

# Colonialism, Modernity and Hindi Satire in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>1</sup>

Prabhat Kumar

This paper delineates an aspect of social perception of modernity, as reflected in Hindi satirical texts, in late 19th century colonial India by focusing on five selected satirical pieces written by two nineteenth century Khari Boli authors Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-1884) and Radhacharan Goswami (1858-1925).<sup>2</sup> Hindi satire of this period mocks at targets as disparate as religious reform(er)s, colonial judiciary (or rule of law), caste associations, the railways, etc., and alludes to social groups and movements, state and civil institutions, and cultural values. All these are associated with, and largely located in, urban space – a principal site for the unfolding of colonial modernity. The subject matter of satire in a variety of literary forms, it is argued, is inextricably entangled with the question of colonial modernity.<sup>3</sup> Although the trope of modernity as chaotic and deprived of ethical and moral values appears to have been a rather universal feature in modernising societies, yet its connotative meaning was delimited by the respective historical-particular literary context. As the existing scholarship shows us, modernity in its myriad forms has been linked to the global phenomenon of capitalism and has been experienced and articulated differentially throughout the world.<sup>4</sup> It is

---

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Hans Harder for his extensive comments and suggestions without which this article would not have been possible. I am also thankful to Prof. Dr. Harald Fischer-Tiné and Prof. Dr. Gita Dharampal-Frick for giving suggestions on its early draft. All faults remain mine. I am thankful to Asia Europe, Cluster of Excellence, Heidelberg for the granting me doctoral fellowship to work on this topic.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, a large corpus of late nineteenth-century Hindi satirical texts is available. I have selected those texts which deal relatively more directly with the question of colonialism and modernity and have overt intertextual references to pre-established literary and oral narrative genres in contemporary circulation.

<sup>3</sup> As Satya P. Mohanty clarifies, the term colonial modernity refers to the particular combination of modern social institutions and colonialist ideology that European colonial rule brought with it. This ideology was based on a wholesale devaluation of traditional social institutions in the societies that were colonized. It was used to justify colonial rule, but it is possible to separate the ideology from the institutions (and laws, values, etc.) associated with modernity. (See MOHANTY 2011: 1-21).

<sup>4</sup> What we call modernity in shorthand is a set of 'new' practices in major spheres of social life: new practices of production, governance, scientific cognition, education, artistic and cultural creativity. According to Sudipta Kaviraj, modernity is not a single, homogeneous process, but an asymmetrical and sequential combination of several interconnected processes of social change. First experienced in the western European context, modernity soon was encountered in other regions of the world and came entangled in a deeply asymmetrical web of capitalism. As Kaviraj rightly points out, modernity is a historically contingent combination of its constituent elements which tend to produce different histories of the

the particularity of historical experience of modernity mediated by colonialism in North India that gives specificity to its articulation by the Hindi litterateurs in colonial North India.<sup>5</sup>

Taking Vasudha Dalmia's important insight about the political function of *Punch* skits in the 19th century literary periodicals of Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-85) as a starting point,<sup>6</sup> it is argued that this satirical inflection of modernity commences from the ideological vantage point of the emerging upper caste Hindu/Hindi middle class<sup>7</sup> – a new social group which emerged under the new political dispensation. Satirists, while not necessarily belonging to this class, nevertheless articulate their potential political agenda. Satire functions as a potent literary tool to tackle the perceived multiple asymmetries produced by colonialism in its various immanent forms. In this view, colonialism has not only led to the obvious political-cultural subordination of the country, it has precipitated a violent cultural change which has threatened to erode Indian/Hindu moral-social order. In other words, reper-

---

modern under different historical circumstances. Making a case for a revisionist theory of modernity against the dominant but fallacious academic practice of deficit analysis which is based less on research and more on expectation concerning the experiences of modernity in non-European societies, he calls for accommodating the historical reality of multiple or differential modernity in the light of recent academic research. He argues that modernity is bound to have different trajectories all over the globe because of the structurally diverse a priori conditions within which it has unfolded. Even if modernity were uniform, what existed before it must have been structurally diverse, and these structures constitute the "initial" or prior conditions from which modern institutions begin to arise. Kaviraj writes: "[I]nitial historical conditions in which processes of modernity begin to work would impart to those processes and institutions specific qualities and forms, which would become conditions for their further evolution. [...] Initial conditions in which modern institutions and processes arrive in particular societies determine the subsequent shape of their modernity to a substantial extent." (See KAVIRAJ 2005: 497-526). There is a vast amount of works on the theme of modernity which adds to confusion rather than clarification. I have found Sudipta Kaviraj's article one of the most lucid and insightful ones for the immediate purpose. However, for originary and contemporary issues pertaining to modernity's self-understanding in the west see TAYLOR 2002: 91-124. For a compellingly productive criticism of the confusing and uncritical deployment of modernity as an explanatory category see COOPER 2005: 113-149.

<sup>5</sup> A very bold and convincing argument has been provided by the famous triumvirate Velcheru Narayana Rao, David Shulman and Sanjay Subrahmanyam regarding the rise of literary forms compatible with modernity in the late medieval/early modern Indian historical period. (See RAO et al. 2001). My argument in this article is not contradictory to their proposition. The logic of such indigenous development of modernity, to my mind, was altered by colonial intervention and resulted in a different trajectory of change in literature and society. For instance, see DALMIA 2008: 44-60, which looks into the question of continuity and rupture in the emergence of the Hindi novel in nineteenth century India in relation with the early seventeenth century autobiography.

<sup>6</sup> See DALMIA (1997: 251-261).

<sup>7</sup> See DALMIA 1997; ORSINI 2002; JOSHI 2005; DAECHSEL 2009

cussions of colonial modernity were said to be visible in at least two ways: one, in the emergence and activities of a new group of self-appointed social reformers, who along with their British masters were derisive of Hindu culture, and two, in the increasing assertions of hitherto socially subordinate lower castes and women, which was facilitated by the colonial institution theoretically accessible to all and thereby threatening the traditional social supremacy of male caste Hindus. Satire can be seen as a *literary* response to the complexities of colonial modernity from within the subjectivities of the contemporary Hindi intelligentsia of the time.<sup>8</sup>

Hindi satire is viewed here as a literary mode of expression which through its technique of descriptive excess (exaggeration, deformation) imitates a pre-existing formalised literary or speech genre of representation. The imitative reproduction markedly transforms the respective basic genres of representation while retaining some of their distinctive features. More importantly, this act of generic imitation simultaneously enables satire to mock the language or discourse of its object of representation (for instance, colonial modernity in its myriad forms), thereby exposing the contradiction between the commonsensical claim of that discourse and the more complex reality around it.<sup>9</sup>

Further, this characteristic of satire makes it an interventionist mode of literary communication in the emerging Hindi public sphere<sup>10</sup> of the late 19<sup>th</sup>

<sup>8</sup> As Partha Chatterjee has pointed out, modernity in the dominant self-representation of the Enlightenment meant an unrestricted and universal field for the exercise of reason but came with an important caveat. Its universality was restricted by building an intricately differentiated structure of authority which specified who had the right to talk on which subjects, and could be used for the exercise of power. The history of modernity in India, which has been intertwined with the history of colonialism, played upon this imbedded inequality: modernity was invoked to justify colonialism as what made India enlightened. It is the perception of this inequality which led to modernity's qualification, criticism and negotiation by the Indian intelligentsia, and was reflected in their cultural project of nationalism in the field of literature, art and sciences to articulate a different and/or a national modernity. (See CHATTERJEE 1997) The nationalist negotiation with modernity also played upon the differentiated structure of authority: only the upper caste Hindu middle class could speak for the Indian nation. The upper caste nationalist intelligentsia, as we shall see, played the same card, thereby justifying their social domination over the lower castes.

<sup>9</sup> See KNIGHT (1992: 22-41)

<sup>10</sup> Unlike the Habermasian ideal public sphere, this is not an open dialogic space of rational debate where the private individual citizen, shorn of (pre-modern) community ties and equipped with the persuasive power of reason works to arrive at a consensus on the matters of common public good. The Hindi public sphere in colonial India was a deeply segmented space where all forms of hierarchy – linguistic, class, caste, gender – were at play. It was an open space, but regulated by the colonial regime. It was a space where the individuals participated as representatives of community public. They discussed the matters internal to and pertaining to the private realm, addressing to their own community public, yet open to the gaze of a wider and differential 'community public'. They spoke in the language of

century. It is interventionist in the sense that the satirical texts are marked by topicality of their subject matter and are always explicitly directed at certain target(s). Their subject matter is built upon the already known and widely circulated news and events which are discussed and debated at length in the discursive realm of contemporary periodicals – an important institutional site of the public sphere. Hindi satirical texts attempt to simultaneously constitute and address a reading community public putatively sharing a common ideological agenda by its intervention in those debates. But this intervention is not articulated through positive and sustained argumentation with the opponent whose discourse is the object of representation; rather the latter remains muted in the background. Satirical texts put a closure on dialogue with their opponent. While they start from the premise from which such debates emerges, they strategically avoid the discursive demands of sustained argumentation by taking recourse to more or less direct attack. By deploying literary techniques of deformation, exaggeration and creation of the absurd and the grotesque, satire imitates and manipulates the premises of thought characteristic of their objects of representation in an effort to drive their arguments towards their illogical and unreasoned extremity. Unwilling to participate in the game of persuasive reasoning and arguments, Hindi satire attempts to evoke, through a series of negative gestures, a traditional hierarchical Brahmanic ideal that perhaps no longer seems rationally defensible<sup>11</sup> but has become necessary to contain the threat caused by the forces of colonial modernity. We shall start our investigation with a piece of satire which takes up the question of colonialism head on and then discuss similar representative pieces of nineteenth century Hindi satire to substantiate the claims made above.

### Confronting the order of colonialism

The piece we shall start with, *Pāc<sup>h</sup>veṃ paigambar*,<sup>12</sup> was written in 1873 by the so-called ‘father of modern Hindi’ BHARATENDU HARISHCHANDRA (1850-

---

tradition but it was duly marked by the language of (colonial) modernity. The participation in the debates did not ensure acceptance of all critical positions. The debate or a critical dialogue could start with a closure by adoption of a singular normative premise and rejection or refusal to engage with of all other premises as deviation from the norm hence unacceptable. It did not necessarily lead to a consensus through a reasoned argument and could be open to violent fractures. For the best overview of conceptualizations of the public sphere in colonial India and the critical appraisal of the Habermasian public sphere in general see BHATTACHARYA 2005: 130-157.

<sup>11</sup> This idea is borrowed from THORNE (2001: 531- 544).

<sup>12</sup> This satirical piece first appeared in his journal *Harischandra's Magazine* (hereafter *HM*) in 1873. I have used its facsimile edition which contains the reprint of the journal from Octo-

1884). Harishchandra belonged to a noted Hindu merchant family of Banaras. Apart from being an insider to the Indian literary tradition (Sanskrit, Persian, Braj, etc.), he had learnt English and was familiar with the English literary tradition. In his short life span he successfully carved himself out as a public personality, poet-playwright-journalist and socio-religious reformer.<sup>13</sup> Harishchandra's *Pāc'veṃ paigambar* is representative in its take on colonialism and modernity in nineteenth century British India. Written in Persian-laden Hindi, *Pāc'veṃ paigambar* imitates and debases the literary precept of revelation literature. In the text under discussion the narrator speaks in the first person. He begins with his claim of being a prophet named *cūsā*, but later turns out to be an embodiment of colonialism. The text replaces the divine and godly saint by one 'sucking prophet' (*cūsā paigambar*) who claims to be in continuum with the holy Prophets:

“Folks, come to me! I am the fifth Prophet. David, Jesus, Moses and Muhammad have been the previous four. My name is the Sucking Prophet.”<sup>14</sup>

The first person satiric narrator, namely the Fifth or Sucking Prophet, reveals with descriptive excess the quality and character of his own self and the faith and values he stands for; he does so in a self-annihilating tone, which results in the perpetual undermining of the text, as we shall see.

The text starts off, in its very first passage, with a satiric deformation. The *Paigambar* introduces himself as fifth in the line of holy prophets with a strong self-deprecation by calling himself the sucking prophet born of illegitimate consummation of his widow mother. On the one hand side, this assumes that a widow, if she is a virtuous woman, cannot give birth to a child since the father is already dead, and hence a child must be engendered by an illegitimate consort. On the other, the impossibility of a legitimate birth in the absence of a husband obliquely satirises the virginhood of Jesus's mother. Also, contrary to the putatively compassionate language of a prophet, he is arrogant and fearsome towards his potential followers.

“Born of a widow's womb and sent hither by none other than God Almighty Himself, I command you to have faith in me or to be ready to face His divine wrath!”<sup>15</sup>

This text has several layers of referentiality. It blurs the distinction between colonial rule and its manifest cultural forms which were entangled

ber 1873 to May 1874. (See *HM* 2002: 84-86)

<sup>13</sup> For an exhaustive study of his historical role in the literary, cultural, political and religious realm see DALMIA 1997.

<sup>14</sup> All citations unless otherwise cited are translated by me. (See *HM* 2002: 84)

<sup>15</sup> (See *HM* 2002: 84)

with Christianity. The satiric self-proclamation of divinity in the beginning obliquely refers to one of the widely spread discourses of legitimation of colonial rule as 'divine dispensation', redeeming the declining Hindu civilization from the shackles of medieval Muslim despotism, which was shared by the colonialists and Indian liberals alike.<sup>16</sup> On the one hand, *Pāc'veṃ paigambar's* oblique reference to this colonialist discourse, functions as a deformative imitation of a pre-established narrative genre of revelation. On the other hand, it mocks its object of representation, i.e. the legitimacy of the colonialist discourse of divine dispensation, which is in this logic just as illegitimate as the son of a widow! The sucking prophet of colonialism is further disparaged as he has had an uncivilized and plundering past, but ironically has 'recently' been empowered by God himself to redeem his subjects:

"I have lived on this earth for ages, but kept mum as the Almighty did not grant me permission to speak. Forget speaking, I used to prey like a wild animal and people had named me variously as an ape, an uncivil, a soldier in the army of the Kingdom of Demons [*Laṅkā*], and a barbarian [*mleccha*]. But now I am the Guru, because it's His commandment to people that they have faith in me."<sup>17</sup>

The prophet is shown to have revealed his multiple protean selves. His self-expository nomenclatures playfully associate his characteristics with the image of colonial government as articulated by the nationalist critics. The exposition of his first name, one who sucks wealth, draws on the already familiar economic nationalist criticism of colonial rule, namely the 'drain of wealth' theory, which would soon become institutionalised in the nationalist

---

<sup>16</sup> As K. N. Panikkar has pointed out, the Indian intellectual community in the nineteenth century colonial India functioned within the parameters of bourgeois-liberal ideology, and their political perspectives and activities in colonial India were based on the ideal of gradual realisation of a bourgeois democratic order. The character of pre-colonial political institutions and of the colonial state was understood and assessed within this parameter. Hence the early critique of the pre-colonial political system and the acceptance of British rule as divine dispensation. Panikkar cites Dosabhoj Framjee's views in a pamphlet entitled "The British Raj Contrasted with its Predecessors" as a source which is quite representative of this understanding: 'The steady expansion of English dominion has been followed by the establishment of peace in all the borders of the land; by a firm and upright administration of the laws, and by a security of life and property to which India had been unhappily a stranger from the remotest times. The children have forgotten the adversities of their fathers – the true character of that bloody and lawless tyranny from which England has emancipated the people of India'. The object of the author, Panikkar argues, was to recall the fading memories of the unhappy past and to contrast them vividly with the peaceful experience of British rule. This stark contrast between the conditions that prevailed in the two systems reflected the differences in the nature of polity – one despotic, arbitrary and tyrannous and the other liberal and democratic. (See PANIKKAR 1987: 2118)

<sup>17</sup> (See HM 2002: 84)

discourse.<sup>18</sup> The drain theory is legitimized by a travestied invocation of the religious doctrine of the rulers, Christianity; namely, that excessive wealth is sinful, and hence, draining the wealth from India is tantamount to enhancement of its spiritual merit:

“Like Muhammad and others I, too, am called by many names: 1) the Sucking Prophet, 2) the Double, 3) the White; but my full name is Shri Hazrat Hon. Mr. Double White Sucking Prophet, the Destroyer of the Universe<sup>19</sup> [...] My name is the Sucking Prophet because I suck everyone’s unholy wealth, because the Almighty himself decreed to me that His children tread on the path of crime due to the presence of excessive wealth. It’s therefore He who instructed me to suck away all your money so that you have no incentive left for crime [...].”<sup>20</sup>

The second name is again a differential articulation of the same characteristic as the greedy and squeezer of wealth, while the third name makes the racial underpinnings and the supremacist rhetoric of the civilizing mission of colonialism explicit:

“My second name is **Ḍabal**<sup>21</sup> because it refers to money in Hindi, means *dunā* [double] in English, and signifies a container for extracting ghee or cereals in west[ern India]. My third name is the White because I enlighten the world – my heart is as white and sweet as sugar, my skin is fair, and I shall also cleanse people in the light of my religion.”<sup>22</sup>

The mocking of colonialist discourse and the consequent exposure of its contradiction continues throughout the text: the claim of British rule as being based on a superior moral political ideology and rule of law heralding a new dawn of moral and material progress, goes against its actual operationalisation and impact. The contradiction is highlighted through satiric exaggeration of the supremacist rhetoric and its juxtaposition against the ‘reality’ of it. Mutually antagonistic and irreconcilable values reigning under the colonial condition are constantly pitted against a politically subordinate but presumably ‘superior’ Hindu moral order.

<sup>18</sup> The critique of colonial rule draining India’s national wealth, though still dispersed, came into being long before the works of Dadabhai Naoroji’s *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (1891) and Romesh Chandra Dutt’s *Economic History of India* (1902 and 1905) among others, who in their book length studies would come out with scholarly criticisms of drain of wealth in the coming decades.

<sup>19</sup> *Śrīmān ān'rebal haz'rat ḍabal saphaid cūsā alaihussalām paigambar ākhīr kun jamā.*

<sup>20</sup> See *HM* (2002: 84)

<sup>21</sup> Words in bold font in the quotation are English words which have been used by the author in Devanagari script.

<sup>22</sup> See *HM* (2002: 84)

In the course of narration the self of the *Paigambar* transforms itself into the British ruling elite in India. He claims to have been bestowed with the power to civilize the world and speaks in language of the Anglicists and Evangelicals<sup>23</sup> vouching for eradicating the barbaric practice of idol-worship. He pitches non-Hindu forms of sociality – food, drink, behaviour towards women etc. – as morally permissible and superior to its Hindu counterpart, which must be forbidden and discarded. Continuing in the same vein the prophet claims even to have the liberty to speak and argue the untruth in religious matters because he enjoys the power to do so.

“[The Almighty says], Listen up! Disband idolatry from society, for I have left the entire world half-civilized but civilized you thoroughly. Alcohol, which is *harām* [forbidden] for others prophets, is *halāl* [permissible] for you. Indeed it’s the hallmark of your religion and shall flourish on earth even after you yourself have left for heaven. So, although you may not yourself rule forever, your sect will forever remain intact. [... The Almighty says], I have declared cows, pigs, frogs, dogs, etc. as *halāl*, all of which are otherwise *harām*. I allow you to lie about religious matters; and authorise you to honour womenfolk and treat them as equals, indeed, I permit you to allow them to flirt with their male friend [...]. Believe me folks; even God is fearful of me because I have been such a staunch atheist. It was only due to the dread of the Prophetess that I have become a believer. Even so, the Almighty still remains anxious about His own existence, such has been the great power of my arguments. If He himself is afraid of me, imagine how I’ll make you quake in your boots!”<sup>24</sup>

However, the colonialist discourse of a civilizing mission is made out to be contradictory or even farcical from a tacit moral vantage point of a Brahmanic Hindu reader. The prophet of a civilizing mission actively promotes a culture of alcohol consumption and taboo food and thus creates a dietary regime which is incongruous with that of Hindus. His supposedly superior moral-religious values and civility, which were among the most significant parameters used by the colonialists to assess Hindu civilization,<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> To know more about different ideological constellations within British regime and their views on Indian society and history see COHN 1996: 3-28.

<sup>24</sup> See *HM* (2002: 85)

<sup>25</sup> Two major premises of their criticisms centered on the unscientific practice of polytheism and position of women in Hindu society since early 19th century. Hindu socio-religious reformers and intellectuals like Rammohan Ray, Dayanand Saraswati and others consequently focused on these two issues through their engagements with the traditionalists within Hindu society as well as with the Anglicists and Evangelicals. (See SARKAR 1975; JONES 1976; PANIKKAR 1995) The popularization of J. S. Mill’s *The Subjectation of Women* (1869)

are contradictorily premised on crookedness in matters of religious faith and on sexual licentiousness in the case of gender equality. Above all, the relationship between God and the prophet is shown to be based not on piety and faith. It is based on opportunist anti-religious rationality: he can discard the existence of God, but nonetheless refrain from doing so because his wife is a believer and cannot annoy her. He solicits the faith of his followers by generating fear: “I’ll make you quake in your boots”. Liberal respect and freedom of women is shown to be grounded in male sexual lust and enslavement by sexual desire for women.

The satiric narrator again transforms himself into the colonial state and robustly voices its discriminatory policies in contradiction to its claim to be based on the rule of law. He goes on to proclaim racial partiality towards British nationals at the cost of the rhetoric of equality before the law. Moreover, he lauds the colonial state’s appeasement of the ‘aggressive’ Muslims and promises to take care of their educational advancement. Not surprisingly, the Hindus are condemned as the doomed race of cowards who must suffer and get destroyed under his regime:

“My English friends, you don’t need to worry yourselves though! I shall acquit you of every single crime, for **nationality**,<sup>26</sup> I believe, is a huge thing. Also, the Prophetess is of the same colour as you, so I have an added incentive to overlook your crimes!

Dear Muslims! I am slightly fearful of you, because I know that killing, for you, is not a big deal. So, for your betterment, I shall not forget to write in my Holy Scripture that all my **successors** should not only respect you, but [...] will wail on your educational backwardness and try to dispel it by establishing schools and colleges for you.

But my beloved, cowardly Hindu brethrens, it’s you that I look down upon in every conceivable way! This country is burning and shall continue to burn in the fire of God’s wrath. And in his wrath, the divine lord has decreed that you shall be called half-civilized, rude, *kāfirs*, idolaters, the doomed, barbarous, and shall thoroughly deserve to be

---

from 1870s onwards formed the strong and legitimate idea that women’s status in a society is the marker of progress of any civilization. For nineteenth century Indian Intellectuals’ primacy to the ‘women’s question’ in the context of colonialist arguments see SARKAR 1998.

<sup>26</sup> The term ‘nationality’ is used in the text in a very specific sense to connote racially organized white rulers, primarily the British in India.

destroyed.”<sup>27</sup>

The claim of colonialism as the precursor of a liberal democratic order to enable the gradual realisation of rule of law in India is obviously made absurd by underlining the superior status accorded to the nationality of the ruling elite, which has a primordial basis rather than that of the impersonal rule of law. Play with social stereotypes like ‘aggressive’ Muslims and ‘docile’ Hindus is combined and overloaded with arbitrary and discriminatory policies and attitudes of the new order established by the fifth prophet of colonialism. Hence the new order is made self-evidently arbitrary and partial in its treatment of different communities and especially antithetical to the community of Hindus. This new sucking order, arguably, entertains only those Hindus who are stripped of their dignity and have been ready to be stooges of the establishment. More importantly, it is the believers in the faith of the sucking prophet, i.e. the colonised anglophile Indians devoid of Hindu cultural ethos, who stand for the programmes of social and religious reforms and simultaneously mimic the social practices of their masters for the reasons of appeasement rather than moral conviction and commitment:

“And hear me, you Hindus! Only those who have sincere faith in me shall be rescued [...]. So have faith in me, worship me, take your shoes and turbans off before entering my shrines, and get shaken and stupefied by my Priests who will be the true vehicles of salvation [...]. So listen to me, ye believers! Drink alcohol, encourage widow remarriage and female education, abolish child marriage and the caste system, destroy the purity of aristocratic descent, dine out in restaurants, learn the art of **love**,<sup>28</sup> deliver **speeches**,<sup>29</sup> play cricket, reduce marriage expenses, become a member of societies, visit durbars regularly, be clever and sly, speak with English accent,<sup>30</sup> wear rounded caps or keep your head uncovered but always remember to wear skin-tight dresses, visit dance clubs, ball rooms, theatre and privy houses, because these acts will make me and the Almighty happier.”<sup>31</sup>

In other words, the new cultural order established by the fifth prophet and practiced as per his dictates by his followers – the self-styled modern libe-

---

<sup>27</sup> See *HM* (2002: 85)

<sup>28</sup> This refers specifically to the practice of non-marital physical-sexual intimacy.

<sup>29</sup> This seems to refer to the new forms of public associational spaces which emerged as a result of colonialism and the enthusiasm of English educated middle class to participate and talk endlessly without taking any action.

<sup>30</sup> *ham nahīm jān'te ko ham nahīm jān'tā kaho.*

<sup>31</sup> See *HM* (2002: 85)

ral reformers who advocate social reform measures like widow remarriage, modern education for Hindu women, the abolition of the system of marriage of girls before attainment of puberty, and simultaneously indulge in the modern forms of sociality by rejecting caste Hindu norms of purity, sexuality and conjugality – this order is shown as hypocritical and contradictory. It consists of acts rooted in self-aggrandizement by the culturally enslaved, and is visibly manifested in the sites and forms of their activities within this new cultural regime.

At the end of his dictum the prophet prescribes what is *harām* or forbidden, and *halāl* or permissible. All disparate cultural stereotypes, in matters of food, lack of cleanliness, sociality, goods, commodities, technology, sexual morals, etc., identified with the British are clubbed together as permissible and hence to be consumable. They are then juxtaposed with a list of the forbidden, which includes not only Hindu virtues, manners, religious rituals and practices but universal liberal values like the spirit of critical inquiry, platonic love, and magnanimity:

“[The faith I preach then is one] where the Lord Almighty himself permits and encourages alcohol, **beef**, **mutton**, **buggy**, conceit, crop, **nationality**, lantern, coat, boot, stick, pocket-watch, **rail**, cigarette, widow, spinster, others’ women, hunting, cigar, rotten fish, rotten cheese, rotten pickle, bad breath, pubic hair, toilet paper, handkerchief, mother’s sister, father’s sister, maternal aunt, paternal aunt, self-[abuse], [sleeping with] daughter, granddaughter, cousin, daughter-in-law, male and female cook, *hukkā*, abuse, wailing and freedom. But He forbids honesty, truthfulness, justice, *dhotī*, anointing, beads, bathing, brushing teeth, free-spiritedness and liberality, fearlessness, mythology, caste system, child marriage, joint family, idol worship, **orthodoxy**, true love, mutual magnanimity, unity and **prejudice**.”<sup>32</sup>

*Pāc<sup>l</sup>veṃ paigambar*, thus, imitates a pre-established revelation genre. It is a travestied deformation as a result of an unconventional change in its object of representation, i.e. a ‘sucking’ and terrifying progenitor of the new colonial order instead of a conventional enlightened and benevolent prophet heralding a new moral order. This travesty of a sacred genre is heightened by further satiric deformation to make the contradiction between the claims and the actual impact self-evident. The narrator’s description of his own divinity is deliberately made fake. Self-praise is turned into self-deprecation by the attributes given, as part of a rhetorical strategy that exaggerates the cultural attributes of the new colonial order or manifest forms of colonial modernity

<sup>32</sup> See *HM* (2002: 86) Terms like ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘prejudice’ are used in the strictly conventional sense of honest conformity with the established religious practice of Hinduism.

in implicit opposition to the putatively superior Hindu order.

The construction of a binary opposition between colonial modernity and the existing Hindu order, and the satiric rejection of the former, however, is not complete, but strategic and selective. This is especially clear when the modernised social behaviour of the urban educated middle class is made the subject of satiric ridicule. It is not so much reform as such that is rejected (child marriage passes without condemnation and widow-remarriage remains unsanctioned), but rather the opportunist reformist slogans of a spineless and servile middle class.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, while easily identifiable modern cultural mores and objects associated with colonial order are made *halāl* in the satire, qualities like rationalist free-spiritedness and liberality, fearlessness, mutual magnanimity, etc. are made antithetical to the new ethics propounded by the cavaliers of colonial modernity. This satiric vision dissociates this class from universally cherished modern values and attributes them to the Hindu society instead. As we shall discuss at length in the next section, the satiric indictment of the objects, institutions, social practices, etc. which are always associated with colonial modernity and usually located in the ‘degenerated’ urban space,<sup>34</sup> is always left ambivalent through strategies of satire. The unfolding of modernity in its myriad manifest forms in colonial urban social spaces is accepted not only at the authorial level but also by the satiric narrator. However, this acceptance is accompanied with an essential qualifier, a caveat that remains rooted in the Brahmanic Hindu ideology to counter the threats of modernity reconfiguring asymmetries of social power in colonial society.

### Countering the threats of modernity

One of the most frequently repeated and central themes of colonial Hindi satire is the articulation of a deep seated ambivalence of the contemporary Hindi intelligentsia towards the project of colonial modernity, and especially towards its rhetoric of liberalism. Like their counterparts in Bengal

---

<sup>33</sup> The reason behind such attacks on the reformists taking social reform, a matter of the private domain which was believed to be a realm of national sovereignty, to the public of the colonial state, has been spelt out by Partha Chatterjee. See CHATTERJEE (1990: 233-53)

<sup>34</sup> The followers of the fifth prophet, i.e. the English educated middle class, and the upholders of this new order, i.e. British rulers and administrators, are shown to be active in newly formed public spaces (clubs, town hall, court room ball room, etc.) located in urban centers. The punch skits, jokes and conundrums which appeared in the periodicals of the time, also had their locus in the city. Similarly satires like *Nāpī'totra*, *Rel'vestotra*, *Yam'lok kī yātrā*, *Kalirāj kī sabhā*, *Sabe jāti gopāl kī*, *Andher Nag'rī*, *Ṭhagī kī capeṭ meṃ bagī kī rapeṭ meṃ*, which appeared in the late 19th century and some of which are discussed below, allude to institutions and events located in the colonial city-space.

or Maharashtra, they appreciated and appropriated the benefits of liberal education, rule of law, etc. for their class, and critiqued the colonial government for discriminatory policies<sup>35</sup> as falling short of its own liberal promise.<sup>36</sup> Simultaneously, they were averse to any subaltern self-assertion powered by the same rhetoric of liberalism. This resistance to low caste assertion, it appears, is comparatively more pronounced and explicit amongst the nineteenth century Hindi intelligentsia than their Bengali counterpart.<sup>37</sup> Radhacharan Goswami's satires *Yam'lok kī yātrā* and *Nāpī'sotra* of the 1880s are emblematic of this aversion; and they will be dealt with in this section in some detail.

A Gauriya Brahmin of Vrindavan, Radhacharan Goswami belonged to the so-called *Bhār'tendu maṇḍal*, the circle of writers inspired by the works and personality of Bharatendu Harishchandra.<sup>38</sup> His *Yam'lok kī yātrā* is a strong attack on the Kāyasthas' upward social mobility. It is a telling example of the fact that even this comparatively high-ranking caste group could not skip the wrath of Brahmanic condemnation.<sup>39</sup> *Yam'lok kī yātrā*, 'A Journey to the kingdom of Yama', is written in the form of a fantasy travelogue narrated by a Vaishnava Brahmin who is mistakenly taken to the city of Yama, the god of death, by the god's henchmen. *Yam'lok kī yātrā* also be-

<sup>35</sup> The Ilbert Bill controversy in 1883 was a famous case in this regard. The bill proposed that Indian judges would have the legal authority to try White or European accused. This bill was staunchly opposed by the British staying in India and finally did not get passed in the British Parliament. The controversy united middle classes of every Indian region against the local British opposition to the Bill.

<sup>36</sup> Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the most respected nationalist leaders in the nineteenth century, wrote a book in 1891 titled *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. It gave a systematic liberal nationalist critique of economic condition of British India and argued that the colony's government is not following the principle of British liberalism. British government in India is not adequately British, in other words liberal and benevolent, as it is in Britain or other colonies like Australia.

<sup>37</sup> A skit *Pañc kā prapañc* in *Kavivacan'sudhā* edited by Harishchandra appeared in August 17, 1873. This skit reprimands a scavenger woman who was dreaming of getting liberal education by defying Brahmanic proscriptions. See DALMIA (1997: 254-255) Also see Harishchandra's testimony to the Hunter Commission on education for a strong objection to extension of liberal education to the lower castes. Vir Bharat Talwar mentions this and provides its Hindi Translation in the Appendix. See TAL'VĀR 2003.

<sup>38</sup> Radhacharan Goswami was the son of Goswami Galloji Maharaj, the head priest of Vrindavan's *Rādhāramaṇ* temple and a Vaishnava *ācārya*. He mastered Sanskrit language and literature at a very early age and learnt Persian and English also. See RĀDHĀCARAN GOSVĀMĪ's autobiography *Merā sañkṣipt jīvan paricay* (1895) in ŚĪSĪR 1990: 17-25.

<sup>39</sup> According to Karmendu Shishir, editor of Goswami's selected works; this piece remains incomplete because its serialization in the weekly *Sār'sudhānidhi* (Calcutta) was abruptly stopped due to strong protest from the conservative Kayasthas. (See ŚĪSĪR 1990: 32). For a general idea about the caste associations claiming higher ritual status with a focus on the Kayastha in the late 19th century see CARROL 1978: 233-250.

ars the subtitle *Naye nāsiket*, which provides an intertextual reference to the *Nāsiketopākhyāna* of the *Kathopaniṣad*.<sup>40</sup> The Hindi *Nāsiketopākhyān*, sometimes also titled as *Candrāvati ath'vā nāsiketopākhyān*, was one of the earliest translations from Sanskrit into Khari Boli by Pandit Sadal Mishra of Fort William College in the first decade of 19th century. *Nāsiketopākhyān*, like many traditional mythological narratives, has stories within stories.<sup>41</sup> Of its two main plots,<sup>42</sup> the second is about the protagonist Nāsiketa and his trip to the city of death god Yama. Nāsiketa, a great young practitioner of yoga, is asked by his father sage Uddālaka, a practitioner of Vedic sacrifices, to bring some required material for the preparation of the *yajña*. Nāsiketa enters the woods in order to obey his father but goes into deep yoga meditation in between and thereupon comes back only after one hundred years. After being reprimanded by his father for his failure to return on time and the consequent delay in holding the *yajña*, Nāsiketa argues for the spiritual superiority of yogic meditation over sacrifices. Annoyed by the rudeness of his argumentative son, Uddālaka curses him to visit the kingdom of the god of death. The young pious yogī, equipped with the irresistible power of yoga, not only successfully reaches *yam'lok* but pleases the lord of death with his extraordinary intelligence and spiritual merit. Yama allows him to travel freely in his city. Nāsiketa then meets the minister of Yama, Citragupta, who provides him guides to assist his travel to various parts of the city – garden, river, assembly, heaven, hell, etc. After the completion of his trip Nāsiketa comes back to earth. Surrounded by sage and monks of all hues, he reveals his knowledge about the city of death where all creatures are subjected to final judgement in accordance with their deeds and achievements on earth. Nāsiketa elaborates in grotesque detail the punishment meted out to those who violate the Brahmanic moral-social order and summarises the pleasure enjoyed by those who righteously uphold the order.<sup>43</sup>

*Yam'lok kī yātrā*, as we shall see in the following detailed synopsis, imitates and debases the *Nāsiketopākhyāna*. Its complex narrative displays several levels of referentiality. It begins with the description of the narrator, a proxy-Nāsiketa who is under an extreme attack of pneumonia and compares

<sup>40</sup> *Nāsiketopākhyān* was republished from Kāśī Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā through the intervention of Babu Shyamsundar Das in 1901. See MÍŚRA (1901: 1) For more detailed version of the narrative in translation see NEVO 2010.

<sup>41</sup> For a crisp overview of Puranic narrative and its structure see RAO 2004: 97- 115.

<sup>42</sup> The first story is about the merits of non-celibate spiritual life. It emphasizes the significance of conjugal life for reproduction: Nāsiketa is born without sexual intercourse from the nose of a beautiful and pious princess Candrāvati, who has conceived by inhaling a lotus carrying sperm of a celibate sage Uddālaka.

<sup>43</sup> The summary presented above is based on Sadal Míśra's book. It does not differ substantially from the upaniṣadic account.

its symptoms with the semi-divine acts of ancient sages: “I was so thirsty that I would have drunk the entire ocean in one gulp”<sup>44</sup> and so on. The accounts of his hallucinatory experiences that follow are allegorical descriptions of colonial urban institutional spaces as well as oblique comments on contemporary society and politics.

In the unconscious state he finds himself surrounded by the henchmen of the death god, who alternately looks like Muslims, demons and the colonial police. He soon realises that he has been arrested by them and is being taken to the city of the death god. Then abruptly the narrator switches to a colonial time frame and laments:

“Oh! I am dying so early! Only twenty five years did I live in the nineteenth century! Neither did I see the spread of Nāgarī and the Hindi language in Hindustan! Nor widow-remarriage! Nor Indians as civil servants! Neither could I see the end of the Press Act, nor the restrictions on sea-voyage! Nor could I know the result of the Afghan War!”<sup>45</sup>

He wants to turn back but is hit with a whip and then kicked by the constable with such a force that he reaches the *Vaitaranī* river, a mythic chronotope that serves as passage to *Yam'lok*. There he confronts an Indian colonial office which apparently allots the vehicle to cross the river. When asked whether he has ever donated a cow to a Brahmin, he retorts in the rational language of the urban middle class: If one can cross the river by holding the tail of a cow, he asks, can't he go for a bullock, or for that matter, a dog? He recalls having donated a dog to the wife of a British Magistrate and hence gets the dog to cross over the river.<sup>46</sup>

He reaches *Yam'lok* and finds its streets as dirty as Benaras and its buildings as magnificent as those of Delhi and American cities. His description alludes to the towns of colonial India. On feeling hunger the narrator tries to forcibly take food from the shop like the famine stricken hungry crowd. After strolling through the town, he visits the big gardens outside the city that resemble urban spaces like Calcutta's Eden Garden, Delhi's Company Bagh or Lahore's Shalimar Bagh, in which the commoners are discriminated and the gardeners are unashamedly commercial. When he comes to a pond looking like the ghats of Banaras, he breaks his chains, takes a dip into the water and assumes the form of a devout Vaishnava.<sup>47</sup>

He, then, enters into the court of the death-god. The interior of the court

<sup>44</sup> See ŚĪSĪR (1990: 26)

<sup>45</sup> See ŚĪSĪR (1990: 27)

<sup>46</sup> See ŚĪSĪR (1990: 28)

<sup>47</sup> See ŚĪSĪR (1990: 28-29)

where ex-officio head Citragupta sits, like the high court, is peopled with hundreds of peons, clerks and *vyavasthā* pundits.<sup>48</sup> The office rooms are furnished with electric light, fan and telephone. The narrator is charged by the police of being an imposter in the guise of a Vaishnava and the *vyavasthā*-giver sentences him to hell. Consequently, he makes hue and cry and defends his Vaishnava identity in a changed context of colonial modernity. He pleads:

“Birth after birth I have been a Vaishnava [...]. I did everything without an iota of pride [...]. Yes, I acquired some English manners, customs and education, but I did this only for the sake of the country’s betterment. So, I undoubtedly deserve to be in heaven.”<sup>49</sup>

Impressed by his defence, the judge forwards his case to the office of Citragupta. While waiting, the narrator observes the ongoing proceedings of the court, applauds the speedy trial and prosecution of the sinners even when they are socially privileged, and caustically comments upon the slow and inefficient court on earth. In the end he is acquitted by Citragupta, for he has been brought here mistakenly. He thanks Citragupta for upholding justice and speaks with the cultural authority of a Brahmin:

“May the almighty bestow peace upon you; may the Kāyasthas, who are from your lineage and are important bureaucrats in India, be prosperous. As they became Kṣatriyas from the position of Śūdras, may they soon be Brahmins and may your temples and idols be established and worshipped everywhere.”<sup>50</sup>

Citragupta smiles wryly and denies any connection with the Kāyasthas in the language of legal rationality: ‘When did I visit the earth to produce children and when did I become a Śūdra? See, what are the evidences?’<sup>51</sup> He, then, quips:

“Had the Kāyasthas been of my lineage, all employees in the offices here would have been Kayasthas. Because Kāyasthas, like crows, always flock together! On the contrary, I punish them more severely. As far as becoming Kṣatriya is concerned, will this ever help in fetching a place in heaven? And idolization and worship is against sacred law, I am not going to be happy about this.”<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Brahmins dealing with Hindu jurisprudence.

<sup>49</sup> See ŚĪŚĪR (1990: 29)

<sup>50</sup> See ŚĪŚĪR (1990: 32)

<sup>51</sup> See ŚĪŚĪR (1990: 32)

<sup>52</sup> See ŚĪŚĪR (1990: 32)

After listening to Citragupta's sermons, he expresses the desire to visit the assembly of the death-god and hell so that he could publish the entire report in the newspapers in India.<sup>53</sup>

*Yam'lokkīyātrā*, thus, plays upon the literary form of the *Nāsiketopākhyāna* and achieves satiric grotesqueness through the descriptive excess of fantasy. Intertextual referents to the Upaniṣadic narrative let the first person satiric narrator attain a semi-divine status, and like with the proverbial sage, with him, too, extreme suffering is followed by the acquisition of power to visualize and judge what is, in his case, the mundane colonial urban culture from an outsider's distance. The narrator thus covertly manages to blur the distinction between the historical and mythic times and spaces. The historical reality of contemporary society is transposed into the fantastic world of mythical hell in the beginning and then they are clearly juxtaposed to each other. This equips him to criticize obliquely the events, institutions and socio-political processes unfolding in the colonial urban space. The blurring of distinction implicitly enables him to articulate his political self, a cunning member of the Hindi middle class.

So what happens here can be interpreted as follows: A section of educated upper caste male Hindus, who claim to be rooted in Hindu moral-religious world, negotiate with new cultural manners and adapt new languages of political argumentation for the larger 'national' cause, but are frustrated at their own subjection and threatened by the potential erosion of Indian/Hindu civilization. One of the cornerstones of Hindu civilization, of which the narrator claims to be a representative, is understood to be the hierarchical caste system for maintaining an internal social equilibrium and preventing disintegration.<sup>54</sup> Hence, acts of symbolic transgression by materially powerful social groups like the Kāyasthas, which were facilitated by the institutions of the colonial state,<sup>55</sup> are shown as threatening outcomes of colonial modernity and made the target of satiric indictment. In the case of materially deprived social groups seeking to defy caste order, the attack becomes more blatant and crude, as we shall see in the following section.

<sup>53</sup> The last section of the text was not published in the periodical but came out in the form of a booklet, which, according to Sudhir Chandra, described the sinners of colonial India burning in the fire of hell including the 1857 rebels. This part is not available in the edition used and I have not been able to find that booklet so far. See CHANDRA (1992: 94-95).

<sup>54</sup> For instance see the views of nineteenth century "Indian social theorists" like Bhudev Mukhopadhyay on Hindu society. See KAVIRAJ (1995: 253- 281).

<sup>55</sup> In this regard also see "Pañc kā nyāy" in *Hindī pradīp*, June-July 1899 and "Pañc kā prapañc," *Hindī pradīp*, July-August 1903.

### Silencing recalcitrance of the modern

*Nāpit'sotra*, or the 'Barber's hymn',<sup>56</sup> deals with Radhacharan Goswami's take on the rise of the social power and 'liberty' of the *Nāpit* or barber caste which, according to the text, is reflected in their 'cunning' and assertive activities, particularly in the cities of colonial India. In the introduction Goswami explicates the agenda of satire.

"Although *Nāpit'sotra* is primarily humorous, it will be fruitful. First, the power and independence of barbers, which has been on the rise in our *Ārya* nation, should decline; second, educated barbers should improve their character; third, amongst our [Aryan] fraternity they should be despised; fourth, humour should increase interest in reading of Hindi books and hence shall be a service to the nation".<sup>57</sup>

According to Radhacharan, the recalcitrant community of barbers, who, far from serving their caste superiors and performing their traditionally assigned duties in the Aryan nation of *homo hierarchicus*, have started subverting them, should be taken to task. The educated few of their community should reform themselves and help their community in mending their ways according to the caste Hindu order.

This piece of satire is a travesty of the traditional panegyric hymn called *stotra*.<sup>58</sup> As Sudipta Kaviraj has rightly pointed out, to be a *stotra*, a composition must conform to some purely formal properties of style. Incomparability of the deity to whom the *stotra* is offered is conveyed by the mannerisms of descriptive excess. *Stotras* also exhibit a usually circular, repetitive movement, coming back, after each cycle of excessive praise, to the signature phrase describing the essential attributes of the object of worship.<sup>59</sup> In course of incantation each and every attribute is conveyed and, consequently, the object is familiarised. Radhacharan's travesty of the *stotra* betrays intimate knowledge of its formal requirements and deliberately debases its form.

"O Barber, the cooler of our hot head! I salute you. If you are unavailable, we are in great distress; we become he-goats with long beards, and the hair transforms into dreadlocks and we become indistinguishable from ghosts. Those who do not believe should look at

<sup>56</sup> *Kṣatriya patrikā*, July 1881. *Nāpit'sotra* was also published by the owners of *Kṣatriya patrikā* in the form of a tract from their Khaḍgavilās Press, Bankipore (Patna) in 1882.

<sup>57</sup> Citations are from ŚIŚIR 1990: 36.

<sup>58</sup> For the similar case of *Imrāj'sotra* written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee see KAVIRAJ 2000: 389-92. BHARATENDU HARISHCHANDRA also wrote its Hindi version *Aṅgrej'sotra* in the 1870s.

<sup>59</sup> See KAVIRAJ 2000:389; for a more detailed study see BÜHNEMANN 1984: 73-104 and GONDA 1977: 232-270.

the history of 1877 when barbers had a quarrel with the ironsmiths of Banaras. Therefore, O Gardener of Lord Brahma's hair-garden, you are great!

O Sir Barber! Government servants and the princes invariably worship you on Sundays and Wednesdays. Therefore, O midweekly enlightening periodical of Sun [day] and Mars [Wednesday] you are great! [...]

You have beheaded [tonsured] innumerable girl children; you have forced innumerable daughters of the rich into the drudgery of impoverished family; you have thrust so many youthful spinsters upon the head of young boys; [you] have made so many girls the wood of old men's funeral pyres; destroyed so many people with your cunningness and treachery. Therefore, O Father of the law court's Urdu documents! O Elder Brother of Mahmud of Ghazni, Aurangzeb, Nadir Shah and other destroyers of India! You are great [...]

You are the one who decided in unison to charge not less than one anna for shaving. Poor Brahmins were compelled to shave each others. Therefore, O Outcaste(r)! O Minister of the *kali* age! You are great! [...]

Like other castes trying to claim higher caste status, you have claimed yourself to be a *Nyāyī* or a *Kṣatriya* who does justice. Therefore, O progressive of the nineteenth century, O reformer! You are great!"<sup>60</sup>

Thus, Radhacharan debases the literary form by replacing the sacred with the profane and substituting for the deity a low caste group who is said to be defying the Hindu moral-social order. Within the formal structure of the *stotra*, essential social attributes and functions of a barber in the Hindu social order are negatively described as his subversive acts. This enables *Nāpit'sotra* to perform a two-fold task. On the one hand side, the barber's importance in the erstwhile *jajmani* system<sup>61</sup> is conveyed and underlined. On the other, the representation of his subversive acts as his praised qualities produces an obvious incongruity to a reader who implicitly shares the Brahmanic ideological premises of the satirist and turns the panegyric hymn into a grotesque condemnation. Thus, the barber, traditionally a Śūdra, is condemned for breaking the Hindu social order. The symptoms of its breakdown are overloaded by satirical exaggeration as the sole result of his (mis-)deeds; his acts are allegedly as evil and gruesome as those of Muslim plunderers. Moreover, his subversive acts are facilitated and precipitated under the conditions of colonial modernity. Not surprisingly then, the site of his

<sup>60</sup> See ŚĪSĪR (1990: 36-39)

<sup>61</sup> See the section on the *jajmani* (*jajmānī*) system in DUMONT 1980: 57-106.

subversive activities is the city space, they take place in the dystopian times (*kali age*) of colonialism, and are assisted by the modern state as well as public institutions manifested in the politics of social and caste reform movements among the lower castes.<sup>62</sup>

The satiric condemnation of a recalcitrant social group defying the normative order of the caste system, addresses the ‘undesired’ effects of social-intellectual churning which has been occasioned by colonial modernity and threatened the social privilege and norms of respectability of male upper caste Hindus against the underclass. Liberal education and rule of law, which conceptualised every individual as theoretically equal, are envisaged as threats to the customary privilege and social supremacy of the upper caste Hindu middle class and put them on equal footing with the lower classes. This aspect of colonial modernity came under the severest attack in satirical works such as the one discussed here and the strategies of satire were used to silence and dispel the subversive threats.

### Mocking the absurdity of equality

The most programmatic attribution of colonial space witnessing the free play of modernity is to be found in Harishchandra’s satirical play *Andher nag<sup>1</sup>rī* (‘Dark city’, 1881).<sup>63</sup> The title alludes to a city or a city-state of blind excess and injustice. The play is based on one of the very popular pre-modern folktales of the region that had also found its way into the print world as part of a commercially successful genre of pleasure writing<sup>64</sup> in the nineteenth century. For example, one of the leading publishing houses of north India, Naval Kishore Press of Lucknow,<sup>65</sup> brought out a cheap edition of one hundred copies of *Manohar kahānī* in 1880, ‘which contain[ed] a total of hundred didactic and highly entertaining tales’<sup>66</sup> in the Nagari script.<sup>67</sup>

Tale 71 of *Manohar kahānī* which, like the other tales, bears no title, is in the following given in translation:

“A *Gosāī* [saint] along with his disciple went on pilgrimage from

---

<sup>62</sup> For example the reform movements led by the Kāyastha association, the Gop<sup>1</sup>jātīya Mahāsabhā, etc. Proliferation in the act of claiming higher social status by the lower castes came from the impetus provided by the intense ideological propagation and activities of the Ārya Samājīs.

<sup>63</sup> I have used its 2009 reprint. See HARIŚCANDRA 2009.

<sup>64</sup> See ORSINI 2009.

<sup>65</sup> For an exhaustive study of Naval Kishore Press in the 19th century see STARK 2008.

<sup>66</sup> The cover page describes the book as follows in Hindi: *Manohar kahānī jis<sup>1</sup> meṃ sab ek sau alāhidah alāhidah nihāyat dil<sup>1</sup> casp kisah darj haiṃ.*

<sup>67</sup> However, the title of the book is written in both Nāgarī and Nastālīq scripts.

some city, and after a long walk reached a village. Then he asked his disciple to bring some food-grain. When the disciple found that all goods were of equal price, he brought ghee, sugar and *maidā* [finely processed flour] home ecstatically, and cooked *malīdā* [bread fried in ghee and soaked in sugar] and offered it to his Guru. The Guru asked, 'Hey! What is up today that you have cooked this?' 'Here every commodity is of equal value', he replied. 'So I made *malīdā*.' Listening to this the *Gosāī* asked, 'What is the name of the village?' He replied, 'Haribhūm'pur [City of the land of Hari or of the monkey respectively].' The Guru said, 'Leave now. Who knows which disaster is impending?' The disciple replied, 'I am not going to leave this village, if you wish you can go on pilgrimage.' Consequently, the *Gosāī* left alone and the disciple stayed there. Within a year he became so fat of eating that he was unrecognisable. Once some thief was caught stealing; he was ordered by the king to be hanged. What the *Kut'vāl* [sentinel] found<sup>68</sup> after putting the thief on the gallows is that the thief was thin and the rope was thick. The king ordered, 'Hang a fat man and free the thief.' On the king's order the *Kut'vāl* took that fat disciple of the *Gosāī* to the gallows. God willing, before he could hang [the disciple] the *Gosāī* suddenly appeared. Finding his disciple being hanged he spoke, 'Hey *Kut'vāl*! Do not hang him, hang me instead.' The *Kut'vāl* asked, 'Why?' The *Gosāī* said, 'Whosoever will be hanged now will become the king of heaven. The day for which I was earning spiritual merits has arrived now and my quest is over.' The *Kut'vāl* said, 'Why shall I hang you? I myself will be on the gallows.' Getting the news of the *Kut'vāl* being ready to hang himself, the *Subā* [head of the province] said [to the *Kut'vāl*], 'Not you, I shall.' Receiving the news of the headman's captain's [decision], the *Dīvān* [prime minister] spoke [that] he would [volunteer to be hung]. Finally, after such kind of discussion the king decided to hang himself. Then the *Gosāī* said to his disciple, 'Didn't I tell you not to stay here? [Do you] want to stay even now?' [The disciple] replied, 'By mistake a Hindu merchant ate mutton, god forbid if he eats again'.<sup>69</sup> He left soon after uttering this [verse]."<sup>70</sup>

The moral of this widely known and circulated humorous folktale is that judging every individual or commodity with the same yardstick without ta-

<sup>68</sup> *kyā dekh'tā hai* ('What does he see/find?'): the tense of narration changes into the present in this sentence to convey immediacy.

<sup>69</sup> Proverb: *bhūle baniyā bheṃṛ khāī, pher khāe to rām'duhāī*.

<sup>70</sup> See *Manohar kahānī* 1880: 34-35.

king into cognizance its individual merit is catastrophic. *Andher nag'rī*, to be written and published a year later in 1881 by Harishchandra, subjected the internal structure of this tale to a creative alteration and by “overwriting” it developed it into a farcical play.<sup>71</sup>

In the opening scene of *Andher nag'rī*, a Hindu monk and his two disciples, Narayan Dās and Gobardhan Dās, are walking and singing a sacred hymn and they stop at the outer frontier of a nearby city. The guru and his disciples discuss that the city leaves the impression of being elegant and opulent from outside. While the disciples optimistically enter the city, the guru stays back, preaching refrain from avarice.<sup>72</sup>

The second scene is spatially situated in the marketplace inside the city. The vendors advertise their commodities in rhythmic verse. Apart from the appreciating the benefits of consuming the commodities each verse includes acerbic comments on the contemporary state of socio-political affairs under the colonial dispensation and its collaborators. Gobardhan Dās, the wandering mendicant, observes to his pleasant surprise that the vendors and shopkeepers are selling almost everything, from *kabāb*, *pācak* (digestive powder), orange, dry fruits, vegetable and grocery to caste (!) and sweets, for one *ṭākā a ser*. Ghasirām, the vendor of *canā* (roasted gram), advertises:

“Rosted gram made by Ghasirām, who carries his store in his handbag [...]. Very high officials eat roasted gram, and impose double taxes on us all [...].”<sup>73</sup>

A *pācak'vālā* sings:

“This is known as *cūraṇ* [powder] of Hind and it is for *vilāyat's* [England's] fulfilment [...]. Civil servants who eat *cūraṇ* digest the double amount of bribe [...]. Money lenders who eat *cūraṇ* consume all previous deposits [...]. Editors who eat *cūraṇ* cannot absorb any secret. Sahibs who eat *cūraṇ* can digest all of Hind. Policemen who eat *cūraṇ* can digest all legislations [...]. Buy a heap of *cūraṇ* for one *ṭākā a ser*.”<sup>74</sup>

A Brahmin selling caste shouts:

“Take away caste, one *ṭākā a ser* of caste. For money's sake I become a washerman and make the washerman a Brahmin, for money I give

<sup>71</sup> Bakhtin argues on similar lines in the context of usage of a pre-established poetic genre like the sonnet within the new genre of novel and contends that when a formal genre has itself been made an object of representation its literary value is completely transformed and fulfils a different purpose. See BAKHTIN 1988: 43-51.

<sup>72</sup> See HARIŚCANDRA 2009: 39-40.

<sup>73</sup> See HARIŚCANDRA 2009: 41-42.

<sup>74</sup> See HARIŚCANDRA 2009: 44-45.

you the desired *vyavasthā*. For money become a Muslim, for money turn from Hindu to Christian. For money [I] make a low caste [my] grandfather; *Veda*, *dharma*, family prestige, everything one *ṭākā a ser!*"<sup>75</sup>

Finally, Gobardhan Dās decides to buy seven *sers* of sweets and goes back to meet his preceptor, appreciating and chanting the name of the city and its ruler: "In a city of blind excess, the ruler is a buffoon. Be it vegetable or sweets, all are equal".<sup>76</sup>

The third scene is located outside the city in the forest where the guru, chanting Lord Rama's name, meets Gobardhan Dās who is singing the praise of *Andher nag<sup>l</sup>rī*. Gobardhan Dās opens the pack of sweets and happily narrates the tale of the city where everything is of equal value. The guru refrains from eating and plans to leave immediately a city which does not have a system of discrimination based on merit.

"Where camphor and cotton are equal for each of them is white [...], where cuckoo and crow are equal [and] pundit and fool are equivalent [...], even if it rains gold there, one should avoid being a resident."<sup>77</sup>

Gobardhan Dās stays back appreciating the easy life of the city and the other two mendicants leave.

The fourth scene is set in the court of the ruler. Instead of dispensing justice, the king and his sycophants, ministers and other officials are insanely drunk. A complainant enters seeking justice for his she-goat which died under the rubbles of a fallen wall. The judge first asks to arrest the wall; on the advice of his assistants he issues orders to bring the owner of the wall to the court. The owner of the wall puts the blame on the mason, the mason on the limestone maker, the limestone maker on the waterman. This latter accuses the leather worker for making an oversized water-pot; the leather worker blames the shepherd for selling an oversized sheep, and the shepherd in his turn accuses the *ko<sup>l</sup>vāl*'s inspection tour in the city which made him so nervous that he sold a big instead of a small sheep. The king accordingly orders to hang the *ko<sup>l</sup>vāl* to death.

The fifth scene is situated in the symbolic space of the forest/country-side, outside the city where Gobardhan Dās is singing:

"In a city of blind excess, the ruler is stupid. Vegetable or sweets, [...], high and low, [...], pimp or pundit, all are equal. Nobody asks about caste or sect, chanting god's name makes equal all and sundry. The wife is equivalent to the prostitute; the she-goat is at par with the cow

<sup>75</sup> See HARIŚCANDRA 2009: 45-46.

<sup>76</sup> See HARIŚCANDRA 2009: 48.

<sup>77</sup> See HARIŚCANDRA 2009: 50.

[...]. Right or wrong is hardly distinct; the king's deed is an act of law. Dark from within and clean from without, stooges and pawns [*pyāde*] rule the town. Chaos is spread all around, as if the ruler stayed in a foreign land. No respect for the cow, *dvijas* [twice-born caste Hindus] and the scriptures, as if the ruler were an infidel. High and low all are equal, as if there were enlightenment all around."<sup>78</sup>

Gobardhan Dās enjoys tasty sweets and appreciates the kingdom. But suddenly he realizes that the royal guards have come to arrest him to be hanged. On his plea of innocence they clarify that as a matter of fact the *koṭ'vāl* [sentinel] was sentenced to be hanged, but his neck was too thin to be hanged as the rope was oversized. The king, then, ordered to hang someone fat; for in the interest of justice, someone must be punished and it is safe to hang an innocent mendicant. Gobardhan Dās cries and invokes his guru to rescue him.

The last scene of the play is located at the gallows on the cremation ground. Gobardhan Dās relentlessly cries for justice but to no avail. He chants his guru's name. Suddenly, his guru appears and expresses his wish to be executed himself for, as it were, whosoever dies at that time will go to heaven directly. This declaration results in a chaos and everybody wants to die for a place in heaven. But, finally, the king exercises his privilege to go first to heaven and is executed. The play ends with a couplet recited by the monk:

“Where there is no morality, wisdom and ethics, nor a society of nobles, the people will destroy themselves like this stupid king.”<sup>79</sup>

As this synopsis of *Andher nag'rī* reveals, the monks are ideal reflectors for the narrative to be told since they are located outside the city – and, by extension, outside colonial modernity – but due to their regular contact nevertheless are well-acquainted with it. It is through their perspective that the second scene is narrativised, and here we enter a world of colonial police, revenue officials, money-lenders, magistrates, and Brahmins at the service of the British law court. While all come under the oblique attack of satire, the Brahmin, the traditional custodian of Hindu (Indian) moral-legal system, is attacked most grotesquely. The marketplace in the ‘Dark City’ is shown to be a place of absolute equality where everything is of equal value. What we see in the advertisements at the marketplace is that the distinction between exchangeable (like food item) and non-exchangeable (socio-religious rank or status) is made fluid. The usual quality of each edible commodity

---

<sup>78</sup> See HARIŚCANDRA 2009: 58-59.

<sup>79</sup> See HARIŚCANDRA 2009: 64.

is exaggerated and deformed by the attribution of political-cultural virtue or vice to it. Alternatively, social-religious markers of status are attributed with qualities of exchangeable goods. The ascription of singular price value – one *ṭākā* a *ser* – to both the edible and the social deforms and mocks at the idea of equality itself and renders indiscriminate social and political equality as absurd in the theatre of the marketplace. Hence, foregrounding caste or community identity as exchangeable and at par with obviously incongruous things like edibles makes any such act promoting the liquidation of a rigid social structure look ridiculous and illegitimate. The act of the Brahmin – selling *vyavastās* like grocery and legitimizing the process of upward social mobility – is presented as the most grotesque effect of equality. By the end of the first scene, the absurdity of the idea of equality, oblivious of the hierarchy of merits, is established, at least in the projected realm of commodities.

The third scene, symbolically situated in an ‘authentic’ space untainted by colonial modernity, makes the guiding political overtone of the play more pronounced. The allegorical parity in values of commodities is translated into the social realm through the *caupāī*. It is axiomatically asserted that the place where ideology of equality prevails over the system of discrimination based on obvious social quality or merit is essentially dangerous and non-inhabitable. In other words, the colonial urban space governed by the impersonal liberal ideology of the ‘rule of law’ assigning equal status to everyone is unacceptably dangerous. But this can hardly be defended without being blatantly crude. Here the literary strategy of satire comes to the rescue in pushing the Brahmanical ideology of hierarchy. It cannot defend itself through positive argumentation against the liberal idea of equality, but it can attack its opponent through a series of negative argumentations. So the satire dissociates the principles of liberal equality from their rhetoric of ratiocination.

While the ‘absurd’ value of equality is already made unreasonable in the realm of the commodities, in the realm of justice it is put to test. The fourth and the fifth scenes make this clearer. The song in the fifth scene further alludes to the colonial legal political system based on such an ‘absurd’ ideology of equality.<sup>80</sup> The theatre of the marketplace is governed by an ‘absurd’ value of equality and is shown to be in continuum with the theatre of the courtroom in the fourth scene. The grotesque error of judgment in the courtroom relies on the satiric exaggeration of the court proceedings and pushes it to ridiculously absurd extremity. Crucial to this, again, is the caricatured deployment of the same ‘absurd’ value of equality. It does not distinguish

<sup>80</sup> The collaborators of the rule, too, are shown to be precariously positioned in the system, and manipulating it for personal benefits.

between a human being and the wall, makes unreasonable causal relations between the crime and the potential accused and the actually sentenced. After all, everything is equal; be it a goat, a wall, a *kot'vāl* or a mendicant. The final scene is the logical culmination of this descriptive excess imposed on the city-state governed by the 'absurd' value of equality. It is shown that this 'absurd' value of equality is chaotic, disorderly and emblematic of the blind excesses and injustices, and thus bound to meet its logical end in a solemn chaos. The salvager is, of course, the chief mendicant, who is unpolluted by the colonial modernity and the champion of traditional hierarchical values of *adhikāra-bhed*, the differentiation of rights according to *varṇa* and *āśrama*, as the bases of social harmony.

Again, however, this satire against the liberal idea of equality as ignoring the value of traditional social privilege and norms of respectability should not lead us to conclude that all forms and aspects of modernity were despised by its author or his audience. The discussion of the perception of a more concrete and widely acknowledged symbol of modernity, the railways, will make this amply clear in the following section.

### Satirising the technology of Railways

Written as a 'mock' stotra in twenty nine stanzas, Radhacharan Goswami's *Rel'vestotra*<sup>81</sup> is about the critical social perception of the railways' impact on political economy and culture. The giant technology of railways was one of the most prominent symbols of modernity all over the world and consequently had generated a variety of responses. Satirical attack on railways is a common theme in the periodicals of the nineteenth century both in England (especially in its early years between 1830 and 1870) and in north India, but because of a varied historical experience the same technology generated different responses.

As the historians of the English satirical press point out, the literary response to railway technology in England is linked with the anxieties of the expanding middle class public who not only would be the travellers but also aspiring investors in the private joint stock companies in the 1840s and after.<sup>82</sup> In England, the initial response to railways in 1830s was a mixture of awe and terror.<sup>83</sup> The novelty of railway travel also bred a degree of antipa-

---

<sup>81</sup> It was first published in *Bhār'tendu*, August 18, 1883.

<sup>82</sup> See ALTICK 1997. A few of these periodicals were also circulated in India and well-known in the burgeoning Hindi literary sphere. For instance, the contents of British *Punch* were not only reprinted in Indian periodicals but its format was enthusiastically received by the Indian litterateur in the nineteenth century. See HANS HARDER et al. forthcoming.

<sup>83</sup> Reflecting on the contemporary picture gallery flooded with the images of railways techno-

thy and suspicion, and comment was often skeptical. The ambitions of the proponents of steam travel were easily satirized, and cartoons of the 1820s and 1830s focused on the apparent absurdity of the ‘progress of steam’ and the ‘march of intellect’. Within a decade this innocent initial reaction gave way to caustic and biting attack. The ‘railway mania’, which preoccupied almost every middle class man who could aspire to be rich by investing in joint stock companies, has been one of the main subjects of English satirical press of the time. It attacked middle class greed and loss in speculative business, the corruption and lack of accountability of mushrooming joint stock companies (often owned by men of low social origin) and its management for neglecting the comfort and security of the passengers for the sake of profit.<sup>84</sup> Cartoons of this period stressed the dynamic and destructive power of the engines as a means of conveying the devastation wrought by speculation in railway shares. The railway was depicted as a monster, a serpent, or a demon, ruining the lives of investors. However, soon the focus shifted from the speculative mania of the middle class to the directors of the companies who for the sake of profit risked the lives of customers.<sup>85</sup>

While this was the range of general railway perception in 19th century Britain, the picture for India was significantly different. Here, the arrival of railways was inextricably linked with the political economy of colonialism<sup>86</sup> and embedded in its discourse of a civilizing mission.<sup>87</sup> It was conceived in the official discourse as a civilizing technology that would secure material welfare for the people, dissolve the entrenched social prejudices and enable the production of an ‘industrious and disciplined body’.<sup>88</sup> It would produce

---

logy, William Makepeace Thackeray summed up the reaction as follows: “There comes a train down upon you, really moving at the rate of fifty miles an hour, and which the reader had best make haste to see, lest it should dash out of the picture, and be away up Charing Cross through the wall opposite”. This is cited from TAYLOR 2005: 112.

<sup>84</sup> For example, British satirical weekly *Punch* published a cartoon ‘The Railway Juggernaut of 1845’. It depicted a dramatic scene in which the locomotive *Speculation*, an imp clinging to its smoke stack, plowed into a crowd of ordinary women, children and men, some of the latter prostrate on the ground as if praying to the Almighty. The design was completed with several vultures with human faces flying overhead and alligators waiting with open jaws. This example is taken from ALTICK 1997: 156. Also see TAYLOR 2005: 111-145; FREEMAN 1999; SIMMONSOMAS 1994.

<sup>85</sup> An illustration from the satirical journal *Puppet-Show* portrays the railway as an anthropomorphized land serpent which is gobbling up its investors, depicted as plump and helpless moneybags. The accompanying text explains that the ‘greedy’ and ‘brazen’ monster consumes ‘every kind of man [...] from the dullest lord of thousands, to the poorest scamp on town’. See TAYLOR 2005:119-120.

<sup>86</sup> See KERR 1995.

<sup>87</sup> See AHUJA 2003: 195-216.

<sup>88</sup> See GOSWAMI 2004: 105-106.

an abstract space of production and circulation, and act as incubator of the modern subject liberated from primordial customs and prejudices. As one chief consulting engineer for railways in India, George Macgeorge, observed:

“The strong barriers of one of the most rigid and exclusive caste systems in the world have been penetrated on every side by the power of steam. In India for many years past, caste prejudices have been practically extinguished within the fences of a line of railway, and the most sacred Brahmin will now contentedly ignore them rather than forgo the luxury and economy of journey”.<sup>89</sup>

Despite such claims, the application of this technology in the Indian sub-continent was guided by the needs of the political economy of colonialism and duly marked by the racial economy of difference in its spatial reorganisation.<sup>90</sup> The response of Indian intelligentsia in the second half of the nineteenth century, as the following examples will show, was therefore heavily centred on these two significant points, though not confined to them.

In *Rel'vestotra*, which we will now look at in detail, railways are perceived as an unavoidable quasi-divine, techno-industrial, urban monster, which is a gift of colonial rule to India.<sup>91</sup> The onward march of this modern technology of communication is represented as a threat not only to pre-modern technologies of communication but also to the concurrent political order.

“O rail! Victory to you, victory to you! And death to cart, *ikkā*, boat, and vessel! Death to them! Let the Hindustani Kings be afraid of your entry in their kingdom! And the end to our sorrows [when receiving the] blessings of the precious dust of your wheels on our head!”<sup>92</sup>

The enthusiasm generated by the seductive power of this technology is presented with a deep sense of irony, produced by the underlying ambivalence of enchantment with progress on the one hand and the exploitative aspects of the ‘drain of wealth’ technology on the other:

“O enchantress of the world! O temptress! People of the country un-blessed by the touch of your expiating feet, incessantly pray for your *darśan*; do picketing at the government’s doorstep; donate thousands of rupees; and then feel blessed by your arrival in the country. But when you steal the profit of their trade by your sublime light, they

---

<sup>89</sup> Cited from MANU GOSWAMI 2004: 106.

<sup>90</sup> See GOSWAMI 2004: 103-131.

<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, as we saw through the example of British satirical press, the depiction of the railways as modern techno-urban monster is to be found in India as well as Britain.

<sup>92</sup> See ŚÍŚIR 1990:40.

name you *Rer* [hassle]! Therefore, O rail, your beginning as well as end are full of sorrow!”<sup>93</sup>

The expansiveness of the railways project and its essential megalomania is allegorically embodied as and equated with a mythological demon in line with the descriptive excess of the panegyric hymn:

“O beloved of god and demon! You are the lady of the dynasty of monsters. Your head is in Howrah. Your feet are in Delhi and Karachi. Your hands are Awadh-Ruhelkhand railways and Rajputana railways. Your tail is the great India peninsula railways; and all others are your body hair. You are lying upon the whole of India. The day you do not get the moneybag you eat up India like the proverbial demon *Gayāsura*.”<sup>94</sup>

*Rel'vestotra* critiques technology of railways as constitutive of colonial space<sup>95</sup> marked by racial and class difference and outlines the travel experiences of the colonized within this space from a nationalist position.

“O light of European heredity! You are the embodiment of English lineage; therefore, full of *sajātīya pakṣ'pāt* [racial discrimination]. The very same train at the same moment is heaven for the Englishmen and hell for the Indians. Therefore, ‘Heaven and hell is on the earth’ – a proposition of the atheists – is true for you [...]”<sup>96</sup>

This *stotra* and other literary pieces of the time highlight common Indian travellers as victims of class discrimination, insult and harassment at the hand of railway staff and officials at each and every moment of travel – in getting access to railways platforms, buying ticket at the counter, boarding the train, inside the train compartment, alighting from the train, and so forth. The railways space is perceived quintessentially as a modern colonial urban space smothering under the immoral and corrupt control of colonial officials.<sup>97</sup> A less known farcical play by Harishchandra Kulashrestha ‘*Thagī kī capeṭ meṃ bagī kī rapeṭ meṃ*’ (approximate translation: ‘Looted by robbers

<sup>93</sup> See ŚĪŚIR 1990:40.

<sup>94</sup> See ŚĪŚIR 1990:41. We know at least two versions of the tale about *Gayāsura*, one purāṇic and the other a folk tale. In both the version he is unusually huge and the entire divinity has to sit on his body to control his movement. In the purāṇic version the pilgrimage centre of Gaya is associated with the name of the same demon. (See ETHOVEN 1989: 12 and GOLD 1988: 217.

<sup>95</sup> For the articulation of railway space as the colonial state-space see GOSWAMI 2004. For railways travel experience and imagination of novel national space see BURY 2008.

<sup>96</sup> See ŚĪŚIR 1990: 43.

<sup>97</sup> The common representation of colonial urban space in the 19th century Hindi satire has a remarkable similarity with the railways space.

chased by tyrants’),<sup>98</sup> as well as *Rel kā vikaṭ khel* (‘The perilous play of the railways’)<sup>99</sup> which was written by Kartik Prasad Khatri in 1873 and performed at Harishchandra’s house in Benaras, can be cited as other examples. *Thagī* opens with the arrival at the station of an educated rural north Indian young man accompanied by his mother and a male and a female domestic from a village. It graphically illustrates his problems as a native waiting at the platform and his unsuccessful attempts of getting the ticket on time. The short span between the opening of the ticket counter and the arrival of the train proves insufficient because of the stampede-like situation orchestrated by the police constable and his props in the crowd hurling at the ticket counter. Finally, he bribes the police constable to fetch a ticket for him and boards the train.<sup>100</sup> *Rel kā vikaṭ khel* deals with the similar theme. A rustic adult along with his beautiful young wife are shown to be struggling to get a ticket and boarding the train. He finally gets the ticket after being cheated, looted and humiliated by the railways peon, constable and ticket-*bābū*, and boards the train in the last moment with a kick in his back by the railway guard. The guiding idea of these farces is that the colonial urban space of railways, which is apparently under the rule of law, is actually controlled by the railway officials and nothing but a network of class discrimination and injustice. *Rel’vestotra* also describes the railway station as follows:

“O You with dreadful tickets! Bless me so that I shall not be looted by the ticket-babu; O Crowd Filler! Bless me for I shall not be trampled in the stampede! O Beloved of blue monkeys [guards]! Bless me so that I shall not be teased by them. O Verisimilar of prison! Bless me

<sup>98</sup> The literary style and quality of the play does not resemble Bharatendu Harishchandra’s works. This author Harishchandra Kulashrestha seems to be a different person coincidentally or deliberately having a similar name. See KULŚREṢṬH 1884.

<sup>99</sup> “*Rel kā vikaṭ khel*”, *prathamāṅk* [first scene] first appeared in May 15, 1874 issue of *Harishchandra’s Magazine*. See *HM* 2002: 202-204.

<sup>100</sup> In the second scene, the family along with the servant reaches at his friend’s place where the play makes sarcastic comments about an illiterate Brahmin chatting with the protagonist’s urbane friend. In the next scene, the domestic visits the riverbank to fetch drinking water for the womenfolk. He is soon befriended by a group of city thugs who invite him for smoking marihuana and gather information about him and the womenfolk. In the last scene one of the thugs arrives as a salesman of ornaments and takes money from the women who apparently purchase a necklace. Suddenly, a police constable drops in and catches the thug for selling stolen goods. He kicks the domestic, abuses and threatens the womenfolk for being culprits of buying stolen goods. Both of them leave the place with the money and the necklace. In the end the urbane gentleman laments the foolishness of the womenfolk for not recognizing the thug’s plan and the constable, who was a thug in disguise. He also underlines the futility of going to the police station. (See KULŚREṢṬH, 1884: 6-18)

for I shall not be incarcerated for hours. O Constrainer of nature's call! Bless me so that I shall be able to defecate freely"<sup>101</sup>

This nationalist critique of the railways as a colonial space of racial and class discrimination is, however, not unconditional. The tacit middle class claim to articulate the grievances of the entire populace of the colonized and hence to represent the entire nation, gets punctured along the fault lines of community, caste and gender. The critique comes with a simultaneous advocacy for the reconstitution of social markers of difference which is increasingly levelled by the railways. The Brahmanic Hindu disgust against the erasure of the socio-spatial marker of difference is spelt out clearly not only against the Muslims and Christians, but also against the lower castes. Railway spaces, especially the interiors of railway compartments which are devoid of caste and community markers and hence oblivious of the social privilege of upper caste Hindus, is compared with the non-discriminatory space of a brothel:

“O multifaceted lady of the world! At your bottom is the *nīl-cakra*<sup>102</sup> [‘blue wheel’] and at the top is the *bhairavī-cakra*<sup>103</sup> [‘dark wheel’]. Because sitting on the precious throne inside your temple, Hindu, Muslim and Christian become equal and dine together. Therefore, threatened by the *kali* age, the following two proverbs – ‘The entire world begs for the supreme being’s alms’ and ‘Under the shadow of *bhairavī cakra* all castes are twice-born’<sup>104</sup> – have found refuge in you [...]. O Embodiment of the world! How should I go on praising you, you are the prostitute. You welcome everybody. You are the shelter of the shelter-less [...]. O You who causes a chaste Hindu to fast! [...] O Rail! [Please] manage segregation of Hindus and Muslims [...] O dreadful play of the almighty God! Rail! May you always be in consonance with me! Hail rail! Hail congenial rail! Hail heavenly rail! Hail!! Hail!!”<sup>105</sup>

This Brahmanic anxiety is more pronounced in another satire *Rel'Ve Dokat* on the farcicality of the railways’ legal regulations and their implementation. Mocking the legal system, it says in the beginning that ‘everywhere else is *ekaṭ* (for Engl. ‘act’, in the sense of one common standard) but in the rail-

<sup>101</sup> See ŚÍSIR 1990: 45.

<sup>102</sup> A metaphoric expression signifying lord Vishnu.

<sup>103</sup> A metaphoric expression signifying goddess Kali. It is also a Tantric drinking ritual which does not discriminate on the basis of the caste provenance of the participant.

<sup>104</sup> The proverbs are: ‘*Jagannāth ke bhāt ko jagat pasāre hāth*’ and ‘*pravṛte bhairavīcakre sarve varṇāḥ dvijāyatāḥ*’. For the origin and earlier satirical use of this *śloka* in Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyaya’s Bengali satire *Nababābubilās* (1825) see HARDER 2004: 358-401.

<sup>105</sup> The last lines are in the original: *bol rel'gārī kī jay! bol mel'gārī kī jay! Bol indravimān kī jay! jay!! jay!!!* See ŚÍSIR 1990: 45.

ways it is *dokaṭ* ('double standard'). *Rel<sup>ve</sup>-dokaṭ*, ironically, demands the removal of spatial segregation of the 'untouchables':

"The Hindu and the Muslim hate the *Bhaṅgī* [scavenger caste], [so] the latter should be forced to sit beside the formers."<sup>106</sup>

Within the patriarchal discourse of satire, the railways were also perceived as an insecure, unprotected and morally volatile space for respectable (Hindu) women,<sup>107</sup> who were not only exposed to the gaze of 'lecherous' railways officials and lower class male passengers but to morally corrupting spatial proximity with lower class women. This anxiety is conspicuous in the above mentioned farce *Rel kā vikaṭ khel* and was there to stay, as the following cartoons from the 1920s demonstrate.



Figure 2: '*Hindustānī rel<sup>gaṛī</sup> ka tīs<sup>rā</sup> darjā*' (Third class of Indian railways)<sup>108</sup>

Fig. 2 depicts the general hardship of travelling with women's inconvenience only as a side effect. It shows a railway guard kicking the Indian passengers inside the crowded third class train compartment. While men are managing to get inside the train, the woman has fallen down on the platform as a result of the stampede. Likewise, fig. 3 depicts Hindu women from a 'respectable' middle class family standing at the railway station while the men travelling in the train, standing at the platform, are lecherously staring at them. The caption below makes the patriarchal anxiety amply clear: "The appearing of

<sup>106</sup> It was first published in *Bhār<sup>tendu</sup>*, July 27, 1884. See ŚĪSĪR 1990: 49-50.

<sup>107</sup> Laura Bear points out the similar anxiety amongst the British officials about the racial intermix between white men unguarded by their wives and members of another race in the railway colonies in India. See BEAR 1994: 531-548.

<sup>108</sup> This cartoon (from *Sudhā*, May 1928) illustrates the mistreatment of third class Indian passengers articulated in nineteenth century satires mentioned above. The condition remained almost similar in many respects even in the early twentieth century as the production of cartoons in the 1920s testifies.

women without veil at the Station is like a thunderbolt. Here is a common depiction of how full of hope they all – railway officials, passengers, coolies and vendors – gaze [at them]!!”<sup>109</sup>



Figure 3 ‘*Hamāre rel’ve stes’noṃ ka dṛiśya*’ (A scene at our railway stations)

Such satirical attacks on railways from a Brahmanic male Hindu vantage point in India, however, should once again not lead us to conclude that the Indian response was against this technology per se. Generally, all the litterateurs satirizing railways cited above showed deep appreciation not only for the development of the railways under British rule,<sup>110</sup> but towards modern technology and scientific knowledge as a potential basis for national progress.<sup>111</sup> Typically for nineteenth century liberal intelligentsia, they also

<sup>109</sup> *Cād*, April 1928. Representation of railways as the space of racial, class discrimination and threat to Hindu patriarchy (of course with new historical twists and configurations) looms large in the twentieth century as well. However, I have used Figure 2 and 3 only to visually illustrate my 19th century literary examples.

<sup>110</sup> See, for instance, the travelogue (“*Vaidyanāth yātrā*”, 1871) by Harishchandra and the autobiographical memoir (*Māim vahī hū*, 1886) by his friend and contemporary Damodar Shastri. See *Bhār’tendu samagra* 2000: 1036 and ŚĀSTRĪ 1886.

<sup>111</sup> See, for example, Harishchandra’s Ballia Lecture on how India will make progress and his description of Roorkee, a site of the new engineering college founded in 1847, in his travelogue on Haridwar in *Bhār’tendu samagra* 2000: 1009-13, 1031. Contemporary Hindi periodicals published columns of modern science and technology. To cite one example, May

had faith in the modern liberal discourse of progress under colonial dispensation.<sup>112</sup> Hindi intelligentsia's enchantment with modern science and technology as vehicle of national progress is reflected in *Rel'vestotra* too. In fact, through the obliqueness of the literary technique of satire *Rel'vestotra* performs a function beyond the criticisms and mockery explicated above. At the cost of repetition, it should be emphasised again that a *stotra*, among many other things, also describes the essential attributes of the object of worship. In course of this narrative movement each and every attribute is conveyed and, consequently, the object is familiarised. *Rel'vestotra*, too, conveys essential qualities and functions of the railways in India.<sup>113</sup> So in addition to its criticism, it performs the additional task of familiarizing the alien-modern technology in the Hindu mythical register. Moreover, *Rel'vestotra* records the Indian enchantment with railways. For example, the *stotra* constantly invokes railway's qualities and substantiates them by drawing upon the imageries from the Hindu cultural universe.<sup>114</sup> Apart from making sense of the power and magnitude of this modern technology, which is compared with the attributes of Hindu deities, it also describes the enchantment of the Indians<sup>115</sup>

---

15, 1874 issue of *Harishchandra's Magazine* published two long articles. (See HM 2002: 204-207 and 212-214)

<sup>112</sup> For instance, Radhacharan Goswami drew and published a cartoon titled '*Unnati kī gāṛī*' ('The cart of progress') in the same periodical in which *Rel'vestotra* was published. It depicts the 'cart of progress', which symbolically stood for the Indian nation, driven by an Englishman carrying whips named *śāsan* (governance) and *anuśāsan* (discipline). This cart is pushed forward by Bengali, Marathi and Punjabi gentlemen, while a Hindustani (north Indian) is left behind, ensnared by *avidyā* (ignorance) and *ālasya* (idleness). (See PARIMALENDU 2007: 21) Also see Harishchandra's '*Īśvar baṛā vilakṣaṇ hai*' ('God is great') in *Bhār'tendu samagra* 2000: 993-95.

<sup>113</sup> Another work of Radhacharan in the same style, *Muśak'stotra* ('Hymn to the rats'), is a humorous description of the problems caused by the rats. It may have been written in the wake of the plague outbreak and was published in *Bhār'tendu*, 22 November, 1885. See ŚĪR 1990: 58-60.

<sup>114</sup> "O You [who art] unattainable to gods! Brahma and Vishvakarma both are mesmerized by your unprecedented invention and forgo their pride [...]. O [You with a] magnificent face! You are as magnificent and huge as lord Vishnu [...]. You are lord Kartik, because you split and move across many mountains. You are Ganesha, because you have your breakfast with your trunk at every station. You are the forty-nine Maruts, because like them, more than forty nine vehicles of yours move simultaneously!" (See ŚĪR 1990: 41) In this connection it would be pertinent to recall David Gosling's argument that the introduction of western science in nineteenth century India did not lead to any direct confrontation with theological knowledge as it happened in Europe. For instance, according to David Gosling, Darwin's theory of evolution based on a common ancestry of human beings and animals could be made intelligible by its referentiality to the familiar pre-existing theory of incarnation. (Cited from RAINA et al 1989: 2085)

<sup>115</sup> This is also recorded in English language by nationalist leaders like Bhola Nath Chunder and Bipin Chandra Pal in their travel memoirs. See GOSWAMI 2004: 103-131.

by the railways just as with any divine incarnation.<sup>116</sup>

Thus, this critique of the technology of railways in India in terms of drain of wealth, reinforcement of racial difference and threat to the privileged class is different from the criticisms in Britain sketched at the beginning of this section. This is due to the distinctive historical conditions under which railway technology made its presence felt in the metropolis and the colony. While railway was the symbol of modernity and progress in both the regions, in colonial India the rhetoric of the civilizing mission was appended to it. In Britain satire was limited to the criticism of middle class pre-occupation with investment speculation and the attack on the railway company and its directorate for neglecting the plight and convenience of passengers. In India, by contrast, satire focused on the colonialist political economy and the social and cultural implications of the modern technology from an upper caste male Hindu perspective.

## Conclusion

I have argued that the nineteenth century Hindi satire represents colonial cultural encounters as chaotic. The sites of this encounter are articulated either as urban with explicit markers of colonial modernity or as colonial state-space in the case of railways. Most were delineated as institutional spaces<sup>117</sup> – colonial law court, civil association, railways, etc. – and had become important and indispensable in the life of the emerging middle class. The literary imaginary of satire sought to purge out the socio-cultural chaos emanating from the new colonial order by counterposing a programmatic reordering of society on the basis of a reified (Brahmanic) Hindu tradition. A close reading of a few representative satirical pieces has shown that the satirical inflection of colonial modernity originates from the definite ideological vantage point of the emerging Hindi middle class. Satire is deployed by this class as a literary tool to tackle the perceived cultural asymmetries produced by colonialism. It becomes a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it targets and exposes the colonial institutions and authorities of power; on the other, it silences the self-assertions of lower castes who were empowered by the limited opportunities available under the new colonial order and, in the view

<sup>116</sup> “O Durga! O dissipater of distress! Many of your rustic devotees perceive you as incarnation of [goddess] Durga and prostrate before you. Therefore, O goddess incarnate omnipresent Rail! Salute to her, salute to her!” (See ŚĪŚĪR 1990: 43)

<sup>117</sup> Significantly, this satirical imaginary hardly touches upon the sites beyond colonial institutional spaces. This suggests that the rhythm of the contemporary everyday life in north Indian cities is not so much under rupture as a result of colonial modernity as e.g. Calcutta. Cf. Ranajit Guha’s work on *Hutom pyāñcār nak<sup>l</sup>śā*. (See GUHA 2008: 329-51)

of that middle class, destabilised the Indian/Hindu social equilibrium. A careful examination of satirical texts gives us a clue to the constant negotiation with colonial modernity on the part of the Hindu middle class who sought to appropriate and domesticate the forces of modernity in its own terms. They welcomed new knowledge of science and technology and modern educational institutions, but simultaneously critiqued the coloniality of these and sought to restrain their dissemination to the lower social orders threatening to diminish their social power. In any case, however, we can state that the historic process of negotiation with novel forms of colonial modernity mobilized Hindi writers to reconfigure pre-existing literary-cultural forms and construct a new satirical mode of communication.

#### Bibliography:

- ALTICK, RICHARD D. 1997. *Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution, 1831-51*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1997.
- AHUJA, RAVI. 2003. "The Bridge-Builders". Some Notes on Railways, Pilgrimage and the British "Civilising Mission" in Colonial India. *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission. The Case of British India*, edited by HARALD FISCHER-TINÉ and MICHAEL MANN, 195-216. London: Anthem Press.
- BAKHTIN, M. M. 1988. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Tr. by MICHAEL HOLQUIST. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988.
- BEAR, LAURA G. 1994. Miscegenation of Modernity: Constructing European respectability and race in the Indian railway colony, 1857-1931. *Women's History Review*, 3, 4: 531-548.
- BÜHNEMANN, GUDRUN. 1984. Some Remarks on the Structure and Application of Hindu Sanskrit Stotra. *WZKS*, 28 (1984) 73-104.
- BURY, HARRIET 2008. Novel Spaces, Transitional Moments: Negotiating Text and Travel Accounts in 19th Century Hindi Travel Accounts. 27 *Down: New Departures in Indian Railway Studies*, edited by IAN J. KERR. New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2008, 1-39.
- BHATTACHARYA, NEELADRI 2005. Notes Towards a Conception of the Colonial Public. *Civil Society, Public Sphere and Citizenship: Dialogue and Perspective*. Edited by RAJEEV BHARGAVA and HELMUT REIFIELD. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005, 130-157.
- Bhār'tendu samagra*. Edited by HEMANT ŚARMĀ. Vārāṇasi: Pracārak Granthāvalī Pariyojanā, 2000.
- CARROL, LUCY 1978. Colonial Perceptions of Indian Society and the Emergence of Caste(s) Associations. *Journal of Asian Studies* 37, no. 2, (1978) 233-250.

- CHANDRA, SUDHIR. 1992. *The Oppressive Present: Literature and Social Consciousness in Colonial India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- CHATTERJEE, PARTHA. 1990. The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question. *Recasting Women: Essays on Colonial History*. Edited by KUMKUM SANGARI and SUDESH VAID. Delhi: Kali for Woman, 1990, 233-253.
- 1994. *Our Modernity*. The Srijan Halder Memorial Lecture. Rotterdam/Dakar: Shefis and Codresia, 1997.
- COHN, BERNARD. 1996. Notes on the History of the Study of Indian Society and Culture. *Structure and Change in Indian Society*. Edited by MILTON SINGER and BERNARD COHN. Delhi: Rawat Publications, 1996, 3-28.
- COOPER, FREDERICK. 2005. *Colonialism in Questions: Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- DAECHSEL, MARKUS 2009. *The Politics of Self Expression: The Urdu Middle-class Milieu in Mid-Twentieth Century India and Pakistan*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- DALMIA, VASUDHA 1997. *The Nationalisation of Hindu Tradition: Bharatendu Harishchandra and 19th Century Benaras*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- 2008. Merchant Tales and the Emergence of Novel. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43, no. 34: 44-60.
- DUMONT, LOUIS 1980. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- ETHOVEN, R. E. 1989 [1915]. *Folklores of Konkan*, Vol. II. Delhi: Asian Educational Service, 1989.
- FREEMAN, MICHAEL 1999. *Railways and the Victorian Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
- GOLD, ANN GRODZINS 1988. *Fruitful Journeys*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- GONDA, JAN 1977. *Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit. A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. 2, Fasc. 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1977.
- GOSWAMI, MANU 2004. *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- GUHA, RANAJIT. 2008. A Colonial City and its Time(s). *Indian Economic Social History Review* 45 (2008) 329-351.
- Hamāre rel've steś'noṃ ka drīśya, Cād*. April 1928.
- HARDER, HANS. 2004. The Babu and the Metropolis. *India's Literary History: Essays on the Nineteenth Century*, Edited by STUART BLACKBURN and VASUDHA DALMIA. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004, 358-401.
- HARDER, HANS and BARBARA MITTLER (Eds.). *Punch: A Transcultural Reading*. Heidelberg: Springer, forthcoming.
- Harishchandra's Magazine 1873*. Fascimile edition, Ed. Satyaprakāś Miśra.

- Ilāhābād: Hindī Sāhitya Sammelan, 2002.
- HARIŚCANDRA, BHĀR<sup>1</sup>TENDU. 2009. *Andher Nag<sup>1</sup>rī*. Naī Dillī: Rāj<sup>1</sup>kamal Prakāśan, 2009.
- Hindustānī rel<sup>1</sup>gaḍī ka tīs<sup>1</sup>rā darjā, Sudhā*. May 1928.
- JONES, KENNETH W. 1976. *Arya Dharma: Hindi Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab*. Berkeley: California University Press, 1976.
- JOSHI, SANJAY. 2005. *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- KAVIRAJ, SUDIPTA. 1995. *The Reversal of Orientalism: Bhudev Mukhopadhyay and the Project of Indigenist Social Theory*. *Representing Hinduism*. Edited by VASUDHA DALMIA and HEINRICH VON STIETENCRO. New Delhi: Sage Publishers, 1995, 253-281.
- 2000. *Laughter and Subjectivity*. *Modern Asian Studies* 34, no.2, (2000) 389-392.
- 2005. *An Outline of a Revisionist Theory of Modernity*. *European Journal of Sociology* 46, no. 3 (2005) 497-526.
- KERR, IAN J. 1995. *Building the Railways, 1850-1900*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- KNIGHT, CHARLES A. 1992. *Satire, Speech, Genre*. *Comparative Literature* 44, no.1 (1992) 22-41.
- KUL<sup>1</sup>SREṢṢṢH, HARIŚCANDRA. 1884. *Thagī kī capeṭ meṃ bagī kī rapeṭ meṃ*. Banāras: Bhārat<sup>1</sup>jīvan Pres, 1884.
- Manohar kahānī*. Lucknow: Naval Kishore Press, 1880. *Hamāre rel<sup>1</sup>ve ste<sup>1</sup>nom ka driśya*
- MĪŚRA, SADAL. 1901. *Nāsiketopākhyān*, Kāśī: Nāgarī Pracārīnī Sabhā, 1901.
- MOHANTY, SATYA P. 2011. *Introduction: Viewing Colonialism and Modernity through Indian Literature*. *Colonialism, Modernity, and Literature: A View from India*. Edited by SATYA P. MOHANTY. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 1-21.
- NEVO, AMOS. 2010. *The Nāsiketa Story: Nāsiketopākhyāna*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dās, 2010.
- ORSINI, FRANCESCA. 2002. *Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- 2009. *Print and Pleasure: Popular Literature and Entertaining Fictions in Colonial North India*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009.
- Pañc kā nyāy*. *Hindī pradīp*, June-July 1899
- Pañc kā prapañc*. *Hindī pradīp*, July-August 1903

- PANIKKAR, K. N. 1987. Culture and Ideology: Contradictions in Intellectual Transformation of Colonial Society in India. *Economic and Political Weekly* 22, no. 49 (1987) 2118.
- 1995. *Culture, Ideology, Hegemony: Intellectuals and Social Consciousness in Nineteenth Century India*. New Delhi: Tulika Publishers, 1995.
- PARIMALENDU, RĀM<sup>n</sup>NIRAÑJAN. 2007. *Mohan<sup>l</sup>āl Mah<sup>t</sup>o Viyogī*. Sahitya Academy: New Delhi, 2007.
- RAINA, DHYUV, and S. IRFAN HABIB. 1989. Cultural Foundations of a Nineteenth Century Mathematical Project. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 24, 37 (1989) 2085.
- RAO, VELCHERU N. 2004. Purāṇa. *The Hindu World*. Edited by SUSHIL MITTAL and GENE THURSBY. London: Routledge, 2004, 97-115.
- RAO, VELCHERU N., SHULMAN, DAVID, and SUBRAHMANYAM, SANJAY (Eds.). 2001. *Textures of Time: writing History in South India 100-1800*. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001.
- SARKAR, SUMIT. 1975. Rammohun Roy and the Break with the Past. *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernisation in India*. Edited by V. C. JOSHI. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1975, 49-68.
- SARKAR, TANIKA. 1998. The Feminine Discourse. A Candid Look at the Past and Present. *Making a Difference*. Edited by RUKMINI SEKHAR. New Delhi: Spic Macay, 1998.
- ŚĀSTRĪ, DĀMODAR. 1886. *Maiṃ vahī hū*. Bankīpur: Khaḍgavilās Pres, 1886.
- SIMMONS, JACK. 1994. A Powerful Critic of Railways: John Tenniel in Punch. In: *The Express Train and Other Railway Studies* (ed. by JACK SIMMONS). Nairn: David St John Thomas, 1994, 133-157.
- ŚĪSIR, KARMENDU. 1990. *Bhār<sup>t</sup>endu maṇḍal ke pramukh rac<sup>n</sup>ākar rādhācarāṅ gosvāmī kī cunī huī rac<sup>n</sup>āyem*, Ilāhābād: Parimal Prakāśan, 1990.
- STARK, ULRIKE. 2008. *An Empire of Books: Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed World in Colonial India*. New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2008.
- TAL<sup>v</sup>ĀR, VĪR BHĀRAT. 2003. *Rassāk<sup>l</sup>śī: unnīs<sup>l</sup>vīm śatābdi kā navajāgarāṅ aur paścimottar prānt*. Delhi: Sarans Publication, 2003.
- TAYLOR, CHARLES. 2002. Modern Social Imaginary. *Public Culture* 14, no. 1, (2002) 91-124.
- 2005. Business in Pictures: Representation of Railways Enterprise in the Satirical Press in Britain 1845-1870. *Past and Present*, no. 189 (2005) 111-145.
- THORNE, CHRISTIAN. 2001. Thumbing Our Nose at the Public Sphere: Satire, the Market, and the Invention of Literature. *PMLA* 116, no. 3, (2001) 531- 544.

Prabhat Kumar  
Karl Jaspers Centre, Room No. 118  
Voßstraße 2, Building No. 4400  
69115 Heidelberg.