

sets be operationalized with a consensual contract between supposed libertarian forms of reasoning and action within a well-ordered society? The question is raised in the context of reorienting the notion of 'capability' and 'individual functionings' into reasonableness of the demand for being just to the deprived and the marginalized. This is also a simultaneous assertion of a positioned subjectivity of the marginalized within the mainframe process of choosing and deciding, which is Sen's mainstay in the book.

The situation is exemplified by a supposed value conflict between distributive justice and recognition.<sup>2</sup> Similarly between liberal-contractarians and communitarians, the conflict of values arise centering the role that cultural specificity plays in assigning 'values' to development. They cannot resolve between themselves should the 'values' of justice be specific to culture or they should be trans-cultural. The developmentalist stance to eliminate cultural differences on the anvil of a common goal of 'just' material progress and prosperity complicates the debate between communitarians and liberal-contractarians. The thesis shall attempt to sort out the debate on the basis of an idea of 'good' based on the idea of 'justice' or rather on the basis of eliminating injustices that arise in the overall impact of a programme of development.

In its overall thrust, Sen's attempt to pluralize the debate between libertarians and contractualists in terms of equally possible solutions to questions of injustice is a novel attempt to move beyond the liberal paradigm of constrained freedom of choice. He privileges 'freedom of choice' both in theory and practice to evolve an alternative of parallel reasoning and resolving the problem of injustice. The book is extremely readable, well argued, meticulous and detailed in analytical as well as in phenomenological terms. Sen's inspirational attempt to such panoply of thoughtful and pleasurable essays is itself a striking achievement. Anyone interested in economics or philosophy should read this book for a defensible account of justice.

## NOTES

1. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 43.
2. In his book, *The Idea of Justice* Sen has exemplified the divergent views of justice with the example of three children and a flute: Anna, Bob and Carla fight over a flute. Anna claims that she should get the flute that is lying on the ground because she knows how to play it, Bob says he should get it because he is poor and has no toys of his own, and Carla says she should get the flute because she made it. Theorists of diverging

schools of justice would have different views, Sen writes: 'The economic democratic who is committed to reducing social gaps might feel that Bob should get the flute because he is poor; the libertarian would say that Carla should get the flute because she has made it; while the utilitarian hedonist may feel that Anne's pleasure would be greatest because she can play the flute.' (p.3)

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Bhalchandra Nemade, *Nativism (Desivad)*, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2009. pp. 179. Rs. 360

Bhalchandra Nemade's 'nativism' concept and his reflections are already, for the last almost twenty years, a part of literary thinking in the departments of languages in the Universities and a widely discussed issue in Marathi intellectual circles and also in some other states such as Gujarat where the 'native' stream still runs strong. But what was earlier available in dispersed essays, and translations of some of them, and by word of mouth has now been put together as four coherent lectures with an appendix that puts some of his thoughts into critical/evaluative action.

It is a rich text bustling with ideas, rather a text with ideas jostling with each other – a clear evidence of Nemade having so much to say in a defined temporal space and anxious that he may miss out on something. It is a statement of the current vicissitude of a complex, variegated, long-lived, and in many respects a unique culture, the Vedic culture that is, that has been under siege in its own home for several centuries but has survived because it has always given birth to great minds that have acted as barriers against floods of counter-culture ideas that have off and on been swamping the vulnerable, intrinsically pluralistic, Hindu mind.

In these four lectures – 'Nativism,' 'Modernity,' 'Orality (Native Styles),' 'Marathi Novel' – and two appendices, Nemade seeks to ward off the onslaught of 'Modernity' (p.14.) on the already battered Hindu mind. His worries stem from what is rather uncommon among 'educated' Hindu intellectuals – the deep respect in which he holds what he calls (p.11) 'the oldest civilization of the world', the 'Vedic' civilization, though that one word is not used.

The apparent subject, the immediate concern, of course is the metropolitan Indian literary culture that has constituted itself following the contact with the West. It is a culture in which – (i) 'language controls literature'

(rather than the other way round)); (ii) there is critical bankruptcy (uncritical acceptance of and exclusive use of western frameworks to the almost complete exclusion of the long unbroken tradition of Indian literary thinking; (iii) uses borrowed themes and forms; (iv) is expressly addressed to, panders to, the western audience); (v) denigrates the Indian self-hood, and (vi) is in disjunction with the lived life of the Indian peoples. This 'literary culture' is a symptom of the much deeper malaise – the subordination of the Indian mind and academy to the West – 'suffocation'. From being a part of a long existing donor tradition, the Indian mind has become a receptacle of alien ideas having entered into a Theory – Data relationship with the Western academia. Denial of self-hood by the 'educated' Indian, his virtual contempt for the self, is the marker of his modernization and 'internationalism'. It seems that the very consciousness has been coloured, the *citta* itself afflicted. The consequence is a cultural anomie, a split self, the old self atrophied with no new self to take its place, a confused Indian changing colours and caps from one event (sports!) to another. The product of this environment, particularly the education system, is an individual who at best is ignorant and at worst has contempt for everything Indian. Long ago, Max Mueller had noted (in his 1880s lectures to the ICS published as *What India can Teach Us*) how the Indian takes care to 'distance' himself from his heritage and Ananda Coomaraswamy talking about 'the educated Indian' in his *Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought* wryly commented in the footnote that 'that is how the victims of Indian education are described'. And much before that in 1812 in a letter to his father from Calcutta, Macaulay, talking of the School education in Calcutta, said that "Hindus who take this education have no respect left for their religion – much better than proselytisation". If anything, Hindu self-denigration is now endemic. Nemade's anxiety therefore is how, in the face of this onslaught, "to salvage and preserve the vestigial values and native ways of life: tolerance, pluralism, spiritual point of view, beauty and grace of individual traditions. . . ritual observances, folklore, art and architecture, language and literature. . ." (p.43).

And this is possible only when we cease, he says, to consider Indian Knowledge as an extension of, and free ourselves from, the mental bondage of Western knowledge paradigm which has so far been dominantly empiricist and reductionist. That is, we 'decolonize' by overthrowing the three imperatives of 'modernity', 'scriptalism' and 'internationalism', the cobwebs of the 'educated' Indian mind. The causes of this Hindu enslavement are – fascination with the written word and the translation of an essentially oral culture into scriptal

– witness patronizing scholars going into 'tribal' (*sic*) areas and impressively transcribing their narratives, turning a living emotional experience into a fossilized word. Second cause is the stifling of Indian expressiveness by mass adoption of English as if it were a native mother tongue of all Indians and, third, the official support to materialism and commercial values.

The way out is assertion of 'nativism'. Throughout his arguments, Nemade adds on to the semantic domain of *nativism* and places it in a configuration of *native*, *nativeness*, *nativistic* and *nativism*. *Nativism*, according to Nemade, does not have to be constructed – it is a pervasive social phenomenon in all societies, a geographical principle (attachment to land), an emotional principle (love for the country/people/practices), and a cultural principle of autonomy, an intellectual principle of assimilation and equilibrium and a social principle of differentia, plurality. In literature, *nativism* rejects the opposition between native and 'universal' (for all great 'universal' compositions were intrinsically native, addressed to their own people and age and in fact no work that is not native can become 'universal'), rejects the notion of World Literature as Anglo-American or European alone, rejects 'modernist' neurotic themes as alien to the Indian experience and philosophy of literature, and accords primacy to orality as the 'native style' – in sum rejects the metropolitan Indian literature as derivative and as out of tune with the lived life of the people.

There are objections; it is pointed out, to *nativism* objections that spring from 'bogus internationalism' – charges of 'narrow mindedness', narcissism and bigoted nationalism in the era of European/American 'globalization'. Several factors have contributed to the 'loss of faith in the so called third world' (p.24). And that is the new imperialism of the mind. One feels that this has been facilitated by the assiduously cultivated belief in 'modern' as a higher culture rather than as an alternative culture, a postulate that the Latin-American thinkers (Third World?) have now been strenuously arguing for more than a decade (see, Jorge Armand, *Beyond Modernity*, 2000, Merida, Venezuela: Universidad de Los Andes, p. 8. Mimeo). Nemade would happily, I am sure, look at, and analyse, these straws in the wind and feel somewhat reassured.

The case has been very convincingly argued by Nemade. No one can dispute, least of all the set of 'uncolonized' minds – and that set is growing even among the 'educated' – that instinctively see the truth of the author's anguish. I am close to him in age and have experienced the same anguish and have for years been arguing the same case though not perhaps in the same

focused and cogent manner as he has done. I may therefore risk saying that the problem with us is that at some stage we get defensive in that we try to argue often within the terminological frame of the paradigm we are contesting. The apparent 'reason' of the shibboleths of that paradigm – secularism, human rights, democracy, racism, genocide, equality, and so on – paralyse us and we are unable to take issue with these shibboleths. How can we argue against 'secularism', 'human rights', 'genocide' etc.? So we hedge. We do not boldly take on these 'charges' against the Hindu history, traditions and practices – let there be no doubt that in India these are directed against Hindus. We do not argue that India is 'secular' because wherever 10 persons are present, 8 are Hindus; we do not argue that that is also the reason why India is the only working Asian democracy; we do not argue that Hindu social political thought never accepted 'slavery' as a human practice (contrast it with Aristotle's *Politics*). What may be the clearest statement of egalitarian political ideology only comes to us through many intermediaries, as a tantalizing passage in Diodorus Siculus (2.39; *Classical Accounts*, p. 236) which seems to derive from Megasthenes: "Of several remarkable customs existing among the Indians, there is one prescribed by their [sc. Indian] ancient philosophers which one may regard as truly admirable: for the law ordains that no one among them shall, under any circumstances, be a slave, but that, enjoying freedom, they shall respect the principle of equality in all persons: for those, they thought, who have learned neither to domineer over nor to cringe to others will attain the life best adapted for all vicissitudes of lot: since it is silly to make laws on the basis of equality of all persons and yet to establish inequalities in social intercourse." We do not argue that the Hindu mind goes far beyond human rights, to the rights of all beings, *jiva*. We do not assert that the assumption that this is among the 'ultimates' in Political Theory and in Ethics is open to debate as also their actual practice on the ground. For example the anthropocentric view that if man encroaches on the elephant or leopard country and that elephant or the leopard retaliates, it is the elephant or the leopard that should be shot does not make sense in the traditional Hindu thought in general and the Jaina value system in particular (though now it does make sense to the *de-culturised* Hindus) as these non-western thought systems talk of the *rights of all living beings*. Why is the human being so important? Because he has mastered the gun? We do not assert that the societies that are using 'human rights' as a whip today are guilty of having practiced slavery throughout their history till 19<sup>th</sup> century. We do not assert that the principle of 'rights' is a self-centered *conflict oriented* principle and

generates, has generated violence. *Contra* 'rights' we have the time-honoured Indian core construct of 'duty,' the other-centered harmony-promoting principle that sets up for many young educated Indians a contradiction between the School and the Home. Without denying the injustice that developed in the actual practice of *Varna* system, we do not tell them not to transfer their guilt of 'genocide' of the Jews to us and that the Hindus have in fact been victims of attested genocide over centuries. In fact any critique of the Western civilization annoys the Indian intellectual no end – he is happy only in self-denigration. Centuries of oppression that Hindus suffered and the repeated defeats in the battle field have altered the Hindu character – he is now the opposite of what Al-Beruni had said he was – the Hindu always speaks the truth, he said; the Hindu is proud of his knowledge; the Hindu is not afraid to die. Where have those people gone? Like the Jews, the other persecuted race, Hindu self is a fractured self. In other words, "the fault dear Brutus is not in our stars that we are underlings".

There are, therefore, some caveats to be introduced in Nemade's discourse and some contestables - conceptual, terminological and assumptive. To begin with, I think there is claustrophobia in the structure of feeling. If we get out of 'Delhi-vision' and 'Tele-vision', we find that our culture is fighting back very resolutely. Nemade himself points out that the Hindu mind does not throw out anything, that it tests the new things that come, that it sifts and assimilates what is in harmony with its core. I think that is happening at this time. For the second time, after Islam, the Indian culture has confronted a powerful alternative culture and thought system and for almost 200 years now, the processes of emergence, submergence, assertion, modification, adaptation, rejection and assimilation have been going on. It is like the confluence of two streams – the two run parallel for some time and you can see two different colours for some time. And then a mixed colour and finally one of the colours, an inflected colour again dominates and the river has that colour then. Those who have been to Devaprayaga will actually see this – two turbulent streams, Bhagirathi and Alakananda, meet and after a stretch of flow, the colour of Bhagirathi is the colour of Ganga. I see this very clearly in our young girls, who are in any case the most vibrant section of Hindu society – it is not uncommon to see a young jeans-clad, mobile-wielding, car-driving young multi-national executive first offering flowers in the small society temple, then getting into her car and driving off. And this is the section that has been 'westernised'.

Some of the contestable, to mention, in view of the space-time coordinate, only a few are: (i) the use of words such as 'Brahmanical' and 'Brahmanism' that in our

'modern' discourse always show a lack of de-synonymising between 'Brahmin' as caste and 'Brahmin' as *sampradaya*, a school of philosophy (in disputation through India's intellectual history with Buddhist and Jaina *sampradayas*) and we must remember that Buddha, contrary to the popular impression, had deep respect for Brahmins (as caste) – read the *Jatakas*. Equation of *varna* and *jati* (they are not the same) belong here.

(ii) expressions such as 'Brahmin dominated Hindu society' (p.32), a notion deliberately cultivated by the British in 19<sup>th</sup> century as 'state policy' and continued in free/partitioned India by the present dispensation, need to be expounded and debated.

(iii) the reading of India's intellectual history on page 49, is highly contestable in the matter of ideational relationship between Vedas, Upanishads, 'early Brahmanical cults' (?), Jain and Buddhist systems, 'classical Brahmanism' (?) – the quick summary on page 49 does no justice either to the rich textual tradition or the density of thought therein. Many intellectuals are prone to summarizing what will take decades to read and understand.

(iv) one wishes that Nemade had not made statements such as ". . . even the purely Kshatriya documents such as the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* . . . began to flaunt *Ahimsa*. Rama after killing Ravana, says, *Ahimsa paramo dharmah*: and another warrior hero Yuddhisthira at the end of mass destruction of life, deliberates with the *Rishis* in *Shantiparva* on *shanti*. . . Then in the second millennium, numerous *Bhakti* cults . . . rebelliously continue to re-inforce Jain, Buddhist and several other *Nastika* ways of life suppressed by Brahmanism." Well! This is swashbuckling opinion-making—every verb and noun is contestable in this and there is a hint of lack of intimacy with major intellectual texts. Shows that even in Nemade, a modernist lurks.

To cut the story short. Bi-polarities are the bane of western humanist-sociological mind – their modern science has successfully gone beyond that (*More Are Different* is a celebrated book by a scientist). The Indian mind nurtured in, what has always been since ancient days, a multiple, pluralistic, pluri-theistic, multi-linguistic and multi-belief system has never functioned in either-or mode or in the linear mode – cyclicity and configuration are basic drivers of the Hindu mind. One who wants to contest the other paradigm must operate with his own categories as was the rule in Indian *vada parampara*. It isn't India or West even now – it is *more* and *different*. And what would you say to the TV, a western invention that is perfect fit for India's *shravya-preksha* orality.

Let us wait. Oral cultures have in built mechanisms of recovery. And as it is, strong cultures resist both kinds of

loss – that due to the text-internal factors and that due to the text-external, contextual factors - to preserve culturally central systems of ideas.

## NOTES

1. Recent and contemporary Western Theory is in fact *conflict centered*. Post-Renaissance, it successively substituted for the Pre-Renaissance God-Man adversarial relationship, first the adversarial Man-Nature relationship (witness Descartes in *On Method*: "The goal of knowledge is to bend nature to man's purpose"), then the adversarial Man-Man relationship (witness Marx's class war) and now of late the adversarial Man-Woman relationship. *Conflict* of course has been sanctified post- Karl Marx as the necessary condition of progress, again something debatable.

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Shreesh Chaudhary, *Foreigners and Foreign Languages in India – a Sociolinguistic History*, New Delhi: Foundation Books, 2009. pp. 586. Rs. 950

*Foreigners and Foreign Languages in India* by Shreesh Chaudhary deals with the sociolinguistic history of the Indian subcontinent from the earliest encounters with Sanskrit and Greek to the English of the British colonizers. Within this long linguistic and cultural interaction is about one thousand years of Arabic, Turkish but mainly Persian period followed by the development of Urdu. Shreesh Chaudhary has done a highly commendable job in recounting this linguistic narrative with profusely documented situations where the native speakers assimilated the foreign idioms. It is also very interesting to note that the native elite never took long to adapt itself to the emerging circumstances of new political realities. It was almost with great enthusiasm that they learnt, practiced and communicated in the language of the colonizer.

The present day linguistic situation is very well described by Chaudhary when he talks about his grandson's sociolinguistic interactions :

My son's son, Rishabh, born in 1998, attends an English school in Hyderabad. He speaks Maithili with his father, me and my wife; Bengali with his mother and her parents; English, Hindi and Telugu with his friends. He watches English, Hindi and Telugu programmes on the television and plays computer games in English.

This sociolinguistic interaction, with some local