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There are different approaches to resolving conflict, to restore peace. Some focus on faith and look at the common threads therein. They highlight the shared values of living in harmony and respecting each other despite being different.

The focus of composite heritage is to bring out the shared cultural heritage that has taken shape over a very long period of time with the efforts of people from one generation to another. This shared cultural heritage has been the life line of our society across South Asia. Our shared history, shared struggles, shared celebrations, shared experiences of joys and sorrow binds us together. Our love for music, dance, theatre, stories, comes to us as a rich heritage created and recreated through generations.

In such a society how can one imagine superiority of one culture, one language, and one history? The idea of purity of culture is absurd and has been ridiculed by the people in different times. Cultures are not static. Cultures are ever evolving, it changes, for good or for bad, whether we like it or not. Cultures influence and get influenced and that is the basic nature that cannot be changed.

Poetry for Peace

by **RANIA J BUSADA/ SEPTEMBER 2011**

The ability to change, to cure, to heal, to give....
The tolerances to accept, to wait, to believe....
The environment, draw a smile in the broken spirit,
dried the wet tears...
The environment is the freedom wing of PEACE.

The greatness of the Great endures the unendurable....
The vision of the Light ignites the dark caves....
The love of the Lover cleaned the cure, healed the past ...
The mercy of the Universe draws a new pathway for the broken spirits...

The word of Peace is the Great Lover that Light Universe,
The word of Peace is the environment,
The environment is the freedom wing of Peace

Political Economy of Women's Liberation

Margaret Benston

The position of women rests, as everything in our complex society, on an economic base.

—Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling

The “woman question” is generally ignored in analyses of the class structure of society. This is so because, on the one hand, classes are generally defined by their relation to the means of production and, on the other hand, women are not supposed to have any unique relation to the means of production. The category seems instead to cut across all classes; one speaks of working-class women, middle-class women, etc. The status of women is clearly inferior to that of men,¹ but analysis of this condition usually falls into discussing socialization, psychology, interpersonal relations, or the role of marriage as a social institution.² Are these, however, the primary factors? In arguing that the roots of the secondary status of women are in fact economic, it can be shown that women as a group do indeed have a definite relation to the means of production and that this is different from that of men. The personal and psychological factors then follow from this special relation to production, and a change in the latter will be a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for changing the former.³ If this special relation of women to production is accepted, the analysis of the situation of women fits naturally into a class analysis of society.

The starting point for discussion of classes in a capitalist society is the distinction between those who own the means of production and those who sell their labor power for a wage. As Ernest Mandel says :

The proletarian condition is, in a nutshell, the lack of access to the means of production or means of subsistence which, in a society of generalized commodity production, forces the proletarian to sell his

labor power. In exchange for this labor power he receives a wage which then enables him to acquire the means of consumption necessary for satisfying his own needs and those of his family.

This is the structural definition of wage earner, the proletarian. From it necessarily flows a certain relationship to his work, to the products of his work, and to his overall situation in society, which can be summarized by the catchword alienation. But there does not follow from this structural definition any necessary conclusions as to the level of his consumption... the extent of his needs, or the degree to which he can satisfy them.⁴

We lack a corresponding structural definition of women. What is needed first is not a complete examination of the symptoms of the secondary status of women, but instead a statement of the material conditions in capitalist (and other) societies which define the group “women.” Upon these conditions are built the specific superstructures which we know. An interesting passage from Mandel points the way to such a definition:

The commodity ... is a product created to be exchanged on the market, as opposed to one which has been made for direct consumption. *Every commodity must have both a use-value and an exchange-value.*

It must have a use-value or else nobody would buy it ... A commodity without a use-value to anyone would consequently be unsalable, would constitute useless production, would have no exchange-value precisely because it

had no use-value.

On the other hand, every product which has use-value does not necessarily have exchange-value. It has an exchange-value only to the extent that the society itself, in which the commodity is produced, is founded on exchange, is a society where exchange is a common practice...

In capitalist society, commodity production, the production of exchange-values, has reached its greatest development. It is the first society in human history where the major part of production consists of commodities. It is not true, however, that all production under capitalism is commodity production. Two classes of products still remain simple use-value.

The first group consists of all things produced by the peasantry for its own consumption, everything directly consumed on the farms where it is produced ...

The second group of products in capitalist society which are not commodities but remain simple use-value consists of all things produced in the home. Despite the fact that considerable human labor goes into this type of household production, it still remains a production of use-values and not of commodities. Every time a soup is made or a button sewn on a garment, it constitutes production, but it is not production for the market.

The appearance of commodity production and its subsequent regularization and generalization have radically transformed the way men labor and how they organize society.⁵

What Mandel may not have noticed is that his last paragraph is precisely correct. The appearance of commodity production has indeed transformed the way that men labor. As

he points out, most household labor in capitalist society (and in the existing socialist societies, for that matter) remains in the pre-market stage. This is the work which is reserved for women and it is in this fact that we can find the basis for a definition of women.

In sheer quantity, household labor, including child care, constitutes a huge amount of socially necessary production. Nevertheless, in a society based on commodity production, it is not usually considered "real work" since it is outside of trade and the market place. It is pre-capitalist in a very real sense. This assignment of household work as the function of a special category "women" means that this group *does* stand in a different relation to production than the group "men." We will tentatively define women, then, as that group of people who are responsible for the production of simple use-values in those activities associated with the home and family.

Since men carry no responsibility for such production, the difference between the two groups lies here. Notice that women are not excluded from commodity production. Their participation in wage labor occurs but, as a group, they have no structural responsibility in this area and such participation is ordinarily regarded as transient. Men, on the other hand, are responsible for commodity production; they are not, in principle, given any role in household labor. For example, when they do participate in household production, it is regarded as more than simply exceptional; it is demoralizing, emasculating, even harmful to health. (A story on the front page of the *Vancouver Sun* in January 1969 reported that men in Britain were having their health endangered because they had to do too much housework!)

The material basis for the inferior status of women is to be found in just this definition of women. In a society in which money determines value, women are a group who work outside the money economy. Their work is not worth money, is therefore valueless, is therefore not even real work. And women themselves, who do this valueless work, can hardly be expected to be worth as much as

men, who work for money. In structural terms, the closest thing to the condition of women is the condition of others who are or were also outside of commodity production, i.e., serfs and peasants.

In her recent paper on women, Juliet Mitchell introduces the subject as follows: "In advanced industrial society, women's work is only marginal to the total economy. Yet it is through work that man changes natural conditions and thereby produces society. Until there is a revolution in production, the labor situation will prescribe women's situation within the world of men." The statement of the marginality of women's work is an unanalyzed recognition that the work women do is *different* from the work that men do. Such work is not marginal, however, it is just not wage labor and so is not counted. She even says later in the same article, "Domestic labor, even today, is enormous if quantified in terms of productive labor." She gives some figures to illustrate: in Sweden, 2,340 million hours a year are spent by women in the housework compared with 1,290 million hours spent by women in industry. And the Chase Manhattan Bank estimates a woman's overall work week at 99.6 hours.

However, Mitchell gives little emphasis to the basic economic factors (in fact she condemns most Marxists for being "overly economist") and moves on hastily to super structural factors, because she notices that "the advent of industrialization has not so far freed women." What she fails to see is that no society has thus far industrialized housework. Engels points out that the "first premise for the emancipation of women is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into public industry And this has become possible not only as a result of modern large-scale industry, which not only permits the participation of women in production in large numbers, but actually calls for it and, moreover, strives to convert private domestic work also into a public industry.⁷ And later in the same passage: "Here we see already that the emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so as long as women are excluded from socially productive work and

restricted to housework, which is private." What Mitchell has not taken into account is that the problem is not simply one of getting women into *existing* industrial production but the more complex one of converting private production of household work into public production.

For most North Americans, domestic work as "public production" brings immediate images of Brave New World or of a vast institution—a cross between a home for orphans and an army barracks—where we would all be forced to live. For this reason, it is probably just as well to outline here, schematically and simplistically, the nature of industrialization.

A pre-industrial production unit is one in which production is small-scale and reduplicative; i.e., there are a great number of little units, each complete and just like all the others. Ordinarily such production units are in some way kin-based and they are multi-purpose, fulfilling religious, recreational, educational, and sexual functions along with the economic function. In such a situation, desirable attributes of an individual, those which give prestige, are judged by more than purely economic criteria: for example, among approved character traits are proper behavior to kin or readiness to fulfill obligations.

Such production is originally not for exchange. But if exchange of commodities becomes important enough, then increased efficiency of production becomes necessary. Such efficiency is provided by the transition to industrialized production which involves the elimination of the kin-based production unit. A large-scale, non-reduplicative production unit is substituted which has only one function, the economic one, and where prestige or status is attained by economic skills. Production is rationalized, made vastly more efficient, and becomes more and more public-part of an integrated social network. An enormous expansion of man's productive potential takes place. Under capitalism such social productive forces are utilized almost exclusively for private profit. These can be thought of as *capitalized* forms of production.

If we apply the above to housework and

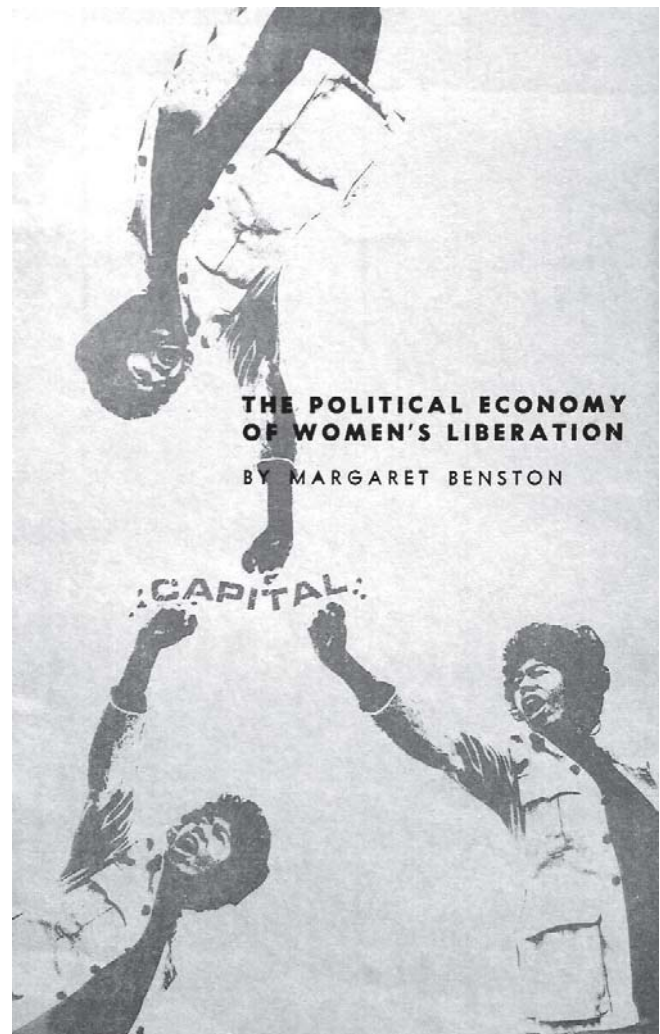
child rearing, it is evident that each family, each household, constitutes an individual production unit, a pre-capitalist entity, in the same way that peasant farmers or cottage weavers constitute pre-industrial production units. The main features are clear, with the reduplicative, kin-based, private nature of the work being the most important. (It is interesting to notice the other features: the multi-purpose functions of the family, the fact that desirable attributes for women do not center on economic prowess, etc.) The rationalization of production effected by a transition to large-scale production has not taken place in this area.

Industrialization is, in itself, a great force for human good; exploitation and dehumanization go with capitalism and not necessarily with industrialization. To advocate the conversion of private domestic labor into a public industry under capitalism is quite a different thing from advocating such conversion in a socialist society. In the latter case the forces of production would operate for human welfare, not private profit, and the result should be liberation, not dehumanization. In this case we can speak of *socialized* forms of production.

These definitions are not meant to be technical but rather to differentiate between two important aspects of industrialization. Thus the fear of the barracks-like result of introducing housekeeping into the public economy is most realistic under capitalism. With socialized production and the removal of the profit motive and its attendant alienated labor, there is no reason why, *in an industrialized society*, industrialization of housework should not result in better production, i.e., better food, more comfortable surroundings, more intelligent and loving child care, etc., than in the present nuclear family.

The argument is often advanced that, under neo capitalism, the work in the home has been much reduced. Even if this is true, it is not structurally relevant. Except for the very rich, who can hire someone to do it, there is for most women, an irreducible minimum of necessary labor involved in caring for home, husband, and children. For a married woman without children this irreducible minimum of

work probably takes fifteen to twenty hours a week; for a women with small children the minimum is probably seventy or eighty hours a week." (There is some resistance to regarding child-rearing as a job. That labor is involved, i.e., the production of use-value, can be clearly seen when exchange-value is also involved—when the work is done by baby sitters, nurses, child-care centers, or teachers. An economist



has already pointed out the paradox that if a man marries his housekeeper, he reduces the national income, since the money he gives her is no longer counted as wages.) The reduction of housework to the minimums given is also expensive; for low-income families more labor is required. In any case, household work remains structurally the same—a matter of private production.

One function of the family, the one taught to us in school and the one which is popularly accepted, is the satisfaction of emotional needs: the needs for closeness, community, and warm secure relationships. This society provides few other ways of satisfying such needs; for example, work relationships or friendships are not expected to be nearly as important as a man-woman-children relationship. Even other ties of kinship are increasingly secondary. This function of the family is important in stabilizing it so that it can fulfill the second, purely economic, function discussed above. The wage-earner, the husband-father, whose earnings support himself, also “pays for” the labor done by the mother-wife and supports the children. The wages of a man buy the labor of two people. The crucial importance of this second function of the family can be seen when the family unit breaks down in divorce. The continuation of the economic function is the major concern where children are involved; the man must continue to pay for the labor of the woman. His wage is very often insufficient to enable him to support a second family. In this case his emotional needs are sacrificed to the necessity to support this ex-wife and children. That is, when there is a conflict the economic function of the family very often takes precedence over the emotional one. And this in a society which teaches that the major function of the family is the satisfaction of emotional needs.⁹

As an economic unit, the nuclear family is a valuable stabilizing force in capitalist society. Since the production which is done in the home is paid for by the husband-father's earnings, his ability to withhold his labor from the market is much reduced. Even his flexibility in changing jobs is limited. The woman, denied an active place in the market, has little control over the conditions that govern her life. Her economic dependence is reflected in emotional dependence, passivity, and other “typical” female personality traits. She is conservative, fearful, supportive of the status quo.

Furthermore, the structure of this family is such that it is an ideal, consumption unit. But this fact, which is widely noted in women's liberation literature, should not be taken to

mean that this is its primary function. If the above analysis is correct, the family should be seen primarily as a production unit for housework and childrearing. *Everyone* in capitalist society is a consumer; the structure of the family simply means that it is particularly well suited to encourage consumption. Women in particular *are* good consumers; this follows naturally from their responsibility for matters in the home. Also, the inferior status of women, their general lack of a strong sense of worth and identity, make them more exploitable than men and hence better consumers.

The history of women in the industrialized sector of the economy has depended simply on the labor needs of that sector. Women function as a massive reserve army of labor. When labor is scarce (early industrialization, the two world wars, etc.) then women form an important part of the labor force. When there is less demand for labor (as now under neo capitalism) women become a surplus labor force but one for which their husbands and not society are economically responsible. The “cult of the home” makes its reappearance during times of labor surplus and is used to channel women out of the market economy. This is relatively easy since the pervading ideology ensures that no one, man or woman, takes women's participation in the labor force very seriously. Women's real work, we are taught, is in the home; this holds whether or not they are married, single, or the heads of households.

At all times household work is the responsibility of women. When they are working outside the home they must somehow manage to get both outside job and housework done (or they supervise a substitute for the housework). Women, particularly married women with children, who work outside the home simply do two jobs; their participation in the labor force is only allowed if they continue to fulfill their first responsibility in the home. This is particularly evident in countries like Russia and those in Eastern Europe when expanded opportunities for women in the labor force have not brought about a corresponding expansion in their liberty. Equal access to jobs outside the home, while one of the

preconditions for women's liberation, will not in itself be sufficient to give equality for women; as long as work in the home remains a matter of private production and is the responsibility of women, they will simply carry a double work-load.

A second prerequisite for women's liberation which follows from the above analysis is the conversion of the work now done in the home as private production into work to be done in the public economy." To be more specific, this means that childrearing should no longer be the responsibility solely of the parents. Society must begin to take responsibility for children; the economic dependence of women and children on the husband-father must be ended. The other work that goes on in the home must also be changed—communal eating places and laundries for example. When such work is moved into the public sector, then the material basis for discrimination against women will be gone.

These are only preconditions. The idea of the inferior status of women is deeply rooted in the society and will take a great deal of effort to eradicate. But once the structures which produce and support that idea are changed then, and only then, can we hope to make progress. It is possible for example, that a change to communal eating places *would* simply mean that women are moved from a home kitchen to a communal one. This would be an advance, to be sure, particularly in a socialist society where work would not have the inherently exploitative nature it has now. Once women are freed from private production in the home, it will probably be very difficult to maintain for any long period of time a rigid definition of jobs by sex. This illustrates the interrelation between the two preconditions given above: true equality in job opportunity is probably impossible without freedom from housework, and the industrialization of housework is unlikely unless women are leaving the home for jobs.

The changes in production necessary to get women out of the home might seem to be, in theory, possible under capitalism. One of the sources of women's liberation movements may be the fact that alternative capitalized forms of

home production now exist. Day care is available, even is inadequate and perhaps expensive; convenience foods, home delivery of meals, and take-out meals are widespread; laundries and cleaners offer bulk rates. However, cost usually prohibits a complete dependence on such facilities, and they are not available everywhere, even in North America. These should probably then be regarded as embryonic forms rather than completed structures. However, they clearly stand as alternatives to the present system of getting such work done. Particularly in North America, where the growth of "service industries" is important in maintaining the growth of the economy, the contradictions between these alternatives and the need to keep women in the home will grow.

The need to keep women in the home arises from two major aspects of the present system. First, the amount of unpaid labor performed by women is very large and very profitable to those who own the means of production. To pay women for their work, even at minimum wage scales, would imply a massive redistribution of wealth. At present, the support of a family is hidden tax on the wage earner—his wage buys the labor power of two people. And second, there is the problem of whether the economy can expand enough to put all women to work as a part of the normally employed labor force. The war economy has been adequate to draw women partially into the economy but not adequate to establish a need for all or most of them. If it is argued that the jobs created by the industrialization of housework will create this need, then one can counter by pointing to (1) the strong economic forces operating for the status quo and against capitalization discussed above, and (2) the fact that the present service industries, which somewhat counter these forces, have not been able to keep up with the growth of the labor force as presently constituted. The present trends in the service industries simply create "underemployment" in the home; they do not create new jobs for women. So long as this situation exists, women remain a very convenient and elastic part of the industrial reserve army. Their incorporation into the labor force on terms of equality—which would create pressure for capitalization of housework—is possible only with

an economic expansion so far achieved by neo capitalism only under conditions of full-scale war mobilization.

In addition, such structural changes imply the complete breakdown of the present nuclear family. The stabilizing consuming functions of the family, plus the ability of the cult of the home to keep women out of the labor market, serve neo capitalism too well to be easily dispensed with. And, on a less fundamental level, even if these necessary changes in the nature of household production were achieved under capitalism it would have the unpleasant consequence of including *all* human relations in the cash nexus. The atomization and isolation of people in Western society is already sufficiently advanced to make it doubtful if such complete psychic isolation could be tolerated. It is likely in fact that one of the major negative emotional responses to women's liberation movements may exactly such a fear. If this is the case, then possible alternatives—cooperatives, the kibbutz, etc.—can be cited to show that psychic needs for community and warmth can in fact be better satisfied if other structures are substituted for the nuclear family.

At best the change to capitalization of housework would only give women the same limited freedom given to most men in capitalist society. This does not mean, however, that women should wait to demand freedom from discrimination. There is a material basis for women's status; we are not merely discriminated against, we are exploited. At present, our unpaid labor in the home is necessary if the entire system is to function. Pressure created by women who challenge their role will reduce the effectiveness of this exploitation. In addition, such challenges will impede the functioning of the family and may make the channeling of women out of the labor force less effective. All of these will hopefully make quicker the transition to a society in which the necessary structural changes in production can actually be made. That such a transition will require a revolution I have no doubt; our task is to make sure that revolutionary changes in the society do in fact end women's oppression.

NOTES

1. Marlene Dixon, "Secondary Social Status of Women," unpub. m.s., Chicago, 1969.
2. The biological argument is, of course, the first one used, but it is not usually taken seriously by socialist writers. Margaret Mead's *Sex and Temperament* is an early statement of the importance of culture instead of biology.
3. This applies to the group or category as a whole. Women as individuals can and do free themselves from their socialization to a great degree (and they can even come to terms with the economic situation in favorable cases), but the majority of women have no chance to do so.
4. Ernest Mandel, "Workers Under Neo capitalism," paper delivered at Simon Fraser University.
5. Ernest Mandel, *An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1967), pp. 10-11.
6. Juliet Mitchell, "Women: The Longest Revolution." *New Left Review*, December 1966.
7. Fredrick Engels, *Origin of the Family. Private Property and State* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), Chapter IX, p. 158. The anthropological evidence known to Engels indicated primitive woman's dominance over man. Modern anthropology disputes this dominance but provides evidence for a more nearly equal position of women in the matrilineal societies used by Engels as examples. The arguments in this work of Engels do not require the former dominance of women but merely their former equality, and so the conclusions remain unchanged.
8. Such figures can easily be estimated. For example, a married woman without children is expected each week to cook and wash up (10 hours), clean house (4 hours), do laundry (1 hour). The figures are minimum times required each week for such work. The total, 16 hours, is probably unrealistically low; even so, it is close to half of a regular work week. A mother with young children must spend at least six or seven days a week working close to 12 hours.
9. For evidence of such teaching, see any high school text on the family.
10. This is stated clearly by early Marxist writers besides Engels. Relevant quotes from Engels have been given in the text; those from Lenin are from "On the Emancipation of Women."

Source : *History as it happened*

Pluralism : Core of Indian Society

Ram Puniyani

INDIA

INTRODUCTION

During last three decades Worldwide in general and in India in particular, there has been a great deal of intolerance for 'others' religious tradition. Globally the theory of clash of civilizations is based on the clash between religious traditions, and locally the politics of RSS combine, the Hindutva also builds itself on the dislike, demonization and hate for others religious traditions.

MEDIEVAL TIMES

As such India has been a country with multiple religious and cultural traditions living and interacting peacefully in the society. While kings had been fighting with each other for the sake of power the average people interacted with each other, cutting across religious lines and created the humane syncretic traditions.

The diversity of Indian society has been a rich source of strength and resilience of the community. Though it is true that kings fought amongst each other for larger control of

Territories, the average people, the toilers, the downtrodden of both the religions celebrated the interaction with each other. While the kings had bigger preoccupations with expansion or preservation of their kingdoms for their material benefit, the large chunk of society derived the pleasure from their social and community life. While different sectors of nobility were more interested in consolidating their political powers and humiliating the other, different creative layers of society: poets, laureates, architects, performing artists, folk artists and painters integrated the other streams into their art, and went on to enrich the art itself in the process.

RELIGION: Biggest synthetic trends are discernible in the popular religions, Bhakti from Hindu side and Sufi from the side of Islam are the major religious trends to have come up in this period. Kabir, Nanak and Tulsidas reflected the synthetic trends and the influence of both major religious trends to have come up in this period. Kabir, Nanak and Tulsidas reflected the synthetic

trends and the influence of both religions in their lives and works.

Kabir, rejected Sanskrit, the language of elite Brahmins and communicated with people in simple Hindi and reflected the building of bridges between the two communities. In one of his *Sabda* he goes on to say that just as ornaments are different manifestation of some basic product, gold, so Allah, Ram, Rahim and Hari were all different names of the same god. *Puja* offered by Hindus and *Namaz* offered by Muslims are just different methods of adoration of the same God. Kabir was a harsh critic of institutionalised religions and the religious traditions which divided people. He was a critic of the mullahs and pandits in equal measures, and the social evils which had infested the society in the name of religion like caste system and untouchability. His teachings spread amongst vast followers of major religious trends to have come up in this period. Kabir, Nanak and Tulsidas reflected the synthetic trends and the influence of both religions in their lives and works teachings spread amongst vast sections of weavers and others, cutting across both the religions.

Tulsidas another poet sage of this time in an autobiographical couplet shows how the religious synthesis was operating at this time:

A slave of Ram is Tulsi,

What ever they say let them say.

On alms I live, the mosque is my refuge,

My give and take with the world is done.

(Tulsidas : from *Kavitavali*)

One of the biggest Ram bhakts of the time was living in a mosque, from where most of his devotional works for lord Ram emanated. Guru Nanak was for peace in the society, influenced by ideas of Kabir and was a strong proponent of syncretism. He tried to unite Hinduism and Islam by adopting beliefs from both these religions, borrowing from Islam, it believes in one God Islam by adopting beliefs from both these religions. Borrowing from Islam, it believes in one God and prohibits image worship. From Hinduism it adopted the theory of reincarnation and karma according to which a persons actions determine his fate in future incarnations. It was against the

caste system. Their holy book, *Adi Granth*, quotes exclusively from Kabir and Sufi saints like Baba Farid. Also one of the Sufi saints Mir Miyan was requested to lay the foundation stone of the Golden temple.

Sufis attracted a large following among the lower classes and castes. It was their unorthodox and simple lifestyle which attracted large number of low castes to convert to Islam. Their majors (holy places) were open to all irrespective of their religious following. Sufis were basically upholding the spiritual side of Islam, and it can be said that it was a revolt against the rigidities of Islam, propagated mainly by the Ulema. One of the great Sufi saints Muhiuddin Ibn Arabi founded the doctrine of *Wahadat-al-wujud* i.e. Unity of being, which promoted spiritual universalism, in turn demolishing the barriers of caste founded the doctrine of *Wahadat-al-wujud* i.e. Unity of being, which promoted spiritual universalism, in turn demolishing the barriers of caste and creed. This doctrine states that the real being is One and we are all its manifestations, this brought in harmony amongst followers of different religions.

It is interesting to note that Sufi saints writings were very close to the people. Baba Farid wrote poetry in Punjabi and his writings are a part of *Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs. Baba Farids most distinguished follower was Nizamuddin Auliya, who proudly used to say that there were as many ways of worshipping God as there are particles of sand. He was very fond of listening to bhajans, being touched equally by bhajans and quawallis. His respect for local traditions was tremendous. One small story will illustrate as to how he was away from Islamic orthodoxy and had great respect for local traditions.

“One day he was passing through the bank of Jamuna in Delhi, along with his disciple, the famous poet Khusrau, and saw some Hindu women bathing in the Jamuna and offering prayers to the sun. To this Hazrat Nizamuddin said, O Khusrau, these women are also praying to Allah; they have their own way of prayer; and then he recited a verse from Quran: “And every one has a direction to which one turns, so vie with one another in good works” (from A.A Engineer, *Sufism and Interfaith Harmony: Institute of Islamic Studies*, March 4, 95)

It is interesting to note here that “Ulema often denounced all those who followed religions

other than Islam as kafirs, where as sufis respected similar spiritual practises in all other religions and showed utmost respect for them “ (A.A Engineer, above paper). Similarly Mazhar Jan-I-Janan was a Sufi theologian of repute who was again a great upholder of respect for others traditions. Dara Shikoh, the heir of Jahangirs throne, who was murdered by his own brother for the sake of power was a great Sanskrit scholar who had studied the Hindu scriptures at depth and had written a book called as *Majmaul Baharayn* (The meeting of the two great oceans, Hinduism and Islam). In this book he compared the Islamic and Sufi Phraseology and that of Hinduism and shows that there is much in common between the two.

The interaction of the practice of these two religions has been very well summarised by well known scholar Dr.B.N Pandey, “Islam and Hinduism which appeared at the start so antithetical, at last intermingled, each one stirred the profoundest depth of the other and from their synthesis grew the religion of Bhakti and Tasawwaf, the religion of love and devotion, which swept the hearts of millions following different religions and sects in India. The current of Islamic sufism and Hindu Bhakti combined into a mighty stream which fertilised old desolate tracts and changed the face of the country. It was this spirit of India which achieved apparently an impossible task of reconciling the puritanical severity and awe inspiring transcendence of Islam into luxuriant fullness and abundance of form and the intuitive perception of there immanent unity with Hinduism, and created those monuments of art, literature, painting, music and poetry and love inspired religion which are the heritage of Indian History, during the middle ages.”.

CULTURE : Due to interaction of the Muslim kings, Islam and local culture there developed a whole stream of synthetic culture in all walks of life, in music khayal, ghazal and thumri are outstanding contributions of these interaction. North Indian classical music as known today, is a thorough blend of Hindu and Muslim elements achieved over 500 years. Ibrahim second Adishahi of Bijapur (1580-1626) had 300 Hindu singers in his court. To popularise this music among Muslims he himself composed *Kitab-e-Naurang* in Urdu (a book containing 59 poems) and of those the first one is an invocation of goddess Saraswati). Chaitanya Maha prabhu and most of the Vaishnav

saint poets influenced many Muslims to write in their idiom. Rahim and Raskhan are among the very popular Hindi poets who have written in Brij-bhasha in praise of lord Krishna. Syed Wazid Shah wrote *Hir and Ranja* the greatest classic of medieval times. Sheikh Mohammed has greatly contributed to Marathi literature and Shivajis guru (saint teacher) Ramdas Ranja had special words of praise for him.

Mixture of Persian dialect with Western Hindi spoken in and around Delhi produced a new language which later on came to be called as Urdu. There were great Hindu scholars who took to Urdu not only as administrative language but also wrote and contributed to Urdu literature. Hindu architecture was masked by profusion of intricate sculptured detail, while Islamic architecture was notable for elegance and lightness. The fusion of the two manifested in different architectural marvels which came up during this phase. This fusion is seen in Jodhabais palace in Agra fort, in Fatehpur Sikri, and in arches of Kuwat-ul-Islam mosque. The influence of this mixture is discernible far and wide in the havelis of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and the Indo-Saracenic architecture of Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer. Similarly fusion of Persian techniques and brilliant Hindu colors resulted in the type of miniature painting marked by beauty and lyricism.

One of the most valuable relics of the harmony of mediaeval society which has survived the onslaughts of different communal forces is Sufi dargah (shrine). These dargahs are scattered in many a cities, managed by Hindu or Muslim families and visited by people of all religions, unmindful of the communal venom being poured by practitioners of communal politics. Right near Mumbai, Haji Malang shrine is a very good expression of syncretic ethos of medieval times. The hereditary trustee of the shrine is the Kailashnath Gopal Ketkar (a Brahmin). The offerings given at the shrine are a mixture of Hindu and Muslim traditions. Devotees offer chaddars, coconuts, flower and sheets of flower. To add on to this the many a Christian churches also became a place of pilgrimage for people of all the religions like Mount Mary Church in Mumbai amongst many others.

Such examples are numerous and scattered all over. Today there is a conscious attempt to

downplay such a valuable tradition and to harp upon the differences of the elite and the rulers. There is a need to look at the truth as a whole. There is a need to observe the richness of these syncretic traditions which are a rich tribute to our communities love, respect and tolerance for each other.

MODERN INDIA

The concept of Indian Nationalism began with the introduction of modern industries and modern education system. These profound changes in India resulted in the rise of many new social classes, businessmen-industrialists, educated classes and workers. They formed their associations; the political expression of these new classes was Indian National Congress. With the formation of this political outfit, which strove for the interests of these new rising classes, the declining classes of landlord, kings and associated clergy of both the religions, Hindus and Muslims, came together to form United India Patriotic Association (UIPA), which pledged its loyalty to British rule and opposed the formation of Congress on the ground that 'our' religion teaches us to be loyal to the king (queen in this case) and the action of Congress tantamount to disloyalty to British.

It is from this period on that communal violence started in India and foundations of communal politics were laid. This formation, UIPA later gave birth to religion based communal streams, Muslim League, Punjab Hindu Sabha and Hindu Mahasabha. Later from amongst the Brahmins, RSS came into being. People like Bhagat Singh (Hindustan Socialist Republican Association) Dr. Bhimrao Babasaheb Ambedkar (Republican Party of India, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mahatma Gandhi, Annie Besant etc (Indian National Congress) strove for democratic/socialist nationalism and contributed in different ways for the freedom of the country and participated in the freedom movement. While people like Mohammad Ali Jinnah (Muslim League) Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (Hindu Mahasabha) and RSS (Hindu Rashtra) talked of the old glories of their religions and opposed the movement for secular Indian nationalism. Savarkar was anti British revolutionary till 1906, but after getting himself released from Andmans, he never participated in the anti British movement. Jinnah initially joined Congress but later when Gandhi gave the call for non cooperation movement he distanced himself

from Congress and much later joined and led Muslim League.

People like Bhagat Singh, Gandhi and Ambedkar saw India as a nation in the making while Muslim league argued that Muslims are a nation from the time since Mohammad bin Kasim attacked and ruled Sindh from 8th Century. Savarkar argued that Hindus are a nation from times immemorial and RSS later went to say that Muslims have to live here as a subordinate nation. The streams deriving their identity from religion acted as the ideal foil for British policy of 'divide-and-rule'. The average people of India did not support communal streams. Only an insignificant section of Muslim supported Muslim league and the demand for Pakistan. Similarly a miniscule section of Hindus supported Hindu mahasabha. The partition tragedy took place mainly due to British policy of divide and rule supplemented by the decisive politics spread by ML, HM and RSS. Since these streams did not get popular support they started spreading hate against the other community.

Muslim League, Muslim communalists propagated that Hindus are cowards, we ruled them, they kafirs etc. Hindu Mahasabha/RSS picked up from British historiography to propagate through various mechanisms and more so through Shukla baidhhi that Muslim kings destroyed Hindu temples, Islam was spread by sword, Muslims committed lot of atrocities on Hindus, they marry four times, produce many children and kill cows that are an object of worship for Hindus. These myths about other communities were the ground on which communal violence stood and social and political atmosphere started getting vitiated and communal violence and divisive atmosphere started affecting the national scene. This aided in the partition process. This propagation about other community totally ignored the plural and diverse nature of Indian society. It totally bypassed the syncretic values, bhakti-Sufi of Indian tradition and harped on the differences of the elite.

Indian constitution came to express the values of freedom movement and was based on the concepts of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The communal streams believe in the hierarchy of caste and gender, though in a subtle form. Muslim elite inherently believed in the Ashraf, Azlaf and Arzal at caste level and the inferiority of women at

gender level. The hierarchy of Hindu caste system, Brahmin, Khatriya, Vaishya and Shudra was put forward as the glorious way of organizing the society and inferiority of women was reflected in the word, Rashtra Sevak Samiti the subordinate women's organization where the word swayam is missing, in contrast to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh which is the real controller of the other subordinate hindutva organizations.

Pakistan, the result primarily of British machinations was formed on the basis of Islam, and India on secular grounds. Pakistan toeing the religion based nationalism broke into two, Pakistan and Bangla Desh, while India though formed on the grounds of secular democracy is being severely threatened by the growing strength of RSS, Hindu nationalism and its impact on the cultural and political arena in India. It got manifested in the form of ascendancy of divisive politics, demolition of Babri masjid, post demolition violence, burning of Pastor Stains, Gujarat carnage, and the blasts all around. The concept of secular democracy has been maligned, efforts are being made to demonize the minorities, their being part of Indian society is being questioned and in the whole milieu the social progress is being retarded.

CURRENT TIMES

In India one has seen the intensification of violence in the name of religion more so from last two decades. After Babri demolition a wave of violence rocked the nation. In 1998, a Pastor working amongst leprosy patients was burnt alive along with his two innocent sons. Anti Christian violence has been the marker of our times. The burning of Sabramati express in Godhra followed by the massive anti Muslim violence, the genocide, was another blot on the national life. The 9/11 events, resulted in the death of close to three thousand people of all religions. Along with this came the thesis that current time is the one of clash of civilizations, the backward Islamic civilization is out to destroy the advanced Western civilization. One can see the underlining element of the attempt to relate the violence and religion in some form or the other.

Along with this came the misunderstanding about other religions. This misunderstanding has assumed mammoth proportions today and it provides the base for the violence and the policy of aggressions/acts of violence and terror. There is a clear need to understand the difference

between religion and politics, there is a need to understand the rise of violence from these misconceptions.

Most of the religions came as a set of moral values to guide the people to cultivate the feelings of love for mankind. There began a process of institutionalization of religions to ensure that these values are sustained and percolated to the broad layers of people. At the same time the emphasis on rituals began to be heavier while the focus and emphasis on moral values took a back seat. Over a period of time the institutional rigidities and ritual, identity part of religion has undermined the moral values of religions. There have been numerous attempts to ensure that the basic unity between people of different religions is sustained though the efforts of saints and others who preached the values of humanism in right earnest.

Today the vested interests have launched the efforts to suppress the weaker section of society and weaker nations for the sake of their material interests. As these attempts are undertaken in the name of religion a feeling of alienation amongst people overtakes the real spirit of religion.

Here at home those associated with RSS and politics in the name of Hindutva have been spreading the hate amongst different communities. The result is there for all to see. This hate has been spread against Muslims and Christians both. Muslims have been projected to be fanatics, aggressors, having more wives, converting through sword and being more loyal to Pakistan. This has resulted in a broad social common sense which sees Muslims as the 'other', their demonization, the consequent violence at different places even on the smallest of pretexts, the fear and insecurity leading to their ghettoisation. At global level the US has been resorting to War against terror which is a ploy to attack the areas in oil rich countries and to create a global Islamophobia. World wide this hate against Muslims is on the rise. In India the problem is worst confounded as the US goals worldwide and RSS goals at home match and worsen the problem. In many a Muslim majority countries similar processes are going on against the other religious minorities.

In India even the tiny minority of Christians has been accused of conversions through allurements and fraud. As a matter of fact the population of Christians is declining from last four decades (1971-2.60%, 1981-2.44%, 1991-2.32%

and 2001-2.30 %), despite that a sustained scattered attacks on Christian missionaries is on the rise. Similarly the myths against Muslim minorities have no truth but have captured the minds of people, the destruction of holy places done by kings in the past for the sake of power and wealth is being presented as the insult of faith, the conversions in the past are being presented as due to coercion, the demographic profile which is due to social factors is being shown to be due to religion, the loyalty to other nations is a mere propaganda meant to suit their political goals, and that all Muslims are terrorists also does not hold any water as neither is terrorism due to religion nor all terrorists belong to Muslims. (LTTE, ULFA, Khalistanis, Irish Republican Army and so on)

WAY TO HUMANE FUTURE

The responsible people of different faiths do realize that this is not in tune with the spirit of their religion. They are watching helplessly this whole process of demonization of certain religious communities and the social rifts being created due to that. Faith in the values of humanism is paramount in the values of religion. This current scenario is pushing back the aspirations of poor people and so it is needed that the situation is overcome for the sake of better world, for the sake of peace and amity. While the political forces bent upon creating this mayhem are very powerful and almighty, have control over resources of different types and on media, the people with genuine faith in human values need to come forward to ensure that this dark phase of human history is overcome in the spirit of dialogue. The need for inter community relations and dialogue was never needed more than at present times.

The isolation due to this political process is not only creating emotional walls amongst different communities, it is also resulting in the retardation of social development. The kernel of present efforts for peace lies in the process of building bridges amongst communities and that process can be started only by a genuine dialogue amongst people of different faiths, by coming close to each other by abolishing the artificial boundaries created by the politics of hate being practiced by various forces, globally and locally.

These dialogues amongst different religious communities are needed at all the levels, starting from the basti, mohalla to the leadership of religions,

scholars of religions, the activists engaged in dispelling hate from the society, and those working for human rights, all of them need to be involved in this process of dialogue. The present impasse which is presenting religions as the separating points need to be overcome and the understanding that religious differences and plural ways of life are a strength not an obstacle to peace. The dialogue amongst religions needs to be supplemented by the cooperation in the field of social work to alleviate the pain and misery of the mankind, there is a need to encourage and coordinate in the field of struggles for the human rights of deprived sections of society. We aspire for peace and we remind ourselves that the peace desired by us can not be achieved without justice for the people. Justice is a mandatory prerequisite for peace. The spirit of service to mankind has to prevail over the current assault on the basic human values in the name of religion.

We need to look into the recent high level committee of UN which went on to counter the thesis of Clash of civilizations put forward by the US professor Samuel Huntington. This thesis forms the cover for US ambitions for its aggressions in West Asia. The UN committee (<http://www.unaoc.org/repository/report.htm>) has put forward that there is no clash between civilizations, as a matter of fact civilization have an alliance for a better tomorrow. On the similar lines one will like to say that there is no clash between the moral values of religions, it is the alliance between these values that the human race can look forward to a better future, a future which will eliminate poverty, hunger, disease and misery from the world. Religions should be standing for love and peace. One posits that there cannot be peace without justice and so the implication is that religions should address the issues not only of poverty but also of the system which creates poverty, it just does not talk of superficial manifestation of the problems but to go to the root of prevalent problems and to raise the voice against perpetrators of injustices. Religions have to raise the issues of human rights of all people of the World. It is this alliance which will ensure that the focus of world policies has to be brought back to the issue of Human rights of weaker sections of society. Nothing short of a genuine dialogue amongst people of different faiths can overcome the obstacles created by the

political forces misusing the religious identity for their political goals.

India is essentially a plural, multicultural, multi-religious nation. The tasks for secular movement are huge, we need to retrieve the values of freedom movement from the clutches of communal politics, politics in the name of religion. We need to reconnect with the plural, mixed heritage and cultural diversity of the country. We need to strengthen the syncretic aspects of religious traditions, the traditions which look at religion as a uniting force, not a divisive disrupter.

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Cinematic Secularism of Dharmputra

Prakash K Ray

(INDIA)



Dharmputra (Yash Chopra, 1961) is one of the most remarkable films that engage with the problematic theme of communalism set against the background of Partition of India. The story begins in 1925 depicting the closeness of two families- headed by Nawab Badruddin (Ashok Kumar) and Gulshan Rai. Nawab's daughter, Husn Banu (Mala Sinha) becomes pregnant, though she is still unwed. Her lover Javed Hamid (Rehman) has been declared unfit by Nawab to be her husband because of his social positioning. Now, eager to save his family's reputation and honour, Nawab looks for him but he is nowhere to be found. Nawab goes to Rai's son Amrit (Manmohan Krishna) for help. Amrit and his wife Savitri (Nirupa Roy) adopt the baby. Eventually Banu meets her lover, Javed, and with the approval of Nawab get married. Soon, taking part in the struggle for Independence Nawab is killed and the couple goes to some other place to get over the

trauma and return after some years. While on the one hand, the freedom movement is nearing its goal, on the other hand, communal politics is leading the country to the Partition. Dilip is now grown up as a handsome young man (played by Shashi Kapoor) and has joined communal Hindu organization that preaches hatred against the Muslims. Dilip and his organisation declare that all Muslims in Delhi must be killed or forced to leave for Pakistan. With a lynch mob, he goes to the house where Banu lives with her husband to execute that agenda.

His parents try to stop him but he refuses to listen to them. At last they reveal the truth about his biological mother. At once, the entire ideological and cultural understanding of Dilip gets shattered. The film ends with a plea for communal harmony.

The film is based on a novel of the same title written by Acharya Chatursen Shastri. It was Shashi Kapoor's first adult role. The songs penned by Sahir and composed by N Dutta are still popular. Akhtar-ul Iman wrote the dialogues. Later in the film, a voice-over by a narrator (Dilip Kumar) describes the plight of partition and communalism. Rajendra Kumar makes a special appearance as a secular nationalist figure resembling a congressman. Despite the boldness of the theme and the freshness of the memories of the violent Partition, the film could not get expected success; however, it earned rave reviews and the national award.

This was the second film directed by Yash Chopra under the banner of BR Films headed by his brother BR Chopra. In his directorial debut, *Dhool Ka Phool* (1959), he had highlighted the misery of an unwed mother, the trauma of being an 'illegitimate' child and broader social hypocrisies. The mother has to abandon the infant that is found by an old man. The social attitude towards such a child begins unfolding soon when the old man, Abdul, requests the villagers to adopt the child. He tells them to

accept him as a gift from God but no one, whether Hindu or Muslim, is ready to keep the child whose parentage is not known. Abdul raises the child to become a good human being, instead of a Hindu or a Muslim. The song sung by Abdul in the film, 'Na Hindu Banega Na Musalman banega, Insaan

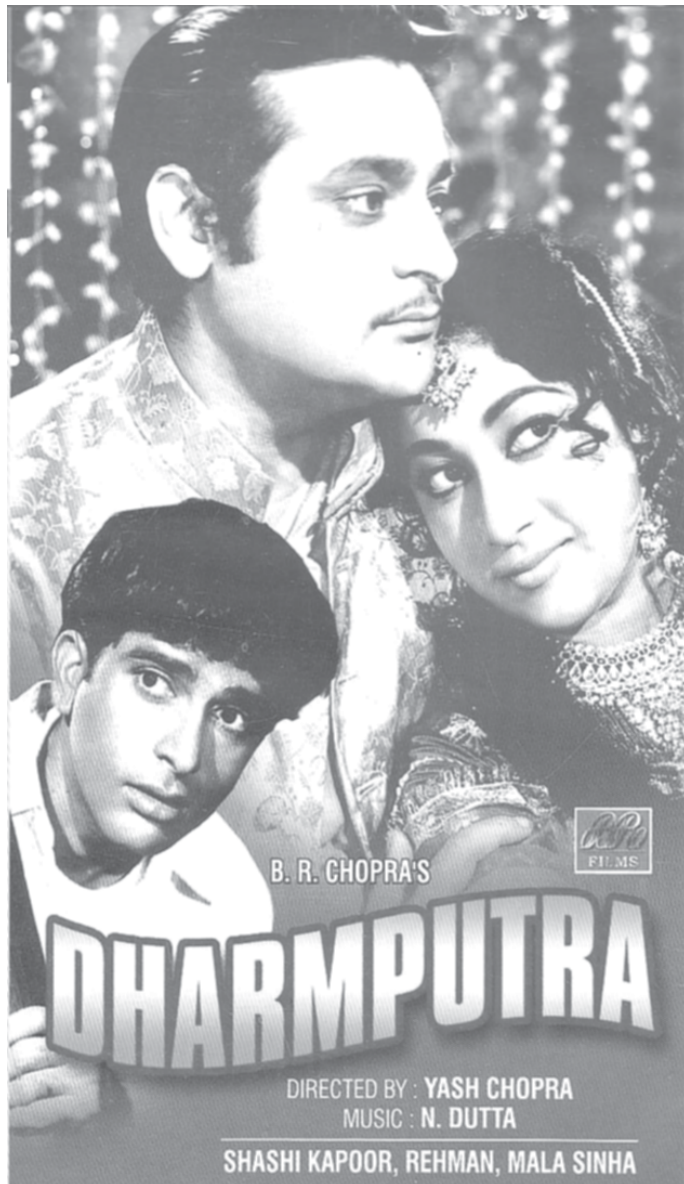
the new nation and its new sensibility. In another sequence, he says that he found the child on April 15, 1947. Though he mentions April, it resonates the day India won freedom. Though, I do not propose to see the child as a 'midnight child', but there are enough hints in the narrative in this regard.

In *Dhool Ka Phool*, the narrative prominence of Abdul's character and an intense secular stand in the song is interesting in the light of the fact that Yash Chopra used to be a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Caste Hindu fundamentalist outfit, and even made crude bombs to be used in the riots during Partition. Partition's violence, friendship with Sahir and the impact of his elder brother soon changed him.

The secular vision of the Chopra brothers is most clearly expressed in *Dharmputra* that argues for a secular society based on religious amity. Acharya Shastri wrote to B R Chopra suggesting to him to make a film on Hindu-Muslim unity and sent his novel for consideration. Chopra, himself a victim of partition, liked the novel and decided to convert it into a film. He had earlier made *Chandni Chowk* on the theme, which was rejected by the audience, but a determined Chopra went ahead with the project.

Acharya Chatursen Shastri, a prominent writer and journalist in Hindi, has been, on the one hand, criticized by some critics for being 'reactionary' and 'revivalist' in his depiction of history and, on the other, placed in the league of Premchand. However, his sympathy for the RSS is evident from his description of the Partition's violent days in Delhi in the preface of *Dharmputra*, the novel, where he describes the defeated Muslims and praises the 'angry tigers' of the organization. The communal activities of the RSS, at that time, were even accepted by the organization itself. Not going into further discussion, it can be argued that the Chopras changed the tone and texture of the novel since the film is not entirely based on the literary text.

The film begins with the credits rolling



Ki Aulad Hai Insaan Banega', depicts Abdul's desire to see the child as a sign of humanity. Naming the child Roshan (Enlightened) and telling him to become a symbol of the changed time (*Badle Huye Waqt Ki Pehchan Banega*), Abdul metaphorically points towards

with the song, *Saare Jahan Se Achha*, written by Iqbal, and visuals of cultural symbols of multi-cultural, multi-religious India echoing the inclusive nature of the Indian National Movement in which background the story unfolds. In order to win Independence, a voice-over emphasizes the unity of the two communities- Hindu and Muslim. This unity was one of the important aspects of the movement. The story begins with a procession against colonial rule in 1925 and ends with the partition days of 1947. It must be noted that Arya Samaj and the RSS along with the Muslim League championed the communalization of society, particularly in the North-West India during these years. It is, indeed, remarkable for the Chopras to point finger at the Hindu communalists because their family belong to the Arya Samaj. Thus, the film stands out as an example of rare artistic integrity and commitment.

The narrative and scenic elements employed in the film continuously reiterate the socio-cultural as well as a humanist unity of the communities. The deep sense of neighbourliness makes the two families one entity. This bond is repeatedly expressed through everyday lives and also through the crises the families face. The ultimate sign representing this unison is the adoption of Bano's infant by Amrit Rai. This act not only refers to the close ties between the families that demand from Amrit Rai and Savitri to do so in order to save the honour of Nawab and his unwed daughter, but also marks the families as one conveying the inseparability of the two communities. The construction of the bridge joining the houses of the two families to make it convenient for the child to visit Husn Bano further strengthens the closeness. The song about the oneness of God, Nawab's sacrifice for the country, the voice-over etc. asserts the shared space including the political, strongly underlining the equal claim of the Muslim community on the nation by recalling its intense cultural and political contribution.

The film also counters Dilip's thoughts regarding the ideal woman. In an argument with her son, Dilip, Savitri underlines the

rampant oppression of women by regressive socio-religious practices. Here, we witness, as Bhaskar has pointed out, an educated middle class woman's inclination towards the modernist ideals of the State.

Dilip refuses to listen to his father's argument on the difference between the true religion and communalism. His ideological-political notion- the purity of his origin, and the inseparability of the nation and the religion- is only shattered by the truth that Husn Bano, the *Muslim* woman, he is about to kill for the nation, is his mother. His cry *Ma!* (Mother!) dissolves into the cry of the nation agonized, killed, looted, raped, displaced due to the violent orgy of the Partition. Using documentary visuals of violence with dramatized sequences and the song *Ye Kiska Lahoo Hai Kaun mara* (Whose blood is this, who is killed), the film leaves a deep impact. Just before the end, it is the police, an arm of the State, that come and control the violent mob.

The film deserves unquestioned commendation for portraying the unprecedented violence and trauma brought by Partition, and for highlighting the dangers posed by majority communalism. Despite the hollowness of its ideology, it remains one of the biggest challenges before the nation since Independence. Even the release of the film was threatened. Yash Chopra had recalled those days in an interview: 'It was the most controversial film of the time and both the communities threatened to burn down the theatres. The exhibitors weren't willing to release the film and to give them confidence, Shashi Kapoor, Deven Verma and I sat in the manager's room for all the shows everyday....'

Though the film was only a moderate success at the time of its release, it remains an important film on the theme of Partition. Ironically, Bombay cinema has made very few films on the theme while a number of important filmmakers had witnessed the tragedy and some were also its victims.

*Prakash K. Ray : Journalist. Author of
BR Chopra : His Films, His Times*

Efforts made by partners on
COMPOSITE HERITAGE



1

My journey started with ISD when I got the opportunity to receive an orientation about Composite Heritage on February, 2015 at Tewa, Nepal. Before that I had no idea about Composite Heritage, It was for the first time when I met friends from South Asia who like me came to learn about Composite Heritage. It was a great learning experience with so much of fun which to me is the core value of every Composite Heritage training.

In those days, I use to work for Shtrii Shakti, a leading national NGO, working in the area of women and youth empowerment. Soon after the orientation program once again I got another chance to receive ToT on Composite Heritage in September, 2015 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This time we actually practiced what we learned in the orientation program, this brought lots of insightful thoughts and additional values of being a global citizen. There, I got the chance to celebrate one of the major festivals of Muslim community called EID, even if, I came from the Hindu community, I didn't felt any kind of difference with Muslim friends which was actually the first step towards breaking old mind set.

The year 2015 was full of difficulties and challenges for Nepali people from Natural calamities to the political unrest. During those days Nepali citizens developed a sense of unconstructive and negative attitude towards Indian Government and people. At that time I advocated and spread the message of social harmony and peace among the community people. Similarly, on 25th April, 7.6 magnitude devastating earthquake stroke in Nepal and took away more than 8000 lives and more than 20,000 people were injured. Due to this disaster all the planned project activities were postponed and we became busy in providing emergency support to highly affected areas like Nallu, Dhading and Nikosera with food supplies, tents and medicines. We faced a lot of difficulties during distribution of relief materials and that was the time when Composite Heritage learning as a tool helped me to deal with aggressive community people and to address their expectations from us. In fact later on they themselves supported us to reach out the highly affected and needy peoples of the community.

I am glad to express that Composite Heritage is a great disaster management tool which I learn from my own experience. I was able to apply the learning of Composite Heritage as disaster management tool during post earthquake period which helped us to create positive impacts among community people. I will be always grateful to ISD for providing me the opportunity to expand my horizon and making me skilful towards creating a peaceful and harmonized society.

Sangita Mayur
Global Citizen, Nepal

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2

My Memories

I am Shahida Tasneem, born in November 1949 in Lahore city. In my childhood I saw the city very peaceful and harmonious place where I had not evident of any hater on the name of religious or social biases. We were used to celebrate Basant festival for three days. Amimy mother used to make new clothes of very specific colour called "Basanti Rang" for us on this event and it was a tradition all over that people wear new cloths of basanti colour. There was not gender or religious division or discrimination during the celebration. We used to fly colourful kites and have competition with neighbourhood. "Aba ji" my father used to invite his friends family members and on this event. There was a tradition to visit each other's house during these three days and distribute local made sweets called Methai especially Ladu because of their colour which resemble the event colour. During this celebration the local authorities clean the city very regularly and decorate it with flowers and colourful stuffs. Sometimes my father's Sikh friends from Amritsar, India also used to join us on this festival and our all neighbourhood love to have them as guest and feel proud that they come to see our celebrations.

They were so beautiful days which are disappeared. Now I am an old lady and mother of 10 children but even when I remember those days I feel like a child myself. I wish I can see those days again.

Shahida Tasneem,
Pakistan

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3

Training on Composite Heritage became useful for Positive Change

I has been working in United Mission to Nepal (UMN) as a Rehab. Coordinator since 2005. Through our programme, we are providing treatment support to the disabled children and income generation support for their parents especially who are poor and marginalized. Our service does not end with the treatment we want to rehabilitate them in their own community as an ambassador to generate hope and motivation for other disable children and family. But the process is not so easy. The perception of communities, people even family towards disabled people is not positive. They think disability is the result of sin in former birth. Disabled people were more aggressive and reactive towards those communities. Negative attitude and behavior of both were directly reflected in the process of programme. In such

situation it was really challenging to run the programme smoothly and result oriented.

In the month August of 2014, UMN provided an opportunity to me to attend the orientation training workshop on Composite Heritage (CH) organized by Institute of Social Democracy (ISD) India. The training provided me good knowledge about Composite Heritage; its importance and application in the community during different stages of our programme. It was good opportunity to discuss, understand and reflect positive and negative Composite Heritage of different countries : Nepal, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Especially I became able to relook my programme through positive and negative composite heritage and its role to develop negative perception of communities and people for disable people. During my field visit, I am conducting formal and informal discussion session and meetings among UMN cluster and partner's staff even between disabled and non-disabled people and communities. I am trying to minimize the negative Composite Heritage and maximize the positive Composite Heritage. Now a days in the area where we implementing our project the negative perception and prejudices towards the disabled people are gradually decreasing which is helping us to make out programme more participatory and effective. Designed activities for disabled families are running smoothly. Non disabled communities are supporting to disabled communities.

Nepal is full of cultural, religion, language, environment and ethnic diversity. It has 125 languages and 123 ethnic groups. They have their own culture and practices. In such scenario this training is more essential, useful and practical for the staff who are involving in development activities. Lastly I would like to thank to UMN and ISD for providing me such practical training to me.

Damodar Pandit

Rehab. Coordinator

*United Mission to Nepal, Thapathali, Kathmandu,
Nepal*

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4

It was July 2014 when I first time heard about ISD as an institute which is working to promote peace and democratic values at South Asia level through our chairperson Ms Mahnaz Rahman who sent me an information to apply for an upcoming training on Composite Heritage in Dhaka. She told me that she already is trained on this subject and this training will be beneficial for us to promote peace.

Before applying for the training I searched some material on net related to the topic as it was a new concept for me. I got very little reading material and all

was produced by ISD. We two people (MR. Waseem Ejaz and myself) from AASAAN Foundation attended the training in August 2014. It was an opening for us to include this concept in our peace building program especially for youth as AASAAN Foundation mostly focus on youth for peace and harmony promotion in the society.

Our first activity in this regard was a two day orientation workshop for our team in the organization so that they also have clarity about the topic followed by a plan to include this concept as tool in our running peace building program. We also used conflict analysis, global and local forces analysis who play positive or negative roles in conflicts, tools and mechanisms for Composite Heritage and historical analysis tool as well as include these sessions in our on-going workshops. We also arranged few exposure trips for youth to historical places in district TAXILA, ATTAK and RAWALPINDI which were our common historical places and our youth was not aware of it.

I also work as training consultant with different international and national organizations therefore I got the opportunity to use different sessions in some of the training on peace, harmony and inter and intra faith workshops.

In February 2015 two more people got the opportunity from AASAAN Foundation to be trained on Composite Heritage in Nepal. This strengthened our team to work use this concept in more appropriate manner in our daily work on peace. As a team we also include this concept in one of our project proposal so that we could have some specific resources to work on it with full focus.

In September 2015 ISD gave us a chance to receive the ToT in Dhaka. It was a very good experience which really empowered me and my colleague to use the manual in different trainings. After receiving the training I applied few sessions in my three trainings on Human Rights, Peace Building and Social & religious harmony.

Now a days I am collecting some case studies/ memories of elderly people of our society on such events/ practises and celebrations which were our composite heritage and were promoting harmony among different sections of the society and now they are fadeout due to many political reasons for ISD newsletter.

Zahra Tul Fatima

Pakistan

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5

I participated in the Orientation Workshops on Composite Heritage from 11-15 February, 2015 held at Tewa Training Centre, Kathmandu, Nepal and Training of Trainers (ToT) on Composite Heritage from 20th to 26th September 2015 at CCDB, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Due to freedom fighting between Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1971, respect for Bangladesh and disrespect grown in my behavior against Pakistan. These behaviors were not aggressive but I used to consider all the Pakistani people as opposition. But after participating in the Orientation Workshops on Composite Heritage, I have received a message that some people were involved in that war in 1971, so blaming all is injustice. We should realize and rethink humanely. I have changed my attitude towards Pakistani people as my opposition. As a trainer, I have to conduct sessions in different levels over the year. Whenever such type of nationalism arises conflict in the discussion, I try to play the role of a peace worker. This is not a big thing but it is a tremendous change for me.

Inclusion of some sessions in ALRD's training programs from the Composite Heritage workshops helps changing participants' behavior towards peace and harmony.

Inclusion of different sessions in ALRD's training curriculum are given below-

Contents Selected content Learned from Title of ALRD's training

- i. Context of Conflict
 - ii. Importance of Composite Heritage to peace and harmony
 - iii. Games related to peace and conflicts.
- Orientation workshops on Composite Heritage
i.) Training on Land law and Mobilization, ii.) Gender Equality and Women's Access to Land.

We have incorporated a training course on Conflict Transformation in our next five-year plan inspired from the workshops on Composite Heritage.

MD. Shofiqul Islam

Program Officer (Training)

*Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD),
Bangladesh*

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6

I attended Advanced Social Historical Analysis Training (ASHA) in 2010, Composite Heritage Orientation in 2014 and ToT in 2015 at Hope Center, Dhaka. After receiving the trainings I really feel to work on it. After coming back to my organization I had to sit and share with my colleague. We are working in 27 villages under the Action research for alternative development in Chittagong Hill Tracts and Enhancement of the social workers in Chittagong Hill Tracts. We are trying to introduce Composite Heritage at village level through discussing with the Village resource persons. First of all we are thinking to introduce with the tools than we can start to work on it. Even we have great chance to work on it because we are 11 indigenous groups living in Chittagong Hill Tracts. We have different customs,

language, traditional system and ideology but we peoples are very much unique. We have some commonness things among the 11 indigenous groups which bring us together like Jum cultivation, maleya, Boisabi festival etc.

We people usually do Jum cultivation in same style to produce multiple crops. Maleya are the one of tools to bring us together. Maleya means cooperative. I can say like if anybody can't build his house alone the family can request to the villagers to help to build his house and he will provide food. Such a way we peoples come together. Now we are thinking to work on language to bring together. If 11 group's people can speak and communicate in 11 languages it will bring us together and will bond us in one relation. In such way we are doing and thinking to work on Composite heritage.

Sudipta Chakma

Maleya Foundation

Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

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7

My involvement with ISD began after my participation in orientation on Composite Heritage held in February 2015 in Nepal. For me the concept was new. Following that I also got the opportunity to participate in the ToT on Composite Heritage in Bangladesh in September 2105. I had never participated in such kind of training where you got the opportunity to reflect your context in a very cultural way according to each country's context. After receiving the orientation I shared the concept of Composite Heritage to my staff members to enhance their understanding about Composite Heritage. In April 2015 Nepal experienced devastating earthquakes and faced unofficial embargo from india from September 2015 February 2016 after the formulation of new constitution which was not accepted by the people of Madhesh. At that context the hatred amongst Pahadi people and Madhesh people was rising up. I was just back from ToT on Composite Heritage. To intervene at some extent my organization invited a women from Madhes (both Pahadi and Madheshi) for the consultation of the context. At this event I incorporated some of the concept of Composite Heritage to our women where they also realized our common and shared values as Nepali citizens. They promised us that they will create a similar space in their community where they will also share this concept which can contribute in bringing peace and Harmony among people of their community.

What ISD Gave us :

- A common platform for the peace practitioners and the peacebuiiders like us to share our work with each-other and to learn the best practices from each-other.

- A very simple tool which can contribute in bringing peace and harmony amongst people in the divided society
- An analytical skills for analyzing the dividers and what intervention can pull these dividers in the collective effort whereby everyone can contribute to create peaceful societies.
- Think about the neglected issues which are around us.

Susan Risal
Nagrik Awaz, Nepal

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8

ToT on Composite Heritages, increased my analytical skills, facilitation skills and made me familiarised on South Asia social context as ISD, not only provided the concept of Composite Heritages but also encouraged to be Facilitators by providing in depth analysis on South Asia Socio cultural environment.

I use the tools/concept during the training on LCP, Context Analysis and Social Analysis as well. I use the term in my communications like personal contact, participating in meeting, workshop or in my write ups. There are number of my write ups/articles published by me where I highlighted/promoted the existing Composite Heritages that needs to taken care off for the sake of communal harmony among the 11 Indigenous Community of Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. I personally discouraged/critics, to the number of young development workers of Chittagong Hill Tracts whose thoughts reflect only on his/her community or some section's interest only as we 11 Indigenous Community share the same sort of culture and values for the centuries long. Similarly, we also uphold the thoughts of the persons/groups that reflects/promote collectiveness of the People of Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Personally, motivating the colleagues to work on Composite Heritage among the Indigenous Peoples. Finally, I have a plan to develop a research based article on Composite Heritages of CHT Indigenous Peoples.

Nyohla Mong
Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

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9

This is a personal narrative of my journey with ISD. I got associated with ISD less than a decade ago and the journey has been intellectually enriching and full of surprises. It has also been a deeply personal journey. It began with attending a Composite heritage workshop. The Most important aspect of my association with ISD

is the self reflective exercise in order to gain clarity about myself and understanding the many ways to peace.

What are the habitations of peace? Or to put it more simply where does peace reside? This is a question I'm often confronted with. Having witnessed various instances of domestic violence from close quarters, I often wondered about peace in my personal life. Feminism and its various texts assisted me in this journey towards self reflection and transformation. However there were still parts of me that remained in a state of turbulence, trying to find that balance. The association with composite heritage enabled me to join the pieces of that puzzle together.

I now understand that composite heritage ought to start with one's own life. The violence within as a point of departure is critical to understanding and empathizing with the violence around. This understanding influences our mannerism, behaviour and our own behaviour when we are dealing with fellow people, in a very significant way. For me this process of composite heritage involved challenging and unlearning several of my own biases and prejudices. For example as a facilitator inculcating and practicing adult learning principles can be extremely daunting for someone who is impatient. To understand and accept that people have different levels of understanding, skills and knowledge enabled me to be more empathetic to the inequalities and marginalisation people across different class and caste face. I realised early that if I had to be an effective facilitator, I had to dissipate the feeling that all the power—is-held-by-the-facilitator during the training.

How does the facilitator connect with the group members? How does she/he create a learning environment? The facilitator has to be comfortable in her/his skil; and should respect and treat members or participants with dignity. The facilitator should realize that those who participate or are facilitated also have knowledge to share; and that this knowledge is shaped by their lived experiences. This fundamental respect should be the factor that drives the interactions between the facilitator and the participants. Equally importantly the facilitator should believe in the essence of questions and answers; agreements and disagreement; standpoints that people come from and on the whole be compassionate. The core of any work related to peace building involves all of this.

It is through the several enriching discussions and adult learning methods that I began to see things differently. ISD provides a platform to discuss, challenge and therefore counter certain held beliefs. The journey with ISD is both personal and political. It is about challenging the forces and system that would want you to be typecast.

Pallavi Gupta
India

CHAPTER VI
ENGLISH POETS
(III. THE DECLINE OF CAPITALISM)

Christopher Caudwell

...Continued from previous issue

Arnold, Swinburne, Tennyson and Browning, each in his own way, illustrate the movement of the bourgeois illusion in this "tragic" stage of its history.

Tennyson's Keatsian world is shattered as soon as he attempts to compromise between the world of beauty and the real world of misery which will not let him rest. Only the elegiac *In Memoriam*, with its profound pessimism, the most genuinely pessimistic poem in English up to this date, in any way successfully mirrors contemporary problems in contemporary terms.

Like Darwin, and even more Darwin's followers, he projects the conditions of capitalist production into Nature (individual struggle for existence) and then reflects this struggle, intensified by its instinctive and therefore unalterable blindness, back into society, so that God – symbol of the internal forces of society – seems captive to Nature – symbol of the external environment of society:

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod...

The unconscious ruthlessness of Tennyson's "Nature" in fact only reflects the ruthlessness of a society in which capitalist is continually hurling down fellow-capitalist into the proletarian abyss:

"So careful of the type?" but no.

From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries: "A thousand types are gone:

I care for nothing, all shall go."

...No more! A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime
Which tear each other in the slime
Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress
Behind the veil, behind the veil?

Browning revolts from the drab present not to the future but to the glories of the virile Italian springtime of the bourgeoisie. Never before had that vigour been given in English poetry so deep a colouring. But his vocabulary has a foggy verbalism which is a reflection of his intellectual dishonesty in dealing with real contemporary problems. To Tennyson the Keatsian world of romance, to Browning the Italian springtime; both are revolting backwards, trying to escape from the contradiction of the class for whom they speak. Browning dealing with contemporary problems, can produce no higher poetry than that of Mr. Sludge or Bishop Blougram. Yet he too in his eager youth could reproach an older bourgeois poet for following the familiar round of reaction:

Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley was with us—They watch
from their graves!

He alone breaks from the van and the
freemen,
He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

Swinburne's poetry is Shelley's world of immanent light and beauty made more separate by being stiffened with something of the materiality and hypnotic heaviness of Keats' world. Fate, whether as Hertha or the Nemesis of *Atalanta in Calydon*, is no longer tragic, but sad, sad as the death of Baudelaire. Swinburne is profoundly moved by the appeal of the

contemporary bourgeois-democratic revolutions taking place all over Europe (1848-1871), but the purely verbal and shallow character of his response reflects the essential shallowness of all such movements in this late era when, owing to the development of the proletariat, they almost instantly negate themselves.

Arnold's poems breathe the now characteristic "pessimism" of the bourgeois illusion, which is now working out its final and (to itself) tragic stages. Arnold battles against the Philistine, but he has an uneasy suspicion that he is doomed to lose. And in fact he is, for he fights his mirror reflection. As long as he moves within the categories of bourgeois society his own movement produces the Philistine; he drives on the movement which generates Philistine and poet, by separating the poet from society.

2

The next phase of bourgeois poetry is therefore that of "commodity-fetishism" – or "art for art's sake" – and is given in the false position of the bourgeois poet as producer for the market, a position forced on him by the development of bourgeois economy. As soon as the pessimism of Arnold and the young Tennyson, and the even sadder optimism of Browning and Swinburne and the old Tennyson when dealing with the contemporary scene, made it inevitable that the poet quit the contemporary scene, it was equally inevitable that the poet should fall a victim commodity-fetishism. This meant a movement which would completely separate the world of art from the world of reality and, in doing so, separate it from the source of art itself so that the work would burst like a bubble just when it seemed most self-secure.

Engels in *Anti-Dühring* very clearly explains the characteristic of every society based on commodity-production:

[It] has this peculiarity : that the producers have lost control over their own social inter-relations. Each man produces for himself with such means of production as he may happen to have, and for such exchange as he may require to satisfy his remaining wants. No one knows how much of his particular article is coming on the market, nor how much of it will be wanted. No one knows whether his individual product will meet an actual demand, whether he will be able to make good his costs of production or even to

sell his commodity at all. Anarchy reigns in socialised production.

But the production of commodities, like every other form of production, has its peculiar, inherent laws inseparable from it; and these laws work, despite anarchy, in an through anarchy... They work themselves out, therefore, independently of the producers, and in antagonism to them, as inexorable natural laws of their particular form of production. *The product governs the producers* (p. 376, Moscow edition, 1954)

Engels contrasts this with the older and more universal method of production for use instead of exchange. Here the origin and end of production are clearly seen. All are part of the one social act, and the product is only valued in so far as it is of use to the society which produces it. In such a society the poem as such derives its value from its collective appearance, from the effect it has on the hearts of its hearers and the impact, direct and evident, on the life of the tribe.

In capitalist production, which is commodity production *in excelsis*, all this is altered. Everyone produces blindly for a market whose laws are unfathomable, although they assert themselves with iron rigidity. The impact of the commodity upon the life of society cannot be measured or seen. "Man has lost control of his social relationships." The whole elaborate warp and woof of capitalism, a complex web spun in anarchy, makes this helplessness inevitable.

To the poet the bourgeois market appears as the "public." The invention and development of printing and publishing was part of the development of the universal bourgeois free market. Just as the development of this market (by the extension of colonisation and transport and exchange facilities) made it possible for a man to produce for places whose very names he did not know, much less their location, so the poet now writes for men of whose existence he is ignorant, whose social life, whose whole mode of being is strange to him. The market is for him "The Public" – blind, strange, passive.

This leads to what Marx called "commodity-fetishism." The social character of the art-process, so evident in the collective festival, now disappears. "A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an

objective character stamped upon the produce of that labour. In the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself." In the same way the art work, once its social realisation in the hearts of society is veiled by the "market" or the "public," appears to the poet as something objective. This is helped by the swing-over of art from forms visibly dependent on men in association the dance, the song, music, the spontaneous drama and *commedia dell'arte* – to crystallised records of the art process not therefore visibly dependent on society – the written poem, the musical score, the written play, the picture or sculpture. The art stimulus becomes objective – a commodity.

Capitalist production requires for its movement capital. Constant capital is a continually increasing part of the sum of capital. This constant capital takes the visible form of elaborate factory plant and indirectly the more highly-developed technique and organisation necessary to use this plant. This growth of constant capital and therefore of social organisation due to increasing productivity of labour contrasts with the growth of individualism in ownership and appropriation due to the increasing wealth of private capitalists. In the same way bourgeois poetry is marked by a continually increasing sum of tradition and technique, of which the Poet feels the pressure, so that there is a continual contradiction between the tremendous social experience embodied in the poem and the individualistic and anti-social attitude of the poet. "Tradition" towers up before the poet as something formidable and tremendous, with which he must settle accounts as an ego.

But the poet is not a capitalist. He does not exploit labour. To the capitalist commodity-fetishism takes the form of sacralisation of the common market-denominator of all commodities money. Money acquires for him a high, mystic, *spiritual* value. But the writer is himself exploited.

In so far as he "writes for money" of course he acquires a purely capitalist mentality. He may even himself exploit labour by means of secretaries and hacks who do his "donkey-work" for him. But the man who writes for money is not an artist, for it is the characteristic of the artist that

his products are adaptative, that the artistic illusion is begotten of the tension between instinct and consciousness, between productive forces and productive relations, the very tension which drives on all society to future reality. In bourgeois society this tension is that between the productive forces (the socially organised power of capitalist technique in the factories) and the social relations (production for private profit and the resulting anarchy in the market as a whole indicated by the universality of the money or "exchange" relation instead of the direct or "use" relation). Because this is the fundamental contradiction, the poet "revolts" against the system of profit-making or production for exchange-value as crippling the meaning and significance of art. But as long as he revolts within the categories of bourgeois thought – that is, as long as he cannot cast off the basic bourgeois illusion – his revolt takes a form made necessary by the system of commodity production.

3

The exploited – of which the poet thus becomes one – are of two kinds in capitalist production: These two kinds, the labourer and the craftsman, may be regarded as descendants of the serfs and artisans of medieval days. However, the lineage is not direct. Serfs became capitalists and artisans were hurled down into the proletariat during the capitalist revolution. The exploited may be regarded as descendants of the one class of artisans. The *labourer* has been thoroughly proletarianised; the *craftsman*, for special reasons, has still retained a measure of privilege in capitalist production which gives him the illusion of belonging to the "middle class," a class immune from and superior to the class struggle as a whole. None the less, the proletarian abyss yawns always beneath his feet. His privilege is an accident of a particular stage of capitalist production and is always being torn from his grasp. However, the historical change of capitalist production produces always new members of this class, which therefore appears always to have a certain stability and separate existence, although its actual composition is in a state of wild flux. The final stages of capitalism reveal the fallacy of even this phantom separation, and the petty bourgeoisie finds its privileges being torn from its hands.

Let us examine the main history of these

two divisions in England.

(i) *The Labourer*. – He is the man who works drably, monotonously and at the most-sweated wages, a mere cog in the machine. He is the proletarian proper, the unique creation of capitalism. His fight against the capitalist is most bitter and uncompromising because his work, by its very nature, is of a kind it is impossible to like, and therefore his revolt is expressed as a fight for leisure, an attempt to snatch from his employers' reluctant hands every extra hour of decent human existence outside the factory. This fight goes with a struggle for higher wages, to make those short hours of leisure as full and free as possible.

This is the only form his struggle for freedom can take within the categories of capitalist production, for in his dull task freedom expresses itself as the opposite to social activity or "work." Because he constitutes the majority of those from the surplus value of whole labour-power the capitalist derives his profit, the antagonism between the two classes is naked and direct. This antagonism is the real core of the class struggle in capitalist society. Each minute of his leisure or penny of his wages is so much from the capitalist's profit. His freedom is precisely the capitalist's unfreedom, and *vice versa*.

(ii) *The Craftsman*. – This class, as foreman, overseer, or mechanic, or in a profession as barrister, doctor, engineer or architect, occupies a special position in capitalist production because of his personal skill, technique or "key" job. Because of his favoured position, his delight in his skill, and his higher wages, the craftsman finds himself often in opposition to the genuine proletariat. Work for him does not "stand in such sharp opposition to leisure, or his freedom to the capitalist's freedom, as in the case of the labourer. Sometimes he is even in business "in a small way" himself, not as a capitalist, but employing two or three apprentice-assistants and selling to large capitalists. This apparent cleavage of interests is expressed in these workers' organisations. The great general labouring unions the T. & G.W., N.U.G. & M.W., and such similar unions – in their early days, led by Ben Tillett, Tom Mann and John Burns, found themselves opposed by and contending with the "amalgamated" craft unions such as the old A.S.E., which inherited the Liberal traditions of the "Junta" that had, at an earlier date, ousted

the original militant but badly organised lodges.

None the less, the development of capitalist production remorselessly turns the craftsman into a labourer. The machine competes with and ousts the product of his skilled hands in all departments and forces him into the "industrial reserve army" of the unemployed.

The effect is at first to make him revolt against the demands of a "commercialised" market by setting up his skill as a good in itself, detached from social uses. You will hear such a craftsman admire an old Napier car, for example, as a superb production of skilled *craftsmen*, and compare it with a modern *mass-production* Ford, which fulfils the same social rôle and is cheaper. The old skill, although more wasteful of human labour, has acquired a special value to the craftsman because it is the condition for his existence as a class distinct from the proletariat, and is set over and against the market with its criterion of profit, which is the cause of the outdating of his skill. Eventually, employed as a factory hand, he may still cherish his outdated skill by making models, by indulging in little private "hobbies" and other socially meaningless activities that exercise his craft.

In this his attitude is fundamentally akin to that of the writer. The writer's relation to capitalism is also privileged and craft, although its "ideal" content gives it a still higher privilege than manual craftsmanship in an age where the class division has separated thinking from doing. The writer is a part of upper bourgeois society, like the doctor, barrister, architect, teacher or scientist whose work has a similar theoretical content – the manual craftsman is never more than "lower middle class." None the less, both find themselves expressing the special aspirations and delusions of the petty bourgeoisie.

Just as the growth of capitalism tends more and more to whelm all industrial production in mass production, expropriate artisans in thousands, and proletarianise the craftsman to the level of a labourer or machine-minder, so it has the same effect in the realm of art. Mass-production art enforces a dead level of mediocrity. Good art becomes less saleable. Because art's rôle is now that of adapting the multitude to the dead mechanical existence of capitalist production, in which work sucks them of their vital energies without awakening their instincts, where leisure

becomes a time to deaden the mind with the easy phantasy of films, simple wish-fulfilment writing, or music that is mere emotional massage – because of this the paid craft of writer becomes as tedious and wearisome as that of machine-minder. Journalism becomes the characteristic product of the age. Films, the novel and painting all share in the degradation. Immense technical resources and steady debasement and stereotyping of the human psyche are characteristics alike of factory production and factory art in this stage of capitalism. Let any artist who has had to earn a living by journalism or writing “thrillers” testify to the inexorable proletarianisation of his art. The modern thriller, love story, cowboy romance, cheap film, jazz music or yellow Sunday paper form the real proletarian literature of to-day – that is, literature which is the characteristic accompaniment of the misery and instinctual poverty produced in the majority of people by modern capitalist production. It is literature which proletarianises the writer. It is at once an expression of real misery and a protest against that real misery. This art, universal, constant, fabulous, full of the easy gratifications of instincts starved by modern capitalism, peopled by passionate lovers and heroic cowboys and amazing detectives, is the religion of to-day, as characteristic an expression of proletarian exploitation as Catholicism is of feudal exploitation. It is the opium of the people; it pictures an inverted world because the world of society is inverted. It is the real characteristic art of bourgeois civilisation, expressing the real and not the self-appraised content of the bourgeois illusion. “High-brow” bourgeois art grows on the bourgeois class’s freedom. “Low-brow” proletarian art grows on the proletariat’s unfreedom and helps, by its massage of the starved revolting instincts, to maintain that unfreedom in being. Because it is mere massage, because it helps to maintain man in unfreedom and not to express his spontaneous creation, because of that, it is bad art. Yet it is an art which is far more really characteristic, which plays a far more important and all-pervasive rôle in bourgeois society than, for example, the art of James Joyce.

The poet is the most craft of writers. His art requires the highest degree of technical skill of any artist; and it is precisely this technical skill which is not wanted by the vast majority of people

in a developed capitalism. He is as out of date as a medieval stone-carver in an era of plaster casts. As the virtual proletarianisation of society increases, the conditions of men’s work, robbed of spontaneity, more and more make them demand a mass-produced “low-brow” art, whose flatness and shallowness serve to adapt them to their unfreedom. The poet becomes a “high-brow,” a man whose skill is not wanted. It becomes too much trouble for the average man to read poetry.

Because of the conditions of his life, the poet’s reaction is similar to that of the craftsman. He begins to set craft skill in *opposition* to social function, “art” in opposition to “life.” The craftsman’s particular version of commodity-fetishism is *skill-fetishism*. Skill now seems an objective thing, opposed to social value. The art work therefore becomes valued in and for itself.

But the art work lives in a world of society. Art works are always composed of objects that have a social reference. Not mere noises but words from a vocabulary, not chance sounds but notes from a socially-recognised scale, not mere blobs but forms with a *meaning*, are what constitutes the material of art. All these things have emotional associations which are social.

Yet if an art work is valued for *its own sake* in defiant and rebellious opposition to the sake of a society which now has no use for skill, it is in fact valued *for the artist’s sake*. One cannot simply construct random poems. If their associations are not social they are personal, and the more the art work is opposed to society, the more are personal associations defiantly selected which are exclusive of social – bizarre, strange, phantastic. In this stage of the bourgeois illusion therefore poetry exhibits a rapid movement from the social world of art to the personal world of private phantasy. This leads to individualism. In revolting against capitalism the poet, because he remains within the sphere of bourgeois categories, simply moves on to an extreme individualism, utter “loss of control of his social relationships,” and absolute commodity-production – to the essence, in fact, of the capitalism he condemns. He is the complete mirror-revolutionary.

And his too triumphant proclamation of liberty at last achieved in full, marks the very moment when liberty completely slips out of his hands.

to be continued...

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