

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SARI 2017 CONFERENCE ON REINVENTING THE SEA

Michel Naumann, Jayita Sengupta, Subhendu Mund, Debashree Dattaray, F. Elizabeth Dahab, Bhaskar Sengupta, Sudipta Bhattacharjee, Geetha Ganapathy-Doré, Ludmila Volná

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Some of the papers presented at this conference with a focus on English studies are being published in a thematic issue by the journal *Angles*: *French Perspectives on the Anglophone World*.

Other papers with a regional or comparative focus or with a different disciplinary approach and methodology, collated by Geetha Ganapathy-Doré and Ludmila Volná (organizers of the conference), are made available to the public in this on-line and open-access publication.

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THE DREAM OF THREE OCEANS

By

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About the author

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Abstract

The first globalization started in the 10th century around the Indian Ocean as a result of China's prosperous economy and the Muslims' dynamic attitude towards trade, work and success. It involved almost the whole world (Swahili Africa, Ethiopia, the Volga trade routes, Venice...). India, of course, was its centre and an economic giant. This historical phase ended with the Chinese prohibition of long distance voyages for Chinese boats. The second globalization started in 1492 and was based on the Atlantic. It soon was dominated by the triangular trade that gave an impulse to the West and produced the Industrial revolution. The third globalization has started around the sea of China but this stage might be short as Africa and Latin America could join China to change and perhaps unify the world.

Keywords: globalization, trade, slave trade, Indian Ocean, Pacific, Atlantic, peace

Résumé

La première mondialisation a débuté au Xème siècle autour de l'océan Indien à la suite de l'économie prospère de la Chine et des attitudes dynamiques des musulmans vis-à-vis du commerce, du travail et du succès. Cela impliquait le monde entier (Afrique Swahili, Éthiopie, les routes commerciales de la Volga, Venise ...). L'Inde, bien sûr, était son centre et son géant économique. Cette phase historique s'est terminée par l'interdiction chinoise des voyages de longue distance pour les bateaux chinois. La seconde mondialisation a commencé en 1492 et a été basée sur l'Atlantique. Elle a été bientôt dominée par le commerce triangulaire qui a donné une impulsion à l'Occident et a produit la révolution industrielle. La troisième mondialisation a commencé autour de la mer de Chine, mais cette étape pourrait être courte car l'Afrique et l'Amérique latine pourraient rejoindre la Chine pour changer et peut-être unifier le monde.

Mots clés : mondialisation, commerce, traite négrière, océan indien, le Pacifique, l'Atlantique, paix

This paper is not about History but about dreams which are my dreams, limited by my ego, hopefully enhanced by my experiences on three continents and several oceans. I hardly call them my dreams because they come from Time which haunts History as the mysterious dreamer of the past, the present and the future. Time is like the seas and oceans ever changing and permanent, affected by men and affecting them. Time and oceans existed before men, they gave birth to life. The endless waves of the sea evoke eternity, that is to say birth, death and rebirth more than birth and death. When humanity was on the verge of destruction because of a long drought, a small group of South Africans survived thanks to the resources of the sea and they became our six hundred ancestors as our DNA shows. We are the children of the sea more than the children of the earth. In the Bantu languages, *kalunga* means substance (of the universe), God and the sea. Movements of Time as well as tides or waves provoke dreams whose rhythms follow the rhythms of these parents. Being endless and bottomless Time was all and the One needed the otherness of creation as a mirror to overcome its own void. Thus the foam coming from the fury of the sea against rocky coasts might be a metaphor of History and a mirror of Time's quest.

Jules Verne's character Nemo, a Bengali Maharaja born in Decca, a sailor and a scientist, a pacifist and a Utopian, is a sea lover:

> The sea is everything! She covers seven tenth of the globe. Her breath is pure and fresh. She is a large desert where man is never alone because he feels that life in her womb is never at rest. She serves a wonderful and supernatural life-force; she is endless motion and love; she is the infinite life according to a poet. (Verne 1947:95)

And the scientist adds, evoking species (more than 13 000) and legions of fish and other animals, reptiles or mammals:

> The sea is the vast reservoir of nature. Life began with her and so did our globe. Who knows, maybe they will end with her or of the consequence of what might happen to her? She is the most supreme peace. She does not belong to despots. On her surface they can still distort rights, fight, destroy and commit all the horrible crimes they are usually guilty of, but deep under this surface, their power ceases, their influence disappears, their rule is extinct. (Verne 1947:96)

Of course, a century later, we know that pollution can destroy the deep of the sea. In the Irish Sea, obsolete deadly weapons have been buried and also toxic products in containers that might not be as strong as we think they are. The oceans are no longer safe reservoirs of life, they are threatened and part of perishable human history.

A particular sea links human groups and cultures through trade and curiosity as much as it brings enemies and plunderer: the Philistine and Zakal invaders of Egypt coming from the sea were defeated in 1192 (Deschamps 1952: 11), but people related to their races and way of life created the Greek emporium. Rome and Carthage in the Mediterranean Sea brought together North African intellectuals and Latin culture (St Augustine, Apuleius...); the Vikings and the Germans or the Swedes and Novgorod were both foes and partners in the Baltic Sea. Sometimes the forces of war and peace were combined in one personality. It was the case of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, who had 40 ships that plundered the sea for reasons that Hubert Deschamps sums up in four points (Deschamps, Ibid):

1. To balance the budget of the State
2. To rally the neighbouring States into a confederation
3. To make generous offerings to the Delos Shrine
4. To patronize arts.

The same dualistic relations developed later in the vast oceans of the world to produce our contemporary world. The Eastern oceans first became the heart of the world trade (10th to 15th centuries). The Atlantic Ocean grew as the most important factor of globalization more recently (15th to 20th centuries). The process was irregular, sometime slow, as in the Indian Ocean, sometime fast, as in the Atlantic Ocean. In the 21st century all oceans, including the Pacific, seem to be important parts of the global world, but the waters of the blue planet might be threatened by the perverse logic of growth which started in 1492 and still prevails today.

The First Global Ocean

From the Egyptian harbours of the Red sea, African, Arab, Jewish, Tyanian, Greek, Latin boats sailed along Persian coasts and reached India and China, the two major economic world powers of Ancient Time. St Augustine refers to this trade and advises his readers to prefer prayers to the lure of fortunes in far away Eastern places. Pluto and Indian philosophers exchanged their views on the One. The great wise man, Apollonius of Tyana, visited Cadix, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Ethiopia and India. In the early Middle Ages Ethiopia conquered Yemen and controlled the two banks of the Red sea to master the West's connections with the Indian sea trade.

In the 10th century, bold Arab and Persian sailors dared to leave the coast to catch the Monsoon winds in the middle of the sea to be thrown towards India. From there they would reach China, the major world power of the time. The African Swahili City States soon joined the trade. From Egypt, Venetians would bring to Europe the silk and china of the Song Empire and, later, in the world described by Marco Polo, the Yuan Empire. Africa provided gold and high quality iron, Indonesia gold and spices. Ibn Battuta traveled from Tangier to China. These trading routes created the first globalized world of human history whose merchants were organized in powerful guilds and whose banks were rich temples (Sanyal 2016: 134-6). No one was forced to join; no one was brutalized or colonized. Arabic was the lingua franca of this new world and the cult of saints its very open religion (Ghosh 1992: 55-56). In Indonesia rajas, gold miners, sailors and merchants would participate in this great trade whereas tribes would just bring their local products to the boats or even ignore the visitors. All races, all religions, all classes and all cultures were involved - if willing - in these fruitful commercial activities. In a famous tale of the *Arabian Nights*, Sinbad the beggar is invited into the wonderful garden (an image of God's Paradise) of Sinbad the sailor's palace to hear his host's stories about his many travels to far away and fascinating islands and countries. This meeting symbolizes the destiny of poor but bold sailors and travelers who became incredibly rich merchants.

In his subversive traveller's tale, *In an Antique Land*, Amitav Ghosh used a Cairo document (MSH.6) to study the connections between a Jewish merchant, his Muslim partner and an Indian called Bomma. His deductions and further investigations on the people involved in this network reveal a closely connected world:

> The second of the great travelers of Madmun's circle was Abu-Zikri Judah ha-Kohen Sijilmasi. As his name suggests, Abu Zikri Sijilmasi had his origins in the desert town of Sijilmasa in Morocco, but he later migrated to Fustat and rose to prominence within the Jewish community there, eventually becoming the Chief representative of Merchants. He too travelled far afield, between

> Egypt, Aden, Southern Europe and India. References in Ben Yijus's correspondence show that he frequently encountered Abu Zikri Sijilmasi and his brother-in-law, a ship-owner called Marhuz, in Mangalore. So close were the links between the three of them that on one occasion, when Abu Zikri Sijilmasi was captured by pirates off the coast of Gujarat, Ben Yiju penned him a letter on behalf of Mahruz, urging him to travel quickly down from Broach to Mangalore. (Ghosh 1992: 157-158)

Sijilmasa is described as a desert city, but it is to be noted that it was actually the gate to the Sahara and the routes leading to the Black African world that was so rich in gold that it was the economic basis of the construction of States and Empires in Africa and in Europe. The Ghana Empire was the first provider of the yellow metal and it was followed by the huge Empires of Mali and the Sonrhay Empire. Sijilmasa was not a lost place between North Africa and Africa South of the Sahara, but a most important market centre.

For the association of the three protagonists of Ghosh's narrative, the other extreme of their world was Mangalore in India, but they could have reached Indonesia or Cathay (China), perhaps Cipango (Japan).

> Ben Yiju, like so many other Middle Eastern merchants, was drawn to Mangalore because of the economic opportunities it offered as one of the premier ports of an extremely wealthy hinterland: a region that was well endowed with industrial crafts, apart from being one of the richest spice-producing territories of the medieval world. (Ghosh 1992: 245)

We can easily draw the picture of a syncretic cultural community born out of these business and human relations.

> It was probably no coincidence, since merchant families have always tightened the bonds of trade with a tug of kinship, that Abu Zikri's Sijilmasis's sister happened to be married to Madmun. It could well be that it was Abu Zikri who, out of allegiance to a fellow North African, gave Ben Yiju the introduction which secured his entry into Madmun's circle. (Ghosh 1992: 158)

The Indian Ocean was a place for self-made men, an open world of opportunities. Feudal links, Caste distinctions, communalism were decreasing. We can easily imagine poor Untouchables becoming dockers, sailors, small but bold entrepreneurs on their way towards wealth and power. One possibility for gifted and poor people was to be adopted as servants or disciple in a relation which was often called "slavery" although it had nothing to do with the institution of slavery in the Atlantic trade.

> In the medieval world, slavery was often used as a means of creating fictive ties of kinship between people who were otherwise unrelated. Amongst the Jewish merchants of medieval Cairo, for instance, as with the tribes of Africa, slaves were sometimes gradually incorporated into their masters' households and came to be counted as member of their families. Equally, in some vocations, the lines of demarcation between apprentice, disciple and bondsman were so thin as to be invisible: to be initiated into certain crafts, aspirants had to voluntarily surrender a part of their freedom to their teachers. (Ghosh 1992: 260)

Such a relation of devotion to a master and success in life had an impact on religion. The Indian Ocean trade produced a creed based on love and faithfulness to a Saint, a Jinn, a God. It was a changing, tolerant, creative and open religion, always ready to borrow from another trend and even faraway rituals of trance and intoxication with the madness and fury of love, especially unrequited love, which requires more devotion and passion. The traditionalists would be shocked by this rage to become one with the Lord and would stress God's transcendence but the attraction towards these cults remained strong and even the wise Talmudist Moses Maimonides remarked that these Sufis were "worthier disciples of the Prophets of Israel than were many Jews" (Ghosh 1992:261).

Slavery could actually be a metaphor of faith for the disciple and absolute transcendence of the Object of his desire:

> Perhaps the most elusive aspect of medieval slavery is its role as a spiritual metaphor, as an instrument of the religious imagination. In South India, amongst the pietist and fiercely egalitarian Vachanakara saint-poet of Bomma's lifetime, for example, slavery was often used as an image to represent the devotee's quest for God: through the transforming power of metaphor the poets became their Lord's servants and lovers, androgynous in their longing; slaves, searching for their master with a passion that dissolved selfhood, wealth, caste and gender, indeed, difference itself. In their poetry it was slavery that was the paradoxical embodiment of perfect freedom. (Ghosh 1992: 260-261)

In the early 15th century, Zeng He led a numerous fleet to create loose but profitable relations with Sri Lanka or the Swahili city-states (Levathes 1994). Unfortunately the new Ming Emperor, noting that China provided luxury goods of such a quality that no one could offer anything of interest in exchange, declared that these far away adventures were useless. The door was then left open to the Portuguese whose caravels otherwise (i.e., if they had been opposed to Zeng He's fleet) would not have conquered the Indian Ocean and put an end to this first globalization.

Camoes who wrote about the Vasco da Gama's epics of Portugal ended his masterpiece (*Os Lusiadas*) with these prophetic words:

> Curb your greed and vain ambitions which lead to dark, vicious, despicable passions dedicated to a shameful and heavy tyranny; vain honours, like gold, do not bring real honour: not getting what we deserve is better than getting what we don't deserve. (Canto IX, stanza 93)

Soon the waters of another ocean sowed the seed of the nightmare of a brave new world.

The Atlantic Trade

The Europeans dominated the Atlantic because their skills as sailors were more developed than in America and Africa. It is not due to any inborn superiority but to the advantage they got from very indented coasts which made trade by sea highly profitable.

Christopher Columbus wanted, with the help of the Great Khan, to surround the Muslim countries, unify the world under the Christian banner, discover the Garden of Eden and bring History to its glorious end. He phonetically confused cannibals with subjects of the Khan and, when, reaching the mouth of the Oronoco, his caravel was pushed back towards the ocean by the river stream, thought that the source of this powerful river was on the top of a very high mountain which he compared to a breast and which he thought was the obvious site of Paradise. Indeed he was not totally wrong about the end of the world and its destruction because the Western global project based on the Atlantic Ocean started destroying Nature, lives and cultures.

The western route to the Empire of the Great Khan led to America that provided the gold required to trade with China. The miners of the gold and silver mountains were swallowed by the hungry earth and West Indians were ruthlessly massacred. The Black slaves ejected from the Triangular trade boats to replace the dead actually travelled with the Gods of Africa who came to the New World to fight with its devotees.

Speaking of one of these fighters, Milton McFarlane sums up the History of Jamaica at that time:

> In 1655, as a result of a successful expedition sent out by Oliver Cromwell, Jamaica was conquered from the Spaniards by the British who brought in more African slaves to work the big sugar estates which were replacing the smaller farms. As the number of plantations grew, so did the number of fugitive slaves, for the example provided by the free Maroon community was proving contagious.
>
> By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, hostilities had greatly increased between the British and the Maroons, and the island was virtually divided. Colonial planters and their slaves lived and worked on the coastal plains occupying the cities and towns. But the colonists were always aware that high up in the Blue Mountains were a mysterious people – a band of thieves – whose most formidable leader was a shadowy and sinister figure: General Cudjoe of the Maroons.
>
> The colonial settlers made desperate and determined efforts, from time to time, to enslave these Maroons, but Cudjoe, their cunning and equally determined chief, caused every effort to fail. The superior fire power of the British was just no match for the brilliant guerilla tactics? After each failure, the conflict between the Maroons and the colonists tended to escalate, with the colonists devising newer and better plans – even enlisting the help of Indians recruited from the Mosquito Coast of Central America – and Cudjoe employing the most unorthodox and unsophisticated means to foil their plans. On top of that, he constantly raided their plantations and stores, which was one way in which he did acquire muskets and gunpowder. (McFarlaine 1977: 15-16)

History will never forget the epic resistance of the Maroons, the Palenque (with heroes like Zumbi in Brazil or Cudjoe in Jamaica), the Haitian Revolution (Toussaint Louverture and Dessaline), the Mumbis (with their General, Maceo, the bronze giant), the Cunados (Brazil) and Rastas (Jamaica) or the feats of Tupac Amaru, Crazy Horse and Emiliano Zapata. In the 19th century, to force the planters to apply an English law against whipping, African slaves started a strike that brought about the Abolition of slavery.

If the first globalization centered around the Indian Ocean could be seen as a progressive move in human history, the second one, based on the Atlantic ocean involved racial struggles and class-struggle as well as discrimination and a rigidity in human relations and economic roles which prevented development in most colonized spaces. Productivity is, according to Fourier, Simone Weil and Antonio Negri, a result of the creativity of desire. Crushed slaves or peons had no access to this creativity and Abolitionism very often changed the slaves into indebted farmers tied to a repetitive way of life and economic activity.

The situation was different in the North. The triangular trade had needed boats that could carry thousands of slaves, a requirement which led to technological perfection. This effort raised the technological level of the West tremendously. The profits of slavery represented a substantial part of what has been called primitive accumulation and which was going to be reinvested in the industrial revolution enabling England to sell manufactured goods to its colonies and the continents that it had been able to dominate: India (conquered in 1799 with the death of Tipu Sultan), Australia and Oceania, Africa (surrounded by the British fleet) and South America (the English Banks financed Bolivar's campaigns and the continent was heavily indebted and economically subdued). The Atlantic became the lake of two industrialized countries, the UK and the USA (Rodney 1972: 103-61).

On the Southern and Eastern coast of the ocean, in Africa, the population stagnated because of the wars and deportations involved by the Slave trade (Rodney 1972:106):

	1650	1750	1850	1900
Africa	100	100	100	120
Europe	100	144	274	423
Asia	257	437	656	857

While South America was entangled in the consequences of slavery (past or present) Africa was unable to break the vicious circle of the Slave trade:

> Hunting for elephants or captives did not usually induce in Africa a demand for any technology other than firearms. The lines of economic activities attached to foreign trade were either destructive as slavery was, or at best purely extractive, like ivory hunting and cutting camwood trees. Therefore there was no reason for wanting to call upon European skills. The African economies would have had little room for such skills unless negative types of exports were completely stopped. A remarkable fact that is seldom brought to light is that several African rulers in different parts of the continent saw the situation clearly, and sought European technology for internal development, which meant to replace the trade in slaves.
> Europeans deliberately ignored those African requests...

The African requests for technology came almost continuously:

- In the 16th Century the Kongo Empire wanted an alliance with Portugal and a policy of fair trade which would replace the exports of slaves.
- Ethiopian petitions to get European technology were being repeated with no success from the 16th Century to the 19th C.
- In Danhomey, King Agaja wanted to suppress the slave trade.
- King Opoku of the Asante devised a policy of import of technologies. (1720-50)
- King Moshoeshoe of Lesotho created a Parliament to balance his own power and tried to cooperate with Protestant missionaries to modernize his country and avoid colonization.

At the end of the 19th century, Africa was conquered and ruthlessly exploited during the 20th century. Raw materials and captive markets were the motives of colonization. Nothing really changed when Independence was conquered in 1960. The great African State expected by Nkrumah was never in view as the Northern powers went on with their divide and rule strategy.

The curse of the Atlantic process was reversed when Cuban forces twice reversed the slaves' voyage from Africa to America: operation Carlota in 1975, bringing thousands of Cuban fighters to Africa and securing the Independence of Angola and its repetition in 1987-88 which culminated with the Afro-Cuban victory of Cuito Cuanavale against South-African forces. One consequence of this reversal of the past was the liberation of Nelson Mandela. Less than 10 years after, in 1994, the neo-Zapatist movement started developing actions in Chiapas (Mexico) rejecting the curse of power and domination over man or over nature. The dreams of the Marroons and Rastas had at last defeated the deadly Western global project first centered on the Atlantic.

Too often the defeat of Imperialism in 1987-8 was transformed into the victory of neo-liberalism with its shock treatments (Structural Adjustment Plans to dismantle national

economies and services, high level of debts, traumatized populations...), but the new dispensation opened a space for China and the rise of a new ocean.

The Pacific Ocean as the Other Face of the Universe

Nemo is also the voice through which Jules Verne sums up the knowledge of his century on the great Pacific Ocean:

> The circulation of currents is very important there. To get it working the Great Creator of all things just had to produce in these waters heat, salt and microscopic life. Heat creates different densities, they produce streams and currents. There is more steam on the tropical zones than in the Poles, thus creating an endless exchange between tropical water and polar water. Some of these movements are also horizontal, going from the surface to the bottom of the ocean and from the bottom to the surface. They are truly the breathing of the sea. When we reach the Poles you will realize how important these streams and currents are and you will understand that, thanks to this wonderful law of nature, only the surface of the sea can freeze...
>
> The quantity of salt is a very important component... It prevents too much water from being transformed into steam and clouds which, if they could become rains would flood temperate zones. (Verne 1947:172)

Already in Verne's time it was clear that life depended on a natural equilibrium achieved thanks to the seas and of course to the largest of all oceans, the Pacific Ocean.

For human beings it was the last ocean to be discovered. While Neanderthals steadily withdrew into Western Europe, Homo Sapiens were more adventurous. They might have been pushed out of Africa because of a temporary drought as studies suggest that the water in Lake Malawi dropped by nearly 95 %. About 65 000-70 000 years ago the earth was much cooler and sea level lower. Subsequently the shorelines extended 100kms further out from the current seaside. The Homo Sapiens who became daring explorers might have sailed from the horn of Africa to Arabia and Oman. Some scientists suggest that the strait could have been dry land for a short period of time. Most of these bold groups nevertheless settled in Western Asia except for an even bolder group.

Sanjeev Sanyal sums up this incredible epic migration:

> About 50 000 - 55 000 years ago, a small adventurous group seems to have left the Persian Gulf-India continuum and headed east. They probably made their way along the Indian coast on foot and kept going till they reached what is now South East Asia. Almost the whole tribe seems to have kept moving since they have left only the tiniest genetic traces of their passage through the Indian subcontinent. When the group arrived in South East Asia, the sea level was much lower than it is today, and many of the islands of the region would have been connected by land to the Asian mainland. Thus the group would have been able to spread out quickly on foot. Their descendants are the Melanesians who live in Papua New Guinea, Fidji, and parts of eastern Indonesia...
>
> Then, about 45 000 years ago, a branch of this Melanesian group hopped across to Australia. (Sanyal 2016: 25-26)

Theses peoples and those who followed them often became remarkable sailors and they traveled all over this huge ocean. Trade and refined cultures flourished. The French traveler Cyril Laplace visited Oceania in the years 1837-40 and evoked Touboway as a symbol of the glorious past of the islands of this continent:

> ... it was a small island that, when discovered by Cook, was thickly populated and whose relations with its neighbours were prospering thanks to a fleet whose boats were admired by the great English explorer for their beauty (Laplace 1952:99).

The present issue for humanity is about overcoming Man's ability and tendency to destroy life and the environment. It is especially true for the Pacific Ocean. It is also of first importance because its banks are shared by the three leading economies of the world (China, Japan, US). The question is whether they will work together or fight, save the ocean or destroy it. In the case of the Atlantic, solutions seem to have sprung from the movements of solidarity between the banks of Africa and those of America and a cultural link between these two continents. Is such a dialogue likely to happen between the two banks of the largest ocean of the blue planet?

The Pacific is threatened by a number of issues:

- the relations between its three superpowers,
- the ambitions of white nations (USA, Australia, New Zealand, France...) versus the smaller indigenous nations,
- the marginalization of indigenous peoples : in Papua New Guinea and Kanaky for instance, they are deprived of lands, rights and wealth by giant mining multinational corporations,
- cultural questions: the survival of indigenous cultures, the Aborigines, the Maoris, the Kanaks and others who were once turned into devotees of a cargo cult which is not dead nowadays but more and more connected with the universal fetishism of merchandise,
- environmental problems: destruction of corals, plastic islands, toxic clouds drifting from Asian industrialized countries, disappearance of species, rise of the water levels flooding islands, brutal exploitation of resources, eventual catastrophes due to tempests and giant waves hitting nuclear stations...

None of these difficulties can be solved independently from the others or independently from the whole world. The future of the Pacific is deeply connected to the future of life. History is at a crossroads. One day the seas of the world might turn into dead lakes of mud or the Pacific Ocean could become the lake of Peace.

Giovanni Arrighi's works bring some hopes. He anticipated the growth of a major power of the great ocean: China. Even as he felt that this country had a future, most people saw China as a third world economy whose development would require time and modesty in so far as most economists opined that the Chinese should study and imitate Western models. Arrighi nevertheless foresaw an Asian Age and he even added that the new Chinese impact on the world as well as on her own territory would be ecologically positive (Arrighi 2007). If his predictions about a Chinese hegemony turned accurate, even though the situation of this country seemed to show that it was most unlikely to happen, we could reasonably hope that, although Chinese economy still appears to be a very polluting economy, the opposite could happen. If we refer to the very recent decisions on non-polluting urban transports in Chinese huge cities, the laws on industrial pollution and the economic edge that China has in soft and clean technologies provided at a very cheap price, this unlikely prophecy of China as a protector of environment may become true.

Arrighi thinks that the world system depends on the relations between the economic and political forces and also on the relations between the States. He tends to believe in a

leading power. It was Britain and the US during the age of Western capitalism, but it should now be up to China to be the leader of the coming Asian Age.

What are the differences between the two ages?

-the hegemony of the new Asian age should be connected to a Commonwealth of Civilizations. This is of course very different from Western models and Hobbesian vision of a competitive world in which economic war is presented as the only way to avoid wars and bring unity in a divided world.

-in the Asian Age, the husbanding of natural resources and workforce prevails over the Western idea that Man must rule over nature as a conqueror and a ruthless master. Kaoru Sugihara has coined the term "industrious revolution" to explain the philosophy of the Asian forms of free market and development. Quality of the workforce and high levels of education are more important for growth and development than machines and hordes of human slaves. Economy should be sustainable. Human and natural resources should, therefore, be more protected and cultivated and the general ecology of the country and the region more protected than in the West still dominated by the urge for a fast profit.

-Regional networks are well maintained at home and beyond the borders of the leading economy that tries to help all its neighbours for them to become more and more integrated in its progress. Without an AU (Asian Union), Asian economy is more integrated than the economies of the EU (European Union).

-political power is relatively less bewitched by economic forces than in the West. It could be remnant of the power of the Mandarins in the old and prestigious Empire of the Middle.

As major partners in the Pacific Lake, countries with such a tradition and a vision of the future, like China and Japan, could protect the great ocean and the world. If an environmental and political revolution cannot not be set aside, a strategy for such a revolution should obviously take into account the specific features of the Asian Age.

The logic of the process which started with the second globalization in 1492 has been a growing isolation from life: in the 17th century, Descartes described human beings confronted to a dead mechanical world, in the 20th century, man, as a competitive individual in a competitive market economy fights other human beings who are his rivals and he finds himself not only isolated from nature but also from humanity. Man dominated nature and also started dominating other men through war and exploitation. We are, therefore, entitled to think that by reversing this process and by saving nature, men will come to abolish exclusions and inequalities. As a link between continents and a most important environmental factor, the oceans, as much as the forests, are part of the living connections of our world.

This is a dream for poets:

Wolf and lamb will graze together
Lion like cow will eat straw
For the snake, dust will be bread (Isaiah: LXV, 25).

The kind of dreams which become true...

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SEA: MYTHOLOGICAL/MYTHICAL DIMENSIONS IN INDIAN IMAGINATION

By

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Abstract

This essay will discuss how the sea-symbolism has haunted the Hindu mythological imagination as well as the Buddhist imagination in India. While there is an interlaced relationship between the two cultures, there are also certain specificities relating to art and literature. When we consider Hindu mythology, the visual imagination would depict the God of the sea, Varuna, as a White man wearing a golden armour and riding a sea-dragon or "makara" ("chu-srin" in Tibetan). Hindu mythology has an interesting story related to the origin of Varuna. Varuna makes his appearance again in *Matsya Purana,* a genre of literature which survives in the modern era in numerous versions in Indian languages. The sea myth also has various representations in art and sculpture. In Tibetan Buddhist mythology, the sea plays a dominant role. As colour symbolism in thangka paintings, it is suggestive of rest, calmness, constructive thinking. Sea signification is keyed to the white colour and is indicative of the power to remove delusion and instill wisdom. Again, among the eight auspicious symbols or the astamangala in Tantric Buddhism, the conch shell and the lotus are the two. The right turning conch-shell has a certain signification, so do the golden fishes, the dragons of Mara, the coral branch, the "naga" or the serpent and the scorpion. Sea iconography relates to precarity and human psychology and archetypes. While it refers to these narratives of the sea and sea creatures, one of the objectives of this article is to analyze the psychological dimension of the Indian cultural imagination. Lastly, it studies a short story by Intizar Husain, "The Boat", which weaves the Hindu, Christian and Islamic

cultural imagination together in a narrative where people flee their homelands under certain circumstances for an alternative, uncertain destiny, through tumultuous seas in a boat or a Noah's ark.

Keywords: art, representation, myth, mithya

Résumé

Cet article traite de la façon dont le symbolisme de la mer a hanté l'imagination mythologique hindoue ainsi que l'imagination bouddhiste tibétaine dans la ceinture indo-himalayenne. Bien qu'il existe une relation entrelacée entre les deux cultures, il existe aussi certaines spécificités relatives à l'art et à la littérature. Lorsqu'on regarde la mythologie hindoue, l'imagination visuelle représente le dieu de la mer Varuna comme un homme blanc portant une armure d'or et montant un dragon de mer ou "makara" ("chu-srin" en tibétain). La mythologie hindoue raconte une histoire intéressante liée à l'origine de Varuna. Varuna réapparaît dans *Matsya Purana*, un genre de littérature qui survit à l'ère moderne dans de nombreuses versions et dans des langues indiennes. Le mythe de la mer a également connu diverses représentations dans l'art et la sculpture. Dans le mythe bouddhiste tibétain, la mer joue un rôle dominant. Comme symbolisme des couleurs dans les peintures thangka, elle connote le repos, le calme, la pensée constructive. La signification de la mer rattachée à la couleur blanche est révélatrice du pouvoir de supprimer l'illusion et d'instiller la sagesse. Les huit symboles auspicieux (ou l'*astamangala*) dans le bouddhisme tantrique comprennent la coquille et le lotus. La conque de coquille droite a une certaine signification de même que les poissons d'or, les dragons de Mara, la branche de corail, le "naga" ou le serpent, le scorpion. L'iconographie de la mer se rapporte à la précarité et à la psychologie humaine et aux archétypes. Tout en faisant référence à ces récits de créatures maritimes, cet article tente d'analyser la dimension psychologique de l'imagination culturelle indienne. Enfin, elle étudie une nouvelle d'Intizar Husain, "Le Bateau", qui entremêle l'imagination culturelle hindoue, chrétienne et islamique dans un récit où les gens fuient leur patrie sous la pression de certaines circonstances vers une destinée alternative et incertaine, à travers des mers tumultueuses dans un bateau ou une arche de Noé. Cet article met en relation l'idée jungienne d'archétypes et la théorie de la signification barthésienne afin de proposer une psychanalyse sémiotique des récits mythologiques/mythiques dans l'art et la littérature indiennes.

Mots clés : art, représentation, mythe, mythya



Ananta Nag and HariNarayan in the cosmic sea[1]

"Mythos", "mithas", "mithya", or myth as the term has been coined is the living cultural imagination. In tune with Emily Lyle's (2006) analysis of myth and narrative, traditional narratives, which generally connect with pre-history and cultural imagination to fill up the gaps in facts, also have an immediacy about them as a fabric of living imagination. Myth in Indian imagination is "mithas" as well as "mithya," as opposed to "Sat", or the absolute Truth. *Mithas* suggesting the enticing effects of the fable which seduces the reader is also *mithya* or a figment of human imagination which is elusive, illusory and delusive (Pattnaik 2006: 1-2) Being a distorted or sometimes hyperbolic view of reality, *mithya* is open to interpretation and correction and connections. Where cultures share commonalities in beliefs, customs and codes and there is a blending of various fabrics of imagination related to an idea or iconography in art and literature.

> We often have at our disposal not just a single story but a group of stories and this allows us to study analogies. The process is not one of argument by analogy but of discovery through analogy" (Lyle 60).

My analysis of the fish, serpent and water iconography related to precarity as well as epistemology would borrow insights from Lyle's analysis. To formulate her argument in the essay, Lyle mentions Dedre Gentner's study in "Structure Mapping" (1983) involving systems of iconography which study relationships between cultures rather than objects as icons, through an analogical discourse. The systems, as Lyle points out, cannot be too close but might have identical or even remote bearings with each other so that the common elements allow for "queries to be posed about the elements that differ." (61) Hence the point of origin of the myth and the ruminations it leads to are not necessarily fixed and could be a constant field of inquiry and discovery. Lyle also cites Gentner's later volume (2001), which includes an essay by Gilles Fauconnier on conceptual blending:

> Like standard analogical mapping, blending aligns two partial structures (the inputs). But in addition, blending projects selectively to form a third structure, the Blend. The blend is not a simple composition of the inputs. Through pattern completion, and dynamic elaboration, it develops an emergent organization of its own. (2001:256)

"Sea" as a metaphor resonates with stories in cultural space(s), which would contain the stories of water creatures such as the fish and the serpent among others. I would like to look at the sea and water myths along with the myths of serpents related to the sea, in Hindu and Tantric Buddhist mythological imagination before moving on to analyze Intizar

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Husain's short story, "The Boat". Following Lyle's hypothesis in her above-mentioned essay, my own essay would include two sets of stories or myths: myths from Hindu cultural imagination (A) and Buddhist cultural imagination (B), which together create the third cultural space or the generic space or "the achematic frame", in the blending of the two cultures into one, in art, architecture and literature. Intizar Hussain's story would inhibit the fourth space, where inputs from the two sources A and B, merge along with other inputs from other cultural spaces. Either of the input spaces could be the source, and the movement between the two cultural spaces are not necessarily from one to another in a fixed direction, rather there is a blending based on point and counterpoint in the structural patterning of cultural systems that evolve through time.

Hindu Cultural Imagination and the Buddhist Cultural Imagination and the Achematic Frame

The Myth of the Varuna and his vessel Makara and the trail



Varuna

Varuna, according to the Puran Katha, is the son of the sage Kashyapa and Aditi. He is one of the twelve Adityas. As the myth goes, the gods had prayed to Varuna to look after the clouds and rains. Therefore Varuna with his thousand eyes has a supreme survey over all the waterbodies on earth, including the oceans, streams and lakes. He is often visualized as riding a crocodile, or a chariot drawn by seven swans holding a lotus, noose, conch, serpent and a vessel of gems in his hands. In Buddhism, Varuna is one of the twelve devas, or guardian deities along with Indra, Agni, Yama, Niriti, Vayu, Istasa, Kubera., Bramha, Prithvi, Surya, Chandra. The most common representation in Hindu culture is that of Varuna riding the sea-monster Makara, who is depicted as a half terrestrial animal in the frontal part which could be a stag, deer, crocodile or elephant, and as a half aquatic animal in the hind part, usually a fish or a seal tail though sometimes a peacock or a floral tail is also common. Varuna rides the Makara in most of the Hindu temple iconography, so does river goddess Ganges.

Makara or Tibetan "Chu-srin" is supposed to be the guardian of temples, and figures in monastery doorways. The Tibetan iconography evolving from the Indian form of makara is slightly different. The Makara in Tibetan Buddhist iconography has lion's forepaws, a horse's tail, the gills and tendrils of a fish and horns of a deer or dragon. The fish tail has a complex spiraling floral design called "sankritmakareku". In Vajrayana Buddhism, weapons

with Makara symbolism are curved knife, iron hook, vajra and the ritual dragon Makara. Makara is the symbolic representation of water and fertility and sometimes the architectural pattern is such that the Makara so sculpted also functions as a rain water spout or gargoyle. Generally, there are two identical makaras flanked by two nagas with the crown of garuda, upon the upper arches of carved wooden doorways of the "torana" that rises behind the enlightened throne of Buddha (Beer 2003:78). The iconography is called "Kirtimukha", and is very popular among the Newar craftsmen in Nepal. Kirtimukhi is the monster-mask which symbolizes the face of majesty, fame or glory.



Kirtimukhi in Nepal

In the Tibetan Buddhist mythical imagination, a demon named Jalandhar was created from the blaze of Shiva's third eye. He assumes great power and desires an incestuous relationship with Shiva's consort Parvati, his adopted mother. He engages Rahu to win Parvati's approval for this illicit relationship. Shiva becoming aware of this design is enraged and creates another demon to devour Rahu. A terrified Rahu begs for mercy and is pardoned eventually, but the demon deprived of his prey and ravenously hungry turns upon itself to devour its own body. The head without the body of the demon is named by Shiva as "Kirtimukha" or "the face of glory", who is to be the eternal guardian of the threshold to Shiva's door. Among the Newar craftsmen of Nepal, "Kirtimukha" is called "Chepu". Its sculpted serpent devouring form is found on the doorways and shrine arches in Nepal. "Chepu" myth however has a different story, with an interlaced commonality with the former myth. Chepu was the elder brother of Garuda. It was said that he was to be most virtuous and chivalrous among beings when born, but his mother Vinata cracked the egg in her impatience before Chepu was fully formed. In another legend as Beer (2005) unfolds, Chepu was persuaded by Manjushri to reveal his invisible self. As Chepu was taking form from the clouds, Manjushri secretly began to draw his likeness. Chepu perceiving this became formless again. However, Manjushri was so impressed by Chepu that he proclaimed that Chepu's naga devouring face will appear at the top of all shrines. Both Chepu and Kirtimukha, because of their virtue signify the idea of the chosen ones for guarding the sacred.

Going back to Lyle's formula, the structural mapping of the two cultures so entwined with each other produces the generic space of the "Kirtimukha" and "Chepu" myths, moving away from the mythical conception of the Makara and yet not quite either.

Of fishes and waters

Chetan Raj Sreshtha when drawing upon the myths and legends of Sikkim to create the idea of the *beyul* (paradisal) land, writes about Tontem and his deformed ears.

> Instead of mushroomed folds that everyone possessed, he had been born with two flaps of cartilage that drooped like winter leaves over pea-sized holes ... When Tontem asked his mother about it, she told him that it was because he has been a fish in his previous life who had swum the waters of the mountain lakes, while the other servants had been large-eared dogs scavenging for shit. (2013: 99-100)

Each and every river has its own tales as do lakes and waterbodies in India. The lakes and water bodies have sacredness attached to them, along with unique legends which form streams of stories. Fish is often considered sacred in both Hindu and Buddhist iconography, and is bound up with good omen and fertility myths. The two golden fishes, male and female in the form of carp is an auspicious symbol. And it also symbolizes the "yoni" or the vagina, with its suggestiveness of fertility. A golden fish is the attribute of Mahasiddha Tilopa, to liberate humans from cyclical patterns of karma and reincarnations. It is among the eight auspicious symbols or the *asthamangala* in the Buddhist tradition along with the conch-shell which the god Indra had gifted to Siddhart on attaining of his Boddhisatya as "a symbolic request to proclaim the truth of the dharma." (Beer: 2). In Hindu iconography, Vishnu's fire emanating "panchajanyo" (the sacred conch) held in his upper left hand proclaims to have power over five classes of beings. Among his ten incarnations, matsya is one and Buddha too is his ninth incarnation. Arjuna was given the conch, named Devdatta meaning "god-given", which when blown would terrify the enemy with its triumphant blast. Early Hinduism divided the conch-shell in gender and caste specifications.





The Sacred Conch

The golden fish in Buddhist symbolism has been lifted directly from ancient Vedic mythology. While we discuss the *Matsya Purana* a little later, it is interesting to see how the Buddhists like to think by practicing dharma they will have good luck as they do not fear "drowning" in the ocean of suffering and can choose their rebirth like fish in water. Tontem's mother's reasoning about his deformed ears is embedded in this Buddhist concept.




Fish gargoyle in a temple in South India *The Golden fishes in a thangka*

It is said that the two fishes are depicted in Buddhist iconography is because fish often swim in pairs. In connection with water, fish also represents creation. Water is an element that creates life, and it is related to the symbiotic fluid in the mother's womb. Two-fish iconography is not only found in Buddhist symbolism, but also in other cultures such as the ceramic bowl at Nazca in Peru. Plaques and ornaments with symbols of two fish are typically offered to newly married couples in China as a symbol of conjugal rights and fidelity. At the philosophical level, fish also represents the balance between thought and emotion for experiencing higher consciousness which enables us to act with more clarity and rationality. When the right/left hemispheres of the brain are unbalanced we are prone to suffer from mood swings and confusion. Feelings of anger, hatred, jealousy and other fear based emotions lead us into making wrong choices. The two-golden fish therefore represent the ability to create the balance between the body and mind to attain what Buddhists call "Nibbana" or Samadhi. In Vedic chronology, matsya (meaning fish) also represents the first stage in the evolution of life. From an esoteric point of view, this is the birth of a new idea that can be developed to create something one wants in life. Two fishes therefore symbolize the ability to create good fortune and prosperity in life and how much one achieves, depends on how balanced one is in body and mind.

Matsya Purana

There are eighteen Mahapuranas, *Matsya Purana* is the sixteenth one. *Matsya Purana* describes the five characteristics (pancha lakshana) that a purana text must satisfy before being classified as a mahapurana. The text should describe the original creation of the universe (sarga), the periodical process of destruction and re-creation (pratisaryga), the various eras (manvantara), the histories of the solar dynasty (surya vamsha), and lunar dynasty (chandra vamsha) and royal genealogies (vamshanucharita).



Story of Manu and Matysa Purana

Vedavyasa, the son of Satyavati and the sage Parashara besides composing the Mahabharata also composed the Mahapuranas. His real name was Krishna Dvaipayana. As he was dark in complexion, he was called "Krishna" and as he was born in an island, the sage acquired the name of Dvaipayana, where "dvipa" means an island. The Mahabharata has one lakh shlokas or couplets. After composing the Mahabharata, Vedavyasa composed the eighteen mahapuranas. The Matsya Purana is a medium-length Purana, and consists of fifteen thousand couplets. The longest Purana, the *Skanda Purana,* has eighty-one thousand. And the shortest Purana, the *Markandeya Purana,* has only nine thousand. The fourteen thousand shlokas of the *Maysya Purana* are divided into two hundred and ninety-one chapters (adhyaya). Usually Vishnu is regarded as having had nine incarnations, with the impending tenth one, Kalki, in the future.

The *Matsya Purana* is so named because it was first recited by Vishnu himself, in his incarnation of a fish. Krishna Dvaipayana had four other disciples. But the Puranas were taught only to one called Romaharshana. As the myth goes, years ago, several sages organized a yajna (sacrifice) in the forest named naimisharanya. After the sacrifice was over, the assembled sages requested Romaharshana to recite from any of the Puranas. Romaharshana then recounted the *Matsya Purana*, told by Vishnu to Manu. According to this recounted story, the king Vaivasvata Manu was the son of the sun-god Vivasyana, and he was the seventh among the fourteen Manus in his era. When it was time for Manu to retire to the forest, he handed over the kingdom to his son. (The son's name is Ikshvaku.) Manu then went to the foothills of Mount Malaya and started to perform tapasya (meditation). After many thousands of years of meditation, Brahma appeared to Manu and wished to bless him with a gift that he would ask for. Manu, with his inner vision knew about the forthcoming pralaya (apocalypse) and requested Bramha to grant him the boon that it will be he who will save the world. Brahma readily granted this boon.

Days went by, then on one particular occasion when Manu was performing ablutions in a pond near his hermitage, he found that there was a minnow (shafari) swimming around in the water. Manu had no desire to kill the minnow. He placed it carefully in his water-pot (kamandalu). But the minnow started to grow and within a day, it was sixteen fingers in length. As the fish was too big for the pot, Manu placed the fish in a jar. But the fish continued to grow and, within a day, it was three hands in length. Manu then put the fish in

a well, but the well soon became too small for the fish. Manu then transferred the fish to a pond, and then to the holy river Ganga, and finally to the ocean. There the fish grew so much that it soon occupied the entire ocean. A bewildered Manu, then requested the fish to reveal his identity. Vishnu then revealed himself in his true form and told Manu that the earth would soon be flooded with water. Vishnu had a boat built by the gods. When the earth was flooded, Manu was to place all living beings in the boat and thus save them. Vishnu would himself arrive in his form of the fish and Manu was to tie the boat to the fish's horn. Thus, the living beings would be saved. And when the waters of the flood receded, Manu could populate the world and rule over it. Vishnu disappeared, and for a hundred years there was a terrible drought on earth. The drought led to famine and people died of starvation. Meanwhile, the sun blazed in fury and burnt up the entire world. When everything had burnt to ashes, dark clouds loomed in the sky and rains began to pour. Soon, water engulfed the entire earth. As instructed by Vishnu, Manu gathered together living beings inside the boat. And when the fish appeared, he tied the boat to the fish's horn. While the boat was being dragged around by the fish, Manu asked Vishnu several questions. The answers that Vishnu provided form the text of the *Matsya Purana*.

The myth of the fish as fertility symbol thus manifests itself differently in both Hindu and Buddhist cultural imagination. The generic space is created by the similarity the mythical imagination shares with other cultures and religious philosophies, and how it manifests itself in literature. While one here is reminded of Rushdie's *Haroun and the sea of Stories*, in the way there are streams of stories that generate stories to form a *kathasaritsagar*, the Christian iconography of fish in *Moby Dick* and *The Old Man and the Sea* too come to mind.

The sea -serpent and Maras of Temptation



Mara in a Buddhist Monastery pillar

Nagas are mythical serpents which find strong representation in all religions and cultures. In Buddhism, they often are protectors of the Buddha and of the dharma. However, they also are worldly and temperamental creatures that spread disease and misfortune when angered. The word naga means "cobra" in Sanskrit.

Nagas (snakes) generally have for their abode any waterbody, from an ocean to a mountain spring, though they manifest themselves on earth as well. People in the Himalayan region worship the nagas in fear of skin diseases and refrain from polluting streams. The Chap-chu and Bam-chu festivals associated with the Buddhist practices in

Sikkim, are related to naga deities and their blessings which create perennial source of drinking water, provided the reservoirs are unpolluted. In early Hindu art, nagas were half human and half snakes. In Buddhist iconography, nagas sometimes are giant cobras, often with multiple heads. They are also portrayed mostly like dragons, but without legs. In some parts of Asia, nagas are thought to be a sub-species of dragons. In many myths and legends, nagas are able to change themselves into a human appearance. One is reminded of Lamia and medieval Christian myths and the Egyptian myths and the queen Cleopatra in this connection. Satan and Leviathan in Milton and Blake too become a contested terrain of ideas and conflict.

Nagas find mention in the many Buddhist sutras. A famous enmity between nagas and garudas that originated in the Hindu epic poem *The Mahabharata* continues into the *Maha-samaya Sutta* of the *Pali Sutta-pitaka* (Digha Nikaya 20). In this sutra, the Buddha protected nagas from a garuda attack. After this, both nagas and garudas took refuge in him. So instead of being precarious creatures, nagas often find mention in stories as benevolent beings supporting humanity. Some of them are enumerated below:

1. In the *Muccalinda Sutta* (Khuddaka Nikaya, Udana 2.1), Buddha was sitting in deep meditation as a storm approached. A naga king named Muccalinda spread his great cobra hood over the Buddha to shelter him from the rain and cold. Similarly, when Krishna after his birth was being carried by his father Basudeb to Gokul across the tempest tossed Yamuna, Vasuki with his hood protected the father and child from rain and thunder blasts across the turbulent waters.
2. In the *Himavanta Sutta* (Samyutta Nikaya 46.1) the Buddha used nagas in a parable. In the *Mahayana Lotus Sutra,* in Chapter 12, the daughter of a naga king acquired enlightenment or nibbana.
3. Nagas are often the protectors of scriptures. For example, according to the legend, the *Prajnaparamita Sutras* were given to the nagas by Buddha, as he had felt that the world was not ready yet, to receive his teachings. Centuries later, the nagas befriended the philosopher Nagarjuna and finally gave the sutras to him.
4. In a legend of Tibetan Buddhism, once a great lama named Sakya Yeshe and his attendants were returning to Tibet from China. He carried invaluable copies of sutras given to him by the Emperor. Somehow the precious texts fell into a river and were hopelessly lost. When the lama with his fellow friends reached their monastery, they learnt that an old man had delivered some sutras to the monastery mentioning that they were to be delivered to Sakya Yeshe. The old man apparently as the myth tells us, was a naga in disguise.
5. Vasuki the nagaraja, one of the King serpents of Hindu mythology and Buddhist mythology has a gem called Nagamani on his head. Manasa, another naga, is his sister. Vasuki is Shiva's snake. He is known in Chinese and Japanese mythology as being one of the eight Great Dragon Kings amongst Nanda (Nagaraja), Upananda, Sagara (Shakara), Takshaka, Balavan, Anavatapta and Utpala. Vasuki is famous for coiling around the neck of Shiva and the most famous legend in Hinduism relating to Vasuki is that of "Samudra manthan", or the churning of the ocean of milk. In this legend, Vasuki allowed the devas (gods) and the asuras (demons) to bind him to

Mount Mandara and use him as their churning rope to extract the ambrosia of immortality from the ocean of milk.



Churning of the Ocean of Milk with Vasuki

In Buddhist mythology, Vasuki and the other Naga Kings appear as the audience to Gautama Buddha's sermons. The duties of the naga kings included leading the nagas in protecting and worshiping Buddha, as well as in protecting other enlightened beings.



Ananta HariNarayan

6. Ananta Nag or Shesh Nag, signifies collapsing of Time and end of creation. In Hindu mythological imagination Ananta is a massive form that floats coiled in space, or on the ocean of bliss, to form the bed on which Vishnu resides. Sometimes he is shown as five-headed or seven-headed, but more commonly as a many thousand-headed serpent, sometimes with each head wearing an ornate crown. His name (from the Sanskrit root "śiṣ") implies "that which remains", at the end of the *kalpa*. In the *Bhagavadgita* Chapter 10, verse 29, Shri Krishna while describing his common manifestations declares, "anantaś ca asmi nāgānāṁ" (Of the nagas, I am Ananta). The association of Ananta nag and Vishnu finds expression in the name "Ananta HariNarayan". In the *Bhagavata* Shesha is named Sankarshana, and also stands for the tamasic energy of Lord Narayana himself, and is said to live deep within the inner layers of *patala*, (hell) where there are many serpents with gems on their heads and where Sankarshana is the ruler. He is the Jungian deconstructive power in the archetypal image of Vishnu before the creation of the universe. When the universe is towards its end, Sankarshana creates eleven rudras from him to destroy the

universe for a new one to be created. Ananta or Sankarshana expands himself as garbhodakshayi-Vishnu in the beginning of the universe to create Brahma. In other words, Lord Sankarshana is Lord Narayana himself.

Maras



Sakyamuni and Mara

Maras, not very different in appearance from a naga and somewhere between the dragon and the snake is a mythical creature which the Pali dictionary introduces as "the personification of Death, the Evil One, the Tempter (the Buddhist counterpart of the Devil or Principle of Destruction)." The commentary further states that "The legends concerning Mara are ... very involved and defy any attempts at unraveling them." My reason for including Mara in this discussion is because metaphorically Mara belongs to the libidinal sea of desires and the dark deconstructive forces which find alliance with Satan leading Eve to the forbidden fruit. Maras also depict the negative Kundalini energy in our spine. While the meditative practices force the kundalini energy through the "sushumna" or the spine to uncoil and move upwards to spread its hood of enlightenment in "sahasara", the negative kundalini coils to wreck disease, lust, anger and negativity, as attributed to demoniac Mara.



Temptations of Mara



Kundalini energy

Analyzing a series of allusions to Mara in the commentarial literature, G.P. Malalasekera, (1937) elaborates on his definition in the dictionary (Vol II) the following observations:

- In the latest accounts, mention is made of five Maaras — Khandhamaara, Kilesamaara, Abhisa"nkhaaramaara, Maccu-maara, and Devaputtamaara". Elsewhere Maara is spoken of as one, three, or four.
- The term Maara, in the older books, is applied to the whole of the worldly existence, the five khandhas, or the realm of rebirth, as opposed to Nibbaana.
- Commentaries speaking of three Maaras specify them as Devaputtamaara, Maccumaara, and Kilesamaara.

Malalasekera proceeds to attempt "a theory" of Mara in Buddhism, which he formulates in the following manner:

> The commonest use of the word was evidently in the sense of Death. From this it was extended to mean 'the world under the sway of death' (also called Maaradheyya, e.g. AN IV 228) and the beings therein. Thence, the kilesas (defilements) also came to be called Maara in that they were instruments of Death, the causes enabling Death to hold sway over the world. All temptations brought about by the kilesas were likewise regarded as the work of Death. There was also evidently a legend of a devaputta of the Vasavatti world called Maara, who considered himself the head of the Kaamaavacara-world [the sensual realm] and who recognized any attempt to curb the enjoyment of sensual pleasures as a direct challenge to himself and to his authority. As time went on these different conceptions of the word became confused one with the other, but this confusion is not always difficult to unravel. (4)

What follows from this statement, even though Malalasekera did not elucidate enough, and what Ananda W.P Guruge (1998) analyses, is that the term Mara, when it occurs in Buddhist literature, could signify any one of the following four:

- Mara could be an anthropomorphic deity ruling over a heaven in the sensual sphere (kaamaavacara-devaloka), namely, Paranimmita-Vasavatti. He is also called kaamadhaa-turaaja (the king of the sensual realm). He is in the company of Sakka and Mahaabrahma and this Maaradevaputta, is a very powerful deity bent on making life difficult for holy persons.
- The Buddhist canon also mentions Maras in the plural as a class of potent deities in the Dhammacakkap-pavattana Sutta and in the Maaratajjaniiya Sutta. In Tibetan texts, the ascetic Siddhartha could have, with the instructions given by AAraa.dakaalaama, become a Sakra, a Brahmaa, or a Mara.
- The Buddhist canon personifies Death as Maccuraaja, the exterminator as Antaka. There is a persistent preoccupation in Buddhism on the quest for deliverance for escaping the phenomenon of death, which presupposes rebirth. The concept of existence falls within the realm of Mara or Maaradheyya on account of the ineluctable presence of death. Mara is said to control all states of existence, including the six heavenly worlds of the sensual sphere, and Death itself.
- Mara allegorically is the power of temptation, the tendency towards evil, moral conflict, and is associated with indolence, negligence, and niggardliness. Somewhat similar to Satan in Judeo-Christian and Islamic thinking and Ahriman in Avestan thought, Mara is described as Paapimaa (i.e. the Evil One, or simply the Evil),

> Pamattabandhu (Kinsman of Dalliance), Pisuna (Calumnious or Malicious), and Kanha (the Black).

There are variations in myths of various canons, but what is interesting is how the concept of the Mara as Temptation has found expression in Asian Art and literature. Even before Buddha came to be represented in human form, the Great Departure and Victory over Mara were popular themes depicted at both Sanchi and Amaravati, as pointed out by W.P. Guruge. Sculptures on the gateways of the Great Stupa at Sanchi (first century B.C.) include a scene of the Great Departure and two scenes of Mara's Assault (north gateway) and Defeat (west gateway). A rider less horse (repeated four times) represents the future Buddha (symbolized by the royal parasol) leaving the city in the company of countless gods in a mood of jubilation. None of the figures can, however, be identified as Mara. Apparently, the panel does not represent Mara's temptation. But, as described in the *Lalitavistara* and Asvagho.sa's *Buddhacarita,* the horse is borne on the hands of *yaksas* or deities. In the panels depicting the assault and defeat of Mara, the future Buddha is represented by an empty seat under the Bodhi-tree. Mara himself is depicted as a veritable god, reflecting Asvagho.sa's identification of Mara as Kamadeva, the Indian God of Love. Though this figure is a handsome one, his hosts in both panels are ugly and fearful.

The Amaravati sculptures of the second century A.D., too depict scenes of the Great Departure and Mara's Assault. Though much of the architecture is damaged, the panel on Mara's Assault conveys the energy it is supposed to depict. The hosts of Mara with various weapons are ready to attack, and Mara himself appears to be the seated figure to the left of the empty seat under the Bodhi-tree. Here, Mara is a handsome god in princely attire and the panel seems to combine synoptically three events: The Assault, the Defeat of Mara, and the Temptation by Mara's daughters.

To be in agreement with Guruge's observation, it is in the Gandhara school of art that we notice a further development of the two themes and the emergence of the scene depicting the Temptation by Mara's daughters. Lahore Museum has a sculpture where the future Buddha rides a horse. The facts of life namely, old age and death, which prompted his renunciation, are depicted around the figure of the Buddha. A princely figure with a halo, standing in the left corner of the panel, could be Mara, and the wheel-like object at the right upper corner could be the symbol of Universal Monarchy, with which Mara appraised the future Buddha. The scene includes symbolically a third element, the role of the earth, represented as a female figure emerging from the ground, in enabling the future Buddha to take a last look at his city without turning back. The story of the Great Departure is included here in all its traditional details, and there is also the continuing representation of Mara as a devaputta. Besides this, there is another fragment of a Gandhara sculpture on the Great Departure panel. Here, the earth-goddess emerges from the ground and bears upon her shoulders the feet of the horse. The two standing figures have been identified by Grunwedel (1901) as guards. But there is also the likelihood that the one in front with the bow in hand is Mara. This panel too might be a representation of this encounter.

Grunwedel discusses in some detail the representation of Mara in Gandhara sculpture. According to him,

> Mara rarely if ever appears in Buddhist sculptures except in the representations of the temptation scene... Though different sculptors may have taken their own ways of representing

> Mara, still there was a fixed type also for this deva. He appears, at a later date, in full festal attire, youthful in figure, with bow and arrow... His attributes, bow and arrow and Makara, suggest that there is some connection with Greek Eros."(98)

The finest combination of the attack by the hideous hosts of Mara and the temptation by Mara's daughters is to be found in Ajanta (c. 600 A.C.), both in a painting in Cave 1 and in a sculptured version in Cave 26. Apart from their artistic merits the composition has demonstrated how this could be extended to massive dimensions. Examples come from far-flung places like Tun-huang in China and Dambulla and Hindagala in Sri Lanka. At Dambulla the entire ceiling of the largest cave is devoted to the theme of Mara's Assault, bringing together many characteristics that had been progressively incorporated in the artistic representation of this event.



Mara's daughters



Akshobhaya statue in Bihar

Mara with time goes through a process of abstraction, so much so that the *bhuumi-sparsa-mudra* becomes a short-hand way of recalling the event of great departure. The additional element of the Temptation by Mara's daughters is sometimes portrayed discreetly on the pedestal with three dancing girls and two playing musical instruments in some Buddhist architecture. Say for example in Nalanda sculpture, three female figures on the pedestal, possibly suggest the association of Mara as a *yaksa* or demon. But the three female figures do not appear in all cases. The Buddha statue in the earth-touching posture in the case of a Buddhist sculpture in Bihar of the 8th or 9th century, becomes identified as one of the Dhyani Buddhas of the Mahayana tradition with the specific name of Aksobhya, meaning the imperturbable one.

With the passage of time the mode of the presentation of the Temptation scenes and the concept of the Mara, underwent change. As late as the eleventh century, Sri Lankan Buddhists seemed to have considered Mara to be a devaputta, or a son of god. But with time, his god-like appearance was replaced by what was traditionally ascribed to a yaksa or demon. The final evolution of Mara's transformation could be seen in the Tibetan *Yamaantaka*, which iconographically represents him as a fierce looking demon with multiple arms.

In sum, the temptations of Mara as allegorical representations are as old as Buddhism itself and the imagery could have originated in the Buddha's own graphic poetical expressions. Possibly the early compilers of the life of the Buddha did not make a conscious effort to deal systematically with individually recorded instances of such temptations. There is a fair amount of confusion as regards the nature and the timing of the related

events. The event of the Great Departure, the Victory over Mara, and his daughters, came to be singled out for detailed treatment in literature and art. The artists have freely used their imagination in their conception of the situation, which explains such varied depictions in art over the ages. The very diversity of the presentations has contributed to the enrichment of both literary and artistic creativity, creating the third space of cultural translation and of human imagination based on mythos and "mithya".

Conclusion: Intizar Husain's The Boat – Fourth Space in structural mapping of cultures

> Again, everyone tried to think hard how long they had been travelling how many days, how many years, or how many ages? This is exactly what happens when one is on travel or when one it's raining. When it rains continuously for days, it seems as though it's been raining for ages and continue to do so for years. Similarly, if there are no stopovers during travel, it seems as though one's been travelling for generations. (Husain 2007:248)



In this story the strands of other cultural imagination weaves together to create "The achematic frame" or Fauconnier's generic Fourth space. The myths of Hazrat Noah, Manu, Gilgamesh Ananta Naga and Prajapati Bramha entwine as coloured strands to the symbolical significations of the boat and travel, where destiny is uncertain, amidst tumultuous seas. The story written in the backdrop of Indian Partition creates a myth of its own deriving its material through various cultural mythologies. Precarious seas, precarious journeys through time suggesting the end of Time and new creation and different epistemologies of myths from various cultural sources mingle to define the "Sea", and what it stands for.

As long as human civilization thrives, the precarity of seas in myth and reality will too. While new myths could be created, old mythologies with their underlying transcendental messages in modern re-interpretations through literature and art will continue to offer meaning to an otherwise tumultuous precarity of life itself through varied cultural translations.

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COLONISER COLONISED: ODISHA'S MARITIME HISTORY, ODIA COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND IDENTITY POLITICS

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Abstract

Archaeological and textual evidences confirm that Odisha (eastern India), known as *Kalinga* in the Ancient Age had a rich maritime tradition and had even established "colonies" in a number of islands/countries on the Bay of Bengal which was known as *Kalingadresu.* Much more than historical evidence and textual references, the "past glory" has remained vibrantly alive in the "collective memory" (Maurice Halbwachs) of the Odia people and is manifest in folklore, legends, folk rituals and festivals, even mainstream literature. The narratives, real and imaginary, of the maritime achievements became instrumental during the colonial era in re-constructing their identity in the face of threats to their language and culture. On the national level, the maritime past of India became an anti-colonial nationalist strategy with a section of scholars trying to re-write the history. In 1926, historian Kalidas Nag (1892-1966) formed the "Greater India Society" in Calcutta which sought to include the ancient "Indian Colonies" as integral parts of "Greater India". Eminent historians like Ramesh Chandra Majumdar (1888-1980) published a number of books (e.g. several volumes of *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East,* 1927>) and research papers on the subject. My essay examines the Odia/Indian maritime narratives and their significance in nationalist/subnationalist identity politics.

Key words: collective memory, maritime narratives, Odia, greater India

Résumé

Les preuves archéologiques et textuelles confirment que l'Odisha (état de l'Inde orientale), connue sous le nom de Kalinga dans l'époque ancienne, possédait une riche tradition maritime et avait même établi des "colonies" dans plusieurs îles / pays de la baie du Bengale, connue sous le nom de Kalingadresu. Beaucoup plus que des preuves historiques et des références textuelles, "le passé glorieux" est resté vivant dans la "mémoire collective" [Maurice Halbwachs] du peuple d'Odisha et se manifeste dans le folklore, les légendes, les rituels populaires et les festivals, voire dans sa littérature dominante. Les récits, réels et imaginaires, des réalisations maritimes des Odia deviennent essentiels à l'époque coloniale pour reconstruire leur identité face aux menaces qui pèsent sur leur langue et leur culture. Au niveau national, le passé maritime de l'Inde fait partie d'une stratégie anticoloniale et nationaliste grâce à un groupe de chercheurs essayant de réécrire l'histoire. En 1926, l'historien Kalidas Nag (1892-1966) formait la "Greater India Society" à Calcutta qui cherchait à inclure les anciennes "colonies indiennes" en tant que parties intégrantes de la "Grande Inde". Des historiens éminents comme Ramesh Chandra Majumdar (1888-1980) ont publié un certain nombre de livres (par exemple, plusieurs volumes sur les colonies indiennes anciennes en Extrême-Orient, *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*, 1927) et des articles de recherche sur le sujet. Mon article étudie les récits maritimes de l'Odia / de l'Inde et leur signification dans la politique identitaire nationaliste/sous-nationaliste.

Mots clés : mémoire collectif, récits maritimes, Odia, Grande Inde

Introduction

Kalinga (*read* ancient Odisha) was well-known for its strong naval power and maritime trade with the South and South-East Asian islands, Burma [Myanmar], China, and some countries in the continents of Africa, Europe and even Mexico. According to the eminent historian Hemchandra Raychaudhuri, "There can be ... no doubt that Kalinga existed as an independent kingdom in the time of which the Brahmanas[1] speak"; and that "it comprised the whole coast from the river Vaitarani in Orissa to the boarders of the Andhra territory at the mouth of the Godavari" (42). Archaeological and textual evidences confirm that Kalinga (also known in various historical periods and geopolitical terms as Trikalinga, Toshali, Utkala, Mahakantara, Kangoda, [Dakshina] Koshala, Udra/Odra[Desha]), etc. had a rich maritime tradition and had even established "colonies" in a number of islands on the Bay of Bengal which was known as 'Kalinga Sagara' during the pre-Christian and pre-Muslim eras. *Aryamanjusrimulakalpa*, a text of Mahayana Buddhism (8^{th}/9^{th} C AD, published in 1920), refers to "all islands in the Kalinga Sea" as *Kalingadresu.* It is also believed that Emperor Ashoka attacked Kalinga (261 BC) to strengthen the naval power of Magadha and enjoy supremacy over the seas and sea trade (Patel 2).

What happens when an erstwhile "coloniser" eventually becomes "colonised"? This essay seeks to explore the unique historical phenomenon which Odisha has experienced in

[1] According to *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the Brahmanas belong to the period 900–700 BC, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Brahmana.

its recorded history resulting in the complexities involving collective memory, cultural subnationalism and identity politics.

Ancient Kalinga and Maritime History of Odisha

Historians, scholars and archaeologists the world over: Karl Friedrich von Schlegel (1808), William Wilson Hunter (1872), Pyari Mohan Acharya (1879), Sylvain Lévi (1911, 1926, 1938), Radha Kumud Mookerji (1912), Jagabandhu Singh (1917), Krupasindhu Mishra (1918, 1927), R. C. Majumdar (1927>), Rakhal Das Banerji (1930-31), Jawaharlal Nehru (1934), Dr Hermann Goetz (1959), Dr Harekrushna Mahatab (1981), Manmath Nath Das (1945), Nabin Kumar Sahu (1964), Dr Mayadhar Mansinha (1971), D. P. Singhal (1972), Karuna Sagar Behera (1999, 2007), Krushna Chandra Panigrahi (1981), Sean McGrail (1984), Herman Kulke and D. Ruthermond (1991), John Emigh (1996), Lynda Norene Shaffer (1996), Sila Tripati (2002), Himanshu Prabha Ray, et al (2003) concur that the ancient Kalinga had a rich maritime power and had even established colonies in several regions.

Greek navigator and merchant Hippalus has been credited with discovering the direct route from the Red Sea to India over the Indian Ocean (45-47 AD) by plotting the scheme of the sea and the correct location of the trade ports along the Indian coast. Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD) had claimed that Hippalus had not only discovered the sea route but also the south-west monsoon wind called 'Hippalus' after his name. However, Sila Tripati and L. N. Raut claim that much before Hippalus, the mariners of the east coast of India were aware of the monsoon wind and currents and used them for maritime trade (864).

Historians also agree that the Kalingans had established colonies in many of these regions, particularly in islands/countries like Java, Sumatra, Borneo [Indonesia], Sri Lanka, Burma, or parts thereof and had even migrated in large numbers as settlers. Rakhal Das Banerji writes in his monumental work, *History of Orissa from the Earliest Times to the British Period,* that "the people of Kalinga were the pioneers of Indian colonization in Further India and the Indian archipelago", and

> It would not be strange at all to find that the Chalcolithic civilization of these people extended as far as the Easter Islands and perhaps to Peru and Mexico. In my opinion the people of Kalinga who have been proved to be the pioneer colonists of India, Indonesia, and Oceania, are probably the very same people whom the modern barbarians of the Pacific and Indian Oceans regard with awe and wonder as people from the sky who civilised them and taught them the rudiments of culture. (qtd. in Das 9)

Jawaharlal Nehru (1869-1964), the first Prime Minister of the Indian Republic and an eminent historian writes in *Glimpses of World History*:

> The early colonists are supposed to have gone from Kalinga on the east coast (Orissa) but it was the Hindu Pallava Kingdom of the south that made an organised effort at colonisation. The Shailendra dynasty (of 8th century AD), which became so famous in South-East Asia, is believed to have come from Orissa. (216)

R. C. Majumdar, another major historian, also asserts that there was "Hindu colonization" in the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Bali, and Borneo". He writes, "Another cycle of legends gives the credit for the colonization of Java to the people of Kalinga. In one of them we read that 'twenty thousand families were sent to Java by the prince of Kling'. These people prospered and multiplied" (95). Karl Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829), the renowned German poet, philosopher and Indologist, well-known for his book *Über die Sprache und*

Weisheit der Indier [On the Language and Wisdom of India, 1808], claimed that "India was the cradle of Western culture" (*New World Encyclopedia*). His assumption of Kalinga's colonisation over a large part of South East Asia was quite influential: "There is no doubt that all these islands, as also Kaling on the main, were founded by Kalinga or Kling colonies who gave the name of their own country to the new settlements" (qtd. in Majumdar 379). Speaking about Bali, historian and colonial administrator William Wilson Hunter speculates in his *Orissa* (1872) that the island might have been named after Bali, a legendary king of ancient Kalinga (217).

However, I must hasten to add that this was not what we generally understand now by 'colonialism'. Historians assume that it was a "peaceful and benevolent Imperialism -- a unique thing in the history of mankind". According to the eminent French scholar Sylvain Lévi (1863-1935),

> The ancient Hindus of yore were not simply a spiritual people, always busy with mystical problems and never troubling themselves with the questions of 'this world'... India also has its Napoleons and Charlemagnes, its Bismarcks and Machiavellis. But the real charm of Indian history does not consist in these aspirants after universal power, but in its peaceful and benevolent Imperialism -- a unique thing in the history of mankind. The colonisers of India did not go with sword and fire in their hands; they used... the weapons of their superior culture and religion. ... The Buddhist age has attracted special attention, and the French savants have taken much pains [*sic*] to investigate the splendid monuments of the Indian cultural empire in the Far East. (Qtd. in 'Indianized Kingdoms')

Textual References, Literature, Art Forms, Folklore, Rituals, etc.

The accounts left by foreign travellers at different points of time in the ancient era mention this aspect of Kalinga history: Meghasthenes (350-290 BC), the Greek diplomat, historian and ethnographer (*Indica*), Claudius Ptolemy (100-170 AD), the Greek mathematician, astronomer, geographer, astrologer and poet; the Chinese monk Xuanzang [Huien Tsang] (7th century AD) et al.

Besides the historical, archaeological and anthropological evidences, the narratives of the achievements of Kalinga have found place in different kinds of texts pertaining to different historical times. Kalinga's sea voyages to far-off places in South-East Asia are mentioned in the Jatakas (Francis and Thomas 345). Buddhist texts like *Aryamanjusrimulakalpa*, *Ashcharya-Charyachaya*, *Mahavamsa* and *Chulavamsa* chronicle the maritime victories and empire formation of the Kalingas. *Brahmanda Purana*, one among the ancient *Astadasha Puranas*, has a detailed account of maritime adventures of Kalinga. In the Sanskrit literary tradition the people of Kalinga have been frequently described as "brave" (*Kalingah Sahasikah*) due to their martial and naval prowess and maritime adventure. In the Mahabharata the emperor of Kalinga is invited to join the Kuru side with his mighty elephant regiment. In *Raghuvamsam* (Canto VI, Verse 56), Kalidas describes the king of Kalinga as *Patir Mahendrasya Mahodadhe/cha* ["the Lord of the Mountains and Oceans"] (Patra 2). There is even reference to it in an ancient Balinese spiritual text called *Butha Yadnya* [sacrificial ritual for spirits and demons]. The literatures in other Indian languages also refer to the history of Kalinga (viz. Mallik Mahammed Jayashi's *Padmavat*, Bohita Khand 1-5).

In Odia literature we have references to the maritime expeditions and expansion of empire since the earliest times. Besides *Charyapadas*, the works of such major poets as Adikabi Sarala Das (Mahabharata, Adiparva), Narasimha Sena (*Parimala Kavya*), Yashobanta Das (*Tika Govinda Chandra* and *Kaivarta Gita*), Upendra Bhanja (*Lavanyabati*), Dinakrushna Das (*Prastaba Sindhu* and *Rasakallola*), et al have made use of themes as well as words/terms related to maritime memories like *boita*, *naba*, *Sadhava*, *Sadhavani*, *manga*, *nabika*, etc. and names of island countries like Simhala [Srilanka], Java, Bali, Sumatra, Borneo, Suvarna Dvipa, Brahmadesh, etc.

There is one interesting, but less known work called *Paika Kheda* [The Book of the Soldier] by Kanhai Champati Roy which neatly theorises Odia martial tradition and its 7th canto is entirely devoted to naval warfare and organisation of the Odishan navy. Perhaps written in the late 16th century, after the Muslim occupation of Odisha (1568), it describes the nine types of war vessels which Odishan navy used. Importantly, even in the contemporary times, poets and writers keep referring to such themes and words/terms.The stories of Odia maritime adventures are also narrated in texts of paraliterature like *Leelabati* or '*Bole Hun ti*' (I agree with you), '*Kuhuka Mandala*' (the Kingdom of Magic), '*Chadhei Katha*' (Story of a Bird), '*Sadhava Jhia*' (the Merchant's Daughter), '*Kuhuka Karat*' (Magic Box), '*Saudagar Charipua*' (Four Sons of a Merchant), etc.

The ancient seafarers were known as Sadhavas [Good Men], and they are invariably depicted as a class of very affluent but noble people. Interestingly, no such class or community exists now: with the decline of the maritime activities, this community also disintegrated. It is believed that in course of time, the word 'Sadhava' has become 'Sahu', which generally stands for the trading class. In reality, the surname of Sahu[oo] is used by several 'castes' in Odisha: Brahmins, Kshatriyas or Khandayats and farmers [*chashas*], Vaishyas like oilmen (*teli*), grain merchant (*thodia*), *Putuli Bania, Kumutis* (small merchants), bakers and sweet-makers (*gudia*), fishermen (*nauria*, *kaivartas*), brewers and wine merchants (*shundhi*), etc.. It may therefore be presumed that the term 'Sadhava' collectively meant a community representing not only merchants but also people from different castes/categories who accompanied the traders as providers of various services.

It is in the legends, folklore, rituals and art forms that the maritime past of Odisha continues to live. The more prominent instances are *Boita Bandana* on the full-moon day of Kartik, *Akashadeepa* festival, *Khudurukuni Osha, Bada Osha, Dalkhai Osha, Bhodei Osha* (the full-moon day of Bhadrav), *Karma Puja*, *Chaiti Parba* of the *kaivarta* community (fishermen), etc. The folk rituals and worship of Shani (the Planet Saturn), Trinath Mela (the Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiba), *Dutia Osha* (Dyutivahan or Sun), *Sari Subanathi Brata* (of Kharsuan in Jharkhand) are also based on stories connected to maritime tradition.

The two most popular rituals which are very dear to the Odia imagination are Boita Bandana and *Khudurukuni Osha.* The first one, also observed as Bali Jatra in Cuttack is the commemoration of the setting off of the expedition/voyage of the Sadhavas to the distant islands for trade. *Khudurukuni Osha* (also known as Bhalukuni Puja) is observed by the unmarried and newly married girls on the Sundays of the month of *Bhadrab* in coastal Orissa to worship Goddess Mangala for the safe return of the members of the family -- the seafaring sadhavas – from the perilous voyage. The tragic tale of Ta'poi narrating the

sufferings of a Sadhab girl is very close to the hearts of Odias. Even now, movies, plays and television serials are being made on this narrative. It is interesting to note that there is one Tapoi Island in the Solomon Islands, a sovereign country consisting of six major islands and over 900 smaller islands in Oceania lying to the east of Papua New Guinea and the northwest of Vanuatu and covering a land area of 28,400 square kilometres (Latitude: -8°18'29.88", Longitude: 157°10'36.55"). Ta Poi is also the name of a bay within Trat Province in the Eastern Thailand and is close to Ban Ao *Ta Poi* and Laem Ao *Ta Poi.*

Ancient Buddhist texts like *Mahavamsa, Dipavamsa* and *Chulavamsa* narrate the genealogy of Simhala's royalty and trace them to Kalinga. Odishan customs, traditions, rituals, nomenclatures, typical habits and the like can still be noticed in many of the island countries in the South and South-East Asia like Sri Lanka and the Javanese Island. A river in Java is named Kali Kelinga. A part of Burma, as well as a part of the kingdom of Sri Vijay King Jayanash in Simhala was known as 'Srikshetra'. There are even now a number of places in these islands which sound like 'Kalinga'. Interestingly, there is a strong similarity between the national anthem of Sri Lanka and a traditional Odishi classical song.[2] A number of Odia surnames/titles like Ranasingha, Jayasingha, Bijayasingha, Nayaka, Dasa Nayaka, etc. are still used in Sri Lanka. The sweet rice cake of Odisha known as 'pitha' is also prepared in the island. In Java, the goddess worshipped as the deity of corn and yield resembles such observance by Odias in the worship of Maha Lakshmi. Besides, there are many Odia words in similar pronunciation and meaning in these places.

Prof I. M. Bandam enumerates the cultural similarities between Odisha and Bali as follows:

> The Boita bandana festival has a parallel celebration in the *Masakapan ke Tukad* of Bali with a similar offering of boats in memory of their maritime ancestors. There are shared symbols of worship such as mountain Mahendragiri and the river Mahendratanaya; the rituals of Garvana Sankranti in Orissa and its parallel, the Mabinukukung at Bali; the Goddess of wealth and prosperity, Lakshmi in Orissa and Devi Sri in Bali .... There is archeological and written evidence of relationship that extends upto 3rd millennium BC down through the reign of Ashoka until the 14th century.... (qtd. in Panda 20)

'Greater India'

Owing to the apparent prevalence of the cultural influence of India, the countries, especially the islands in South and the South-East Asia were broadly known as 'Greater India'. Scholars have also described them as 'Indian Colonies', 'Extended Part of India', 'Further India', 'Indosphere', etc. During the colonial rule, in an exercise of self-assertion, a

[2] The opening words of the traditional Odishi song I am referring to are: "*Chahan re, nidhubana keli kushalaku*". The resemblance was noticed by my wife Pranati, an Odishi singer and researcher. It is difficult to explain this similarity but it surely indicates the cultural link between Odisha/Kalinga and Sri Lanka. Incidentally, 'Sri Lanka Matha' was composed by Egodahage George Wilfred Alwis Samarakoon **(a**ka Ananda Samarakoon**, 1911**-62) **on** 20 October 1940, and was adopted as the national anthem **of** Sri Lanka **on 22** November **1951.** It is also believed that it was originally composed by Rabindranath Tagore as Samarakoon was a student at Santiniketan during 1936-37. However, this notion is contested by the contemporary Sri Lankan scholars like Sumana Saparamadu, 'The origin of our National Anthem' (http://archives.sundayobserver.lk/ 2011/01/30/jun06.asp) and 'Ananda Samarakoon - The composer of our national anthem' (http://archives. sundayobserver.lk/ 2006/05/14/ jun02. asp), D. B. S. Jeyaraj , 'History of Sri Lanka's National Anthem mired in controversy'(http://www.dailymirror.lk/67545/history-of-sri-lanka-s-national-anthem-mired-in-controversy) and Sujitha Miranda, "The 'National Anthem' was first sung at Mahinda Galle" (in *The Sunday Times,* Sri Lanka, 28 October 2012).

group of Calcutta scholars and historians sought to legitimise the claim of Indian supremacy in the past. On the initiative of Dr Kalidas Nag (1891-1966), an organisation called the 'Greater India Society' was formed for the promotion of this ideology in 1926, with Sir Jadunath Sarkar as President and historians Ramesh Chandra Majumdar (1888-1980), P. C. Bagchi (1898-1956) and Phanindranath Bose; and philologist Suniti Kumar Chatterji (1890-1977). This school enjoyed the scholastic support of well-known western scholars like Sylvain Lévi. Majumdar, the most prolific historian of the time published a number of books and research papers on the subject, most noteworthy being *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East* (2 vols.: 1927, 1937), *Hindu Colonies in the Far East* (1944) and *Ancient Indian Colonisation in South-East Asia.* However, this has been seen as a nationalist project by a section of scholars, but it was quite influential in several other aspects.

Collective Memory and Identity Politics

Kalinga seems to have lost its dominating position after the 16th century AD owing to several historical reasons. It came under the Muslim, the Mogul, the Maratha and then finally the British rule in 1803. The British then began their imperial mission over the other parts of 'province' and brought "the entire Orissa" under their subjugation by 1858. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the British Orissa consisted of three coastal districts (Cuttack, Puri and Balasore) and 19 tributary *mahals.* There were a number of rajas and zamindars (feudatory chiefs) of the gadjats (feudatory states) in the rest of the 'province'. The British Orissa or the Mogulbandi region was kept under the jurisdiction of the Bengal Presidency; the southern part came in the share of the Madras Presidency; and the western part remained under Nagpur (Central Province). Some Odia speaking tracts continued to be in Bihar (many of them are still in Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand). Under the British Rule, the dispersed Odia speaking people were further segregated and brought under many different administrations/rulers. Thus, the Odia-speaking people lived dispersed under different administrations and were dominated by the languages and cultures of the hegemonic regions. Though Odia was their mother tongue and they had been brought up in Odia culture and literature, the Odias had to cope with the many languages/cultures of power: English, Urdu/Persian, Bengali, Telugu, Hindi and Marathi, not to speak of the hegemonic Sanskrit. I have discussed in detail in other essays how the imperialist policy of the British Government accentuated the sense of insecurity over Odia language among the Odias.

The 'Odia Movement' was akin to what is called "unification nationalism." It remained culturally exclusive, but it ultimately succeeded in the configuration of the conceptual Orissa as a province with a congruent cultural and governance boundary in 1936. The "past glory" which lived in folklore, rituals and literature, kept the Odia collective memory alive and became instrumental in culturally uniting the Odia-speaking people when they were reeling under identity crisis.

Collective Memory, Cultural Politics and Identity Formation

Collins English Dictionary (Complete & Unabridged 2012 Digital Edition) defines 'Collective Memory' as "a memoryor memories shared or recollected by a group, as a

community or culture", "any collection of memories passed from one generation to the next"; and "the shared memories of a group, family, race, etc". The term *collective memory* is generally attributed to Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), who first discussed this phenomenon in relation to commemorative rituals in his *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912), as well as his student, Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945), for his theorisation of the subject in *La mémoire collective* (*Collective Memory,* 1950 and *The Social Frameworks of Memory,* 1925).

According to Halbwachs, human memory can only function within a collective context. A society can have a collective memory and that this memory is dependent upon the 'cadre' or framework within which a group is situated in a society. Thus, there is not only an individual memory, but also a group memory that exists outside of and lives beyond the individual. Consequently, an individual's understanding of the past is strongly linked to this group consciousness. Collective memory can be shared, passed on, and constructed, by large and small social groups. Collective memory is also sustained through a continuous production of representational forms. He maintains, "It is also in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (38); and that, "in reality ... the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present" (Halbwachs 39-40).

Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka take the theory of cultural memory a step farther by correlating the "three poles -- memory (the contemporized past), culture, and the group (society) -- to each other" (129). They argue that Collective Memory has a role in '"The concretion of identity" or the relation to the group. Cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity. The objective manifestations of cultural memory are defined through a kind of identificatory determination in a positive ("We are this") or in a negative ("That's our opposite") sense ('Collective Memory and Cultural Identity' 130). No memory can preserve the past. What remains is only "which society in each era can reconstruct within its contemporary frame of reference" (130).

In his 'The Ernest Gellner Memorial Lecture' on "Memory and Modernity: Reflections on Ernest Gellner's Theory of Nationalism", Anthony D. Smith points out that Gellner agrees with Michael Billig (*Banal Nationalism* 1995, Chs. 3-4). According to him,

> Memory, then, is bound to place, a special place, a homeland. It is also crucial to identity. In fact, one might almost say: no memory, no identity; no identity, no nation. That is why nationalists must rediscover and appropriate shared memories of the past. Identification with a past is the key to creating the nation, because only by 'remembering the past' can a Collective identity come into being. (383)

He further asserts that, "Collective memories, then, are active components in the creation and reproduction of nations" (383). He also refers to Ernest Renan's well-known view on this issue articulated in his iconic lecture:

> One is the past, the other is the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present consent, the desire to live together, the desire to continue to invest in the heritage that we have jointly received. ('What is a Nation?')

The Odia *jati*, or broadly the Odia 'people' or in the modern sense of 'nation', which became the catchphrase in the mid nineteenth century of the neo-educated middleclass intelligentsia as well as creative writers was in fact what Anderson calls "an imagined community" -- or rather a cultural community. Geographically, historically and politically,

the Odia-speaking people, who were connected by the imperceptible chords of language, literature and culture, for the first time sought for a geopolitical space which would include all the Odia-speaking traits. This was triggered by the colonial policy of the British who kept the Odia-speaking traits segregated and under different revenue administrations with the imposition of non-Odia languages. In the coastal part of Odisha which was under the direct British administration, there was a move in certain quarters to even introduce Bengali in place of Odia in schools and official transaction claiming that Odia was not a language. Consequently, there was discontentment among the people. Na'anka Durbhiksha, the Great Famine of Odisha, broke out in 1866 and it was believed that the suffering of the masses was the result of administrative apathy. This further accentuated the discontentment. With the coming of the printing press and publication of books and periodicals, the Odia intelligentsia sought to create public platforms. Interestingly, the poets, writers and journalists of the time, who took the lead in reconstructing the history of the Odia people sought to go back to collective memory and created narratives of a shared culture to awaken the feeling of subnationalism among the "imagined community".

The rise of Odia subnationalism, in fact, was more an outcome of the anxiety over Odia language, the mother tongue of millions of people even at that point of time, than resistance to the colonial rule. The organised anti-Odia agenda of the influential non-Odias with the tacit support of the ruling classes hurt the sentiments of the elite class and consequently the so-called Odia Bhasha Andolan [Odia Language Movement] sprang up in the late 1860s. Importantly, the leaders of the movement strove, from the very outset, for the re-construction of the regional cultural identity of the Odia people in a provincial space and for creating an awareness of cultural subnationalism on the ethnic model on the bases of cultural attributes. Thus, since the 1870s, the poets, writers, journalists, artists, even the folk performers of cultural Odisha strove to reconstruct the Odia identity through various means. They tried to demonstrate that Odisha has had a rich tradition of culture and literature; that it has a glorious history of kings and emperors who patronised art, architecture, literature and the like. They retold the stories of the religious and metaphysical traditions, the erection of temples and promotion of performing and plastic art forms.

Thus, between 1870s and 1930s there was the prevalence of narratives reviving the *past glory* of the Odia *jati*. Phakir Mohan Senapati, the greatest writer of the time and the Father of Odia literature, not only re-created history in his historical fiction *Lachhama,* but also kept referring to maritime glory in his poetry and fictional works ['Baleswar Pangaluna', 'Kamala Prasad Gorap' and 'Kalika Prasad Gorap'].

A number of British administrators had written various kinds of histories of Orissa by the mid nineteenth century, but it was in the 1870s that the Odias started writing back. Their narratives sought to re-construct Odishan history chiefly inspired by their collective memory. Soon Odia historiography began taking shape when Odias started writing their own history and each of them sought to glorify the military prowess and maritime history of the Odia *jati* in their works. Pyari Mohan Acharya (1851-81) wrote his *Odishara Itihasa* [A History of Odisha], the first such endeavour by an Odia, in 1879 where he historicised the maritime past of the Odia people. Three other historians who may be mentioned here are

Jagabandhu Singh (1876-1944), the author of *Pracheena Utkala* (1917); Krupasindhu Mishra (1887-1926), the author of *Konarka* (1918), *Utkala Itihasa* ('History of Odisha', 1927) and 'Utkaliya Noubanijya' ['Maritime Trade of Utkal']; and Birupaksha Kar who wrote *Pracheena Utkalare Jalajatra* [Sea Voyages in the Ancient Utkal] (1920). There were many other writers like Kuntala Kumari Sabat's (1901-38) 'Indonesia' which became influential.

Radhanath Ray, the greatest poet of the time who is looked upon as the Father of Modern Odia poetry referred to the theme in several of his works, especially in his long poem called *Chilika.* Gopabandhu Das, the greatest statesman of Odishan politics of the early twentieth century, keeps going back to the theme of past glory in his works. In two of his long poems, '*Balijatra Sandhyare Mahanadi Tire*' ['On the Bank of the Mahanadi in the Evening of Balijatra', 1906] and the more popular '*Rela upare Chilika Darshan*' ['Viewing the Chilika from a Train'], he dwells on this theme in greater earnestness. The other poets and writers of the Satyabadi Group known for their nationalist commitment wrote for the reawakening of the Odia *jati.* 'Sagarika', a short story by Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, a renowned poet and novelist, has been written with Odishan maritime history as its background.

However, the most iconic work on the theme is *Bali Raja* (1926-1929) by Kanhu Charan Mohanty, one of the major Odia novelists of the twentieth century. *Bali Raja* literally means, 'the King of Bali'. 'Bali' refers to Bali Dweepa, or the Bali Island in the South-East Asia with which Kalinga had maritime relationship of hundreds of years. Written in the form of a historical romance, *Bali Raja* re-creates the maritime history and naval supremacy of the ancient Kalinga. Importantly, the novelist connects his narrative to history to tell how Mania, the protagonist, declares himself the king of Bali with the sanction of Lalitendu Keshari, the then Emperor of Kalinga.

Conclusion

Owing to the trauma of multiple colonialisms Odias have been living through interminable anxieties over their identity. The anxiety seems to persist even after Odisha was declared a province (1936) and India was decolonized (1947), and every other day we get to see its manifestation in many different forms. Incidentally, Odia has been declared a classical language in 2014, one among the six of the country, but the anxiety over the language still persists. We still have debates and demonstrations over the *suraksha* [safety] of Odia language. It seems to me that the affront of the past still haunts the present day Odia people and that is why they still feel insecure about their language and their identity.

Interestingly, Odisha's memory of the maritime past is still used to reassure themselves. 'Kalinga Bali Yatra-1992' was organised in November 1992 under the leadership of the then Chief Minister of Odisha, Mr Biju Patnaik (1916-97) to track the ancient sea trade route between Odisha and Bali/Indonesia.[3] Mr Patnaik, a brave and daring person and leader, had made thrilling adventures as a young pilot and was a confidant of Jawaharlal Nehru by not only transporting "wanted" Indian leaders to safety but also whisking away Sutan Sjahrir (1909-66), the first Prime Minister of Indonesia on 24 July 1947 from Indonesia during their freedom struggle. His exploits are legends of sorts for the Odia people.

[3] For more details, see, http://bijupatnaik.org/blog-post/biju-patnaik-designed-kalinga-bali-yatra-1992-to-track-the-ancient-sea-trade-route-between-odisha-indonesia/

Interestingly, Patnaik had great fascination for 'Kalinga' which symbolised for him the strength and glory of Odisha. His fascination for the term can be seen, among many projects, the internationally acclaimed UNESCO Kalinga Prize instituted by him. The "expedition by boat to Bali" on 10 November (Full Moon Day in Kartika) was intended to "To revive & refresh the memories of Kalinga's glory in general & to promote Tourism in particular", and "as a glorious attempt to bring back into focus ancient historical & cultural trade link between Odisha and the Island of Bali, Java of today.[4]

The Government of Odisha has instituted the 'Orissa Institute of Maritime and South-East Asian Studies' exclusively for fresh inquiries into the subject. Recent excavations and archaeological findings have yielded hitherto undiscovered facts about the maritime past and there is a steady stream of books and research papers in this area of study.

Kalinga is embedded in the Odia psyche so intensely that it is used even now to celebrate the bravery of the Odia people. It is interesting to mention here that "*Kalingah Sahasikah*" has been declared as the Motto/Badge of the SOG of Odisha designed to combat terrorism. Interestingly, the *jhanki* [tableau] representing Odisha in the 2017 Republic Day Parade depicts a *Boita* (ship), symbolic of the Kalingan maritime prowess.

This shows that even now Odisha has not got over its fascination over the maritime past and uses it as an anchor to reassure itself. The Odia collective memory keeps reminding the community about a glorious past – a shared history and culture – which despite cultural and political subjugations in the recent past resurfaced to remind the colonised that they were once colonisers and to reassure them over the identity. Nevertheless, the anxiety prevails, even persists, and at times I feel that the Odias are colonised forever by their own anxieties and insecurities of the past.

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5

A SEA FOR ENCOUNTERS: CHANGING EPISTEMOLOGIES IN T.S. PILLAI'S *CHEMMEEN*

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Abstract
Within the context of the "modern", Indian literary traditions are often articulated as an instance of unbroken continuity or that of colonial rupture. In this context, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's seminal award-winning novel *Chemmeen* (1955, *The Prawn*) articulates the dilemma of a nebulous 'nation' as embodied within the fishermen community in the coastal state of Kerala in southern India. The narrative of Karuthamma, a Hindu fisherwoman and Pareekutti, a Muslim fish wholesaler is interspersed with the pervasive myth of Katalamma (Sea – Mother) and her codes on chastity and borders signifying transcendence in art and life. The ever-changing and endless sea becomes symptomatic of a community in transition. Through *Chemmeen,* Thakazhi foregrounds a textual and human displacement which in turn reinvents concepts of community and gender, divulging the ambiguities of the "modern" in the Indian context. This paper would explore how Thakazhi uses the symbol of the sea to invoke the creative possibilities of coastal life in Kerala, which bypasses Eurocentric linear narratives of achievement and progress. The text itself compels one to rethink the contours of pedagogical proclivities and intellectual production.

Key Words: Kerala, fishermen, community, sea-mother, modern Indian literature, epistemic shift

Résumé

Dans le contexte d'une pensée "moderne", les traditions littéraires indiennes sont souvent vues comme une instance de continuité ininterrompue ou comme celle de la rupture coloniale. Dans cette perspective, le célèbre roman primé de Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, *Chemmeen* (1955, *Les crevettes*), exprime le dilemme d'une "nation" nébuleuse, incarnée par la communauté des pêcheurs de l'état côtier de Kerala, dans le sud de l'Inde. Le récit de Karuthamma, une pêcheuse hindoue et Pareekutti, un grossiste musulman de poissons s'entremêle avec le mythe omniprésent de *Katalamma* (Mer-Mère) et ses codes sur la chasteté et les frontières signifiant la transcendance dans l'art et dans la vie. La mer en constante évolution et sans fin devient symptomatique d'une communauté en transition. Grâce à *Chemmeen*, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai met en évidence un déplacement textuel et humain qui, à son tour, réinvente les concepts de "communauté" et de "genre", divulguant les ambiguïtés de l'époque "moderne" dans le contexte indien. Cet article explorera comment Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai utilise le symbole de la mer pour invoquer les possibilités créatrices de la vie côtière au Kerala qui contourne les récits linéaires eurocentriques de l'accomplissement et du progrès. Le texte lui-même oblige à repenser les contours des tendances pédagogiques et de la production intellectuelle.

Mots clés: Kerala, pêcheurs, communauté, mer-mère, littérature indienne moderne, glissement epistémique

According to Robert Holub, the term horizon of expectations refers "to an intersubjective system or structure of expectations, a system of references or a mind-set that a hypothetical individual might bring to any text." (Holub 1984: 59) The 'horizon of expectations' as propounded by Jauss is derived from a repository of texts read in the past as well as from contemporary socio-historical contexts. The literary experience of the reader enters into the horizon of expectations manifest in his life, which in turn, affects his social functions. (Jauss 1970) Jauss discusses the process of formation of a horizon of expectations in the text as follows:

> A literary work, even when it appears to be new, does not present itself as something absolutely new in an informational vacuum, but predisposes its audience to a very specific kind of reception by announcements, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions. It awakens memories of that which was already read, bring the reader to a specific emotional attitude, and with its beginning arouses expectations for the "middle and end," which can then be maintained intact or altered, reoriented, or even fulfilled ironically in the course of the reading according to specific rules of the genre or type of text. (Jauss 1982: 39)

Reception theory, according to Jauss, addresses the history of literature as the history of disparate acts which form the literary object across time and space. He opines that literary history is centered on mapping the diverse historical permutations of form, which in turn, lead to 'a specific emotional attitude' on part of the reader. With an arousal of 'expectations for the 'middle and end'', literary history articulates the generic modifications or revolutions, subtle or not so subtle variations and adaptations of what came before. Critically, the status of the reader as a deeply historical animating force is foregrounded and essential. The significant contribution by Jauss in this context is his ability to connect general and literary history. Jauss further envisages that the task of

literary history involves the representation of literature both synchronically and diachronically and also in the context of a 'special history' in a unique relationship with general history. Jauss elucidates that the horizon of expectations develops through the reader's life experience, socio-cultural customs and understanding of the world which have an effect on the reader's social behaviour. (Jauss 1982: 39) In addition, according to Jauss, hermeneutics is a critical element in the ever-changing "horizons of the interpretations," which defines a distinction "between arbitrary interpretations and those available to a consensus". (Jauss 1982: 147) Jauss' approach to the idea of hermeneutics focuses on the importance of history and incorporates the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), who was a follower of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). (Selden et al: 55) Gadamer explains hermeneutics in following terms:

> ...all interpretations of past literature arise from a dialogue between past and present. Our attempts to understand a work will depend on the questions which our own cultural environment allows us to raise...Our present perspective always involves a relationship to the past, but at the same time the past can only be grasped through the limited perspective of the present...a hermeneutical notion of "understanding" does not separate knower and object in the familiar fashion of empirical science; rather it views understanding as a "fusion" of past and present. (Selden et al 1997: 56)

Therefore, the science of hermeneutics delineates two roles for the reader, viz., that of the 'implied reader' and secondly, that of the 'actual reader' (Selden et al 1997: 56). Holub points out the concept of the implied reader as controversial as it implicates the reader with a 'textual condition' as well as in the 'process of meaning production' (Holub 1984: 84). Wolfgang Iser, one of the prominent figures in Reception theory, introduces and defines the term 'implied reader' as one which

> incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process. It refers to the active nature of this process.(Wolfgang 1974; xii)

The term implied reader is defined as "the reader whom the text creates for itself and amounts to a network of response-inviting structures, structures, which predispose us to read in certain ways." (Selden et al 1997: 56). In contradistinction, the actual reader is defined as the reader who "receives certain mental images in the process of reading; however, the images will inevitably be coloured by the reader's existing stock of experience." (Selden et al 1997: 56). Jauss links literature and society in a close connection by adding the concept of horizon of expectations to the idea of reader-response advocated by Iser. By tracing a new social formation produced in the very act of reading, Jauss' theory involves multiple readings of texts by divergent social, national, and cultural groups, each committed to diverse generic and thematic concerns. Jauss empirically locates the position of the reader with the help of a nation-bound and scrupulously delineated social group. Literary history needs to be envisaged as a discourse privy to the ups and downs of a postcolonial condition. Such an approach would invite dialogues which are 'temporally syncretic, that is, past and present are simultaneous in it." (Dev 1989: 320) For example, in the context of India, Amiya Dev has pointed out that India's principal literary languages themselves form an interlinked repository of cultural and literary processes. Consequently, according to Dev, no Indian literature is ever itself alone:

> Bengali will be Bengali +, Panjabi Panjabi +, and Tamil Tamil +. In a multilingual situation there cannot be a true appreciation of a single literature in absolute isolation. (Dev 1984: 14)

"The very structure of Indian literature is comparative," as Sisir Kumar Das has stated; "its framework is comparative and its texts and contexts Indian."(Quoted in Chandra Mohan 1989: 97) Comparative Literature methodology therefore necessitates interdisciplinary practices which involves both the theoretical proclivities of the reader and an understanding of the historical process as well. Moreover, the methodology foregrounds literature as a social practice and its study involves a comprehension of all the social systems which help to produce and receive literature. This was the vision which found its way in Rabindranath's musings on *Viswa-Sahitya* or World Literature. In 1907, Rabindranath was invited by the stalwarts of the newly established National Council of Education or *Jatiya Siksa Parisad* (1906)[1] to speak on Comparative Literature. He uses the term 'Viswa-Sahitya' or World Literature to indicate a Comparative study of literature, a term which immediately reminds one of *Weltliteratur* used by Goethe in 1827. Rabindranath opines:

> Just as this earth is not the sum of patches of land belonging to different people, and to know the earth as such is rusticity, so literature is not the mere total of works composed by different hands. Most of us, however, think of literature in what I have called the manner of rustic. From this narrow provincialism we must free ourselves; we must strive to see the work of each another as a whole, that whole as a part of man's universal creativity, and that universal spirit in its manifestations through world literature. (Quoted in Bose: 1959)

When the Bangla poet, academician and thinker, Buddhadeva Bose, established the Department of Comparative Literature at Jadavpur University in 1956, the thrust had been on non-English, and therefore anti-colonial literary traditions. As early as 1956, Bose marks out a clear trajectory for the discipline of Comparative Literature as follows:

> Potentially, India is one of the richest fields for Comparative Literature. The age and complexity of our civilization, the diverse elements that compose it, that 'world-hunger' of which Tagore spoke a hundred times and which took possession of us with the dawning of our modern age - all these provide the material and atmosphere demanded by the nature of this discipline. The history of India is a story of absorption, adaptation and assimilation, of continual coming to terms with foreign influences, and of resistance transformed into response. (Bose 1959: 2)

The emergence of Comparative Literature as a concept in the western world may be dated from Goethe's (1749-1832) use of the term "world literature," which he coined in the last decade of his life as a reaction to Romantic -- even pre-Romantic -- literary criticism, breaking through the traditional limits of Occidental literature by revaluating popular poetry and the literatures of the Middle Ages and of the Orient. "I am more and more convinced," Goethe remarked, "that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men . . . I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach." Speaking to his young disciple Johann Peter Eckermann in January 1827, the seventy-seven-year-old Goethe used his newly minted term Weltliteratur, which passed into common currency after Eckermann

[1] The National Council of Education or *Jatiya Siksa Parisad* (1906) was established as a parallel system of education, outside the University of Calcutta. This was to become the present Jadavpur University.

published his *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* in 1835, three years after the poet's death.

The normative conditions of a culture shape the selection of works that enter into it as world literature, influencing the ways in which the literary process is translated, marketed, and read. In India, for example, world literature comprises a dyadic identity within a multilingual situation and the pervasive postcolonial presence of the English language.

Within the context of the "modern", Indian literary traditions are often articulated as an instance of unbroken continuity or that of colonial rupture. In this context, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's seminal award-winning novel *Chemmeen* (1955, *The Prawn*) articulates the dilemma of a nebulous 'nation' as embodied within the fishermen community in the coastal state of Kerala in southern India. The narrative of Karuthamma, a Hindu fisherwoman and Pareekutti, a Muslim fish wholesaler is interspersed with the pervasive myth of Katalamma (Sea – Mother) and her codes on chastity and borders signifying transcendence in art and life.

The story of *Chemmeen* begins with every fisherman's dream:

"That father of mine talks of buying a boat and nets." (Pillai (1956) 2011: 3)

To own a boat and nets, to be master of one's own destiny, to have the temerity to rule the sea – to aspire for a life of prosperity and plenty are perhaps integral to the imagination of all sea-faring men. In a tone mixed with mirth and seriousness, Karuthamma, a young Hindu fisherwoman utters the fondest hopes of her father, the strong and industrious, Chembankunju to her childhood friend and a Muslim trader, Pareekutty.

Juxtaposed with the realist dream is a subtle and lyrical story of evolving and forbidden love between a Hindu fisherwoman and Muslim fish trader. With the seafront as witness, the two youngsters engage in innocent dalliance which had began from a long time ago.

> Once upon a time a little girl of four years had wandered along this seaside. A little girl who collected shells from the beach and ran to gather the silvery minnows that flew off the nets the men flung out of their boats. In those days, she had a little boy companion. Pareekutty. Wearing a pair of trousers and a yellow shirt, with a silk handkerchief knotted around his throat and a tasselled cap, and clinging to his father's hand. Karuthamma remembered her first glimpse of him very well. (Pillai (1956) 2011: 5)
>
> ....And so on the seaside they grew up as neighbours. (Pillai (1956) 2011: 6)

However, this love finds a barrier in shape of the Sea – Mother – *Katalamma* with her "ancient and sacred moral code of the children of the sea" (Pillai (1956) 2011: 10).

The rising sea offers possibilities of returning cycles, haunted by the luminous progress of the great earth's rhythms. The encompassing, lapping relationship of the sea to terrestrial Earth and its poetic human occupants may be envisioned as a circle of which all are an integral part. According to Jonathan Raban, "Of all natural symbols, the breaking wave is the most laden with suggestive meanings. For several thousand years, the waves have been talking power and sex and death to us" (2010, 159).

In *Chemmeen,* the Sea Mother or Katal-Amma is a reckoning force that embodies the life of her community within the cyclical seasons of Chakara, the month of harvest. Katal-Amma, the benign mother of all functions as an almost always present entity –a

transcendental signified– beyond question and sacrosanct. She is an infallible as folklore – represented through both men and women of the little communities of coastal Kerala.

It is through Karuthamma's mother, Chakki, that one is aware of the traditions of the sea. The well being and the safety of the fisherman as he navigates the turbulent seas would always rest on the chastity and virtue of his wife. "The life of the man who goes out to the sea rests in the hands of his woman on the shore." (Pillai (1956) 2011: 8) The sea's propriety is seeing to it that the chaste fisherwomen and young Muslim traders at the sea do not fall outside these laws. Chakki reiterates "He is not one of us." (Pillai (1956) 2011: 9)

The mimetic mode through the voice of Chakki is representative of the transcendental authority of "a fisherwoman born and bred on the seaside. And an inheritor of a long tradition of sea lore." (Pillai (1956) 2011: 7)

Yet the seemingly impenetrable walls need to stand the test of endurance when "called by flesh and blood". Pareekutty's tuneless song, which reverberates with the silences of the sea, spreads through Karuthamma's heart and across the "lonely seaside". (Pillai (1956) 2011: 11) At moments when Karuthamma cannot hear her beloved's song, "The mysterious song of the sea beat its way through the coconut fronds and wafted to the east." (Pillai (1956) 2011: 15)

The burden of the sea lore cannot often be articulated. In one of the earlier moments in the novel, Karuthamma attempts to explain her expectations from Pareekutty but feels hindered by "the traditions of the sea; the dictates that governed her life" (Pillai (1956) 2011: 17)

The sea – mother marks a threshold for strength of character. Therefore, irked by the seeming avarice of her parents who borrow money from Pareekutty as he would not be charging interest, Karuthamma remarks: "Won't the sea mother be angry if you cheat people?" (Pillai (1956) 2011: 19) and then again: "Look, the sea's crying." (Pillai (1956) 2011: 20)

To her mother's admonishment, "Will this girl bring doom upon the seashore and the fisherfolk?" (Pillai (1956) 2011: 20), Karuthamma replies: "I won't break any rules." (Pillai (1956) 2011: 20)

Yet, there is hope for respite. Chakki utters that in order to escape the ire of the fisherfolk, they would convert to Islam if needed. In moment of fury that does not quite realize itself, Chakki feels that this would help her family face the Shore Master's wrath for malicious gossip would reach all shores and the only option would be to convert.

In one of the rare moments of declaration of their love for each other, with the sea as witness yet again, Karuthamma realizes "The sea wasn't angry; the winds didn't rise. Little waves rose and broke into a froth of foam. The sea smiled. Had such a love story ever been played out on these shores?" (Pillai (1956) 2011: 47)

The day arrives and Chembankunju with all rituals is able to take the boat out to the sea. It is not an ordinary boat but one that belonged to the wealthy and mighty, Pallikunnath Kandankoran. As he travels one with the sea, promises are made by Chakki to their younger daughter, Panchami, to Pareekutty, to her friends – the fisherwomen. Like the boat, everyone is "full of felicity" (Pillai (1956) 2011: 50). As Chembankunju rows back to the shore, there seems to be a harmonious celebration – with seagulls hovering and

bouncing waves arched in a grand welcome. At that moment, Chembankunju seems transformed, an epitome of grace and power, as one who is 'fostered by the sea.' (Pillai (1956) 2011: 56). The bounty of the sea transforms the man and ironically, it permits him to violate age – old traditions of the shore. Not only does he forsake childhood friends, Pareekutty or the demands of his younger daughter, Chembankuju embarks on a journey of vaulting ambition and courage. The sea front and the sea turn Chembankunju into a figure of industrious inspiration until the arrival of Palani, a young boatman from a neighbouring shore. An orphan, he is hailed by Chembankunju as "the sea's prince" (Pillai (1956) 2011: 81). He finds him to be a convenient match for his daughter as Palani, being an orphan, would not have any family to demand a dowry. He dismisses his wife's reservations regarding the family, with the rejoinder: "He is human. And a worker of the sea." (Pillai (1956) 2011: 86).

Despite her overriding presence in the text, the sea is a sublimation of masculinist anxieties, whereby the waves attain a subaltern feminine imagery:

> A river without end, enormous and wide, flows through the world's literatures. Over and over again: the women-in-the-water; woman as water, as a stormy, cavorting, cooling ocean, a raging stream, a waterfall; as a limitless body of water that ships pass through . . . woman as the enticing (or perilous) deep; as a cup of bubbling body fluids. (Theweleit 1987: 283)

The lives of Karuthamma and Pareekutty reach for what is beyond prescribed identities - the visual for the olfactory and the tactile, and through it they are able imagine and perceive their bodies which have crossed all borders. In her acceptance speech for the 1952 National Book Non - Fiction Award for *The Sea Around Us*, Rachel Carson stated: "If there is poetry in my book about the sea, it is not because I deliberately put it there, but because no one could write truthfully about the sea and leave out the poetry." (Carson 1952)

In her apparent transgressions, Karuthamma wishes to know of other women – perhaps, the story of "A fisherwoman who fell in love with a man from another community; a woman who, despite all her efforts, felt her love only grow rather than lessen; had there been such a woman on this shore?" (Pillai (1956) 2011: 101)

> On the day of her wedding, Karuthamma still wonders if there was such a woman. Karuthamma thought that she saw the soul of that cursed woman with her unfulfilled longings wandering through the winds of the shore. Sometimes in solitary moments, she heard an incomprehensible story being narrated to her in an alien language. Once, the shore had known women like her. Women who turned into grieving creatures, living a life of sorrow. Those were the tales of loss the wind too told her. The sea's heaving voiced the same. The grains of sand knew it too. (Pillai (1956) 2011: 103)

Her mother's friend, Nallapennu, sings a sea ditty around such a fallen woman:

> Her fall from grace caused the waves to rise as high as a mountain and climb onto the shore. Sea monsters with cavernous mouths chased the boats to swallow them whole. (Pillai (1956) 2011: 104)

The authorial voice informs that this was also a story of love and Karuthamma wonders if there would be songs written on her for posterity. As she prepares to leave, she must bid adieu to the moon on the shore, to the sea washed in moonlight and to the sweet song of the moon. Moreover, she must bid adieu to the singer who sings for her on the shores – Pareekutty. With deep, inarticulate sorrow in their hearts, they part ways with a nightbird, a dog, and the moonlit seashore as their witnesses. When Karuthamma finally leaves the familiar shores, one wonders: "Would that song echo on that shore again? Who knows? But there wouldn't be anyone to hear it." (Pillai (1956) 2011: 121)

The defiance of the lovers in *Chemmeen* is a poetic wave of unrepentant modernity facing fantasies of non-malleable tradition. On one hand, the sea front can be both dark and untamed and domestic and imperiled, on the other. The ill-starred lovers in Chemmeen, the ambitious fisherman in Chembanjunju, the boisterous and wild Palani reflect the enduring metaphor of the sea as a powerful and intoxicating embodiment of passion and danger. Karuthamma's exercise of agency increases her likelihood to be framed as the woman who polluted the sea front – documented in sea lore. The women in the text try to make their own decisions even the face of cultural and familial opposition. Chakki, Karuthamma and others even find collective ways to resist the many and overwhelming efforts to them. The novel foregrounds the constitutive role of the sea in the overall spatial systems through which the characters move and how the sea/ seafront shaped the ideology, social practices, forms of coercion and restraints or obstacles constituting the same system. All characters, victimized by various power structures, strive to find a place of their own. Ironically, the sea which had denied them their new found identity, offers them the final space for solace and solitude. It is through the experience of displacement that they find their voices and redesign their identities. Displacement for the characters triggers a new sense of belonging. The sea encapsulates a shared history of pain and subjugation. Karuthamma and Pareekutty are symbols of individual agency and are no longer mnemonic markers of a turbulent past. Their lives deeply inform both the reality and representations of experiences of the sea.

As Karuthamma begins her new life, with the memory of a father forever estranged, and that of a mother on her deathbed, she embarks on a journey to transform the orphan's house into a home. But the uncertainty of the sea looms large with an ominous call to the future: "It wasn't a quiet sea here. Beneath the ways lay a capricious undercurrent that would churn up the sea up into a swirl causing treacherous whirlpools." (Pillai (1956) 2011: 126)

By the new sea front, Karuthamma is deemed a fallen woman and Palani is eventually refused access to the sea by his fellow fishermen. Karuthamma's dreams to be "an ordinary fisherwoman" ((Pillai (1956) 2011: 128) are thwarted over and over again, even after the birth of a child. Karuthamma tries in vain to collect stories from the new sea front but the only story that she hears is of herself. The lives in the different shores are upturned – Chakki dies, Chembankunju brings home another woman, Panchami rebels and he stumbles upon the truth of Karuthamma. Unhinged like King Lear, he meets a distraught, penurious Pareekutty and flings the money across his face, accusing the latter of destroying families. Yet, it seems Chembankunju's story would not have been unfolded, had it not been for the ill-fated lovers.

Moments in the text when the shores of Neerkunnath and Trikunnapuzha converge as Karuthamma and Pareekutty drown in a dying embrace and Palani's boat capsizes, with the diabolic dance of the sea having the last word.

> The waves of the sea are emblematic of rhythmic and predictable motion dictating the humdrum life of the community of fishermen and women. Within the apparently seamless trajectory, the fragility of life and discontinuity therein are highlighted. The waves are also icons of chaos and destruction – and within themselves respond to the many questions posed by Karuthamma that remain unanswered. The statelessness of the sea is based on a precarious existence which encapsulates the imagery of drifting, capsizing and drowning.

Like the Chakara season with its uncertain presence of 'chemmeen' or shrimps, the sea – goddess, Katal Amma, is both locus and metaphor that reflects and shapes the experience of the characters in Pillai's evocative novel. The sea is not only a potent reminder of the forces of nature but also in the words of Pico Iyer cautions humanity on "the folly of thinking we know" (2014).

Chemmeen instructs on the interface of social life and environmental landscapes offering a vibrant human engagement with maritime topographies in specific historical relations. The novel simultaneously reassesses the past and interrogates the future with the present predicated on a precarious continuum. Focusing on the symbiosis between cultural memory and deep marine geologies, *Chemeen* opens up a chain of geospatial continuities. The myth of Katal Amma enacts a flow between fragments, dreams, stories, heresy and truth claims as public repositories of a sacred past. The believers in Katal-Amma extract memories and fantasies, offering in turn volatile, convoluted histories. Kumkum Sangari discusses the significance of the folkloric as "forged within the insistent specificity of a localized relation," which transforms into a strategy of survival and a nonmimetic mode of articulating ideologies, thereby opening a new "politics of the possible" (1987, 181).

The distant past folds into the immediacy of a common present. The intertwined journeys of both the Sea Mother and the lovers epitomize cultural rearticulation and recalibration of established orders. Further, the journeys necessitate an understanding of the category of forgiveness. In his essay "On Forgiveness", Jacques Derrida proposes, "Forgiveness is not, it *should not be*, normal, normative, normalizing. It *should* remain exceptional and extraordinary, in the face of the impossible; as if it interrupted the ordinary course of historical temporality" (2001, 32). *Chemmeen* proffers tantalizing moments of radical, transformative, exceptional, and extraordinary interruption of an inescapable history. The proximity to the sea anchors and transforms the coastal community. It permits them to engage with their environment in diverse ways, allowing them to ask questions, participate in their own landscapes, interact with their coastal environs and fathom their precarious seascapes. The agency of Katal–Amma and the practice of intimate objectivity by Karuthamma and Pareekutty find resonance in Evelyn Fox Kellner's concept of "dynamic objectivity" (1995). Kellner theorizes dynamic objectivity as a practice that

> grants to the world around us its independent integrity but does so in a way that remains cognizant of, indeed relies on, our connectivity with that world. In this, dynamic objectivity is not unlike empathy, a form of knowledge of other persons that draws explicitly on the commonality of feelings and experience in order to enrich one's understanding of the other in his or her own right. (1995, 117)

All characters in *Chemeen* share a "commonality of feelings and experience" specific to their world in coastal Kerala, and to a subjective knowledge of desire and control. The ever-changing and endless sea becomes symptomatic of a community in transition. Through *Chemmeen,* Thakazhi foregrounds a textual and human displacement which in turn reinvents concepts of community and gender, divulging the ambiguities of the "modern" in the Indian context. Thakazhi uses the symbol of the sea to invoke the creative possibilities of coastal life in Kerala, which bypasses Eurocentric linear narratives of achievement and progress. The text itself compels one to rethink the contours of pedagogical proclivities and

intellectual production. Stories, narratives and myths foster a sense of intimacy but *Chemmeen* does not permit easy equivalency between intimacy and physical proximity, leading to epistemic shifts. Relations of authority and vulnerability are replayed through the text projecting fragmented and contested lives. Practices of hospitality on the seafront run parallel to coercive politics of control.

The novel ends with no closure, no finality, only an intensity built to a painful silence of drifting, along with the guiding pole star with its diminished light as witness.

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BURIAL AT SEA: RECONCILIATION AND BEREAVEMENT IN WAJDI MOUAWAD'S *LITTORAL* (*TIDELINE*)

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Abstract

Littoral (*Tideline*), a play by the celebrated Lebanese-Québécois playwright Wajdi Mouawad was staged in Limoges in 1998 and in the Festival d'Avignon in 1999. It is about a son who travels far to bury his father at sea in a war ravaged and unnamed location. No place, no village, no country is ever mentioned. One can definitely surmise that the action in *Littoral* takes place anywhere where war has occurred and where there is a coastline. It could be in the Indian Ocean or the Arabian Sea. The communal sense of bereavement, the quintessential leitmotif of the play, ties in with the figure of the father himself, a figure that acquires the added symbolic status of a collective patriarch. The universality of the image of the father, against the backdrop of the leitmotif of the play, is explicitly signified by one of the protagonists. The nameless country is perhaps a sure way to reach various international audiences who can identify with the dramaturgy, an assumption substantiated by the fact that *Littoral* has been translated in several European countries, as well as Mexico. The sea as a burial place is symbolic insofar as it is the cleanser of all human affairs, the purifier that takes away the suffering and the havoc of human vicissitudes. In the words of the ending of the play, when the father is buried at sea, his cadaver speaks:

> There is the tideline and the great sea,
> The great sea
> That carries everything away
> And that's now taking me,

That's taking me, taking me, taking me

My essay deals with the poetics of bearing witness, remembrance, and reconciliation against the backdrop of the sea as harbinger of forgiveness and rest.

Key words: war, mourning, testimony, memory, reconciliation

Résumé

Littoral (Tideline), pièce du célèbre dramaturge libano-québécois Wajdi Mouawad a été mise en scène à Limoges en 1998 et au Festival d'Avignon en 1999. Il s'agit d'un fils qui voyage loin pour enterrer son père dans la mer dans un endroit non-nommé et ravagé par la guerre. Aucun endroit, aucun village, aucun pays n'est nommé. On peut certainement supposer que l'action dans *Littoral* ait lieu partout où une guerre s'est produite et où il y a un littoral. Cela pourrait être dans l'océan Indien ou la mer d'Arabie. Le sens commun du deuil, le leitmotiv de la pièce, s'inscrit dans la figure du père lui-même, une figure qui acquiert le statut symbolique supplémentaire d'un patriarche collectif. L'universalité de l'image du père, dans le contexte du leitmotiv de la pièce, est explicitement signifiée par l'un des protagonistes. Le pays sans nom est peut-être un moyen sûr d'interpeller des différents publics internationaux qui peuvent s'identifier à la dramaturgie, une hypothèse étayée par le fait que *Littoral* a été traduit dans plusieurs pays européens ainsi que dans le Mexique. La mer comme lieu de sépulture est symbolique dans la mesure où elle est la laveuse de toutes les affaires humaines, la purificatrice qui enlève la souffrance et le ravage des vicissitudes humaines. A la fin de la pièce, quand le père est enterré en mer, son cadavre parle:

Il y a le littoral et la grande mer, qui emporte tout
Et qui m'emporte ailleurs,
Qui m'emporte, qui m'emporte, qui m'emporte

Mon article a pour but de traiter de la poétique du témoignage, du souvenir et de la réconciliation avec comme arrière fond la mer comme annonciatrice du pardon et du repos.

Mots clés : guerre, deuil, témoignage, souvenir, réconciliation

Littoral (*Tideline*) is the first play of a tetralogy on the blood of promises ("Le Sang des promesses") by the celebrated Lebanese-Québécois playwright Wajdi Mouawad.[1] It was first staged at the author's *Théâtre des quat'sous* in 1997 in Montréal, then in 1998 in Limoges, at the 15th international festival of *francophonies* in the Limousin, and the following year at the celebrated *Festival d'Avignon*. The play nearly single-handedly catapulted Mouawad to the foreground of the Montréal-French scene. In 2000, he received the most prestigious Canadian award, The Governor General Award in Literature for theatre (for *Littoral*) and in 2004, he was awarded the *Prix de la francophonie* bestowed by the international *Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques* (SACD) for his oeuvre. Speaking of *Littoral* and the fact that it was produced all over the world, over 175 times, in Lebanon, France, and North

[1] The three other volumes are *Incendies* (2003), *Forêts* (2006) and *Ciels* (2012). For an indepth study of Wajdi Mouawad, see F. Elizabeth Dahab, *Voices of Exile in Contemporary Canadian Francophone Literature*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009/2011.

America, Mouawad recognized the impetus it gave to his career: "*Littoral* m'a mis au monde artistiquement, m'a fait naître aux yeux du milieu théâtral québécois" [*Littoral* gave birth to me artistically, handed me a place in the Theatrical Québécois mileu].[2]

Littoral is about a son, Wilfrid, who travels far and wide to bury his father at sea in a war ravaged and unnamed location. No place, no village, no country is ever mentioned. One can definitively surmise that the action in *Littoral* takes place anywhere where war has occurred and where there is a coastline. It could be in the Indian Ocean or the Arabian Sea. The communal sense of bereavement, the quintessential leitmotif of the play, ties in with the figure of the father himself, a figure that acquires the added symbolic status of a collective patriarch. The universality of the image of the father, against the backdrop of the leitmotif of the play, is explicitly signified. The universality of Wilfrid's task is established through a passage quoted from *The Iliad*.

The nameless country is a sure way to reach various international audiences who can identify with the dramaturgy, an assumption substantiated by the fact that *Littoral* has been translated in several European countries, as well as Mexico. The sea as a burial place is symbolic insofar as it is the cleanser of all human affairs, the purifier that takes away the suffering and the havoc of human vicissitudes. This paper deals with the poetics of bearing witness, remembrance and reconciliation against the backdrop of the sea as harbinger of forgiveness, oblivion, and rest.

Littoral is composed of 52 scenes or tableaux and six divisions, or acts, titled, sequentially, "Here, Yesterday, Over There, The Other, Road, and Tideline." Those titles follow the thread of the plot suggesting that past and present will sometimes be simultaneously staged, the dead sharing the stage with the living. Wilfrid, who lives in Montréal (the *Here*), receives a phone call announcing the death of his father while he is reaching sexual climax with a partner.

Wilfrid's parents' troubled past (the *Yesterday*) and the mystery of his birth are suddenly revealed to him through his discovery of unsent letters his father had written him over the years. We learn that the mother's family had objected to his parents' marriage and that his mother died giving birth to him in the old country. Wilfrid is raised by his maternal aunts who, by rejecting the father and blaming him for the mother's death, drive him into exile. Some comic scenes of family dynamics are staged between the aunts and Wilfrid over the question of the father's burial. At first Wilfrid hesitates, but then he is entrusted with a mission by his alter ego (the kind, ethical, imaginary Arthurian knight Guiromelan, the companion of Wilfrid's childhood imagination) to bury his father in his native land. Wilfrid reluctantly embarks on the journey, leaving all his commitments behind. He is accompanied by his irritating father's talking cadaver as well as a film crew that continuously records his movements in what constitute humorous, ironic touches that alleviate the weightiness of the overarching theme.

Over There, in the nameless father's country, Wilfrid finds a place decimated by war, with no more plots left for burial. He first encounters Ulrich, an old sage who quotes the

[2]. Catherine Richon, "Wajdi Mouawad. Interviews sur Fluctuat.net," <http://fluctuat.net/1317-Wajdi-Mouawad> (accessed January 4, 2007): 1-3, 1. Mouawad produced his first film in 2004 based on the play *Littoral*.

opening of the *Iliad* and the passage where Priam beseeches Achilles to remit him the body of his slain son Hector, an endorsement that gives Wilfrid's quest a mythical dimension. In his father's homeland, he continues to encounter the *Other*, first hostile villagers who tell him to go away, and eventually, one by one, what comes to form a collection of sympathetic young orphan-survivors (Simone, Amé, Massi, Sabbé, Joséphine) who help him fulfill his mission by traveling with him on the *Road* they finally discover, one that leads them all the way to the *Tideline*. The father is buried in the water from which he addresses the group of young folks, ending the play on a note of universal hope, resilience, and rejuvenation:

> Tout juste après les amours et les peines
> Les joies et les pleurs,
> Les pertes et les cris,
> Il y a le littoral et la grande mer,
> Qui emporte tout
> Et qui m'emporte d'ailleurs,
> Qui m'emporte, qui m'emporte, qui m'emporte[3]
>
> [Right after loves and sorrows
> Joys and tears,
> Losses and laments
> There is the tideline and the great sea,
> The great sea
> That carries everything away
> And that's now taking me,
> That's taking me, taking me, taking me].[4]

The last line, "that's taking me, taking me, taking me" is repeated six times as the father's voice gradually grows fainter as he sinks into the sea. "The great sea" "that carries everything away" is a colossal witness to a communal tragedy. The collective mission is thus accomplished. What is exactly that mission? Jane Moss has rightly remarked, if "the ethical burden placed on those who survive historical trauma is to mourn the dead and bear witness, [...] this is exactly what *Littoral* does."[5] Wilfrid and his friends form a cohesive group bound together by a sacred, communal sense of bereavement, as they have each been through a war-related trauma; after having lost all her family, Simone, the unique survivor of her entire village, continues, despite opposition, to play the violin from place to place to celebrate life and to commemorate the war victims. Her task is to tell people the stories of what has happened[6] as she longs to liberate herself and to enjoy life: "Aujourd'hui, la guerre est terminée et je suis encore en prison" [7] [Now the war is over and I'm still in prison][8] she cries to the villagers who admonish her for her carefree demeanor.

Simone is the one who, along the way, collects other orphans who end up following her; we learn that Massi has never known his father, Amé unwittingly killed his own father,

[3] *Littoral*, 135.

[4] Wajdi Mouawad, *Tideline*, translated by Shelley Tepperman (Toronto: Canada Playwrights Press, 2002): 166.

[5] Jane Moss, "The Drama of Survival: Staging Posttraumatic Memory in Plays by Lebanese-Québécois Dramatists," *Theatre Research in Canada/Recherches Théâtrales au Canada* 22, no. 3 (Fall/Automne 2001): 173-179, 179.

[6] *Littoral*, 85 and 84, 92, 117.

[7] *Littoral*, 71.

[8] *Tideline,* 81.

and Sabbé was plagued with laughing fits after being forced to watch the dismemberment of his father and hold the decapitated head in his hands, not to forget Joséphine, the Antigone-like figure whose vocation, in Mouawad's words, "is to bear the memory of the vanquished."[9] Those who survived the violence or observed it from afar will suffer from post-traumatic stress disorders. Unless they can honor their Dead, inscribe their names into collective memory, and give them proper burial, they cannot move on with their lives nor head towards the brightness of the sky that embodies their new future (132).

In fact, Joséphine carries a heavy load of books where she scrupulously records the names of all the war victims, and when she runs out of pencils she commits to memory the names, repeating them unceasingly to avoid memory loss. She will find no rest until the father has received proper burial. When the group reaches the tideline/coastline the body is collectively washed in the sea. In a highly symbolic gesture, Joséphine uses the weight of the memorial books to anchor the body onto the seabed when he is thrown into the sea, thus making the sea a witness and a repository for all the victims of war. This allegorizes the sea as the hub of pardon, reconciliation and closure, surely, but mostly it allegorizes it as a country within a country, a meta-country so to speak, one that acts as a parallel world with hope and reconciliation. Moreover, the sea is the last home, the final resting place for the exile and the outcast. Thus speaks the cadaver of the father at the coastline when he is about to be buried:

> Mon odyssée s'achève.
> Je reviens au port.
> Mon pays m'a conduit à mon pays.
> Le chemin fut long, mais la récompense est grande.
> J'entends le mugissement des vagues
> Qui s'entrelaçent jusqu'au ravage
> Je les entends, les vagues,
> Haleter, haleter, haleter, haleter, haleter,
> Haleter vers la jouissance qui ne viendra jamais."[10][11]
> [My Odyssey is drawing to an end
> I am returning to the Harbour
> My country has led me to my country
> The road was long, but the reward is great
> I hear the rumbling of the waves
> Interlacing all the way to the shore
> I hear the waves
> Panting, panting, panting, panting
> Towards the climax that will never come (155)

"My country has led me to my country" is a stark reminder that Canada (the adopted country) has led the Father back to Lebanon (his country of origin) into a trajectory whose endgame is played off at the seashore amidst the eternal "panting" of the waves, a panting that finds no final satisfaction because its repetition itself is aimless. The sea, hence, though compassionate in its embrace, is also mechanical in its movements and supersedes human sorrows. Insofar as it offers refuge unwittingly, it can symbolize the unconscious and

[9] *Littoral*, 8.

[10] *Littoral*, 125.

[11] Throughout this paper, I will provide quotations in the French original followed by the English translation.

ultimate protector. However, this return home does not go without the fear of groundlessness, deterritorialisation and drifting. The father standing at the shoreline about to be thrown in it demands to be grounded unto the sea bed, in an ultimate gesture of closure and reconciliation. But the fear of being uprooted continues to haunt the father, even as he is about to end his exile:

> "Il ne me reste plus qu'à espérer que mon corps,
> Une fois lance à la mer,
> Voyager jusqu'`a ces rochers que l'on appellee récifs
> Qui m'accrocheront
> Et là,
> Bien ancré par mes raciness aux raciness des algues,
> Je deviendrai l'ami des moules, des oursins et des étoiles de mer
> Je ne veux pas que mon corps parte à la derive,
> Je ne veux pas, je ne veux pas."
> [All I can do is hope that my body,
> Once thrown into the sea
> Will travel to those rocks they call reefs
> That will catch hold of me
> And then,
> Firmly anchored by my roots to the roots of the seaweed
> I will become a friend to the mussels, the sea urchins, and starfish
> Because I don't want
> I don't want my body to drift away,
> I don't want to drift away (156)].

The father is tormented by eternal dispossession and seeks rootedness amidst "mussels, sea urchins and starfish", an alternative population that may after all prove more reliable than humans, and certainly more comforting. So, does the sea in *Littoral* symbolize the ultimate resting space to the expatriate and exile, victim of wars? The abovementioned final scene of the Father's burial depicts Wilfrid, son of a returning exile (albeit a dead one) entrusting his past and his present into oblivion, in a grand gesture that crowns the sea as the repository of all memory, evoked, conjured up, and willful, as opposed to incidental, involuntary memory. Mouawad's endeavor in this play is part of "the witnessing project," to borrow an apt expression of the critic Malpede describing newer trends in 21st century theater. She refers to "the witnessing imagination" as a construct developed with a psychiatrist she worked with.[12] Witnessing and willful memory go hand in hand to conjure up speech.

In a noteworthy article by Pierre L'Hérault, subtitled "l'hospitalité comme instance dramatique" [Hospitality as dramatic instance],[13] the eminent Québécois critic remarks that in the final analysis, Wilfrid's quest in *Littoral* involves *words* rather than *territories* (including the sea as a territorial space). Joséphine literally discloses the identity of members of the group by giving them back their names,[14] and if the plot stages

[12] Karen Malpede, "Theatre at 2000: A Witnessing Project." *The Year 2000: Essays on the End*, eds. Charles Strozier and Michael Flynn (New York and London: New York University Press, 1997), 299-308. The psychiatrist in question is Stevan Weine.

[13] Pierre L'Hérault. "*Littoral* de Wajdi Mouawad: l'hospitalité comme instance dramatique," in *Le Dire de l'Hospitalité*, eds. Lise Gauvin, Pierre l'Hérault, and Alain Montandon (Clermont-Ferrand, France: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2004): 179-187, 182-183.

[14] *Littoral*, 116.

deterritorialization (here taken literally as the destruction of a country, the absence of burial ground, and the consequent burial in water) enhanced by the burial ritual that is enacted, it ultimately deals with the dual theme of encounter (*rencontre*) and hospitality, or lack thereof, on the ground. In this light, the sea can be said to be the engulfer, the harbinger of peace, the massive body of water that allows one to wash away the sins of war and to bear witness to the suffering of those who are about to be buried in it.

The narrative harbored by the protagonists is one that seeks closure, a closure marked by hope and reconciliation. Just as they are reaching the sea, Simone declares that the story they will be telling henceforth to everybody, will be that of a man who wants to bury his father and who seeks a burial ground to this purpose. The circle is closed and the play ends in a metatextual, self-reflexive fashion that ties the dénouement to the starting point, the initial situation of Wilfrid himself at the opening scene. Wilfrid summarizes that initial situation when he is asked by Massi to tell his story and, in yet another touch of humor juxtaposed with the sacred nature of the leitmotif (a juxtaposition Mouawad cultivates and enjoys) Wilfrid irreverently recalls the sexual climax connected to the telephone ring, bearer of the death news:

> C'est un type qui a couché avec son père parce qu'il faisait l'amour avec une fille au même moment où son père mourait. Puis là le type va éjaculer d'une sonnerie de téléphone. Ça le surprend! Il répond. On lui dit qu'on vient de retrouver son père mort assis sur un banc.[15]
> [It is a guy who slept with his father because he was making love with a girl, at the same time that his father was dying. Here the guy will ejaculate a telephone ring. He is surprised! He answers. He is told that his father was just found dead on a bench].[16]

Guiromelan, the imaginary companion of Wilfrid's dreams, and one of the humorous ploys at use by the playwright, retires at the closing of the play and bids farewell to Wilfrid. It is time for the latter to become his own person, in what opens the door for a coming-of-age, or hero's journey reading of *Littoral*.

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[15] *Littoral,* 116.
[16] *Tideline*, 144.

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SINKING OF COASTLINE OF DELTAIC WEST BENGAL AND ENDANGERED MARINE FLORA AND FAUNA DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE, CHANGE OF LAND USE AND DISCHARGE OF TOXIC EFFLUENT CARRIED BY RIVER GANGES

By

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Abstract

The sea and the deltaic West Bengal on the eastern fringes of India along with the neighbouring Bangladesh are heavily endangered terrains as these regions have suffered the loss of mangrove, soil settlement and there has been a rise of the sea level due to global warming and climate change. Soil erosion, inundation of land and increased salinity have caused loss of flora and fauna along with forest cover. Salty sea water rushing towards fertile soil has been reported mostly due to pumping of water from coastal aquifer and lack of sweet water flow from the Ganges to its distributary Hooghly river due to geological tilting of the plate towards the eastern side. There has been degradation of soil physical properties, increase in sea surface temperatures by 0.5 degree per decade, rising of sea level by 12 mm every year, increase of soil salinity between 8.7 and 12 (EC between 5dS/m and 10dS/m) and rise in the magnitude and the numbers of storm surges along with the increase in the number and intensity of cyclones per year. Sea level rise and decay of mangrove plants due to toxic pollutants, natural disaster and other anthropogenic factors has caused severe coastal erosion in the islands of Sundarbans. Agriculture, which is the major occupation of people in this area has been seriously affected due to increase in soil salinity, erratic rainfall, inadequate irrigation and erosion of land masses. Drinking water problem has worsened. The situation is heading towards the loss of the Sunderbans in its entirety, - the world's biggest mangrove forest by the end of this century. In this study,

samples of water and soil are collected, some spot measurement with respect to GPS, salinity and pH were made, and other parameters like organic carbon, Nitrogen and Phosphorous were analyzed in laboratory and compared in bar diagram.

Keywords: global warming, climate change, seal level rise, soil erosion, loss of mangrove

Résumé
Le littoral du Bengale occidental deltaïque sur la frontière orientale de l'Inde avec le Bangladesh voisin sont fortement menacés en raison du tassement du sol causé par le pompage aléatoire des eaux souterraines et l'élévation du niveau de la mer en raison du réchauffement climatique et du changement climatique. En plus de cela, la décharge d'effluents toxiques et de métaux lourds emportés par la rivière Ganges jusqu'à la mer a détruit la flore et la faune dans cette zone. Certaines initiatives sont prises pour sauver l'endroit de la catastrophe. La présente communication propose de discuter de la gravité de la situation ainsi que des efforts correctifs qui sont entrepris.

Mots clés : réchauffement climatique, changement climatique, augmentation du niveau des mers, érosion du sol, perte des mangroves

1.Introduction

Sunderbans, the land of mangrove forests in the delta caused by the river Ganga is located in the southeastern tip of India covering India and Bangladesh abutting the Bay of Bengal. It is one of the world heritage sites with a rare variety of flora and fauna including the Royal Bengal tiger. The region is a marshy area with tidal creeks surrounding the islands full of mangrove forests. The mangrove forests have the ability to retain and accrue soil sediments with nutrients, entrap carbon dioxide of the atmosphere to reduce greenhouse gases, reduce pollution and carbon footprint, withstand wind and storm preventing destruction thereby protecting the inland. These forests create an ideal habitat setting for tigers and crocodiles and many rare species of the world.

During the last few decades Sunderbans have witnessed radical changes in the coastal and estuarine belts due to climate change. Global warming leads to rise in the sea level, soil erosion, increase salinity both in soil and water, increase the frequency and intensity of natural disasters. Together with these, high level of toxic elements from industry in the river coming from inland, have seriously affected the life of the inhabitants here in this region. The mangrove forests have thinned due to the attacks of climate change, water inundation and stagnation, anthropogenic affects like cutting of trees for timber, creating agricultural land and human settlement and shrimp cultivation, invasive action of destructive marine species and toxic pollutants from industries. The sweet water mangroves species are slowly on the verge of extinction due to high salinity levels. Thus, due to the loss of mangrove forest which used to bind the soil particles together, land has started eroding away, storms and hurricanes easily invade the mainland from the coast and animals especially tigers are in a precarious state, facing threats of extinction.

There has been average fall in the alluvium deposition on the westerns coastal side (Indian side) due to various anthropogenic causes like change of river course, construction of dams and barrages, pitching of embankments of creeks and canals etc. Land settlements and the erosion of the top soil have been observed. There has also been complete wash out of many islands due to high sea water level and manifold submergences of many areas. Tiger reserves have reduced along with other animals, reptiles and birds. The high salinity also has a disastrous effect on the high yielding paddy cultivation resulting in food scarcity for the rising population. The drinking water crisis has worsened the situation due to the non-availability of sweet water. There has been a fall in the fish entry mainly Hilsa and other marine fishes in estuarine and upstream rivers due to lack of sweet water inflow from Ganges and industrial toxic elements. The way the erosion of soil is in progress, it will not be very long that a sizeable portion of Sunderbans will be under sea along with the forest reserves and the mangrove heritage would become a history.

It is an urgent need of the hour for the environmental scientists to evaluate and introspect the present scenario and find some ways to reduce erosion, mangrove population reduction, and find alternative methods of farming for increasing crop production, find means for providing adequate drinking water by rain water harvesting and other treatment methods, provide proper treatment of effluent at source to reduce toxic levels. [5,6]

2. Mangrove Forest and its beneficial mechanism

Sunderbans of India and Bangladesh form the world largest mangrove forests. The structural diversity of roots of the mangroves play an important role for inhabiting numerous species in these forests. It offers a home to threatened species like Bengal Tiger, hawksbill turtle and many more. It also acts as a refugee for corals from ocean acidification. It contributes to water quality and nutrient transfer. It filters and traps sediments from runoff and river water before the river water reaches adjacent ecosystem, thus reducing the turbidity of the water. It has ability to reduce water velocities through aerial roots helping sediment deposition as it traps microbial filamentous algal mats and bind sediments with them. The mangroves also accumulate litter and woody debris which lead to increased vertical accretion rates which compensate for soil erosion. It acts as a main carbon sink from atmosphere. Mangroves can lower the damage caused by cyclone and storms as they proceed inland to destroy living and non-living infrastructure by absorbing some force of the wind and waves. Thus, in ways more than one, they play an important role in the coastal ecosystem and food chains.

3. Factors that threaten mangrove survival

But these beneficial mangroves are facing threats of reduction and extinction. The large-scale deforestation for timber carried out by British and thereafter by India has left its permanent scars. Inadequate planning, huge growth in population, spread of agriculture for sustenance of human habitat have created pressure for deforestation. Sunderbans which are a low-lying deltaic region, marked by dozens of creeks, tributaries and islands are especially vulnerable to sea-level rise. Climate change, especially global

warming with melting of glaciers has created this sea level rise. Frequent flooding and inundation are real threats; off and on hurricanes with higher intensity have initiated coastal erosion; disasters like tsunami, cyclone, heavy rainfalls in large intensity have ruined the region's mangrove cover.

Nurturing of shrimp in the tidal creeks also has affected the mangroves. As a result, the binding capacity of the root with the land mass is affected and islands are prone to sea erosion. Increased temperature mostly above 40 degrees Celsius has reduced photosynthesis rates. Thus, there is reduction in intake of carbon dioxide by the floras. Increased evaporation has caused increase in the salinity level. These have resulted in reduction in plant productivity, growth, migration, species diversification and reduction in mangrove forest density. Sweet water mangroves as mentioned earlier are on the verge of extinction and salt resistant mangroves are getting thinner.

Environmental degradation due to the impact of heavy metal pollutants, has given rise to asphyxiated swamp, where Dissolved Oxygen (DO) has fallen below the threshold limit. Lack of oxygen eventually gives rise to the dead zone. Paper and petroleum effluents are also one of the major sources of pollution in the mangrove ecosystem. The toxicity studies for mangrove plants have focused on the effects of trace metals (Cu, Cd, Hg, Mn, Pb and Zn), oil residues, some herbicides and raw wastewater. Photosynthesis, growth, and biomass were reduced due to their effect, resulting in increased mortality rate.
Trace metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, persistent organic pollutants, pharmaceuticals, personal care products and endocrine disrupters compounds have been detected in various mangrove compartments and these have indeed affected the mangrove ecosystem species.[1,2,4,5,6]

4. Climate change and Geological issues

The melting of glaciers, icecaps, ice sheets due to global warming lead to sea level rise; thermal expansion of ocean cause more intense cyclones due to rise of the sea temperature; groundwater withdrawal leads to soil settlement and subsidence; wave motions, micro and macro-tidal cycles and long-shore currents, monsoon and ocean currents cause land erosion on the coast. Other effects are amplified storm surge, permanent inundation and saline water infiltration from the sea has resulted in the decline of agriculture and drinking water along with loss of land, flora and fauna. Due to reduction of carbon sink (mangrove cover) global air pollution in South East Asia has been increasing at an alarming level. Sea fish like Hilsa and other varieties which earlier used to float inward to the Kolkata side of the coastline for breeding in sweet water has become unavailable.

5. Findings in the recent past

It has been recorded that in the years between 1975 and 1989 dense mangrove cover were reduced to half. 120 sq km of Sunderbans were lost in the last 35 years. Land erosion is estimated as 5.5 sq km per year. Mangroves are affected by the dearth of oxygen supply due to inundation and oxygen depletion due to algal bloom in presence of excess nitrogen in soil. During 1980-2005 mangrove forest loss is 30% - 50%, mainly because of coastal development, aquaculture expansion and over harvesting.[1,2,4,5]

In a study conducted in 2012, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) found out that the Sunderban coast was retreating up to 200 metres in a year. Agricultural activities had destroyed around 17,179 hectares of mangroves within three decades (1975–2010). Shrimp cultivation had destroyed another 7,554 hectares (18,670 acres).

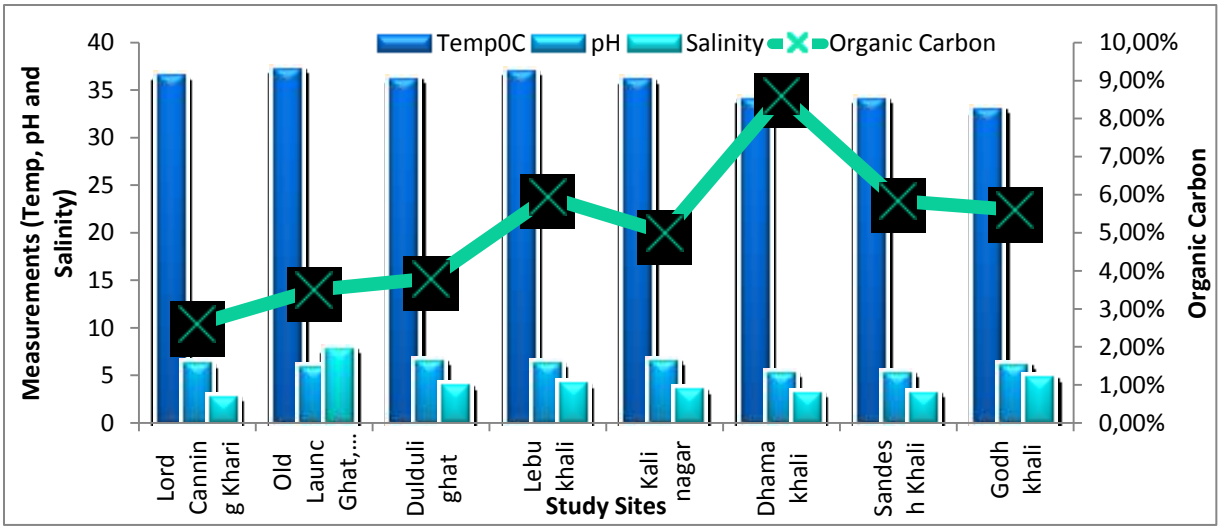
The annual rise in sea level was 8 mm (0.31 in) in 2010. It had doubled if compared to 3.14 mm (0.124 in) as recorded in 2000. The rising sea levels had also submerged around 7,500 hectares (19,000 acres) of forest areas. This, coupled with in and around 1.5 C (2.7 F) rise in surface water temperatures and increased levels of salinity have posed a problem for the survival of the indigenous flora and fauna. The Sundari trees are exceptionally sensitive to salinity and are being threatened with extinction. Loss of the mangrove forest will result in the loss of the protective biological shield against cyclones and tsunamis. This may put the surrounding coastal communities at high risk. Moreover, the submergence of land mass has rendered up to 6,000 families homeless and around 70,000 people are immediately threatened.[3,4,10]

6. Basic primary data collection and our research analysis

Visits have been conducted in different areas of Sunderbans on the Indian side right from Canning, Gosaba, Basanti, Sandeshkhali, Jharkhali, Sajnekhali, Dhamakhali, Pakhiralaya etc. Soil and water samples were collected, instant measurement on salinity, pH, GPS were made. The samples were taken to the laboratory for further analysis on other parameters like organic carbon, Nitrogen etc. Interviews were conducted with the villagers and inhabitants to know the problem faced by them now and how things are changing from the past.

Soil Sample Data

Soil Sample	Lord Canning Khari	Old Launch Ghat, Canning	Duldi ghat	Lebu khali	Kali nagar	Dhama khali	Sandesh Khali	Godh khali
Temp^{0}C	36.4	37.2	36.1	36.9	36.0	34.0	34.0	33.0
pH	6.1	5.8	6.5	6.2	6.5	5.2	5.2	6.0
Salinity	2.7	7.7	3.8	4.1	3.4	3.1	3.1	4.7
Organic Carbon	2.6%	3.5%	3.8%	5.94%	5.0%	8.61%	5.84%	5.6%
GPS	**N-22^o 19.20' E- 88^o 40.07'**	**N- 22^o 19.183 E- 088^o 40.50**	**N-22^o 21.69 E-88^o 57.30**	**N- 21^o 21.933 E-8^o 57.58**	**N- 22^o 26.360 E-88^o 57.3**	**N-22^{o}21.35 E-88^{o}52.581**		**N-22^{o}10.09 E-88^{o}47.263**

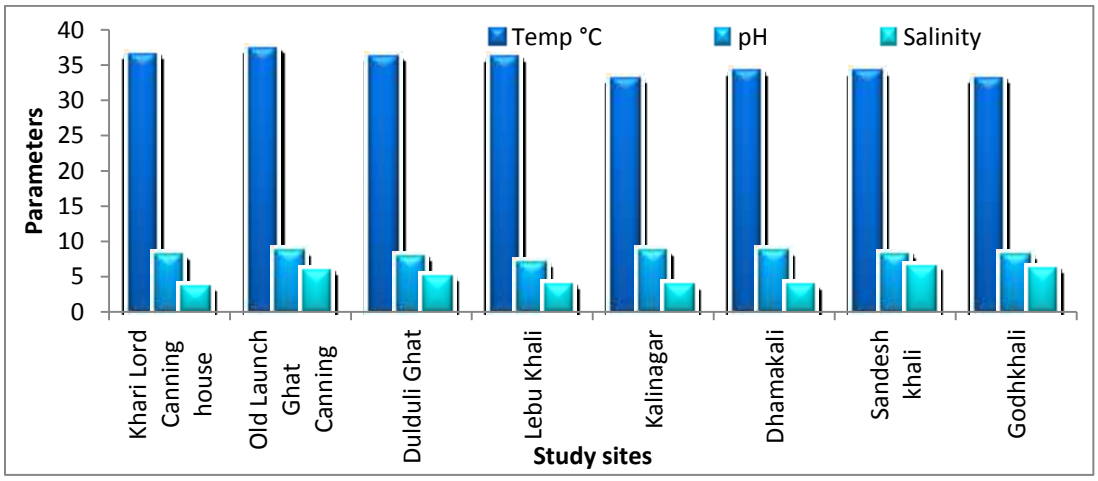


Bar chart showing soil sample test results

As per our study we have found that soil pH is mostly acidic and there is appreciable salinity which reduces a little during the monsoon seasons when the river water outflow increases. The water samples collected in and around the western portion of the Indian part of the Sunderbans, show more salinity, whereas when one moves towards the east it becomes slightly alkaline. The average value of Nitrogen measured in soil samples was found to be16.1 kg/acre and Potassium 7.3 kg/acre.

Water Sample Data

	Khari, lord canning house	Old launch ghat canning	Dulduli Ghat	Lebu khali	Kali nagar	Dhama Khali	Sandesh Khali	Godh khali
Temp^{0}C	**36.4**	**37.2**	**36.1**	**36.9**	**36.0**	**33.0**	**34.0**	**33.0**
pH	**7.9**	**8.4**	**7.7**	**6.2**	**6.8**	**8.4**	**8.1**	**8.0**
Salinity	**3.4**	**5.7**	**4.8**	**4.5**	**3.7**	**3.6**	**6.4**	**6.0**



Bar chart showing water sample test results



GPS map showing the sample collection spots

7. Major Challenges

The main challenges are:

- *Land Encroachment* - Due to the increase in population and shortage of space, man had to cut forests to build their habitat. With shortage of agricultural arable land to feed the growing population man had to encroach forest land for farming and crop production.
- *Excessive consumption of forest produce*- Man during the last century or more, started clearing forests for timber, fuel wood, pulp, honey, bees-wax, fish, crustacean and mollusk. Excessive felling of trees for the above-mentioned reasons has created an ecological imbalance.
- *Lack of right programme to mitigate disaster*- The governmental agencies and bodies are not able to produce effective and efficient Disaster management strategies. Funds, infrastructure and motivation are lacking for such work.
- *Rise in Salinity* – Due to lack of outflow of sweet water from river Ganges and its distributaries mainly affected by the construction of dams and barrages and geological tilting of Bengal plate towards the eastern fringe, there has been more inflow of sea water. Evaporation due to high temperature has increased concentration and salinity has increased considerably
- *Hindrance to major Agricultural production*- During the last four decades of green revolution farmers have practiced high yielding variety which are water intensive and require sweet water. Due to rise of sea water level and its encroachment inland, the salty water is producing serious hindrance to farmers
- *Shortage of drinking water–Due to salinity and lack of fresh water even underground water is a serious crisis.*
- *Lack of sanitation*- There has been rapid infiltration of people but practically no infrastructure and sanitation in the forest inhabited land leading to wide spread diseases.

- *Invasive species*- Colonization of weeds from sea of some specific origin has negatively affected the flora and fauna of Sunderbans especially the mangroves.[7]
- *Increase in man-animal conflict*- New settlements and population increase have led to clearance of forest lands for human inhabitation. The space for wild animals is reduced every day and there has been enough confrontation between them leading to loss of human lives. [1,2]

8. Combating Mechanism

Some of the mitigation strategies suggested on short term basis are:

- *Cutting of Mangrove forests should be stopped* - We need to preserve, re-sprout, grow, nourish mangroves which are salt tolerant. Felling of trees should be forbidden through legislation.
- *Embankment along tidal creeks in Sunderbans should not be pitched with concrete* - There should be flow of nutrient from water to soil and vice-versa. If this flow is artificially blocked it will tell upon the health and growth of Mangroves.
- *Dredging of Bhagirathi Hooghly at intervals and avoiding of natural water diversion by embankments, dams etc* – In order to bring sweet water of Ganga and other rainfed rivers silt deposited in upstream side should be dredged off regularly. All actions of holding or detaining natural course of water should be avoided.
- *Treat industrial effluent especially carrying heavy metals before its discharge into Hooghly* - The heavy metal contamination is killing flora and fauna and affecting the mangrove forests. This needs to stop.
- *Provide filtration plants for converting salt water to sweet water for drinking* - To develop avenues to sustain inhabitants, water-plants in phases needs to be installed which will work on reverse osmosis to provide palatable drinking water.
- *Shrimp cultivation at the coastal areas which is hampering mangrove needs to be shifted* – The shrimp rearing needs to be relocated in other areas from tidal creeks abutting mangrove forests.
- *Salt resistant paddy seeds should be distributed to farmers* – Earlier, high yielding seeds variety of paddy were grown which were not water intensive. Those agricultural practices of yore need to be followed.
- *Zoning Sundarbans according to vulnerability* - The area should be divided with respect to vulnerability so that priority can be fixed for rear guard action.
- *Rehabilitation and relocation* - The inhabitants who have encroached into unsafe areas need to be rehabilitated and the core zone for wild animals needs to be relocated to keep the mangrove forests for wild animals, to avoid man animal conflict.
- *Developing efficient disaster management system* - Disaster management team backed by scientific instruments and infrastructure and resources should be made ready to save Sunderbans from causality in case of disaster.

9. Suggestions for some of the Long Term combating Strategies

- *Control gaseous emission particularly greenhouse gases* –Gaseous pollution from industry, burning fossil fuel, thermal power, vehicles must be reduced as per Paris agreement. This will control global warming. We should replace thermal energy by nonrenewable energy.
- *Control water resources by rain water harvesting and re-cycling liquid domestic waste*-The tendency to pump out underground water should be controlled, since excessive pumping causes soil consolidation and subsidence and help inundation and submergence with the sea level rise and migration of sea water inland.
- *Finding alternative avenues of livelihood other than forest clearing and poaching of animals*- People of Sunderbans have to be shown alternative ways to sustain their livelihood.
- *Adopting continuous Afforestation programs*- Afforestation programmes with rearing of seeds of salt tolerant mangroves need to be planted and grown to compensate the loss of mangroves in Sunderbans.
- *Construction of Relief Camps and Disaster homes* – The vulnerable areas should have disaster homes and camps built with all resources to provide adequate shelter in case of emergencies since the frequency of storms and cyclones have gone up.
- *Controlled Eco-Tourism* –Tourism is to be practiced in a controlled manner so that it does not disturb the habitat of wild animals in core areas. Recreation spaces and hotels should not be allowed to be built in core areas of the forests.
- *Release of additional fresh water*- In order to compensate the outward flow of fresh water some means must be thought of, so that they can be channelized downstream.
- *Awareness and Educational Program*- People need to be educated through seminar, workshops, and face to face discussions in order to make them aware of the situation.

10. Conclusion

There should be adequate initiative from the government, local bodies, NGOs, foreign social organization with funds to act on the situation immediately knowing the gravity of the situation in a time bound manner in order to save the biggest mangrove forests of the world, which are on the verge of extinction, and to save the local inhabitants who are at the risk of losing their lives. The approach should be positive to restore the mangrove forests by creating a favorable environment for the same.

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