely with the possibilities of fulfillment in both the secular life and Islam. Such possibilities, however, were articulations of longstanding local concerns alongside global ones, concerns marked by efforts to be apart of, rather than apart from, the world marked by forces of romance and valor. Part VII concludes this dissertation by arguing for enriched means by which SubContinental political theory can be appreciated, attending to the shared traditions across long distance relationships within which the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule found a home. As also part of a project of SubContinental Political Theory, perhaps we too are Non-Brahmin.

# PART II. BRAHMIN ASSASSINATION & UNTOUCHABLE CONVERSION: THE BOOKENDS OF SELF-RESPECT

If the idea of *swaraj*, along with the idea's inseparable Gandhian voice, has served as a model for projects of political theory that go beyond its Euro-Atlantic bias, an effort to complicate such projects may require complicating the idea of *swaraj* itself. Complicating the idea of *swaraj* requires, in turn, both complicating *swaraj*'s demand in a situation without *swaraj*, as well as in a situation of *swaraj* when *swaraj* was threatened. That is to say, a challenge to the idea of *swaraj* requires a challenge to both what it pushes against (demand) as well as that which pushes against it (threat). What does the idea of *swaraj* push against, and what pushes against the idea of *swaraj*? I argue that the answer to both these questions is the same: the outcaste.

In what follows, I look at two events that help us appreciate the outcaste as answer. The first, the 1911 assassination by a Brahmin of a British political official named Ashe, looks at *swaraj* demanded. The second, the 1981 conversion to Islam by Untouchables in the village of Meenakshipuram, looks at *swaraj* threatened. These two events hold elements of space and time constant. With respect to space, both the plot of the 1911 assassination and the village of the 1981 conversion were located within the same 10 km radius in South India, situated where the railway line connecting ports on the Bay of Bengal to the east and the Arabian Sea to the west cuts through the Aromboli pass[213] of the Western Ghats mountains that run from India's southernmost tip, Kanyakumari, in the south to the Indian financial hub of Bombay in the north. With respect to time, both events equidistantly straddle the achievement of independence on 15 August 1947, with the assassination demanding *swaraj* roughly 35 years before independence and the conversion threatening *swaraj* roughly 35 years after independence.

Moreover, both events are central, though woefully understudied, moments in the 20th century history of the idea of *swaraj*. Assessments at the time of the 1911 assassination demanding *swaraj* claimed it to be the "first anarchist crime that has been committed in this Province"[214] and the very moment when "sedition invaded the Madras Presidency,"[215] revealing the possibility of "a conspiracy for the overthrow of British rule by means of a simultaneous massacre of all Europeans on a day to be fixed."[216] As history would have it, this event was the

[213] As Sir William Wilson Hunter writes of this railway line in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India,* vol 23 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908) claims, naming locales which will be central to 1911 and 1981 later: "From Maniyāchi it [the railway] turns east to Tuticorin on the coast, thus completing through communication between Madras city as the chief southern port of the Presidency. From the same place a railway branches off to Tinnevelly, and on to Shencottah on the eastern Frontier of Travancore territory, through the fertile *tāluks* of Ambāsamudram and Tenkāsi. The portion of this last between Tinnevelly and Shencottah was opened in 1903, and has been extended to Quilon on the West Coast through the gap in the Western Ghāts near Kuttālam" (373).

[214] "The Maniyachi Tragedy," *The Madras Times*, 19 June 1911. Period newspaper articles can be found in Ashe Papers, Centre of South Asian Studies Archives, University of Cambridge.

[215] *Madras Mail*, 22 June 1911.

[216] "The King-Emperor *versus* Accused (Nilakanta *alias* Brahmachari, Sankurakrishna Aiyar, Madathukadai Chidambaram Pillay, Muthukumaraswami Pillay, Subbiah Pillay, Jagannadha Aiyengar, Harihara Aiyer, Bapu Pillai *alias* Ramasami Pillay, V. Desikachari, Vembu Aiyer *alias* Mahadeva Aiyar, Savadi Arunachalam Pillay, Alagappay Pillay, Vandemataram Subramania Aiyar, Pichumani Aiyar *alias* Venkatachalarm Aiyar)," Special Bench Case No 1. of 1911, High Court of Judicature at Madras, 15 February 1912: 3. Home Political (A) 1911, 40-46, National Archives of India, New Delhi. Hereafter simply "Ashe Case (1912)." Also available at IOR/R/2/881/103, British Library, London, UK.

first and only political assassination to take place in South India. Assessments at the time of the 1981 conversion threatening *swaraj* raised the possibility that "foreign money, especially from the Arab nations, was pouring into the country to allure the downtrodden,"[217] animating the concern "that through conversion some foreign powers were trying to divide the Hindus and the Muslims to weaken the country"[218] and a fear that "there was an international conspiracy to change the political complexion of the country."[219] As history would have it, this event prompted a conservative backlash that launched right-wing Hindu forces to political power in the 1990s, a period of economic liberalization, communal violence, and nuclear weapons tests, changing the face of India politics (see Appendix A). This chapter, by turning to 1911's assassination and 1981's conversion, provides a framework for challenging *swaraj* and, by extension, for challenging the prevalent model for projects of political theory that go beyond its Euro-Atlantic bias, e.g. comparative political theory.

This Part, and the two events which serve as its focus, frame the Parts and Chapters that follow which provide a study of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, constituting a part of the larger field I call Subcontinental Political Theory. The leading figure of self-respect, whose thought and movement serve as the focus of my project as a whole, is EV Ramasami Naicker (EVR), commonly referred to as Periyar. The framing is not simply theoretical, providing articulations of "self-rule" that "self-respect" attempted to critique, but historical, providing concrete moments directly involving EVR's thought and movement itself. Such moments add flesh to the term "Non-Brahmin" and its self-respect critique. The 1911 assassination of Ashe was just one moment in a longer that EVR felt captured the persistent power of Brahminism in its virtually cannibalistic demand for *swaraj*, from the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny to the assassination of Gandhi:

> Who was it that conducted the Sepoy Mutiny, do you know? Irāṉā,[220] who was a Brahmin—remember it. Is that all? Who was the one who earlier shot the official Ashe in Tirunelveli [District], do you know? Vāñci[nathan], a Brahmin. Is that all? The one who killed the perfect Gandhi praised the world over—who, do you know? Godse, a Brahmin—remember it! They [the Brahmins] call us to war and dare [us] to the point of taking up arms—we fearlessly stand against [them]. Let them step up according to their speech.[221]

And the 1981 conversions to Islam provided a moment for which EVR's thought and movement provided inspiration. As one report noted in conversation with a convert named Rahamatullah (née Rajagopal]:

> Mr. E.V. Ramasamy Naicker…had himself suggested once that all non-Brahmin communities should embrace Islam in order to escape from the Brahmin oppression, he recalled. Again and

[217] The Sankaracharya of Puri from Varanasi, "Congress (I) MPs' team to visit Meenakshipuram," *The Hindu*, 6 August 1981

[218] Mr. NP Shahi (LD) at the Rajya Sabha. "Religious Heads Should Reform Hindu Religion," *The Hindu*, 16 September 1981 at New Delhi,

[219] Mr. N. Sankariah, CPI(M) at the Tamil Nadu Assembly, "Conversions: 'Govt. Can Act Only When There Is Coercion," *The Hindu,* 25 August 1981.

[220] Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi, a Queen who was one of the leading figures in the 1857 uprising.

[221] EVR, lecture delivered at Tūttukkuṭi, 9-5-1948, published in *Viṭutalai* 19-5-1948. V. Anaimuthu, *Periyār Ī. Ve. Rā. Cintaṉaikaḷ, Thoughts of Periyar E.V.R.* (Tiruchirappali: Thinker's Forum, 1974): 262.

> again, this statement of EVR was mentioned by many Harijans [Untouchables] to this reporter as a justification of their conversion.[222]

In short, the 1911 assassination and the 1981 conversion provide a framing of how events of consequence influenced EVR's understanding of Brahminism and how EVR's understanding of Brahminism influenced events of consequence. Subsequent chapters will explore the Non-Brahmin's self-respect critique of self-rule as *Brahminical*.

Two questions were central to this Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of self-rule. First, how can one cast out the British without reinscribing the idea of the Indian outcaste? After all, given "Hinduism's" massive theoretical resources for articulating purity and pollution, wouldn't the temptation to use those resources to articulate demands for national independence, for *swaraj*, perpetuate, rather than destroy, aspirations for justice among large swaths of the South Asian population historically considered polluted? Second, and relatedly, how can demands for *swaraj* legitimately associate the native self with acts of voluntary embrace and the foreign other with acts of coercive force? After all, South Asian history is saturated with caste hierarchy whose foundation involved coercive force that was nothing but the articulation of native selves, in which case the foreign may actually represent the only legitimate opportunity for voluntary embrace. Under such circumstances, Gandhian *swaraj*, no matter how finessed and thoughtful, might require something antecedent and supplemental in order to mean anything like "freedom" or "justice." For Non-Brahmins, that antecedent and supplement would be "self-respect."

This Part is divided into three Chapters. Chapter 4 looks at the compelling mutual imbrication of the events of 1911 and 1981 and how such imbrication, present in the 20th century history of the world's largest democracy, is echoed by gestures to the experiences of the world's oldest democracy, America. Chapter 5 looks at the 1911 assassination, examining the centrality of the claim that the British were untouchable outcastes, written in the note found on the assassin's body, within the context of the subsequent court case investigating the possibility of wider conspiracy. Chapter 6 looks at the 1981 conversion, examining the tension between acts of force and embrace, on the one hand, and presumptions of native and foreign, on the other, in the event's drawn-out media reactions and related government reports. I conclude by gesturing to the persistent importance of the 1981 conversion into the 21st century, given renewed efforts to pass legislation banning coerced conversions, or, to take up the idiom of these chapters, "forced embrace," before returning our focus to recurring elements in our two events, each straddling the achievement of independence by 35 years in the same locale along a separation of rock and earth between regions, along a connection of iron and steel between seas. Those elements, which will be the respective thematic foci of the four subsequent Parts, are: self-respect, dharma, Aryan and Pariah, and the secular life and Islam.

## CHAPTER 4. THE MUTUAL IMBRICATION OF NON-BRAHMIN ORIGINS AND ENDS

In October 1981, the Chief Minister of the state of Tamil Nadu, MG Ramachandran [MGR], met with the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. In the months leading up to their meeting, Indira Gandhi had expressed her "unhappiness" regarding the nationally publicized and

[222] TN Gopalan. "Converts Quote EVR," *Indian Express,* 19 August 1981. Rahamatullah continues: "Nobody goaded me into it. It is a result of my own researches in all religious philosophies and of course the continuing humiliation of Harijans' he said." Some articles relating to Meenakshipuram were drawn from Andrew Wingate Personal Papers, DA50, University of Birmingham Personal and Family Papers Archives.

highly controversial conversion in the village of Meenakshipuram earlier that year. She was, however, "concerned more about the background to the mass conversion, than persons changing religion,"[223] for "[n]obody will have any objection if anybody changes his religion voluntarily. But what is obviously objectionable is if people's poverty and hardships are exploited for conversion."[224] Such sentiments suggested a framework that pitted spiritual against material concerns, with religion and the voluntary allied with the former, and poverty and exploitation allied with the latter. This framework was shared by MGR himself. A few months earlier on 15 August, unfurling the national flag on Indian Independence day from the ramparts of Fort St. George in the state capital of Madras, MGR warned that "the law would ban the activities of those who tried to politicize everything and use religion for politics."[225] He elaborated:

> If some persons renounced their faith out of genuine conviction there could be no objection. But conversions sought to be achieved through compulsion, threats, inducements or exploitation would not be consistent with the principles of a secular country like India.

MGR and Indira Gandhi were part of a general consensus about what constituted legitimate religious action. "[T]he principles of a secular country like India" meant protection *of* conversion out of "genuine conviction," i.e. "chang[ing]…religion voluntarily," and protection *from* conversion "achieved through compulsion," i.e. "exploit[ing]" vulnerabilities of "poverty and hardships."[226]

At their meeting in October 1981, however, MGR did not bring up Meenakshipuram with Indira Gandhi. The conversion at Meenakshipuram had thrust a national spotlight on MGR, with both those at the centre and in his state suggesting that his government was complicit in the conversions by allowing an environment of caste-based injustice to fester, "maltreating the local Harijans [Untouchables] thereby forcing them to embrace Islam."[227] MGR's speech on Indian Independence Day was subsequently part of an effort to ally himself with patriotic sentiment and national commitment against suspicions fanned by a nascent Hindu right of "some foreign hand in the recent conversion"[228] and the alleged "conclusive evidence" of "the 'machinations' of foreigners"[229] within his state. At his October meeting with Indira Gandhi, then, we may not be surprised to find MGR uniting Tamil Nadu not only with Indian independence in the present but also with India's struggle for *swaraj* in the past. As reported of their meeting: "Mr. Ramachandran [MGR] urged that the Maniyachi railway junction [in Tamil Nadu] be renamed Vanchinathan, the freedom fighter, who had shot dead the British Collector, Ashe, at the station in 1908."[230] The assassination of Ashe was the first—and only—political assassination in the name of *swaraj* in South India.

Though he was unlikely aware of it, MGR's gesture to the assassination of Ashe in the wake of the conversion at Meenakshipuram could be read as drawing attention back to the very

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[223] Congress (I) General Sec'y G. Karuppiah Moopanar, "Conversions: PM Unhappy," *Indian Express* 28 June 1981.
[224] "Islam's New Children," *India Today* 16-31 July 1981: 72-77. This article was "Photo Feature" of the issue.
[225] "Conversions: MGR's Warning," *The Hindu,* 15 August 1981.
[226] See the Constitution of India, Article 25, Part III on fundamental rights.
[227] MGR is concerned here that these are the implications of the report by the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Yogendra Makwana. "Islam's New Children," *India Today*, 16-31 July 1981.
[228] "Conversions: Pejawar Swami Sees Foreign Hand," *Indian Express*, 8 July 1981
[229] "Arya Samaj Demands Ban on Conversions," *The Hindu,* 19/20 August 1981.
[230] "MGR meets PM," *The Hindu*, 1 November 1981.

place he seemed so intent on distancing himself from. In response to the Untouchable conversion, the locale of Meenakshipuram invited an Indian investigation in 1981 and reports that "Prominent caste Hindus in Tenkasi and Shencottah regions deny there is any untouchability being practiced there."[231] In response to Ashe's assassination, the very same locale of Meenakshipuram invited a British investigation in 1911 and reports that "a dangerous anarchical society…had…branches in Shencottah and Ponular—villages belonging to Travancore, and lying close to Tenkasi, the westernmost taluk of the Tinnevelly district."[232] A locale less than 10 kilometers in diameter—home to the village of Meenakshipuram and the towns of Tenkasi and Shencottah—hosted both the alleged conspiracy that surrounded the colonial assassination *to which* MGR was trying to draw attention, as well as the alleged caste relations that surrounded the postcolonial conversion *from which* MGR was trying to draw attention.

There was an error in the reported date of Ashe's assassination, given as 1908 rather than 1911 during MGR's meeting with Indira Gandhi. This was not altogether unreasonable. The year 1908 in Indian history is associated with the rising wave of revolutionary nationalist activity around Calcutta that began with the partition of Bengal in 1905, roughly coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, and was peppered with the very first assassinations and assassination attempts in the name of *swaraj* on the Subcontinent.[233] In fact, newspaper articles reacting to Ashe's assassination in 1911 repeatedly understood the act as an extension into the South of the "Alipore Tragedy" of 1908—the attempted assassination of Magistrate Kingsford by bomb in the wake of Bengal's partition—which effectively, from the perspective of the British, "first proclaimed the existence in this country of a party of anarchists."[234] From the perspective of nationalists, of course, this "anarchy" was the struggle for *swaraj*. And for Chief Minister MGR in 1981, or the reporter, the assassinations of 1908 blended synonymously with that of 1911. Subsequent chapters will make us suspicious about this collapse of events in south India in 1911 with those of the north in 1908.

These two events exceed themselves through one another in the place that they took place, turning the time that holds them separate as the very thing that holds them together. Such hidden features of place and date bound within a national region and history suggests constitutive, yet subterranean, features of 20th century Indian politics that laugh at the meaning that categories like "colonial" and "postcolonial" try to make. Their concern is not with "independence" as defining Indian politics, but of a much more expansive terrain within which "independence" was just one of several peaks. Such a terrain, though illuminated by is not limited to our 10 kilometer-in-diameter locale nor by the larger South Asian geography in which we at first see this locale. In fact, distant America, the world's oldest democracy, was pulled into a proximate relationship of synergy to the events in our locale shared by the events of 1981 and

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[231] LD Nataraj, "Conversions in Tamil Nadu," *Indian Express,* 26 June 1981.

[232] AMGC Tampoe, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Tinnevelly, "Preliminary Register Cases now. 3, 4, 5 and 6 of 1911," Proceedings of the Home Department June 1912, Murder of Mr. Ashe Collector of Tinnevelly, Notes, Home Political (1) September 1911 Nos 40-46, page 15, National Archives of India.

[233] Those assassinations, attempts, and related events include: 6 Dec 1907, failed attempt to blow up train of Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Andrew Fraser; 30 April 1908, failed assassination of Magistrate Judge Douglas Kingford, accidentally killing Mrs. Kennedy and daughter; 8 June 1908, Explosive Substances Act to curtail violence; 7 Nov 1908 failed assassination of Sir Andrew Fraser, shot at but unhurt; 1 July 1909, assassination of Leitenant-Colonel Sir William Curzon-Wiley in London; 13 November 1909, failed assassination of Viceroy Lord Minto by bombing. Perhaps the highest profile attempted assassination was the bombing of Vicerory Lord Hardinge on 23 Dec 1912 who suffered serious wounds but survived. For a standard account, see John F. Riddick, *The History of British India: a Chronology* (Wesport: Praeger, 2006): 92-95.

[234] "The Maniyachi Tragedy," *The Madras Times,* 19 June 1911.

1911. This relationship with a far away place helps draw our attention to tensions that were all too close, tensions whose surface provided fertile ground for a markedly Non-Brahmin political thought.

## AMERICA, CASTE & OUTCASTE

Newspaper articles document responses to the 1981 conversion featuring parallels between Indian untouchables and American blacks. Such responses fell into two general categories. The first response was conservative, articulated by Hindu religious authorities, and involved the non-violent connection between MLK and Gandhi. As Swami Tantradevan, a "fraternal delegate from America," claimed:

> Untouchability, he said, was not the bane of Hinduism alone. In the US the Negroes were till recently looked down as outcastes. It took a bold leader like Martin Luther King to lead the down-trodden blacks to deliverance. What is more, Luther King took his inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi who espoused the cause of Harijans [Untouchables] in this country.[235]

The argument, of course, is alleviatory: untouchability is bad, but all great democracies have it. Moreover, the argument reinscribes *swaraj* within the idea of social justice, coupling Gandhi's struggle against foreign colonial forces with MLK's struggle against national racist forces. These comments were made at "the Hindu Solidarity Conference," a conference formed specifically in reaction to the conversions at Meenakshipuram held in the same village. The comments of the other speakers, largely in religious positions, provide the context for Swami Tantradevan's remarks.[236] Mr. Manian of the Vivekananda Kendra gestures to how Gandhi invented the term "Harijan" for untouchables "to proclaim to the world that all of us were 'sons of God'"; Manian goes on to encourage "caste Hindus" to adopt such a name to "help them forget that there is a segment in their community riddled with social disabilities." The vice-president of the International Arya Samaj, Mr. Vandemataram Ramachandra Rao, claims "Let us be proud of Hinduism. We are born Hindus, we shall live as Hindus and we shall die as Hindus upholding the torch of our ancient religion." The Madurai Aadheenam claimed "Never take your children to the movies. Never cultivate in them the habit of smoking or tobacco chewing or using snuff. All these are symptoms of social decay." Others were concerned that "Gulf money is being used to create a big gulf [sic] between the various religions in this country," and that "Hinduism…is timeless and immemorial. We (the Hindus) have decimated our religion. The Brahmins have nurtured the Vedas, Upanishads and the shastras. But they are now held in utter contempt." In short, gestures to race in America that refracted the conversion of Untouchables at Meenakshipuram were used to buttress *swaraj*, linking MLK to Gandhi, reinscribing social justice within the practices of Hinduism and its Brahmin devotee.

The second response involving African-Americans was a bit more radical and referred not to "Negroes" in the US but to "Black Americans." Here the emphasis was not on the preservation of a religion associated with a national majority (Christianity via MLK in the US, Hinduism via Gandhi in India) but with a turn to a minority religion perceived as threatening the nation. An editorial on the "Open Page" of *The Hindu*, written by one ED Devadason, remarks "A large number of Black Americans have embraced Islam…"[237] This response endorses

[235] "End reservations, says US Swamiji," *Indian Express* (Tenkasi), 16 July 1981.
[236] "Harijans All," *Indian Express* (Meenakshipuram), 17 July 1981.
[237] E.D. Devadason, "Conversion and the Constitution" [the open page], *The Hindu,* 4 August 1981.

conversion, turning to ideas of freedom, rights, personal development, and choice to resist what may be called upper-caste paternalism:

> Religious freedom is the most important of all freedoms. Man can rise to his fullest development only in the freedom of responsible choice he exercises. It is unfair to those who are converted to suspect that they have been converted either because of inducement or force. They are people with their own rights. No one has a right to treat them as backward. They are responsible people and the best way to respect them is to presume that they have made a responsible decision.
>
> It is also unfair to the Harijan community as a whole to consider that they are susceptible to conversion by force or inducement. They are also people with strong convictions. After all conversion has also taken place even from Brahmins and other caste Hindus and there is no reason to get excited when a Harijan or a community of Harijans was converted to another religion.

Such a position provoked hostile reactions in subsequent replies to the editor. On the one hand, to some, it seemed as if Devadason was allowing issues of choice or conviction to obscure deeper forms of social injustice that prompted the conversion:

> The recent "conversion" of Hindu harijans at Meenakshipuram is mainly due to the social discrimination indulged in by the higher sections of Hindu society. Untouchability, illtreatment and harassment have forced the harijans to give up Hinduism in favour of other faiths like Islam and Christianity.
>
> …
>
> This mass "conversion" cannot therefore be due to "conviction and faith" in Islam. It is only a mild ripple in the "tea cup" of social upheaval.[238]

However, this criticism does not diminish Devadason's important focus on "Black Americans" converting to Islam. One could simply say that Devadason did not go as far as he could have in his own article: that, unlike non-violent efforts among the "untouchables" of America and India to destroy social injustice by retaining a national religion (MLK/Gandhi), some blacks in America, like the untouchables at Meenakshipuram, chose a different, non-nationalist, path to eliminating social injustice. That is to say, this criticism strengthens rather than diminishes the turn to "Black American" conversions to Islam as offering a more radical approach.

Other criticisms of Devadason, however, could be read as motivated by the conservative position with its upper-caste paternalism. As one letter to the editor reads:

> It is contended by him that in America…many black Americans embraced Islam…One would first like to know how many of these were below the age of 18, and then how much financial inducement was involved in these conversions. One can categorically state none below the age of consent would have been permitted to register his/her change in religion…But in Meenakshipuram whose families, including even babies-in-arms, were converted.
>
> …
>
> … all this talk of redemption, religious experience, etc., will become meaningless when Meenakshipurams becomes Rehamathnagars [the new Islamic name of the village post-conversion] and a demand for an Islamic State is made. This is what has made the politician to evince concern because then secularism will be dead.[239]

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[238] Letter to Editor from VC Rajasekaran, Tiruchirapalli. *The Hindu,* 12 August 1981

[239] Letter to Editor from TG Ramachandra Rao, Madras. *The Hindu,* 12 August 1981

The conservative concern here with Devadason is that his comparison between American black Muslims and Indian untouchable Muslims fails because the former was voluntary but the latter produced by "inducements" targeting the vulnerable. And by targeting the vulnerable, the very integrity of the nation-state itself becomes threatened, possibly making an "Islamic state" out of a "secular" state that was insistently synonymous with a state occupied by a majority of "Hindu" selves. Holding these criticisms for now, Devadason's turn to America may be read as far more radical, less interested in perpetuating religious balance within the nation as in achieving social justice here and now, an interest involving black American conversion to Islam rather than the non-violent resistance of MLK and Gandhi.

As we have seen, the turn to America surrounding the 1981 conversion had two varieties: the first, a conservative move that saw national integrity as synonymous with the Hindu self and social justice, the second, a radical move that saw social justice as distinct from and perhaps even threatening a national integrity premised on the Hindu self. The connection was made through linking caste and race, untouchable and black, as parrallel agents demanding social injustice. Yet, in contrast, the turn to America surrounding the 1911 assassination was not premised on the elimination of untouchability as a social practice but rather the social practice of attempting to eliminate the untouchable himself. It was the same articulation of national integrity, of *swaraj*, that could provide more frightening imbrications of race and caste—perhaps leading some to suspect that *swaraj* itself was irrevocably so imbricated.

Following the assassination of 1911, a court case was held on 15 February 1912 to investigate the possibility of a related broader conspiracy to overthrow British rule.[240] The evidence involved in the case included several pamphlets found in the homes of the accused around the 10 km locale shared by the 1981 conversion. Among such pamphlets was a set that the court labeled "Special Exhibit AAA." In it, we find a gesture to the American struggle for independence against the British as a model for the Indian one. As the court document states:

> In answer to the argument that the English rule alone prevents the various classes of the country from breaking out into sanguinary strike, it is pointed out that the English said the same thing about the Americans before they won their independence. It is reported that the Englishmen then said that the colonists residing in the different parts differed from each other greatly in quality, in conduct, in observances, in religion and in private interests. If only they were left free (without the English Government) [sic], war extending from one end to the other of the Continent of America would arise. Extracts supporting these views from historians are referred to.[241]

Like with the Indians, the British threatened the Americans with inevitable chaos as a result of their insurmountable differences were the British to depart. It goes without saying that this gesture to America is unlike the one made in 1981: it is white America here in 1911 that provides a model for nationalist struggle against colonialism, rather than black America in 1981 that provided a model for social justice struggles within a national space.

As one proceeds through Special Exhibit AAA, one encounters various efforts to refuse this war of differences threatened by the British. The gesture to American colonists mobilizing against the British subsequently provides historical ground upon which to build an Indian nationalist project. The British Court remarks on the various more general nationalist tropes

[240] Ashe Case (1912).
[241] Ashe Case (1912): 43.

against colonial rule in these pamphlets, "not only in powerful prose, but in verses of power and feeling," including: an idealized national history disrupted ("invent or discover a golden past…a holy land with sacred shrines and with sacred rivers"); foreign economic exploitation ("Over and over again economic questions are discussed with a good deal of ability. It is provided that English competition has destroyed Indian industries…*Swadeshi* and *boycott* is repeatedly insisted…"); familial unity across differences ("passionate appeals for union between the followers of different religions, like the Hindus, Mahomedans and Christians, between the various castes amongst the Hindus, tell them that they are all brothers, children of the same mother, and ask them to live with one another as brothers"); invocation of an anthropomorphic nation ("India is personified and deified and over and over again in the newspapers and pamphlets people are called upon to worship her and love her as a common mother"); and the duty of sacrifice (‘‘‘The patriot must bear with patience and courage the prosecutions which resemble waves which he may meet with by his doing the great virtuous action of service to the country’’’).[242]

The gesture to American colonists fighting for independence against British rule as part of a national imagining which could refuse the British threat of a war of difference may seem relatively benign, perhaps even helpful. After all, colonization is a bad thing, and we all need allies elsewhere in struggling against bad things. But Special Exhibit AAA takes a slightly disturbing turn. There is a conflation between *dharma*, *swaraj*, violence, and "the other world":

> The readers are told briefly that Dharma is trampled under foot and that for Dharma, Swaraj or self Government is indispensable. ‘The two are connected as means to an end. Swaraj without Dharma is despicable and so Dharma without Swaraj is powerless. The sword of material power, Swaraj, should always be drawn for our object, our safety in the other world, Swadharma…’
>
> Then the poet Saint Ramadoss is quoted as saying to the Mahrattas ‘Die for your Dharma, kill the enemies for your Dharma before you are dying in this way, fight and take back your kingdom.’[243]

Such claims could be regarded as colonialist contempt or dismissal, relegating efforts to imagine legitimate claims for freedom as some sort of backward "religious fanaticism." But Special Exhibit AAA goes a bit further, berating all those who even question this conflation of *dharma*, *swaraj*, violence and "the other world":

> ‘The command of God is to obtain Swaraj, for that is the chief key for the protection of Dharma. He who does not intend to acquire Swaraj, he who sits silent in slavery, he is an atheist and a hater of religion.’[244]

This blanket rejection of any criticism of this conflation of *Swaraj* and *Dharma* as mere atheism and hatred of religion may be cause for worry.. What if, for example, such conflation, designed to *remove* colonial exploitation by foreign forces, actually *reinscribed* forms of regional exploitation by native forces?

Special Exhibit AAA suggests just such reinscription, invoking caste hierarchy to buttress demands for material sacrifice in the name of the nation:

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[242] Ashe Case (1912): 43-44.
[243] Ashe Case (1912): 43.
[244] Ashe Case (1912): 43.

> The necessity for the sacrifice of oneself to the country's good is always insisted upon. The people are told that they must expect prosecution… "Even if perchance he should meet with trouble, he should consider all that a pleasure. When cattle die the Pulayan (pariah or low caste man) [sic] covets them. Giving up the false attachment to this body which is not liked even by such a Pulaya (carcass-eater) [sic] and doing at all times with a strong faith the duty of his strong faith, the duty of service to the country, undaunted even if hardships occur by crores, is the paramount duty imposed by God on every Indian. This itself is the paramount duty of an Indian."[245]

What we see here is a Brahminical sensibility, an upper caste outlook whose focus on the spiritual is accompanied by a vegetarianism that relegates impoverished meat-eaters to the low-caste status of "pariah." Such sensibility is used to articulate "the sacrifice of oneself to the country's good" which is the "paramount duty imposed by God on every India." Any attachment to the material, to the body, is understood as associated with caste pollution. We may presume that atheism, as a turning away from the spiritual, is also associated with caste pollution and the pariah.

Special Exhibit AAA suggests that early articulations of nationalism in South India against British colonial rule articulated a reinscription of the idea of untouchable and outcaste, a desire to eliminate the untouchable, as it were, rather than freedom from the idea of untouchable and outcaste, a desire to eliminate untouchability. We may of course wonder how the gestures to America in 1911 and 1981 would fit together here: what benefit did the black Americans referred to in 1981 receive from the white Americans who won their independence referred to in 1911? We may imagine that related sorts of wonderings—a wondering about what the priority of *swaraj* really meant for the masses, about whether the self of self-rule was the wildly diverse South Asian population or just the figure of Brahminism with its caste concern over pollution, about what may need to come before *swaraj* to make *swaraj* meaningful—formed the preoccupation of many minds in South India. Such preoccupations would give rise to the Non-Brahmin thought and movement of EVR and the demand for "self-respect." For the Non-Brhamin, independence requires the elimination of untouchability, not the reinscription of untouchability in order to imagine independence.

The preceding discussion has gestured to compelling mutual imbrications of place and history, both near and far, as they related to the 1911 assassination which marked a dramatic expression of *swaraj's* demand and the 1981 conversion which marked a dramatic expression of *swaraj*'s threat. With the 1911 assassination, we saw the action by an individual Brahmin draw attention to the disturbing invocation of the outcaste pariah as a way of shoring up *swaraj*'s demand. With the 1981 conversion, we saw outcaste action as providing an opportunity for the challenging effort to distinguish coerced from voluntary action, force from embrace, that was grafted onto a distinction between foreign (coerced/force) and native (voluntary/embrace). These themes were not apart from the world but a part of the world, as repeated appeals to the American experience make clear—either relating to independence from the British or to justice for "Negroes" or "Black Americans." These two events, I submit, provide the frame that bookends this dissertation's focus on Non-Brahmin political theory and EVR's Self-Respect critique of Gandhian Self-Rule.

We should ask two questions about this frame. With respect to 1911's assassination, which I suggest provides the paradigmatic example of that against which Non-Brahmin self-

[245] Ashe Case (1912): 44.

respect originated, we may ask: just how central was the idea of the outcaste to casting out the British? I argue it was central, though perhaps now ignored out of embarrassment. With respect to 1981's conversion, which I suggest provides the paradigmatic example of that for which Non-Brahmin self-respect was directed, we may ask: just how compelling was the distinction between force and embrace, grafted onto the distinction between the foreign and the native? I argue it was not compelling, despite efforts to make it definitive. This combination of what was central and what would be uncompelling opened the space for the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule within SubContinental Political Theory.

## CHAPTER 5. THE INDIAN OUTCASTE AND CASTING OUT THE BRITISH: THE BRAHMIN 1911 ASSASSINATION OF ASHE

Newspaper and court documents describe the assassination of "Mr. Robert William D'Estcourt Ashe, Collector and District Magistrate of Tinnevelly…an officer of marked capacities, sound judgement, and broad sympathies"[246] as having taken place "on the platform of Maniyachi Railway Station in the Tinnevelly District on June 17th 1911" [247] and carried out by "an old Brahmin of about 45…concealed in a Railway Station Latrine"[248] named "Vanchi Aiyer of Shencottah in Travancore Territory"[249] who then "ran into the privy and shot himself"[250] "through the mouth, the bullet lodging in the muscles of the neck, after having passed through the spine"[251] with the same "Browning automatic pistol"[252] he used to kill Ashe. In the letter found on his body, Vanchinathan—referred to as "Vanchi Aiyer" by the British Raj in their investigation, invoking his Brahmin caste name "Aiyer"—provides a provocative demand for *swaraj* at its inaugural South Indian moment.

> The English enemies have wrested our country and are destroying the imperishable 'Sanatana Dharmam' (eternal religion) [sic] by trampling it under foot. Every Indian is at the present time endeavouring to drive out the Englishman, who is the enemy of (our) country and to establish Dharma and liberty. In a country where our Rama, Sivaji, Krishna, Gurugovind, Arjuna and others lived and ruled so as to make Dharma thrive, grand propagations are being made with a view to crown George Panchame 'George V' a Mlechcha (foreigner) given to eating the very cow's flesh. To kill him (George) the moment he sets his foot in our country, we 3,000 Madrasis have taken a vow. To make it known I the least of them did this day commit this act. This alone is the duty which every one in Hindustan ought to do […]
>
> [...] 'Die for your Dharma, kill the enemies for your Dharma before you are dying in this way, fight and take back your kingdom.'[253]

[246] "Mr Ashe Shot," *The Madras Times*, 19 June 1911: p 10.
[247] Ashe Case (1912): 2.
[248] "Collector of Tinnevelly Shot by Indian Concealed in a Latrine," *The Hindu*, 17 June 1911.
[249] Ashe Case (1912): 2.
[250] "Collector of Tinnevelly Shot by Indian Concealed in a Latrine," *The Hindu*, 17 June 1911.
[251] AMGC Tampoe, "Preliminary Register Cases now. 3, 4, 5 and 6 of 1911," June 1912.
[252] AMGC Tampoe, "Preliminary Register Cases now. 3, 4, 5 and 6 of 1911," June 1912.
[253] Ashe Case (1912): p 54. The last quote came from "the poet Saint Ramadoss." Here and throughout dissertation: parentheses in original, brackets are my own.

This letter, which the court labeled "Exhibit EE," provides a framing of this early, and most dramatic, articulation of *swaraj* in South India in terms of two features: what *swaraj* was *for* and what *swaraj* was *against*.

First, *swaraj* was for Brahminical Hinduism. The last line demanding one to die and kill for *Dharma*, which we have already seen, drives this point home. This is a rough quote originally from the Marathi "poet saint Ramadoss" but popularized by the Hindu nationalist text *The Indian War of Independence* by VD Savarkar. Published in 1909, Savarkar's text claimed that the 1857 "Sepoy Rebellion" in North India against the British was a unified *national* event, making Sanskritic Hindu terms such as *dharma* along with the pantheon of sacred Hindu figures such as Rama and Krishna central to the idea of national struggle—and thereby creating a history for the rising nationalist sentiments at the turn of the century.[254] Savarkar has subsequently been most commonly associated with the principle of *Hindutva*, the nationalist, right-wing, militant Hinduism based on a text by the same name he published in 1923. It would be the rise of *Hindutva* that has been understood to characterize the national reaction to Meenakshipuram in 1981 and the particular politics in India that rose in Meenakshipuram's wake and which would last for decades. Savarkar's emphasis on the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and quotes like that here from Ramadoss were found in the materials which the British uncovered in their investigation of the alleged conspiracy—the "3,000" people from the Madras Presidency referred to in the letter—which led to Ashe's assassination by Vanchinathan.[255] This gesture towards a particularly Brahminical brand of patriotic *swaraj* that *Hindutva* encouraged was most certainly the valence MGR decades later tried to tap when he turned to Ashe's assassination. After all, MGR had provided "assurance" to Atal Bihari Vajpayee—who would serve as Prime Minister of India as head of the Hindutva party the BJP from 1998-2004—during their meeting on 14 July 1981 in which they "discussed…the question of conversion of Harijans to Islam."[256]

Second, *swaraj* was against Untouchable outcastes. This conclusion is unavoidable given Vanchinathan's justification of his violent assertion of *swaraj* and his desire to eliminate the British by associating King George with the Untouchable. The untouchable is the "fifth caste" or *panchama,* from the Sanskrit word for five, *panch*. Through a bit of word play, Vanchinathan takes advantage of George V also being the "fifth" or, as the British transliterated it, "panchame." The association between untouchable and the British is reinforced through Brahminical Hindu notions of purity and pollution, focusing on the beef diet of the British and thus King George V's "given to eating the very cow's flesh." Eating the cow in India was associated with defilement and the untouchable outcaste and thus with, as discussed elsewhere in the court documents, "the *Pulayan* (pariah or low caste man)" as a "(carcass-eater)." The British should be cast out of India, as it were, because they are equivalent to the outcastes of India—King George V and the *panchama* are fused, George's hereditary "fifth" and the outcaste's hereditary "filth" become one. And the one which King George becomes is the "Mlechcha

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[254] Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence* (Bombay: Dhawale-Popular, 1960 (1909). This quote is widespread in literature focusing on Savarkar. For example, for a comparison of Savarkar (Hindu) and Iqbal (Muslim) on separatism, see Sisir Kumar Das, *History of Indian Literature Vol II - 1911-1956, Struggle for Freedom*: *Triumph and Tragedy* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2006): 364-369. As another example, for an argument which attempts to distinguish Gandhi's idea of independence from Savarkar's by virtue of Gandhi's use of religion being neither dogmatic nor divisive, focusing on inclusion rather than exclusion, see Sudarshan Kapur, "Gandhi and Hindutva: Two Conflicting Visions of Swaraj" in *Gandhi, Freedom and Self-Rule,* Anthony J. Parel, ed. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000): 119-133 [part of the "Global Encounters" series].

[255] Though the investigation, mistakenly, does not mention Savarkar by name.

[256] "Protection to Harijans: MGR's Assurance," *Indian Express,* 16 July 1981.

(foreigner)," which seems to apply equally to his being English royal fifth as well as Indian pariah filth.

The trouble with this rationale, of course, is that in this very gesture—for a *swaraj* that is for national *dharma* and (thus) against unotuchable *panchama* foreigner *mlecchas*—a huge swath of Indians become as un-Indian as the British, or rather, the un-Indian-ness of the British is articulated through a caste that includes a huge swath of Indians. In fact, the first effort to determine the population of untouchables in India was undertaken by the Census Commissioner that same year, in 1911. At that time, cow-eating *panchama* pariah—which Vanchinathan likens to King George V—numbered 6.3 million in the Madras Presidency, roughly 1 out of ever 6 native Indians there, and such *panchama* or pariah constituted nearly 1 out of every 5 natives born in "Hindustan" overall.[257] In the spirit of gestures to America evident within the pamphlets surrounding the 1911 assassination themselves, we may well be reminded of a similar set of statistics in the history in the United States. As Thoreau writes in 1854 criticizing the courts on their support for the Fugitive Slave Act: "I do not wish to believe that the courts were made for fair weather, and for very civil cases merely,—but think of leaving it to any court in the land to decide whether more than three millions of people, in this case, *a sixth part of a nation*, have a right to be freemen or not!"[258]

## "GENTLEMEN, WHAT ARE WE COMING TO…WHAT IS BRAHMANISM COMING TO?"

What *swaraj* was doing, then, may not have been simply articulating a struggle for national independence against colonial British forces. Rather, *swaraj* in 1911 marked a moment whereby a form of power on the Subcontinent was shifting and extending its articulation. This form of power, I submit, was *Brahminism*. On 21 June 1911—just four days after the assassination—a man named K. Srinivasa Rao delivered a series of speeches at Bangalore making this shift clear.[259] Rao was not only a friend of Ashe but also the Sub-Judge in the Coimbatore District of the Madras Presidency.[260] Rao was horrified by the murder of Ashe, "a

[257] Per the 1911 census, the total population of the Madras Presidency was 39.8 million, which included 6.3 million members of the "depressed classes." The total population of British India—which excluded native states like Travancore—was 221.2 million, 41.9 million of whom were members of the "depressed classes"—roughly 1 in 5. The Madras Presidency had the best representation for Untouchables in India in 1911, which is not saying much; out of a total of 120 seats, 2 were reserved for untouchables—more than in any other state. Bengal, with a total of 127 seats had only 1 reserved for untouchables, despite its similar ratio with Madras (9.9 million untouchables out of 45.0 total Bengalis). The information here about the 1911 census is drawn from BR Ambedkar "From Millions to Fractions" in *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, vol V* (ed. Vasant Moon) (Bombay: Education Dept Govt of Maharashtra, 1989): esp 231-233.

[258] Henry David Thoreau, "Slavery in Massachusetts" in *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1993): 23. My italics.

[259] "The Late Mr. Ashe" *The Madras Mail,* 22 June 1911, taken from a speech at a public meeting under the auspices of the Theosophical Society held at Doddann's [?] Hall in the evening of 21 June 1911, Bangalore. "The Tinnevelly Tragedy," *The Madras Mail*, 23/24 June 1911, taken from a speech at a public meeting of the Friends' Union at London Mission Hall, Bangalore. The speech was titled "The World Spirit and What it Demands" and delivered either presumably in the morning or mid-day of 21 June 1911. The speaker claims, in true Hegelian form: "I wanted to tell you something about Jesus Christ, Buddha, and Sri Krishna, and how progress was merely the assertion of the God spirit that was bringing together the divided of the world, step by step."

[260] This was the district in which the town of Erode was located, the future home of the Non-Brahmin Self-Respect Movement.

brother who had been doing his best in working for us and in bringing East and West together…"[261] Rao continues to describe who exactly this "us" is:

> We who drink deep from English literature, who think English thoughts, who agitate for British forms of government, we who play English games at our Clubs, we who are knit together with England in a thousand ways, can we afford to sit quiet when such ungrateful acts are done in our own country by our own countrymen against Englishmen? We, who have learned so much from England and we who have so much more to learn and we who should look upon the British as our rulers and teachers, are we to allow such acts?

And this "we"—a "we" of loyalty to and benefit from the British Raj—Rao calls *Brahminism* even while demanding its rethinking in the wake of Ashe's assassination by the Brahmin named Vanchinathan: "Gentlemen, what are we coming to…What is Brahmanism coming to?" The answer, evident in hindsight, was that the Subcontinental form of power called Brahminism was shifting its articulation, from an investment in colonial loyalism to an investment in national independence.

If our 1911 assassination was indeed a moment in which Brahminism was "coming to" a new form of articulation, that moment was being shaped by a constellation of forces both near and far. Such forces were evident in the assassin Vanchi Aiyer's letter, expressing concerns: with "our safety in the other world, *Swadharma*"; with protecting "the imperishable '*Sanatana Dharmam*' (eternal religion)"; with figures like "Rama, Sivaji, Krishna, Gurugovind, Arjuna"; with the polluting power of the "panchame," "(pariah or low caste man)," and "Mlechcha (foreigner)"; and with how such pollution was related to being a "carcass-eater" and in particular "eating the very cow's flesh." All these, of course, had long historical precedents at home in South Asia. Yet now such *regional* concerns in the South were being reformatted in light of a series of influences from *elsewhere* in the North.

The assassination, according to the court documents, was inspired by Bengali sedition in the North, whose influence moved to the South through the French colony of Pondicherry nestled on the coast of the Madras Presidency. The trial, concerned with the possibility of a wider conspiracy behind the assassination, remarks on "the extraordinary way in which the town of Pondicherry seems to permeate this case,"[262] and newspaper articles in the wake of Ashe's assassination were insistent that it was "now quite time the Government decided to deal seriously with the grave problem which the existence of an anarchist party at Pondicherry constitutes… whereby Pondicherry would cease to be a sanctuary for political malefactors" largely from Bengal.[263] The French response, from the newly appointed Governor of Pondicherry Martineau in June 1911, was understated: "that the French Colonies might be the centre of dangerous propaganda against the tranquility of your Empire, I was loathe to believe..."[264]

Such Bengali derivation from the North via the French colony of Pondicherry was apparently necessary in order to understand how the assassination could have occurred in South India where Brahminism had hitherto largely been synonymous with loyalism, as suggested in the remarks earlier by K. Srinivasa Rao. Newspapers were clear that "[t]he most surprising feature of the crime is that it should have occurred in Southern India. The Madras Presidency

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[261] "The Tinnevelly Tragedy," *The Madras Mail*, 23/24 June 1911. The following quotes are taken from this speech.
[262] Ashe Case (1912): 41.
[263] "The Murder of Mr. Ashe: Anarchism in South India," *The Madras Times,* 18 June 1911.
[264] Letter from M. Martineau, 22 June 1911, Home Political, Branch B, July 1911, No. 41-42, National Archives of India.

has so consistently been held up to admiration as a model of good behaviour that one has become accustomed to regard it in that light."[265] Indian elites echoed the same sentiment, such as the Hon'ble Mr. Justice PR Sundara Iyer, claiming "It was not believed that there was in South India any sign of sedition or anarchism. This Presidency had earned a good name for loyalty and the maintenance of order."[266] Such claims further echoed those in the then widely quoted text *Indian Unrest* by Valentine Chirol that "'there is in the Hinduism of Southern India a peculiar element of conservative quietism of which lawlessness in any form seems repugnant.'"[267] The British subsequently seemed to require a large constellation of sources outside South India, both close to home and further abroad, in order to understand the "cause" for this shift in Brahminism from loyalism to "anarchism."

While the British may have seen a surprising shift from "conservative quietism" to "lawlessness," we may wonder whether or not untouchables would have seen anything but the reincarnation of "conservative," all too familiar elements in this shift. For instance, "Exhibit OOOO" provides an example "of the verses inciting to independence" among the materials found belonging to the "dangerous anarchical society" of which the assassin Vanchinathan was a member that articulated an opposition between the pure and the polluted reinscribed, rather than erased, by Brahminism's nationalist guise. Here, the "Aryan," the Sanskrit term for pure and noble representing the Brahmin, battle the "Rakshasas," the demons who represented the polluting and the foreign:

> When will subside this thirst for liberty?
> When will perish our love for servitude?
> Oh! when will snap our mother's manacles?
> And when will our troubles cease and become null?
> Oh! Thou! that came once for the Bharata [India] war,
> Thou, Protector of Aryans' lives!
> Is it not Thy mercy to assist us with victory?
> Is it proper Thy devotees will suffer?
> Are famines and epidemics (reserved) for Thy true servants?
> To whom else is all greatness in this world?
> Canst Thou give up those who have taken shelter under Thee?
> And can the Mother case her child away?
> Is not Thy duty to say—Fear not.
> Oh! Arya! Has Thou forgotten Thy virtue?
> Oh! Thou, Destroyer of the evil Rakshasas (demons)!
> Oh! Gem of Warriors, Oh! Best of Aryans![268]

The foreign British and the native Untouchable alike could be plugged into the position of the Rakshasas against national Aryan aspirations. As we've seen, both were. We may suspect that for the pariah, loyalism and anarchism were the same sort of thing: Brahminism.

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[265] From *The Times of India* reprinted in "The Tinnevelly Outrage: Press Opinion" in *Madras Mail*, 20 June 1911.
[266] "The Tinnevelly Tragedy," *The Madras Mail,* 23/24 June 1911.
[267] Reprinted from *The Times of India* in "The Tinnevelly Outrage: Press Opinion" in *The Madras Mail* 20 June 1911. Chirol was speaking about the 1908 riots in Tinnevelly which the newspaper sees connected to the release of Bepin Chandra Pal and a more general Swaraj agitation, but which was also related to the closing down of the Swadeshi Steamboat Company. The details of these events are beyond the scope of my purposes here.
[268] "Exhibit OOOO." Ashe Case (1912): 44-45.

## ANARCHY, OR "TO BE CONTENT WITH THE STATUS GIVEN"

The British were very worried about this conceptual shift in Brahminism for two reasons. First, this shift demonstrated geographic spread. After all, it was Brahmins in Bengal to the north after 1905 who seemed to have begun what the British variously referred to as "unrest," "sedition," and "anarchy"—and now Brahmins in the Madras Presidency to the south had become involved in similar actions. Second and equally, if not more, disturbing for the British was the way in which such Brahminism demonstrated a social spread; it seemed not only to have crossed geographic boundaries from the north to the south in Ashe's assassination but to have crossed caste boundaries as well. When discussing the "about 50 letters found on search in the houses of various persons implicated in the alleged conspiracy" to assassinate Ashe, the Court investigation found that "one or two considerations call for notice"[269] that mark this spread. Foremost among such considerations was the mixing of different castes: "The first is the extraordinary degree of intimacy evidenced by certain of the letters between persons so widely separated by caste…" such as that between "Brahmins of Shencottah" and "Vellalars of Ottapidraram and Tuticorin [Tuttukoodi]" evident in nationalist salutations between them such as your "affectionate youngster in the caste (*jati*) of Bharat [India]."[270] Indeed, the Court's description of the 14 accused in the conspiracy to assassinate Ashe—a conspiracy which the Court prosecuted as seditious, but a seditious conspiracy for which there was no proven link with Ashe's assassination, as we will see—categorized those involved as either "Brahmin" or "Non-Brahmin."[271] For the British, the assassination revealed the extent to which Brahminism, as it were, was now forging associations—dangerously seditious associations—not only from the north to the south but with Non-Brahmins across Brahmin caste-lines in the name of *swaraj*.

But though there certainly was a rough 50/50 split between "Brahmin" and "Non-Brahmin" among those involved in the alleged conspiracy to assassinate Ashe in 1911, one should not let these words on a particular archival document pull us away from a history of power relationships in a particular part of the world. All the alleged "Non-Brahmins" are further qualified in the court report as being of the "Vellala" caste. The investigation failed to attend to the ways in which, in fact, Brahmins and Vellalas had a history of being united in, not divided by, struggles within the very same locale of the alleged Ashe conspiracy. Perhaps most striking among such struggles were those in which Brahmins and Non-Brahmins such as Vellalas and others in the region united to violently subjugate lower-caste populations who challenged the dominant social order. For example, in June 1899, in the very same region as the Ashe conspiracy 12 years later,[272] there were massive riots "entailing much plundering and destruction of property and considerable loss of life"[273] produced by "the ill-feeling between the [low-caste

[269] Ashe Case (1912): 17.
[270] Ashe Case (1912): 17-18.
[271] Ashe Case (1912): 37. All of the 14 accused were men, most in their 20s with the youngest 18 and the oldest 45, and roughly half knew English.
[272] "[I]n the Tinnevelly and Madura district of the Madras Presidency, and in a portion of the neighboring state of Travancore" (To His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor General of India in Council from George Hamilton [e.g. The Right Honourable Lord George Francis Hamilton, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India], 5 April 1900, IOR/L/PJ/6/523 [Judicial and Public Papers: 1900], British Library) but "chiefly in Satur and Tenkasi Taluks" which also "extended N. of Tinnevelly Taluk and to part of the Ottapidaram Taluk" (M. Hammick, Esq, ICS, Special Commissioner for Madura and Tinnevelly District to The Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Judicial Department, 30 June 1899 in "Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of Madras, Judicial Department, No. 1077, dated 7th July 1899", IOR/L/PJ/6/523 [Judicial and Public Papers: 1900], British Library.)
[273] Hamilton to Excellency, 5 April 1900.

Non-Brahmin] Shanars and [the somewhat higher-caste Non-Brahmin] Maravars."[274] The riots were extensive, with the Madras Presidency subsequently demanding an increase in the police force costing 65,259 RS annually.[275] Reports of the Indian Civil Service claimed the riots were a reaction to lower caste populations attempting to move out of their assigned place:

> It is a quarrel which has arisen solely from the known determination of the Shanars as a caste to improve their present social and their religious condition, and unless the Shanars can be persuaded to be content with the status given to them by their caste superiors, it is useless to expect an improved state of things.[276]

Maravars were not alone in opposing the Shanar efforts to move out of their place in the caste hierarchy. Shanars had "been arrogating themselves titles" of respect for "more than 30 years" resulting in the fact that "there is not a village in Tinnevelly [Tirunelveli] where the Shanars are not on bad terms with their neighbors of other castes."[277] "Besides the Maravars…a number of other castes took part in the attacks on the Shanars,"[278] castes which included Kallars and Pillavas along with—central to our focus here—"Vellalas" *and* "Brahmins."[279] In short, what the Court in the Ashe case saw as a conspiracy of widely separated castes against the British was actually a local tried-and-true coalition in acts of violence against untouchable *panchama* such as the Shanars—e.g. the "fifth," the beef-eating—in order to assert control, authority, and power. It was such assertion that was, in the "coming to" of Brahminism, being *expanded* from merely targeting native *panchama* to now targeting foreign *panchama*. Such expansion was achieved through new nationalist demands for *swaraj* in order to achieve a particular social order under the continued auspices of *dharma*.

## VEDANTISM, "CAN YOU ANSWER MY QUESTION."

I have argued so far that the demand for *swaraj* considered inaugural in South India, the dramatic 1911 Brahmin assassination of Ashe, deployed articulations of domination very familiar to huge swaths of "natives" in order to demand independence from forces deemed "foreign." It was the reinscription of the Indian outcaste that provided the logic for casting out the British. And yet the court case relegates the Indian outcaste and the casting out of the British to different realms. Indian outcastes had to do with "religion" and were "personal." Casting out the British had to do with "sedition" and was "political." This distinction, between religion and sedition, between personal and political, I argue, helped preserve the logic of the Indian outcaste

[274] To the Right Honourable Lord George Francis Hamilton, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India, RE: telegram no 1273, 16 June 1899 correspondence RE: Shanars and Maravars, 1899. IOR/L/PJ/6/523, Judicial and Public Papers: 1900, British Library. For more on the Shanar community, see Robert L. Hardgrave, *The Nadars of Tamilnad: The Political Culture of a Community in Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).
[275] To Hamilton RE: telegram no 1273, 16 June 1899.
[276] From M. Hammick, Esq, 30 June 1899, in "Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of Madras, Judicial Department, No. 1077, dated 7th July 1899."
[277] From M. Hammick, Esq, 30 June 1899, in "Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of Madras, Judicial Department, No. 1077, dated 7th July 1899."
[278] Minute Paper 462/1900, Subject: Riots in Tinnevelly and Madurai: June 1899 (22 February 1900), IOR/L/PJ/6/523 [Judicial and Public Papers: 1900], British Library.
[279] From M. Hammick, Esq, 30 June 1899, in "Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of Madras, Judicial Department, No. 1077, dated 7th July 1899."

in casting out the British, providing ideological means, or echoing ideological means already present, to entrench Brahminism through *swaraj*.

Though the court did discover a conspiracy through their investigation into Ashe's assassination, the court did not find the conspiracy responsible for Ashe's assassination. This finding was premised, however, on a distinction between the "personal" realm, where "religion" existed, and the "political" realm, where "sedition" or "treason" existed.

Several responses to the assassination praised Ashe's "real and well earned popularity among the Indians"[280] thereby suggesting that "[t]here can hardly have been any actual existing motive"—"political or…personal"—"for the murder"[281]:

> His administration since he was placed in charge of the District was quite efficient and sympathetic and on all the best of terms with the people [Non-Brahmin?] and the educated classes [Brahmin?], after visiting their club of which he was an honorary member, and mingling quite freely with them. No immediate motive, either of a political or a personal kind could have been fancied by the murderer or his accomplices.[282]

The framing of the murder as "meaningless"[283] and "the most wanton and unprovoked outrage"[284] quickly gave way, however, to potential "personal" motives. Ashe "had to deal with the serious Tuticorin riot of three years ago, and thus, presumably, incurred the hostility of those who have now cut short the career of an able Government Servant."[285] This riot was the reaction to the British closing down the surprisingly successful Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company, begun by V.O. Chidambaram Pillai in 1906 to challenge the British monopoly on shipping between the District of Tirunelveli and Sri Lanka. As the court documents would later claim, "The murder of Mr. Ashe by Vanchi, was due mainly to the impression that he ruined the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company to benefit his country-men…"[286]

Yet, in turn, these claims about, first, the lack of any motive or, second, the existence of a personal motive were abandoned in favor of a widespread "conspiracy," e.g. "political motives": "There is no doubt whatever that the assassin was not prompted by any personal motives against Mr. Ashe, and that the murder was the result of a conspiracy,"[287] a conspiracy "planned and premeditated,"[288] and thus "[t]he motive for the shocking murder of Mr. Ashe, Collector of Tinnevelly, is believed to be political."[289] In short, the popular press, from the meaningless and across the personal, came to the conclusion that Ashe's assassination was "not the mere outcome of impulse…but a definite part of the disloyal campaign" which included the series of recent assassinations all over India,[290] e.g. not "personal" but "political." And, as one Calcutta paper

[280] "The Tinnevelly Murder," *The Madras Mail,* 19 June 1911
[281] "The Muder of Mr. Ashe," *The Madras Times*, 18 June 1911.
[282] "The Ashe Murder Tragedy," *The Hindu* 19 June 1911
[283] "The Muder of Mr. Ashe," *The Madras Times*, 18 June 1911.
[284] "The Ashe Murder Tragedy," in *The Hindu* 19 June 1911.
[285] "Murder of the Collector of Tinnevelly," *Madras Mail*, 17 June 1911
[286] Ashe Case (1912): 93.
[287] "The Tinnevelly Outrage," *The Madras Mail* 23 June 1911.
[288] "The Motive," *The Hindu,* 20 June 1911.
[289] *The Madras Times*, 19 June 1911.
[290] "The Tinnevelly Murder," *The Madras Mail* 19 June 1911

put it in response to Ashe's assassination, "political crime must be put down with a heavy hand."[291]

However, the Court addressing the possibility that the assassination was part of a conspiracy—the guilt of the dead assassin Vanchinathan not being at issue—found just the opposite. Vanchinathan, the Court concluded, though influenced by a widespread "treasonable conspiracy" and despite the fact that the letter found on his body after the assassination indicated "political motives," ultimately conducted the actual assassination for personal reasons.

> It may be that the murder of Mr. Ashe was a probable consequence of the conspiracy proved in the sense that Vanchi's mind had been inflamed and his criminal propensities aroused by the pernicious influences exercised by the members of the conspiracy, but that is not enough. We must be satisfied that, although the members of the conspiracy which is charged in the indictment and which has been proved to have existed did not conspire to murder Mr. Ashe, Mr. Ashe was murdered "in pursuance" of that conspiracy within the meaning of section 111 of the Indian Penal Code. On the evidence we are unable to take this view.[292]

"Vanchi's mind" not part of the conspiracy, and therefore not "political." The court went on to conclude that the alleged "conspiracy" was "contemptible and farcical," that many of those involved such as "the cooks 6th and 14th accused" and "the grocers 3rd and 4th accused" "could have had no idea of what they were undertaking" in "tak[ing an] oath to expel [the] British Government" in order to achieve "Indian progress, both material and spiritual"; and yet, "though no acts of violence or lawlessness have been proved as the direct outcome of the conspiracy it is difficult to overestimate the mischievous effect of a conspiracy" such as this "on the minds of all brought within its influence."[293] However, Vanchinathan's motives—his inflamed "mind"—themselves were not understood as politically seditious but personally religious. Referring to the letter found on his body which demanded protection for the *"Sanatana Dharmam* (eternal religion)," the court concludes:

> This supports the inference…that his religious feelings were inflamed, Swadesi and boycott generated dislike and disloyalty towards the Englishmen in general and Mr. Ashe in particular and his excited religious feelings nerved him to undertake the dreadful task. The evidence places beyond doubt that Mr. Ashe's murder had nothing to do with the alleged conspiracy now in question.[294]

In short, Ashe's assassination was not political, an articulation of the treasonable conspiracy, because Vanchinathan acted for a personal reason, that is, as a product of religious inflammation.

Yet the British distinction between the "personal" and "religion," on the one hand, and the "political" and "sedition," on the other, was difficult to maintain on the basis of the testimony of the conspirators themselves. Their testimony turns on the translation of the troubling term "Vedanta." The testimony centers on the teachings of a man named Nilakantam, who had come from the neighboring French colony of Pondicherry bordering the Madras Presidency and was understood as the mechanism that brought seditious influences from Bengali anarchists into our

[291] Reprinted from *The Englishman* (Calcutta) in "The Tinnevelly Outrage: Press Opinion," *The Madras Mail*, 20 June 1911.
[292] Ashe Case (1912): 37.
[293] Ashe Case (1912): 93
[294] Ashe Case (1912): 54.

locale. It was widely agreed in the court that "Nilakantam left Pondicherry in order to preach revolutionary politics," that "[h]is procedure is remarkable" in such preaching, and that such remarkability consists in the fact that he told the accused in their seditious societies

> that their Sanathana Dharma ["eternal religion"] is in danger. He tries to show that it is impossible that their Swadeshi industries can be fostered and the administration of the country improved without the expulsion of the British Government. He preaches to them that all peaceful methods, or in other words, constitutional agitation has failed; that if articles are published in newspapers or lectures are delivered for the improvement of the country, the patriots are sent to Jail; that assassinations of individuals have done no good. He poses as a religious preacher and gives a religious turn to his preaching. He professes himself a vedantist not concerned in the material affairs of this world, he tells them to disregard the body and sacrifice themselves for the country. He deifies the country and makes it an object of worship...There can be no doubt that…the minds of all...of them was impressed [with] this one broad fact by Nilakanta that a revolution for the purpose of expelling the British Government was absolutely necessary.[295]

It would seem that Nilakanta professing himself a *vedantist,* e.g. a teacher of Vedanta, is synonymous with him "pos[ing] as a religious preacher."

But in the following interview, referring to Nilakanta's preaching, "vedanta" is not translated as "religion," despite initially suggesting otherwise, but as "philosophy."

> With reference to the use he [Nilakantam] made of **religion** in his lectures there, Arumugam P[rinciple] W[itness] 6 says "I took it at the time all that he preached was **sedition** in the name of pure **philosophy**."
> Q—Did he preach any **philosophy** to you apart from **sedition**?
> A—All his words appeared to me to be **philosophy** and appeared to me also proper.
> Q—Can you answer my question.
> A—Whether it was **philosophy** or **sedition**, all **sedition** he preached appeared to me to be **philosophy**.
> Q—You mean he might have preached pure **philosophy** to you without any **sedition** in it—which you were willing to take as **sedition**?
> A—It is like this, all that he talked was **sedition** and it appeared to me to be **philosophy**.'
> The word used for **philosophy** was **Vedantism**.[296]

The dialogue here starts with a discussion of "the use he made of religion," but then proceeds to translate *Vedantism* as "philosophy"—despite the fact that elsewhere in the court case, as above when Nilakanta claims "poses as a religious preacher" which seems synonymous with "profess[ing] himself a vedantist," *Vedantism* was rendered as "religion." Were *Vedantism* translated as "religion" here, it would be clear that in the mind of the conspirators there was no distinction between religion, that is the "personal," and sedition, that is the "political."

What the British legal effort to separate the personal from the political, religion from sedition, does, I suggest, is obscure the very answer the court case provides to the question which K. Srinivasa Rao, Sub-Judge in the Coimbatore District, asked elsewhere days after Ashe's assassination itself: "Gentlemen, what are we coming to…What is Brahmanism coming to?" The answer, it would seem, was that Brahminism had fused the fulfillment of *dharma* with the achievement of *swaraj*. The British scrambled to frame the concern as one of religious

[295] Ashe Case (1912): 74
[296] Ashe Case (1912): 45-46. Bold and Italics mine.

sentiments being put to seditious use, the "personal" masquerading as "political," was evident in the Court's reference "to the authority" of the premier 19th century German Orientalist scholar Max Müller "on the point that *Vedantism* could not possibly have any pernicious effect. No higher authority can be referred to and...no doubt he is right, but, as the Public Prosecutor pointed out, this is not the question; it only shows that the noblest religious principles may be used for such treasonable purposes."[297] This scrambling of the British Raj draws attention away from what to many may have been far more troublesome: the reinscription, rather than erasure, of forms of social injustice in the nationalist fusion of *swaraj* and *dharma*. This is not to say that the joining of politics and religion is a violation of basic secularist demands and therefore bound to be bad. But the fusion of *dharma*, which the British read as "religious" but which upper caste elements saw as justifying the position of "outcaste," with *swaraj,* which positioned a self-ruling self against this outcaste, was unlikely to be viewed favorably by huge swaths of the Indian population.

In short, by fusing what the British called religion with what the British recognized as sedition in this inaugural moment of *swaraj* in South India, joining the "personal" with the "political" of the British which both added clarity to *swaraj's* demand among its advocates while mystifying it from its opponents, Brahminism seemed to claim that a past of native unfreedoms, e.g. the untouchability of being outcaste, would conspire with a future of national freedom, e.g. self-ruling independence from the British. This nationalism—or anarchism, or treason, or sedition, Vedanta, or *swaraj*—was a reincarnation of Brahminism, a form of power that perpetuated the degradation of the carcass-eating Indian pariah through opposing a carcass-eating British one, linking the past of the Indian outcaste with the future of casting out the British. Non-Brahmins, finding such *swaraj* markedly unappealing, required an alternative to "self-rule" not focused on "rule" as much as on relationships with the "self" through "respect."

## CHAPTER 6. FOREIGN FORCE AND NATIVE EMBRACE: THE UNTOUCHABLE 1981 CONVERSION TO ISLAM

The 1911 assassination reveals the ways in which the Indian outcaste fused with efforts to cast out the British, providing an answer to the question "What was Brahmanism coming to?" that would terrify the Non-Brahmin. The British saw this fusion through a variety of conceptual frameworks, such as the fusion between "personal" and "political" or "religion" and "sedition." But we have also seen how these distinctions in turn mapped onto a distinction between native interiority and foreign exteriority. The British Raj suggested that the assassination must have been the product, at least in part, of foreign influences: a native Madras Presidency, "a model of good behavior" whose "Southern India[n]" brand of "Hinduism" had "a peculiar element of conservative quietism of which lawlessness in any form seems repugnant," had met with foreign elements, namely, "political malefactors" from Bengal and "French Colonies" that had become a "centre of dangerous propaganda against the tranquility" of the British Empire. The equation between native quietism and foreign danger, of an interiority prone to acts of peaceful embrace and an exteriority associated with violent force, marks the central concern revolving around the same 10 km locale decades later in the wake of the 1981 Untouchable mass conversion to Islam in the village of Meenakshipuram.

If the locale in 1911 provided the assassination plot that illustrated what the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect pushed against (e.g. "Brahmanism"), the locale in 1981

[297] Ashe Case (1912): 46.

provided the mass conversion that illustrated just what that Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect pulled for: acts of forging allies elsewhere in order to better demand just relations fostering self-respect at home.

On 19 February 1981, around 180 scheduled caste (untouchable) families of the unotuchable Pallan caste converted to Islam *en masse* in the village of Meenakshipuram, Tamil Nadu.[298] Subsequent studies of Indian politics have been of general agreement that "[t]o understand current events...we must go back to 1981 when...Dalits [Untouchables] in Meenakshipuram, Tamilnadu, underwent mass conversion to Islam."[299] Reports showed that caste dynamics within and around Meenakshipuram itself, involving degrading and violent acts by low-caste Thevars against outcaste Pallans, had led to circumstances in which Pallans considered conversion in order to escape a situation of vulnerability enforced through regimes of humiliation, violence, and poverty by renaming themselves and reconfiguring their relationships through new attachments elsewhere. The sensationalized concern at the time, however, was that "foreign money" from oil-rich Muslim countries in the Persian Gulf was targeting poor, vulnerable "Hindu" populations in an attempt to change the religious demographics of India, destroy its indigenous traditions, and thereby subvert its politics. "Casting out" foreign elements once again became *swaraj*'s demand, with *swaraj*'s subtext remaining the native outcaste.

Regardless of whether the domestic injustice of the outcaste or casting out a foreign threat was emphasized, I argue that widespread reactions to Meenakshipuram emphasized some external, foreign, and collective force rather than an internal, indigenous, and individual embrace as the "reason" for the mass conversion. Such reaction, I suggest, marked a defining moment in the postcolonial answer to the colonial question asked by Sub-Judge K. Srinivasa Rao of Coimbatore District in 1911: "What is Brahmanism coming to?" Brahminism was defining what "religion" was in the secular democracy of the Republic of India. Under the Brahminical rendering of the conditions of the "mass," the conversion could not be understood as "religious," e.g. the product of personal conviction. As we will see, whether or not one saw such conversion as legitimate, in turn, rested on one's interpretation of "secularism and democracy." Did mass conversion threaten the existence of secularism and democracy? Or did mass conversion demonstrate the existence of secularism and democracy? I claim that it was this interpretation, rather than secularism and democracy themselves, that was decisive. And I argue that such decisiveness, in turn, reiterated persistent relations of power, e.g. Brahminism, that were of concern to EVR's Non-Brahmin political thought and movement of Self-Respect.

## REACTION

Many reactions to Meenakshipuram saw coercion, rather than conviction, as the "cause" of the mass conversion. Such reactions missed the importance of individual agency and the influence of an idea.

Those emphasizing domestic injustice presumed that the conversion was the product of coercive elements, namely, local caste injustice. The Regional Director of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Mr. K. Arumugam, following his May 1981 visit to and official state report on

[298] This is the figure and date provided in the official "Meenakshipuram Report" conducted by the Office of the Director of SC/ST [Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes], Government of India, Madras conducted between 15 May 1981 to 17 May 1981. The Report was published in *Sunday,* 13-19 November 1982 edition: pp 17-27. The Report itself derives its figure and date from the newspaper report of the conversions published in the Madras edition of *The Sunday Standard*, 14 April 1981, under the headline "A Whole Village Goes Islamic."

[299] David Smith, *Hinduism and Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003): 184, 193.

Meenakshipuram, reported that "The Harijans had told him that they were finally forced to embrace Islam because of the non-cooperative attitude of caste Hindus…"[300] Likewise, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Yogendra Makwana, reported after his 3 July 1981 visit to Meenakshipuram: "those Harijans who converted themselves to Islam" said that "they were forced to embrace Islam due to the 'humiliation, insult and ill-treatment they suffered at the hands of caste Hindus.'"[301] Certain forms of indigenous treatment had forced the outcaste to embrace Islam.

Though different in content, those emphasizing foreign threat mirrored this belief in coercion. In a language whose logic sounds remarkably like that of the British, LK Advani, leader of the recently formed Hindu-right Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that would achieve national power in the 1990s, suggested that the mass conversion of untouchables to Islam at Meenakshipuram opposed "the democratic and secular complexion of the country" for "the conversion of an individual was an act of conscience but conversion en masse pointed to a 'sinister conspiracy which posed a grave threat to India's secularism.'"[302] Advani's concern here in distinguishing "individual" and "conscience" from "mass" and "conspiracy" in the name of India's secularism and democracy echoes the concerns at the State level (MGR) and the Centre (Indira Gandhi) that we saw in Chapter 4. There, "the principles of a secular country like India" meant protection *of* conversion out of "genuine conviction," i.e. "chang[ing]…religion voluntarily," and protection *from* conversion "achieved through compulsion," i.e. "exploit[ing]" vulnerabilities of "poverty and hardships." AB Vajpayee, who would later serve as Prime Minister of India from 1998-2004 under the BJP government, voiced the same concern between foreign threat and the distinction between external force and internal embrace. During his visit to Meenakshipuram—where he participated in the "first-ever Hindu solidarity conference in this part of the country"[303] that required, on some accounts, "all the dexterity of the police to avert what could have been a nasty confrontation between the police and the volunteers of the Hindu Unity Centre"[304]—Vajpayee claimed Meenakshipuram to be a "danger signal,"[305] demanding his fellow Hindus "to atone for our sins if we are to reassure the Harijans of a safe and secure place in the future,"[306] and the need for "the solidarity" of the "Hindu religion" to "regain its ancient glory."[307] Though acknowledging domestic injustice, Vajpayee, like Advani, was concerned that "mass conversions…tended to harm the whole fabric of the socialistic and secular society,"[308] suggesting that elements foreign to that society were the culprit. And such concerns were not framed merely as national but as international, evident in organizations involved in efforts along

[300] "Untouchability May Have Caused Mass Conversion: Official," *The Hindu,* 27 May 1981.
[301] "Religious Heads Must Find Solution," *The Hindu*, 5 July 1981.
[302] "Conversions: Advani Sees Conspiracy," *Indian Express*, 14 August 1981 (at the inauguration of a training camp for workers in Madurai).
[303] "Hindus Pledge to Follow Path of Brotherhood," *Indian Express* 17 July 1981 (Meenakshipuram, July 16).
[304] "Anxious Moments for Police," *Indian Express 17 July 1981*, (Meenakshipuram, 16 July). Note caption of the image accompanying this article: "The Swamijis hearing the grievances of Harijans at Thirumalapuram village."
[305] "Reforming Hindu Society: Vajpayee Calls for Mass Movement," *Indian Express,* 16 July 1981 (Meenakshipuram, 15 July)
[306] "Choked with Emotion," *Indian Express* 16 July 1981 (Meenakshipuram, July 15)
[307] "Reforming Hindu Society: Vajpayee Calls for Mass Movement," *Indian Express*
[308] "Choked with Emotion," *Indian Express*

with Advani and Vajpayee, such as the "Sarvadesika Arya Prathinidhi Sabha (International Arya League)."[309] Certain forms of foreign influence needed to be cast out.

In short, both those emphasizing domestic injustice and foreign threat were worried that the mass conversion of untouchables to Islam was an act of forcible embrace. On both accounts, Meenakshipuram was a product of social circumstance rather than personal conviction. And yet the suggestion that Islamic mass conversion was an automatic reaction to unjust social circumstance, evident in the fact that such conversion was en masse itself, obscures two major features of the event at Meenakshipuram itself. First, the demonstration of individual agency involved in organizing the mass conversion. Second, the influence of particular ideas that served as justification for and helped provide an interpretation of the event to those involved in the social circumstance themselves. With respect to individual agency, reports center on a man whose convert name was Omar Shariff. With respect to the idea of influence, Omar Shariff and others suggest it was "self-respect" [*cuya-mariyātai*].

First, agency. The most prominent leader of the mass conversion at Meenakshipuram was a man named Omar Shariff, though variously transliterated. According to the official government "Meenakshipuram Report," "Uma[r] Sheriff"—née Durai Raj—"along with others seems to have taken a leading role in the mass conversion in this village..."[310] Though educated, Omar Shariff personally experienced caste abuse at the local fund audit department where he was employed. The "Report" claims that Omar Sharif is the one who "approached" a local "social and religious" organization called the South Indian Ishathul Islam Society,[311] founded in 1944, to help conduct the conversions.[312] The Report further claims that Omar Shariff had "been approaching them for the last four years" regarding "the ill treatment of the harijans" in which time he had submitted "three petitions"—including one the month immediately preceding the mass conversion in February 1981. Moreover, newspaper articles also focused on Omar Shariff, who was quoted as claiming that Islam was desirable because there was "no discrimination among Muslims" as there was in caste Hinduism.[313] Accordingly, various academic studies of Meenakshipuram have focused on Omar Shariff as well. The author of one of the few detailed studies of Meenakshipuram claims that "Yusuf (Thangaraj), Umar Shariff (Durai Raj), Raja Sharif (Rajendra), Khaja Mohiuddin (Kandaswamy), were some of the educated Harijan youths

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[309] "Hindus Perform Yagna," *The Hindu*, 11 August 1981. There is another organization in Uttar Pradesh described as being run by Arya Samaj volunteers referred to as "the fledling Dharma Raksha Maya Abhiyan Samiti." Prabhu Chawla, "Converted into an Issue" in *India Today* September 1-15 1981: 31.

[310] "The Meenakshipuram Report" published in *Sunday,* 13-19th November 1982: 17. The report also narrates the following caste grievance of Uma[r] Shariff: "Shri Dorai Raj (alias Uma[r] Shariff) was working the local fund audit department in Dindigul sometime back (since transferred to Srivilluputtur). There was a quarrel in the office and his colleague called him by his caste, 'Oh, scheduled caste, how arrogant you are!' He made a complaint in the office and the case is going on." (19)

[311] According to "The Meenakshipuram Report," the South Indian Ishathul Islam Society had been assisting conversions since 1944, having converted between 7000-8000 people by 1981. Such acts were being organized in coordination with the South India Isha-Athul Islam Sabha, a 37 year-old organization with branches throughout Tamil Nadu—including one in the neighboring town of Tenkasi—which claimed to have arranged "17,000 conversions in Tamil Nadu since its inception." The other branches were in Madras, Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli, Cumbum, and Kilakarai. Kilakarai seems to have been an important branch. BR Navasakthe, president of the Ramanathapuram Ryots Sangham, claimed that "Killakarai is one of the richest villages in Ramanathapuram district and the Muslims are known to be connected with the South Indian Islamic Society, an association which is meant to promote Islam and was instrumental in converting the Tiruvelveli Harijans [at Meenakshipuram]." "Islam's New Children," *India Today* 16-31 July 1981: 78.

[312] "The Meenakshipuram Report" (1982): 25.

[313] "Harassment Reason for Conversion," *The Hindu,* 14 September 1981.

who volunteered to take up the responsibility of mass conversions,"[314] and suggests that "Omar Shariff seems to be very relevant."[315] A Muslim press-published Tamil pamphlet titled *Meenakshipuram Thoughts* [*Mīṉāṭcipura Cintaṉaikaḷ*] also focused on Omar Shariff.[316] Agency, rather than automaticity, was central to the 1981 conversion.

Second, such agency was influenced by an idea. Studies reveal the influence of EVR and "self-respect." The academic study above reports that Omar Shariff felt that conversions like Meenakshipuram were taking place in Tamil Nadu because of a greater "awareness" of resistance to caste oppression than in other parts of India, largely due to the "[i]nfluence of EV Ramaswamy's talk on rationalism and equality" which "awakened the people during the last 40 years."[317] *Meenakshipuram Thoughts* invites a link with EVR, republishing an entire 1929 speech of EVR's in which he declared the virtue of Untouchable mass conversions to Islam as a way of challenging caste hierarchy,[318] and the first in which he claim that there could be no objection to "Untouchables becoming Muslims *en masse* [*kumpal kumpalāka*]."[319] The pamphlet also quoted Omar Shariff in citing the principle of *cuya-mariyātai*, or "self-respect," as the cause for the conversion: "Our feeling of self-respect encouraged us to convert religion!"[320]

To add to such evidence of the influence of EVR's "self-respect," following the conversion at Meenakshipuram, the current iteration of EVR's thought and movement, the *Dravidar Kaḻakam* [DK], published a Tamil pamphlet based on research into the 1981 conversion. The pamphlet titled and described itself as follows:

> Why The Change of Religion at Meenakshipuram?
> (This is the direct-met interview (25.7.1981) by Dravidar Kaḻakam Secretary Ki. Vīramani of the oppressed who embraced the Muslim path at Meenakshipuram)[321]

It appears that the continuing thought and movement of EVR was just as interested in the converts at Meenakshipuram as converts like Omar Shariff at Meenakshipuram were in the continuing thought and movement of EVR. The interview here makes sure to establish the relationship between EVR, affectionately referred to as "Periyar" and one of India's most infamous "atheists," by beginning with a conversation with one of the main leaders of the conversion that we have seen earlier, Omar Shariff:

> According to the words of Omar Sharif, who had converted[322] from the Hindu religion to the Muslim religion:- "A working-man came here and asked, 'You are Periyarists[323]; doesn't one need to pray to God even in this religion [Islam]? Then why did you convert [*māṛu*] religion?" he asked…"It is in the Hindu religion that there is *jāti* [caste]. Here [in Islam] there is no *jāti*

[314] Mumtaz Ali Khan, *Mass-Conversions of Meenakshipuram: A Sociological Inquiry* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1983): 41.
[315] Khan, *Mass-Conversions* (1983): 123.
[316] Tañcai Pīlāl, "*Mīṉāṭcipura Cintaṉaikaḷ*" (Ceṉṉai: Nūr Patippakam, 1981): 21. "*eṅkaḷ cuya mariyātai uṇarvē eṅkaḷai matam māṛat tūṇṭiyatu*!"
[317] This interview with Omar Shariff can be found in Khan, *Mass-Conversions* (1983): 123-125.
[318] Pīlāl, *Cintaṉaikaḷ* 1981: 41-46.
[319] Pīlāl, *Cintaṉaikaḷ* 1981: 46.
[320] Pīlāl, *Cintaṉaikaḷ* 1981: 21.
[321] Ki. Vīramaṇi, *Mīṉāṭcipurattil Matam Māṛṛam Ēṉ?* [Why Religious Conversion at Meenakshipuram?] (Cheṉṉai: Uṇmai Viḻakkam Patippakam, 2003 (1981)).
[322] *Māṛu*: lit, "change"
[323] Lit., "those of of the principle of Periyar" [*periyār koḷkaikkāraṅkiṛīṅka***]**.

> difference. For us [Periyarists] there may be the God-denial-principle. However, everywhere they [Hindus] ask what your *jāti* is!" I said. [324]

Such claims echo those of other related converts, such as the following passage quoted partially earlier from a reporter's conversation with a Mr. Rajagopal, now Rahmatullah, who was a part of one of the "copycat" conversions immediately subsequent to that at Meenakshipuram:

> His own conversion, according to him, stemmed from his long association with Muslims. He claimed that even when he was an atheist and a Dravida Kazhagam activist Islam had some fascination for him. Mr. E.V. Ramasamy Naicker…had himself suggested once that all non-Brahmin communities should embrace Islam in order to escape from the Brahmin oppression, he recalled. Again and again, this statement of EVR was mentioned by many Harijans to this reporter as a justification of their conversion.
>
> Successive waves of violence in Tamil Nadu and in other States unleashed on Harijans in the recent years clinched the issue. "Nobody goaded me into it. It is a result of my own researches in all religious philosophies and of course the continuing humiliation of Harijans" he said.[325]

In short, the idea of demands for equality surrounding EVR's articulation of "self-respect" in its opposition between Non-Brahmin to Brahmin was a recurrent feature of studies and reports on the 1981 mass conversion at Meenakshipuram. Such features trouble the initial reactions, whether focused on domestic injustice or foreign threat, that retained a belief that conversion *en masse* could not be the product of a conviction considered "religious." Yet we see individual agency and deep conviction within this mass conversion—agency and conviction invested in self-respect, equality, a challenge to caste, Islam, atheism, and remedies to Harijan humiliation as part and parcel of "religious philosophies" themselves. It starts becoming less clear how we are to understand the worry over "forcible embrace" articulated by both those emphasizing either domestic injustice or foreign threat, for there seems to be no point of contact here with the sorts of worries by the mass converts themeselves.

## STRUCTURE: LOCKE & THE VEDIC

Such discussions of agency and idea—namely, the efforts of Omar Shariff and the concern with EVR's principle of self-respect, respectively—is not meant to draw attention away from but direct attention towards a better appreciation of structural elements at play in the village of Meenakshipuram. Such elements were both logical and historical. The logical element dealt with liberal elements evident in a distant text like John Locke's 1689 *Letter Concerning Toleration*. The historical element dealt with longstanding Subcontinental tensions between orthodox ("Vedic") and heterodox traditions. We will take each in turn, with the purpose being heuristic as well as suggestive: heuristic in so far as it provides a framing of conceptual divisions familiar to Euro-Atlantic political theorists, suggestive in that it may suggest different avenues for the study of SubContinental political theory For our purposes, here, at stake is how we understand the relationship between near and far, here and there, and what such relationships might mean for the "indigenous" self of self-rule.

The confluence of some of the themes mentioned so far—namely force, embrace, Islam, and atheism[326]—are not peculiar to "Indian" concerns with what the Hindu-right leader Advani

[324] Vīramaṇi, *Mīṉāṭcipurattil Matam Māṟṟam Ēṉ?* (1981): 1.
[325] TN Gopalan. "Converts Quote EVR," *Indian Express,* 19 August 1981.

above called "democratic and secular complexion." A concern with atheism, Islam, force, and embrace were also central to John Locke's 1689 *Letter Concerning Toleration* centuries earlier far away, animated by intense religious and political disputes revolving around the Church of England. For Locke, atheists are among "those [who] are not at all to be tolerated."[327] "Those…who deny the Being of a God" have no allegiance to a higher power of truth and justice and thus cannot be trusted in a commonwealth: "Promises, Covenants, and Oaths, which are the Bonds of Humane Society, can have no hold upon an Atheist."[328] And Muslims have extra-territorial allegiances that make their loyalty to the commonwealth questionable: "It is ridiculous for any one to profess himself to be a *Mahumetan* only in his Religion, but in everything else a faithful Subject to a Christian Magistrate, whilst at the same time he acknowledges himself bound to yield blind obedience to the *Mufti of Constantinople*, who himself is entirely obedient to the *Ottoman* Emperor, and frames the feigned Oracles of that Religion according to his pleasure."[329] Locke dismisses force in matters of religion as an external means unfit for internal beliefs, for "the care of Souls cannot belong to the Civil Magistrate, because his Power consists only in outward force; but true and saving Religion consists in the inward persuasion of the Mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God. And such is the nature of the Understanding, that it cannot be compelled to the belief of anything by outward force. Confiscation of Estate, Imprisonment, Torments, nothing of that nature can have any such Efficacy as to make Men change the inward Judgement that they have framed of things."[330] Likewise, Locke favors embrace in matters of religion as relating to internal beliefs distinct from external means, "because no man can so far abandon the care of his own Salvation, as blindly to leave to the choice of any other, whether Prince or Subject, to prescribe to him what Faith or Worship he shall embrace. For no man can, if he would, conform his Faith to the Dictates of another. All the Life and Power of true Religion consist in the inward and full persuasion of the mind; and Faith is not Faith without believing."[331] In short, it appears that there are opportunities for productive juxtapositions between Locke and Meenakshipuram.

For Locke, the public community involves force and possessions that are of collective concern, whereas the private individual involves faith and salvation that are of personal concern. Reactions to the conversion at Meenakshipuram provided an instance wherein we may see this logic reincarnated. Such reincarnation, however, is, like with the Islam in the conversion at Meenakshipuram and the sedition in the conspiracy around Ashe, neither a pure foreign import nor a complete domestic product. Rather, this effort to control "democratic and secular complexion" provided an opportunity whereby a form of power could rearticulate itself by determining the division between collective mass and individual person, public and private, foreign and domestic, force and embrace, coercion and conviction as the meaning of the right

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[326] The full quote from an ealier passage reinforces the importance of something called "atheism": "Mr Rajagopal [a Hindu name], now Rahamatullah [a Muslim name],…claimed that even when he was an atheist and a Dravida Kazhagam activist Islam had some fascination for him. Mr E.V. Ramasamy Naicker, father of the Dravidian movement, had himself suggested once that all non-Brahmin communities should embrace Islam in order to escape from the Brahmin oppression, he recalled. Again and again, this statement of EVR was mentioned by many Harijans [Untouchables] to this reporter as a justification of their conversion." TN Gopalan. "Converts Quote EVR" *Indian Express,* 19 August 1981.

[327] [John Locke,] *A Letter Concerning Toleration: Humbly Submitted, &c.* (London: Awnsham Churchhill, at the Black Swan at Amen-Corner, 1689): 48.

[328] Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689): 48.

[329] Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689): 47.

[330] Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689): 7-8.

[331] Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689): 7.

rather than allow right's meaning to exceed such divisions. That form of power in South India, I argue, was Brahminism.

If Meenakshipuram drew to the foreground conceptual divisions that appear to be the incarnation of a broader logic, a logic equally incarnated in Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration*, this does not suggest that such incarnation could not equally be the reincarnation of narrower tensions evident historically in the region. After all, scholarship has claimed that the Meenakshipuram Untouchable's "motives were quite clear: ongoing conflict with caste Hindu Thevars nearby and a sense that they could get protection in Islam—not so different after all, from the millennia of history of conversions in India."[332] More importantly, immediate reactions to the 1981 conversion expressed similar sentiments about a past brought into the present. For example, the Islamic-press-published Tamil pamphlet *Meenakshipuram Thoughts* begins by claiming that "Meenakshipuram… is just a new page in a history of many centuries."[333] Such references to "many centuries" or "millennia of history" gesture to an Indian past riven by conflict rather than consensus.

We may think of such conflict being between "orthodox" forces aspiring for hegemony, on the one hand, and "heterodox" forces part of more critical projects, on the other. Take Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's introduction to Princeton University Press's 1957 *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*. It provides a classic articulation of orthodoxy in India which would have been familiar to a world that witnessed Gandhi's nationalist struggle for Indian *swaraj* against the colonial British in the decades previous. India is "spiritual."

> The chief mark of Indian philosophy in general is its concentration upon the spiritual. Both in life and in philosophy the spiritual motive is predominant in India…Philosophy and religion are intimately related because philosophy itself is regarded as a spiritual adventure, and also because the motivation both in philosophy and in religion concerns the spiritual way of life in the here-and-now and the eventual spiritual salvation of man in relation to the universe. Practically all of Indian philosophy, from its beginning in the Vedas to the present day, has striven to bring about a socio-spiritual reform in the country, and philosophical literature has taken many forms, mythological, popular, or technical, as the circumstances required, in order to promote such spiritual life. The problems of religion have always given depth and power and purpose to the Indian philosophical mind and spirit.[334]

This "Indian philosophy and religion" position emphasizes the spiritual ("salvation"), indicates historical continuity ("from its beginning…to the present day"), establishes geographical spread ("India," "the country"), and claims cultural pervasiveness ("chief mark," "predominant").

Yet we might ask here, with Marx, "Why does the history of the East appear as a history of religions?"[335] The ellipses in the block quote from Radhakrishnan above harbor another position, a heterodox one that sounds for more critical and atheistic. Radhakrishnan writes,

> Except for the relatively minor materialistic school of Cārvāka and related doctrines, philosophy in India conceives man to be spiritual in nature, is interested primarily in his spiritual destiny, and

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[332] Gail Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution: New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India* (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1993): 184.
[333] Pīlāl, "*Mīṉāṭcipura Cintaṉaikaḷ*" (1981): 4.
[334] Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, "General Introduction" in Savepalli Radhakrishnan & Charles A. Moore, eds., *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957): xxiii.
[335] Marx to Engels, 2 June 1853, in Shlomo Avineri, ed. *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968).

> relates him in one way or another to a universe which is also spiritual in essential character. Neither man nor universe is looked upon as physical in essence, and material welfare is never recognized as the goal of human life, except by the Cārvāka.[336]

The language acknowledging a school called Cārvāka, as well as "related doctrines," stands in stark contrast to that used to describe "Indian…[p]hilosophy and religion."[337] Against the language of the "predominant," we have that of the "relatively minor," against the language of the "chief" we have a gesture to an "except," against the "spiritual" we have the "materialistic." Radhakrishnan goes on to claim that

> This system [Cārvāka] assumed various forms of philosophical skepticism, logical fatalism, and religious indifferentism…
>
> The doctrine is called Lokāyata, as it holds that only this world (loka) exists and there is no beyond…
>
> …
>
> The materialistic theory is a bold attempt to rid the age of the oppression of the past and prepare the ground for the great constructive efforts of speculation…[338]

Such language echoes those of the opposition between critical forces and hegemonic ones. With the former, we have an allegedly materialist strand that was relatively minor, and with the latter, we have a spiritual strand predominant across a period of time described as "age-long." The latter appears associated with the "Indian," leaving us to wonder just what the former's association is. Whatever it might be, the former, critical project is an effort to overturn past oppression and build a better future. This critical, "materialist" heterodox tradition—opposed to the prevalent, hegemonic orthodoxy marked by "concentration upon the spiritual"—is called, as Radhakrishnan indicates, "Lokāyata."

If Meenakshipuram brought into the present a "millennia of history" or "history of many centuries," that history was one in which critical heterodox "Lokāyata" and hegemonic orthodox "Vedic" traditions were in conflict. "Lokāyata" serves as one of the common Tamil translations of the word "secular," as we will see first hand in Part VI. We should not be surprised, then, to find that Meenakshipuram's echo of a "millennia of history" whose own concerns were framed by a tension between orthodoxy and heterodoxy found themselves reincarnated in a struggle over the meaning of "secularism" and, in the modern moment of Meenakshipuram's present, its closely allied idea of "democracy." Indeed, we saw this concern in Advani's worry above over India's "democratic and secular complexion."

There were two different streams that ran the course of such concern. The first saw Meenakshipuram as a *threat* to secularism and democracy in India. As Professor Rajendra Singh—a prominent leader in the Hindu-right organization the RSS[339]—claimed after Meenakshipuram, there was widespread worry about a "threat posed by mass conversions of Hindus to alien religions" and a belief that "India must remain a predominantly Hindu State if

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[336] Radhakrishnan, "General Introduction" (1957): xxiii.

[337] Cārvāka and Lokāyata find brief mentions in the footnotes of *Subaltern Studies*. For example, see Sumit Sarkar, "The Kalki-Avatar of Birkampur: A Village Scandal in Early Twentieth Century Bengal," *Subaltern Studies* vol VI (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989): 44.

[338] Radhakrishnan & Moore, eds., *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy* (1957): 227-228.

[339] Professor Rajendra Singh (1922-2003) would later serve as the RSS chief from 1994 to 2000.

the ideals of democracy and secularism had to be preserved."[340] The second saw Meenakshipuram as a *demonstration* of secularism and democracy in India. As Syed Shahabuddin—the editor of *Muslim India*, former Indian ambassador to Algeria and Mauritania, and one time Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)—claimed, "Meenakshipuram has thus become the symbol of the continuing struggle for democracy and secularism because without equality, democracy cannot exist and without religious freedom, secularism is inconceivable and meaningless."[341] The position of threat echoed the logic evident in Locke regarding a strict separation between collective and individual acts of conversion, a separation drawn along the lines of parallel distinctions between acts of coerced force that were relatively synonymous with the foreign and involved the political, on the one hand, and acts of voluntary embrace that were relatively synonymous with the indigenous and involved the religious, on the other. The position of demonstration, however, troubled the separation between collective and individual acts of conversion, and with it, the parallel distinctions between an outside (coercion / force / foreign / political) and inside (voluntary / embrace / indigenous / religious). We have seen such troublings in the 1911 court case investigating the most dramatic moment of *swaraj*'s inaugural articulation in South India. I will suggest that these two different interpretations relating to Meenakshipuram, rather than any meaning of "secularism" or "democracy," bend us back towards a "millennia of history" defined by Subcontinental struggles between hegemonic orthodoxy and critical heterodoxy, part of which were Non-Brahmin self-respect critiques of Gandhian self-rule.

## THREAT

The claim that mass rather than individual conversion constituted a threat to secularism and democracy in India was premised on the idea that mass movement, and not individual movement, could change the "indigenous" character of India. The emphasis on the individual constituted a conservative strategy to preserve status quo relations wedded to an idea of indigeneity premised on traditional harmony. This "indigenous" character of India was allegedly preserved through secularism and democracy. Moreover, the recurrent focus on the individual divorced the personal from the political, with individual conviction equating the personal with sovereign good while mass conversion was equated with "political moves to disrupt Indian society from within and destroy our independence."[342] On this account, secularism and democracy were threatened by mass conversion because secularism and democracy were interpreted in terms of personal standards, namely those involving notions of the voluntary and its liberty, along with the belief that secularism and democracy simply *were* Hinduism, and therefore anything un-Hindu was opposed to secularism and democracy. If we wished to adopt the language of Radhakrishnan above, secularism and democracy represent *orthodoxy*, which is rendered as indigenous and part of the "Indian tradition," and not *heterodoxy*, which is rendered as foreign and un-Indian.

Mass conversions threatened the fusion of nation and tradition, whereas individual conversions would not. Some reactions suggest that mass conversions threaten the nation and suggest that the nation is the preserve of the ethical and deeply wedded to home life: "Mass

[340] Prof [Rajendra] Singh as reported in "Conversions Will Lead to Separatism, Warns RSS Leader," *Indian Express*, 3 January 1982.
[341] Syed Shahabuddin, "Conversion: A Quest for Equality or a Challenge to Hindu India?" *Indian Express*, 6 September 1981.
[342] TR Vedantham, "Conversions" [editorial], *The Hindu,* 11 August 1981.

conversions are ethically unsustainable and bring credit to none and portend anything but good to the nation. Conversions have not solved any problem and they lead to broken homes and hearts and a trail of bitterness, misery and disillusionment. Individual conversions out of deep conviction of course stand on a different footing."[343] Other reactions go further in drawing attention to the critical, or at least oppositional, nature of mass conversion towards, not nation and home, but relationships perceived as traditional and balanced: "because the mass conversion is an act of rebellion, it cannot be a self-limiting act, which it would be if an individual changed religion out of a change of faith. The conversions will inevitably upset the traditional balance of forces in many villages and towns, and that can lead to communal tensions."[344] The clear emphasis here is on the acceptability of personal acts (conviction, self-limiting) and the unacceptability of non-personal, if not political, ones (a trail of disillusionment suggesting effects beyond the individual, rebellion).

On this account, secularism in India is threatened by mass conversion because secularism is indigenously Indian and anything that is not indigenous is not secular. Take, for example, the following reaction:

> It is true India is a secular State. But even in a secular State, nobody has a right to force his religion on others. Individual conversions are not at all objected to by anybody. But in Meenakshipuram, mass conversions has [sic] taken place and it is therefore necessary to find out the reason for the same…What the Government proposes to do is only to find out whether the conversions were voluntary or due to some inducement. The persons who have embraced Islam are stated to be poor Harijans, it is [sic] not a difficult job to convert them into Christians or Muslims. No Government [can] be a silent spectator to such happenings. Everyone in India knows that it is only the Christian missions, and, of late, Muslims, who were trying to convert Hindus. Does this not show that Hinduism is a most tolerant religion?...A person who has understood Hinduism properly will not think of changing his religion. A devout Hindu has no objection also to any Hindu changing his religion voluntarily. But the question to be answered here is whether mass conversions is [sic] legal.[345]

India is here, again, folded into the secular, while Hinduism is now folded into tolerance. India is Hindu, and thus opposed to efforts to change India at the hands of Christians and Muslims. Anyone who understands secularism and tolerance in India cannot but be Hindu. If an individual converts, perhaps this individual misunderstands secularism and tolerance. This may be forgiven as an articulation of the "voluntary," articulations of which are recognizable to the "devout Hindu." If a mass converts, however, more than misunderstanding is at work—there must be "some inducement."

Likewise, those worried by Meenakshipuram suggested that democracy in India is threatened by mass conversion because democracy is indigenously Indian and anything that is

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[343] Amrutha Ramesubrahmanyam, "Conversions" [editorial], *The Hindu,* 11 August 1981.

[344] Abraham Eraly, "Why Not Mass Conversions?" *Aside,* July 1981: 9-10, 15. This quote is taken somewhat out of context, for Eraly immediately follows "Happily, there is not as yet much danger of that"; but Eraly is still clearly of the view that such rebellion and the upset of harmony *is* a danger. The sentiment regarding individual rights holds across the political spectrum I am discussing here.

[345] VN Narayanaswamy, "Conversions" (editorial), *The Hindu*, 10 August 1981. I have cut some parts of this passage as nonsensical. For example: "In fact Hinduism is not a religion as such though the Veda's constitute the base of the creed." I am not sure what leverage this adds to the argument, and as his passage seems to suggest that Hinduism is a religion, I have removed this passage. Our attention is drawn to the problem with translating "religion," which will be addressed in Chapter 15.

not indigenous is not democratic. The following passage, though it does not explicitly mention democracy, clearly uses terms of democratic concerns: individual liberty, Constitutional framing, rights, the state and its people, the majority. The author is concerned, again, that mass conversion is a threat to democracy, whereas individual conversions would merely by democratic expression:

> An individual is at liberty in this country to change his religious faith as per the dictates of his conscience. But the organised group conversions stand on different footing and have invidious purposes. The framers of the Constitution never contemplated to guarantee any right to shield the nefarious activities of religious conversions by vested interests. Increasing conversions in Tamil Nadu have deeper social and political consequences to the state and its people and the followers of majority religion can not continue to be the mute spectators…
>
> …The Hindu religious leaders seem to have at last come to realise the shortcomings of their religion and are alive to the need to do the necessary patch works. But any organized attempt by other religious activists to avail the weak points of the religion of the majority people and divert as many of them as possible to other religious fold is fraught with risks and danger to the social harmony in the state.[346]

Unlike the previous quote, the author here does not suggest Hinduism is ideal, but rather claims that it should be self-correcting ("patch works" for "shortcomings"). Yet, like the previous quote, Hinduism is equated with an indigeneity that is the political ideal—here, that of the democratic—which is folded into the idea of social harmony. Social harmony is disrupted, not by just democratic appeals, but rather by "vested interests" and "other religious activists" taking advantage of "weak points."

These efforts to see mass conversion as *threat* to secularism and democracy demanded a strict separation of the individual from the collective, the indigenous from the foreign, and conviction from coercion. This separation between the personal (voluntary) rather than political (rebellion) maintained values of orthodoxy (tradition, balance, harmony linked with the spiritual) rather than heterodoxy ("deeper social and political consequences" linked with material "inducements"). This distinction between the personal (individual marked by indigenous conviction) and the political (collective marked by foreign coercion) would be undone by those who saw mass conversion as a *demonstration* of secularism and democracy. This undoing would see individuals and collectives as mutually constituting one another, and by extension, see more complex imbrications of indigenous and foreign, conviction and coercion. Moreover, the undoing of the distinction between personal and political turns us to a history of such debates involving criticisms of Gandhi, criticisms that mark heterodox challenges to orthodoxies rearticulating themselves through *swaraj*.

## DEMONSTRATION

For those who saw promise in Meenakshipuram's conversion, individuals and collectives were fluid and porous, constituting the action of one another, and thus mass conversion could demonstrate, rather than necessarily threaten, secularism and democracy. Syed Shahabbudin, mentioned earlier, makes this point clear:

[346] P. Padmanabhan, "Conversions," in "Letters" section of *Indian Express*, 3 July 1982.

> Much is made in this context of the fact that groups rather than individuals have changed their religion. But such a group phenomenon is never sudden…
>
> … Groups are after all aggregates of individuals and collective, simultaneous action does not detract by an iota from the right, freedom and privilege of the individual to change his faith. It is human nature to consult one's kith and kin before undertaking a journey to an unknown land and to travel together on an unfamiliar path. Once again, a political parallel comes to my mind. Voting is an individual act, but don't the people of a village, or at least those bound by kinship or caste, consult together and vote for a common candidate? Does it prove that they have been coerced, bribed or cheated?[347]

Such remarks make two important points. First, there is the blurring between the allegedly personal (religion) and the political (voting). Shahabuddin suggests that the practice of a religion or voting for a candidate both involve the imbrication of individual and collective in acts of consultation. Second, voluntary action is in fact crippled by divorcing individual from collective. Without the collective, Shahabbudin suggests, the individual would be effectively coerced in avoiding the unknown and the unfamiliar. To take a term used above, separating the individual from the collective would be "self-limiting," forcing the individual to not be "self-expanding," as it were. Both of these points—first, personal/political blurring, and second, the importance of the unknown and unfamiliar in expanding, rather than limiting, the self—are recurring themes in discussions of mass conversion, both with respect to Meenakshipuram as well as in earlier engagements with Gandhi and the demand for *swaraj*.

The blurring of distinction between personal and political by comparing the actual practice of religion and that of party politics is a common theme on the 20th century Subcontinent. Like Shahabbudin, others reacting to Meenakshipuram made such a comparison. Yet such a comparison incorporates a hierarchical element into the equation: the separation of individual and collective actually means that elites are judged by standards different than the mass. One reaction that illustrates this, for example, turned not to the action of the voter but to the candidate:

> Freedom of religion includes the freedom to change from one faith to another. Top political leaders, after they get elected on behalf of one party, change over to another party for their personal benefit. If they can misuse the political freedom why worry about the use of the freedom of religion? Such conversions will not adversely affect the character of our nation.[348]

"Personal benefit" is operative in the action of "top political leaders" in motivating change of party, so why should "personal benefit" be considered illegitimate in motivating change of religion? Isn't this using two different standards, for the elite and the other for the mass?

These questions in a situation of *swaraj* in a postcolonial present would have been familiar to those concerned with *swaraj* in the colonial past. Such questions in 1981 in the wake of Meenakshipuram echoed those in the 1930s and 1940s in Tamil letters directed at Gandhi, where interactions with religious denomination and political party were fluid. MC Rajah, a Tamil untouchable leader in South India, is disturbed by such fluidity. As he writes to Gandhi in 1937 following his switch of allegiance to Gandhi's Congress party:

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[347] Shahabuddin, "Conversions: A Quest for Equality or a Challenge to Hindu India?" *Indian Express*.
[348] *The Hindu*, 12 August 1981.

> I am wondering whether all my labours extending over so many years to keep the national aim before my people without sacrificing it to immediate temporary advantages will be counted for nothing before a sort of overnight conversion to Congress Party resembling the nominal conversions secured by Christian Missionaries from among the distressed members of my community.[349]

While MC Rajah here is *worried* that the personal and political, religion and party, are difficult to separate, others found such difficulty much more matter-of-fact. For example, a Tamil named C.E. Dasan writes to Gandhi in 1942, after declaring "I am a Christian. But I love my motherland and love her culture," about his concern over Gandhi's persistent worry with "[c]onversions without conviction":

> if a Congress-man is bribed and taken over to another party can we take legal action against anybody? And if we could, would it not be waste of energy to do so? Does not the same principle apply to conversions by pecuniary enticements? [350]

Dasan does not find the analogy between religious change and political change produced through "enticements" as marking an action illegitimate because it was produced through coercion rather than conviction. Instead, he uses this observation to imply that equal standards be applied to elite and mass alike, to Congress-men who switch political parties as well as the masses who switch religious denominations.

We already have a sense of how those who saw Meenakshipuram as a threat to, rather than as a demonstration of, secularism and democracy would respond: "The conversions in Meenakshipuram and other villages have revealed that religion today has ceased to be a matter of conviction. It has become more a matter of social convenience."[351] Such claims in 1981 echo those of Gandhi in responding to the sentiments of someone like Dasan:

> There is a fallacy running throughout your letter. Conversion without conviction I hold to be always bad. They are no conversions. They are a convenience. They are no proof of the looseness or badness of the religion changed. They proceed from selfishness or worse. I am not intolerant when I deplore my friend's forsaking his religion for a selfish motive.[352]

Gandhi's comments here echo his broader rejection of conversion to non-Hindu, e.g. non-indigenous, religions couched in an investment in the personal and the individual, against the collective and mass, as a way of preserving ideas of tradition. He claims in 1935, for example, "I believe that there is no such thing as conversion from one faith to another in the accepted sense of the term. It is a highly personal matter for the individual and his God," citing foreign missionary work as attempts at "destroying" the "social superstructure" of "unsophisticated villagers," while faithful that "what is true in the Hindu faith will abide, what is untrue will fall to pieces."[353] However, others may not have shared Gandhi's invocation here of an evolutionary automaticity. The parallel between religious faith and party politics, for example in that drawn

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[349] MC Rajah to Mahatmaji, 16 March 1937, Delhi, Subject File #214 (1934-1938), Gandhi Papers (Pyeralal Collection).
[350] Dasan to Gandhi, 18 March 1942, Misc Subject Files 326, Gandhi Papers (Pyeralal Collection).
[351] Quoted in Prabhu Chawla, "Converted into an Issue," *India Today*, 1-15 Sept 1981.
[352] Gandhi to Dasan, 22 March 1942, Misc Subject Files 326, Gandhi Papers (Pyeralal Collection).
[353] *Harijan*, 28 September 1935, in MK Gandhi, *Christian Missions: Their Place in India* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 2000 (1941)): 49-50.

by Dasan, were replies to while further prompting Gandhi's distinguishing conviction from convenience in ways that echo threatened reactions to Meenakshipuram, emphasizing the preservation of "the Hindu faith" and an indigenous "social superstructure" that requires elite stewardship for the sake of "unsophisticated villagers."

Yet, Gandhi's reaction to Dasan's letter misses Dasan's emphasis on what we described in Shahabuddin as the importance of self-expansion rather than self-limitation in the pursuit of secularism and democracy. Such emphasis is a central feature of the demonstration-view of Meenakshipuram in contrast with that of threat. "Let men be converted to other religions; and living in other religious environments they will learn new truths, consciously or unconsciously. Let Religions lose their boundaries, and mingling become one great shoreless sea, even as God Himself."[354] Boundaries between personal and political, individual and collective, conviction and coercion, or indigenous and foreign may be what in fact threatens, rather than demonstrates, religion itself. Religion, on Dasan's account, may be the very thing that allows the human to be a part of a wider world, rather than apart from it.

If we take reactions of threat, which include reactions to Meenakshipuram and those of Gandhi, as well as reactions of demonstration, which include reactions to Meenakshipuram and concerns with Gandhi, we are left with an opposition that, on the one hand, parallels that between Radhakrishnan's spiritual orthodoxy and material heterodoxy, and yet, on the other, goes beyond such parallels. With respect to parallel, it may seem as if personal conviction and pecuniary enticements map onto spiritual orthodoxy and material heterodoxy: the persistence of indigenous Hinduism requires opposition to the inducements of foreign Islam, where the former are voluntary and the latter are coerced. And yet the "heterodox" position, laid out by Shahabuddin and Dasan, is one where collective and individual work together in order to engage unknown lands or unfamiliar paths, inaugurating new ways of being and learning "new truths" through a loss of boundaries and acts of mingling in the world. That is to say, the orthodox is not spiritual Hindu and the heterodox materialist Muslim, but rather, the orthodox position attempts to preserve ways of being thought traditional through strict boundaries (collective/individual, foreign/indigenous, coercion/conviction). The heterodox position challenges those boundaries to inaugurate new ways of being.

## PERSISTENCE

So far, we have seen how the 1981 mass conversion at Meenakshipuram was rendered as both a threat to and a demonstration of secularism and democracy. Threat was seen by an orthodoxy that enforced set boundaries between political and personal through binaries such as collective/individual, coercion/conviction, and foreign/indigenous, and then privileged the personal, echoing Locke. Demonstration was seen by a heterodoxy that did not simply reverse the binary, privileging the political, but rather one that saw a far more complex intermingling of political and personal, collective and individual, coercion and conviction, foreign and indigenous, as a way of understanding what secularism and democracy meant. Such intermingling heterodoxy, in contrast with bounded orthodoxy, has found multiple witnesses throughout the history of Indian politics and thought—indeed, one could suggest these witnesses to be at the heart of Subcontinental political theory itself. With respect to our discussion, the heterodox challenges that were most pressing were those that decoupled the orthodox pairs of foreign/conviction and indigenous/coercion. Two examples will suffice.

[354] Dasan to Gandhi, 18 March 1942.

First, an example directed at Gandhi that reveals the omnipresence of conversion. A month following the Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936, which allowed Untouchables to enter "their" Hindu temples, the Bishop VS Azariah— the first Indian Bishop and a Tamil from the Tirunelveli District, the same district of the Ashe assassination and Meenakshipuram conversion—writes a letter to Gandhi that includes the following:

> I am troubled in my mind about another matter…There is the Temple-Entry Movement and all that the Proclamation…means. It is a fact that the Depressed Classes [Untouchables] have not, during the last thousand years or more, been worshippers of [the caste Hindu gods] Siva or Vishnu. Their gods were the [non-caste] Dravidian village gods and goddesses and spirits. Their worship consisted of sacrifices—yea bloody sacrifices too…To these were often added…liquors. They are now asked to enter the Hindu temples and worship there. Of course they cannot offer their usual sacrifices and bring their other accompaniments of the cult into the precincts of the temple. This, I submit, means a move to convert them to Hinduism![355]

Azariah suggests that a Hindu Gandhi is involved in acts of conversion no less than a Christian Azariah with respect to the Untouchables. That is to say, it is the indigenous, as much as the foreign, that is involved in acts of conversion, whether such conversion by through coercion or conviction. This is another way of saying that the indigenous itself is the product of manufacture caught between, as Azariah claims, "Dravidian village…spirits" and the Hindu—or, to use a term we saw in the poetry cited in the 1911 Ashe court case, "Aryan"—gods.

Second, an example from the reactions to Meenakshipuram that involves the omnipresence of mingling. This example builds on Azariah's concern with the mingling of past spirits and current gods. In response to Meenakshipuram, Hindu Right organizations attempted to convert Untouchables "back" to Hinduism. On 13 August 1981, for example, the secretary of the "World Hindu Council" (*Vishva Hindu Parishad*), Mr. Devdutt, reported "Thirty-eight of a large number of Harijans in Meenakshipuram, who recently embraced Islam, have returned to the Hindu fold" in the wake of the efforts of Hindu Right organizations—efforts which included numerous "study teams" and committees "of non-Harijans and Harijans to prevent future conversions and to persuade those already converted to come back to Hinduism."[356] By November 1981, efforts to get converts to "embrace Hinduism" had hyperproliferated.[357] But what did going away from Hinduism, and then coming back entail? One article describes the "first ever 'homecoming' in the history of Hinduism"— organized by the *Hindu Ekata Vedike* [Hindu Unity Forum] on *Gandhi Jayanti* [Gandhi's Birthday] (2 October 1981)—and the "stunning" response where "363 Christians…embraced Hinduism, exchanging the Cross for

[355] VS Azariah to Gandhi, 8 December 1936, Misc. Subject Files 360, Gandhi Papers (Pyarelal Collection).
[356] "38 Converts Return to Hindu Fold", 14 August 1981, *Indian Express* (Pondicherry, Aug 13). Another claims: "The VHP has launched a campaign to bring back the new converts to the Hindu fold. As a result of this campaign the RSS and its various front organisations have been able to reconvert 88 families from Islam. They have also persuaded 1,321 Harijans who embraced Christianity to return to the fold." Prabhu Chawla, "Converted Into an Issue" in *India Today*, 1-15 September 1981: 32.
[357] "11 Muslim Families Embrace Hinduism", *Indian Express*, 21 December 1981; "25 Christians Embrace Hinduism", *Indian Express,* 21 December 1981 (Salem); "Christians, Muslims Embrace Hinduism" *The Hindu*, 12 November 1981; "14 Christians Embrace Hinduism", *Indian Express*, 7 December 1981.

Om."[358] Yet the distinction between Christianity and Hinduism, which the term "embrace" is supposed to demarcate, is troubled by the article's content:

> The family regularly attended church and had Christian names. But the habit [over the course of] of generation[s] in worshipping 'bhuta[m]s' (spirits)—which symbolised disease, prosperity, travel [-] would not die. The parish priest would frequently admonish them. Christ and the 'bhutas' co-existed uneasily in the household, as in other convert families.[359]

The uneasy coexistence of Christ and *bhutam* suggests that the distinction between the "alien religion" of "Christianity" and the "homecoming" religion of Hinduism is hard to make, and may not be entirely transparent to the converts themselves. Furthermore, the reporter interpolates the Christian converts "back" to Hinduism as being concerned with such *bhutam*, though they seem equally concerned with hierarchical forms of power: "The alienation from the church and the anger at being treated as an untouchable by the affluent parishioners, made Angaja [the convert of focus in the story] longingly consider returning to the Hindu fold. There his 'bhuta[m]' ritual would be in harmony with his accepted faith." The motivating factor in reconverting is not a devotion to the *bhutam*, who seem to be perfectly content with being worshipped alongside objects of Christian devotion, but rather acts of alienation and degraded treatment. Such issues of power were likely the very ones which led to conversion in the first place, which provided an opportunity for mingling Christ and *bhutams*, *not* the *abandoning* of Hinduism and the *adoption* of Christianity, as an articulation of heterodox challenge.[360]

Was Indian "secularism and democracy" threatened or demonstrated by the 1981 Untouchable conversion to Islam at Meenakshipuram? I have claimed that our discussion above indicates how answers to this question drew to the fore a "millennia of history" involving the conflict between the orthodox and the heterodox. The orthodox was a "spiritual" move that attempted to maintain boundaries. The heterodox was a "material" move that attempted a more boundless challenge. Moreover, as we've seen, those involved in the conversion themselves repeatedly indicated that the thought and movement of EVR played a central role. Such thought and movement, as we will see, was centered on the demand for "self-respect" in contrast with Gandhi's demand for "self-rule." I suggest that this demand and contrast provides us with the resources of Subcontinental political theory to answer the question regarding Meenakshipuram's relationship to "secularism and democracy."

Or to rephrase the concern slightly differently: In the wake of Meenakshipuram, Dr. Karan Singh, chief of the "Greater Hindu Assembly" [*Virat Hindu Samaj*], while joining with others in expressing "concern over the conversion of Hindus to other religions," claimed "an urgent need for leading a new meaning and content to the Hinduism, the Sanatan [eternal] Dharma."[361] I suggest that the question which the Non-Brahmin asked was this: which best represented the true, eternal dharma, self-respect or self-rule? This Non-Brahmin question is one that we, sharing in the tradition of Subcontinental political theory across long distance relationships, may ask ourselves.

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[358] "Back to the Hindu Fold with Hope," *The Indian Express*, 23 November 1981. This same story would be republished, slightly modified and with corrected grammar, as "Exchangin Cross for Om", *Indian Express*, 23 November 1981.
[359] "Back to the Hindu Fold with Hope," *The Indian Express*, 23 November 1981.
[360] We will study the *bhutam* in more detail as the agent of "communism" in Chapter 10.
[361] "Hinduism Must Be Made a Unifying Force," *The Hindu,* 24 January 1982 (Allahabad).

## CONCLUSION

> The South, rather than Bengal as was once believed, is the leader in Indian thought and religion. First, the great Dravida movement, whatever its aberrations, swept away Brahmin privileges in Tamil Nadu. And now the mass conversion of Harijans [Untouchables] to Islam at Meenakshipuram contains the seeds of an ever more far-reaching sociological change.
>
> Shorn of its rhetoric and initial secessionist trends, the Dravida movement was essentially a process of democratization. The Brahmins' hold was the most pervasive and oppressive in the South and the reaction, when it came, was sweeping and successful.
>
> Decades later, the North tried to take the cue from the South in the form of a backward classes' movement sought to be aligned with peasant power...[362]

We have seen the same locale yield up two completely different political articulations, one roughly 35 years before independence, the other 35 years after. In 1911, we saw a Brahmin lone assassination of a British official which provided colonial South India's most dramatic demand for *swaraj*. In 1981, we saw an Untouchable mass conversion to Islam which provided postcolonial South India's most dramatic challenge to *swaraj*. Yet the above passage responding to Meenakshipuram suggests that we should not see these as two different events, but rather, that the former should be interpreted in light of the latter. The passage claims that South India's "Dravida movement," which remains associated largely with the Non-Brahmin thought and movement led by EVR himself, should be seen as the "leader in Indian thought and religion," representing a past process whose present in Meenakshipuram was one of "democratization" and resistance to oppressive forces rendered as Brahminical. This stands in contrast to the claim that "Bengal" was such a leader, a suggestion evident from our look at the 1911 assassination where the British were concerned with Bengali *swaraj* making its way down to the South. If we take one of the agents of conversion, Omar Shariff, at his word, the term of concern in the 1981 conversion was EVR's emphasis on "self-respect." If we take that assassin Vanchi Iyer at his word, the term of concern in the 1911 assassination would be "self-rule," a term built upon shortly afterwards by Gandhi. And whereas 1911's assassination in the name of "self-rule" was premised on untouchable elimination, 1981's conversion in the name of "self-respect" was premised on untouchable assertion.

Given the terms of concern above, we may ask: what in the world was EVR's self-respect's challenge to Gandhian self-rule, and how did it relate to agents of conversion? what in the world is the true dharma and how does it relate to the "bhutams" of the past that persist into our present? what in the world is the relationship between the "Oh! Best of Aryans" and the "carcass-eater" "*panchame*" pariah in the world? and what in the world is the relationship between Islam and the secular life? In the chapters that follow, I suggest answers to these questions provided by the Non-Brahmin political thought and movement of Self-Respect, which themselves are part of a larger, world-wide configuration that I call Subcontinental political theory. Such answers trouble inaugural articulations of comparative political theory that tried to collapse the textured expanse of India's thought and history in the world into Gandhi and his demand for *swaraj*.

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[362] S. Nihal Singh, "Lessons of Meenakshipuram," *Indian Express*, 14 July 1981. The leader of this alignment mentioned is "Mr. Charan Singh," founder of the Bharatiya Lok Dal, a political party formed at the end of 1974 in opposition to Indira Gandhi's autocratic rule, and was a tributary party feeding into the Janata Party of 1977, which was the first party to defeat the Indian National Congress.

Through our detailed look at two events, we both have acquired a shared set of concerns with *swaraj* as well as a better sense of just what this Non-Brahmin demand for self-respect could be. This Non-Brahmin was pushing against the Brahminism of *swaraj* evident in 1911, while pulling for the challenges to Brahminism that threatened *swaraj* evident in 1981. With these bookends to the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule in mind, let us turn to the critique itself.

# PART III. FEELING: ON SELF-RESPECT AS SELF-RULE'S CRITIQUE

*"Self-rule—self-respect," she murmured to George. "That is the vital principle of democracy, isn't it? I realize it here as I never did before."*

*"Why, you have become a philosopher," he answered gaily. And then he added gravely. "Yes, you have put it all in two words: self-rule—self-respect…"*[363]

-Albert Elmer Hancock, Bronson of the Rabble: A Novel (1909)

Centuries after the arrival of the first Protestant missionary in India arrived on the shores of the Tamil-speaking South at the Danish colony of Tranquebar, the Swedish daughter of one of the subsequent Bishops of Tranquebar published her dissertation about EV Ramasami Naicker [EVR]. Her general assessment of EVR, now known affectionately as "Periyar" or the "Great One," ran as follows: "Periyar is no intellectual philosopher, but a pragmatic propagandist against sectarian influence and against religious, social, and political domination. In this propaganda Periyar is repetitious, shallow, and indefatigably persistent."[364] There can be no doubt that EVR, during his long life from 1879 to 1973, was indefatigably persistent in his propaganda against domination—which he called "Brahminism." But the rest of this assessment is questionable. There is no doubt that EVR, a dry-goods merchant with a fourth-grade education utterly horrified by the Brahminical direction of Indian politics by the 1920s, was a bit more on the "pragmatic propagandist" than the "intellectual philosopher" side of the spectrum. Yet to concede that EVR therefore did not constitute an "intellectual philosopher" at all would be a mistake. The central claim of EVR's thought and movement, certainly persistent, was just as certainly philosophical: that self-respect, and not self-rule, is the foundation for efforts to eliminate domination and achieve freedom. As a foundational claim, one suspects that "deep" rather than "shallow" may be a more precise characterisation. But it is the epithet "repetitious" that is most troubling. For it is in, and perhaps only in, the repetition of the claim that self-respect is prior to self-rule, across time and place, iterated and reiterated similarly and differently, religiously, socially, politically, over and over again and yet always it seems for the first time, that makes the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule continue and cohere as a subject of study within the broader field of SubContinental political theory.

Part II attempted to add flesh to the phrase "Non-Brahmin self-respect" by attending to what I argued to be its foil in a 1911 assassination and its effort at fulfillment in a 1981 conversion. As the core tenet in the Non-Brahmin political theory of EVR's thought and movement, such a phrase insisted that self-respect needed to be established before self-rule. This was opposed to many nationalist forces associated with Gandhi, who claimed that self-rule should have priority and self-respect would automatically follow. For example, in an essay titled "Birthright: Self-Rule or Self-Respect?" EVR asks in January 1926, within the first year of the Self-Respect Movement:

> *Swaraj*[365] is not necessary for a man without *cuya-mariyātai* [self-respect]. Yet *cuya-mariyātai* is necessary for a man without *swaraj*. One should say that he without *cuya-mariyātai* is a corpse.

[363] Albert Elmer Hancock, *Bronson of the Rabble* (Philadelphia: JB Lippincott Company, 1909): 317.
[364] Anita Diehl. *Periyar EV Ramasami* (Madras; BI Publications, 1978): 68.
[365] As with many Tamil terms, either due to their own transliteration into English or how this transliteration reflected an earlier transliteration from Hindi/Sanskrit into Tamil, is simply replaced with more familiar Roman script renders. The Tamil transliteration of *swaraj* is *cuya-rājyam*.

> When looking in that way, in our own nation [*tēcam*] there are thousands of crores [100,000s] of people living like bugs and worms, dogs and pigs, devils [*picācukaḷ*] and demons [*arakkarkaḷ*]. Thousands of lakhs [10,000s] [of such people] are born daily. For this society [*camūkam*] what is *swaraj* for?[366]

Given the miserable conditions of the masses, self-rule could not possibly be for them. Self-Respecters asked, then, "Who is self-rule for?"[367] Their answer was the Brahmin elite –self-rule would be "the Rule of Brahmins"[368]—who, through self-rule, would entrench, rather than erase, the very forms of political, social, religious, and economic hierarchy which was understood to have, across India's past and present, crippled the Non-Brahmin masses. The "philosophy" of the Self-Respect Movement reversed the claim of those who demanded Gandhian *Swaraj*, declaring instead "If we get self-respect, we shall get self-rule."[369] Furthermore, the Non-Brahmin members of EVR's Self-Respect Movement were confident in troubling the nationalist demand synonymous with Brahminism because they felt that their demand was part of a broader world-historical movement: "The Self-Respect Movement is everywhere in the world."[370] This world-wide movement of self-respect provided Non-Brahmins with an international and interdependent alternative focused on questions of social justice and the eradication of "high low" removed from the binaries of colonial dependence/national independence, British Raj/Swaraj, European/Indian, West/East.

Perhaps of most significance, however, was a real worry about just what this "nation" of national independence through *swaraj* was supposed to bring about. Very often, the word "nation" was translated as *jāti* in Tamil, the term we translate as "caste." For example, concerned that "the Cult of the Nation" was the "greatest danger" to the people by bringing "success" at the expense of "higher ideals," the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore begins his essay "The Nation" in 1922:

> The peoples are living beings. They have their distinct personalities. But nations are organisations of power, and therefore their inners aspects and outward expressions are everywhere monotonously the same. Their differences are merely differences in degree of efficiency.
>
> In the modern world the fight is going on between the living spirit of the people and the methods of nation-organizing…When the spread of higher ideals of humanity is not held to be important, the hardening method of national efficiency gains a certain strength; and for some limited period of time, at least, it proudly asserts itself as the fittest to survive. But it is the survival of the part of man which is the least living. And this is the reason why dead monotony is the sign

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[366] Editorial. "*Piṛappurimai Cuyarāajyamā? Cuyamariyātaiyā*? [Birthright: Self-Rule or Self-Respect?" *Kuṭi Aracu,* 24 January 1926: 6. In scholarship on EVR, it is standard to presume that editorials in the weekly *Kuṭi Aracu* were written by EVR himself.

[367] For an early expansion on this central theme of the Self-Respect Movement, see EVR's and other's speeches "*Ceṉṉaiyil Kuḻumiya Cīr Peruṁ Kūṭṭam: 'Cuyarājyattai Viṭa Cuya Mariyātaiyē Pirtāṇam.': 'Makātmā Kāntikku Maṇṭaiyil Mūḷaiyillai' Eṉṛu Coṉṉa Makāṉ (!) Ippoḻutu Kāṁkaraciṉ Talaivarāy Viḷaṁkukiṛār* [Large Gathered Reform Meeting in Chennai: 'Self-Respect is Far More Important than Self-Rule': 'Mahatma Gandhi Has No Brain in His Head' Said the Mahatma (1) Now Explained by a Congress Leader]" *Kuṭi Aracu,* 22 August 1926: 3ff. "*Shrīmāṉ Nāyakkar Alacantāpurattil 20-3-28l Nikaḻttiya Corpoḻiviṉ Cāram* [Summary of the Revered Nayyakar (EVR)'s Speech that Occurred on 20 March 1928 at Alacantāpuram," *Kuṭi Aracu,* 15 April 1928: 6.

[368] For example, *Kuṭi Aracu*, 28 June 1931: 7.

[369] For example, *Kuṭi Aracu,* 9 September 1928: 1 (though such claims saturate publications of *Kuṭi Aracu*, especially from Sept.—Nov. 1928)

[370] For example, *Kuṭi Aracu*, 7 October 1928: 11.

> of the spread of the Nation. The modern towns, which present the physiognomy due to this dominance of the Nation, are everywhere the same…
>
> The peoples, being living personalities, must have their self-expression, and this leads to their distinctive creations…They are like different dishes at one common feast. They add richness to our enjoyment and understanding of truth…
>
> But the nations do not create, they merely produce and destroy.[371]

The Tamil translation of this essay by the politically influential poet Subramanya Bharathi—a figure which influenced the Self-Respect Movement[372] as well as whose particular translation was reproduced in part by Non-Brahmins[373]—translated "nation" above with the word *jāti*: nations as organizations of power are *jāti*; methods of nation-organizing opposing living spirit are *jāti*; national efficiency gaining a certain strength becomes "*jāti jaṉattai aḻikkirṟatu*" or "*jāti* destroys the people"; nations that do not create but destroy are *jāti*; the domination of the Nation everywhere the same is "*jāti eṉṉam ātikkam peṟṟirukkum nakaraṇkaḷaṉaittilum orē mātiriyāṉa iyalpaik kāṉalam*," "we see the same kind of quality in all the cities which have the domination of the idea of *jāti*."[374] Such translation made etymological sense: the root of nation is the Latin *natio*, meaning birth, and the root of *jāti*, is the Sanskrit *jāt*, meaning birth. "Nation" and *jāti* refer to that which has birth, and, moreover, that to which such birth remains a defining characteristic. But if Non-Brahmins felt as if *jāti* was the very characteristic through which the hierarchical, dominating relations of Brahminism were articulated, then how in the world could *jāti* independence, the *swaraj* of *jāti*, possibly remedy those relations? Creating an Indian *jāti* alongside an English *jāti* and a Japanese *jāti* simply marked the persistence of *jāti* and its domination, whereas true freedom marked the elimination of *jāti* altogether, and with it, the establishment of equality. In other words, the critique of caste *was* the critique of the nation, and thus the demand for self-respect was placed in critical tension with the demand for self-rule The 1911 equation of establishing *swaraj* by casting out the British who in turn were rendered as outcaste was therefore not an accidental reinscription of *jāti* but the essential feature of self-rule. The self of self-rule was a self of *jāti*, it was a *national* self, a self whose birth was its politically, socially, economically, and religiously defining characteristic.

In this Part, I suggest that "self-respect" as *cuya-mariyātai* is best understood through its ability to comprehend local, regional, and global elements. In other words, *cuya-mariyātai* is a critical, negative principle evident in relief, capable of responding to and providing illuminating interpretations of a variety of conditions in the world. This mode of operation is distinct from "self-rule" as *swaraj* which is an assertive, positive principle that stands against the world in its self-assertion for rule. With respect to the local, *cuya-mariyātai*, though associated with "atheism," functioned alongside other religions in a drive for converts that constituted the mass movement politics of South India at the time. With respect to the regional, *cuya-mariyātai* found itself sharing in pan-Indian terms of concern which distinguished itself from those used by Gandhi when articulating *swaraj*. With respect to the global, *cuya-mariyātai* engaged even as it

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[371] Rabindranath Tagore, *Creative Unity* (New York: Macmillan, 1922): 139-141.

[372] For one of many examples, and one which will feature later, see Es. Nīlāvati, "*Kātal Ulakam: World of Love*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 10 April 1932: 15.

[373] The essay with which this dissertation concludes begins with quotes (unacknowledged) from Bharathi's translation of Tagore likewise using *jāti* for "nation." Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 27 October 1929: 3—

[374] Makākavi Cuppiramṇiya Bāratiyār, "*Jāti II,"* July 1917, posted at http://bhaarathi.blogspot.com/2012/12/2.html accessed 1 August 2013.

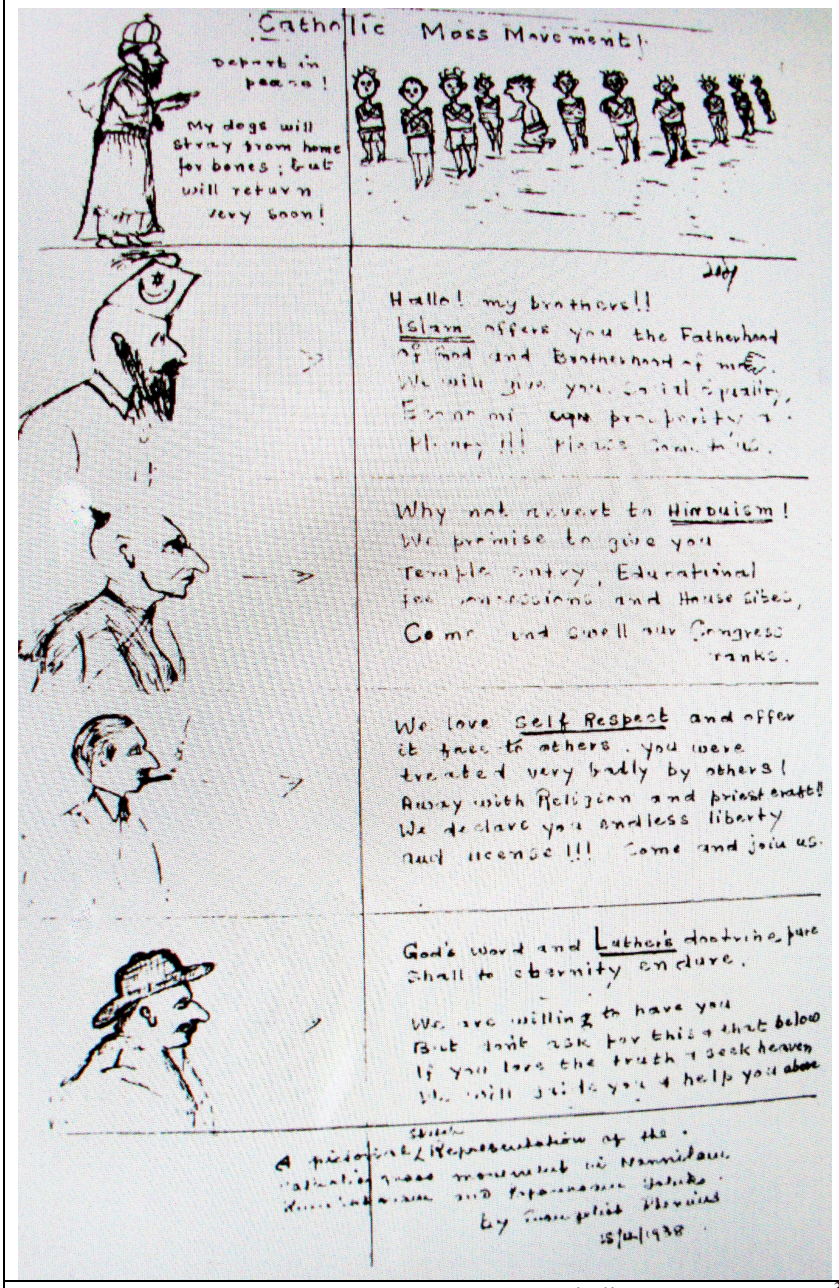
exceeded prevalent articulations of sovereignty circulating among Christian Missionaries as well as prevailing interpretations of canonical figures of political theory like Rousseau and Nietzsche.

## CHAPTER 7. THE LOCAL COMPREHENSION OF SELF-RESPECT: MASS MOVEMENT

In April 1937, a parish priest in Mullangudi—one of the five Roman Catholic parishes in the fertile *taluk* [county] of Nannilam, Madras Presidency—did something wrong. That month, three bridal parties from the neighboring villages of Kalangudi, Manavalanallur, and Eravangerry went to the priest to learn catechism prior to their marriages. While at the parish head-quarters, "the parish priest of Mullangudi is said to have misbehaved towards the brides and attempted adultery during the night."[375] Shortly after the brides returned to their villages and reported such attempts, the villagers of Kalangudi, Manavalannallur, and Eravangerry decided to be Roman Catholics no more. But if not Roman Catholics, what would these villagers be?

These villages were not too far from the Lutheran mission at Tranquebar. Subsequent correspondence from Tranquebar was pregnant with hope for a mass movement to the Lutheran church among these villagers, expressing "joy in seeing the Work grow and the harvest ripen."[376] As it turned out, however, the Lutheran missionary sent to investigate the situation, named Rhenius, was himself struck with "disappointment," for "[n]o mass, much less any movement, village wide or Taluk [county] wide was discernible."[377] What was discernible to Rhenius, however, was the variety of groups and the particularity of their appeals in competing for the "souls" of these villagers. Such variety and particularity had taken years to be established in the region. And it is a picture of this variety and particularity that provides our introduction to the thought and movement of "Self-Respect."

[375] "Investigation of the Adi Dravida Movement in Nannilam and Kumbakonam Taluks," Evangelical Work 1934/38, Coleroon Mission, Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission [LELM] no. 077, United Theological College [UTC] Archives, Bangalore, India.
[376] K[arl] H[eller] to Rhenius, 30 November 1938, Tranquebar. LELM 077: 121, UTC Archives.
[377] "Christian Mass Movements—To Lutheran Church—From Roman Catholic Church—Kumbakonam, Nannilam, Papanasam Taluks—Reports of Commissions—Present and Future Prospect—an analysis by Evangelist DD Rhenius—to the LELM Council—Submission of" dated 16 December 1938. LELM 077: 61, UTC Archives.




Catholic Mass Movement!

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|---|
| [Catholic Priest:] Depart in peace! My dogs will stray from home for bones; but will return very soon! |
| [Muslim:] Hallo! My brothers!! Islam offers you the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of men. We will give you social equality, economic prosperity, and plenty! Please come to us. |
| [Hindu:] Why not revert to Hinduism? We promise to give you temple entry, educational fee remission, and house sites. Come and swell our Congress ranks. |
| [Self-Respecter:] We love Self-Respect and offer it free to others. You were treated very badly by others! Away with religion and priestcraft! We declare you endless liberty and license! Come and join us. |
| [Lutheran:] God's word and Luther's doctrine pure shall to eternity endure. We are willing to have you but don't ask for this and that below. If you love the truth and seek heaven, He will guide you and help you above. |

*Image 1*. "Catholic Mass Movement!"[378]

What does this "pictorial sketch representation" claim? At the most basic level, this sketch provides a window into articulations of "mass movement" in Tamil-speaking South India. And "Self-Respect," replete with an anti-religious valence, is placed alongside "religions" in such movement. Maintaining an awareness of the author's Lutheran bias when attaching descriptions

[378] "Catholic Mass Movement! – A pictorial sketch representation of the Catholic mass movement in Nannilam, Kumbakonam and Papanasam Taluks [of the Madras Presidency] by Evangelist Rhenius [a Lutheran Missionary] – 15 December 1938," LELM 077: 44, UTC Archives, Bangalore, India. NOTE: the word I rendered as "sites" is only partially legible, and looks more like "sibes" but "sites" is my best guess.

to agents, we can still appreciate the significance of these descriptions and agents. Across the board, the players in such mass movements do not maintain distinctions between material and spiritual issues, blurring religious faith with political mobilization.

Each player has distinct elements as well, emphasizing both thematic and spatial features. Catholicism is associated with themes of degradation, control, and desperation and the space of the home; starving dogs have no choice but to return back. Islam is associated with themes of equality and prosperity in the space of the world; brotherhood, plenty, and egalitarian relationships with all humanity. Hinduism is associated with themes of privileges and concessions in the space of the nation; housing, education, and worship opportunities will be provided through Congress. Self-Respect is associated with freedom and just treatment in a space of universal opposition; liberty and license are to be achieved through anticlericalism. Finally, the Lutheran is associated with eternity and truth in heaven; God's word can only serve as a guide if one forsakes what is below for what is above. Such were the players in the mass movements of South India, wedded to discrete sets of themes and places.

Even more basic, this sketch suggests a widespread imperative to move the masses along with various strategies for doing so. Do the masses move back home in acts of desperation? Do the masses move out into a world of equality? Do the masses move towards a nation of privileges? Do the masses move for a freedom possible through just treatment? Do the masses move based on doctrines promising spiritual fulfillment? These were open questions, questions laden with the urgency of the political moment of *swaraj*'s demand.

EVR and his unlikely Self-Respect Movement was a central component among these "religious" mass movements in South India. One Rev. T.M. Rajendran recounted EVR's spreading the message of Self-Respect in Rhenius's mass movement area years earlier, in 1931, as follows:

> …the Self-Respect [SR] Movement was started elsewhere and in connection with the political agitation. The SR Movement had produced a great effect on these Harijans also. The leader of the SR movement [e.g. EVR], having his headquarters in Erode, came to Trichy many times and gave many addresses. These addresses made the once R[oman] C[atholic] Harijans completely sever their connection with the RC Church and become Self-Respecters.
>
> The number of souls of the movement is said to be about 30000 in both the districts, in about 300 villages. They solemnized marriages in the SR way, had their own forms printed to register their marriages and stopped completely from Church going.[379]

And just as Self-Respect was actively received when EVR, the leader of the Self-Respect Movement, appeared in person and delivered speeches, so too would Self-Respect fall in prominence when EVR could not so deliver. As Rajendran writes of the period around 1933, "In the mean time there was a mishap in the movement. Its distinguished leader Ramasamy Naidu [sic, EVR] of Erode was imprisoned by the British Govt" which "made the Harijans…realize that this movement is an Atheistic movement, i.e. no God."[380] We may of course wonder about the simplicity of this account, but what is left far less doubtful is this: when members of the core of the Self-Respect Movement (not only EVR but "a leader, Alphanso Lacanshe, of the SR Movement of Pondicherry" is mentioned by Rajendran) could deliver speeches in person to a

[379] "Address delivered by Rev. T. M. Rajendran, Special Officer, Self Respecters' Movement (at Kodaikanal on __ -5—1934)," LELM 077: 164, UTC Archives.

[380] "Address delivered by Rev. T. M. Rajendran, Special Officer, Self Respecters' Movement (at Kodaikanal on __ -5—1934),, LELM 077: 164, UTC Archives.

largely illiterate public, Self-Respect was far more likely to take hold among the "religious" mass movements in the political moment of 1930s South India.

What happens in this political moment would be the channeling of the strategies we saw above into two distinct demands. The first demand was for self-rule concentrated on the desperation of home, the privileges of the nation, and the material sacrifice of the spiritual. The second demand was for self-respect and concentrated on the freedom of just treatment and a world of equality. The first demand, culminating in Gandhi, saw Hinduism and Christianity as complementary, a complementarity that shored up elements of Brahminism. The second demand saw the Self-Respect Movement and Islam as complementary, a complementarity that shored up elements of the Non-Brahmin. Meenakshipuram, with its orthodox coupling of Vedic and Locke, on the one hand, and the heterodox coupling of EVR's thought and movement and the Muslim, on the other, illustrate these complementary moves that are part and parcel of Subcontinental political theory.

In this Chapter, I will problematize four conceptual tools often used to diagnose the situation between Colonizer and Colonized. I argue that the common conceptual tools fail us, and by so doing, incriminate the demand for *swaraj* against British Raj. In what follows, I attend to our situation of mass movement involving Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, Self-Respecters, and Lutheran in the Kumbakonam, Nannilam, and Papanasam Taluks of the Madras Presidency as a window onto the political landscape within which the Self-Respect Movement moved. The first tool relates to Christ. Under the British and later with Hindutva, the distinction between a foreign Christianity from outside and a native non-Christianity from inside is understood as meaningful. I argue that such distinctions fail to capture far more complicated possibilities for alliance. The second tool relates to spirit. Again, under the British and later with Hindutva, the distinction between spiritual and material, religious and atheist, is understood as meaningful. I argue that the process of mass movement for the Tamils of our taluks involves such an incredibly elaborate political process of deliberation as to make these distinctions mute. The third relates to race. Default understandings of colonizer/colonizer often break along white/black lines that serve as proxies for a West/East divide. I argue that "black" provided Tamils with both an obstacle as well as an opportunity to forging more complex world-wide alliances. The fourth relates to nation. Concerns with colonialism offer a distinction between foreign dependence as unfreedom on the one side and native, national independence as freedom on the other. I argue, however, that the Tamils of these taluks were far less interested in distinctions between native and foreign, dependence and independence, than they were in creating non-hierarchical relationships of classlessness in the world. We will see foreshadowings of Meenakshipuram and suggestions of a tradition of mass mobilization by outcaste populations where traditional ideas of religious denominations, spiritual commitments, racial distinctions, and national demands are insufficient for appreciating the landscape of the Self-Respect Movement.

## CHRIST

Attending to the landscape from within colonial India, rather than from some privileged postcolonial outside of fundamentalist interior, makes a divide between Christian colonizers and the Non-Christian colonized hard to maintain.

Rhenius's sketch, of course, suggests a particular set of alliances and oppositions that is more nuanced than the Christian/Non-Christian divide. Lutheranism, concerned with what is "above" ("heaven"), is opposed to Roman Catholics just as much as to Hindus, Muslims, and Self-Respecters, for they are all allied in their concern with what is "below" (e.g. "bones,"

"prosperity," "house sites," and "license," etc.). Yet a Protestant vs. non-Protestant distinction does not seem to undo but rather reinscribe the (real) Christian vs non-Christian divide of Northern Europe.

There is evidence of a broader Christian/Non-Christian divide, though the possibility of this divide mapping onto any colonizer/colonized distinction is difficult to imagine. A report of 1934 concerning the region, for example, supports this basic *divide* while rendering the *distinction* obsolete. The report suggests that Lutherans "make it clear to the Roman Catholics that we have come in to save the Christian for the Christian Religions and not allow them to be exploited by Self-Respectors or by Islams" [sic] and a concern that "the grieved party" was "in danger of being lost to Christianity either by their joining the Self-Respect movement which would lead to secularism or irreligion or their conversion to Islam."[381] It seems as if there may be something to the Christian vs non-Christian divide, though this divide, extended into the populations of South India, had an unclear relationship to the distinction between colonizer/colonized at best.

Yet neither of these two oppositions—true Christian vs. false/non-Christin or all Christians vs non-Christians—exhaust the alliances and oppositions in the region. At times it seems as if it is non-Muslim vs Muslim, with Lutherans claiming "Thanks to Our Lord that we were in the villages just at the junction and prevented the Christians from joining [the] Muslim[s]. Had we been an hour later, we would have lost all of them."[382] Yet still, at the same time, Rhenius could court members of Islam in the area, writing about how he "sought the aid of the Muslims, who are sufficiently strong there…"[383] in combatting the Catholics.

At times it seems as if the real divide is "religion" vs "irreligion," as one report put it, e.g. it is Everyone vs. Self-Respecters who claim "away with religion and priestcraft!" We should not be surprised to find Lutherans concerned that "[t]he opposition from the Self-Respecters is not to be minimized," and given the Self-Respect opposition to "religion" itself, we may suspect that Hindu, Muslims, and Roman Catholics felt that same way.[384] Yet such opposition seems not always to have been the case, with Lutherans noting in the mass movement present "[i]t is with much regret the CSM [Church of Sweden Mission] Council notes some rather unwise promises which have been given to the Self Respecters" in the past.[385] That is to say, alliances were forged between Lutheran Christian and Self-Respecters, though it seems that such alliances were not always seen as desirable by the agents involved, such CSM missionaries, themselves.

In part, the point here is that crude frameworks along Colonizer/Colonized lines, such as Christian/non-Christian, fail to capture the dynamics of the region. Yet, furthermore, it may be difficult to see how "religion" could meaningfully capture those dynamics at all. Such failure's root, I suggest, is a limited idea of spirit.

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[381] "Secession from the Roman Church and the Conference at Sengarayur on May 19th, 1934," LELM 077: 190-191, UTC Archives. Hindu forces were evidently not relevant to, or not politically wise to mention with respect to, this "grieved party."

[382] "Investigation of the Adi Dravida Movement in Nannilam and Kumbakonam Taluks" which took place 21-22 January 1937 [should be 1938?]. LELM 077, 2-3: 190-191, UTC Archives.

[383] "The Final Report of Evangelist D.D. Rhenius Regarding the Nannilam Mass Movement Work: [undated, but after 19.2.1939]," LELM 077, 2-3: 34, UTC Archives.

[384] "Secession from the Roman Church and the Conference at Sengarayur on May 19th, 1934," LELM 077: 186, UTC Archives.

[385] "Proceedings of the 156th meeting of the CSM Council held at Trichinopoly on June 29th 1934," LELM 077: 170, UTC Archives.

## SPIRIT

If we are committed to a European Colonizer/Non-European Colonized binary, and if the Christian/non-Christian divide did not help us understand mass movement, perhaps a spiritual/material one would. Yet, as we will see, the defining characteristic of such mass movement was not spiritual but political, not turns of faith but persistent, invested, deliberative, and reflective efforts by people to understand how they could live well and live well together. The concerns we saw that arose in Meenakshipuram that echoed Gandhi's own worries that opposed true conversion to mere convenience and demanded the authenticity of individual expression when changing religious faith is complicated, rather than conceded, when attending to the South Indian milieu. I suggest that we should be more concerned with hierarchical relations between high and low, and pluralistic relationships between the few and the many, than with categories premised on authenticity.

Maybe the spiritual was ideological, where Christian other-worldly concerns were spread by the British in order to obscure the this-worldly exploitation of the Indian. There is evidence of this. For example, in June 1934, a Dr. A. Mathuram addressed a conference in the region where 3,000 families resolved a "unanimous declaration of allegiance to the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church" in which "he congratulated the Christian Harijans on directing their attention to the consideration of spiritual subjects when political and social subjects loomed large in all Conferences. He outlined the benefits of British rule and Christian influence for the good of India and emphasised the need for the obliteration of all caste distinctions…"[386] Here the rule and religion of the Colonizer is paraded about as the solution to the ills of the Colonized, deceptively drawing attention away from more material concerns with the political (like national independence) and social (like caste or economic reform). Perhaps the Colonizer/Colonized distinction, mapped along a spiritual/material divide of ideological deception, may have some purchase.

But here, too, this binary fails to capture the texture and nuance of the dynamics in the region. For if anything, such mass conversions were of worrying concern to Mission not for their spiritual but for their material valence. As Rhenius reports of the leaders of the various conversion movements, "They are so materialistic, that, even for decency's sake, they do not mix up an atom of religion in their negotiations" with various denominations.[387] Even the idea of "negotiations" here suggests a far more determined and collective approach to conversion than some ecstatic change of faith. Potential converts were not looking for spiritual salvation, but "economic salvation,"[388] and demanded "education for their children…[,] jobs for the unemployed and brides for some…house sites for the disowned and legal assistance where Mirasdars [landlords] and RC Priests give trouble…"[389] Moreover, they were not looking simply for *positive* forms of "economic salvation," but for negative ones, as it were, e.g. protection if they *do* convert. Conversion in the past had resulted in "their house sites…wrested from

[386] "From Catholics to Lutherans," *Indian Social Reformer*, 2 June 1934.
[387] "Christian Mass Movements—To Lutheran Church—From Roman Catholic Church—Kumbakonam, Nannilam, Papanasam Taluks—Reports of Commissions—Present and Future Prospect—an analysis by Evandelist DD Rhenius—to the LELM Council—Submission of" dated 16 December 1938. LELM 077: 58, UTC Archives.
[388] "The Final Report of Evangelist D.D. Rhenius Regarding the Nannilam Mass Movement Work: [undated, but after 19.2.1939]," LELM 077, 2-3: 37, UTC Archives.
[389] "Christian Mass Movements—To Lutheran Church—From Roman Catholic Church—Kumbakonam, Nannilam, Papanasam Taluks—Reports of Commissions—Present and Future Prospect—an analysis by Evandelist DD Rhenius—to the LELM Council—Submission of" dated 16 December 1938. LELM 077: 61, UTC Archives.

them…caused them to be beaten…and thrown out of their jobs" and resulted in "no facilities or places of worship, no baptism for their children, and no burial grounds for their dead."[390] Any change of faith required promises to prevent such abuse in the future.

Such "materialistic" concerns are evident when some potential convert families from Roman Catholicism to Lutheranism had instead "gone back to Hinduism, taking service under a big Mirazdar, who has over 700 velies [unit of measure] of land…"[391] Rather than allow such considerations to remain in the realm of the non-spiritual, however, Rhenius attempts to provide his mission with some holistic considerations: "The considered opinion of the Jerusalem Conference of 1928…'that man is a unity; and his spiritual life is indivisibly rooted in all his conditions, physical, mental and social…and the missionary work must be sufficiently comprehensive to serve the whole man in every aspect of his life,' affords sound counsel and guidance."[392] All this is to say that, *even if* such conversions revealed "the benefits of British rule and Christian influence" we saw above suggesting a spiritual/material divide, it is unclear that the benefits actually *taken* were the same as those that were ideologically *offered*.

The Colonizer/Colonized, European/Indian distinctions as mapped onto a spiritual/material divide as a way of understanding mass movements break down further when extending the spiritual to concerns with God and the material to concerns with numbers. For example, though reports insisted that "the task of the Christian missionary is not to proselytize or seek to increase the number of adherents of his particular denomination. He has to sow the good seed, presenting Christ through word and life,"[393] potential converts seemed to have been just as concerned about the numerical, rather than salvational, incentives of the Missionaries as the Missionaries were of potential converts. As Rhenius notes, potential converts "run away with the false idea that the Lutherans are after statistical additions to their numbers."[394] Both the Christian and the non-Christian, or the Lutheran and the non-Lutheran, it seems, were concerned with the self-interested motives of conversion. No clear division there between the concerns and awarenesses of Colonizer and Colonized.

Moreover, the division not only between spiritual and economic but between spiritual and political, suggested by Dr. A. Mathuram, themselves breaks down with respect to conversion. It does so at two levels. The first is familiar: the rift between Hindu and Muslim within the Indian nationalist project. Upon a visit to one village, Rhenius writes of how "the bogy of conversion haunts every average resident" and then elaborates: "The conversion mania here has more a political than a religious significance. It is not a struggle between Krishna & Allah: but it is a struggle between Gandhi and Jinnah."[395] Conversion means "the capture of the Harijans for the Muslim League."[396] Earlier assessments of other parts of the region relied on this familiar

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[390] "Christian Mass Movements—To Lutheran Church—From Roman Catholic Church—Kumbakonam, Nannilam, Papanasam Taluks—Reports of Commissions—Present and Future Prospect—an analysis by Evandelist DD Rhenius—to the LELM Council—Submission of" dated 16 December 1938. LELM 077: 63, UTC Archives.

[391] "The Final Report of Evangelist D.D. Rhenius Regarding the Nannilam Mass Movement Work: [undated, but after 19.2.1939 b/c ref made to that date]," LELM 077, 2-3: 37, UTC Archives.

[392] "Christian Mass Movements—To Lutheran Church—From Roman Catholic Church—Kumbakonam, Nannilam, Papanasam Taluks—Reports of Commissions—Present and Future Prospect—an analysis by Evangelist DD Rhenius—to the LELM Council—Submission of" dated 16 December 1938. LELM 077: 64, UTC Archives.

[393] "The Movement among Self-Respecters in the Trichy and Tanjore District towards the Ev. Lutheran Church," undated but probably Summer/Fall 1934. LELM 077: 160, UTC Archives.

[394] "The Final Report of Evangelist D.D. Rhenius Regarding the Nannilam Mass Movement Work: [undated, but after 19.2.1939]," LELM 077, 2-3: 36, UTC Archives.

[395] Rhenius to Rev. P. Jaëbler [should be Gaëbler?], 14 December 1938. LELM 077, 2-3: 116-117, UTC Archives.

[396] Rhenius to Rev. P. Jaëbler, 14 December 1938. LELM 077, 2-3: 116-117, UTC Archives.

Hindu/Muslim split, but threw Self-Respect back into the mix. Here is an excerpt from an address delivered by one Rev. T.N. Rajendran in May 1934 concerning the region:

> Seeing that this movement ignores God, the Self Respecters [who had earlier converted from Roman Catholicism] with an intention to adhere to one faith had brought a leading Muhamadan to preside over a Mahanad [Conference] and expressed their willingness to become Muslims. Of course this was opposed by many of the people. Later on they approached Sri C. Rajagopalachari the right hand of Mahatma Gandhi and sought his advice for becom[ing] Muhamadans. At the very word he startled, dropped his pen and spectacles and requested them to select any other faith except Muhamadanism from his political point of view.[397]

We have, as above, an opposition between Gandhi/Hindu and Jinnah/Islam, an opposition that is from a "political point of view." This opposition, despite involving the "religions" of Hindu and Islam, is not more or less political than the Self-Respect movement, despite the fact that Self-Respect "ignores God" and may arguably appear, on the face of it, more "this-worldly" than "other-worldly." Everything seems to be this-worldly—everything political.

We may suspect that the opposition between religion and politics, alongside that between Colonizer and Colonized, is unhelpful in navigating articulations of political theory in South India. After all, Self-Respect, despite being "an Atheistic movement, i.e. no God," was understood as being on par in mass movements with a "religion" like Islam and a force circulating with Hinduism and Christianity.[398] In fact, Rhenius suggests that both Islam and Self-Respect are equivalent in being something called "political minorities":

> Two political minorities in Southern India, viz. the Muslims and the Self Respecters came forward to fish in troubled waters. The offer of social equality by the former and the freedom from priestly bondage of the latter naturally fascinated these Adi Dravidas smarting for ages under many inhuman disabilities. The Roman Catholic priests were not lagging behind the rest in coaxing the backsliders back to their mother Church.[399]

Offers of human equality and freedom from bondage, as mentioned in the picture above articulated by these two "political minorities," invites us to understand the relevant distinctions as not being between, say, Colonizer and Colonized, or spiritual and material, or religious and economic. Instead, we may wish, I suggest, to be more concerned with hierarchical relations between high and low (landlords and priests vs servants and laborers) and pluralistic relationship between the few and the many (political minorities, increasing faction ranks).

The Rev. T.M. Rajendran provides a different account of mass movement out of the Roman Catholic Church, one that sounds far more political than religious, if that distinction is to have any meaning—even democratic. Here is Rajendran at length documenting events that lead up to "mass movement," involving conferences, proposals, resolutions, violent outbreaks, and religious heads (literally) among a people who once considered themselves Catholics, currently consider themselves Self-Respecters, but would consider themselves Lutherans:

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[397] "Address delivered by Rev. T. M. Rajendran, Special Officer, Self Respecters' Movement (at Kodaikanal on __ -5—1934)", LELM 077: 164-165, UTC Archives. My italics.

[398] "Address delivered by Rev. T. M. Rajendran, Special Officer, Self Respecters' Movement (at Kodaikanal on __ -5—1934)", LELM 077: 164, UTC Archives.

[399] "Christian Mass Movements—To Lutheran Church—From Roman Catholic Church—Kumbakonam, Nannilam, Papanasam Taluks—Reports of Commissions—Present and Future Prospect—an analysis by Evangelist DD Rhenius—to the LELM Council—Submission of" dated 16 December 1938. LELM 077: 57, UTC Archives.

From the year 1931 to 1934 there were over 47 Mahanads [Conferences] called parish conferences, Taluk conferences, District conferences and Presidency conferences. The findings and resolutions were printed and sent to Govt. Officials and to the administrative bodies of the R[oman] C[atholic] church, including the Bishops of Kumbakonum, Trichinopoly, Aylopore etc. They have also sent elected representatives to the Bishops to settle the agitation. There was no response.

On the 11th February 1934 they held a Mahanad [Conference] at Kangamangulam, Tanjore Dist. Rev. TM Rajendran upon invitation by the agitators took Rev. G. Daniel of Tanjore and some of our congregation members of Trichy and Pudukotah to the Mahanad and addressed the Self Respecters. Messers Ramanujan and Somadundram, leading members of the Trichy Bar and some of the important men of the Self-Respecters from Trichy were invited to take part in the deliberations. The two learned law[y]ers addressed the audience and encouraged them to enter the Lutheran Church, testifying that the Lutheran Church is the Church to which they should go as it was brought about [by] the Reformation. As a result of the addresses some of the Self Respecters of Thirukattupalli and its surroundings petitioned Rev. TM Rajendran to admit them in the Lutheran Church. What meaneth this? Guidance of God.

On 18-2-1934 they held a Mahanad of the two Districts at Vellanur, Trichy Dist. under the presidentship of Devasahayam, one among them. No Lutheran was invited to this Mahanad. There were three proposals before the people:

1. To return to the Catholic Church again
2. To continue as Self Respecters
3. To join one of the protestant churches.

The first proposal was brought by one Arockisamy of Pallakudi who was bribed by the R[oman] C[atholic] Priests at Vadagarpatti Parish. At the very proposal the audience got wild and broke his head and thus the proposal to return to the Catholic Church was dropped once for all.

The second was not agreed by a majority of the people as the movement was an atheistic one.

The third was discussed, carried and passed by an over-whelming majority.

According to the third resolution 27 representatives were selected from the different villages….and were sent to the three protestant church in Trichy to investigate and to report their decision to the people in the next final Mahanad which they have proposed to be proposed to be held in May 1934. These representatives after going round to all other protestant church and after consulting several legal advisers came [to the Lutheran] Zion Church.[400]

A total of 47 conferences filled with findings and resolutions, 27 representatives consumed by deliberations, proposals passed by over-whelming majorities, legal advisers, lawyers, government officials—this "mass movement" sounds like a four-year effort by the people to articulate themselves in a very non-spontaneous, democratic way in order to move closer to living well and living well together. That such a democratic process provided for the presence of "an appreciable minority [who] opposes the majority resolution,"[401] rather than a corporatist kinship consensus along the lines of "caste," should not be surprising.

Nor should it be surprising, then, how the change of "festivals" accompanying mass conversion would involve so much of the government apparatus. Here is an excerpt from a Lutheran report, providing a glimpse into the detailed analyses involved in mass movement:

[400] "Address delivered by Rev. T. M. Rajendran, Special Officer, Self Respecters' Movement (at Kodaikanal on __ -5—1934)", LELM 077: 165-166, UTC Archives.

[401] "Secession from the Roman Church and the Conference at Sengarayur on May 19th, 1934," LELM 077: 187, UTC Archives.

> But the priest with the influence of the Circle Inspector who is a Roman Catholic has persuaded the Sub-Divisional officer to refer the Roman Catholic petition to the Special Divisional Magistrate with an endorsement [that] the Sub-Inspector should be present at the time of the festival and see that at the time of the festivities no disturbances was caused. This was virtually in order to protect the Roman Catholics against the Protestants. The Roman priests attempt to hold a festival at this time was a hugely objectionable one and the Special Divisional Magistrate was taking up a partisan attitude against the Sub-Magistrate who in his order wanted to be neutral and whose community attitude was not known to the Sub-Divisional Magistrate. It was the clear duty of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate not to take any action without referring the matter to the Sub-Magistrate. As Cand. Gnanavaram was very anxious that the situation should be reported to the Additional District Magistrate, he went to Mr. Isaak Durai who as a mason knew the Mahomedan Add. Distr. Magistrate, and when we were present there, we found there also the District Sub-Magistrate and the Registrar who was an old resident of Tranquebar and a personal friend spoke to use most cordially about his Tranquebar days and about his son having been a student of the Madras Christian College, etc. The district Magistrate said that he could act only when any orders of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate was presented to him, for reformation, and on his advise we met the Roman Catholic Special Divisional Magistrate and he said that he had issued no orders and that in this matter orders must be passed first by the Sub-Magistrate and referred us to him. We interviewed the Sub-Divisional Magistrate at Tanjore on our return and therefore Cand. Gnanavaram on his way back to Tirukkattupalli would have seen the Sub-Magistrate and would have taken necessary action. The above is an instance to show how extremely difficult the situation is in many places, and there can be a clash between the two sections at any moment.[402]

Conferences and magistrates, deliberations and clashes, there is something much more than a need to refract the presumed authenticity of individual expression when changing faith through Indian custom in the movement of a mass.

In short, a split between the material and the spiritual—or between politics and religion—does not seem to work here. To put, say, the "religions" of Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam on one-side, and Self-Respect as advocating "no-religion" on the other, seems to misunderstand what was going on. When one newspaper tries to shore up the lack of religious sentiment in the mass movements of this region by associating them with the Self-Respect Movement—writing that "It is quite evident that the part of religion in these mass movements is inappreciable. The acknowledgment of the services of the Self-Respect Movement by the dissenters is significant"[403]—there is something missing. If everything was political, and "religion" suggested that there was something outside politics, then it may have appeared sensible to many to embrace irreligion, e.g. Self-Respect. To pretend to submit to a non-political category called "religion" was simply unrealistic, and Self-Respect offered an alternative to *that* "religion." Yet that "religion," being unrealistic, was likewise not terribly prevalent; Hinduism, Islam, Self-Respect, and a Christianity divided at times between denominations, were in fact all equally "political" and material. Thus we have the pictorial sketch by Rhenius of mass movement in which Self-Respect competed alongside "religions" for converts.

It is in *this* political realm and in *this* religious realm that an appreciation of the Self-Respect Movement can—must—take place. Such appreciation is not in a politics that divides colonizer and colonized, but rather in one concerned with high and low more broadly. Nor is such appreciation in a religion that divides spiritual from material, but rather in one emphasizing

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[402] "Secession from the Roman Church and the Conference at Sengarayur on May 19th, 1934," LELM 077: 187, UTC Archives.

[403] "The Catholic Landslide," *Indian Social Reformer* 2 June 1934.

concerns with individual survival in a thriving community. Lutherans were right to claim that "the Self-Respect Movement…contend[s] that no-religion is better than a religion which keep them in bondage and does not really help them to conquer slave mentality…and other evils, " though whether or not "no-religion" could result in a "satisfied" people is an open question.[404] What is not questionable is that, like Muslims, Self-Respecters were considered to be part of a "political minority," and like Islam's message of "social equality," Self-Respecter's message of "freedom from priestly bondage" was an emancipatory vision that requires an understanding of hierarchical relations between high and low (such conquering the "slave mentality"), and pluralistic relationship between the few and the many (with "political minorities" and majorities), rather than traditional categories of analysis between Colonizer and Colonized and between British Rule and Self-Rule.

**RACE**

Again, so what were the relevant classifications in Colonial South India? If one wished to maintain the Colonizer/Colonized distinction as the most salient way of organizing politics in India, one might say European vs. Non-European race was a very relevant classification. I again suggest no. European ideas of race, particularly the "black," could provide both disappointment as well as hope to untouchables moving *en masse*, again suggesting more complicated relationships of power both in the region and the world.

The material concerns of the potential converts in the region are evident in the reactions which met Rhenius upon touring the villages of the Kumbakonam, Nannilam, and Papanasam Taluks in December 1938. He writes:

> I made it a point to meet the leaders of the movement as per instructions contained in Dr. Pickett's classic volume on *The Christian Mass Movement of India*.[405] But when they saw me—a black man –unattended by any Assistants or Attendants, a car or a driver[,] they were confronted with a different picture altogether. They felt that the fond hopes which they had entertained were foiled by entrusting this pioneer work to a poor Indian, whose poor and impoverished appearance did not betoken any material resources on his side. I attempted to describe myself and my position and plainly told them that I was the long looked for, well qualified Evangelist appointed to continue the work of the Commissions.[406]

Our missionary Rhenius was not European, but Indian, not white, but black, and because he was a black Indian and not a white European he was not taken seriously by potential converts who were seeking "material resources." Worry about familiar racial assumptions—White/wealth/power vs Black/poverty/powerlessness—seem vindicated.

Yet we should not suddenly jump to the conclusion that some colonial discourse on race had saturated the minds of the colonized here. The "black" is not simply understood as obstacle, but as opportunity, in the achievement of mass movement's vision. For example, a few years earlier at a conference of "seceding Christians" in the nearby village of Sengarayur [Sengariur],

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[404] "The Movement among Self-Respecters in the Trichy and Tanjore District towards the Ev. Lutheran Church," probably Summer/Fall 1934, LELM 077: 160, UTC Archives.
[405] My italics.
[406] "Christian Mass Movements—To Lutheran Church—From Roman Catholic Church—Kumbakonam, Nannilam, Papanasam Taluks—Reports of Commissions—Present and Future Prospect—an analysis by Evangelist DD Rhenius—to the LELM Council—Submission of" dated 16 December 1938. LELM 077: 61, UTC Archives.

the "representatives" of the community "emphasized what a large community can do for itself if it had the right motive and adopt[ed] the right methods and pointed out what had been done for the depressed community in America and in the mass movement areas in India."[407] That this "depressed community in America" referred to a racially parallel idea of "black" which marked disappointment with Rhenius was clear at the conference. As one newspaper reports of a speech by Dr. Das Manickam[408]:

> he referred to the condition of Negroes in America who had advanced a great deal during the last sixty years. He was often asked while in America about the condition of the depressed classes in India and he was not ashamed to tell the Americans of the efforts taken by reformers and the various missions to improve their lot. Whatever others might do for them, the community had to rely on themselves for their own uplift, although it could not be denied that extraneous help was necessary.[409]

It would seem that Christian Mission had made possible forms of international travel, from India to America, and here in an anonymous little village in 1934, in a district neighboring the first Protestant Mission at Tranquebar, such forms of travel was informing a way of imagining the emancipation, uplift, and freedom of a community. The "black man" did not provide simply a hindrance to that vision, which might be the immediate reaction to reading of Rhenius's dismissal, but also was informing the sort of hope required to sustain that vision. It was a vision by which a community, simultaneously "rely[ing] on themselves" while admitting of "extraneous help," could "improve their lot."

## NATION

The gesture to "extraneous help" suggests that another category distinguishing Colonizer from Colonized, namely the desire among the Colonized for an independent nation, may not have been considered terribly pressing by the moving masses. Such "native" forces may in fact have been opposed to demands for an independent nation to achieve freedom, instead invested in articulations of freedom that could come from simultaneously "rely[ing] on themselves" (national) while admitting of "extraneous help" (international). A "religion" like Christianity was not important to the moving masses because it distinguished national from non-national elements. Instead, Christianity was important as a possibility at stake, for the question was whether this community would become a regional articulation of hierarchy or an articulation of freedom that could appropriately blend "extraneous help" with interior reliance. Rather than "nation," issues of class, subservience, and labor were most pressing in considerations of whether or not to convert.

How could a classless society be brought about, and could Christianity help or hinder such bringing? As Rhenius writes,

> I made earnest attempts in Nachiakoil [near Kumbakonam] to secure a place of worship for the intending converts. Two of such attempts were frustrated by the Catholic Priest of Mathur (1 ½ miles s/o Nachiarkoil) who roused the fears of the most influential Landlords of that place by

[407] "Secession from the Roman Church and the Conference at Sengarayur on May 19th, 1934," LELM 077: 186, UTC Archives.
[408] Das [Doss] Manickam. A PhD holder and headmaster of the Union Christian High School in Madurai.
[409] "From Catholics to Lutherans," *Indian Social Reformer,* 2 June 1934.

> telling them, that if the farmers joined them (Lutherans) they would destroy caste and bring about a classless society, which would not be subservient to them.[410]

These frustrated efforts drove Rhenius to seek the help of the Muslims as mentioned above in the section "Christ." This frustration was brought about through a collusion of Catholic priest and influential landlords to preserve caste, that is, class relations of subservience.

The issue of subservience was central here. Rhenius understands the central concern in terms of slaves and masters, with untouchables ("Adi Dravidas" in South India) being the slaves and Brahmins being the masters. This subservience was shored up by labour relations:

> Adi Dravidas are the virtual slaves of their Masters. Their social status is lower than the meanest of animals. Only a couple of days back, it pained me to hear that in the Machiarkoil Brahmin Street, no Adi Dravida could walk, while dogs and pigs could use it with impunity. The moment they embrace Christianity, they will have to run the risk of losing their doubtful daily wages.[411]

Spiritual concerns, then, were necessarily tied to material ones. At stake was the issue of "doubtful daily wages" which served as a means for elements of domination to leverage their control over those who challenged the hierarchy upon which such domination was based. Religious conversion could threaten one's livelihood. Thus, to "destroy caste" was understood as part and parcel of the creation of a "classless society," an economic worry.

Acts of "protest[] against caste tyranny"[412] which provided the idiom of conversion, or hopes for "equality and freedom from caste distinction which they consider their right in a Christian Church," [413] are only meaningful when one understands, say, that "Adi Dravida…Christians are the labourers (pannays) of the Roman Catholic Vellalas [a higher caste] resident at Michaelpet [the name of a rechristened village]…"[414] Thus, when Lutheran converts [e.g. untouchable / Adi Dravida] made a move against "the Roman alter" in a Catholic church in the region, "a large number of Vallala Roman Catholics from Michaelpett" showed up "to offer resistance," whereupon, in turn, such resistance was met with various low-caste Pallas and low-caste Panchamas joining with the Lutherans against the landlord Vallalas, whereupon the Vallala "opposition melted away."[415] Similar dynamics of master and slave serving as the distinction of political dominance were articulated in other ways, such as those involving diet. For example, reports in the area are clear that what was involved were "2 classes viz. the BEEF-EATERS and the NON-BEEF EATERS." The non-beef eating Catholic farmers assumed "superiority over the other and living only on cultivation" while the

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[410] "The Final Report of Evangelist D.D. Rhenius Regarding the Nannilam Mass Movement Work: [undated, but after 19.2.1939]," LELM 077, 2-3: 34, UTC Archives.
[411] "Christian Mass Movements—To Lutheran Church—From Roman Catholic Church—Kumbakonam, Nannilam, Papanasam Taluks—Reports of Commissions—Present and Future Prospect—an analysis by Evangelist DD Rhenius—to the LELM Council—Submission of" dated 16 December 1938. LELM 077: 64, UTC Archives.
[412] "Address delivered by Rev. T. M. Rajendran, Special Officer, Self Respecters' Movement (at Kodaikanal on __ -5—1934)", LELM 077: 164, UTC Archives.
[413] "The Movement among Self-Respecters in the Trichy and Tanjore District towards the Ev. Lutheran Church," undated but probably Summer/Fall 1934. LELM 077: 160, UTC Archives.
[414] "Secession from the Roman Church and the Conference at Sengarayur on May 19th, 1934," LELM 077: 188, UTC Archives.
[415] "Secession from the Roman Church and the Conference at Sengarayur on May 19th, 1934," LELM 077: 189, UTC Archives.

beef-eating "do[] menial service to the Mirasdars [landlords]." Power relations defined by hierarchy are considered to define mass movement in the region.

The question that arises here is a familiar Marxist one: whether or not the vision of a "classless society" is resolvable through *national*, rather than through *international*, means. Certainly, the national appeal was evident in the conferences surrounding conversion to Lutheranism in the region. For example, at our conference of 1934, one Lutheran convert

> recounted the various difficulties and disabilities under which they had suffered in the Roman Catholic Church, and hoped that their intention to change to Protestantism would result in their regeneration. He appealed to the Christian community as a whole not to call them "Adi-Dravidas" or depressed classes but as Tamilians and sons of Bharate Mata [Mother India] in the same way as people similarly placed in France and England called themselves as French and English people.[416]

Yet it is unclear how these claims which suggest a sort of *national* sufficiency in achieving a classless society sit with the later claims made at that same conference by others, as we've seen, whose experiences abroad suggested parallels between the "Negroes of America" and the "depressed classes in India," or the demand to couple the need of a community to "rely on themselves for their own uplift" with the the need for "extraneous help." Would the "national" be sufficient in articulating a classless society? Or would a classless society require the international, both for the conceptual purchase offered through parallels connecting distant peoples as well as the resources made available outside in the realm of the "extraneous"?

Such questions, though, may be meaningful only if we presuppose a self of self-rule as prior to relationships in the wide world. The disappointment felt by a moving mass demanding a "classless society" when seeing a "black man" is no less nor more a part of the world than the hope felt by this same moving mass when hearing of "the condition of Negroes in America." The national independence demanded by *swaraj* could not define the political inflections of the moving masses, already a part of the world. What was needed was a way of imagining oneself as a part of, rather than apart from, a wide world that always already was a partner in demands to live well and to live well together.

The Self-Respect Movement was an effort, I suggest, to articulate this world-wide imagination through mass movement. Yet despite their turn to a world of self-respect, and away from a nation of self-rule, the Self-Respecters' comprehension of what that emancipation would entail, not only in India but everywhere, was inflected by the terms of concern they had at hand. To understand Self-Respect as "philosophy" rather than "propaganda," as distinguished at the beginning of this Part, requires an appreciation of the local comprehension of self-respect—framed in terms of mass movements for a classless society against relations of domination—that could equally comprehend both regional developments in South Asia as well as global developments in the world. It is through an appreciation of these acts of comprehension, critically interpreting rather than positively asserting, that we may better appreciate an understanding of just what the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule meant as an articulation of Subcontinental Political Theory, e.g. part of, rather than apart from, a shared tradition across long distance relationships

[416] Mr. V.O. Arpudasamy <sic>, "From Catholics to Lutherans," *Indian Social Reformer,* 2 June 1934.

## CHAPTER 8. THE NATIONAL COMPREHENSION OF SELF-RESPECT: INDIAN PAST, GANDHIAN PRESENT

The term "self-respect" is, of course, no stranger to European political theory. It features in canonical modern texts by figures like Kant and Mill and central to more contemporary authors, such as Rawls. The basic question of self-respect is whether or not a person achieves respect through being a part from or apart of relationships with others. Related questions of self-respect include: is self-respect achieved through assertions of independence or acknowledgments of dependence? is self-respect achieved through situations of hierarchy or equality? is self-respect achieved through particularistic gestures or universalizing claims? That is: do I have self-respect when I act autonomously or when I recognize the gratitude I owe to others? do I have self-respect when I demonstrate my excellence or when I see excellence among us all? do I have self-respect when I derive a sense of right as a member of a distinct community or as a member of general humanity? An interest in the "self-respect" of EVR's thought and movement could begin by asking these sorts of question.

EVR and his fellow Non-Brahmins were skeptical of answers invested in independence and autonomy, hierarchy and excellence, particularism and community. These sorts of answers did not constitute a self of self-respect but a self of self-rule. *Swaraj* demanded independence, claims to excellence, and the protection of a particular cultural identity. Yet Non-Brahmin "self-respect," though more sympathetic towards alternative answers regarding dependence, equality, and universals, were also skeptical of them as sharing in a sense of stability, of an essentialized identity, of the self. It was not the independence or dependence of *being* selves that was of Non-Brahmin concern but rather more just relationships of interdependence that could create better ways of becoming selves. It was not hierarchy or equality of being selves that was of Non-Brahmin concern but rather more just relationships involving acts of conversion to become better selves. It was not the particular or the universal of being selves that was of Non-Brahmin concern but rather more just relationships involved in acts of translation to become better selves. In short, it was not this nor that, nor here nor there, that framed the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. Rather, I argue, it was the space between the options of *swaraj* and British Raj—national independence or colonial dependence, civilizational hierarchy or civilizational equality, particular culture or universal human—that defined the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule.

If this is the case, then to ask the question of "self-respect" informed by canonical concerns may be both suitable and unsuitable for appreciating the Non-Brahmin. There is no doubt that the Non-Brahmin saw itself as a part of, rather than apart from, a wider world, in which case asking canonical concerns in that world of the Non-Brahmin is suitable. The unsuitability stems from just *how* the Non-Brahmin was in the world, not as a being self but a becoming self wedded to acts of interdependence, conversion, and translation. It is the porosity, rather than containment, that makes the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule a constitutive feature of Subcontinental political theory.

To appreciate Non-Brahmin "self-respect" then, taking into consideration its local situation shaped by mass movement we saw in Chapter 7, requires us to see "self-respect" as shaped through levels of interdependence, translation, and conversion at both regional and global levels. Chapter 9 will focus on self-respect's comprehension of the global level. This chapter focuses on self-respect's comprehension at the regional level. First, I look at how self-respect

understood itself as continuous with a regional past. Second, I look at how elements of that continuity provide moments of disagreement with a distinct present.

In both cases, any initial temptation to see EVR and his fellow Non-Brahmins as being somehow less "Indian" by appropriating a nominally "European" term like "self-respect" is troubled. For if EVR's thought and movement was a capacity to comprehend features of the world, the relevant issue is not where "self-respect" came from but how it was comprehended. The most prominent translation by EVR's thought and movement of "self-respect," the term rendered as even as it was rendered by "self-respect," was the Tamil *cuya-mariyātai*. But even to say "Tamil" here is not entirely right; this is in fact the Tamil transliteration of the Sanskrit *sva-mariyāda*. Given this broader South Asian terminological locus, we cannot but see the need for an appreciation of *cuya-mariyātai*'s regional comprehension.

## PAST CONTINUITY

Rhenius's description of the principle of Self-Respect in the last Chapter—"Away with religion and priestcraft! We declare you endless liberty and license!"—may suggest some radical attempt, in a EuroAtlantic liberal sort of way, to renounce tradition or custom and embrace a coupling of alleged "modernity" and freedom. Opposed to this principle would be that more closely aligned with Self-Rule, the "swell[ing] of Congress ranks" which Rhenius understands as synonymous with embracing the Hindu tradition. On this account, EVR would be "individualist," Gandhi "communitarian." General assessments of EVR would not disagree.

The problem with this account is that it misses the ways in which Self-Respect saw itself as part of an "Indian" tradition going back millennia. Self-respect was therefore not conceding but competing over what it meant to be "Indian." Such meaning allied itself with a series of figures more amenable to critical heterodoxy than hegemonic orthodoxy. As one Self-Respecter writes in 1929,

> Unable to bear the atrocities [*koṭumaikaḷ*] of the society [*camūkam*] of the Hindu creed [*camayam*],[417] from 2,500 years ago up until now, Vardhamana Mahavira,[418] Buddha,[419] Tiruvaḷḷuvar,[420] [Guru] Nanak,[421] Kabir,[422] Tukaram,[423] Eknath,[424] Ramanuja,[425] Caitaṉṉiyar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy,[426] Swami Dayananda Sarasvati,[427] Ramalinga Swami [Adigal],[428] [and] Swami Vivekananda[429] all had the character of removing flaws [*kuṟai*] by taking up good efforts[.] To

[417] EVR claims that *camayam* and *matam* are the same: see Anaimuttu '*matam*'…
[418] Founder of Jainism, ca. 6th c. BCE.
[419] Founder of Buddhism, ca 6th c. BCE.
[420] The premier moral poet of ancient Tamil literature, ca 0th c. CE.
[421] The founder of Sikkhism, ca 15th c CE..
[422] Influential mystic saint and bhakti poet, ca 15th c. CE.
[423] Religious poet, ca. 17th c. CE.
[424] Religious poet, ca. 16th c. CE.
[425] Theologian and philosopher, ca. 11th c. CE.
[426] Bengali reformer, translator of Hindu texts into English, co-founded Calcutta Unitarian Society, etc., ca. 18th c. CE.
[427] Founder of Arya Samaj, which though a Neo-Hindu movement demanding Swarayja or 'India for the Indians and which would be often *opposed* to *Cuya-Mariyaatai*, also campaigned against idolatry and ritualism, 19th c CE.
[428] Greatest of the 19th c. CE Tamil saints, advocate of caste eradication, and religious skeptic.
[429] Founder of Ramakrishan Mission, central to the introduction of Indian Religion and Philosophy to the Euro-Atlantic world, follower of Advaita Vedanta (all is one), and social reformer, ca. 19th c. CE. Vivekananda's interaction with the utopian anarchist Kropotkin encouraged him to see a coming "rule of the Sudras" [the lowest

> unite that [character] with the customs [*paḻakka vaḻakkaṅkaḷ*] of ancient good Tamils, a new name was created [*puṉai*], a new life [*uyir*] given, and so as to practice [*aṉushṭi*] and agree [*oppu*] to gather [*oruṅku*] those learned [*paṇṭitar*] and those common [*pāmarar*], it is precisely [*iṉṉatu*] the *Cuya-Mariyātai* [Self-Respect] Movement of our Ramacami Periyar [EVR] which has spread so ferociously [*veku tīviramāy*][.][430]

The tradition of India was taking its true form, not in the demand for *swaraj*, but in the demand for *cuya-mariyātai*. It is the removal of the flaws of social order, what Rhenius referred to perhaps over-euphemistically as the Self-Respect concern that "You were treated very badly by others!" that defines *cuya-mariyātai*. Such "flaws" created slaves out of humans—as our Self-Respecter writes: "Briefly stated, *Cuya-Mariyātai* is the destruction of the slave-quality [*aṭimaittaṉmai*] and living the way of knowledge joining with human-quality [*maṉitattaṉmai*]."[431] It would be the tradition of eliminating slavishness and restoring humanity that defined *cuya-mariyātai*. As we have seen Tamil Lutherans to claim, "the Self-Respect Movement" was an effort to free the oppressed from bondage and "to conquer slave mentality…and other evils."[432]

The true tradition of India as one articulated through the *cuya-mariyātai* of EVR was not "Indian" in the nationalist sense emphasized by *swaraj*. It had a world-wide valence, which was troubled by the term *jāti* or "caste" while refiguring that term. As one Self-Respecter writes in 1928:

> The human *jāti* [*manushya jāti*] ["caste"] always, once awakened [*viḻippuṭaṉ*], goes to death searching for new conditions [*nilaikaḷ*]. *Cuya-Mariyātai*…humbly asks for truth [*uṇmai*], and when it progresses and is victorious age after age going on the small path [*vītivaḻi*] which kindles the flame of knowledge [*aṛivu*], [*cuya-mariyātai*] creates the appropriate desire[433] to listen to the echo of the whole world [*ulakamuḻatum*]. The propaganda [*piraccāram*] of [the Self-Respect weekly] *Kuṭi Aracu* is this: if we also wish to go on equal footing [*cama naṭaiyāka*] with the human *jāti*, throw off without hesitation the back burden of religion [*matam*] atrocity [*koṭumai*] to which we have born.[434]

*Cuya-mariyātai* is a world-wide force which marches towards progress, that is, "equal footing" with all others of the human *jāti*. This march is to eliminate slavishness and preserve one's humanity.

We have seen above that *cuya-mariyātai* associated Hinduism ("the Hindu creed") with "atrocities," e.g. social injustice creating a slave-quality among men rather than the human-quality of equality. But, just as in competing for rather than renouncing some "Indian" tradition in articulating *cuya-mariyātai*, so too were EVR and his fellow Non-Brahmins, through

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caste, but above the untouchable]. See Wilhelm Halbfass, *Indian and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (Albany: SUNY P, 1988): 233.

[430] "*Tirunelvēli Jillā 2nd Cuyamariyātai Makānāṭu* [Tirunelveli District 2nd Self-Respect Conference]," *Kuṭi Aracu,* 28 July 1929: 5.

[431] "*Tirunelvēli Jillā 2nd Cuyamariyātai Makānāṭu* [Tirunelveli District 2nd Self-Respect Conference]," *Kuṭi Aracu,* 28 July 1929: 5.

[432] "The Movement among Self-Respecters in the Trichy and Tanjore District towards the Ev. Lutheran Church," probably Summer/Fall 1934, LELM 077: 160, UTC Archives.

[433] The word here is *ārvāram*. I assume this is a variant on *ārvam*.

[434] Kaivalya Cāmiyār, "*Uṇmaiyāṉa Matattai Veḻippṭuttuvatē 'Kuṭi Araciṉ' Pircāram*" [The Propaganda of *Kuṭi Aracu* Reveals the True Religion]" *Kuṭi Aracu*, 18 March 1928: 3.

publications such as the weekly *Kuṭi Aracu* which served as the "core" organ of the Self-Respect Movement, laying claim to the "true Hindu religion." The clearest articulation of *cuya-mariyātai* as the true *matam* was written by Kaivalya Cāmiyār [KC] in a six-part running article in 1928 titled "The Propaganda [*Piraccāram*] of *Kuṭi Aracu* Reveals the True Religion [*Matam*]."[435] KC writes:

> We need to establish in our country the all-religion [*matam*] fraternity [*cakōtarattuvam*]. But because of the Hindu religion [*matam*], custom [*vaḻakkam*], and atrocity [*koṭumai*] there is difference [*vittiyācam*]. Nāyakkar's [EVR] propaganda and the principle [*koḷkai*] of Kuṭi Aracu is that the deception which fills the belly by fabricating [*karpittu*] high low [*uyarvu taḻvu*] should be eradicated; even though fraternity should be established [*nilaittu*], such deception [both] maintains the obscenities that have been made to be written which drive it [fraternity] out, as well as the differences [*vittiyācaṅkaḷ*] among religion [*matam*]...The propaganda of *Kuṭi Aracu* is that the true Hindu religion [*matam*] should be created [*uṇṭāku*] in which all who eat by the mouth are brothers [*cakōtararkaḷ*].[436]

As with the Indian past, so too do we see a complicated relationship between *cuya-mariyātai* and the Hindu religion. On the one hand, the Hindu religion is seen as an agent of injustice and divisiveness. But what exactly is this "difference" [*vittiyācam*] which is of concern to EVR's "propaganda" about, and *Kuṭi Aracu*'s "principle" of, *cuya-mariyātai*? It is about the manufacture of hierarchy, "high low," in order to profit (filling the belly). The conclusion is not the eradication of the Hindu religion, and all other religions, because they are different. Instead, the conclusion reached above is that one must follow the "true Hindu religion." Subsequent differences, namely between the true Hindu religion and the false Hindu religions, would not be one of "high low" in order to profit at the expense of another. Instead, this difference is to establish equality, fraternity, among "all who eat by the mouth."

### *MARIYĀTAI*

So *cuya-mariyātai* is continuous with a regional past. Such continuity does not emphasize regional separation from a wider world (as with *swaraj*) but rather being a part of it and its unfolding project. And whatever it is that may be continuing, it is a kind of *mariyātai*—namely the *mariyātai* of the self.[437] *Mariyātai* is no stranger to scholarship on the Tamil-speaking South, and has figured as a term of great significance. Many scholars have found it "interesting" that the term *mariyātai* is the Tamil transliteration of the Sanskrit word *maryādā. Maryādā* literally means limit, boundary, or frontier—either physical or moral.[438] Of course, a

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[435] Kaivalya Cāmiyār, "*Uṇmaiyāṉa Matattai…*" *Kuṭi Aracu* from 4 March 1928 to 29 April 1928.

[436] Kaivalya Cāmiyār, "*Uṇmaiyāṉa Matattai…*" in *Kuṭi Aracu,* 25 March 1928: 3. The elipses here gloss over a short discussion of the progressive force of Islam in Turkey and Buddhism in Burma and Japan.

[437] Though *mariyātai* is repeatedly invoked as the concern of EVR and in the name of his movement, there are scholars who have not focused on its importance. For example, Sumathi Ramasamy in her well-known *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India 1891-1970* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1997), while deploying the phrase "self-respect" and claiming EVR to have "had the greatest influence" (234), does not use *cuyamariyātai* at all but instead refers to *taṉmāṉam* (107). Though the two overlap at the point of "respect," her choice of Tamil serves to obscure the importance of a particular term and the theoretical significance of its genealogy in Tamil Country and the Subcontinent more broadly. I do not have an explanation for why she focuses on *māṉam*, which is used on occasion, rather than *mariyātai*, which is overwhelming prominent.

[438] मर्यादा *maryādā*: 1. A limit, boundary (fig. also); bound, border, frontier, verge; 2. End, termination, terminus; 3. A shore, bank; 4. A mark, land-mark; 5. The bounds of morality, any fixed usage or established rule, moral law; 6. A

boundary has, as emphasized in various literatures, the property of serving to both divide and to connect.[439] Our question is how a particular kind of *mariyātai,* the *cuya-mariyātai* of EVR and his fellow Non-Brahmins, was recovered and refigured to articulate what has been referred to above as "propaganda," "principle," and the true "religion." The quality of such recovery, the recovery of what I claim is a critical project, is evident in contrast with pre-colonial and colonial figurations of *mariyātai*, as well as with related late 20th century postcolonial anthropological literature. *Mariyātai*, I suggest, was not about individualist independence or corporatist dependence but relational interdependence.

Pre-colonial uses of *mariyātai* emphasized division over connection. For example, one scholar's examination of a 13th century inscription—one of the earliest records of the term *mariyātai* in Tamil—reveals how *mariyātai* marked the ways in which alliances were forged through divisions resolved, through argument and subsequent contest, as opposed to presuming (as with a shared ancestry) or forging (as with marriage) alliances through kinship. For while

> [p]olitical integration among the three powerful chieftaincies was achieved through kin relations…[a]nother device used by Vaṉṉiyar chieftains explicitly refer to the need for Vaṉṉiyar solidarity against the Cōḻas and their Hoysala allies…In the peripheral areas of the Cōḻa country which had come under the sway of Vaṉṉiyar chieftains are found inscriptions which record the ratification of alliances between different segments of Vaṉṉiyar lineages. From Madam, a township in present day North Arcot district, comes an inscription stating that two branches of the Vaṉṉiyar family of the Campuvarāyars were to unite against a Cōḻa chieftain named Vikramacōḻa. Another 13th century inscription from Aragalur in South Arcot district records an argument

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rule of propriety or decorum, bounds or limits of propriety, propriety of conduct; 7. A contract, covenant, an agreement. Vaman Shivaram Apte, *Revised and Enlarged Edition of Prin. V. S. Apte's The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary* 3v (Poona: Prasad Prakashan, 1957-1959). The Sanskrit meaning of 'border' for *mariyātai* recurs in scholarship in South India. One scholar defines the Sanskrit *maryādā* as "frontier, limit, bounds of morality and propriety, custom." Pamela G. Price, *Kingship and Political Practice in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 15. Another writes "*Karai* literally means border, or boundary, often referring to the bank of a river or the shore of the sea…a term depicting the space where two different things meet: more specifically, where these two things are differentieated. Interestingly, *karai* has many of the same literal meanings as *mariyaatai*, the term which is generally used to mean honour but in a more literal sense means boundary as well." Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987): 210. Another writes: "*mariyātai*, conventionally translated as 'honor' or 'honors',…[is] derived from a Sanskrit word meaning 'boundary' or 'limit'." Elizabeth Kent, *Converting Women: Gender and Protestant Christianity in Colonial South India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 20. Such claims get tucked away into footnotes, that in turn direct us to yet other scholars. For example, one scholar's footnote reads: "The term *mariyātai* (derived from the Sanskrit *maryāda*) [sic] refers ot both the features of persons and offices that is 'honourable' and also, in the social semantic context of temples, to a particular set of transvalued substances that embody and signify such persons. S. Hanchett ahs pointed out the general importance of this concept in ceremonial competition elsewhere in South India in "Hindu Potlatches: Ceremonial Reciprocity and Prestige in Karnataka." See Arjun Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict under Colonial Rule* (New York: Cambridge U P, 1981): 35. Neighboring Kerala's medieval society also adapted the Sanskrit *maryādā*: "Kerala society appears to have developed its own system of balance based on some 'codes of conduct' known by different titles such as *maryada, margam,* or *acharam*." Binu John Mailaparambil, *Lord of the Sea: The Ali Rajas of Cannanore and the Political Economy of Malabar (1663-1723)* (Leiden: Brill, 2011): 40. Some have claimed that the preservation of *purva mariyadai* (old culture, ancient respect, "tradition" perhaps?) was central to Vijayanagara rule. See S. Jeyaseela Stephen, *Caste, Catholic Christianity, and the Language of Conversion: Social Change and Cultural Translation in Tamil Country* (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2008): 31.

[439] Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands: the New Mestiza-La Frontera* (San Francisco: Spinsters, 1987). See also Michiel Baud & Willem Van Schendel, "Toward a Comparative History of Boderlands," *Journal of World History* 8:2 (Fall 1997): 211-243.

> (*mariyadai*) [sic, e.g. *mariyātai*] between the Bana chieftain Ponparappina Vanakovaraiyar and the Campuvarāyar chieftain. According to this inscription both chiefs agreed not to shelter their mutual enemies, and agreed to cooperate against common enemies. Seventeen such inscriptions have been found so far in North and South Arcot districts. It may be concluded that horizontal alliances between Va<u>nn</u>iyar chieftains served to strengthen Va<u>nn</u>iyar political power, and that matrimonial and kin relations cemented Va<u>nn</u>iyars into a compact political block.[440]

Chieftains clash in an act called *mariyātai*, rendered above as "argument." Such *mariyātai* produced through clash, an act constituting divisive conflict, was resolved here through the manufacture of agreement. Such agreement goes beyond resolutions through kinship. Perhaps such agreement *must* go beyond kinship when involving *mariyātai*, requiring not biological but political forms of resolution establishing new possibilities for cooperation and conflict. *Mariyātai* gives rise to what above are called "horizontal" alliances in constituting forms of self, which are distinct from forms of self constituted through kin and matrimony. The echoes with Hegel here are too obvious to mention further.

This pre-Colonial *mariyātai* stood in stark contrast to the ways in which the term was configured under Colonial rule centuries later. In fact, the British saw *mariyātai* as just the opposite: an uncontested continuity through kinship. For example, a British Collector, faced with the claim that a Tamil man's "forefathers ha[d] been receiving…mariyadais [*mariyātais*] at the temple" decided to extend "the same mariyadai" to him on 20 September 1820 and, furthermore, helped enforce the extension of mariyadai through kinship lines so that "there was no room for any sort of complaint."[441] There is a dramatic shift in the meaning of *mariyātai*, from one of division and contest to one of connection and kinship, from the precolonial to the colonial period.

Scholarship since the 1980s set out to recover *mariyātai*'s meaning of division and contest, thereby challenging the colonial idea that Indian society was constituted by a fixed caste system founded on connections of kinship relations which in turn shaped religious rules and ideas of purity and pollution.[442] These projects generally agreed that *mariyātai* could be translated as "honor"[443] and was determined by actions conducted, and subsequently achieved, in "public."[444] Some framed *mariyātai* in political terms, alongside "royal authority and honor, and associated notions of power, dominance, and order."[445] Others framed *mariyātai* in religious terms, as "a continuous flow of transactions between worshippers and deity"[446] or as "entitlements to make specified sacred offerings during a locality's important religious

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[440] Venkata Raghotham, "Structural Change in Medieval Tamil Country: Agrarian and Political Roots of Warrior Chiefdoms," *Tamil Civilization* 5.3 (September 1987): 92.
[441] A.V. Jeyachandrun, "The Modi Records of Tirumala Tirupati Deasthanam" in *Aspects of Indian History and Culture* (New Delhi: Books & Books, 1984): 28-29.
[442] I am referring here to the definitive texts dealing with South India during this period that touch on *mariyātai*: Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict under Colonial Rule* (1981); Dirks, *The Hollow Crown* (1987); Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
[443] Appadurai *Worship and Conflict* (1981): 35, Dirks *Hollow Crown* (1987): 290, Bayly *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings* (1989): 35.
[444] Appadurai *Worship and Conflict* (1981): 36, Dirks *Hollow Crown* (1987): 369, Bayly *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings* (1989): 35.
[445] Dirks, *Hollow Crown* (1987): 7.
[446] Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict* (1981): 18-19.

festivals."[447] Such distinctions between the political and religious were asserted only to subvert them, and scholars argued persuasively that such distinctions made little sense in a Tamil past given, for example, how the deity's temple is understood as a royal palace.[448] What remains despite such efforts at subversion is an emphasis on the supreme importance of *mariyātai* in the Tamil-speaking south as honors in public. *Mariyātai* is subsequently described as "a particular set of transvalued substances,"[449] as "more important than anything else…invaluable, and could not be sold for any amount of money,"[450] and as thus framing "arenas of violent conflict."[451] In short, what such scholarship did was position *mariyātai* as contestable and in contrast to "fixed or harmonious ranking schemes"[452] in South Indian society.

Such scholarship, though revealing political contest rather than religious harmony in Indian society, retained the corporatism of linking "various kin and caste groups who had a stake in the locality's moral order."[453] Its claims still presumed a "political block" created by kin relations, though now this block engaged in conflictual acts of *mariyātai* rather than were fixed by *mariyātai*. There is little doubt that EVR and his fellow Non-Brahmins were, like the scholarship above, emphasizing the contest rather than fixity involved by adopting the term *mariyātai*. Some have suggested, however, that in contrast with such scholarship's emphasis on the corporate, Non-Brahmins trained their attention away from the public and instead on the individual: the *self* of *cuya-mariyātai*. As one historian has suggested, EVR's *cuya-mariyātai* was an innovation upon the historically public role of *mariyātai*, for *self*-respect "was based on the inner qualities of a person" and therefore, unlike traditional *mariyātai*, "not dependent on the honour which others showed you."[454] That is, unlike colonial understandings of *mariyātai* which were fixed and based on caste, and unlike precolonial/postcolonial understandings of *mariyātai* which were contested and based on caste, perhaps the principle of *cuya-mariyātai* was to articulate a form of *mariyātai* which was contested but based on the individual rather than caste. Such a move would constitute a shift away from *mariyātai*'s traditional public registers ("on the honour which others showed you") and towards a conception of the modern along a private register ("based on the inner qualities of a person").

However, we have encountered two major reasons to disagree with the claim that *cuya-mariyātai* was an allegedly "modern" form of *mariyātai* that located traditional honors purely within a private realm of the individual rather than the public realm between communities. The first turns us back to the local comprehension of "self-respect" as mass movement, that is, how those who served as audience to the propaganda of EVR's Self-Respect Movement understood *cuya-mariyātai*. For the villagers in the *taluks* neighboring Tranquebar we discussed earlier, *cuya-mariyātai* seemed to have functioned in just the same way as Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, Islam, and Hinduism did. Though these were "religions," they functioned not, it seemed, to emphasize an inner quality of a person like faith—much to the chagrin of some of the

[447] Bayly *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings* (1989): 35.
[448] Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict* (1981).
[449] Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict* (1981): 35, fn 41.
[450] Dirks, *Hollow Crown* (1987): 369.
[451] Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings* (1989): 35. Her argument talks about how *mariyaatai* is a Tamil cultural element retained and fused into Islam/Christianity after conversion, but she does not check to see how such fusion redounds upon *mariyaatai* itself. *Mariyātai* is not a set value which is at stake, but a theoretical claim upon the world about what matters, and in turn, is informed by what matters in the world.
[452] Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings* (1989): 35.
[453] Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses, and Kings* (1989): 35.
[454] Price, *Kingship and Political Practice* (1996): 198.

missionaries—but instead provided opportunities to "declare their intention publicly not only to all people in the two districts but to mobilize their own forces."[455] And by "their own forces," we presume some breakdown along the lines of "2 classes viz. the BEEF-EATERS and the NON-BEEF EATERS" that reveals caste divisions caught up in a nexus of spiritual/material, religion/labour relations, such as between the Roman Catholic Vellala landlords and the Adidravida Christians who serve as their labourers. That is to say, for those who received the speeches and addresses of Self-Respecters, *cuya-mariyātai* seemed to have served as another way for kinship relations to contest status, and in the process perhaps transform kin itself—but not as an individualist way to remove oneself from traditional relationships. We do not have reason to presume that *cuya-mariyātai* was a dramatically independent corrective to a dependence on the "honor which others showed you."

The second reason to disagree with the idea that the *cuya-mariyātai* of EVR and his fellow Non-Brahmins was about inner, private, individual qualities rather than public recognition has to do with how *cuya-mariyātai* as a principle was articulated by Self-Respecters themselves. We have already seen the importance of continuity with tradition, rather than breaking from tradition, in understanding *cuya-mariyātai*—and that tradition was part of a wider world, rather than removed into a national space. But that regional tradition of being a part of, rather than apart from, the world was being threatened by hierarchical relationships of "high low." Such relationships were what threatened *cuya-mariyātai*, and therefore it was in targeting such relationships, rather than simply a concern with the interior qualities of the self, that became a key part of how the principle of *cuya-mariyātai* was articulated at its core. And the force understood as maintaining such hierarchical relationships, preventing more fulfilling relationships and the better treatment subsequent to these relationships, had a name, a name we encountered in Part II: Brahminism.

### *BRAHMINISM*

There is no doubt that Brahminism was the target of *cuya-mariyātai*. Such Brahminism was understood to be a set of practices that had structured society and, like our discussion of *cuya-mariyātai* above, was understood as part of a present continuous with a long past. The flagship journal of the Self-Respect Movement, the Tamil weekly *Kuṭi Aracu* we have seen above (literally "Resident Rule" or, commonly, "Republic"), is filled with claims mobilizing its Tamil-speaking audience against it: "The Country of Bharat [India] has been Ruined by Brahminism. Therefore, Tamil People! Our Duty is that We Should Destroy It!"[456] *Kuṭi Aracu* often claimed that the journal itself was key to arming one with the tools necessary to so mobilize: "To Destroy Brahminism Read *Kuṭi Aracu*."[457]

But what does this destruction of Brahminism mean? In an article of that title published in the first year of the Self-Respect Movement, representative of the general tenor of the concerns of *cuya-mariyātai* itself, EVR claims in *Kuṭi Aracu* that its destruction meant the elimination of social hierarchy. And the destruction of such hierarchy required the changing of people's beliefs*:*

[455] "The Catholic Landslide," *Indian Social Reformer,* 2 June 1934.
[456] A blurb in *Kuṭi Aracu,* 29 August 1926: 4. Notice the *national* register at this early point of the Movement.
[457] A blurb in *Kuṭi Aracu*, 26 February 1928: 12.

> If it is asked in the name of what idea [*karattu*] we began the claim to destroy Brahminism, it is nothing other than that we began thinking [*karuti*] as priority the philosophy [*tattuvam*] of the destruction of imagining [*eṉṉuvatu*] that the Brahmin is a higher one than us, of driving out of our mind the believed superstitions, the fraudulent scriptures, the false revelations, and cunning [*vañcakam*] Sastras [sacred texts] which were created for the survival of him [the Brahmin], and the idea that the Panchama [untouchable] is a lower one than us.[458]

These ideas, thoughts, and imaginings of some as higher than oneself and others lower marked a continuity with the past. Through control over the beliefs of the people, the Brahmin has "deceived us, lowered us, and passed with power-as-superiority [*ātikkam*] over us for thousands of years. Because of this we have been saying that we must get freedom [*viṭutalai*] by destroying their authority [*atikkāram*],"[459] a destruction requiring the destruction of Brahminism.

Brahminism was a target of destruction because it violated *mariyātai*. Or rather, Brahminism claimed that kinship instead of contest defined *mariyātai*. The Non-Brahmin was furious with this interpretation of *mariyātai*, one in which we have seen the British to be implicated but one which ran against various articulations from 13th century alliances between tribal chieftains to various deployments in mass movements among untouchable communities, between different religions, regarding temples and festivals. Brahminism's attempt to place kinship at the center of *mariyātai*, and thus remove the Brahmin's position at the top of the social hierarchy from contest, was of concern for various reasons to EVR and his fellow Self-Respecters.

As an example that vividly illustrates the Non-Brahmin concern, let us turn to a series of editorials EVR wrote in August 1928 titled "Brahminism" whose point of departure was a Brahmin conference held in the Madras Presidency earlier that summer. Brahminism made the Brahmin's position uncontestable regardless of merit, and the Self-Respect Movement saw itself as needing to focus or amplify "disgust" [*tuvēsham*] among the masses to challenge the Brahmin's position. Articulations of such disgust were couched in anti-clerical language, familiar to Protestantism. "Priests[460] and other Brahmins feel the same way, [and] for [as long as a] little Brahmin thinks that the Brahmin is higher[461] than others, up to the ends of the world [*ulakam*] no one can destroy disgust for the Brahmin [*pirāmaṉat tuvēsham*]…"[462] In advocating such disgust, critics of the Self-Respect Movement would claim that they were fueling the flames of "communalism," of antagonism between the communities. But such antagonism, in the spirit of the contest central to *mariyātai*, was central to *cuya-mariyātai* in challenging the ways in which Brahminism had made the Brahmin's position uncontestable:

> It is only they, no matter how degraded or lacking in integrity their actions [*kāriyaṅkaḷ*, (karma)] may be, who are called the Brahmin[.] Apart from them, others—no matter how much integrity [*yōkkiyam*] they may have—are called bastards,[463] Sudra [low-caste], and sinners,[464] those that

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[458] "*Pirāmaṇīyattai Oḻippatenṟāl Eṉṉa*? [What Does the Destruction of Brahminism Mean?]," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 19 September 1926: 9. See also the many discussions of weddings designed to eradicate Brahminism, such as in "*Pirāmaṇīyattai Oḻitt Tirumaṉam* [Brahminism Destruction Marriages]," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 26 September 1926.

[459] "*Pārppaṉīyam*" [Brahminism]," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 5 August 1928: 9. The concern here was that "…the Brahmin invented frauds [*puraṭṭu*] called Veda, *matam* [religion], God [*cāmi*], and monster [*pūtam*]."

[460] *Yācakar,* priest, beggar, mendicant.

[461] *Uyartavaṉ*

[462] "*Pārppaṉīyam*," *Kuṭi Aracu,* 5 August 1928: 9

[463] *Vaippāṭṭimakkaḷ*, people of concubines.

[464] *Caṇṭāḷaṉ,* untouchable, bastard, etc. This term would be taken up by Nietzsche as "Tschandala."

> should not be touched, those that should not walk on the street[.] [They] are called by degrading words of so many kinds, are tormented [*vatai*] suffering cruelty [*koṭumai*], and [unable to] go without [feeling] disgust[.] If only our saying that these doings are without integrity [in and of itself constitutes] disgust, then with the desire that this disgust should take place in the whole world [*ulakamuḻumaiyum*], we say that that those Tamil people who are without this disgust are those without *cuya-mariyātai*.[465]

The Brahmin are at the top regardless of their actions (*karma*). Regardless of integrity, all others are below—and subjected to degrading abuses. Rather than feel ashamed of naming this situation as one deserving disgust, embarrassed about generating antagonism rather than amicability, EVR embraces such disgust, claiming it worthy of the entire world, and central to what it means to have *cuya-mariyātai*. And this concern with "Brahminism"—with the ways in which hierarchical relations have become uncontestable by "oppress[ing] those class members [*vakuppār*] who are not a part of their class from coming up [*talaiyeṭu*] [and] preventing the children of others, but not their own children, from studying"—are part of the "atrocities which have tormented people…concealed for yet still so many ages,"[466] that is, as continuous with a past extending beyond region into the world.

But why *wasn't* Brahminism contestable? Sure, Brahminism, as we gather from the above discussion, was understood as an ideology that blinded the masses to true relations of power and so forth. Additionally, I have suggested that Self-Respecters tried to recover the contestability of *mariyātai*, against a *mariyātai* automatically defined by kinship at the heart of Brahminism as an ideological construct, through a new kind of *mariyātai*, e.g. *cuya-mariyātai*. But how was this Brahminism's blinding articulated? And how was Brahminism constructed—making itself known and felt?

Brahminism's construction relied on the division and then reunification of fields we would refer to as "religion" and "politics." Brahminism suggested that religion was separate from politics, that there was an other-worldly orthodox truth that this-worldliness could not contain, on the one hand, and then that this religion should serve as the basis for politics, on the other. Brahminism meant "Oppressing the Non-Brahmin in the name of religion [*matam*], in the name of God, in the name of politics [*araciyal*], without letting [the Non-Brahmin] come up [in the world]."[467] It was religion and politics that provided the grounds for maintaining hierarchy. How were they divided, named as two different conceptual categories, and subsequently unified in a coherent expression called Brahminism?

The ways in which the Brahmin divided politics and religion, the material and spiritual, the "worldly" and the "orthodox" (or "Vedic" in the idiom of South India) was of recurring concern to Self-Respecters. Such division was a false one in the eyes of EVR and others. Referring to our earlier meeting of the Summer of 1928, EVR writes: "…given that the meeting took place for the sake of…many worldly [*laukīkam*] business[468] Brahmins and many Vedic[469] [*vaittikam*] Brahmins of the Sabha [association], none can object to saying that this assumed the importance of a Sabha of South Country [*teṉṉaaṭṭu*] 'Worldly-Vedic' Brahmins."[470] It was the

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[465] "*Pārppaṉīyam*," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 26 August 1928: 11
[466] "*Pārppaṉīyam*," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 26 August 1928: 10.
[467] "*Pārppaṉīyam*," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 5 August 1928: 9
[468] *Uttiyōkam*
[469] Vedas: ritual texts of Hinduism.
[470] "*Pārppaṉīyam*," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 5 August 1928: 8.

Brahmin, and Brahminism, that was of concern: divisions between the material "worldly" and spiritual "Vedic" were meaningless.

Such sentiments were echoed continuously. During the 1930s, for example, another prominent Self-Respecter who would go on to form the DMK, the first postcolonial political party to claim to be descended from EVR's thought and movement, CN Annadurai. The following excerpt focuses on the limits and possibilities of destroying *jāti*, or "caste," in parallel terms:

> You may declare [*terivi*] that among Brahmins there are Worldly [*laukīkam*] Brahmins and Vedic [*vaitīkam*] Brahmins, [and] that even though Vedic Brahmins do not support the destruction of *jāti* Worldly Brahmins would. What you say in plain view appears correct. But most are not afraid that Brahmin Society would destroy *jāti*. Because, can one expect that Brahmins would support a *Jāti* Destruction Movement that would destroy Brahmin Society's power [*cakti*] and influence? It is foolish to split Brahmin into two divisions of Worldly Brahmins and Vedic Brahmins, and to believe that Worldly Brahmins would be progressive [*muṛppōkku*]. Both belong to the same group [*kōttiram*]. The two of them are two hands of the same body. What one hand protects the other hand battles against.[471]

The very division between *laukīkam* and *vaitīkam*, between the worldly/material and the Vedic/spiritual, appears to be the ruse of Brahminism itself. Such a ruse may make it appear that the worldly holds out progressive possibilities, by which we should understand to mean a challenge to *mariyātai* defined by kinship in the achievement, or recovery, of *cuya-mariyātai* defined by contest that would result in the very elimination of "high low" itself. But Brahminism will not allow this, shoring up relations of *jāti* within a set hierarchical configurations, regardless of whether Brahmins appear to be concerned with this-worldly concerns or other-worldly ones. The distinction between worldliness and the Vedic is a false distinction, an ideological one. The real concern should be the elimination of high and low in all its manifestations.

The greatest fear of Self-Respecters was that the reconstitution of this misleading division, where the worldly appeared progressive and distinct from a regressive Vedic, was consolidated in and articulated through that thing called *swaraj* in terrifyingly familiar ways. As EVR implies, "our people… need the Non-Brahmin Movement and the movement possessing excellence called the *Cuya-Mariyātai* Movement" in order to combat "the fraud [*puṛaṭṭu*] of the outcry for reform" by those demanding *swaraj*.[472] Such fraudulence was evident in the fact that it was the *Brahmin* demanding *swaraj*. Yet it was also the Brahmin who was understood as benefitting from British Rule earlier on, having allowed the British to colonize in exchange for posts of power and a monopoly on *mariyātai*—"spying for an unjust government after betraying the country out of their selfishness [*cuynalam*]."[473] That is to say, the Brahmin was now, in the demand for *swaraj*, doing exactly what the Brahmin had done in the alliance with the British Raj—locking themselves into the top of the hierarchy and pulling *mariyātai* outside the realm of the contestable by allying with a form of Raj.

This new form of Raj, or politics, *swaraj* or self-rule, was to be founded on *matam*, the term most commonly rendering "religion." This reconstitution of the division between politics

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[471] CNA[nnadurai], "*Apētavātamum Camūka Cīrtiruttamum* [Non-Difference & Social Reform]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 4:6 (October 1938): 38.
[472] "*Pārppaṉīyam*," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 5 August 1928: 9
[473] "*Pārppaṉīyam*," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 5 August 1928: 9

and religion would suggest, in the name of *swaraj*, that all were of one nation, denying the very divisions of hierarchy which allowed the Brahmin to speak for the "self" of "self-rule." EVR, in answering the question "What are issues of religion [*matam*]?" places exploitation, untouchability, God, sexual relations, profiting from government service, and demanding full independence all in one continuum of Brahminism which reveals the incontestability of *mariyātai*:

> Is [*matam*] simply a blessing for money which all earn to go and fall into the belly of the members of one group [*kūṭṭattāriṉ*]? Or that aside from members of one group no one should see the basis for *matam*? That one should not touch another? That [one] should not walk on a road? That in the name of God [*cāmi*] girls should be dedicated to the temple as dancers [prostitutes] and that they should distribute[474] syphilis to all the villagers?[475] That God [*kaṭavuḷ*] created others to work for the Brahmin? That regardless of the atrocity [*akkiramam*] done, "The Brahmin [remains] a Brahmin"? That members of one group [*kūṭṭattār*] make a way to survive by imagining[476] family, concubines, adultery and other qualities for the gods [*cāmikaḷ*] and imagining temple tank festivals for them? That an old man of 60 years can be wedded [lit, tied/bound] to a girl of 10 years? That a girl child of 11 years shall give birth to another child?... Is it the politically moderate older brother, the government servant [*carkkārvāti*] younger brother, their CID [Criminal Investigation Department] spy father [who became] a Congressman after he had his youth, the Uncle [who became] a Full Independencer having swindled lakhs [10,000s] upon lakhs of money as a lawyer, and the blind grandmother who is a [Gandhian] Non-Cooperator? Like this there are yet tens of thousands more things that are called *matam* philosophy, which we do not understand.[477]

The Brahmin's status is uncontestable, premised on exploitation (money, gender, labour) and the institution of untouchable degradation (touch, roads). More importantly for our purposes here, there is no distinction between working for the British Raj and working for *Swaraj*: the CID spy for the British becomes a Gandhian Congressman, and the corrupt lawyer under the British Raj becomes a man demanding Full Independence. Brahminism ensures that the distinction between British Raj and *Swaraj* will be meaningless. And all of this, according to Self-Respecters, is occurring under the rubric of *matam*, or "religion."

Brahminism's act of division—between worldly and Vedic, material and spiritual, progressive and orthodox—and then reconstitution—through the *matam* or religion that provided the foundation for the politics of *swaraj*—was a process of false separation and connection that found echoes elsewhere. Brahminism would make false separations, for example, in terms of rights, claiming "that there should be different rights [*urimai*] for them and different rights for others [with respect to everything] from liquor stores and whore houses to the presence of God [*kaṭavuḷ caṉṉitānam*]."[478] At the same time, Brahminism would make false connections, claiming that "in our country there is nothing imagined [*kaṛpippatu*] as difference [*vittiyācam*]

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[474] The word here for 'distribute' is charged with temple connotations, and therefore quite funny: *viniyōkam*.
[475] *poṭṭu-k-kaṭṭutal*: Ceremony of dedicating a dancing girl to a temple by tying the marriage badge round her neck. Definitions for this term, and others where appropriate, are based on the University of Madras *Tamil Lexicon*. (Madras: University of Madras, 1924-1936).
[476] *kaṛpi*: create, imagine, instruct, invent, etc.
[477] "*Pārppaṉīyam*," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 5 August 1928: 9. This paragraph also includes discussion of Brahmin *matam* conversion and an extensive list of prurient Brahmin activities.
[478] "*Pārppaṉīyam*," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 26 August 1928: 10.

between Brahmin and Non-Brahmin…how many lies…"[479] in order to create a "national" demand for independence from British Raj, for *swaraj*.

At stake, I suggest, was what would constitute the self: a concern with *raj* or a concern with *mariyātai*? We have seen how *mariyātai* literally referred to that which simultaneously separated and connected, divided and united, namely, the boundary or frontier. The constitution of the self through *raj* promised the perpetuation of the same Brahmin/Colonial *mariyātai* of fixed relations through kinship. It would be the self of *mariyātai*, of "respect," that refused such fixity, establishing not only a *mariyātai* that was contestable, but a *cuya-mariyātai* whose contest was bounded by the demands of the elimination of high and low, of equality.

Self-Respect was portrayed as continuous with a past, a past of the true India, as it were, in contrast with Self-Rule. This past was one of *mariyātai* that was defined by contest not kinship, but brought into the present as *cuya-mariyātai*, where that contest was premised on the destruction of relations of high and low in defining the self. Struggles against such relations, against Brahminism, had a long history, and that history was brought forward in the struggle against the *swaraj* of Gandhi.

## DISTINCT PRESENT: "THE REASON I JOINED IN THIS SERVICE WAS THIS"

Despite the virulent language above, the struggle against Gandhian *swaraj* was not the initial inspiration behind *cuya-mariyātai* at all. Rather, it was in fact Gandhi himself who was initially the inspiration. Gandhi and the demand for *swaraj* was a central part of EVR's thought and movement across the early and mid-1920s. By the late 1920s, however, the break from Gandhi and *swaraj* was definitive. Why? The easy answer is that there were shifts in Gandhi's position with which EVR and others disagreed, a shift involving a romantic turn to a contained Indian past as constituting the self of self-rule. This is at a certain level true. But, pushing deeper, I argue that Gandhi and EVR, though sharing some of the same terms of concern, had a different understanding of those terms that foreshadowed the break itself.

Crudely, I suggest that Gandhian "self-respect" presumed a sense of national belonging along kinship lines, and therefore always already contained the "self" of self-rule, e.g. a biologically defined self. EVR's self-respect did not presume a sense of national belonging, and therefore could always already serve as a critique of such a self-rule's "self." I argue that such differences in understanding are evident in the interpretive acts by which Subcontinental terms were used to render, or were rendered as, "self-respect." EVR's emphasis on the pan-Indian Sanskritic term *mariyātai*, used but used rarely by Gandhi, points to the Tamil Non-Brahmin's emphasis on borders, as that which both unites and divides, in understanding the "self," and a history of contest rather than the heredity of kinship in the maintenance of borders to bring about a world of equality.

In January 1927, EVR made one of his most explicit and unambiguous expressions of commitment to Gandhi and Gandhi's principles. The Gandhian principle to which EVR was most committed was *cuya-mariyātai*:

> …The reason I joined in this service was this: Mahatma Gandhi. It was Mahatma Gandhi who was the very first to say in a political[480] way that the people, without attaining *cuya-mariyātai*, could

[479] "*Pārppaṉīyam*," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 5 August 1928: 9. This paragraph also includes discussion of Brahmin *matam* conversion and an extensive list of prurient Brahmin activities.
[480] *araciyal*

> attain neither freedom[481] nor *swaraj* [.] [In addition], he also said that, [after] having attained *cuya-mariyātai*, expect *swaraj*. That is, maintain this idea: [his] saying that it is the fulfillment of the Constructive Program[482] which is *swaraj*, and that it is the attainment of the people's equality through the destruction of untouchability that is freedom. It is because of this that the Brahmins who opposed *cuya-mariyātai* have needed to leave and abandon the Mahatma and Congress. It is because of this that additionally many Non-Brahmin political leaders are afraid to explain confidently in public[483] my war and this idea. It is because of this that Brahmins make the venomous propaganda[484] that these principles[485] are the principles of national betrayal, the principles of atheism, and the principles of class-disgust [e.g. communalism].[486]

EVR understands Gandhi to be providing a vision of the "political way." This political way claims that *cuya-mariyātai* is a necessary condition for *swaraj* (without *cuya-mariyātai* there is no *swaraj*) and a sufficient condition for *swaraj* (having attained *cuya-mariyātai*, *swaraj* follows). Moreover, *swaraj* is coupled with "freedom." The achievement of *swaraj* is the same as, nothing more nor less than, the fulfillment of Gandhi's Constructive Program—a cluster of social-service practices which, for Gandhi, involved truth, non-violence, spinning khadi cloth, "visiting 'untouchable' homes and finding out their wants," temperance, common gender platforms, "establishing real *panchayats* [village governments] and…organizing national schools." The achievement of freedom is the same as, nothing more nor less than, "people's equality." This definition of the political way that is synonymous with *cuya-mariyātai*—where *cuya-mariyātai* is the Constructive Program that means *swaraj* and the equality that means freedom—disturbs Non-Brahmin and Brahmin alike. But it is the Brahmin who is most adamantly opposed to the political as *cuya-mariyātai*, for it lacks supplemental features such as nation, god, and class or caste. This is presumably why EVR's emphasis on *cuya-mariyātai*, which EVR understands to be equivalent to Gandhi's project itself, is dismissed as "national betrayal," "atheism," and "class-disgust."

We have seen that the concern of the Self-Respect Movement was that Brahminism was attempting to appropriate *mariyātai* so that it maintained hierarchical relations, relying on

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[481] *viṭutalai*

[482] *nirmāṇattiṭṭam*. In a letter reacting in horror to the mob violence at Chauri Chaura in which non-cooperators were engaged, Gandhi refers to "the constructive programme sketched by the Working Committee" as the "creed of truth and non-violence for the attainment of swaraj" which involved "daily and religiously spinning for a fixed time, in introducing the wheel of prosperity and freedom in every home, in visiting 'untouchable' homes and finding out their wants, in inducing national schools to receive 'untouchable' children, in organizing social service specially designed to find a common platform for every variety of man and woman, and in visiting the homes which the drink curse is desolating, in establishing real *panchayats* [village governments] and in organizing national schools on a proper footing." MK Gandhi "The Crime of Chauri Chaura," 16 February 1922, *CWMG* vol. 26: 181-182. In a more focused pamphlet in 1941, he repeats the social service orientation of the Constructive Programme, focused on communal unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition, khadi and other village industries, sanitation, education, women's rights, labour, economic equality, language reform, and civil disobedience. The achievement of such goals "may otherwise and more fittingbly be called construction of Poorna Swaraj or complete Independence" though such "independence is never exclusive. It is, therefore, compatible with interdependence within or without." MK Gandhi, *Constructive Programme: It's Meaning and Place* (Ahmedabad: The Navajivan Trust, 1941). Perhaps the earliest mention of the "constructive programme" was in 1919 ["Letter to Zafar-Ul-Mulk Alawi" after 15 June 1919, *CWMG* vol. 18: 111].

[483] *Veḷiyil*: in the outside.

[484] *piraccāram*

[485] *ikkoḷkaikaḷ*

[486] EVR in "*Shrimāṅ Nāyakkariṉ Tañcai Jillā Piracāram* [Revered Nayakkar's [EVR] Tanjore District Propaganda]," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 30 January 1927: 7, 10.

features supplemental to the here-and-now. Such supplement was the other-worldly (the effort to divide and recombine spiritual and material) and the heredity of kinship (whereby Brahmin action, or *karma*, could not affect his high status), opposed to the this-worldly (which we can see operating in the Constructive Program that is *swaraj*) and the history of contest (which was to achieve the freedom that is equality). We are therefore not surprised at the Brahminical claim of "atheism"—this-worldliness, a refusal of supplement, was the origin and end of *cuya-mariyātai*. Nor are we surprised at the Brahminical claim of "class-disgust"—we have seen that the fostering of such disgust against relations of hierarchy constituted the actions, the "propaganda," of *cuya-mariyātai*. But what of this Brahminical claim of "national betrayal"?

"National betrayal" turns on how we translate "nation. EVR and his fellow Non-Brahmins commonly used the term *tēcam*, the Tamil transliteration of the familiar Sanskritic Indian term "*desh*," to translate the referent of nation, e.g. the people and place. But "*desh*" does not have the same etymology as "nation." For a parallel to "nation's" etymology, meaning "birth," we would turn to the pan-Indian term *jāt*, e.g. "birth." And *jāti*, literally "of birth," is the word translated into European languages as "caste"—as we noted at the beginning of this Part. The question, then, was whether or not "caste" was to determine the coupling of people and place, if *jāti*/caste/birth was being smuggled into *desh*/people/place through "desh's" rendering of "nation."

There cannot be any doubt that EVR and his Self-Respecters were committed to the betterment of the people in a place called India, in which case EVR *was not* betraying his "nation." Such commitments, and the subsequent hatred of the British, were the foundation of EVR's politicization in the early 1920s. For example, in 1924, the British were very worried about EVR's enthusiastic propaganda demanding *swaraj*. On 20 July 1924, EVR was charged with sedition under section 196 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and sentenced to 4 months rigorous imprisonment based on his "spirit of defiance and revolt to law and order."[487] The British Government had been tracking him the entire year because, as one official noted, "[h]e has been doing a great deal of mischief and is in no sense a propagandist of non-violence."[488] The Government was concerned with EVR's affinity for Gandhi, praising the possibilities for true Self-Rule "only when Gandhi lives"[489] and claiming that "Gandhi said we must destroy this Government."[490] The Government was concerned with EVR's demands for such Self-Rule

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[487] *The Hindu,* 21 July 1924. See "In the Court of the District Magistrate of Madura, CC No 20/491 of 1924 *King Emperor vs EVRN*" and "In the Court of the District Magistrate of Madura, CC No 21/491 of 1924 *King Emperor vs EVRN*," *(EVR) 491, 25-6-1924, Ramaswami, Naicker, EVR - Prosecution under Section 124-A, IPC Sanctioned*, Under Secretary Safe Files (1914-1952), R1 (Confidential) Section, Tamil Nadu State [TNS] Archives, Chennai. India.

[488] Unsigned handwritten notes dated 24 April 1924, *(EVR) 491, 25-6-1924, Ramaswami, Naicker, EVR - , Prosecution under Section 124-A, IPC Sanctioned*, Under Secretary Safe Files (1914-1952), R1 (Confidential) Section, TNS Archives. In contrast, the Advocate General of Madras would write in reference to EVR, "I am bound to add, however, that will all these seditious illustrations and arguments, the stress is always on the topic of khaddar [kadi homespun cloth], the need for realizing the value of khaddar in the interests of the poorer classes and the duty of working out our salvation without violence, without hatred towards any individual." From the Advocate General, Madras 14 April 1924. *(EVR) 491, 25-6-1924, Ramaswami, Naicker, EVR - , Prosecution under Section 124-A, IPC Sanctioned*, Under Secretary Safe Files (1914-1952), R1 (Confidential) Section, TNS Archives.

[489] From the Special Branch, CID, 23 February 1924, "Extracts from the speech (38 pages) delivered by Ramaswami Naicker of Erode at Pannarpuram, Madura District on 5/2/24…" *(EVR) 491, 25-6-1924, Ramaswami, Naicker, EVR - , Prosecution under Section 124-A, IPC Sanctioned*, Under Secretary Safe Files (1914-1952), R1 (Confidential) Section, TNS Archives.

[490] From the Special Branch, CID, 28 February 1924, "Extracts from the speech (89 pages) delivered by EV Ramaswami Naicker of Erode at Thevaram, Madura District on 6/2/24…," *(EVR) 491, 25-6-1924, Ramaswami,*

expressed in remarks about various achievements of "*swaraj*" in the past "by bomb-throwing in Calcutta" and "throwing a bomb on the Viceroy at Delhi"[491]—references to events familiar to the assassin Vanchinathan in 1911, as we saw in Part II. And the Government was certainly concerned with EVR's subsequent attitude to the British: "If you ask a thief to be your guide will he show you the right way? So can you ask for Swaraj from the Government bent upon carrying away our money and profiting itself [?]…Why did the white people come here? It is not possible for them to give us Swaraj unless they are determined to pack their baggage and leave by the next steamer."[492] EVR subsequently portrays the British as thief-rulers, as a class apart from the Indian: "He has named himself 'Viceroy' instead of 'thief' with a view to plunder our property. They call themselves 'Ruling Class' instead of 'Gang of Robbers.'" Such economic exploitation, EVR claims, is the only purpose for the British presence in India: "The only real object is to carry away as much as possible from India by occupying the important commercial ports and they are guided by no other motive."[493] In short, the Government in 1924 convicted EVR of sedition because he allied with Gandhi and demanded a *swaraj* that pushed the British out as a class apart from the Indian. No "national betrayal" here.

But there also cannot be any doubt that EVR and his Self-Respecters were ferociously committed to preventing *jāti*, the "caste" which pulled *mariyātai* outside the history of contest aimed at equality and into the heredity of kinship aimed at hierarchy, from defining the people who lived in a placed called India—in which case EVR *was* betraying the nation of India, or at least the idea of "natio/*jāt*/birth" in India. Such commitment is just as present in the mid-1920s as EVR's Gandhian investments. We see EVR questioning the ways in which Gandhian organizations functioned—a questioning based on the ways in which caste-based hierarchy was reinscribed, rather than erased, through nationalist projects, and how non-national, foreign elements could be rendered in such a way as to enable freedom rather than ensure exploitation.

For example, on 6 April 1926, EVR was invited under the auspices of the Gandhi Ashram to speak at the opening of a "Gandhi Well" whose digging was funded by Gandhi's Congress Party. The well was created for the use of "Adi-Dravidians" or untouchables.[494] Despite the fanfare and excitement surrounding the event, EVR begins his speech by saying "I consider it degrading and participate in this event with great embarrassment." EVR claims the

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*Naicker, EVR - , Prosecution under Section 124-A, IPC Sanctioned*, Under Secretary Safe Files (1914-1952), R1 (Confidential) Section, TNS Archives.

[491] From the Special Branch, CID, 28 February 1924, "Extracts from the speech (55 pages) delivered by EV Ramaswami Naicker of Erode at Mandaivelli Maidan, Mylapore, Madras, on 8/3/1924 …," *(EVR) 491, 25-6-1924, Ramaswami, Naicker, EVR - , Prosecution under Section 124-A, IPC Sanctioned*, Under Secretary Safe Files (1914-1952), R1 (Confidential) Section, Tamil Nadu Archives, Chennai. EVR refers to two different stages of swaraj in his speeches in 1924. The first, resulting from bomb-throwing violence in Calcutta and Delhi, produced the Minto-Morley Reforms (1909) which allowed limited elections of Indian nationals. The second, resulting from the enlistment and sacrifice of tens of thousands of Indians in World War I, resulted in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919) which increased the limited franchise and limited authority of Indian nationals in a situation of "dyarchy" where finance and military were retained with the British while education and other public resources were left under Indian control.

[492] Government Order No. 191-S dated 25th June 1924, citing EVR's speech at Mylapore, Madras, on the 8th March 1924. *(EVR) 491, 25-6-1924, Ramaswami, Naicker, EVR - , Prosecution under Section 124-A, IPC Sanctioned*, Under Secretary Safe Files (1914-1952), R1 (Confidential) Section, TNS Archives.

[493] Government Order No. 191-S dated 25th June 1924, citing EVR's speech at Mylapore, Madras, on the 8th March 1924. *(EVR) 491, 25-6-1924, Ramaswami, Naicker, EVR - , Prosecution under Section 124-A, IPC Sanctioned*, Under Secretary Safe Files (1914-1952), R1 (Confidential) Section, TNS Archives.

[494] "*Tīṇṭāmaiyap Paṛṛi: Shrīmāṉ Ī.Ve. Rāmasāmi Nāyakkarkaḷiṉ Piracaṅkam. Cirāvayal Kānti Vācaka Cālaiyiṉ Āṇṭu Niṛaiyu Viḻāvum Kānti Kiṇaṛu Ciṛappu Viḻāvum*" *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 April 1926: 5, 8.

separate well is an "obscenity" [*akkiṛamam*] motivated by caste-based demands for separation and the thought that "the Adi-Dravidians [Untouchables] are those lower than us, that they are not those fit to be mingled with." He continues to expose the event as a ruse for shoring up caste hierarchy: "Putting on a disguise as if doing good for a few Adi-Dravidians, these sorts of *dharmas* only serve to establish the position of those who are high." In this speech, EVR attacks conceptions of dietary pollution which many invoked as a reason for the untouchable status of the Adi-Dravidian community called *paṛaiyar* by gesturing to the British: "There is not the slightest truth to the claim that the reason that you are Pariah [*paṛaiyar*] is because you eat beef and drink alcohol. It is those who eat beef and drink alcohol who are now ruling the world."[495] Though he is very clear that "I do not think that…Europeans rule India for the sake of India's well-being,"[496] he continues to appeal to allegedly foreign Christian (e.g. European) as well as Muslim practices of consuming beef as a cheap and valuable source of nutrition dogmatically opposed by upper-castes as un-Indian and polluting: "Even if some Christians and Muslims—who are members of religions permitted beef—have pocket-money freely available [saved by eating cheap beef], [the upper-castes] say that we do not have the custom of eating beef."[497] In short, EVR in 1926 criticizes activities undertaken in Gandhi's name presumably in pursuit of *swaraj* by pulling the British (and beef) in as if a part of a class of Indians—the untouchable *paṛaiyar*. Such parallels between the British and the Pariah, of course, had a long history—as we saw in the letter written by Ashe's assassin Vanchinathan in 1911; here, in a move we may consider Non-Brahmin, such parallels are meant to embolden the Pariah and thereby serve to parody Brahminical moves to degrade the British through beef-eating.

By 1928, it was not just activities in the name of Gandhi that seemed saturated with Brahminism, but Gandhi himself. Gandhi began to rely on mythical, other-worldly elements—like the Hindu epic the *Ramayana*—along with softer reformist language rather than revolutionary action—preserving caste or *jāti* but in a milder, less hierarchical way—that violated the very sense of self articulated through *mariyātai* that the Self-Respect Movement was trying to achieve. EVR perceived Gandhi differently across the early 1920s; Gandhi was understood as someone who felt that the self needed to be defined through *mariyātai* which through contest, and not kin, could establish relations of equality in order to truly be a self-ruling self. But then EVR came to understand Gandhi as someone who felt that the self of *raj* could be presupposed, rather than achieved, by virtue of cultural-biological origins, who only through *raj* could achieve *mariyātai*.

Yet in both the early 1920s and the late 1920, *cuya-mariyātai* remained central to what appealed to EVR. In the British records from 1924, EVR favorably quotes Gandhi as saying "Don't ask other people to give you swaraj. They are only temporary sojourners in the country. It is not consistent with our self-respect to beg of them to give us swaraj. It is for you to take it by refusing to be exploited."[498] And in 1926 at the well-digging function, "self-respect" is invoked as the solution to the status of the *paṛaiyar*: "No matter how much one raises a caste person who is not concerned about self-respect (*cuya-mariyātai*) [he] will not rise. To each and every person must come the realization (*uṇarcci*) that he is a man."[499] And in 1925, between

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[495] *"Tīṇṭāmaiyaip Paṛṛi* [About Untouchability]," *Kuṭi Aracu,* 25 April 1926: 5.
[496] *"Tīṇṭāmaiyaip Paṛṛi* [About Untouchability]," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 25 April 1926: 5.
[497] *"Tīṇṭāmaiyaip Paṛṛi* [About Untouchability]," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 25 April 1926: 5. *Matam:* religion.
[498] From the Advocate General, Madras 14 April 1924. *(EVR) 491, 25-6-1924, Ramaswami, Naicker, EVR - , Prosecution under Section 124-A, IPC Sanctioned*, Under Secretary Safe Files (1914-1952), R1 (Confidential) Section, TNS Archives.
[499] *"Tīṇṭāmaiyaip Paṛṛi* [About Untouchability]," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 25 April 1926: 8.

these two invocations of "self-respect," between 1924 in which EVR saw foreign elements like the British as an obstacle to its achievement, to 1926 in which EVR saw foreign elements like the British as an opportunity to its achievement, EVR began "The Self-Respect Movement."

We may wonder, however, if such differences between EVR and Gandhi had always been present, though hidden. Is the English rendering of "self-respect" perhaps doing a disservice to the richer, more complicated acts of translation within India itself that serve as part of what I argue to be a shared tradition across a long distance relationship that constitutes SubContinental political theory?

### *TWO MOVEMENTS DIVIDED BY A SHARED LEXICON*

I argue that EVR and Gandhi had a different understanding of "self-respect," and that such a difference of understanding is evident in the pan-Indian Sanskritized vocabulary which they both shared but used differently in their terms of choice to render, or rendered as, "self-respect." Choice of terms indicate an interpretive move. I suggest that the "self" of Gandhi's "self-respect" and "self-rule" were the same, determined by the heredity of kinship and the power of Brahmininical orthodoxy. In contrast, the "self" of EVR's "self-respect" was determined by a history of contest and could serve to critique the "self" of "self-rule." We may begin to wonder whether "self-respect" rather than "self-rule" should be the central concern of studies in 20th century Indian political thought as a part of Subcontinental Political Theory.

Such an argument is difficult to make at the level of the word and the word's interpretation, as we have access to Gandhi's writings in English far more easily than those that were written in Gandhi's native tongue of Gujarati. However, fortunately, we do have Gandhi's Gujarati original *Satyanā prayogo athavā ātmakathā* (1927) ["Truth Experiment or Self-Story"], translated soon after by Mahadev Desai into English and published as *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*.[500] We are encouraged by Gandhi's own words to attend to his mother tongue, especially in matters of self-rule and self-respect; Gandhi insisted on the importance of one's "mother tongue" for "*swarajya*" and indicated that the use of English among Gujaratis constituted a "degraded state" in which "we…lose our self-respect."[501] Such claims may even suggest, perhaps, a certain violation to "self-respect" when considering *swaraj* in Gandhi's English works themselves.

The year 1927 in which his Gujarati original *Autobiography* was published, of course, is significant—it was in this very same year that EVR makes perhaps his most unambiguous claim that his *cuya-mariyātai* is the very same as Gandhi's. As discussed above, *cuya-mariyātai* is a

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[500] MK Gandhi, *Satyanā prayogo athavā ātmakathā* (1956). Originally published 1929? MK Gandhi, trans. Mahadev Desai, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993 (1957). Original Navajivan Trust translation published 1927.

[501] In South Africa in 1909, in the wake of the recent rise of nationalism in the world, Gandhi says:

"These days a new idea is in the air in India. Hindus, Muslims, Parsis—all are filled with the spirit of "my country" and "our country"… Thinking of it from the point of view of language, it requires little effort to see that we must cultivate pride in our language before we can speak of "our country" with genuine feeling. Turning to recent examples, we find that one strong reason why the Boers enjoy *swarajya* [self-rule] today is that they and their children mostly use their own language…

…If this argument is correct, we may proceed to consider the case of Gujarati. One cannot help saying that the fact of Gujaratis using English among themselves is an indication of their degraded state. This practice has impoverished the mother tongue. We ourselves despise it and, as a result, lose our self-respect." [MK Gandhi, "Speech at Gujarati Meeting," 5 October 1909, *CWMG* vol. 10: 144-145.]

Tamil transliteration of a Sanskrit terms. The question we may ask ourselves is: did Gandhi use the same Sanskrit terms to indicate "self-respect" in the Gujarati of his *Autobiography*?

No. Out of the 15 terms rendered by Mahadev Desai as "self-respect" in the English translation of Gandhi's *Autobiography*, 11 are rendered from the Gujarati *svamān* which comes from the Sanskrit *sva* for "self" and *mānḥ* for "respect."[502] The Tamil transliteration of this term, as *cuya-māṉam*, was available and variations sometimes used by Self-Respecters. But this leaves us with a question. If EVR believes that he is following Gandhi in placing a priority on self-respect over self-rule, and if Gandhi usually used the Sanskrit-derived Gujarati term *svamān* to render/be rendered as "self-respect," and if EVR had access to an equivalent Tamil transliteration of this Sanskritic term as *cuya-māṉam*, then we should ask: why was EVR not demanding *cuya-māṉam* in a *Cuya-Māṉam* Movement but instead demanding *cuya-mariyātai* in a *Cuya-Mariyātai* Movement? That is, given that EVR had equal access to the Sanskritized vocabulary of Gandhi, and given that EVR claims to have concerns synonymous with Gandhi's, why wouldn't EVR use the same Sanskritized term as Gandhi when discussing "self-respect"? If there is an answer to this question, it must lie in the ways in which *māṉam* and *mariyātai* meant something different in terms of "self," with Gandhi preferring the self of the former and EVR preferring the self of the latter.

We have already discussed the Sanskrit root *maryādā* of the Tamil term *mariyātai* as one which means limit, boundary, frontier; this meaning extends to include the bounds of morality, rules of propriety or decorum, as well as contract or (dis)agreement. There is only one occurrence of "self-respect" rendering the root *maryādā* in the original Gujarati of Gandhi's *Autobiography*. To further underscore the pan-Indian consensus that this occurrence, and only this occurrence, was an instance of *maryādā*, it is also the only moment in which "self-respect" is rendered as *maryādā* in the Hindi translation of Gandhi's *Autobiography* as well. Unsurprisingly, the Tamil translation of Gandhi's *Autobiography*, too, renders this moment in similar terms as *cuya-mariyātai*. That moment of "self-respect" in the Gandhi-endorsed Desai English translation is as follows:

> The grinding poverty and starvation with which our country is afflicted is such that it drives more and more men every year into the ranks of the beggars, whose desperate struggle for bread renders them insensible to all feelings of decency and self-respect. And our philanthropists, instead of providing work for them and insisting on their working for bread, give them alms.[503]

The Gujarati and Hindi version literally render the underlined portion above "they do violation of *common maryādā* for the sake of procuring a meal." Both "decency" and "self-respect" are folded into, or out of, Gandhi's Gujarati term *maryādā*, or rather, "common" (*sāmānya*) *maryādā*. Importantly, such "self-respect" in fact is rendering a phrase that does not include the "self" at all, but only "common *maryādā*." In the Tamil translation, this is simply rendered as *cuya-mariyātai*—indistinguishable from the majority of other ways in which "self-respect" is rendered.

What can we make of this? Gandhi used both *svamān* and "common *maryādā*" in terms rendered as "self-respect" in his *Autobiography* of the mid-1920s. Gandhi used *svamān* almost

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[502] This "*māṉ*" root we have seen preferred by Ramasamy, *Passions of the Tongue* (1997), despite the overwhelming use of *mariyātai.* The *māṉ* root is preferred in both the Hindi and Gujarati versions of Gandhi's *Autobiography*, suggesting that the Tamil is doing something different.

[503] Chpt 5: Part 22, "The Fast" [last sentences of section]. MK Gandhi, *Satyanā prayogo athavā ātmakathā* (1956): p. 395. Hindi version—*Satya ke prayog athava ātmakathā* (New Delhi: Sasā Sāhitya Maṇṭal, 1951)—p. 543.

exclusively and only once used *maryādā*. EVR in the mid-1920s claims to follow Gandhi and is interested in his priority of "self-respect." Yet EVR used *maryādā* (as in the Tamil *cuya-mariyātai*) almost exclusively and rarely used *svamān* (as in the Tamil *cuya-māṉam*) in expressions redeemable as "self-respect." I suggest that this is evidence of a pan-Indian interpretive struggle over what "respect" meant, or rather, whether "self-respect" meant a self produced through *mān*—a Sanskrit term which means respect, honor, regard, but also pride in both a good sense as well a sense of haughtiness or vanity, a feature of one's interiority that must be preserved against corrosive external elements—or *maryādā*—a Sanskrit term which means border, limit, frontier, a sense of decorum and propriety. I argue that Gandhi's "self-respect" as *svamān* did double duty, switch-hitting as both this-worldly and other-worldly and thereby echoing the Non-Brahmin's concern with Brahminism by binding present relationships into hierarchies from an alleged past. *Cuya-mariyātai* was an attempt to pull "self-respect" back to more this-worldly concerns in the present, to what was shared and in common.

Focusing on Gandhi's Gujarati *Autobiography*, we see *svamān* playing a dual role. On the one hand, *svamān* is against injustice and carries a universal valence. It is "for the sake of *svamān*" that one stands up against "high-handedness…absurd orders…[and] [i]nvidious distinctions," for "it is unthinkable to put up with the loss of it."[504] And because one should not "compromise our *svamān*" one should "suffer the consequences of our non-payment" of unjust Government fee collections.[505] On the other hand, *svamān* requires the preservation of or depends on the nation, e.g. India, and carries a group valence. Gandhi writes that "I saw that South Africa was no country for a self-respecting Indian" and thus tried to improve the situation there.[506] And, again with respect to South Africa, Gandhi writes "Thus God laid the foundations of my life in South Africa and sowed the seed of the fight for national self-respect."[507] Given these two uses of *svamān*, e.g. universal human and national pride, in which camp does the instance of *maryādā* which was rendered as "self-respect" fall? Though Gandhi refers to "our country," *maryādā* seems concerned with a universal human who, subject to "grinding poverty and starvation," cannot achieve "self-respect." While *svamān* straddles the universal human and national pride, *maryādā* is concerned with the universal human, achieved only with the provision of certain material conditions understood to be a part of senses of decency held in common.

EVR's "self-respect" of *cuya-mariyātai* is just this sort of universal, material concern. As we saw above, EVR is concerned that the material conditions—e.g., "in our own nation [*tēcam*] there are thousands of crores [100,000s] of people living like bugs and worms, dogs and pigs, devils [*picācukaḷ*] and demons [*arakkarkaḷ*]," where, we may note, such creatures, whether natural or supernatural, are associated with hunger—prevent "self-respect" and thus would make "self-rule" meaningless. There are moments in Gandhi's far more accessible English prose in which he would agree with EVR. For example, Gandhi expresses concern with the human and hunger when responding to a demand "that all should become equal" by claiming "Such should be the case in the eye of the law in the matter of elementary human rights, even as, irrespective of caste, race, creed or colour, we have certain things in common, e.g., hunger, thirst, etc." It would seem that hunger would be central to concerns with self-respect as a universally human feature. Yet earlier in that very same conversation, Gandhi flips this relationship in a frequently

[504] Gandhi, *Autobiography* (1957): 353; Gandhi, *Ātmakathā* (1956): 324.
[505] *Autobiography* (1957): 436; *Ātmakathā* (1956): 397.
[506] *Autobiography* (1957): 131; *Ātmakathā* (1956): 122.
[507] *Autobiography* (1957): 140; *Ātmakathā* (1956): 130.

quoted line: "Man does not live by bread alone. Many prefer self-respect to food."[508] Whereas it seemed as if food was necessary for self-respect, now self-respect can exist independently of, and perhaps be preferable to, food. Gandhi can't have it both ways—either food is necessary for self-respect, or self-respect can be preferable food. Self-respect can't both require the satisfaction of hunger and yet be preferable to hunger's satisfaction.

This would not be the first time we have seen a coupling and the separating of material (satisfying hunger) and non-material or spiritual (that which is preferable to satisfying hunger) concerns. Gandhi's *svamān* as "self-respect" is doing the work of what, I suggested, Non-Brahmins called Brahminism. Gandhi's "self-respect" is sometimes material and sometimes non-material, sometimes universal and sometimes national, and these efforts to distinguish and then blur such differences served to remove *mariyātai* from the history of contest and thrust it into the heredity of kinship. Would Non-Brahmins have reason to think this was Gandhi's goal? Yes. For example, in 1925, shortly before the birth of the Self-Respect Movement, Gandhi printed his replies to a series of questions posed to him by "a Madras correspondent".[509] Evident in Gandhi's replies is an emphasis on Self-Rule feared by Non-Brahmins, that is, the rule of a self hallmarked by Brahminism. When Gandhi is asked about the "practical steps to be taken to remove untouchability" and replies "To open to untouchables all public schools, temples and roads that are open to non-Brahmins and are not exclusively devoted to any particular caste," the Non-Brahmin would wonder why schools, temples and roads devoted exclusively to *Brahmins* are not open to the ex-untouchable. When Gandhi is asked about "the religious status of the untouchables when the ban of untouchability is completely removed," the Non-Brahmin would wonder why Gandhi retains caste categories and relegates ex-untouchables to the lowest Non-Brahmin *jāti,* the Sudra, rather than the highest, the Brahmin, by replying "They will…be classed as Sudras instead of Atisudras." When Gandhi replies to a question about the "inter-mingling of castes" with "I would abolish all castes and would keep the four divisions" [Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra], the Non-Brahmin would wonder why Gandhi retains the four divisions of *varnashrama dharma*, which lists duties in this hierarchical division of four castes, gesturing to mere reform when claiming "The whole system needs to be revised and brought in unison with the latest discoveries in the field of religion." For the Non-Brahmin, the answer would be that Gandhi was invested in the expression of an indigenous national Indian self that Non-Brahmins saw as Brahminism. Such Brahminism was not prevented, but in fact made possible, by the dual valences of Gandhian *svamān*.

In short, Gandhi's "self-respect" shares a fundamental ambiguity, whether in its English or Gujarati incarnations. It seems as if "self-respect" and "self-rule" are not two analytically distinct projects. And such features of duality in Gandhian "self-respect" is evident at the very start of Gandhi's political career in India and elsewhere outside of his *Autobiography*. For example, as "the author of the *satyagraha* movement," Gandhi was called to testify before the

[508] For example, one scholar quotes this line in a footnote supporting the following claim: "Although Gandhi assumes the sanctity of life, he denies the priority of life, not because he does not value life but because he wants to celebrate a life that is honest to itself. He holds that nonviolent agents prefer their own death to 'a life of falsehood' and would rather be killed than do 'things unbecoming the dignity of a human being.'" Ronald Tercheck, *Gandhi: Struggling for Autonomy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998): 206. Whether or not Gandhi's insistence here, say, that the "four divisions" of Indians should be retained, and that Untouchables should be instead classified as low Sudras, is an insistence "unbecoming the dignity of a human being" is left as an open question. By taking Gandhi out of context, we lose the very real tension between Self-Rule and Self-Respect present in the interview.

[509] Gandhi, "Pertinent Question," *Young India* 5 February 1925, *CWMG* vol. 30: 173-177.

Disorders Inquiry Committee on 9 January 1920.[510] After describing *satyagraha* as "a movement based entirely on truth" "to replace the methods of violence" and as "an extension of the domestic law on the political field," Gandhi was asked by Lord Hunter, the President of the Committee,

> …I know we have been told that there was a very general widespread Indian opposition to the Rowlatt legislation. Look at that legislation from an independent standard, apart altogether from the Indian or European standpoint. Would you indicate briefly to me what the essence of your objection to the legislation is?

to which Gandhi replied,

> As I read the Rowlatt Committee's report and came to the end of it, and I saw the legislation that was fore-shadowed, I felt that it was…so restrictive of human liberty, that no self-respecting person or no self-respecting nation could allow such legislation to appear on its regular statute-book. When I saw the debates in the Legislative Council, I felt that the opposition against it was universal and when I found that agitation or that opposition flouted by the Government, I felt that for me, as a self-respecting individual, as a member of a vast Empire, there was no course left open but to resist that law to the utmost.[511]

On the one hand, self-respect is about a person and an individual, on the other, about a nation and member of an Empire. These two interpretations of "self-respect" are repeated throughout Gandhi's thought.

Gandhi felt that "self-respect" was coupled with the individual. For example, in a speech responding to the question "Are Asiatics and the Coloured Races a Menace to the Empire?" in 1908, at the age of 38, Gandhi deploys a number of different strategies in refuting the idea that coloured races were a menace,[512] ultimately culminating in a discussion of what appears to be universal rights which erase nationality and the indigenous—a discussion framed in terms of self-respect that defers "political rights":

> …sweep away the conditions under which British Indians are called upon to live, sweep away the condition that they cannot own a patch of land which they can call their own, that they cannot live, and move, and have their being on God's earth in South Africa with any degree of freedom, self-respect and manliness, and they will…respond to every real and reasonable call that can be made upon them by the white man; but I ask you to be patient with them just as you would be patient with any fellow-man. Treat him as a real, live human being, and you will have no such thing as the Indian question in the country…Whether he should have political rights or not is another question. I am not here today to discuss the political question at all. But there should be no two opinions as

[510] Gandhi, "Evidence before Disorders Inquiry Committee," 9 January 1920, *CWMG* vol 19: 216.
[511] Gandhi, "Disorders Committee," *CWMG* vol 19: 219-220.
[512] He first deploys the social: "In a well-ordered society industrious and intelligent men can never be a menace." [Gandhi, "Speech At YMCA, Johannesburg," 18 May 1908, CWMG vol 8: 319.] He continues by deploying the civilizational: the "fallacious maxims" of "western civilization" are "might is right" and "survival of the fittest," and lists "the difference between western and eastern civilization" as between "destructive" and "constructive," "centrifugal" and "centripetal," "disruptive" and "combin[ational]," "without a goal" and having "the goal before it," "tremendous activity" and "contemplativeness," and concludes here that "It is…necessary for these two civilizations to meet and we shall have a different force altogether, by no means a menacing force, by no means a force that disunites, but a force that unites…there is no difficulty whatsoever in [the] two civilizations meeting and meeting for a good purpose." [Gandhi, *CWMG* vol 8: 321.]

> to whether he may live freely without being restricted, move freely without being restricted, own land, or trade honestly.[513]

Freedom, "manliness," the ability to own, to trade, and to move without restriction are all mentioned in the same breath as "self-respect"—and distinguished from "political rights" and "the political question" by which we presume Gandhi means measures of Self-Rule. The "political question" of, self-rule, can be deferred.

Yet "self-respect" to Gandhi was also wed to the national. For example, Gandhi, recounting a story of a Japanese student who politely held his place in line to speak with a lawyer despite an English official's attempt to cut ahead, writes:

> This anecdote should be engraved on the mind of every Indian, for it gives an exact idea of our bond of slavery. The young Japanese did not allow his self-respect to be flouted. When every one in Japan, the rich as well as the poor, came to believe in self-respect, the country became free. She could give Russia a slap in the face, and today Japan's flag flies very high in the world. Though her people wear a yellow skin, Japan enjoys friendship with white England as between equals. In the same way we too need to feel the spirit of self-respect.[514]

The student's Japanese-ness is not an incidental characteristic; the student is identified by nationality, the person is simply one step on the journey to a high flying national flag and the anthropomorphized friendship between Japan and England. Moreover, the goal for Gandhi is not the material elimination of rich and poor within Japan; in fact, the persistence of rich and poor seems to be a given, an obstacle making the unified achievement of "self-respect" sound heroic and a real achievement. And there seems to be a mismatch between the labor of "every one in Japan" in manufacturing self-respect, and the finished product of freedom allocated to "the country." Japan, a free country, is expressed through *Japanese* self-respect. Furthermore, on the one hand, self-respect seems separate from and perhaps a precursor to self-rule.

This latter sense of self-respect, as inseparable from and synonymous with national self-rule, often took dramatically spiritualized articulations. For example, at a speech to students at a Government College in Dacca in 1925, Gandhi declares:

> My own position is that this Government in its nakedness is dominated by the spirit of Satan and if you want to be dominated by the spirit of God, if you want to establish the kingdom of heaven in India, if you want, that is to say, to establish what swaraj is in India, it is your bounden duty to leave these colleges and schools without any condition whatsoever. Because the instruction that you receive in these schools and colleges is not the instruction that will give you swaraj, this is not the instruction which a man ought to receive who desires freedom or liberty. It is a slave-owning state and do you imagine that a slave-owning state can possibly give you education in such a manner that you can break down the shackles that bind you in slavery? I have never yet known a slave-owner teaching his slave the price of freedom, the price of liberty. Wherever slaves have enfranchised themselves, they have done so in spite of the slave-owner….
>
> … You may get posts under the Government. You may become Deputy Magistrates and what not. But all these are badges not of our freedom but they are badges of our slavery. If you feel that you cannot tolerate this Government for one moment, honour demands, the self-respect of India demands, that you leave these colleges and schools tomorrow…[515]

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[513] Gandhi, *CWMG* vol 8: 323.
[514] Gandhi, "Will Indians Be Slaves" (original in Gujarati) in *CWMG* vol 6: 426-427.
[515] Gandhi, "Speech to Students, Dacca," 15 December 1920, CWMG vol 19; 105, 107.

The establishment of "swaraj in India," associated with "freedom," the elimination of "slavishness," and "the instruction which a man ought to receive"[516] is equated with what "the self-respect of India demands." In short, the distinction between "self-respect" and "self-rule" was erased rather than established by what we presume to be Gandhi's *svamān*.

I suggest that, while *svamān* could be grafted onto a national configuration like India, *cuya-mariyātai* would serve as a distinct feature that could critique the nation. EVR's claim to merely imitate Gandhi's project in the mid-1920s, as we saw above, hides the extent to which the Self-Respect Movement was attempting to establish its interpretation of the Gandhian present. Gandhian "self-respect" is not what EVR and other Non-Brahmins in South India meant by "self-respect." Their *cuya-mariyātai* had a quality of the external, rather than internal, about it. It was about the self in relationships, involved with but not bound to birth, part of a history of contest driven towards equality, founded on what was shared—those features which both divide and connect us, e.g. *mariyātai*. EVR was allying with Gandhi but not on Gandhi's terms. What EVR saw in Gandhi was a demand for self-respect that could be used to critique self-rule, a sense of self premised on an exteriority forged through relationships of equality rather than an interiority premised on birth that could give rise to senses of inferiority or superiority. It was a "self-respect" made possible only with the elimination of hunger, rather than a "self-respect" preferred to hunger's elimination. It was an effort to distinguish the material from the spiritual, to wrest "the political way" from the confines of Brahminism.

*Cuya-mariyātai* was EVR's effort to be a part of the Gandhian present of the 1920s, but to no avail. EVR's Self-Respect Movement, despite its best efforts, found itself distinct from—and necessarily distinct from—Gandhi and his demand for *swaraj*. For EVR and his fellow Non-Brahmins, the self of self-respect was analytically distinct from the self of self-rule. This analytic distinction was not present in Gandhi and his *svamān*. EVR's *cuya-mariyātai* and Gandhi's *svamān* provided different answers to the Non-Brahmin question asked earlier: "Birthright: Self-Rule or Self-Respect?" Gandhi would claim that, as a self-respecting Indian invested in the pride of his community, one's birthright was self-rule. EVR would claim that, as a human that was part of a material world shared with others, one's birthright was self-respect. Above, we have seen the ways in which such *cuya-mariyātai* was joined with the world through a nationally defined space contained by *swaraj,* e.g. by acts of comprehending a regional past and a political present in "India." Such joining of *cuya-mariyātai* exceeded this space; it had to

[516] We see "self-respect" repeatedly associated with "manliness." It is unclear what we are to do with this "manliness," especially given the temptation to see Gandhi's approach to politics as somehow effeminate. The idea of "self-respect and manliness" would recur throughout Gandhi—see Gandhi "Letter to 'The Star,' Johannesburg," 11 May 1907, CWMG vol. 6: 446. See also Gandhi, "Letter ot Private Secretary to General Smuts, Johannesburg," 8 August 1907, CWMG vol 7: 115, "I must say that there is hardly any defiance about the attitude, but complete resignation to the will of the Almighty, in whose name they have sworn not to surrender their manliness and self-respect, which, in their opinion, are seriously attacked by the Registration Act." See also Gandhi, " Johannesburg Letter," [From Gujarati] *Indian Opinion,* 14 September 1907, CWMG vol. 7: 202-203: "According to Mrs. Besant, all Indians, high and low, should learn wrestling and other physical exercises to train all parts of the body. All this will be possible only if we feel the urge of self-respect and cultivate a sense of manliness." Again, Gandhi, "The Punjab Students," 1 October 1919, CWMG vol 19: 5: "If education is to be bought at the price of manliness and self-respect, the price is too heavy. 'Man does not live by bread alone.' Self-respect and character are above means of livelihood or a career." Swaraj would also become associated with "manliness" further blurring the difference between self-respect and self-rule. E.g. "our goal, namely, swaraj, equality, manliness." Gandhi, "Swaraj in One Year," 22 September 1920, CWMG vol 20: 279. In Chapter 14, we will see sexuality and self-respect coupled to challenge Gandhi.

exceed such space given *cuya-mariyātai*'s critical valence concerned with broader acts of sharing and relating not so easily contained within a self-ruling self. The Non-Brahmin self-respecting self was not only critical of self-rule's nationalist self, but in fact, and necessarily, was forged through relationships outside the nation—an imagining of the human within a world-wide community rather than within India. It would be relationships and their externality, rather than birth and its internality, that defined both the content and form of *cuya-mariyātai* as an act of international comprehension.

## CHAPTER 9. THE INTERNATIONAL COMPREHENSION OF SELF-RESPECT: MISSION'S MASS & CANON'S INTERPRETATION

In attending to the redeployment of *mariyātai* as *cuya-mariyātai* by EVR and his fellow Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters in the 1920s, "self-respect" reveals itself as a markedly "Indian" concern. It was refigured from a long regional past and used to compete over the meaning of political life in a national present. Moreover, such an act of refiguration and competition was not only part of what was happening to *mariyātai*, but was in fact what *mariyātai* itself, in a naïve sense, *meant*: the term referred to a history of contest used against assertions of the heredity of kinship. For Self-Respecters, however, the purpose of such contest was not to appropriate the means of domination or the authority of *raj*, but to undo domination altogether—*cuya-mariyātai*, unlike certain interpretations and even "legal" uses of *mariyātai*, was about equality and positioned against hierarchy. Nonetheless, despite evidence from within, one may wonder about influence from without. That is to say, it may be all well and good that one can describe *cuya-mariyātai* as a robust way to comprehend a past and present of national interiority, but what about its capacity to comprehend international forces of exteriority?

In what follows, I extend a discussion of *cuya-mariyātai*'s power of comprehension from the local and national/regional to the elsewhere and international. I focus on two sorts of international forces moving from the outside-in. The first is Christian Mission. Against a concern that Christian "self-respect" was colonizing the minds of Non-Brahmins in the form of *cuya-mariyātai,* I show instead how Non-Brahmins and Missionaries were understood as equally wed to an engagement with, and struggle over, "self-respect" itself. The second is the canonical political theory of Europe. As with Mission, against a concern that European canonical texts were colonizing the minds of self-respecting Non-Brahmins, I argue instead that Non-Brahmins and certain thinkers of canonical political theory were understood as equally wed to an engagement with, and struggle over, "self-respect" itself. My arguments here, as elsewhere in this dissertation, do not rely upon some nationalist East vs. colonizing West binary, but rather attend to relationships of Subcontinental Political Theory—here, how Self-Respecters were able to forge concerns with self-respect through acts of comprehending international forces like Christian Mission and canonical political theory in order to further their critique of *swaraj*. The forging of these relationships draws us again to *mariyātai*, to the borders and frontiers that both join and divide, to thinking about how acts of comprehension come out of what happens in-between.

### MISSION

As in 1924, from 1932-1933 EVR was once again under surveillance by the British.[517] Unlike 1924, however, EVR was being watched because of his internationalism, not his nationalism. He had just returned from a nearly year-long "world tour" across Europe and Russia which was prompted by, and in turn further fueled, the interest of Self-Respecters in communism—a common theme in a world facing the Great Depression. As one report claims, "EV Ramaswami Naicker, No 114 of the Madras Political 'Who's Who,' who had hitherto confined himself to denouncing religious abuses, has returned from his visit to Moscow with pronounced Communist views."[518] Apart from this alleged shift from God to Economy, however, ambiguity was the most persistent feature of the British Raj's subsequent reactions to EVR's thought and movement during this period, with officials writing reports like "It seems to me that taking into consideration the cumulative effect of all the speeches [of EVR], it is probable that security may be demanded under section 108 under both sub clauses (a) and (b) but at the same time, I must confess there is an equal probability of coming to a contrary conclusion…"[519] The British Raj was just not clear on what to do with EVR and his critique of *swaraj* made in remarks like "The Government is not wanted; God is not wanted; Religion is not wanted; All these are only intended to deceive us and, therefore, we do not want them."[520] Were they to be dismissed as "a lot of incoherent and illogical thoughts,"[521] "almost hysterical outbursts of a very general nature"[522] that were "more or less common"[523] considered "utterly impracticable"[524] even by his audience? Or were they part of "his attacks on Royalty, his repeated allusions to the people of other countries getting rid of their Kings, and his remarks that the present government must be destroyed" that could fuse with statements claiming "that after settling with other classes their due share of seats and political rights after the reforms, they should all join together in their swaraj in their attempt to drive out the whitemen" and thus constituting seditious "plain incitements to violence" and part of "wide-spread deterioration of the relations between different classes of his Majesty's subjects, coupled with hatred and contempt of the Government by law established"?[525]

By June 1933, EVR was in jail regardless—not because of any consensus regarding the meaning of his propaganda but through the perseverance of his upset creditors. As the British noted, "considerable debts were incurred for the purchase of paper, type, etc.," in order for EVR

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[517] "The Self Respect Movement in Tamil Nad," 1739/C, SF, Strictly Confidential, From the Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, 10 June 1932, *Under Secretary Safe Files #839*, TNS Archives.
[518] AF Buckeley, "Strictly Confidential: Spl Br, CID, No 1085C," 11 May 1933. *Under Secretary Safe Files #839*, TNS Archives.
[519] "Copy of a letter dated 4-4-1933 from the Public Prosecutor and Government Pleader, Coimbatore, to the District Magistrate, Coimbatore," *Under Secretary Safe Files #839*, TNS Archives.
[520] P. Venkataramanam, "Strictly Confidential: No. 45—Opinion, Memorandum No. 171-s, dated 26 April 1933, Public Department," 9 May 1933. *Under Secretary Safe Files #839*, TNS Archives.
[521] "Copy of the opinion of the Public Prosecutor of Ramnad at Madura dated the 5th April 1933," *Under Secretary Safe Files #839*, TNS Archives.
[522] P. Venkataramanam, "Strictly Confidential: No. 45—Opinion, Memorandum No. 171-s, dated 26 April 1933, Public Department," 9 May 1933. *Under Secretary Safe Files #839*, TNS Archives.
[523] Copy of a letter dated 4-4-1933 from the Public Prosecutor and Government Pleader, Coimbatore, to the District Magistrate, Coimbatore, *Under Secretary Safe Files #839*, TNS Archives.
[524] Co. No 83/33, TO Chief Secretary to Government, Public Department, Fort St George, Madras, FROM J Gray Esq., OBE, ICS, District Magistrate of Ramnad, 7 April 1933. *Under Secretary Safe Files #839*, TNS Archives.
[525] AF Buckeley, "Strictly Confidential: Spl Br, CID, No 1085C," 11 May 1933. *Under Secretary Safe Files #839*, TNS Archives.

to spread his propaganda over the years, and despite the duration of EVR's travels abroad, the debts, his creditors, and several civil suits were waiting for him upon his return.[526]

We will return to the Self-Respect embrace of Communism in the next Part. For our purposes here, EVR's speeches recorded by the British during this period—against God and Government—draw our attention, perhaps surprisingly, to the prominent presence of Christian Mission, not only in the mind of EVR but evidently in the minds of his audiences. General remarks about missionaries are, of course, not uncommon in the scholarship on South India in general or the Self-Respect Movement in particular.[527] But these speeches go further, showing the concrete importance on EVR's thought and movement of the London Missionary Society's [LMS] head station in the city of Erode, EVR's hometown and headquarters of the Self-Respect Movement. The LMS and the members of his Erode head station are offered here as a concrete point of contact between the thought and movement of Self-Respect and Christian Mission. What we find in these acts of relating, once again, are various efforts to define "self-respect." As before, EVR's thought and movement of Self-Respect remained intent on *cuya-mariyātai* being non-synonymous with, and thereby providing a vantage point from which to critique, the demand for *swaraj*. Members of the LMS, I will argue, saw the idea of "self-respect" in ways similar to Gandhi's view: as simply an ancillary feature of a broader schema of "indigeneity" of which *swaraj* was an integral part.

Two of EVR's speeches following his return from abroad, diligently recorded in shorthand and subsequently translated by V. Doraiswamiyar, Acting Tamil Translator to Government, make references to a "Reverend Bruff" and a "Rev. Proof," respectively. In these references, EVR is discussing the relationship between Christian Mission and Communism, forces related to God and the Economy, with his audiences: both in Erode and in Mayavarum,[528] 173 miles east of Erode, about 18 miles north-west from Tranquebar. His purpose, consonant with *cuya-mariyātai,* is the critique of the priority of *swaraj* and the troubling of the Colonizer/Colonized binary through more radical appeals to justice, now heavily inflected with concerns over labor and capitalism. As he says, "What is the use of doing away with the existing Government and introducing Rama's Government [e.g. the 'Rama Raj' of Gandhi's Congress thought equivalent to *Swaraj*] if the labourers are subjected to hardships as of old?" and "Our effort concerns all people who are undergoing hardships. We do not care whether they are Indian or Europeans."[529] Here is EVR at Mayavaram speaking to 300 people on 7 February 1933:

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[526] Strictly Confidential No. 1222C, TO: DH Elwin, ICS, Under Secretary of Government, Stonehouse Hill, FROM: Office of the Deputy Insprect General of Police, Railways and CID, Mylapore, Madras, 20 June 1933. *Under Secretary Safe Files #839*, TNS Archives.

[527] Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: the Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Eugene F. Irschick, *Tamil Revivalism in the 1930s* (Madras: Cre-A, 1986); Eugene F. Irschick, *Dialogue and History: Constructing South India, 1795-1895* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[528] Current day Mayiladuthurai.

[529] "On the evening of 7-2-33 between 6:45 and 8:20 pm, a public meeting was held on the sands of the Cauvery River, Mayavaram, when an address of welcome was read in Tamil and presented to EV Ramasami Naicker of Erode by one Natarajan of Mayavaram on behalf of the Self-Respect Association, Mayavaram. Kalyanasundaram, Proprietor, Khaddar Depot, Mayavaram, took the chair. The Chairman and Messrs. Natarajan, Chidambaranar, Gurusamy, and EV Ramasamy Naicker addressed the meeting in Tamil. About 300 person were present." Strictly Confidential, No. 400C SF, From the Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, Dated: 21 February 1933, *Under Secretary Safe Files #839-A*, TNS Archives.

> This kind of spirit has now spread throughout the world. The wise will admit that the cruelty of the rich, the iniquity of the capitalists and the arrogance of the high caste people are ruining mankind….The Christian "Pope" issued a circular in the month of June. He has stated: "Do not be sorry that atheistic propaganda is being carried on in the country; because it is carried on account of the iniquity perpetrated by the capitalists. We should first of all get rid of only the domination of the capitalists." Missionaries too are only saying that this hardship of the poor should be got rid of. But they say at the same time that there is God for everything. "Reverend Bruff" had come to Erode. He has been there for 32 years. He has considerable influence. He said: "We cannot bear the sight of the suffering of the people. Protection has been afforded to the capitalists everywhere. But I do not admit that it is only God that is responsible for it." Even missionaries say that it is only the capitalist that is responsible for the hardships of the poor people. This view has been expressed by all religious heads. They have stated that God is not responsible for the hardships suffered by the poor and that they are due only to the iniquities perpetrated by the capitalists.

EVR is unsure about the value of the theistic investments of missionaries. However, he is sure about the value of their investments in capitalism's elimination. Alongside the Pope, the "Reverend Bruff" of Erode, a man of considerable influence, is provided as evidence to the audience in distant Mayavaram of the social justice investments of Mission—despite God—in which EVR's Self-Respect Movement shares.

We should not be surprised, then, if the same man is mentioned in Erode itself. This time, "Rev. Proof"—evidently a variant on V. Doraiswamiyar's transliteration of "Reverend Bruff"—appears as a figure very familiar to his audience. Here is EVR at Erode a week earlier, on 31 January 1933:

> There is no person who can say that it is a mistake to introduce "Socialism" in India. The Moderates are saying that "Communism" may be tantamount to atheism. In Europe, it is only the Missionaries that are opposed to "Communism." In every place it is the Missionaries that are raising a cry. The Missionaries have begun to say that "Communism" should be avoided and that "Socialism" may be adopted and followed. In our place, a youth's association was formed last month, "Rev. Proof" presided there[]. In his speech, he stated that (one) should work for the poor, that (one) should work for the principle of equality and that, as the iniquities perpetrated by the capitalists in the country have increased, (one) should work for the principle of equality in order to remedy them. He said clearly: "I am a socialist." But he stated that he was a believer in God. They have come down to say so much. Even last week, I quoted the views of certain newspapers. Newspapers too have sanctioned (the introduction of) "Socialism." "Communism" has entered even "Spain." The feelings of the people are undergoing a change in several respects. We need not be afraid of saying that we want "Communism."[530]

One again, "Rev. Proof" is cited as representative of Mission's relationship to Communism—agreeing on issues of social justice but disagreeing on atheism. What is clear is that this Reverend Bruff/Proof has been a missionary in Erode for over thirty-years, is prominent in the area, and thus is someone of whom EVR is well aware and in terms of whom he even positions his own views. Such positioning is, presumably, illuminating for his audience.

[530] "Transcription of the speech of EV Ramasami Naicker made at Erode on 19-1-1933 at 6 PM. Ratnasabapathy was the President. Audience was about 100." Strictly Confidential 225C, From the Special Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, Dated: 31 January 1933, Under Secretary Safe Files #839-A. TNS Archives.

These transliterations "Bruff" and "Proof" were various transliterations of the name "Brough." A.W. Brough was the senior and leading figure at the London Missionary Society head station at Erode. One may wonder if EVR's interactions with the evidently influential LMS presence in his own hometown, and headquarters to the Self-Respect Movement, could have any relationship to the articulation of *cuya-mariyātai*. I suggest it does, despite it being absent in related scholarship, and provides an example of the ways in which the coupling of "self-respect" and *cuya-mariyātai* was launched intercontinentally.

### *SELF OF THREE, MOVEMENT OF MASS*

By the early 20th century, the London Missionary Society in Erode, like all other missionary organizations, was bound to an idea: the "indigenous." Such binding was the product of the constraints facing mission during the latter half of the 19th century. By the 1860s, Europeans began to feel that the world was simply too big to be saved by Christ through the efforts of Europeans alone. Europeans could not administer every church, finance every congregation, and preach the gospel to every corner in the world. Churches elsewhere needed to be able to go on themselves, to be autonomous and sovereign, to be "indigenous" rather than European, in order to ensure the possibility of global salvation. To articulate the idea of "indigenous" Christianity after the necessary European "euthanasia of Mission," two men in the 1860s, Henry Venn (1796-1873) and Rufus Anderson (1796-1880), independently developed what came to be known as the "three selves formula" to define the attributes of an "indigenous" church: self-government, self-support, and self-propagation.

This "three selves formula" would have massive world-wide impact, providing an on-the-ground way of theoretically engaging issues of "independence" more generally. For example, this formula structured the concerns at the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 where contemporary discussions about "world" Christianity were first framed, and the only Christian denomination in China tolerated by the Communist Party is called the "Three Self Church."[531] Unlike prevalent studies of "sovereignty" or "autonomy" that rely on sophisticated intellectual articulations, "the three selves formula" was broadcast to the masses, to the congregations on the ground all around the world relatively simultaneously, as desirable, as goal, as purpose, as well as in and of itself a means to a more glorious end.

These prominent concerns over the euthanasia of mission and the need to create indigenous churches, where the indigenous defined and was defined by the self of the three selves formula, likewise featured prominently within the concerns of members of the LMS at Erode. From the Rev. Herbert Arthur Popley, a figure who repeatedly featured in interactions between EVR and the LMS at Erode, writing in March 1905 of his concern that "the church will pass from the state of dependence and tutelage to that of independence and self-government"[532] to that of Rev. AW Brough in May 1921 concerned with "the way of self-support and self-government" among local congregations, correspondence to London's LMS headquarters from Erode was saturated with the idea of creating indigenous churches defined by the three-selves formula in anticipation of the euthanasia of mission.

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[531] See Brian Stanley, "The Church of the Three Selves: A Perspective from the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910" in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol. 36, No. 3, September 2008, pp. 435 –451.

[532] Popley to Thompson, Erode, 8 March 1905. CWM/LMS South India—Tamil—Incoming Correspondence Box 23 (1905-1908), SOAS Archives.

Erode was not just a place where missionaries were concerned with the indigenous autonomy of *Christianity* captured in the language of the three-selves formula—it was also an exciting place to be in the early years of Gandhi's *nationalist* demands for indigenous autonomy. Ms. Jessie W. Inglis of the LMS at Erode writes of the town "as the place where the Ali brothers made their famous speech about Afghanistan," a speech that had given the town "a bad name" and placed it "in the public eye, even mentioned in the H[ouse] of Commons" for having a politically "lively culture with a strong non-coop[eration] party."[533] Miss Inglis, upon returning to Erode after being evacuated in the wake of the Moplah Rebellion that same year, writes: "Since we came back we've had Gandhi in Erode—which is a great center for all seditions of his."[534] The British would agree. Erode in the 1920s was an exciting place to be, filled with important speeches, a lively political culture including sedition, and parallel efforts, by missionaries and nationalists alike, to create "self-government" where the "self" was defined in terms of indigeneity.

But this three-selves self defined by indigeneity in terms of government (politics), support (economics), and propagation (reproduction) was not terribly related to individual conversion. Instead, this self of concern to mission was bound to mass movement. Such mass, in turn, referred not only to a numerical many but "the masses" of low social status. It was the compounding of this three-selves self and the mass of mass movement that enabled the achievement of indigeneity in the construction of "the national," e.g. "the people" or the numerically many of low social status. Yet this compounding could also corrode indigeneity's claim, providing a sense of self that could in fact challenge "the people's" low social status and invite a turn to "non-indigenous" and "international" spaces for justification, invocation, or comparison. Such compounding, of self with a national mass, and corroding, of mass against the low status of naitonal selves, was evident in the Erode of the LMS.

The members of Erode's LMS were particularly concerned with the creation of indigenous churches through various mass movements in the region. Such mass movements, we would imagine, had a similar dynamic to the ones outside of Tranquebar which we saw above: a blurring of political and religious concerns, not because of the blurring of clearly demarcated fields called "politics" and "religion," but because efforts to increase the number of adherents around a set of beliefs was simply the very structure of mass movement itself. The increasing size of adherents to the message of the LMS meant expansion, and thus increasing prominence in the region. Such mass movements indicate that the LMS could not have been ignored by anyone in Erode, including Self-Respecters. The LMS was growing fast. In 1912, apparently before such "mass movement," Brough writes:

> In the Erode town the LMS has a large Christian Community—and Eight Schools, and within a radius of three miles they have six other schools and some Christian communities. They also have two Boarding Homes, an Industrial School, a large Zenana work, and a hospital in course of construction. In the Erode taluq we have a large Christian Community of about 2000 and more than 50 schools.[535]

Less than a decade later, in 1921, Brough writes of Erode as a "mass movement area" "with more than 10,000 Christians, with 91 schools, more than a 100 congregations, with over 800

[533] Inglis to Lenwood, 30 November 1921, LMS Box 27(1920-1923), Folder 2 (1921). SOAS Archives.
[534] Inglis to Lenwood, 29 July 1921, LMS Box 27(1920-1923), Folder 2 (1921). SOAS Archives.
[535] Brough to Thompson, 17 April 1912. CWM/LMS, South India, Tamil, Incoming Correspondence, Box 25 (1912-1914) 1912 - Jacket A. SOAS.

acres of land, and the prospect of 2000 or 3000 more on which to settle the people, with weaving communities developing and the demand for a modern weaving school, with a number of Co-Operative Banks, with a Hostel and Boarding Homes" all administered by the LMS, in addition to the hospital, industrial school, etc., listed in 1912.[536]

In addition to the administrative responsibilities of LMS Missionaries required by such spheres of activities—responsibilities which Brough divides into "educational work" "ranging from the lower elementary to the High Schools," "evangelistic work," "Vocational and Industrial work," "women's work" and the work of overseeing "Cooperative Banking, Boarding Homes and Hostels"—Brough also emphasizes the importance of "time to devote to civic duties." As an example of the sort of "civic duties" he has in mind, Brough writes: "Personally, I do not think I did a better piece of Mission work last year than when as President of the [Erode] Taluq Board. I put down 50 wells for the outcaste community. It probably is a record for any Taluq Board in well-building, but had I had more time, I could have done more."

This combination of activities, both missionary and municipal, made the LMS, and by extension Erode itself, stronger. In 1924, discussing the LMS High School at Erode, Brough writes:

> Erode being a large commercial centre, most of the non-Brahmin, Hindu and Muhamadan [sic] communities occupying the surrounding country have considerable business interest here. Their children receive education largely in our High School.
>
> The extensive Evangelistic work that is being done in the outlying Panchama [Untouchable] villages is directed and controlled from Erode. The non-Christians have therefore learnt to look upon Erode as a great centre for Christian Missionary effort and the Erode Church has come to be recognised as an important factor in the life of the town.
>
> A Christian High School imparting religious instruction and permeating the life of the town with Christian Principles has become not merely a valuable adjunct to direct Evangelistic work but an indispensable necessity.[537]

The LMS was a fairly powerful force in Erode, a town which not only was host to the large mass movement apparatus of the LMS but which in fact was a town whose very government was occasionally administered by members of the LMS itself. Given that Brough was a President of the Erode Taluq Board, we shouldn't be surprised that he and EVR ran in the same circles—EVR too had served as President.

Brough felt strongly about mass movement, and felt strongly that mass movement gave the London Missionary Society Headquarters in London good reason to continue funding its station in Erode. Unsurprisingly, he uses the language of the three-selves formula in order to articulate its promise and importance. He writes,

> May I here remark that I believe strongly in mass movements, and hold that we should press our opportunity to the utmost. I have no sympathy with the cry of "holding back" or of "marking time." In the Kingdom of God there can be no such attitude. The "mass movement" is surely the command of God to go in and possess the land. To my mind it is a wrong and fatal policy to starve a "mass movement." If necessary, sacrifice areas in which there is no decided movement in order

[536] Brough to Lenwood, 10 May 1921 [on Furlough, Sydney, Australia], CWM/LMS, South India, Tamil, Incoming Correspondence, Box 27 (1920-1923), Folder #2 (1921), SOAS.

[537] LMS—Minutes of a Meeting of the South India Central Committee, held at Salem, January 15th to 23rd, 1924, "Erode Local Committee Minutes," 34. CWM [LMS] South India, Tamil, Incoming Correspondence, Box 28 (1924-1925) Folder 1 (Jan-June 1924), SOAS.

> that the Church may be established in the mass movement area and become self-supporting and self-propagating, ultimately, spreading out into those areas which at present seem to be barren.[538]

Erode was an active center of mass movement, and Brough of the LMS felt strongly about such mass movement.

Christian Mission itself was mesmerized and bewildered by mass movement in India. We have already seen the Lutheran Rhenius follow the "instructions contained in Dr. Pickett's classic volume on *The Christian Mass Movement of India,*" published in 1933,[539] as he toured the villages of the Kumbakonam, Nannilam, and Papanasam Taluks neighboring Tranquebar in December 1938. A different approach to appreciating the power of mass movement in India to the systematic study of Pickett's can be found in the *Mass Movement Quarterly* [*MMQ*], "The organ of the Mass Movement Commission of the Church Missionary Society in India," which was created "to enquire into the needs, possibilities, and problems of the Mass Movement work throughout India."[540] The first issue in October 1917—coincidentally or not, during the "Red October" of the Bolshevik Revolution—contained some programmatic claims for the journal which ran under the same title until December 1947 when, given India's independence, it changed its name to the softer and less militant title *Our Growing Church*.[541] The journal envisioned India as participating in a world-wide phenomenon.

What were these mass movements? According to the *MMQ*:

> Obviously, the movements of a mass—the movement of masses of people out of the darkness of the primitive religions into the light and liberty of the Church of Christ. Such movements are now going on in India, Africa, and other parts of the world, and are perhaps the most outstanding of mission-field phenomena. And who can say what they may not portend for the future history of the whole human race? Here we shall confine our attention to the movements in India.[542]

Just what was the "mass" of this "phenomena" of mass movement? An early article of the *MMQ* first suggests that the mass is not a numerical many but a social low; it is not an issue of counting but of class or caste.

> They are "the masses," to use a term not heard now-a-days—the lowest stratum of society—the very poorest and most down-and-out of India's three hundred and twenty millions. And yet among the most indispensable of her people. They are those who produce the food of the vegetarian higher classes, and perform other useful, if humble, offices…[543]

It was "the lowest stratum of society" that constituted "the masses." Number is not incidental here, but it a consequence of being "the masses" that "the masses" may happen to be many.

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[538] Brough to Lenwood, 10 May 1921 [on Furlough, Sydney, Australia], CWM/LMS, South India,Tamil, Incoming Correspondence, Box 27 (1920-1923), Folder #2 (1921), SOAS.
[539] J. Waskom Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India: A Study with Recommendations* (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1933).
[540] *CMS Mass Movement Quarterly* Vol 1, No. 1, October 1917: 5. University of Birmingham Archives, UK.
[541] After 1947, India's recent independence demanded a reimagining of evangelization and the name of the journal; the militant-sounding *Mass Movement Quarterly* [*MMQ*] subsequently become a softer, more organic *The Growing Church*.
[542] N.A., "Mass Movements", *MMQ* 4:17 (May 1922): 1
[543] N.A., "Mass Movements", *MMQ* 4:17 (May 1922): 1-2.

They are the "indispensable," the "useful," those who "produce" and yet are "the very poorest and most down-and-out."

That very same article, however, continues to suggest that, in fact, it is being numerical many, and not socially low, that gives the name "mass" to "mass movement."

> These are the people whose coming into the Church in companies—families, or groups of families, or whole villages, at a time—constitutes Mass Movements. Because they come in en masse, not because they belong to the "masses," that name has been given to the movement. They are generally called Outcastes.[544]

Now it is countability, and not class or caste, that is given primacy. These are a people who, because they move "en masse," gave the name "mass" to "mass movement." The fact that they are called "Outcastes" seems almost incidental now.

At one level, this article is part of a larger schizophrenia within Mission's drive for conversion. Mission wished to be seen as, and to see itself as, concerned with the souls of the forsaken and not with increases in statistics. And yet, Mission's strength rose when it dramatically increased its numbers, which were not necessarily linked to the souls of the dramatically forsaken. It was, perhaps, a happy coincidence that the masses moved en masse, and where the issue of coincidence arose—such as in this article—there were incoherent efforts to couple and uncouple the two. Yet, at another level, this article's schizophrenic quality indicates a much larger issue with the relationship between the three-selves and mass movement. The three-selves purported to capture indigeneity. Was the indigenous synonymous with the moving masses? Did a numerical mass combine government, support, or propagation with an indigenous self? Or did a low status mass combine government, support, or propagation with an indigenous self? The question, of course, might not arise if the two continued to be *coincidental*. But was the en masse mass's movement *essentially* synonymous with the self of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation?

As suggested in the correspondence we saw from Erode, the *MMQ* may have likewise suggested that mass movement was, coupled with the language of the three-selves formula. Yet the self of the three selves—self-government, self-support, and self-propagation—did not, and perhaps could not, exhaust the sorts of selves relevant to mass movement. There was also a self of something called "self-respect," a self that had an ambiguous relationship to indigeneity at best. As the Bishop of Travancore and Cochin in South India as well as the Chairman of the CMS Mass Movement Commission, CH Gill, writes for the *MMQ* in 1920:

> But when a flock has been gathered in, how much there is to do for them within the Church. Even though they may have been brought into spiritual touch with Christ, they are not at once made perfect. They have emerged from degradation; they have renounced all the ways of heathenism; they have surrendered their charms and ornaments, symbols of their former animistic belief; they have had the top-knot shaved from their heads; they have often been given Christian names and have abandoned their old ones; their bodies are now washed with pure water; their clothing, though scanty, is clear; a proper self-respect has taken the place of a cringing servility; a light of intelligence and spiritual consciousness is manifest on their faces; they are new creations in Christ Jesus. All this is true, but yet how much remains to be done. That is only the beginning.[545]

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[544] N.A., "Mass Movements", *MMQ* 4:17 (May 1922): 1-2.
[545] Bishop Charles Hope Gill, "The Beginning of a Magnificent Enterprise," *MMQ* 3:13 (October 1920): 2.

Mass movement on Gill's account here is not the end of Mission as an agent of conversion, but the beginning. This beginning marks Mission's role in the formation of something called "self-respect" among the converts. The question was, then, how did the self of self-respect relate to self-government, self-support, and self-propagation? That is to ask, how does "self-respect" relate to the three selves that seem folded into the nationalist, e.g. indigenous, self that equally formed the basis of the demand for *swaraj*?

### *ANOTHER SELF*

By the early 1900s, missionaries engaged in conversion all over the world were concerned with another self: the self of self-respect. The questions being asked revolved around how self-respect related to the idea of indigeneity or nationality grounded in the three-selves formula. One missionary in China suggested that "Christian civilization" would boost qualities like "self-respect", "moral character" and "social progress" without erasing nationality.[546] Another missionary, however, suggested "self-respect" incompatible with certain nationalities: "Nowhere could I learn of a Persian equivalent for the English term *self-respect*. Even the quality for which it stands is largely lacking from the Persian character."[547] Yet another missionary identified self-respect with the assertion of nationality, speaking of "the Zulu…awakening to a new…sense of power, of self-direction, of self-respect, of purpose to play his part in the theatre of the world's life…in the political developments that are going on around him."[548] Often, self-respect was contingent upon treatment, of how one treated others or oneself—especially when it came to financial support. On the one hand, Timothy Tingfang Lew, President of the Chinese Student's Christian Association in North America, writes in 1917 that "the greatest enemy of missionary efficiency" is providing patronizing financial assistance "which hurts the self-respect of the receiver," suggesting "self-respect" is a quality inherent which can be injured.[549] On the other hand, one missionary from South Dakota claims that only those who refuse financial assistance, and actively engage in self-support, can actually possess

[546] For example, a missionary at the 1907 China Centenary Missionary Conference declared the need "to show to the nations…what Christian civilization really means", namely, "the development among men of all grades of society of…moral character, wholesome family life and good citizenship, self-control, self-respect and self-sacrifice, prudence, intelligence and healthy ambition, mutual trustfulness, sound public opinion, and social progress." Rev. Arnold Foster, "Report of Committee On Memorials," *China Centenary Missionary Conference Records: Report of the Great Conference 1907* (Shanghai/New York: American Tract Society, 1907): 370.

[547] For example, a missionary from the Middle-East in 1912 wrote that "Nowhere could I learn of a Persian equivalent for the English term *self-respect*. Even the quality for which it stands is largely lacking from the Persian character." Rev H.C. Schuler, "Persia's Plight and Plea,", *The Missionary Review of the World* vol XXV New Series, (January to December 1912): 184.

[548] One missionary claims in 1901 that "the Zulu…seem to be awakening to a new and stimulating sense of power, of self-direction, of self-respect, of purpose to lay his part on the theater of the world's life, and assert for himself a permanent and honorable place in the political developments that are going on around him."Rev. Judson Smith, "Annual Survey of the Work of the American Board, 1900-1901," *The Missionary Herald: Containing the Proceedings of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions with a View of Other Benevolent Operations for the Year 1901*, vol XCVII: 456.

[549] Timothy Tingfang Lew, President of the Chinese Student's Christian Association in North America, writes in 1917: "the greatest enemy of missionary efficiency is this patronizing attitude which hurts the self-respect of the receiver with an unnecessary sense of humiliation and taints the giver's fruit with the impurity of pride".Timothy Tingfang Lew, "Chinese Students in America: How Can They be Won for Christ?," *The Missionary Review of the World* vol XXX New Series (January to December 1917): 443.

"self-respect."[550] In short, from China to South Dakota, from Persia to Africa, missionaries deployed different, and often times contradictory, notions of self-respect. Given the backdrop of conversion to Mission in the early 1900s, one must attend carefully to how self-respect relates to the indigeneity put in play by the three-selves formula. Does conversion graft self-respect onto the indigenous or replace the indigenous with self-respect? Is self-respect inherent in every human, or does it depend on particular forms of indigeneity, or perhaps on actions regardless of indigeneity relating to other three-selves characteristics, like self-support?

Such questions regarding "self-respect" were on the minds of the LMS missionaries in Erode. These questions are evident during the early years of the Self-Respect Movement in encounters with the LMS headstation that shared Erode. The first direct appearance of EVR in correspondence from Erode was in 1931, in the wake of a cholera outbreak in the LMS's Erode Boarding School. EVR's newspaper, *Kuṭi Aracu*, was none too pleased.[551] EVR subsequently appears in a letter from WTM Clewes, an LMS missionary at Erode, regarding a particularly prominent malcontent from Erode, named P. John, who in early 1931

> has been organising mass meetings amongst our people under the guise of [the] self-respect movement, and this week he had Ramaswamy Naiker [EVR] speaking to a large meeting. I went to the same assembly later, and told them that we should welcome any effort they made towards self-support, and that this would be the first step to self-respect; also that when they began to make substantial contribution to the work we were doing they would have no difficulty in getting adequate representation in our committees. I pointed out that they had representation now through the Church Councils if only they would take a real live interest in the church affairs, but that since they would not even pay the expenses of representatives to the Councils they could not blame anyone but themselves if they were not represented. Many of them saw the force of my reasoning. But we must be patient, {*hand-written*} *and very tactful*.[552]

Here we have an example in which a self of the three-selves formula which defined indigenous church autonomy—"self-support"—is understood as a prerequisite to self-respect, in apparent contrast to both (1) the priority of *cuya-mariyātai* which defined the Self-Respect Movement in its *critique* of related articulations of autonomy, such as *swaraj*, and (2) apparently what the members of the Self-Respect Movement at this meeting believed, as they seemed far more interested in using "self-respect" to critique the church from the outside than in paying representative's expenses.

Unfortunately, though we know Clewes spoke Tamil—he was reading *Kuṭi Aracu* after all—we do not know how Clewes communicated his idea of "self-respect" to his audience. We would suspect that he used the term *cuya-mariyātai*, mimicking the term's prevalence in *Kuṭi Aracu*. But even given his competence in *reading*, we cannot be so sure what he *said* to his

[550] One missionary writes from South Dakota in 1901: "The church that is content to ask for aid for a score of years, and makes little or no effort to care for itself, and help others, is lacking in self-respect, and is likely to forfeit the respect of its helpers" and therefore "Self-respect is as desirable and necessary as self-support".Rev. TM Shanafelt, "Self-Support," *The Baptist Home Mission Monthly,* vol. XXIII, No 12 (December 1901): 348.

[551] Clewes to Phillips, 14 December 1930, LMS, Box#33 (1931-1932 i), Folder "WTM Clewes," SOAS. Clewes attaches an article from *Kuṭi Aracu,* upon which he writes "Ramaswamy Naikar's Paper," signed by "Spy" [*spai*] which concludes with suspicion in discussing the Erode Boarding School Tragedy, "On another doctors' authority they say it may have been poison [*visham*]. No doubt."

[552] Clewes to Phillips, 29 January 1931 (Erode), LMS, Box#33 (1931-1932 i), Folder "WTM Clewes," SOAS.

audience.[553] While we are not sure of how Clewes communicated "self-respect" to his Tamil-speaking audience, we are on surer footing in exploring what Clewes may have meant by "self-respect." We see above that the "self" of "self-respect" requires the "self" of "self-support" in the three-selves formula: self-support is the surest way to self-respect. The idea that there may need to be some prior changes to the self—perhaps along the formula of the three-selves—is contained in other correspondence from Clewes. For example, writing of Erode's mass movement in 1927:

> …our village congregations seem to be in a sort of settlement, apart from the main village...veritable hives of filth, disease, ignorance, and superstition...
> …
> The reason our congregations are found in these settlements of backward peoples is because the mass-movement[554] towards Christianity in India has hitherto been chiefly among these castes...the task of uplifting them and bringing them along the road to freedom and self-respect is stupendous.[555]

Self-respect here is coupled with freedom. But what does Clewes mean by "freedom" and the coupling of "freedom" with "self-respect"? The achievement of self-respect and freedom requires something else first: uplift. And uplift requires the elimination of filth, disease, ignorance, and superstition. It is certainly true, as we have seen, that the Self-Respect Movement couples *viṭutalai* (freedom), *cuya-mariyātai* (self-respect), and the elimination of utter destitution through the removal of qualities like filth, disease, ignorance, and superstition. In fact, these phrases from Clewes sound like lines directly out of the Self-Respect Movement's playbook—which gives us good reason to see a shared conceptual approach to "self-respect."

One of the clear differences between the Self-Respect Movement's *cuya-mariyātai* and WTM Clewes's "self-respect" would be the emphasis on "Christianity." If his wife's sentiments reflect at all upon his own, then it is important to note that Edna Clewes suggests that conversion to Christianity and self-respect are closely linked, with the latter following automatically from the former:

> What a difference it makes when the people become Christians! There is no magic change, but slowly and surely they are lifted up—lifted out of their gloom of ignorance and superstition and despair. They became cleaner, more self-respecting and kindlier...many of them develop into men and women of character and ability who are a real strength to...their community.[556]

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[553] Such a question of language competence is no small feature; it in fact was a concernal concern and often featured in leveraging remarks to one another and Home. For example, Miss Inglis, another missionary at Erode, writes of Clewes's ability to *speak* in Tamil later that year: "Mr Clewes's Tamil is an insufferable barrier to his taking up the Community School work and I am surprised that he should ever have thought of it. You of course would have no idea how bad he is. It is not that he has not done his best—he has worked really gallantly at it and if honest work and determination could make a man a linguist he would be one. He is not so bad when he has time to set down and write out what he has to say, but ordinary conversation and an ordinary address are perfectly painful to listen to. He has many fine gifts and is a most capable man but it will be forever beyond him to teach any one in a foreign language. I write frankly because we all feel it would be a fatal mistake to put him in the Community School..." Inglis to Phillips, 16 March 1931.

[554] For more on the "mass movement" of the period, see Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India* (1933).

[555] Clewes to Friends, "Erode, S.India, 1927", p 1, LMS Box 29 (1926-1927), Folder 4 (1927), SOAS.

[556] Edna Clewes to Friends, September 1925 (Erode) LMS, Box 28 (1924-1925), Folder 4 (1925), SOAS.

The language of "uplift" is shared between Edna and WTM Clewes. But it seems ambiguous whether the indigenous self of the three-selves formula—self-government, self-support, and self-propagation—is constitutive of the "uplift" that leads to "self-respect" or not. Though we have seen WTM Clewes presume a "representative" self that could achieve self-support, gesturing towards a communal, indigenous self to ground autonomy, it still remains unclear, given their overlapping concern with the elimination of destitution, whether or not LMS "self-respect" serves the same role as EVR's *cuya-mariyātai*.

I claim that there is stronger evidence to suggest that not only were the LMS and EVR engaged in conversation about "self-respect" as central to, while outside of, the three-selves, but that such engagement resulted in disagreement. That is to say, though the encounter between LMS and EVR occurred within the shared tradition of Subcontinental political theory, such sharing did not automatically produce consensus—it could not. The LMS conflates the self of self-respect with the self of the three-selves, e.g. an indigenous, proto-national self. EVR, on the other hand, is more concerned with a self of self-respect that can remain critical of the indigeneity of the three-selves, particularly the self of self-government or self-rule.

To appreciate such engagement, however, is to see the coupling of both hope and rejection to a figure that in the 1910s and 1920s had galvanized in South India as a distinct self—the Non-Brahmin. To anticipate: as we know, the great push from the members of the LMS at Erode, as was the case for all mission since the three-selves formula became the name of the game, was towards an indigenous church. By the mid-1920s, this push was not just for any articulation of the indigenous, however, but for *the Non-Brahmin*. However, EVR's "Self-Respect Movement" launched from Erode in 1925 suggests that the Non-Brahmin was not interested in such indigeneity—where indigeneity defined and was defined by self-government, self-support, and self-propagation—but was instead interested in *cuya-mariyātai*. We are thus invited, once again, to see the Self-Respect Movement's power of comprehension, to appropriate yet contest the terms of concern. Mission "self-respect" would mean something similar to, yet distinct from, *cuya-mariyātai*. Where Christianity was hoping to fuse an indigenous Indian nationalist self with Christianity through the Non-Brahmin at Erode, the Non-Brahmin was interested neither in such Indian nationalism nor Christianity. They were interested, however, in the possibilities of Missionary "self-respect" as a sort of self not captured within the three-selves formula. In a word, I argue that Mission sought the Non-Brahmin for Christ's indigenous reproduction, while EVR sought the Non-Brahmin for self-respect's indigenous rejection.

### *MISSIONARY POSITION: THE NON-BRAHMIN AS CHRISTIAN SAVIOR*

The LMS mission in Erode was broke. As one missionary, Miss Inglis, writes home in 1921: "As far as I know there is not a missionary who has been able recently to provide him or herself with the barest food and clothes on his salary. Every single person has had to secure help from relatives—some quite an amount of help. This however is a parenthesis."[557] If such concerns were parenthetical, they were part of a persistent parenthesis. As Miss Inglis wrote four years earlier in 1917:

> I suppose I must not tell you that with all the desire for economy in the world it is impossible for Miss Pollard to do without [2] furniture and she is already very heavily in debt over it as she must have a cot to lie on and chairs to sit on.

[557] Inglis to Lenwood, 29 July 1921 (Erode), LMS, SOAS.

> I have only my own share of furniture, and of course she was forced to buy. I have been lending her money up to now and also for her mission work as nothing has been sent out, but I am beginning to get into straits myself and in another month we really shan't either of us know which way to turn for money...[558]

Without sufficient funds for food, clothes, and furniture, the LMS at Erode had two solutions: cut costs or increase revenue. WJ Hatch, in the neighboring town of Salem, suggested one way of cutting costs: "The financial position has brought about the proposal to lessen our staff of Europeans."[559] Europeans were costly labourers of the Lord. As Brough notes in 1921, "[s]peaking broadly, one European missionary…costs as much as two Indian graduates."[560] Yet such cost-cutting solutions wouldn't necessarily help spread the Word, and thus were no real solutions to the current Missionary position. The more appealing prospect was to increase revenue. But how? The answer, of course, lay within the creature of the three-selves formula, the indigenous. As one LMS missionary at Erode writes in 1924:

> We are trying here a little experiment in devolution, suggested to us by the serious cut in our expenditure. We are suggesting to the people that they should take over the responsibility for the village schools, with a fixed grant from the Mission, and that they should raise themselves any sum necessary for the yearly increases of salaries or for extension of school work. Of course there are all sorts of safeguards to begin with, and the initial experiment is to be for one year. But I think it is worthy trying, even if it only teaches them to understand that the Mission's funds are not elastic, and makes them anxious to raise some income locally to extend the work.[561]

Through "devolution," it would be "the people" themselves—these indigenous selves—who would raise the funds to fill the gap between European financing and Mission work.

But who exactly were "the people" that could fill this gap? "The people" could not be members of the fastest growing group of Christians, those of "mass movement." Mass movements consisted of "the very poorest and most down-and-out of India's three hundred and twenty millions," living in "veritable hives of filth, disease, ignorance, and superstition"—not exactly the description of selves that can easily raise local funds to pay the bills. Mass movement—a financially devastating conceptual coupling of the numerical many as well as those of "the lowest stratum of society"—was understood not to be a source of revenue-generating selves but in fact the very selves who demanded revenue generation: "Unless some way out is found our position here is that of those who are entrusted with the pleasant job of snuffing out a mass-movement because it is becoming too expensive."[562]

The solution, of course, was to subsidize Christianizing work among the "indigenous" poor masses with the capital of the "indigenous" middle classes. Such a solution is exactly what an astute observer like Herbert Arthur Popley, a prominent LMS missionary who will feature prominently in the upcoming pages, proposed for Erode as early as 1909:

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[558] Inglis to Lenwood, 20 September 1917 (Erode), LMS, SOAS.
[559] Hatch to Lenwood, 27 January 1921, LMS, SOAS.
[560] Brough to Lenwood, 10 May 1921 (Sydney), LMS, SOAS.
[561] Witney to Lenwood, 27 February 1924 (Erode), LMS, SOAS.
[562] Witney to Lenwood, 27 February 1924 (Erode), LMS, SOAS.

> …as long as our work lies almost entirely with the lower classes it will always be difficult to make it self-supporting. But I think that we shall soon be able [4] to do more in that direction than we are doing now.
>
> We ought also very soon be able to influence the middle classes and here we ought to get into a more or less self-supporting basis from the very beginning. We have opportunities today that we never had before. A strong persistent evangelism among these people, an evangelism which is carried on according to the newer ideas and methods of today, which comes to build up from what is, rather than to destroy—to attract rather than to goad with fear. Such an evangelism will I feel sure meet with success among this large class. It may not and probably will not give us the same results that we get in Western lands, but we don't want them. That the result will be truly Christian and the glory of Christ I fully believe [sic]. But such an evangelism needs competent men and continuous persistence not taken up today and dropped tomorrow. I think probably that we shall find here the solution of our difficulties with the lower classes and as regards self support. It is absolutely essential for us to win the [5] middle classes for Christ and I believe that nothing but pukha [pure] and steady evangelism will do it. Schools are help and hospitals [sic] but without a definite and regular evangelism, I do not think that our end can be achieved.
>
> And now I think is the time for it. I am trying to do as much of this work as possible…[563]

Popley believes that "the solution of our difficulties with the lower classes and as regards self support"—that is to say, the answer to the question of making a church indigenous, e.g. manufacturing a three-selves self—was with the "middle classes." It was thus "this large class" that needed to be targeted with "[a] strong persistent evangelism," not simply targeted through material incentives like schools and hospitals. Though Popley is open to different results than those "we get in Western lands," given the evidence of the correspondence from Erode, we have very good reason to suspect that this evangelism involved not only a focus on the self-government, self-support, self-propagation of the three selves formula. It likely also involved some articulation of "self-respect."

If the "middle classes" were "the people" that could fulfill the three-selves formula for an indigenous church in Erode, who exactly were these middle classes? In 1920, a missionary just recently arrived to the LMS at Erode, TC Witney, suggests that the "middle classes" that were the progression of evangelical activity were understood to be those of "caste origin" as opposed to being outcaste or Panchama, "the average ryot class" of small landholding tenants, i.e. the "Non-Brahmin."

> First impressions are distinctly favourable, though I believe that I have not seen the best part of the district yet. There is as feeling of life and opportunity in the air, and the movement among the Panchamas towards Christianity is evidently still in full swing, and it seems possible that the matter may be pretty well clinched, so far as the Panchamas in this District are concerned, within a few years. But so far as I can see at present, the question of the caste people, whether low or high, has not been touched. Christians of caste origin are conspicuously absent. I think that is our weakness here, for a Church entirely Panchama in origin cannot do much to bridge the gap between the class we have reached and the other classes still untouched. In my private opinion it is high time we had a shot at the average ryot class, which after all is the back-bone of the community, especially in a comparatively *non-Brahmin* District like ours. If the time for redirecting the center of our attack has not yet come, I feel that in a few years from now the point may be reached when the Panchama [2] work will be carried on to completion largely by its own momentum, and may be safely entrusted to the care of the Church, while we concentrate our attention on the next class—the

[563] Popley to Thompson, 19 August 1909 (Erode), LMS, SOAS.

> Gounder ryot, and attempt the much more difficult task of starting a movement among them. These are only the opinions of a newcomer to the District, based on a very inadequate knowledge of the fact, so please do not take them too seriously. However they will serve to show my first and unrevised impressions of the work here before I get immersed in detail. [564]

Whitney's focus on the "ryot class" as "the back-bone of the community" in the Coimbatore District of which Erode was a part of a common trope. The *Manual of the Coimbatore District* (1887), for example, centers on the ryot class as the primary source of tax revenue with the same language: "As the backbone of the revenue, and as the tax which chiefly affects the ryot class, which is the backbone of the district, the Land Revenue claims the chief share of attention…"[565] The *Manual* defines this ryot class in a way that reinforces their importance with respect to both production and status along with reproduction and number in the region:

> …they may best be described as peasant proprietors holding direct from Government, and complete de facto owners of a share of the State land, subject only to the payment of the assessment; labour-cultivators, men owning no land but mere tenants, or perhaps mere labourers, are not included in this term. But, as shown below, owing to the pressure of population on soil, the universality of marriage at a tolerably early date, the rapidity of reproduction, the custom of equal family division, and the non-recognition of the natural limits of the soil, the ryot class continually supplies the classes below, viz., the labourers-ryots, labourer-tenants and mere labourers. There being practically no industries other than agriculture open to the agricultural class, the surplus population which cannot find room in cultivating the hereditary farms, or is ousted from them by debt or misfortune, cannot turn to factories or town for subsistence as in European countries, nor has it the outlet of emigration. Hence a large number of almost paupers, continually supplied form above until a famine sweeps off its myriads…
>
> This system [of ryots] has no middlemen between the State and the cultivator [such as a large landowner]; the land of the district is divided into fields, each of which bears a fixed assessment, and any person soever who requires a field not already in another's possession can have it by simply applying to the Revenue officer…The State charges no price or fee for granting the field, which once granted, becomes the indefeasible property for cultivation of the ryot, who can deal with it at pleasure…subject only to the payment of assessment, which the State demands in return for the use of the land [e.g. Land Revenue].
>
> The system of individual responsibility is not of British introduction, but, with modifications and many irregularities, has been immemorial in the district…[566]

It would be the ryot class, the peasant proprietors that formed the region's largest tax base, as it were, that would provide the selves necessary to fulfill the three-selves formula, thereby providing a basis for an indigenous church and allowing the euthanasia of Mission. This class was understood as Non-Brahmin, neither Untouchable nor Brahmin.

Certainly, the financial fulfillment of "self-support" was central to the Non-Brahmin attraction for members of the LMS at Erode by the 1910s and 1920s. As one missionary, Gnanamuthu, put it in 1926 discussing those of "caste," e.g. Non-Brahmins, rather than "outcaste":

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[564] Witney to Lenwood, 22 November 1920, LMS, SOAS.
[565] Frederick Augustus Nicholson, *Manual of the Coimbatore District of the Presidency of Madras* (Madras: The Government Press, 1887): p 92.
[566] Nicholson, *Manual of Coimbatore* (1887): 257-258.

> With a view to avoid Societies getting into such a miserable state, it is thought necessary to admit a few caste men into our Societies wherever possible. It is an undoubted fact that the Adi-Dravida community [e.g. outcastes] has much to learn from the caste people with regard to thrift and the use of money. It is believed that a minority of caste members in the case of a large number of our Societies is bound to create a greater sense of responsibility in the minds of the Adi-Dravida members and to prove a healthy sign of co-operative life and activities but the number of caste members should be less than half or about one-third of the total membership in order that the interest of the depressed classes may be always safe-guarded. We do not think it necessary that every one of the Societies should go in for admission of caste members—but where there is want of trustworthy leadership and keenness of interest in business transactions and keeping of accounts, we cannot but [9] admit a number of desirable caste elements into our Societies.[567]

Popley, too, had long seen Non-Brahmin "caste people" as the promise to fulfill the three-selves formula to form an indigenous church. As he wrote in 1905,

> There is no doubt that the gospel itself, and not only the privileges associated with its reception, has obtained a firm hold among the Panchama peoples of Southern India and the labours of the next few years should yield a rich harvest. So the church will grow first among the poor and weak. If only it were possible to start a movement among the caste people. I believe that the same astonishing results which were seen in the early church would be reproduced here today. I have been reading Harnack's Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries and have been struck with the similarity of the conditions then and today. Apart from the one dissimilarity of caste, the likeness is wonderful and it should be remembered that up to the present only one century has passed [since the LMS began its efforts]. When such a movement as I have suggested above takes place [e.g. including caste rather than only outcaste Christians], it is then that the church will [3] pass from the state of dependence and tutelage to that of independence and self-government.[568]

A shift from the "poor and weak" Panchama outcaste to the "caste people" Non-Brahmin would enable "independence and self-government."

But these Non-Brahmins, these "caste men" above the outcaste but below the Brahmin, were not simply thrifty men with business savvy who could keep accounts and who were the immediate objectives of Mission. By the mid-1910s, Non-Brahmins in and around Erode were themselves articulating demands for equality and justice against an entrenched social hierarchy that threatened to dominate political life. The *Non-Brahmin Manifesto* was published in 1916 by Dr. T.M. Nair and Rao Bahadur Theogaraya Chetty and was an attempt to mobilize Non-Brahmins as a block, despite caste fractures, in order to critique the "Home Rule Movement" which was understood to be saturated with Brahmin interests. Shortly after these mobilizations, Popley sees such social articulations and subsequent inter-caste mingling, rather than simply economic resources, as further reason for Mission to invest in these middle-classes, e.g. the Non-Brahmin:

> I cannot help feeling that evangelistic work is the work that I ought to take up after this work is over...particularly among the middle classes...great opportunity...many signs that they are open today to Christian influences as never before. Already through the special campaigns which have been conducted in Madura and other places some success has been attained among these people.

[567] Gnanamuthu to Phillips [note Gnanamuthu was replacement for Popley temporarily, 1916-1932?], 8 December 1926, LMS, SOAS.
[568] Popley to Thompson, 8 March 1905, Erode S. India, LMS, SOAS.

> Everywhere they are mingling freely with our Christians as a result of this non-Brahmin movement. The other day in a place where the Christians for the first time had made a special effort among them their leaders came forward and offered to share in the expense of a large pandal for special meetings to be used by both parties.[569]

And later, underscoring the "social" over "political,"

> Then all through the South this "Non-Brahmin" movement is helping us very considerably. It is perhaps more of a social than a Political Movement at heart, and the result of it must be in the very near future, to overthrow entirely the reign of caste within the non-Brahmin communities. I was interested to hear just now from a friend that one of the leading Brahmins of Madura had said that in the very near future the temples of South India would be opened to all castes and that every man would be granted the right to choose his own religion as a result of this Social Movement.[570]

The Non-Brahmin movement is breaking down hierarchical barriers, allowing the free mingling between "our Christians," e.g. outcastes, and the middle classes. Such mingling seems to be producing fiscal responsibility among Christians, e.g. coming forward to share expenses. But the Non-Brahmin Movement is doing more, enabling not only inter-caste mingling but inter-religion conversion.

So it was the Non-Brahmin that the LMS saw as promising in and around Erode, providing the sort of self required to fulfill the three-selves formula, create an indigenous church, and allow the euthanasia of European Mission. All this meant, or course, that the LMS saw the Tamil-speaking Non-Brahmin self as easily amenable to the Christian self—the Non-Brahmin would be the Holy Grail of Mission, the non-indigenous indigenous, the Christian Indian. In fact, Popley and other missionaries felt that the Non-Brahmin self was somehow always already Christian, and thus this non-Hindu sort of Indian was just the sort of self to fulfill the three-selves formula. For example, Popley claimed that the concepts present in the literature of the Non-Brahmin, often understood as Saivite (relating to Siva, coded as Non-Brahmin in South India) as opposed to Vaishnavite (relating to Vishnu, coded as Brahmin in South India), was already, or rather could only be fulfilled, by Christianity. As early as 1908, Popley claims that "The religious literature of India must to a large extent take the place of the Old Testament for Indian Christianity" and "The Tamil Saivite Scriptures are full of thoughts and ideas which can only attain their full perfection and fulfillment in Christianity. When the audience has learnt to see and to feel these deep religious needs which receive such full expression in their own devotional books, they will be surprised to find their fulfillment in Christianity."[571] The Non-Brahmin was already, or could only be fulfilled by becoming, Christian.

For the LMS, this Non-Brahmin—always already Christian but still yet to be fulfilled, to be redeemed, by Christianity—not only consummated the three-selves formula understood as pertaining to an indigenous *church* but a national *state*. The self of particular importance here in moving between religious and political autonomy was, of course, *self-government*. But the "self" of Indian "self-government," as far as a Mission seeking euthanasia was concerned, was not Hindu but Christian. Popley, for example, is enthusiastic about the nationalist movement

[569] Popley to Lenwood, 26 December 1917 (on train), LMS, SOAS.
[570] Popley to Lenwood, 20 June 1918 (train, Sencottah to Madras), LMS, SOAS.
[571] HA Popley, "Vernacular Preaching to Hindus" in *Harvest Field,* reprint in SOAS LMS Tamil Box #23, Folder #4 (1908): 1-8, p 6.

evident by the early 1920s, writing hopefully of "Indians on way to self-government."[572] But the appealing part of these blossoming prospects for self-government, for *swaraj*, was that there was by now a Province not simply with an "Indian Governor" but with "an Indian *Christian* Minister" which is "a good augury in the future when the whole country will be under Indian rulers."[573] This "good augury" meant the absence of Hinduism and the prevalence of Christianity as the hallmark of the indigenous:

> we have an extraordinary openness of mind to new ideas and a very keen realisation of the fact that Hinduism has not a great part to play in the future of India. At any rate that the old ideas and practices of Hinduism have been found wanting, and something new and much more dynamic must come into existence**. [sic]** A Hindu the other day said to a friend, 'Hinduism to-day is like drawing a check in an old bank book belonging to one's ancestors on an old account which no longer exists'. There is a feeling that the future development of India needs something more ethical and more constructive than the inner spirit of Hinduism affords.

And that "something more ethical and more constructive" than Hinduism was, of course, Christianity. "Caste is breaking from the top to the bottom," Popley continues, which is opening Indians to being "free to choose their own religion according to their consciences..." Though there is here a danger of "Christianity being swamped by half convinced adherents," given that Popley presumes Christianity is superior ethically and constructively than Hinduism, it is also in this breaking and choosing that the nation state, not simply the indigenous church, can come about. The fulfillment of the three-selves formula is leeching out, requiring not only indigenous Christians to run the churches but also to run the state in order for Indians to be sovereign.

Christian Mission in South India, such as the LMS in Erode, were thereby articulating a conception of autonomy and sovereignty through the Non-Brahmin which both aligned with Gandhi—Indians ruling India—as well as opposed Gandhi—those Indians were Christian and not Hindu. The language between Gandhian nationalists and Missionary nationalists, as it were, was the same—self-government!—but exactly *who* this self of "self-rule" would be was a deep matter of disagreement.

The Non-Brahmin—described variously above as "the middle classes," "caste people," and "the ryot class" in a place like Erode—would feature centrally in such disagreement, often under another, autochthonous, description: the "Dravidian." This "Dravidian" was put in contrast with the "Hindu." Sometimes such a Dravidian was more closely aligned to outcaste people than caste people. A letter to Gandhi in 1936 from Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah—a Tamil, a long-time member of the YMCA, the first Indian to become a Bishop, and so prominent a figure in Christian circles as to have helped consecrate the South India United New Church in December 1929 in Erode built by the LMS[574] (whom we encountered above questioning Gandhi and his default Hindu position for all untouchables in Chapter 6)—provides one such example of this outcaste Dravidian. Azariah writes with concern about how Temple Entry is interpolating the outcaste as Hindu when in fact the outcaste (e.g. the "Depressed Classes") worshipped Dravidian, e.g. non-Hindu, forces:

> It is a fact that the Depressed Classes have not, during the last thousand years or more, been worshippers of Siva or Vishnu. Their gods were the Dravidian village gods and goddesses and

[572] Popley to Friends, 26 March 1921 (Royapettah), LMS, SOAS.
[573] My italics.
[574] A.W. Brough, 25 December 1929, LMS, SOAS.

> spirits. Their worship consisted of sacrifices—yea bloody sacrifices too—sacrifices of chicken, lambs and even buffalo calves. To these were often added toddy and liquors. They are now asked to enter the Hindu temples and worship there. Of course they cannot offer their usual sacrifices and bring their other accompaniments of the cult into the precincts of the temple. This, I submit, means a move to convert them to Hinduism! This is surely exploiting the present Depressed Class feeling in the interests of Hinduism. Are not, I ask, royal proclamations and Legislative measures in the cause of Temple-entry for Depressed Classes a distinct propaganda to exploit the present situation in favour of a change of the religion and worship—to which the Depressed Classes have owed allegiance for hundreds of generations?[575]

Azariah, as Popley earlier, suggests here that the Hindu self is not the self of self-government, whether it be of an indigenous church or a national state. At the very least, the Dravidian, the outcaste Non-Brahmin, disrupts such a sense of self. At the very most, as suggested by Popley, such a Dravidian may in fact fulfill the demands for indigeneity, but only by being fulfilled by Chrisitianity, with respect to both church and state.

This indigenous Non-Brahmin, as the Dravidian, was not simply the sort of self that could fulfill the three-selves formula for indigeneity. Missionaries in the Tamil-speaking South India also saw the Dravidian as going beyond providing a self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating self to providing a *self-respecting self*. Perhaps the clearest example of the fusion between Dravidian and self-respect comes from Kanakarayan Tiruselvam Paul of the YMCA, a Non-Brahmin Christian from a town near Erode and so close a personal friend of Popley's that Popley himself would write KT Paul's biography.[576] KT Paul suggests, as had his friend HA Popley, that the Non-Brahmin or middle class—here "Dravidian" redescribed yet again as "Tamil Sudra"—would be the fulfillment of the demand for indigenous Christianity, providing what the poor outcaste masses could not. He writes in 1924 about the LMS Residential High School in the town of Salem, which had just begun accepting students from the recently closed school in neighbouring Erode:

> the Master [of the school] must himself belong to the middle class Tamil society, into which our [outcaste] boys have naturally to fit in after life [at the high school is over]…The Dravidian (Tamil Sudras) [sic] have in many centuries evolved a way of living which in point of hygiene, social amenities and robust self-respect form a heritage of great value. It is the normal 'next step' for our Mass Movement Christians in the line of social evolution...Given leaders trained suitably the whole community can in a few generations mount into the Dravidian Culture. [577]

The Dravidian, the Tamil Sudra or Non-Brahmin, is, once again, the *fulfillment* of Christian Mass Movement in South India. KT Paul elaborates this fulfillment further, showing how the Non-Brahmin is fulfilled, redeemed, by Christianity. He goes on to distinguish "Tamil Dravidians" from the rest of India, having a "continuous history…little disturbed by invaders as North Indians were…evolved in agrarian conditions." These Tamil Dravidians, previously "in a process of Aryanisation in contact with the Brahman," had been recovered for themselves through "the entering in of Western ideas," particularly "Christian" ones, which in turn suggested that mission now needs merely "to assist natural processes onward to Christian ends."

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[575] Azariah to Gandhiji, 8 December 1936, Dornakal, Misc. Subject Files, #360, MK Gandhi Papers, Teen Murthi, New Delhi.
[576] Herbert Arthur Popley, *KT Paul, Christian Leader* (Calcutta: YMCA Publishing House, 1938)
[577] KT Paul to Lenwood, 23 June 1924 (Salem), SOAS LMS, Box#28(1924-1925), Folder 2(1924).

KT Paul expressed these views at a "debate" "at Erode."[578] He joins the indigenous Dravidian here with the indigenous Saivite literature—or Siva Siddhantism—of concern to Popley in opposition to the Brahmin: "Brahmin religion [e.g. Hinduism] merely aryanised thinly Dravidian ritual and tradition: in philosophy it developed the peculiar form called Siva Siddhantism; in social structure it never succeeded in establishing the four-fold caste system, to this day really there are just two castes: Brahmin and Sudra [Non-Brahmin] with the casteless [Panchama, outcaste] fold submerged below."[579] All of these features, KT Paul claims, were part of a Non-Brahmin "heritage" of "robust self-respect."

What we have seen so far, then, is a process of convergence upon the Non-Brahmin by Christian Mission in and around Erode by the 1920s. Such convergence, perhaps motivated by fiscal insolvency, found its resolution in the Non-Brahmin who are considered not only to have sound finances but have a "heritage" of "self-respect."

In 1925, EVR mobilized Non-Brahmins as part of something called the "Self-Respect Movement" [*Cuya-Mariyātai Iyakkam*]. It seems fairly clear that a missionary organization like the LMS in Erode and EVR himself have some shared investments, such as the eradication of caste hierarchy and a focus on forms of both material and cultural degradation as obstacles to forms of fulfillment. But what exactly was being fulfilled? Both the LMS and EVR would likely respond "a self-respecting self." I have suggested that we have very good reason to believe that "self-respect" was a shared concern not only thematically but also historically, in forms of encounter, between the LMS and EVR, such as in the town of Erode. Such encounter documents another topic in the field of SubContinental political theory. But, I argue, it seems unlikely that the LMS by "self-respect" and EVR by "*cuya-mariyātai*" meant the same thing. For the LMS, "self-respect" achieved through the Non-Brahmin was tied to the indigenous fulfillment of Christianity. This emphasis on indigenous fulfillment was, at its root, shared by Gandhian demands for *swaraj*, though Gandhi would as aggressively assert the "Hindu" as Mission would the "Christian" as the authentically indigenous. EVR was likely very receptive to Mission's idea that "*cuya-mariyātai*" could be achieved through the Non-Brahmin. However, he would have been far less receptive to the idea that the Non-Brahmin aspired to Christianity with its God or to the indigeneity of a nationalist three-selves. That is, for the LMS, the self of "self-respect" seems to have collapsed into the self of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation in order to achieve autonomy premised on a coherent sense of indigeneity. But for EVR, the very purpose of "*cuya-mariyātai*" was to remain outside such a three-selves self, particularly that of the "self" of "self-government" or *swaraj*. And this meant a critique of the prevalent set of values invested in the "indigenous," whether as the object of Mission/Christian or Gandhi/Hindu redemption.

### *MISSIONARY IMPOSITION: THE NON-BRAHMIN AS INDIGENOUS REJECTION*

To the extent that self-respect required uplift and the elimination of degradation, the meaning of "self-respect" in Erode was shared between Mission and the Non-Brahmin. To the extent that self-respect was invested in national indigeneity, the meaning of "self-respect" in Erode was not so shared. Such sharing and its absence took concrete forms in Erode. To further illustrate such forms, not simply to further reveal shared engagement but to better ground a different redemption, I explore an essay written by the LMS missionary HA Popley published in

[578] KT Paul to Miss Grierson, 30 July 1924, SOAS LMS, Box#28(1924-1925), Folder 2(1924).
[579] KT Paul to Miss Grierson, 30 July 1924, SOAS LMS, Box#28(1924-1925), Folder 2(1924).

EVR's Erode-based Tamil Self-Respect daily *Viṭutalai* in 1937 and a speech given by EVR at a conference held by HA Popley at the LMS library in Erode in 1933. Not only do these instances reiterate the concrete interactions between the LMS and the Self-Respect Movement of EVR and his Non-Brahmin allies, but the interactions themselves reflect on the irreconcilable approaches to the indigenous self. Though preceding discussion provides evidenc eof the importance of "self-respect" to the members of the LMS and of EVR's thought and movement, it is unfortunate that this most concrete and dynamic of exchanges between the LMS and the Self-Respect Movement—between Popley, the most literate in Tamil and arguably most socially engaged culturally among missionaries in Erode, and EVR, the leader of the Erode-based Self-Respect Movement who in 1933 had recenlty returned from world travel—does not actually use the expression "*cuya-mariyātai*." Despite this, we can attend to a constellation of concerns that serve as the background for these investments in Mission "self-respect" and Non-Brahmin "*cuya-mariyātai,*" respectively.

As we would imagine, we find both overlap and divergence. Both are invested in a life made meaningful through self-respect. But Popley, I argue, grounds his claims in the indigenous: what makes his ideas matter is that they matter in Tamil. His gestures are national and his mode that of application. In contrast, EVR grounds his claims in the world: what makes his ideas matter is that they matter everywhere. His gestures are cosmopolitan and his mode that of critique. It is this combination of sharing and difference that once again reveals *cuya-mariyātai*'s power of comprehension—to both connect and to divide, to articulate *mariyātai* itself.

Popley's 1937 Tamil article, titled "*Pāṭacaralāiyum Kuṇacīlamum*" ["School and Noble Character"] in EVR's *Viṭutalai*, argues that school's most important role for the student between the ages of 4 and 10 is the formation of good character; this character is central to having a meaningful life as part of society. Such a view of school is set in contrast to the simple teaching of knowledge and skills in order to gain employment.[580] EVR's 1933 speech, delivered at Popley's conference themed "*Intiyāviṉ Taṛkāla Nākarīkam*" ["India's Contemporary Civilization"], argues for the importance of global progress for the world's people. This progress serves to interrogate the significance of articulations of civilization too wedded to particular identities such as those of nation, religion, or caste.[581] Despite these differences in theme, there are substantial agreements between Popley and EVR that could inform a shared vision of self-respect/*cuya-mariyātai*. Three examples of agreement stand out: doing, vigilance, and truth.

First, both EVR and Popley emphasize the importance of thinking as an act of doing for oneself, and the subsequent need to be encouraged to actively do so through modeling rather than being passively taught to do so by another. EVR begins his speech by telling his audience "You

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[580] Rev. HA Pāpli, "*Pāṭacaralāiyum Kuṇacīlamum* [School and Noble Character]," in the daily *Viṭutalai* 31 March 1937:7.

[581] Ī. Ve. Irāmacāmi, "*Nākarīkam Eṉṛāl Eṉṉa?* [What Does Civilization Mean?]," in the weekly *Puraṭci* 31 December 1933: 3, 18. This speech would also be reprinted in a slightly altered and truncated form as "*Nākarīkam*" in the monthly *Pakuttaṛivu* 2.12 (April 1937): 16-20. This reprinted article was published around the same time as Popley's. Though space does not provide here for a discussion of the reprinting, the minor alterations and decontextualization there are symptomatic of a larger trend among those who lay claim to EVR, a trend in which some of the concrete concerns of EVR are jettisoned and a caricature of EVR's thought subsequently produced. In the republication, the context of Popley's conference is eliminated, as well as philosophical concerns between the difference of the Judicial and the Just (which we will see later). Both of these absences cripple the reader to appreciate the historical specificity and philosophical scope of EVR's actual effort here—and parrallel instances elsewhere do the same.

should not think that simply the opinion I say is conclusive, nor that it is a correct idea [derived] from conclusive research." Instead, he invities his audience to be critical of his claims.[582] Popley begins his article by criticizing the "evil custom" in elementary schools whereby teachers strictly monitor and discipline students thereby interpolating children as having malicious intent or as natural born cheaters: "Because of this custom it is clear that which is the theory [*kōṭpāṭu*] which mostly explains that (1) all children have deceitful thought, and (2) therefore, according to that thought, [a child] will look at the writing of another [child] and write. As the teacher[s], etc. are not going to place faith in the person of the children, in that way the children also will themselves think as those without faith about themselves."[583] One must develop faith in oneself, and both EVR and Popley emphasize that such faith develops through doing—as Popley writes, "formed in doing and impressed in habit"—rather than being taught.

Second, both EVR and Popley have markedly egalitarian positions that require vigilance in the present against hierarchical formations. EVR when discussing married women "who have civilization," for example, claims they go beyond being "limited to domestic chores" and a sense of subservient "duty" and "roar [*karjaṉai*]" at their husbands ["]Am I your worker? Enslaved cattle? If you are careful okay, but if not [there is] even for me equal status [*antastu*], equal right, [and] full liberty["].[584] Popley emphasizes the equality of birth, whereby "When born everyone has one type of mind-nature [*maṉaviyalpu*],"[585] e.g. there is no particular capacity that distinguishes humans by nature so inequalities must be produced in environments of nurture, such as the school. Both EVR and Popley are articulating demands for equality as natural but which require a certain vigilance to maintain through, for example, acts of demand or acts of education.

Third, EVR and Popley are focused on "truth" in its philosophical sense, captured by the Tamil word *mēy*, rather than "truth" in its empirical sense, captured by the Tamil word *uṇmai*. EVR, in writing of understandings of "civilization" invested in superficial features about appearance such as "moustache and hairstyle," claims that they are evanescent, ever-changing, deaf to "the skill of the mouth" e.g. reason. Appearance changes "regardless of whether it is true [*mēy*] or false, correct or an error."[586] Popley, in writing of what exactly "noble character" is, includes "seeking true meaning [*mēyporuḷ*]." Such meaning is not merely what appears to us in the present but which is evident only upon further assessment and judgment. EVR and Popley are not interested in the factual, as it were, but the reflective in their emphasis on "truth."

In short, EVR and Popley, if read as theorizers of *cuya-mariyātai*/self-respect, share explicit investments in doing critical work over simply being taught knowledge, a certain vigilance to preserve equality and potential rather than hierarchies based on natural differences, and a sense of truth which is not captured by empirical claims (such as Indian men wear moustaches and women in the world have long hair) but rather by philosophical ones (such as those about the good).

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[582] Irāmacāmi, "*Nākarīkam*" (1933): 3.
[583] Pāpli, "*Pāṭacaralāiyum*" (1937): 7.
[584] Irāmacāmi, "*Nākarīkam*" (1933): 3. As an example of the liberties taken with reproduction, the reprint of this claim in *Pakuttaṟivu* April 1937: 17 adds the idea of womanhood as bound to matrimony: "But to the husband of today, 'Am I your worker? A slave? If you are careful okay, but if not for even me there is equal restatus [*antastu*], equal right, all liberty' [–] we think that this is a roar [*karjaṉai*] of women who have become wives and have civilization."
[585] Pāpli, "*Pāṭacaralāiyum*" (1937): 7.
[586] This stands in contrast to EVR's suggestion, which we will turn to shortly, that it is without attachment and through "independent evaluation" that one come to know "truth" [*uṇmai*] as self "evident" [*viḷaṅkum*].

In these two pieces, EVR and Popley also make non-overlapping claims with which one could presume a large degree of implicit agreement informing a shared understanding of *cuya-mariyātai*. In different ways, they are both interested in the possibility of being together. Popley, for example, in emphasizing how the ways in which a person is treated results in the formation of that person's character, blurs the line between the personal and the social with his articulation of "noble character." In speaking of the ideal elementary school experience, Popley claims that "there is no important goal other than attaining the quality suitable to conducting excellently these two: a personal life-living [*taṇippaṭṭa uyir vāl̲kkai*] and social life." Popley includes among the qualities of this "noble character" such features as helping others [*upakāram*]. It is hard to imagine that EVR would disagree. Similarly, Popley would likely agree with EVR's suggestion that differences of "civilization," or culture, are the product of unfamiliarity rather than insurmountable barriers to interaction: "Because each and every person does not understand [*uṇar*] each and every other person's actions correctly, we are made [*nēriṭu*] to feel astonished about some things." Such astonishment, EVR claims, is an accidental rather than essential feature of our response. It is hard to imagine that Popley would disagree.

We also see here the ways in which Missionary commitments evident in Popley and others that we've touched on above—such as how the present eclipses past Hindu practices, and the possibilities of world-wide mass movement—synergistically resonate with EVR's own. For example, like Popley, EVR undercuts the viability of Hinduism in the future, claiming, "In one age, praying 'Siva Siva' by covering oneself in ashes [*cāmpalaippūci*] was thought of as [an act of] the right thing [*yōkkiyam*: lit, integrity]. In today's age, the national present-day affairs [*vartamāṉam*] mock the aforementioned matters." And EVR is also critical of a zero-sum relationship among the world's peoples, revealing his communist internationalism: "In one age separate-separate philosophy was thought of as civilization. For example, it was thought to praise the good of a separate-separate *jāti* and the good [of a separate-separate] nation. But today we have begun to understand [*uṉar*] well that the favor of one *jāti* is the harm [*pātikam*] of another *jāti* and that the good of one nation is ruin [*pollaṅku*] for another nation."[587] Though EVR would not court the Christian God of Mission, his commitments engage missionaries like Popley who also questioned the future of Hinduism and hoped for a better comity among the world's peoples.

Such agreements over background investments informing their investments in "self-respect" elsewhere should not, however, blind us to the ways in which Popley's understanding of "noble character" in 1937 and EVR's discussion of "civilization" in 1933 also offer instances in which there would likely be disagreement over "self-respect." These instances stem, I suggest, from different approaches to the idea of the "indigenous." Popley presumed its importance, given its potential to be fulfilled in Christ, but EVR questioned its value, skeptical of power relations which could inhere in it. Perhaps this difference is most apparent over the use of the ancient moral treatise the *Tirukkuṛaḷ*, perhaps the most universally revered Tamil text regardless of caste or religion. Both EVR and Popley were very familiar with this text; Tamil speakers, such as EVR, would have been raised with a knowledge of many of its 1330 pithy, rhyming couplets, while Popley himself provided an English translation of the text in 1931.[588]

Popley, as we might expect, uses couplets from the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* to "indigenize" his arguments concerning noble character. To shore up his claim that "noble character is the most

[587] Irāmacāmi, "*Nākarīkam*" (1933): 18.
[588] HA Popley (trans), *The Sacred Kural: or The Tamil Veda of Tiruvalluvar* (London: Oxford UP, 1931).

excellent good among all goods…indispensable for personal and social life," Popley quotes the following couplet:

> *kuṇanalam cāṉṛōr nalanē piṛanalam*
> *ennalattu uḷḷatū um anṛu*
>
> Good character is the good of the excellent person; other goods (e.g. the sensual)
> are not among any comparable good. [982]

And to shore up his claim that "teachers need to give most time" to modeling behavior, rather than teaching factual skills, in order to foster the development of "noble character," Popley quotes the following couplet:

> *ollum vakayaiyāṉ aṛaviṉai ōvātē*
> *callumvāy ellāñ cayel.*
>
> As is possible ceaselessly practice virtue,
> doing so in every act (33)

Popley here attempts to draw legitimacy for his position by showing how it shared in "indigenous" claims.

In stark contrast to Popley's use of the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* to indigenize claims, EVR draws upon the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* in order to question one of the central premises of indigeneity, namely, a sense of "civilization" or culture that could be one among many and thus mark separation and distinction from others. Addressing his speech to the theme of Popley's LMS conference, "India's Contemporary Civilization," he interrogates the very meaning of an indigenous "civilization" itself:

> The meaning of the word "civilization" [*nakarīkam*] is difficult to grasp. Each person has been providing a distinct definition for "civilization." Ten or twenty years ago I remember seeing the word "civilization" used by Vaḷḷuvar[, author of the *Tirukkuṛaḷ*,] in a *kuṛaḷ* [couplet] under the heading "fellow-feeling" [*kaṇṇōttam*]. I also remember that it could be used [not only to] mean compassion [*tākshaṇṇiyam*] [but also] slavery [*aṭimai*].[589]

The couplet to which EVR refers is as follows:

> *payakkaṇṭū nañcuṇ ṭamavair nayattakka*
> *nākarikam vaṇēṭu pavar. [58-580]*
>
> Those who desire civilization,[590]
> Are those that are friendly even after swallowing poison served them.

The translation of the term "civilization" as *nākarikam*, or *nakarīkam*, is literal; just as "civilization" comes from the Latin root for that which pertains to the city (*civitas*), *nākarīkam*

[589] Irāmacāmi, "*Nākarīkam*" (1933): 3.
[590] The *nākarīkam* of concern in the LMS conference, and the slightly different spelling of *nākarikam* in the *Tirukkuṛaḷ*, are equivalent.

comes from the Sanskrit root for that which pertains to the city (*nākar*). The couplet thus means that those who desire to cultivate a degree of urbanity, of civilization, will happily endure suffering, including even being served poison by friends, upholding a degree of politesse. To some, this couplet may demonstrate the great lengths to which one must go to achieve "civilization." But EVR is questioning these lengths altogether. Perhaps such lengths result in a deeper or more refined sense of compassion. But such lengths may just as easily demonstrate the ways in which people are enslaved to an ideal that must be questioned. In short, whereas Popley uses the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* to indigenize his argument, EVR draws upon the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* to make an argument which questions the premise of indigeneity, namely, the presence of civilization itself and the distinct ideals of being cultured which may refine but also may enslave.

Such differences in approach to the indigenous between Popley and EVR extend to other aspects of their respective discussions of "noble character" and "civilization." Here we see further examples of how Popley's concern with being Tamil or making things indigenous repeatedly stands in contrast with EVR's interest in using Tamil to question indigeneity; Popley's efforts of *application* contrast with EVR's efforts at *critique*. For example, take the term "fellow-feeling," or *kaṇṇōṭṭam* which literally means something like glance [*kaṇ* (eye) + *ōṭu* (running)] and by extension a form of regard. As we have just seen, EVR worries that the couplets classified as features of *kaṇṇōṭṭam* can just as easily mean compassion as slavery; we must therefore use the idea of *kaṇṇōṭṭam* critically. Popley too refers to *kaṇṇōṭṭam*; *kaṇṇōṭṭam* is one of the qualities of "noble character." But there is something naïve about Popley's use, devoid of an appreciation for the term's ambivalence and the presence of relations of power. Popley's encounter with Tamil terms, as with Tamil literature, are terms to be applied or deployed, rather than terms which should be critiqued and in turn used to do the critical work EVR invites.

There are other instances of Popley's mode of application set in contrast with EVR's mode of critique. For example, Popley is more interested in the movement from the outside-in to Tamil country and its past, looking at local spaces like the classroom within the context of Tamil literature. In contrast, EVR from Tamil country is looking from the inside-out to the world and its future, with sweeping radical claims about how, for example, "The flow of time does not stop. It makes one thing appear from another and creates revolution." Or, to take another example, we can see such patterns evident in the different use of the term *aṛivu*, or knowledge. Popley suggests that *aṛivu* is not the central purpose of school—school should be to cultivate "noble character" first and foremost. But for EVR, *aṛivu* is the very means by which relations of power are grasped, relations from which "noble character" is not free and through which such an ideal may need to be interrogated. As EVR declares,

> Comrades! I would like to emphasize one matter in particular. That is, it is said that we have been reaching progressiveness through research of *aṛivu* and development of experience. We attend deeply [to] all men through our feeling of *aṛivu.* For example, we see that merchants are those who join into a faction to attain profit and spoil the well-being of people's society, that money lenders are those capable of destroying man's society, that the class [*varkkam*] who hold religious power [*mata ātikkam*] are the enemies of man's society. [591]

[591] Irāmacāmi, "*Nākarīkam*" (1933): 18.

To dismiss *aṟivu* in favor of an ideal, such as that of Popley's "civilization" or "noble character," would cripple the ability to critique power relations that inhere in such ideals which EVR finds so important.

In sum, members of the LMS were not only in relatively close touch with EVR's thought and movement but shared a concern with the idea of "self-respect." Yet the above issues of both broader agreement and disagreement suggest that members of the LMS were no more possible collaborators with EVR than they were likely targets of EVR's vehement criticism. Though EVR's *cuya-mariyātai* shared with LMS's "self-respect" an acknowledgement of the horrors of degradation in South India society and a mistrust of a Hinduism understood as complicit in such degradation, *cuya-mariyātai* did not share self-respect's fetishization of indigeneity. Popley's interest "that the church will pass from the state of dependence and tutelage to that of independence and self-government"[592] and reports of how mission activity brings about conditions in which "The people are more self-respecting and more independent"[593] seem to name two different selves—a self of self-government and a self of self-respect—but which are actually the same: an indigenous self, who draws from within the possibilities to govern and respect. That is to say, the LMS, and mission more broadly, collapsed the self of self-respect and the other selves of the three-selves formula which defined the "indigenous." EVR's *cuya-mariyātai*, in contrast, should be read as part of that same process of grappling but through which a very different conclusion was reached: *cuya-mariyātai* was NOT the same indigenous self as that presumed by *swaraj* (i.e. self-rule or self-government), but in fact was somehow outside it and thus could be used as a vantage point from which to critique it and the power relations inherent in its indigenous presumptions.

Let us conclude here by returning to EVR's speech at Popley's conference on "India's Contemporary Civilization." At the outset of this section on Missionary Imposition, I suggested that EVR's investments were cosmopolitan and critical. EVR makes the critique of indigeneity explicit by jettisoning entirely the idea of "nationality" through a parenthetical gesture to the literal meaning of "cosmopolitan":

> In one age we thought of nation, nationalism, and national-attachment [*paṟṟu*] as civilization. But today, determinedly pushing away all of those, we have advanced to think that even greater civilization is the thought of mankind *jīvakāruṇyam* [compassion for all-living things][,] world fraternity[,] people honor [*apimāṉam*]:"(Citizen of the World) [sic]."[594]

There are two aspects of this passage particularly important to concluding this section:

First, such "nationality" EVR repeatedly associates with other forms of "attachment," namely "nation, religion, caste." EVR was not simply pitting an idea of being a "Citizen of the World" against civilizational ideas of nation or cultural ideas of religion, but also against caste.

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[592] Popley to Thompson, 6 March 1913. CWM/LMS South India—Tamil—Incoming Correspondence Box 25 (1912-1914), 1913, Jacket A. SOAS.

[593] Popley to Thompson, 6 March 1913. CWM/LMS South India—Tamil—Incoming Correspondence Box 25 (1912-1914), 1913, Jacket A. SOAS.

[594] Differences between the 1933 speech and its 1937 reprint should be pointed out. The [,] were inserted in *Pakuttaṟivu* April 1937: 18. Also, in 1937, the "today" was not concrete but metaphorical; but here in 1933, the "today" is the day of the speech at the LMS; and on that day (as well as all others) they push away attachment to nation/caste/religion in order to turn to the world. EVR seems to be refusing, on an LMS platform, the national/civilizational/cultural cluster, that is, refuting the conceit of the indigenous in a turn to the world. The world isn't filled with pockets of indigeneity, a variety of indigeneities, a variety of nationalities, a variety of civilizations, but instead, there is a more ecumenical look at the world.

Though sharing with the LMS a critique of Hinduism and other cultural features as part of an Indian "self"— dismissing "Earlier scholarship…about the Purana and *matam* [religion]"—EVR would not only disagree with a national self of self-rule, but also with the ways in which missionaries equally reinscribed nationalist caste identities, like Dravidian, in order to imagine the fulfillment of outcastes. When EVR emphasizes in his speech the need to be "without any sort of attachment [*paṛṛu*], that is *viṭṭu viṭṭu* (*free* [sic]) of attachments such as caste, religion, nation," he is, of course, echoing a whole galaxy of South Asian thought which sees liberation (*viṭutalai,* translated in 20th century as "freedom") as a product of the absence of attachment. But such an absence of attachment in this galaxy of thought traditionally was thought of as attachments to the this-worldly. EVR, of course, is suggesting the absence of attachment *so that* one can truly be a part of this world—a "citizen of the world," a cosmopolitan, critical reconfiguration of "liberation." The Christianity of the LMS was as complicit as the Hinduism of Gandhian *swaraj* in its national-indigenous investments that seemed to court caste differences even as they tried to eradicate degradation. In so far as "caste" provided a conceptual anchor to an indigenous self, EVR and Popley would not agree here about "self-respect."

Second, recall our earlier national discussions of Gandhi in Chapter 8's subsection "Two Movements Divided by a Shared Lexicon." EVR uses in his translation of "Citizen of the World" a term based on *māṉam* (pride-as-respect), a term central to Gandhi's idea of "self-respect" which I had tried to contrast with the *mariyātai* (limit-as-respect) central to EVR's. EVR writes of "people honor" in using the expression *apimāṉam*. But this use of a *māṉam*-rooted word to refer to humanity as a whole in this section of EVR's speech should be contrasted with his use of the same *māṉam*-rooted word, *apimāṉam*, elsewhere in the speech. He claims that "all caste *apimāṉam*, fraternal *apimāṉam*, language *apimāṉam*, national *apimāṉam* among us should disappear."[595] That is to say, it seems that articulations of the self in terms of *māṉam*, which was the very thing Gandhi demanded in his self-respect-as-*svamān*, was destined to result in forms of attachment, not to the this-worldly, but to that which would prevent one's ability to be in this world. The distinction between what I argue to be a self defined by *mariyātai* and a self defined by *māṉam,* I suggest, can be read into the opening remarks of EVR's speech:

> two words Judicial [*vivakāram*] and the Just [*niyāyam*] are used. The Just is different, and that which is Judicial is different. [With respect to] that which is Judicial, the strong-one will reach a conclusion according to authority [*ātikkam*], deception [*tantira cūkshikal*], and with financial influence [*celvākku*]. If one person is without power [*cakti*] for himself—because [he is] without the skill of speaking, the experience of explaining, etc.—and if one loses after disputing about a matter [with respect to the Judicial], can you say that [he] has found Justice?[596]

The institutional features of the Judicial are bound to *māṉam*—a sense of pride in one's own people, nation, or caste shores up authority and influence. There is an indigenous power here linked to *māṉam.* In contrast, the critical features of the Just are bound to *mariyātai* for EVR. This is not to say that the Just is other-worldly, but in fact, the Just is part of actually being in the world, providing a capacity to critique indigenous investments. It is not in one's indigenous location that one can find the Just, but only the Judicial. The Just requires a broader gesture to the world.

[595] Irāmacāmi, "*Nākarīkam*" (1933): 18.
[596] Irāmacāmi, "*Nākarīkam*" (1933): 3.

I have argued above that Mission provided an occasion for the International comprehension of the Non-Brahmin members of EVR's Self-Respect Movement. Both Mission and the Non-Brahmin were synergistically linked to a concern over self-respect, a self supplemental to that of the three-selves. But Mission, as we see in a figure like Popley, is concerned with a supplemental self of self-respect that is as equally indigenous as the three-selves self. For EVR and the Non-Brahmin, however, self-respect provided a position from which to critique this very indigeneity. Mission was interested in self-respect as that which could redeem the indigeneity of the masses and, or through, the Non-Brahmin. The Non-Brahmin, however, was interested in a self-respect which could redeem a a broader sense of the human. Mission was interested in becoming Non-Brahmin, while the Non-Brahmin was interested in becoming a citizen of the world. Such becoming required acts of comprehending international forces that extended beyond the physical presence of Mission in South India and the couplings which offered up a politics of mass movement. This extension included the textual presence of the Canon and the couplings which offered up a politics revealed through interpretation.

## CANON

The Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule wove together features of SubContinental political theory through acts of interpretation. Such interpretation included that of texts circulating globally recognized as canonical in "Western" political theory. For the Non-Brahmin *not* to interpret such globally circulating features would have been to cripple the self-respect critique of self-rule, for such critique demonstrated its strength by its demonstration in the world. As with the engagement with Mission, the engagement with Canon does not indicate any failure to be sufficiently "indigenous," as brain-washed brown men overwhelmed by the glory of the white man's mind evident in some divine arsenal running from Plato to Rawls, but rather the sheer power and scope of the Non-Brahmin's capacity to imagine living well and living well together. In what follows, I argue that this power and scope is evident in the Non-Brahmin embrace of both Rousseau and Nietzsche. Rousseau and Nietzsche provided allies against Brahminism and in imagining the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, interogating not only the "self" but also the triumvirate of "caste, religion, and nation" we saw in the previous section. Moreover, such interpretations were necessary as, I suggest, the interpretation of figures like Rousseau and Nietzsche had become contested by Brahminical elements. Rousseau and Nietzsche, as figures whose texts were in global circulation through European expansion, were going to be redeemed one way or another: the question was whether such redemption would be Non-Brahmin or Brahmin. The Canon, as other globally circulating elements, would be used by the Brahmin as a way of shoring up nationalist articulations of *dharma* against its international critique unless the Non-Brahmin could redeem the Canon otherwise.

### *ROUSSEAU THE UNTOUCHABLE: "WHATEVER NATION HE WENT TO…MADE ORDERS FOR HIS ARREST"*

Given his own investments in "self-respect," we should not be surprised to find Rousseau being read by Non-Brahmins. As Rousseau writes, "Self-respect is a natural feeling which leads every animal to look to its own preservation, and which, guided in man by reason and modified

by compassion, creates humanity and virtue."[597] Such remarks may have suggested that Rousseau was interested in the priority of "self-respect" over *matam*, the word often rendering and rendered as "religion," in order to create *dharma*, a word sometimes rendering and rendered as "religion" but also suggesting something broader like "virtue" or "morality." We saw in the 1911 Ashe case how Brahminical demands for *swaraj* positioned themselves against both religion-hating *atheist* and carcass-eating pariah *untouchable*: "The command of God is to obtain Swaraj, for that is the chief key for the protection of Dharma. He who does not intend to acquire Swaraj…is an atheist and a hater of religion"[598] where such Swaraj can by achieved only by "Giving up the false attachment to this [human] body which is not liked even by such a Pulaya (carcass-eater) [sic]," which are not even "covet[ted]" by "the Pulayan (pariah or low caste man) [sic]" who is willing to eat "cattle."[599] An interest in the priority of self-respect, committed first to the preservation of the body through which humanity and virtue is possible, is clearly at odds with the priority of Swaraj, committed first to relinquishing attachment to the body through which the protection of Dharma is possible. We would expect, then, the Non-Brahmin to redeem Rousseau as a fellow atheist opposed to *matam*, a pariah outcaste, an untouchable ally.

This is just what we find.

Non-Brahmins turned to Rousseau in the mid-1930s to shore up their vision of revolution to defeat Brahminism in the world. Some shored up this vision through more general claims. For example, one S. Lakshimirataṉ Pārati described Rousseau as the "Sage" [*āciriyar*] who said "Man is born free [*cutantiram*, "liberty"], but everywhere he is in chains."[600] This Sage established freedom as the "natural" [*iyaṛkai*] "upside" [*talai*, "head"] and "slavery" as the unnatural "down" [*kīḻ*: base], thereby revealing how India and its relations of *jāti*, premised on slavery over freedom, were "upside-down" [*talaikīḻ*]. This encouraged Non-Brahmins to seek "another great revolution" [*maṛṛu oru puraṭci*] not "to destroy the world [*ulaku*]" but "to raise the upside of the upside down world and establish again in the world love [*aṉpu*] and knowledge [*aṛivu*]."

This vision of revolution in the world was very interested in Rousseau's relationship to *matam* [religion] and the power of ideas to make change. His relationship to *matam* was one of opposition, an opposition that rendered Rousseau as untouchable pariah. The first among such readings was written by the Non-Brahmin S. Said Ahmed in a short article titled "Rousseau's Biography."[601] S. Said Ahmed recounts the importance of people and ideas in "creating great intra-country confusion [*uḷnāṭṭu kuḻappam*] so as to make slaves free [*viṭutalai*]." He writes "by the great power [*apāracakti*] of ideas [*eṇṇaṅkaḷ*] the condition of people has changed upside-down [*talaikīḻ*]"—naming examples such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in America along with the role of Marx in Russia, Sun-Yat Sen in China, Jaglul Pasha in Egypt, and someone transliterated as

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[597] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses*, trans. GDH Cole (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1950): 223. I cite this particular translation, for it is likely through its translator GDH Cole that Self-Respecters themselves encountered Rousseau. We know, for example, that GDH Cole, along with Harold Laski, circulated widely among Non-Brahmins at the time. For one of the few "bibliographies" of a Self-Respect article with Cole and Laski cited, see the bi-lingually titled Tōḻar Ma. Ciṅkāravēlu, "Bolshevism, Fascism, and Nazism. *Pōlshivisam, Pāsisam, Nāsisam*" in *Kuṭi Aracu,* 6 August 1933. Cole here translates *amour de soi* as "self-respect," a translation that in and of itself may raise questions. Such questions, though productive, are beyond the scope of this disseration. My thanks to Wendy Brown for raising this question.

[598] Ashe Case (1912): 43.

[599] Ashe Case (1912): 44.

[600] S. Lakshimirataṉ Pārati, MA, BL, "*Talaikīḻ* [Upside-Down]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 1:4 (August 1935): 35, 40.

[601] Maturai Es. Saitu Ahmatu, "*Rūsōviṉ Caritam* [Rousseau's History]," *Puraṭci* 18 February 1934: 6.

*Tivāv Rāvāl* of Ireland—before turning to Rousseau: "The fire Rousseau lit burned ablaze [*koḻuntu*], shone [*eri*], created a fever [*kotippu*] in the minds of the people, and because of it a great revolution [*puraṭci*] appeared in France." The target of Rousseau's ideas are established in S. Said Ahmed's discussion of the world which Rousseau turned "upside-down," a world dominated by *matam*:

> Before Rousseau was born, Christian *matam* craze [*pittam*] dominated in the countries of the European continent. The atrocities [*akkiramaṅkaḷ*] committed by Catholic Christians in the name of *matam* cannot be counted. What[ever] the Pope who is the *matam* Guru and other small priests [*pātirikaḷ*] did [*iṭṭatu*] was law [*kaṭṭaḷai*]. This was not enough; Kings and Rich-People harassed [*imci*: i.e. "himsa," violence] the poor-people. People lost [*iḻa*] all liberties [*cutantiraṅkaḷ*], were submerged in superstitions [*mūṭanambikkaikaḷ*], and were spending their time as humiliated to slaves and as low-people to enemies.

Rousseau's opposition to *matam* was not only a defining feature of his life, but a feature that rendered him as atheist and demon—terms associated with the casted out outcaste. S. Said Ahmed writes of Rousseau, "whatever nation he went to, that nation's kings [*aracarkaḷ*] and priests [*pātirikaḷ*] made orders [*uttaravu*] for his arrest"[602] and the "Christian *matam* Gurus" "conferred upon Rousseau the title of atheist [*nāstikaṉ*], drove him out as a demon [*avēcam*] opposed to the common people, and made him leave."[603] Said Ahmed concludes that, despite or rather because of his resistance to *matam*, Rousseau's "ideas continue to be high" and "have spread throughout the whole world."

Another article, titled "Jean Jacques Rousseau or He Who Gave Political Rights to All: Society is a Shackle—*Matam* is a Poison" by one K. V. S. Vas, extends Said Ahmed's biographical sketch while adding three short sections that provide "the flavor [*rasam*] of his political philosophies [*araciyal tattuvaṅkaḷ*], which have been reproached [*ēcupaṭṭu*] by many [with]in the bound[s] [*varaiyil*] of a great many countries."[604] The first section looks at Rousseau's state of nature—*uṉṉata vāḻkkai* or "eminent life"—in which an individual lives happily "as if in a dream" alone in the wilderness, ending when "men meet each other face to face." This meeting "destroys the separate-life [*taṉivāḻkkai*]," "reduces peacefulness," "destroys [the natural] equality [of living separately] and [subsequently] the comparison-of-value [*tāratammiyam*]—high low, strong weak—was created [*uṇṭāyiṟṟu*]" and thereby "begins the quality of slavery." The second section discusses the recover of equality, not by returning to the state of nature, but through political means. Titled *taṟkāla vāḻkkai*, "modern life," Vas discusses the creation of the "the social contract [*camūka oppantam*]" in order to destroy war [*caṇtai*] and establish peace, whereby the people form a "Sovereignty" [*carvātikāram*: lit, "All Authority"] "to punish [*taṇṭikka*] those who misbehave [*naṭakkāviṭil*]" subject to "the General Will [*potu apippirāyam*: lit, "Common Intention"] of the people."[605] The third section further discusses the General Will as generating equal rights [*urimai*]. It claims "Everyone is equal by birth. In

[602] Referring to the reaction in France to the publication of *The Social Contract* and *Émile, or Education* (1762).
[603] Referring to the events at Môtiers, in which Protestant ministers organized a campaign against Rousseau, driving Rousseau from Môtiers. Obviously, *naastikaṅ* is more akin to "freethinker" than "atheist." The passages following, though including his brief stay at Île de Saint-Pierre, leave out Rousseau's trip to England with David Hume before returning to France.
[604] Tirucci Āciriyar Kē Vii Es. Vās BA (honours), "*Jīyaṉ Jākūs Rusō allatu Araciyal Urimaiyai Aṉaivarukkum Aḷitta Āṭṭavaṉ: Camūkamē Vilaṅku—Matamē Visham* [Jean Jacques Rousseau or He Who Gave Political Rights to All: Society a Shackle—Religion a Poison]," *Puraṭci*, 3 June 1934: 5, 15-16. This quote is from p. 15.
[605] Vās, "*Jīyaṉ Jākūs Rusō*" (1934): 15.

Government everyone should have the same kind of rights." As Vas continues, "If one spoke in a nutshell [about the General Will], in a Government formed considering the welfare [*cēmam*] of the common people, there should be the same kinds of rights for all."[606]

Vas, along with his fellow Non-Brahmins, were particularly concerned with the supplement that arises in the encounter between men that destroys natural equality. What is the ideational sphere, the conceptual field, the relational configuration which provides the home for such "comparison-of-value" that provides the place for the hierarchy of "high low, strong weak" to take place? For Rousseau, this sphere was *matam*. "Nature lovingly [*aṉpuṭaṉ*] provides the material food required by a lone man. He is without the affection [*pācam*] called desire [*ācai*]. There is no vanity [*mamatai*] called highness. There is no shame [*avamāṉam*] called he-that-is-low [*taḻntavaṉ*]. He does not have the disposition to feel jealousy [*poṛāmai*] upon seeing another. Why does he have worry? Why [such] sorrow [*tuṉpam*]?"[607] The answer, which provides the basis for "the community law of society [*camūkak kaṭṭuppaṭu*]," is *matam*. Such *matam* is opposed to relationships inflected by filial love that are the only means by which men can truly be independent:

> *Matam* is the affliction [*iṉṉal*] that has reduced human life…That which is called *matam* is a support [*muṭṭukkaṭṭai*] cultivating a distortion [*paṅkam*] of men's independence [*cuyēccai*]; we need to dispose of these terrible ideas [*eṇṇaṅkaḷ*]. Establishing the feeling that there is nothing other than love [*aṉpu*], everyone should live like the children of the same mother—it is this that is Rousseau's philosophy.

It was such "innovative [*nūtaṉaṉ*] opinions" that "supported a kind of new feeling among the people and this kind of innovative feeling was the fundamental reason for the French Great Revolution."[608] Vas, who began his article with a discussion of Aristotle and the claim that "Revolution is the instrument of change,"[609] left little doubt in the mind of the Non-Brahmin reader about just what the object of Rousseau's worry and the obstacle to revolution was: *matam*, an object shared by the Non-Brahmin.

Rousseau, a figure in global circulation, was not only being read for Non-Brahminism but also for Brahminism. As an example of a Brahmin reading of Rousseau, I turn to a peer of EVR's in the Madras Presidency, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), who, unlike EVR, had a career of world-wide prominence from Indian statesman to Oxford don, known largely in scholarly circles as an "ambassador between East and West" for his work on comparative philosophy and religion.[610] We encountered Radhakrishnan's discussion of spiritual orthodoxy as

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[606] Vās, "*Jīyaṉ Jākūs Rusō*" (1934): 16.
[607] Vās, "*Jīyaṉ Jākūs Rusō*" (1934): 16.
[608] Vās, "*Jīyaṉ Jākūs Rusō*" (1934): 16.
[609] Vās, "*Jīyaṉ Jākūs Rusō*" (1934): 5.
[610] Radhakrishnan is well known in the Euro-Atlantic for his work in comparative philosophy and religion, once claimed as the "ambassador between East and West" and additionally had a successful political career, serving, for example, as India's first Vice-President and second President. Educated at an Evangelicial Lutheran Mission School and at the prestigious Madras Christian College, Radhakrishnan would go on to secure a series of important academic appointments within India, and he spoke at places like the University of Chicago, Harvard University, and Oxford University—where he held the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics from 1936 to 1952. See Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed., *The Philosophy of S. Radhakrishnan*, (New York: Tudor, 1952): 282. Quoted in Halbfass: 251. He was arguably the most important 20th century English-speaking academic philosopher of Hinduism beginning with his "The Ethics of the Bhagavadigita and Kant" (International Journal of Ethics 21:4 (1911): 466-475, moving through his book *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), and including his

the primary mark of Indian thought and the subsequent dismissal of material heterodoxy in Chapter 6. However, when we look to his interpretation of Rousseau, we would find cause for Non-Brahmin alarm.

Like many Subcontinental thinkers, Radhakrishnan saw the fragile world of the 1930s as the product of overemphasizing the material at the expense of the spiritual: "The coming struggle is not so much between Fascism and Communism as between empires of material values, supported by organized religions and provincial patriotisms, and the sovereignty of spiritual ideals…A reborn living faith in spiritual values is the deepest need of our lives."[611] Yet the "deepest need of our lives" was not merely for spiritual values, on Radhakrishnan's account, but also for a more expansive approach to the world across East and West:

> If we are nurtured exclusively on the past of Europe or of Asia we cannot consider ourselves to be cultivated. The thought and experience of one-half of humanity cannot be neglected without peril. If we are to correct the narrowness resulting from a one-sided and exclusive preoccupation with either Eastern or Western thought, if we are to fortify our inner life with the dignity of a more perfect and universal experience, an understanding of each other's cultures is essential.[612]

Given this brief description of Radhakrishnan and the importance he gives to understanding other cultures, one would be surprised to find his use of Rousseau to be one at odds with the Non-Brahmin. Yet, as I suggest below, Radhakrishnan's investment in "spiritual values" demonstrated an investment in the very sort of *matam* Non-Brahmins struggled against.

Radhakrishnan delivered the 1926 Upton Lecture at Manchester College, Oxford. It was published the following year as *The Hindu View of Life*.[613] The text would become quite popular in the English speaking world, and was soon translated into German (1928)[614] and French (1929)[615] by figures nestled within familiar networks of theory's articulation in Europe. In the text, Radhakrishnan follows up with his earlier and since well-quoted claim that "Next to the category of reality, that of dharma is the most important concept in Indian thought,"[616] writing:

> Dharma is right action…Dharma formed from the [Sanskrit] root *dhṛ,* to hold, means that which holds a thing and maintains it in being. Every form of life, every group of men has its dharma, which is the law of its being. Dharma or virtue is conformity with the truth of things; adharma or

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influential co-edited volume *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952). For more on S. Radhakrishnan, see Dermot Killingley, "Radhakrishnan (1888-1975): First Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford" in *Asian Affairs*, vol. 20, issue 1, February 1989: 25-36.

[611] S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions & Western Thought* (2005 (1939)): 114.

[612] S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions & Western Thought* (2005 (1939)): 115.

[613] S. Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1988 (1927)).

[614] S. Radhakrishnan, *Die Lebensanschauung des Hindu,* trans. Hilko Wiardo Schomerus (Leipzig: JC Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1928). Prior to working in South India through the Leipziger Mission and cultivating an expertise in Tamil, the translator HW Schomerus (1879-1945) studied at the Evangelish-lutherishchen Mission in Leipzeg under the indologist Paul Deussen. Paul Deussen (1845-1919) is associated with the European "discovery" of Sanskrit and Hinduism, was founder of the Schopenhauer Society, and was friends with both Swami Vivekananda and Friedrich Nietzsche.

[615] S. Radhakrishnan, *L'Hindouisme et la vie*, trans. Paul Masson-Oursel (Paris: F. Alcan, 1929). The translator Paul Masson-Oursel (1882-1956) studied with Henri Bergson, Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, and the archeologist Alfred Foucher (who argued that Buddhist iconography in South Asia was influenced by the Greeks).

[616] Quoted in Halbfass, *India and Europe* (1988): 311. The quote itself is from 1923.

> vice is opposition to it. Moral evil is disharmony with the truth which encompasses and controls the world.[617]

The question for *dharma* then is: what defines such "group[s] of men"?

Radhakrishnan's answer is riven by the appeal of eugenics at the time which he in turn justifies through appeals to Hindu and European philosophy. "The question of nature *versus* nurture is still hotly debated. Democrats are quite certain that it is not blue blood or inherited traits that make for the superiority of the upper classes. The Hindu view, however, has the support of ancient Greek thought and modern science."[618] Allying himself with figures like Plato and Darwin in the belief that "eugenics rests today on somewhat safe and sound foundations," while disagreeing with "the views of Locke and Rousseau" and their "insistence on the natural equality of all men,"[619] Radhakrishnan emphasizes the power of "germ-plasm" and "chromosomes" and claims that "Hindu thinkers, perhaps through a lucky intuition or an empirical generalization, assumed the fact of heredity and encouraged marriages among those who [were] of approximately the same type and quality...We cannot make genius out of mediocrity or good ability out of inborn stupidity by all the aids of the environment."[620] Radhakrishnan's eugenic elitism dismisses a democracy grounded in the genetically inferior masses:

> The general character of a society is not always best expressed by the mass of its members. There exists in every community a natural elite, which better than all the rest represents the soul of the entire people, its great ideals, its strong emotions and its essential tendency. The whole community looks to them as their example. When the wick is ablaze at its tip, the whole lamp is said to be burning.[621]

Here, the worst fears of the Non-Brahmin are present in Radhakrishnan's rejection of Rousseau: the dismissal of the Non-Brahmin mass's self-respect in favor of the Brahmin elite's selves capable of self-rule. The wick's tip, and not the whole lamp, seems like the concern of *swaraj*. Radhakrishnan dismisses Rousseau for his insistence on equality, instead emphasizing a "general character of…society" perpetuating relationships between elite and masses, of the "high low, strong weak" that the Non-Brahmin saw as central to Rousseau's concern with "comparative-value" that needed to be remedied. Radhakrishnan, instead, gestures to harmony in the world, of a dharma which holds *matam* fast. One cannot ignore the gap between the above Non-Brahmin and Brahmin readings of Rousseau, between unknown Non-Brahmin figures like S. Lakshimiratan̲ Pārati, S. Said Ahmed and K. V. S. Vas on one side and the renown Brahmin Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan as "ambassador between East and West" on the other, between those who prioritized a self of self-respect and those who prioritized the self of self-rule. A globally circulating Euro-Atlantic theorist of self-respect like Rousseau cannot be extricated from the battle between Brahmin and Non-Brahmin, a battle waged on the terrain of thoughtful reflection upon lived experience to make claims about the world, theoretical claims, a battle over *matam*, a battle over the meaning and priority of *cuya-mariyātai*, a battle within the shared tradition of SubContinental Political Theory across long distance relationships.

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[617] Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (1988 (1927)): 56.
[618] Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (1988 (1927)): 72.
[619] Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (1988 (1927)): 72-73.
[620] Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (1988 (1927)): 73-74.
[621] Radhakrishnan *The Hindu View of Life* (1988 (1927)): 66.

### *NIETZSCHE AND THE TIRUKKUṚAḶ: "(BEYOND GOOD & EVIL)"*

The Non-Brahmin was dismissed as "an atheist and a hater of religion" by Brahminism's demand for *swaraj*. We might therefore suspect that the Non-Brahmin would have certain sympathies with the figure most associated with the godless in Europe, Nietzsche. If so, such sympathies would not have been easy to forge. It is not clear how much Nietzsche was circulating among Self-Respecters, but Nietzsche was certainly no egalitarian. His anti-egalitarian claims were often shored up with Brahminical references to the Aryan and favorable remarks regarding the "law of Manu" as "the most magnificent example of" "*breeding* a particular race and kind" that was "provided in Indian morality."[622] Nietzsche claims that this magnificent Brahminical breeding stood opposed to "the unbred human being, mish-mash man, the Chandala"—e.g. an untouchable community which is known in Tamil as *caṇṭāḷaṉ* that frequently featured in Self-Respecter concerns. Yet there are examples, however few, of Non-Brahmins reading Nietzsche sympathetically. Such readings are even more striking given the sentiments evident in Mission correspondence circulating in South India. These sentiments allied Nietzsche and the world-war fighting Germans, funneling anti-German rhetoric into a figure that explicitly allied himself with the Brahmin. Like with the interpretation of Rousseau above, we see again below the international comprehensive power of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of self-rule.

Above mention was made of Popley's and EVR's uses of the *Tirukkuṛaḷ*, an ancient moral treatise consisting of 1330 couplets that has long remained central to Tamil identity. The centrality of the text to Tamils was clear to the earliest Europeans. As Ziegenbalg, the Lutheran who served as the first Protestant missionary in India along the coast of current day Tamil Nadu, writes of the text around 1710:

> A book on morals in verse form, by its material not unlike the writings of Seneca. The Malabaris [e.g. Tamils] think very highly of it and it is indeed one of the most learned and edifying books found among them. High-class Malabaris often make it their handbook and whenever one enters into a discussion with them they are always ready to quote a few verses from it to prove the validity of their words. It is the habit of educated Malabaris to confirm and demonstrate everything with one or the other verse; to do so is considered a great art amongst them. Therefore such books are not just read but learnt by heart.[623]

Were there to be an effort to read Nietzsche in conversation with the *Tirukkuṛal*, such an effort not only would have been striking among Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters then, but would provide us with an indication of just *how* Nietzsche could synergistically engage the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of self-rule. We have an example of such an effort.

In March 1932 one S. Lakshimirataṉpārati published an article titled "*Oḻukkunūl,*" or "Moral Text," which provided the first—and perhaps only—explicitly Non-Brahmin use of unmistakably Nietzschean terms like "Superman" and "Beyond Good and Evil."[624] If we follow the convention of translating the Tamil term *aṛam* as *dharma,* then the bilingual subtitle of one

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[622] Friederich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 34

[623] Quoted in Albertine Gaur, "A Catalogue of B. Ziegenbalg's Tamil Library," *The British Museum Quarterly*, Vol 30, No ¾ (Spring 1966): 102.

[624] The article was published in two parts. S. Lakshimirataṉpārati, MA BL "*Oḻukkanūl* [Moral Text]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 13 March 1932: 5, 17. The second part comes with a translated subtitle: "*Oḻukkanūl: Aṛaneṛikaḷiṉ Āṛṛalumavaciyamum: Function of moral criterion," Kuṭi Aracu,* 20 March 1932: 8,14.

installment of the article ran, in Tamil, "The Capability and Necessity of the Way of Dharma," and then after a colon in English, "*Function of Moral Criterion*." At its most basic, the article justifies lying and focuses on two cases: first, lying to a vegetarian friend who requires medicine that contains meat, and second, lying to a lustful king regarding the whereabouts of a particular woman of *kaṛpu* ['fidelity'] that the king seeks.[625] These are paradigmatic examples of violating cultural norms in order to do the right; the article is looking for a way to justify such violations and thereby indicate a higher realm of justice. In both these cases, one is to ignore "the suffering [*tuṉpam*]" claimed to result from "the nurturing of falsity" and lie:

> for the sage [*ñāṉiyar*] (*Supermen*) [sic] is the one who goes beyond received excellence [*tiraṉ*] and taught-knowledge [*aṛivu*] and who goes beyond [*kaṭantu*]…the good and evil [*tiṁmai*] which happens one-after-the-other that confuses men in the life of the world (*Beyond good & Evil)*[626] [sic]. [He] is one who has received the great-truth [*pēruṇmai*] by which is understood that words such as pleasure [*iṉpam*], beauty [*aḻaku*], dharma [*aṛam*], and God [*kaṭavuḷ*] have the same meaning.[627]

The author is trying to redeem the term *ñāṉiyar*, traditionally referring to a wise philosopher or sage, with the Nietzschean idea of "Superman," and describes this Superman as able to go "Beyond good & Evil," that is, beyond the confusing sequence of affairs in the world. This beyond, for the author, means an appreciation of how other-worldly features, such as dharma and God, are synonymous with this-worldly features, like pleasure and beauty. Such claims would oppose *swaraj*, in so far as such *swaraj* required the sacrifice of the body, and thus pleasure and beauty, for the sake of *dharma* and God.

To illustrate his point about "Superman" going "Beyond good & Evil," Lakshimiratan̲pārati cites a couplet from the *Tirukkuṛaḷ*.

> *aṛattāṉ varuvatē iṉpamaṛ ṛellām*
> *puṛatta pukaḻum il* (4-39)
>
> Pleasure is only that which comes from dharma, all else
> is outside [dharma] and without praise.[628]

There of course arise some philosophical complications and confusions here. For example, surely there are forms of pleasure that most would claim to fall outside the moral bounds of *dharma*. How do we distinguish these non-*dharma* pleasures from the true pleasures that come

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[625] Lakshimiratan̲pārati, "*Oḻukkanūl,"* 13 March 1932: 5.

[626] As with the use of many Roman characters in the Tamil journals of the Self-Respect Movement, capitalization and spelling may appear off to the native speaker. I am sure the same goes for my Tamil transliterations to a native Tamil speaker.

[627] Lakshimiratan̲pārati, "*Oḻukkanūl,"* 20 March 1932: 14. The ellipses removes the phrase "the pleasures and suffering"; the contradiction between the Superman going beyond pleasure and suffering, yet acknowledging that pleasure, beauty, dharma, and God are one, go beyond the scope of this essay. By pleasure in the first instance, he means going beyond the "pleasure" of telling the truth and the "suffering" of "the nurturing of falsity"; by pleasure in the second instance, he means the happiness one feels being allied with dharma and beauty (sensuality?) in the world.

[628] HA Popley translated this couplet simply as: " Only the good is fit to do / The bad is ever fit to shun." HA Popley, *The Sacred Kural* (1958 (1931)): 39.

from *dharma*? Certainly, such claims would trouble *swaraj*'s ascetic insistence, but it may not be clear how far that will get us.

The point here, however is not *how* Non-Brahmins resolved issues of "Supermen" and going "Beyond good & Evil," but *that* there are instances of them doing so—and doing so through paradigmatic Tamil texts like the *Tirukkuṛaḷ*. Moreover, the possibilities within this Nietzsche for the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule is clear, even if we may question their usefulness. These instances indicate efforts to deploy self-respect to redeem features of SubContinental political theory, struggling even against the clearly Brahminical content of the claims of someone like Nietzsche in order to recover Non-Brahminical elements.

This effort at redemption is even more striking given the ways in which Nietzsche and the German had been circulating in South India—even before turning to the rise of Nazi Germany (which will feature prominently in Part V). It had been the *Brahmin*, and not the Non-Brahmin, in fact, that was invested in the German during WWI. Such investments are clear if we return to our astute observer of South Indian political and social developments, the Rev. H.A. Popley. Writing in a 1915 letter from his station at Erode, the missionary Popley is again excited about how "The Hindu community is talking of thorough reconstruction even to the throwing up of caste and idolatry" a "discussion going on as to the need or otherwise of Christ for India."[629] We see, as we saw before, how the Non-Brahmin appears as a vehicle for Christian concerns:

> At the same time an acute conflict is developing between Brahmin and non-Brahmin. The non-Brahmin believes that his day is drawing near and is determined not to allow the Brahmin to retain his supremacy. I am speaking of the South, of course. Many of the things which I have often wanted to say about the Brahmin dominance are now being said publicly by leading non-Brahmins...

EVR, a prominent rising figure in Erode, was circulating in these same circles. But Popley goes beyond "speaking of the South" as he notes the *international* dimensions of Brahminical efforts to comprehend the world of World War I:

> It is strange too, how the Brahmins have identified the fortunes of non-Christian religions with the Germans…Hinduism would be kindly treated by the Germans. These are the stories that are being spread by educated Brahmins. The victory of the allies has come to signify in the minds of many Indians, the victory of Christianity. Therefore quite a number of educated men privately express their hope in Germany's victory.

The Brahmin saw its world-wide ally in the German. At one level, of course, the Brahmin, as an agent of *swaraj* which was defined in opposition to British Raj, would quite reasonably see the German enemy of its British enemy as its friend. Yet we also must wonder about the appeal of the aggressively Brahminical sentiments expressed in Germany which we have seen, evident in Nietzsche's sympathies with the laws of Manu that were by no means peculiar to him, and which will come to a head during WWII.

Brahminism's international acts of comprehension could negotiate a globe of German vs. British. But the moving Indian masses of Christian Mission may have reason to be confused: why would two Christian countries be at war with one another? On the one hand, one of

[629] Popley to Lenwood, 11 March 1915, LMS, Box#26(1915-1919), Folder 1 (1915), SOAS.

Popley's friends and fellow LMS missionaries in the area, Gordon Matthews,[630] claims that Tamils understood the battle between the Allies and the Germans as *not* a fracture within Christendom, suggesting some Indian Christians knew who Nietzsche was: "I have been much relieved to discover to how great an extent the responsibility of the present war is realized to not be with Christ, but with Nietszsche, and the state historian Treitzschlee, with his military appendix Von Bernhardi. I think men realize that it is Christ vs Antichrist."[631] On the other hand, another fellow missionary in the region, Miss Crouch, witnessed greater confusion: "When it has been said to me (at the first) Was Germany not also a Christian nation I said No, she worshipped a great powerful God one who would help to make them a world power but they had nothing to do with Christ, they did not accept His teachings, and were not His followers."[632]

Taking all of these correspondences into consideration, we have a picture of a Brahmin-German-Antichrist-Nietzsche pitted against a non-Brahmin-British-Christ. If this was the common picture circulating among both Britishers and Indians in South India, then our sympathetic Non-Brahmin reading of Nietzsche above would, especially by the early 1930s, be shocking and seriously trouble this opposition. Such shock again draws our attention to the power of Non-Brahmin comprehension in its self-respect critique of self-rule, capable of reading against the grain, as it were.

Yet the German was not just an international imaginary—Germans were concrete. For one, the Germans provided concrete support to Indian nationalists, starting with the "Hindu-German Conspiracy" during World War I.[633] But, less obvious but no less important, Germans as Lutheran missionaries remained a powerful feature of the social landscape of South India since their arrival in 1708. More specifically, German Lutherans were a regular feature of Erode and neighboring towns. Miss Crouch in neighboring Salem, for example, is concerned that Lutherans are spreading German sympathies:

> We have our work cut out trying to make the poor ignorant folk understand some what about the war. There is a lot of pro-German feeling in this country, any way in the South. It must have been fostered by secret workers from Germany. It is difficult to believe that the German missionaries can keep from speaking against the British Raj, and in favour of their Kaiser. Years ago I remember what one of their leading missionaries said to us of the worship they paid the Kaiser. We have heard that a German missionary at [the Tamil hill station of] Kodai[kanal] lately preached to a large number of Indian Christians on that line.[634]

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[630] "Since last I wrote I have [spent time] with Popley and made his real acquaintance—hours more comforted none by than with anything since Oxford [sic]...He is a fine efficient energetic missionary—a veneer of Christianity over a solid basis of paganism—the finest combination in the world!" Gordon Matthews to Thompson, 28 May 1913 (Salem), LMS, Box #25(1912-1914), Folder (1912) Jacket B, SOAS. Matthews was ready to return to Europe as a soldier. Matthews to Lenwood, 18 March 1915, Box#26(1915-1919), Folder 1(1915), SOAS. The letter suggests that his family in India is the reason he does not return.

[631] Matthew to Lenwood, 29 October 1914 (Coimbatore), LMS Box#25(1912-1914), Folder 1914, Jacket B. SOAS. "Of course, I am careful not to pretend that the whole of the Antichrist has a…home in Germany."

[632] Miss Crouch to Lenwood, 2 December 1914 (Salem), LMS Box#25(1912-1914), Folder 1914, Jacket B, SOAS.

[633] For a recent text dealing with this controversy, see Maia Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar Movement Charted Global Radicalism and Attempted to Overthrow the British Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[634] Crouch to Lenwood, 16 September 1914, LMS, Box#25(1912-1914), Folder 1914, Jacket B, SOAS.

The Germans were not a far away force that could be imagined as Brahmin or Non-Brahmin, but had for centuries had a very concrete presence in South India.

The fact that there are examples of Non-Brahmins attempting to sympathetically read Nietzschean terms into the Self-Respect Movement through a central text like the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* is remarkable for at least two reasons. First, such reading marks a moment of departure and return, where Nietzsche, a figure who appropriated India with respect to texts like *Manu* and the untouchable *Tschandala*, is in turn reappropriated by Indians. Second, we see how underdetermined such return was, for Nietzsche could equally be appropriated and redeemed by the Brahmin as by the Non-Brahmin—and in fact redeemed in historically "Malabari" form. We saw further evidence of the availability of Euro-Atlantic canonical figures to such appropriation and redemption by Brahmin and Non-Brahmin alike with Rousseau. Such efforts suggest underlying political theory concerns whose study is central to an appreciation of SubContinental Political Theory. In particular, they suggest the powerful international scope of comprehension within the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. But these efforts to comprehend, to redeem, canonical figures like Rousseau and Nietzsche paled in comparison to efforts by Non-Brahmin members of EVR's Self-Respect Movement to comprehend, to redeem, one figure in particular. This figure helped Non-Brahmins theorize an entirely new kind of *dharma* which could bring about a world in which the self could live with *mariyātai*, not bound by the demands of indigeneity so important to Mission's three-selves self and Gandhi's national independence. This figure was Karl Marx.

# PART IV. FAITH: THE COMMUNIST RECOVERY OF THE TRUE DHARMA

In the last Part, Non-Brahmins in Tamil-speaking South India demonstrated their power of comprehension through locale (mass movement), region (India and Gandhi), and world (Mission and Canon). Such comprehension provides evidence of their self-respect critique of self-rule as well as efforts to redeem a wide constellation of elements to further that critique. This critique, at one level, centered on this-worldly feeling in opposition to other-worldly asceticism, emphasizing the recovery of the "true Hindu religion" that emphasized the material and equality against the spiritual and hierarchy. Such comprehension and redemption provides an important component of our shared tradition of SubContinental Political Theory. This tradition here turns from the feeling of *cuya-mariyātai* [self-respect] to a way to imagine a faith of *dharma*, the very element used by Brahminical forces to shore up the power of hierarchy in a demand for self-rule. Non-Brahmins would redeem *dharma* to shore up egalitarian possibilities in the world complementing self-respect's critique. Such redemption involved the Canonical figure of Marx.

How can we see Marx as a part of this shared tradition? One way involves a return to Mission. The Scudders were a family from upstate New York who, collectively across several generations, committed nearly a thousand years of missionary work in the Tamil-speaking South of India.[635] One Scudder, Dr. Ida Sophia Scudder, built the still regionally renown Christian Medical College and Hospital in the city of Vellore at which EVR himself died in 1973. Their experiences were of great interest to a neighboring man in upstate New York like Henry Lewis Morgan by the 1850s.[636] Morgan was interested in kinship relations among upstate New York's native American populations, and was desperate to know if the theories he was generating based on this population could be extended to other non-European peoples. The Scudders were there to provide some insight. Correspondence like that from Henry Martyn Scudder[637] claiming "The terms of relationship which I sent you are reliable, for…in preparing for the Press an abridgement of a large Tamil Grammar by…[the German-born missionary C.T.E.] Rhenius [1790-1838], I went over the list of terms in his appendix…in conjunction with one of the best native scholars in the Tamil country"[638] helped to provide a comparative framework for Morgan's scholarship—scholarship that, in hindsight, is considered the birth of the field of Anthropology.

Henry Lewis Morgan's work on "primitive" peoples at the time was of great interest to two men exploring ways to ground a critique of capitalism in communist practices: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Engels would write that "in his own way" Lewis Henry Morgan

[635] See also Dorothy Jealous Scudder, *A Thousand Years in Thy Sight: The Story of the Scudder Missionaries of India* (New York: Vantage Press, 1984).
[636] For more, see Thomas R. Trautman and Karl Sanford Kabelac, *The Library of Lewis Henry Morgan* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1994).
[637] Periyar would pass away in the hospital built by his niece, Ida Sophia Scudder. See also Scudder, *A Thousand Years in Thy Sight* (1984).
[638] Henry Martyn Scudder, letter to Lewis Henry Morgan, 31 August 1859, "Correspondences", Lewis Henry Morgan Papers, University of Rochester, Rush Rhees Library.

"discovered afresh…the materialistic conception of history discovered by Marx." Marx's notes on Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1877) would provide the basis for Engels's *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.[639] Beyond Marx's better known journalistic discussions of British India from a long distance away, there is perhaps, however small, a bit of a shared tradition across the Tamil-speaking South and Marx.

And there would be more than a bit of Marx in Tamil. Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters provided the first Tamil translation of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1931. They were, however, not looking towards an ancient past as much as an international future. Though very much interested in a critique of capitalism, Self-Respecters were also committed to a critique of Brahminism and its *swaraj* priority. For "communism" to provide this critique—one that did not dismiss material concerns but which could envelop them in relations of high and low *per se*—Marxism needed to redeem and be redeemed by *dharma*. I argue that Marx's redemption in a new form of *dharma*, an equal-*dharma*, further inscribed the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule in Subcontinental political theory.

## CHAPTER 10. BHUTAMS OF MARX AND THE MOVEMENT OF SELF-RESPECTERS

The role of Marxism in India has often been understood as part of a process of "Europeanization," an instance of Continental theoretical universalism threatening Subcontinental cultural particularity. Such understandings were particularly acute at the end of the 20th century during our moment of rising interest in "non-Western" political theory. For example, shortly after introducing the field of comparative political theory,[640] Fred Dallmayr claimed with respect to India that "in its bent toward secularist universalism, Marxist analysis rides roughshod over and thus homogenizes local experience and traditions by subjecting them to a global design...strip[ping] oppressed people of their cultural memories just when they are most needed as points of resistance."[641] Scholars affiliated with *Subaltern Studies* at the time would have agreed. Gyan Prakash wrote that in India, "Marxists" have "universalized Europe's historical experience" rooted in ideologies of "modernity and progress" by dismissing as "'backward' ideologies of caste and religion" and thus have a "debatable" ability to represent "the history of the masses."[642] Dipesh Chakrabarty shares Dallmayr's and Prakash's concerns. He declares that "Marxism" is part of "an intellectual heritage" "now global" of "European thought and history" which includes concepts that "entail an unavoidable—and in a sense indispensable—universal and secular vision of the human," and yet, by severing "the relationship between thought and modes of human belonging" and thereby dismissing "particular ways of being-in-the-world," such heritage means that "[g]ods, spirits, and other 'supernatural' forces can claim no agency in our [Indian] narratives."[643] In short, there has been concern over Marxism in India as Europeanization, the idea that the "particular" people of India (the masses with cultural memories, caste, religion, and narratives of supernatural agency) were being erased rather than

[639] From Eleanor Burke Leacock, "Introduction" to Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (London: Lawerence & Wishart, 1972), 7.
[640] Fred Dallmayr, "Toward a Comparative Political Theory," *The Review of Politics* 59, 3 (1997).
[641] Fred Dallmayr, *Alternative Visions; Paths in the Global Village* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998): 235.
[642] Gyan Prakash, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism", *American Historical Review,* vol. 99, No 5 (Dec 1994): 1475-1490.
[643] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000): 4; 254-255, 73.

expressed by "universalizing" Marxist articulations originating in Europe (marked by the secular, modern, progressive, and indispensable).

In this one-Chapter Part, we further trouble this concern over Europeanization, turning to Marxism in India by attending to a particular encounter, arguing against a relationship of threat and instead for a relationship of synergy with universalism. In 1931, the Self-Respect Movement [*Cuya-Mariyātai Iyakkam*] published the first Tamil translation of *The Communist Manifesto*. The term "communism" was translated as "*samadharma*" or "equal-dharma"—a fact often missed in scholarship on 20th century Tamil politics.[644] On first blush, the use of dharma to translate communism may seem peculiar. As we have seen, many presume an opposition between the secular universalism of Europe associated with "communism" and the particular religiosity of India one could associate with "dharma." How in the world could they be used to translate one another? This Chapter attempts to provide an answer to that question, not through sophisticated turns to familiar theoretical investigations removed from our event of concern, but through a detailed look at the context and text of the *Samadharma Manifesto* itself. I focus on both the translation of "communism" as *samadharma* and its "spectre" as *bhutam*.[645] I argue that *samadharma* was an attempt to wrestle with issues of equality and difference. I argue that the *bhutam* provides a figure through which we can think about concerns for justice in acts of encounter that bring the outside-within and the related troubling of conceptual boundaries; we have already encountered the *bhutam* in Chapter 6's discussion of Meenakshipuram. Furthermore, I suggest that the *Samadharma Manifesto* provides another example of, and invites us to again consider the importance of attending carefully to, efforts that forge allies elsewhere in struggles to share in shared struggle—efforts which constitute the shared tradition of Subcontinental Political Theory across long distance relationships. These efforts emphasize the synergies that come from being together rather than the threats imagined by being apart. Such efforts, I suggest, should invite us to move away from popular articulations of the plural and the multiple, such as those which arise in many discussions of postcolonialism or multiculturalism, and instead move us towards visions which capture the permeabilities and malleabilities that bring us closer even when, perhaps especially when, we seem so far away. And it is through,

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[644] Much of the area studies literature translates *samadharma* simply as "equality" rather than "equal-*dharma*." Doing so eliminates the concern with *dharma* and, furthermore, makes the Self-Respect Movement amenable to liberalism rather than communism. For such examples of *samadharma* as "equality" see: Christopher Jaffrelot, *India's Silent Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003): 170; WB Vasantha Kandasamy, Florentin Smarandache and K Kandasamy. *Fuzzy and Neutrosophic Analysis of EVR's Views on Untouchability* (Phoenix: Hexis, 2005): 54; Gopal Guru and Anuradha Chakravarty, "Who Are the Country's Poor" in *Social Movements in India: Poverty, Power, and Politics*, ed. Raka Ray and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein (Landham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 145; Kalpana Kannabiran, "A Cartography of Resistance" in *The Situated Politics of Belonging*, ed. Nira Yuval-Davis, Kalpana Kannabiran, and Ulrike Vieten (London: Sage, 2006), 59. All these claims about *samadharma* rely on a single text, *Towards a Non-Brahmin Millenium* (Calcutta: Samya, 1996). Yet the text's authors, V. Geetha and SV Rajadurai, are far more nuanced in their discussion of *samadharma* than those who refer to them suggest.

[645] This essay involves both translation (from English to Tamil) and transliteration (from English to Romanized Tamil, or from Tamil to Romanized Sanskrit). Such translations and transliterations hope to make for easier reading, but, as one can imagine, they also serve to close down debates about such translations and transliterations for the sake of the argument at hand. Such translations from Romanized Tamil to English include: *jāti* (caste); *matam* (religion); *aṛikkai* (manifesto); *cuya-mariyātai* (self-respect); *swaraj* (self-rule). Such transliterations from Romanized Tamil to simplified Romanized Sanskrit include: *camatarmam* (*samadharma*); *pūtam* (*bhutam*); *cuyarājyam (swaraj)*. Deserving particular attention are the terms "caste" and "religion"; the absence of such attention is one of the casualties of this paper, its unfortunate collateral damage.

and perhaps only through, these efforts that we can appreciate the *bhutam* of *samadharma*, even as, I hope, the *bhutam* of *samadharma* helps us appreciate these efforts.

This Chapter involves three areas of discussion. The first area considers *samadharma*-as-communism. I argue that we see in this embrace of Marxism an effort to forge allies elsewhere in order to demand justice at home. The second considers what is lost when not attending carefully to such embrace. I argue that the British, caught within the horizons of a set of worries, missed an opportunity to see broader concerns with equality that fused issues at home and abroad. The third considers the *bhutam* as spectre. I argue, drawing upon examples across the two thousand year old literary and philosophical tradition of Tamil, that the *bhutam* was invested with concerns for justice and the crossing of borders, serving to illustrate the concerns of *samadharmavatis* more broadly. I conclude by offering *samadharma*, the importance of careful attention in order to go beyond approaches illustrated by the colonial British, and the figure of the *bhutam* as further points of engagement with SubContinental Political Theory.

## FORGING ALLIES

Self-Respect needed to provide a critique of Self-Rule that was not simply its obverse of British Rule. To get out the binary of independence and dependence, Non-Brahmins again gestured to world wide forms of interdependence. By the late 1920s, after EVR's break with Gandhi, a search for further articulations of this critique became more desperate. At that time, a term began to appear frequently on the pages of the Self-Respect Movement's flagship weekly, *Kuṭi Aracu*, in order to imagine this solution. That term was *samadharma*. Perhaps the most direct relationship between Self-Respect and *samadharma* was first provided in an article published in 1928. Yet, despite its directness, the article's author relates Self-Respect and *samadharma* in a way that seems paradoxical. On the one hand, the "Self-Respect Movement" is associated with the achievement of unity by *destroying* differences universally, e.g. with the need "to condemn religion [*matam*]" and "to courageously drive out and beat customs which, from time immemorial, have been creating divisions—such as caste [*jāti*], community [*kulam*], and clan [*kōttiram*], etc.—because of which society is not united."[646] On the other hand, Self-Respect is associated with *samadharma*, which in fact *preserves* differences and particularity through relations of equality,

> This Self-Respect Movement...descends into the sector of social reform,...drives and beats out the [quality of] high [and] low which is thought to result from birth among people [e.g. caste], gives a hand and lifts up those who hunger as a class which has been oppressed by government law, religion, and society for a great while, makes known the cunning life of those in a community [i.e. the Brahmins] who are thought by many as a high community...and has appeared in order to spread samadharma which [means] that all those born as men are equals regardless of custom, religion, or caste.

Self-respect eliminates differences of caste and religion as obstacles to unity, yet self-respect spreads the principle of *samadharma* that is predicated on the persistence of differences (e.g. caste and religion) in relations of equality and the subsequent elimination of hierarchy ("high low"). If the Self-Respect Movement was trying to provide a critical alternative to the opposition between British Raj and *Swaraj*, and if *samadharma* was a name for that alternative,

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[646] Rā. Caurirājaṉ (from Paṭṭukkōṭṭai), "*Cuyamariyātai Iyakkam: Amaippum Ataṉ Avaciyam* [The Self-Respect Movement: Its Formation and Necessity]," *Kuṭi Aracu,* 19 August 1928: 6. [hereafter: *KA* + day-month-year]

then emancipation was to be achieved by maintaining difference through relations of equality which, somehow, expressed the elimination of difference in a drive for unity. The question, then, is: how can Self-Respect, which destroys differences (such as those of caste and religion) to achieve unity, spread *samadharma*, which preserves differences (such as those of caste and religion) through relations of equality?

*Samadharma* here can be read as inhabiting the same liminal space as we saw *cuya-mariyātai* as "self-respect" inhabiting in Part III. As we saw then, *cuya-mariyātai* was neither colonial nor national, neither foreign nor indigenous. Instead, it was between, produced on and through the *mariyātai* or "boundary" itself, constituting a feeling of being in the world, this world, together as human, and drew from the wide world its own materials for articulation. With *samadharma* we bear witness to the same process, whereby the world itself become the resource for imagining a concern at home, *dharma*. This bringing from the world to redeem a new form of *dharma* in turn returns us to that world, for it is in the redemption of Marx and Engels, and the international possibilities of communism, that *samadharma* finds its most pressing articulation.

The *Samadharma Manifesto* was published serially in *Kuṭi Aracu* from 4 October 1931 to 1 November 1931. Though the translators were anonymous, the translation featured an introduction signed by EVR himself. The dates of its publication suggest that the translation was a challenge to nationalist *Swaraj*, for this was the very period in which the monumental Second Round Table conference discussing the possibility of Indian independence was taking place in London.[647] Furthermore, the translation was incomplete, likely resulting from the fact that EVR and S. Ramanathan, another figure central in the Self-Respect Movement, left for Soviet Russia and Europe that December in order to learn from travels abroad.[648] But perhaps more pressing than these contextual events was a textual one: the decision to translate "communism" in terms of *dharma* rather than property.

The translation of communism in terms of *dharma*, the choice of "*samadharma*" to translate "communism," could not have been unintentional, neither the whim of the moment when pen met paper nor the over-determined product of an impoverished language without alternatives. Transliteration was a very popular way of expressing "communism" in Tamil script during the 1930s; indeed, though absent in the title of the first installment of the *Samadharma Manifesto*, all subsequent installments bear a cascading heading in which both a transliterated "*kamyūṉisam*" (communism) and "*sōshiyalisam*" (socialism) preceded the title "*Samadharma Manifesto*."[649] Furthermore, a common way of rendering "communism" into the Tamil language, as opposed to mere transliteration into Tamil script, was through the word "*potuvuṭaimai*," "common-property." For example, Self-Respecters often described the principle

[647] The complex issues of representation involved at the Second Round Table conference are beyond the scope of this paper. For one recent and related discussion, see Shabnum Tejani, "Reflections on the Category of Secularism in India: Gandhi, Ambedkar, and the Ethics of Communal Representation, c. 1931" in Needham and Rajan (eds), *Crisis of Secularism in India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007): 45-65.

[648] The gloss of the last words of the translation was followed by a promise unfulfilled: "With this ends the first part; the second part will come hereafter." KA 1-11-1931: 18. EVR & S. Ramanathan departed 13 December "to make their all-Europe continental tour." KA 13 -12-1931, 9. The tour had been discussed since February in order to give the leaders of EVR's non-Brahmin, Self Respect Movement an opportunity to learn from seeing "England, Russia, and other foreign countries at least once" (*Nāṭārkula Mittiraṉ* 16-2-1931 as quoted in Vē. Āṉaimuttu, *Periyāriṉ Ayalnāṭṭup Payaṇak Kuṛippu* [*Periyar's Foreign Country Travel Notes*] (Ceṉṉai: Periyār Nūl Veḷiyiiṭṭakam, 1997), p. xvii).

[649] KA: 11-10-1931, 5; 18-10-1931, 3; 25-10-1931, 3; 1-11-1931, 6.

of Soviet Russia as *potuvuṭaimai*, and it would be difficult to imagine that they meant something other than "communism."[650]

We can appreciate the use of *dharma* rather than "property" to translate "communism" by looking at another prominent communist at the time from South India, a man named Singaravelu Chettiar.[651] In his President's Address at the First Indian Communist Conference—held in the North Indian city of Kanpur, the "Manchester of the East," from 24-25 December 1925—Singaravelu claimed that communism would resolve inequalities based on caste and religion, namely "untouchability," because communism was singularly economic, and seemed to equate such Communism with *Swaraj*:

> It should be clearly understood that, from the standpoint of Communism, this question of untouchability is purely an economical problem…With the advent of Swaraj…social and religious disabilities will fall of themselves. Communists have neither caste nor creed nor religion…The question of untouchability is essentially associated with [the] economic dependence of the vast mass of these Indians. No sooner their economic dependence is solved, the social stigma of untouchability is bound to disappear…[652]

Singaravelu seems to suggest here that *potuvuṭaimai* should translate "Communism," entailing the prioritization of Self-Rule, the automatic elimination of difference following Self-Rule, and the primacy of the economic.[653]

EVR himself felt quite differently about "communism." As he claims in 1926, "Self-Rule is not necessary for a man without Self-Respect. Yet Self-Respect is necessary for a man without Self-Rule,"[654] thereby suggesting a strong disagreement with Singaravelu's investment in the priority of "the advent of Swaraj [Self-Rule]" and subsequent automatic resolutions. As EVR would put it in 1930, the "duty" of Self-Respecters is to point out how "the poor people and the degraded people attaining independence or *swaraj* is not the attaining of victory."[655] Self-Respecters were instead deeply concerned with something supplemental to the economic. EVR writes earlier in 1931: "even though most of capital and resources go to and are gathered among high-caste people such as Brahmins as well as among money-dealers, it is apparent that envy is by far greater for those who are called high-caste people."[656] There is something beyond property which efforts to remedy inequalities of wealth must address. EVR suggests there are means "to destroy the way of the high caste and the wealthy" in the world by disaggregating while relating issues of social hierarchy and material wealth: "There is not the slightest doubt

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[650] See, for example, N.A. "*Rushya Mātarkaḷ: Āṇ Peṇ Camattuva Nilaimai*" [Russian Women: The Condition of Male-Female Equality] KA 10-11-1929: 13. See also EVR "*Caināvum, Potuvuṭaimaiyum*" ["China and 'Communism'"] in *Pakuttaṛivu*, 9-9-1934: 4.

[651] For more details about this figure, see K. Murugesan, *Singaravelu: First Communist in South India* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1975). His articles began to feature in *Kuṭi Aracu* just months before the publication of *The Samadharma Manifesto*, suggesting that he may have influenced the translation's publication.

[652] M. Singaravelu [Chettiar], "The First Indian Communist Conference 1925: President's Address" (BN Press, Madras: n.d.): pp 5-6. Institutional Collections #27, NMML, Delhi.

[653] Singaravelu's contributions to *Kuṭi Aracu*, which begin in 1931, suggest this material translation. See, for example, Tōl̲ar Ma. Ciṅkāravēlu, "*Potuvuṭaimaiyum Matamum*" [Common-Property and Religion], KA 23-8-1931: 3,18.

[654] KA 24-1-1926: 6.

[655] "*Nākar Kōvilil Tiru. E. Ve. Irāmacāmiyāriṅ Camatarma Coṛpol̲ivu* [Mr. EV Ramacami's Samadharma Speech in Nagarkovil]," KA 21-9-1930: 8.

[656] KA 4-1-1931: 8.

that, if one wishes to bring about a condition of peace and tranquility generally for all in the world, it is only" through the twin paths of "*samadharma* and the principle of *potuvuṭaimai.*" Struggles for equal-*dharma* and common-property are allied, but not synonymous, efforts. It may then appear that *samadharma* and *potuvuṭaimai* are distinct yet cooperating possible renderings of "communism" in the Self-Respect attempt to bring about the social conditions required for the realization of a sense of freedom or justice: "whether it be for today's social reform principle, caste destruction principle, Self-Respect principle, the principle asking for *swaraj*, or the full independence principle, for all these things, at the basis is this *samadharma-potu[v]uṭaimai* principle."

Despite their relationship, EVR's introduction to the *Samadharma Manifesto* provides compelling evidence that, when *one* term had to be chosen to render the "communism" of Marxism, it was definitively *samadharma* and not *potuvuṭaimai*. The very first sentence runs "It is a truth known to all that there have been agitations and political regimes in the name of *samadharma*, *potuvuṭaimai dharma* in Russia, Spain, China and a few other places in the contemporary world."[657] But aside from this initial invocation, *potuvuṭaimai* (here as kind of *dharma*!) does not reappear in the "Introduction." Instead, "*samadharma uṇarcci*," the "feeling" or "fervor" of *samadharma*, becomes the object whose history EVR describes for the Tamil reader. This history includes a broader "*Samadharma* Movement," the 1847 "*Samadharma* Congress" in London, and the acts of *samadharmavatis* [*samadharma*-ists] more generally, including the "*Samadharma* Revolution [*puraṭci*]" in France during 1848.[658]

"Communism," while not divorceable from concerns over property, decisively focused on *dharma* for Self-Respecters. But why incorporate "*dharma*" into such a translation at all? This question is important given that "*Dharma* Raj" (the "Rule of *Dharma*") and *Sanatana Dharma* (the "Eternal *Dharma*") were often used synonymously with the very demand for Self-Rule advocated by Gandhi's Congress that the Self-Respect Movement was questioning. Why associate with a term which framed one's opposition? Furthermore, Non-Brahmins, at least at times, were clear that caste hierarchy and *dharma* were related—worrying that "…in whichever caste one is born, one should act according to that *dharma*…"[659] Thus, passages such as the following in EVR's "Introduction" –

> But among the qualities opposing the Samadharma feeling in the world, there has been an important difference between other nations and India. In other countries only one matter is considered important. That is, capitalist (rich people)—worker (poor). But, because high caste-person, low caste-person is plentiful and of priority in India it has been protecting the philosophy of rich-poor like a fortress.[660]

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[657] KA 4-10-1931, 3. Anaimuthu's republication of the *Samadharma Manifesto*'s first installment of 4 October 1931 (which, however, partial, is the only reproduction available) mistakenly excludes "China" from the first line of EVR's introduction. Vē. Āṉaimuttu (ed), *Periyār Ī. Ve. Rā. Cintaṉaikaḷ-Thought of Periyar EVR* (Tiruccirāppaḷḷi : Cintaṉaiyāḷar Kaḷakam, 1974): 1677-1680. China would also be mistakenly absent from Anaimuthu's (partial) republication of the *Samadharma Manifesto* itself where *The Communist Manifesto* mentions "Chinese markets" (Robert Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: Norton, 1978): 474) and "Chinese walls" (Tucker 1978: 477).

[658] KA 4-10-1931: 3, 18.

[659] Ma. Ciṅkāravēlu, "'*Jātiyum Vēṇṭām, Camayamum Vēṇṭām, Vayirniṛaintāl Pōtum' Potuvuṭaimaiyōr Muḻakkam* ['Don't Need Caste, Don't Need Religion, A Fully Belly is Enough'—the Roar of 'Communists']." KA 25-10-1931: 4, 17.

[660] KA 4-10-1931, 3.

– would make *dharma* complicit in the opposition to the very aims which Self-Respecters were associating with equal-*dharma*. In short, in so far as *dharma* was associated with caste hierarchy ("high low"), how in the world could one make caste hierarchy *equal*?

There is something in *dharma* which Self-Respecters were not willing to concede to the opposition, even as the opposition attempted to define itself in terms of *dharma*. Perhaps part of our answer comes from the fact that "*adharma*", or "anti-*dharma*", was a popular way in which members of Gandhi's nationalist Congress translated "Communism" across the 1920s.[661] That is to say, perhaps retaining *dharma* in a translation of "Communism" *was* a way of expressing opposition to *Dharma* Raj; Communism was not anti-*dharma*, as many demanding Self-Rule claimed, but rather an expression of an improved *dharma*, an *equal-dharma*. In fact, Non-Brahmins relied on the play between *dharma* and *adharma* frequently. For example, with respect to the "Laws of Manu" commonly understood to dictate caste relations in Hinduism, Self-Respecters claimed that "Reading the Manu (*A*)*Dharma* results in the Brahmin (*A*)*Dharma* consciousness,"[662] while EVR could claim that "in most matters today's *dharma* may become tomorrow's *adharma* and change upside-down [*talaikīḻ*]."[663]

Though there are other uses of *dharma* in the Tamil that constituted the essays of the Self-Respect Movement,[664] perhaps ultimately we should turn to EVR's own definition of *dharma* to understand why he, and those that followed him, retained, rather than rejected, *dharma* in their engagement with Marxism. One of EVR's most concise definitions preceding the publication of the *Samadharma Manifesto* is as follows:

> What does dharma mean? The word dharma is often used in a man's life. Many in many ways speak and write about it. But, generally, when one gives the meaning for dharma, dharma has been used as a way of [expressing]: the duty of a man, the natural quality of a man; the aid one man should do for another as well as the duty which needs to be done to achieve the good which is the means for one's own soul [e.g. salvation]; commonly, nature; along with that often [dharma] has been used as a means for the survival of cheats, lazy-bones, and beggars. I say some words about this, thinking about the ways in which you use it [dharma] and how at a given time.[665]

EVR acknowledges the polysemy of *dharma* and the need to attend to its context of use in order to understand *dharma*'s meaning. In whatever context, *dharma* names a social relation that is not immediately material (duty, nature, salvation). Depending on the context, EVR understands *dharma* to be either good or bad. And, in contexts in which it is made equal, *dharma* evidently means "communism."

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[661] See Ranajit Guha, "Dominance without Hegemony and its Historiography" in *Subaltern Studies VI*. (New Delhi; Oxford UP, 1989): 244-249.

[662] KA 19-8-1928: 19. Elsewhere this would become "Reading the Manu (A)*Nīti* [justice] results in the Brahmin (A)*Nīti* consciousness." See for example KA 26-8-1928: 2, KA 9-9-1928: 13, KA 26-11-1928: 2.

[663] EVR, "*Camatarmamum Nāstikamum*" ['Communism' and 'Atheism'], KA 7-9-1930: 7.

[664] *Dharma* could be rendered as "religion"; for one of countless examples, see n.a.., "*Intu Muslīm*" [Hindu-Muslim] KA 19 April 1931. For more on *dharma* as religion, see Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988): 310-348. *Dharma* could also be rendered as "donation"; for one of countless examples, see *Kuṭi Aracu* 1926-1-1931: 4, KA 8-4-1928: 13. For a challenge to the deployment of *dharma*-as-donation by the Brahmins, see Kaivalyacāmiyār, "*Intu Tarmattiṉ Tāṉa Pāttiraṅkaḷ*" [Donation Bowls of the Hindu Dharma] KA 24-6-1928: 3,18. For an outside example of *dharma* as "alms," see the section discussing the giving of alms in Matthew 6:2-4, titled *Tarmam Ceytal*, "The Doing of *Dharma*," *Tiruviviliyam: Potu Mozhipeyarppu* [Holy Bible: Common Translation] (Tindivanam: Tamil Nadu Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre, 1995).

[665] KA 8-6-1930: 9

Let us return to the text of the *Samadharma Manifesto* to further explore "*dharma*." The word *dharma* only occurs once. What in *The Communist Manifesto* reads as "ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism"[666] is glossed in *The Samadharma Manifesto* as "religion, *dharma*, and social discipline,"[667] thereby suggesting that "*dharma*" means "chivalrous enthusiasm." Surely, *dharma* means something else. Added to the trouble of Self-Respecters' perhaps unconventional use of *dharma* is the absence of *dharma*'s other conventional glosses. For example, Marx and Engels list "so many bourgeois prejudices" as "[l]aw, morality, religion,"[668] a trio which the translators could have glossed with a single "*dharma.*" Instead, the translators list such prejudices as "law, morality, religion, and nation."[669] The addition of nation, of course, was part of Self-Respect's opposition to Self-Rule; Self-Respecters, by including the "bourgeois prejudice" of the nation where it was not present in the original, seemed to have been helping Marx along in theorizing *samadharma* and its opposition to *swaraj*.[670] Equally important, *dharma* was not the same as law, morality, religion, or the nation—a suggestion which would have stood in opposition to the claims of Indian nationalists like Gandhi who saw all four as implicated in the project of "*Dharma* Rule" and the independence of *Swaraj*.

In short, the use of "*samadharma*" to render "communism" was significant. *Samadharma* named a Marxism different from an automatically liberatory and reductively economistic version that may otherwise have been implied by "common property." Though beyond the scope of this paper, we may mention as an aside that this interpretation was quite prescient in 1931, given the fact that the usual benchmark for non-materialist Marxisms is the German publication of *The Economic and Political Manuscripts* a year later in 1932.[671] Moreover, *samadharma* reclaimed, rather than renounced, one of the central terms of the demand for Self-Rule that Self-Respecters opposed, namely, the term "*dharma*" itself. The encounter between Marxism and India here does not seem to be an example of universal threat to particularity, but of synergy between particularity and universality.

## WORRY'S HORIZON

The ability to tease out the difference between threat and synergy in encounter requires, first, recognizing the encounter itself. If Self-Respecters were associating themselves with Marxism through their encounter with "communism" as *samadharma*, this association was often missed by the most proximate and politically concerned outsiders within, as it were, across the early 1930s: the British Raj. The details of this miss are important, for it illustrates the difficulty of thoughtfully negotiating issues of threat and synergy in encounter when caught within the horizons of a set of worries.

In 1933, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras reported on the activities of a *Samadharma* Ashram in the city of Trichinopoly to the Secretary of the Government of India.

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[666] Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, in Tucker 1978: 475.
[667] KA 11-10-1931: 5.
[668] Tucker 1978: 482.
[669] *KA* 1-11-1931: 6. Translations: law [*caṭṭam*], morality [*oḻukkam*], religion [*matam*], and nation [*tēcam*].
[670] For one of many explorations of the under-theorization of nationalism in Marx, see Shlomo Avineri, "Marxism and Nationalism," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 26, no. 3/4 (1991): 637-657.
[671] Robert C. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961): 167. Related points of comparison, again beyond the scope of this paper, could be concurrent Marxist concerns during the 1920s and 1930s over hegemony in Gramsci or culture in the Frankfurt School.

This Ashram claimed to make Untouchables into world citizens and challenged the efforts of the movement of *Sanatana Dharma* which opposed the entry of Untouchables into temples because of their ritual impurity:

> The Samadharma As[h]ram**,** Trichinopoly, announces a 'dynamic programme of service to humanity,' including the foundation of As[h]rams all over the Tamil country, one to every 7 or 8 square miles, where Harijans [caste untouchables] will be educated in all that goes to make a true citizen of the world and from which workers will go forth to render social service in every hamlet. Sanatanists on their side have recently revived the publication of the Kalpadruma, a journal intended to aid in the diffusion of a correct knowledge of Sanatana Dharma, and are making its columns the vehicle for denunciations of the temple entry campaign.[672]

The British did not recognize *samadharma*'s program of service to humanity, cosmopolitan vision, efforts to establish Ashrams, and apparent advocacy of temple entry as expressions of Marxism in Tamil country. Indeed, Self-Respecters themselves understood *samadharma* as something which had existed separate and distinct from Marxism,[673] and we may suspect that this "*Samadharma* As[h]ram" existed quite independently of communism. If so, we may likewise suspect that the first Tamil translation of *The Communist Manifesto* did not simply mark a moment in which Self-Respecters attempted to understand Marx but one in which Self-Respecters were attempting to re-approach a pre-existing concern with *samadharma*, and its challenge to *Sanatana Dharma* as above, through Marx.

These Self-Respect attempts at understanding and encounter were relatively opaque to the British. For example, both Indian and British District Magistrates in the Madras Presidency, responding to a 1934 Memorandum asking whether or not anti-communist propaganda was necessary in various districts, seemed hard pressed to clearly identify EVR's Self-Respect Movement with Marx and communism. One District Magistrate felt the need to clarify what was meant by communism before listing the "Self-Respect Association" as having "activities...remote from any communist activity": "I take it that by Communist activity is meant attempts by means of mass movement to establish a new type of Government by which the workers and the proletariat will be the dominant factor in the machinery of the Government."[674] Another claims that "[t]here is practically no communist activity in this district" despite the existence of "Self Respect Leagues" and "Sama *Dharma* Socialist Associations."[675] Yet another seems more aware of Self-Respect links to communism: "Communist propaganda is carried on in this district only by the 'Self-Respect' league, but the movement has not attracted much attention."[676] The District Magistrate in EVR's hometown of Erode is well aware of Self-Respect's communist leanings but seems to be unaware of what "*samadharma*" may mean as a part of the identity of Self-Respecters: "I have the honour to say that Communist Preaching undoubtedly is done in this district by the Self-Respecters...though they do not call themselves

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[672] Bracken, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, to Hallet, Secretary of the Government of India, *Fortnightly Report,* 4 February 1933. Tamil Nadu State Archives [hereafter TNSA], Tamil Nadu, India.

[673] *Samadharma* was understood by Self-Respecters also as a Buddhist notion. See V. Geetha and S.V. Rajadurai, *Towards a Non-Brahmin Millennium* (Calcutta: Samya, 1998). See also Tiru Vi. Ka.'s remarks in this essay.

[674] District Magistrate of Ramanad, Rao Bahadur AA Venkatarama Ayyar to Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, 28 June 1924, Under Secretary Safe Files 897, TNSA.

[675] District Magistrate of Tanjore, ER Wood to Chief Secretary of the Government of Madras, 18 June 1934, Under Secretary Safe Files 897, TNSA.

[676] District Magistrate of Tinnevelly, Rama [?illegible?] to Chief Secretary of the Government of Madras, 20 June 1934, Under Secretary Safe Files 897, TNSA.

Communists."[677] One District Magistrate provides us with a clue as to why "*samadharma*" does not always match up with "communism," namely, the presumed difference of class and "communalism" (e.g. differences of caste or religion)—concerns of economy and those associated with group identity were understood by the British as mutually exclusive: "There are no signs of communist propaganda in South Kanara; here the troubles are entirely communal."[678] In short, it would be difficult to make a claim concerning the encounter captured in "communism"'s translation as "*samadharma*," and subsequently the Self-Respect Movement's investments in Marxism, on the basis of the observations of the British Raj.

The opacity of encounter here, and the subsequent foregoing of any effort to assess issues of threat or synergy between Continental "universals" and Subcontinental "particulars," is evident in the two very different assessments of Communism's presence in South India by the Intelligence Bureau [IB] of the Government of India's Home Department which straddle *The Samadharma Manifesto*'s 1931 appearance. Four years earlier, in 1927, the IB would write of EVR's Madras Presidency that "Communism may be said to be almost non-existent in that Province." Yet in 1935, four years after the *Manifesto's* publication, the IB seems to have become aware of "the existence of a considerable Communist organization in Madras" and claimed, with some qualification, that "the Madras Presidency may be said now to have become the most energetic centre in India for the preaching of pure Communism."[679] It may seem peculiar that the IB mentions only in 1935 the "considerable progress" being "made in the translation of basic [Communist] documents into...Tamil" when the most basic of such documents, *The Communist Manifesto*, had been translated by Self-Respecters four years earlier.

That the British Raj often had difficulty recognizing the early Self-Respect Movement's encounter with communism is significant, for the British Raj spared no expense in connecting Indians to communism wherever possible. The 1934 memorandum to District Magistrates above was part of a larger attempt by the British Raj to come to grips with a rising wave of communism on the Subcontinent. In the wake of serious labor unrest, such as that which resulted in the Meerut Conspiracy Case of 1929, the British Raj by the mid-1930s recognized that its archaic definition of sedition as attempts "to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty over British India" needed not only revision, but new legislation to include in its definition movements aimed at "the destruction of the existing economic organisation."[680] This recognition met with considerable enthusiasm from the Governments of the various provinces. In his March 1934 response to such legislation as proposed by the Central Government, the Chief Secretary of the Government of Madras would suggest how the Self-Respect Movement's Marxism could have gone relatively unnoticed by the IB in a Province where "though the [Communist] menace may not as yet have assumed emergent proportions, there is little doubt that…it has every potential for dangerous development."[681] The Chief Secretary provides a long list of people and organizations circulating in the Madras Presidency in 1934 that had infested the region with such potential, all related to either "Moscow-trained Bolshevik propagandist[s]" or "direct offshoot[s] from Northern India" owing their origin "to communist doctrines imbibed from Bengali detenus"

[677] Wells to Chief Secretary of the Government of Madras, 7 June 1934, Under Secretary Safe Files 897, TNSA.
[678] Gawne to Chief Secretary of the Government of Madras, 9 June 1934, Under Secretary Safe Files 897, TNSA.
[679] "Extract from Weekly Report of the Director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India," 1 August 1935. IOR/L/P&J/12/430, British Library.
[680] "Memorandum for the Cabinet", undated. (ca. 1933). IOR/L/PJ/12/471, BL.
[681] GTH Bracken to Secretary to the Government of India, 7th March 1934. IOR/L/PJ/472, BL.

in Madras jails.[682] From this list, it would seem that the defining characteristic of Communism as "menace" in the South for the British Raj was the presence of national and international associations indicated by Bengali and Bolshevik ties.

Yet, as we saw in some of the reports of various District Magistrates earlier, the communism of EVR's Self-Respect Movement was not entirely overlooked. At the end of the IB's list here comes a figure currently jailed for "sedition" whose "propaganda has always been on the border of the actionable" yet without any such menacing ties at all: "A purely local organization is EV Ramaswami Naicker's Self Respect League which openly advocates Communism and has been doing considerable propaganda in the Tamil country."[683] EVR's "Self-Respect League," engaged in "purely local" "propaganda…on the border of the actionable" is here in 1934 recognized as communist—though we have seen District Magistrates (who provided part of the basis for the Chief Secretary's claims about the Presidency) far less clear on the matter that same year. Perhaps this inconsistency resulted from the fact that EVR failed to meet the standard for being a "menace" by definition—EVR was not read as international nor national, linked neither to Bolshevik nor Bengali, and thus failed to meet the Raj's threshold for "Communist." Yet one may wonder if this encounter with a Western European "universal" like communism located on the "purely local…border of the actionable" in South India may have had a richer significance than what the British Raj perceived.

Though particularly opaque to the British, *samadharma* was transparently a term of universal importance to Self-Respecters. We have already seen suggestions of this world-wide importance in the introduction to the *Samadharma Manifesto, where* EVR claimed *samadharma* to be at stake in events in London, France, Russia, Spain, and China. EVR and others would continue to establish "*samadharma*" as no mere provincial idiom that insufficiently translated the idea of "communism" in that world. For example, in his "Introduction," EVR provides *samadharma* with a law-like operation across the human when explaining why the *samadharma* revolution in Russia preceded the one presumed to come in India: "wherever there is injustice [*koṭumai*] that cannot be tolerated, that goes beyond a [certain] limit [*aḷavu*], quickly there will be remedying efforts that rise up violently [*vīṛu*]…"[684] Furthermore, EVR allies the Tamil translation centered on *dharma* with Marxism by acknowledging the centrality of translation and republication itself in the spread of *The Communist Manifesto* in Europe, mentioning parallel translations into German, French, English, Armenian, and Russian and how they often defied government prohibitions. If there was any doubt about the fidelity of the translation of *The Communist* Manifesto by Self-Respecters, EVR claims "All of what comes hereafter is a translation of that *Manifesto.* In it there is not the slightest bit of our own opinion. That is, we want that the reader should read and consider this as the opinion of two Germans in the year

[682] The list included: Amir Haider Khan, S. Mukundalal Sarkar, HD Rajah, a Free Thinkers Association, the National Literature Publishing Company, the Indian Workers Equality League, and the Hindustan Samayavadi Sangha. Documents from the first year of the Communist Party of India used variants of the translation *sāmyavādi* [साम्यवादी] and the transliteration *kamyūnism* to render "Communist" and "Communism" in Devanagri script. See Institutional Collection #27. Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi [hereafter: NMML].

[683] It should be noted that Bracken, the Chief Secretary quoted here, would habitually marginalize the events of Madras. For example, out of the 66 letters informing the Government of India of the persecutions instituted under sections 121-A, 124-A, 153-A, 295-A (i.e. sedition) of the Indian Penal Code during the two months of the *Samadharma Manifesto's* publication (October-November 1931), only the 3 from Madras—written by Bracken—apologetically conclude "None of these persons is of more than provincial importance." Home Political files nos. 27/9/1931 & 27/10/1931, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

[684] KA 4-10-1931: 3.

1847."[685] In short, EVR's "Introduction" leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader that *samadharma* was the subject of world-wide, "universal" concern to the human and *the* subject of concern to "two Germans in the year 1847" named "*Kāral Mārks* and *Piraṭrik Eñcals*."

Prominent figures in the Madras Presidency allied with EVR's Self-Respect Movement also declared that *samadharma* was a world-wide project, even if the exact meaning of *samadharma* was contested. Perhaps the most prominent of such allies, who both featured in such declarations and contestations, was a man named Tiru. Vi. Kaliyāṇacuntaram [Tiru Vi. Ka. 1883-1953].[686] In the mid-1930s, for example, Tiru Vi. Ka., after discussing the "many meanings" of *samadharma* and the ways in which "each and every party member" claims it, declared *samadharma* a universal principle which both destroys and preserves difference while allied—and thus non-synonymous—with the economic:

> [S]amadharma is that which is common to the whole world. The duty of samadharma[vat]is is the need to shatter and burn all of these: caste, religion, natural difference, women slavery, and relations of high-low [determined] by birth.[687] Only when the samadharma principle enters into economic matters will all [these] come [to be] troubled [*tollai*]. This samadharma philosophy is not new in this country. This is a philosophy of a very ancient age. Caste, religion, nature [*niṛam*] should all be in harmony [*camarasam*]. But if it is said that this sort of harmony should be everywhere but in economic matters, is that true samadharma?[688]

As we saw in 1928, *samadharma* paradoxically straddles the elimination and preservation of difference, treating difference (caste, religion, and here gender, etc.) as the object of shattering and burning as well as that which should be maintained in relations of harmony. Tiru Vi. Ka. claims that *samadharma* must become a part of, and thus is distinct from, the economic. And *samadharma* is common to the whole world, an ancient principle, and (thus) nothing new to India.

Not only did Self-Respecters declare *samadharma* a world-wide concern, but they also went to some lengths to ensure that the reader understood that "*Kāral Mārks* and *Piraṭrik Eñcals*" shared that same concern. We have seen EVR's claims about the translation's fidelity. The translation itself, as we saw with the addition of "nation" above, may require a rather capacious understanding of such fidelity. Compare the first lines of (1) *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848 and (2) the *Samadharma Manifesto* of 1931:

> (1) A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies. [689]

> (2) Seeing the bhutam that has appeared in the world, everyone is afraid. What kind of bhutam is it?—it is the bhutam of "Samadharma." All the powers of Europe, that is the powers of government and religion, have joined together and are trying to threaten and chase out this bhutam. Religious authorities like the Pope, kings like the Czar, famous ruling commanders, heads of

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[685] KA 4-10-1931, 3.
[686] One of the disagreements between EVR and TVK was over *Samadharma*'s relationship to God. For a discussion of this disagreement, and their alliance despite this, see the journal called *Samadharma* 1934-8-8: 7
[687] Though "women slavery" appears in this list, the feminist valence of the Self-Respect Movement is beyond the scope of this Chapter; we will return similar valences in Part VI's discussion of the "secular life."
[688] *Samadharma* on 15 August 1934: 2.
[689] Tucker, *Reader* (1978): 473.

political parties, and secret spies all have come together in a Bhagarithaean struggle to destroy this bhutam.[690]

In the *Samadharma Manifesto*, "the spectre of Communism" is not haunting Europe but appearing in the world; as with "nation" above, Self-Respecters seem to be helping Marx and Engels along. The proper names that would wed "communism" to Europe (Metternich, Guizot, etc.) are rendered in far more general terms applicable to that world. Moreover, the efforts to exorcise this spectre[691] are understood to be a "Bhagarithaean" struggle; King Bhagaritha is the mythological figure responsible for bringing the river Ganges, the central geographical marker of Hinduism, from heaven to earth. The projection of this Hindu idiom onto the world may suggest that the world figures who happen to be in Europe, too, are to be understood as Brahminical forces upholding relations of high and low which were of central concern to Self-Respecters. Perhaps *the world* could be understood in terms of caste, and the appearance of *samadharma* is a threat equally to "the powers of government and religion" wherever they may be in that world.[692]

We have seen that *samadharma* was transparently a term of world-wide importance to Self-Respecters, a universal concern of shared struggle between Continent and Subcontinent. The translation of "communism" may be read as a struggle to share in that shared struggle. We should not allow the opacity of this struggle to the British Raj, nor allow the colonial Raj's marginalization of such struggles to share as merely examples of "purely local" "propaganda…on the border of the actionable," to discourage us from attending to these universal aspirations. We may instead wish to read a text like *The Samadharma Manifesto* as offering a "local" means to trouble that very "border" itself. One way to engage in this reading, I suggest, is to attend to the spectre of Samadharma, the *bhutam*.

## LIMINAL SPECTRE

The "spectre" was translated as "*bhutam*" in *The Samadharma Manifesto*. As with "communism," there were many alternatives. Perhaps the most common supernatural creature in Tamil is the *pēy* and thus a likely alternative candidate for such rendering. Yet the text of the *Samadharma Manifesto* leaves no doubt that *bhutam* and *pēy* are separate and distinct. Where Marx and Engels write of bourgeois society as a "sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the power of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells,"[693] the Self-Respecter translates: "Capitalist society existing in the present time…has released an unmanageable manufacturing power, that is a '*pēy*' quality, able to manufacture incredible amounts of goods, yet being unable

[690] *KA* 4 October 1931: 18. I transliterated *pakīratean* into simple Sanskrit romanization.
[691] The common use of *pēy* in common renderings of "exorcism" makes the choice of *bhutam* and the use of Bhagiratha to instead gloss "exorcism" even more striking. For one example, the Jewish exorcists in Acts 19:13 are rendered in the most comprehensive Tamil Biblical translation as the *pēy ōṭṭum yūtar*, the "the Jews who drive out the *pēy*." *Tiruviviliyam: Potu Mozhipeyarppu* [Holy Bible: Common Translation] (1995).
[692] The projection of a Hindu idiom upon world-wide struggle here was supplemented elsewhere in the translation. Where Marx speaks of his epoch's distinctive splitting of society into the two camps of Bourgeoisie and Proletariat [Tucker, *Reader*, p. 474], Self-Respecters translate this passage in a manner which suggests reading the Bourgeoisie as agents of Hindu Brahminism through the term *paṭṭavarttaṉam,* the mark on the forehead of orthodox Brahmins. Class domination would literally appear here *as* this mark of Brahminism. [*KA* 4 October 1931: 18. ]
[693] Tucker 1978, 478.

to suppress and rule it those same Capitalists have become necessarily vexed."[694] The *bhutam* must confront the *pēy* just as communism must confront capitalism.

We have noted Dipesh Chakrabarty's concern that Marxism is opposed to Indian ways of being which involve "[g]ods, spirits, and other 'supernatural' forces…in our [Indian] narratives." Yet here we may have good reason to see *samadharma*-as-communism as in fact *extending* such "particular ways of being-in-the-world." For example, the first Protestant missionary in India, Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, noted in 1713 a Tamil division of "devils into two groups" naming "one Pēys…and the other Bhūta[m]s."[695] Despite the fact that this missionary from a provincial town in Saxony unsurprisingly saw these two groups in an unfamiliar land as evidence of "the inspiration of Satan," Ziegenbalg pushed further, recognizing the *pēy* as associated with the bad and the *bhutam* as associated with the good. *Pēy* are "very black with a horrible face" with "lean bodies in such a posture that they look like they are floating in the air and have great hunger, thirst, and pain," and they "possess" and "harm people." *Pēy* are innumerable, "as many…as they can count the sins among them"; Ziegenbalg goes through the trouble of listing seventy-seven. The *bhutam*, on the other hand, are "fully red, small and fat" with "pigtails" and "fearsome faces" while their bodies are "adorned with jewels." Ziegenbalg continues, "The South Indians state the such Bhūta[m]s were created for the service of gods and other persons. Even though they have to do the most tedious jobs, [South Indians] do not consider them to be an affliction because they were not created for anything other than their jobs. Hence, one could not compare them to the wretched state of Pēys." Centuries later, the *pēy* evidently lent themselves to capturing the qualities of a terrifying capitalism of harm, while the *bhutam* were more associated with the laboring masses. Self-Respecters found an opportunity to recast, rather than erase, these "supernatural forces" in their encounter with Marxism.

This distinction between the *bhutam* as ally and the *pēy* as enemy extends beyond the text of the *Samadharma Manifesto* to the Self-Respect Movement more broadly. Prior to 1931, both *bhutam* and *pēy* were evil figures wedded to caste hierarchy. After *The Samadharma Manifesto*, the *bhutam* became a force which could destroy a caste hierarchy now more fully associated with the *pēy*.

In the early years of EVR's Self-Respect Movement, the *bhutam* is associated with the force of "Brahminism" understood to maintain caste hierarchy. In 1926, for example, "Ancient Brahminism" is described as a "*bhutam*" which "caused the forming of the Brahmin/Non-Brahmin Party in this age,"[696] and elsewhere this "*bhutam*" is given as the cause of division whereby "Tamilians born as brothers are beating each other and disputing in courts."[697] Yet the translation of Marx provided Self-Respecters with an opportunity to re-articulate the *bhutam* as an ally rather than an enemy. The most compelling instance of the *bhutam*'s post-1931 transfiguration into an ally in struggle appears in a poem published a few years after *The Samadharma Manifesto*:

> Ten million legs [marching as one] bhutam, sirrah - labor's
> angry form, sirrah!
> Look at its seeking, rising—

[694] *KA* 18-10-1931, 3.
[695] Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, *Genealogia der Malabarischen Götter* [*The Genealogy of the South Indian Deities*], trans. Daniel Jeyaraj (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005). Chapter 6, "Regarding the Devils and the Harmful Giants…" pp 136-143.
[696] "*Pirāmaṇīyam*" [Brahminism] KA 25-7-1926: 7.
[697] "*Pirāmaṇīyak Koṭumai*" [Injustice of Brahminism] KA 15-8-1926: 7.

shaking the world's four directions
[as] the one body which we sought...
...
From the burning, smoking, smelting factory's
narrow lanes, dark caves, and
holes the laborer
bhutam sets out and immediately
the chains weaken and shatter –
four thousand continuous years
of ancient cuffs turn to dust,
...
The red flag spreads and the new king
enters onto the streets;
to show the strength of his hand
he does not hesitate to fight;
everywhere [is] the shattering of capitalist [*mutalāḷi*]
scum's [*īṇar*] bones;
[the bhutam] is enraged and roars as thunder
...
– comrades, listen!
samadharma [is] in the world [*ulaku*].[698]

The shift in the association of the *bhutam* from the most evil of all evils, Brahminism, to one of the greatest of all goods, *samadharma*, was pronounced, dramatic, and followed the Self-Respect Movement's Non-Brahmin embrace of Marxism. Furthermore, we should note that such *bhutam* is not understood merely as a recent phenomena—as we presume the spreading "red flag" of the Soviet Union indicates—but in fact an articulation of a "four thousand year" old struggle, by which we presume Self-Respecters mean the struggle against caste hierarchy affiliated with the Brahminism they had come to associate with Gandhi's demand for *Swaraj*.

The *pēy*, on the other hand, remained associated with Brahminism, caste hierarchy, and other foes of Self-Respecters. Such foes included, as we saw in the *Samadharma Manifesto*, capitalism. Another great foe was Untouchability, and the *pēy* is associated with Untouchability from the very beginning of the Self-Respect Movement, such as in "A Song which Drives Out the *Pēy* of Untouchability" published in 1926.[699] The *pēy*—along with a whole host of other supernatural creatures[700]—would be consistently tied to the injustices of "high low" understood to operate through caste Brahminism. As EVR writes in 1929, challenging upper-caste appeals to morality: if "high low [*uyarvu tāḻvu*] is affirmed by 'morality,' [then] the *pēy* of caste cruelty will not be destroyed."[701] This association between caste and *pēy* persisted throughout the 1930s. For example, one prominent Self-Respecter, in demanding the paramount need to "resolve problems of caste high-low" echoing the claims of *samadharma* writes in 1938: "whatever reform one wishes to do, one must see the driving out of the caste *pēy* obstacle [first]…without destroying that caste *pēy*, political reform or economic reform is not going to

[698] Kāmrēṭ [Comrade], "Labourer's Rouse" [*Toḻilāḻar Eḻucci*], *Puraṭci,* 29 April 1934:12.
[699] "*Tīṇṭāmaip Pēyai Ōṭṭum Pāṭṭu*." KA 31 January 1926: 9.
[700] Such as *picācu* and *arakkar.* See EVR in KA 24 January 1926: 6.
[701] EVR, "*Kaṇṇappar Vācakacālai Tiṟappu Viḻā*" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 11 August 1929: 7. Note here: "morality" = *oḻukkam*; "caste cruelty" = *jāti koṭumai*.

come about."[702] In short, though both *bhutam* and *pēy* were associated with caste hierarchy in the 1920s, *The Samadharma Manifesto* provided Self-Respecters with a way to re-imagine traditional "supernatural forces," rearticulating alliance with the *bhutam* in opposition to the *pēy*.

The *bhutam* provides a figure through which we could explore features central to projects concerned with the relationship between universal and particular and threat and synergy, namely, a concern with justice and the importance of troubling boundaries. Justice must be a concern of such projects, unless such projects believe that acts of encounter themselves automatically produce something politically valuable. And the troubling of conceptual boundaries must be a concern of such projects, unless such projects believe that the borders defining that which is involved in encounter are unchanging and not subject to revision through the encounter itself. What follows simply gestures towards some of the related theoretical work that could be done by looking at the history of Tamil literature focusing on the figure of the *bhutam* and what I suggest to be this figure's relationship with justice and the troubling of boundaries.

The *bhutam* appears in one of the very earliest extant Tamil texts, the *Puṟanāṉūṟu* (200 CE). The *bhutam* here features alongside, yet is distinguished from, the *pēy* on a battlefield after the fighting is over:

> And the terrible new crop,
> with handsome heads bending low
> [is] the many towering stacks of corpses with…
> pēy crowding around them. Demons and herds of foxes
> thresh the field while bhutam take up their guard posts.[703]

Prior to this passage, a battle was described by mixing images of death and life, violence and agriculture, where drums are thunder, arrows are rain, chariots are plows, and, here, after the fighting is over, where corpses become crops. Both the *bhutam* and the *pēy* are a part of this graveyard-like space marked by liminality, of crossing over and the blurred distinction between life and death.[704] The *bhutam* are marked by a quality of protectiveness in this liminal space of hunger, taking up guard posts, while the *pēy* are defined merely by a gruesome ravenousness.

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[702] CNA, "*Apētavātamum Camūka Cīrtiruttamum*" in *Pakuttaṟivu*, October 1938 (4.6): 43.

[703] I reinserted *pēy* for "ghouls" and *bhutam* for "evil spirits" in "Paraṇar sings *Cēramāṉ Kaṭalōṭṭiya Vēlkeḷu Kuṭṭuvaṉ,*" George Hart and Hank Heifetz, trans. *The Four Hundred Songs of War and Wisdom: the Puṟanāṉūṟu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 210-211. See also *Puṟanāṉūṟu Mūlamum Uraiyum* compiled by U. Vē. Cāmināṭaiyar (Ceṉṉai: Kapiir Accukkūṭṭattiṟ Patippu, 1963 (1894)), 545-546. My discussion ignores *kaḻutu* [demon] as somewhat obsolete, which Cāmināṭaiyar needed to translate for his reader even in 1894 as "a caste of *pēy*" (547).

[704] And *pēy* and *bhutam* would continue to occur together as separate creatures centuries later, for instance, in the first seven books of the Tamil Śaivite canon, the *Tēvāram* (ca. 8th century CE). For example,e see TM Kumarakuruparaṉ Piḷḷai (ed), *Tiruñāṉacampanta Cuvāmikaḷ Tēvāram* (Shrīvaikuṇṭam: Shrī Kumarakuruparaṉ Caṅkam, 1961), 205. Space does not allow for a discussion of Śiva nor of the *bhutam*'s marked Śaivite valence. Śiva is described as "he who has an army of many *bhutam*" (*Tēvāram* 1961, 395) whereas such a "spectral" *bhutam* is absent from comparable Vaisṇavite texts like Vi. Es. Vi. Irākava Tāsaṉ, ed. *Nālāyira Tivviyap Pirapantam,* commentator Dr. M. Nārāyaṇa Vēlup Piḷḷai (Ceṉṉai: Mullai Nilaiyam, 2000). In addition, *bhutam*s are present with a Śaivite trident during moments of religious conversion (C.K. Cuppiramaṉiya Mutaliyār, *Tirutoṇṭar Purāṇam* (Cōyamuttūr: Kōvait Tamiḻ Caṅkam, 1960)), 207 (#1417)) as well as when devouring Brahmins (Villiputtūr Āḻvār, *Villi Pāratam*, Vol. 2 (commentary: M. Nārāyaṇa Vēluppiḷḷai) (Ceṉṉai: Pūmpukār Patippakam, 2001), 481 (#698)). The *bhutam*'s Śaivite valence is important given the prevalence of Śaivite Vellala elites competing with EVR for defining a Non-Brahmin, "Dravidian" identity. See also MSS Pandian, "Notes on the Transformation of 'Dravidian' Ideology: Tamilnadu, c. 1900-1940" in *Social Scientist*, 22, 5/6 (1994): 84-105; A.R. Venkatachalapathy, "The

This "protecting *bhutam*"[705] is elsewhere explicitly associated with the protection of justice, coupled both with hunger and liminality. One such example features in the first Tamil epic, *Cilappatikāram* (ca. 500 CE):[706]

> " Their hands
> I will bind with a rope, and beat
> And devour those who behave unnaturally
> Under the subterfuge of penance, unfaithful women
> Who hide their evil, lascivious ministers
> Who covet others' wives, false witnesses
> And slanderers,"
> thus spoke in a rough voice,
> Loud enough to be heard for four leagues,
> The bhutam of the crossroads…[707]

Here we have a *bhutam* associated with the devouring of evil-doers in achieving protection for the just along with a repeated association with a liminal space, the "crossroads."

We also see in this passage reference to the "rough voice" of the *bhutam*, perhaps echoed over a millennium later as the enraged thunderous roar of the *bhutam* as "labor's angry form." And this capacity to speak made the *bhutam* a figure central in the long and sophisticated grammatical tradition in Tamil. Such grammar deals broadly with the relationship between the word and the world rather than simply with formal linguistic considerations. And such grammar is important, I would like to suggest, for those interested in rethinking the relationship between universal and particular along with that between threat and synergy. Such rethinking requires a shift, as it were, away from essentializing Euro-Atlantic universal *subjects* whose *objects* are non-Euro-Atlantic particularities—and in the process undoing the distinctions between Euro-Atlantic/non-Euro-Atlantic and universal/particular themselves. Instead, what was previously the *object* of the voice of theoretical concerns, e.g. the non-Euro-Atlantic, becomes the *subject* voicing theoretical concerns. Let us turn to Tamil grammar involving the *bhutam* for clarification.

For example, if we look at the grammarian Mayilainātar's (ca. 1300) commentary of the 12th century Tamil grammar *Naṉṉūl*, both *pēy* and *bhutam* are invoked as grammatically resistant exceptions to the simple relationship of first-, second-, and third-person nouns to corresponding verbs.[708] Mayilainātar focuses on the ability of the agent *to voice* its existence as the locus for ambiguity, an ability which forces us to consider something as first person, typically thought of

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Dravidian Movement and the Vellalars, 1927-1944" in Venkatachalapthy, *In Those Days There Was No Coffee: Writings in Cultural History* (New Delhi, Yoda Press 2006):, 114-142; Geetha and Rajadurai 1998, 342-345; Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) Chpt 8. "Army," of course, retains plurality irrespective of rationality or gender, one should bear in mind as we move to discuss grammar.

[705] Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ, *Cilappatikāram,* commentator Puliyūrk Kēcikaṉ (Ceṉṉai: Mōṉārk Kirāpiks, 2004 (1958)), 69. [Hereafter *Cilap* PK 2004].

[706] For details of the epic, see R. Parthasarathy's "Introduction" to his translation *The Cilappatikāram: The Tale of an Anklet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

[707] Translation by Parthasarathy 1993, 51. The original Tamil in fact equates two different expressions of *bhutam*, "the *bhutam* raising a rough voice…" and "the *bhutam* of the crossroads who beats and eats." *Cilap* PK 2004, 74. For another related example, see *Cilap* PK 2004, 230-231; Parthasarathy 1993's translation, p 153.

[708] U. Vē. Sāmināṭaiyar (ed), *Naṉṉūl Mūlamum Mayilainātarurayum* (Ceṉṉai: U. Vē. Sāmināṭaiyar, 1995), 138. [Hereafter *Naṉṉūl* MN.]

only to apply to rational [I] nouns or subjects, what we would otherwise consider irrational [it] or objects.[709] He asks: "Isn't it the case that the non-rational are appropriate for first-person without rationality, that if a *pēy*, *bhutam*, monkey, parrot, and dove speak then first-person is common [to them]? Yes."[710] Mayilainātar's claim for non-rational creatures becoming first-person nouns through speech means that the *pēy* and the *bhutam*, though understood as non-rational, must be considered as having the grammatical quality of first-person; the *bhutam* is an "it" that can refer to itself as an "I." Their grammatical defiance places the *bhutam* and *pēy* in a grammatical realm of linguistic liminality, reversing the presumed relationship between voicing subject and the object of voice.

By the 19th century, the scholar Aṟamuka Nāvalar's commentary on the *Naṉṉūl* verse preceding Mayilainātar's above dispenses with the *pēy* and focuses simply on the *bhutam* to illustrate grammatical defiance and conceptual blurring.[711] Nāvalar here is concerned in particular with gender. Nāvalar explains one rule as follows: "Therefore, a masculine common noun may fit a rational male gender and a non-rational male gender, a feminine common noun may fit a rational female gender and a non-rational female gender, a singular common noun may fit a rational singular and a non-rational singular, a plural common noun may fit a rational plural and a non-rational plural."[712] Some nouns are marked by masculinity or femininity, singularity or plurality, but that does not necessarily tell you whether or not they are rational [I] or non-rational [it] beings. This summary is followed by a few pages of examples which feature the *bhutam*, but not the *pēy*, as the archetypal example of that which can be both rational and non-rational. Regarding the "first person noun" he writes: "Common to the third of [these] I-first person nouns—I-young man-of-distinction [*yāṉambi*], I-young woman-of-distinction [*yāṉaṅkai*], I-*bhutam* [*yāṉpūtam*]—is the two *tiṇai* [rational and irrational] singular."[713] Again, the *bhutam* can refer to itself (?) as an "I" but which is referred to as an "it." Nāvalar takes the *bhutam* as the archetypal example of that which defies our grammatical understanding of rational subjects and non-rational objects.

The above brief discussion of the *bhutam* in the literary and grammatical tradition of Tamil suggests that this supernatural creature had distinct characteristics articulated over thousands of years. One such characteristic was an association with protection and justice; like the *pēy*, the *bhutam* was marked by a ravenous hunger, but unlike the *pēy*, this hunger was not an indiscriminate desire to devour. The *bhutam*'s acts of ingesting, of bringing the outside-within, were meant to protect and maintain justice. The second characteristic was an association with liminality, not only in the world but in word. The *bhutam* inhabited spaces of moving across, "crossroads," and it was in these spaces that the *bhutam* voiced its concern for justice and acted to protect. Such crossroads in the world reflected crossroads in word, as it were, where the *bhutam*'s capacity to voice confounded the ability to distinguish grammatically between subjects and objects. The *bhutam,* I suggest, provides a model for undoing distinctions between subjects and objects more broadly, such as those involved in the very distinctions Euro-Atlantic/Non-Euro-Atlantic or universal/particular in matters of theoretical articulation, by attending to issues

[709] Note: "rational nouns" (*uyirtiṇai*); "irrational nouns" (*akṟiṇai*).
[710] *Naṉṉūl* MN, 138-139.
[711] Aṟamuka Nāvalar (commentary) *Naṉṉūl Kāṇṭikaiyurai* (Tañcaavūr: Tamiḻ Palkalaik Kaḻakam, 1988), 194, verse #284. [Hereafter: *Naṉṉūl* AN]
[712] *Naṉṉūl* AN, 195.
[713] *Naṉṉūl* AN, 196. The *bhutam* continues to appear as the grammatical exception, the example of a noun which features both *tiṇai*s and, additionally, an indeterminate gender, as Nāvalar discusses the first person plural, second person singular, and second person plural.

of justice and liminality in world and word. Such attention focuses not merely on sites of origins, which may always already be the in-between spaces inhabited by the *bhutam* from which it roars, but also destinations, those acts of just devouring which pull within the *bhutam*'s belly.

Let's turn to one final example, for beyond a theoretical purchase that captured Self-Respect concerns, the *bhutam* also had a history of opposing the tropes deployed by the nationalist Congress. For instance, in addition to its association with Dharma Raj, Gandhi's *Swaraj* was also associated with "Rama Raj"—the "Rule of Rama," the hero of the Sanskrit epic *Ramayana*.[714] Given *samadharma's* opposition to *swaraj*, we should not be surprised to find that the most famous Tamil translation of this epic, by Kambar (12th c), contains a scene in which a *bhutam*—defined by a ravenous, devouring power to bring the outside within associated with justice—confronts Rama. Rama and his brother encounter this gigantic *bhutam*, named Kavantaṉ, in the liminal region between places, the forest. They are seized in its hands and risk being "digested in the stomach / of Kavantaṉ."[715] Much of Kavantaṉ's description subsequently revolves around his mouth, which is like a cavern that could hide the full moon and filled with teeth like crescent moons,[716] combined with a smoke-blowing nose and a tongue of flames.[717] Yet "Kavantaṉ" is a Sanskrit name that literally means "body without a head."[718] How could a headless *bhutam* have a mouth? The answer depends on *where* that mouth is. His "teeth, from one to the other, / is two *kātam*s [20 miles]; they fill / a mouth on a stomach, / an ocean with sharks."[719] The *bhutam* Kavantaṉ who threatens to devour Rama is a body without a head whose face opens directly upon its massive belly. Moreover, this belly's horrifying power is described in terms of justice, the punishment of evil-doers: "sins terribly severe / committed by the ill-bred - / even at the hell where such live / his stomach laughs."[720] The confrontation between a *bhutam* and Rama had a long history before Self-Respecters imagined the confrontation between *samadharma* and *swaraj*—and one marked by the *bhutam*'s familiar characteristics.

The we have made to Tamil literature and grammar is not meant to be tangential but essential to a project which questions the relationship between universal and particular and the concomitant concerns with threat or synergy when attending to moments of encounter between regions such as Europe and India. Like the *bhutam*, such projects position themselves on the crossroads, attend to those moments of encounter where the outside was brought within even when the borders between are adjusted subsequent to such bringing, adjudicate on issues of the just and protection, and trouble the distinctions between the objects and subjects which have voice. Moreover, this *bhutam* is *samadharma*, and such *samadharma*, of course, is the translation of "communism" by Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters in colonial South India. The *bhutam* of *samadharma* provided these Non-Brahmins with a way to imagine Marxism's challenge to the hierarchical relationship Self-Respecters called Brahminism. The *bhutam,*

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[714] Self-Respecters mistrusted how "…the Rama Raj spoken of by Mr. Gandhi…he calls…at times '*Dharma* Raj', at times 'Swaraj', at times 'Full Swaraj'…". Jārj Jōcap, "*Kāntiyiṅ Rāma Rājyam* ["Gandhi and Rama Raj"]," KA 7 June 1931: 10. For the standard interpretation of EVR's reading of the *Ramayana*, see Paula Richman, "EV Ramasami's Reading of the *Rāmāyaṇa*" in *Many Ramayanas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*, ed. Paula Richman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[715] Kambar, *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam,* A. Ca. Ṇāṅacampantaṅ (chief editor), vol 3. (Ceṅṅai: Nātaṅ & Kampeṅi, 2004 (1994)): 728-729 (verse #3643)

[716] Kambar 2004, vol 3, 737, (#3656)..

[717] Kambar 2004, vol 3, 736, (#3655).

[718] Kambar 2004, vol 3, [commentary], 728.

[719] Kambar 2004, vol 3, 735 (#3653).

[720] Kambar 2004, vol 3, 738, (#3658).

associated with justice and liminality in both world and word, provided a way of imagining a *samadharma* that could challenge nationalist *swaraj* and its caste hierarchy as joined with the *pēy*. The *bhutam* provided a way to imagine a radical change in social relations heretofore defined by "high low," emphasizing the malleability and permeability of ways of being in the world, e.g. their moving across, rather than simply their multiplicity and plurality, e.g. their origins.

To be sure, such radical change constituted a threat. But this was not a threat produced by universalizing Marxism corroding a particularly Indian *dharma*. This was a threat produced by Non-Brahmins using Marxism to help imagine, marshaled into the service of their own imagining, a struggle against Brahminism. In fact, such threat helped preserve or create rather than destroy *dharma—samadharma*.

## CONCLUSION

What are we to make of the sense of threat articulated by many postcolonial critics and critics of multiculturalism alike when discussing the encounter between Euro-Atlantic universalism and non-Euro-Atlantic particularity? By looking at one presumed instance of threatening encounter—that between universalizing Marxism and Indian particularity—we may hesitate to say this relationship of threat can be presumed. Instead, I have argued that the first Tamil translation of *The Communist Manifesto*—published in 1931 by the South Indian radical reform organization called The Self-Respect Movement—provides evidence of synergy rather than threat. Given this redemption of communism by Non-Brahmins, one would be hard-pressed to agree that Marxism in India contained a "secularist universalism" which "rides roughshod over and thus homogenizes local experience and traditions," or "universalized Europe's historical experience" by dismissing "caste and religion" and thus has a "debatable" ability to represent "the history of the masses," or which entailed a "universal and secular vision of the human" projected out from "European thought and history" which dismissed "particular ways of being-in-the-world" and denied the agency of "[g]ods, spirits, and other 'supernatural' forces." Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters translated communism in terms of an equality of *dharma* and the spectre as a *bhutam*, embracing Marxist universalism so as to rearticulate, rather than reject, particular concerns over the hierarchical caste relations of Brahminism and its *Swaraj*. As we have seen, the politics of such embrace between allegedly non-Euro-Atlantic particular and equally alleged Euro-Atlantic universal here is not one of threat but one of synergy, providing evidence of a struggle to share in shared struggles against forces of hierarchy and injustice in the world.

We were concerned here, as with "self-respect" earlier, with the boundaries of the indigenous. I suggest that *samadharma*—in its concern with equality and difference—as well as the *bhutam*—a figure associated with justice by bringing the outside-within and the crossroads—could serve as terms of concern to help frame allied efforts elsewhere to tease out synergy from threat in the encounter between universalism and particularity more generally, perhaps disrupting the distinction between universal and particular altogether. Insofar as our discussion of the British Raj revealed the ways in which the horizons of a set of worries cripples one's ability to appreciate such encounter, the nascent field of comparative political theory—with its emphasis on immersion and being elsewhere that help redefine oneself—may be the field which promises

to provide a much welcome remedy.[721] Given their concerns with threat, it may be the case that certain strands of postcolonial concerns and certain strands of concerns with multiculturalism—attached to languages of pluralism and multiplicity—foreclose modes of encounter through presumptions of difference without appreciating the *edibility*, as it were, of such differences à la the *bhutam* of *samadharma*. We have already seen the *bhutam* serving an alternatively more liminal function, drawing attention to permeability and malleability, in Chapter 6's discussion of Meenakshipuram: "the habit [over the course of] of generation[s] in worshipping 'bhuta[m]s' (spirits)—which symbolized disease, prosperity, travel [that] would not die" and thus "co-existed uneasily in the household[s]" of converts.[722]

The concerns surrounding the *Samadharma Manifesto* continued well past its translation of 1931, helping to frame for decades the relationship among Non-Brahmin investments, communism, and particular acts of redeeming universal claims. In conclusion, let us return to the founder of the Self-Respect Movement, EVR, but in 1948—immediately following the achievement of *Swaraj*. Fending off critics of his recently formed *Dravidar Kazhakam*, the organization born out of the Self-Respect Movement that would give rise to the major political parties in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu today, EVR asks:

> Whether regarding private property,[723] potu[v]uṭaimai [common property], or samadharma—how can you say that we have no plan? The *Kamyūṉisṭukaḷ* [Communists] scold only the Capitalists who invest capital and then go to a Brahmin club and take coffee on the house. We name the faults of not only the Capitalists who invest capital but also the sacred-thread [*pūṇūl*] Brahmin Capitalists who survive by the pestle for which they invested no capital at all. Isn't this a difference?[724]

EVR is distinguishing between transliterated "communists" (*kamyūṉisṭukaḷ*) and a translated "communism" (*samadharma, potuvuṭaimai*). To assume that either indicates a threat to an essentialized indigenous way of being would be to miss the assertion of and resistance to Brahminism which was central to the Self-Respect Movement, and the complicated role communism played in that resistance.

In the decades since, a transliterated *kamyūnisṭ*, rather than a translated *samadharma*, has been prominent in Tamil translations of *The Communist Manifesto*. One might be tempted to see the transliteration as "stronger" evidence of Europeanization, as the word certainly sounds more similar to "communist" than its translation.[725] EVR's words in 1948 above suggest, however, that this reading would overlook the possibility that such transliteration may in fact mark the

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[721] For a brief flavor of the field's development, see: Fred Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross Cultural Encounter* (Albany: SUNY P, 1996); Roxanne Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1999); Leigh Jenco, "'What Does Heaven Ever Say?' A Methods-centered Approach to Cross-cultural Engagement," *American Political Science Review* 101:4 (2007): 741-755; and the exchange between between Andrew March, "What Is Comparative Political Theory?" *The Review of Politics* 71, (2009): 531-565 and Farah Godrej, "Response to 'What Is Comparative Political Theory?'" *The Review of Politics* 71 (2009): 567-582.

[722] "Back to the Hindu Fold with Hope", *The Indian Express*, 23 November 1981.

[723] *taṉi uṭaimai*

[724] Lecture delivered at Tūttukkuṭi, 9-5-1948, *Viṭutalai* 19-5-1948 (Anaimuthu 1974, 260).

[725] One such *Kamyūṉisṭu Aṟikkai* [Manifesto] is published in Ee. Es. Kē. *Kamyūṉisam, 1847-1975: Aṉṟu Mutal Iṉṟu Varai* [*Communism, 1847-1975: From That Day to This*] (Ceṉṉai: Pakat Hāvus Paplikēshaṉs, 1975): 544-594. This edition, as others, features technical Sanskritized vocabulary. For another example of transliteration over translation with respect to "communism," though one that retains more of the Self-Respecters' own renderings elsewhere, see Rā. Kirushṉayyā (trans), *Kamyūṉisṭuk Kaṭci Aṟikkai* [Communist Party Manifesto] (Chennai: New Century Book House, 2004).

very assertion of *Brahminism*. As we see in the above quoted passage, where communism's transliteration marks Brahminism's assertion and communism's translation marks resistance to Brahminism, whither Europeanization and the threat which encounters with allegedly universal claims pose to allegedly particular ways of being in the world?

In answering such a question, perhaps we may wish to return to considerations of difference and equality central to *samadharma* and the protection of justice and the troubling of borders which marked its *bhutam*, roaring and ravenous….

*SAMADHARMAVATIS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!*

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Yet such unity in the world through *samadharma* was at one and the same time inevitable and impossible. Over the course of the 1930s, the possibility and impossibility of *samadharma* for Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters would turn on a figure thrust into global prominence like never before: the Jew. The Jew provides yet another, and perhaps one of the most compelling, examples of the shared tradition of SubContinental Political Theory forged across a long distance relationship in the world. It would be the duality of this Jew, and its Aryan double, that shattered the Non-Brahmin's self-respect critique of self-rule, and turned the Non-Brahmin in upon itself to seek an answer in the very thing it had worked so hard to question: *swaraj*.

# PART V. FUTURE: PARIAH AS JEW, A HIDDEN TRADITION

In her 1944 essay "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," Hannah Arendt writes:

> The status of the Jews in Europe has been not only that of an oppressed people but also of what Max Weber has called a "pariah people"…It is…not surprising that out of their personal experience Jewish poets, writers and artists should have been able to evolve the concept of the pariah as a human type—a concept of supreme importance for the evaluation of mankind in our day…Indeed, the concept of the pariah has become traditional…[726]

Arendt here marks the Jew as a pariah, a traditional concept evolved by Jews who were not simply beneath others in a social hierarchy but outside society itself, with a supreme importance—it is from the position of the Jew as pariah that we should evaluate mankind and which suggests the future of political life. As Arendt goes on to discuss in this essay, the supreme importance of the Jew as pariah comes from the ways in which this figure reveals both the dangers and opportunities of those who have not assimilated to society, of the outsider.

Yet the attention Arendt draws to this hidden tradition of the Jew as a pariah should not draw our attention away from her gesture to Max Weber. While Arendt locates the evolution and tradition of the "pariah as a human type" in Europe, Weber is clear on locating this "human type" in India. As he begins his study *Ancient Judaism* completed in 1920:

> The problem of ancient Jewry…can best be understood in comparison with the problem of the Indian caste order. Sociologically speaking the Jews were a pariah people, which means, as we know from India, that they were a guest people who were ritually separated, formally or de facto, from their social surroundings. All the essential traits of Jewry's attitude toward the environment can be deduced from this pariah existence…[727]

Weber draws our attention here to the essential traits of Jewry from this pariah existence, of which the most essential was a voluntary exclusion from the people of the present world in order to turn towards a world to come.[728] Yet this should not draw our attention away from the fact

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[726] Hannah Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," *Jewish Social Studies* v.6 n.2 (April 1944): 100.

[727] Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1952): 3.

[728] "The religious promises to which the ritual segregation of Jewry was moored differed essentially form those of the Indian castes. Ritually correct conduct, i.e., conduct conforming to caste standards, carried for the Indian pariah castes the premium of ascent by way of rebirth in a caste-structured world thought to be eternal and unchangeable…the world…had no 'history.'

For the Jew the religious promise was the very opposite. The social order of the world was conceived to have been turned into the opposite of that promised for the future, but in the future it was to be over-turned so that Jewry would be once again dominant. The world was conceived as neither eternal nor unchangeable, but rather as having been created…," Weber, *Ancient Judaism* (1952): 3-4.

Popular criticisms of Arendt—her belief that nationalism's decline rather than rise contributed to antisemitism; her belief that antisemitism had a reason, a distant basis in fact, and thus a subsequent tendency to blame the victim; her focus on court Jews and finance Jews rather than the Jewish majority; her belief that

that the pariah is not simply from India, but is the name of a living untouchable community in the Tamil-speaking South of India, the *paṟaiyarkaḷ*.

This dissertation's introduction suggested how it is that Western European peoples came to imagine themselves in terms of a "human type" concept from South India. The focus of this chapter is on how, during the 1930s and 1940s, the figure of the "Jew" and the "Pariah" were both being imagined simultaneously between Europe and India. This relationship of imagining, shared across Continent and Subcontinent, as we have seen and will continue to see in this Part, invests supreme importance in the outside, in those excluded. This tradition of investment, largely hidden, which locates among outsiders the position from which to evaluate mankind, a location imagined across the long distance relationship between the Pariah in India and the Jew in Europe, provides a dramatic illustration of the field of SubContinental Political Theory.

One may suspect that this field of SubContinental Political Theory shares substantial concerns with Comparative Political Theory given its, as was once fashionably called, "cross-cultural" content. Through a focus on the Jew and Pariah, however, I argue that this field of SubContinental Political Theory is in tension with at least some of the inaugural claims of the field of Comparative Political Theory. As we saw in this dissertation's introduction, the inaugural claims of Comparative Political Theory involved a focus on Gandhi's political thought coupled with the hermeneutics of the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer as a "philosopher of dialogue." We saw then a contrast with another "philosopher of dialogue," the Jewish philosopher and theologian Martin Buber, who articulated a powerful critique of Gandhi focused on Gandhi's failure to comprehend the Jew. This critique, I argued, suggests a much more cautious approach to the Gandhi/Gadamer coupling as a focus, if not one of the foundations, of Comparative Political Theory. Rather than Gadamer's fusion of horizons, where the indigenous and the alien come together, I offered Buber's priority of relationship, where a shared encounter develops in different ways, as an alternative—or, at the very least, a perspective of critique.

This chapter further develops that alternative by turning to the figure of the Jew in the Self-Respect Movement. It builds upon the seemingly contradictory attempt by Rā. Caurirājaṉ, mentioned in the previous chapter, to articulate the relationship between *cuya-mariyātai* and *samadharma*:

> This Self-Respect Movement...descends into the sector of social reform,...drives and beats out the [quality of] high [and] low which is thought to result from birth among people [e.g. caste], gives a hand and lifts up those who hunger as a class which has been oppressed by government law, religion, and society for a great while, makes known the cunning life of those in a community [i.e. the Brahmins] who are thought by many as a high community...and has appeared in order to spread samadharma which [means] that all those born as men are equals regardless of custom, religion, or caste.[729]

The contradiction, of course, was that *cuya-mariyātai* was out to destroy social hierarchies by destroyed differences of caste and religion, while *samadharma* was out to preserve differences of caste and religion through relationships of equality. We will see here how efforts to create a better world through the twin, yet mutually exclusive, goals of difference's destruction and

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antisemitism was rooted in a Jewish Question rather than a German Question, etc.—rarely mention Weber's influence and thus miss any possible role of India in conceptual framings.

[729] Rā. Caurirājaṉ (from Paṭṭukkōṭṭai), "*Cuyamariyātai Iyakkam: Amaippum Ataṉ Avaciyam* [The Self-Respect Movement: Its Formation and Necessity]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 19 August 1928: 6.

difference's preservation articulate themselves in the late 1930s. I look at how the figure of the Pariah along with the Jew, shared across Continent and Subcontinent alike, was used to articulate a tradition of a particular human type concept, namely, that of the outsider and the excluded.

The Part begins with Chapter 11, touching on Hannah Arendt from Western Europe but focusing largely on a series of contemporaneous articles published by the *Cuya-Mariyātai Iyakkam* or "Self-Respect Movement" in the Tamil-speaking South of India which is home to the living untouchable community of the *paṛaiyarkaḷ*. This Tamil movement, as we will see, allies itself with both the Jew and the living community of the *paṛaiyarkaḷ* or "pariah." The Jew and the Pariah are seen as paradigmatic expressions of the Tamil Non-Brahmin, the outsider located within a Brahminical nationalist project where the "self" of self-rule's demand is a threat to forms of difference that are valued and associated with the creation of a better world. This Jew-as-Pariah extends that emphasis on self-respect through *samadharma* we saw in the previous chapter, trying to imagine articulations of equality that preserve difference.

In Chapter 12, we see a very different approach to the Jew. The Jew is not associated with the Pariah and thus a Non-Brahmin ally; the Jew is now associated with the Brahmin and thus a Non-Brahmin enemy. Perhaps most strikingly to the Euro-Atlantic audience, this would mean, for Non-Brahmins, that the Jew was Aryan. European anti-semitic tropes of the Jew—an invasive foreign minority community holding disproportionate privileges over and thereby crippling the prospects of the native masses for forms of fulfillment—provided a compelling parallel to the Brahmin. Such parallels had been circulating in South India for centuries, particularly through Christian Missionaries who found the Brahmin position in a caste hierarchy analogous to that of the Pharisees in the Bible, and who had long used this parallel as a way to translate Christianity across South India. This Jew-as-Brahmin articulation occurs simultaneously with that of the Jew-as-Pariah, demonstrating the richness as well as the difficulties of imagining a coherent project of *cuya-mariyātai*. The difficulties, I argue, involve the Jew's dual valence, as simultaneously ally and enemy, which was coupled with an Aryan double, both in an Indian here and a European there.

In Chapter 13, I argue that the "Dravidian nationalism" with which the Self-Respect Movement is currently associated in Tamil politics is part-and-parcel of this Jew-as-Brahmin/Aryan articulation, and thus a turn away from what one may think of as the "Dravidian internationalism" that took shape across the 1920s and 1930s we have been discussing. Such a turn may seem necessary, given that the world was no longer a place where answers could be sought to local challenges by the late 1930s; instead, the late 1930s showed a world at war, a war which could be understood as framed by a world saturated with the very fears of Self-Respecters: the demand for *swaraj*. No longer was the world a place of refuge from *swaraj*; *swaraj* must be used to fight *swaraj*, as it were. Just as Muslims turned to the demand for a separate state, so too would the Non-Brahmin. These separatist demands occurred within a world that seemed so evidently saturated with Brahminism, requiring nationalist turns to fight a world-wide Aryan threat and preserve *samadharma*.

## CHAPTER 11. THE PARIAH AS JEW

Why, exactly, does Arendt claim the *pariah,* this "concept of…a human type" evolved by Jews as part of a tradition in Europe, to be "a concept of supreme importance for the evaluation of mankind in our day"? *Historically*, of course, the answer has to do with the Holocaust and a world at war: "The comity of European peoples went to pieces when, and because, it allowed its

weakest member to be excluded and persecuted."[730] We turn now briefly to Arendt's *theoretical* reasons for arguing this supreme importance, after which we focus on the contemporaneous Self-Respect Movement and how they embraced both the Jew and the Pariah. We will see that the Self-Respect embrace of the Jew was used to articulate a far more aggressive critique of Gandhi and his Congress party's nationalist demand for *swaraj* than what we saw from Buber in this dissertation's introduction, while the Self-Respect embrace of the pariah overlaps with Arendt's investment in the "supreme importance" of the excluded for evaluating mankind.

Theoretically, Arendt is concerned with how it is that the coupling of exclusion and persecution made the Jew into a pariah. She focuses on the ways in which neither standing aloof from society nor becoming assimilated into society are politically viable in her present. With respect to standing aloof, Arendt is clear, picking up from Weber, that the Jew as pariah is not only "excluded from formal society"[731] but also has "no desire to be embraced within it."[732] Yet such desire for self-exclusion became meaningless as a viable option with the rise of nationalism, imperialism, and anti-Semitism across the 19th century, and thus in Arendt's present "Social isolation is no longer possible. You cannot stand aloof from society…The old escape mechanisms have broken down…"[733] Such escape mechanisms included, in the past, a refuge in the arts, which could deny if not mock "the reality of the social order"[734] from the perspective of something more sublime, or a refuge in privilege, which derived directly from "the rulers" and thus made the Jew into their "creature and tool" in exchange for "protection."[735] They existed no more. With respect to assimilation, Arendt draws attention to how Jews who turned away from their community and assimilated into a national identity have not succeeded in avoiding such persecution and exclusion. For what has become clear across the 1800s and into Arendt's present is just "how treacherous the promise of equality which assimilation has held out"[736] was, for one could be just as easily recognized as a fellow Frenchman or a German one day as recognized as a foreigner or alien the next.[737]

The figure of the pariah therefore makes evident that one can neither remove oneself from society as if above it nor can one remove oneself from his or her community and act as if an equal, but that one must remain within one's own community and demand that this community be recognized as equal within society. "Today," Arendt writes, "the bottom has dropped out of the old ideology" where one could remain an outsider pariah or embark in the individualist assimilation which had lured many pariah to become the social climber she calls the parvenu. She continues

> At long last, it has become clear that the 'senseless freedom' of the individual merely paves the way for the senseless suffering of his entire people…
>
> …
>
> For only within the framework of a people can a man live as a man among men, without exhausting himself. And only when a people lives and functions in consort with other peoples can

[730] Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees" (January 1943) in Arendt, *Jew as Pariah,* ed. Ron H. Feldman (New York: Grove Press, 1978): p 66.
[731] Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah" (1944): 121-122.
[732] Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah" (1944): 102-103.
[733] Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah" (1944): 104.
[734] Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah" (1944): 104.
[735] Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah" (1944): 116.
[736] Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah" (1944): 100.
[737] Arendt, "We Refugees" (1943): 66.

> it contribute to the establishment upon earth of a commonly conditioned and commonly controlled humanity.[738]

What must happen, then, is for the pariah to awaken, engage "the world of men and women"[739] rather than seek refuge either from it or through an assimilated within, and a need to struggle on behalf of his community. As Arendt writes, "As soon as the pariah enters the arena of politics, and translates his status into political terms, he becomes perforce a rebel."[740] It is through such rebellion and struggle of a community that equality, requiring both survival and dignity, can be achieved; "assimilation with self-respect,"[741] at the heart of the "old ideology," she claims, is now impossible. The pariah thus becomes the exemplary figure marking the end of the "old ideology" of either being separate from or assimilated within society and thus provides a, if not the, "concept of supreme importance for the evaluation of mankind" today. In Arendt's present, the pariah inaugurates a new sort of politics.

Arendt's concerns above are with what she calls the "hidden tradition" of the "Jew as pariah." Yet they are in fact part of a larger hidden tradition that joins South India and Western Europe. For, as mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the term "pariah" comes from the community of *paṛaiyarkaḷ*, a living outcaste community in the Tamil-speaking south of India. To argue for this hidden tradition of Subcontinental political theory, we turn to another group of people who were concerned, like Arendt, with "self-respect" and deployed it to trouble the demands of nationalist assimilation during roughly the same time as Arendt: the *Cuya-Mariyātai Iyakkam* or "Self-Respect Movement."

During the 1930s and largely as a consequence of the rise of the Nazis in Europe, parallel discussions of both the Jew and the Tamil pariah community, the *paṛaiyarkaḷ*, featured within the Tamil dailies, weeklies, and monthlies published by the Self-Respect Movement. Though there are some substantial differences, in what follows I focus on a few of the key similarities between articulations of the Jew and pariah in these Tamil Self-Respect publications during the 1930s, on the one hand, and Hannah Arendt's almost simultaneous understandings of the Jew and pariah, on the other. To repeat: I understand Arendt's concern with the Jew as pariah to revolve around what it means to be not only oppressed as a community, but excluded, and not only excluded, but aloof. The mechanisms for sustaining this unassimilated aloofness in the past—through appeals to the arts providing transcendent critique or to direct ties to rulers providing forms of privilege—was no longer possible under modern conditions, which I understand to include conditions of nationalism. In the present, one must struggle for the self-respect of one's own community within the social order in order to be truly fee. What we will see, I submit, is how Western Europeans deployed a Tamil, South Indian concept of a human type called "pariah" just as Tamil-speaking South Indians were deploying a Western European concept of a human type called "Jew" in order to imagine dangerous forms of exclusion from political life. I begin by discussing the role of the Jew in the Tamil dailies, weeklies, and monthlies of the Self-Respect Movement before turning to parallel concerns over the Pariah in such publications.

## JEW

[738] Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah" (1944): 121-122.
[739] Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah" (1944): 109.
[740] Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah" (1944): 109.
[741] Hannah Arendt, "Zionism Reconsidered" (October 1944) in *Jew as Pariah* (1978): p. 145.

To appreciate articulations of "Jew" on the Subcontinent, one must first appreciate another idiom the region shared with the Continent: not simply that of the "pariah" but also that of the "Aryan." We already encountered the "Aryan" in Chapter 1 in the work of Sir Henry Sumner Maine with his claims about the creation of comparative projects through the encounter between Europe and India. It is this coupling of Aryan/Pariah that, for our purposes here, can be understood to have informed the binary German/Jew in Western Europe and the binary Brahmin/Non-Brahmin in South India. The shared idiom of an Aryan enemy provided an easy and obvious way for Self-Respecters to relate to the Jew as a Tamil Non-Brahmin ally.

The term *aṟiyarkaḷ*—the Aryans—had traditionally referred to the Brahmins in Tamil country. The Non-Brahmins that formed a part of the Tamil-speaking Self-Respect Movement had to account for why the term *aṟiyarkaḷ*—the Aryans—had also come to refer to the Nazis in Europe. Self-Respecters explained this by claiming that European orientalist scholars had brought the idea of the Aryan—and, with it, articulations of caste power—from India to Europe. As one Self-Respecter writes in March 1938 in an article titled "The Aryan Infatuation of the White-Man":

> The Aryan [*āriya*] infatuation came about a few years ago for the specialists of the culture of eastern countries in nations such as England and Germany. They began to spread the glory [*pukaḻ*] of all that which was related to [the] Aryan…
>
> Hitler in Germany, now needing to drive out the Jews, introduced the philosophy of the Aryan caste [*jāti*]; this came for [his] concern over sect [*camayam*].[742]

The Aryan idiom spread across India and Europe because English and German scholars of India brought that idiom from the Subcontinent to the Continent, which subsequently came to be adopted by Hitler in order to articulate his concern over "sect" or "caste."

What was the relationship between the Aryan and the Non-Aryan? Self-Respecters are clear that it is a relationship of *eradication*. As mentioned earlier, the longstanding fear by Non-Brahmin Tamils was that the Congress party's demand for nationalist *swaraj* was merely a vehicle for furthering the caste domination of Brahmin elites. Self-Respecters were subsequently terrified during one of the most definitive moments of late-colonial Indian politics that also, coincidentally, occurred around the time of the beginning of World War II: the Congress party sweep of regional elections across India in 1937. In the largely Tamil-speaking Madras Presidency of British India, the Premier elected from these elections was a Brahmin Congressman and close friend of Gandhi's named Rajagopalachariar. To Self-Respecters, this Brahmin Congressman's electoral victory appeared as evidence that Aryanism was set to destroy the Non-Brahmin Tamil in India just like the Jew in Europe. As one Self-Respecter writes in 1938:

> Aryan [*āriyar*] legal procedure is simply the crushing of opposition [*etirikaḷ*: opponents]—whether it be by German Aryans or by Indian Aryans.
>
> In Germany the Aryan Hitler has crushed the Jews.
>
> In India the Aryan [Rajagopal]āccāriyār is trying to crush the Tamilian.
>
> Though living and joining from ancient times (the Brahmin with the Tamilian and the German with the Jews), the Aryan *jāti* [caste] fanaticism [*vēṟi*] and disgust [for others {*tuvēsham*}] has not been destroyed![743]

[742] Pi. Citamparam, "Tirāviṭarum Āriyarum," [Dravidian and Aryan], *Kuṭi Aracu*, 13 March 1938: 6.
[743] Sar. Kē. Vi. Reṭṭi Nāyuṭu, "Intippuraṭṭu" [Hindi Treachery], *Pakuttaṟivu* 4.4 August 1938: 22.

We see here, quite explicitly, the coupling of Brahmin and German through the Aryan and subsequently the coupling of Tamilian and the Jew, understood as Non-Brahmin/Non-Aryan.

Self-Respecters were also clear that the Non-Aryan targets of the Aryan were objects of dehumanization, either as slaves or through outright destruction. As a world-wide category which could combine Nazi fascism and Congress nationalism, Aryanism allowed Self-Respecters to conceive of Hitler and Gandhi engaged in a parallel effort of such enslavement and/or destruction. In an editorial written in August 1938, one Self-Respecter writes:

> Both the character [*kuṇam*] of Aryan division [*piṛavu*] and caste [*jāti*] either destroy the Non-Aryan or take [the Non-Aryan] as slaves whereby they live in toil [*uḻaippu*]. If an example for this is needed, by looking at the Germans' Hitler it will become clear. The principle [*koḷkai*] of Hitler and the Nazi establishment [*tāpaṉam*] is that the Non-Aryan should be destroyed. The principle of our country's Congress and the principle of Gandhi used as an Aryan stooge [*kūli*] is just like that [of Hitler and the Nazis]. That is, the saying that 'According to the Congress, Manu Dharma, and the path of the Varna Shastra, India should be revived [*putupi*]' proves our claim. Furthermore, regardless of which bases one may take and see of the Aryan, the Non-Aryan country is a mleccha [foreigner-as-polluted] country, the Non-Aryan language is a mleccha language, [and] the Non-Aryans [themselves] are mleccha, demon [*acurar*], and devil [*rākkatar*]—one can see such reason[ing] [*karaṇakkiṭappatu*] even today.[744]

Self-Respecters are concerned that Indian nationalist emphases on ancient Sanskrit texts that establish distinctions among castes, including outcastes, such as the Manu Dharma and the Varna Shastra, are evidence of the Aryanism of Congress and Gandhi who, like the Nazis and Hitler, are focused on the eradication or enslavement of Non-Aryans. In India, Non-Aryans are dehumanized as *mleccha*—a recurring trope we've seen in Part I and Part II—those polluted-because-foreign, or as demons.

Moreover, such eradication or enslavement was understood to be achieved, at least in part, through acts of conceptualization. Here, the Non-Aryan is conceptually laden with a degraded identity reinforcing forms of exclusion. Self-Respecters are concerned that Gandhi is enacting such exclusion by calling untouchables "Harijans," literally "Children of God" and taken by many as condescending at the very least. As one Self-Respecter writes in July 1939:

> …Gandhism, without coming forward to examine the terrible basis of untouchability, gives them a separate title [*paṭṭam*] 'Harijan' and [thereby] makes them remain as degraded-ones [*kīḻāṉavarkaḷ*]. Like this, German Nazis at all times establish the place of the Jews as degraded-ones.[745]

Exclusive terms for untouchable groups in India and Europe threaten to preserve a degraded, excluded status. Gandhism and Nazism are once again fused as two articulations of the Aryan which threatened the survival, let alone political viability, of the Non-Aryan.

In sum, with respect to the Jew in South India, we have seen how the Aryan was understood by Self-Respecters in India and Europe alike as set to dehumanize the Non-Aryan through enslavement or destruction. Such Aryanism in Europe was articulated through Hitler and Nazi fascism, while such Aryanism in India was articulated through Brahminism and, thus,

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[744] Editorial, "Pārppaṉa Āṭci Iṉṉum Eṉṉa Ceyya Vēṇṭum?" [Brahmin Rule: What Should One Do?], *Kuṭi Aracu*, 7 August 1938: 10.

[745] Je. Ka. Vēlaṉ, "Hiṭlarum-Kaṇtiyārum," [Hitler and Gandhi], *Kuṭi Aracu*, 16 July 1939: 5.

through demands for nationalist *swaraj* by Gandhi and Congress. On the account given by Self-Respecters provided above, the Tamil Non-Brahmin and Jew alike shared in a Non-Aryan status. And, as we'll see, such status extended not only to the human concept "pariah" in the European Jew, but to the lived untouchable community of *paṟaiyarkaḷ* in the Tamil-speaking India of the Self-Respect Movement.

## PARIAH

We now turn to a series of articles published in Self-Respect journals to explore the qualities of the Non-Aryan Tamil *par excellence*, the *paṟaiyarkaḷ* or "pariah." What we will see are echoes of several of Arendt's own concerns with the Non-Aryan Jew *par excellence*, the pariah, as a member of an excluded community whose past was premised on mechanisms that could sustain an aloofness but which were now no longer viable. As we will see, the *paṟaiyarkaḷ* shares in the outsider qualities of Arendt's pariah and a past sustained through direct ties to ruling power or a distinct culture and tradition invested in the arts. More importantly, the *paṟaiyarkaḷ* of South India is also understood by Self-Respecters as exemplary of the modern condition who, like the Jew as pariah of Western Europe, reveals the necessity to struggle on behalf of one's community in order to achieve self-respect and individual equality.

We saw the coupling of the Jew and Tamil above as Non-Aryan. In what follows, we will see that the *paṟaiyarkaḷ* ["pariah"] are portrayed as the quintessential Tamil. This suggests, I argue, the existence of a hidden tradition parallel to that of the Jew as Pariah: that of the Pariah as Jew. Nowhere is the articulation of the Tamil "pariah" more focused than in a series of articles published in the flagship Self-Respect weekly *Kuṭi Aracu* in February, March, and April of 1939. These articles broach and respond to the question "Who is the *Paṟaiyaṉ*?"

This discussion of the "pariah" among Self-Respecters begins with an article published on 26 February 1939 by one Pi. Nallayarām titled "Is the *Paṟaiyaṉ* One Who Beats the *Paṟai* [drum]? No! No! Then Who Is the *Paṟaiyaṉ*?"[746] Unfortunately, this article exists only in fragments. Regardless, from these fragments, three features of the *paṟaiyaṉ* stand out (we'll return to the "drum" shortly). First, the *paṟaiyaṉ* is understood as a result of the appearance of the Aryan. Here, the author is operating with the prevalent "Aryan invasion" theory whereby the caste peoples of India, particularly the Brahmins, are understood as racially "Aryan" and originally from Western Asia. He writes that "our researchers" have concluded that "this question [concerning the *paṟaiyaṉ*] was of the time when the *Āriyar* came to India." Second, this Pariah Question, our author claims, has not received the attention it deserves, and he laments the absence of a publication devoted to the Pariah Question in our "contemporary time." The third important point raised by the article is an attempt to suggest answers to the question "Who is the *Paṟaiyaṉ*?" Here, despite the fragmentary nature of the surviving article, we see that the identity *paṟaiyaṉ* is understood either to originate from birth, that is "caste" [*jāti*], or through action, that as "labour" [*toḻil*]. In short, the Pariah Question—"Who is the *Paṟaiyaṉ*?"—arises as a product of Aryan encounter, is a largely underemphasized question yet of central importance in the political present, and involves issues of birth and action.

On 26 March 1939, a Dr. Ji. Paktavatsalam responds to Nallayarām's question "is the name *paṟaiyaṉ* a caste name or a name concerning labour" in his own article "The Meaning of

[746] Pi. Nallayarām, "Ōr Cantēka Viṉara: Paṟaiyaṭippavaṉ Paṟaiyaṉā? Illai! Illai! Piṉ Yār Paṟaiyaṉ? [Is the *Paṟaiyaṉ* One Who Beats the *Paṟai* [drum]? No! No! Then Who Is the *Paṟaiyaṉ*?]," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 26 February 1939: 14.

the Word *Paṟaiyaṉ*."[747] After great praise offered to both those who raise the Pariah Question as well as the Self-Respect journal *Kuṭi Aracu* for providing an opportunity to explore answers, Paktavatsalam gives us a helpful review of the competing claims for the identity of those most degraded of caste peoples, the pariah. Such claims fall into two primary categories.

On the one hand, our author discusses those explanations which fuse the degraded pariah to a past linked to the cultural arts and the power of rulers. The most prevalent of such explanations understands the origins of the *paṟaiyaṉ* community as "he who announces the order of the king through the hide-percussion-instrument [e.g. drum] called the *paṟai*." The *paṟaiyaṉ*'s direct association with political power through the percussive performing arts here extended, for some, to an understanding of the *paṟaiyaṉ* as not just the vehicle for royal decrees but as the source of power itself. For example, Paktavatsalam mentions a recent book which claimed "the meaning for *paṟaiyaṉ* is '*parai*' the very foundation of power [*āticakti*] or the people of rain/cloud [*māri*]." In ancient Tamil prosody, the bringing of rainclouds was among the central roles of a king, where the power to make the crops grow was understood as the foundation of political power, and the king's drum, the vehicle of royal decrees, was therefore often likened to rainclouds and their thunder. The *paṟaiyaṉ*, then, by providing the king's thunder, as it were, was not merely an instrument of political power but its very source. And this identity of the pariah as derived from the arts are not exhausted by those of performance, whereby the drum links the pariah directly to the power of and possibly privileges from kings, but includes literary ones as well. For example, our author cites several scholars as suggesting that "*paṟai* is a variation [*tiripu*] of the northern-word [Sanskrit] '*pokariyā* (Pohariya)' whose meaning is he who reads." The percussive arts, ruling power, and the literary are understood, by some, to be the origins of the *paṟaiyaṉ*.

These answers to the question "Who Is the *Paṟaiyaṉ*?," however, do not satisfy Paktavatsalam. Such answers suggest to our author that communities in ancient Tamil Country could have been hereditary [*paṟamparai*], defined by birth and organized into castes, whereas Paktavatsalam insists that "In this country in which appeared the proverb 'All which lives [lit., emerges, develops] is of equal birth' there were not castes [*jātikaḷ*] in early days as [there are] today." And because "high-low by birth" did not exist in ancient Tamil Country, communities did not get their names from connections of blood but instead got their names from "labour" and from "the five divisions of landscapes [*tiṇai*]." The ancient Tamil literary tradition of the five landscapes invoked here is a highly formalized structure relating to flora, fauna, mood, and narrative evident in the first extant body of Tamil prosody, nearly two-thousand years old, where both poems of love and war begin in the hills and move across other landscapes, such as seashores and agricultural fields, before arriving at a conclusion (marriage in love poems, victory in war poems). Our author proceeds to claim that the name *paṟaiyaṉ* came from a word whose origins were in the hill language—the language of Malayalam, where "*malai*" means "hill." Locating the *paṟaiyaṉ* in the hills, as with the earlier discussion of arts and kings, locates the pariah in the realm of the originary if not the exemplary, for the pariah is associated with narrative beginnings, that is, associated with the hills that formed the first landscape in the narrative progression central to the ancient literary tradition of ancient Tamil prosody.

The final article in this conversation directly addressing the Pariah Question pushes beyond merely treating the pariah as having exceptional origins. Ira. Muṉicāmirācaṉār's 2 April 1939 article "Answer to the Question of Doubt: Who is the *Paṟaiyar*? How Did the Name

[747] Eṭṭayapuram Dākṭar Ji. Paktavatsalam, "Paṟaiyaṉ Eṉṟa Colliṉ Poruḷ [The Meaning of the Word *Paṟaiyaṉ*]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 26 March 1939: 12.

'*Paṛaiyar*' Come About?"[748] adds to such exceptional origins the centrality of *exclusion*. Muṉicāmirācaṉār praises Nallayarām's February question "Who is the *Paṛaiyar*?" by modifying it slightly—using the more respective suffix: *paṛaiyar* rather than *paṛaiyaṉ*. Perhaps related to his use of the more respective form, Muṉicāmirācaṉār claims that such a question is important because it is "the duty and need of the people in a community to struggle [*pōrāṭu*] for themselves and remove [any] degradation [*iḻivu*] existing for their community"—a question which, with respect to the pariah, has been important for "twenty centuries" but is of undeniable significance in the political present.

Muṉicāmirācaṉār agrees with the paramount importance of the Pariah Question but disagrees with previous answers. He refutes the prevalent suggestion that the *paṛaiyar's* origins were in forms of labor outside the social structure, as claims that linked the pariah directly to royal power through the beating of the *parai* drum seemed to do. Adopting the same ancient "five landscapes" framework we saw in earlier Paktavatsalam, he places the pariah community not in the hills, the landscape that marked the beginning of ancient Tamil prosody's narrative, but in the third landscape, the agricultural fields (*marutam*).[749] This field landscape is central to Muṉicāmirācaṉār's argument, for he claims that originally the pariah were a part of the "the majority of people" in ancient Tamil Country, and the majority of Tamils at that time, he claims, were agricultural laborers [*uḻavu*] and thus associated with the landscape of the field—not the hills. If the origins of the pariah community are not exceptional—neither with direct ties to kings, as with the *parai* drum, nor occupying the exemplary landscape of narrative beginnings, as in the hills—how is it that the pariah came to be singled out as a minority community, that is, singled out in the political present of the Self-Respect Movement as the most degraded of all communities?

Muṉicāmirācaṉār's answer deals with the action and agency of a small group of ancient Tamils. In response to the arrival of the Aryans, he argues, a minority of Tamilians refused assimilation and subsequently became the minority called "pariah." As he writes:

> Aryans [āriyar] entered the forests where the Tamilians had been living. They spread among the Tamilians their arts, civilization, religion [*matam*], etc. The vast majority among the Tamilians followed these. [Yet] some among the ancient Tamil people were…afraid that their art, civilization, and religion would be destroyed. They joined together. They saw the Aryans and the Tamils who were made slaves to them…Not wishing to join and live with them they were those who lived [*vāḻalāyiṉar*], abandoning their homes, outside [*puṛam*] their native places.

Subsequently, he goes on to say, this Tamil minority who lived outside the majority of Tamils who had become assimilated to Aryan civilization, in part because of this minority's own hatred of the assimilated majority, became themselves the target of tremendous degradation continuing up to the present. He then goes on to add, "Even today this enmity [*pakai*] has not been destroyed."

Moreover, it is this existence outside society produced by a choice to resist assimilation and enslavement, rather than from the name of the royal drum suggesting direct access to the privileges of rulers or from terms coming across the hills located in the landscape of narrative

[748] Ira. Muṉicāmirācaṉār, "Cantēka Viṉāvukku Viṭai: Paṛaiyar Yār? Paṛaiyar Eṉṛa Peyar Vanta Vitam [Answer to the Question of Doubt: Who is the *Paṛaiyar*? How Did the Name '*Paṛaiyar*' Come About?]," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 2 April 1939: 17.

[749] The *marutam* landscape, in love poems, is associated with the quarelling of the couple. The quarrel has political implications not explored here.

beginnings, from which the "pariah" get their name. For the word for "outside" here is "*puṟam*." As Muṉicāmirācaṉār explains:

> Because they joined and lived in the outside [*puṟam*] they became known to others as *puṟavar* [those of the outside]…Like calling someone who lives in the *kuṉṟu* [hills] as a *kuṟavar*, they called those who lived in the *puṟam* [outside] as *puṟavar*! Th[is] word[]…in the course of time changed…finally becoming…*paṟaiyar*.

It is the pariah's excluded existence—a community name literally descended from the term *puṟavar*, "those of the outside," an outside produced by a refusal to assimiliate with the Aryan and become their slaves—that makes this minority the exemplary Tamilian. For these pariah "are those ancient Tamil people who were called and valued degradingly by others as *paraiyar*, they who are distinctly Tamilians, [they] who did not adopt the Aryan art, civilization, religion, etc., and did not mix [*kalappu*] with Aryan blood."

This discussion reveals a relatively simultaneous interest among South Indians and among Western Europeans with the figure of the "pariah." With Arendt and Continental political theory more broadly, of course, *the Jew is a Pariah*. Given the ways in which we have seen the Jew coupled with the Tamil in response to the Aryan, as in Self-Respecter concerns which linked Hitler and Nazi fascism with Gandhi and Congress nationalism, and the ways in which the Pariah is coupled with the distinctly Tamil in response to the Aryan, as in Self-Respecter concerns with the question "Who Is the *Paṟaiyaṉ*," I argue that we see here a Subcontinental tradition in which *the Pariah is a Jew*. Both Arendt and Self-Respecters alike are invested in an excluded minority, a minority whose outsider status is the product of resisting forces of assimilation, and are worried about how such status becomes dangerous when current conditions, which in India revolved around demands for "self-rule" or *swaraj*, become the dominant political idiom. For, we may ask with Arendt and Self-Respecters alike, who is the self of self-rule, and who is not the self of self-rule? Moreover, Arendt and Self-Respecters alike understand the possibility of the pariah's existence as an unassimilated community apart from society, rather than as an assimilated community a part of society, to be variously premised in the past on direct access to political power and support from ruling forces as well as on some investment in the arts. In the political present, however, both Arendt and Self-Respecters are clear that the pariah must struggle to remove the degradation [*iḻivu*] of his or her community.

What we have then, I suggest, is a shared "hidden tradition" in which the Jew and Pariah came to constitute and frame understandings of one another across India and Europe alike, a hidden tradition of SubContinental Political Theory which invests "supreme importance" among the excluded. Such importance, for German Jew and Tamil Pariah alike, may be of importance in the evaluation of mankind and the future of political life. As a point of reflection, we may wonder whether or not such excluded positions, and thus their supreme importance in evaluating mankind, are imaginable within any given tradition at all. Perhaps such positions, like that of the Pariah and the Jew, can only be imagined through prior and distant relationships, perhaps whose thought is more possible the larger the expanse, the greater the distance between, the vaster the realm of the world outside.

## CHAPTER 12. THE BRAHMIN AS JEW

Alliance with the Jew, however, was not so simple. Understandings of the Jew elsewhere in the world suggested that that the Jew may not simply be the target of Aryan domination but an

agent of capitalist exploitation. Such an understanding was present in Europe, though meeting with widespread criticism,[750] even among members of the Frankfurt School who, drawing upon earlier articulations by Marx in "On the Jewish Question," suggested an alliance between the Jew and capital.[751] Yet such understandings among members of the Frankfurt School were quite so straightforward. For example, in *The Dialectics of Enlightenment* (1944), Adorno and Horkheimer, while still insisting on the Jew's vulnerability to anti-Semitism because of his association with "[t]he circulation sphere, in which they once held positions of economic power,"[752] were also insistent that anti-Semitism was the product of a paranoid projection and thus not of economic concerns; rather anti-Semitism was the product of the malformed psyche of the masses who, in order to justify a will to persecute, configured the Jew as persecutor. Such understandings reveal a figuration of the Jew that could appear to Non-Brahmins as not simply an ally of the Pariah, but a Brahminical enemy.

That is to say, the European Jew was dual—both associated with material exploitation as well as an outlet for paranoid projection. This dual Jew, as not only ally but enemy, was the topic of conversation in the Euro-Atlantic during the 1930s and 1940s. As claimed in *The Dialectics of Enlightenment*, Jews "are regarded by advanced civilization as both backward and advanced, like and unlike, shrewd and stupid."[753] A more specific articulation can be found in an allied project, *Studies in Prejudice* (1949), the multi-volume project largely funded by the American Jewish Labor Association and led by Horkheimer [et al] while the Frankfurt School was in exile in the United States. In this project's fifth volume, *Prophets of Deceit: A Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator* by Leo Lowenthal and Norbert Guterman, the dual Jew finds a series of substantive formulations. The dual Jew, while logically contradictory, is demanded for reasons apparently psychologically consistent. As Lowenthal and Guterman write in the chapter "The Jew as Enemy":

> In this chapter no attempt is made to develop a theory of anti-Semitism. We are here concerned only with the stereotypes of the Jew as they appear in agitational material and the way in which the agitator develops and transforms those stereotypes into a logically self-contradictory but psychologically consistent image of the Jew, who appears both as weak and strong, victim of persecution and persecutor, endowed with changeable racial characteristics and irrepressible individualism.[754]

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[750] One such critic was G. Scholem, who accused Horkheimer of missing the fascist push to annihilate Jews as Jews, not just as some economic agent of circulation. Peter Stirk, *Max Horkheimer: A New Introduction* (Lanham: Barnes & Noble, 1992): 147.

[751] As Max Horkheimer writes in 1939, "The Jews are stripped of power as agents of circulation, because the modern structure of the economy [under fascism] largely puts that whole sphere out of action." Max Horkheimer, "The Jews and Europe" (1939) in Stephen Eric Bronner & Douglas Kellner, *Critical Theory & Society: A Reader* (New York: Routeledge, 1989): 90.

[752] Max Horkheimer & Theodor Adorno, *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007 (1944)): 164.

[753] Horkheimer & Adorno, *Dialectics* (2007): 153.

[754] Leo Lowenthal & Norbert Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit: A Study of the Techniques of the American Agitator,* Studies in Prejudice Series, volume 5 (New York: Harper, 1949): 65-66. Martin Jay, in discussing the strong/weak articulation of the dual Jew in *Studies in Prejudice*, suggests this articulation was part of an argument "against the assumption that the exposure of deliberate deception was enough to discredit the demagogue" thus seeking "to unmaks the arsenal of unconceious devides that accounted for his appeal." "The Jews and the Frankfurt School: Critical Theory's Analysis of Anti-Semitism" in *New German Critique* 19:1 (Winter 1980): 142.

Anti-Semitism, as forms of domination more generally, can only find justification if those persecuted are simulatenously rendered as persecutor. Justification for anti-Semitism required the Jew, rendered weak through domination, to simulatenously be strong and dominant and thus deserving persecution.[755] This half of the dual Jew, whose anti-Semitic projection out from Europe was associated with capitalism and domination, involved qualities of domination and persecuting strength more amenable to the Brahmin enemy than the Pariah ally.

The most famous component of the research project *Studies in Prejudice* was, of course, *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). The dual Jew is here given another articulation, supplementing our discussion of the duality Jew/oppressed/ally vs. Jew/capitalist/enemy. The language here, turning on the distinction between fear of *contamination* and that of *being overwhelmed*, will echo justifications for Jew-as-Pariah-ally (both forces despised for being a contaminating community) vs. Jew-as-Brahmin-enemy (both forces despised for being an overwhelming sect):

> The negative imagery of Jews, and the accompanying sense of threat, involves two main fears which form the basis for attitudes. There is, first, the fear of contamination: the fear that Jews may, if permitted intimate or intensive contact with Gentiles, have a corrupting or degenerating influence…Among the many ideas which have been attributed to "Jewish contamination" are free love, radicalism, atheism…
>
> In addition to the fear of contamination there is the fear of being overwhelmed. This anxiety is related to the imagery of Jews as preying and powerful. If Jews are given the opportunity of free participation in community affairs then…they will form a small sectarian clique interested only in their own power and material interests. To gain these aims they will shrewdly use even the most ruthless and dishonest methods. There is thus a great danger that the Gentile group will be persecuted, victimized, exploited—in short, overwhelmed.[756]

The Jew as a contaminating agent was an evident ally of the Non-Brahmin who were, by the Brahmin, also considered contaminating. EVR's thought and movement was rendered polluting by upper caste nationalists for many of the reasons Jews were: an association with free love ("mixed marriage" across caste lines, see Part VI), radicalism, and atheism. But the Jew could also be redeemed as Brahmin: an overwhelming enemy, dominating, ruthless, sectarian/communal/caste-based, exploitative, and capitalist.

Non-Brahmins were not unaware of the duality within the European Jew. For example, they translated and published a speech by David Lloyd George, who had been the Prime Minster of the United Kingdom during World War I and played a critical role in the Balfour Declaration to create a Jewish homeland in Palestine, titled "*Yūtarkaḷai Viraṭṭuvatu Ēn?*," "Why Drive Out the Jews?," in September 1939.[757] Lloyd George was critical of, and was well aware of the role of duality in, anti-Semitism, claiming:

> the Jews of to-day can do nothing right. If they are rich they are birds of prey. If they are poor they are vermin. If they are in favour of a war it is because they want to exploit the bloody feuds of the Gentiles to their own profit. If they are anxious for peace they are either instinctive cowards or

[755] "the agitator can play upon the ambivalent feelings toward the weak who even as they are objects of sympathy, are also the objects of suspicion and hatred." Lowenthal & Guterman *Prophets of Deceit* (1949)

[756] Daniel J. Levinson, "Chapter III: The Study of Anti-Semitic Ideology" in T.W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality: Studies in Prejudice,* vol 1 (New York, Harper, 1950): 98.

[757] *Miṣṭar Lāyiṭ Jārj*, "*Yūtarkaḷai Viraṭṭuvatu Ēn?*" *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 September 1939: 17-18.

> traitors. If they give generously—and there are not more liberal givers than the Jews—they are doing it for some selfish purpose of their own. If they do not give—then what could one expect of a Jew but avarice? If labour is oppressed by great capital, the greed of the Jew is held responsible. If labour revolts against capital—as it did in Russia—the Jew is blamed for that also. If he lives in a strange land he must be persecuted and pogrommed out of it. If he wants to go back to his own he must be prevented. Through the centuries, in every land, whatever he does, or intends, or fails to do, he has been pursued by the echo of the brutal cry of the rabble of Jerusalem against the greatest of all Jews—"Crucify Him!"[758]

And yet Europe's dual Jew faced Non-Brahmins with a possible articulation of enemy. Some Non-Brahmins capitalized on this articulation. Such capitalization did not eclipse the sympathetic reading of the Jew, but it did elicit unsavory if not schizophrenic elements of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. Yet such elements were not apart from, but very much a part of, the shared tradition of Subcontinental Political Theory.

## "NOT BECAUSE BORN IN A XTIAN FAMILY AM I A CHILD OF GOD"

Before we turn to the Jew as Brahmin among Self-Respecters, which cannot but cast self-respect in a less flattering but no less SubContinental light, we should note just how pervasive the Jew/Brahmin coupling was—and had been for centuries—in South India. Such pervasiveness does not justify the anti-Semitic strains of the Non-Brahmin, but it does make clear just how capacious and remarkable Non-Brahmin efforts were to comprehend the Jew as ally. I focus here on Mission.

Mission's message in South India was clear and unequivocal: the South Indian Brahmin was like the Jew of the New Testament. Given this message spread across the Tamil countryside for centuries, the surprise should not be that the Brahmin was understood by many Self-Respeccters as Jew in the 1930s, but that there was such an effort to see the Non-Brahmin Pariah as a Jew during this time. For example, take the Prussian CTE Rhenius, whom we saw cited by a Scudder in this Part's beginning, sent to the Tamil-speaking South in 1814.[759] After seeing a "pagoda" at the invitation of a "Brahman" with an image of "the earth painted" on one of the walls next to a "figure describing the different stages of heaven and hell," he writes in his diary on 15 August 1818 from the village of "Víranammúr":

> It seems to me, on farther considering the former subject, that as the Vishnu and Siva sects [e.g. Hindu] and religious worship exhibit a strong likeness to the Jewish dispensation, nearly in all their forms and ceremonies, idolatry and a few local peculiarities excepted, so the sect of the Jainas [e.g. non-Hindu] exhibits striking similarities to the Christian dispensation.[760]

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[758] David Lloyd George, "Palestine and the Jews" (London, 9 July 1923) in *Is It Peace?* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1923).

[759] He spent 5 months learning Tamil at Tranquebar before going to Madras. He was one of the first in the rash of missionary activity following the Acts of 1813 by the East India Company which allowed mission.

[760] Johann Rhenius, *Memoir of the Rev. CTE Rhenius, Comprising Extracts from his Journal and Correspondence, with Details of Missionary Proceedings in South Asia, by His Son* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1841): 150-151. This passage, slightly out of context, is popular in Indo-Judaica studies. See Yulia Egorova, *Jews and India: Perceptions and Image* (New York Routeledge, 2007): 18; Tudor Parfitt, "The Use of the Jew in Colonial Discourse" in Ivan Davidson Kalmár & Derek Jonathan Penslar, ed. *Orientalism and the Jews* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2005): 53.

Such sentiments were pervasive. For example, writing elsewhere in South India decades later, in 1870, one Rev. Samuel Mateer writes,

> The Brahmans in Travancore have secured for themselves a singularly high and unfair superiority over all other classes—very different from their present position in British India. Though comparatively so few in number (little more than three per cent. of the whole population), they are the only class that are free from all social and religious disabilities, and enjoy perfect liberty of action. The whole framework of Hinduism has been adapted to the comfort and exaltation of the Brahman. His word is law; his smile confers happiness and salvation; his power with heaven is unlimited; the very dust of his feet is purifying in its nature and efficacy. Each is an infallible Pope in his own sphere. The Brahman is the exclusive and Pharisaic Jew of India. He is professedly the pure and exalted priest, separate from all that is "common or unclear."[761]

In short, Christian Missionaries in South India persistently claimed that paralleled the Brahmin with New Testament Jews.

We have good reason to suspect that such claims redeeming the Brahmin as Jew were not simply locked away in personal diaries or published accounts. Such claims were stock features of sermons given by itinerant preachers across South India for centuries in order to draw parallels between the Bible and the lived experiences of Tamil villagers. It is difficult to find existing notes for actual sermons given in the Tamil-speaking South of India, but we may imagine that those kept by Edward Alfred Livingstone Moore[762] of the Church Missionary Society during the 1910s and 1920s, in the decades of the rise of the Non-Brahmin and its Self-Respect Movement, are representative. From his notes, composed in both Tamil and English, we have reason to believe that he delivered these sermons in Tamil, rendering the English portions in Tamil on the spot. And there is no doubt in these sermons that the Brahmin was used to illustrate the Jew of the Christian Bible. For example, in a sermon on the Book of John 2:12-13 concerning the "Children of God" delivered at "JnP" (a church in Madras) on 18 October 1914, at Vagei on 14 October 1915, at St. Thomas Mount in 1915, and in Pulavanam in October 1915, Moore writes:

> 'not of blood'...not by caste or birth, divine sonship not dependent on physical descent—race, family &c...contrast the Jewish dispensation and the confinement of its spiritual privileges to the family of Abraham—and the Hindu system with its distinction between the Brahmin and the Pariah...and the world with its distinction of privileged and pauper. Xtianity oversteps all such distinctions. the children gathered from every race and kindred and tribe and tongue...high or low makes no difference here...[763]

The idea of Jew/Brahmin as the mark of caste and privilege was a perennial theme as Moore would continue to try to convey the idea of the "Children of God." At JnP in 1914, at Pulavanur, Vagei, and St. Thomas Mount in 1915, in Idayankulam in 1916, and elsewhere in 1925, Moore delivered a sermon whose notes included the following:

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[761] Samuel Mateer, *The Land of Charity: A Descriptive Account of Travancore and Its People, with Special Reference to Mission Life* (Delhi, Asian Educational Service: 1991 (1870)): pp 31-32. This quote's partial, but slightly modified, republication is cited in Parfitt, "The Use of the Jew," p 53.

[762] Later Bishop of Cochin and played a role in the Temple Entry movement of Travancore which was of great interest across India, including among figures like Gandhi.

[763] Bundle, "New Testament III, including St. John" in the Edward Alfred Livingstone Moore papers, Mss Eur F214: 1901-1944, India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library, London.

> not by blood—i.e. not by caste or birth—many things in this world come by blood—the prince—the Brahmin—the Jew—in that family—to such and such a father—in that particular *vamsam* ^race^ [sic]. not so God's children. not because born in a Xtian family am I a child of God. nt in a particular race or caste. high or low makes no difference here...[sic][764]

Jewish dispensation and Abrahamic privilege is like that which marks Hindu caste, distinguishing Brahmin from Pariah. The Jew is more explicitly, and damningly, associated with the Brahmin in an undated and unplaced sermon given during the same period:

> In Jerusalem there was a great temple (like Temple in Madura or Trichendur)—What did Xt see when he entered Temple? Why were they selling these 3 kinds of beast? Why was that not fitting in Temple? (much noise—calling people to buy—cp. Pal[amcottah] markets)—and dispute and quarrelling and cheating too…Yes, like Brahmins…[765]

In short, the idea of the Brahmin as the Tamil equivalent of the Biblical Jewish Pharisee was pervasive across the Tamil countryside by the 1920s.

That there is a Missionary trope of the Brahmin-as-Jew is undoubtable. Features of this trope involve the above claims about how: "Jewish dispensation" confined privilege to the Jew and not others, just like Hinduism confined privilege to the Brahmin and not the Pariah; "blood" determined such confined privileges, like that of the Brahmin and the Jew, whereas forces of freedom and salvation paid no attention to "high or low"; and those Jesus faced in the temple were Jews parallel to cheating Brahmins. The "responsibility" for this story vanishes into a past of varying degrees of documentation, with low-caste elements and Christian Europeans likely feeding one another in a frenzy of synergy, aspiration, and wills to power.

What is better documented, and what is our focus here, is how this SubContinental trope provided great trouble when reconfigured into the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. The remainder of this section turns to the trouble posed by the dual Jew's adversarial valence across four sections. First, taking up the Mission trope of Jew vs. Christian, Non-Brahmins could imagine the Jew as threatening an important principle like *samadharma*, and therefore the Jew was enemy. Yet Non-Brahmin references to Marx suggested that the Jew was on the side of *samadharma*, and therefore the Jew was ally. Second, this dual Jew—echoing diagnoses of the Jew by the Frankfurt school in Europe earlier—comes to a head in encounters with the Nazis, for the Jew could be associated with *samadharma* and still, or actually therefore, the Jew was enemy; this was the Nazi's Jew of Communism. Third, this dual Jew—whose relationship with *samadharma* was, for some, decoupled from qualities of ally or enemy—encounters its Aryan double, both among German Aryans in Europe and Brahmin Aryans in India. This encounter suggested that the adversarial Jew was, in fact, Aryan. Fourth, we see how the dual Jew, rather than being articulated as Non-Brahmin ally by some and Brahmin enemy by others, could inhabit the very same speech—a speech, and a very important one, by EVR himself. As the next Chapter will argue, it is the schizophrenia arising from the dual Jew and its Aryan double, confused and yet desperate as self-ruling elements like Gandhi and Hitler rose in prominence after 1937, that provides one diagnostic element for understanding the reversal, and betrayal, of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule by the late

[764] Sermon Jn 1/12, 13 "Children of God." *Ibid*. EAL Moore papers.
[765] Sermon Jn: 2/12-17. *Ibid.,* EAL Moore Papers.

1930s: the shift from the internationalism of Self-Respect, premised on the Non-Brahmin critique of *swaraj*, to an ethno-linguistic Dravidian Nationalist separatism, which in fact was a Non-Brahmin demand for *swaraj*.

## MARX

The association between Karl Marx, the demand for a world of *samadharma*, and Judaism was well established among Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters. The earliest article providing a brief biography of Marx begins with Marx's Jewish birth and his family's subsequent conversion:

> In the year 1818 in the German nation Karl Marx was born to an incredibly learned Jewish lawyer. At the age of 6 his family joined the Protestant[766] religion [*matam*]. The reason for this was that he [the father] made the additional deep consideration that his son Marx should join in the European Civilization [*nākarīkam*] and that in it [his son Karl Marx] should have renown [*uyar*].[767]

Wishing to succeed in Europe, the Jewish Marx's converted to Christianity: Marx's Jewish origins are here not denied but acknowledged by the Non-Brahmin.

Furthermore, Non-Brahmin investments in Samadharma wed Non-Brahmin to the Jew through Marx's origins during the early rise of Nazi power. For example, one IM Ipṛāhīm from Colombo wrote in 1934: "Because Karl Marx, who taught *cōshiyalīcam* [socialism] to the world, was a Jew, *Cūrāvaḷi* [Hitler] has taken the army in order to drive out all the Jews from Germany…and was one who beat and chased [them] out; giving their wealth and profession to his Nazi members and group-relatives [*iṇapantukkaḷ*]…"[768] Earlier in the article, IM Ipṛāhīm parenthetically equated *cōshiyalīcam* with samadharma: "In the conduct of the coming world according to samadharma (*cōshiyalīcam*), everyone would have food, clothes, a place to be, medicine, means to trade, and education. In a world unable to see poverty, high low would be destroyed…" It would appear that through Marx the Jew is figured as Non-Brahmin, as fellow Samadharmavati, as a parallel *jāti* suffering through the principle of "high-low." Jew was a Non-Brahmin ally because one of the greatest theorists of Samadharma, a liberatory force in the World and central to the Non-Brahmin political thought of Self-Respect, Marx, was a Jew.

Yet this insistence on the association between the Jew and Samadharma, via Marx, was often undone with tropes reminiscent of Mission. Such tropes would oppose Jew and Samadharma, though in a very particular Non-Brahmin self-respect way that exceeds the Missionary trope we saw above. For example, we see EVR occasionally opposing Jews not just to Christ but also Mohammed, the latter two both being agents of *samadharma*: "The reason for Jews calling Christ and Mohammed [the derogatory title of] Atheists was their [Christ's and Mohammed's] samadharma and reformism."[769] Opposition to samadharma and reformism, usually associated with Brahminism and its investments in social hierarchy and the politics of *swaraj*, was here associated with the Jew. Of course, this is amenable to the Missionary trope of the Jew—but only up to a point. EVR redeems the Jew vs. Christian opposition of Mission by

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[766] Note: typo, transliterated in the text as *pirāṭṭaḷṭaṇṭu* but should be *pirāṭṭastaṇṭu*.
[767] N.A., "Kāral Mārks," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 April 1933: 4. The following issue would also refer to Karl Marx as a learned Jew from Germany, and, of course, discuss communism, *Kuṭi Aracu* 30 April 1933:10.
[768] IM Ipṛāhīm, "*Taṉi Uṭaimai Ulakil Anītamuṛaiyil Naṭapeṛṛu Varukiṛa Poruḷātārattiṉ Taṉmai* [The Quality of the Economy Under Conditions of Injustice in a World of Private Property]" *Pakuttaṛivu* 21 October 1934: 7, 14.
[769] EVR, "*Camatarmamum Nāstikamum* [Samadharma and Atheism]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 7 September 1930: 7.

tossing in his own self-respect investments in atheism, samadharma, and Islam (we'll return to Islam in Chapter 15). If Mission could understand the Brahmin in South India as allied with the Jew in opposition to progressive reforms and human equality embodied in Christ, then Non-Brahmins could understand this coupling of Brahmin with Jew in opposition to a distinct variety of agents demanding reform and equality in South India, like those denounced as atheists, communists, and Muslims.

By the early 1930s, then, the Jew was being understood by a variety of Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters in oppositional ways when it came to samadharma. For some, Marx's background suggested a close alliance between Jew and Samadharma. Jew was ally. For others, variants on Missionary tropes suggested an undeniable antagonism between Jew and Samadharma. Jew was enemy. As Hitler's *Mein Kampf* entered into greater circulation across India during the 1930s and subsequently penetrated more deeply into a variety of articulations of struggles for freedom, the Jew could be understood as enemy for the very reason the figure of the Jew could be understood as Non-Brahmin ally: its close relationship with samadharma.

## NAZI

The highest profile and most widely known connection between Indian Nationalism and Nazi Fascism is the Bengali Subhas Chandra Bose. Bose was ousted from the Indian National Congress leadership by Gandhi in 1939 for a variety of differences, such as the former's desire to use force against the British. Bose would end up trying to join with the Axis Powers to drive out the British, meeting with Hitler and Himmler during his stay in Berlin from 1941 to 1943. The title of his 1935 book *The Indian Struggle: 1920-1934* is not a subtle echo of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Such echoes in the 1930s can be found throughout India, as Fascist opposition to the British Empire often blurred into the opposition articulated by nationalist demands for *swaraj*. That is to say, though understandings of it varied, fascism seemed to many, perhaps most explicitly in Bose but also among others in India, as a viable way of approaching freedom, struggles for independence, and liberation from colonial forces.

Some Non-Brahmins in the late 1930s shared in this wider pan-Indian effort to read a text like *Mein Kampf*, prompted by a shared opposition to British economic exploitation, as a way of articulating ideas of freedom. Yet the freedom Non-Brahmins had been interested in, of course, required a critique of rather than the demand for *swaraj*. Such a critique was wedded, as we have seen, to the project of Samadharma. Hitler, however, seemed to suggest that the Jew, portrayed as a figure that could walk on well-trod paths of Brahmin parallels, was associated with Samadharma and *therefore* should be understood as enemy. Given the dual valence of the Jew, evident in SubContinental Political Theory across Europe and India, such an association was fraught with complexity. Such complexity was certainly not simplified by trying to read *Mein Kampf* sympathetically, for Hitler's text was very much an articulation of a sort of "self-rule."

Such complexity, and subsequent contradictory Non-Brahmin conclusions, are evident in the early publications of the rising star of the Self-Respect Movement, CN Annadurai.[770] CN Annadurai's first recorded speech, delivered on 27 August 1937, provides insight into

[770] An installment of CN Annadurai's first published article dealt with Hitler and referred to Jewish deception on 29 April 1936 in the daily *Viṭutalai*. Unfortunately, the other installments featured in issues which no longer exist, and his intent is not altogether clear from the damaged extant issue.

understandings of the Jew through Non-Brahmin readings of *Mein Kampf*.[771] One section, titled "Story of the Jews," reads as follows:

> "All the big industries are owned by the Jews. It is Jews who are in all the technical institutes. The field of culture [*kalā maṇṭalaṅkaḷ*][772] is in their hands. The poets are Jews. The work of publications is theirs. The Ministry Assembly is [in] their hands. Science is their property. Samadharma is theirs. Wealth is theirs. Poverty is Germany's. Power-as-superiority [*ātikkam*] is theirs, slavery is Germany's. If our political authority [*atikāram*] comes then my first job will be the destruction of Jewish power-as-superiority [*ātikkam*]." So wrote Hitler in "Mein Kampf" ["*Cuya Caritai"*].[773] He decided to do what he wrote. Truth [*uṇmai*] announces a history in which, in whatever country and in whatever age, whatever class [*vakuppu*] itself has been grabbing the life-force of society [*camūkam*], itself developing power-as-superiority [*ātikkam*], making other class-persons slaves, and developing divisions [*pirivukaḷ*] in society, other class-persons join together as one to destroy that class's power and make revolution. That, in a very barbaric [*muraṭṭuttaṉam*] way, is happening in Germany. Holding oppressive ways, Hitler destroyed Jewish power-as-superiority [*ātikkam*]. We hold the weapon called knowledge [*aṛivu*] and will destroy that power.

This passage captures a constellation of concerns with the Jew. There is the obvious echo of sentiments reminiscent of Missionary tropes about the Jewish Pharisee: the Jew as Have, the non-Jew as Have-Not. The Jews have science, technology, and industry, the Jews have culture, poetry, publication, the Jews have political control, the Jews have power and wealth. And along with such traits of domination, the Jews have *samadharma*. Germany, in contrast, has poverty and slavery. CN Annadurai, in claiming that "we will destroy that power," suggests that his audience replace Jew with "Brahmin" and German with "Non-Brahmin," turning *Mein Kampf* into an articulation of Self-Respect (just as Bose and others would turn it into an articulation of Self-Rule). The distinction between someone like Bose and Hitler, on the one hand, and Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters, on the other, CN Annadurai suggests, has to do with force: Self-Respecters focus on ideas, not physical violence, to achieve their aims. The aim, however, is the same: to destroy the relationship between superior and subordinate, master and slave. CN Annadurai sees Non-Brahmin aspirations in Hitler's destruction of "Jewish power" in Germany.

Yet, of course, the Jew is described as having *samadharma*: how can destroying forces of Non-Brahmin *samadharma* possibly be part of Non-Brahmin struggle? Moreover, there is something very *samadharma*-sounding in Annadurai's claim about inevitable class conflict, about a truth in history that transcends country and epoch whereby the have-nots rise up to destroy the haves whose power is premised on dividing society in the first place. The term *vakuppu* used by Annadurai often redeems the term "class" but means, more generally, "classification" itself, and therefore can as easily refer to caste as "class" divisions in society. We have seen with the Rev. EAL Moore immediately above how Jewish divisiveness—the "Jewish dispensation" of race, tribe, caste, confined privileges to some and not others, like that between Brahmin and Pariah—was a recurring and widespread Missionary trope. Yet we have also encountered *samadharma* as the very force that ensures class revolution, equality, and the

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[771] Aṇṇāturai, "*Mucari Tālūkā Mūṉṟāvatu Cuyamariyātai Makānāṭu: Tuṛaiyūril Kūṭṭam: Talaivar Aṇṇāturai Coṛpoḻivu: Kaṭci Muṉṉēṛṛattukku Upatēcaṅkaḷ* [3rd Self-Respect Conference of the Mucari Taluk: Crowd in Tuṛaiyūr: Chair Aṇṇāturai's Speech: Teaching for Party Advancement]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 29 August 1937: 2, 4, 17, 18, 19, 20.

[772] Should be *maṇṭalaṅkaḷ*?

[773] Literally "self-chronicle."

eradication of "high low." But here, in *Mein Kampf*, this very class revolution is targeting the class most associated with *samadharma* itself, the Jews. Clearly, though CN Annadurai implies that Hitler's dominating Jew could be redeemed as the dominating Brahmin, such redemption was fraught with problems. How could Non-Brahmin self-respect have anything to do with anyone out to destroy forces allied with Samadharma?

CN Annadurai's selection from *Mein Kampf*, unlike the general consensus across Self-Respecters from the late 1920s onwards, does not list Samadharma as a remedy to the divisions creating classes of superior and slave. Instead, through a quote from Hitler, the Jews, associated with the force of division, are declared to be on the side of Samadharma itself. The Jew, that is, combines class (*vakuppu*) superiority and Samadharma, whereas we had been led to believe in 1931's *The Samadharma Manifesto* that superiority and Samadharma were diametrically opposed. The dual Jew seems to have had an impact not only in the Frankfurt School's West but the East as well, marking a shared tradition across a long distance relationship. In the next Chapter, we will return to CN Annadurai and the role of the dual Jew in his thought as evidenced above. Such a role will help us understand a shift in Non-Brahmin political theory, by the late 1930s, from the more "internationalist" Self-Respect critique of Self-Rule to the "nationalist" demand for Dravidian Self-Rule. In the following section, however, we turn to the Subcontinent's mirror to the Continent's dual Jew: the Aryan double.

## ARYAN DOUBLE

The Non-Brahmin *par excellence* was arguably the Pariah, and the Pariah as Jew provided a remarkably stable theoretical configuration, as we saw in the last Chapter. When the dual Jew was associated with the Brahmin enemy rather than understood as a Non-Brahmin ally, a possibility made available by the Jew's duality, trouble started brewing. The first casualty of such trouble, as we saw above, was a certain conceptual clarity regarding *samadharma*'s relationship to the Jew: was the Jew an agent of or an obstacle to *samadharma*? But SubContinental Political Theory faced further conceptual challenges, for the *Brahmin* in South India was understood to be *Aryan*. An association between Jew and Brahmin meant that the Jew was Aryan. While the Jew-as-Aryan provided no contradiction on the Subcontinent, the catalyst for such configuration was coming from the Continent, where the Jew-as-Aryan was utterly contradictory. What I have called the "dual Jew," which could be framed as Non-Brahmin ally or Brahmin enemy, once framed as Brahmin enemy, gave rise to what I call the "Aryan double."

The resolution to this contradiction was a turn from idea to race. Whereas the dual Jew provided a way to articulate the conceptual division between Brahmin and Non-Brahmin, once Jew was Brahmin and thus Aryan, the Aryan double resolved subsequent *conceptual* nonsense through the sense of *biological* multiplication. While the coupling of Jew and Non-Brahmin/Pariah provided a theoretical analogy through a shared political position, this coupling did not give rise to claims that the Jew and Non-Brahmin were genetically the *same* in the sense of one breed of human spread across Europe and India alike. But the coupling of Jew with Brahmin/Aryan did: the Jew, Aryan, and Brahmin were the same breed, race, caste; evidence of their single genetic stock was in their shared practice of dividing and dominating others. The dual Jew was about politics, requiring thinking about action through conceptual efforts of analogy. The Aryan double, which was the consequence of Jew-as-Brahmin half of the dual Jew, evacuated such politics, determining action without thought through physical efforts of biology.

This is not to say that the biological did not feature within dual Jew framings in its alliance with the Non-Brahmin/Pariah. But such framings were efforts to bring together, a togetherness premised on a conceptual division. For example, a June 1936 article under the headline "Mixed Marriage for Reform: Mixed Marriage between a Jewish Daughter and a Tamil Son" proudly proclaimed the matrimonial union of Jew and Non-Brahmin in Singapore.[774] Such pride was heightened by the fact that the Jewish bride conducted "her marriage without religious conversion" thereby preserving forms of difference, non-assimilation, through romantic coupling that the author believed would work towards a "world of greater rationality [*pakuttaṛivu*]." The idea of the mixed marriage was a long-standing trope in Self-Respect publications, as we will see in Part VI; for years, the blurb "Only by Mixed Marriage Shall Caste be Destroyed" appeared at the bottom of the pages of *Kuṭi Aracu.* Such caste, required for the mix, included the Jew. This inclusion of the Jew was conceptual, listing the "*Jūs*" in articles alongside castes like Anglo-Indians, E̲lavar's, Christians, Muslims, Brahmins, Nāyars, etc.[775] The Jew as caste [*jāti*] was also described as one of many human "differences" [*pētaṅkaḷ*], such as in one article's list of "Brahmin, Veḷāḷar, Maḷavar, Iṭaiyar, Jew, English, Negro, etc."[776] Such caste or difference was not simply a conceptual way of understanding the Jew as apart from India but rather how the Jew was physically a part of the Indian population. For example, the 1931 British Indian census claimed 750,000 Jews [*yūtarkaḷ*] to be living in India, and this fact featured in Self-Respect publications.[777] And the avid reader of Self-Respect publications knew that Jews had lived in India for millennia.[778] There was a conceptual difference in the human that "Jew" marked, but this difference simply made the biological Jew human and a part of India.

The claim that the Jew was a Brahmin, however, gave rise to an Aryan double through which Non-Brahmins saw such difference as more biological than conceptual. The Jew-as-Brahmin-therefore-Aryan was invasive, foreign, and had virally reproduced across both India and Europe alike. March 1938 provides an illustrative contrast with Jew-as-Pariah conceptual configurations and demonstrates the sort of transition, always partial and contradictory, towards the Jew-as-Brahmin biological configuration called "Aryan."

We have seen above a Self-Respect article that month claiming that the Aryan was an idea from India brought by orientalist scholars to Europe: "Hitler in Germany, now needing to drive out the Jews, introduced the philosophy of the Aryan caste [*jāti*]."[779] Hitler's deployment of the philosophy of the Aryan was the deployment of an idea, the idea was Brahminical and thus bad, and this bad Brahminical idea was opposed to the Jew who were thus conceptually analogous to the Non-Brahmin/Pariah. But that same month also gave rise to an alternative claim: that the Brahmin was not an idea but a race whose presence in Europe and India was not the product of conceptual division, cleaving the high from the low in a way that could be shared

[774] "*Cīrtiruttak Kalappu Maṇam: Yūta Mātiṛkum Tamiḻ Makaṉukkum Kalappu Maṇam* [Reform Mixed Marriage: Jewish Bride and Tamil Groom's Mixed Marriage]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 June 1936: 14.
[775] Editorial titled "*Cuteeca Camastaaṅamum, Vakuppuvaatamum*" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 13 September 1936: 12-13.
[776] A. Irākavaṉ, "*Kaṭavuḷ Veṛiyum, Mata Veṛiyum* [God Frenzy, Religious Frenzy]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 31 July 1932: 7.
[777] "*Biriṭṭishār Kaṭṭiyāḷum Pirajaikaḷil Intiyarkaḷē Mejāriṭṭi* [Indians are the Majority among British Citizens]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 2:6 (October 1936): 61. The article announces an Indian majority among British Citizens, including 240,000,000 Hindus, 100,000,000 Muslims, and several other denominations (Christian, Buddhist, Sikhs, Parsis, Jains) including 12,000,000 demon worshippers [*pēy vaṇakkam ceyvōr*].
[778] For example, see R.P. Parāñcipai, "*Camaya Paripālakarkaḷ* [Religious Rulers]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 1:8 (December 1935): 51-60, esp 56-57 discussing Parsees and Jews.
[779] Pi. Citamparam, "*Tirāviṭarum Āriyarum* [Dravidian and Aryan]," *Kuṭi Aracu*, 13 March 1938: 6.

theoretically, but of biological multiplication, reproducing bodies and practices in a way that was shared genetically.

This transition from conceptual division to biological multiplication, from problem of the *dual Jew* to its resolution in the *Aryan double*, had to grapple with the challenge of misnomer. Some Non-Brahmins had to claim that the South Indian Brahmin, called Aryan in South India, were in fact related to the Western Europe Jew, and not the Western European Aryan (e.g. Nazi). An article published in March 1938 by an author called simply "A Doubter" illustrates this transition through addressing misnomer.[780] The article concludes that the Brahmin was an Aryan [*āriyaṉ*] in word only but not flesh: "apart from the Brahmins being called Aryans [*āriyarkaḷ*], isn't it proper for them to be called Jews?" Subsequently, the flesh, and not the word, was the article's focus, graphically examining the biological multiplication of the "Aryan," e.g. Brahmin-Jew, across Europe and India. The title says it all: "Brahmins—Aryans? Jews? They are Jews!" The word involves mystification: the "Indian" term *āriyaṉ* is the wrong word for Brahmin in the world-historical present of the late 1930s; the right word is what Europeans mean by "Jew." The flesh is resolution: the Jew of Europe *is* the same as the Brahmin, not an analogical equivalent but biologically so. Genetic identity—as the author rhetorically asks by invoking race, "Is it not so that, in form and color, the Jew and the Brahmin are like one?"—rather than positional distinction, fuses Jew and Brahmin in the Aryan.

The purpose of the article is to claim that the original Hindus *were* Jews, biologically. What is the evidence for this biological identity across Europe and India? The proof is in the current practices between Jews and the Hindu Saivism (e.g. of Siva vs. of Vishnu) of Tamil country:

> From the many unities between the Hindu Religion and Jewish Civilization is there place to conjecture that the Brahmins who were the ascetics attending to Saivite religious establishments [*ātiṉakkārarkaḷ*] of the Hindu Religion were Jews?

Alleged similarities in practices among Brahmins and Jews, here associated with "asceticism," provide evidence of a shared genetic history. Some seem superficial. For example, the author sees similarities between the Jews and the Brahmin Priests [*arccakar*] in their offering of "lamped smoke of incense and ringing bells." Others were perhaps more damning. For example, the author finds the stories of both Judaism and Hinduism mythical and opposed to reason [*pakuttaṛivu*]: "like the Jewish stories and ideologies [*cittāntam*] which are imaginary opposed to *pakuttaṛivu*, the Brahmins Puranas and their ideologies and teachings are contrary to *pakuttaṛivu*…" How could such similarities have come about, the author suggests, if Jews and Brahmins were not, biologically, the same?

Another such claim was that of idolatry, worshipping that of this world rather than turn to the other-worldly.

> In Palestine Country it is a custom that eminent men are worshipped as gods.
>
> Even in India it is the custom that eminent men are worshipped as gods. Therefore should not this custom have come from there [Palestine] only?

[780] Ōru Cantēki [A Doubter], "Pārppaṉarkaḷ Āriyarkaḷā? Yūtarkaḷā? Avarkaḷ Yūtarkeḷē! [Brahmins are Aryans? Jews? They are Jews!" *Kuṭi Aracu* 20 March 1938: 7. Pi. Citambaram's 13 March 1938 article in fact would continue to 20 March 1938.

For our author here, Jew and Hindu are the same in their idolatry, puffing up mortals as gods. Such claims about idolatry, about whether Jews worshipped this-worldly or other-worldly forces and which was better, were of course hotly contested in Europe at the time. [781]

But it was not just in idolatry but in the very "God" of the Jews and these Hindus, namely Jehovah and Siva, respectively, that the author sees Jew and Brahmin united. The author asks: "Has not Jehovah of the Jews combined with Siva of the Hindus?" As evidence, the author focuses on similarities of words and themes. With respect to words, the author suggests that "the Hebrew term '*el*' united with the '*vēl*'," where "el" means God or Almighty in Hebrew, and the Tamil word *vēl* means "spear" but is associated with Saivism, as the weapon of Siva's son Murugan. Moreover, the idea of the son here itself suggests to the author parallels between Judaism and Saivite Hinduism with respect to themes. For example, salvation is to come through "the Son of God" who was "a child born as a Jew." The word for "child" is *piḷḷai*, and Siva has two children, the first Murugan, and the other Ganesh whose name *piḷḷaiyār* literally means "he as the child." Not only are their similarities in words relating to God but themes emphasizing salvation through the child.

Other shared themes suggest genetic identity to our author, "A Doubter." For example, the author tries to suggest that the importance of various associations with trees in Hinduism, like the cobra with the peepul tree or the ritual significance of the neem tree, are akin to the Biblical serpent and its association with the tree of knowledge ("the tree which makes known good or evil") and the *tēvatāru* tree of importance of Saivite rituals (which literally means "cedar" but whose first part "*tēva*" is cognate with "theos" or god, and whose second part *tāru* is cognate with the English words druid, tree, and true.) The author rhetorically asks here, but as a way of summarizing the concerns throughout the essay: "How could these similarities have come about?"

"A Doubter's" purpose here is not, of course, to suggest an academically interesting but politically unimportant biological link between some here and others there under the refigured name "Aryan." Illustrations of shared practices, terms, and themes are politically vital to understanding the circulation of domination and servitude globally, circulation made possible through Brahmin-Jew ideologies of separation and superiority. For example, the author finds the practice of non-assimilation between Jews and Brahmins—that is, the practice of the separation of caste—as evidence of a shared genetic link: "Is not the Jews standing apart without mixing with other castes [*jāti*] the same as the Brahmins standing apart without mixing with other castes?" Perhaps most importantly, such caste separation is not understood to be a part of equality among differences in Judaism and Hinduism but as a way to assert superiority of some over others. Such superiority is linked to myth, to the Jews as the chosen people, or to the Brahmin as being formed from the head of God: "What is the difference between those chosen by the God of the Jews and those created from the face of the God of the Brahmins[?]" And such superiority in myth, as a product of division, lends itself to irresponsible acts of domination, seeing parallels between:

[781] As an aside, we may wish to recall that during this time Horkheimer and others, despite claims which were controversial in Jewish circles, were claiming just the opposite. Horkheimer conclusion to his 1939 essay "The Jews and Europe" suggests that the anti-idolatrous position will be the salvation of the Jews: "The Jews were once proud of abstract monotheism, their rejection of idolatry, their refusal to make something finite an absolute. Their distress today points them back. Disrespect for anything mortal that puffs itself up as a god is the religion of those who cannot resist devoting their life to the proposition of something better, even in the Europe of the Iron Heel." Horkheimer, "The Jews and Europe" (1939): 94.

> the fact that Jews, apart from themselves, have not the slightest responsibility for anything else, somehow make themselves comfortable with the rulers, mix in the ruling, make stratagems, torment other citizens, and live as the high ones; and the fact that Brahmins without having the slightest responsibility somehow make themselves comfortable with rulers, enter into rule [*āṭci*], and try to conduct domination [*ātikkam*].

Moreover, such domination through division is a mark of undeserved power, substituted for virtues like valor and justice:

> And isn't there place to say that the two are members of a single class [*iruvarum orē vakuppiṉar*]—the Brahmins are just like the Jews who, without ruling people with valor [*vīram*], are adept [*kaitāriyavarkaḷ*] in continuing to divide [*pirittu vaï*] according to class war [*vakuppu vātattālum*] and other divisions [*piriviṉaikaḷ*].

Coupled with the claim that Brahmin and Jew are of the same "form and color," the suggestion is that Brahmin and Jew are biologically the same.

The question one might ask is: how did one dominating breed of human stretch across such distances, from Southern India to Western Europe? Two answers arise, one pull, one push. The pull factor was selfishness, leading the Brahmin/Jew to wander to satisfy their indolent greed:

> Are not [these facts] fairly appropriate for one another: the fact that the Jews searching for their own well-being [*cukam*] in whatever way that their body does not toil hard have the character of wandering and searching for wealth; and the fact that Brahmins wander searching for wealth without toiling in whatever way with their own selfishness [*cuyanalam*]?

The other could be considered a push factor. The Brahmin-Jew had no country to which to be attached in the first place:

> Is there not a similarity between the fact that there is no country to which the Jews are attached, no particular country in which they are citizens, and the fact that there is no country to which the Brahmins are attached, no particular *ūr* [hometown/homeland] for them?

The wandering Jew and the Brahmin are fused in body and action, bound together by homelessness and selfishness across continents, united in a shared project of social division and political domination.

This March 1938 article suggested that it was an Indian misnomer to call the Brahmin an *āriyaṉ*—Brahmin was actually a European Jew. But it was only by dispelling the *Indian* misnomer could one understand the true identity, a biological identity, evident by shared terms, practices, and themes. In April 1938, an article titled "Aryans and Jews are Basically Brahmins" extends the shared genetic claim but by suggesting that the true biological identity must be understood by dispelling the *European* misnomer of Aryan—Brahmins were *āriyaṉ* and Jew.[782] As the author writes,

[782] Ñā. Cē. Cē. Iraṅkūṉ, "*Āriyarum Yūtarum Ātiyil Pirāmaṉarkaḷē* [Brahmins are Basically Aryans and Jews]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 April 1938: 7.

> Members of three kinds of communities [*camayam*] called—being separated distinctly—Jew, Aryan, and Brahmin are those who are members of many *varna* [caste] divisions formed today of the branch of the very same tree. They, in earlier times, had been members of the same *jāti* [caste] and the same language.

Once again, body and word, *jāti* and language, are coupled in order to fuse biologically Jew, Aryan, and Brahmin. But by "Aryan" here, the author seems to be referring to the Indian *āriyaṉ*, not the German Aryan—unlike our March 1938 author.

Yet like our March 1938 author's emphasis on push-factors that resulted in the doubling of an identical Aryan across India and Europe, this author sees in the Brahmin-Jew an essential quality of homelessness. The author draws upon the Biblical story of 400 years of slavery in Egypt, here of the Brahmin-*Āriyaṉ*-Jew, in order to frame the claim that

> the smallest bit of territory which had been their own was appropriated by the foreigner. From that day until this day, nowhere in this world do they have a territory of their own.
>
> … Because of a single event [*campavam*] of cruelty which took place in that era, they are those who are born enemies, threatened and beaten by the opposition, driven out and scattered. They have no place in this world.

The wandering Jew, the wandering Aryan, the wandering Brahmin, all amounted to the genetically identical, a biologically *same* homeless threat.

Here we encounter yet another example of theoretical instability, if not incoherence, when the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule redeemed the Brahmin as a Jew. This formulation posed several challenges in, and failures of, simple coherence. The first had to do with the origins of division-as-domination bound to "caste." If Hitler invoked the "philosophy of the Aryan caste" from India in order to drive out the Jews, and if the Jew was a Brahmin, then Hitler invoked Brahminism in order to persecute the Jews. That seems okay. But if the Brahmin was a Jew, then Hitler was invoking the Jew to persecute the Jews. This would make Hitler, because of his anti-Semitism, the most prominent Semite. Equally troubling, if the Jew, because a Brahmin, was an Aryan, this would make Hitler's invocation of the Aryan caste against the Jew equally cannibalistic: Hitler would be invoking the Aryan to destroy the Aryan. This would make Hitler, because of his Aryanism, the greatest anti-Aryan. Once separation-as-superiority was located in biological multiplication, as with the Aryan double, rather than conceptual division, as with the dual Jew, the world failed to make sense politically.

But such non-sense was not merely the product of a confused effort to fuse practices of power onto the bodies of castes. Conceptual division, not just biological multiplication, provides a second failure of coherence. Nowhere is such failure more clear than with the idea of homelessness, wandering, and non-assimilation that was repeatedly invoked to explain the intercontinental biological multiplication, and thus genetic identity, of Brahmin/Jew. For it is not just the Brahmin that was defined as homeless wanderer refusing to assimilate. As we saw in the previous Chapter, the Pariah was also defined in this way. The pariah were literally *puṟavar*, those of the outside, who had abandoned their homes out of a refusal to assimilate with the Aryan. That is to say, the very explanation of the Aryan double, the biological intercontinental identity of Western European Jew and South Indian Brahmin, was the very explanation that made the dual Jew of Western Europe conceptually analogous to the Non-Brahmin of South India.

We begin to realize here that the attempt to refract familiar Indian words that were adopted by Europeans back into India was not the issue. It is not just about puns on some term "Aryan." Instead, the trouble with the Aryan revealed a trouble with Self-Respect and its demand for a world of *samadharma*. Attempts to make sense of the Aryan show that the fundamental Self-Respect distinction itself, between Pariah and Brahmin, may have been conceptually confused. The Pariah could be understood as wandering and homeless out of a refusal to mix with others/assimilate just as the Brahmin could be understood as wandering and homeless out of a refusal to mix with others/assimilate. There was no meaningful distinction between enemy and ally. The enemy was ally, the ally was enemy.

In short, the dual Jew, upon encounter with its Aryan double, revealed parallel failures. The European distinction between Jew and Aryan could not be made to make sense in terms of the Indian distinction between Pariah and Brahmin. But through the Non-Brahmin effort to try to make such sense of reuniting that which had been divided—the "hidden tradition" of the "Jew as pariah" and the equally hidden one of Aryan as *Āriyaṉ* that marked the European appropriation of India in order to imagine its world at war—the divisions themselves, intercontinentally, were revealed to be without foundation. The shared tradition of SubContinental Political Theory was feeding on itself, burning the candle at both ends, and the Tamil Non-Brahmin was both devouring and being devoured. The casualty of this cannibalism, as I argue in the next chapter, at least in part, would be the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule itself.

## THE DUAL JEW'S IMPOSSIBILITY

The dual Jew, so far, has been a part of separate and distinct positions, articles, and authors who constituted the publications articulating the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule across the 1930s. Some suggested that the Jew is a Non-Brahmin, if not Pariah, while others have suggested that the Jew was a Brahmin, if not an Aryan, but no single person has suggested both. To claim that the Jew was both Brahmin and Pariah would be utter nonsense, given the politics of South India. But the dual Jew was not simply the parrying of dueling claims about the Jew's relationship to the uncompromising opposition between Brahmin and Non-Brahmin. The dual Jew could inhabit the same position, article, and author; its appearances were not a matter of comparison *across* those which were distinct but *within* that which was identical. EVR's speech at the South Indian Welfare Association's 14th Conference—the association which began the Non-Brahmin Movement with which the Self-Respect Movement was strongly allied—in December 1938 captures the ways in which the dual Jew revealed "a logically self-contradictory but psychologically consistent image of the Jew, who appears both as weak and strong, victim of persecution and persecutor" not only in Europe but in India.[783] These contradictions and consistencies, I argue, reveal the constitutive tensions within the Non-Brahmin itself, constitutive tensions evident only by attending to the shared tradition of SubContinental Political Theory.

On the one hand, EVR parades the Jew-as-Brahmin as a way of understanding the coherence and necessity for the Non-Brahmin Movement's origins.

[783] EVR, "*Te. I. Nalvurimaic Cañka 14-vatu Mānāṭu* [14th Conference of the S[outh] I[ndia] Liberal Federation]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 1 January 1939: 5-8, 15-16. Conference held 29-31 December 1938 (*Kuṭi Aracu* 25 December 1938: 12). The formation of the South Indian Welfare Association in 1916 would begin the Non-Brahmin Movement upon which EVR's own Self-Respect Movement in 1925 was based, and his reflections here are about these originating moments.

> How was our situation at the beginning of this movement?
>
> Whatever Hitler says as the reasons for the attitude to take from the Jews, those and the reasons mentioned above for them [the leaders of the Non-Brahmin Movement] were the reasons for our great leaders beginning this movement here.[784]

The "reasons" are not important here; they deal with by now familiar ideas of hierarchical domination maintained through caste separations. What is important is the suggestion that "Hitler vs Jews" is the same as "Non-Brahmin leaders vs Brahmins." He goes on in the speech to suggest not only that the Jew is like the Brahmin, but that the Brahmin is in fact even worse

> I very much doubt whether the Jews at that time [the 1910s when the Non-Brahmin Movement started] in Germany would have captured as disproportionately many professions [*uttikōkaṅkaḷ*] as the members of our countries small group [e.g. the Brahmin].[785]

Such claims clearly indicate that EVR believe that the Jew of Western Europe is allied with the Brahmin of South India, illustrating the need for Non-Brahmin resistance.

Yet EVR also has no problem with using the Jew to illustrate not the target of Non-Brahmin resistance, but an analogy with the Non-Brahmin. For example:

> In the social sector, even a very degraded Brahmin was valued as one of high caste [*jāti*], while a disciplined wealthy non-Brahmin [was valued] as one of low caste. Therefore if all the benefits of the small caste such as education, post, expertise, wealth, and social status [*uyarvu*], were all changed, wouldn't our position be filled with even more of the disabilities [*kuṟaikaḷ*] than that spoken of about the Jews of Hitler's Germany, or would there not be such disabilities? Think about it.[786]

The Non-Brahmin, like the Jew, is suffering at the hands of the Aryan-as-German-as-Brahmin. In fact, the Non-Brahmin is even worse off in South India, suffering "even more of the disabilities" than the Jews in Western Europe.

There is a clear contradiction. The Brahmin is like the Jew, if not worse. Yet the Non-Brahmin is like the Jew, if not worse off. I would like to suggest that this speech's contradictory position regarding the Jew—as Brahmin enemy, with Non-Brahmin as Nazi, or Non-Brahmin ally, with Non-Brahmin as Jew—echoes contradictions within Non-Brahmin articulation itself. That contradiction revolves around the acts of separation we have already seen as of so much concern above. On the one hand, EVR denounces division as causing hierarchy in his speech. At the same time, EVR is bound to encourage division as the way to challenge hierarchy. Such division, as "communalism" [*vakuppuvātam*, literally "class-ism"], is both what the Non-Brahmin Movement must be, separating itself as a class from the Brahmin, as well as what the Non-Brahmin must not be, as this would give credibility to the idea that the Brahmin is a separate class. EVR must refute the claim to being "communal": "From the time this movement started up to today our enemies [*etirikaḷ*] have called it a communal movement and have been

[784] EVR, "*Te. I. Nalvurimaic Cańka 14-vatu Mānāṭu"* (1939): 6
[785] EVR, "*Te. I. Nalvurimaic Cańka 14-vatu Mānāṭu"* (1939): 6
[786] EVR, "*Te. I. Nalvurimaic Cańka 14-vatu Mānāṭu"* (1939): 6

doing much trying to crush it."[787] Yet communalism must be the very thing the Non-Brahmin must embrace:

> I wish to say that, if communalism is that which awakens a large society which has been deceived by the members of a small, very small, group who get a train-coach [*kōcci*] through deception [*cūḻcci*] and selfishness, that communalism, instead of our need to withdraw ourselves from it, so far as it provides us with our rights [*urimaikaḷ*], should be our life supporting demand. [*jīvarātara kōrikkai*].[788]

That is to say, in the speech EVR must encourage "communalism" but not encourage "communalism." The Jew, it seems, is caught within a broader trouble with "communalism": the force of division is both poison and remedy, both disease and cure. The Jew, just as communalism, is the target of opposition as well as providing the very possibility of opposition.

Yet, still, two contradictions don't create coherence. The fact remains that EVR, like others involved in articulating the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, was willing to court Nazi alliance—even if he was just as willing to court alliance with the Jew, as we saw in the previous Chapter. There is likely no resolution, and it may appear that there is nowhere else to go—but there is. That place has been suggested by the shared feature of both Brahmin and Pariah: they have been cast out, wandering, homeless, and refusing to assimilate. It is the sharing between opposites, their shared location in the outside, that provides us with the very place we need to go. For it is not simply that such contradiction can be understood as internal, within the thought and movement of the Non-Brahmin, but as external, in the world itself where Subcontinental Political Theory exists.

I suggest that such efforts to be a part from one another, Brahmin from Non-Brahmin, were nothing other than an effort to be a part of the wider world. Moreover, they were an effort to be a part of a world at war, a world whose wars were defined by *swaraj*. This Non-Brahmin effort to be apart from the Brahmin and thus to be a part of the world, this internationalist self-respect critique of nationalist self-rule, would have consequences indicated by, but not entirely contained within, the dual Jew's impossibility alongside that of its Aryan double. Such efforts to be a part of the world came to mean to be a part of a world that saw itself in terms of *self-rule* first and foremost—radically departing from the previous marked emphasis on self-rule's critique. To be a part of a world of *swaraj* thereby both articulated while undermining Self-Respect internationalism. The Non-Brahmin subsequently began to concentrate its rhetorical efforts at separatism, at being apart from that world through the Non-Brahmin's own dueling assertion of *swaraj*: Dravidian Nationalism.

## CHAPTER 13. NON-BRAHMIN INTERNATIONALISM TO DRAVIDIAN NATIONALISM: NAZI PROPAGANDA, JEWISH PLACE

In the last Chapter, we saw the impossibility of the dual Jew, where the Jew appeared as both Brahmin enemy and Pariah ally. Such impossibility was dramatically evident in EVR's speech at the South Indian Welfare Association's 14th Conference in December 1938. The South Indian Welfare Association was central to the Non-Brahmin, for it had provided the Non-

[787] EVR, "*Te. I. Nalvurimaic Cańka 14-vatu Mānāṭu"* (1939): 5
[788] EVR, "*Te. I. Nalvurimaic Cańka 14-vatu Mānāṭu"* (1939): 5

Brahmin's first political articulation with its publication of the "Non-Brahmin Manifesto" in December 1916 and its subsequent creation of the Justice Party; this party would successfully oppose Gandhi's Congress Party for decades in the Madras Presidency. EVR's speech then, as one may suspect, was significant for reasons other than simply illustrating the dual Jew's impossibility. In fact, this was the speech where EVR accepted the leadership of the Justice Party.

EVR's did not exactly speak "at" the South Indian Welfare Association's 14th Conference. Rather, the speech was delivered in absentia by a Self-Respecter named Paneer Selvam, as EVR by then had been jailed for 24 days by the recently elected Congress of Gandhi. The Justice Party, humiliatingly defeated in the election, was thus turning in December 1938 to an imprisoned EVR in the hopes of rejuvenating itself. I argue that the dual Jew's impossibility was not coincidentally but essentially present here during the most profound turning point in late-colonial South Indian history. The dual Jew's presence here helps us better understand the centrality of South India's politics in the late 1930s to understanding SubContinental Political Theory.

The election of Congress in the Madras Presidency, and the subsequent acts by agents allied with Gandhian nationalists, would alter the course of SubContinental Political Theory's Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule in three ways.

First, Congress's Madras Presidency victory, in February 1937, was just one in a series of victories in legislative assembly elections; Congress swept India. These victories assured that *swaraj* became the name of the only political game. Critiques of *swaraj* would become increasingly less plausible as a strategy for victory, regardless of how "victory" was defined. Pakistan is the most obvious example of the proliferation of counter- or separatist demands for *swaraj*, rather than critiques of *swaraj*, as the sole legitimate articulation of politics. Dravidian separatism, the subsequent goal of Non-Brahmin demands, as we will see, is another example.

Second, the defeat of the Justice Party, created out of the Non-Brahmin Movement begun by the South Indian Liberal Federation and that had been the predominant political power from 1920 to 1937, marked the defeat of the very *possibility* of *swaraj*'s critique. The Justice Party, as the direct descendent of the "Non-Brahmin Manifesto,"[789] now seemed a failed "attempt…to define the attitude of the several important Non-Brahmin Indian Communities…towards what is called 'the Indian Home Rule Movement'…with respect to their present political position." The fear in 1916 that the Brahmin's "practical monopoly of political power" under British Rule would only be entrenched, rather than erased, through Home Rule seemed now to be all but inevitable. The Non-Brahmin demand for "terms of perfect equality," which they had felt to be more pressing than *swaraj*, was over. That is to say, with the defeat of the Justice Party and its critique of *swaraj* or "Home Rule" came the defeat of the demand for such equality apart from *swaraj*, and the subsequent turn to competing claims for *swaraj* as the only vehicle for such demands.

Third, the victory of Gandhi's Congress brought with it various nationalist projects that terrified Non-Brahmins. In particular was Congress's attempt to impose Hindi as the single national language of India. This met with ferocious resistance in the Madras Presidency. At the head of the "Hindi Opposition War" [*Inti Etirppu Pōr*] was none other than EVR himself and his Self-Respect Movement—soon joined with the Justice Party. In was such opposition that landed

[789] First published in *The Hindu* 20 December 1916: 10. P. Kesava Pillai Papers, File no 9/1916-1919 (Press Clippings) at NMML Archives.

EVR in jail along with, by the end of December 1938, 586 people—550 men, 26 women, and 10 children.[790]

EVR's speech from prison in late December 1938 at the 14th South Indian Welfare Association's Conference therefore was not just any speech. EVR was in fact assuming the leadership of the Justice Party, fusing together what had been two separate and distinct agents of Non-Brahmin politics: the negative, social critique in the demand for Self-Respect and the positive, electoral program of the Justice Party. With the Non-Brahmin critical project less plausible and the positive program of the Justice Party defeated, a shift began that could not be stopped. This shift was away from Self-Respect internationalism and toward the birth of Dravidian nationalism, a demand for separatist *swaraj* inspired not by its subsequent rhetoric about a noble Tamil-speaking Dravidian past but, ironically, as the last ditch effort to defeat a force more politically terrifying than terror itself: *swaraj* and its inevitable Brahminism.

EVR's December 1938 speech suggests something more than merely the presence of the dual Jew at a crucial crossroads in the self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule: its Aryan double. As we will see, such Brahminical *swaraj* was not only nationally evident in Gandhi's India but globally evident in the Aryanism of Hitler's Germany. With the elections of February 1937, world-wide *cuya-mariyātai* or "self-respect" had become impossible not simply because Congress controlled India but because the world was now controlled by the *Āriyaṉ*. In this chapter, after recounting this shift, I argue that the shift can best be appreciated within the broader context of SubContinental Political Theory. This argument takes places across four sections: first, looking at the circulation of the swastika; second, attending to the world-wide Aryan threat of the late 1930s; third, exploring how *swaraj* and *samadharma*, once divided, came to seem inseparable; and, fourth, how separation from the world and engagement with the world came to appear the same.

## THE 1937 ELECTION & THE SECESSIONIST SHIFT: A PRELUDE

The shift from Non-Brahmin self-respect to Dravidian *swaraj* can be witnessed simply by looking at some of the short, bold declarations that served, at times, as themes of Self-Respect publications. In the 1920s, such declarations were focused on the critique of *swaraj* through *cuya-mariyātai*, e.g. "Before getting Self-Rule, Self-Respect is Necessary."[791] In the early 1930s, this concern with *cuya-mariyātai* found itself coupled with international demands for *samadharma*. But in the wake of the February 1937 victory of Gandhi's Congress and the demand for *swaraj*, Non-Brahmin political thought began to change. An ethno-linguistic identity began to graft itself onto criticisms of *swaraj*'s priority, e.g. "Tamil Before, Self-Rule After."[792] The ethno-linguistic identity of Tamil quickly became, not simply the substitute for Self-Respect's critique of Self-Rule, but as the basis for a competing demand for Self-Rule itself. The separatist rallying cry "Tamil Nadu for the Tamilians!" began to appear in the header of what

[790] *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 December 1938: 9.
[791] One instance of this repeated claim is *Kuṭi Aracu* 12 May 1929: 15.
[792] "*Tamiḻ Muṉṉāl Cuyarājyam Piṉṉāl*" appeared, for example, in the speech by Ms. Va. Pā. Tāmaraikkaṇṇi, Chair, "*Tamiḻ Nāṭṭup Peṇkaḷ Mānāṭu* [Tamil Country Woman Conference]," *Kuṭi Aracu,* 20 November 1938: 6. Many have used "Tamil" as if synoymous with "Dravidian". For example, in writing of the Separate Tamil Movement, or *Taṉi Tamiḻ Iyakkam*, Vijaya Ramaswamy writes that it "can be defined as the Tamil ethno-nationalist movement which did not merely claim separateness from the 'mainstream' Congress led antioanlist struggle but in fact moved parallelt to it and represented a counter culture." In "Tamil Separatism and Cultural Negotiations: Gender Politics and Literature in Tamil Nadu," *Social Scientist* 26:5/6 (1998): 61.

was now EVR's "Tamil daily" *Viṭutalai* in November 1939.[793] This ethno-linguistic "Tamil" identity quickly became more radically racialized as "Dravidian." In December 1939, EVR's flagship weekly *Kuṭi Aracu* published a map of the proposed separate nation of "Dravida Nadu."[794]

Image 2. Map of Proposed Dravida Nadu, *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 December 1939: 7

By October 1942, *Viṭutalai*'s header read "Dravida Nadu for the Dravidians!" and claimed to be a "Dravidian daily."[795] At a meeting in August 1944, EVR's thought and movement was renamed the Dravidar Kazhakam [DK]—or "Dravidian Association"—"among whose [most] important principles" was "the need to separate and establish a separate state...with the name Dravida Nadu..."[796] To gesture towards well-known features of South Indian political history beyond this dissertation: shortly after the independence of India, CN Annadurai, whom we saw earlier, would break from the DK, which had shied away from party politics, to create the DMK political party. In 1967, the DMK was the first regional party to defeat the Congress in a postcolonial Indian state election. "Dravidian" has served as the dominant idiom for the major political parties of Tamil Nadu to this day.

[793] The first extant issue—e.g. available in archives, where the collections are not complete—to bear the header *Tamiḻnāṭu Tamiḻarukkē* was published on the 6 November 1939 issue of *Viṭutalai*. That header was absent from the issues prior to, and including, 4 November 1939. Such a demand had been made earlier in speeches, for example, see EVR above in *Kuṭi Aracu* 1 January 1939.
[794] *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 December 1939: 7.
[795] Archival material concerning *Viṭutalai* does not exist for much of the intervening period in 1940 and 1941.
[796] "*Cēlam Mānāṭu* [Salem Conference]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 September 1944: 3.

Though EVR is now remembered in Tamil Nadu as the "father of the Dravidian movement,"[797] we have seen that whatever the Dravidian would be, its foundation in EVR's thought was not the ethno-linguistic, racialized, nationalist identity it has since become. Instead, from 1925-1937, Self-Respect had internationalist aspirations that attempted to trouble and refute these very tropes of nationalism in their incarnation as Gandhian *swaraj*. EVR, it seems, is being mis-remembered. Part of this mis-remembering, I suggest, stems from an amnesia about the role of the Aryan and the Jew in the distinction between Brahmin and Non-Brahmin. I am not suggesting that the dual Jew, for example, created Dravidian Nationalism out of Self-Respect Internationalism, thereby attributing origins in Western Europe for politics in Southern India. Rather, the dual Jew found itself grafted onto a duel within South India between international and national. This was not a movement of West or East, but in the world of Subcontinental Political Theory, and this single world was wrought by forces that seemed both one and the other. The dual Jew is not the cause but an effect of this duel in the world. The duel was between, to return to Frankfurt-school inspired sentiments quoted previously,

> persecuted and privileged, strong and weak, rich and poor, religious and atheistic, clannish and promiscuous, modern and archaic. But the Jew somehow synthesizes all contradictions; despite his multiplicity he remains one, easily and clearly identifiable. A remarkably integrated personality, he gives free expression to individualistic impulses that others must repress; at the same time he has a highly developed rational faculty, and has not lost the sense of collective solidarity.[798]

To bring our attention back to the ways in which the Jew figured in this duel in the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule is to return us, once again, to a shared tradition across a long distance relationship.

The election of February 1937, which gave rise to Brahminical victory and the Non-Brahmin's defeat, is decisive in appreciating the Non-Brahmin turn from internationalism to nationalism. In the run-up to the election, as we'll see, the journals of the Self-Respect Movement aggressively adopted elements of Nazi propaganda in their effort to help the Justice Party defeat Gandhi's Congress. What are we to make of this? I suggest, counterintuitively, that such elements in South India were actually an effort to ally Non-Brahmins with the Jew of Western Europe. How could turning to the Nazi be a turn to the Jew? The Nazi had already appropriated Indian symbols through the channels that established the shared tradition of

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[797] Internet cites making this claim abound. For examples in the literature, see: Glynis George, " 'Four Makes Society': Women's Organisation, Dravidian Nationalism and Women's Interpretation of Caste, Gender and Change in South India", *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 36 (2002): 498; S. Muthiah, *Madras Rediscovered: A Historical Guide to Looking Around* (Chennai: EastWest Books, 1999): 60; Milton Singer, "Beyond Tradition and Modernity in Madras", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13:2 (1971): 181. Singer's article akcnowledges the profound role of the international on EVR's thought and movement in the following way: "Although the cultural ideology of the Dravidian movement has declared Brahmans and various aspects of Sanskritic Hinduism 'the foreign enemy', it nevertheless incorporates many foreign imports. E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, the founding father of the Dravidian movement, described in an interview a trip to Europe in the early 1930s as the source of many of his ideas and organizational techniques. On this trip, he said, he discovered Lenin's communism, Mussolini's fascism, Bertrand Russell's rationalism, and Robert Ingersoll's atheism; and in each of these he found something useful." We, of course, should question what "incorporation," "source," and "discovery" mean, and what "finding" something useful entails. I have suggested that *redemption* serves as a more suitable term. Moreover, historically, Singer (and EVR, if he is being paraphrased correclty) is incorrect: Lenin, Mussolini, Russell, and Ingersoll were circulating in a variety of ways through South India as a part of the world; EVR's European travel was *one* of these ways.

[798] Lowenthal & Guterman, *Prophets of Deceit* (1949): 86.

Subcontinental Political Theory. This reflection of familiar images in a foreign land provided a certain critical distance that allowed Non-Brahmins to redeploy such old symbols but now with a new valence—not with their previous Brahmin associations (e.g. *āriyaṉ*) but with new Non-Brahmin ones (e.g. *paṟaiyar,* "pariah").

I argue that the redemption of South Indian tropes from their Western European deployment both provides evidence of the recurring effort by Non-Brahmins to be a part of the world, even as the consequence of such redemption resulted in a separatist vision in which a refigured *swaraj* in the form of Dravidian nationalism suggested that Non-Brahmins were apart from the world. We see this redemption and consequence across the Non-Brahmin use of the *swastika*, the Non-Brahmin fear of a global *āriyaṉ* threat, and the Non-Brahmin turn to *swaraj* as the last available means to establish *samadharma*. Subsequently, acts of separation from a world of *āriyaṉ* domination was hard to distinguish from engagement with the world through Non-Brahmin fears of Brahminism at home connecting with those abroad.

## REAPPROPRIATING THE SVASTIKA: THE TAMIL TURN

Indian provincial elections, as provided for in the Government of India Act of 1935, took place in 11 provinces around January 1937, and in the Madras Presidency in mid-February.[799] The Justice Party, the political organ of the Non-Brahmin, was utterly defeated, providing Congress with its largest victory, and therefore its clearest mandate, in any of the 11 provinces. There was good reason, in practice, for the defeat of the Non-Brahmin: the Justice Party had been in power almost without interruption since the first elections of 1920 and had become rabidly corrupt. But the Self-Respect Movement, which had distanced itself from positive party politics in order to engage in negative social critique, saw the Justice Party not only in terms of Non-Brahmin practice but in terms of Non-Brahmin theory. And this theory was the critique of national *swaraj* and the demand for world-wide *samadharma*. Corruption was tolerable if it furthered these goals, e.g. provided an obstacle to Brahminism.

The importance of the February election, given its representation of a contest not simply of party but of principle, strongly encouraged Self-Respecters to stump on behalf of the Justice Party as they never had before. EVR's Self-Respect Movement acquired the daily *Viṭutalai* ["Freedom" or "Salvation"] in January 1937 from the Justice Party[800] and immediately made a dramatic change in the masthead to indicate both an attachment to, and a fusion of, the importance of the Justice Party in South India and that which was important in the world. With respect to the former, the masthead began to include the scales of justice, which were the symbol of the Justice Party. With respect to the latter, and perhaps shocking especially to those wedded to a Continental experience divorced from the Subcontinent, the masthead began to include the swastika.

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[799] *Viṭutalai* issues during February 1937 suggest that the elections took place the 15th and 16th of February 1937.

[800] According to the www.periyar.org website: "Periyar began to extend his support to the Justice Party. It [the Justice Party] started the Tamil weekly paper "Viduthalai" on 1-6-1935. Then it was entrusted to Periyar who published "Viduthalai" as [a] Tamil Daily Newspaper from 1-1-1937." I am not clear on when it became a "daily," but know that it was not a "Tamil daily" in January 1937—the "Tamil Daily" occurred later that year. The popular idea that *Viduthalai* was a "Tamil daily" immediately once EVR took control projects back from later Hindi protests. http://www.periyar.org/html/ap_bios_eng3.asp The site also lists 1935 as central for EVR letter reforms, which we will see in a later masthead of Viduthalai in 1937. Accessed 31 May 2013.

Image 2. *Viṭutalai* masthead in December 1936, as a Justice Party bi-weekly.

Image 3. *Viṭutalai* masthead in January 1937, as a Self-Respect bi-weekly.

The question that arises, of course, is: what in the world did it mean for Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters to redeem the Swastika by placing it on their masthead in 1937?

The question is a difficult one to answer, as the Swastika was an Indian symbol appropriated by Europe. The Sanskrit term *sva-stika* literally means "well-being." An interest in the world-wide circulation of the symbol was of sufficient interest in the Euro-Atlantic by the end of the 19th century for the Curator of the Department of Prehistoric Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution in 1896 to publish a 1,000 page study titled *The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol, and Its Migrations; with Observations on the Migration of Certain Industries in Pre-Historic Times.*[801] The Curator, Thomas Wilson, writes:

> The Swastika has been called by different names in different countries, though nearly all countries have in later years accepted the ancient Sanskrit name of Swastika; and this name is recommended as the most definite and certain, being now the most general and, indeed, almost universal…
>
> …
>
> …two thousand and more years of use in Asia and Europe had sanctioned and sanctified that [Swastika] as its [the symbol's] name."[802]

Wilson includes a series of definitions and etymologies of the word, such as the following from Littre's French Dictionary:

> Svastika, or Swastika, a mystic figure used by several (East) Indian sects. It was equally well known to the Brahmins as to the Buddhists…
>
> Etymology: A Sanskrit word signifying happiness, pleasure, good luck. It is compose of Su…, "good," and asti, "being," "good being," with the suffix ka…[803]

Wilson goes on to include similar definitions and etymologies, usually complete with the Greek and Latin cognates to the Sanskrit, as provided by the German Orientalist Max Müller (whom we saw used in the 1911 Ashe court caste) and other French and English scholars. Such an interest

[801] Thomas Wilson, *The Swastika: The Earliest Known Symbol, and Its Migrations; with Observations on the Migration of Certain Industries in Pre-Historic Times* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1896).
[802] Wilson, *The Swastika* (1896): 768-769.
[803] Wilson, *The Swastika* (1896): 768-769.

suggests that the adoption of the Swastika by the Nazis was an effort to pull something out of world-wide circulation into a very particular purpose. However, it is hard to believe that Self-Respecters participating in the *same* acts of redemption in 1937 during an era of massive Nazi propaganda. The Nazis were appropriating a symbol out of worldwide circulation. Self-Respecters were reappropriating a symbol in worldwide circulation

It is hard to imagine that, by reappropriating an Indian swastika from Nazi Germany in an effort to redeem it, EVR and his Self-Respecters were actually making an effort to definitively associate themselves with Nazi principles. For one thing, the swastika, as a symbol of well-being, is associated with political propaganda *per se* in South India even today, as we see in Image 4. For another, it is a benign symbol of prosperity, appearing on shops like tea stalls (Image 5).

Image 4. The swastika as used in a political campaign poster, Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu, April 2011. The swastika appears both on the cricket bat (which was the symbol of the candidate) as well as at the top, superimposed with temple lamps, flanking the figure of Mother India.

Image 5. A drink and snack stall in Chennai, Municipal rail line, in September 2009 featuring a swastika.

The swastika, associated with "well-being," is an auspicious image associated across the scope of political candidates in South India. We presume this valence was present in 1937 as well.

Furthermore, we know that EVR was clearly not sympathetic with Nazis. Such a lack of sympathy was not conjured up at a remove but forged through first-hand experience. As discussed earlier, in 1932, EVR engaged in a research tour that took him from Soviet Russia (Image 6) across Europe and back again to South India. His goal was to investigate political alternatives to Self-Rule and means by which to propagate Self-Respect. He believed both could be found in the practice of Communism in Soviet Russia—in *samadharma*—and perhaps elsewhere in Europe.

Image 6. EVR in the USSR with a Russian woman and R. Ramasamy to his right, and S. Ramanathan to his left.[804]

The timing of EVR's European tour was significant. The year 1932 was a year of massive Nazi propaganda, transitioning from Hitler's loss in the presidential campaign of April 1932 to the Nazi victories in the Reichstag election of July 1932.[805] And it would be in the middle of this Nazi propaganda campaign that EVR arrives in Berlin on 19 May 1932, staying for a month.[806] Such propaganda would have been filled with the swastika (Image 7).

[804] Āṉaimuttu, Vē. *Periyāriṉ Ayalnāṭṭup Payaṇak Kuṛippu* [*Periyar's Foreign Country Travel Notes*] (Ceṉṉai: Periyār Nūl Veḷiyiiṭṭakam, 1997): xiv.

[805] In April 1932, Adolf Hitler lost the presidential election to Paul von Hindenberg. He solidified a degree of adoring Fuhrer worship that summer on the heals of defeat, and the Nazis subsequently achieved a stunning victory in the Reichstag elections of July 1932 where they garnered 37% of the votes.

[806] And it was between April 1932 and July 1932, at the height of one of the most successful political propaganda campaigns in the 20th century, that Periyar (according to his travel diaries) arrives in Berlin, from Moscow, on 19 May 1932, departing Berlin, for London, on 14 June 1932. His travel diaries are republished and edited in Āṉaimuttu, Vē. *Periyāriṉ Ayalnāṭṭup Payaṇak Kuṛippu* [*Periyar's Foreign Country Travel Notes*] (Ceṉṉai: Periyār Nūl Veḷiyiiṭṭakam, 1997)

Image 7. Nazi propaganda posters ca. 1932 that EVR may have seen while in Germany.[807]

On the day of his arrival in Germany, EVR remarks in his diaries to have visited the League Against Imperialism—which he would do quite frequently during his month in Germany–, a Zoo, and a "Fascist Office." However, his investments in Communism are overwhelming: on 21 May he goes to the Leningrad Museum, on 24 May he visits a Marx University, on 26 May he speaks with Communists in his hotel room, on 31 May he attends a Marxism lecture at a Marx school, on 10 June he goes to a Communist paper printing office, and on 11 June he meets with Japanese Communists. Furthermore, EVR is clearly aware that the Communism in which he is invested is opposed to Fascism; he notes a Communist demonstration on 1 June, and a riot between Fascists and Communists on 30 May in which some Communists were shot. EVR, despite being surrounded by the familiar propaganda of the swastika, is clearly invested in the Communist opposition to Nazi fascists.

Whatever Self-Respecters were doing in placing the swastika in *Viṭutalai*'s masthead in January 1937, they were associating with a familiar image of significance now circulating with hypertrophic strength in the wide world. This effort to achieve proximity to the world was in stark contrast to the ways in which Gandhi and his demand for *swaraj* was perceived. Image 8 illustrates how Gandhi was understood by many to imagining distance between India and Europe—perhaps at the peril of not only himself but of India as a whole.

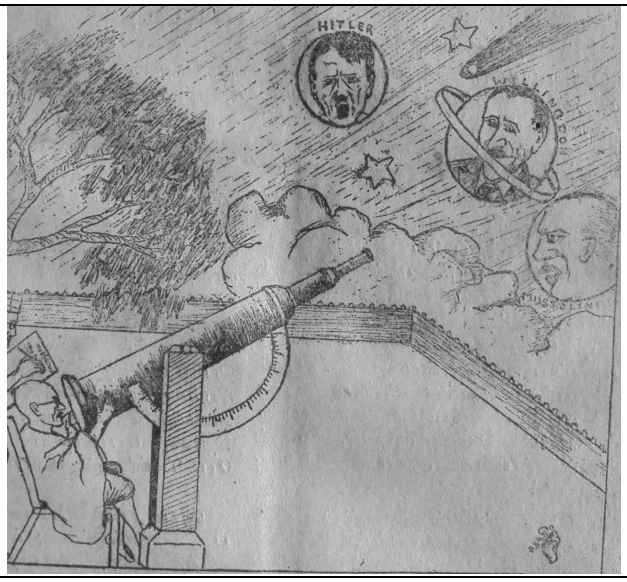


Image 8. Cartoon from the front page of the Tamil journal *Cutantiraccaṅku,* 6 April 1933.

Gandhi is depicted as looking through the wrong end of the telescope, making it appear as if European forces—Lord Willingdon of British India, Hitler, and Mussolini—are not only distant, but different planets altogether. Gandhi and his *swaraj*'s efforts to generate inter-galactic distance between India and Hitler, for example, is clearly very different from the proximity imagined by EVR and his *cuya-mariyātai*.

[807] Images taken from German Propaganda Archive http://www.bytwerk.com/gpa/posters1.htm accessed 1 March 2011.

And yet the masthead of *Viṭutalai* in 1937 was not just used to declare proximity, with the swastika of South India as a part of the world and the swastika of the world as a part of South India. It was also used to declare distance—from India itself. By the end of the use of the swastika in the masthead in November 1937, *Viṭutalai* declared itself to be definitively Tamil, a distinct ethno-linguistic group.

Image 9. *Viṭutalai* masthead on 16 November 1937, with the declaration *Tamiḻar Tiṉacari*, "Tamilian Daily," appearing beneath the Roman transliteration "Viduthalai."

Image 10. *Viṭutalai* masthead on 18 November 1937, repeating its declaration "Tamilian Daily" but also using the reformed alphabet of EVR in the last characters of the journal's title.

A number of features are evident in Images 9 & 10. First, obviously, the swastika has been removed in Image 10. In all likelihood, it was removed simply because it was understood to no longer represent what Self-Respecters meant. Second, the journal has moved from a bi-weekly, as it was under the Justice Party in 1936, to a daily. It continues as a daily to today, as "The Leading Rationalist Tamil Daily" (Image 11).

Image 11. The recent masthead, featuring EVR himself, of *Viṭutalai*, now the "Leading Rationalist Tamil Daily."

The adjectives "Leading" and "Rationalist" suggests a return to global gestures. But these were grafted onto what was, starting in 1937, a far more ethno-linguistically inflected, separatist claim to be a "Tamilian Daily" [*Tamiḻar Tiṉacari*]. It was being a Tamilian, as distinct from being an Indian, that was coming to be associated with demanding *cuya-mariyātai,* as opposed to *swaraj*. Finally, the masthead, as soon as it dropped both the swastika and the scales, adopted the slightly reformed alphabet that EVR and his Self-Respecters began to emphasize in the mid-1930s.

The swastika, a familiar feature circulating in the world, was invoked in the period leading up to the provincial assembly elections of February 1937. Subsequently, in November 1937, the swastika was dropped. In the intervening months, the "Tamilian" was being mobilized as a political force. It may be tempting to see the overlap between the Swastika on the masthead of the new Self-Respect daily, *Viṭutalai*, and the later appearance of the declaration of being "Tamilian" as related. But the "swastika," in preceding the "Tamilian," may actually have been one of the final acts of an un-ethnicized political struggle in South India. It was the victory of Gandhian *swaraj* and the fear of Brahminism, which the Swastika's deployment was intended to defeat, that led Self-Respect to become less about a political principle and more about an ethnic people.

## WORLD-WIDE ARYAN THREAT AND DRAVIDIAN DESPERATION

As hard as it may be for Continental political theorists to imagine, the invocation of the swastika in 1937 seems not to have been associated with the German Aryan but the European Jew. To grasp this, we need to understand how the 1937 election led not just to a victory for Congress and the idea of *swaraj* but to a host of nationalist ideas. Central to such ideas was the belief that a national people needed to speak a shared national language. That language, as Gandhi and others demanded, would be the Indo-European language of Hindi. Speakers of other native languages, such as the Dravidian language of Tamil, were understandably concerned: a free and independent nation run in a foreign language, a language associated with the Sanskrit of Brahminical forces, was terrifying. One wished to be free and independent as a Tamil-speaker, rather than eradicate Tamil to be free and independent. Tamil subsequently became increasingly ethnicized, associated with a particular people, a particular people demanding Self-Respect, and such a people found a welcome ally in the Jew. The new ethno-linguistic subject of self-respect, the Tamilian and later Dravidian, was galvanized not simply in reaction to the 1937 electoral victory of Brahminical forces, but through attentive, if not imaginative, and repeated deployments of the Aryan, the *āriyaṉ*, as a world-wide threat demanding *swaraj* that was sweeping across the globe in multiple incarnations. That is to say, with the electoral victory of February 1937, the Self-Respect struggle shifted, less about the position of Brahmin vs. Non-Brahmin in the world and more about the people Aryan vs. Tamil/Dravidian in the world. Under such circumstances, Self-Respect publications, including *Viṭutalai* with its temporary Swastika-featuring masthead, described the Tamil and the European Jew, not the Tamil and the European Aryan, as allies in the shared tradition of SubContinental Political Theory.

The February 1937 election installed a Brahmin named Rajagopalachariar into power. Rajagoplachariar was very close to Gandhi. It was with Rajagopalachariar, for example, that Gandhi first discussed his realization of the importance of national *satyagraha*. Such realization followed the passage of the Rowlatt Act in March 1919 which indefinitely extended the British Government's emergency powers passed during World War I. As Gandhi relates in his autobiography:

> Towards the small hours of the morning I woke up somewhat earlier than usual. I was still in that twilight condition between sleep and consciousness when suddenly the idea broke upon me—it was as if in a dream. Early in the morning I related the whole story to Rajagopalachari.
>
> 'The idea came to me last night in a dream that we should call upon the country to observe a general hartal. Satyagraha is a process of self-purification, and ours is a sacred fight, and it seems

> to me to be in the fitness of things that it should be commenced with an act of self-purification. Let all the people of India, therefore, suspend their business on that day and observe the day as one of fasting and prayer. The Musalmans may not fast for more than one day; so the duration of the fast should be twenty-four hours. It is very difficult to say whether all the provinces would respond to this appeal of ours or not, but I feel fairly sure of Bombay, Madras, Bihar and Sindh. I think we should have every reason to feel satisfied even if all these places observe the hartal fittingly.'
>
> Rajagopalachari was at once taken up with my suggestion.[808]

And on 16 June 1933, Gandhi's son Devdas wed Rajagopalachariar's daughter Laxmi. It is hard to imagine a closer connection.

Aside from Gandhi, then, Rajagopalachariar—despite being a personal friend of EVR—was one of the figures most associated with the most terrifying Brahminical elements of *swaraj* by the Self-Respect Movement. Among other features of an agenda that was markedly *swaraj*-ist, markedly Brahmin, markedly *national*, was the imposition of Hindi. Much scholarship on 20th century Tamil Country has focused on Tamil resistance to Hindi imposition.[809] What such scholarship has missed, however, is the ways in which Self-Respecters made this local event concerned with national *swaraj* into a global concern. Nowhere is this more evident than in the parallels drawn between the Nazis and Congress and, in particular, following the election of February 1937, between Hitler and Rajagopalachariar—or, as Self-Respecters referred to latter emphasizing his Brahmin caste, simply *Āccāriyār*.

An article titled "Honorable Āccāriyār's Dictatorial Theatrics.—No Difference between Hitler's Speech and Āccāriyār's Speech—Both Are the Same Style" published in *Kuṭi Aracu* on 2 October 1938 provides perhaps the clearest illustration of this parallel.[810] Written by one Em. Irājamāṇikkam from a Tamil diasporic distance in Saigon,[811] the article compares a recent speech of Rajagopalachariar with the one given by Hitler at Nuremberg on 12 September 1938. This speech of Hitler's was perhaps one of the most anticipated, given the rising tensions along the border between Germany and Czechoslovakia, and it preceded by weeks the "Munich Agreement" of 30 September which conceded the "Sudetenland" to Hitler.[812] One of the conclusions of Irājamāṇikkam's article, as we would suspect, is evidence of a world-wide Aryan threat: "*Āriyar vamcamallavā*?" - "Are [they] not of Aryan descent?" he asks referring to both Hitler and Rajagopalachariar. This gesture to "descent," of course, marked the creeping racialization of Non-Brahmin political thought from the critique of *swaraj* to ethno-linguistic nationalist demands of its own. But the specific elements of comparison between Hitler and Rajagoplachariar are worth attention. And these specifics reveal the echoes of ethnicization, particularly with concerns over justice defined in terms of the relationship between majority and minority.

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[808] Gandhi, *Autobiography,* CWMG vol 44: 434.

[809] Ramasamy, *Passions of the Tongue* (1997), Irschick, *Tamil Revivalism* (1986).

[810] Ceykōṉ Em. Irājamāṇikkam, "Kaṉam Āccāriyāriṉ Carvātikāra Nāṭakam.—Hiṭlar Pēccukkum, Āccāriyāriṉ Pēccukkum Vittiyācamē Illai!—Iruvar Pōkkum Ōrē Pōkku! [Honorable Āccāriyār's Dictatorial Theatrics.—No Difference between Hitler's Speech and Āccāriyār's Speech—Both Are the Same Style]," *Kuṭi Aracu,* 2 October 1938: 5.

[811] *Ceykōṉ,* Saigon. The Tamil diaspora to French Indo-China was made possible through France's colonies in South India, like Pondicherry.

[812] For the speech and its details, see Max Domarus, *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations, 1932-1945* (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1962): 1150-1161. For a sense of the anticipation of the speech, see the editorial "Hitler at Nuremberg," *New York Times* 12 September 1938.

The point of departure of the article is two passages, the first from Hitler and the second from Rajagopalachariar. Hitler is quoted as follows:

> "We are working hard to establish a situation of European peace. It is to protect the liberty [*cutantiram*] of the men of Europe that we are trying today. But Britain and France are opposed to it. It has become necessary to cope in any way with their opposition; no matter how much[813] the sacrifice [*nashṭam*] for that, our subsequent blessings will never go away" so he said very tenderly [*veku nayam*] with compassionate conviction [*irakka cittam*].[814]

Rajagopalachariyar is quoted as follows:

> "The Hindi Opposition Movement is not at a Hindi Opposition Movement, nor a Tamil Movement. It is the rivalry between the power [*cakti*] of the majority and the power [*cakti*] of the minority" he says.

For the author, such rhetoric is identical ("*itē mātiri tāṉ*") in form, despite differing in context: "If there is any difference or change in sentiment [*karuttu*] between the speech spoken by Hitler and Āccāriyār's speech we do not see it. Are they not of the same Aryan descent?" The difference between global and local was the difference in context through which such "sentiment" or idea [*karuttu*] was maintained. Hitler's context is "a time of crisis [*nerukkaṭi*] of the world's people" and his Nuremberg speech was a "battle cry [*yuttakōsham*] that made the world tremble" whereas Rajaji's speech was local, an attempt to "dig a hole and bury the Tamil people—Tamil civilization." The difference of course suggests a parallel: the Tamil people are like the world's people, each threatened by a shared Aryan enemy.

This Aryan enemy was shared with respect to three features: devouring, deception, and demographics. First, with respect to devouring, these speeches by the Aryan Hitler and the Aryan Āccāriyār are motivated out of a desire to swallow up a people. Hitler's speech is like "opening the mouth to swallow up [*kavaḷīkaram cey*] Czechoslovakia" while Āccāriyār's speech is "to swallow up the society of Tamil people." Second, the Aryan Hitler and the Aryan Āccāriyār provide speeches marked by deception in order to achieve their devouring aims. Hitler is taking "enthusiastic care with his propaganda [*pircaṅkam*]," speaking "very beautifully," "very tenderly" [*nayam*], and "craftily-skillfully" [*tantiramāka-tiṟamaiyāka*]. Āccāriyār, likewise, speaks with "deception" [*cūḻcci*], "craft" [*tantiram*], and "craftily-skillfully" [*tantiramāka-tiṟamaiyāka*]. Such deception is achieved through an appeal to being on the side of justice against injustice: "However much conscience and human justice is in the speech delivered by Hitler, in that same way, there is conscience and human justice in Honorable Āccāriyār's speech." Hitler and Āccāriyār are thus fused not simply *racially*, by a common Aryan "descent," but marked by Aryan *characteristics*.

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[813] Typo: *evvaṉavu* should be *evvaḷavu*.

[814] This must be a paraphrase of sentiments in the speech such as: "For the sake of peace in Europe, the National Socialist state has made enormous sacrifices…We made the greatest of sacrifices and distanced ourselves voluntarily from any future demands so that Euorpe might enjoy a peaceful future and so that a passage might be cleared at least on our part for reconciliation of all peoples world wide…We understand when England and France pursue their interests in the world. I wish to point out to the statesmen in Paris and London that there are German interests as well asn that we are determined ot puruse them under all circumstances…No European state has done as much as Germany in the sercie of peace! No one has made greater sacrifices! One must bear in mind, however, that there is a limit as to how much one can sacrifice…" (Domarus, *Hitler* (1962): 1155-1156).

It is the third such shared "Aryan" characteristic, however, that makes possible the other two: namely, a demographic separation between peoples, those who devour and those who are devoured, those who deceive and those who are deceived. This demographic "Aryan" and "dictatorial" distinction classifies people in terms of minority and majority, and it is minority/majority that is understood to underscore both Hitler's and Āccāriyār's speeches and is a preoccupation of the author. In short, Aryan nationalist actions—actions articulated in terms of "self determination" or *swaraj*—draw justification from a claim to protect vulnerable minorities from oppressive majorities. This is the central justification for Hitler invading Czechoslovakia—e.g. the minority of "Sudetenland Germans" amongst the majority Czechs. As Hitler would say in discussing Czechoslovakia,

> Amongst the suppressed minorities in this state, there are also three and a half million Germans…The Almighty has not created them so that the construction [of Czechoslovakia] arrived at in Versailles might place them at the mercy of an alien power they hate. And He has not created seven millions Czechs either so that they may reign over these three and half million, keep them in tutelage, and even far less did He create them to ravage and torture.
>
> The situation in this state has become unbearable, as is well known. In a political context, three and a half million people there are robbed of their right to self-determination in the name of the right of self-determination [of Czechoslovakia] as construed by a certain Mister Wilson…The misery of the Sudetenland Germans defies description…they are being oppressed and humiliated in an unprecedented fashion.[815]

Hitler goes on to list the reasons for such oppression and humiliation—for which "they are hunted down as though animals" despite claims by the "representatives of democracy"—focusing on cultural difference: the singing of songs, the wearing of stockings, the giving of greetings, and "every little detail connected to the expression of their nationality."[816]

Em. Irājamāṇikkam does not engage in such rhetorical propaganda, but is deeply concerned that such sentiments underlie the rhetoric of Hitler's Aryan double Āccāriyār. The nationalist project of Gandhi's Congress invades regions in which the upper-caste, more Sanskritized groups are a minority—where Tamil Country was increasingly imagined as such a region—and justifies the swallowing up of the majority people through a demand for self-determination or *swaraj*. Such actions for *swaraj* are not motivated by justice but self-interest, for "the welfare of one's own class members" [*conta vakuppiṉarukku naṉmai*"]. When referring to Āccāriyār's speech denouncing opposition to mandatory Hindi lessons, our author writes "Hitler, just like this, after the Great War, out of complete covetousness, has accomplished the welfare of his own country." It is likewise the good of one's own at the expense of others—and not justice—that is motivating Āccāriyār. The author repeats the majority/minority remarks of Āccāriyār's speech to make this clear, and turns the devouring concerns of the Aryan on its head:

> After saying "It is the rivalry [*pōṭṭi*] between the power [*cakti*] of the majority and the power [*cakti*] of the minority," why he wanted to take this sort of poisonous agitation and accept repressive measures for the prosperity [*kiḻarcci*] of the minority is a savory dish [*rucikkum pākam*]!

What is worthy of devouring, the "savory dish," is not the majority act for the sake of the minority, but rather, the motivation for wanting to devour the minority for the sake of the

[815] Domarus, *Hitler* (1962): 1154.
[816] Domarus, *Hitler* (1962): 1154-1155.

majority. Is it done out of a concern for "conscience and human justice" [*maṉaccāksiyum maṉitanītiyum*] or for "the sake of one's own class members"?

It is clear here how the very definition of "one's own class members" was what was being politicized. *Swaraj* presumed a self of self-rule, an Indian against the British. But Self-Respect had a different sense of self, the low against the high. High-caste Indians against British colonizers was not, ultimately, an incarnation of the struggle between low and high but between Subcontinental high and Continental high. Non-Brahmins saw the nationalism of *swaraj* as part of an invasive project which had, with the elections of February 1937, culminated in the mandatory study of Hindi: "First, [the national anthem] Vande Mataram; second, the national flag; third, the Vaishnavite Brahmin [e.g. orthodox high-caste] problem; and now the Hindi Mandatory Lesson!" The nationalist demand for *swaraj* or self-determination provided the rhetoric of justice to hide the self-interested actions of Hitler and Āccāriyār alike. The Tamil Brahmin minority, like the Sudetenland German minority, provided the excuse necessary for dictatorial action in the name of national independence and self-determination—in the name of *swaraj*.

And yet there remained a question: how to maintain a project for Self-Respect in a region where *swaraj* nationalism had become so clearly the name of the game following the elections of February 1937? Such an effort to reinscribe Self-Respect's demand, particularly that of *samadharma*, within a national project would, despite the shared Aryan threat across Continent and Subcontinent, resulted in the Non-Brahmin embrace, however partial, of Hitler's idiom: nationalism socialism.

## NOT SOCIALISM TO PRESERVE THE NATION BUT SWARAJ TO SAVE SAMADHARMA

In general, the deep interest in the national socialism and fascism of the Continent on the Subcontinent has been understudied and serves as part of the promising 21st century future for the project of SubContinental Political Theory. Such lack of attention is nowhere more evident than in articulations of Non-Brahmin political theory by members of EVR's Self-Respect Movement during the late 1930s. This evidence, however, has been masked by certain nationalist presumptions in "area studies," overly emphasizing demands based on an investment in "Tamil *Tāy*" or "Mother Tamil" that began out of defense of Tamil as an object of love against Gandhi's Congress with its demands for Hindi as the language of an independent India. This *presumed* nationalist emphasis has come at the expense of *appreciating* the width of the world and related possibilities of theoretical depth, pulling South India out of the world in order to understand it rather than broadening and enriching our *appreciation* of the world in South India.

National Socialism was a part of the world in South India that, as we have seen above in terms of idioms like Aryan/Pariah and of images like the Swastika, was also evidence of South India's part in the World. National Socialism began to play a role in Non-Brahmin political theory in South India during the 1930s, but for reasons somewhat different than its role among Nazis in Western Europe. Whereas in Western Europe, socialism—in the form of full employment, welfare services, etc.—was a way of shoring up a feverish nationalism, a *national* socialism as it were, in South India, where nationalist demands had come to monopolize the political imaginary—evident in the sweeping Congress victory in the elections of 1937—nationalism became the only way in which to preserve socialist aspirations, a national *socialism* as it were. That is to say, in the idiom of concern, *samadharma* was the way in which Nazis preserved the integrity of *swaraj*, but for Non-Brahmins, *swaraj* became the necessary vehicle through which to preserve the survival of the aspiration of *samadharma*. The move, of course,

marked a complete reversal from the prior logic of *cuya-mariyātai* or "self-respect." The Aryan double of the dual Jew, discussed above, I suggest, provided an obvious and increasingly unavoidable bridge to creating a project of *swaraj samadharma*, for the Aryan was a threat at home *and* abroad, and thus a home/abroad effort, an effort combining the language of nationalism/internationalism, e.g. *swaraj/samadharma*, came to constitute the only viable articulation of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule by the late 1930s.

Yet the focus on Tamil *Tāy*, or "Mother Tamil," has been an overwhelming and stubborn preoccupation of studies on South India during the late 1930s. Without doubt, as we have seen, there is great fear that the imposition of Hindi as part of the national project of *swaraj* will undermine the Non-Brahmin and entrench the Brahmin. Cartoons, familiar to scholars working on the period, undeniably attest to the ways in which Self-Respecters deployed Tamil *Tāy* against the recently elected Congress minister Rajagopalachariar. Here are two of the most compelling and frequently cited:

Image 12. "Āccāriyār's Daring" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 19 December 1937.

Image 13. "Āccāriyār Strikes *Tamil Tāy* with the Daggar of Hindi" in *Pakuttaṟivu* 1 July 1938.

Image 12 shows *Tamil Tāy* being disrobed by Rajagopalachariar, alluding to the famous scene in the epic *Mahabharata* where the character Draupadi is disrobed. The richly colored fabric of her sari, labeled *Tamiḻ Kalai* or "Tamil Art[s]," stands in contrast to the white outfits and caps indicating Congressmen who watch on with mixed expressions, some lecherous, some ashamed. Yet the "Arts" in terms of culture are not all that is at stake. "Arts" in terms of industry is as well. The uncapped man grimacing behind Rajagopalachariar seems to suggest the interests of business, and the fear that nationalism was a way for the Hindi-speaking north to not just politically but economically exploit the South was widespread among Self-Respecters. For example, Annadurai, the rising star of the Self-Respect Movement by the late 1930s, was concerned in December 1940 with the terms of the trade of sugar cane (*ālai*) unfavorable to South India, mocking Gandhi's alleged interest in the poor while claiming "The capitalists of North Country colonize (*kuṭiyēru*) South Country and zealously expand money dealings."[817] The emphasis on cloth in the disrobing of Tamil *Tay* [Mother], stripping Tamil *Tay* of the "Tamil Arts," is likewise an allusion to unfavorable terms of trade in textiles between North India and

[817] Aṇṇāturai in "*Tirucci Jillā 12vatu Jasṭis Mānāṭu* [Trichy District 12th Justice Conference]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 22 December 1940: 11.

South India. Image 13 retains the deployment of sexual violence between Rajagopalachariyar and Mother Tamil but far more dramatically. It relies exclusively on gender rather than class to convey the threat that forces of *swaraj* pose for Tamil-speaking South India. Arts in terms of industry is absent, but arts in terms of culture is present in full-force here: Mother Tamil standing beneath Rajagopalcahariar's dagger is clutching two of the texts central to the long history of Tamil literature, the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* and the *Tolkāppiyam*.

Such cartoons undeniably support the emphasis of area studies literature on South India which takes an ethno-linguistic Tamil identity as central to understanding 20th century South Indian politics marked by the postcolonial proliferation of ethno-linguistic Dravidian parties. Such cartoons emphasize Tamil literature and arts as part of an essential identity that was mobilized when threatened—what some Self-Respecters called "*Tamiḻ Paṛṛu*," an "attachment" or a "bond" with Tamil.[818] Yet these cartoons are a small sample of the cartoons used to image the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect in the late 1930s.

The literature has focused on the consequence of the February 1937 elections, where the elected Brahmin Congressman Rajagopalachariar and his imposition of Hindi is figured as threat. Yet such focus has displaced images that are arguably the most striking moment in the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. These were published by EVR's Non-Brahmins in the days immediately leading up to the February 1937 election in the hopes of defeating the Brahmin Congressman Rajagopalachariar.

Image 14. "The Light in the Middle of Darkness" in

Image 15. "Congress Demoness Slaying" in *Viṭutalai* 17

[818] See, for example, the "fictional story" by Maturai Pi. Jetīṉ, *Tamiḻ Paṛṛu* [Tamil Attachment] in *Kuṭi Aracu* 26 March 1939: 5, 15, 14. Sumathi Ramasamy makes what had become by then a standard claim: "My access to this analytic ['to theorize the discourses of love, labor, and life that have coalesced around Tamil in this century, discourses which can only be partially contained within a metanarrative of nationalism']—and hence to a different take on the language question—is through a Tamil word *paṛṛu*, which speakers of Tamil routinely use in their talk about the language. Typically, the term appears with the world *tamiḻ* in the compound *tamiḻppaṛṛu*, the hinge on which hangs the structure of affect and sentiment that develops around Tamil. So, its speakers are told to cultivate *tamiḻppaṛṛu*, to demonstrate *tamiḻppaṛṛu*, and to not sacrifice *tamiḻppaṛṛu* for worldly gains. Those who practice *tamiḻppaṛṛu* are *tamiḻar*, 'Tamilians'; by the same token, anybody who does not show *tamiḻppaṛṛu* is not a Tamilian." Ramasamy, *Passions of the Tongue* (1997): 5-6. Whether or not one was being "attached" to Tamil apart from the world, or as a part of the world, is a greater issue than the literature suggests.

Certain features of these undeniably striking cartoons may appear underspecified. For example, is Hitler's long hair in Image 14 a gender-bending allusion to the future flowing locks of *Tamil Tāy*? And is it a ballot or some ominous legislation lying beside the fallen Congress Demonness in Image 15? What is without doubt, however, is that these cartoons blend together images of Hitler and Roman Empire and, given the year 1937, are clear deployments of German-Italian, Nazi-fascist imagery coupled with the valorization of violence used by Non-Brahmins as pieces of election propaganda against Congress. Such images are disturbing, and may seem to be a big point in favor of Gandhi's project of *swaraj*: if Gandhi's enemies are Nazi-fascists, well then, the general prejudice in favor of Gandhi—the *insistence* we saw in comparative political theory projects in Part I—seems vindicated.

Despite the effect these images may have for a Western European audience, a South Indian audience at the time may remark on a different, but equally shocking, effect: self-respect is adopting the language of self-rule. In fact, Non-Brahmins are almost completely conceding terms associated with self-respect in favor of self-rule's idiom. Image 14 suggests that "revolution" or, as the Tamil text puts it, *puraṭci*, is part of the darkness of Gandhi's Congress. And yet *puraṭci* or "revolution" was, particularly during the early 1930s with the frequent deployment of a Marxist idiom, the hallmark of Self-Respect and one of the very features that distinguished its effort to achieve radical equality from the mere nationalist struggle of Congress. Moreover, though tempered with the idea of "constitutional action," the Non-Brahmin is adamantly on the side of *swaraj*'s sword rather than interrogating it. Likewise, in Image 15, the text seems to mark a dramatic reversal in Non-Brahmin political theory. The text reads "If [you] want India to live—if [you] want Indians to prosper—[you] must destroy this Congress Demonness." Yet such nationalist language—specifying Indian prosperity as distinct from other nations—is completely at odds with the internationalist language we saw emphasized by Self-Respecters in Chapter 9 that pushed against the zero-sum language of national prosperity.

Much more could be said about these cartoons in and of themselves. I focus on two arguments.

First, these cartoons should not be read as vindicating Gandhi since his opponents were Nazis or Fascists. Rather, these cartoon indicate that the Gandhian idiom of *swaraj* had come to saturate the political landscape of India by the late 1930s, evacuating the space for any alternative for those who focused on its critique in order to shape it into a more desirable demand. All that was now available were variants on *swaraj* and opposing demands for *swaraj*. It is, I suggest, the very demand for *swaraj* that lent itself to the use of Nazi-Fascist imagery, particularly among those who were interested in patching together idioms to mobilize an alternative to Gandhi—even if the patches in that patchwork, if taken independently, did not represent what such alternatives envisioned. That is to say, Gandhi's *swaraj* is implicated in, rather than opposed to, the Non-Brahmin use of Nazi-Fascist imagery. The use of Nazi-Fascist imagery indicates the triumph of *swaraj* in India, and the desperate efforts by Non-Brahmins to imagine, with no alternative to *swaraj*, an alternative of *swaraj* using a constellation of images—some familiar, others foreign. Perhaps the swastika's circulation through Western Europe stripped it of any previous Brahminical valences and lent itself, not to some adopted fascist purpose, but to the possibility of being refigured for a Non-Brahmin one.

Second, such Nazi-Fascist cartoons suggest a much more complicated story than the one usually attending the selective use of the *Tamiḻ Tāy* cartoons common in related area studies literature. This *Tamiḻ Tāy* story claims that there was a (Hindi) threat to a shared (Tamil) culture

that mobilized a (Tamil) people. Such mobilization was not "automatic" in that Non-Brahmins were part of efforts of articulation and propaganda to actively mobilize the people. But it was "automatic" in the sense that "the (Tamil) people" were there to be mobilized. This may be true, but this is only part of the story. The earlier use of Nazi-Fascist imagery, which we would understand to be wedded to ultra-nationalist projects, may suggest that there were efforts to articulate a nationalist "people" that preceded *Tamiḻ Tāy*.

Image 16. "Tamil People! – Service, Sacrifice, Solidarity" in *Viṭutalai* 6 March 1936.

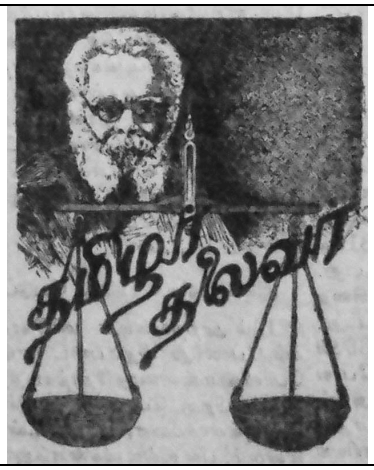

Image 17. "Leader of the Tamils" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 17 September 1939.

Image 16 should be familiar—it is the same emblem, though here with Tamil words, that appeared on Hitler's shield during the February 1937 election. This emblem, however, was published nearly a year earlier, in March 1936. It appears beneath a call to the "Tamil People!" to rise to "beware" [*jākkiratai*] of acts of Congress deception. The scales of justice—the symbol of the Justice Party that EVR took command of in December 1938—appear in Image 17 as they did in Image 16. Image 17 is part of a 1939 advertisement for a recent EVR biography titled "Leader of the Tamils," a biography central to the larger amnesia over the internationalist origins of Self-Respect mentioned earlier as one of our concerns. Such images suggest that in the late 1930s there was an aggressive invocation of the "Tamil" as the way Non-Brahmins mobilized demands for Self-Respect, and that such invocations were at times wedded to Nazi-Fascist imagery from Europe. Yet, again, much of the idiom of Nazi-Fascism was originally drawn from India, and what such idioms in India upon their return indicated was part of a more complicated circuit. Yet, still, we may still reasonably wonder: what part of the Continental valence of these Indian idioms are retained upon their return to the Subcontinent?

The answer to this question overturns related area studies assumptions and enriches approaches to political theory by again illustrating the redemptive acts central to SubContinental Political Theory. "Area studies" approaches have casually associated South India with linguistic nationalism, namely Tamil. Approaches to political theory have casually associated Nazi-Fascism with Europe, namely Germany and Italy. But what if nationalism rooted in the language of Tamil was bound to the idiom of Nazi-Fascism from Europe, while at the same time, such Nazi-Fascism was being refigured, rather than retained, through the language of Tamil in South India? In this case, the study of Western Europe would be impoverished without the study of South India, and the study of South India would be impoverished without the study of Western Europe. Moreover, this fusion of Continent and Subcontinent, as we will see, not only

articulated an opposition to Gandhi, but an opposition which cannot be dismissed as violently totalitarian but, rather, was one tied to a position we would associate with the Jew.

Given the prevalence of the Nazi idiom in the images we have seen in this chapter, perhaps the translation of "national socialism" into Tamil provides some clues as to what was part of Hitler's appeal. Such translation pushes us beyond the facile truism, at least within nationalist circles, that Hitler appealed to Indians because Hitler was opposed to the British and Indians were opposed to the British. The best place to start would likely be in the wake of the consolidation of Germany under the Nazis, inaugurating the Third Reich, in 1933, which included Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January, the elimination of all other political parties by July, and the Nazi control of the elections in November. As among those elsewhere in the world, Non-Brahmins took note. The clearest of such note taking was by Ma. Ciṅgāravēlu, whose articles had begun to appear shortly before the publication of the *Samadharma Manifesto* in the Fall of 1931 and who was, during the 1930s, perhaps the figure most intent on synthesizing European texts into the Tamil of Self-Respect Non-Brahmin political theory. In August 1933, Singaravelu published an article titled, in both Roman and transliterated Tamil letters, "Bolshevism, Fascism, and Nazism. *Pōlshivisam, Pāsisam, Nāsisam*."[819] He sets out these three "new political ways [*putiya araciyal muṟai*] for the reader, discussing Russia's Bolsheviks and the "dictatorship of the proletariat" [*toḻilāḷar carvātikārittaṉam*] and a future in which (this portion in Tamil but parenthetically in the English quoted here) "class Antagonism will cease…usher[ing] into the present chaotic world, order, plenty happiness for all" [sic]. He likewise discusses Italy's Mussolini and his claim that "through nationalism only can the nation develop. A great amount of national devotion [*tēcāpimāṉam*] is required for the growth of nationalism. Those without national respect are thought to be enemies of the nation."[820]

Finally, Ciṅgāravēlu discusses Germany's Nazi party. Ciṅgāravēlu translates "national socialism" as *tēcīya camatarma* or "national *samadharma*."[821] Without doubt, here and throughout Non-Brahmin political thought, Hitler's *samadharma* is described as opposed to Marx's *samadharma*. As Ciṅgāravēlu explicates the "*siddhānta* [*cittāntam*]" or "doctrine" of such national *samadharma* for his Non-Brahmin audience:

> Like Fascism, nationalism is worshipped [*toḻu*] in Nazism. Those who are opposed to nationalism are removed from the national welfare. Internationalism [*akila tēcīyam*], those born as enemies to nationalism, and therefore the *samadharma* that craves [*ātari*] internationalism, must be crushed. Marxism which is the foundation for communism-as-common-property [*potuvuṭamai*] must be eradicated from Germany. The Proletariats [*toḻilāḻikaḷ*] expect the government, rather than their organizations, to protect their liberty. Capitalists have been capitalists, and Proletariats have been

[819] Tōḻar Ma. Ciṅkāravēlu, "Bolshevism, Fascism, and Nazism. *Pōlshivisam, Pāsisam, Nāsisam*" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 6 August 1933: 3, 17, 18. The article is remarkable, not for its effort to wed the demand for Self-Respect in South India to the political demands in a wider world, but for being one of the few—to my knowledge, the only—such article to provide a bibliography, however partial. Corrected for spelling and other errors, and adding the dates of publication the list includes: *Bolshevik Theory* (1920) by Raymond Postgate; *Communism* (1927) by Harold Laski, *Scientific Socialism* (1907, 1894) by Frederich Engels, *Fascism* (1923) by Odon Por, a "*Decay of Europe* by Seignor Nitt," *Germany in Transition* (1923) by M. Phillips Price, *State and Revolution* (1932?) by Lenin, *Theories and Forms of Political Organization* (?) by GDH Cole, in addition to articles in *The Hindu*, *Current History*, and *Advocate*.

[820] Ciṅkāravēlu, "Bolshevism, Fascism, and Nazism. *Pōlshivisam, Pāsisam, Nāsisam,*" 3. Note the use of *apimāṉam* which was used also to mean "self-respect" by Gandhi and others.

[821] Ciṅkāravēlu, "Bolshevism, Fascism, and Nazism. *Pōlshivisam, Pāsisam, Nāsisam,*" 17.

> Proletariats. A condition in which this sort of class hatred [*iṉam vēṟṟumai*][822] is a class hatred that could be eradicated is nothing other than a day dream. In order to advance the condition of the German nation each and every German must make whatever sacrifice [*pāṭumpāṭal*]. Countries [*nāṭukaḷ*] must join with Germany in order to cause great wars [*caṇṭaikaḷ*]. For this enough armies must join. Parliament will not advance the German nation. Therefore dictatorship must be adopted after destroying it [Parliament]. Everyone must act submitting and being subservient to [*aṭaṅ*ki *oṭuṅki*] it [dictatorship]. The dictator [*carvātikāri*] named Hitler, pursuing [*mēlpōttikkoṇṭu*] these sorts of principles [*koḷkaikaḷ*], has been amassing [his] troops [*paṭaitiraṭṭu*]. He calls this *siddhānta* "Hitlerism."[823]

Clearly, here as well as elsewhere, "Nazism" and "Hitlerism" are consistently understood as inimical to the Non-Brahmin political theory of self-respect. Nazism is about class hatred, feverish nationalism, massive wars, submission and subservience, and opposition to international projects of *samadharma* and *potuvuṭaimai*.

Such features of Nazism, of course, were very familiar to Non-Brahmins: these were the very characteristics they associated with *swaraj*. But if, by the late 1930s, *swaraj* had come to evacuate the political arena of any alternative possibility, wouldn't one want a *swaraj* coupled with *samadharma* rather than one without *samadharma*? If so, Hitler, through a glass darkly, seemed to provide perhaps the best the Non-Brahmin could hope for. To emphasize: such provision was not Nazism or Hitlerism, however, where *samadharma* was merely a ruse in order to shore up a project of *swaraj*. Instead, for the Non-Brahmin, it would be *swaraj* that might be able to provide a cover for pushing forward the project of *samadharma*. This would explain both the use of Nazi-Fascist images, such as a Gladiator Hitler and the Swastika we saw earlier, while being opposed to Nazism and Fascism. Non-Brahmins were reaching out to national *socialism*, not *national* socialism, in a last ditch effort to preserve a world-wide project of equal-dharma despite the hegemony of *swaraj*. If this is the case, then the "area studies" literature on 20th century South India which has focused on linguistic nationalism and the centrality of figures like *Tamiḻ Tāy* are in fact missing the very thing that made such nationalism and such figures meaningful—the hope of participating in a world-wide project of *samadharma* with justice and equality for all.

The combination of the nationalist demand for *swaraj* and the socialist demand for *samadharma*—a formulation which would have been antithetical to the demand for *cuya-mariyātai* [self-respect] from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s—brought together both the dual Jew and the Aryan double. The dual Jew was a creature of conceptual division, where a nationalist opposition to the Jew as Brahmin existed alongside a socialist desire for the Jew as Non-Brahmin. The Aryan double was a creature of biological multiplication, where the forces of unfreedom at home (the Brahmin) were genetically tied to the forces of unfreedom abroad (the Jew and/or Brahmin). *Swaraj samadharma*, then, was not a meaningless formulation, but seemed to preserve the project of *cuya-mariyātai* in an age in which alternatives to *swaraj* had become politically effete.

Moreover, I will argue in the next section that the dual Jew and its Aryan double help push us beyond the Dravidian separatism so overemphasized in the related area studies literature. It would be the Aryan, and how Non-Brahmins mobilized to oppose this *āriyaṉ*, that allowed EVR's Self-Respecters to parlay a project of both separation and engagement, demanding a separate Dravidian state on the Subcontinent while engaging with—or rather, *therefore* engaging

[822] Note: *iṉam* is elsewhere explicitly used to translate "race."
[823] Ciṅkāravēlu, "Bolshevism, Fascism, and Nazism. *Pōlshivisam, Pāsisam, Nāsisam,*" 17.

with—the Allies in order to defeat the Nazis on the Continent. To acknowledge only the former, as area studies literature has done by single-mindedly focused on an overly romanticized linguistic nationalism in South India, is to miss the second half of the Aryan double. Let us look at such separation and engagement in turn, focusing on the period from January 1939 to December 1940. By January 1939, EVR was the recent leader of the Justice political party rather than simply serving as the head of the Self-Respect movement for social critique, and his December 1938 acceptance speech provided an articulation of the dual Jew as we saw above. In December 1940, the journal *Kuṭi Aracu* ceases production for several years as part of the war effort and the idea, if not the duty, of separation becomes part and parcel of the new political articulation of Non-Brahminism: the Dravidian.

## SEPARATION & ENGAGEMENT

### *SEPARATION*

Separation can be read as the culmination of a concern with the duty, or *kaṭamai*, of the Tamilian across 1939 and 1940. So, for example, in February 1939, an article is published titled simply "The Protection of Our Mother Language is Our Duty."[824] By July 1940, the understanding of duty had been extended, with one article titled, for example, "The Separation of the Country and our Duty."[825] The idea of the "country" or "land" with the Tamil word *nāṭu* as opposed to the "nation" whose word is the Sanskritic *tēcam* carries an affective rather than an analytic difference: both denote the place for a people, but with the need to defend Mother Tamil, Tamil terms would come to replace the heavily Sankritized vocabulary present in earlier articulations of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. This story of duty, from the protection of one's language to the separation of one's land, is an extension of the emphasis on linguistic nationalism, and its "*tamiḻ paṛṛu*" or "Tamil attachment" so prevalent in the area studies literature.

The problem here, of course, is that nationalist self-rule had historically taken a back-seat to the Non-Brahmin demand for self-respect. The priority of self-respect over self-rule, rather than self-rule over self-respect, was, I argued, the defining philosophical distinction within the founding decade Non-Brahmin political theory as articulated in EVR's Self-Respect Movement. By 1940, however, "self-respect" was changing radically, both as a concept and in its terminology, to make demands for separatism and thus *swaraj*.

One of the decisive moments refiguring "self-respect" conceptually was the "Separation Conference" [*Piriviṉai Mānāṭu*] held in Kanchipuram on 2 June 1940. An editorial published a week earlier suggests that, though "at the time Periyar left Congress" in the mid-1920s the concern was between "Brahmin" and "Non-Brahmin" in which "there were those who claimed it necessary to provide proportionate representation [*takuntāṛpōl piratinitittuvam*],"

> yet today, even though communal [*vakuppuvāri*] representation has been provided, as long as the Aryan race [*varkkam*] is in this *naṭu* [country], as long as Aryan power-as-domination [*ātikkam*] is in this *naṭu*, neither Tamilians nor Tamil Nadu can raise their heads, Tamilians cannot live as men

[824] Tēṉi Ē.Es. Tańkamaṇi, "*Namatu Tāymoḻiyaik Kāppatu Namatu Kaṭamai* [The Protection of Our Mother Language is Our Duty]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 12 February 1939: 13.

[825] Ci. Mu. Po. "*Nāṭu Piriviṉaiyum Namatu Kaṭamaiyum* [The Separation of the Country and our Duty]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 July 1940: 5. "Separation" was the dominant concern of the Separation Conference held in Kanchipuram in June 1940.

> with self-respect [*cuya-mariyātai*], and Tamil *naṭu* cannot achieve eminence [*tikaḻ*] of suitable strength-cum-beauty [*eḻil*] with liberty [*cutantiram*] like the rest of the countries [*naṭukaḷ*]. [826]

Such concerns are described as those EVR has been making known for "2 ½ years," that is, from the campaign leading up to the February 1937 elections. Now, Non-Brahmins demanded not merely critical but programmatic action. By 1940, with the rising demand for Dravidian separation seen as coextensive with "self-respect," *cuya-mariyātai* was changing radically both in its concept and its terminology. Self-respect as *cuya-mariyātai* was undergoing a profound shift—from a challenge to the priority of nationalism to a much more *swaraj*-ist position in which a self-ruling self, and the excellence achievable only as a nation, is required in order to possess *cuya-mariyātai*.

This conceptual change, which we are invited to locate around the February 1937 election—where the *nation* rather than the *world* can make the equality required for self-respect possible—, was coupled with a change in how "self-respect" was literally being articulated in Tamil. For example, in a 1940 article commemorating the 15 years of *Kuṭi Aracu*'s publication, the parenthetical English phrase "Self-Respect" is listed alongside terms that are not *cuya-mariyātai* but instead are closer to, or are more fully, terms with Tamil roots—as opposed to the Sanskritized roots of *cuya-mariyātai*. The article claims that "The desire for *viṭutalai* is the basis for *Kuṭi Aracu (Democracy)*. The protection of *taṉ māṉam (Self Respect)* is the basis for *viṭutalai (Freedom)…"* and praises EVR (as Periyar) for his leadership of the "*taṉ matippu iyakkam (Self-Respect Movement)*."[827] The use of the Tamil word *taṉ* to refer to self, rather than the Sanskrit *cuya*, coincides with the article's emphasis on "Tamil civilization" [*nākarīkam*] and "language." A Tamil self, which could be expressed only in a Tamil word, had become central; such sentiments echo those of Gandhi's in Chapter 8 that it is a violation of self-respect not to deal with oneself and others in their native tongue. By 1940, it seems that one cannot have a self-respecting Tamil self where the word for "self" is not a Tamil word and part of a Tamil civilization. The same goes for the Tamil word *matippu* for "respect." *Māṉam*, also used in the article to render "respect," was a pan-Indian Sanskrit term we saw in Gandhi's autobiography, but which may have seemed less Sanskrit than the traditional term *mariyātai*. And with the displacement of the word *mariyātai*, perhaps, came a loss of *mariyātai*'s target, its original meaning that drew *attention* to borders and boundaries, and towards the *presumption* of borders and boundaries between a Dravidian Self and its Other.

The point, of course, is that as "self-respect" was shifting conceptually the term for "self-respect" was changing, too. Such a shift had theoretical and political costs. The continuity of concern, achieved through parenthetical English renderings, marked the potential casualties of moving from a project critical of self-rule's priority to a sense of self that presumed it. The casualty was a particular sort of self; the parenthetical English "Self-Respect" invocations mark a change from a Non-Brahmin "Self-Respect" of *cuya-mariyātai* to a Tamil, Dravidian "Self-Respect" of *taṉ matippu*. Such casualty, in other words, was the reduced scope of imagining "respect" and its "self." "Self-respect" no longer involved the appropriation of and competition over the meaning of shared terms across India, nor an effort to share terms through appropriation and reinterpretation—no longer these complicated acts of redemption—but instead the

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[826] Editorial, "*Kāñciyil Piriviṉai Mānāṭu* [The Separation Conference in Kanchi(puram)]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 26 May 1939: 8.

[827] Advocate Es. Latcumirataṉ Pāratiyār. "*Kuṭi Aracukku 16-vatu Āṇṭu: Vāḻttukaḷum, Ācikaḷum* [16th year for Kuṭi Aracu: Praises and Benedictions]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 8 September 1930: 4.

fabrication and assertion of authentic, indigenous terms. The "self" of self-rule was no longer being interrogated by self-respect, but rather, the logic of having an agreed upon self—though now Tamil rather than Indian—was conceded.[828]

These shifts in the Self-Respect Movement that followed in the wake of the February 1937 elections were a part of shifts across India, shifts in which the opposition to Gandhi's demand for *swaraj* could no longer articulate themselves as anything but through equivalent *swaraj* demands on behalf of other communities on the Subcontinent. The 9th resolution of the Separation Conference at Kanchipuram on 2 June 1940 makes such a demand clear. The "other communities" were no longer part of a broader *Non-Brahmin* identity that was used to critique *swaraj* as in-and-of itself saturated with Brahminism, but part of a *Dravidian* identity that demanded its own *swaraj* against the nationalism of an upper-caste Congress party:

> As a result of the atrocity [*koṭumai*] of Congress Rule, the Dravidian People must divide and scatter [national?] solidarity by joining together all Christians, Muslims, Tamilians, and Adi-Dravidians [untouchables] without class [*vakuppu*] [divisions]. Because of this plan, [Congress] has invited [the Hindu nationalist] Comrade Savarkar[829] from North Country to carry out poisonous propaganda across many places in the name of the Hindu Mahasabha, ruining [our] unity. This conference, seeing the fruits of [such unity's ruin], requests the Dravidian People that they should join together without the difference of Muslim, Christian, Tamilian, [and Untouchable?], as part of this plan.[830]

It should be no surprise that *"cuya-mariyātai*" does not appear in the Separation Conferences welcoming address[831] nor at its opening celebration.[832]

What did appear was evidence of *swaraj* as monopolizing the imagination of alternatives to Congress. As Taṅkavēlar Mutaliyār says in his welcoming address at the Separation Conference at Kanchipuram on 2 June 1940:

> Congress-people demand *swaraj*. The true meaning of *swaraj* is that each and everyone rules each and everyone's [own] country [*nāṭu*]. Ruling each and everyone's [own] country [means] that, under such rule, that country's people's arts, language, civilization, trade, handicrafts, agriculture, and birth should grow and develop even if the language arts power [*ātikkam*] of another country do not have a place. In our country, having given power [ātikkam] to other countrymen in all departments, we patiently wait [iruttal][833] as [these] other countrymen's captured-servants [piṭiyāḷ]—the name for this is not *swaraj*. If you see in terms of this goal, is there today in Dravida Nadu Dravidian language art civilization? No. Is there power [*ātikkam*] for the Dravidian in the business of Dravida Nadu? No. Do Dravidians have the handicrafts and trade of Dravida Nadu?

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[828] One can see this concession when recalling how EVR *dismissed* the idea of "civilization" [*nākarīkam*] by invoking a couplet from the Tirukkural in 1933 (Chapter 9) as opposed to how "civilization" through that very same couplet was *praised* in *Kuṭi Aracu* 8 September 1940: 4.

[829] Savarkar was the founder of *Hindutva,* discussed in Part II with respect to the assassination of Ashe and the conversion at Meenakshipuram..

[830] "*Kāñci Mānāṭṭu Nikaḻcci: Niṛaivēriya Tīrmāṉaṅkaḷ* [The Kanchi Conference Event: Passed Resolutions]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 June 1940: 12.

[831] "*Kāñci Piriviṉai Mānāṭu: Tōḻar Taṅkavēlar Mutaliyār Varavēṛpurai* [Kanchi[puram] Separation Conference: Comrade Taṅkavēlar Mutaliyār's Welcome Address]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 16 June 1940: 13.

[832] "*Piriviṉai Mānāṭu Tiṛappu Viḻa: Tōḻar Ṭi. Pi. Vētāsalam Coṛpoḻivu* [Separation Conference Opening Ceremony: Comrade Ṭi. Pi. Vētāsalam's Speech]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 16 June 1940: 11.

[833] *Iruttal* is the quality of a woman waiting patiently during her separation from her man in ancient literature.

No. At the place of business of the North Country and Foreign Country, like a servant boy, our people have been ruined.[834]

In other words: in order for one not to be ruined, for South India not to be ruined, one must rule oneself. The Dravidian needed *swaraj*.

The effects of February 1937 and the subsequent hegemony of *swaraj* was felt not only in the South but across India as a whole. Like with its Tamil opposition, Gandhi's *swaraj* had to meet with equivalent demands for *swaraj* on behalf of other communities whose "self" was presumed. In fact, "Dravidian" *swaraj* demands were synergistically coupled with other communities elsewhere opposing Gandhi through, rather than against, *swaraj*. Such synergies are most evident in the meeting that EVR had with the untouchable leader Ambedkar and the Muslim leader Jinnah in Bombay in January 1940.

Image 18. "Jinnah-Periyar Meeting: A Picture of Periyār Seeing and Speaking with Janāp Jiṉṉā in Bombay on 3-1-40" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 28 January 1940.

Image 19. A clearer image from *OutlookIndia's* photogallery. Jinnah is seated at the center, with EVR and Ambedkar at the right of the frame.[835]

What is clear from the image and its description is the centrality of the All India Muslim League leader Jinnah, literally positioned in the middle, in giving legitimacy to projects opposed to Gandhi's Congress following the February 1937 provincial elections. What is also clear from the image and those involved is how, by 1940, Non-Brahmin forces—quickly becoming separatist Dravidians—in South India were in direct conversation with Muslims and Untouchables.

Such conversations, and the subsequent synergy of concerns, clustered around the proliferating investment in the position of "minorities" by 1940. The first *Kuṭi Aracu* article with the transliterated word "minority" in the title was published the same month of EVR's visit with Jinnah and Ambedkar: "What *Mainārāṭṭikaḷ* ["Minorities"] Need to Do."[836] And the increasing salience of the *maiṉārāṭṭi* ("minority") among Non-Brahmins, now Dravidians, was coupled

[834] "*Kāñci Piriviṉai Mānāṭu,*" 13.

[835] http://photogallery.outlookindia.com/images/gallery/20120808/ambedkar_jinnah_20120820.jpg. According to the caption in *Kuṭi Aracu*'s image, from left to right: "Sunday Observer" Editor Pi. Pālaccuppiramaṇiyam, "Justice" Editor Ṭi. Ē. Vi. Nātaṉ, A. I. Mu. League leader Jaṉāp Jiṉṉā, Advocate Pālacupramaṇiyam, Periyār Ē.Ve. Rāmacāmi, Bombay Independent Labor Party leader Doctor. B. R. Ambedkar

[836] Editorial, "*Maiṉārāṭṭikaḷ Ceyya Vēṇṭiyatu* [That Which Is Necessary for Minorities to Do]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 14 January 1940.

with the impossibility of now imagining an alternative to *swaraj*. Achievement was predicated, instead, on each minority's *swaraj*. Such *swaraj*, in turn, was modeled explicitly on the political configurations Europe. For example, in response to Congress's claim that Muslims are not a *maiṉāraṭṭi* and thus do not require forms of protection in March 1940, Non-Brahmins, now "Dravidians," jump to the aid of Jinnah, first by claiming that their Aryan/Dravidian distinction is parallel to that of the Hindu/Muslim, and then drawing upon the national experience of Europe as a model for achieving freedom. We can see the scramble to deploy the term, which elsewhere was used to redeem terms like "race" (for example, see Chapter 15) and "class" (for example, see Chapter 9), to capture "nation" as a coherent idea:

> But, like Periyār E.V. Rāmacāmi—that is, in the way one says that the Dravidian is different, the Aryan is different, and these two *varkkam* (two *nēshaṉ* [nation]) [sic], because [they] are in this country…the Dravidians need to separate politically [*araciyalil*] from the Aryans—in that same way Jaṉāp Jiṉṉā [Jinnah] says that because the Hindus are different, the Muslims are different, and these 2 nēshaṉ [nations] are in India, the Muslims should separate politically from the Hindus.
>
> …
>
> Like European *nāṭu* [country], whereby each and every *varkkam* separates every corresponding *nāṭu* and *varkkam's* society and takes pains for the sake of its own advancement and liberty, India or this *nāṭu* can attain the advancement, liberty and achievement of other *nāṭus* of the world.[837]

The alternative to this national project—the project of *swaraj*—is here called the "*cōmpēṛi vāḻkkai*" or "lazybone life."

Accordingly, in return for the Dravidian support for Muslims separatism, Jinnah would recognize the efforts of the Dravidian struggle. Though his support for a separate "Dravidastan" that mirrored Pakistan would rapidly wane, if it was ever present, Jinnah sent a letter to EVR in 1940 upon the end of compulsory Hindi, which was republished in *Kuṭi Aracu* (Image 20) as well as in Tamil translation:

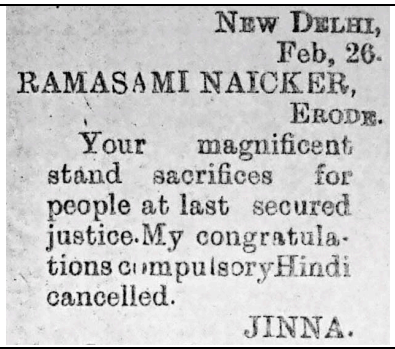
NEW DELHI,
Feb, 26.
RAMASAMI NAICKER,
ERODE.
Your magnificent stand sacrifices for people at last secured justice. My congratulations compulsory Hindi cancelled.
JINNA.

Image 20. Letter from Jinnah to EVR published in *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 March 1940: 9.

And yet, though so clearly demanding separation, we are tempted to see in such Dravidian demands the further endorsement of Muslim demands as efforts to engage the wider world. For

[837] "*Tamiḻarkaḷ Kavaṉikkavum* [Tamils Pay Attention]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 31 March 1940: 1. Originally published as an editorial in *Viṭutalai* on 23 March 1940.

it was a global threat, not simply a regionally one, the required Dravidian *swaraj*. That global threat was the *āriyaṉ*.

***ENGAGEMENT***

What we may be tempted to see here, and as the related area studies literature has repeatedly suggested, is that linguistic nationalism gave rise to a separatist Dravidian identity. Such nationalism and separatism found synergetic relationships across India, captured in the photo from the January 1940 meeting in Bombay among "minority" communities, which had arisen in the wake of the February 1937 provincial elections in which Congress received its mandate, a mandate for *swaraj*.

In contrast to this conclusion, I argue that such separatist articulations were an extension of, rather than departure from, earlier articulations of Non-Brahmin political theory which attempted to imagine ways to engage the wider world. For, by the late 1930s, the struggle for self-respect had, as we have seen, a new world-wide enemy: the Aryan. And it was in terms of an articulation of the Non-Brahmin struggle against a world-wide Aryanism, not simply a Dravidian struggle against regional Aryans, that we should understand the move from Non-Brahmin/Brahmin to Dravidian/Aryan in the articulation of Self-Respect—even though, and especially because, this move gave rise to demands for *swaraj* that quickly overtook the Non-Brahmin investment in *swaraj*'s critique. That is to say, to focus on a Dravidian identity, as the area studies literature has done, is to miss the animating world-wide engagement that had been so central to *cuya-mariyātai*.

To focus on a Dravidian identity is to emphasize forms of national separatism, whereas to focus on the Aryan enemy is to see how it is world-wide engagement that remains the central idiom of *cuya-mariyātai* or "self-respect." The cover of the March 1940 *Kuṭi Aracu* issue that published Jinnah's letter appeared with the headline: "*Victory! Victory! Ready for the Next War!*"[838] The law to make Hindi compulsory, with an aim to make it the national language of an independent India, had been defeated in late February 1940. EVR's Self-Respecters were overjoyed and rightfully assumed credit for the law's defeat, having led protests, providing opposition with theoretical articulation, and providing institutional support—such as the creation of the Aryan-Dravidian Research Institute.[839] What would this "next war" be, then? By December 1940, the next war was obvious: "Aryanism, Dravidianism: The War Has Started."[840] And that war is articulated through a struggle for *swaraj*, in the outlines discussed in places like the Separation Conference at Kanchipuram and subsequent separatism, such as discussed by R.N. Abdul Ahmed: "Aryan Strategy and Separatism's Necessity."[841]

Central to appreciating a world-wide engagement reminiscent of "self-respect" rather than nationalist separation echoing "self-rule" is the fact that Gandhi's Congress did not support the British war effort against the Nazis. For those who saw Congress and Nazism as two articulations of the *Āriyaṉ*, the Non-Brahmin response was inevitable: support the British. And it

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[838] Editorial published in *Viṭutalai* 22 March 1940: "*Veṛṛi! Veṛṛi! Aṭutta Pōrukku Tayār!* [Victory! Victory! Ready for Next War!]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 March 1940: 1.

[839] EVR, "*Āriya Tirāviṭa Ārāyccippaḷḷi (Nilaiyam)* [Aryan Dravidian Research Institute (establishment)]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 19 November 1939: 2.

[840] Anon. "*Āriyam, Tirāviṭam Pōr Tuvaṅki Viṭṭatu* [Aryanism, Dravidianism: The War Has Started]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 15 December 1940: 15.

[841] Lēlappāḷaiyam Ār. En. Aptul Amītu, "*Āriyar Cūḻcciyum Piriviṉaiyiṉ Avaciyamum* [Aryan Strategy and Separatism's Necessity]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 15 December 1940: 7.

would be the Dravidian at home, like the Allies abroad, that were attempting to destroy the *Āriyaṉ*. As EVR claims in December 1939, at the height of the Hindi Opposition Movement, in order to rally "Dravidian" support for the British in World War II:

> That the British must achieve victory is not for the good of the Britishers. Our thought is that, if there is to be any sort of foreign rule in our country, there should be no other rule but the Britisher.[842] If the British are defeated, German Rule may come. Germany calls itself Aryan. You would not be ignorant of our country's experience of suffering under Aryan rule, society, religion, and politics. We have seen here that the desire and speech that Germany should win is usually in the Brahmin mind. Therefore if Germany comes [to India as ruler] two Aryans shall join, even Gandhi shall be a spy, and they shall conduct rule according to the [text prescribing caste relations called the] Varnashastras. At that time, Tamils must be only, like in the [Hindu epic the] *Ramayana*, monkeys and demons. Therefore we should fully help bearing the desire that the British achieve victory.[843]

Though he says earlier in the speech that "There is no relationship between the War [*yūttam*] and Hindi Opposition," we must presume he means to distinguish two claims. It is not the case that the Tamils are fighting Hindi in order to help the British, as traitors of the Indian nationalist cause. Rather, Tamils and the British find themselves on the same side of a world-wide war against the *Āriyaṉ* abroad and at home.

The Aryan double—whose biological reproduction across European Continent and Indian Subcontinent were coupled with articulations of the dual Jew—makes Dravidian separatism not exactly a departure from previous self-respect critiques of self-rule. Instead, *swaraj*, as the only game in town by the late 1930s, was being mobilized, just as *cuya-mariyātai* was earlier, to forge allies elsewhere by understanding struggles abroad as parallel to struggles at home. The support offered by Self-Respecters, who understood themselves now more as Dravidians than Non-Brahmins, was persistent, and included the Separation Conference at Kanchipuram we saw earlier.[844] Such support stood in stark contrast, of course, to Gandhi's Congress which not only opposed the involvement of the British in the war but, in fact, withdrew their victorious Congress party from the posts they won in February 1937 as a mark of their opposition.

What was happening then, was that the "next war" would in fact be a continuation of the previous war—that war [*pōr*] against the *Āriyaṉ* on the Subcontinent embodied in the Tamil opposition to mandatory Hindi would blend seamlessly into the War [*yūttam*] against the *Āriyaṉ* on the Continent embodied in the British/Allied opposition to Nazi Germany. For, alongside the positive content contained in a Dravidian identity—namely, "Tamil arts language civilization," etc.—was being articulated a more powerful critical, oppositional identity than the more regional sounding "Non-Brahmin"—the global sounding "Non-Aryan."

Perhaps the most powerful articulation of this globally expansive Non-Aryan identity would be found, ironically but unsurprisingly, within what has hitherto in area studies literature been considered to be one of the defining themes of regional Dravidian nationalism: the critique of the Sanskrit epic the *Ramayana*.[845] As we have seen, "Rama Raj," the rule of Rama which served as this epic's hero, was one of the ways in which Gandhi and his Congress party

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[842] This sentence is partially an inference from the text which is not completely legible.
[843] EVR, "*Intiyai Etirpputu Ēṉ?* [Why Hindi Opposition?]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 January 1940: 1.
[844] See *Kuṭi Aracu* 15 October 1939: 3,4,7. *Kuṭi Aracu* 7 July 1940: 7. *Kuṭi Aracu* 15 September 1940: 4,5,6.
[845] Richman, *Many Ramayanas* (1991). The claims in the scholarship are that the multiplication and critique of the Ramayana is a South Asian tradition, etc., of which Periyar's critique serves as one.

articulated the desirability of *swaraj*. EVR's critique of the *Ramayana* has often been reduced to a parable of South India's opposition to North India, with the story tracing the movement of the hero coming from the North down to the land of "monkeys and demons" located in the South. While this is true, this suggests that EVR's critique of the *Ramayana* was confined regionally rather than expansive globally. Yet one of the most focused and sustained discussions saturated with references to scholarship on the *Ramayana* was in a speech titled "An Explanation of Aryan and Non-Aryan" in September 1939.[846] Given the obvious awareness Non-Brahmins have of the "Aryan" idiom of the Nazis, it is hard to imagine the title, and thus the conceived theoretical usefulness of the *Ramayana*'s critique, was accidental at this time. After all, why put "Aryan" in the title when the article itself often uses "Brahmin" synonymously, or why put "Non-Aryan" in the title when the article often uses "Dravidian" or "Tamil" synonymously? Why not "An Explanation of the Brahmin and Non-Brahmin" or "Brahmin and Tamil" or "Aryan and Dravidian"? The obvious explanation, of course, is that this was anexample of a struggle to share in the shared struggles of a *world* at war, not simply a *region* at war, through the Indian epic *Ramayana*.

Let us turn to the speech itself, of which five components are salient in terms of my argument for the world-wide rather than regionally-narrow significance of EVR's critique of the *Ramayana*, that is, as a way of articulating a global struggle between Aryan and Non-Aryan rather than a local one between Brahmin and Non-Brahmin. First, nationalism in general, and Congress in the Indian context, are simply articulations of a possibly larger Aryan threat: "…I say that Congress and Nationalism [*tēcīyam*] serve as the fortress [*araṇ*] for the Aryan…"[847] Second, such Aryanism has been articulated in India most recently through Brahmin victory of the February 1937 provincial elections:

> Brahmins in the name of nationalism [*tēcīyam*] and in the name of *swaraj* and in the name of Congress showed [you] Gandhi, got your vote, won the post of minister, and in the past 25 months not only have tolerated the injustice [*koṭumai*] and wicked acts [*aṭṭūḻiyam*] they have done to you but have also played madly so that your stomachs pang with hunger, your hearts arrest in pain [*kumaṛi*], your blood boils, and your temper is worn through…

Such concerns, of course, had been a part of EVR's thought and movement for the past "15 years."[848] Third, the Aryan has historically articulated itself through non-violence, rather than violence, casting a long shadow of doubt on Gandhi's articulation of *swaraj*'s struggle: "But, I ask you, shouldn't [you] find the reason for how we, without rights [*urimai*], have been made slaves to these Aryans who were without swords, without guns, without even bodily strength, and [what caused the] impoverishment of [our] condition [*uḻal*] with respect to politics [*araciyal*], sociology [*camūka iyal*], religion [*camaya iyal*], economics [*poruḷātāra iyal*], knowledge [*ñāṉa iyal*], etc.?" The reason EVR finds, of course, are the ways in which Aryans used ideological means to saturate the minds of Tamils—perfectly compatible with *ahimsa* or Gandhian "non-violence." One such ideological tool was the pan-Indian epic the *Ramayana*. And thus, fourth, the *Ramayana* provides a way of theorizing the struggle between Aryan and Non-Aryan. As EVR quotes Rātā Kumut Mūkkarjī in "Hindu Civilization," adding his own parenthetical clarifications: "The reality [*uḻporuḷ*] of the *Ramayana* story is this: the war

[846] EVR, "*Āriyar Āriyarallātār Viḻakkam* [An Explanation of Aryan and Non-Aryan]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 16 September 1939: 3,4,17,18.
[847] EVR, "*Āriyar Āriyarallātār Viḻakkam*," 3.
[848] EVR, "*Āriyar Āriyarallātār Viḻakkam*," 4.

conducted between Aryan civilization and Non-Aryan civilization (that is, between the leaders Rama [of the Aryan] and Ravana [of the Non-Aryan])." Fifth, and finally, the Aryan is the product of biological multiplication across Europe and India alike, and thus not simply a possible but an actually larger Aryan world-wide threat, an Aryan "here" whose double is "there." As EVR quotes an author named Pālmāciṉ, again adding in his own parenthetical clarifications: "The black men whose skin has been darkened (the Dravidians) have been called by Indian Europeans (that is Aryans) as inhuman-infidels [*tasyūkkaḷ*], murders, and often as those who can change into demons [*picācu*] as claimed in Vedic literature."[849] The *Ramayana* is not, then, only of regional significance, but a way of articulating Aryanism, and its Non-Aryan opposition, more broadly.

What are we to make of a broader "Non-Aryan" position engaged by Self-Respecters by the late 1930s, alongside separatist investments in Tamil language and Dravidian ethnicity? I argue that this "Non-Aryan" serves to link the war at home with the war abroad, the war opposing Hindi, usually expressed through the Tamil word *pōr* for war, and the war opposing Hitler, usually expressed through the Sanskritized Tamil word *yūttam* for war. The rising identity of "Dravidian" should not only, then, point to acts of separation but acts of engagement. What we thought was a turn to national *swaraj* that betrayed international *cuya-mariyātai* is actually its reincarnation, redeemed in a world now saturated with *āriyaṉism*.

We can see such engagement through Non-Brahmin resistance to an Aryan double across Continent and Subcontinent in the images that mark a shift from Hindi opposition to the "next war" of Hitler opposition from 1939 to 1940. We can see how a global Non-Aryan mass mobilization was depicted:

[849] EVR, "*Āriyar Āriyarallātār Viḷakkam*," 18.

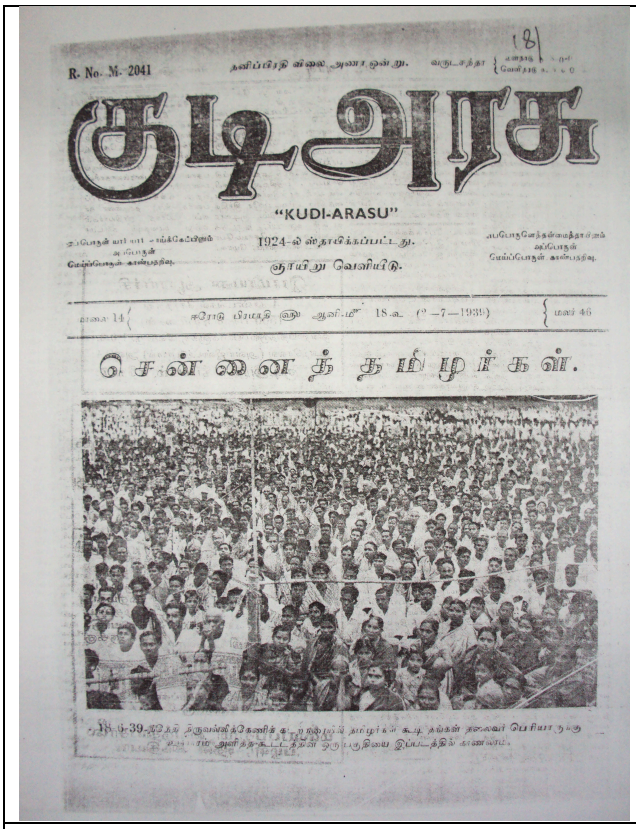


Image 21. "Chennai Tamilians" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 July 1939.

Image 22. "Troops Arriving in Britain" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 July 1940.

Such mass images emphasized support for the Non-Aryan cause:

Image 23. "Image of Chennai Hindi Battlefield [*pōrkkaḷam*]" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 5 February 1939.

Image 24. "Support for Britain" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 July 1940.

Women were also central to the war effort against the Aryan.

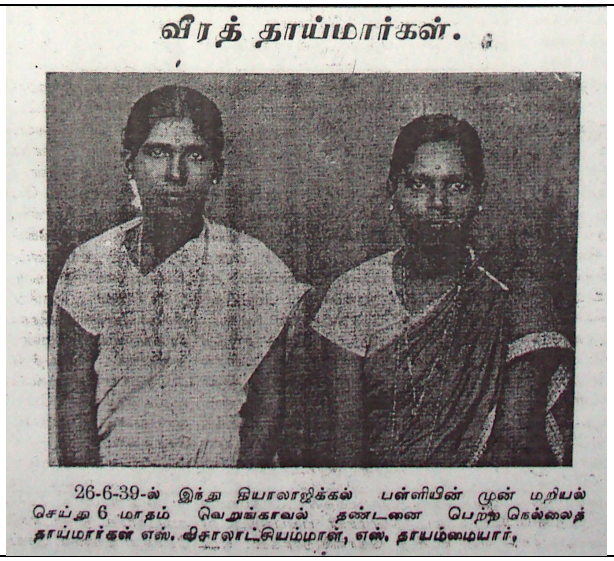


Image 25. "Women Heroes," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 16 July 1939. Pictured: Es. Visālāṭciyammāḷ and Es. Tāymmaiyār.

Image 26. *Kuṭi Aracu* 29 September 1940. Pictured: Lady Zia Wernher working in a soldier convalescent home.

Such contributions emphasized powers of reproduction and production.

Image 27. "Women Heroes" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 30 July 1939. The ages of the women range from ages 2 to 78.

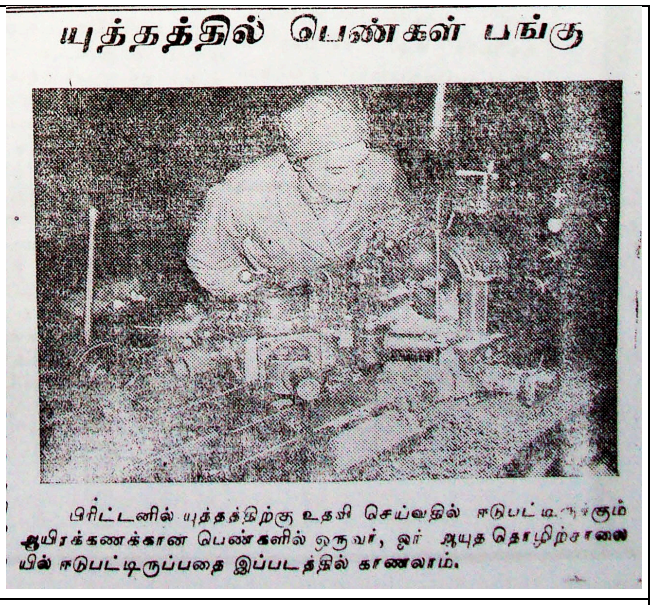


Image 28. "Girls' Share in the War" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 7 July 1940. Here a "girl" [*peṇ*] is working at a weapon's factory.

And images across the pages of *Kuṭi Aracu* provide montages to demonstrate the scope and power of Non-Aryan resistance. The most popular among such images opposing Hindi was that of the male, photos of which were reproduced from available posed stills. The most popular

among such images opposing Hitler was that of the machine, photos of which were reproduced from war effort propaganda.

Image 29. Images of men opposing Hindi in *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 April 1939.

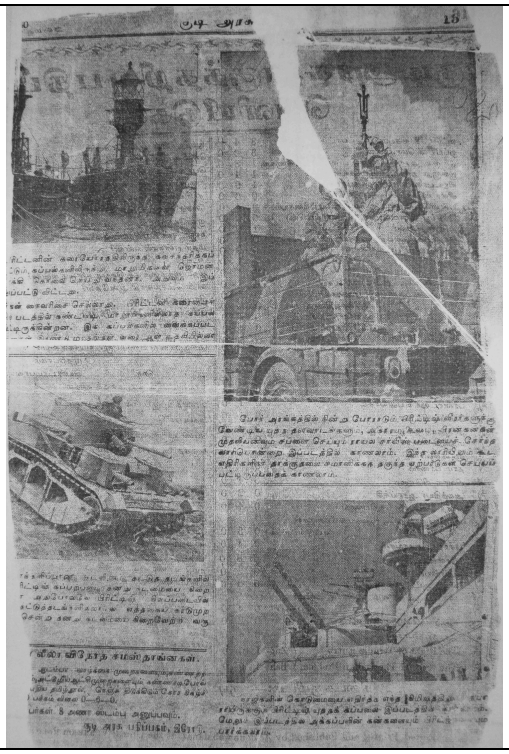


Image 30. Images of machines opposing Hitler in *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 July 1940.

But families in opposing Hindi, and men with their machines in opposing Hitler, were also popular:

| Image 31. Those who have gone, and died, in jail opposing Hindi. *Kuṭi Aracu* 29 January 1939. | Image 32. Those who may go, and die, opposing Hitler. *Kuṭi Aracu* 14 July 1940. |
|---|---|

Such struggles had their own theatres, with Hindi opposition in the Asian theatre and Hitler opposition in the European theatre.

Image 33. "Singapore Hindi War Heroes." Singapore Comrades Ṭi. Vakshmaṇaṉ, Si. Kāḷimuttu, Ṭi. Rājakōpāl went to jail on 25 January 1939. *Kuṭi Aracu* 39 February 5.

Image 34. "Heroic Pilots!" British pilots are central to winning the war in Berlin. *Kuṭi Aracu* 15 September 1940.

Men opposing the Aryan were captured in different poses.

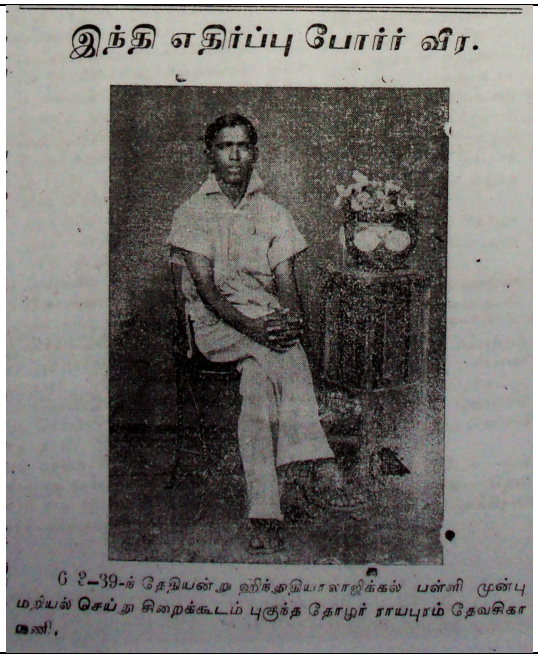


Image 35. "Hindi Opposition War Heroism." Picture of

Image 36. "Preparing to Lead Invasion." Bombs

| | |
|---|---|
| Rāyapuram Tēvacikāvaṇi who was sent to jail. *Kuṭi Aracu* 19 March 1939. | dropped from planes are important in beating Germany. *Kuṭi Aracu* 27 October 1940. |

Such poses captured acts of alliance, such as between Hindu and Muslim, in opposing Hindi, or military coordination in opposing Hitler.

Image 37. "Hindi War Heroes" sent to jail. Top: Em. Vi. Campantaṉ, Ke. Aṟumukam. Bottom: Māriyappa, E. Ce. Shākul Hamītu. In *Kuṭi Aracu* 29 January 1939.

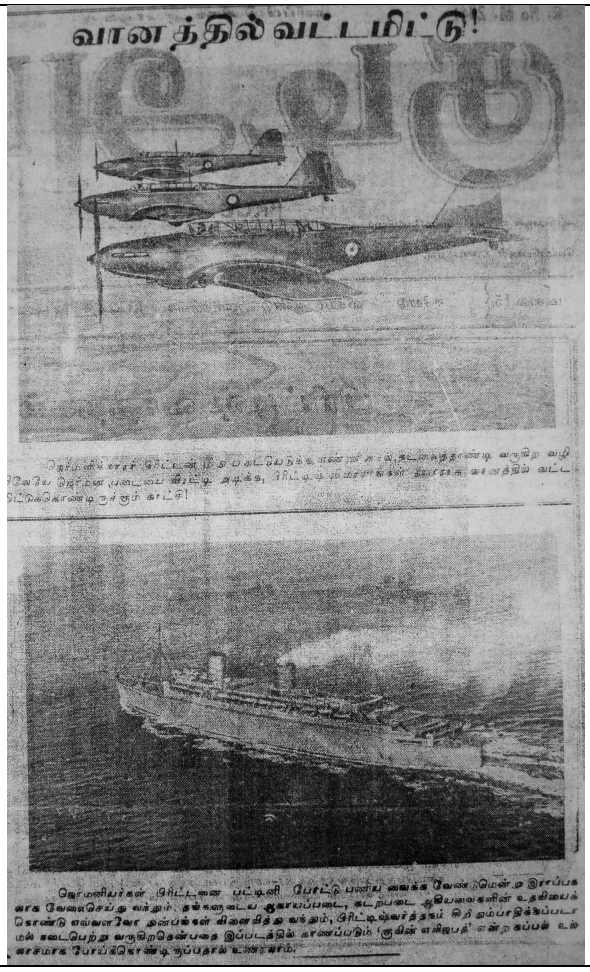


Image 38. "Circling the Skies." In *Kuṭi Aracu* 14 July 1940.

And such Non-Aryan opposition had their leaders.

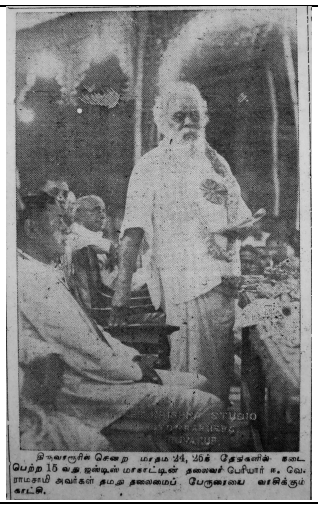

Image 39. EVR in *Kuṭi Aracu* 15 September 1940.

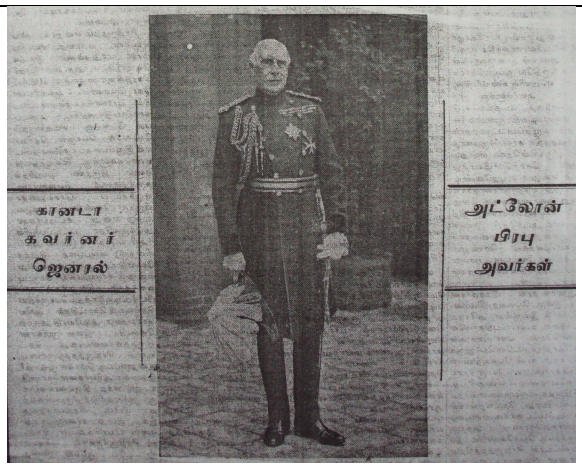


Image 40. Canada Governor General Athlone. *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 November 1940.

Image 41. "Canadian Soldiers Coming to Destroy Hitler." Claims here, "*Hiṭlar Oḻika*" [Let Hitler Be Destroyed] and "*Nājicam Vīḻka*" [Let Nazism Perish] echo the rhetoric of the Non-Brahmin war against mandatory Hindi during the same period, e.g. both as wars against "Aryans."

In short, I argue that such images suggest that the Aryan double—the biological multiplication of the Aryan enemy across Continent and Subcontinent alike—troubles the idea that the "Dravidian" was a separatist identity. Instead, the "Dravidian" became a way of extending the sorts of engagement with the world central to the Self-Respect Movement from the very beginning.

## CONCLUSION

By the late 1930s, the Non-Brahmin self-respect engagement with the wider world was not about equal-dharma or the redistribution of property or human rights, as we saw in Part IV's Non-Brahmin redemption of Marx, but about an opposition to a world-wide *āriyaṉ* threat, first,

in order to create *samadharama*. Such opposition provides yet another, and perhaps the most compelling, articulation of a shared tradition across a long distance relationship between India and Europe, the tradition of SubContinental Political Theory. Whether or not Dravidian separatism was any more or less an engagement with the world than "self-respect" is difficult to say. What is clear, however, is that now a coherent and contained "self" was being presumed. Did this presumption, in the wake of the elections of February 1937, constitute the collapse of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule? In the next Part, I argue no. Two elements would remain a feature of EVR's thought and movement, features which we have seen central decades later in the mass conversion at Meenakshipuram in 1981. Those two features were the power of romance and valor as ways of constituting the self through *mariyātai* rather than presuming a self through *raj*.

# PART VI. FORCE: SECULAR ROMANCE, MUSLIM VALOR

I have argued that there is a distinct shift in the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. From 1925 to 1937, the refrain "Self-Respect before Self-Rule" suggested the priority of a self constituted through respect rather than presumed by rule, and lent itself to an internationalist vision. As EVR claims upon return from his world tour in the early 1930s, "Our effort does not concern one caste. (It) does not concern one language. (It) does not concern one religion. (It) does not concern one country. Our effort concerns all people who are undergoing hardships. We do not care whether they are Indian or Europeans. The hardships of all people should disappear."[850] However, from 1937 onwards, with the Congress electoral victory that February and the events of World War II, the refrain "Dravida Nadu for the Dravidians" suggested a presumed self capable of rule through which respect would be constituted, and lent itself to a nationalist vision. As we saw in the months leading up to the Separation Conference at Kanchipuram in 1940, "Periyār E.V. Rāmacāmi [claims that]…the Dravidians need to separate politically [*araciyalil*] from the Aryans…[so that] this *nāṭu* can attain the advancement, liberty and achievement of other *nāṭus* of the world."[851] And yet, I suggested, this separatist shift was no less an engagement with the world than the earlier internationalism. Rather, the world was now understood as saturated by the Brahmin-as-*Āriyaṉ*, and therefore truly being in the world required removal from the *āriyaṉ*. This world was part of a shared tradition across a long distance relationship, the tradition of SubContinental Political Theory.

Though there was a formal continuity (world-wide engagement) despite a shift in content (international to national), there were substantive elements which persisted. These elements, I suggest, help return us to this dissertation's point of departure: the locale of Meenakshipuram with its assassination in 1911 and conversion in 1981. As we saw in 1911, *swaraj*'s demand meant the Brahmin casting out the Pariah. This Brahminism was understood as an orthodox spiritualism that coupled Hindu idioms with ascetic practices. As we saw in 1981, *swaraj*'s threat meant the Untouchable embracing Islam. This Islam was understood as devoid of native faith and thus an act of foreign force, not the product of individual choice but collective influence. The Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule would retain, from its push against 1911 toward its pull into 1981, its refusal of these two elemental constellations of *swaraj* as (1) defined by an orthodox spiritualism synonymous with Hindu asceticism, and (2) the product of individual faith as a choice rendered as "indigenous." The self of self-respect, prior to becoming a self of self-rule, instead required not Hinduism but Islam, not asceticism but home life, not individual faith but collective force, not an allegedly indigenous choice but allegedly foreign influence.

This Part is divided into two chapters that attend to the continuous features of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, irrespective of the 1937 shift. The first focuses on the critique of *swaraj*'s ascetic valence by turning to home life as the "secular life" and subsequent associations with romance. The second focuses on the critique of *swaraj*'s Hindu valence by turning to Islam and its associations with valor. What we see is a deep-rooted

[850] EVR, "On the evening of 7-2-33 between 6:45 and 8:20 pm, a public meeting was held on the sands of the Cauvery River, Mayavaram…" [translator not listed], Under Secretary Safe Files 839-A, Tamil Nadu State Archives.

[851] "*Tamiḻarkaḷ Kavaṉikkavum* [Tamils Pay Attention]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 31 March 1940: 1. Originally published as an editorial in *Viṭutalai* on 23 March 1940.

concern with the ways in which *swaraj* had divided the inner/spiritual realm from the outer/material one, and thus an interrogation of parallel binaries well acknowledged in the literature such as that between home (*ghar*) / woman / religion / sovereign and world (*bāhir*) / man /secular / colonized.[852] Non-Brahmin refigurations of romance and valor, with their ancillary ideas of marriage and conversion, would turn this binary inside-out, as it were, making, for example, women and religion not objects insulated through sovereign articulation but subjects that must negotiate world-wide demands for justice. Such justice, as always, required the elimination of forces of "high low"—forces that the Non-Brahmin felt would be preserved rather than destroyed through the self presumed by self-rule rather than a prior self-respecting self. I suggest that this focus on home-life and Islam collapses distinctions between the secular and religion. This collapse is the product of relationships between Non-Brahmin concerns with home and world, cover and exposure, mixing and multiplication.

## CHAPTER 14. ATTRACTION OF THE SECULAR: HOUSEHOLDING

In this chapter, I argue that concerns with love, if not with the erotic, provided a vehicle for Non-Brahmins to disrupt nationalist *swaraj* binaries and challenge Brahminism through three sets of couples: home and world, cover and exposure, and mixing and multiplication. Whereas the demand for self-rule pit a national home against a colonial world, the demand for self-respect articulated intimacy against the home/world binary altogether. Whereas the demand for self-rule pit national cover against colonial exposure, the demand for self-respect saw liberation that challenged the cover/exposure binary altogether. And whereas the demand for self-rule pit national similarity against colonial difference, the demand for self-respect saw justice in the more complicated demands for the mixing and multiplication of selves.

South India has a long tradition in which love and the erotic were coupled with spiritual devotion or *bhakti*. Such devotion is set in contrast to ascetic spiritual practices. The scholar Kamil Zvelebil articulates this well established claim in the area studies literature as follows:

> The endless personal loyalty of a *bhakta* [devotee] to a personal and very real God, and love, not suffering and renunciation, are the central motives and features of *bhakti*: including sexual love and eroticism, which is not a hindrance, but on the contrary, frequently a precondition to divine love or, at least, its standard symbol. There is in fact a direct connection between the idealized and typified love of the *akam* [interior] genre in the early classical poetry, and the ecstasies of the eternal love between the soul and the Lord. The trend may be followed from the *akam* pieces through Tiruvaḷḷuvar's *Kāmattuppāl* and Tirumūlar's basic utterances like *aṉpē civam* "God is love" to the relation between the human and the Divine as expressed in the great Saivite and Vaisnavite poet-saints.[853]

As Zvelebil continues, "It is usually the *bhakta* [devotee] who turns into [the] woman [of classical *akam* prosody] craving for the embrace of the Lord: i.e. the human soul is female, God is male."[854] Recall that we saw in Part II Non-Brahmins lay claim to the "true Hindu *matam*

[852] For example, see Partha Chatterjee, "Colonialism, Nationalism, and the Colonialized Women: the Contest in India," *American Ethnologist* 16:4 (1989): 622-633.
[853] Kamil Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan* (Leiden: Brill, 1973): 197-198.
[854] Zvelebil 1973: 198, footnote 1. In this footnote, Zvelebil also notes how the *bhakta* is often a slave to a king, a child to a mother, a flower to the sun, and even a demon (*pēy*) to the Lord. This latter point should draw attention

[religion]" in contrast to Brahminism, emphasizing a critical and materialist tradition against a religious and renunciatory one. I suggest that we see in what follows echoes of a history of competition over true *bhakti,* between erotic interpretation and ascetic ones, in how self-respect discerned the relationship between home and world, cover and exposure, and mixing and multiplication.[855] Non-Brahmins found true *bhakti* not in *matam*, or "religion" understood as necessarily Brahminical and too pure to be contaminated with this world, but in efforts to redeem the secular, nudity, and marriage.

## HOME AND WORLD

Non-Brahmins found in the "secular" a way to disturb the *swaraj* distinction between home and world. First, the "secular" of Non-Brahmin interest was that of the family, the "secular" life of the home opposed to the "celibate" life of the monastery, which sidelined the "secular" life of the material realm supposedly opposed to the "religious" life of the spiritual realm. Second, attention to the home-life as "secular" made gender, the relationship between man and woman, the point of departure for a just world. Third, this secular life had a sensual valence that provided a way to engage with, rather than separate from, the world. Such a "secular" synergistically related to traditional concerns in India that distinguished the householder from the ascetic; the householder distinction was wed to EVR's Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of the asceticism wed to Gandhi's Brahminical self-rule.

### *SECULAR RENDER: HOME LIFE*

For Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters, the "secular" provided a powerful way to complicate the binary between the spiritual, associated with the home, and the material, associated with the world. The first two explicit translations of "secular" in the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect occur in two articles—March and May 1932, respectively—written by M. Ciṅkaravēlu, the figure often claimed to be the "first communist of South India" that we came across in Chapter 10. I argue that the first, where secular is noun, provides us with greater purchase on understanding the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule than the second, more adjectival translation.

In the first translation, "secular life" is rendered as *ilvāḻkkai* or "home life," thus equating the "secular" with "home."

> This religion [*matam*] imagination of caste [*jāti*] exists [*vaḻaṅku*] in our country [*nāṭu*]. There should be the knowledge [*aṛital*] that one of the religion [*matam*] customs [*kaṭṭuppāṭukaḷ*] is caste

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back to our reading of the "spectre of Communism," e.g. the *pūtam/bhutam* of *camatarumam/samadharma*, in Chapter 10.

[855] Indeed, we may be tempted to read parts of the research program *Studies in Prejudice* as bearing parrallel concerns. As Theodor Adorno writes in *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950), a volume of that research program, "Fear and destructiveness are the major emotional sources of fascism, *eros* belongs mainly to democracy." See also William R. Morrow, "Chapter XXI. Criminality and Antidemocratic Trends: A Study of Prison Inmates" in *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950): 872; Else Frenkel-Brunwik, "Chapter XII. Comprehensive Scores and Summary of Interview Results," *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950: 483. For more recent efforts to link the romance and religion, to articulate "the relation between erotic desire and the love of God," see Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007): 840 (fn 29). As Taylor writes, "one needs…today… to explore again the profound interpenetration of eros and the spiritual life. This terribly fraught area in Western Christendom, where the sexual meets the spiritual, urgently awaits the discovery of new paths to God." (767).

> [*jāti*]. In other nations [*tēcams*] this custom has gone without exception [*vēṟaṟṟu*]. In our country still it has been flourishing [*taḷai*]. There are two reasons for this. First reason: the unenlightenment [*aṟiyāmai*] of our country [*nāṭu*] people. Second reason: it is thought that even in our *ilvāl̲kkai (Secular Life)* [sic] that religion [*matam*] customs are necessary [*avaciyam*]. Because of these two disorders [*tōshaṅkaḷ*] the religion [*matam*] custom of caste [*jāti*] has been entrenched [*nilai*].[856]

The article begins by reviewing previous discussions regarding the economy, caste/race, and religion which the Non-Brahmin used in trying to understand the persistence of Brahmin power: capitalists had made a ruse of democracy allowed by the ignorance of the common people; the "American leader Lincoln" clarified the true meaning of "democratic politics" [*jaṉanāyakam araciyal*]; and the Protestant "*cīrtiruttam (Reformation)*" was important in educating the common people not to desire religious imagination [*matam kaṟpaṉai*] for "life-in-this-world-and-the-next" [*ikaparavāl̲vu*]. The article proceeds to discuss what this "*ilvāl̲kkai (Secular Life)*," or literally "home life," meant:

> In western countries, the necessary regulations and customs for this-worldly life today go beyond the absence of the frauds of religions. In western countries, that which is necessary for *ilvāl̲kkai*—marriage, death, life, the initiation of a home [*girkappiravēcam*], the coming of age, the beginning of studies, pregnancy [*karppam tarittal*],[857] the giving of a name, the beginning of work, days of rest [*ōyvu nāṭkaḷ*],[858] the sowing of seed, the buying and selling of property [*cottu*], the wearing of a chain [*koṭi uṭuttal*] [symbolizing marriage], making a journey [*yāttirai*], the swallowing of medicine, the performance of [political] rule [*aracu puritaḷ*],[859] employment [*uttiyōkam*], the conduct of trade, etc.—has been removed from religious custom.

The "western countries" are associated with the "secular life," and the author makes clear that India is lagging behind when it comes to removing the various necessities of such *ilvāl̲kkai* from "religious custom." Such lag has insured the perpetuation of caste [*jāti*] whereas elsewhere caste [*jāti*] has been largely eliminated.

In the second, adjectival translation, "secular" is translated as *laukīkam*, a Tamil term which literally means "worldliness." The "secular" is explicitly allied with "world" in two passages in an article published on May 1, labor day, titled "The Dawn of Samadharma." The first occurs as follows: "No one denies our All-Tamil-Nadu-Self-Respect Movement-ers have been working incredibly hard aiming [*kuṟittu*] at national [*tēciya*] *laukīka (Secular Advancement) muṉṉēṟṟattu* [sic]."[860] The second occurrence further establishes what this "secular" as "worldliness" means, namely, a project distinct from that of Gandhi's, allied with movements elsewhere in the world, such as in England, and aimed at the cultivation of the critical faculty of *pakuttaṟivu* or "rationality" among the masses:

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[856] Tōl̲ar. M. Ciṅkāravēlu BA, BL, " (*The Work before us): Nām Ceyyavēṇṭiya Vēlai Eṉṉa?: Jātiyai Ol̲ikkavēṇṭum* [What Should We Do? Need to Destroy Caste]," VII, *Kuṭi Aracu* 6 March 1932: 3.
[857] Lit. "bearing of embryo."
[858] Also Biblical "sabbath.
[859] Literally, the creation of politics or making of government, etc.
[860] Tōl̲ar. M. Ciṅkāravēlu, "*Camatarma Utayam: Cuyamariyātai Iyakkattiṉ Eṭṭāvatāṉtu—Intiya Ulakiṟkōr Naṟkuṟi* [Dawn of Samadharma—The Eighth Year of the Self-Respect Movement—A Good Sign for the Indian World]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 1 May 1932: 5

> We may compare this Self-Respect Movement to the *"laukīka caṅkaṅkaḷ (Secular Societies)"* [sic] which are secular establishments [*laukīka stāpanaṅkaḷ*] that have been gaining strength in English country, *"pakuttaṛivai virutti ceyyum caṅkaṅkaḷ (Free Thought Societies)"* [sic], *"aṛivai vaḷarkkum caṅkakaṅkaḷ (Rationalist Associations)"* [sic], and other societies [*caṅkam-s*] for developing *pakuttaṛivu* ["rationality," "free thought," e.g. the critical faculty]. Another matter should be attended to today. Let us see the image in which the Self-Respect Movement has opened the eyes of the common people [*pāmara janaṅkaḷ*] in secular matters [*laukīka vishayaṅkaḷ*] just as how Gandhi's movement has attracted our common people in the political sector [*tuṛai*]. Truly, there is no doubt that our Self-Respect Movement can, at one time, be the struggle of our common [*potu*] people. Because of this movement a thousand crore[861] people have lost their faith in the deception of Hindu religion [*matam*]. Still among many thousands of people, the feeling of inquiry [*vicāraṇai*] and more have developed. In our [weekly journal] *Kuṭi Aracu*, needing to clear doubt, there are indications of question/answer publications and the dawn among common people of *pakuttaṛivu* [e.g. the critical faculty].[862]

The "secular" here as "worldliness" refers to the cultivation of critical thought—distinguishing right from wrong, for example—among the common people. Such cultivation is the goal of the Self-Respect Movement, and has as its object the world as secular, in contrast with Gandhi's movement which focuses on politics as (presumably) religion. Such a distinction between the "secular matters" and the "political sector" as religious further demonstrates the Non-Brahmin belief that politics [*araciyal*] and religion [*matam*] had become fused under Brahminical nationalism. Gandhi's fusion of politics and religion in the demand for *swaraj* was doing the common people no favors. For "Gandhi reforms with different words the need to destroy untouchability. But this Self-Respect Movement is an important tool to bring this into *kāriyāmcam*[863] *(Practical Politics)* [sic]." The "political sector" of Gandhi's movement for Self-Rule is mere "words," while the "secular" of EVR's movement for Self-Respect is "practical politics"; the suggestion, of course, is that Untouchability's actual eradication requires EVR, not Gandhi. This reiterates the persistent theme of the opposition between Self-Rule and Self-Respect: Self-Rule talks the talk of changing the lives lived by the common people in the world, but Self-Respect walks the walk.

For our purposes here, however, the first explicit translations of the "secular" in the Non-Brahmin political thought of Self-Respect pose a deeper challenge to the demand for Self-Rule. The "secular" disrupts the Indian *swaraj* nationalist binary of spiritual/home vs material/world, of the Indian nation vs the British colonizer. Ciṅkāravēlu redeems *both* "home life" [*ilvāḻkkai*] and "worldliness" [*laukīkam*] to render the secular. Such renderings echo uses of the "secular" in "the West" historically: the secular life of the family is what a priest enters when he is no longer celibate and marries, while secular life is also opposed to religious concerns with the other-worldly.

Furthermore, such acts of redemption mean that we should not presume the use of the "secular" as something "Western" that is corrupting the native traditions of the "East." Investments in *ilvāḻkkai* and *laukīkam* were millennia old features of thought in South India, and the "secular" gave new wings for old concerns to fly in, amplifying rather than corroding ways of being Non-Brahmin. Moreover, as we'll see, despite their parallel use here in 1932, the Non-Brahmin political thought of Self-Respect is often critical of the usefulness of the distinction

[861] Crore=10,000,000.
[862] Ciṅkāravēlu, "*Camatarma Utayam*," 5
[863] The root of this term, *kāriyam*, means effect or action, e.g. "karma."

*laukīkam* (worldliness) in combatting Brahminism's articulation through *swaraj*. It is *ilvāl̲kkai* (home life), and in particular its erotic valence that we'll see later, that provides the more useful "secular" rendering in defeating Brahminism.

*Ilvāl̲kkai* was a very old concern in Tamil-speaking South India. Ancient texts echo the concerns of the Non-Brahmin, emphasizing the productiveness of home-life. Here, it would be useful to recall the traditional distinction between householder and ascetic, one which has been a continuous concern in Indian thought and scholarship on India,[864] one that could very well frame the contrast between EVR/Self-Respect and Gandhi/Self-Rule. That distinction is what the ancient text *Patiṉeṇkīl̲kaṇakku*, a collection of 18 poetic works primarily dealing with morality and ethics composed around 250 CE, refers to in the following passage:

> *ilvāl̲kkai yāṉum ilatāṉum mēṛkoḷḷār*
> *nalvāl̲kkai pōka naṭuvuṉiṉṛu—ellām*
> *orutalaiyāc ceṉṛu tuṇiyā tavarē*
> *'irutalaiyum kākkal̲it tār'*[865]

> Those who adopt either *ilvāl̲kkai* or [life] otherwise,
> to lead a good life, should not stand between [the two lives]—all
> those who dare not to go to one side
> 'have been those who wasted the protection of both sides.'

Here, one must choose between the householding life of *ilvāl̲kkai* or that of the ascetic ("otherwise")—living anywhere in-between is wasted. While this distinction seems gendered masculine, elsewhere in this ancient collection, *ilvāl̲kkai* is gendered feminine, claiming "with beauty and knowledge is she who is the woman of *ilvāl̲kkai*" [*urupōṭu aṛivuṭaiyāḷ ilvāl̲kkaip peṇ*].[866]

Perhaps of greatest significance, *ilvāl̲kkai* is a prominent feature of the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* by the poet Tiruvalluvar, the Tamil moral treatise composed in couplets that is roughly 2,000 years old whose quotes remain popular in conversation today.[867] This text's 5th section is titled *Ilvāl̲kkai,*

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[864] For the classical claim—"the secret of Hinduism may be found in the dialogue between the renouncer and the man-in-the-world"—see Louis Dumont, "World Renunciation in Indian Religions," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 4 (1960): 33-62. In contrast to the householder, like Gandhi, "socio-political reformers in India have frequently appropriated the symbols of the renouncer" Romila Thopar, "The Householder and the Renouncer in the Brahmanical and Buddhist Traditions," in TN Madan, ed. *Way of Life: King, Householder, Renouncer—Essays in Honour of Louis Dumont* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1982): 274. The binary householder/renouncer has been subsequently taken up in various ways to discuss everyone from Kashmiri Pandits to Telugu Transvestites. See TN Madan, "The Ideology of the Householder among the Kashmiri Pandits" in TN Madan, ed. *Way of Life* (1982): 223-250; Gayatri Reddy, *With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South India* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2005). In these cases, the concern has been to blur the binary, revealing that which "encompasses and joins together both the ascetic wanderer and the worldly householder" (Madan (1982): 270) or to unpack the interwoven forces of "*tapas* and *kama* or asceticism/renunciation and desire/eroticism" (Reddy (2005): 86). See also the text Reddy and others rely upon for formulating this paradoxical conjunction of renunciation and eroticism through Lord Siva: Wendy O'Flaherty, *Siva: The Erotic Ascetic* (London: Oxford U P, 1973).

[865] Muṉṛurai Araiyanār, *Pal̲amol̲i Nāṉūṛu* (Madras: SPCK Press, 1977 (1917)): 46.

[866] Viḻampi Nāgaṉār, *Nāṉmaṇikkaṭikai* (Tañcāvūr : Tamiḻp Palkalaikkal̲akam, 2001): 55.

[867] In the early 1700s, the first Protestant missionary to South India writes:

> A book on morals in verse form, by its material not unlike the writings of Seneca. The Malabaris [Tamils] think very highly of it and it is indeed one of the most learned and edifying books found among them…whenever one enters into a discussion with them they are always ready to quote a few verses from it

which HA Popley—the LMS missionary stationed at the Self-Respect headquarters of Erode whose personal relationship with EVR I established in Part III—translated as "Home-Life" in his translation of the *Tirukkural* published in 1931. Tiruvalluvar praises *ilvāḻkkai*:

> *aṛattāṛṛiṉ ilvāḻkkai āṛṛiṉ puṛattāṛṛil*
> *pō oyp peṛuva tevaṉ (5-46)*
>
> If one is of the *ilvāḻkkai* of dharma-way, what
> shall be gained by going outside that way?[868]

Dharma [*aṛam*], love [*aṉpu*] (5-45) as well as labor [*muyal*] (5-47) are given as intrinsic parts of an *ilvāḻkkai* that will lead one on earth to "being placed among Gods"[869] (*teyvattuḷ vaikkap paṭum* [5-50]). Clearly, the distinction between "home life," later redeemed as the secular life by Non-Brahmins, was not necessarily opposed to theism.

Furthermore, it is not only its fulfilling life for one's *own* home that marks the productivity of *ilvāḻkkai* as important. *Ilvāḻkkai*'s productivity also supports and sustains *other* ways of being in the world, thus revealing itself as in fact the most worthy of all lives. It will be in terms of such support that we see the reappearance of the familiar binary of householder and ascetic renouncer.

> *āṛṛiṉ oḻukki aṛaṉiḻukkā ilvāḻkkai*
> *nōṛpāriṉ nōṉmai uṭaittu.*
>
> The *ilvāḻkkai* which does not stray from dharma is the way of helping [others]
> [thereby] enduring [more than] the suffering of the ascetic.

Such helping [*oḻukku*] here is repeatedly given by Tiruvalluvar as the proper conduct of *ilvāḻkkai*, demanding the "sharing of food" [*pāttūṉ*] [55-44], providing "support" [*tuṇai*] "to the forsaken, the poor, and the dead" [*tuṛantārkkum tuvvā tavarkkum iṛantārkkum*] [5-42], and providing "support" [*tuṇai*] to "the nature of three" [*iyalpuṭaiya mūvarkkum*] (5-41). Of these "three" Popley writes, drawing upon Sanskrit terminology: "The 'three orders' referred to are the three orders outside the order of domestic life, namely, Brahmachāri [celibate student (the well known emphasized path of Gandhi)], Vanaprasthan [hermit], Sannyāsī [spiritual ascetic]. They have to be supported by the householder (Gṛihasthan)." Despite the fact that other texts "exalt[] the ascetic state over against the domestic state,"[870] Popley is clear that this section on *ilvāḻkkai* "distinctly declares the sufficiency and adequacy of home-life. If lived aright it is in no way inferior to the ascetic calling."[871] In fact, *ilvāḻkkai* indicates "the hypocrisy and evil lives of

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> to prove the validity of their words…; to do so is considered a great art among them…The author of this books was called Diruwalliwer [Tiruvalluvar]…"

Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, 'Verzeichnis der Malabarischen Bücher', Book 7, quoted in Albertine Gaur, "A Catalogue of B. Ziegenbalg's Tamil Library," *The British Museum Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. ¾ (Spring 1966): 102.

[868] Popley translates this couplet as: "If home-life's lived always in Virtue's way, / What good is there in leaving house and home?" Popley, *The Sacred Kural* (1931): 40.

[869] Popley translates this line as: "Will win a place 'mong gods…" Popley, *The Sacred Kural* (1931): 40.

[870] Such as "[t]he *Nālaṭiyār*, which was written about three centuries later" as well as *Manu* 3:78. Popley, *The Sacred Kural* (1931): 73.

[871] Popley, *The Sacred Kural* (1931): 74.

many pseudo-ascetics." It would not be a mistake to see echoes here of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule.

In short, the ancient concern with *ilvāḻkkai* is not being replaced by a "modern" concern with the "secular," but rather, the language of the "secular" is being understood by Non-Brahmins in conversation with long-standing concerns over *ilvāḻkkai*. The "secular" and *ilvāḻkkai* are understood as providing each other's redemption, pointing to the possibilities of, if not sharing, the forging of traditions across the long distance relationship constituting SubContinental Political Theory.

Similarly, concerns with *laukīkam* are nothing new, though the term's Sanskrit origins shift our genealogical gesture more to North India from the South. We know that *laukīkam* is part of a binary in Indian philosophy and that the British rendered it as "secular." For example, a scholar in 1860 translated an excerpt taken from the 17th century logical treatise *Tarkasamgraha* (1623)[872]—"*Vākyam dvidiham laukikam vaidikam cha*"—as "Sentences are of two kinds, Vedic and secular."[873] We may wonder about the choice of "secular," perhaps, but what is unquestionable is the dualism of which *laukīkam* is a part in contrast with the Vedic, e.g. Brahminical Hinduism. One need not wonder, then, about why *laukīkam* appealed to the Non-Brahmin: it served as a traditional way to critique a Brahminism now articulated through *swaraj*. Again, the "secular" and *laukīkam* are understood as being redemptions of one another, pointing to the possibilities of forging traditions across long distance relationships.

It may appear that this binary of *laukīkam* vs. Vedic might be closest to the state v. church understandings of the "secular." In similar form, one could produce oppositions between *laukīkam* on one hand, and Hindu, Christian, Islamic, Jewish, etc. on the other. And yet, the *laukīkam* vs Vedic binary was largely understood by Non-Brahmins as utterly useless as a diagnostic for eliminating Brahminism. For example, in August 1928, EVR responds sarcastically to a meeting in which Brahmins discussed their condition in Tamil Country: "…given that the meeting took place for the sake of…many secular [*laukīkam*] business Brahmins and many Vedic [*vaittikam*] Brahmins of the Sabha [association], none can object to saying that this [meeting] assumed the importance of a Sabha of South Country 'Secular-Vedic' [*laukīkam-vaittikam*] Brahmins."[874] The distinction between secular and Vedic is meaningless as Brahminical power can inhabit either side and thereby preserve its ability to sustain hierarchical relations of high and low. A decade later, in October 1938, the rising star of the Self-Respect Movement, Annadurai, would echo the same sentiments in far more detail. To expand a quote used earlier in Chapter 8:

> Brahmins are the utter foes of reform efforts. Brahmins stand in the forefront in the sector of political reform and in some sectors of economic reform. But in movements that have appeared for the sake of destroying caste [*jāti*] they do not at all take an important part. Is there a place for the belief that in some future age they may take an important part? No, not even that. Listen to why. You may respond that Brahmins would not be obstacles to social reform. You may say that Brahmins know [*aṛivu*] that caste [*jāti*] is a blemish for Hindu society, that knowledgeable [*aṛivu*] Brahmins would not themselves agree to the evils [*tīmai*] that are made possible by caste [*jāti*]. You may express [*terivi*] that among Brahmins there are secular [*laukīkam*] Brahmins and Vedic [*vaitīkam*] Brahmins, that even though Vedic Brahmins do not support the destruction of jāti

[872] http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/26169/Annam-Bhatta
[873] J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts: On the Origin and History of The People of India, Their Religion and Insitutions,* vol. 3 (London: Trübner & Co, 1868): 127.
[874] Editorial [EVR], "*Pārppaṉīyam,*" *Kuṭi Aracu*, 5 August 1928: 8.

> secular Brahmins would. What you say in plain view appears correct. But…can one expect that Brahmins would support a Caste Destruction Movement that would destroy Brahmin Society's power [*cakti*] and influence? It is foolish to split Brahmin into two divisions of secular Brahmins and Vedic Brahmins, and to believe that secular Brahmins would be progressive [*muṟppōkku*]. Both belong to the same community. The two of them are two hands of the same body. What one hand protects the other hand battles against.[875]

In short, secular as *laukīkam* is not a useful category for imagining a challenge to Brahminism. The eradication of powers establishing hierarchical relations of high-low are not guaranteed simply by emphasizing *laukīkam*. Such renderings of "secular" and "religious" are not necessarily opposing forces but can serve as "two hands of the same body."

Likewise, it is not just the distinction between *laukīkam* and Vedic that fails to capture anything meaningful for the Non-Brahmin. "Religious neutrality" [*mata naṭunilaimai*], which may appear to provide the "secular vs religion" distinction with meaningfulness, lending a veneer of legitimacy, equanimity, and justice to the former, also fails. For example, Non-Brahmins, in the weeks leading up to the Second Round Table conference in London in 1931 meant to discuss self-rule, dismissed the acceptance of "religious neutrality" by both British and Congress as making meaningful reforms impossible. As one article of August 1931 declares:

> If, at the time the slightest reform is undertaken, reform opposition rises up and cries out "What has come is disaster for religion!" and "Religion is dying, religion is dying!" what can reformers do?...Though British Government came roughly 150 years ago, still this religious neutrality has been the most significant obstacle to decent reforms; we have seen in our direct experience [*pratyaksa*] that even the government tries to save itself by hiding its shadow.[876]

Religious neutrality cripples the progressive capability of even those forces, such as the British, which have no investment in the religions at hand. Non-Brahmins see religious neutrality not as a progressive force—that is, not as a force that could undertake reforms regarding the "property rights for women," "the elimination of untouchability," and the "Sarda Bill," a measure driven largely by women which raised the age of marriage for women to 14 and for men to 18 across all religions in 1930—but as a regressive one. *Swaraj* premised on "religious neutrality" would entrench, not erase, Brahminism; as the article claims, "We say that if Congress accepts this religious neutrality that this will entrench Congress, and Vedicism-Brahminism."

Moreover, this article makes clear that "religious neutrality" is not the same as *samadharma,* the term "equal-*dharma*" which Non-Brahmins used to translate "communism" in *The Communist Manifesto* as we saw in Chapter 10. "Therefore, a political foundation which maintains religious neutrality is a great obstacle to a people who desire *samadharma*." Marx's demand for "equal-*dharma*" was an effort to establish equality as the true *dharma*, which required "progressive" elements, not an effort to establish equality among a variety of *dharmas* which in and of themselves harbored relations of hierarchy. Again, the distinction between "secular and religious" would not guarantee the achievement of Non-Brahmin goals, such as a world of *samadharma*. The distinction between *laukīkam* and Vedic, or the principle of religious

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[875] CNA[nnadurai], "*Apētavātamum Camūka Cīrtiruttamum* [Non-Difference & Social Reform]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 4:6 (October 1938): 38.

[876] N.A. "*Virutunakar Makānāṭu: Mata Naṭunilaimaik Koḷkai Kaṇṭaṉat Tīrmāṉam* [Virutanagar Conference: Resolution Refuting the Principle of Religious Neutrality]," II, *Kuti Aracu* 30 April 1931: 12.

neutrality, could not achieve the radical social transformations that Non-Brahmins saw as required for bringing about a world of justice, of Self-Respect.

In short, the second translation of secular as *laukīkam*, and its possible gestures to religious neutrality, fail to capture anything meaningful for the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. In such failure, I suggest that the Non-Brahmin here reveals its concern with the *swaraj* nationalist binary of material/world/colonial VS. spiritual/home/national. This very distinction threatened to fold within the home the very features of life that may be in need of the most reform, reforms whose success in bringing about justice could be judged, perhaps could only be judged, when turning to their success or failure in the wider world. Creating a separate sphere of "religion" which required "neutrality" would be to presume the distinction between *laukīkam* and the Vedic, between the worldly and the spiritual, which was a distinction—a boundary or *mariyātāi* constituting the self—that in and of itself required justification. This distinction condemned efforts to explore how to make life at home better by dismissing them as that which was opposed to religion, as that which was foreign, colonial, and worldly.

But, of course, the secular was not just rendered in terms of the world. The secular was also rendered in terms of the home. It would be the Non-Brahmin effort to be at home as a part of the world, rather than at home as apart from the world, that provided Self-Respect's most enduring challenge to Self-Rule. This challenge found articulation through a concern with *ilvāḻkkai*, of "home life," of the life of love and labor, a central theme in Tamil thought and literature for millennia and a theme that Non-Brahmins wed to the "secular." The "secular" as "home" rather than "world" emphasized, I suggest, the power of interiority's permeability rather than impermeability, of the ways in which the outside constitutes the inside rather than the ways in which the outside threatens the inside, and the ways in which synergies between spaces imagined as inside and those outside enable rather than cripple demands for justice. This acknowledgement of the importance of such exteriority was not separate from an interiority, as the binary *laukīkam* vs Vedic presumed, but rather served as the premise for a stronger, more just interiority, a home-life built upon experience in the world. And this interiority was *ilvāḻkkai*, an extension of, rather than corruption of, a longstanding Tamil concern: "home life."

### *MS. INTIRĀṆIPĀLACUPPIRAMAṆIYAM*

The *swaraj* binary was gendered, with the interiority of home and religion associated with the woman, and the exteriority of world and "secular" associated with the man. As one might expect, "home life"—despite *ilvāḻkkai*'s association with both man and woman—was not simply the concern of Self-Respecters in general but of female Self-Respecters in particular. Such concern with "home life," variously rendered, is evident, for example, in the head address given at the Second Self-Respect Women's Conference in the city of Virutunakar held on the 8th and 9th of August, 1931—shortly before the historic Second Round Table Conference in London held to discuss Indian nationalist *swaraj*.[877] This address, delivered by one Ms. Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam [hereafter: Intirā], illustrates the importance of *illaṛavāḻkkai—il* (home) + *aṛam* (dharma) + *vāḻkkai* (life)—as that sphere in which the maintenance of justice is

[877] *"1931 Ākasṭu 8, 9m Tētikaḷil Vitutunakaril Naṭanta Iraṇṭāvatu Cuyamariyātai Peṇkaḷ Makānāṭṭil Tirumati Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam"* [Second Self-Respect Women's Conference in Virutunakar, 8,9 August 1931: Ms. Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam's Delivered Head Address," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 11, 14, 15. Continued in *Kuṭi Aracu* 16 August 1931: 4, 21, 22. NOTE: type, reads "Nētikaḷ" rather than "Tētikaḷ."

paramount yet which does not originate somehow "within" that sphere. Instead, justice in *illaṛavāḻkkai* is possible only within a wider world.[878] The speech more broadly is predicated on the claim that "women's rights" [*peṇṇurimai*] is the basis for problems faced by the "country" [*nāṭu*], namely insufficient attention to "class [*vakuppu*] division by birth," "untouchability", and "superstitious customs."[879] Intirā discusses *illaṛavāḻkkai* in two separate instances in order to shore up her investment, the Self-Respect investment, in the important connection between interiority and exteriority in remedying demands for justice.

Intirā's first instance of *illaṛavāḻkkai* emphasizes equality as symmetry. "I ask: isn't pleasure and happiness mixed with love [*aṇpu*] common to both [male and female] in *illaṛavāḻkkai*?"[880] Her concern lies with asymmetrical uses of the Tamil term *kaṛpu*, often translated as "chastity" or "fidelity," to be a demand of women only. She expresses this concern using terms of ancient Tamil prosody relating to the relationship between hero and heroine. Regarding those who turn to ancient texts to justify gender relations, "The question which one should ask them is: is *kaṛpu* only for the heroine [*nāyaki*], or isn't it [also] for the hero [*nāyakaṉ*]?" She, in turn, is not concerned with a sense of *kaṛpu* or fidelity to tradition but rather with the suspicion that allegedly traditional gender relations are the product of male power, through "male people's stratagem" [*cūḻcci*], rather than "justice" [*niyāyam*], rendering women in "modern times as slaves, as uneducated, as instruments of lust [*kāmakkaruvi*], as laborers [*vēlaiyāḷarkaḷ*]."[881]

Such power is located in the capability to remarry, that is, in the capacity to create different iterations of "home life" symmetrically between man and woman. Focusing on the prominent theme of remarriage after the death of a spouse, Intirā writes: "Like we see women as widows, we do not see men as widowers. The reason: men have remarriage, women don't have remarriage."[882] She does not claim, importantly, that men can remarry because the status of *male* widower is different from that of *female* widowed. Instead, the power to remarry is what in fact gives the differences of status to male widower from female widowed. Moreover, such distinctions after the death of a married member is an extension of gendered power relations within a married couple centered on unequal *kaṛpu*. "I say that, but for the foolishness of the desire of being a slave of a *kaṛpu* [chastity/fidelity] which claims that for each birth there is a [different] justice [*nīti*], in it there is not a mustard-seed's amount of integrity and responsibility."[883] "Home life" is seen as the site where equality must be forged, in relations of "pleasure and happiness mixed with love" and *kaṛpu*, in order for relations outside of marriage—such as class relationships, the existence of untouchability, and ideological superstition—to achieve "justice."

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[878] Such situation of agency within a wider world, rather than simply within a religious tradition, may exceed the binary of disembedded-liberal-feminism/embedded-tradition of importance to scholars like Saba Mahmood. **"**Viewed in this way, what may appear to be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from a progressivist point of view, may actually be a form of agency—but one that can be understood only from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment." (*Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005): 15. The "within" here has an unclear relationship to a wider "without."

[879] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 11.

[880] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 14.

[881] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 11.

[882] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 14.

[883] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 14.

Intirā's second instance of *illaṛavāḻkkai* emphasizes the world, not the home, in contrast with *swaraj*. She here builds upon one of the themes of her speech: the status of the widow, and in particular the child widow, a popular concern in India that touched on issues of age and fulfillment. Concerned again with "injustice" [*aniyāyam*]:

> After [a girl] gets married at 7 or 8, if the husband dies [when she is] age 9 or 10, that child, who has the air still of suckling, becomes a widow and is called a deformed person [*mutēvi*]. She, after reaching the age of 14 or 15 (that is, the stage of a woman), should enjoy having knowledge, beauty, and world experience [*ulaka aṉupavam*], joining with her husband, conducting *illaṛavāḻkkai*, and bearing good people [*makkaḷ*] before the wrinkles of widow[hood].[884]

Experience of the world, Intirā claims in contrast to *swaraj* nationalism, should *precede* home life. She rejects the suggestion that the "home" [*vīṭu*] rather than the "outside" [*veḷiyil*] is the domain of women: " 'What can we do? They have interpreted that women in the home, upon reaching age 12, should not go outside,' is not an alright answer to say."[885] The importance of the "outside" and of "world experience" gestures towards the domain of Self-Respect: "The light of *cuya-mariyātai* should spread across the whole world [*ulakayeṅkum*]."[886] Such a world-wide domain stands in contrast to prominent responses inflected by *swaraj* to demands for women's right to remarry that some say will "destroy society [*camūkam*]."[887] In short, "home life" is seen as fulfilled only when predicated on life out in the world, not when remaining distinct from it; self-respect sees world before home, in contrast to the presumption of home before world in self-rule.

Moreover, the assessment of articulations of domestic interiority in and of themselves required acts of judgement that would be crippled by abandoning the world. Such instances of *illaṛavāḻkkai* shore up claims for the failure of interiority to satisfy demands for justice. For example, how should one assess the varieties of histories that offer up different resources one could imagine as traditional, authentic, or interior? Intirā, like others whose concerns anticipated Dravidian nationalism and Hindi resistance years later, compared the Indian history of the Pandya kings in Tamil Nadu with the Sanskrit Indian mythic histories documented in texts like the "*Puranas* and *Ithihasas*" ["*purāṇaṅkaḷum, itikāsaṅkaḷum*"].[888] There are two different kinds of "Indian" interiority: that of the South/Tamil and that of the North/Sanskrit. As she claims of the former, "Tamilians, in the ages of the Pandya, had the custom of the bride themselves seeing and taking a hero according to their desire [*ishṭam*]—it is adequate evidence of women's rights [*peṇurimai*] in those days. In that age, the position of females [*peṇ makkaḷ*] was that of the female warrior [*vīrattāymārkaḷ*], of specialists of inquiry and education, of those with right [*urimai*]…"[889] As she claims of the latter Sanskrit sources, she lists "obscene examples" of the sexual conduct by the gods and the treatment of the women, such as that of a covetous Lord Krishna, and claims that "*Puranas*, *Ithihasas* are all nothing other than composed by men in order to submit one man to another."[890] While such claims are open to interpretation, the claims

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[884] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 14.
[885] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 16 August 1931: 22.
[886] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 16 August 1931: 22.
[887] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 14.
[888] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 11.
[889] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 11.
[890] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 14.

of Intirā, like that of other Self-Respecters, was about competing traditions and interpretations during the period of what was, and even could be counted as, indigenous.

The speech provides numerous examples of efforts to redeem elements in India through the world and the world through elements in India. *Illaṛavāḻkkai* itself features elements of the nationalist binary central to *swaraj*, such as God and maternity, as ways to engage with, rather than separate from, a wider world. With respect to God, Intirā claims the Lord Siva is love and acceptance instead of being angered at the violation of various native religious practices. Rather than being "omnipotent and omnipresent" [*carva vallamaiyum uṭaiyavar, ênkurm uḷḷavar*], Intirā claims that "Siva is Love [*aṇpē civam*]. Siva whose name is love is not a god who is without compassion [*karuṇai*]. If that is the case, what [would it mean] for Him to be angry?"[891] Such a God is not maintained simply through practices of *bhakti* or devotion [*pakti*] from within an interiority but devotional engagement towards an exteriority. Likewise, with respect to maternity, Intirā "...you call your country your mother country. You call your language your mother language. To these women who are of such pride, provide a promise in matters of education."[892] Such education, she claims, is directed towards the world. Again, as with God, the pride of maternity voiced by so many is not a pride maintained simply through practices from an interiority but engagement with an exteriority.[893] Acts of love of and for God and pride of and for the mother could not be maintained through separation from the world, nor from the world separated from them as perhaps suggested by *laukīkam*, but relied on engagement with the world.

In short, I suggest that for Intirā, invested in the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, the judgement and assessment of traditions and interpretations, acts in the present to redeem configurations of a past, was not a part from but a part of the world. And that orientation to the world was not divorced from articulations that prioritized part of the nationalist binary associated with the home—the "pleasure and happiness mixed with love [*aṇpu*]"—but was in fact wed to it.

### *"Mysteries of Wedded Life"*

So far, we have seen how the first explicit Self-Respect translations of "secular," rendered by Ciṅkāravēlu in 1932, troubled the Indian nationalist *swaraj* binary of spiritual/home/nation vs material/world/colonial. Secular could be redeemed in terms of both "home" and "world," and thereby provided a powerful way to synergistically mobilize Tamil terms of long-standing concern in the Non-Brahmin critique of Self-Rule. Such dual redemptions not only refigured the binary from one of separation to one of connection. As I've suggested, Self-Respecters also were invested in a "secular" project which emphasized a home engaged with the world, rather than divorced from the world. Nowhere is such investment

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[891] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 16 August 1931: 21

[892] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 16 August 1931: 22.

[893] Many other matters delivered here and by other women Self-Respecters is left undiscussed. Such matters engage with related concerns over the secular and the erotic. For example, Intirā is concerned with the practice of temple prostitution, of the Devadasi [*tēvatāci*], who is a women committed to the servitude, "married," to god. Taylor finds in the connection between prostitution and the temple reason to find sexuality in the sacred: "sexuality was connected to the sacred, through rituals like sacred marriage, or temple prostitution" (Taylor *Secular Age* (2007): 660. See also pp. 107, 611, and 669). Though the Self-Respect Movement more broadly was invested in ways of connecting the sexual to the sacred, it does not seem, from their efforts to eliminate or reform this practice, that women Self-Respecters saw "temple prostitution" and the Devadasi as "Self-Respect" articulations of this connection.

demonstrated in practice more evident than in the advertisements for the marriage manual *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*, literally "Home-Life Secrets" but often rendered into English as *Mysteries of Wedded Life*. Such advertisements plastered the pages of the Self-Respect Movement's flagship weekly *Kuṭi Aracu* during the years immediately preceding speeches like that of Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam in 1931 with her interest in *illaṛavāḻkkai* (home-dharma-life) and Ciṅkāravēlu's translation in 1932 of *ilvāḻkkai* (home-life) as "secular life."

As one scholar notes, *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ,* published in 1927, was "the interwar Tamil language block-buster of marriage manuals" and representative of "a new taxonomy of progressive licentiousness produced out of publishers' and booksellers' juxtaposition with grouping together a variety of books; books on birth control with books on sex with books on sexual health with books on general health with erotica."[894] We may wish to suspend any moralistic condemnation suggested by the term "progressive licentiousness" as missing three central features of the text's advertisements in *Kuṭi Aracu*.[895]

First, such advertisements reveal the mobilization of longstanding Tamil concerns with *ilvāḻkkai* into a political present dominated by *swaraj*, a mobilization alongside translations of the secular.

Second, any effort to link sexuality with secrets and mystery cannot help but elicit Foucault's concern that sexuality was not essentially a secret or mysterious but made into a secret or a mystery so that regimes of power could proliferate around discovering its secret and revealing its mystery. Foucault is interested in the "technique and mystery" of "pleasure" and the "transmission of secrets" regarding "sex's difficult knowledge,"[896] of "whole secular campaign[s]…constituting" sexuality "as secret (that is, forcing them into hiding so as to make possible their discovery)…" resulting in the spreading of "surveillance," "admissions," "corrective discourses," "designated as the evil to be eliminated" but "demanded…to persevere, to proliferate to the limits of the visible and the invisible…"[897] And yet, as we may presume from Intirā and Ciṅkāravēlu's concerns, investments in *ilvāḻkkai* were not so much to render an interior space that was separate from external forces, a national realm of religion, home, and women that required *swaraj* to be protected and articulated, but to engage—to redeem and be redeemed by—external forces so as to make home life more just, to make it a part of a wider world that valued self-respect. The "mystery" or "secret" of *ilvāḻkkai* was a way of engaging the world itself, not an assertion of *swaraj* fantasy.

Third, a coupling of the erotic with marriage and its manual is in and of itself not automatic. As George Bataille claims, "Marriage is most often thought of as having little do with eroticism" because "We use the word eroticism every time a human being behaves in a way strongly contrasted with everyday standards and behaviour…"[898]

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[894] Sarah Hodges, *Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce: Birth Control in South India, 1920-1940* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008): 115, 131. For more on the coupling of the erotic and marriage, as opposed to the divorce of the erotic and marriage, in 20th c. Euro-Atlantic thought see George Bataille, *Erotism: Death and Sensuality* (City Lights: San Francisco, 1986 (1957)).

[895] Indeed, Hodges own project is framed in far more complex terms than my quotation suggests. She usess Foucault's "biopolitics" and the relationship between "health and governance" (Hodges *Contraception* (2008): 3). However, Hodges sees *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ* as an *example* to understand a larger process of biopolitical power. I, however, am interested in the ways in which this text's advertisements help us understand the mobilization of *ilvāḻkkai* into the Tamil present by Self-Respecters through their redemption of "secular life."

[896] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*: *An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990): 62-63.

[897] Foucault, *History of Sexuality* (1990): 42.

[898] Bataille, *Eroticism* (1986): 109ff: 109ff: "Marriage is most often thought of as having little do with eroticism…We use the word eroticism every time a human being behaves in a way strongly contrasted with

In short, I argue that *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*, "Home-Life Secrets" or *The Mysteries of Wedded Life*, was an effort to articulate the Non-Brahmin self-respect challenge to Gandhian self-rule in the idiom of the secular as opposed to religion by mobilizing "indigenous" concerns rather than idling them, rendering articulations of intimacy into an engagement with the world rather than allow them to be locked away into an opaque national indigenous that subsequently required defense against the world calling *swaraj* to its aid, and using this worldly engagement to shore up rather than undermine the sensuality of marital fidelity.[899] That is, self-respect linked sexuality to the secular as a way, once again, to reveal the importance of a home as a part of the world rather than apart from the world, and how assessments of justice in home life relied on acts of engagement with the wider world.

Advertisements in *Kuṭi Aracu* for *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*, "*The Mysteries of Wedded Life*," further reveal the intricate ways in which the nationalist *swaraj* binary was challenged by the Non-Brahmin, building upon the concerns of those like Ciṅkaravēlu and Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam above. Home life, secular life, life of the home *dharma*, etc., could not be achieved simply through a national turn inwards but rather through a turn outwards to the world.

"In the world, they say that the life of joy [*iṉpa vāḻkkai*] is one in which men and women who have a particular kind of love [*aṉpu*], who have true love [*kātal*] for each other, marry each other, unite, share in delight [*kaḷippu*], beget good children, and live without failing the justices [*nītikaḷ*] of home-dharma [*illaṟam*]." [900] Such claims in advertisements for *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ* in the late 1920s point to how "home life" itself was, for many, premised on being a part of, rather than apart from, the world—that the fulfillment and flourishing captured in claims for the home discussed in Tamil thought and literature for millennia had as its reference not a particular people but the globe. *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ* promised to put this home life in conversation with the world; moreover, the text suggested that without such a conversation, *ilvāḻkkai* itself would suffer:

> Though foreign countrymen [*aṉṉiya nāṭṭārkaḷ*] have published many kinds of joy-rule [*iṉparacu*] books in many languages—such as Arabic, Hindustani, Kannada, Telugu, Sanskrit, Marathi, English, and French—the majority of those within Tamil country, because they have not studied those books properly, they miss the joys of union [*kalavi inpam*] and suffer with worry as those who do not know the secrets of joyous life.

"Foreign countrymen" do not threaten but provide resources to restore, supplement, or augment the promise of flourishing and fulfillment in *ilvāḻkkai*. The secrets of home life are not revealed through turns to an interiority but to an exteriority, and the text thus promises to discuss "many excellent matters" [*pala ariya vishyaṅkaḷ*] such as "the principles of joy-rule [*iṉparacu*] books in languages such as Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Arabic, Hindustani, Parsi, English, and French." [901]

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everyday standards and behaviour…I have in mind the quality of transgression that persists at the very basis of marriage. This may seem a contradiction at first…"

[899] Another way or articulating the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule would be over contraception. See, for example, articles like "*Karppattaṭai Avaciyam* [The Necessity of Pregnancy Prevention]" and "*Karppa Āṭci* [Pregnancy Rule]" in *Pakuttaṟivu* 1:8 (December 1935): 35-40; 41-50.

[900] Advertisement, "*Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 July 1929: 1; 28 July 1929: 1.

[901] Advertisement, "*Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 July 1929: 1; 28 July 1929: 1.

Such gestures to the world were not merely about the joys of romantic union, but of controlling its effects, e.g. conception. Accordingly, we see in concerns over conception a turn to the world that gestures not merely to resources for thinking justice but about injustice, such as infanticide: "Without setting aside the joining of wife and husband, can one prevent conception? In places such as America, France, England, Japan, China, and Turkey, what are the injustices [*aniyāyaṅkaḷ*] people do in matters of begetting children? Infanticide [*cicu kolai*][902] is injustice."[903] In short, though *ilvāl̲kkai* had several millennia of Tamil investment behind it, its home life had to navigate issues of justice and injustice through engagement with, rather than separation from, the present world. After all, how, without some sort of comparative conceptual project, could *ilvāl̲kkai* be assured: "How are marriages conducted in every nation? Which is the true marriage?"[904]

Such longstanding investments were not erased from *ilvāl̲kkai* in its encounter with the world but instead provided conceptualizations for understanding it. One set of conceptualizations, as mentioned earlier, was that between householder and ascetic. The most popular advertisement for *Ilvāl̲kkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ* puts these two figures at the top of the list of over 30 "matters contained in this book":

1. What is the path of ascetics [*tuṟavikaḷ*]?
2. Why is home-life [*ilvāl̲kkai*] auspicious?
3. How to attain *moksha* [spiritual liberation/salvation/release] from home-life [*ilvāl̲kkai*]?
4. The suffering of those who are ignorant of home-life's secrets [*ilvāl̲kkai irakaciyaṅ*kal][905]

Such concerns seem to echo those of the moral text *Tirukkuṟaḷ* mentioned earlier, as well as a larger Sanskritized conception of life stages: the householding life is the desirable life, it is in contrast to that of the ascetic, and it provides its own means to salvation. Furthermore, this *moksha* listed above, or salvation, was aimed at rebirths, and the "secular life" of *ilvāl̲kkai* is not seen as necessarily mutually exclusive with such concerns.

> …this book, now published in sweet Tamil, is filled with a great many joyful paths which serve as a guiding light [*kētu*] to attain even the fruits of the next-birth [*maṟumai*]…One who buys and reads this—by understanding: that sort of thing which is true love [*kātal*]; that only if one marries those in such a way shall there be joy; and that only if one follows those who are properly married in such a way shall one be filled with bliss without anxiety [*akavaṟṟa*[906] *ān̲antam*] in *ilvāl̲kkai* and

[902] Literally, "offspring killing." It is not clear what the distinction would be here between infanticide and abortion.
[903] Advertisement, "*Ilvāl̲kkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ,*" *Kuṭi Aracu* full page advertisement in multiple issues, most of which are as follows: on page 19 of 18 December 1927-1 January 1928 (which is slightly extended from subsequent adverts); on pages 20 or 19 of issues 8 January 1928-5 February 1928, on page 2 of 12 February 1928-2 March 1928; on pages 15, 17, 18 or 19 of 22 July 1928-29 July 1928 and 16 September 1928-25 November 1928.
[904] Advertisement, "*Ilvāl̲kkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ,*" *Kuṭi Aracu* full page advertisement in multiple issues, most of which are as follows: on page 19 of 18 December 1927-1 January 1928 (which is slightly extended from subsequent adverts); on pages 20 or 19 of issues 8 January 1928-5 February 1928, on page 2 of 12 February 1928-2 March 1928; on pages 15, 17, 18 or 19 of 22 July 1928-29 July 1928 and 16 September 1928-25 November 1928.
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[906] I presume that this term takes the Indo-European prefix "*a*" for "not," plus the verb form of "*kaval*" for "worry" and means "without worry, without anxiety," etc. The dictionary phrase *kātal kavaṟṟu*, "love-causing-anxiety" suggests that *akavaṟṟu* means just he opposite.

> live [*jīvi*, subsist] begetting beautiful descendants—shall attain the joy that must be attained in this world [*ivvulakam*] and the joy of the next-birth [*maṛumai*].[907]

*Ilvāḻkkai* is not crippled through a comparative project with the world, but finds in such engagement with the world tools for enriching and furthering the project of *ilvāḻkkai*—a project which demands the attainment of fulfillment and flourishing in this world as part of whatever meaning the next birth could have.

Whose fulfillment and flourishing, exactly, are such home-life secrets meant to achieve? There are undoubtedly elements in these advertisements that target the heterosexual male. One of the questions that *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ* answers, for example, is "How many women may one marry? What are the matters that one who has joined with multiple women should be careful of? How shall he protect his body? How should he conduct himself skillfully if his wives should not be jealous of one another?"[908] And perhaps there is some "male-gaze" scopophilia invited by the advertisements claim to contain "plenty of half-tone, eye-catching pictures."[909] Certainly, there is a heterosexual male scopophilic element to the readership of *Kuṭi Aracu*, super-charged by the scintillation of "secrecy," evident in other advertisements, such as for "Pleasure-Secret [*iṉpa rakaciya*] photos of true Paris women…"[910] And there are certainly gender-biased concerns, such as that of a "husband lamenting without having a son" or a "wife withering without having a man."[911] Moreover, the text promises to provide some of the anatomical details of how to sexually please a woman, presumably again aimed at a male audience.

Yet we should not allow the millennia-old Tamil investment in *ilvāḻkkai* as relevant for men and women, nor its later redeployments by Self-Respecters such as Ms. Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam, be dismissed by a few such advertising tactics. Advertisements of *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ* were overwhelming addressed to "lovers," both "men and women," and while "every family man should set one copy of it in his home,"[912] the text is also advertised as one in which "Every member of the family may buy and read this." There is a focus on shared concerns, like "What does love [*kātal*] mean? The difference between love and lust [*kāmam*]." There are constant efforts to ask symmetrical questions: asking how a husband should be devoted to his wife only to then ask how a wife should be devoted to her husband, or expressing concern for the eradication of sterility in women only to then express concern for the eradication of

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[907] Advertisement, "*Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 July 1929: 1 ; 28 July 1929: 1.
[908] Advertisement, "*Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ,*" *Kuṭi Aracu* full page advertisement in multiple issues, most of which are as follows: on page 19 of 18 December 1927-1 January 1928 (which is slightly extended from subsequent adverts); on pages 20 or 19 of issues 8 January 1928-5 February 1928, on page 2 of 12 February 1928-2 March 1928; on pages 15, 17, 18 or 19 of 22 July 1928-29 July 1928 and 16 September 1928-25 November 1928.
[909] Advertisement, "*Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 July 1929: 1 ; 28 July 1929: 1.
[910] Advert "*Pāris Pooṭṭoo Paṭam*" [Paris Photo Picture] in *Kuṭi Aracu* 1 September 1929: 17. The advertisement claims to get such photos straight from the Pondicherry, the French Indian colony nestled into the British Madras Presidency. We have seen in Chapter 5 the central role which French India played in the development of Tamil Country, providing a space for seditious—as well as salacious—publications. We should note the Gurusamy, EVR's close friend and fellow Self-Respecter, ran a short-lived Self-Respect journal in Pondicherry; the role of Pondicherry in the development of Non-Brahmin political theory is a fertile future field of study.
[911] Advertisement, "*Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 July 1929: 1 ; 28 July 1929: 1.
[912] Advertisement, "*Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ,*" *Kuṭi Aracu* full page advertisement in multiple issues, most of which are as follows: on page 19 of 18 December 1927-1 January 1928 (which is slightly extended from subsequent adverts); on pages 20 or 19 of issues 8 January 1928-5 February 1928, on page 2 of 12 February 1928-2 March 1928; on pages 15, 17, 18 or 19 of 22 July 1928-29 July 1928 and 16 September 1928-25 November 1928.

sterility of men. That is to say, while asymmetries and occasional stereotypes are sometimes invoked—the role of a man and woman in pregnancy, or the cultivation of "coyness" [*nāṉam*] in women—there are also efforts to see in *ilvāḻkkai* not simply the preservation of practices that may undermine equality, but also to see *ilvāḻkkai* as the arena for true equality itself.

Images of readers interacting with *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ* both reinscribe and challenge gender hierarchies, placing the burden of understanding *ilvāḻkkai* on the interpretation itself: is *ilvāḻkkai* a gendered hierarchical relation made palatable only through gestures to equality, or does *ilvāḻkkai* hold within it the very possibility of equality despite elements of gendered hierarchy?

Image 42. A very European looking man enjoying *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*. *Kuṭi Aracu* 15 April 1928.

Image 43. "*Ilvāḻkkaiyiṉ Irakaciyaṅkaḷ* - Mysteries of Wedded Life – An indispensable joy-book for both genders [*irupālār*]. Available in all book shops." A Tamil couple enjoying *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*. *Kuṭi Aracu* 6 January 1929.

Image 44. A Tamil couple enjoying *Ilvāḻkkai Irakaciyaṅkaḷ*. *Kuṭi Aracu* 29 July 1929.

In Image 42 we see a European-looking male enjoying *Ilvāḻkkaiyiṉ Irakaciyaṅkaḷ* by himself, in Image 43 a couple where the man seems to be in charge of the text with his wife beside him, and in Image 44 a couple equally sharing the text by each holding it at either end. The dress and furniture in all these images obviously indicate middle-class standing. There seem to be a variety of claims about the secrets of home-life here: the ways in which they may interest the European male, the ways in which they may allow an Indian couple to be together while maintaining male authority, or the ways in which they may allow an Indian couple to be together through shared acts of equality. Clearly, a number of permutations are absent: the solo female, or the female in a position of authority within the couple. However, in the social milieu of Tamil Country in the late 1920s, and elsewhere in the world during that time, such images may have backfired and thus corroded, rather than buttressed, the possibility for home-life, and its secrets, to provide both the platform for as well as the target of a better home-life, a better world, a better "secular."

The suggestion that *ilvāḻkkai* was strengthened by, rather than weakened from, engagement in the wide-world is not to suggest the absence of power's reinscription. We can see

the disturbing persistence of power's presence through different invocations of legitimacy in the above advertisements:

Image 45. The man in Image 42 above was holding a book with an English Translation, as well as an author described as a "Fictionist" and "Ethnologist."

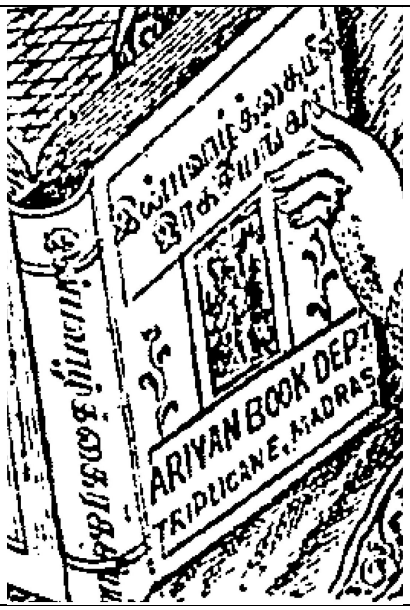


Image 46. The couple in Image 44 above was holding a book with the Tamil tile on the spine and a company called the "Ariyan Book Dept."

As we see in Image 45, the European-looking male is dazzled by the *Mysteries of Wedded Life* whose author has official, science-ese sounding titles like "Fictionist" and "Ethnologist." Both, perhaps, appeal to certain disciplinary bourgeois sensibilities, priding oneself on being a part of a world of letters and an awareness of various human practices in that world that can be meaningfully understood as "ethnic." The Tamil couple, on the other hand, is engrossed in the text of Image 46 whose publication has been christened by sentiments no less disciplinary. The book is sold by the "Aryan," a figure whose power—not merely authority but domination—was drawn from Brahminism. Moreover, we may wonder, if these two sets of appeals are distinct or if, instead, they are efforts to redeem one another. Is the valence of the power-saturated appeal to the "Aryan" for the Indian somehow the same as the appeal to the "Fictionist" and "Ethnologist" for the European? In other words, is Brahminism's authoritative invocation parallel to narrative moves combined with various separate articulations of indigeneity? Regardless, we cannot imagine that the presence of these authorities are endorsed by the Non-Brahmin, but rather provide evidence at the level of advertisement just what the Non-Brahmin was struggling against.

In sum, we have seen efforts by the Non-Brahmin to use the English term "secular" that suggest a challenge to distinctions between world and home. Such distinctions were central to the *swaraj* nationalist binary of material/colonial/world and spiritual/national/home, and thus "the secular" provides yet another iteration of the Non-Brahmin self-respect challenge to Gandhian self-rule. While the "secular" could equally render the world as well as home, it was clear which the Non-Brahmin felt was more effective in challenging Brahminism. The binary "secular/religious" mirrored by "*laukīkam*/Vedic" was useless in this challenge. Brahminism, as a way of ordering some as high and others as low, would simply reinscribe itself through that very division. It was instead home-life, and occasionally the binary householder/ascetic, that

seemed to be most effective in challenging Brahminism. Through efforts to understand the true meaning of love, and through efforts to become better lovers, a better world could be wrought from the hands of Brahminism. Such efforts to understand love and become lovers was not to be achieved through a turn inwards and renounce the world, the ascetic move, but required in fact one to be in that very world, a world of secrets and mysteries, and embrace the possibility of equality that such a world held. *Ilvāḻkkai* was not corroded but in fact corroborated through its engagement with the world, modified and empowered through comparisons with love and lovers elsewhere.

Such modification and empowerment, reiteration and continuity, with the concern for *ilvāḻkkai* was evident in many ways. One such way dealt with relationship between exposure and cover. Another such way dealt with the relationship between mixing and multiplication. The next two sections deal with these in turn.

## EXPOSURE AND COVER: NIRVĀṆA

The most popular full-page add of *Ilvāḻkkaiyiṉ Irakaciyaṅkaḷ* includes, at the top if its list of questions addressed, the following:

> 8. Why should we wear [clothes]?
> 9. What is the philosophy of nudity?
> 10. Where are those who are nude in this age?[913]

Such questions about states of dress and undress, cover and exposure, were of course significant, if not pressing, in a place where the politics of *swaraj* was dominated by Gandhi. We need only to remind ourselves of how Churchill famously, and derogatorily, referred to Gandhi as a "half-naked fakir" to appreciate such significance. For Self-Respecters, Gandhi's undress provided yet further evidence of an asceticism associated with Brahminism, rather than a householding associated with the Non-Brahmin, and thus paid further tribute to a *swaraj* bound to relations of "high low." Accordingly, these question about dress and undress followed the earlier questions 1-4 in the text's advertisements we saw above that distinguished the path of the householder from the path of the ascetic. The householder was one who was clothed with his family in a village, the ascetic was one who was naked and alone in the forest. Perhaps, then, we may be tempted to see undressed exposure on the side of the ascetic informing Gandhian self-rule, and thus the target of dressed cover on the side of the householder informing Non-Brahmin self-respect.

Yet for the Non-Brahmin to side with dress over undress would overlook certain erotic valences, and their mysteries and secrets in the world, central to *ilvāḻkkai*. *Ilvāḻkkai* did not dismiss nudity but was, of course, predicated on the sex such nudity could suggest. We thus find Self-Respecters working hard to reimagine the significance of nudity, redeeming it from the ascetic image of Gandhi's nationalist politics of *swaraj*. Perhaps more important, what Self-Respecters were redeeming was not simply nakedness, but the Tamil term for nakedness: *nirvāṇam*, or "nirvana," a term whose Sanskrit roots indicate, variously, human finality and

[913] Such question fell between concerns about female coyness and clothing before, and true marriage after. The more extended version of this add, which only ran on page 19 from 18 December 1927-1 January 1928, inlcuded here another question: "What condition is coyness in every nation?." For the add quoted here, see pages 20 or 19 of issues 8 January 1928-5 February 1928, page 2 of 12 February 1928-2 March 1928; pages 15, 17, 18 or 19 of 22 July 1928-29 July 1928 and 16 September 1928-25 November 1928.

completion, whether it be with liberation and emancipation or extinction and annihilation.[914] The association between nakedness and such completion is most associated with the predominantly South Indian Jain sect known as the Digambar, or "sky-clad," whose renunciation of all property, including clothing, was thought to help an ascetic attain nirvana.[915]

But Self-Respecters were not interested in adopting such "indigenous" Jain associations between nakedness and liberation, and certainly not an asceticism increasingly linked to Gandhian *swaraj*, in understanding *nirvāṇam*. Instead, Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters wanted to redeem *nirvāṇam* to better understand the world. Such efforts at understanding are evident in the spat of articles in *Kuṭi Aracu* in 1934 on the *nirvāṇa* movements of Europe. We see here—as elsewhere in SubContinental Political Theory, such as in the redemption of *dharma* through Marx and Marx through *dharma*—the redeployment of terms rich in theoretical depth and part of a complex philosophical genealogy further complicated, both enriched and undone, by the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule.

For the Non-Brahmin, the strength of Europe's *nirvāṇa* movement was unquestionable. *Nirvāṇa* in the political present promised to bring health and discipline to the body and love and peace to the world thereby enabling humans to live as humans rather than animals. European *nirvāṇa* found rejuvenation and health in sun bathing and tanning.[916] As one Non-Brahmin writes,

> Nirvanists are those of greater benevolent discipline and reduced lustful desire. Furthermore, they have achieved bodies of excellence [*tiṭkāttiram*] and their bodies have darkened in color to a shade of tawney brown. For the most part, they do not catch any kind of disease. The children of nirvanists are of healthier weight than children of other people. It is nirvanists who today live with less animal desire and more like men.
>
> Nirvanists act towards one another with great fraternity and love [*aṇpu*]. They do not have fights with one another for any reason. This movement can create a world of peace and drive out war in the world. Such is the opinion of political experts of the Nirvana Movement.[917]

The power of nirvana, as were most of the other powers favored by Self-Respecters, were world-wide—one article writes of the "*akila ulaka nirvāṇa iyakkam (International Nudist Congress)*" [sic] outside of Paris—and therefore demanded recognition as clear allies in the struggle against Brahminism.

Moreover, international *nirvāṇa* appealed because it provided a challenge to ideas of "civilization" associated with nationality. "We think it the significance of civilization however far one dresses so as to see the body."[918] One article, which discusses the *Nirvāṇa* Movement in Germany, makes clear that *nirvāṇa* is so powerful as an international force that it can flourish even in an "incredibly regressive" country filled with some of the hallmarks of *swaraj* such as Nazi Germany, filled with "Vedic fanaticism, those who love Aryan civilization, and cruel

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[914] Recall here Buber's distinction between the former, Johannine immersion and the latter, Upanishadic/Buddhist immersion.

[915] See, for example, Michael Carrithers, "Naked Ascetics in Southern Digambar Jainism," *Man* 24:2 (1989): 219-235.

[916] Much more can be said about skin color and race; some of the white dislike of white skin, evident in the naturist movement's insistence on sun bathing, was discussed in these Self-Respect articles.

[917] Es. Navakār, "*Jarmaṉiyil Nirvāṇa Iyakkam: Carkkārāl Aṅkīkāram* [The Nirvana Movement in Germany: Support by the Government]," *Puraṭci* 17 June 1934: 6, 15.

[918] "Navagar," "*Prāṉcil Nirvāṇa Iyakkam* [The Nirvana Movement in France]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 2 September 1934: 17.

Hitler's violent murder-rule that is opposed even to *samadharma*…"[919] Such shared struggle invited new alliances: "Today there is no kind of relationship between the *Nirvāṇa* Movement and our Self-Respect Movement. Our movement's comrades who hold the tool of rationality [*pakuttaṛivu*] should know, urgently, about every new movement of the western country and about their principle, organization, propaganda, growth, etc."[920] Of course, by learning about the movements of the "west," one was learning new ways to redeem terms of traditional concern, such as we saw with *dharma* in Chapter 10.

*Nirvāṇa* was, like so many other Indian terms, riddled with an orthodox "spiritual" valence, for lack of a better term—as would no doubt please Radhakrishnan, claiming Indian thought to be essentially "spiritual," as we have seen. Yet the Non-Brahmin insisted on these terms being engaged with, rather than separated from, a clear focus on the fulfillment and flourishing of body and world. Such fulfillment and flourishing relied on the coupling of man and woman in *ilvāḻkkai* which did not require renunciation of this world in order to better prepare for the world to come:

> *Nirvāṇa* sages [*ñāṉikaḷ*] claim that through *nirvāṇa* life the bounds which strengthen [*viṛkuṇṭākum*] the soul [*ātma*] change, the soul's heat achieves a purity, and that not only in this world [*ivvulakam*] but also in the next world [*maṛuvulakam*] [shall one] achieve joy [*iṉpam*]—with that is the origin of living harmoniously as those who know the quality of man and woman.[921]

Such *nirvāṇa*, straddling concerns with fulfillment in the next world and with flourishing in this world, exceeded the usefulness of "religion" in Europe as a way of marking ally and enemy. The "Christian religion," as one article notes, undoubtedly composed "obstacles" [*iṭaiyūṛukaḷ*] to *nirvāṇa*, such as French "priests"[922] and the "Catholic Christians from the south part of the German nation."[923] And yet it was Catholic Christians in France and Germany who also gave articulation to support, religious support, for *nirvāṇa*.

> In this group [*saṅkam*] [of nirvanists] all are Christians. There are theists and atheists, mostly othodox ["Vedic"] Christians. They have shown much support which has created a fortress around their principles, claiming that the Christian religion supports the existence if *nirvāṇa*, that so does the will of God, and that Adam and Eve was made by God in *nirvāṇa*.[924]

That is to say, *nirvāṇa* was not captured by any nationalist *swaraj* binary between the inner-spiritual and the outer-material, between religion and the secular, but instead, like with the "secular" as both worldly *laukīkam* and home-life *ilvāḻkkai* above, helped trouble that binary.

The articles provide factual details to supplement the "naturist" or "nudist" movement in Europe's rendering as *nirvāṇa*. Mention is made of the nudist colony on the island of Levant in the French Riviera, the German island of Sylt, and a short but engaged discussion of Adolph

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[919] Es. Navakār, "*Jarmaṉiyil Nirvāṇa Iyakkam: Carkkārāl Aṅkīkāram* [The Nirvana Movement in Germany: Support by the Government," *Puraṭci* 17 June 1934: 6

[920] "Navakar," "*Nirvāṇa Vāḻkkaiyil Uḷḷa Iṉpam* [The Joy within the Life of *Nirvāṇa*]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 11 November 1934: 15.

[921] "Navagar," "*Prāṉcil Nirvāṇa Iyakkam* [The Nirvana Movement in France]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 2 September 1934: 17.

[922] "Navagar," "*Prāṉcil Nirvāṇa Iyakkam* [The Nirvana Movement in France]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 2 September 1934: 4.

[923] Es. Navakār, "*Jarmaṉiyil Nirvāṇa Iyakkam: Carkkārāl Aṅkīkāram* [The Nirvana Movement in Germany: Support by the Government]," *Puraṭci* 17 June 1934: 6.

[924] Es. Navakār, "*Jarmaṉiyil Nirvāṇa Iyakkam: Carkkārāl Aṅkīkāram* [The Nirvana Movement in Germany: Support by the Government," *Puraṭci* 17 June 1934: 6.

Koch, the leader of the *Freikörperkultur* (naked culture) movement in Germany, demonstrating Non-Brahmin awareness of Koch as an advocate of "*samadharma*-ists—common-property-ists" [*camatarmikaḷ-potu uṭamaikkārarkaḷ*], the two terms Non-Brahmins used to redeem communism and socialism. There is even speculation that *nirvāṉa* has increased in Germany as a result of the Great Depression: "Because of the economic crisis that appeared in Germany, many poor, who were without a way to buy clothes, brought about *nirvāṇa* and built little huts where they have been dwelling."[925]

But perhaps most significant of all was not simply detailed discussion that helped flesh out the rendering of such European movements as those advocating *nirvāṇa*, but details that included Self-Respecters within those European movements itself. "The Self-Respect Movement leader E.V. Ramacami," during his visit to Germany in 1932, "returned having taken his photo mixing with this group" pursuing *nirvāṇa* in Germany.

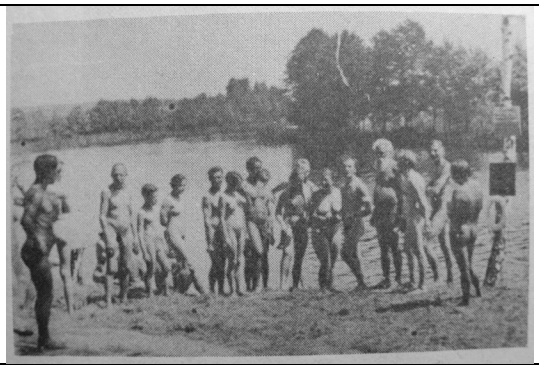

Image 47. EVR at a *Nirvāṇa* Association, Germany, 12 June 1932.[926]

Here is a Indian man in his mid-50s, in his effort to learn from abroad to redeem the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, believing this critique was best understood as a term of "communism" yet redeemed in terms of the equality of *dharma*, standing naked alongside European men and women outside Berlin in an increasingly Nazi Germany, in order to find *nirvāṇa*. This photo marks one of the most compelling images of SubContinental Political Theory, for it captures the interpretive power of Non-Brahmin political thought in its efforts to be a part of the world rather than apart from it—and how these efforts took opportunities to engage rather than separate whenever and wherever they arose.

The question of *nirvāṇa* could not avoid the issue of women's dress. Women standing in *nirvāṇa* was argued, counterintuitively, to reduce rather than increase "lustful desire" among men. Women's dress and undress has of course been a recurrent feature with respect to Muslim women's bodies and the veil: does the veil mark imprisonment, remedied only through less clothing if not the freedom to be naked? Or does the veil mark a freedom from the prison of the lustful gaze? However, ideas of liberation which involve the freedom to chose in these recent conversations, e.g. dress or undress, were different from the concerns of *nirvāṇa*. The issue of *nirvāṇa* was not in the presumption that sex was linked to the naked and deployed to reinforce

[925] Es. Navakār, "*Jarmaṉiyil Nirvāṇa Iyakkam: Carkkārāl Aṅkīkāram* [The Nirvana Movement in Germany: Support by the Government," *Puraṭci* 17 June 1934: 6.
[926] According to EVR's diary entry of 12 June 1932. Āṉaimuttu, Vē. *Periyāriṉ Ayalnāṭṭup Payaṇak Kuṛippu* [*Periyar's Foreign Country Travel Notes*] (Ceṉṉai: Periyār Nūl Veḷiyiiṭṭakam, 1997): 254.

gendered hierarchies, but in imagining how the naked could be used to refigure sex and deployed to undo gendered hierarchies. That is to say, the naked was not being deployed as *nirvāṇa* to further existing bodily attachments, nor to remove bodily attachments, but to better redeem them in order to achieve forms of equality particularly with respect to gender. As one Non-Brahmin Self-Respecter ideally portrays a scene of *nirvāṇa*:

> Alongside sloping hillsides near places of cool water with cool blowing breezes, in flower gardens of beauty abundant in fertile nature, forgetting worldly obscenities [*ulaka āpācaṅkaḷ*], men and women join together as close friends [*kulāvu*] through *nirvāṇa* with natural beauty, swim and play in ponds and seas, sun bathe, do bodily exercises [*tēkāppiyācam*], and the heart is infused with joy [*iṉpam*] and bliss [*cānti*].[927]

We may point out some differences in inflection with respect to the imagery between India and Europe—hot South India is fond of a nature of cool breezes, while colder North Europe is fond of warm hearths. And yet South India, which traditionally finds shade rather than sun desirable, willingly takes up the naturist interest in a healthy tan.[928] Regardless of the complex deployment of imagery, the message is clear: *nirvāṇa* is not meant to arouse "maddening lust" [*kāmappitti*] but to enable a forgetting of "worldly obscenities." Bodily attachments to the world are not to be renounced, as an ascetic, but redeemed so that one can truly be in the world of men with women, as a householder.[929]

*Nirvāṇa*, I argue, provides yet another illustration of SubContinental Political Theory, and demonstrates the form and content of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. With respect to form, we see a partial agreement with Gandhi that becomes disagreement. Both the Non-Brahmin and Gandhi are recovering states of undress, rather than dress, as serious politics. Such issues of clothing were not trivial. They often fell under the umbrella of "civilization," which included food, language, music, religion, and, of course, dress. Undress was often thought to be an indication of barbarity and the savage—"We think of excellent civilization only so far as one dresses up so as to see the body."[930] Both the Non-Brahmin and Gandhi, on the other hand, are recovering undress as civilized. Yet Gandhi's undress was nationalist, dividing the covered West, associated with materialism, from the uncovered East, coupled with asceticism. The Non-Brahmin's undress, on the other hand, was internationalist and coupled with householding, happily this-worldly rather than other-worldly. With respect to content, we see Non-Brahmins through *nirvāṇa* focusing on worldly, material, bodily attachments not through an asceticism determined to renounce the world but to redeem them through householding to embrace the world. *Nirvāṇa* was not about ascetic turns to celibacy but rather with furthering, even by refiguring, concerns central to *ilvāḻkkai:* to enable men and women to live together, and to live together better, enjoying natural beauty and bliss in the world. *Nirvāṇa*, in short, provides those moments of redemption we have come to expect from the Non-Brahmin, internationalist rather than nationalist, not digging deep within an allegedly national tradition to reveal possibilities of freedom but to reveal freedom through

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[927] "Navakar," "*Nirvāṇa Vāḻkkaiyil Uḷḷa Iṉpam* [The Joy within the Life of *Nirvāṇa*]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 11 November 1934: 15.
[928] Other literary images of Tamil happiness, like the swing [*ūñjal*], make repeated appearances in scenes of *nirvāṇa*.
[929] As discussions of *ilvāḻkkai* made clear, the cultivation of women's "coyness" was part of dress, not undress, or at least a part of dress as suggesting the possibility of undress. But without such dress at all, undress would no longer be an issue. The issue of "coyness" is a compelling subject but beyond our scope here.
[930] "Navagar," "*Prāṉcil Nirvāṇa Iyakkam* [The Nirvana Movement in France]," *Pakuttaṛivu* 2 September 1934: 17.

engaging concerns here with concerns there in the world. By turning to the world rather than the nation, *nirvāṇa* was yet another moment in SubContinental Political Theory, pitting self-respect against self-rule.

I suggest that *nirvāṇa* provided the Non-Brahmin with an opportunity to challenge and refigure traditional associations. The householder had been associated with dress, and the ascetic with undress. *Nirvāṇa* redeemed undress for the foundational cause of *ilvāl̲kkai*, allowing men and women to live together, and live together better. In so doing, *nirvāṇa* provided another articulation of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. But concerns with *ilvāl̲kkai*, the "secular life," though equally opposed to dress as markers of *nakarīkam* or "civilization," did not simply involve a challenge to *swaraj* through the parallel yet oppositional redemption of undress in *nirvāṇa*. The concern with *ilvāl̲kkai* went to refigure the very idea of the purity and singularity that the "self" of self-rule was built upon.

## MIXING AND MULTIPLICATION: MATRIMONY

The self of self-rule was a self that was both contained and coherent. Such containment and coherence would be challenged if, first, that self was produced through acts of mixture rather than self-same repetition and, second, that self was produced not by one singular act of mixture but such acts that were multiple and without end. Non-Brahmin's turned to mixed and multiple marriages, once again redeeming *ilvāl̲kkai* as a way to further articulate their self-respect critique to Gandhian self-rule. And the engine of such mixture and multiplicity was love—a love not renunciatory but romantic.

Ms. Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam's interest above in the life of the householder, the life of home *dharma*, was not an interest in the pure and singular, but in the mixed and multiple. Marriage established the home, and it was in marriage that Ms. Intirā shared in the Self-Respect consensus advocating mixture and multiplicity in order to create a more just *ilvāl̲kkai* or "secular life." Mixed marriage was meant to undo hierarchy. Ms. Intirā, discussing the need to eliminate "high low by birth [*piṛappiṉāl uyarvu tāl̲vu*]" targets "caste difference [*jāti vēṛṛumai*]" as the primary obstacle to "freedom [*viṭutalai*]," a targeting which she shares with "all of our great ones": "Carry out the idea in mixed marriage [*kalappu maṇam*]. At that time, caste difference will perish." The possibility of multiple marriages through remarriage was a way to ensure fulfillment and flourishing. Returning to her concerns with symmetry and reciprocity, Intirā is critical of frequent male remarriage—due to circumstances such as the unhealth [*acaukkiyam*] of a bride, the absence of a child, and the pursuit of a "beautiful young girl" [*aḻakiya iḷāṅkai*]—when females cannot do the same. Instead, she understands just remarriage, again sharing in a widespread Self-Respect consensus, as a necessary response to sterility and widowhood.[931] With respect to sterility, given that it justifies male remarriage, and given that "the desire to give birth to a child is greater for the woman than for the man, this is a matter known to all," she claims that remarriage [*maṛumaṇam*] should be within the powers of the female (against, as we saw earlier, the claims that female remarriage would destroy society). With respect to widowhood, just as "there is remarriage for men" so too should there be "remarriage for women."[932]

Such interest distinguished Ms. Intirā's interest in the home from the nationalist *swaraj* interest in the home. In the latter, the home was authentic and indivisible and a refuge from a threatening world; in the former, the home was fluid and permeable and a site of justice only in

[931] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 11.
[932] "*Intirāṇipālacuppiramaṇiyam Avarkaḷ Ceyta Talaimai Upanyācam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 14.

conversation with a wider world. But what force should govern mixed marriage and the multiplicity wrought by remarriages? Wouldn't mixed marriage and remarriage destroy Indian civilization? In the absence of customary rules, namely that of caste, Non-Brahmins found such a force in the life of love and the joy it brings. As Intirā claims, "In *illaṛavāḻkkai*, isn't joy mixed with love common to both" husband and wife? This investment in the primacy of love, rather than customary forces of caste or political forces like nationalism, once again fueled Self-Respect's critique of Self-Rule. Such love, linked to *ilvāḻkkai* and the life of joy, was linked to the world and the miscibility of differences.

"The way of love is our foundation."[933] This line appeared in the first editorial of the first edition of the weekly *Kuṭi Aracu*, published on 2 May 1925. The word for "love" here was *aṉpu*. One might think, then, that the article titled "*Aṉpu*" published in the same issue would indicate just what exactly the foundation of the Self-Respect Movement was. The article, a speech by one Civashaṇmuka Meyññāṉa Civācāriyā Cuvāmikaḷ, a name indicating his status as a Saivite spiritual sage, however, seems in fact to provide a foil against which Self-Respecters would subsequently articulate the importance of "love." While later Self-Respecters would share in Civashaṇmukam's emphasis on love's supreme importance as the object of mixture producing joy—"the aim of this birth is mixture [*kalapatu*] with love [*aṉpu*]" described as "everlasting, pure, full joy [*iṉpam*]" without which one is a "corpse [*piṇam*]"—such love here is renunciatory rather than, as later Self-Respecter's insist, romantic.[934] Civashaṇmukam sees true love's object as God rather than the world, drawing a distinction between the material and the spiritual: "the body is different, the soul is different."[935] "It is not just to place love in the world [*ulakam*]. There is no knowledge [*aṛivu*] of the world. Therefore one should place love in the God who is three.[936] It is that which is the greatest love."[937] He claims that "one should not join with the world" because humans "are tied by three ropes [*kayiṛu*]" or "three fetters/bonds [*kaḷai*]" namely "egotism [*āṇavam*], illusion [*māyai*], and lust [*kāmam*]." True love, Civashaṇmukam claims, is possible only by "driving out desire [*ācai*]." He suggests that this claim is contrary to what is commonly presumed: "Many say that love is desire. But desire is different, love is different…" In order to illustrate both the meaning of such love stripped of desire, e.g. their "difference [*veṟṟumai*]," as well as to demonstrate the inextricably worldly fusion of love and desire, Civashaṇmukam uses the maternal body's milk and blood: "The same body of a woman gives the milk for the child touched with love and the blood for the husband touched with desire."

With its turn away from Gandhi over the course of the 1920s, and the use of Self-Respect to articulate an aggressive critique of a Self-Rule associated with Vedic/orthodox Hinduism, Non-Brahmin political thought refigured if not refused articulations of love like those above. Yet despite such refiguration and refusal, Non-Brahmins did not abandon the primacy such articulations gave to love. Civashaṇmukam's love, as *aṉpu*, turned to God and away from the world, separating itself from desire. Though Non-Brahmins initially saw *aṉpu* as their foundation, they turn to another kind of love—a love of romance rather than renunciation, of the world rather than against it, a "love" rendered by the term *kātal*. Such *kātal*-as-love would

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[933] N.A. *"Kuṭi Aracu,"* *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 May 1925: 9.

[934] Civashaṇmuka Meyññāṉa Civācāriyā Cuvāmikaḷ, "*Aṉpu* [Love]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 May 1925: 3. The author uses serveral couplets from the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* as points of departure for his discussion, largely in the *Aṉpuṭaimai* [Possession of Love] section, 8-73, 8-80, 8-77.

[935] Civashaṇmuka, "*Aṉpu* [Love]," 4.

[936] Saiva Siddhanta claims that the three elements are: *pati* (Lord/Supreme Being), *pacu* (individual soul/bull), and *pācam* (affection/bondage).

[937] Civashaṇmuka, "*Aṉpu* [Love]," 4.

deploy *ilvāḻkkai*-as-secular, of the life of romance and intimacy between lovers, as the very possibility of "joy" or *iṉpam* rather than its obstacle. This *kātal*-as-love, as central to the definition of *ilvāḻkkai*, meant that the coupling of lovers was to be defined by the feelings of the lovers themselves in the world, feelings not defined by community but which could transcend community, feelings not defined by the past but turned to the future.

Ms. Es. Nīlāvati's April 1932 bilingually titled essay "*Kātal Ulakam: World of Love*" demonstrates the Non-Brahmin recovery of love's romantic, rather than renunciatory, valence and its association with joy and liberation in the world, rather than against it.[938] Her effort is to excavate the term *kātal* for this sort of love, an effort to fuse attraction rather than submission with marriage, an effort shared by the "Self-Respect Movement" whose "thunderous roars [*iṭi muḻakkam*]…for the acceptance of love marriage [*kātal maṇam*]" stand against the "plump orthodox/Vedic [*vaitīkam*] Brahmin religion."[939] Though she in 1932, like Civashaṇmukam in 1925, suggests that one is a "corpse" [*piṇam*] without love, Nīlāvati's love-as-*kātal* differs from Civashaṇmukam's love-as-*aṉpu* position in at least three substantive ways.

First, while Civashaṇmukam seemed to dismiss alternatives to *aṉpu* as love, casting them away as desire [*ācai*] and lust [*kāmam*], Nīlāvati uses the idea of *kātal* as a wedge to open up *aṉpu* to a much wider assortment of feelings. Addressing those evidently prejudiced against articulations of love outside the devotional term *aṉpu*, such as *kātal*, she claims: "At this time in our country, some are of the opinion '*kātal*' is a dirty word [*mōcamāṉa vārttai*].[940] In truth [*uṇmai*], the meaning of *kātal* is *aṉpu*. *Kātal*, *aṉpu*, intimacy [*piriyam*], and affection [*nēcam*] are all of the same quality." While not including desire and lust here, Nīlāvati is clear that *aṉpu* shares in a spectrum of love rather than in uncontested command over love's monopoly.

Second, though sharing with Civashaṇmukam the metaphor of milk for the good we saw earlier, Nīlāvati does not use it to reduce love to particular relations, if not essentialized gendered ones. Whereas Civashaṇmukam see love-as-*aṉpu* in the milk of a mother for her child in contrast with the desire-filled blood flowing through the wife's veins for her husband, Nīlāvati uses milk as a way to capture the limitless, abundant happiness of the union of husband and wife through love-as-*kātal*: "It is in such love marriages [*kātal maṇam*] that the milk of happiness [*makiḻccippāl*] abundantly flows without limit." Milk is not some naturalized love of an essentialized maternal body, but the happiness that flows, in perhaps unexpected ways, from romantic coupling.

Third, and echoing our discussion of the "secular" above, in contrast to Civashaṇmukam who shares in the widely held "orthodox/Vedic" [*vaitīkam*] view that equates love-as-*aṉpu* with servitude and slavery [*aṭimai*] to God, Nīlāvati deploys love-as-*kātal* as a way to contrast with such servitude, targeting acts of force, material incentives, and slavery [*aṭimai*] as obstacles to the achievement of *illaṟavāḻvu*, "home-dharma-life." She contrasts "love marriage" with "forced marriage": "Love marriage has been murdered, forced marriage [*kaṭṭāyamaṇam*] used, and marriage without heart has been increasing daily." The sort of force Nīlāvati has in mind is not simply of parent over child through arranged marriages, but of wider socialized incentives: "One can see in our country parents who conclude marriages for the sake of money, for the sake of

[938] Es. Nīlāvati, "*Kātal Ulakam: World of Love*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 10 April 1932: 15.
[939] Her interest is largely in the poet Cuppiramaṇiyam Pāratiyār in particular, whom she sees as sharing in the views of the Self-Respect Movement in general.
[940] As a later essay would put it, revealing bizarre ideas of racism articulated by white and brown alike, "*Kātal* is thought to be a low animal that lives in the jungle of South Africa." Ṭi. Kē. Em. Cāmi, "*Kātalum, Kaliyāṇamum* [Love and Marriage]" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 12 June 1932: 5.

land, for the sake of jewels, for the sake of caste, for the sake of wealth, for the sake of color, and for the sake of titles." She associates such circumstances of marriage with "slavery [*aṭimai*]" "trade [*varttakam*]," and "business [*viyāpāram*], not the "love" in an idealized relationship between mother and child such as that Civashaṇmukam suggested with *aṉpu*.

In fact, she sees the perpetuation of elements of slavery [*aṭimai*] through birth to a couple: "Is there a place to believe that a baby that swells in the belly of a married couple soaked in the mentality of slavery, in the substance of slavery, will turn around with the desire of liberty [*cutantiram*]?" As an alternative, Nīlāvati turns to the images *illaṛavāḻvu,* "home-dharma-life," portrayed in poetry as well as 1930s Tamil cinema. She sees here features related to the process of coupling achieved through "love marriage [*kātal maṇam*]," namely, where the couple "directly knows one another, *aṉpu* flourishes, and the marriage is then conducted." It is related acts of "heroism" and "feeling" with such *kātal* that need to be shown "outside" [*veḷiyil*] in order to defeat "slavery" [*aṭimaittaṉam*].

Ms. Nīlāvati's essay was representative of the Self-Respect Movement's investment in the liberating power of love, and of how such liberatory love was coupled to the term *kātal* as a way to share in traditional investments in love-as-*aṉpu.* This shattered *aṉpu*'s monopoly on love, and with it, understandings of just what was at the foundation of, first, true *swaraj* and, second, one's relationship with the world. Romance, not renunciation, helped ground the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule.

As one Non-Brahmin claims: "[W]ithout at least 75% of families living the life of joy [*iṉpavāḻvu*] as whole-hearted lovers [*manmotta-kātalarkaḷ*], you will not get the *swaraj* you demand."[941] While we may question the figure, what is clear here is that *kātal*, rather than *aṉpu*, was understood by Non-Brahmins as the basis of any meaningful *swaraj*. Such *kātal* meant that romance, rather than *aṉpu*'s renunciation, and affection, rather than *aṉpu*'s servitude, should define relations of flourishing and fulfillment. As we saw with Civashaṇmukam, *aṉpu* was premised on the division of soul and body, and the priority of God over that of the world. The Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect refused such division and priority. Such refusal targeted practices of asceticism and the celibacy of the *bramacharya*—both commonly associated with Gandhi but also, among Non-Brahmins, with figures like "Saint Paul," spanning Continental beliefs in Christ and Subcontinental ones in the Vedas alike—finding in them the very basis for the denigration of the female gender.

> It is because of this religious asceticism [*mata vairākkiyam*] that women are degraded as widows [*amaṅkali*, *vitavai*], ghosts [*pēy*], and demons [*picācu*]. This religious asceticism was brought about by another religious superstition. Imagining that there is a soul in man, another imagining is formed that for that soul to reach liberation [*mōṭcam*] that it must cast away and separate from the body. From that absurdity the destruction of the body reared its head…Like such atrocity was the teaching [*siddhanta*] of the destruction of female people [articulated] by this *bramacharya* philosophy…[942]

Asceticism and the philosophy of *bramacharya*, which included the "hatred of beauty," separated soul from body, denigrated the body, and with it, the status of women. Civashaṇmukam's *aṉpu*, an articulation of love associated with not only nationalist devotion but now masculinist domination, was aggressively challenged by Self-Respect.

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[941] "*Kātalum, Kaliyāṇamum* [Love and Marriage]," 5, 17.
[942] A Samadharmist, "*What is Marriage? Kalyāṇameṉṟāl Eṉṉa?*" *Puraṭci* 28 January 1934: 5.

If romantic *kātal* rather than renunciatory *aṉpu* was required prior to *swaraj*—that is, as that which constituted self-respect—then, continuing with the troubling of the nationalist binary which mistakenly pit home against world, home-life would be related to the world. Therefore: "Without attaining *ilvāḻkkai* liberty, the world shall not be healthy."[943] The claim that a particular condition of "home life" or *ilvāḻkkai* was necessary for a healthy world did not refute claims elsewhere, as we saw above, that the world must be brought into *ilvāḻkkai*. Rather, this made the relation of the world to *ilvāḻkkai* all the more important. For true "home life" of *ilvāḻkkai* was possible through, and only through, the *kātal* of "love marriage," and such *kātal* was possible through, and only through, relations of equality outside the home, e.g. in and of the world. "The primary reason that the life of love [*kātal vāḻvu*] has not shown its head in our country is that female-folk are not able to become trained [*payil*] with the education adequate to equal-wisdom [*camañāṉam*], equal-knowledge [*aṟivu*], and equal-condition [*nilamai*] as men-folk…Without knowledge adequate with world wisdom there is no use" in efforts to achieve the life of love possible through gender equality and the gender equality possible through the life of love.[944] One needed to redeem world *and* home, not pit home *against* the world.

It was this fusion of world and the life of love possible in, and only in, *ilvāḻkkai* that Self-Respecters saw pitted against "religious rites and the injustice of blind orthodoxy/Vedicism" understood as its "obstacle" [*taṭai*]. Such orthodox practices of "the mandatory laws of the Hindu religion" associated with Brahminism twisted the liberatory possibilities of "home life" into practices of enslavement, whereby parents during their search for a husband when their daughter reaches "the age of 12" and is thought suitable for "separate life (*ilvāḻkkai*)" from her family, is "thereafter not allowed to go outside nor speak with anyone…imprisoning her in a room in the corner of the house [*vīṭu*]…"[945] The search for true *ilvāḻkkai*, the product of *kātal*, meant pushing outwards towards that which is adequate to comprehend and thereby redeem the world, not receding inwards into a home making it a prison.

### *THE MISCIBLE: EQUALITY AND ATTRACTION*

Framing the national project of *swaraj* in terms of love-as-*aṉpu*, a renunciatory servitude as devotion, may seem to have certain advantages: forms of devout servitude can be mobilized towards a project of devotion to the nation. Framing the international project of *cuya-mariyātai* in terms of love-as-*kātal* runs right up against a problem: how can those who have lived without equality come to truly realize a life of love that, according to the Non-Brahmin, relies on equality? The answer for the Non-Brahmin was the outside, and the outside here is the wide world. *Kātal*, unlike *aṉpu*, is understood as an engine of *mixing*, of breaking barriers of class, caste, and nationality, a force of attraction that does not follow the rules of orthodoxy. The synonymity of love and mixture is captured very simply in a Self-Respect poem from 1931 which bore two synonymous titles: "The Victory of *Kātal*—or—Mix Marriage [*kalappu maṇam*]."[946] Such mixture, such miscibility, or *kalappu*, would produce the conditions in which *kātal* was possible. Mixture would assert equality through a refusal to obey divisions of hierarchy, as well as be a product of *kātal* itself, driven by forces of attraction that were not "desire [*ācai*]" nor "lust [*kāmam*]" but related to a variety of terms of intimacy and achieved

[943] A Samadharmist, "*What is Marriage? Kalyāṇameṉṟāl Eṉṉa?*" *Puraṭci* 28 January 1934: 17.
[944] Ṭi. Kē. Em. Cāmi, "*Kātalum, Kaliyāṇamum* [Love and Marrige]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 12 June 1932: 5.
[945] Ṭi. Kē. Em. Cāmi, "*Kātalum, Kaliyāṇamum* [Love and Marrige]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 12 June 1932: 5.
[946] B.R. Ciṉṉa Kirushnacāmi, "*Kātaliṉ Veṟṟi allatu Kalappu Maṉam [*The Victory of *Kātal*—or—Mix Marriage]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 31 May 1931: 21.

through interpersonal interactions involving sight and speech. Along with "mother remarriage [*mātar maṛumaṇam*]," such "mixed marriage [*kaluppu maṇam*]" was considered by some to be "the most important undertaking by Self-Respecters in Tamil country for the thousands of both poor and rich."[947]

The scope of such miscibility was not simply national but international. Along national lines, one Self-Respecter in 1939, invested in both a regional South Asia landscape and the rising Dravidian/Tamil nationalism of the late 1930s, claims that one "should set religious [*matam*] differences aside" because of the experiences with mixed religious marriages among Tamils. After describing the "love marriage"—e.g. of the need to conduct marriage based on a man and woman "seeing each other, feeling and speaking through mixing each other's ideas and conditions" rather than one based on "false matters, one's own relations, community, the idea of the woman of the man after great praise, and age"—provides two examples.[948] First: "Some Tamils living in Sri Lanka, though the husband was a Christian and the wife was a Saivite girl, or though the husband was Saivite and the wife a Christian girl, mixed and lived with great love [*aṉpu*]." Second, taking into account the mixing of Hindu branches of Saivism and Vaishnaivism, there should be no obstacle to mixing religious branches like that of Islam: "However ordinarily among Tamils is the relation between Vaishnavites who wear the *nāmam* [clay on forehead] and Saivites who smear the *cāmpal* [ashes on forehead], just like that we should be ready for the intermarrying [*koḷviṉai koṭuppaṉai*] of Tamil Christians and Tamil Muslims." The motivations for such claims, given the context of 1939, was a Tamil/Dravidian nationalism: "Mixed marriage is the special remedy for the pestilent disease of caste [*cāti*] and religion [*camayam*] which are the great obstacles to the progress of Tamilian solidarity." Such nationalist claims were given frequent boosts by claiming that such love marriage and mixed marriages were the customs of ancient Tamils before the rising influence of North India.

More importantly, such miscibility was international. As we've seen, mixed marriage was appealing well before the rising centrality of a Tamil national identity. Just a few years earlier, in 1934, mixed marriage was not seen as a way to divorce Tamil from forces in the world (namely, the divisiveness thought to be engendered by upper-caste *swaraj*) but the means by which to wed Tamil with the world. Here we see again the elision between the idea of caste and nation we have repeatedly encountered earlier:

> Because of caste [*jāti*] differences [*vittiyācam*] and national [*tēciya*] differences, marriages have gone unused. It is said that marriage should not be done from one caste to another. It is said that there should be no marital relation of one nationality with another nationality. Marital cooperation [*kūṭṭuṛavu*] has been determined by these two obstacles. A caste man of India does not take a woman from another caste. An English person does not get married with an Indian. A Brahmin should not conduct marital relations with a Sudra. Because of these sorts of foolish customs, marital cooperation has been crushed [*neru*].[949]

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[947] Es. Es. Āṉantam, "*Kātal Maṇamē Tamiḻar Maṇam: Tamiḻar Maṇam Cīrpaṭṭāl Tāṉ Tamiḻar Iṉam Cīrpaṭum*" [Love Marriage is Tamilian Marriage: By Reforming Tamilian Marriage the Tamilian Community/Race Will Be Reformed]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 July 1939: 7.

[948] Es. Es. Āṉantam, "*Kātal Maṇamē Tamiḻar Maṇam: Tamiḻar Maṇam Cīrpaṭṭāl Tāṉ Tamiḻar Iṉam Cīrpaṭum*" [Love Marriage is Tamilian Marriage: By Reforming Tamilian Marriage the Tamilian Community/Race Will Be Reformed," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 July 1939: 7.

[949] A Samadharmist, "*What is Marriage? Kalyāṇameṉṟāl Eṉṉa?*" *Puraṭci* 28 January 1934: 17.

Such claims were not oblivious to the importance of racialized language of the later nationalist position on mixed marriage, e.g. we are all Tamilians despite differences and so should be able to mix, but rather saw race as encouraging an internationalist position, e.g. "*Close interbreeding, Deteriorates the race* [sic], that is, in a family, or in a caste, or in a nation, marital relations fosters ruin [*nācam*] within that family, caste, or nation." Therefore, our author here encourages a world-wide "mixed marriage," or marriage conducted "freely [*cutantiram*] among the entire-world's [*akila ulaka*, also "international"] people."[950] Such efforts are the "most important" in the world, efforts "according to the desire [*iccai*] of man and woman."[951] That is to say, it seems that it is desire informing the romantic love of *kātal* that serves as the basis for the international project of mixed marriage, rather than the renunciatory love of *aṉpu* as a basis for a national project of what Ms. Nīlāvati referred to above as "forced marriage." Love was the answer, it seems—not in its rarefied form of *aṉpu* that could propel servitude but in its more expansive form as *kātal* that could propel the miscible acts that could undo inequalities, and by implication, perhaps, establish a world of *ilvāḻkkai*.

Yet mixed marriages faced a recurring dilemma within Non-Brahmin political theory. Was mixed marriage, premised on differences without which there would be no possibility of mixing, out to ensure their more just and equitable relationship? Or was mixed marriage, though premised on differences without which there would be no possibility of mixing, out to eliminate differences entirely? Was mixed marriage, as it were, on ongoing response to injustice as a persistent political problem or a way to solve issues of injustice once and for all?

On such questions, the answers are unclear. Certainly, the idea that "*kātal*-as-love's victory" was equivalent to "mixed marriage" suggests that forms of attraction, desire, romance, intimacy, etc., between different classifications of human (caste, nation, race, family, etc.) was not only possible but necessary; *kātal*, that is, suggests that it was the perpetuation of forms of difference in more just relations, e.g. eliminating "high-low," that was the goal of mixed marriage. Yet there were many articles about mixed marriage that did not mention *kātal* at all, and which subsequently took a far more instrumental approach and/or suggested the resolution of injustices once and for all. For example, one 1939 article titled "Mix Marriage is Necessary" repeatedly explored the "use" [*payaṉ*] of mix marriage without mention of love.[952] The author's instrumental approach to mixed marriage is clear: "However important an instrument [*karuvi*] (*Mariners Compass* [sic]) is which shows direction to one who has become confused [*māl*] and distressed [*tavi*] by losing direction in the middle of the sea, just like that, in order to eliminate [*nīkku*] the distressing troubles of our current time, one may say that this sort of marriage is an instrument which correctly shows the way."[953] Others emphasized instrumental issues of reproduction over romance, gesturing to science in order to answer the question by "some Self-Respecter [*cu. ma*.] comrades, 'What does marriage [*kalyāṇam*] mean?'," noting issues of "*kātal (love)*" in "*(Sexual Life) atāvatu āṇ peṇ vāḻkkai* [lit., 'that is man woman life']" as features of that which are derived from and necessary "*(for the propagation of the race) maṉita kulam*

[950] The English rendering here, "Free Ternal Intercourse," [sic] is unclear. Is "ternal" a failed rendering of "international" or "external"? Is "intercourse" referring to sex or marital intermingling?
[951] The word for "desire" here, *iccai*, differs from a relatively synonymous term *ācai* seen earlier, but is part of the term for "self-restraint" [*icaiyaṭakkam*].
[952] Rājēntirā, *"Kalappu Maṇattiṉ Avaciyam* [Mix Marriage is Necessary]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 30 July 1939: 16. This article is perhaps one of the mixed marriage articles which most aggressively praises EVR's efforts, and there is a good argument to be made that EVR approached mixed marriage in a very instrumental way.
[953] Rājēntirā, *"Kalappu Maṇattiṉ Avaciyam* [Mix Marriage is Necessary]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 30 July 1939: 16

*vituttiyāka'* [lit, for the prosperity of the human community]."[954] Perhaps most importantly, during this period of rising nascent Dravidian nationalism, the idea that love marriage and mixed marriage was markedly South Indian and opposed to the Hindi-speaking *swaraj* demanding North was another way in which instrumental goals, rather than origins in love, framed the importance of mix marriage—which we've seen above.

But there was another recurring dilemma within Non-Brahmin political theory that arose in mixed marriage. If the justification of mixed marriage was that it, and it only, could ensure a life of flourishing in *ilvāḻkkai*, even as such *ilvāḻkkai* drew upon the world while it provided the basis for a more just world, what would happen to the idea of *ilvāḻkkai* itself framed in Tamil? After all, *ilvāḻkkai*, as we've seen, goes back millennia in Tamil thought and literature. What would happen to this concept, a concept with a history in *Tamil*, when mixed with the *world*? Isn't there something paradoxical here, where a concept nurtured on indigenous soil motivates cross-pollinating efforts across the world? Shouldn't one wish to control and regulate such world-wide movement in order to protect the indigenous soil? What happens to national ideas that serve as international aspirations? Does their pursuit mark their fulfillment or their failure?

Such questions remain as feature of SubContinental Political Theory. Instances of such dilemmas peppered the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect. One such instance is the article "Love and Lovers," using *kātal* for love, published in *Kuṭi Aracu* on 4 February 1940, well into the period of rising Dravidian nationalism.[955] This article on *kātal*, however, does not draw upon a Tamil past but rather the British present: it is a translation of an article taken from the popular *Weldon's Ladies Journal.* The article marks a moment where Tamil and world mix in an effort to redeem one another. In its translation, the reader encounters familiar terms of concern to Non-Brahmin political theory: the centrality of *kātal* as love, the importance of *maṇam* as marriage, and the foundation of *ilvāḻkkai* as home-life. There are similarities, to be sure. For example, we have seen the necessity of distinguishing love-as-*kātal* from yet placing it over and joining with love-as-*aṉpu*. The article "Love and Lovers" does the same: "If one must say the meaning for *kātal*, one must say it is friendship mingled [*aḷāvu*] with *aṉpu*." And, of course, such mingling and mixture, as we've seen, is not only what makes *kātal* but is in turn what *kātal* makes.

Yet there are also tensions in this article. We have seen love invested with unparalleled romanticized importance, the unparalleled importance of romance, in the pursuit of *iṉpam*-as-joy. The article "Love and Lovers," however, starts out, "Love can provide wonderful, great joy; just like this, [love] has the power to give great ruinous sorrow."[956] We have seen the coupling in love marriage as a precondition to a life of fulfillment, and marriage that is a product of love as the result of the exchange of sight and speech between lovers. The article "Love and Lovers," however, claims that "marriage is a gamble [*cūtāṭṭam*]" and, when the gamble is lost "married life is without joy, it is better to live a separate life."[957] Moreover, whereas Non-Brahmins used the idea of *ilvāḻkkai* in order to trouble distinctions between gendered spaces of interiority and exteriority, positioning *ilvāḻkkai* both as having the world as its foundation as well as serving as

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[954] Ma. Ciṅkāravēlu, "*Genesis of Love. Kātal Uṛpavam*," *Pakuttaṛivu* 4:4 (August 1938): 36-42. Ciṅkāravēlu suggests that terms for love, desire, infatuation, affection, etc ("*aṉpu, ācai, mōkam, kātal*") are secondary and derivative from, and reducible to, the biological imperative to reproduce. Importantly, he concludes, this meant that "chastity" or *kaṛpu* was an ideological articulation of power.

[955] Velṯaṉs Lēṭis Jarṉal, "*Kātalum Kātalarum* [Love and Lovers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 4 February 1940: 3-4.

[956] Velṯaṉs Lēṭis Jarṉal, "*Kātalum Kātalarum* [Love and Lovers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 4 February 1940: 3

[957] Velṯaṉs Lēṭis Jarṉal, "*Kātalum Kātalarum* [Love and Lovers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 4 February 1940: 3, 4.

the foundation of the world, the article here deploys a gendered private/public opposition in discussing an *ilvāḻkkai* subject to marital counseling advice:

> When a lover enters from the outside, his beloved's happy gentle smile gives him heart-felt joy. News about the matters of other homes do not give him as much happiness as that moment.
>
> Therefore lovers should develop the propensity to speak sweetly and sportingly among themselves. If in *ilvāḻkkai* different feelings arise between the husband and wife and tranquility diminishes, both should consider the reason, see the condition, and make an effort to satisfy themselves. At that time matters will improve.[958]

The lover from outside in the world is male here, the lover inside the home is female. Yet, as we have seen, part of the central purpose of *ilvāḻkkai* was to undo the presumption of a female divorced from outside in the world, just as *swaraj* was a concern to Non-Brahmins for its overemphasis on the sufficiency of the interiority of home.

To see differences in the interpretation of concepts, however, is not to see "cultural" differences defined by different units of *swaraj*. For, certainly, quarrels among lovers—and thus a cautious approach to issues of love, marriage, and the home-life—was a millennia old feature of Tamil thought and literature. What was happening to terms like *kātal*, *maṇam*, and *ilvāḻkkai* through their engagement with the world was continuity, rather than rupture, of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, demanding renewed interpretation as a project in SubContinental Political Theory.

## CONCLUSION

The above discussion of love and the householder troubles the idea of the "secular" as a term of universal concern. Such troubling did not occur because the "secular" *is* not of universal concern, but rather, attended to how such concern could be *redeemed*. By attending to such acts of redemption in the shared tradition of SubContinental Political Theory across long distance relationships, we have explored another articulation of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. The nationalist self-rule binary of spiritual vs. material broke down across three axes that composed self-respect investments in love. First, the spiritual/home/religion vs material/world/secular binary collapsed as Non-Brahmins imagined the secular as both home-life and worldliness, yet the *ilvāḻkkai* of home-life was emphasized more than world. Such investments in home tapped into householding tropes that contrasted with ascetic or renunciatory ones as a way to live with joy in the world. Second, investments in undress were shared by Non-Brahmin self-respect and Gandhian self-rule alike, yet such undress was redeemed by Non-Brahmins as *nirvāṇa* as a way to be in the world, and to be in the world internationally as men and women in lives of *ilvāḻkkai*, rather than be removed from the world into nationalist demands. Third, such a life of *ilvāḻkkai* constituted by such fulfilling ways of being in an international world required marriage to act as an engine of mixing and multiplication, engendering relationships of respect and equality that could give birth to selves, rather than presume selves who married under regimes of orthodoxy. Moreover, these elements continued across the shift in 1937, pointing to enduring features of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule.

[958] Velṭaṉs Lēṭis Jaṟṉal, "*Kātalum Kātalarum* [Love and Lovers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 4 February 1940: 3.

This world, this "secular" world, was one of coupling bodies. Such couplings pushed against the ascetic, renunciatory investments of *swaraj* we saw in both 1911 and 1981. This "secular" world was also, however, about the coupling of beliefs. Such a world, it often seemed to Non-Brahmins surrounded by the orthodox [*vaitīkam*] of a Hinduism wedded to demands for *swaraj*, required faith in a different, more international community. Such couplings, of bodies and beliefs, provided a challenge to the purity and containment of nationalist *swaraj* caste in a Brahminical Hindu idiom. In fact, the Non-Brahmin secular would require Islam, again troubling the investments of *swaraj* we saw in both 1911 and 1981.

## CHAPTER 15. EQUALITY OF THE MUSLIM: CONVERSION

I argued in the last chapter that the bodily-oriented investments of an amorous secular life wedded to the householder placed the romantic love of *kātal*, rather than the renunciatory love of *aṉpu*, at the heart of fulfillment and flourishing in the world for the Non-Brahmin. Such a world was an effort to target the asceticism that shored up the hierarchy of Brahminism that blended into the Gandhian demand for *swaraj*. But we also saw how concerns with this-worldliness did not always outright dismiss other-worldliness within the secular as *ilvāḻkkai*, "home life." Instead, we saw concerns here with "life-in-this-world-and-the-next [*ikaparavāḻvu*]," "the joy that must be attained in this world [*ivvulakam*] and the joy of the next-birth [*maṟumai*]," and "that not only in this world [*ivvulakam*] but also in the next world [*maṟuvulakam*] [shall one] achieve joy [*iṉpam*]." One would be hard pressed to consider these "religious" investments, given how adamant the Non-Brahmin was in resisting forms of orthodoxy at the heart of *swaraj* and, in turn, how upper-caste forces dismissed the Non-Brahmin as "atheist." And yet there seems to be a belief-oriented mate to the bodily-orientation of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule in seeking flourishing and fulfillment in egalitarian relationships in the world. In this Chapter, I argue that these belief-oriented investments were coupled with its amorous secular articulated through marriage. Such investments were in a valorous Islam articulated through conversion.

Non-Brahmin political theory emphasized love, the householder, and the life of the secular. Such bodily emphases found their belief-oriented mate in terms of equality, the Muslim, and the life of conversion. We have seen that true love required forms of equality, and, for Non-Brahmins, it would be conversion to Islam that could catapult the degraded into a world of equality, and thus generate the relationship in the world giving rise to self-respect. The belief-oriented mate of Islam to Non-Brahmin bodily investments likewise were articulated through three couples of home and world, cover and exposure, and the mixing and multiplication. And, also likewise and to be expected, such articulation challenged a *swaraj* nationalist binary that pit the desirable national triumvirate of home/cover/self-same against the undesirable colonial triumvirate of the world/exposure/other-different. Whereas the Brahminism of nationalists saw the reproduction of the same as the fulfillment of freedom, where the same was located in an interiority of culture, it would be Non-Brahmin efforts to produce difference, rather than reproduction of the same, that would lead to true freedom, not of self-rule but of self-respect.

With respect to home and world, we see the early shift from Gandhian investments in an "indigenous" Hindu faith to an adamant demand for conversion to the foreign faith *par excellence*, Islam. The focus on Islam would be retained among Non-Brahmins, renewed through concerns with Arab Palestinians under Jewish settlement, Jinnah's separatist demand for Pakistan in fear of a Hindu majority, and the growing desperate realization that Brahminism cannot simply be eliminated through resistance but required a world-wide replacement. With

respect to cover and exposure, we see an investment in seeing without bias as a way to get through the ideological force of Brahminism. Yet such naïve realism finds repeated invocations of the importance of disguise and costume as a way to realize self-respect. Seeing clearly and wearing a disguise are in tension when Non-Brahmins voice their disagreement with the burkha of Muslim women, a disagreement that does not try to refuse Islam as much as try to cull out what Self-Respecters see as Islam's radical egalitarian dimension. With respect to mixing and multiplication, we find a provisional investment in Islam as enabling the critical, "rational" powers that would in fact invite such provisional investments themselves. Conversion is not a final and definitive act, as it were, but only the beginning of efforts at redefinition—efforts involving conversion in order to mix and the multiplicity of acts of conversion. In short, it is not any fundamentalism that appeals to the Non-Brahmin, but rather Islam's ability to foster an appreciation of a world whose only meaningful foundation are the relationships of self-respect that we must build together.

## HOME AND WORLD

We have seen how important Gandhi was to the Self-Respect Movement of EVR during its nascence. Before the break with Gandhi by 1928, Self-Respect accordingly shared Self-Rule's basic understanding of the self: an indigenous, Hindu self whose Hinduism had been fulfilled through certain acts of reform. In October 1926, for example, a Non-Brahmin could claim "in Mahatma [Gandhi]'s Self-Rule there is no *jāti* high low [*jāti uyarvu tāḻvu*]," thereby distinguishing Gandhi from the "*jāti* high low" that defined Brahminical Swaraj.[959] Accordingly, conversion to "foreign" religions (e.g. anything not Hinduism) were seen by the Self-Respect Movement, as they were by Gandhi, as threatening Indian freedom. Such conversions were thought to detract from reforming Hinduism and thus making an indigenous self capable of self-rule. However, after the break with Gandhi, EVR begins to speak at Muslim conferences, notably during the celebration of the Prophet Mohammed's birthday, endorsing conversion to Islam as a way to achieve self-respect. He does this continuously until his tour of Russia and Europe in 1932. While such endorsements continue across the 1930s and 1940s, the most prominent subsequent fill-ups to Islam's appeal are three-fold. First, the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt in Palestine, understood as invasive Jewish capital against native Arab labor. Second, the coincidence of the February 1937 electoral victory for Congress that gave rise to Islamic separatism and Jinnah's increasing demand for Pakistan. And third, the growing realization that simply resistance to Brahminism was not sufficient to eliminate Brahminism; instead, ideological saturation could only be remedied through different acts of being together, and being together better.

### *DEFENDING A HINDU SELF*

From the beginning of the Self-Respect Movement in May 1925 to as late as January 1928, the self of self-respect was similar to the self of self-rule: a native whose indigenous "Hindu" beliefs, through reform, were the way to *viṭutalai*, a term redeeming "freedom" as well as the liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth called "moksha" in Sanskrit.

[959] N.A. "*Kakshikaḷ: Tayavu Ceytu Ūn̲ṟip Paṭiyuṅkaḷ: Uṅkaḷ Naṇparkaḷaiyum Paṭikkccolluṅkaḷ* [Parties: Please Read Closely: All Your Friends Tell You to Read]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 31 October 1931: 5.

One of the most strident Non-Brahmin articulations of the need to reform a glorious Hinduism, and the subsequent threat of embracing [*taḻavu*] another religion, was written by Karuvēli Shrīmāṉ Pa. Vīrappapiḷḷai in a markedly Gandhian tone under the title "The Entering of Other-Religion [*matam*] and Untouchability" in September 1925.[960] Vīrappapiḷḷai tells a familiar story of an ancient tradition threatened by modernity, a threat partially self-inflicted by a degree of corruption which, through reform, can and must be remedied. The article begins by praising an "everlasting [*aṉāti*] Hindu religion [*matam*]" of "distinct excellence [*ciṛappu*]"—an excellence distinct because of its ancient age, its absence of a human founder, its foundation which encompasses "all the high principles within whatever religions [*matam*] in the world like the ocean," its proven ability to withstand and outlive "opposing *matams*…on the battle field," its correct teachings by which one reaches salvation, its being filled with "a Divine Nature," and its appearance in "the blessed 4 Vedas." This ancient tradition is threatened by "the demon [*paicācam*] of modern civilization" which currently "possesses our Hindu people."[961]

In the present circumstances, those of devoted-love [*apimāṉam*] to the Hindu religion are few and weak in comparison to "competing religious people [who] aggressively [*tīviram*] make religious propaganda [*piraccāram*] by the strength of their wealth and the strength of their authority [*atikāram*]." Hindu monasteries, normally places of salvation, have been corrupted, becoming places of selfishness [*svātīṉam*]. Such selfishness, Vīrappapiḷḷai suggests, is synonymous with the process whereby the "orthodox [*vaitkam*] have been destroyed" by the "secular [*laukīkam,* worldliness]," and as a result the heads of monasteries have gorged themselves to obesity [*pushṭi*], decorated themselves with diamonds, smothered themselves with fragrance, played with dancing girls, and became untruthful. Not only are there subsequently no real leaders for the common Hindu people, but even efforts by the truly faithful are futile because underfunded. Even those of devoted-love [*apimāṉam*] who "come forward to protect it [Hinduism] with a mind unable to bear it [the denigration], without the wealthy coming forward to patronize and encourage all of them, even he will grow tired and his enthusiasm will decrease." Thus, to protect the people's "Hindu *matam* mother," not only is true guidance through devotion necessary, but wealth as well.

But protection against what, exactly? Protection against "entry into another *matam*" [*piṛa matam pukutal*], e.g. religious conversion. And by "another" one should read "foreign," e.g. not indigenously Indian. Vīrappapiḷḷai seems to be particularly concerned with the Christian *matam* of the British as the target of embrace. Such conversions are effected by humiliating pushes, people who "believe in the terrible words which Pastors [*pātirikaḷ*] imagine saying 'in your *matam* is that which is garbage [worm-eaten, *cottai*]' and [thus] embrace [*taḻavu*] the other *matam.*" Such conversions are also effected by incentivized pulls, people who "embrace [*taḻavu*]" thinking foolishly that "by embracing [*taḻavu*] the Christian *matam* jobs and posts will be available." They are effected by social and political aspirations, or "low *jāti* people…those-without-right [*urimai*]" who think that through "embrace [*taḻavu*]" "obstacles such as *jāti pētam* [caste difference] and untouchability" will be eliminated. And, and this causes "great grief," they are effected by the imperial cultural enticement of native elites—"even the Brahmin, who is

[960] Karuvāli Shrīmāṉ Pa. Vīrappapiḷḷai, "*Piṛamatam Pukutalum Tīṉṭāmaiyum* [The Entering of Other-Religion and Untouchability]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 20 September 1925: 9-10.

[961] Vīrappapiḷḷai "*Piṛamatam Pukutalum Tīṉṭāmaiyum*," 9. For a discussion of Gandhi's use of demons to describe modernity, see see Ajay Skaria, "Gandhi's Politics: Liberalism and the Question of the Ashram" in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101: 4, Fall 2002: 960, 973, where "*rakshas"* (*irakshashas*) are used to describe the "monster" of rationality and modern civilization.

said to be the highest group-people of the four groups [*kulam*]" "embraces [*taḷavu*] an other *matam* [*piṟamatam*]" after "learning English" and "wishing to eat and dress and enjoy in the English way."

Moreover, Vīrappapiḷḷai is not concerned simply with the target of conversion, e.g. the foreign, but is also concerned with the process of conversion. Conversion, in order to be legitimate, must be an individual and not a collective act (concerns we recall from 1911 and 1981). Such legitimacy stems not only from the conversion being *personal*, an act expressing an interiority rather than a response to external forces, but must involve intense acts of *seeking* and *sacrifice*:

> One, up to the point where he is firm in his knowledge, makes thorough [*tīram*] inquiry into the truth of his religious principle [*matam koḷkaikaḷ*], indicates what appear to him as objections in his principle [*koḷkai*], asks a 'big man' [*periyār*] who has attained erudition in religion [*matam*] education, and [if] his doubts do not receive peace, even after clearly asking and researching such that there are no suitable means [*cātaṉaṅkaḷ*] for attaining the salvation of soul [*āṉam ēṭēṟṟam*], [then] the embrace [*taḻavutal*] of another religion [*matam*] fitting his needs was the embrace [*taḷuvutal*] of another religion [*matam*] in the just [*niyāyam*] way.

Unsurprisingly, given a milieu steeped in nationalist *swaraj*, Vīrappapiḷḷai does not find many instances of such embrace in this "just way": "But in contemporary times [*taṟkālattil*] there is no place to think that among those who enter an other religion [*piṟamatam*] there is even one who acts like that in this kind of just way." Instead "other" religions, through external forces, pose a threat: "thousands [are] pulled…into the Christian *matam* and the Islam *matam*." Moreover, such external forces are coupled with a group rather than an individual process. On this account, Vīrappapiḷḷai is concerned with the low *jāti*, for they do not act individually, as the Brahmin would, but *en masse* in their encounters with the foreign: "those *jāti*-people who have been pushed aside [*otukkapaṭṭa*] have been pulled *en masse* [*kūṭṭam kūṭṭamāka*] to foreign [*ayal*] religions [*matam*]."

The foreign pull of the pushed-aside native is, on Vīrappapiḷḷai's account, understood as an aggressive threat. Vīrappapiḷḷai has already alluded to "aggressive" [*tīviram*] religious propaganda [*piraccāram*] targeting Hindus. He goes on to be more explicit, mentioning not only Christians and Muslims but organizations of Lutheran and Punjabi missionaries: "like a hawk [*paruntu*], Christian Missionaries and Muslim Maulvis[962] are looking out for the right time [*camayam*]. Now in that place Maulvis from the Punjab Muslim Organization [*caṅkam*] and Basel Missionaries have been doing aggressive [*tīviram*] religious propaganda [*matam piraccāram*]."[963] The success of such mass "pull" provides reason for the identification of a self, albeit a self defined by the need for reform: "Why? Isn't the reason *us*?" Vīrappapiḷḷai forwards both Mahatma Gandhi and EV Ramacami Naicker as agents of such reform of a Hindu self, given that both demand that the poor low-castes "should be taught education," come forward "to remove their poverty [*vaṟumai*]," and invite changes given "the path fitting the time" as opposed to blindly following "the ways of our ancestors" by which "we" "hesitate to touch, mix, and associate" with the outcaste, the pushed-aside native.[964]

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[962] *Makammatiyamaulvikaḷ*

[963] Vīrappapiḷḷai "*Piṟamatam Pukutalum Tīṉṭāmaiyum*," 10.

[964] Vīrappapiḷḷai "*Piṟamatam Pukutalum Tīṉṭāmaiyum*," 9. But not just Gandhi and EVR: "Mahatma Gandhi [*makātmā kānti*], Shrīmāṉkaḷ Varadarajulu Naidu [*varatarājulu nāyuṭu*], EV Ramacami Naicker [*ee. ve. rāmacāmi nāyakkar*], Kalyanacundarara Mutaliyar [Tiru Vi. Ka., *kalyāṇacuntara mutaliyarr*] all have been striving [*uḻai*] in

Clearly, this demand for reform identifies a Hindu Self that can subsequently be mobilized in the demand for Self-Rule. Equally clearly, such identification departs markedly from the Self-Respect Movement as it matured across the 1920s. One less obvious way of marking this departure is to note how the concern here with untouchable mass conversion to foreign religions does not discuss issues of happiness and pleasure, such as the recurrent focus on "joy [*iṉpam*]" which we saw above as central to the Self-Respect appreciation of the secular as *ilvāḻkkai*. Instead, the concern with conversion revolved around *numbers*. Vīrappapiḷḷai is concerned with maintaining a Hindu majority in the electoral politics of the British Raj. "There is no doubt about this: by saying 'untouchability untouchability' we sacrifice [*pali koṭu*] the majority of the 7 crore [70,000,000] of people who are Adi Dravidian [outcaste] Hindu people to foreign [*ayal*] religion [*matam*]…Lo!—our lack-of-understanding [*aṛiyāmai*]!" That is to say, the self of self-rule—that which is referred to by the possessive personal pronoun "our"—is threatened by acts of embrace:

> If all or the majority of those who have been pushed aside [*otukku*…] by us as low class-people [*vakuppiṉar*] in this way join with a foreign [*ayal*] religion [*matam*], won't our Hindu religion [*matam*] total decrease? The total population of Christians and Muslims will increase. Therefore great ruin [*aṉarttam*] will result for us and our precious Hindu religion [*matam*].[965]

Evidence of such threat to "our" self of self-rule, an "our" which here in 1925 in the first year of the Self-Respect Movement evidently includes both Brahmin and Non-Brahmin as devoted to a shared and precious Hinduism, is conveniently provided by the British census:

> In the population [*jaṉa tokai*] of the two countries India and Burma [given in] the manner of the year 1921 census, in the past [*kaṭanta*][966] ten years, Christians increased by 22 percent and Muslims by 3 percent, while Hindus decreased by 4 percent. Seeing this, our heart [*maṉam*] is wounded [*puṇ*]. Therefore, we should be careful, we should wipe [*tuṭai*] away the blot [*kaḷaṅkam*] of untouchability, and we should try so that the institutions which protect the Hindu religion [*matam*] are conducted correctly.[967]

Vīrappapiḷḷai then concludes by asking the Non-Brahmin members of the Self-Respect Movement, "those of devotion to religion" [*matāpimāṉikaḷē*], to "Come forward to protect our high distinct Hindu religion [*matam*]. Do your duty [*kaṭamai*]. Let the Omnipotent Lord give Grace [*aruḷ*] [to you in doing your duty to protect Hinduism]!"

In short, Vīrappapiḷḷai makes clear how, in the first year of the Self-Respect Movement, religious conversion was considered a threat. It was a threat because it threatened the Hindu self of Self-Rule, an indigenous self threatened by a foreign other. And such Self-Rule was "Mahatma [Gandhi]'s Self-Rule" in which "there is no *jāti* high low [*jāti uyarvu tāḻvu*]."

As late as January 1928 we find sentiments similar to those of Vīrappapiḷḷai above in the Self-Respect weekly *Kuṭi Aracu*. That month saw the publication of a poem titled "Why Do Indians Enter an Outside-Religion" by S. Aruṇācalam Piḷḷai. The poem equally expresses a concern with abandoning the Hindi religion [*matam*] through conversion, a concern particularly

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truth [*uṇmai*] to destroy untouchability. The Vaikkom Satyagraha war was conducted for the rights of those who are called Untouchables."

[965] Vīrappapiḷḷai "*Piṛamatam Pukutalum Tīṇṭāmaiyum*," 10.

[966] The prose here features a typographical error.

[967] Vīrappapiḷḷai "*Piṛamatam Pukutalum Tīṇṭāmaiyum*," 10.

focused on *mass* conversion, population, and the treatment of people as low *jāti*.[968] Aruṇācalam proposes to describe "the proper reason that Indians enter [*ēku*] / *en masse* [*ērāḷmāka*] into other [*itara*] religions [*matam*]" by which "every year" "the world population of outside-religions [*camayam*] increase / and the Hindu religion [*camayam*] will die without knowing where it went." And the "proper reason" for such conversions again suggests a discrete self of self-rule, because "we are in this way," namely because "Those people [*maṉpataiyāḷar*] who are Indian / who possess highness of birth"

> disgrace [*tūṛṛi*] [others] out of haughtiness [*mēṭṭimai*] [calling them] high and low *jāti*,
> and telling some to stand far [away],
> saying "stay away stay away [*vilaku vilaku*]" and valuing them as animals;
> afterwards, they [those people who are Indian valued as animals] enter and go [to] an outside religion [*puṛamatam*]…

Unlike Vīrappapiḷḷai above concerned with both Christianity and Islam, here Aruṇācalam seems solely concerned with conversion to the "outside religion" called Christianity, which involves "learning English" and following related "customs [*ācāram*]," "rising in the jobs of the government," "saying 'Sir Sir'," and being treated as "equals" by the British by "working with them" and "eating with them."

For the Self-Respecter Aruṇācalam in early 1928, Hinduism is a comprehensive system understood as providing fulfillment to both the householder and the ascetic. Of course, in our discussion above of the Non-Brahmin secular of *ilvāḻkkai,* emphasis was placed on householding in self-respect over and against an asceticism conflated with self-rule; again, "self-respect" has yet to mature as a distinct principle. Aruṇācalam identifies the "omnipresent and faultless God" as addressing "life in this wide world" and giving "salvation along both paths, home-*dharma* [*illaṛam*] and asceticism [*turavaram*]." The home and its renunciation, concepts allied to Non-Brahmin understandings of secularism and religion, respectively, are *both* acknowledged as the relevant factors in conversion here rather than, as later Self-Respecters would have it later, refiguring asceticism.

Moreover, Aruṇācalam in concerned with a change in interiority. It is a change in "morality" that is understood as a deciding factor in the appeal of the Englishmen's Christianity: "They [converts?] become high by their moral [*oḻukka*] ways / learning from their true books, and under English Rule stand by their ways…" Accordingly, the concluding passage is a call for *true* Self-Rule, articulating a reformed Hindu interior "mother country" of "equals" purged of "high low" positioned against the "outside religion":

> Therefore [*ātaliṉ*], oh Learned Ones, do not wish the divisions [*kiḷaikaḷ*: branches]
> of low high [*kīzh mēl*] among the creations of the Lord [*āṉṭaṉ amaippu*].
> We praise and stand worshiping always
> the feet of the omnipotent Lord of All
> for the mother country-people so [all will be] valued as equals,
> to teach the true path in the world [*ulakam*],
> and to get through moral [*oḻukkam*] ways the highest salvation [*kati*].

[968] Shrīmāṉ S. Aruṇācalam Piḷḷai, "*Intiyar Puṛamatam Pukuvatēṉ?* [Why Do Indians Enter an Outside- Religion?] " (republished from the journal 'Lakshimi') *Kuṭi Aracu* 22 January 1928: 13.

"[T]he world" without "low high" where all are "valued as equals" is the target of "moral ways" allowing one to reach "the highest salvation." Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters here appear to believe such salvation to be possible in, and only in, a redeemed Hinduism. It is devotion of the people to a Hindu interiority that provides the means by which the mother country can achieve salvation. And this is, we presume, *swaraj*.

### *ANOTHER SELF AND THE BIRTH OF MUHAMMAD*

The break with Gandhi in the late 1920s and the abandonment of nationalism's "self" of Self-Rule resulted in a complete reversal from the above positions defending a Hindu self. Conversion to foreign religion, rather than dismissed as a threat to the self of self-rule, was embraced as holding the promise of the desirable self: the self of self-respect. Moreover, the foreign religion of choice became what, in a period of rising Hindu-Muslim "communal" tension, was the foreign religion par excellence vis-à-vis a Brahminical *swaraj*, namely, Islam. Islam featured in acts of conversion in two modes. First, conversion to Islam could be a tactical warning, leveraging the Hindu fear of a loss of numbers in order to secure redress of grievances. Second, conversion to Islam could be the very achievement of equality itself, a remedy to Brahminical orderings of human as high low through caste.

The first mode of conversion to Islam was certainly present within the Self-Respect Movement by the late 1920s. An article published in June 1929, for example, provides some of the basics of understanding the grievances of "the class-people [*vakuppar*] called untouchables" which first led Non-Brahmins to demand *good* Self-Rule and then to oppose Self-Rule *per se*, an opposition articulated by the act of conversion to Islam.[969] The article identifies typical caste grievances: the inability of untouchables, as a class [*vakuppu*], to take water from wells and tanks and to enter temples, not because of a failure among Indians to demand "progress [*muṉṉēṟṟam*]" but because of the "obstacles" set by "orthodox [*vaitīkam*] Brahmins." In the town of *Jalakāṉil* in the Pērar district [of the Bombay Presidency], a group of Mahars [the untouchable community of Ambedkar], having "reached dissatisfaction and impatience" in achieving the status of "equals to other high class-people [*vakuppar*]" decided to change religion to either Christianity or Islam "and thus made a firm warning to the so-called high class-people [*vakuppar*]." Once some of the Mahars "embraced [*taḻavu*] the Islam *matam*," "the Hindus there were awakened [*kaṇvahittu*]" and changed their treatment of the Mahars: allowing them to take water, to join in festivals, to enter temples, and to participate in various ceremonies or in leisure activities involving betel leaf and areca nut. The Mahars, once equal treatment had been secured, subsequently abandoned their decision to embrace Islam. The article concludes: "Will not Hindus who are in different parts [*pākam*] of India destroy [the] straight-forward [*nērmaiyāṉa*] grievances [*kuṟakaḷ*] of the poor people called untouchables by following the eminent example of the Hindus of *Jalakāṉ* and come forward to distribute *nīti* [justice]"?

Yet, here, this warning to convert to Islam was merely an extension of other tactics used to reform Hinduism. Islam was not the goal, rather, the preservation of the Hindu self of self-rule, through its reform, was the goal. EVR's attraction to Islam following the break with Gandhi, however, was far more radical and allied with our second mode. EVR wanted the

[969] "*Pērār Mākāṇattil Tīṇṭāmai Oḻittatu: Matam Māṟiyataṉ Payaṉ: Ālayap Piravēcam Oppukoḷḷappaṭṭatu* [In Pērār District Untouchability Destroyed: The Use of Changing Religion: Temple Entry Agreed]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 June 1929: 5.

elimination of a false Hindu self, a self he understood as inextricably saturated with, if not identical to, Brahminism and its unjust relations of high and low. Brahminism was no longer something that happened to interfere with the achievement of self-rule; Brahminism *was* self-rule. The self's freedom from Hinduism, rather than its mere reform, required Non-Brahmins to come together and the courage to do so. If the "secular" we saw in the previous Chapter expressed the importance of love, romance, and intimacy in the thought and movement of Self-Respect, Islam expressed the importance of unity, discipline, and valor. The romance of the secular couple and the mobilization of the Muslim mass became fraternal twin elements in the more radical project of Self-Respect now that it had lost its investments in the self of Self-Rule.

The shift was from a reform focused on the Hindu interiority of Self-Rule to more revolutionary gestures that drew upon such Self-Rule's exteriority, e.g. Islam, to generate Self-Respect possible only through more radically egalitarian relationships. The Self-Respect articles published in and shortly following the third month of the Muslim calendar, *Rabi' al-awwal*, provide evidence of this shift. This is the month of *Malwid,* the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, and thus when Muslims in the Madras Presidency and elsewhere would hold related celebrations. Though there were changes in the development of Self-Respect during the month of *Rabi' al-awwal* from 1925-1928, it would not be until 1929, after the break with Gandhi, that Islam began to feature prominently in Non-Brahmin political theory. Though EVR did not speak at celebrations of the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad from 1925-1928, when Self-Respect was still invested in a Gandhian project, EVR frequently spoke by invitation at Malwid during the month of *Rabi' al-awwal* from 1929 until his departure for Russia and Europe in 1931. And in these speeches, EVR claims Islam to be the remedy for Brahminism.

The most general appeal of Islam to EVR and the Self-Respect Movement is its claim for equality among all Muslims, in opposition to Hinduism's graded caste hierarchy. To stop there, however, suggests that Self-Respecters were naïve enough to believe that a principle of equality translates into equality's practice. Instead, EVR's speeches in and around Malwid suggest that Islam appealed for its ability to further press the life of the this-worldly householder into more complete realization than possible through a directly secular life of *ilvāḻkkai*. For, in addition to the love possible within the secular, one needed valor; it was not just romance but heroism that could bring about the radical change in the world demanded by Self-Respect. EVR's Malwid speeches from 1929-1931 reveal an Islam that was a world-historical fulfillment of love and valor and thus the very possibility of self-respect, in contrast with the ascetic nationalism of Brahminical self-rule.

EVR is clear that, unlike in the Hindu *matam*, in the Islam *matam* there is no high and low. Rather, there is an equality that extends not only across birth but income, education, and physique. Islam

> is a religion [*matam*] which holds the equality principle [*camattuvam koḷkai*]. That is, in the births [*piṛavi*] among people in the Muslim *matam* there is no high low [*uyarvu tāḻvu*] at all. Without making a difference [*vittiyācam*] between rich and poor, read and unread, weak [*iḷaittavaṉ*] and strong [*palacāli*], [Islam] gives to everyone all right in life [*vāḻvil cakala urimaiyum*].[970]

Such general characteristics are pressed into service as remedy to particular forms of abuse experienced in South India, namely, untouchability.

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[970] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṛanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Mr. Mohammad Nabi's Birth Day Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 7-9: p 8.

> In the Islam religion [*matam*] there is no *jāti* high-low. Among them there is no untouchability. There are none who will not eat near [*kiṭṭa*] you. There are no men who cannot walk on the road, no men who cannot draw [water] from the tank, no men who cannot enter the temple. Honest [*yōkkiyam*] Hindus who reflect on this should agree.[971]

Such claims for the absence of high-low in Islam here among Self-Respecters mark the radical departure from the claim we saw earlier that in "Mahatma [Gandhi]'s Self-Rule…there is no *jāti* high low [*jāti uyarvu tāl̲vu*]."[972]

Such phrases, however, suggest a rather facile parading of equality as a product without an appreciation of equality as a process. What is the *process* that Islam enables so that such equality can be achieved? I suggest that EVR sees, by these early speeches on or around Malwid and the month of *Rabi' al-awwal*, the possibility of further developing the opposition between householder and ascetic, as an illustration of the opposition between self-respect and self-rule. We have already seen the secular play that role, with a focus on romance and love. Islam provides EVR with an opportunity to couple this focus with that on heroism and valor to further contrast Non-Brahmin from Brahmin. Islam provides EVR with an outside, which Brahminism associated with the uncivilized, that provides the fulfillment of self-respect that has been corroded by the inside, which Brahminism associated with the civilized.

EVR unites both love and valor in Islam against the ascetic traditions of India. Such acetic traditions, as we have seen, were being mobilized for nationalist purposes, for defending the culture and tradition of Indian civilization through Gandhian tactics that included *ahimsa* or non-violence and, by extension, vegetarianism. For the Non-Brahmin, however, such ascetic traditions marked a cowardice that fostered abuse and inhumane treatment.

> Seeing the love [*aṉpu*] and valor [*vīram*] among them we [*nām*] call them [Muslims] ruffians. Just like that, we [*nām*] see the disgust [*tuvēsham*] [for others considered low] and cowardice among Hindus to each other [because of caste divisions] and we [*nām*] call these the quality of the *Sadhu* [ascetic Saint]. In a village, if a Hindu beats an Islam-person a 100 Islam-people come and descend. It is this which we call ruffianism [*muraṭṭuttaṉam*]. If an Islam-person beats a Hindu the other Hindus say "whoever beat him, what concern is it to us" [as he is another caste] and simply leave. If not they are afraid of being beaten. It is that which is the quality of the Sadhu [ascetic] of which we speak proudly. Where is the love [*aṅpu*] and fraternity [*cakōtarattaṉmai*] of the Hindu? [What] is just saying "Don't eat goat and chicken" [e.g. eat vegetarian]. He who does matters such as thinking people degradingly, lowering, *himsa* [*imci*, e.g. violence] and treating [them] cruelly [*koṭumai*] in the name of [their] birth [*piṛavi*] is he who speaks "Love! Love! [*Aṉpu*! *Aṉpu*!] Compassion-for-all-living-things! [*jīvakāruṇyam*]!!!' The truth of love [*aṉpu*] is not known [*aṛi*]. In the Islam principle [*koḷkai*], however it may be wherever else, in social life [*camūka vāl̲vu*] and in the presence of God [*āṇṭavaṉ muṉṉilai*], the human is thought of as human [*maṉitaṉ*].[973]

The ascetic saint, as a model for national *swaraj*, lays a claim to love, to *aṉpu*, to compassion for life. But rather than treating humans as humans and mobilizing against abuse, the ascetic saint permits and encourages forms of disgust for and degradation of others, a fear of intervening to prevent violence, masked with demonstrations of compassion for animals through advocating a

[971] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacami's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 10, 15-16: 15.
[972] Vīrappapiḷḷai, "*Piṛamatam Pukutalum Tīṉṭāmaiyum*," 9-10.
[973] KA 2 August 1931 : 15.

vegetarian diet. Such ascetic love is a hollow *aṉpu*, an *aṉpu* without any hint of the *kātal* we saw earlier. In short, the ascetic claim to *ahimsa* [non-violence] is actually the perpetuation of *himsa* [violence]. Muslim love and valor, shunned by Hindus as ruffianism, uncouth, and uncivilized, appears as a way of resolving unjust practices in the present. Islam does not preserve but in fact denies the Hindu self's capacity to reform.

The reversal here—where those who claim *ahimsa,* love, and compassion for life are actually those who perpetuate *himsa*, disgust, and degradation of the living—provides a complement to the focus on *ilvāḻkkai* above. The struggle against Brahminism is now not simply about recovering a widely accepted category—such as love-as-*aṉpu*, which, through love-as-*kātal*, becomes this-worldly intimacy rather than other-worldly devotion—but recovering an unaccepted category—that of *himsa* or violence. The disavowal of *himsa* by ascetic Brahminism—whose most pronounced articulation we find in Gandhian *swaraj*—required new, forceful articulations of warning at home. Such articulations were required because such *ahimsa* masked other articulations of force far more violent.

What I am translating as "ruffian"—or *muraṭṭu* which means roughness, ruggedness, wildness, rudeness, obstinacy, etc.—was the Non-Brahmin entré into a constellation of terms associated with *himsa* or physical force. "Some have written to me that the Muslim *matam* [*makammatiyam matam*] forms a ruffian nature [*muraṭṭu cupāvam*]. If that is true, I think that is a good reason for recommending [*cipārcu*] the Muslim religion [*matam*]…"[974] This constellation of terms included longstanding Tamil investments in heroism or valor [*vīram*], and was understood as being mobilized on a basis of love [*aṉpu*] rather than in contrast with love:

> It is no wonder that that the solidarity and valor among Muslims are seen by the Hindus as [reason to think them] Wicked-People. If a *Sahib* [master] hits me then an *Ayyar* [Brahmin] or a *Ceṭṭiyaar* [upper-caste] or *Mutaliyār* [upper-caste] would not come to intervene [*cipārcu*].[975] Because of *jāti*-division the quality-of-fraternity [*cakōtarattaṉmai*] has gone among Hindus, the love [*aṉpu*] of one for another has gone. Because there is no *jāti*-division, the Muslim people have had the quality-of-fraternity. Everyone has the habit of being afraid if they see one who has fraternals [*cakōtararkaḷ*] freely.[976]

Caste division produced by disgust and degradation has corroded Hinduism irrevocably. Islam achieves solidarity because it encourages fraternity and love between one and another. Such love is the basis for intervention, animated not only by valor but terms like "manliness" and "daring": "the Muslim religion [*matam* is a religion [*matam*] which gives manliness [*āṇmai*] and valor [*vīram*]. How?—they are more daring [*tuṇivu*] than others. If others see them [Muslims] the others are afraid but they [Muslims] are not afraid of anyone."[977]

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[974] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Uṇmaināṭṭuvōr Caṅkam: Ē.Ve. Rāmacāmiyār Upanniyācam: Matam Māṟutal; Carasvati Pūjai* [Erode Truth-Seekers Society: EV Ramacami's Address: Religious Change; Saraswati Puja]" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 20 October 1929: 7-8.

[975] *Cipārcu* is one of many Persion/Urdu loan words used in these speeches. Urdu, *sifārish*.

[976] EVR, "*Ērōṭṭil Tiru. Mukamatu Napi Piṟantnāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Talaivar: Vēlūr Maulvi Sharputīṉ Cāyapu Upaṉyācam* [Mr. Mohammed's Brithday Celebration in Erode: Head, EVR: Speech by Maulvi Sharputīṉ Cāyapu of Vēlūr," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 8.

[977] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṟanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Mr. Mohammad Nabi's Birth Day Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 8.

EVR and others, invested in gender equality, were generally critical of "manliness."[978] Yet daring and valor were vital ingredients to the radical program of Self-Respect: "The meaning of valor is to dare to lose [lit: release] one's life for goals [*ilakshiyam*]."[979] And the goal of Islam, at the very least, was the elimination of "high low" and accompanying modes of disgust and degradation.

### *INSULAR*

The preceding discussion raises at least two questions central to understanding Islam's appeal to the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. First was the question of insularity. Muslims have love for one another. But do Muslims only have love for other Muslims, yet disregard—if not have disgust [*tuvēsham*] for—non-Muslims? On first blush, the answer seems to be "yes." EVR claims that "the Muslim religion [*matam*] has a lot of solidarity [*oṛṛumai*]. That is, if the slightest harm is done by a stranger [*anniyaṉ*] to an individual [*taṉi*] human who is a part of that religion [*matam*], immediately all of them [Muslims] join as one and, thinking as if [that harm] came to themselves, rise up urgently [*avacaram*] to provide help to him."[980] Muslims protect other Muslims, because they consider all Muslims equal, which stands in contrast to Hindus who do not protect other Hindus, and who consider all Hindus on a hierarchical scale of high and low. Muslims have an ambiguous relationship, at best, to non-Muslims.

While in part true, to stop here would be to miss the ways in which EVR considers Islam to be the fulfillment of a world-historical process and therefore appropriate for world-spatial adoption. We are, actually, *all* Muslims. EVR maintains a progressive view of time where reforms against injustice anywhere are suitable reforms against injustice everywhere. The point of departure was a world saturated with Aryanism—the *Āriyaṉ* menace we discussed in Part V. As a contributor to *Kuṭi Aracu* named Abdullah [Aptulhai] claims in January 1928, "people are born for the sake of religion [*matam*] without realizing that religion [*matam*] was brought about for the sake of humans," which requires "research about that which is called religion [*matam*], established upon their high reason [*pakuttaṛivu*]" in order to "awaken the Dravidian people who have been caught by the neck beneath the yoke of the Shastras of the Aryan race [*varkkam*]," and concludes that "such high research made Tiru [EV Ramasami] Nāyakkar [EVR] descend into the self-respect [*cuya-mariyātai*] war."[981] We saw in the last chapter how such Non-Brahmin concerns were anything but regional by the late 1930s, given the rise of Nazi Germany. But even here in the late 1920s among EVR's *Malwid* speeches, the *Āriyaṉ* provides the point of departure for understanding a world-historical progressive movement towards human justice.

EVR sees a world that had been saturated with Aryanism in its primitive state. Against such Aryanism had arisen social reformers like the Buddha, Jesus Christ, Socrates, and Mohammed who suffered at the hands of the orthodox powers of the time.

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[978] Of course, Self-Respect would be critical of this emphasis on issues of "manliness". For example, see EVR, *Peṇkaḷ Viṭutalaikku 'Aaṇmai' Aḻiyaveeṇṭum* [For Women's Freedom, Manliness Must Be Destroyed]," *Pakuttaṛivu* (May 1938): 3-6.

[979] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacami's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 15.

[980] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṛanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Mr. Mohammad Nabi's Birth Day Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 8.

[981] Aptulhai, "*Makkaḷum Matamum* [People and Religion]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 22 January 1928: 8, 13.

> It has come to be known that about two or three thousand years ago, every where in the world Hindu religion [*matam*] principles [*koḷkaikaḷ*]—that is, rather, Aryan religion principles—had spread. How was that? At one time in the world matters in which many gods were worshipped, idols [*vikkirakam*] were worshipped, live sacrifices were made, etc. were religion [*matam*] principles. From that [condition] on one side was the Buddha Dharma, on the other side Christianity, and furthermore many great-ones [*periyār*] set out to do reform and had been undertaking effort with great difficulty.
>
> Because of their effort which appeared as new for that time, it happened that they were slandered as atheists[982] and given great suffering, and Christ the Savior [*nātar*], Socrates, and others were killed. Many ages after that, our revered [*tiru*] Prophet [*napi*] Mohammed set out to reform those principles.[983]

As we know from other contexts, Aryanism was not just the worship of idols, but closely associated with rankings of high/low that pit Brahmin against Pariah. The Buddha, Jesus, Socrates, and Mohammed were "great-ones [*periyār*]" slandered as atheists because of efforts to reform society and destroy Aryanism—just like, EVR implies, himself. Yet the people, despite their persecution by those in power, were drawn to them.

EVR sees the success of these historical reforms elsewhere in contrast to the Hindu society of his day. In EVR's present, the persistence of unreformed *Āriyaṉ* ways is implied to be the reason for India's colonization:

> Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed the Prophet appeared as reformers [*cīrtiruttakkārarkaḷ*]. The people of each and every country [*nāṭu*] accepted the reform of their great-ones [*periyār*]. In saying that in behavior they [the people] were acting mistakenly in a variety of different matters, each and everyone's society [*camūkam*] developed [*perukki*], all were pulled together [*iḻuttuppiṭittu*] and became one. There is no mistake at all that they acted by maintaining the unity fervor, equality fervor, and fraternity [*cakōtara*] fervor. That was an act [*kāriyam*] which made each society live excellently [*mēṉmai*] with honor [*māṉam*].
>
> The Hindu society [*camūkam*]—the name of our country [*nātu*], our society [*camūkam*]– in this action [*kāriyam*] has reached a completely empty direction [*cūṉyaticai*], it has reached a wasted direction [*kshīṉaticai*] for its society has been used for all other society-people [as a society to colonize].[984]

For EVR, India's Aryanism, persisting through the Hindu, had destroyed India. Aryanism cannot be reformed through Brahminism's reform, but only through more powerful world-historical movements.

But which one? In a world of progressive history, first is worst and last is best. Mohammed, as the most recent in this series of radical social reforms, is not only like his predecessors in their elimination of Aryanism, but in fact, by being the most recent, their culmination.

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[982] Typo: *nattikarkaḷ* should be *nāttikarkaḷ*.

[983] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṟanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Mr. Mohammad Nabi's Birth Day Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 7.

[984] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṟanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 7

> Yet still if to speak more clearly, I say confidently [*tairiyam*] even that now among all the great-ones [*periyārs*] who are said by us to be religion [*matam*]-head-persons it is the respected Prophet Mohammed who is the highest, and that all people generally should, for the most part [*peritum*], follow him as the suitable-one [*uriyār*]. Because the respected Prophet Mohammed's religion [*matam*] principles [*koḷkaikaḷē*] was a religion [*matam*] that was later and is more recent than all other religions [*matam*]. Therefore I say that it removed all errors and faults among other [prior] religions [*matam*] and is [thus] that which has an amount of reform [*cīrtiruttam*] [in which] just about everyone is able to agree…
>
> …Therefore, [by virtue of being the most recent among agents opposing Aryanism,] the Prophet found and spread [*para*] his superior [*uyariya*] new principles of that which was suitable for most [*peritum*] knowledge, that which was necessary, that which was suitable for the human race [*maṉitavarkkam*], that which had [*vāyntatatum*] a good human nature. If we ask how these sorts of superior principles appeared only to him, he well knew all the character flaws of the other religions [*matam*] since his religion [*matam*] had come about in a later age at the end and he could [therefore] create a religion [*matam*] with reform as much as possible. But also at that time the people-of-old-principle said that the respected Prophet was an atheist and a traitor of God and in many ways had caused [him] suffering; they had tried to kill [him]. Even so, the respected Prophet was unafraid for whatever and stood with determination and well impressed [*patiyum*] his principle [on the minds of] the people. Therefore one should say that he was a great reformer suitable for that age, a great devotee [*tiyāki*] without self-interest [*taṉṉalam*], and a prophet.[985]

Coming at the end of a progressivist history, Muhammad was able to incorporate previous efforts at reform and eliminating Aryanism into his religion [*matam*], achieving a religion [*matam*] that was, on the one hand, "suitable for that age," but on the other hand contained "superior principles" culminating in the maximum amount of "reform" appropriate, it seems, for humanity itself.

We should not ignore the fact that EVR's account of acts of social reform that culminated in the religion [*matam*] of Mohammed, as the culmination of reform itself, are void of any mention of the divine. EVR is clear about this, and clear that what was important to him was that Mohammed was seen in his time by prevalent powers as an *atheist*. We do not have records of how the crowds gathered to celebrate *Malwid* responded, but the fact that EVR's ideas were no secret, and that he was repeatedly invited to speak at *Malwid* celebrations from 1929-1931, suggests that many Muslims were interested in such a "secular" perspective. Such interest apparently was in an "atheist" Mohammed, e.g. one who was against the orthodoxy of his day and who created a new "religion" in order to destroy Aryanism.

So far, I have argued that EVR's *Malwid* speeches reveal a belief in Islam as the culmination of world-historical progress. On this account, the answer to our insular question is a qualified "yes": for EVR, Muslims are only concerned about equality with other Muslims, and this is just, as non-Muslims have not yet realized their own Muslim-hood, that is, their own capacity to be a part of the world-historical culmination of social reform. Hierarchical, Hindu, "Aryan" others must be brought within the fold to be equal. EVR's belief in progress echoes what the Euro-Atlantic political theorist may see as Hegelian in its appeal to universal reason, and EVR grafts one of the Non-Brahmin renderings of "reason," *pakuttaṛivu*, onto Islam because of its position in the culmination of history: "The Muslims say today confidently [*tairiyam*] that the Islam religion [*mārkkam*] is the *pakuttaṛivu* religion [*mārkkam*] and are ready to act

[985] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṛanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Mr. Mohammad Nabi's Birth Day Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 7-8.

accordingly…Why aren't other religion's [*mārkkam*] people ready to talk like that? Because, [only] their revered Prophet Mohammed appeared in the near-age…"[986] The "rational religion" is Islam, for it is the most recent religion and thus contains the culmination of past efforts of reform. Any deviance from Islam suggests an irrational Aryanism that must be eradicated.

Yet there is a tension here between universal justice that flattens differences, e.g. all are equally Muslim, and an appreciation of cultural variety and contextual texture, e.g. non-Muslims are equal too. As we noted in Chapter 10 on *samadharma*, self-respect was well aware of the delicate balance one must strike between the elimination of difference as a way of bringing about equality and the preservation of forms of difference through which equality can operate. Given this balance, we should not be surprised that, even in his investments in Islam as the world-historical culmination of human efforts to destroy Aryanism, EVR is concerned with difference, variety, and particularity. Such a concern comes not only in terms of historical period but in terms of other contextual features, such as nationality:

> The human is shackled to [differences of] age, nation, occurrences.[987] The human's religion [*mārkkam*] or principle [*koḷkai*] is also felt within it. I say so because I maintain that religion [*mārkkam*] is the guide for man's life [*vāḻkkai*]. That which is a path [*vaḻi*] may often change. A walking path, a path gone by goat, donkey and horse, a cart path, a motor path, a rail path, a steam ship path, and finally a plane path—like what is suitable for each and every age, the path [vaḻi] should be reformed. Like that, one should agree that the human's life path should necessarily change according to the circumstances [*cantarppam*], national [*tēcam*] quality and according to the passing of ages. The correct religion [*mārkkam*] is the [*mārkkam*] that gives room for change [*māṛutal*].[988]

The possibility of historical change and national quality providing texture to a flattened Islam invites us to ask: how much texture? How far can difference go?

EVR does not suggest that Islam provides an answer here. Instead, in his *Malwid* speeches, there are moments in which he suggests that Muhammad may not have been the culmination of world-historical efforts at reform, but rather, that Muhammad meets his fulfillment in Marx. "If one needed to pull out a principle [*koḷkai*] higher than the Islam religion [*matam*] principle, one should claim that it is the Russian religion [*matam*]."[989] The "Russian religion," of course, was *samadharma*, the non-Brahmin rendering of "communism" in their 1931 Tamil translation of *The Communist Manifesto.* While a discussion of Communism's fulfillment of Islam as the next stage in a progressive line of universal reformist world history extends beyond this dissertation, the suggestion that *samadharma*, the equality of *dharma*,

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[986] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṛanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 14.

[987] See also: "In addition, just like that, I never have agreed at any time that God formed all *matam koḷkaikaḷ*, nor that it is suitable for all time, nor that among them there should not be changes even in the slightest according to [*aṅucari*] time-nation-occurrence." EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṛanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Mr. Mohammad Nabi's Birth Day Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 7.

[988] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḻattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacami's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḻam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 16.

[989] EVR, "*Erōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Janāp Kē. Kātar Cāyapu Talaimai Vakittār: Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmiyiṉ Piracaṅkam* [Erode [Mohammed] Nabi Birthday Celebration: Janāp Kē. Kātar Cāyapu Responsible as Chair: E.V. Ramacami's Propaganda], in *Kuṯi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 12.

fulfills the reformist efforts of Muhammad in turn suggests another answer to our insular question, a qualified "no": non-Muslims are equal to Muslims as long as they are a part of Islam's fulfillment in *samadharma*. Perhaps the discussion of the *bhutam* in Chapter 10 may provide an answer to what *samadharma*'s fulfillment may mean.

Despite the suggestion that Communism, rather than Islam, may be the future *matam* suitable for the world, EVR generally in his *Malwid* speeches is clear that Islam's position in world history makes it suitable for world space in the present: "If one wants the whole world [*ulakam*] to come under one principle [*koḷkai*], then one wants [the whole world] to completely come to consent to the Islam principle [*koḷkai*]."[990] The reason is that Islam, eradicating high low, finally provides humanity with "self-respect":

> we say also that the Muslim [*makamatiya*] religion [*matam*] possesses a lot [*mikka*] of the feeling of self-respect [*cuyamariyātai uṇarcci*]. How so[?]—at no time would it [Islam] agree that God's avatars, prophets, and seers could have come to this world [*iṉi ulakam*]. It does not consent [*cammatippu*] in the slightest to one man bowing to another man or to him falling [at another man's] feet. Its greatness [*perumai*] is still yet boundless. The reason of all this greatness [*perumaikaḷ*] is this[:] as said before, because it is a religion [*matam*] of contemporary [*camīpakālam*] reform, and because Muhammad Nabi maintained good experience, wisdom [*ñāṉam*], prophet-ness [*tīrkkataricaṉam*], and determination, it is fitting to say that among all the religions [*matam*] in the world [*ulakam*] [Islam] is the [most] excellent religion [*matam*].[991]

Though there are suggestions that there may be a more fuller fulfillment, Islam for the most part remains, for EVR in his *Malwid* speeches, the culmination of a world-historical process of progressive reforms, achieving the fulfillment of self-respect and thus suitable for the whole world.

So, given the preceding discussion of the world-historical and world-spatial importance of Islam, how can we answer the question of insularity? Did EVR believe that Muslims only treated, and should only treat, other Muslims equally? To answer "yes" would not be wrong, but it would not be quite right either. Islam was understood as the culmination of world-historical progress with respect to social reform. Islam was, from the perspective of the Non-Brahmin, synonymous with the possibility of self-respect existing in the world; to treat equally those not on the side of self-respect would be incompatible with self-respect itself. Yet the suggestion that *samadharma* could be the fulfillment of Islam in turns suggests a relation of equality among different *dharmas*, perhaps Muslim and non-Muslim alike, though an equality that hews to Marx; how such equality could hew to Marx requires a return to Chapter 10. We must, it seems, leave our question of insularity without a satisfying answer. Here we note that the "divine" qualities associated with Islam were not significant to EVR; what was important, what gave Islam legitimacy, was Muhammad being outcaste as an atheist. Given that such speeches were provided by invitation to *Malwid* celebrations, we must presume Muslims in South India—who were, of course, by definition also "Non-Brahmin"—found something appealing, something interesting, something *redeemable* in EVR's position of Islam being the "rational religion."

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[990] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacami's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 16

[991] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṛanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Mr. Mohammad Nabi's Birth Day Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 8.

### *CIRCULAR*

Our second question is the question of circularity. EVR's *Malwid* speeches suggest that love among Muslims is the basis for their valor; it is care in equality for other Muslims that leads to solidarity articulated through force and sacrifice to defend one another. But he also suggests that valor is required to remove conditions of high and low which makes care possible; it is through force and sacrifice in the defeat of Aryanism that equality and subsequent care among Muslims can be achieved. Which comes first, then, valor or love? To answer this question requires us to recall that Islam's appeal to EVR was a markedly this-worldly one; Muhammad refuses, on EVR's account, that there is any divine element in "this world" and was dismissed by orthodox forces as an atheist. EVR's this-worldliness, though accommodating features of the reductive "secular vs religious" binary, is actually, I have argued, taking part in the conflict between Non-Brahmin and Brahmin refracted through the opposition between householder and ascetic. It was the fulfillment of self-respect as a householder, rather than self-rule's idioms of asceticism, that could truly bring about freedom. Islam, to be appealing to the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, would have to share in the life of love, romance, and intimacy that marked *ilvāḻkkai*-as-secular-life. I argue that it was the romance of *ilvāḻkkai* that provided the basis for Islam's valor: the Non-Brahmin secular is the basis for the Non-Brahmin Muslim. Moreover, I suggest that responding to the question of circularity helps resolve the insularity one.

The biological reproductive act producing the Prophet Mohammed, the fact that the Prophet Mohammed was a product of the intimate coupling associated with *ilvāḻkkai*, was central to Islam's appeal to EVR. Such appeal was three-fold. First, it meant that the Prophet Mohammed was a human:

> However someone may think about the revered Prophet Mohammed, I think only that he was a man and that like a man he was a child born of a mother and father (man and woman) [sic] who joined [*kūṭi*] and became pregnant, and I praise [*pukaḻ*] many of the matters which are said were done by him. That is why I praise [*pārāṭṭu*] him. I think that those things said like that are a great pride for that religion [*mārkkam*]. Buddha is just like that. But other religion [*matam*]-people get angry if you say that their religious [*matam*] leader is a human.[992]

The Prophet Mohammed was a human, born of a man and a woman through coupling. That the Prophet Mohammed was a human made Islam distinct from most other "religions" which require leadership from that which is foreign to *ilvāḻkkai*.

Second, and relatedly, that the Prophet Mohammed was amenable to *ilvāḻkkai* meant that he was neither fantastical nor animal, nor a mixture of the two. Such a point was central for the Non-Brahmin who felt that animal-like treatment of humans was justified in the name of supernatural forces:

> They [e.g. the Hindus] agree that he [god] appeared from the belly [born] of a donkey, or a horse, or a dog. They think that there is no dignity [*kauravam*] in being born mixed [*kalantu*] between a man [*manitaṉ*] and a woman [*maṉushi*]. Most people will not agree [*cammati*] to determine a

[992] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḻattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacami's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḻam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 10

> religion [*matam*] that increases humanity [*taṉmai*] and human's knowledge unless someone says at least something which people do not understand.[993]

The dignity of being human, of being the product of the coupling of man and woman, was central to self-respect, and set Islam apart from Hinduism.

Third, and further relatedly, that the Prophet Mohammad was human, was a product of a coupling in *ilvāḻkkai*, meant that Islam was a human product, and therefore amenable to human reform itself. For EVR, "religion [*matam*] is that which has principles [*koḷkais*] which show a path for conducting the worldly life of men. It was formed by a man like us[;] [we] have the right [*urimai*] to correct [it] [*tiruttiyamaikka*] for the sake of people's well-being according to that age's and nation's affairs [*varttam*]."[994] Notable here is that it is not simply the progress of history that may modify a religion, but national differences. As we saw above, the tension between universal history and cultural particularity is raised but not resolved.

The point here is that Islam, that which provides the valor and heroism supplementing the love and romance of *ilvāḻkkai*, is predicated on love and romance, on the productions and reproductions of the human. The answer to our question of circularity seems to be this: love comes before valor, *ilvāḻkkai* before the Muslim, the "secular" before the "rational religion" of Islam. But this answer spills out into our question of insularity: love, which EVR associates with equality, appears paradoxically before valor, which EVR associates with the destruction of inequality. On this account, Islam's fulfillment in the "Russian religion" of *samadharma* would not be one of progress but of return. Insularity, a concern that some are equals at the expense of others, and circularity, a concern with the ways in which love in equality is premised on valor's elimination of inequality just as valor's elimination of inequality is premised on love in equality, may in fact be married.

Islam appealed to Non-Brahmins in the world, as a way of wedding insularity and circularity in order to generate resolution. This appeal had three distinct elements. First, Islam's origins parallel its ends in India, namely, a reform of *ilvāḻkkai* which targeted the condition of women. Second, Islam shared in a position of outsider and foreign, the location of reform in opposition to the interiority of *swaraj* which required reform. Third, Islam was in fact beyond questions of theism and atheism altogether as irrelevant to world-historical progress.

For EVR, Islam's origins parallel its ends in India. EVR thereby folds within radical reform measures for Self-Respect at home those elsewhere and at other times. He insists that Muhammad in Arabia is like the Non-Brahmin in India. The Prophet Mohammed's challenges in Arabia, a place which we have been told was saturated with Aryanism, are described as parallel to the challenges in an Aryan-saturated South India. Unsurprisingly, his focus parallels earlier concerns with *ilvāḻkkai*, namely, that of women, marriage, divorce, etc.:

> In whatever way Maulvi Cāyapu said that Arabia was in the age in which Nabi appeared, in that very way still India-Hindu principles [*koḷkai*] have been. Maulvi Cāyapu said that in places of Arabia there was the habit [*vaḻakkam*] in which if a girl child was born then with sorrow it was killed. In the places of Hindus if a girl child is born there is still this sorrowful habit. Up until the contemporary age, there had been the habit of, if a husband died, then a woman—an adult woman—would be placed beside [him] while alive and burned. Even today, [worse] than that,

[993] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacami's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 10

[994] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacami's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 10

> women have been humiliating called a widow, imagined as an ill-omen, and then die in a way experience cruelty [*koṭumai*]… Therefore, however it was among the savages of the desert and forest of Arabia before the appearance Muhammad Nabi, just like that up to today has been the Hindu society [*camūkam*] of India.[995]

EVR persists in recovering what he sees as Islam's liberating power for women, a power that contains a liberal inflection of "rights." "In the Muslim religion [*matam*] women have right [*urimai*]. That is, women have the right to property, widow marriage, the liberty [*cutantaram* (*cutantiram*)] to leave if a husband and wife do not go-together [*ottukkoḷ*], the liberty [*cutantaram*] to study…"[996] EVR repeats this claim later: "Furthermore, for their [Muslim] women there are such things as widow marriage, wedding rejection [*rattu*], and property-right [*cotturimai*]."[997] The expression "wedding rejection" was the widely used Non-Brahmin expression for divorce[998]; we have already seen it in the speech by Ms. Intirāṇipālacuppiramāṇiyam. The word for "rejection" here, *rattu*, is technical and is rarely used outside of the expression for divorce; *rattu* is the Tamilization of the Arabic word *radd* [رد] meaning "reject." Historically, EVR claims that Islam has been liberating for women; Arabic words capture expressions of such liberty. Islam's reforming past should become India's reforming present.

EVR is not dismissing India in favor of Arabia, however, but rather recovering the critical position of the outsider. Islam is not a replacement for but rather evidence of an effort to re-engage with India's own reformist past. Yet reformist Indian history, like Islam's past, has been redeemed as foreign or outcaste, cast out, and thus shares in a shared fate. Muslims being outside, being foreign, in a spatial twist, meant that they were therefore within the realm of Self-Respect, which was equally positioned against an interiority, called Self-Rule. It was in this outside that non-Brahmin Tamil and Muslim would meet—perhaps anticipating the Dravidian separatism of the late 1930s which echoed demands for Pakistan. They were both outcaste, a space associated now with the realm of householding *ilvāl̲kkai* rather than independence-demanding asceticism. That is to say, being outside in the realm of Self-Respect, rather than withdrawn within the realm of Self-Rule, was the very space, the wide-world external to the national, that the Tamil Non-Brahmin and the Muslim met. They shared in being outcastes, as it

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[995] The elipses removes discussion of idols, many of which are animals and prostitutes. "[Maulvi Caayapu] said that in Arabia they worshipped many Gods [*kaṭavuḷ-s*]. Like that even today, not only do Hindus pray with the form [*uruvam*] of each and every many crores of Gods [*kaṭavuḷ-s*], [but they also pray] with the forms of girl, child, courtesan, goat, cow, horse, elephant, rat, bandicoot [*peruccāḻi*], peacock, bird [*karuṭań*] and snake. Do not think that all of these are of those called Low-People [*kiizhmakkaḷ*]. In the name of *matam* [even] High-People [*mēlmakkaḷ*] people who have sustained/tied the conclusion [*muṭivu*] have [them/these gods]." Given the importance of being human for EVR, being born of a man and a woman, it is not accidental the women's rights are linked to the eradication of idols. EVR, "*Ērōṭṭil Tiru. Mukamatu Napi Piṛantnāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Talaivar: Vēlūr Maulvi Sharputī̲ Cāyapu Upaṉyācam* [Mr. Mohammed's Brithday Celebration in Erode: Head, EVR: Speech by Maulvi Sharputī̲ Cāyapu of Vēlūr," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 8.

[996] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṛanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Mr. Mohammad Nabi's Birth Day Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 7-9: p 8.

[997] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacami's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 15.

[998] See, for example, S.V. Tonti, "*Vivākarattiṉ Avaciyam* [The Necessity of Marriage-Rejection (e.g. divorce)]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 6: KM Pālacuppiramaṇiyam, BA, BL, "*Vivāha Viṭutalai*" [Marriage Freedom] in *Kuṭi Aracu*, 23 August 1931: 8. Pālacuppiramaṇiyam explicitly draws a distinction between "*(Judicial Separation)* '*caṭṭa vilakku*'" and *"(Divorce) 'vivāha rattu*'."

were, and thus were distinct from Brahminical projects of self-rule wed to Hinduism and its Sanskrit:

> Even now, both in Sanskrit and in the Tamil dictionaries which rely on it [Sanskrit], the meaning of Turk/Musalman is written *mleccha* [*milēccar*] [foreigner-as-polluted]. Along with the Turk language, even still in the Brahmin *Nighaṇṭḥ* [vedic glossary] and Dictionary, it is said that *mleccha* language is like the Brahmin talking about the Tamil language. How can Muslims be in solidarity with those who hold this sort of disgust [*tuvēsham*] feeling?[999]

Brahmin/Sanskrit was equally opposed to Tamil Non-Brahmin and Muslim alike. Such exclusion made "ruffianism" an attractive alternative to subjugation in regimes of Brahmin non-violence and civility. And it made the Tamil Non-Brahmin and Muslim much more a part of the wide world than a part of the nationalist project of *swaraj*. This fusion of Tamil Non-Brahmin and Muslim does not erase but provides opportunity for the reinscription of a heterodox, reformist Indian past. EVR does not dismiss India in favor of Arabia, as it were, but in fact finds in foreign lands native possibilities for such radical egalitarian measures. In the context of Islam, he mentions parrallels with, for example, "our great men" [*namatu periyārkaḷ*] that have historically struggled against such "high low" and for *camattuvam* [equality], such as Rāmāṉujar and the teachings of the text *Tēvāram*.[1000]

Islam, a product of *ilvāḻkkai*, continues to loop back, despite its world-wide appeal, to engaging justice in home life. Its investment in *ilvāḻkkai* in its origins and its ends places Islam beyond concerns with theism and atheism that map onto the self-rule binary of national loyalty or national treachery. In fact, the Prophet Mohammed's extension of concerns with *ilvāḻkkai*, adding valor to romance, heroism to love, enabled new sorts of just, radical reforms.

> In truth, we are not worried about that which is Atheism and Theism. We are ready as people of Self-Respect [*cuya-mariyātai*] to burn whatever Shastra and Purana [religious texts] that are an obstacle to social [*camūkam*] freedom [*viṭutalai*] and progress [*muṉṉēṟṟam*] by establishing *jāti* difference [*vittiyācam*] cruelties [*koṭumai*] through playing the game [*pantayam,* 'gamble'] wherein this man is a low-man and that man is a high-man in this world. If a religion [*matam*] creates an obstacle [*karakōsham*] to people's progress, whatever religion [*matam*] that may be, we should automatically [*tāṇāka*] destroy it. (Listen) Did God [*kaṭavuḷ*] create you as a Pariah [*paṟaiyaṉ*]; did god [*cuvāmi*] create me as a Sudra [*cūttiraṉ*]? [Did] god [*kaṭavuḷ*] create him as a Brahmin [?]…However much high low [*uyarvu tāḻvu*] is affirmed by morality [*oḻukkam*], the *pēys* [ghosts] of *jāti* cruelty [*koṭumai*] will not be destroyed.[1001]

Therefore, given Islam's focus on the elimination of high-low regardless of atheism and theism, EVR declares in his Non-Brahmin present, "Up until the few minutes before I die, I will die as a Muslim in the dusk of death struggling to destroy the deception [*puraṭṭu*] of this *jāti* religion [*matam*] Purana."[1002] This is because "One does not see among Muslims *jāti* difference

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[999] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṟanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Mr. Mohammad Nabi's Birth Day Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 9.
[1000] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṟanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Mr. Mohammad Nabi's Birth Day Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 8.
[1001] EVR, "*Kaṇṇappar Vācakacālai Tiṟappu Viḻā* [Kaṇṇappar Library Opening Ceremony]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 11 August 1929: 7.
[1002] EVR, "*Kaṇṇappar Vācakacālai Tiṟappu Viḻā* [Kaṇṇappar Library Opening Ceremony]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 11 August 1929: 8.

[*vittiyācam*] nor between men the humiliating [*kēvalam*] feeling of high low [*uyarvu tāḻvu*]. In the Mosque [*ālayam*], whether one is a king or an ordinary man, they worship only as equals. His religion [*matam*] gives him solidarity [*oṛṛumai*] and heroism [*vīram*]."

In short, EVR claims that Islam finds parallels with heterodox traditions in India, that Muslims and Non-Brahmins share an outsider position, and that equality is beyond questions of theism and atheism. In these three claims, EVR provides an answer to the question of circulairty from the position of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. The answer is not that love and equality or valor against inequality come first, but rather that interior reforms rely on external ones, achievements here bear a synergistic relationship with achievements there, that acts of redemption between are required for acts of redemption within. Heterodoxy, exteriority, and this-worldliness require world-historical efforts that undo issues of priority within (love or valor) to issues of priority without (the world).

### *PALESTINE & GEORGE MANSUR*

So far, we have seen Islam positioned as the world-historical and world-spatial fulfillment of the possibility of self-respect, providing the valor and heroism required to bring self-respect about in the world. By the late 1930s, that world seemed increasingly to be one where Islam was under attack. Such attack went beyond whatever Hindu-Muslim conflicts were present under the British Raj. Abroad, Non-Brahmins saw Muslim Palestinians overrun by Jewish Capital in the name of self-rule. At home, Non-Brahmins saw Muslim Indians overrun by Brahmin elites in the name of self-rule. The temptation, to which some Non-Brahmins succumbed as we saw in the last chapter, was to conflate Jew and Brahmin as equal representatives of a regressive Aryanism whose demand for *swaraj* was bent on destroying the possibility of self-respect that Islam, and its possible fulfillment in Communism, was thought to inaugurate. Both provide examples of Non-Brahmin investments in Islam as an egalitarian project of radical social reform. And yet, these radical egalitarian aspirations were quickly being impoverished by the monopoly *swaraj* had upon the political imaginary.

If the Islamic radical reform of Arabia in the Prophet Mohammed's past is to provide a parallel to the Self-Respect reformation of India in EVR's Non-Brahmin present, we should not be surprised if Self-Respecters were somewhat concerned with Arabia's present. That present was worrying. Under the British Mandate for Palestine, Jews in the same of self-rule were displacing Palestinians. There was urgency of this situation for understanding the fate of a world-wide Islam whose past and present provided a model for Self-Respect. Self-Respecters found a framework for analyzing Palestine in the writings of George Mansur. Mansur was a Palestinian labor organizer central to the 1936 General Strike, part of the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 against British colonial rule in general but particularly against the Jewish immigration that British rule not only permitted but actively protected.[1003]

Jē. Ka. Vēlaṉ published a translation of a speech Mansur delivered in London at the Economic Reform Club. The translation, under the title *Pālastīṉattiṉ Poruḷātāra Nilai* or "The Palestinian Economic Situation," was published serially in *Kuṭi Aracu* from 6 November 1938 to 22 January 1939.[1004] It is a very detailed, high resolution look at the condition of Palestinian

[1003] There has recently been an increased interest in George Mansour evident, for example, in the special issue of *settler colonial studies* 2:1 (2012). Republished there is Mansour's 1937 paper "The Arab Worker under the Palestine Mandate," pp 190-205.

[1004] KA 6 November 1938: 9, 13; 4 December 1938: 7, 14; 18 December 1938: 5-6, 15; 25 December 1938: 6, 15; 22 January 1939: 6, 15.

labor in the wake of "settler Jews (rich businessmen) [sic]."[1005] It is filled with numbers and statistics relating to everything from agricultural production, such as that dealing with orange groves and advantages provided through mechanical farming, to handicrafts, such as shaving soap and scented oils, in order to illustrate how "Jews develop to all sorts of levels in handicrafts and agriculture."[1006] It argues that British policies related to duty and tax allowed Jewish goods to become competitive in the global market than Palestinian ones.[1007] It describes how "Jewish Rule" [*yūta rājiyam*] coupled with British imperialism has led to "police forces crushing Palestinian Arab's liberty protests."[1008] A look at the "Arab worker" "boils the blood" given his starvation and suffering: "Why in that country is there no food to eat nor place to take shelter? All is there. The recently settled Jews are plundering the means of the Arab worker's life," "suffocating…compassion-for-all-living things [*jīvakāruṇyam*]."[1009] And, along with Mansur's own concerns with injustice, are added other voices, such as that of Sir Jonathan Hope Simpson who claims that "There is no justice in the dispute which claims that if Jews want place [*iṭam*] then this country's Arabs should be expelled."[1010]

A striking feature of Vēlaṉ's translation is the absence of the term "Zionist"; instead, any Jew is simply translated as "Jew." Given the Congress victory of February 1937, rising Nazi aggression in Europe, and the threat of Hindi imposition, it would have been remarkably easy for Non-Brahmins to associate with the Palestinian Arab against a settler Jew that collapsed, in the absence of a "zionist" inflection, with Jews *per se*. Such association would have been in stark contrast to the parallel associations we have seen elsewhere between Non-Brahmin and German Jew-as-Pariah. The conflation of these events is perhaps best demonstrated visually, collapsing once again into attention toward a global *āriyaṉ* threat.

குடி அரசு

பாலஸ்தினத்தின்
பொருளாதார நிலை.

இந்திப் போர்.

Image 48. An installment of Mansour's "Palestinian Economic Condition," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 December 1938: 6. The title of the image below, however, is "Hindi War." According to the caption, the photo is of 15 men, one "heroic woman," and her 1 ½ year old child protesting mandatory Hindi outside a Hindu school alongside two police inspectors.

[1005] Jē. Ka. Vēlaṉ, "*Pālastīṉattiṉ Poruḷātāra Nilai*," 6 Nov 1938: 9.
[1006] Jē. Ka. Vēlaṉ, "*Pālastīṉattiṉ Poruḷātāra Nilai*," 18 Dec 1938: 5, 6.
[1007] Jē. Ka. Vēlaṉ, "*Pālastīṉattiṉ Poruḷātāra Nilai*," 25 Dec 1938: 15.
[1008] Jē. Ka. Vēlaṉ, "*Pālastīṉattiṉ Poruḷātāra Nilai*," 25 Dec 1938: 6.
[1009] Jē. Ka. Vēlaṉ, "*Pālastīṉattiṉ Poruḷātāra Nilai*," 22 Jan 1939: 6.
[1010] Jē. Ka. Vēlaṉ, "*Pālastīṉattiṉ Poruḷātāra Nilai*," 25 Dec 1938: 6.

Above, Image 48, is the fourth installment of Vēlaṉ's translation of Mansur's "Palestinian Economic Condition." The image on the page, however, falls under the caption "Hindi War" and portrays Tamil Non-Brahmins protesting the imposition of mandatory Hindi declared under Rajagopalachariyar's administration. Given the juxtaposition, the settler Jew in Palestine could seem much more like the *swaraj* demanding Brahminical Congress than Non-Brahmin Self-Respecters protesting the imposition of a "foreign" language.

Perhaps a few years earlier, concerns over Jew Rule would have been part of a wider critique of Self Rule itself—which would include self-rule by Muslim selves as well as Dravidian selves. However, by the late 1930s, Self-Rule was the name of the game (Chapter 13), and a whole variety of demands for *Raj* or Rule by ethnic selves was accepted world-wide. Self-Respecter attitudes to Muslim lands illustrate an amplified investment in self-rule. For example, an article titled "World Muslims' Condition" published in 1940 documents the global population (40 crore or 400,000,000) and geographic spread of Muslims (5 continents), ethno-linguistic divisions (7 "*jāti*": Arabic, Farsi, Turkish, Urdu, Chinese, Malay, Negro), and "political condition" (independent or colonized).[1011] It is this latter category that is the most important, and the articles 14 demands of "world Muslims" centers on "independence [*cuyēccai*]" for an exhaustive list of places like Pakistan, Palestine, Malaysia, and Sudan from the British, Morocco and Syria from France, the Dutch West Indies from Holland, Azerbaijan and central Europe from Russia, and Albania and Tripoli from Italy. Islam was being articulated through demands for national independence world-wide.

In short, by the late 1930s, Muslims in the world again seemed to incarnate the pressures faced by the Non-Brahmin. But such pressures, unlike those of the 1920s and early 1930s, were less about the priority of self-respect over self-rule and more about a self-rule required for self-respect. This marriage of the Non-Brahmin and the Muslim in the shift to self-rule as a way to achieve self-respect need not cast its glance so far into the world toward a place like Palestine. This marriage was even closer to home.

### *PAKISTAN & MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH*

Islam was not only being articulated across the world through a demand for national independence but within South Asia itself. Pakistan, featuring as a region of the Muslim world requiring such independence, had become, across the late 1930s, a recurring feature of the Non-Brahmin demand for a Dravidian independence. For example EVR, in a speech from April 1940 shortly after meeting with both Jinnah and Ambedkar earlier that year in Bombay, justified rising Dravidian separatism upon a larger tri-part division of India into "Muslim India, Aryan India, and Dravidian India."[1012] The world-historical justification for this division brings us back to SubContinental Political Theory; in EVR's view, it was British control of a unified India that engendered German wrath and subsequent war: "The philosophy of the war is simply that the Englishman has held greater India. And Germany's impatient temper is just this. If India is split, there certainly will not be war throughout the world—it will not happen." We may doubt some of EVR's reasoning here. But the article is clear that, just as EVR earlier imagined Non-Brahmin self-respect to be achieved by, at least in part, an engagement with Islam in the history of the world, so too now does EVR imagine Dravidian self-rule to be achieved by, at least in

[1011] Em. Ār. Ṭi. "*Ulaka Muslimkaḷ Nilaimai* [World Muslims' Condition]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 4 February 1940: 7.
[1012] EVR, "*Tamiḻnāṭu Piriya Vēṇṭum Eṉṟu Nām Ēṉ Colkiṟōm?* [Why Do We Say that Tamil Nadu Should Split?]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 21 April 1940: 1-2, 15. p 15.

part, an engagement with Islam in the world's present. That is to say, Islam's shift from internationalism to nationalism parallels the Non-Brahmin shift from internationalism to nationalism.

The world-wide significance of Dravidian India is, of course, not solely based on EVR's perhaps exaggerated suggestion that it would end war in Europe. EVR also has other concerns. He is concerned with, of course, Brahmin or Aryan domination under a unified Indian *swaraj*, claiming that "self-rule in India is madness" and will result in "slavery" and that *swaraj* is related to "mixing [*kalappu*] with the Aryan" as "itself the cause for slavery." He is concerned with economic exploitation as a part of that slavery, where "northerners have been draining wealth from here," while Gandhi is understood as "an agent of capitalists of north country" who is against "machines" and bent on the persistent poverty of the south through an emphasis on the "spinning wheel" over the "mill."[1013] And EVR is concerned with the status of the Dravidian as a "minority" in a greater India, which not only threatens their "customs" –"How will our children know our national history? How will Dravidian national devotion come to them?"—but also threatens efforts to reform, such as when Non-Brahmin demands for widow remarriage are crushed by an "Indian" majority.[1014] Separatism (Chapter 13) provided an answer.

Seeing virtue in the "little little countries of Europe" and claiming for them an ability to resist exploitation, EVR believes that, like with Muslim India, "if the rule of Dravida Nadu [country] is kept for the Dravidians, it will prevent not only the exploitation [*curaṇṭu*] of the Aryan but also of the white-man." Along the way, Muslim countries like Turkey and Afghanistan provide a model. Therefore, EVR concludes, "We need to be like Muslims. We need to cooperate with Jinnah. There is not objection if a place is given for the comfort we ask for. For an amicable settlement, we should attain our rule [*āṭci*], [our] country [*nāṭu*]."[1015] EVR's insistence on Non-Brahmins "be[ing] like Muslims" here in their nationalist demands extends earlier efforts, I suggest, regarding his insistence to be like Muslims in the more internationalist inflection of self-respect.

Jinnah was a rallying point for Non-Brahmins in articulating separatist demands against *swaraj*. We have already seen Jinnah's support extended to EVR on defeating mandatory Hindi. In his above speech justifying Dravidian separatism, EVR was clear how there was "no one in Congress with national attachment [*paṛṛu*] like Jinnah" and yet, because of "deception [*cūḻcci*]," Jinnah was leading Muslims out of Congress after 50 years of Muslim supporting Congress; Non-Brahmins were in the same boat.[1016] Jinnah not only provided a contrast to Congress but also to right-wing Hindu nationalists like VD Savarkar—the man understood as providing the beginnings of "Hindutva," the consequences of which we saw in 1981—who had lost "respect [*matippu*]" for Congress but were trying to achieve influence through instigating "Hindu-Muslim clash[es]" and, in fact, appeared in South India "whenever we think to vote with the Muslim."[1017]

Yet Jinnah's ability to serve as a rallying point, equally evident in the many Muslim conferences published in Self-Respecter publications, had a global component. For example, one Muslim at a rally in Tanjore recalls the 1937 election with wrath for the Brahmin: "The Brahmin named Nehru and the Brahmin newspaper called *The Hindu* deceived the people in the common election through the arrogance of possessing a majority…You would know that they had written

[1013] EVR, "*Tamiḻnāṭu Piriya Vēṇṭum*," 1, 2, 15.
[1014] EVR, "*Tamiḻnāṭu Piriya Vēṇṭum*," 2.
[1015] EVR, "*Tamiḻnāṭu Piriya Vēṇṭum*," 15.
[1016] EVR, "*Tamiḻnāṭu Piriya Vēṇṭum*," 1.
[1017] EVR, "*Tamiḻnāṭu Piriya Vēṇṭum*," 2.

and spoken 3 years ago that Jinnah was a national traitor."[1018] Focusing particularly on *The Hindu's* remarks that Jinnah was a pest like a mosquito caught in an automobile, the speaker claims that "however much these Brahmins and Brahmin newspapers think to make Muslims and Non-Brahmins feel degraded [*iḻivu*] and weep," they will be sorry. After all, it is "only in India that Muslims are made timid and oppressed," but in the future, when 100% of the world is Muslim, there will be "peace [*cānti*] and equanimity [*camātāṉam*]."[1019] But such separatist demands would return to the world through Islam, as if nationalist separation was just a step in furthering the global project of self-respect.

This extended discussion of the role of Islam in the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect, I suggest, provides a complement to the role of the "secular." If the secular was about romance, Islam was about valor. Both were part of an effort to rearticulate the value of the householder against that of the ascetic, of self-respect against self-rule, of Non-Brahmin against Brahmin. If the secular was about the role of intimacy in the householder, Islam was about heroism on the battlefield. Islam provided a model for valor as an international project as well as a nationalist one. Neither the secular nor Islam should suggest any insufficiency on the part of Non-Brahmin political thought. Rather, Non-Brahmin political thought craved acts of coupling to better be a part of a better world, rather than apart from that world, and found forging relationships with forces of love and valor as the surest way to establish self-respect.

But the coupling of Islam and Non-Brahmin was not just engaged with issues of home and world, national and international, but also, like with the "secular," provided opportunities to redeem understandings of exposure and cover. If *nirvāṇa* marked exposure and cover's redemption by *ilvāḻkkai*, what would mark its redemption in Islam?

## EXPOSURE AND COVER: PRATYAKSA

We have seen how, with respect to the Non-Brahmin redemption of the secular life as *ilvāḻkkai* with its associations with romantic love [*kātal*], exposure was central. Such love was coupled with elements of exposure so that the couple could see and speak with one another, while the achievement of *nirvāṇa* required exposure in the extreme, finding synergistic resonances with radical nudist societies in Europe. Exposure, acts of uncovering, would also be central to the Non-Brahmin refraction of the religious faith of Islam and its associations with heroic valor. Such valor was coupled with elements of exposure so that the world could be known as it truly was, and the achievement of the technical Sanskritic epistemological category of *pratyaksa*,[1020] or "direct-perception" in contrast with other ways of knowing, led the Non-Brahmin to value Islam above all other faiths.

With the secular life of *ilvāḻkkai*, however, the love that served as its dynamo was perceived as something spontaneous. After all, it was romantic love's spontaneous power of attraction and intimacy that could challenge and subvert ideological norms, with the presumption being that caste difference, and not caste similarity, was actually what was intimately appealing and romantically attractive. With the religious faith of Islam, however, heroism could not serve as the dynamo, but was itself the achievement of a prior animating force. Acts of valor, heroism,

[1018] Kāṉpakatūr Kalipullā Cāyapu, "*Tañjai Jillā Muslim Mānāṭu* [Tanjore District Muslim Conference," *Kuṭi Aracu* 16 June 1940: 1.
[1019] Cāyapu, "*Tañjai Jillā,*" 15.
[1020] The Tamil transliteration of the Sanskrit term is *pirattiyaṭcam*. The Sanskrit is *pratyakṣa*. Like with *bhutam* earlier as the transliteration of the Sanskrit transliterated into Tamil as *pūtam*, I simply use the Sanskrit, *pratyaksa*, in this section.

and "daring" were associated with *pratyaksa*, with seeing the world as it truly was; yet one saturated with Brahminism could not simply decide one day to set about on such acts of *pratyaksa.* Instead, one needed to step further back; in order to engage in acts of *pratyaksa* in order to truly see the world, a world in which Islam was the culmination of past reforms, one required a prior act involving the very anti-thesis of exposing *pratyaksa*, the cover of *vēsham*, clothing, disguise. Though Islam's relationship to *pratyaksa* is heavily discussed in the Non-Brahmin political thought of Self-Respect, it is ultimately, I argue, the *vēsham* of Islam that gets the ball of valor rolling, e.g. the daringness to see clearly. That is to say, whereas the secular life of *ilvāḻkkai* could rely on love's spontaneity to bring about a more just world, the religious faith of Islam could not rely on valor's spontaneity to do so. Love led one to *ilvāḻkkai*, but valor did not lead one to Islam. Rather, Islam led one to valor.

Yet like *ilvāḻkkai* as secular, so too with Islam as religion, would being seen, rather than seeing, form the point of departure for generating a self of respect. Unlike exposure in nudity-as-*nirvāṇa* in *ilvāḻkkai*, however, I argue that it was cover-as-*vēsham* in Islam that was central. In short, romance's exposure required valor's cover to build a world of self-respect.

### *"INVITING SUCH A PERSON AS ME IS A WONDER"*

Let us return to the *Malwid* speeches of EVR, 1929-1931, in order to appreciate the relationship between exposure and cover, *pratyaksa* as revealing the world and *vēsham* as concealing the self, articulated through the Non-Brahmin redemption of Islam. As we saw, these speeches marked a break from the nascent stages of the Self-Respect Movement from 1925-1927, which saw "foreign" faiths as a threat to justice rather than an opportunity for justice, and represent the foundation for the coupling of Islam and the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect. The very first question we may ask ourselves is: what in the world is EVR, understood as an atheist and certainly not a Muslim, doing speaking at celebrations of the birth of the Prophet Mohammed? EVR himself often acknowledges the apparent inappropriateness of his speaking at *Malwid*. Such inappropriateness appears at two different levels, both of which indicate the capaciousness, if not the potential radical leanings, of Islam in South India and its affinity for a fellow *mleccha,* foreigner-as-polluting-outsider, central to Non-Brahmins Self-Respect.

At the first level, EVR may be read as Hindu to an audience that was Muslim but included Hindus as well. EVR addresses this concern in the beginning of his first *Malwid* speech in 1929 as follows:

> My beloved Hindu and Muslim brothers! This day is a day celebrating the birthday of a great soul [*makāṉ*]. Yet there may be many among us who think that this great soul is a great soul belonging only to Muslims and that therefore they only have the right [*urimai*] to celebrate this great soul's birthday. And that is not all; many may also think how can I, who is called a Hindu among that group [e.g. Muslims], have the right to take the responsibility of Head [of this Muslim celebration]. Moreover, when I speak to allay [*camātāṉam*] these [concerns], many of my Hindu brothers may doubt me, thinking that I speak to apologize [*vakkālattu vānki*] for Muslims or the Muslim religion [*matam*]. However that may be, without worrying a bit about what the Hindus may think of me, I make known to my Muslim brothers my heart-felt gratitude for my Muslim brothers giving me the

opportunity to mix [*kalantu*] in this celebration and for inviting me to bear the responsibility of head for this greatly distinguished celebration.[1021]

EVR is worried about being doubted by both Muslims and Hindus alike: the former view him as a Hindu, the latter merely as a Muslim apologist. He unhesitatingly sides with the Muslim.

Yet such concerns with EVR being a Hindu would fade between 1929-1931. The greater concern for EVR was being dismissed by Muslims as an atheist. In a *Malwid* speech in 1931, EVR does not express gratitude for being invited to speak despite being considered a *Hindu* but, rather, for being invited despite being considered an *atheist*. Again, EVR reveals the capaciousness and potential radical valence of Islam in South India during this period:

Brothers!
I consider it a great honor to be invited to be responsible as the head for this important religious celebration [*kōṇṭāṭṭam*] and for the meeting here today.

Because the world knows the flaws [*kuṟai*] that all religious devotees [*paktikaḷ* (bhaktis)] claim about me. That is, it is said of me that I am one that finds fault with religions, and that, not only am I one who says that there should be no religion, but that I am one who argues even about God.[1022]

Shouldn't one say that [you] inviting such a person as me is a wonder [*aticiyam*], you who are followers of the Islam religion [*mārkkam*] about which is said that those religious [followers have a] devotion greater than that of all other religious-people in the world?

Like you have invited me, those called Hindus would not easily invite a Muslim or a Christian to the celebration of a birthday, death-day, nor "*Tirunakshattiram*" [day of astrological significance] of the *Nāyanmār* or *Āḻvār* [saints] related to their religion [*matam*]. Not only that, they could not bear [*cammati*] being next to you. If they touched you, they would not go there [or anywhere] without bathing again. [For whatever reason] why they go to such lengths; [and so] would [certainly] not invite the likes of me. Furthermore, whomever conducts [the rituals] *kurupūcai* and *tirunashttiramam* for whichever *Nāyanmār* or *Āḻvār* [saint] could not bear to call a [different] caste-person [*jātiyār*], eat next to [them], nor touch [them].

Because, they think that their religion [*matam*] (the Hindu religion) [sic] has been without touching like that, without eating next [to one another], and considers others [*maṟṟavarkaḷ*] with aversion [*veṟuppu*] and degradation [*iḻivu*]. I have come to believe that it is those like this, for the most part, that call me a religious traitor [*matatturōki*].[1023]

EVR is allaying the fears of his audience on *Malwid* by suggesting that, in short, only those invested in an exclusionary, hierarchical Hinduism consider him an atheist, or "religious traitor." Muslims, EVR suggests, by the fact that they invited him to speak on a holy occasion, have proven themselves different from their exclusionary, hierarchical countrymen. Yet one may still ask: What could EVR, who along with his fellow Self-Respecters were understood to be atheists, say about Islam?"

To appreciate an answer to this question, we must realize that EVR was not the only Self-Respecter speaking at *Malwid* meetings. These *Malwid* speeches in fact featured others with

[1021] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṟanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Cattiyamaṅkalattil Tiru. Ē. Ve. Rāmacāmiyāriṉ Coṟpoḻivu* [Mr. Mohammed Nabi's Birthday Celebration: Mr. EV Ramacamy's Speech in Cattiyamaṅkalam," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 9.
[1022] Ambiguous—could be about God's existence, could also be about the nature of God (e.g. non-hierarchical, just, etc).
[1023] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacamy's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 10.

Self-Respect sympathies. Yet these Self-Respecters were rather bland and unsubstantive in their remarks. They often acknowledged that they had no faith in any particular religion and yet believed all religions should be treated equally and the virtues of each religion should be adopted. For example, take one of EVR's 1931 *Malwid* speeches. He is preceded by the remarks of two figures with Self-Respect sympathies. The first, a lawyer in the city of Coimbatore near EVR's hometown of Erode and government official named C.S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār, who himself was reluctant to accept the invitation to speak at *Malwid* but claims to have done so only at the encouragement of EVR, begins:

> Gentlemen! Though I have had the responsibility of head for many meetings, I have never had the responsibility of head for these sorts of religion [*matam*]-related meetings. Moreover, I am not one who knows anything of significance about any religion [*matam*], and accordingly, I am not one who knows a single thing about the Islam religion [*matam*]. I generally think highly [*perumai*] of all religions [*matam*] and I am one who shows devotion [*bhakti*] and respect [*mariyātai*] to the Great Ones [*periyār*] of all religions [*matam*]. Furthermore, I think that there is a God which is an earth-one [*pūtar*] which is the reason for the world [*ulakam*], and that he is common for all religion [*matam*], all people, and all living creatures. Aside from this, I am not one who knows any sort of religion [*matam*] investigation.[1024]

Another speaker, C.M. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, echoed these sentiments. That is to say, there were other Non-Muslim, Non-Brahmin speakers at *Malwid* aside from EVR. These speakers drew their legitimacy from rather bland investments in the importance and virtues of all religion [*matam*] and how all the founders of religions had important lessons to teach.

EVR, as we have seen in the previous section, takes a very different approach. He is not particularly interested in the virtues of all the world's religions, but rather, the virtue of Islam in particular. EVR sees Islam, with its egalitarianism and respect, as the total antithesis of Hinduism with all its inequalities and its degradations: "There is a complete reversal [*talaikīḻ*, lit. "head-down"] of difference [*vittiyācam*] in the principles of the Hindu religion and that of the Islam religion."[1025] Moreover, Islam is not only superior to the Hindu religion, but to all other religions, largely due to it being the most recent and thus most reformed on EVR's progressive scale, as we've seen: "The Islam philosophy [*tattuvam*] is suitable for mostly everyone of the world"[1026]; and "If one wants the whole world [*ulakam*] to come under one principle [*koḷkai*], then one wants [it] to completely consent to the Islam principle."[1027] And the "one principle," and Islam being that one principle, on EVR's account, is desirable—on par with the desirability of atheistic alternatives: "Though learned-ones [*aṛiñarkaḷ*] are of the opinion that 'Only after religion [*matam*] is destroyed can there be peace [*camātāṉam*], solidarity, and tranquility [*cānti*],' I think that, when there is a religion [*matam*] that is opposed to this [claim] of which one

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[1024] C.S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṛanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 7.

[1025] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Erode Prophet Birthday Celebration]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 12.

[1026] EVR, "*Cattiyamaṅkalattil Tiru Napikaḷ Piṛanta Nāḷ: Rāmcāmi Talaimaiyil Naṭantatu* [Birthday of Mr. Nabi (prophet) in Cattiyamaṅkalam: Rāmcāmi Conducted as Chair]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 7.

[1027] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacamy's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 16.

can say 'world peace has come about, tranquility has come about,' it is the Islam principle [*koḷkai*]."[1028] That is to say, unlike other Non-Muslim speakers at *Malwid*, EVR does not justify his presence by believing in the virtues of all religions, of which Islam is one, but of Islam as the one true religion.

Despite being considered by some a Hindu and others an atheist, EVR goes beyond more typical bland compliments to the religions of the world in order to focus on the liberatory power of Islam in particular—often at the expense of other religions. But what, exactly, are EVR's qualifications for doing so?

### *COMPARATIVE VALUE: PERCEPTION AND DISGUISE*

I suggest that EVR derives his qualifications, as it were, from three features of "religion" in South India: first, the instability of the term redeeming or being redeemed as "religion"; second, how stability can be achieved through, and only through, acts of comparison; and, third, how comparison is both made possible and limited by a capacity to clearly see the world.

First, what is "religion"? EVR feels that the word is opaque and therefore one must turn to the world. Much turns on how "religion" is redeemed in Tamil. Attending to the many bracketed terms of translation, have EVR's claims above about the Islam *koḷkai* [principle?] being the one true *matam* [religion?] and a *markkam* [path?] of rationality been claims about Islam being the true "religion"? This Babelesque quality of terms that could be rendered in English as "religion" is recognized by EVR within the *Malwid* speeches themselves. "Pundits [*paṇṭitarkaḷ*] say that, because many languages [*pāshaikaḷ*] came and mixed [*kalantu*] in our country [*nāṭu*], *matam* ["religion"], *camayam* ["religion"], and *mārkkam* ["religion"] are said for *kōḷkai*s ["principles"]."[1029] Leaving aside the problem of translating, and thus the proliferation of terms for "religion," what is clear here is that EVR is claiming that he is not interested in the other-worldly concerns of "religion" but rather the this-worldly concerns of "principles." The Babelesque quality of "religion" itself invites one to turn to this-worldly empirics, and not other-worldly discourse, and accordingly this-worldly empirics are what EVR is concerned with when considering "religions" like Islam and Hinduism. For EVR, "religion [*matam*] is that which has principles [*koḷkaikaḷ*] which show a path for conducting the worldly life [*ulaka vāḻkkai*] of men"—they were formed by humans, can be reformed by humans, and act as "rules" [*vitikaḷ*] required of any "institution" [*stāpaṉam*], for there "is no error in the need for some sort of rules for the good of the worldly life of humans thinking to live together."[1030] EVR is not interested in considering *matam* as that which is for the "sake of the *ātma* [soul] of man" nor about "God" [*kaṭavuḷ*], for "that sort of *matam* is the enemy of self-respect [*cuya-mariyātai*], advancement, liberty, and the development of human society."[1031] It is the world and not the word that is of

[1028] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṟanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 14.

[1029] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacamy's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 10.

[1030] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacamy's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 10.

[1031] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacamy's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 10.

interest; EVR can be read as grounding religion in the secular, or rather, as grounding *matam* in *ilvāḻkkai*.

Second, how can one evaluate "religion" in practice? EVR's subsequent worldly task of evaluating "religion [*matam*]" provides him with an opportunity to rehabilitate two technical terms from the Sanskritized idiom of Subcontinental philosophy. The first means "comparative-value" [*tāratammiyam*, transliterated from the Sanskrit *tāratamyam*]: "I ask, Hindu and Muslim brothers, that you should listen from a neutral position [*naṭunilaimai*] and proceed with a bit of care…about the comparative-value" between the "Hindu *matam* principles" and "the principles of that *periyār* [great-one, i.e. Mohammed] today"[1032]; elsewhere, he claims "…I speak about comparative-value, about the differences [*vittiyācaṅkaḷ*] between one *matam* and another *matam*."[1033] (We may recall that this "comparative-value" was the term Non-Brahmins used to describe the encounters between savages in Rousseau's state of nature that subsequently created orders of high and low). Such acts of "comparative-value" require attention to context, to time and place—"there is nothing but to endure the comparative-value among age, place, and the situation of today"[1034]—or what EVR refers to periodically as attention to "the quality of age-nation" [*kālatēcavarttam*].[1035]

Third, what are the means whereby such comparative-value can be achieved? Such acts of comparative-value [*tāratammiyam*] of *matam* as that which is of the world, e.g. provisional rules for humans to practice to live better together, rather than of the word, e.g. divine prescriptions for the soul to follow to achieve salvation, required EVR to rehabilitate another technical term in the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect. That term was *pratyaksa*, a term which literally means "to display to the eye" or "direction perception."[1036] *Pratyaksa* is a, if not the, central term in Subcontinental epistemology and is one of the six main *pramāṇa*, the accepted means of knowledge. Positions on which of these means of knowledge were valid provide a way to define the various philosophical traditions that arose over the course of millennia in India. J.N. Mohanty's introductory text *Classical Indian Philosophy*, for example, provides the following description of schools in terms of accepted means of knowing, where "perception," or *pratyaksa*, was the foundation[1037]:

| | |
|---|---|
| Lokāyata | Perception |
| Buddhism | Perception, Inference |
| Vaiśeṣika | Perception, Inference |
| Sāmkhya | Perception, Inference, Word |

[1032] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṟanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Cattiyamaṅkalattil Tiru. Ē. Ve. Rāmacāmiyāriṉ Coṟpoḻivu* [Mr. Mohammed Nabi's Birthday Celebration: Mr. EV Ramacamy's Speech in Cattiyamaṅkalam," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 7-9, p 8.

[1033] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacamy's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 10.

[1034] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṟanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Cattiyamaṅkalattil Tiru. Ē. Ve. Rāmacāmiyāriṉ Coṟpoḻivu* [Mr. Mohammed Nabi's Birthday Celebration: Mr. EV Ramacamy's Speech in Cattiyamaṅkalam," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 8.

[1035] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṟanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Cattiyamaṅkalattil Tiru. Ē. Ve. Rāmacāmiyāriṉ Coṟpoḻivu* [Mr. Mohammed Nabi's Birthday Celebration: Mr. EV Ramacamy's Speech in Cattiyamaṅkalam," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 7. EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacamy's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 16.

[1036] The Tamil transliteration is *pirattiyaṭcam*; the Sanskrit is *pratyakṣa*. The Sanskrit comes from the verb *prata* "to display, to show" and *akṣa* "eye."

[1037] J.N. Mohanty, *Classical Indian Philosophy* (Lanham: Roman & Littlefield, 2000): pp 16-17. The information in this paragraph is largely taken from Chapter 2: pp 11-40.

| | |
|---|---|
| Nyāya | Perception, Inference, Comparison, Word |
| Vedānta | Perception, Inference, Comparison, Postulation, Word, Nonperception |
| Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā | Perception, Inference, Comparison, Postulation, Word, Nonperception |
| Prābhākara Mīmāṃsa | Perception, Inference, Comparison, Postulation, Word |
| Indian Philosophical Schools and their accepted Pramāṇa. Other renderings of Sanskrit terms include "analogy" rather than "comparison" and "testimony" rather than "word."[1038] | |

An investigation of such schools, and the awesome complexity of Indian philosophical traditions, is beyond the scope of this dissertation as well as the ability of its author. However, we can identify some important characteristics. First, of course, is our old friend Lokāyata, the "secular" element in the opposition between its Tamil transliteration as *laukīkam* and *vaittikam*, its orthodox Brahminical other. EVR is clearly moving toward the Lokāyata, or "materialist," position in his emphasis on *pratyaksa* or perception as the sole legitimate means of knowledge, of assessing comparative-value of *matam*. Buddhism, like Lokāyata, emphasizes the "non-linguistic" means of knowledge, equally rejects the notion of *ātma* or soul, and centered on practicality to evaluate knowledge.[1039] Debates on these and other elements are massive. Far more could be done here in firmly placing Non-Brahmin political theory within its regional critical context and fulfillment in its world wide redemption as a part of SubContinental Political Theory. We should note here how EVR, in drawing upon *pratyaksa* to assess Islam, is making use of "native" tools to evaluate and even accept "foreign" elements, just as Non-Brahmins earlier had drawn upon *ilvāḻkkai* to redeem the "secular life," *nirvāṇa* to redeem nudity, or *samadharma* to redeem "communism." There is a "critical tradition" EVR is drawing upon here in order to articulate the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule and the latter's gestures to the indigenous self. More importantly for our purposes now, I argue that this *pratyaksa* is not that which will produce Islam's appeal as much as Islam which can produce *pratyaksa*.

PERCEPTION: *PRATYAKSA*

It is upon *pratyaksa*, rather than the bland virtue of all *matams* as other Non-Brahmins claimed, that the Non-Brahmin EVR draws in order to claim some authority for his speeches during *Malwid*. And it is on the basis of this *pratyaksa* and related assessments of Islam in practice, and not about a knowledge of divine scripture as Muslim speakers claimed, that EVR endorses Islam during *Malwid*. EVR positions himself as one who sees and bears witness to the world through *pratyaksa*, not one who reads and attends to the word.

> …I am not going to say anything about what is written in books that are these religions' foundations, setting off to speak about what is written in the Koran or what is written in the four Vedas that are the Hindu Vedas. For one, I am not one who reads all of these. Furthermore, the greatness that is said to be in books cannot provide us with any benefit; by writing sugar in a letter will it be sweet to the tongue? Moreover, because one can create "the philosophical [*tattuvārttam*]" however one wishes out of these [books], instead of speaking [*prastāpi*] about that, I discuss what we see in *pratyaksa* in the name of these two *matams* and the benefits experiences

[1038] Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, vol 1 (Cambridge: University Press, 1922): 294: "the means of proof are said to be of four kinds, perception (*pratyaksa*), inference (*anumana*), analogy (*upamana*), and testimony (*sabda)*."

[1039] See, for example, Rita Gupta, *The Buddhist Concepts of Pramana and Pratyaksa* (New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2006).

> by their *matam* people. One should decide [*niccayikka*] the greatness [*perumai*] of *matam* principle [*koḷkai*] considering the benefit [*palaṉ*] created for the land of the people who follow that particular *matam*; if not, one cannot decide considering the stories which are said were made at a [particular] time, or considering the wonders that are said it made at a time by the *matam*-leaders, or considering the beautiful ideas brought about through a commentary [*viyākkiyāṉam*]. If one decides like that, there will be no benefit for the world. Therefore, I speak of *pratyaksa* experience.[1040]

EVR in these *Malwid* speeches claim a different evaluative sphere from both that of his Muslim authority co-speakers who value the Islam *matam*, as well as from his fellow Non-Muslim co-speakers who value the virtues of all *matam*. That sphere is *pratyaksa*. For example, distinguishing himself from both the Muslim maulvi and the atheist-leaning lawyer Irāmaccantiraṉceṭṭiyār who spoke before him,

> Here before me, both Maulvi Cāyapu and Rāvcākip Irāmaccantiraṉceṭṭiyār discussed very excellent matters based on fundamental research of proper text[s] [*nūl*]. I am useless [*cūniyam*] in such matter[s]. That is, I simply don't have any textual research. I don't go about terribly worried about this. Not only that, I am not one who thinks that the greatness of Great-Ones [*periyavarkaḷ*], *matam*-heads, and their spiritual-teachings [*upatēcam*] are sufficient for the excellence [*mēṉmai*] of a society [*camūkam*]. However the foundations were formed, however much greatness is appropriate for the *matam*-heads known as "*matam* avatar men," how is it in our honest [*yōkkiyatai*] *pratyaksa*? What is our position [*nilaimai*] in the order [*varicai*] of the world's people? How far along is our valuing and conduct of *pratyaksa* experience? What is the reason for this? My research is about matters like these. My own opinion is that one should speak maintaining these as a foundation.[1041]

Such turns to the world and *pratyaksa* in evaluating a *matam* like Islam is not, exactly, a turn to a "secular" place separate and distinct from the "sacred" in a Western-liberal frame. Instead, such turns are extensions of regional traditions of privileging direct-perception and practical experience. Thus, EVR's approach to the *Malwid* speeches—"Are these in the Koran? Or not? This not the question. Is it in *pratyaksa* in society? Or not? That is the question"[1042]—are not exactly sacrilege. If they were, we would presume various Muslim groups would not have invited EVR to speak at *Malwid*. Instead, EVR is providing further testimony for the world-historical importance of Islam, additional to that of religious authorities well versed in the Koran or those who simply believe in the value of all *matam*. Such testimony is that of *pratyaksa*, which is the traditional means of knowing accepted by all Indian philosophical schools.

But what enables *pratyaksa*?

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[1040] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṟanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Cattiyamaṅkalattil Tiru. Ē. Ve. Rāmacāmiyāriṉ Coṟpoḻivu* [Mr. Mohammed Nabi's Birthday Celebration: Mr. EV Ramacamy's Speech in Cattiyamaṅkalam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 8.

[1041] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṟanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 7.

[1042] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacamy's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931:16.

DISGUISE: *VĒSHAM*

In EVR's *Malwid* speeches, the most persistent foil to *pratyaksa*, to seeing directly, is *vēsham*, which variously means clothing, disguise, costume, mask, etc. I argue that *pratyaksa's* persistent foil was, in fact, its enabling condition. On the one hand, the disguise of *vēsham* was the antithesis of the direct perception of *pratyaksa*. *Vēsham* covered that which needed to be exposed. The Islam which appealed to EVR was capable of removing such *vēsham*, and shared in qualities like "reason" (*pakuttaṛivu*) and "research" (*arāycci*) in understanding a world progressing towards equality and thus challenging caste hierarchy. Yet, on the other hand, Islam was appealing precisely because its particular *vēsham*, its costume and appearance, instilled the quality of daring and strength that enabled one to see the world directly, to deploy *pratyaksa* and related qualities of "reason" and "research." Without the daring and strength that appearing like a Muslim brought about, the human degraded by caste hierarchy would not be able to summon the confidence, the valor, the heroism, required for *pratyaksa*. Cover and exposure, *vēsham* and *pratyaksa*, were joined rather than separated by Islam. In a word, Islam provided both what needed to be done as well as what needed to be undone in the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect.

At first blush, *vēsham* was an obstacle, if not *the* obstacle, to the achievement of Self-Respect that is tied to the project of *pratyaksa*. That *vēsham* is the antithesis of *pratyaksa* is clear, part of the distinction between unreliable words and the world's reality, a distinction democratically available to everyone regardless of *matam*:

> I speak about matters related to the *pratyaksa* principles which are among the majority of people who say that I speak conflating the two *matam* [Hinduism and Islam], and about the benefits achieved in their *pratyaksa*.
>
> Generally, there is no benefit in seeing what is on a [*matam* book's] page apart from needing to determine…the manner of the *matam*. Just like that, there is no benefit in the *matam* which is just the *vēsham* worn by various *matam* people.[1043]

The *vēsham* worn by people of various *matam* is just like the pages of various *matam* texts: it provides no benefit in terms of *pratyaksa*, mere coverings of what needs to be exposed. Furthermore, *vēsham* suggested that there were different and many, when *pratyaksa* would reveal that there was only one and the same:

> Hindus and Muslims are those living in the same country [*nāṭu*] with the same kind of liberty [*cutantiram*]; if anyone places *matam* principles [*koḷkaikaḷ*] as an obstacle to this then [none] can live with unity ever. Therefore, it is of the utmost urgency that both leave off their *vēsham* and need to, as brothers, maintain as their basis true human *dharma* and love [*aṉpu*].[1044]

The oneness and unity despite *vēsham* did not simply apply to those sharing the same country; as suggested above with reference to the "true human *dharma* and love," EVR was worried about *vēsham* providing an obstacle to oneness in the world: "I think that the age is not very far away in which, with the disappearance of the apparent *vēsham* [*veḷi vēṭam*] in the name of *matam*, we

[1043] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramacamy's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931:10.
[1044] EVR, "*Cattiyamaṅkalattil Tiru Napikaḷ Piṛanta Nāḷ: Rāmcāmi Talaimaiyil Naṭantatu* [Birthday of Mr. Nabi (prophet) in Cattiyamaṅkalam: Rāmcāmi Conducted as Chair]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 7.

can see all people as one kind, with the necessary virtues [*oḻukkaṅkaḷ*] adopted for the good of humanity."[1045]

Such *vēsham* was not merely metaphoric as disguise or clothing, but also, additionally, referred to literal differences of physical appearance and behavior: "[Though] seeing people's conduct of other countries, we make no effort to conduct [ourselves]. Admitting just what *matam* is for—aside from all of our *matam* being in the *vēsham* of style [*naṭai*], dress [*uṭai*], and likeness [*pāvaṉai*]—there cannot be any use for it."[1046] Elsewhere, EVR repeats this triumvirate of *vēsham* while referring to Turkey in particular, seeing *vēsham* as not only irrelevant but as incurring a sort of difference that serves as something of a distraction, pulling one's attention away from the shared beliefs and practices that really matter for living together, and living together well:

> If one says Islamic people are all those who think that their duty [*kaṭamai*] is the doing of service [*cēvai*] for human society, considering that all humans are equal, placing faith in the truth of love [*aṉpu*] showing fraternity, placing love [*aṉpu*] in people, then Muslims should think that myself and my many friends are those of Islamic principles. One should not separate [*piṛappu*] [those of] Islam and Non-Islam upon seeing one's beard, head, or clothes [*uṭai*]. In Turkey, *matam* is not simply *vēsham*. Like that, so too India, in order to hide any appearance of difference [*veṛupāṭṭu*], everyone first should have the same style [*naṭai*], dress [*uṭai*], and likeness [*pāvaṉai*].[1047]

The elimination of *vēsham* brings about a world better suited to "reason" [*pakuttaṛivu*] and the direct seeing of *pratyaksa*, and to, as EVR puts it, "wearing glasses that are well cleared [*cuttam*] of any sort of color [*niṛam*]."[1048] On such accounts, *vēsham*, for EVR, ultimately was an illusion, a superficial feature of the human that distracted the ignorant and generated forms of "like and dislike" [*viruppu veṛuppu*][1049] that stood in the way of fraternal progress across the globe. In fact, EVR's preferred term for dislike was *tuvēsham* or disgust—as in *vakuppu tuvēsham* which could mean "class conflict" as well as "communalism"—was cognate with the word *vēsham* itself [*tu* (bad) + *vēsham* (appearance) = "disgust" or "aversion"]. In short,

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[1045] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṛanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Cattiyamaṅkalattil Tiru. Ē. Ve. Rāmacāmiyāriṉ Coṛpoḻivu* [Mr. Mohammed Nabi's Birthday Celebration: Mr. EV Ramacamy's Speech in Cattiyamaṅkalam," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 9. Such claims were an innovation on certain traditional ideas, such that each *jāti* had its virtue [*oḻukkam*]. See Tirukkural, verse 123.

[1046] EVR, "*Cattiyamaṅkalattil Tiru Napikaḷ Piṛanta Nāḷ: Rāmcāmi Talaimaiyil Naṭantatu* [Birthday of Mr. Nabi (prophet) in Cattiyamaṅkalam: Rāmcāmi Conducted as Chair]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 7.

[1047] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṛanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 14.

[1048] EVR, "*Ērōṭṭil Tiru. Mukamatu Napi Piṛantnāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Talaivar: Vēlūr Maulvi Sharputīṉ Cāyapu Upaṉyācam* [Mr. Mohammed's Birthday Celebration in Erode: Head, EVR: Speech by Maulvi Sharputīṉ Cāyapu of Vēlūr]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 8.

[1049] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṛanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 14. (the text incorrectly writes *veruppu* rather than *veṛuppu*).

*pratyaksa* would remedy the disease of difference, of *vēsham*, and bring about a better, united humanity.[1050]

Yet, such heavy investment in *pratyaksa* had a problem. Could one be presumed to have *pratyaksa*, an innate capacity to see clearly? EVR often suggests not. After all, the premise of the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule is that the masses have been so entirely degraded by Brahminism as to be without self-respect, which would presumably cripple one's ability to see clearly.

> Though there may be solidarity [*oṛṛumai*] elsewhere in the Hindu principle, in social life [*camūkavāḻvu*] and in the position before "God [*kaṭavuḷ*]" the human is valued more degradingly [*kēvalam*] than an animal, than an animal that goes about grasping [*kauvu*] excrement in its mouth. We see this in our *pratyaksa*. This is what Hindus confidently call the love-*matam* [*aṉpu*] and the equality-*matam*.[1051]

Who, exactly, is this "we" outside that can see this degradation? Could people degraded to the point of eating excrement possibly see this with their *pratyaksa*? Could such people, degraded as animals, even have the faculty of *pratyaksa*? How could such a human, valued as an excrement-eating animal under such an ideological formation, generate the "daring" to use his or her *pratyaksa*, either to see his or her condition or that of the world, and thus to make the "comparison-value" act between the two in the pursuit of justice, liberty, fraternity, and self-respect?

The answer was not only Islam, that force of valor to supplement the love of the secular life, but of Islam's *vēsham*. That is to say, it was not simply that Islam's principles provided the degraded Non-Brahmin with the daring necessary to engage in the exposing acts of *pratyaksa*, removing the cover of *vēsham* from the world and engage in the related task of "comparison-

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[1050] Such sentiments, of course, are not unfamiliar to SubContinental Political Theory, either among those in Western Europe or South Asia. Many Western European schools of thought, particularly across the 19th century, had developed various approaches to world-history and the progress of technology and freedom. And many South Asian schools of thought had been concerned with the elimination of *maya*, of illusion, in order to realize unity between the self (*atma*) and everything else (*Brahma*). Both Buddhists and Materialists ("materialism" being the *lookaayitam* we saw refused by the Non-Brahmin in 1956 as a translation for "secularism") were equally invested in *pratyaksa*. Buddhists were largely driven from the Subcontinent, while evidence of Subcontinental Materialists exists only in Brahminical refutations of their position. Materialists acknowledged only *pratyaksa* as a valid source of knowledge, thereby challenging the revelatory power of the Vedas, the authority of brahmanical priests, the efficacy of ritual, as well as "the validity of inferential reasoning…applied to justify belief in the existence of various metaphysical entities, such as gods, demons and heavenly realms that draw our attention away from the here and now…"; this materialist school was more heavily invested in pleasure [*kaama*] and happiness [*sukha*] than authority and text. See Richard King, *Indian Philosophy: An Introduction to Hindu and Buddhist Thought* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1999): esp. 18-20. The Buddhists, equally unfriendly to Vedic authority and the power of Brahmins, were also heavily invested in *pratyaksa*, for *pratyaksa* could be used to counter discursive power, or conceptual construction (*kalpanaa*), which took shape through "*nāma* (name), *jāti* (universal/genus), *guṇa* (quality), *kriyā* (action), and *dravya* (substance)." See Gupta, *The Buddhist Concepts of Pramana and Pratyaksa* (2006): 26. "The basic idea is that a bare perceptual event is constituitively nonlinguistic, with the subsequent addition of linguistic interpretation representing, among other things, the point at which cognitive errors creeps in." Dan Arnold, *Buddhists, Brahmins and Belief: Epistemology in South Asian Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Columbia University, 2005): 25. And one of the discursive forces *pratyaksa* was thought to conteract, *jāti*, is now the word often translated as "caste." EVR's discussion of *pratyaksa* and *vēsham* can be read as part of political theory projects that share in these Continental and Subcontinental traditions.

[1051] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramasami's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931:15.

value." Rather, the degraded Non-Brahmin first needed to adopt the *vēsham* of Islam in order to generate such daring to engage in *pratyaksa*. Acts of exposure, I suggest, were not opposed to acts of cover, but rather presupposed them. Islam was actually not synonymous with *pratyaksa* and its opposition to *vēsham*. Instead, Islam had a particular sort of *vēsham*, a particular set of "style, dress, and likeness," that EVR thought necessary for enabling *pratyaksa* itself.

### *VĒSHAM* BEFORE *PRATYAKSA*

Such presupposition is evident in later reflections upon the period of EVR's *Malwid* speeches. One such reflection occurred 20 June 1943 in a speech EVR delivered in Chennai at the celebration of "Untouchability Eradication Day."[1052] The year 1943 provides us with the other bookend to the importance of Islam in the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect which we saw in the previous section, for this was the final year of the Self-Respect Movement; in 1944, EVR changed the Self-Respect Movement into the *Dravidar Kaḻakam,* the still extant social reform movement from which all the major political parties of Tamil Nadu today claim to descend—a name change reflecting the shift from Non-Brahmin internationalism to Non-Brahmin nationalism that I have argued above. This 1943 speech marks a shift in strategy away from the destruction of *vēsham* in general and Hinduism in particular to a more subtle appreciation of *vēsham's* productive power. Such a shift, I suggest, provides an important move in SubContinental Political Theory and draws attention to the importance of bodily appearance rather than mental principles in achieving "self-respect."

EVR begins by reflecting on the period of his early *Malwid* speeches, reminding his audience of "the years 1927, 1928, and 1930" when "nearly 2000 people heard my speech and the speech[es] of my comrades in the districts of Madurai, South Arcot, North Arcot, etc. and independently left Hinduism and joined with Islam and Christianity."[1053] The problem for EVR remains the same now as it did then, namely, a Brahminism understood as Aryan which stands in contrast to an Islam framed by nationalists as foe: "[we] should not fear the Muslim-Islam. What we should fear is Brahminism—that is, the Aryan-Hindu *matam*."[1054] EVR values such Islam, in 1943 as in 1929, as an articulation of this-worldly self-respect [*cuya-mariyātai*] and not other-worldly salvation: "The Islam that I am speaking of is the Islam which is the *matam* suitable to create your coming solidarity and social self-respect [*cuya-mariyātai*], not for matters of soul-meaning [*ātmārttam*]."[1055] Such "solidarity and social self-respect," which would "remove your degradation, bring about self-respect [*cuya-mariyātai*], bring about a dignity of life [*māṉam vāḻvu*]," was contingent on material survival and flourishing, on the securement of "education, employment, posts, and money"; EVR felt Islam—with its international and national fraternal

[1052] It appeared shortly afterwards in the daily *Viṭutalai* in two installments The first installment was on 26 June 1943 and bore a lengthy title that descended through the highlights of the earlier portion of the speech: "Hinduism Will Not Be Wiped Out / Your Abandoning It is Best / Is Hinduism Yours? / Do You Have a Place in It? / Hinduism is the Way Brahmins Found to Deceive Others." The second installment was on 28 June 1943 and bore another descending title: "[What] If You Don't Become a Muslim / Even 2000 Swarajists Are of No Use / What Has Happened to the Bill of Comrade MC Raja? / Are There Men to Work Hard on Your Behalf? / Even if They Work Hard, Will It Bear Fruit?"

[1053] My personal copy has been lost. Citations therefore will refer to the article's republication (with corrections cited per original where appropriate) in Vīramaṇi, Ki. *Periyār Kaḷañciyam, 4* [Periyar Collection, vol 4] (Ceṉṉai: Periyār Cuyamariyātai Piraccāra Niṟuvaṉa Veḷiyīṭu, 2002 (1981): 144. Hereafter *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): pp.

[1054] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 146.

[1055] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 145.

network, which included reservations for particular government positions in India—could provide these.[1056]

In fact, Islam seems even more central to EVR in 1943 than it did during his *Malwid* speeches from 1929-1931, for he now dismisses all alternative Non-Hindu religions. Yet in 1931, for example, EVR entertained other non-Hindu religions. He mentioned then others' concern with an atheist such as himself, a "*matam* traitor," speaking not only about Islam but Buddhism as well: "when [I] speak about Buddha *matam,* Islam *matam*, and about any matter seen within them, they say 'How could a Self-Respecter, who says that there should not be *matam* and that *matam* is mistaken, speak about these *matam*?'"[1057] In 1943, however, EVR's focus is solely on Islam, dismissing Buddhism which, though historically opposed to Vedic Hinduism and its Brahminical associations, ultimately, in EVR's view, was coopted by Brahminism. Such cooptation is evident in Buddhist texts such as the early Tamil epics "*Cilippatikaram* and *Manimekalai*" which, EVR believes, demonstrate a "blind faith in the Hindu religion."[1058] Moreover, in light of our discussions of the Dravidian separatist shift in 1937 and the synergistic relationship with Pakistan, we should not be surprised that this 1943 speech with its sole emphasis on Islam retains an investment not only in the priority of self-respect but a culmination in *swaraj*: he claims to have been demanding social reform "not only for the destruction of caste [*jāti*], not only for the ridding of untouchability, but for nothing other than 'Complete [*purāṇa*] Swaraj'" for "the past 20 years."[1059]

Despite Islam's continued, if not increasing, emphasis over the years, EVR's framing of the problem of Brahminism had changed dramatically by 1943. EVR claims to have been a part of the "group [*kōshṭi*]" for "25 years" that believed "to destroy Untouchability, the Hindu *matam* must be destroyed."[1060] Now, according to EVR, he holds two different beliefs about the achievement of self-respect. First, the agency of the degraded and humiliated, those without self-respect, cannot simply rise up and destroy Brahminism. Brahminism's destruction "is not a matter which can be done with any ease by you who are common people [*cātāraṇam jaṉaṅkaḷ*] that have endured slavery [*aṭimaittaṉmai*], degrading regulation [*iḻi nipantaṉai*], and great weariness as poor-people in [Brahminism]."[1061] The reason for this inability to destroy Brahminism is not simply because of a crippled agency. Brahminism is simply too great a force, entrenched not only textually ("Sastras, Puranas, Poetry, Arts, Literature, Grammar, Moral Texts") and institutionally ("Monastaries, its Authorities, Monastery-Heads, Accāriyārs [Priests]"). It also completely saturates the South Asian life-world:

> This sort of deceptive [*māyai*] Hindu *matam* has spread from Kanyakumari [in the south] to the Himalayas [in the north]. It has mixed with many matters [*vishayam*] such as temple, lake, river, ocean, insect, animal, town, forest, hill, stone, soil, and the dung and urine of cows. In this situation, how could the Hindu *matam* be destroyed? How many temples would have to be destroyed? How many rivers would have to be concealed [*maṛai*]? How many seashores…should be gone without? If all these are not destroyed, can the Hindu *matam* be destroyed?[1062]

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[1056] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 145.
[1057] EVR, "*Cāttāṉkuḷattil Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācam* [Ramasami's Speech in Cāttāṉkuḷam]" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 2 August 1931: 10.
[1058] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 143.
[1059] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 144
[1060] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 141
[1061] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 141.
[1062] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 142-143.

In contrast with his investments for the past 25 years, EVR suggests, in 1943 he claims that Brahminism, due to both the crippled agency of those currently without self-respect as well as Brahminism's overwhelming world-saturating discursive force, cannot be destroyed. "The Hindu *matam* is not a clod of earth to be broken into dust" and "not a single thing. One cannot easily destroy something which appears like that."[1063]

Second, attempting to destroy Brahminism is, regardless of Brahminism's strength in comparison to that of its degraded challengers, undesirable. Such attempts inevitably reinscribe and further entrench Brahminism, inviting the agent to imagine him or herself only in terms of Brahminism's negation and thus, in effect, only in terms of Brahminism itself. This reinscription through opposition has allowed the demand for Brahminism's destruction to move from a "political idea" [*araciyal karuttu*] held first for "social reform" [*camutāyam cīrtiruttam*] and by "extremists [*tīviravātikaḷ*] who appeared in order to destroy *jāti,*" which EVR favors, to one held by "moderates" [*mitavātikaḷ*] and part of "conservative speech" [*karnāṭakam pēccu*].[1064] For example, EVR cites the recent passage of a bill heralded as a victory for Untouchables allowing them to enter into any restaurant and coffee shop, yet which, ultimately, left owners themselves to decide who was permitted into their business.[1065] That is to say, the removal of degradation has become policy, and shored up the legitimacy of demands for *swaraj*, but not practice, which would require the far more radical establishment of self-respect.

In contrast with the goal of simply opposing Brahminism through its negation in atheism, EVR is interested in conversion to an alternative *matam*. "Even those without *matam* have untouchability. Untouchability is absent only for those who have joined with another *matam.*"[1066] That alternative is, in 1943 as in 1929, Islam. We will return to EVR and the idea of conversion itself, and conversion to Islam in particular, in the next section on "Mixing and Multiplication." Here, we are interested in how EVR's approach in 1943 relates to *vēsham*. On the one hand, *vēsham* is seen as an irrelevant cover for the truth that is exposed beneath. On the other hand, *vēsham* is understood as vital element in the production of the truth EVR is so invested in, namely, the truth of self-respect's transformative power.

At first look, *vēsham* seems as irrelevant to EVR in 1943 as it was during his first *Malwid* speeches. In his *Malwid* speeches, *vēsham* was merely "style, clothes, and likeness" which created meaningless "difference" [*pētam*] that interfered with solidarity and world-wide fraternity by engendering "like and dislike," covering and obscuring the central love of humanity shared by all. Such *vēsham* was then associated likewise with the power of priestly, Brahminical force through religious rituals. As he claims in 1930: "In some places where there are many fallacies [*āpācaṅkaḷ*] of *vēsham*, such as the beating of drums in Hindu temples and the conducting of festivals of Hindu gods, there is also the superiority [*ātikkam*] of priests [*purōkitarkaḷ*]."[1067] Such apparently trivial *vēsham*, in short, enable the operation of forms of subjugation, degradation, and exploitation. They are, at the same time, untrue, superficial, and dispensable—requiring *pratyaksa* and its closely allied faculty of "reason" [*pakuttaṛivu*].

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[1063] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 141, 142.
[1064] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 141.
[1065] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 147.
[1066] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 142.
[1067] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Erode Prophet Birthday Celebration]" *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 13.

EVR's speech in 1943 likewise identifies the irrelevance and superficiality of *vēsham*. He claims that "aside from *vēsham* there is no difference at all between Hindus and Muslims," a point made clear "in the temples and processions of Nākūr" where Muslims "shave their heads" as Hindus and Hindus pray at "tombs" like Muslims.[1068] "Therefore," EVR concludes, "there is Hindu and Muslim in *vēsham* only."[1069] That difference in *vēsham* is the only difference, and a difference that should not make a difference, EVR makes even clearer when he claims that "there is no difference [*pētam*] in the *matam* principle [*koḷkai*] in the slightest between a rational [*pakuttaṛivu*] Hindu and a rational Muslim, nor between a self-respect [*cuya-mariyātai*] Hindu and a self-respect Muslim."[1070] *Vēsham* is mere distraction, an opportunity for conflict that ultimately is without foundation. There is, ultimately, only one *matam* principle. At heart, once we push beyond *vēsham* and achieve our self-respect, there will ultimately be no difference between Hindu and Muslim. In *pratyaksa*, we see inequality resulting from *vēsham*, but also the truth of equality. *Vēsham* is a form of cover, while self-respect requires exposure, to get to the truth which lies underneath and which will set us free.

Yet, unlike EVR's *Malwid* speeches, EVR in 1943 suggests that *vēsham* may, in fact, be the very means by which to achieve *pratyaksa* and related "reason" [*pakuttaṛivu*]. That is to say, *vēsham* is not only an obstacle to freedom and equality, as it were, but in fact provides their very foundation. We have seen EVR in his *Malwid* speeches dispense with mere "style, clothes, and likeness," to encourage his comrades to understand *matam* as beyond the basis of the *vēsham* of beard or clothes, to eradicate such *vēsham* entirely so that one can attain the true *matam* through *pratyaksa*, to achieve "self-respect." Yet here in 1943, the *vēsham* associated with Islam becomes the very means by which one can achieve self-respect. "The Hindu *matam* has cowardice [*kōḻaittaṉam*], selfishness, and the loss-of-honor [*māṉamaṛṛataṉmai*]. These are not in Islam. Do not think that [I] speak about an Islam which means the God of Islam, nor the Prophet of Islam, nor the Koran of Islam; I speak of the cap [*toppi*] and lungi [a type of Indian sarong] of Islam."[1071] It is the clothing of Islam, in contrast with the Koran or God of Islam, that EVR believes can help restore the self-respect of the degraded. "Putting on a Turkish cap and tying a red lungi [associated with Muslims in South India], look at what happens."[1072]

> Even those suffering from asthma [*īḷai nōy*], if he wears the regiment's [*paṭṭāḷam*, "battalion"] clothing, it is as if a stiffness [*viṛaippu*] comes to him, as if by seeing him the common people would hesitate [*tayaṅku*][;] by wearing a cap and lungi—no matter how much of a coward [*kōḻai*], of a person-without-honor, of a selfish-person without the feeling of honor [he may be]—along with getting valor [*vīram*], honor [*māṉam*], and the daring [*tuṇi*] to rise against society [*camutāyam*], [the cap and lungi] will give an appearance [*tōṛṛamaḷi*] such that from the Government to the Brahmin will hesitate, such that there will be at least a mustard seed's worth of fire [*neruppu*] in the heart [*maṉam*].[1073]

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[1068] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 145.
[1069] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 146.
[1070] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 146. Note: the *Kaḷañciyam* version of this speech renders this line as "between a *pakuttaṛivu* Hindu and a self-respect Muslim, nor a self-respect Hindu and a self-respect Muslim." This is incorrect; the actual rendering of the speech as published in *Viṭutalai* is provided above. The parrallel structure, as well as the association of *pakuttaṛivu* with the Muslim, both lost in the incorrect *Kaḷañciyam* transcription is central to EVR's argument.
[1071] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 148
[1072] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 148
[1073] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 148

The *vēsham* no longer appears to be an obstacle to achieving self-respect, but in fact the very means by which to achieve it. Through a change of *vēsham*, the degraded can join with others and strike fear into the superior forces of both Government and Brahmin, bringing about change and, presumably, move towards achieving self-respect. "[T]hat Turkish cap and red lungi have so much glory."[1074]

The rather two-dimensional opposition between exposure and cover earlier—between *pratyaksa* and *vēsham*, between equality and hierarchy, between self-respect and degradation, etc.—has now become far more complicated. The most obvious complication is the shift in the understanding of *vēsham* itself. With EVR's *Malwid* speeches, *vēsham* was opposed to qualities EVR associated with *pratyaksa*, such as liberty [*cutantiram*] and reason [*pakuttaṛivu*]: "All the customs and *vēsham*s related to *matam* should be destroyed. There should be the liberty [*cutantiram*] to do any matter befitting reason [*pakuttaṛivu*]."[1075] EVR was opposed to "differences [*vittiyācaṅkaḷ*] which exist through merely different *vēsham*" as superficial opportunities for "like and dislike" that corroded solidarity and unity. By 1943, however, EVR changes his understanding of *vēsham*. But this change is not as dramatic as we might at first suppose. In the *Malwid* speeches, *vēsham* referred both to other-worldly salvation as well as this-worldly disguise. In 1943, however, EVR retains his dismissal of concerns dealing with other-worldly salvation as mere *vēsham* but invests in this-worldly disguise as forms of *vēsham* that are anything but mere. That is to say, we can see a shift in *vēsham* overall, but that shift rearticulates a long-standing logic pitting this-worldliness, the realm of equality and freedom, against other-worldliness, the realm of hierarchy and degradation.

We can also see a complication in terms of the epistemological concerns of the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect, on the one hand, and the epistemological concerns of various philosophical schools of thought historically located in South Asia, on the other. We saw earlier various schools of thought in India and the sorts of means of knowing they considered valid, mostly revolving around perception or *pratyaksa*, inference, analogy, and testimony. In the *Malwid* speeches, it is easy to see EVR's Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect as an extension of those schools of thought invested in non-discursive *pratyaksa* as a way of troubling discursive articulations, of world over word. The importance of certain kinds of *feeling*, however, *in order to know*, that EVR underscores in 1943—namely, the feeling of confidence—problematizes this easy extension.

We can draw this problematization with a further illustration. EVR, in one *Malwid* speech, claims that "The world is a slave to reason [*pakuttaṛivu*], maintains everything on the experience of *pratyaksa*, examines, and sees correctly; [it] dares [*tuṇi*] to [do] that. [It] is not influenced by the quality of the salesman [*ceṭṭi*]. It is if the goods have quality that they will have influence [*celāvaṇi*]."[1076] Now, in 1943, it seems as if it is not the quality of goods, but the quality of the salesman, as it were, that matters. It is appearance, and not a deeper truth, that enables self-respect. This concern with enabling self-respect in order to use *pratyaksa*, as

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[1074] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 149.

[1075] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṛanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 14.

[1076] EVR, "*Ērōṭṭil Tiru. Mukamatu Napi Piṛantnāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Talaivar: Vēlūr Maulvi Sharputīṉ Cāyapu Upaṉyācam* [Mr. Mohammed's Brithday Celebration in Erode: Head, EVR: Speech by Maulvi Sharputīṉ Cāyapu of Vēlūr]," in *Kuṭi Aracu* 9 August 1931: 7.

opposed to presuming that all can use *pratyaksa*, may be considered the Non-Brahmin's 20th century innovation on traditional epistemological considerations in South Asia. *Pratyaksa* is not opposed to *vēsham* but in fact presupposes *vēsham*.

Finally, in addition to the particular continuity and change with respect to *vēsham* and the other-worldly, along with the more distinct reversal in terms of the relationship between *vēsham* and *pratyaksa*, comes the undoubtable continuous feature in the basic appeal of Islam to the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect: valor [*vīram*]. In the previous section on "Home and World," there was a sense in which valor was deeply connected to Islam, if not at the level of *matam* or "religion," at least at the level of *koḷkai* or principle. After all, it is principle [*koḷkai*] to which EVR turns in 1931 as he considers which *matam* will have "brought world [*ulakam*] peace [*camātāṉam*]" in the future:

> I consider it could only be the Islam principles [*koḷkai*]. Because it [Islam] has taken incredible [*atikam*] concern-over-dignity [*māṉakkavalai*] in showing all others in the world [*ulaku*] in actions [*kāriyams*] of social [*camūkam*] unity, social [*camūkam*] equality.
>
> When looking at Turkey and Afghanistan one sees their readiness and feeling to accept any sort of reform [*cīrtiruttam*].
>
> Therefore if India's Muslims follow it [Islam], I consider that there will be no kind of difficulty in the Islam principles [*koḷkai*] becoming the world principles [*koḷkai*].[1077]

Yet now in 1943, there is the sense that such valor is not directly connected to Islam at the level of mind and its principles but rather at the level of body and its appearance. The disposition of valor, as it were, was not, or at least not simply, the product of Islamic teaching but of Muslim cover.

Like with the romantic, if not erotic, intimacies of the secular life of *ilvāḻkkai*, so too with the heroic, if not intimidating, intimidations of the religious faith of Islam: this-worldly, physical, material presence was the foundation for flourishing and fulfillment, the basis for the achievement of self-respect. What was retained, I suggest, from the late 1920s to the mid-1940s, regardless of the relationship between *pratyaksa* and *vēsham*, was the householding opposition to the ascetic, and with it, the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. Both love and valor distinguished a figure like EVR from that of Gandhi, distinguishing the householder from the ascetic, the this-worldly from the other-worldly.

But such distinction did not go all the way down, as it were. For the physical force that made Islam appealing—as EVR claims in 1943 with respect to removing caste segregation in railway restaurants, "it is by frightening that we removed the difference [*pētam*]"[1078]—did not, in fact, distinguish Self-Respect from Self-Rule, the householder from the ascetic. Instead EVR is clear that the ascetic Hindu position is premised on force just as much as that of the household Muslim; Brahminism's saturation of the life-world does not make its persistence any less violent than its Non-Brahmin challenge. It is to that challenge which we turn now.

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[1077] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṟanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 14.

[1078] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 147.

## MIXING AND MULTIPLICATION: CONVERSION

What marriage and remarriage was to the Non-Brahmin secular, conversion and reconversion was to Non-Brahmin Islam. Though equally concerned with mixing and multiplication, such Non-Brahmin Islam's appeal was a valorous rather than an amorous one, distinguishing Non-Brahmin Islam from the Non-Brahmin secular of *ilvāḻkkai*. With respect to multiplication, the concern was with mass conversion and the politics of numbers, where shifts in population between Hindu and Muslim could change the makeup of the "self" of self-rule. With respect to mixing, the concern was with partial conversion and reconversion, challenging upper-caste notions of purity and authenticity with syncretic practices and faithless reversals. The worry among those invested in the status quo was with the use of "force" in such conversions as opposed to an expression of faith. The worry, that is, was that there was movement from the outside-in during acts of conversion, the product of sullied pressures, rather than from the inside-out, the birth of pristine commitment or realization. Non-Brahmins dismissed this worry by underscoring the ways in which not only the presence but also the absence of conversions are premised on force. The criteria for judging true conversion, then, is not the absence of force, but rather, its capacity to achieve equality and eliminate "high low," e.g. to achieve justice. The questioning of such concerns with force, as an illegitimate product of the outside-in, and faith, as the legitimate product of the inside-out, will return us to the terms of the events in 1911 and 1981 and conclude this dissertation.

### *DEPARTURE AND RETURN*

I suggest that there was a triple turn in the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule with respect to conversion. In terms of the first turn, we have seen how Non-Brahmins during the mid-1920s were opposed to conversion as unraveling the presumed Hindu self of self-rule, yet by the late 1920s, as evident in EVR's *Malwid* speeches, Non-Brahmins had begun to see conversion to a non-Hindu religion as necessary to create a self of self-respect. In terms of the second turn, we have seen EVR claim in 1943 to have made a shift from his position in the late 1920s period of his first *Malwid* speeches; that shift was from an emphasis on the destruction of *matam* in the late 1920s to a change in *matam* in the mid-1940s as the best way to eliminate Brahminism. In what follows, I argue for a third turn. This third turn sees conversion not as final but as provisional, enabling numerous acts of departure and return across religions in order to generate a self of self-respect. This idea of the numerous, moreover, suggested that not individual but mass conversion was desirable.

In October 1929, just a few months after his first *Malwid* speech, EVR resoundingly endorsed the conversion of 69 untouchables to Islam in the village of Cīlaiyampaṭṭi, in effect providing his first sustained discussion of conversion to Islam. His speech here discusses his own shift, from the early 1920s when conversion was seen as a threat to a presumed self (e.g. of self-rule), to now, in the late 1920s, when EVR understands conversion as a key feature of the self's constitution (e.g. of self-respect).

He begins by contrasting other investments in *matam* as concerns over a "high world [*mēl lōkam*] or a low world [*kīḻ lōkam*]" with his own familiar investments: "I am always ready to think about a *matam* and principles if they have principles classified out of *pratyaksa* experience

for the sake of human this-worldly life."[1079] But this capacity to entertain principles in the world, as opposed to a concern with whether such principles are foreign or native, is described by EVR as a self-achievement rather than self-evident—it is a realization he came to over the course of the 1920s. After EVR's usual detailed description of the long history of hierarchical human atrocity [*koṭumai*] in India, he claims that a tradition of refusing that history and those atrocities resulted in the vast numbers of Christians and Muslims in India's present through past acts of conversion, a tradition of conversion whose political productivity he himself first refused to recognize in the early 1920s:

> … the cruelties [*koṭumaikaḷ*] that cannot be endured—such as untouchability, unapproachability, unseeability, unspeakability, all primarily in the name of *matam*, the Veda Shastras, and the Gods—must be completely removed; such fervent desire [*tāvira ācai*] must be made to be thought like this. Great-ones [*periyavarkaḷ*] who conducted such actions, thinking like this for roughly a thousand years, are today's 8 crore of Muslims and 1 crore of Christians in India. If not, where did so many Muslims and Christians come from? Seeing this number [*eṇṇikkai*], myself—along with Taṅkaperumāḷ, Īsvaraṉ, Māriyappaṉ, and others—were afraid when we were in the Coimbatore jail [in 1921 for involvement in the temperance movement]; as soon as we were released from jail, we resolved with determination to do the work to, with the complete destruction of untouchability, return all those who had gone from the Hindu *matam* to the Christian *Matam* back to being Hindus.[1080]

EVR, in the early 1920s, saw conversion as a threat to the self requiring reconversion back to a presumed "Hindu" status quo. However by 1925, in response to Congress insistence on segregation between Brahmin and Non-Brahmin, EVR vowed to "completely destroy the 'Hindu' *matam*" (evidently before many other Non-Brahmins who, from 1925-1928, as we've seen, were invested in Hinduism's persistence). EVR is clear that his first reaction to the rising number of Christians and Muslims was "fear" and a feeling of duty to reconvert Christians and Muslims back to Hinduism. His willingness to consider any *matam* based solely on "*pratyaksa* experience for the sake of human this-worldly life" was not his own political point of departure, but rather, a moment of arrival.

Unlike his discussion of concerns in the early 1920s, EVR's speech of October 1929 claims that the number of converts, and their possibility for multiplication, is cause for *hope* rather than *fear*. "Until there is true solidarity and equality in Hindu society [*camūkam*], without any other religion [*mārkkam*], we are those that cannot object to untouchables becoming Muslims *en masse* [*kumpal kumpalāy*]."[1081] There are tones of reluctance to acknowledge, or defeatism in acknowledging, this need to convert *en masse* to a non-Hindu *matam*: "Therefore I think that, through the embrace of the Muslim *matam*, this religion [*camayam*] can give untouchables immediate social equality. I tried to work so hard so that this would not be our condition."[1082] Yet overall, EVR uses language of celebration to frame mass conversion to Islam, giving "whole-hearted praise" to the 69 converts and expresses his "happiness [*makiḻcci*]," not because of their "mixing with God" but because of their "achieving a small amount of

[1079] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Uṇmaināṭṭuvōr Caṅkam: Ē.Ve. Rāmacāmiyār Upanniyācam: Matam Māṟutal; Carasvati Pūjai* [Erode Truth-Seekers Society: EV Ramacami's Address: Religious Change; Saraswati Puja]" in *Kuṭi Aracu* 20 October 1929: 7.
[1080] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Uṇmaināṭṭuvōr Caṅkam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 20 October 1929: 7.
[1081] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Uṇmaināṭṭuvōr Caṅkam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 20 October 1929: 8.
[1082] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Uṇmaināṭṭuvōr Caṅkam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 20 October 1929: 7.

freedom [*viṭutalai*] from the age of animal barbarism [*kāṭṭamirāṇṭittaṉamumāṉa mirukam pirāyam*] and ignorance [*aṛimai*]." With such mass conversion, not only will it be the case that these 69 once-untouchables "cannot be called degradingly as [the outcaste names] *paṛaiyaṉ* [pariah], *cakkiḷi,* or *caṇṭāḷaṉ*" but "we cannot but be happy [*makiḻcci*] when thinking such things as they have reached a way of freedom [*viṭutalai*] from economic difficulty, from obstacles to the development of knowledge, from social degradation [*camūka iḻivu*], from decreased self-respect [*cuya-mariyātai*], and from decreased political participation [*araciyal pañku*]." The sheer comprehensiveness of the freedom possible with conversion to Islam, and conversion *en masse*, by far outweighs whatever tones of reluctance—tones which we may even regard as rhetorical. It is the multiplication of such movement, conversion *en masse* to the allegedly "foreign*,"* that EVR believes will make a difference, that will move the degraded towards freedom and self-respect.

It is not just the *multiplication* of mass conversion, and its corresponding politics of numbers, that framed Non-Brahmin Islam. It would also be the *mixing* of reconversion, and its corresponding politics of partiality, that framed the language of Islam's appeal to the Non-Brahmin. EVR's 1943 speech quoted earlier provides an articulation of such partiality. Of course, the context of 1929 and 1943 is very different. As we've seen, EVR in 1929 set out to destroy Hinduism, whereas in 1943 EVR believes that the destruction of Hinduism is an impossible, and perhaps meaningless, task. Moreover, the place of the Muslim in South Asia is very different in 1929 and 1943. In 1929, EVR sees India as both Muslim and Hindu: "[We] cannot possibly consider either that Muslims shall quit India in the future, or that one may make it so that there are no Hindus in India."[1083] In 1943, we see EVR courting not only the division of Muslim Pakistan away from India, but in fact using such division as a way of advocating the separation of "Dravidians" from India. I suggest that for EVR, whether one can or cannot destroy Hinduism, or whether one can or cannot quit India, Islam appeals to the Non-Brahmin not simply for mass conversion but reconversion. Moreover, the distinction between what one is converting out of and what one is converting into is blurred, emphasizing the partial rather than the distinct.

In terms of reconversion, EVR's 1943 speech, as mentioned earlier, reflects on the periods of his first *Malwid* speeches. This reflection related to conversion, for during "the years 1927, 1928, and 1930…nearly 2000 people heard my speech and the speech of my comrades in the districts of Madurai, South Arcot, North Arcot, etc. and independently left Hinduism and joined with Islam and Christianity."[1084] His radically altered position on Hinduism, from working towards its utter destruction to realizing its ineliminable saturation, provides for a different approach to Islam's appeal. Rather than the anti-thesis of Hinduism, as it had been framed years earlier, we see here EVR understanding Islam as a way to better inhabit a world cast in a Hindu idiom. Conversion now has a provisional, partial, fluid gloss, rather than one that is definitive, liberating, and final. EVR endorses reconversion: "However… after joining with Islam out of the need to destroy untouchability and obstacles to development, when you desire [*ishṭam*], you may once again become a Hindu."[1085]

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[1083] EVR, "*Tiru. Makamatu Napi Piṛanta Nāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam: Cattiyamaṅkalattil Tiru. Ē. Ve. Rāmacāmiyāriṉ Coṛpoḻivu* [Mr. Mohammed Nabi's Birthday Celebration: Mr. EV Ramacamy's Speech in Cattiyamaṅkalam]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 25 August 1929: 9.
[1084] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 144.
[1085] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 144.

Moreover, in terms of the partial, it is no longer altogether clear what it is, in fact, the convert would be converting out of or into, that is, how distinct Islam and Hinduism would be. EVR is also interested in the partial conversion: "Because [conversion] is necessary go to the Islam religion, if you want [to retain] your Hindu sensibility [*uṇarcci*], you may keep it just as it is."[1086] He draws upon an empirical reality to justify his claim: "Even now, how many Muslims are as if they hold Hindu religious attitudes. This is according to each and every person's desire [*ishṭam*]."[1087] This is not to suggest that EVR's position in 1943 is incompatible with his one in 1929; just as much as in 1929, EVR is clear in 1943 that conversion to Islam is out of "a general concern for creating a life of dignity, instilling self respect, and removing your degradation" and not for "the forgiveness of sin."[1088] EVR's this-worldliness is as compatible with mass opposition as it is with partial incorporation, conversation and reconversion—compatible with both the powers of multiplication and mixing.

EVR's aims with Islam—education, jobs, relief from degradation, the achievement of self-respect, etc.—are, of course, the very things one would associate with the householder, *ilvāḻkkai* or the "secular-life." EVR's investments in "desire" or "wish" [*ishṭam*] signals the same sort of basis which "reason" [*pakuttaṛivu*] or the direct-seeing of *pratyaksa* had earlier. Islam and Hinduism were opposed for EVR only in so far as the former allowed for the achievement of the life of the householder, and Hinduism was wedded to advocating the life of the ascetic. I have argued that the former was allied with self-respect, the latter with self-rule. Here, we see the ways in which Islam, through its capacity for multiplication, in conversion *en masse*, as well as mixing, in partial and repeated reconversion, helped enable *ilvāḻkkai* itself. It was not simply through an act of departure away from Hinduism, but through acts of return, followed by further departures and further returns that constituted Non-Brahmin Islam.

### *ALL RELIGION IS FORCE*

Yet to concede the opposition between Islam and Hinduism, these avatars of the householder and the ascetic, respectively, would be to cede too much ground to the rarefied Brahminism that demanded self-ruling selves apart from polluting foreigners, apart from the *mleccha*, apart from the pariah. For the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, the basis of both multiplication and mixing were only more honest in Islam than in Hinduism. That basis was violence. Gandhi's *swaraj,* with its accompanying idiom of Brahminical asceticism, claimed to advocate non-violence. Non-Brahmins understood such non-violence as a Brahminical ruse perpetuating forms of high and low crafted out of a Hindu idiom and corroding better understandings of social relations and thus prevent the achievement of self-respect. Force is not the way Islam mixes and multiplies, but the way Hinduism mixes and multiplies as well. The critical Non-Brahmin project, however, required tools to show how the status quo, and not simply those who challenged it, deployed force.

"Some have written to me that the Muslim *matam* forms a ruffian disposition [*muraṭṭu cupāvam*]. If that is true, I think that is a good reason to recommend [*cipārcu*][1089] the Muslim *matam* to the Untouchables to destroy their untouchability."[1090] EVR's claim here in October 1929, during the first sustained discussion of conversion to Islam, could very well be not only the

[1086] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 145.
[1087] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 145.
[1088] *Kaḷañciyam, 4* (2002): 145.
[1089] This is the Tamil transliteration of the Urdu word *sifārish*.
[1090] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Uṇmaināṭuvōr Caṅkam*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 20 October 1929: 7.

first but the final word on Islam's appeal to the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule. Such "ruffianism," as we've seen before, is part and parcel of the valor and heroism associated with Islam and is what provided Islam with part of its strength to resist forces of injustice. The language of resistance here, and its accompanying notion of opposition between Hindu and Islam, seems appropriate as EVR continues in the speech to discuss concerns about "the Hindu *matam* that is without a ruffian disposition." But EVR's point, of course, is not to extend the opposition between Hinduism and Islam, for this opposition, on the Self-Respect account, is at root the projection of Brahminism. EVR continues here in October 1929 to dismiss the discussion of non-violence by implication: "…the spiritual wisdom [*ñāṉam*] of the wasted lazy-bones cannot achieve any good in the future. That age has been thrown off a mountain." The non-violent spiritual achievements of Gandhi, of Brahminism, of the ascetic, of Self-Rule, are no longer the governing forces in the world. Such forces led to hierarchy, corruption, exploitation, and atrocity. What is needed is a better understandings of the world, a world that was and continues to be shaped by violence, by force.

As EVR suggests, "all *matam*s are ruffian proselytization," where the word for proselytization here, *piraccāram*, means religious preaching as much as political propaganda. That is to say, the basis of the sorts of preaching that achieves converts is, by definition, the "ruffian" [*muruṭṭu*], the violent, or force. EVR's *Malwid* speeches go to lengths to assure his audience that the "ruffian" is not an effective way to distinguish Islam from Hinduism. All this is being done despite, of course, the ways in which a Brahminical, Sanskritized idiom is being mobilized by Gandhi and others to demand *swaraj* in the name of non-violence, vegetarianism, celibacy, i.e. asceticism. EVR is more interested in the principles and practices of Islam, evident in achievements of social justice, than in any story about its history of violence, meat-eating, and multiple-wives that informed concerns with conversion to Islam as un-Indian. This is not because EVR is interested in the ends rather than the means. For EVR, violence as a means is evident in the propagation of all *matam*, for all such propagation is "ruffian."

EVR's argument for the pervasiveness of force in *matam* propagation uses historical examples to establish the evident. "It is said that those-of-Islam [*islāmiyarkaḷ*]…conduct proselytization [*piraccāram*] holding the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other. Whether that is true or that is false, let it be."[1091] Pointing to an alleged "national" past, EVR instead identifies a history of violence and subjugation in South Asia by "Hindu" elements: of the 8th century Hindu philosopher Caṅkarāccāri's destruction of Buddhism, of Saivites impaling [*kaḻuvēṛṛu*] Jains, and of Vaishnavites smashing Buddhist statues.[1092] Accordingly, pointing to the texts hailed as the historical basis of Hinduism, EVR asks "Were all the battles between Gods and Demons [*tēvarkaḷ-acurarkaḷ*] mentioned in the Puranas peaceful [*cātvīkam*]? Was all that which is related to the Ramayan[a] and the [Maha]Bharata the philosophy of *ahimsa* [*ahimsāttattuvam*]?"[1093] EVR equally sees such history of violence in the world: of Socrates taking the hemlock, of Christ being crucified, of Mohammed hiding in a cave from persecutors.

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[1091] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Erode Prophet Birthday Celebration]" *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 12.

[1092] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Erode Prophet Birthday Celebration]" *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 12.

[1093] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṛanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 14.

Given such history from "the beginning of the age of the world," it is clear that "in our country [*nāṭu*] *matam's* propagation [*piraccāram*] was of the knife [*katti*]." But, in a place like EVR's India, such violence is not just a part of *matam's* history but its *swaraj*-demanding present:

> …even today, which is the philosophy [*tattuvam*] maintained as the basis of all the *dharmas* which are in the Hindu *matam dharma*: "one should cut out the tongues of atheists [*nāstikarkaḷ*], one should pluck out [their] eyes, one should butcher [them], [or] one should banish [*tiṛa*][1094] [them] from the country [*nāṭu*]"—that I ask.[1095]

EVR concludes that *matam* [religion], unlike *ilvāḻkkai* [secular life], is one of violence rather than love: "Therefore, *matam* proselytization [*piraccāram*] in the world maintains ruffianism and force [*palātkāram*], and there is not one *matam* in the world whose lovingness [*aṉpumayam*] [is the foundation of] experience."[1096]

If violence, rather than love, is the basis of all *matam*'s propagation, then violence drops out as the common denominator in the "comparative-value" of any *matam*. Violence and force [*palātkāram*] does not distinguish one "religion" from another, and thus does not distinguish Islam from Hinduism. Instead, Hinduism and Islam should be judged on whether or not, after the force of propagating any *matam*, they produce a more just, more equitable world. Hinduism fails this test, for in addition to its foundational propagation wedded to violence, Hinduism has "untouchability and women slavery" and, by valuing "another as one of a low *jāti*" through "experiences of degradation [*iḻivu*]," is without "self-respect [*cuya-mariyātai*]."[1097] In contrast, those who follow Islam are "high ones" and "the reason for this is their *matam* principles, that is, equality and fraternity."[1098]

In short, EVR dismisses the prevalent concern that "Muslims use force [*palātkāram*] to increase their society [*camūkam*]."[1099] For EVR, given the violence at the foundation of all *matam* propagation, Hindus not only are complicit in such violence but can only blame themselves for the successful spread of Islam and the increasing population of Muslims in India. Such blame is twofold. First, there is nothing in Hinduism that is necessarily "non-violent" so "who prevents Hindus from using force [*palātkāram*]?" This is a facetious point, of course, for EVR finds the appeal of Islam, rather than compulsion, to be the deciding factor in its increase. Second, this appeal revolves around Muslim's "feeling of equality and feeling of fraternity" which he provides as the reason why Muslims "have increased in our country [*nāṭu*]." Hinduism, at least in the orthodox Brahminical incarnations with which EVR is concerned, with its degradation of the human, not only provides little incentive for the favorable reception of

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[1094] Lit., "renounce" (as in asceticism)

[1095] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Erode Prophet Birthday Celebration]" *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 12-13.

[1096] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Erode Prophet Birthday Celebration]" *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 13.

[1097] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Erode Prophet Birthday Celebration]" *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 13.

[1098] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Erode Prophet Birthday Celebration]" *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 13.

[1099] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṛanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 14.

efforts at propagation, but, moreover for EVR, is in fact the reason for why "the Indian country [*nāṭu*] has been for so many ages an enslaved country."[1100] In short, "violence" or "non-violence" is a poor substitute for distinguishing right from wrong; one instead should instead attend to the present or absence of "high low" in the world.

### *"LOOK AT THE WIDE WORLD"*

EVR's encouragement of conversion to "foreign *matam*" in speeches following that of October 1929 provoked other Non-Brahmin studies of "religious conversion" as a way to create a world of Self-Respect. The earliest and most sustained was a two-part piece written by a frequent contributing Self-Respecter named Kaivalyam in *Kuṭi Aracu* immediately after EVR endorsed the conversion of 69 untouchables to Islam in the village of Cīlaiyampaṭṭi.[1101] Like EVR's discussions of "foreign" *matam*, Kaivalyam associates the foreign with the means by which one can recover a true, just self—a self-respecting self—for self-rule. The "foreign" here is associated with valor, evident through acts of comparison, and stands in contrast to a "native" that is not only corrupt and degenerate but which repeatedly coopts efforts to establish a more just world. Such concerns, though they may seem to be simply evidence of colonial discourse's power to brainwash brown men into believing themselves incapable of rule, are part of Non-Brahmin efforts to refashion their lived reality in order to create more equitable relations against the undeniable presence of hierarchical forms of degradation that are often justified through indigenous appeals. Those appeals, as Kaivalyam makes clear, are appeals to the other-worldly ideals of *asceticism* and serve to undermine efforts of this-worldly embrace associated with *valor*. Such appeals are, subsequently, the cause of mixing with and the multiplication of the "foreign *matam*." Kaivalyam's essay complements EVR's speeches though, as we will see, he takes shared concerns in slightly different directions. Kaivalyam's discussion of valor, comparison, cooptation, and corruption provides a coherent early articulation of the Non-Brahmin political theory of Self-Respect which also, by virtue of summary, provides us with an opportunity for conclusion. Furthermore, we will see that there is something always already SubContinental in Brahminism's assertion just as in its critique.

EVR, as we have seen, associates the allegedly "foreign" *matam* of Islam with valor. For EVR, valor, absent from native groups as a result of Brahminism, could be produced through converting to Islam. Kaivalyam makes the association between valor and the foreign differently. For him, there were valorous native elements that were driven out to the foreign *matam* by native ascetic forces, e.g. Brahminism. Kaivalyam is repeatedly worried about "subjugating [*oṭukku*] all *jāti*s whose great devotional [*pakti*] faith [*visvācam*] was coupled with virility [*āṇmai*] and driving them to a foreign [*aṉṉiya*] *matam*"[1102] and with "driving to *matam* change all those societies who have achieved the quality of enduring difficulty, of those of a war-character [*pōrkkuṇam*], of the valorous [*vīrarkaḷ*] who regard us highly and have maintained devotional

[1100] EVR, "*Kōvaiyil Napikaḷ Nāyakam Piṛanta Nāḷ Vaipavam: Tivāṉpaktūr C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār Em. Es. Ci. Talaivar: Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi Upaṉyācakarkaḷ* [Magnificence of the Preeminent Nabi's Birthday in Kōvai: Dewan Bahadur C. S. Irattiṉacapātimutaliyār M.S.C. as Head, Maulvi Nainār Mukamatu Cāyapu, Rāvcāki Ci. Em. Irāmaccantirañceṭṭiyār, Ē. Ve. Irāmacāmi as Speakers]," *Kuṭi Aracu* 23 August 1931: 14.

[1101] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṛṛattiṉ Kāraṇa Viḷakkamum Ārāyccciyum* [Research and Explanation of the Reasons of Relgious Conversion (lit, *Matam* Change)]" *Kuṭi Aracu* 27 October 1929: 3, 18; 3 November 1929: 3, 18.

[1102] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṛṛattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 27 October 1929: 18.

faith towards us…"[1103] Kaivalyam is concerned that, having driven out native valorous elements, there can be no protection for "our society [*camūkam*]" in the face of foreign forces, such as those of colonization and other religions. As he asks, how "can we protect our society" when "we have driven from our *matam* to foreign *matam*" such people as "high men and the valorous-with-virility who can protect" our society?[1104] The result is a present in which the "foreigner [*aṉṉiyar*]…sees us as those who are without authority [*atikāram*] and of a heart bounded in the perpetual baseness [*ciṟumai*] of the Sadhus [e.g. ascetics]."[1105]

Moreover, for Kaivalyam, the capacity to judge whether or not "our society" is worth protecting has been crippled by native elements that decry comparative and critical efforts as treachery. Kaivalyam repeats his concern over the unwillingness of native forces to look at the "good and evil" which comes from conversion to a foreign *matam*. Critics are decried as traitors. In discussing conversion to foreign *matam*, Kaivalyam rebukes his countrymen:

> We are not considering goods and evils [*naṉmai-tīmaikaḷ*]…We despise those who consider [these things] and call them *matam*-traitors [*turōki*]. [Yet] think about who are the sinners [*pāvikaḷ*] who are destroying *matam*. Who are those who speak to establish a situation in which [others] are driven from our *matam* to a foreign *matam*? Who are those who say that, destroying the injustices [*koṭumaikaḷ*] within our *matam*, our *matam*-people should remain within our *matam*?[1106]

Kaivalyam is horrified that none among Hindu Saivites and Vaishnavites "who hate [*pakaikum*] the Self-Respect group" are attending to such "goods and evils," none among "the pundits who have studied English, Tamil, or Sanskrit are standing forward to drive out the causes for *matam* change."[1107] Instead, such "research" amounts to no more than self-congratulation ("thinking greatly only about themselves") and a refusal to move beyond a provincial comfort zone ("the circumference of their hut"). Kaivalyam cites "journalists with English law degrees," a group largely composed of Brahmins, who have accused those of encouraging the poor to change *matam* as being "atheists" [*nāstikarkaḷ*] but without providing any alternative remedy to the various forms of "oppression" [*upattiravam*] under which the poor suffer. In short, native elements not only resist the foreign but also resist acts of *comparing* native and foreign as in and of themselves acts of treason. Yet, Kaivalyam asks, "Will social sufferings [*camūkattuṉpânkaḷ*] be resolved by calling the Self-Respect organization—which has been doing all it can given its power [*cakti*]—as atheists [*nāstikar*], as ignorant ones without education, as those who have come to destroy religion [*camayam*] and country [*nāṭu*]?"[1108]

Yet, despite their postured efforts to resist the foreign to protect the native, Kaivalyam claims that such native elements in fact coopt the foreign in order to further entrench their own interests. Moreover, such cooptation is modeled on a history of appropriating opposition, turning adversaries into avatars. Acknowledging the usefulness of the term "Hindu" as a merely "habitual" and practical matter, as the name itself may or may not have come from elsewhere and refers to a non-unitary set of sects—of "divisions divided" [*pirivukaḷ pirintu*]—whose "origin" [*mūlam*] was the "Veda," Kaivalyam sees in it the effect of the power of Brahmin-

[1103] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3.
[1104] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 18.
[1105] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 27 October 1929: 3.
[1106] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 18.
[1107] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 27 October 1929: 3.
[1108] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 27 October 1929: 18.

priests [*āccārikaḷ*].[1109] The "principles" of the Veda are seen as foreign to "south-country" but which "mixed" [*kalappu*] in with its principles; such foreignness here would not be fully operationalized for another decade with Dravidian separatism, though this foreigness suggests a broader power of Brahminism itself to mix and multiply elsewhere. More to the point here, various traditions were understood as not foreign to but actively against the Hindu *matam* but which were subsequently coopted by it. For example "Buddhism and Jainism were opposed [*virōtittu*] to the Veda [*piramāṇam*]." Such adversaries were quickly appropriated, whereby "Buddha was an avatar [*avatār*] of Vishnu and the Jain Guru was a part [*amcam*] of Vishnu…"[1110] That is to say, the very forces that appeared "to rebuke the foolish orthodox-people [Vedic, *vaitīkarkaḷ*] who cultivated violence [*imcai*, 'himsa'] for living things" simply were collapsed into the very target of rebuke. The power of Brahminism perpetuates itself in encounters with challenge, always "mixing" [*kalantu*] in "Brahmins' highness [*uyarvum*] and superiority [*ātikkam*]," making gestures to the perpetuation of and protection for "Sanatana Dharma ["eternal religion," *caṉataṉatarumam*]" rather than eliminate "untouchability and the injustice [*koṭumai*] of religion [*camayam*]."

The turning of adversaries into avatars points to the Non-Brahmin fear of the broader ways in which Brahminism could grow stronger from British challenges from abroad, just as Brahminism had grown stronger from Buddhist challenges at home. Kaivalyam makes such fears clear. Brahmins happily go to the "west-country" [*mēlnāṭu*], despite the fact that *Manu Parāšara Dharma Shastra* claims that such an act would ritually pollute the Brahmin. Yet Brahmins, though praising this text, push it away as they go abroad to England. There, despite having said that the reason for "those-of-the-west-country" having achieved their current "condition" through "the strength of the sword and the piling of money," come to realize that terms like "justice [*niyāyam*], truth [*uṇmai*], and freedom [*viṭutalai*]" which give the English "greatness [*makimai*]" are the very same qualities which "give greatness to the big caste-ones [*jātiyār*]."[1111] After such discovery, upon returning from the west-country, Brahmins go through a "sin-expiatory ceremony" for having gone abroad, thereby shoring up their ritual purity—now coupled with greater insights into how to use British terms like "justice, truth, and freedom" as further avatars of Brahminism.[1112]

The Non-Brahmin finds such cooptation unfortunate, if not terrifying, for British rule offered an opportunity—yet another opportunity, over the course of a millennia of failed challenges to Brahminism—for equality, rather than simply colonial oppression. It is the misuse, rather than the use, of "English justice" that the Non-Brahmin fears and which has caused conversion to a foreign *matam*. The Non-Brahmin understands "English justice" as defined by its use, either Brahmin or Non-Brahmin, rather than by any alleged English origins. The Non-Brahmin's concern is that upper-caste forces who dress and eat like a "west-person" in fact "use the English justice [*nīti*] for ancient inconsistencies [*acampāvitam*]," that is, using the very possibility of equality to reinscribe traditional forms of hierarchy. Kaivalyam warns the reader about a Brahmin "High Court judge" who "used the British justice [*nīti*] in all sorts of ways" to

[1109] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3.
[1110] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3. The text goes on to include the complicated place of Sankaraccariyar in the history of Buddhism and Hinduism, as well.
[1111] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3. This passage is difficult to translate, partially because of the term "*ātamram*" which appears to be a typo.
[1112] As evidence, Kaivalyam points the reader to C.P. Ramacamy Ayyar.

perpetuate "ancient foolish stubbornness" [*paḻaiya mūṭappiṭivātam*].[1113] Kaivalyam finds possibilities of promise in what he calls "British Rule." British Rule teaches "to everyone in schools" without "hiding the matter" that participation is central to the legitimacy of rule ("people [*jaṉaṅkaḷ*] should mix [*kalakka*] in rule [*āṭci*]"), that foreign rule is illegitimate ("reproaching rule by the foreigner [*aṉṉiyar*]"), and that obstacles of caste or creed to liberty must be removed (whose shastras "invite everyone without the meaning of birth-place [*piṛappiṭam*] or color [*niṛam*]" to the "path of freedom [*viṭutalai*]"). Such "British Rule" or "English justice" is threatened by Brahminism, by texts like Manu and Parāšara, pushing us "to forget the truth [*cattiyam*] of British justice [*nīti*]."[1114] And yet, such truth is threatened by traditional coopting Brahminical practices, turning adversary into avatar, creating what Kaivalyam repeatedly refers to as "inconsistency" [*acampāvitam*]. Such practices may leave no choice but to convert: "If the character [*kuṇam*] of these inconsistencies continue as they have for so long, won't our groups [*kūṭṭaṅkaḷ*] all go to a foreign [*aṉṉiya*] *matam*? If not, won't many among them be made to hate [*pakai*] us?"[1115]

Brahminism's elimination of the valorous, its crippling of critique, and its cooptation of the foreign has produced native articulations of domination and subjugation that are so pervasive as to be almost unbeatable. Kaivalyam provides a catalogue of SubContinental elements, elements that exist across the long distance relationship between India and Europe, that make it seem as if further "indigenous" efforts at reform will go the way of past efforts, serving to reinscribe rather than eradicate Brahminism. There is the Congress, those of the "north-nation [*vaṭatēcam*]" whose concern about the "driving out of untouchability" are "mere gestures," more concerned with "accepting posts [*uttiyōkaṅkaḷ*]" of political power.[1116] There are the landholding Zamindars, who "wring out [*kacakkippiḻi*] the agricultural laborer" irrespective of whether or not there is rain and the possibility of cultivation, and whose insatiable appetites mean that they never have "enough time and wealth to spend…on games of the English civilization [*nakarīkam*] and in buying a new mansion and automobile." There are of course the Brahmins, who not only receive religious "offerings" [*teṭcaṉai*] but who abandon their ritual learning in order to "study English and thus attain great authority and wealth, purely [*cuttam*] maintaining the style of English civilizational [*nakarīkam*] happiness." There are "those of noble lineage [*meṛkulattār*]," who demand the "esteem [*matippu*] of the common-people" without offering any amount of "protection in return." There are never-ending rituals [*caṭaṅkaḷ*] that are both a "wasteful expense" and decrease "comity [*cinēkam*]" among the people, and yet are demanded by Pundits who threaten the destruction of "heaven [*pāramārttīkam*]" otherwise. There are Gurus and heads of Monastaries who "plunder [*koḷḷai*]" the people; such plunder is then used by "officials" and "lawyers-of-justice [*niyāyam*]" to throw a "feast" for themselves and their family relation "clerks," calling it the ritual offering of "Guru prasadam" and "feeding the Brahmin to satisfaction"—all while many in that very same town are "starving [*paṭṭiṉiyāka*]."[1117] "It is this which is Brahmin *pōjaṉam* (ritual meal)." And there are the wealthy merchant Prabhus, so consumed by ritually purifying themselves and worshipping god in order to compensate for being "defiled [*tīṭṭu*] and tainted [*paḻutu*]" by their money dealing that,

[1113] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṛṛattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3. The judge referred to was Vi. Vi Cīṉivāca Ayyaṅkār.
[1114] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṛṛattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3.
[1115] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṛṛattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3.
[1116] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṛṛattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 27 October 1929: 3.
[1117] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṛṛattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 27 October 1929: 18.

Kaivalyam asks, "where is the time for protecting the poor so that they will not leave our *matam*?"

Given such a situation in which asceticism continues to coopt valorous reforms, resulting in "our people's society degenerating [*cīraḻintu*] without help for this life [*ikam*[ or the next life [*param*],"[1118] Kaivalyam rhetorically asks: "is there any way to prevent *matam* change in which the Hindu society will decrease [in population]?"[1119] The answer is: no. The mixing and multiplication brought about in conversion to what is considered "foreign" is understood as the surest way to achieve "native" reform.

Yet such conversion, and the mixing and multiplication it brings about, troubles the very distinction between foreign and native itself. Kaivalyam provides the example of Untouchable laborers in Travancore who, when coming to work either in the home or the field, are given a cross to wear so as to remove their "defilement" [*tiṭṭu*], and the cross is returned at the end of the work day.[1120] "If there is a cross [*ciluvai*] on the neck then there is no defilement [*tīṭṭu*]; if it is not, then there is defilement—this is the behavior we demonstrate…Because of this, we make [them] familiar with the excellence and convenience of foreign *matam* and show the way to *matam* change." The "foreign," that is, has come to constitute "native" practices of labor and employment.

Moreover, such "foreign" *matam* have come to constitute "native" practices of social reform. In contrast to previous "centuries," Kaivalyam sees a new current "century" where Christian *matam* and Muslim *matam*—unrelated to the Hindu *matam* and not a product of its divisions—came to India first as "enemies [*pakai*]," then as "friends [*cinēkam*]," and "now as kinsmen." By being of a "foreign" *matam*, he claims, such kin are able to carry out the earlier "native" reforms attempted by Buddhism and Jainism more effectively, establishing ashrams and "driving out untouchability."[1121] Whether in terms of material labor or ritual impurity, "because of *matam* change we see by our own eyes the abandonment [*nīṅkuvatu*] of many parts," though not all, of the "suffering [*tuṉpam*] of the oppressed [*otukkappaṭṭavarkaḷ*]."[1122]

In discussing the reasons for *matam* change, and the mixing and multiplying such change entails, Kaivalyam dismisses those who blame colonial forces. Instead, Kaivalyam blames "the condition we maintain of our societies" as "the most important reason for *matam* change."[1123] Though he discusses how "the religions [*camayaṅkaḷ*] which have been surrounding us show equality and fraternity in rule [*aracu*], clothes, food, in the worship of God [*kaṭavuḷ*] and in the law from the King to the Coolie," these remarks are only superficially a gesture to the foreign as a remedy to the native. As we've seen, both in Kaivalyam and in EVR, the mixing and multiplication made possible through conversion and reconversion is understood as an articulation of native efforts at reform, at articulations, as it were, of the true "Sanatana Dharma" rather than a threat to it—or at least an articulation of historical heterodox challenges to orthodox Sanatana Dharma, such as in Buddhism and Jainism. Islam and Christianity, as it were, fulfill similar "native" heterodox efforts at reform, constituting another element in SubContinental Political Theory. Mixing and multiplication do not provide evidence for foreign force but

[1118] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 27 October 1929: 3.
[1119] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3.
[1120] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 18.
[1121] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3. Kaivalyam suggests that both Islam and Christianity help do so through "baptism [*paricutta tīrttam*]."
[1122] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3.
[1123] Kaivalyam, "*Matamāṟṟattiṉ Kāraṇa*," *Kuṭi Aracu* 3 November 1929: 3.

instead of native embrace, of efforts to, as Kaivalyam concludes his article "look at the wide-world [*paranta ulakam*]."

## CONCLUSION

The secular life, the life of love, and Islam, the life of valor, were deeply interrelated features of Non-Brahmin political theory and its self-respect critique of self-rule. Home life, with the necessity of egalitarian relationships between man and woman centered on marriage, and the Muslim, with the possibility for external challenges to internal hierarchies, fused into a single critical project of Brahminism's national project: Islam appealed to Non-Brahmins as a way of articulating the need for widow remarriage, wife inheritance, female education, divorce with the Arabic term *rattu,* and, with turns to foreign places like Turkey and Afghanistan, possibilities for a variety of other reforms relating to man and woman. Moreover, neither the secular life nor Islam were far removed from Self-Respect's endorsement of Samadharma. For example, EVR makes both the secular life and Islam explicit and central in his *Malwid* speech of August 1930 delivered at his hometown, and the headquarters of the Self-Respect Movement, Erode. Referring to the earlier remarks of Maulana Maulvi Abdul Ahmed, "…the respected Maulana claimed many liberties [*cutantiraṅkaḷ*] for women and untouchables in the Islam *matam* that do not exist in the Hindu *matam*. I agree with that."[1124] There seems to have been a good deal of agreement among Non-Brahmins that Islam provided the reforms necessary to achieve self-respect. And yet, though we've seen Islam to be the most recent and therefore the most reformed and critically charged *matam*, there had since arisen a more recent *matam* that included but went beyond Islam. "If one wanted to classify [*vaku*] a principle [*koḷkai*] higher than the Islam *matam* principles, it should be today's Russian *matam*. In another way, it gives freely liberty [*cutantiram*], fraternity [*cakōtarattuvam*], and valor [*vīram*] to people up to the point possible."[1125]

This fusion of Samadharma and Islam in the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, as an articulation of SubContinental Political Theory, would retain its importance decades later in the village of Meenakshipuram. As suggested in the previous chapter, Non-Brahmins saw Samadharma as inextricably linked to justice in the "secular life" of the home and its marital relationships; terms related to *ilvāḻkkai* and gender equity were central to the achievement of self-respect through conversion to Islam. The continued importance of the Self-Respect fusions of Samadharma and Islam would, then, also suggest a coupling of secular and Muslim in Non-Brahmin efforts to challenge Brahminism. During my visit to Meenakshipuram in 2005, nearly 25 years after the mass conversion (see also Appendix A), I saw the continued importance of this Self-Respect coupling of Samadharma and Islam:

[1124] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Erode Prophet Birthday Celebration]" *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 11.
[1125] EVR, "*Ērōṭu Napikaḷ Piṛantanāḷ Koṇṭāṭṭam* [Erode Prophet Birthday Celebration]" *Kuṭi Aracu* 24 August 1930: 12.

Image 49. Home of Muslim converts in Meenakshipuram. Photo by author, July 2005.

Image 49 shows a convert's home in Meenakshipuram. The home's front wall was painted with two images. The first was of a sickle and grain. The second was of a mosque.

# PART VII. CONCLUSION: OUR NON-BRAHMIN FUTURE

> The prophet of the new age, the Socrates of South East Asia, father of social reform movement, and arch enemy of ignorance, superstitions, meaningless customs, and base manners.

EVR's movement still exists today, at least in its nationalist ethno-linguistic incarnation, as the *Dravidar Kaḻakam* [DK] or "Dravidian Federation." It has a campus in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, which houses the archives of the most complete collection of materials concerning the Self-Respect Movement; it is a place with which, over many years, I have become very familiar. At the center of the campus is a statue of EVR, who now is usually referred to simply as "Periyar." The statue has two sets of quotes in both English and Tamil. One, the epigram at the beginning of this Part, allegedly drawn from an award given to EVR by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] in 1972, claims EVR to be "the Socrates of South East Asia." Concerns with common geographic terminological errors aside (India is South Asia, Thailand and Vietnam, etc. are in South-East Asia), we may be interested in this idea of EVR being an incarnation of Socrates. We have already seen nascent articulations of comparative political theory attempt to claim Gandhi as "a modern-day Socrates…challenging ingrained habits and unleashing new vistas but transgressing philosophical boundaries."[1126] As with many of our terms of concern above, here too, it seems, we are faced with the task of redemption: is Socrates best redeemed, or redeemed by, EVR or Gandhi?

Such questions of redemption extend further. In the 1950s, for example, terms like "Periyarism" had come to stand in for the thought and movement of EVR. One article reads:

> There is no other Buddha after the Buddha, there is not another Gandhi after Gandhi, there cannot be another Periyar after Periyar.
>
> Periyar is a movement (institution) [sic]; he is not an individual man. Like 'Marxism,' 'Periyarism' is a philosophy; a principle; an ideal.[1127]

Just as we asked what it might mean for EVR or Gandhi to redeem, or be redeemed by, Socrates, what might it mean for Periyarism to redeem, or be redeemed by, Marxism?

Whatever our answers, these questions should not be understood as involving contained and coherent "self-ruling" units of analysis, encountering one another, fusing horizons in efforts at hermeneutical understanding. Instead, I have suggested that we frame such questions of redemption in terms that see the relationships among figures like Gandhi, EVR, Socrates, and Marx as primary, as the point of departure themselves, as part of a shared tradition across the long distance relationships that constitute the field of what I call SubContinental Political Theory. As Buber reminds us, "in the beginning is the relation," and as the Non-Brahmin redemption of "self-respect" encourages, the most valuable part of the self, the part worth

[1126] Fred Dallmayr, "Gandhi as Mediator between East and West" in *Margins of Political Discourse* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989): 22-23.
[1127] "*Tirucci Māṉāṭṭukkut Tiraṇṭu Varuka!*" in *Viṭutalai* 7 January 1955.

fighting for, is not constituted by *raj* or rule but by *mariyātai* or respect—by the boundaries that do not simply separate us but provide the very means by which we can live together, and live together better. Such relationships, and the shared traditions they harbor in those liminal, in-between spaces, should be our framework for doing political theory projects in the world, a world we all share.

Though "comparative political theory" has insisted on Gandhian *swaraj* as a model or frame for doing political theory outside "the West," I have argued in this dissertation that the Non-Brahmin critique of Gandhian self-rule provides a more compelling model from 20th century South India. Such a model is more compelling because it moves us away from ideas of rule, with the presumed encounters between self and other along the lines of a nationalist struggle against colonial exploitation, and towards international efforts to live together, and live together better, which sees synergies in relationships in efforts to redeem one another and, in the process, redeem ourselves.

I have argued that the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhi self-rule has not only critical purchase but historical consequence. Part I demonstrated the relevance of this critique of Gandhi more broadly, given both his centrality to comparative political theory and his problematic claims as pointed out by Martin Buber. Part II suggested that the years 1911 and 1981 provide illustrative bookends of this critique, and revealed the Non-Brahmin as a real, and important, political articulation. An examination of the Ashe assassination of 1911 revealed that self-rule, in its inaugural claims in South India, reinscribed the outcaste in its efforts to cast out, offering a false promise of freedom. I suggested that the Non-Brahmin be understood as pushing against this self-rule. An examination of the Meenakshipuram conversion of 1981 revealed that EVR, in the claims by the converts themselves, played an influential role in the decision by untouchables to move *en masse* to Islam to achieve equality. I suggested that the Non-Brahmin be understood as pulling towards Islam in order to achieve justice. Subsequent Parts demonstrated the ways in which the Non-Brahmin both produced and was produced by a world-wide project of SubContinental Political Theory from the 1920s to the 1940s. Part III looked at the Non-Brahmin as a comprehending agent, able to build itself through efforts at redeeming local Missionary agents, regional leaders like Gandhi, and international texts like those by Rousseau and Nietzsche in order to fortify its place in the world. Part IV demonstrated the ways in which universal claims, such as those of Marxism, did not challenge particular concerns but instead gave such concerns an opportunity to be redeemed, fusing *dharma* and communism, along with *bhutam* and the spectre, in an effort to imagine global justice. Part V argued that turns away from international commitments towards national separatist claims by the late 1930s were a part of, rather than apart from, a wider world, a world aggressively shaped through, while shaping, SubContinental Political Theory and its articulations of Jew, Brahmin, Aryan, and Pariah. Part VI showed elements of continuity despite this nationalist shift in the late 1930s, focusing on articulations of romance and valor as once again a way to be a part of rather than apart from the world; romance, through the secular life and valor, through Islam, would engage international spaces in order to further demands for justice closer to home. Such concerns with the coupling of secular and Islam in order to achieve the justice of equality against the injustice of hierarchy, concerns central to the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule, were the concerns drawn upon by the converts at Meenakshipuram in 1981, returning us to the place whose mutually imbricated coupling of events served as our point of departure.

As we might suspect, Non-Brahmins would not suggest that their influence on an event such as Meenakshipuram's conversion in 1981 was singular. Non-Brahmins in their pursuit of

self-respect saw themselves as carrying on critical efforts within India and across the world historically, in the spaces that remain between parts of the world such as the European Continent and the Indian Subcontinent. Their efforts, and the great distances they had to go in order to articulate those efforts, were not efforts to betray a particular past but redeem it and thereby better become who they already were. We are invited to consider the possibility that Non-Brahmins saw themselves as a part of a broader project that we could call SubContinental Political Theory, present and possible in, and only in, a shared tradition across long distance relationships. In so far as we share in those critical efforts, perhaps we, too, are Non-Brahmin.

## APPENDIX A. THE CENTRALITY AND MARGINALIZATION OF THE 1981 CONVERSION AT MEENAKSHIPURAM

> Hindutva, the politics in the name of Hinduism, came up from the mid-1920s...It was articulated theoretically by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and further defined by Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar…India [instead] took the path of secular democracy and Hindutva remained dormant till quite recently.
>
> In the early 1980s it started asserting itself and taking advantage of every possible event. Starting from the Meenakshipuram conversion of dalits [Untouchables] to Islam, it went on to build itself aggressively...[1128]

Contemporary scholarship on India has underscored the extent to which the 1981 conversion at Meenakshipuram was dramatic and central, inaugurating the rise of Hindutva and a turning point in the postcolonial politics of India itself. And yet, at the same time, the attention paid to the details of the event have been of surprisingly low resolution. One of the casualties of the low resolution treatment of Meenakshipuram, as suggested in Chapter 6, was the relationship drawn with the thought and movement of EVR and his demand for self-respect. And the casualty of Chapter 6 set the stage for the claims within the inaugural articulations of comparative political theory, discussed in Part I, that Gandhi's demand for *swaraj* and Untouchable conversion to Islam at Meenakshipuram are somehow compatible, both illustrative of "a central feature of religious faith: the ability of such faith to transcend prevailing social and political conditions and hence to become a resource for liberation rather than domination," with the implication being that Meenakshipuram's conversion is somehow an extension of Gandhian *swaraj*. Yet as we've seen, it was EVR's self-respect and not Gandhi's self-rule that was involved in the conversion itself.

This appendix is an effort to add resolution to the study of the mass conversion at Meenakshipuram, a central event subsequently marginalized in scholarship on India. Such an effort is important not only to an understanding of 20th century India but, in so far as India was central the field's inaugural articulations, to the field of comparative political theory, as well.

To briefly set the stage. Founded in 1980, a Hindu nationalist organization called the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP; "Indian People's Party") formed the national government of the Republic of India in 1998. The BJP was the political articulation of the extreme nationalist principle of "Hindutva" founded by VD Savarkar (1883-1966) in 1923 which had by 1980 already given rise to social reform organizations like the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP, "World Hindu Council") and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, "National Patriotism Organization"). Collectively, the BJP, VHP, and RSS came to be known as the *Sangh Parivar*, "The Association Family." The events leading up to the formation of the BJP (namely the rising strength of the oil-rich Muslim world and the increasing instability of democratic rule and fractures to Nehruvian secularism under Indira Gandhi across the 1970s), those a part of its rise (such as the Shah Bano controversy in 1985 over different civil codes for different religions, the economic liberalization conditions of the IMF bailout of 1991, and the destruction of the Babri Mosque in 1992), and those that marked its rule at the center (such as the 1998 detonation of a nuclear

[1128] Ram Puniyani, ed., *Religion, Power & Violence: Expression of Politics in Contemporary* (New Delhi: Sage, 2005): 17. Puniyani goes on to make clear links with the Non-Brahmin and Muslim against Hindutva: "…Its deeper social goal was to oppose the quest for social and gender equality, which was being articulated by the non-Brahmin movement and the introduction of education amongst women. Its main aim was to oppose the politics of Muslim communalism…"

device along the border of Pakistan touching off an arms race, and the massive Hindu-Muslim violence in Gujarat in 2002) have been popular subjects among students of Indian politics and saturate the literature. The rise of the BJP and related articulations of Hindutva came to vie for postcolonial *swaraj* in the last decades of the 20th century.

Despite the complexity of the context surrounding the BJP's formation and rise, the literature almost unanimously cites a single event as *the* catalyst for the solidification of the Hindu right as a viable political challenger to the previously hegemonic Congress: the mass conversion of around 200 Untouchable families to Islam in the village of Meenakshipuram, Tamil Nadu, on 19 February 1981.[1129] Though perhaps "in a different political climate in the country the few stray conversions at *Meenakshipuram* would have passed unnoticed,"[1130] the literature agrees that "To understand current events...we must go back to 1981 when...Dalits [Untouchables] in Meenakshipuram, Tamilnadu, underwent mass conversion to Islam."[1131] Accordingly, Meenakshipuram has been variously described with respect to the rise of Hindu nationalism and various Hindutva organizations such as the BJP as: "the defining moment"[1132] and as the "event [which] concentrated 'Hindutva' minds all over India" [1133]; as having "triggered off a new wave of self-questioning and creative activity within the vast, amorphous body of Hinduism"[1134] beginning the rapid "growth of Hindu nationalist organizations"[1135] and "major anti-Muslim agitation"[1136]; as the "incident which focused attention, aroused concern, provoked consternation, and concentrated minds all over India…bec[o]m[ing] a symbol of the need to generate Hindu solidarity"[1137] following which Hindutva "entered Indian politics in a big way, setting the scene..."[1138]; as "the event [which] affected the communal atmosphere in the country greatly" generating "social tensions"[1139]; as having "raised a political storm" shaking "the upper caste Hindus..."[1140] and prompting "a series of mass rituals…claimed…necessary for national integration"[1141] and "massive conversions, fundraising, Ekatmata ('Integration') and

[1129] This is the figure and date provided in the official "Meenakshipuram Report" (1982). The Report itself derives its figure and date from the newspaper report of the conversions published in the Madras edition of *The Sunday Standard*, 14 April 1981, under the headline "A Whole Village Goes Islamic."
[1130] Sita Ram Sharma, *Anatomy of Communalism: An Analysis of Hindu-Muslim Conflict in India* (Delhi: APH Pub Corp, 1998): 163.
[1131] Smith, *Hinduism and Modernity* (2003): 184, 193.
[1132] Manjari Karju, *Vishva Hindu Parishad and Indian Politics* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2003): 143.
[1133] Roger Griffin, Robert Mallett and John Tortorice, eds. *The Sacred in Twentieth-century Politics : Essays in Honour of Professor Stanley G. Payne* (Basingstoke [England]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 198.
[1134] R. Balasubramanian and Sibajiban Bhattacharyya, eds. *Freedom, progress, and society : essays in honour of Professor K. Satchidananda Murty* (Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 1986): 5
[1135] Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1994): 28.
[1136] Steven Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India* (New York: Cambridge U P, 2004): 194-195.
[1137] Robert Eric Frykenberg, "Hindu Fundamentalism and the Structural Stability of India" in Martin E. Marty & R. Scott Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Polities, Economies, and Militance* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1993): 245-246.
[1138] Tapan Basu et al., *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993): 53-54
[1139] Abdul Gafoor Abdul Majeed Noorani, *The RSS and the BJP: A Division of Labour* (New Delhi: LeftWord Books, 2000): 60
[1140] Asghar Ali Engineer, ed. *Politics of Confrontation : the Babri-Masjid Ramjanmabhoomi Controversy Runs Riot* (Delhi : Ajanta Publications, 1992): xiv, xviii.
[1141] Ellen Christenson " Reclaiming Sacred Hindu Space at Ayodhya" in Cris E. Toffolo, *Emancipating Cultural Pluralism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003): 166.

'Hindu Enlightenment' campaigns all over India"[1142]; as "[t]he most dramatic incident…one of many that was to follow throughout [the] 1980s in quite rapid succession, [which not only] reinforced the idea of a Hindu majority under threat, but also one in need of urgent internal reform and reintegration"[1143]; as the "sparking event"[1144] and the "critical issue…[after which] Hindu organisations…began to mobilise people…bec[o]m[ing] politically active and aggressive after this incident"[1145] whereupon such organizations "became a reality"[1146] and the "Hindu nationalist point of view gained…respectability and legitimacy[1147]; as central to "a set of new developments and disturbances across the nation [which] set the stage for even deeper Hindu nationalist incursions…arousing the ire of Hindu nationalists [who] warned that Hinduism was in danger and that these conversions were yet another attack on Hindu identity…[and who subsequently] seized the opportunity to organize and mobilize Hindu communities"[1148]; as beginning the "media hype" which resulted in "[t]he Hindu 'backlash'"[1149] deploying "virulent anti-Muslim rhetoric" [1150]; "as a lightning rod for the alarmist tendencies of Hindu nationalism…presented as an attack on Hinduism and therefore a threat to the very fabric of India"[1151]; as the event which "made clear that the Hindu nationalist forces were allowed a relatively free hand in public, whereas the Muslims community stood without powerful public leaders" [1152]; as the event which marked "the reactivation of a Hindu sentiment of

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[1142] Chetan Bhatt. *Liberation and Purity: Race, New Religious Movements and the Ethics of Postmodernity* (London: UCL Press, 1997): 220.

[1143] Vernon Marston Hewitt, *Political Mobilisation and Democracy in India: States of Emergency* (New York: Routeledge, 2007): 170 (citing (Jaffrelot (1996): 342).

[1144] Gail Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution: New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India* (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1993): 184. She goes on: "Their motives were quite clear: ongoing conflict with caste Hindu thevars nearby and a sense tha tthey could get protection in Islam—not so different alfter all, form the millennia of history of converisons in India. But the VHP spearheaded a wave of hysteria on the issue, centering around the slogans of 'Gulf money.' It initiated a reconversion campaign and started a series of *jan-jagran* or 'popular awakenings' *yatras*—massive processions through cities and villages. The *yatra* idea had been used in the past by popular movements and the left parties, bu thte VHP (and later the BJP) made it a powerful weapon of mobilization that aroused Hindu fanaticism and left a trail of Hindu-Muslim rioting—rioting in which Muslims were primarily the victims.

The VHP followed this up by beginning the *Ramranmabhoomi* campaign declared for the liberation of the 'birthplace of Rama' at Ayodhya...; here a mosque, named after the Muslim conqueror Babar (the Babri-masjid), had been built over wwhat was by tradition a temple of Rama..."

[1145] Sali Augustine, "Religion and Cultural Nationalism: Socio-Political Dynamism of Communal Violence in India" in Erich Kolig, Vivienne SM Angeles, & Sam Wong (eds), *Identity in Crossroad Civilizations: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Globalism in Asia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ Press, 2009): 74-75

[1146] Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996): esp. Chpt 10 "The Hindu Sense of Vulnerability and the RSS's Political Offensive": 349.

[1147] Christophe Jaffrelot ed., *Hindu Nationalism: a Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), "Conversion and the Arithmetic of Religious Communities: Lala Lajpat Rai on Dalits and Conversions": 234-235.

[1148] Kapur, "Gandhi and *Hindutva*: Two Conflicting Visions of *Swaraj*" in Parel, ed. Gandhi, Freedom, and Self-Rule (2000): 130.

[1149] Zafarul-Islam Khan, "Hindu Fundamentalism in Contemporary India: A Muslim Perspective" in *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought*. ed. Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi (Oxford : Blackwell Pub., 2006): 509.

[1150] Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999): 151.

[1151] C. Ram Prasad, "Contemporary Political Hinduism" in *The Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, edited by Gavin Flood. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2003): 537.

[1152] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave* (1999): 151.

vulnerability…interpreted…as constituting 'part of a long-term plan intended to transform the [Muslim] minority into a majority'."[1153]

In short, the literature is emphatically clear on the centrality of Meenakshipuram to understand the politics of the Republic of India after 1981. Like with the Ashe assassination in 1911, the conversion at Meenakshipuram in 1981 was a dramatic event, a turning point, the moment inaugurating a new politics. Yet also like the Ashe assassination, the conversion at Meenakshipuram has been disproportionately underserved by scholarship.

Despite the evident centrality of Meenakshipuram in scholarship on the politics of postcolonial India, such scholarship has had disturbing shortcomings suggesting a failure to take the South seriously, effectively siphoning up the event into a story of *swaraj*—which we saw in Chapter 6 associated with the Bengali/North/Brahmin—rather than into a more complicated narrative—for which we have been invited to attend, again in Chapter 6, to the Dravidian/South/Non-Brahmin. Given the absence of any gesture towards this more complicated narrative, perhaps we should not be surprised that EVR, the figure most associated with the Dravidian/South/Non-Brahmin, is entirely absent from scholarship emphasizing the centrality of Meenakshipuram. This absence is shocking, for we have attended to the repeated invocations of the thought and movement of EVR by those involved in Meenakshipuram and similar conversions at the time.

Let us turn to the treatment by the academic literature of the event at Meenakshipuram. Such treatment is marked by a series of inconsistencies that are remarkable given the centrality of the event to subsequent Indian politics.

One wonders who converted. The overwhelming consensus in the literature is that an outcaste group converted to Meenakshipuram.[1154] Yet there is an important politics of naming related to this outcaste groups that has gone unattended. The literature contains a few references to this group as "tribals" or "*Adivasis*" [1155] and "Adi-Dravidians" [1156] while the terms "Harijans"[1157] and "Dalits"[1158] saturate sources. These terms reveal a profound difference in

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[1153] Christophe Jaffrelot "The Rise of Hindu Nationalism" in Amita Shastri and A. Jeyaratnam Wilson (eds), *The Post-Colonial States of South Asia: Democracy, Development, and Identity* (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 147.

[1154] For an exception to this, at least one author has referred to "the Meenakshipuram conversions of caste Hindus to Islam"– which is like saying that the Communist Revolution will be brought about by the bourgeoisie Kripa Sridharan, "Grasping the Nettle: Indian Nationalism and Globalization" in Leo Suryadinata (ed), *Nationalism and Globalization: East and West* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000): 310.

[1155] BG Verghese, *First Draft: Witness to the Making of Modern India* (Chennai: Tranquebar Press, 2010); see the speech of Ubedullah Khan Azmi quoted in Sudhir Kakar, *The Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion, and Conflict* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996): 183.

[1156] MSS Pandian, *The Image Trap: MG Ramachandran in Film and Politics* (New Delhi: Sage, 1992): 67.

[1157] Partha S. Ghosh, *Cooperation and Conflict in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1989): 38-39; Abdul Gafoor Abdul Majeed Noorani, *The RSS and the BJP: A Division of Labour* (New Delhi: LeftWord Books, 2000): 60; K.S. Shukla, ed. *Collective Violence: Genesis and Response* (New Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1988): 104; P. R. Rajgopal *Social change and violence: the Indian experience*, (New Delhi: Uppal Pub. House, 1987): 174; HV Seshadri, *RSS: A Vision in Action* (Bangalore: Sahitya Sindhu Prakashana, 1998 (1988)): 59; Shyam Agarwalla, *Religion and Caste Politics* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1998): 237; MG Chitkara, *Hindutva Parivar* (Delhi: APH Pub Corp, 2003): 68; the sources Christophe Jaffrelot uses—Office of the Director for SC/ST, Government of India, Madras, "A report on the mass conversion of harijans of Meenakshipuram, Tenkasi Taluk, Tirunelveli District into Islam," *Sunday,* 09 Nov 1982: 16-25; MA Kalam "Why the Harijan Convert to Islam Views Reservations with Reservations" *South Asia Research*, 4 (2), Nov 1984, p 157—in his widely cited *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996): 340; speech of Ubedullah Khan Azmi quoted in Sudhir Kakar, *The Colors of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion, and Conflict* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996): 183; Vernon Marston Hewitt, *Political Mobilisation and Democracy in India: States of Emergency* (New

understanding the agents of the event. The relationship between Untouchable and Tribal is, at the very least, complicated and certainly not one of transparent equivalence. The three terms used as equivalent to Untouchable—Adi-Dravidian, Harijan, and Dalit—reveal markedly different perspectives as to just who an Untouchable is. The term Adi-Dravidian is a term referring to a regional, at one point secessionist, and somewhat racialized identity broadly associated with EVR's thought and movement (though, I argued in Part V, this is only partially correct) to distinguish those in the South from those in the North of India. The terms Harijan and Dalit are more pan-Indian, yet themselves come out of different traditions. "Harijan" means "children of God," a nationalist, it not paternalist, term of Gandhian coinage. "Dalit" means "broken people," a term coined by the Untouchable leader Ambedkar who often vehemently disagreed with Gandhi and his Hindu idiom. The answer to the question "who converted" evades a simple indexical gesture; the term one uses in reply is saddled with ideological investments.

One wonders when the conversion took place. The literature is fairly clear that it was in 1981—19 February 1981, to be precise.[1159] Yet sources give other dates. Readers are variously told that the conversion transpired in "the 1980s,"[1160] "the early 1980s,"[1161] "1980,"[1162] "January

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York: Routeledge, 2007): 170; Prithvi Ram Mudiam, *India and the Middle East* (New York: British Academic Press, 1994): 122; etc.

[1158] V. Krishna Ananth, *India Since Independence: Making Sense of Indian Politics* (Noida: Pearson Education, 2011): 242; Nagendra Kr. Singh, *Ambedkar On Religion* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 2000): 505; BG Verghese, *First Draft: Witness to the Making of Modern India* (Chennai: Tranquebar Press, 2010); KS Lal, *Return to Roots: Emancipation of Indian Muslims* (New Delhi: Radha Publications, 2002): 89; James Massey, *Dalits in India: Religion as a Source of Bondage or Liberation with Special Reference to Christians* (Manohar Publishers & Distributors and ISPCK, 1995): 158; Thiumaavalavan, *Talisman, extreme emotions of Dalit liberation,* trans Meena Kandasamy (Kolkata: Samya, 2003): 156; David Smith, *Hinduism and Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003): 193; Robert L. Hardgrave & Stanley A. Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation,* (Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008): 207; Robert Eric Frykenberg, "Hindu Fundamentalism and the Structural Stability of India" in Martin E. Marty & R. Scott Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Polities, Economies, and Militance* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1993): 246; Gyanendra Pandey, *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories* (Stanford: Stanford Univ Press, 2006): 34; John Zavos, "The Shapes of Hindu Nationalism" in Katharine Adeney, Lawrence Sáez (eds), *Coalition Politics and Hindu Nationalism* (New York: Routeledge, 2005): 50; Rajendra Vora "Decline of Caste Majoritarianism in Indian Politics" in Rajendra Vora & Suhas Palshikar (eds), *Indian Democracy: Meanings and Practices* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004): 289; Sali Augustine: "Religion and Cultural Nationalism: Socio-Political Dynamism of Communal Violence in India" in Erich Kolig, Vivienne SM Angeles, & Sam Wong (eds), *Identity in Crossroad Civilizations: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Globalism in Asia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ Press, 2009): 74; Anthony J. Parel, ed. *Gandhi, Freedom, and Self-Rule* (2000): 130; Zafarul-Islam Khan, Chpt 29: "Hindu Fundamentalism in Contemporary India: A Muslim Perspective" in *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought*, edited by Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi. (Malden, MA ; Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2006): 509; Gauri Viswanathan, "Religious Conversion and the Politics of Dissent" in *Conversion to Modernities: the Globalization of Christianity,* edited by Peter van der Veer (New York: Routledge, 1996); Jeff Haynes "Religious Fundamentalism and Politics" in *Major World Religions: From Their Origins to the Present,* edited by Lloyd Ridgeon (New York : RoutledgeCurzon, 2003): 359; Christophe Jaffrelot ed, *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader* (Princeton: U Princeton P, 2007): 243-245; Ram Puniyani, "Introduction" in Puniyani (ed), *Religion, Power, and Violence: Expression of Politics in Contemporary Times* (New Delhi: Sage, 2005): 17; Tanika Sarkar, "Problems of Social Power and the Discourses of the Hindu Right" in *Social Movements in India : Poverty, Power, and Politics,* edited by Raka Ray and Mary Fainsod Katzenstein. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005): 73; etc.

[1159] To give the most prominently cited source, Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (New York: Columbia UP, 1996): 340.

[1160] Fred W. Clothey, *Religion in India: A Historical Introduction* (New York: Routeledge, 2006): 213.

[1161] Nandini Rao and C. Rammanohar Reddy, "Ayodhya, the Print Media and Communalism" in Robert Layton, Julian Thomas & Peter G Stone (eds), *Destruction and Conservation of Cultural Property* (London: Routeledge,

1981,"[1163] "the autumn of 1981,"[1164] "1982,"[1165] and "1984."[1166] One scholar even refers to "the conversion...in Meenakshipuram...in 1968."[1167] One is tempted to suggest that national events—like the rise of Hindutva in response to various events in "the 1980s" or perhaps Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984—or even international events—perhaps like the Prague Spring or the general strikes in France of 1968—have served to eclipse the local event at Meenakshipuram. The people and place of Meenakshipuram seem to be siphoned into the historical horizons of other concerns.

One wonders where the conversion took place. There is certainly consensus that the conversion took place in Meenakshipuram. But what sort of place is Meenakshipuram? Meenakshipuram is referred to sometimes as simply a "place,"[1168] at other times a "village,"[1169] a "town,"[1170] a "temple town,"[1171] and even as an entire "district."[1172] Where is Meenakshipuram?

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2001): 154, ft nt 1; Gyanendra Pandey, *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories* (Stanford: Stanford Univ Press, 2006): 34; Prithvi Ram Mudiam, *India and the Middle East* (New York: British Academic Press, 1994): 122.

[1162] M.G. Chitkara, *Hindutva Parivar* (New Delhi : A.P.H. Pub. Corp., 2003): 68.

[1163] Veena Das (ed), *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990): 47.

[1164] BG Verghese, *First Draft: Witness to the Making of Modern India* (Chennai: Tranquebar Press, 2010).

[1165] Myron Weiner, "The Struggle for Equality: Caste in Indian Politics" in Atul Kholi, ed., *The Success of India's Democracy* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2001): 199. With respect to 1982, Steven Wilkinson claims that the Hindu Munnani or "Hindu Front" arose "after conversions of low-caste Hindus to Islam" in 1982 [*Votes and Violence:* (2004): 194, ft nt 71]. Not only does he not mention Meenakshipuram, but the first references to the Hindu Munnani occur in newspaper articles as early as June 1981. See LD Nataraj, "Conversions in Tamil Nadu," *Indian Express* 26 June 1981; "Hindu Unity Meets at Meenakshipuram," *Indian Express* 12 July 1981; "Reforming Hindu Society: Vajpayee Calls for Mass Movement," *Indian Express,* 16 July 1981, etc.

[1166] Antony Copley, "Indian Secularism Reconsidered: From Gandhi to Ayodhya" in *Contemporary South Asia* 2:1 (1993): 57. The 1984 date for Meenakshipuram is reproduced citing Copley, for example, in Jeff Haynes "Religious Fundamentalism and Politics" in Ridgeon, ed. *Major World* Religions (2003): 359.

[1167] David N. Lorenzen, *Who Invented Hinduism? Essays on Religion in History* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2006): 98.

[1168] BG Verghese, *First Draft: Witness to the Making of Modern India* (Chennai: Tranquebar Press, 2010).

[1169] John CB Webster, *A History of the Dalit Christians in India* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992): 148; Peter van der Veer, "Conversion and Coercion: The Politics of Sincerity and Authenticity" in Jan N. Bremmer, Wout J. van Bekkum, Arie L. Molendjik (edds), *Cultures of Conversions* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006): 2; Gail Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution: New Social Movements and the Socialist Tradition in India* (Armonk: ME Sharpe, 1993): 184; Robert L. Hardgrave & Stanley A. Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation,* 7th edition (Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008): 207; Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1994): 28, 136; Vernon Marston Hewitt, *Political Mobilisation and Democracy in India: States of Emergency* (New York: Routeledge, 2007): 170; Prithvi Ram Mudiam, *India and the Middle East* (New York: British Academic Press, 1994): 122; Peter van der Veer, "Secrecy and Publicity in the South Asian Public Arena" in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, edited by Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman. (Leiden: Brill, 2004): 46; Zafarul-Islam Khan, Chpt 29: "Hindu Fundamentalism in Contemporary India: A Muslim Perspective" in *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought* (2006): 509; *The post-colonial states of South Asia : democracy, development, and identity /* edited by Amita Shastri and A. Jeyaratnam Wilson. (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 147; Rupal Oza, "The Geography of Hindu Right-Wing Violence in India" [153-174] in *Violent Geographies: Fear, Terror, and Political Violence,* edited by Derek Gregory and Allan Pred. (New York: Routledge, 2007): 160; Jeff Haynes "Religious Fundamentalism and Politics" in *Major World Religions,* Ridgeon, ed. (2003): 359.

[1170] Gauri Viswanathan, "Religious Conversion and the Politics of Dissent" in Peter van der Veer (ed) *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity* (New York: Routeledge, 1996): 101; Christophe Jaffrelot ed, *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader* (Princeton: U Princeton P, 2007): 243-245;

[1171] Ram Puniyani, "India: Religious Nationalism and Changing Profile of Popular Culture" in K. Moti Gokulsing & Wimal Dissanayake (eds), *Popular Culture in a Globalised India* (New York: Routeledge, 2009): 95;

There is no disagreement that Meenakshipuram is in Tamil Nadu. Though located in the Tirunelveli district, this has not prevented the claim that Meenakshipuram is "a small prosperous village in Ramanathapuram district."[1173] Some have described the location of Meenakshipuram simply as "far away in south India, in southernmost Tamil Nadu."[1174] Far away from what?

One wonders how many converted. Such a wonder is important, given the widespread belief that the subsequent rise of Hindutva was premised on a "politics of numbers,"[1175] e.g. where Hindutva forces portrayed Meenakshipuram as "part of a long-term plan intended to transform the [Muslim] minority into a majority"[1176] and thus "Hindu revivalists portrayed Hinduism as under siege, and Hindus, a vast majority in India's population, responded as a threatened minority—a majority with a minority complex."[1177] As one scholar writes:

> The VHP had its first success in…the context of mass conversion as part of a politics of numbers and communal competition. After the oil crisis of 1973 there had been an explosion of allegations and violence centering on the idea that conversions to Islam, by necessity, had to have been induced by oil money. The most important of such conflicts related to Meenakshipuram, a South Indian village in which an untouchable community converted to Islam in 1981. The VHP successfully mobilized the minority syndrome of the Hindu majority and saw its following increase to the extent that it could mobilize support for the far-reaching attack on the Babar Mosque in Ayodhya that was destroyed in 1992.[1178]

Yet despite the ways in which this "politics of numbers" has been so central in references to Meenakshipuram, like with the questions of who, when, and where, an answer to the question

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[1172] Sita Ram Sharma, *Anatomy of Communalism: An analysis of Hindu-Musim conflict in India* (APH Pub Corp, 1998): 162; Sali Augustine: "Religion and Cultural Nationalism: Socio-Political Dynamism of Communal Violence in India" in Erich Kolig, Vivienne SM Angeles, & Sam Wong (eds), *Identity in Crossroad Civilizations: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Globalism in Asia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam Univ Press, 2009): 74; Rupal Oza, "The Geography of Hindu Right-Wing Violence in India" [153-174] in Derek Gregory and Allan Pred , (ed.). *Violent Geographies : Fear, Terror, and Political Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2007): 160; Rupal Oza repeats the claim that Meenakshipuram is "(a district in Tamil Nadu)" in her *The Making of Neoliberal India: Nationalism, Gender, and the Paradoxes of Globalization* (New York: Routeledge, 2006): 14, 116.

[1173] MSS Pandian, *The Image Trap: MG Ramachandran in Film and Politics* (New Delhi: Sage, 1992): 67.

[1174] Zoya Hassan, "Communal Mobilization and Changing Majority in Uttar Pradesh" in David E. Ludden (ed), *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania Press, 1996): 90.

[1175] For example, see Peter van der Veer, "Secrecy and Publicity in the South Asian Public Arena" in *Public Islam and the Common Good* (2004): 35, 40, 46, 48, etc; Bernard S. Cohn, *An Anthropologist Among Historians* (New Delhi: Oxford U P, 1987).

[1176] Quoting the *Hindu Vishva*, the official organ of the VHP, by Christophe Jaffrelot "The Rise of Hindu Nationalism" in Shastri and Wilson (eds), *The Post-Colonial States of South Asia* (2001): 147.

[1177] Hardgrave & Kochanek, *India* (2008): 208. I believe this phrase was coined by Stanley Tambiah. Kanchan Chandra has argued that the argument for a "siege" mentality deriving from Meenakshipuram as driving the Hindu majority to vote for BJP (earlier the BJS) because of this feeling of being a minority are unfounded, as BJP (BJS) fared poorly in states with actual Hindu minorities, and did not do well in South India where Meenakshipuram took place (e.g. in states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu). Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India* (New York: Cambridge U P, 2004): 265. I disagree. She presumes that Meenakshipuram was an event in South India, whereas I am arguing that the literature has echoed the extent to which Meenakshipuram was an event in the history of the demand for *swaraj*. What Kanchan Chandra is registering is the siphoning of Meenakshipuram into *swaraj* and the failure of Meenakshipuram to be grounded in the specificity of its locale, not the inaccuracy of the subsequent "siege" mentality. Chandra, like most other area studies scholars of India, *uses* Meenakshipuram but does not *attend* to Meenakshipuram.

[1178] Peter van der Veer, "Religion in South India," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 182.

"how many" is opaque. The official government report claims that "180 Hindu harijan families have changed their faith into Islam, and that another 50 families are likely to embrace it by the end of April."[1179] Thus any figure that amounts roughly to 180-230 families would be a reasonable answer to a question about the number of people involved in the 1981 conversion at Meenakshipuram. Yet the literature's figures are far ranging. The literature claims that the conversion at Meenakshipuram involved: "some *Dalits,*"[1180] "a few Harijans,"[1181] "a few Scheduled Caste people,"[1182] "a group of Untouchables,"[1183] "a few Dalit families,"[1184] "several hundred,"[1185] "two hundred Harijans,"[1186] "nearly 800,"[1187] "about 800,"[1188] "a thousand untouchables,"[1189] "around 1,000 Dalits,"[1190] "181 Dalit families,"[1191] "200 dalit families,"[1192] "300 Dalit families,"[1193] "more than 1,000 untouchables,"[1194] "some fifteen hundred Dalits,"[1195] "a few thousand Harijans...in three districts of southern Tamil Nadu, but notably in and around...Meenakshipuram,"[1196] "12,000 Dalits in Meenakshipuram and four other districts in Tamil Nadu,"[1197] and simply "a large number of Dalits."[1198] An influential north Indian Muslim leader, Ubedellah Khan Azmi, puts the number even higher, claiming in a 1985 speech reacting to Hindu fundamentalism: "Why are they so afraid of the Qur'an? They are afraid because their

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[1179] "Meenakshipuram Report" (1982): 15. These claims are based on the article "A Whole Village Goes Islamic" in the Madras edition of the *Sunday Standard* on 12.4.1981 [12 April 1981]. See also the extracts republished as "The Meenakshipuram Report" in *Muslim India* (March 1983), Vol 1, No 3: 112. This report differs from how it is reported in other material. For example, "The report of the Intelligence Bureau regarding the conversions was quite disturbing. It said: 'The proselytizing effort effort of the Muslim organizations and institutions has received a fillip because of the inflow of money from the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries and the Pan-Islamic Agencies. Promises of jobs and scholarships in the Muslim countries and deputations of some of the more promising of the convets to places like Madina University for higher religious learning are being made. As an atmosphere favourable for converisons is created...it is likely to attract more and more attention of the Muslim countries and foreign Islamic organizations.'" Mudiam, *India and the Middle East* (1994): 122 (fn 84).

[1180] John Zavos, "The Shapes of Hindu Nationalism" in Adeney & Sáez, eds. *Coalition Politics and Hindu Nationalism* (2005): 50.

[1181] Sharma, *Anatomy of Communalism* (1998): 162.

[1182] A.K. Lal, ed. *Secularism: Concept and Practice* (New Delhi Concept Pub. Co, 1998): 132.

[1183] Lorenzen, *Who Invented Hinduism?* (2006): 98.

[1184] Jerald D. Gort, Henry Jansen, Hendrik M. Vroom, eds., *Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation: Multifaith Ideals and Realities* (New York: Rodopi, 2002): 247; Asghar Ali Engineer, *Communal Riots after Independence: A Comprehensive Account* (Delhi : Shipra, 2004): 24.

[1185] Wilkinson, *Votes and Violence* (2004): 194.

[1186] Ghosh, *Cooperation and Conflict in South Asia* (1989): 38.

[1187] Chitkara, *Hindutva Parivar* (2003): 68.

[1188] Seshadri, *RSS: A Vision in Action* (1998): 58

[1189] Weiner, "The Struggle for Equality: Caste in Indian Politics" in Kholi, ed., *The Success of India's Democracy* (2001): 199.

[1190] Smith, *Hinduism and Modernity* (2003): 193.

[1191] Khan, "Hindu Fundamentalism in Contemporary India: A Muslim Perspective" in *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought* (2006): 509.

[1192] Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution* (1993): 184.

[1193] Lal, *Return to Roots* (2002): 89.

[1194] Hardgrave Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation* (2008): 207.

[1195] Frykenberg, "Hindu Fundamentalism and the Structural Stability of India" in *Fundamentalisms and the State: Remaking Polities, Economies, and Militance* (1993): 246.

[1196] BG Verghese, *First Draft* (2010)

[1197] Sujata Patel & Jim Masselos, *Bombay and Mumbai: The City in Transition* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003): 236.

[1198] Pandey, *Routine Violence* (2006): 34.

[Hindu] religion is one of touchables-untouchables. Qur'an gives a religion of universal equality....That is why thirteen thousand Harijans...converted to Islam in Meenakshipuram..."[1199] Thomas Hansen, in his well-known 1999 book *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, cites Christophe Jaffrelot, perhaps the most widely cited scholar on Hindu Nationalism, in discussing "the wake of the conversions to Islam of approximately one thousand scheduled-caste people in Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu in early 1981..."[1200] Later, Christophe Jaffrelot writes that Meenakshipuram involved the conversion of "several hundred Untouchables..."[1201] Whatever the "politics of numbers" may mean, it does not seem to require empirical attention to the numbers themselves.

Moreover, one may wonder about the narrative texture of the event itself, utterly and totally absent from the one or two lines that gesture to Meenakshipuram's centrality in the literature. The event's consequences provide rearticulations of past conflicts. More than a year after the conversion, the region witnessed renewed violence. For example, in June 1982, "[s]even persons were killed and 21 were injured in clashes between two groups in [the neighboring] Puliangudi area," an area which had "been witnessing violent clashes between Harijans and Muslims on one side and caste Hindus on the other…"[1202] Such "violence erupted due to a quarrel between women belonging to two communities over fetching water from a public tap"—violence which involved fighting with "deadly weapons on the streets," the burning of shops and about 200 houses, and the "country bomb[ing]" of a Vinayaga temple. A few days later, "a violent mob" "of over 1,500 stated to be Maravars" attacked a village nearby Puliangudi, killing 5 Harijans using sickles, burning down 41 Harijan houses, and requiring police to open fire killing one and injuring two.[1203] Articles claimed that "The Pulangudi clashes are a sequel to animosities between Thevars and dissident Harijans who have joined the Samathuva Sahodarathuva Sangham [Equality and Fraternity Association] which has both Muslims and Harijans among its members" begun at the initiative of one-time Member of Parliament named AK Rafayee. Rafayee was a member of the then 37-year old South India Isha-Athul Islam Sabha[1204] which by 1981 had claimed responsibility for 17,000 conversions to Islam in Tamil Nadu and "under whose auspices conversions took place in Meenakshipuram."[1205] The Samathuva Sahodarathuva Sangham was "formed to promote close understanding and cooperation between Harijans and Muslims in all elections."[1206] Mr. AK

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[1199] Kakar, *The Colors of Violence* (1996): 183.

[1200] Hansen, *The Saffron Wave* (1999): 151. He cites Christophe Jaffrelot, *Les nationalistes hindous* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 1993): 407-409. It is this text which would be revised to become Jaffrelot's widely influential *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

[1201] Christophe Jaffrelot "The Rise of Hindu Nationalism" in Shastri and Wilson, eds, *The Post-Colonial States of South Asia* (2001): 147. Yet still later, Jaffrelot would write that "the Hindu nationalist point of view gained some respectability and legitimacy in 1981 after a thousand Dalits converted to Islam in a small town of Tamil Nadu, Meenakshipuram." Christophe Jaffrelot, "Conversion and the Arithmetic of Religious Communities: Lala Lajpar Rai on Dalits and Conversions" in *Hindu Nationalism* (2007): 234-235.

[1202] "7 Killed in Riots in Tirunelveli Village," *Indian Express*, 12 June 1982.

[1203] "5 Harijans Killed in T. Nadu Village," *The Hindu*, 11 June 11 1981.

[1204] Sometimes "Isha Attul Islam Sabhai".

[1205] "New Wave of Conversions Planned," *Indian Express*, 15 February 1982 [they use the translated 'The Equality and Brotherhood Association']. "Another Meenakshipuram in the Making," *The Hindu*, 6 February 1982 [they use the translitered 'Samuthuva Sahodarathuva Sangham']. Equality and fraternity would be deployed throughout articles from May 1981-May 1982 to identify the issues involved in Meenakshipuram's embrace.

[1206] "Another Meenakshipuram in the Making," *The Hindu*, 6 February 1982. Mr Shahul Hameed, MLA, claimed the Sangham was "non-political".

Rafayee, along with his brother Mr. Shahul Hameed (MLA, Indian Union Muslim League), were arrested in connection with the "clashes" at Puliangudi.[1207] During the same month, June 1982, the mosque at Meenakshipuram burned down, though arson was never proved.[1208]

I myself spent a month living near Meenakshipuram in the Summer 2005—nearly 25 years after the mass embrace there in February 1981. The community of Muslims still existed. Their mosque had only been rebuilt since the fire in June 1982 but it was part of an area that I would describe as well fortified—a walled compound that included the home of the local moulvi who was in his mid-twenties and who, through some effort of my own, eventually welcomed me through the wall that surrounded his home that he shared with his wife and baby daughter. In my conversations in and around Meenakshipuram—conversations which not only included caste Hindus (Thevars), Muslim converts, and Untouchables but also local government officials—a complicated story emerged about Meenakshipuram, a story that found verification in a few reactions to Meenakshipuram's embrace. It was a story that involved an unforced embrace. It was a story of love, land, and community. It was a story about being together.

In Meenakshipuram in 1977, an Untouchable named Thangaraj eloped with a caste Hindu Thevar girl.[1209] The couple embraced Islam that year to escape from the repercussions from the Thevars. The "force" behind their embrace of Islam was their embrace of each other, the act of love. Land and community were also at issue. The Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam—400 kilometers away from Meenakshipuram and one of the five most prominent Saivite monastaries in Tamil Nadu, subsequently involved in numerous court cases over its vast landholdings vis-à-vis encroachments and tenants across the state[1210]—held 2,000 of acres of fertile cultivatable land in neighboring Shencottah upon which both Untouchables and Thevars from Meenakshipuram and its environs were tenant laborers. Revenues for the Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam had been regularly collected by a local tenant association whose board was made up of both Untouchables and Thevars. In late 1980 the Thevars became concerned that Untouchables were vying for more control of the association and various "clashes" ensued. Around this time, a neighboring estate, the "Gemini Estate," was sold by a businessman in Quilon, Kerala, on terms which the estate manager found unfair. The manager, along with others that included the groom Thangaraj—who changed his name to Yousuff after the conversion—protested the terms of the sale by striking. Thevars were hired to ensure that labor on the estate continued. On December 18, two Thevars so employed were murdered. Thevar forces prominent in the police force identified mostly Untouchable suspects in the murder, and began activities considered to be "harassment." Yousuff and others were accused.[1211] Widespread harassment from Thevars and Police—often

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[1207] "Puliangudi Riots: Former MP Held," *Indian Express,* 21 June 1982.

[1208] "Mosque Burnt in Meenakshipuram," *Indian Express,* 14 June 1982.

[1209] I am drawing the details from "Police-Thevar Onslaught Drove Harijans to Islam," *Indian Express*, 10 November 1981, as well as from my own conversations at Meenakshipuram from June-August 2005.

[1210] See for example Madras High Court: *Land Acquisition Officer And Special Deputy Collector, Rural Housing vs Adheenakarthar Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam And Ors. on 31/10/1980*; *Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam by Its Adheenakarthar Sri-La-Sri Sivaprakasa Pandarasannadhi Avargal vs State Of Tamil Nadu Represented by the Collector Of Tirunelveli And Anr. on 30/10/1996* ; *THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE M.JAICHANDREN Writ Petition No.8408 of 1999 Sri-la-Sri Sivaprakasa Pandara Sannadhi Avargal Adheenakarthar Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam* IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS DATED: 15/11/2007; etc. see http://www.indiankanoon.org/doc/959038/ ; http://indiankanoon.org/doc/1503087/ ; http://indiankanoon.org/doc/417704/. Accessed 31 August 2010.

[1211] The complexity of this story is compounded with a parralel counterfeit money scheme, but though important, I am not sure this detail adds to our understanding of embrace. Another rendition of this story is as follows:

one and the same—targeting Untouchables became difficult to endure. Neighboring Muslim leaders offered the Untouchables protection—an offer which followed upon years of discussions between young, educated Untouchable men such as Durai Raj, later Omar Sharif, and the neighboring South Indian Ishathul Islam Society. Mass embrace ensued, embrace further encouraged by Muslims who had heard of Meenakshipuram's plight while visiting the nearby waterfall pilgrimage destination of Courtallam.

The earlier embrace between the Untouchable boy and the Thevar girl was a repeated feature of conversations I had in Meenakshipuram in the Summer 2005. These conversations claimed that the embrace of Islam resulted from the Thevar harassment of Untouchables following the embrace of the boy and girl, harassment in which the state police was implicated, and an embrace of Islam that was conducted partially through the help of people elsewhere. One of the other repeated features of such conversations was the word respect [*mariyātai*]—a term of central concern to EVR's thought and movement centered on "self-respect." Villagers in Meenakshipuram repeatedly referred to the fact that educated people with property were treated as "slaves" [*aṭimai*] and not shown "respect" because of their caste [*jāti*]. Muslims showed respect to all castes—"To give respect [*mariyātai*] to all castes is Muslim"—whereas Hindus did not. At root, most of the people I spoke to suggested that the basic cause of the embrace of Islam was respect [*mariyātai*]—of being addressed by others using familial terms like "brother," for example—and the possibility for achieving such respect through Muslim togetherness rather than Hindu separation.

Other conversations during the Summer of 2005 about the conversion at Meenakshipuram nearly 25 years earlier bring us back full circle with the assassination of Ashe in the very same locale. In 1911, the British Raj was worried about Brahmin anarchists. In my conversations at Meenakshipuram in 1981, both convert and non-convert alike used the term *arājakam*—literally without (*a*) the place (*akam*) of rule (*rāj*), e.g. anarchy—to describe the situation in which Untouchables found themselves in the years and months at Meenakshipuram leading up to their conversion in 1981. We have already seen the British in 1911 worried about Brahmin "anarchists" demanding self-rule. In 1981, the Non-Brahmin worry that *swaraj* could not be achieved through an imagination of casting out the British premised on the Indian outcaste returns. For the outcaste at Meenakshipuram, Indian *swaraj* could be anarchy—the *arācakam* of Brahminism. And it was in response to such anarchy that the residents at Meenakshipuram engaged in a different sort of politics, a politics of embrace and the force with which it came.

My visit followed several years after a renewed focus on Meenakshipuram, indicating its continued presence in the politics of Tamil-speaking South India. On 5 October 2002, Chief Minister Jayalalitha—the successor to MGR, whom we saw in Chapter 4 in conversation with

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> The mass conversion in Meenakshipuram has been motivated neither by religious fervour nor even for achieving social betterment, though the latter may be an indirect desire, but it is a move induced by physical fear. It would appear that a Harijan from that village ran away with a girl of the Thevar community of a neighbouring village and this inflamed the feelings of the Thevars who started systematically belabouring the Harijans.
>
> Incidentally, the Harijans were the tenants of lands to reach this [sic] which they had to pass through the Thevar village and this gave an additional opportunity to the Thevars to man-handle the Harijans.
>
> It is in this context that the immediate provocation for the conversions at Meenakshipuram have to be understood. The Harijans naturally felt that if they embraced Islam they would have large physical strength and comparative fearlessness, although they were aware that by becoming Muslims they would lose many of the advantages and other reservations open to them as Harijans. (SY Krishnaswamy, "The Truth about Conversion and Reconversion," *The Hindu*, 15 September 1981).

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, as leader of the AIDMK—proposed *The Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Forcible Conversions Ordinance*. The proposed ordinance was never passed into law. It did, however, echo the language of similar laws in other states[1212] and engaged Indian Constitution Article 25, imposing severe penalties upon those who used "force or allurement of fraudulent means" to encourage religious conversion: 3 years imprisonment and a RS 50,000 fine, with more severe penalties if the converts were Scheduled Castes [Untouchables], women, or minors.[1213] Meenakshipuram was invoked in reaction to Jayalalitha's proposed ordinance by those close by. For example, in an article called titled "Meenakshipuram Redux," Dalit [Untouchable] families in the village of Koothirambakkam, 75 km outside of Chennai, claim to have responded by threatening to "recreate Meenakshipuram."[1214] And Meenakshipuram was invoked to understand subsequent parallels further away; for example, one journalist, referring to Dalits [Untouchables] in the distant, dominant northern state of Uttar Pradesh who were being encouraged to convert to Islam in order to attract the attention and subsequent help of the district government, remarked "Since Meenakshipuram rocked the country in 1981, that has been the overriding trend."[1215] Furthermore, an article titled "Choosing their Religion" featured an inset photo of present-day members at Meenakshipuram, noting the change of the village name to Rahmat Nagar, claiming that "In 1981, 150 Dalit families in this Tamil Nadu village converted to Islam. Affluence followed: most families now have members working in the Gulf."[1216] Decades after its occurrence, Meenakshipuram remained in the popular imagination as a national turning point as well as a local inspirational event.

Yet, as we have seen, the literature thus seems to both care very much, and yet care not at all, about the event at Meenakshipuram. The clear emphasis on the event's importance is paralleled only by the emphatic opacity about the event itself. The literature pulls Meenakshipuram into, even as Meenakshipuram is pushed out of, the history of India. The disregard for the details of the locale that one may associate with Hindu nationalist concerns and some "irrational" perception of threat to the Republic of India seem echoed by the academic literature itself. Neither fundamentalist nor scholar appears particularly concerned with Meenakshipuram's significance as a product of action. Instead, Meenakshipuram's significance has largely stemmed from the products of its reaction. It seems that Meenakshipuram is portrayed as both central to and a part of, yet marginal to and apart from, the unfolding history of *swaraj*'s creation and preservation.

This marks a dramatic shortcoming in the literature on 20th century Indian thought and politics. Such shortcoming, I suggest, has had consequences for inaugural articulations of comparative political theory. We have already seen in Part I Fred Dallmayr suggest that Gandhi's demand for *swaraj* and Untouchable conversion to Islam at Meenakshipuram are somehow compatible, both illustrative of "a central feature of religious faith: the ability of such faith to transcend prevailing social and political conditions and hence to become a resource for liberation rather than domination," with the implication being that Meenakshipuram's conversion is somehow an extension of Gandhian *swaraj*. Such a move, I suggest, places the conversion at Meenakshipuram in 1981 in the hegemonic and reductive orthodox narrative of 20th century

[1212] Similar laws: Orissa (1967), Madhya Pradesh (1968) and Arunachal Pradesh (1977).
[1213] S. Anand, "Zero Convertibility," *Outlook*, 21 October 2002.
[1214] G. Sivaperumal, "Meenakshipuram Redux," *Outlook*, 21 October 2002.
[1215] Ranjit Bhushan "Faith-Change Surgery," cover story in *Outlook,* 18 November 2002.
[1216] "Choosing Their Religion" in *Outlook* 18 November 2002: 47. The cover reads: "Do Conversions Guarantee a Better Life? No Longer Hindu."

Indian thought and history radiating out from Bengal/North/Brahmin, set in terms of a nationalism produced by cultural renaissance, much like the one told about the assassination of Ashe in 1911. Yet, as we've seen, some believe Meenakshipuram reveals instead that "The South, rather than Bengal as was once believed, is the leader in Indian thought and religion." This latter claim positions Meenakshipuram as a part of, rather than apart from, this dissertation's effort to marshal a detailed account of the available evidence to suggest that the proximate story—a story centering on the Dravidian/South/Non-Brahmin in general and the thought and movement of EVR and the Non-Brahmin self-respect critique of Gandhian self-rule in particular—was far more central. Such a positioning not only may invite a critical retelling of the orthodox account of 20th century Indian thought and history but, also, the project of comparative political theory whose inaugural articulations drew so heavily upon that account.

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