CHAPTER II

CRITIQUE ON THE POSTCOLONIAL THEORY OF CASTE AND DALIT POLITICS

Analyzing the veracity and adaptability of postcolonial theory (PC from hereafter) to the Dalit discourse and reality is the aim of the present chapter. The chapter argues that postcolonial theory is incapable to locate the caste problem at the level of theory and practicality and therefore demonstrates a great deal of escapism towards the same. This chapter is thus an exploration of how theory on caste/Dalit has been constructed in the PC scholarship. As the chapter reveals, there are various similarities between the Hindu fundamentalist ideology and the PC theories on caste. It seems time to bring specific attention to ask how these fundamentalist ideas have been perpetuated into contemporary times through the PC project. In this context one has to ask the question how a theory of caste is directly related to the studies of Dalit women. Dalit feminism indicates that Dalit women are Dalits first. Their status as inessential women in Indian society emanates due to their position as Dalits. Thus the theory of caste is very much directly related to the Dalit women studies. Thus, before entering into other chapters, it is felt necessary to examine the existing PC theories on caste/Dalit.

It was during the British colonial period that the Indian system of caste got intellectual attention in a modern sense. Britishers naturally showed this as a feature of the backwardness of India and the incapability of the Indians to rule themselves. The first reaction of the Indian upper caste intellectuals to this British colonial accusation was varied. The hindutva responded to it with an argument of golden age, according to which India was a wonderful land during the earlier times where Aryans ruled. Equilibrium was maintained between different communities due to the existence of varnashramam dharma. It is the invasion of foreigners into India, which converted this golden age into a dark one. Dayananda Saraswathi, Vivekananda, Savarkar and later
Gandhi argued on these lines though with little differences. Though Gandhi attributed the corruption of this system to modernity, this school of thought as a whole did not vacillate to defend and propagate that *caste* system, as a whole is amicable to Indian kind. These hindutva inklings are found in the theories of contemporary academicians also, For instance Ghurey (though not contemporary, but his ideas are endorsed strongly by his dissidents) M.N. Srinivas etc belong to this school.

The other streams of thought include Marxists, Liberals and Socialists who not only readily accepted the British criticism in the case of *caste* system but also with the same ease they believed that it could be eradicated with the implementation of modern rational principles and systems. When the liberals believed that *caste* whisks itself away once the nation enters into the modern forms of ruling, the Marxists on the other hand viewed it in lighter terms. For them it is only one of the facets of superstructure. Most of the literature that has been produced till now within the orbits of these predominant perspectives proves them to be failures to address the growing complexities of the *caste* system and its increasing centrality in Indian politics. For instance, *caste* system did not disappear with the mere importation of the western modes of rule as most of the liberals and Marxists have guessed. But has taken more deeper roots with the emergence of identitarian politics (which has both positive and negative manifestations) and the nation's increased and unexpected proclivity for Hindu fundamentalist nationalism from early 1990s.

There is another school of thought-which see *caste* as a re-creation of British colonialism. This thought needs a little more elaboration here because of its commonality of argument with PC theory. Nicholas B. Dirks argues that modern form of *caste* system is especially a modern phenomenon created by colonialism. He claims that it was under the British colonial rule that *caste* emerged as a single term capable of expressing, organizing, and above all "systematizing" India’s diverse forms of social identity, community, and organization. This was achieved through an identifiable (if contested) ideological canon as the result of a concrete encounter with colonial modernity during two hundred years of British domination. In short, colonialism made caste what it is today.
This sounds true when one looks at the manifestation of *caste* mainly in the outer world i.e., in the domain of political society. But expressions of *caste* in the civil society are extremely different and very often contradict with the observations drew considering only the political society. Dirks was able to strongly advocate his view in absolute terms because he looked at only the reservation scenario and excluded the role of *caste* in the civil society where it still appears to the common Indian with its traditional, almost unchanged dynamics. It is possible to consider full view of the *caste* system only when one is able to understand its materialization both at the civil and political societies. A major problem that emanated with Dirks proposition is that he was continuously confusing Dalit with *caste* which amounts to the mixing of *caste* violence and the Dalits’ resistance to that violence. In other words, he has put the question of upper caste oppression and issue of reservations (where the Dalits are able to make assertions and thus contribute for the dialectics of Indian politics) in the same register. But in civil society *caste* operates not only in more archaic terms where Dalit assertion is very difficult but also in an extremely implicit terms and indirect terms also. It is settled as a state of mind and neither its articulation nor rejection is too easy to recognize.

Sudipta Kaviraj is another scholar who argues that earlier “fuzzy” sense of the community was diminished and then an “enumerable” sense of community has emerged during British colonialism. He emphasizes that community did not claim to symbolize all the layers of selfhood of its members, secondly, it was not aware of how many of its members exist in the world. He seems to argue that *caste* became a conscious reality of the people in the land only with the sytematization that it underwent under the British rule due to its politics of enumeration. It is underestimating the pervasiveness and power of *caste*, which operated as socio-political treatise for many communities of the land. *Caste* was able to rule this land for centuries before the emergence of the British colonialism as a systematizing force simply because it was able to manage the communities in their right places. It is time to recognize that *caste* system has its own terms of systematization much before the advent of British.
Dirks tries to extend this argument. While rejecting Dumont’s idea that the superior position of the Brahmans is the ideological evidence of the hierarchical nature of the caste system, Dirks argues that "Brahmans may have been necessary, both for a great many aspects of Hindu thought and practice and for the ideological maintenance of Hindu kingship, but they neither defined nor provided the principles that organized hierarchy for the entire Indian social order throughout all time" (71). He exemplifies it with the case of Kallars of Pudukottai. First of all it should not be too easy to dismantle a truth that most of the Hindu treatises are written by the Brahmans where they projected themselves as the superior caste and givers of law without failure. Secondly, it is also very clear that all the other castes which are depicted as free from the Brahman influence clearly follow the models set by the Brahmans as Partha Chatterjee finally has to agree in his article "Nation and Its Outcastes" which is discussed below. This is because though these castes tried to make anti-Brahman assertions they failed because of at least two reasons, 1. They mainly operated within the limited sphere of the logic of the caste system, 2. They failed to thus come up with an alternative, independent discourse. Reason for this could be the Brahman’s supremacy to suppress these assertions both through physical and epistemic violence. Therefore it is one-dimensional to portray examples like Kallars to disprove the hegemonic, violent role that the Brahmans played in imposing their mode of dominance.

It could be right to argue that caste underwent a different kind of systematization under the colonial rule to suit the modern democratic contexts. But it is absolutely wrong to deny the kind of systematization that it carried before the British colonial rule. To elucidate more clearly, in the remote areas of the civil society it is the old order of systematization, not the new one (which was born in due to the efforts of colonial world) that still regulates the lives of millions of lower caste people. People still strictly follow the rules of endogamy, religious prostitution, unsociability or vet hi according to the regulations set by caste much before the British colonial state counted and systematized them. There neither the dalit nor the upper caste need to know how many their fellow caste people are there in the world and also that they are very keen to safeguard every layer of their selfhood from food habits to whom they should talk to in what mannerism
they should talk. In other words caste did not get into a completely new radical form under the British colonial rule but continued to remain many of its essential old features. Otherwise it is difficult to understand why and how caste continues to manifest itself in very ancestral ways still in intensely unbridled manner in many parts of India.

Dirks text also reflects a western scholar’s sense of guilt in studying the colonized worlds when the author tries to take all the burden of domination to British colonialism and give too much benefit of doubt for the Indian upper caste nationalists. This sense of guilt is evident in Dumont’s theory also who attributes the failure of the westerners to understand caste to their individualist theoretical limitations. This point is elaborated elsewhere in this chapter. Dirks puts too much emphasis on the hegemonic character of British colonial rule and its tactics of seducing the colonized with modernity which anyway could not be achieved under the conditions of colonialism for obvious reasons. The kind of understanding and respectable tone that Dirks showed towards the Hindu nationalists is absent when he deals with the Dalit intellectuals. For instance he calls the "caste politics" (by this he meant Dalit politics) as developed with "particular vengeance" (237). But when he deals with V.D. Savarkar’s text on Meerut mutiny Dirks does not pass any comment on the over sentimental tone that Savarkar applied to describe the mutiny and the Hindu heroes and heroines who fought in it. Determined to show modern frames of caste as designed by colonialism, Dirks concludes his chapter, "Towards a Nationalist Sociology of India: Nationalism and Brahminism" by assessing a few Indian sociologists views on caste and the process of Sanskritization. This is done in a way where the Indian upper caste sociologists escape from the total burden of being brahmanocentric. He writes:

Under the conditions of colonialism, internal critique was very different from external condemnation. But this is not the end of the story. For Sanskritization was not only description of a natural social process that valorized Brahmans and Brahmanism across India, it also entailed the naturalization of a specific history in which colonial transformations displaced themselves into (even as they relied upon) "native" sociologies (254).

So, finally the sin of seeing the lower castes’ upward mobility as cheap imitation of the upper castes no more rests with the upper caste Indian sociologist.
It is right to argue here that the difficulty in understanding the *caste* system is as much an academic failure as much as it is political. This failure is enormous in the academic arena where Dalit discourse and movement did not enjoy any due response and recognition for a considerably long time. On the whole there seems to be a great lack of acceptance for Dalit discourse as a complete and integrated one. The failure of the Dalit political discourse in acquiring a nationalist status can be attributed to this *upper caste* academic nepotism which is rampant both at the level of recruitment (by restricting the entrance of the Dalits into academic spheres) and production of theory.

It is important to notice here that there are very few works that have considered Ambedkar’s thought seriously in their theorization of *caste*. What we are left with is the school of scholars who are sympathetic to the Dalit cause. Their theories of the *caste* system are to be considered seriously because at least they are the one who try to respond to the phenomenon from a contemporary, realistic point of view. It is very difficult to find even in their texts an analysis of Ambedkar’s thought regarding the *caste* and nation problem in any complete sense. Most of the writings on Ambedkar by *upper caste* academicians of this school deal with his thought from piece-meal approach not as a thought, which is capable of offering a comprehensive and consistent critique. It is not that such an approach is altogether wrong. But it also shows that they cannot do more justice than this. In other words what the researcher would try arguing is that except the Dalits and some of the very few sympathetic academicians, comparing and diagnosing Ambedkar’s ideas into the contemporary politics and developing an argument to demonstrate the Ambedkar’s nationalist thought as an integrated one are almost rare.

It should be acknowledged here that it was Ambedkar who represented an authentic insider radical critique of caste/nation from the modern perspective. What is more important is that one can easily find many of his historic predictions of the nation coming true to this day. It is also Ambedkar who severely and continuously perceived and presented *caste* in relation to the nation. *Caste* as a concept and reality occupied his every analysis and prediction on nation.
**PC Theory on Caste:**

To begin with, theory produced on the problem of *caste* is very scanty in the Indian PC literature, especially when compared with the enormity and centrality of the problem. The researcher would try to prove the following points by deconstructing some of the PC texts. The points that the researcher tries to establish are 1. *Caste* (in its present form), in the PC theory appears as a riddle posed by the western historicism. 2. Since the main concern of the PC writers is to re-write Indian history from an authentic (i.e., native) historiographical base, they see *caste* more as a conceptual challenge than as a living problem. 3. Immunization of the native knowledge frames from the western ethnocentric theories is also their prime concern. 4. So, the authentic Dalit criticism, which found base mainly in the knowledge frames set by the West, remains as illegitimate outsider. A Dalit researcher comes across not even any single explanation for this elimination of Dalit (as a concept and term) in the PC theory. She has to search for the answer to this elimination in the general argument of this school of thought. Therefore Ambedkar, a name does not appear anywhere. Usually these PC writers (Subaltern Studies) take up the views of the writers of a particular school when they try to establish the pitfalls of that particular theory. For instance when they explain the limitations of Indian Marxist thought they obviously put to debate the views of the prominent theoreticians of that school. But in the case of their treatment of *caste/subaltern castes* it is impossible to find the name of Ambedkar at least as an ideologue whose ideas deserve to be deconstructed and disowned. Therefore it is no exaggeration to tell that Ambedkar is considered still as an untouchable in the Subaltern\PC academic operations. Another serious limitation of this group is their constant rejection to the question of internal fissures or pre-British colonial peculiarities and their continuing cruciality in the contemporary Indian national realities. Ruth Frankburg and Lata Mani’s essay explains that while the diasporic identity assumed political prominence in the west in the postcolonial sites, like India, the nation states and its exclusions are more important. But such an understanding is completely absent in the Indian Subaltern School.
This text here superficially looks like a critique of western Reason and a native effort to establish the Indian suzerainty in the domain of nationalist thought. But it is for a Dalit feminist actually a neo-caste methodology of scaling new consent for old trajectory of caste thought. So, she sees this text deeply as a treatise of caste and therefore of Hindu nation. This text is a response to Anderson's postulation that nationalism in the colonized countries of the East is largely an imagination downloaded from the West. The author examines the views of some Western and Indian scholars and finds their views on Eastern and Western nationalisms as a result of what he calls the 'liberal-rationalist dilemma' (2). So, Chatterjee tries to attack the very base of the world view of the Western intellectualism, its idea of development, and its cunningness behind setting such a worldview in front of the non-Western world. Chatterjee's argument is that East (India) is of course influenced by the Western ideology of nationalism but it also produced its own version of nationalism. This version was according to him produced in the inner domain. In order to prove this hypothesis he divided the colonized world into two neat divisions, the inner and the outer. He explains that the nationalists kept the inner cultural sphere intact. He analyses how they applied an ideological sieve through which nationalists strained British impact. In the inner sphere the nation retained its autonomous subjectivity and it is in this sphere, according to Chatterjee, nationalism or the true imagination of the nation really took place. It is the upper caste ideologues like Bankim, Gandhi and Nehru who are counted as constituents of the autonomous Indian nationalist thought. All these three incorporated extremely anti-dalit views in their writings. Chatterjee censored most of such excerpts of the texts and included only those ideas, which would not sound anti-other people nation. All their views were especially made to suit the field where contest of power was taking place not just between the British and India but also between different communities of the land. Chatterjee has laboriously sanctified the political thoughts of these ideologues as something very sacred and situated them above political contest. He did not care to explain the following certain gaps in his theoretical propositions. For instance he does not answer the following
questions: 'How these nationalists make neat divisions between inner and outer spheres'? 'What were the reasons for them not to mix up both'; and 'Why these ideologues did not see the attempts of the others who tried to merge these both domains to produce a wholesome critique on the politics of the upper caste nationalists?' For instance the Dalit leaders during the anti-British colonial times based most of their critique on the upper caste society by connecting its politics to culture (inner domain/hinduism)\(^{12}\). They certainly tried to influence the outer sphere with the same logic and philosophy of inner sphere. In other words the inner was always trying to control outer fringes of the inner domain as well as the complete outer domain. In other words it is the inner sphere which is the core of the Hindus and the Dalits rejection of the Hindu dominance is essentially predicated on their attack of this sphere. That means they were successful in recognizing this sphere as the main ideological feed back of the Hindus which regulated the steering of the outer domain.

Anderson considered only elite sections and certain modern material conditions as the makers of the nationalism (for instance he sees print capitalism, bilingual intelligentsia etc. as the contributive elements of nationalism which emanate primarily from upper caste middle class area). Zillah Eisenstein correctly points out that "He [Anderson] does not recognize that nationalism is an instance of phallocratic construction, with brotherhood, rather than sisterhood at its core. Nor does he recognize racism as part of the historical articulation of the nation."\(^{13}\) Partha'a response to Anderson is framed within the parameters set by Anderson which sees men, that too the most privileged upper caste men as the real imaginators of the nation. It is his next book called *Nation and its Fragments* (1997) that he includes women as those communities, which are kept away from the contours of this imagination. Dalits and peasants come together in the shape of formless masses that he calls with generic title *peasants*.

What he resurrected in the name of native nationalism is an indigenous replica of Anderson's model where, as cited above the upper caste male community becomes the representative and catalyst of bringing the nation into a shape. Thus when for Anderson it is the western material prosperity, industrial revolution and the dominant intellectual
groups which were midwives of nationalisms and nation states all over the world, for Chatterjee it is the *upper caste* male community which played this role in India.

Chatterjee tried to build his hypothesis around the Gramscian concept of passive revolution. Gramsci analyses it in terms of three moments or levels of the 'relation of forces'. The first is the objective structure (it exists independent of human will), second moment is the relation of political forces, (the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness, and organization attained by the various social classes are important here). This is purely a political one. The third moment is the relation of military forces consisting of the technical military configuration and the ‘politico-military’ situation. In conditions of a relatively advanced world capitalism, a bourgeois aspiring for hegemony in a new national political order cannot hope to launch a ‘war of movement’ (or 'manoeuvre') a frontal, military assault on the state. Instead it must engage in a ‘war of position.’ Its strategy is to attempt a 'molecular transformation' of the state. Undertaking economic reforms in a limited scale so as to appropriate the support of the masses is also part of the strategy. But the masses are not allowed to make any direct participation in the process of governance. This is called ‘passive revolution.’ This ‘war of position’ does not pose serious challenge to the capital.

Partha Chatterjee claims to give ideological unity to the nationalist thought in this text. This he did by applying the concept of passive revolution. He tries to explore the historical formation of this unity in terms of *moments*. Each of these *moments* has a specific form of amalgamation of thematic and the problematic. They bear distinct historical possibilities in terms of the relation of 'subjective forces'. Chatterjee also believes that it is not possible to spot out different ideological streams or 'subjective forces' in nationalist thought by simply applying the binaries of elitist\populist, progressive\reactionary or direct\indirect. The Dalit scholar fails to find the Dalit movement in this *list* of 'subjective forces' or 'ideological streams'. What appear here, as opposing ideological tendencies is the same *upper caste* views on nationalism again. They are segmented into three varieties in order to make a sense that they are different and the ideological conflicts between these streams are genuine. He does this
demarcation while agreeing that a strict identification of any two 'subjective forces' is in fact not possible. Therefore he breaks up the nationalist movement into three moments to explore its ideological unity namely, departure, manoeuvre and arrival. Thus it is justified from his side to make an odd match of Gandhian thought with the moment of manoeuvre. He explains: "The argument is that for nationalist thought to attain its paradigmatic form, these three are necessary ideological moments" (50). He also makes a prediction that the asymmetry between the subjective forces can be deposed only when the antithesis acquires the political ideological resources to match the universal consciousness of capital. But it is difficult to come across any such possibility. This is because first of all there is no asymmetry between the subjective forces that are presented here because finally all these are the Hindu forces. Next limitation is that it is wrong to offer a status of antithesis to these subjective forces because they are doomed to fail to acquire the status of political ideological resources to match the universal consciousness of capital. They are doomed to fail because they are lopsided and extremely backward. They cannot match themselves with the more sophisticated universal consciousness of capital.

These moments not only emanate superficially contradictory ideologies but also the first two are absorbed in the last one. This absorption makes the antithesis ultimately appear in a feeble form. It is feeble because it is based itself on the universal consciousness of capital not on the rejection of it. But one can raise no further point at the moral lack of the hindutva nationalist thought if the author finally concludes that it is a result of an unresolved contest of history, the Cunningness of Reason. His rejection to offer a space for Dalit discourse a status of subjectivity thus leaves all the stage of nationalist drama to the British colonizers and the colonized upper castes.

A. The Moment of Departure: Culture and Power in the Thought of Bankimchandra:

Partha Chatterjee analyses Bamkimchandra Chatterjee as one of the first systematic expounders in India of the principles of nationalism. In this particular essay Chatterjee
tries to explain how Bankim's ideas connect culture to power in the colonized context. Historicizing the Hindus' past according to Chatterjee is the first project taken up by Bankim to relate culture to power. As part of portraying Hindu as an exclusive nation having its own history Bankim tried to historicize the Hindus past. This is done despite the realization on behalf of Bankim that Sanskrit literary texts were filled with mere myths. But still such texts are seen as being sources of information about history. Since Banakim himself premised on a western rational terrain and was trying to see history as a repository of rational truth. And the validation of this rational truth had to be predicated on the rational demonstration of its historicity. So here the author tries to explain two things: 1. How Bankim plays a crucial role in constituting autonomous space for the nationalist thought? 2. How that liberating project itself was in a way also fixed on the terrain by which the westerns were oppressing the Hindus. Thus Bankim does not offer any epistemological or even methodological critique of western knowledge system. The author explains:

Thus, Bankim's devotion to what he regarded as the fundamental principles of a rational science of economics makes it impossible for him to arrive at a critique of the political economy of colonial rule, even when the evidence from which a critique may have proceeded was, in a sense, perfectly visible to him(6.3).

Thus, at the moment of departure, nationalist consciousness fights with the help of framework of knowledge created by western rationalist thought. It becomes aware and acknowledges the essential cultural difference between East and West. But the nationalist's claim is that this backwardness is not a historically absolute character. It can be altered by the nation acting jointly by adopting all those modern features of European culture. But if it adopts certain features of the west how will it retain its essential nationalist culture? Chatterjee explains that Bankim has found an answer to this question by inverting the Orientalist problematic within the same general thematic. This answer is a fundamental characteristic of nationalist thought at its moment of departure. Bankim searched for a specific-subjectivity for the nation within the essentialist typology of cultures. This was done according to Chatterjee by accepting that west's supremacy lies in its materiality of its culture where as the superiority of east lies in the spiritual aspect of culture. True modernity of the non-European nations would lie in combining the superior material qualities of the western cultures with the spiritual prominence of the
east. This is an elitist programme for the act of cultural synthesis only is performed by whom Chatterjee calls a "supremely cultivated and refined intellect" (73). Thus his doctrine of power is basically an elite mission. This was essential for the regeneration of national culture as "national religion". Thus religion is the soul of the nation and this religion is Hinduism.

Why only Hinduism should be the very essence of the thematic of mainstream nationalism and a national religion? Bankim highlights two features as answer to this: one is the large popular base and the other is the superior spiritual quality of Hinduism. Bankim also according to the author does not yield to the fraudulent western ethnology that Hinduism is a singular stream. He in reverse confirmed his argument with what Chatterjee calls "brilliant reversal of the anthropological problem of cross-cultural understanding" (p.76). The author continues to appreciate how Bankim proceeds to combine a rational theory of power with a non-selfish spirituality of Hinduism. It is also difficult to understand how Bankim can both accuse the West for portraying the Hindu as a homogeneous entity and also make use of the same hypothesis to propose the idea of homogeneous 'national religion'. Chatterjee also does not address this contradiction. 14

Bankim thus finally comes with an idea of national religion/Hinduism as a solution to the problems of the nation. But Partha does not want caste to bear all the responsibility for Bankim's parochialism. Therefore he writes, "It is perfectly possible that apart from the prevalent cultural prejudices of the upper-caste Hindu Bengali elite of his time, Bankim's opinion was also shaped to an extent by the stereotypes of the post-Enlightenment European historiography" (77). Thus according to the author, Bankim was an unconscious victim of these western prejudices from his resentment towards the lower castes and the Muslims.

A thorough elitist project of education is necessary through which national religion will be stabilized. So, Bankim has expressed his views on who should be educated which may sound as a reckless explanation for any Dalit scholar:
The argument is that it is only necessary for the upper classes to be educated; there is no need for a separate system of instruction for the lower classes... The porousness of the newly educated class will guarantee that the ignorant masses will soon be soaked with knowledge!... We do not, however, have much faith that this will happen (77-78).

According to Bankim it is the upper classes that carry the right to rule in this new culture. Chatterjee tries to justify, “The intellectual-moral leadership of the nation was based not on an elitism of birth or caste or privilege or wealth, but of excellence. The leaders were leaders because through *anusilan* they had attained an exemplary unity of knowledge and duty” (79). Partha Chateerejee however does not tell us how the other people become leaders and acquire excellence when the very gates of their educational institutions (that play the pivotal role in creating an exemplary unity of knowledge and duty in a person as a ruler) are closed for them.15

Partha Chateerjee concludes that this blatantly spiritualist turn in Bankim was not due to emotionalism or not even due to conservatism. Chatterjee poses very important proposition here. He tries to explain that it is wrong to interpret such conservative trends as emotional and also such construction misses what he calls "the most crucial point of tension in all nationalist thought" (80). According to this author, such a realigning of these streams of politics as backward looking emotionalism would overlook its very source of ideological strength. This ideological strength is nothing but its proclamation of a rational and modern religion suitable for the nation. Chatterjee also concludes that it was not the liberal reformers of 19th century who relied on the administrative and legislative powers of the colonial state, but “it was the so-called 'conservative' or 'revivalist' trend which confronted for the first time the crucial question of power in the historical project of nationalism” (80). And also the author writes, "Theoretically, the modern and the national could be synthesized only in the ideal of the complete man, the true intellectual. But it is hardly possible to devise programmatic steps to achieve that ideal in the realm of politics” (80). Without bothering to address the caste configuration of his true intellectual Chatterjee diverts his argument towards the yet un-resolved contradiction between modernity and nationalism and the impossibilities of merging the ideal true intellectual man with that of the modern national. For Partha ostracization of the Dalits and minorities like Muslims from the conservative Hindu nationalists
imagination of nation is not a serious problem and such a limitation cannot abate its 'ideological strength' or the 'question of power' that it displays against the British colonizers.

Bankim tried to construct a nationalist identity along repudiatory (exclusionary) caste and religious lines. His argument always included tirade not only against the British and foreigners like Muslims but also against the distant insiders like lower castes. If one argues that colonialism was instrumental in systematizing the communities through the enumeration and thus created caste and communal cleavages it is also equally true that the hindu nationalists grabbed this opportunity to project the Indian nation as essentially Hindu as understood in the deconstruction of Bankim's ideas here.

It was in the period of Gandhi that Chatterjee sees the nationalist thought being freed from snares of west's modernity. Before entering into the next chapter he gives a clue of what he attributes to the peasantry who occupies central space in a marginalized fashion (this is since as he himself argues the peasantry "would be represented, but of which they would not be a constituent part. In other words passive revolution"(81).) After defining the Indian masses as peasantry, the author talks about the 'intellectual-moral leadership' (expectedly Gandhi). Automatically these masses (because of their backwardness) come to stand in opposition to the nationalist elite who was adhered to the western rationalism. So, there was the historic task of merging the modes of thought characteristic of a peasant consciousness with the rationalist forms of an enlightened nationalist politics. It is part of the assimilation of peasant support for the historic cause of creating a nation-state. As it is said in this passive revolution the peasantry/masses of India is not be an essential part of it. In the next chapter Gandhi enters as an intellectual-moral leader who exercise organic functions of new intelligentsia in manufacturing a national consensus for self-government by using the masses/peasants.
B. The Moment of Manoeuver: Gandhi and the Critique of Civil Society:

Chatterjee highlights *moment of manoeuvre* as a stage, which combines war of moment and position in one inseparable process. It also engages itself in the creation of historical block to achieve passive revolution. Its historical consolidation of the nation is based on non-modern model. In the previous chapter itself the author immunizes his intellectual-moral leader from criticism. In order to understand the greatness of this 'moment of manoeuvre' in the historical context he writes, "we must extricate the problem from questions of subjective motivations, influences, manipulations, who used whom to gain what, etc. Those are valid historical questions, but they lie at an entirely different analytical level" (81). The author also takes another precautionary step in order to insulate Gandhi from any criticism. He therefore inserts another quotation of Gandhi; "My language is aphoristic, it lacks precision. It is therefore open to several interpretations" (85).

Chatterjee considers Gandhi's *Hindi Swaraj* (1910) as a text, which consists his systematic ideas on state, society and nation. The author prefers to read this text as a source of Gandhi's fundamental critique on civil society. Gandhi's idea of nationalism is based on this critique of civil society. To the question why India was subjected for such a long time, Gandhi puts the blame (like Bankim) on India rather on British. For Gandhi the failure or weakness is not due to lack of modernity or presence of backwardness. The reason is that Hindus are seduced by the glitters of western modernity. The alternative is *Ramarajya*. The author encapsulates what all this *raja* covers:

In its form, this political ideal is not meant to be a consensual democracy with complete and continual participation by every member of the polity. The Utopia is *Ramarajya*, a patriarchy in which the ruler, by his moral quality and habitual adherence to truth, always expresses the collective will. It is also a Utopia in which the economic organization of production, arranged according to a perfect four-fold *varna* scheme of specialization and a perfect system of reciprocity in the exchange of commodities and services, always ensures that there is no spirit of competition and no differences in status between different kinds of labour. The ideal conception of *Ramarajya*, in fact, encapsulates the critique of all that is morally reprehensible in the economic and political organization of civil society (92).
Thus this Ramrajya does not need any consensus of the people and there is no question of political citizenship. A super man will decide what is good for the people and keep them in their places in the caste hierarchy and the subjects will act like machines without any spirit of questioning/competition. Chatterjee also carefully excluded the most inhuman comments of Gandhi made on lower castes in this particular text. Chatterjee subscribes to Gandhi’s ideas on caste and considers them as more progressive than the western law, "the colonial state in India, by projecting an image of neutrality with regard to social divisions within Indian society, not only upholds the rigours of those divisions, such as the ones imposed by the caste system, but actually strengthens them” (91). The author proceeds:

it is only when politics is directly subordinated to a communal morality that the minority of exploiters in society can be resisted by the people and inequalities and divisions removed. As a political ideal, therefore, Gandhi counterposes against the system of representative government an undivided concept of popular sovereignty, where the community is self-regulating and political power is dissolved into the collective moral will (91-92).

Neither Gandhi nor Chatterjee explains how a collective moral will can find place when this Ramrajya which is not based on consensual democracy and the continuous participation of people. How undivided concept of popular sovereignty would reign when the concept of communal morality is induced by varna system which professes unequal division of labour? More importantly, how doe such an immature ideology would succeed in forming the historical block?

Chatterjee tries to prove that Gandhian politics was assimilated by coercive state structure and also by different streams of politics. According to the author Gandhian politics is morally superior. It lacked only ideological means to transform that morality into practical politics. Another feature that he puts to analysis is the absorption of the consciousness of peasant into the nationalist politics of the elite. Facilitating this process is another fundamental characteristic of Gandhian politics. The author writes:

the working out of the politics of non-violence also made it abundantly clear that the object of the political mobilization of the peasantry was not at all what Gandhi claimed on its behalf, ‘to train the masses in self-consciousness and attainment of power’. Rather the peasantry were meant to become willing participants in a struggle wholly conceived and directed by others (124).
Untouchables further alienated from mainstream nationalist politics for they were not even considered part of the peasantry. Gandhi explains that his politics directed for the liberation of peasantry does not include the Dalits. Chatterjee continues to justify:

Whether this idiom of solidarity necessarily referred to a cultural code that could be shown to be 'essentially Hindu', and whether that in turn alienated rather than united those sections of the people who were not 'Hindu', are of course important questions, but not strictly relevant in establishing the ideological intent behind Gandhi's efforts (110).

Gandhi appears again in the next chapter, 'The Moment of Arrival' as an intellectual moral leader equipped with a special knack. He used this knack to mobilize the peasantry to work for nationalist elite politics, which would never represent them. What is there to feel proud about such politics? In this chapter Chatterjee tried to explain how Gandhian politics was transformed into the moment of manoeuvre in the passive revolution of capital. It is thus necessary to look at the limitations in applying the concept of passive revolution to all these three moments presented in the text. Thus, the Gramscian concept of passive revolution is put to analysis after a brief discussion on the chapter 'The Moment of Arrival'.

C. The Moment of Arrival: Nehru and the Passive Revolution:

In Chatterjee's opinion Jawaharlal Nehru was "one of the foremost leaders of the Congress Left which consistently demanded that nationalism be given a more definite "economic and social content"" (131). This "moment of arrival" is seen as the fullest development of the nationalist thought. It is now a discourse of power, and glasses over all the earlier contradictions. It tries to actualize this ideological unity of the nationalist thought in the integrated life of the state. Nationalist thought\passive revolution reaches its final stage in the moment of arrival.

In Nehru's Autobiography and The Discovery of India one can find the key ideological elements and relations of nationalist thought at its moment of arrival. Chatterjee takes Nehru's views on communalism and industrialization for analysis in this chapter. Nehru an ardent modernist was motivated by western Reason in his analysis of communalism and thus sees it as a lack of modernity, and that industrialization is
inevitable to solve the problems of the society. The reason for the failure of the development of India was due to colonial rule. By taking up the modern ways of development, it is easy to surpass the difficulties produced by colonialism. Nehru renounced both dogmatic Marxism and metaphysical politics of Gandhi. He came up with his idea of ‘mixed economy’, through industrialization. All this would be done with the supervision of the state. So, at this final stage of moment of arrival nationalism arrives in the form of state and appropriates the nation. It is the destination set by the Reason, which fixes itself in the equations set by the global realities of power. Thus the great moment of manoeuvre is absorbed by the moment of arrival.

Nehru's Ideas on Caste System:

Nehru's radical socialist failed to influence his views on caste system. Nehru's ideas on caste system are not only mixed but also conservative. He perceives it mainly as a system of segregation brought forward in order to keep the Aryans and non-Aryans into different hierarchized spheres. But even in such a hierarchized system he sees the possibility of "a good deal of flexibility"(246). In this whole discussion he does not put the then dalit movement's fight against caste system. But without failure he also explains that 'innumerable Hindu reformers' raised their voices against it. He does not anyway list it out who these innumerable reformers were. He sees the ongoing economic changes posing a great threat to the existence of this system. He explains that what is at stake due to these economic changes was the fundamental approach to the problem of social organization. Now he tries to effectively locate the problem as a tension between the eastern and western approaches towards the theme of social organization. He writes, "The conflict is between the two approaches to the problem of social organization, which are diametrically opposed to each other: the old Hindu conception of group being the basic unit of organization, and the excessive individualism of the West, emphasizing the individual above the group" (246). This analysis bears Gandhian resonance. It is quite strange that Nehru an ardent believer in modernity has to relegate the issue to the area of essential differences between the east and the west. Such an approach is hardly visible in any of his other views except the issue of caste. Though he makes frail attempts to
address the problem within the conceptual frames of Marxian superstructure and base, finally he warns the Indians to search for the feasibilities of keeping this system intact. For instance he writes:

It has ceased to be a question of whether we like caste or dislike it. Changes are taking place in spite of our likes and dislikes. Rut it is certainly in our power to mould those changes and direct them, so that we can take full advantage of the character and genius of Indian people as a whole, which have been so evident in the cohesiveness and stability of the social organization they build up (247).

Nehru also quotes Sir George Birdwood's racist endorsement of caste system, which makes India a “glorious peninsula”. Nehru while trying to draw a balance between his modernist and essentialist perceptions explains that though such a changes in the caste system are inevitable in a phase of transition, it may result in creating a vaccume in the society. Without giving us any modern, practical solution he stops this brief discussion abruptly by drawing a demarcation between the good old type of caste system and the degraded contemporary one. Thus it is clear that like his predecessors Bankim and Gandhi, Nehru was also clearly guided by the Hindu Reason but not the western Reason in the case of caste system and the Dalit politics

Absorption of nation by the state:

In the last paragraphs of this chapter Chatterjee brings back his essential argument about the merging of the 'nation into the life of the state'. Blending of nation into the state becomes inevitable and this appropriation of the nation by the state is according to the author "a particular manifestation of the universal march of Reason" which believes that "World History resides Elsewhere" (161-2). The history of Indian nationalism is only a struggle to find its place in this pre-determined universal scheme of things. Thus, the Indian nationalism traveled towards reaching a modular form that was set by the western Reason. The author now focuses on the leak outs of the nation-state namely various ethnicity struggles etc. These fissures are inevitable. A fundamental question that he raises is how such nationalism would supersede itself. So, the question is has the history of nationalism reached its destiny and thus drained itself totally? The author finally concludes that though nationalism in India has yielded to the modes supplied by the
Reason of the West this surrender was not without struggle. Chatterjee examined and fixed the three nationalists in a nationalist thought which he claims as autonomous to prove that they did not succumb to the west’s Reason so easily. So, this text is a registration of the heroic fights of the Hindu men against the western Reason.

What is there to Celebrate?

What happened to the Hindu Reason when the western Reason with its modernity has emerged? These were contest as the text proves. What about the casteist Reason which ruled the land before the advent of the British, which still continues to rule? If the western Reason has traveled on ‘piggy back’ in search of capital the Hindu Reason has traveled on cow’s back in search of various kinds of free-labour and extraction of economy from the lower castes. Pre-colonial Indian land has witnessed as much brutal oppression on the innocent people as the colonized India has faced in the hands of Raj (colonial experiences are also to be viewed from the caste lines). All this is done in the name of Reason. If the western Reason and its ideology and structure have to be sneered as a negative one the native Reason has also to be equally sneered, rejected and hated. If Western Reason’s motive was capital, the Indian Reason was caste + capital. What does caste stand for? Certainly it stands for more than the capital. When the Hindu nationalists submitted to the West, it was not that wonderful village economy of the land was sold out to the logic of brutal capitalism. What the Hindu nationalists did was to negotiate with their caste\ feudal\ mercantile Reason with western more mobile, entrepreneurial capitalist Reason. The cause for the submission of the caste Reason to the capital Reason was due to the change of world politics and objective conditions. They could no longer do the caste specific extraction so openly. For the caste reason was under check. Chatterjee writes: “The political success of nationalism in ending colonial rule does not signify a true resolution of the contradictions between the problematic and thematic of nationalist thought. Rather, there is a forced closure of possibilities, a ‘blocked dialectic’; in other words, a false resolution which carries the marks of its own fragility.” (169). Though the author excludes the term caste from the list of “fissures” that appear on the body of the nation due to this ‘forced closure’ it is now clear that Dalit
Finally, a direct question could be - If nationalist imagination took place in inner domain in this anti-lower caste fashion what is there to celebrate and feel proud of this? Why only Bankim, Gandhi and Nehru? Why not Ambedkar, Phule or Ikbhal also? Ambedkar in his final stage of political life took to Buddhism and tried to analyze the Indian realities from that plane. In this phase he even questioned the western notions and tried to give an authentic Indian point of view. Why even such views were not considered? Dirks comments:

The history of the production of colonial difference does not license all expressions of nativist fundamentalism, even when it helps to explain their rise. Similarly, the writing of the history of nationalist mobilization and resistance in colonial conditions need not celebrate the promotion of an increasingly Hindu nationalist ideology that excludes women, Muslims, and lower-caste “others” from the inner circle of the national “we” (314).

If a considerable number of historically humiliated, mutilated, and oppressed population is hating even to rethink that any possible good would be fetched from inner domain then there should be something very fundamentally wrong about that. Many upper caste academicians don’t care to consider lower castes' rejection of the inner domain and its Reason as serious political questions. For this reason if any movement in India during British colonial period was autonomous nationalist movement it was the Dalit movement. For it has not only criticized the colonialism of the west but also the colonialism of the Hindu caste people. The mainstream nationalism and the contemporary propagators of that school have launched their voyage from inside and wanted to collapse the outside in the inside itself. The Dalit movement's nationalism, on the other hand starts with a severe indictment of this inner domain. Thus it is the dalitism which gave "a death blow to its blatant slogans of colonialism as a civilizing mission" (of xnh external and internal) not the Hindu nationalism.
Homogenizing the third world:

Homogenizing the third world is another limitation of PC theory. Chatterjee believes that in all the anti-colonial nationalisms that took place in Asia and Africa, this formula of divided spheres as political/outer and cultural/inner operated. Apart from leaving the fact of cultural specificities, and differences in the colonial experiences of Indian and African nations such sweeping generalization also ignores the inter-continental racism that exist between the African nations and India. For instance, upper caste Indians in South Africa fought against native Zulus. It is wrong to identify Indian mainstream nationalism either with African nationalism or with the oriental objectification suffered by Muslims in the Middle East. There is also a very little theory on Gandhi's complicity with the colonizers in their war against Africans during his stay in South Africa. G.B.Sigh writes: "In 1906 Gandhi participated in a war against blacks...Not a single black newspaper ever mentioned Gandhi's Satyagraha." Suniti Kumar Gosh writes: "...Gandhi's Satyagraha completely ignored the indigenous population of South Africa—the Zulus and other Negroes, who constituted the overwhelming majority of the population. Rather, his experiments with truth permitted him to join the British in their unjust war against the Zulus."

Problems of Applying the Concept of Passive Revolution to the Indian Context:
Gramsci's notion of Passive Revolution:

Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* emanates a fragmented nature and sometimes inconsistent with one another. Gramsci used the concept of passive revolution in somewhat contradictory ways. He explains it as a form of political struggle, which is possible in the period of relative equilibrium between the fundamental classes where war of manoeuvre is not feasible. This state of passive revolution should necessarily be followed by war of manoeuvre. He derives his concept of passive revolution\war of position from two fundamental notions of Political Science, 1. no social formation disappears as long as the productive forces which have developed within it still find room for further forward movement; 2. a society does not set itself tasks for whose solution the
necessary conditions have not already been nurtured. Therefore for the passive revolution to take place these principles must first take place.

**Gramsci's views on Gandhi:**

There are at least two contexts in Gramsci's Prison Notes to prove that Gramsci estimation of Indian freedom struggle was not only contradictory but also not based on any first hand information. For instance he describes Gandhian nationalist politics in a very confusing manner, "Gandhism and Tolstoyism are naïve theorisations of the "passive revolution" with religious overtones. Certain so-called "liquidationist" movements and the reactions they provoked should also be recalled, in connection with the tempo and form of certain situations (especially of the third moment)" (108). The following footnotes of the editor explain that Gramsci was keen to warn about the "liquidationist" who make passive revolution into a programme and discard the revolutionary standpoint (which means war of manoeuvre\ military frontal attack). This could be perhaps one example to explain that Gramsci himself had had a confused idea about what was really happening to Indian nationalism under the leadership of Gandhi. Otherwise how would he call Gandhian nationalism both as a naïve theorization of the passive revolution and also perceive it as provoking "liquidationist" movements and reactions? To remind again, for Gramsci this concept of "liquidationist" is very serious which refers to at least to one possible major betrayal: converting passive revolution into a mere programme and abandon its revolutionary standpoint which is war of manoeuvre. This means a phase of passive revolution or war of position should be followed by a war of frontal attack. We are at least by now clear that Gandhian nationalism was operating as a strong deterrent towards any amount of military warfare against colonialism.

There is one more context, which clarifies us how remote the idea of Gramsci on the Indian nationalism led by Gandhi. In his attempt to understand the anti-colonial fights Gramsci writes:

...India's political struggle against the English...knows three forms of war: war of movement, war of position, and underground warfare. Gandhi's passive resistance is a war of position, which at certain moments becomes a war of moment, and at others underground warfare. Boycotts are a war of position, strikes of war of movement, the secret preparation of weapons and combat troops belongs to underground warfare (229-230).
This explains that Gramsci has no first hand information about Gandhi led Indian nationalist movement. Otherwise how would he bunch the underground war of attack as along with the non-violent movement of Gandhi? Even if one put all the efforts to understand Gandhi led politics as contribution to passive revolution one would have to soon realize that this revolution did not reach its ultimate end i.e., the war of maneuver/frontal attack. Thus one has to but conclude that gandhian nationalism was a failure not a completion of passive revolution. Thus to portray gandhis' brand of nationalism as passive revolution is to betray both Gramsci's original ideas about the notion and also Gandhia's faith in (however superficial it may be) non-violence.

_Hegemony:

A. Consensus:

Hegemony (historical block) also is another concept that Gramsci used to explain the passive revolution. It refers to the need to combine at a political level all groups and aims of the working class into a greater whole with a single unified objective. This would be done by intellectual moral leadership. This should also transcend the inherent divisiveness of economistic trade union consciousness. Intellectual and moral unity (which goes beyond immediate and practical economic problems), productive communication and assimilation of the friendly groups, and homogenization are the essential features of his concept of hegemony. So, before winning governmental power it is necessary to establish leadership by this intellectual and moral leadership. This hegemonic social control ought to be consensual. Gandhi's ways of mobilization with knack or Ramaraya did not allow any consensual role for the masses. They were often mobilized to make their politics of spontaneity and sporadicness attuned to the more mundane, moderate politics of the elite nationalists.
B. Question of Economics:

For Gramsci’s concept of passive revolution or hegemony, a common economic goal was compulsory between the elite leadership and the masses that they lead. Paul Ransome writes:

Although the interests of the various groups which make up the new alliance are principally concerned with structural or 'economic-corporate' issues, these concerns will inevitably be reflected in the political and moral spheres. The successful emergence of an alternative hegemony must therefore develop a new economic, political and moral 'leadership', which recognizes and is prepared to engage with practical and ideational issues, within both the economic structure and the political superstructure.\(^{21}\)

Thus, hegemony necessarily means a state of having crossed the immediate economic needs and also reflection and development of the same. In other words, hegemony/intellectual moral leadership does not mean a total denial of the economic realities but a persistence and advancement of the understanding of the same. Gandhian nationalism fails on these accounts, one is that his politics was not consensual on the other hand there is no mentioning of any ways of mobilization of the lines of economic objectives. As Chatterjee himself writes it was politics for which masses were mobilized but were not represented. Such a kind of politics can be anything but certainly not passive revolution. Chatterjee’s application of this concept with the total disjunction of economics thus amounts to the misusing of this concept. Quintin Hoare and G.N. Smith for instance write, "his [Gramsci’s] constant preoccupation was to avoid any undialectical separation of "the ethical-political aspect of politics or theory of hegemony and consent" from "the aspect of force and economics"(207). Chatterjee’s analysis of the passive revolution thus is not based on the fundamental characteristics of passive revolution. Main features of Passive Revolution are: 1. There should be consensus between the elite moral and intellectual leadership and the masses 2. War of position should necessarily be followed by war of military frontal attack and 3. There should be a continuous dialectical relation between politics and economics. None of the ideologues that Chatterjee inserted in this text were capable to furnish all these three features. Bankim’s moment does not deserve the application of this concept because it was based on segregation of the elites from the masses. Nehru’s moment on the other hand marks destination of the nation, and
thus pulls a closure to passive revolution and his theories and plans of economics thus
cannot form part of it but an end. Chatterjee's main focus was on Gandhi in whose reign
the former thinks that passive revolution was trying to take place. All this passive
revolution is illustrated by the author as if the whole nation was spellbound by Gandhi
and followed him in a hypnotic state. What is more exasperating is Chatterjee's praise of
Gandhi's politics of knack and using the masses without allowing them to represent.
Alosius thus observes (especially in the case of Gandhi):

The Gramscian hegemonic process of building the national-popular is certainly not a process by
which the masses are lead into believing something that is not in fact there. Hegemony is a
conscious and consensual political process for all the parties involved; it is a process of dovetailing
the different interests in the realm first of economics, politics, then, and only then, of culture and
superstructures. It is for the same reason that the highest form of Gramscian hegemony, moral
and intellectual leadership by the leading class is not to be equated with the Gandhian call for moral
reform. The former is a process by which the economic and political interests of different
contending parties are unified and universalized into a new form of secular-national morality or
popular religion. The latter, on the other hand was a call to revert to the community-based morality
of traditional Indian society with hierarchical ascription, denying the crucial role of the economy
and politics as the universal arena of all individuals equally (223).

2. Dipanakar Gupta's essay "Continuous Hierarchies and Discreet Castes":

Gupta in this essay "Continuous Hierarchies and Discreet Castes"22 tries to
formulate his critique against Dumont. According to Gupta, Dumont has tried to
resurrect terms like stratification and hierarchy to give a more positive meaning to them.
He introduced modern structuralism with its notion of binary opposition as a part of his
methodology. Gupta's major problem with Dumont are mainly on the following
methodological formulations made by the latter: 1. Castes can be hierarchically arranged
with universal validity, 2. Politics and economics are not constituents of the pure
hierarchy of the caste system but enter into its domains surreptitiously and that too at the
interstitial level.

Dumont defines hierarchy in the following lines, "a hierarchical relation is a
relation between larger and smaller, or more precisely between that which encompasses
and that which is encompassed".23 He explains that caste system is a state of mind. It is
thus through ideology that one can understand the essence of the castes and come to
realize the true principle of caste system. This single true principle is the opposition of
the pure and impure. This opposition triggers hierarchy. This hierarchy is the cause for the linear order of the arrangement of castes from A to Z (Brahmin to an untouchable). This true hierarchy does not give space to power. He tries to justify this idea, that in true hierarchy "that which encompasses is more important than that which is encompassed" (116). Thus for the development of pure hierarchy power should be absolutely inferior to status. But his hierarchy is not a linear order but is a series of successive dichotomies and inclusions.

Gupta comes up with his own formulations on caste mainly those, which militate against Dumont’s theory. Gupta explains that Dumont powerfully and intentionally marginalized certain realities as anomalies or as happening of those regions where caste system is not very strong. He therefore tries to build his paper on these anomalies in order to demonstrate the speciousness of Dumont's theory. Gupta raises a series of queries into Dumont postulations here: If power enters only at the interstitial levels, then how certain forms of violence exist to inflict dominance? Precisely he puts his question like this, "In short the major problem is: Why do people who believe in the caste system not follow the dictates of the true hierarchy?"(1957). Gupta then puts his question more blatantly "Is there a true hierarchy at all in the sense that Dumont has explicated it with reference to caste system?"

Now Gupta tries to come up with his own definitions. A true hierarchy is an unambiguous linear ranking on a single variable. Authority can also be a valid criterion for a true and continuous hierarchy. This authority increases or decreases basing on the position of the individual in the hierarchy. Gupta brings up his notion of 'discreet classes' here. He explains that castes are separate units into exclusive categories. The principle that separates discrete categories/classes cannot be simply understood by the presence or absence of any one criterion or characteristic. It is only a question of level or plane, at which one or the other form of differentiation becomes relevant. He writes, "social classes are parts of different systems and are never unambiguously participants of any one system" (1957). Thus peoples participation or membership in the caste system is not only non-absolute but at the same time they belong to other different systems also.
Thus *caste* system for Gupta is not the only authoritative system which rules the peoples lives.

Here Gupta comes up with his main idea that there is no one-caste ideology, but multiple ideologies. These castes may share some principles in common but they also exhibit contradictory ideologies also. In effect, therefore, the *rule* of caste is obeyed only when it is accompanied by the *rule* of power. The author explains, "One can then perhaps say with a degree of certitude that a hierarchy breaks, unites, encompasses and excludes, on the strength of its own principle, be it power, land or money" (1957). But what about those *castes* which do not have any of these tools of power? How do they make their own attempts of breaking, uniting, encompassing and excluding in the hierarchy? In other words what is the 'strength of its own principle' in the case of *lower castes*? But instead of explaining how the *lower caste* do this mega feet in the absence of both ideological and power tools he ends up in making a hurried conclusion. Thus in his theory ideology jumbles hierarchy and therefore, Gupta tries to argue, "contrary to Dumont, it is the hierarchy of power and economics where we believe that hierarchy is naked" (1957). It is not sheer ideology, which makes hierarchy naked but also the monopoly of ideology and power by the *upper castes*. It is too much absurd to think of *lower castes* as equal or as participants of this.

Another proposition that Gupta makes is that between the discreet *castes* of A to Z there are various other *classes* which are not completely defined by the parameter of purity and pollution. Here Gupta prefers to look at the ideology of purity and pollution instead of looking at hierarchy of purity and pollution. He explains that ideology separates *castes* into discreet entities in a most 'self-centered way'. Because of this separation (on the basis of self-centeredness) *castes* rarely accept the notion of impurity attributed to them. If they accept such definitions attributed to them by the ideology of some other *castes*, he explains, "it is because of the conjoint working of the principles of economics and / or politics, both of which are amenable to hierarchy ranking". This, Gupta accuses was denied by Dumont in his construction of the notion of true hierarchy. Thus Gupta tries to prove that ideology separates what an absolute and continuous
hierarchy tries to unite and encompass. In other words hierarchy in Dumont’s sense is an 
inmate arrangement where everybody obliges naturally. But in Gupta’s view it is an 
autonomous and multiple exercise. Thus the castes do not subscribe to the true and 
continuous hierarchy proposed by Dumont.

Gupta clarifies that the following characteristics of caste as false: 1. A uniform 
hierarchical ideology, 2. Occupational specialization, and 3. The concept of purity and 
pollution as the principle instrument for separation. Dumont believes that there is one 
ideology of caste, and for the amplification of this point he relies on ancient Brahman 
lawgiver, Manu. According to Dumont every caste naturally yields itself to this ideology. 
Gupta accuses Dumont for having neglected what the subaltern castes think of their caste 
status and the system of caste as a whole. But the realities of endogamy or strict caste 
rules specific to each caste appear as a challenge to Gupta’s opposition to singular and 
continuous caste hierarchy. Gupta tries to therefore argue that one should not mix up 
values with ideology.

In the second part of his paper Gupta tries to explain how ontology becomes an 
important feature of all discreet caste ideologies. Here he inserts many myths of origin 
that are in the existence within the circles of certain castes. These myths not only refute 
the dominant derogatory myths of origin attributed to them but also claim equal status 
with the upper castes. The subaltern castes have their own versions to tell about their 
origin and they are not shameful in the way that the Brahman scriptures recorded. And 
Gupta also explains that the subaltern castes do not always perceive the upper castes as 
their role models. Secondly, he also takes up the example of taboos and restrictions that 
exist around the concept of food. Here he makes a highly contentious statement, ”it is 
difficult to say according to any one ideology who is regarded as an untouchable by 
whom” (2004). Finally he comes to the area of hypersymbolisim where he deals with 
rituals, symbols, rites and so on. He writes that the notions of purity and pollution do not 
always influence these signifiers. The author without fail denotes that within the caste 
groups also endogamous jatis are separated by divergent customs. The existence of 
different customs is the evidence of the subaltern castes urge for self-pride and respect.
Thus Gupta tries to prove that the idea of the pure hierarchy of the Brahmanism is not shared by all other castes and thus Dumont's idea of one continuous true hierarchy is false.

In the third part of the article he deals with the issues of jajmani system, Sanskritization and so on. He defines the jajmani system as a "sporadic empirical reality" (2004). He explains that the sacred texts do not specify the occupational specificities of each caste and also that these texts do not mention many jatis (castes) which exist now. Thus the jajmani system for him is existent only at a very slight level. Therefore hereditary occupation is not the fundamental feature for the caste system. He also brings the concept of Sanskritization. For him "Sanskritization is a reassertion in an extraverted form of what was till then an introverted expression of the caste's overall rejection of the position given to it by the hierarchical rule governed by the principles of economics and politics" (2004). He comes with the idea of non-brahmanical model of Sanskritization also. It is difficult to understand here how the so-called subaltern castes feel the need to give reassertion to this introverted expression? How such a reassertion on caste lines becomes obvious when they are after all subjected to the hierarchical rule governed by the principles of economics and politics and not by the caste ideology?

Gupta explains that history has liquidated many features of caste system. Hereditary occupations, notions of purity and pollution, and the power of encompassing can no longer are counted to make an essential definition of caste. For him the only strictures, which guide towards a definition of caste system are then principle of endogamy and multiplicity of rituals. Multiple hierarchies and hypersymbolism are also other constituent features. This alternative hierarchical rankings happen all over the Hindustan. But are these alternative hierarchical rankings continuous and powerful? He acknowledges that there can be only one hierarchical order in effect at once. But which hierarchical order is in effect at once and why so? He does not answer this. This particular hierarchy is again not the essence of caste system but expression of politico-economic power. He concludes "an alternative hierarchy can also effectively come into practice with a change in the political and economic strength of certain castes- a
reshuffling, that is, of jatis on the secular plane” (2051). Thus caste emerges as a creation of politico-economic powers.

He also believes that untouchability is a notion historically added. He makes this statement though in the above lines he acknowledges that the lower castes like Nishadas, Ayogava, Paulkasas were despised, he insists, “but were not considered to be untouchables.” He does not care to explain the difference between untouchability and the state of being despised by the upper castes. Thus untouchability no more exists as a brutal practice. It only operates as a marker of difference between the castes. It has become according to the author an enriching elements of lower castes in their self-glorification. Each jati also enjoys relative freedom to drop or adapt or include new rituals if it helps them in their secular and economic spheres. Thus the castes are not passive actors in caste system but agents who are capable of reflexive action. He concludes that understanding the ‘vivacity and dynamism’ of castes in India is largely denied. He also assumes that the fundamental unity that exists between “men across different cultures with divergent systems of differentiation” is also largely ignored. Thus Gupta concludes his essay with an undaunted faith in the caste system.

Though Gupta’s critique of Dumont and occasional attack on M.N.Srinivas in this article appear to equip the subaltern castes assertion with an amount of self-respect, this theory is premised on a more cryptic and dangerous argument. Most of the ideas of Gupta severely dispute with the Dalit theories on caste. Gupta is absolutely wrong in saying that hereditary occupations are not prevalent. If they are not prevalent how do one explain the predominant reliance of the Dalits on agricultural or other kinds of labour oriented or demeaning jobs? Older forms of labour must have slowly decreased in its prevalence but it did not result in the automatic elevation of the Dalits or release from the demeaning occupations. Notions of purity and pollution exist in many areas of the country in the literal sense. In the urban areas where recognition of the caste status of an individual is difficult, caste is still signified in various forms. Endogamy is still a prominent feature for which the notion of purity and pollution is the backbone. Though Gupta appears to bring the notion of power, he nevertheless ends up in delinking the economics or politics
from the *caste* system. It appears finally, as if, he was trying to explain that politico-economic power exist independent of *caste*. His final resort to hypersymbolism is a too much reductionism. His idea that unity exists between "men across different cultures with divergent systems of differentiation" is also an embarrassing idea in the context where *caste* system has not metamorphosed itself so much.

Despite intra-regional dissimilarities, the mode of stratification is astonishingly uniform all over India. Though some parts of the land do not have this system, it does not discount the overwhelming presence that caste made on a major chunk of the land. Though one has to believe that untouchability was a recent (one thousand years old) phenomenon, one has to understand that one thousand years of oppression on people is not a silly reason to not to consider. The old political order was symbiotically interlinked with Brahmin supremacy accompanied by physical force. More importantly Gupta's essay deals with contemporary scenario where he seems to believe that *caste* really underwent radical transformations and therefore it is no more an oppressive system. According to him it is nothing but an amicable arrangement where each *caste* would live happily (with the help of self-woven definitions, rituals and meanings) without being interrupted by other *castes*. Though he argues that at one time there would be mostly only one hierarchy at work he does not take back his idea of the existence of multiple hierarchies. Like most of the SS theories, Gupta also in his eagerness to argue for existence of multiplicity and democracy of *caste* system failed to take note of various violent manifestations of *caste* system.

3. Partha Chatterjee's Essay “Nation and Its Outcastes”:

It is the Gupta’s idea of ‘discreet castes’ that Partha Chatterjee applied to explain his theory in this essay written to condemn most of the ideas of Dumont on *caste*. His text, *Nation and its Fragments* starts with the argument of dividing the nationalist world into two domains. Chatterjee came down heavily on Anderson’s idea that anti-colonial nationalism is simply a derived discourse from west. It is basically from this plain that he tries to treat the questions of *upper caste* women and *subaltern castes*.
In the first sentence itself the author has acknowledged the centrality of caste system to India. He has highlighted two nationalist arguments that emanated in response to colonialists criticism. One is that caste is a matter of superstructure not an essential feature of the land. The Marxists have taken this position. They have not seen caste as a significant system but only as a feature of superstructure therefore with out much hesitation they become the torchbearers of legal-political principles of modern state. The other sees caste as an essential feature of Indian society but would not agree that it is antithetical to human kind. Orientalists and religious fundamentalists subscribe to this idea. For them it does not stand against the universal principles of freedom, equality etc. He says that this is "achieved by distinguishing between the empirical-historical reality of caste and its ideality" (174). Both the theories accept the premise of modernity and also contain criticism against the other. The former agrees that there is a need to reform and eradicate caste, whereas the latter disagrees for the extinction of caste. Therefore it has to build what the author calls "the synthetic theory of caste". He reminds that this theory has the same form as any synthetic theory, which propagates caste as an essential feature of the unity of Indian society. Chatterjee's problem with any theory of caste, which professes unity of Indian society, is that such theories are artificial in a sense that in India there is no such one-caste ideality. So, the problem of Chatterjee is not that Dumont did not take the realistic view of the caste (for instance its violent form, faith in inequality of people, extreme segregation of people on the base of birth etc.). Chatterjee's main problem with Dumont is with his assumption of caste as having been premised on single unitary ideology. He has taken Dumont's book Homohierarchicus as a more influential construction of the synthetic theory of caste. Does Chatterjee try to explain the limitations of this perception by unifying the empirical-historical reality of caste (its violent manifestations) with its ideality and prove that the realities essentially contradict with its ideality? This essay does not take any such task but only explain that caste is not a homogeneous system and there were resistances to it from the subaltern castes. These resistances of the subaltern groups find place in this essay as legitimate fights since they have emanated from 'immanent critique' though they are doomed to fail precisely because of that reason.
As mentioned above Chatterjee has started his essay with the review of major streams of thought on *caste*. But what is very surprising is he did not bother to include what the Dalits themselves think of the caste system. For instance, those views expressed by Phule, Ambedkar and so on are not given space. They are not included even in the as-a-matter-of-fact manner. It is only in the concluding paragraph we come across a passing line which caricatures all the emancipatory ideology and strategies of the Dalits as pursuit for *artha*. His main presumption is that any theory, which seeks to establish the one *caste* ideality is false. Such a blatant conclusion effectively debases the Dalit critique of *caste*. This is because the Dalit discourse also makes its core of analysis on the fact of *caste* having single *dharma/essence*.

The reason for the resurrection of immanent critique of *caste* is according to the author is that the critique of the synthetic theory of *caste* should not rely on any perception emerged from outside. So, first he tries to focus on what he calls the "immediate reality of caste." What he meant by this is the existence of particular *jatis* with specific characteristics and each of these *jatis* is operated by the peculiar quality of definition-for-self (definition of itself) and definition-for-another (by which they distinguish other *jatis* from itself). These qualities are limited and also therefore changeable. Partha brings out the question of regional and temporal variations of *castes*. It should be noted here that the author does not bring the same question of these spurious *variations* when he deals with the issue of women. He uses the title ‘woman’ to describe the *upper caste* women’s issues. But in the case of *caste* he brings out all these variations. In the case of women’s question his essay moves in the direction of finding a singular solution for a singular problem. In the case of caste he brings all theses problems of variations, which potentially inhibits any unified theory of *caste* and solutions to it. Another clarification that has to be made here on the part of the researcher is that by posing this specific question of variations the researcher does not mean that there are no such variations existing. But they should not be raised to curb any single unifying emancipatory ideology and action for the Dalits. The question of variations serves more meaningful purpose if it is applied to the issue of gender. This is because Indian women are divided on *caste* lines and *castes* are not divided on the lines of gender.
Therefore the concept of 'multiplicity of qualitative criteria' that the author explores to establish the multiplicities of caste idealities are actually more useful to the issue of gender.

According to Dumont’s hierarchy is the most vital parameter to casteness. Through this hierarchy, quantity of casteness is fixed. Now the castes become determinate and fixed. According to Dumont thus hierarchy serves is an universal standard of casteness. Thus status of each caste is fixed quantitatively in the hierarchy and therefore became comparable. Chatterjee explains that by this “the move is made from the unintelligibility of immediate diversity to an identification of the being-for-self of caste” (176). Secondly, according to Dumont hierarchy also contains a paradoxical essence, an ideology, namely, the opposition between purity and pollution. But still castes continue to exist in the system according to these parameters since they cannot do without the other. Thus the unity of identity and difference (purity and pollution) forms the base of caste as a totality or system. Dumont dedicates most of his text to prove this point. Thus the total system appears, as being constituted by different parts unified by a whole. The relation between the parts is the result of contradictory unity of similarity/identity and dissimilarity/difference. He writes that according to Dumont, the principle that keeps together the different castes/parts within the whole of the caste system is the ideological force of dharma. This dharma supervises the caste to be in their place. Chatterjee explains that this dharma would "assign to each jati its place within the system and defines the relations between jatis as the simultaneous unity of mutual seperateness and mutual dependence" (177). The main argument of Dumont according to Chatterjee is that the ideological force of dharma integrates the mediated being of caste with its ideality. Thus this ideal construct of dharma is actualized in the immediacy of social practices and institutions. According to Chatterjee this argument is pivotal not only to Dumont but also to all the synthetic constructions of the theories of caste. This is because all such theories must claim that the all the castes are basically integrated by a single principle/force of dharma. Then only it becomes possible for the caste system to reproduce itself.
By now it looks that Chatterjee is absolutely dissatisfied with this artificial theory of caste produced by Dumont. He calls Dumont's determination to understand the caste system as a 'structure' and not as a 'dialect and also his decision to not criticize the caste system but only understand it as an effort of "anthropologist's luxury" (178). Dumont's open acknowledgement on the westerner's failure to understand the east has not succeeded in appeasing Chatterjee's mistrust in western researchers. According to Dumont West's excessive individualism and commitment to the modern democratic principles affects its theory and understanding of the non-western world. He tries to understand hierarchy as a natural foundation to caste. He also tries to trace the ideological roots of caste system by relating it to the spiritual world, other wordliness of Indian. Such an approach resonates the old Orientalist nostalgia for the Indian past.

Chatterjee's central problem with Dumont's hypothesis is that he denies any history to India. Though Dumont was posing criticism to the western political theory he is criticized as having reproduced the ideology of colonialism by denying any history to India. It is this limitation which attracted the wrath of Chatterjee's criticism. He condemns Dumont's idea that caste is a system "given once and for all" (178). Chatterjee borrows Gupta's concept of 'discrete castes' in order to dismantle most of Dumont's central propositions. Chatterjee takes Gupta's main argument that there is no single caste ideology (dharma) or a single universal ideality of caste but there are several. When Gupta digs out various anomalies to explain this point, Chatterjee gives life to various bhakti movements, which incorporated retaliations against the Hindu dharma though within the same power structure.

But in his rush to prove the point of multiple ideologies Chatterjee also commits the same mistake that Dumont has done. For instance, Chatterjee also starts his hypothesis by distinguishing the ideality of caste from its reality. Or in other words, Chatterjee concentrates only on one area of realities in order to glorify another set of idealities. For instance, when Dumont highlighted a singular notion of dominant dharma, Chatterjee comes up with the argument of multiple dharmas. What both the scholars effectively denied to do is to distinguish the ideality\idealities of caste from another set of
its reality/realities namely, its violent manifestations, material extractions etc. If there is no single ideality of caste but multiple, then its manifestation into realities are also various and need not be uniform also.

Moreover Chatterjee theory also imagines a mythical autonomous space enjoyed by subaltern castes. Such an assumption is more brutal than Dumont in the sense that it results in a total bankruptcy of any complete, total critique against the caste system. It also denies seeing caste fundamentally as a violent scheme. What it ultimately does is to ruin all the existing theories of criticism, which frame caste as a powerfully unified system, which is based on the totality of ideology and operation. Thus according to Chatterjee's account not only the feeble Marxist criticism of caste (which presumes caste only as a feature of superstructure) but also the Dalit criticism (launched from liberal rationalist paradigm) become utterly invalid. More (nastily) Dalits’ criticism of caste system also finally appears, as synthetic one since it also does not see caste system as a dialect (in the artificial sense that Chatterjee proposed in this text). The problem is not that caste system did not undergo changes or that the Dalits failed to make any powerful attempts to alter it. But the problem is with poststructural argument, which denies a legitimate place for such modern historic attempts of the Dalits in theory.

Chatterjee tries to disprove Dumont’s hypothesis that ideality lies united with actuality in the immediate reality of caste. It is here that Chatterjee makes use of Gupta’s criticism of Dumont. Gupta’s idea is that there is no one caste ideology but many and also that these caste ideologies some times even oppose each other. These are the points that received appreciation from Chatterjee. He thus proposes to look at 1. An implicit critique of dominant dharma existing in popular beliefs and practices of caste, 2. Their claims against dominant dharma are conditioned by power relations of the times, 3. These deviancies (existing in the form of various bhakti movements) from dominant dharma are limited by the conditions of subordination, 4. Due to this they ultimately fail to construct an alternative universal to the dominant dharma. What Chatterjee tries to do in this text is to rearrange these scattered oppositions in order to develop what he calls a critique of Indian tradition. He finally explains that all these bhakti cults failed to build a
an alternative universal to the dominant dharma. According to him this failure is inevitable to the subaltern politics. Thus for him the destiny of these subaltern castes dissents and politics is sheer hopeless. First it was historically unable to make a total fight against dominant dharma since its fight was conditioned by the power relations of the time. But after frankly disclosing the historic limitations within which subaltern castes dissent took place in those pre-modern days, the scholar seems to be content with bringing a closure to this dialect. For he leaps his theory to suggest how the immanent critique of caste was displaced by a monolithic modern Dalit movement and discourse, which could not expand itself beyond the cheap pursuit for artha.

Such a conclusion reflects the ending that he drew in the text Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World. Like the Indian nationalists (read upper castes) failed to compete with the superior Western Reason, the Indian popular sects also fail against their upper caste opponents. But the difference is that the former own the battle secretly in the inner sphere. The kind of vehemence that he applies in the case of defending the mainstream hindutva nationalists in the text of Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World is absents in his treatment of the topic subaltern sects. It is written with a genre of as a matter of fact. His impatient rush when he comes to the question of modern Dalit politics leaves many gapes open. Me does not at least tell us on which grounds he is justified to call the modern Dalit politics a pursuit for artha.

He also does not care to tell us how a caste system, which was brimming with various idealities, was able to restrict powerful subaltern dissent in such potential and permanent ways. Here he seems to make a breach of his own conviction by making use of notions, multiple idealities of caste and also the notion of singular dominant dharma. What he implicitly tries to establish is also that the subaltern caste dissent of yester years cannot be viewed as natural precursor of the modern Dalit politics. It thus also implies that the latter is not a legitimate successor of the former. It also implies that western modernity pulled a forcible closure to the dialectic of subaltern caste and the Dalits simply adopted it either due to their selfishness or out of ignorance. Whatever the reason could be, the argument seems to be that Dalit politics is not capable of contributing any dialectic to the Indian history.
He made a somewhat detail notes on different popular beliefs on some sects in Bengal. Finally he sees these oppositions ultimately unsettled. If they are unified it is not at the level of the "self-consciousness of "the Hindu" but only within the historical contingencies of the social relations of power" (181). The reader would be doubtful whether Chatterjee is feeling sad that these oppositions are not unified at the level of the self-consciousness of "the Hindu". This is because, finally, after an elaborate description and analysis of these sects Chatterjee sneers at the destiny of these sects in the modern bourgeois world. This sneering is what perhaps he preferred to call "a critique of bourgeoisie equality". He sees the liberal or modern critique of caste as "external critique" (197). The nation, in the form of state has replaced this unifying force of dharma in the postcolonial society. He indulges to argue:

The force of dharma, it appears, has been ousted from its position of superiority, to be replaced with a vengeance by the pursuit of artha, but, pace Dumont, on the basis again of caste divisions. On the other hand we have the supremely paradoxical phenomenon of lower-caste groups asserting their very backwardness in the caste hierarchy to claim discriminatory privileges from the state, and upper caste groups proclaiming the sanctity of bourgeois equality and freedom (the criterion of equal opportunity mediated by skill and merit) in order to beat back the threat to their existing privileges. This was evidenced most blatantly in the violent demonstrations over the adoption of so-called Mandal Commission recommendations by the government of India in 1990 (198).

Thus Chatterjee groups the anti-caste struggles into cheap fights for artha.

Chatterjee is perhaps absolutely right when he explains, "Dumont’s posing of the principles of homo hierarchicus against those of homo equalis is a false, essentialist, positing of an unresolvable antinomy" (198). But what the author proposes as an alternative to it is an extreme example of the mystification of both the problem and the solution. After recording the inevitability of the death of subaltern caste dissent and, negation of the modern Dalit politics as being essentially structured to bargain for material shares, he was left with no option but to mystify the problem and its solution. He mumbles, "We must assert that there is a more developed universal form of the unity of seperateness and dependence that subsumes hierarchy and equality as lower historical moments." (198). He offers the following suggestion as a solution: "a criticism of "commonsense" on the basis of "commonsense"; not to inject into popular life a "scientific" form of thought springing from somewhere else, but to develop and make
critical an activity that already exists in popular life" (199). This he feels would enable Indian politics, which has been searching to find a universal form of community. But how does it take place? What are the strategies and means of going about it to reach at this new universal form of community? We find no answers to this. Like any of his text, this particular essay of Chatterjee also is very slippery not because of its theoretical eloquence but due to its obtrusive prejudices.

Though t Chatterjee's essay on "Women and the Nation" concludes with a title 'A Pessimistic Afterword' he did not leave a cynical conclusion to the question of women and nation as he did in the case of caste\Dalit. The questions he raises in the case of "Women and the Nation" is also according to the modern measures which he denied to the issue of caste\Dalit. For instance, in his essay on woman, after establishing that nationalism often won in the inner sphere, he raises a tiny set of very sensible questions of writing Indian history with a radical historiographical base and, argues that "This discovery will open up once more the question of who led and who followed, and of when it all began. It will introduce, in short, an agenda to rewrite the history of nationalism with different actors and a different chronology" (156). This luxury is anyway reserved for the historiography of upper caste women and totally denied to the Dalits. Though the essay on Indian women concludes with exemplifying the case of Binodini, a sex-worker cum actor (who could be a lower caste also), it finishes the essay by opening gates into an extremely wide area of nationalist politics i.e., its 'ethical domain'(157). In the case of caste\Dalit the author does not see such a feasibility, for him the question of modern Dalit politics is a brat of western Reason and thus completely gone case. Their politics does not deserve any rightful space in the ethical domain of nation-state because these subaltern castes are as much part of this spoil game as their upper caste oppressors. It is now context for the Dalit feminist to make a point that it is rather an awkward amalgamation, to tie both the dominant and the dominated to the same pole.
Conclusion:

By the early 19th century the Indian upper caste nationalists were forced to answer both the colonizers and the Dalits about the system of caste. They were unable to solve the Dalit question from within as they were able to do efficiently in the case of Hindu women. Neither they were allowed to remain silent. Regular scrutiny from the Raj and persistence from Dalits themselves always pressurized the Hindus to open up their inner domain and its enigmas. This happened in the case of Hindu woman also. In fact, resolution of women's question, according to the depiction of Chatteerjee demonstrates colonizers’ impact and the defeat of the inner domain. In the case of Hindu women also, Hindu nationalists were not capable to remain immune to the influences of Raj. Though they have resolved the question according to the logic of the inner domain they had to make many compromises like allowing their women to enter the outer domain through education, jobs etc. It is also wrong to assume that there were no dissents from the upper caste women towards this kind of resolution. When they had to obey to this colonialist urge, then where was still the question of sovereignty of inner domain, which Chatteerjee claims on behalf of Hindu nationalists?

Unlike Hindu women Dalit is a confronting community. So, how did Hindu nationalists respond to this confronting community? Such a politics from the Dalits forced the Hindu nationalists to open up their inner domain. First of all the conversion of chandala into Dalit during the time of the British colonialism, meant a disastrous collapse of the inner domain and its dominant language. If there is any true brand of nationalism it is that which recognizes this demise of the centuries, rotten inner domain of Hindus. A true narration of a true nationalism starts with the description of how the prison walls of the inner domain hid from view- Hindu women who lurked as young brides to old bridegrooms who were on the verge of death; who were raped to death in the name of legitimate heterosexuality, who ascended pyres along with their diseased husbands. The inner domain was also the place where the Dalits were relegated to an inhuman life, where the countless Dalit women were humiliated, maimed and killed, where Dalit
children became bonded laborers for the parasitic upper castes and where they suffered the highest mortality rate. If nationalist ideological sovereignty rests in this devils’ den, of Hindus’ inner domain, one should immediately curse it, and feel ashamed that such an autonomy survived more democratic and humane theories. Nationalist ideology was not only the space/moment where the upper castes had re-declared their sovereignty but also a space/moment where the same sovereignty faced the greatest challenges perhaps for the first time in this land’s history.

It is impossible to entertain any claims of innocence of any hindutva scholarship. Their texts are rested upon the assumption that non-upper castes are cheap, primitive, and always different from the communities created by the hindutva culture. The PC scholarship pleads that their ideologues are not guilty despite the fact their brim with caste prejudices. These classic nationalist texts are notoriously insensitive, and their generalizations are premised on caste chauvinism. Far from being an innocent domain, the hindutva nationalist texts were deeply implicated in the production of casteist ways of imagining the nation. Despite this fact the PC writers portray these orthodox texts as above politics altogether and also depict them as if they are only spiritual, cultural and ideological constructs.

More fundamentally, the PC theory projects the self-representations of the upper caste nationalists and ignores the resistances to them. By doing so, they develop a static model of nationalist relations in which power to dominate is located entirely with the British colonizer, thus allowing no space to put pre-colonial power relations for inquiry. As a result, the historical experiences of Dalits themselves under the British colonialism inextricable as it is with the caste colonialism of upper castes hold no autonomous existence outside the hindutva texts. At the level of theory, then, the PC writers give themselves the privilege of refuting the feasibility of any alternative descriptions of the Dalit and any agency to them.

One point that has to be understood in all this is that casteism is not just replicated in the hindutva nationalist texts; caste is not just a frame of its production, but its very essence. The hindutva nationalist writings were not the first encounters between the Hindus and
the Dalits. But these texts do mark a new ways in imagining in deed, in fabricating these two communities as binary opposites. The nationalist writings were one method of creating the Hindu’s specialized projections of itself in relation to the Dalits. The definition of the nation and its outside rested on their production of incompatible differences between Hindu and Dalit, the self and the other. Their myths about the Dalits (as betrayers, selfish, non-spiritual) not only expressed all manners of cultural anxieties, but also sometimes overlapped with the images of the colonizers. Hindu nationalism thus based itself upon caste distinctions, which demarcated Hindus from Dalits. Consequently, these peculiarities rationalized a belligerent nationalism that continue to stimulate the political psyche of Hindus even today. What the PC theory offer to this archaic ideology is to interpret it in the frames of what can be fashionably called a new historicism.

Thus PC theory is more than merely one more stream of theory; it manufactures a naval way of justifying the hindutva. It seeks to widen the scope of studies of Hinduism to suit modern theory. Thus this theory can be seen as emanating from the modern need of legitimizing the hindutva ideology of the past. PC theory appears to tailor Hindutva to suit the present political contexts of the modern world. Thus PC theory is nothing but the justification of the epistemic violence renewed during the British colonial period by the upper castes, which has now been reconstructed to suit the changing global contexts.
Notes:


5 Nicholas B. Dirks, _Castes of Mind_, Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003, p. 5.


8 Eleanor Zelliot, Gopal Guru, Gail Omvedt, Kancha Ilaiah, Aloysius are some of the scholar who gave a very serious attention to the facts of internal fissures and linking the question of caste to the intricacies of nation.

9 Using the concepts "caste" and "nation" in this way is to not to indicate that both are same. This usage only denotes the necessity of viewing these two concepts and issues as intersecting.


11 P. Mongia (ed.), _Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader_, London: Arnold, pp. 347-364. Though this suggestion sounds liberal enough, it too carries a gap. Apart from the issues of pure Diaspora there are certain other identities, which also come into scene in the context of first and third world politics. The Dalit women are extremely affected by the politics of globalisation, and due to international transactions like importation of cheap medicines, contraceptives etc and due to the international relations itself. Even the question of Diaspora can be Dalit women’s issue and NRI Dalit women are also to be counted.

This argument is often used to portray the colonizers as responsible for introducing communalism in India. It must be true that the colonizers had tried to bunch the people in the land on the community lines for their convenience through their various administrative policies. But it is an undeniable truth that the caste system was operating as a linking chain to maintain stratification in the society. The nationalists in India had made ultimate use of it by taking the entire nation to the hindus and also at the same time by shifting all the sin to the colonizers. Such an accusation that the construction of hindu/Hinduism as a homogeneous unit was a byproduct of British colonialism is always taken for granted. Shifting this sin from the western writers (however at guilt they must be at) to hindutva politics itself may result in different arrival points of truth.

It is useful to keep in mind that Gandhi and Dayananda also expressed the ideas about the education for the others and the right to rule. Issue of birth and merit are as old as nationalist times which are very political questions. Refer to the fourth chapter.


G.B. Singh, "Gandhi the Racist", The Dalit, Mar-Apr 1 '03, p. 13.

