Report and Opinion

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RELATED LITERATURE IN SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE PUNJAB

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Abstract: Part of the premise of this argument relies on a broader understanding of early anthropological work and research as an important variety of literary activity in the late nineteenth-century. This is not a controversial point in itself: the work of James Clifford, Ruth Benedict and Clifford Geertz was part of a wave of revisionist thinking about how anthropology constructed and understood method, evidence and the production of knowledge, 'No longer a marginal, or occulted dimension, writing has emerged as central to what anthropologists do both in the field and thereafter' (Clifford and Marcus, 2007: 2). The influence of this work in literary studies has primarily been in the field of travel writing where the work of Clifford and Mary Louise Pratt on the relationship between the traveller and the people/cultures they describe, especially in 'exotic' contexts, has become part of the critical canon. However, the anthropological debate has offered a larger epistemological challenge which has failed fully to permeate branches of literary and historical colonial scholarship, partially due to the difficulty in labelling early amateur anthropologists and ethnographers. The writers under consideration here have been of minor interest within the fields of archaeology, South Asian studies and English literary fiction. At the fringes of different spheres of expertise, the accumulation of their knowledge about Punjab has been dispersed.

Keywords: Literature, Social structure, Punjab.

Introduction:

In the wake of the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, the creep of colonial infrastructure facilitated the work of a diverse range of administrators, archaeologists, travellers and various kinds of amateur scholar, who sought to compile, categorise and understand this religiously and linguistically diverse region. The borders of Punjab would change dramatically throughout the colonial period, finally leading to partition in 1947 when the new national border between Indian and Pakistan was used to cut through diverse communities that had historically characterised the area. Recent scholarship on the broad idea of Punjabiyat or 'Punjabiness' practices a historiography that reads past partition to understand the ways in which cultural practice, memory and identity persist post-partition. Although Punjabi is a language shared by a number of faiths and cultures, studies of the history of Punjabi language and its management have demonstrated how it has become increasingly synonymous with the Sikh faith (Ray, 2003; Mir, 2010). Faith, rather than language, acted as the axiom of difference when it came to constructing

the basis of new national imaginaries. This chapter identifies some of the ways a Punjabi literary sphere was (mis)understood in the lateVictorian empire through the curation of a canon of Punjabi folk-culture by R.C. Temple (1850-1931), Flora Annie Steel (1847-1929) and C.F. Usborne (1874-1919), all of whom lived and worked in Punjab as an extension of colonial administration. Examples of a diverse and rich Punjabi literary culture were translated into English under the banner of 'folklore' which delegitimised the diversity of prose and verse in Punjabi with origins in religious, spiritual and genres of the epic derived from Persian. While this chapter does not aim to assess the literary merits of the translations against the originals (an impossible task due to the fact that the originals existed as performed texts), it does question the ways in which Punjabi literary culture filtered in British writing. This literary culture was transmitted in print, but also in performances and through the work of performers and artists who would creatively adapt the orally-transmitted poetic epics, lyrics and ballads of the region.

In recent times and specifically in the post independence period the political discourses have been contemplating the socio-cultural conditions to suit its various political agenda. Whereas the linkages between politics and culture are not merely of cause and effect but it is dynamic in nature. We have the methodologies and theorising tools to analyse the political discourse contemplating cultural responses but do not have the systematic, analytical or reasoning building studies to show the other side of the picture. Literature has played a major role in documenting socio-cultural history in its own way by registering folk memories of different socio-cultural groups through creative literary images. In that process the role and contemplating nature of political discourse cannot be ignored rather it is very prominent. Similarly the effects of socio-cultural activities can also be felt on politics in the form of resistance and acceptance with regard to certain issues related to identities or differences. So the area of study is basically very complex in nature and the research requires non-conventional tools to analyse and theorise certain arguments which may not fit in the prevalent theoretical parameters of social sciences.

Review of literature:

After overrunning the Achaemenid Empire, Alexander moved beyond the limits of the Persian Empire. After crossing the Indus, Alexander met the native ruler of Takshashila, known to the Greeks as Taxila, and other allies. Alexander's first opponent was the Raja Porus. Porus and Taxiles were longtime enemies, and the latter saw Alexander's arrival as a way to settle old scores.Porus and Alexander had fought a battle on the Hydaspes, which proved to be the last battle of Alexander's campaign. On his return, Alexander had conquered many resisting Indian Janas and Janapadas, and those who had refused were killed. Many Brahmans were noted to be executed by Alexander, much to the shock of the Indians. Nevertheless, Alexander made little effort to retain the land he had conquered.[i] (Romm 2012, pp 375-377)

Chandragupta Maurya, with the aid of Kautilya, had established his empire around 320 B. C. Kautilya enrolled the young Chandragupta in the university at Taxila to educate him in the arts, sciences, logic, mathematics, warfare, and administration. With the help of the small Janapadas of Punjab and Sindh, he had gone on to conquer much of the North West. Chandragupta Maurya fought Alexander's successor in the East, Seleucus when the latter invaded. In a peace treaty, Seleucus ceded all territories west of the Indus and offered a marriage, including a portion of Bactria, while Chandragupta granted Seleucus 500 elephants.[ii] (Thorpe & Thorpe 2009, pp 33.) After the assassination of the last Mauryan emperor by the

general Pushyamitra some of the eastern provinces like such Kalinga, were quick to assert independence while Punjab and much of the Indo-Gangetic plain were still under the hold of Pushyamitra's empire.

Chandra Gupta's reign son Samudra Gupta, the empire reached supremacy over India roughly similar to the proportions that the Maurya Empire had exercised before. In the case of Punjab, the local Janapadas were semi-independent but were expected to obey orders and pay homage to the empire. Samudra Gupta was succeeded by his son Rama Gupta in whose time the Scythians, known as the Sakas, had begun to be recognised as a threat. Rama Gupta attempted to stop the Sakas, but he lost his throne. Chandra Gupta II had gone on to defeat the Sakas, earning him the name Sakari Chandra Gupta. By this time the Empire still ruled over much of North India. Chandra Gupta II was a patron of the revival of Puranic Hinduism——a movement that had revived and redefined Hinduism———displacing much Buddhist influence within the period of a century. Much of the original ancient Hindu texts from before the Gupta Empire are lost, but the current iterations of Sanskrit works such as that of the Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita are from the editions of this time. The Huns invaded the Gupta Empire under Kumara Gupta (r.415-455). After the death of Kumaragupta in 467, his son Skanda Gupta managed to defeat further Hun invasions.After the death of Skanda Gupta, the Empire suffered from various wars of succession. By the sixth century, the Huns had established themselves and Toramana and his son Mihirakula, who has been described to be a Saivite Hindu, had ruled over the approximate areas of Punjab, Rajputana, and Kashmir. Chinese pilgrims make reference to the cruelty of the Huns. Finally, Huns were defeated in 533-534 by Raja Yashovarman of Mandsaur. Harshavardhana ruled northern India from 606 to 647 from his capital Kanauj. Harsha's grandfather was Adityavardhana, a feudatory ruler of Thaneshwar in eastern Punjab. Harsha was defeated by the South Indian Emperor Pulakeshin II of the Chalukya dynasty when Harsha tried to expand his Empire into the southern peninsula of India.

Bhima Deva Shahi was the fourth king of the Hindu Kabul Shahis. As a devout Brahmin, in his old age, he committed ritual suicide in his capital town of Waihind, located on the right side of river Sindh, fourteen miles above Attock.[iii] (Mohan, R. T. 2010, pp 190.) As Bhimadeva had no male heir, Jayapala succeeded the Shahi throne, which had included areas spanning from Punjab to Kabul in Afghanistan. Jayapala was defeated at Peshawar by Mahmud of Ghazni and the Shahis lost all territory north of river Sindh. Anandapala and Trilochanapala, his son and grandson respectively, resisted Mahmud for another quarter of a century but Punjab was finally annexed to

the Sultanate of Ghazni, around 1021. After the Muslim attacks, many Punjabi scholars of Sanskrit had fled to schools and universities in Benares and Kashmir, which were at the time unaffected by Islamic invasion. Al Biruni wrote: "Hindu sciences have fled far away from those parts of the country that have been conquered by us, and fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, to Benares, and other places." These places were later to face the same depredations.[iv] (Scharfe 2002, pp 178.)

After The Khalji, the Tughlaq dynasty ruled from 1320 to 1413. Muhammad bin Tughlaq was supported by Turkic warriors, and was the first to introduce non-Muslims into the administration, to participate in local festivals, and permit the construction of Hindu temples. To maintain his identity as a Muslim, the Muhammad bin Tughlaq adhered to Islamic laws, swore allegiance to the caliph in Cairo, appointed Ulamas, and imposed the tax on non-Muslims. The Tughlaq dynasty, however, disintegrated rapidly due to revolts by governors, resistance from locals, and the re-formation of independent Hindu kingdoms.[vi] (Lapidus 2014, pp 394.) After the death of the last Tughlaq ruler Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, Daulat Khan Lodi was chosen for the throne. Later in 1414, Lodi was defeated by Khizr Khan of the Sayyid dynasty of the Sultanate. Under the Sayyid dynasty, Punjab, Dipalpur, and parts of Sindh had come under the rule of the Sultanates.[vii] (Jayapalan 2001, pp. 53) The rule of the Sayyid dynasty was characterised by frequent revolts by the Hindus of the various Punjabi doabs. The rule of the Sayyids experienced revolt under the rule of their general Bahlul Lodi, who in first attempt occupied much of Punjab. In his second attempt, Bahlul Lodi captured Delhi and founded the Lodi dynasty, the last of the Delhi sultanates. The Lodi dynasty reached its peak under Bahlul's grandson Sikander Lodi. Various road and irrigation projects were taken under his rule, and the rule had patronised Persian culture. Despite this, there was still persecution of the local Hindu people as many temples, such as that of Mathura, were destroyed and had a system of widespread discrimination against Hindus.[viii] (Jayapalan 2001, pp 56)

Further to elaborate on the responses in terms of resistance, Punjab has a unique idea about its heroes and the Punjabi psyche reacts on those ideals. There is a long heroic tradition in Punjab beginning from the ancient to present times. The kind of hero emerged from the history, very well characterising the Punjabi psyche while responding, resisting and resolving social, cultural or political impact. "Heroism is the spirit of dash and advance, gallantry and courage, activity and adventure. A hero is one who rejoices in sacrifice, revels in risks, disregards dangers, disdains death, harbours chivalry and values nobility. He is boisterous and ebullient, has a zest and lust for life, believes in action and endeavour, shuns renunciation and withdraws, strives for victory and expansion and loves to enjoy their fruits, but side by side, has a deep sense of values and ideals and directs all his energy and courage towards their pursuit.[xv] (Prakash 200, Preface) According to this definition of hero, Punjabi identity characterise most of these elements in general. So these are the general characteristics of the people of this region and these characteristics have added to the identity not in a day or years but through the centuries. "Geographical situation, climate, soil, horizon, often compel a people to be hardworking and energetic; proximity to frontiers full of raiders and plunderers generally makes them martial and bellicose; frequent contacts with invaders, conflicts with neighbours and encounters with foreigners generate a warlike aptitude and military stamina; communications with outsiders, panmixia with other peoples, mixtures with nomadic, barbaric and uncouth tribes periodically infuse new blood in old veins and strengthen the spirit of fighting and pushing; religion and ideologies also sometimes stimulate heroic activity by expounding an energetic view of life and in-calculating the spirit of sacrifice. All these factors more or less combine to produce the frame of mind we call 'heroic'.[xvi] (Prakash 200, Preface).

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