The premise for cultural development, says Jain (1993), is that civilizations are the legitimate teleology for cultural development. Pleading for a reversal of analytical perspectives between civilizations and settlement societies at the end of the twentieth century, he looks upon civilizations and settlement societies in a dialectic between the Self and the Other. Societies like these, where a considerable amount of cultural synthesis takes place, stand in contrast to larger civilizational constructs. We restate Jain’s argument to steer it towards a similar cultural synthesis found in a colonized society, which has a different set of implications at the level of ‘becoming’. The basic approach, however, remains that of looking at societies in a constant state of change and that the resulting dialectics between the Self and the Other leads to localised identities. In a colonized society, and here, Goa, the violence of implanted practices, social, religious, and cultural, leaves a
deep-rooted initial antagonism towards the colonizers. This does not last as has happened in Goa, when the religion and practises of the Other were appropriated and what emerged was a localised form of Christianity. The initial antagonism, particularly among the lower classes, did leave a trace and residues of the earlier forms of worship – Hinduism was a major influencing factor in the synthesis.

The appropriations of religious symbols that took place in the 19th Century dramatically transformed the nature of this discourse. For, the cultural sign and the linguistic sign carry the responsibility for the meaning of social practice. The desire that animates the sign is a dialectical desire beyond the reach of the satiety that comes with the satisfaction of impulses. "To desire to speak is to desire, not satiety, but the discourse of the Other, which explains why language mulls over itself, why it ruminates over the mysteries of the earth in myths, and why to speak creates a universe of meaning sufficient unto itself. Discourse is always the signifying of a life without positive boundaries. It speaks of a life without positive boundaries. It speaks of an origin that always lies further back in the past and of a completion of life, of a final end that is always further on: an origin and end that are not. One can never say my life has been this or that, for it never ends and it never has begun. Thus, to explain it, to attempt to lay it out for another in language is always to move between an ever-receding past and a future which continually erodes the complacency of the present. The constructions of discourse therefore can never escape the boundlessness of time. And the meaning that language weaves
around the events of personal and intersubjective history must be essentially mythic. That is not to say they are not true, but that truth does not lie within well delineated boundaries, but always lies elsewhere. The interpretation of the course of an individual life moves, as Levi-Strauss said of the interpretations of mythology, in a spiral. (Gillan, 1982:84)

The cultural and religious synthesis chiefly took place largely among the lower classes and marginal groups who were neither here nor there and they evolved a culture which had influences of both the Hindu and Christian world. It is interesting to note that despite the new religion – Christianity – Goa reeled under a pre-existing caste hierarchy.

*Goa – A Caste-based Society:* Even before the Portuguese set foot in Goa, there existed a well-defined caste system in keeping with the Hindu world. The Brahmins, Kshatriyas, the Shudras and the Ati-Shudras (who were essentially out of the caste system, being tribals). When the Portuguese arrived, despite their proselytizing zeal, maintained the caste structure and proceeded to rule a divided society. Hindu Brahmins converted to Christianity were allowed to retain their Brahminical status and as a result, even their well practised hegemony over other classes.

The culture in Goa can be drawn on the lines of the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition. The Great Tradition is undoubtedly the Brahminical culture, belonging to both the Hindu and the Catholic, the former Indian and Maharashtrian oriented, while the latter, Western and Portugal-oriented. Needless to say, the Little Tradition repre-
sent by the lower classes, Konkani-speaking remained obscure and no effort was made to recognize it either. So much so that Goan culture as represented to outsiders is a Brahminical version and not the numerous festivals, events, dances, which form the synthesized discourse of the lesser-known marginal groups in Goa. Even the dances which are called the traditional dances, like the Deknni (a dance of the devadasi cult) are appropriated and one never gets to the actual cult, if one were to appropriate a variant. What is first needed is to understand a discourse in its own field. Newman calling for a reversal, has effectively argued for a re-evaluation of the Goan society from the standpoint of the Little Tradition. Giving sufficient justification for this demand, he cites that the majority of Goans are not Brahmins. "They are Kshatriyas (called Charddo in Goa) and Shudra. Among the Shudras, the most prominent are an agricultural group known either as Kunbi or Gavda". The Shudras share a common culture and a socio-economic condition. Their livelihood is based on agriculture, fishing and liquor-distilling. Newman gives statistical information from two villages, on the percentage of Shudras in Goa. In Carambolim, he says, according to the 1971 Census, there are 3,639 inhabitants. Three years later the Gavdas in the same village are described in a Master's thesis as numbering 3,200 or 87 per cent. In the Socio-Economic Survey of Verna, a village survey monograph published as part of the 1971 Census of India, there is a very useful Table showing that Verna was 95 per cent Catholic. Among the Catholics, 42 per cent were Gavdas, 48 per cent other Shudras, and only 9 per
cent Brahmin. (see Newman, 1981)

This is sufficient evidence to state that the lower classes form the solid base of Goan regional culture, untapped for a long time. The salient features of these classes, which differentiate them from the upper classes are – (1) A shared culture of Hindus, Christians or even Muslims, stressing on a common identity. (2) A deep-rooted faith in myths and stories that further emphasize the shared culture. (3) A common language, Konkani, notwithstanding the numerous dialects.

Gavadas: The Construction of an Identity: Traditions cannot be frozen in time. Far from it as Thapar (1994) states, it may well turn out to be, on closer examination, “our contemporary requirements fashioned by the way we wish to interpret our past”. No tradition can survive unchanged in a land that always remained torn between people of different faiths, lifestyles, languages or occupations. Traditions, as Thapar, says are not self-created: “they are consciously chosen and the choice from the past is enormous. We tend therefore to choose that which suits our present needs. The choice has its own logic and we are, perhaps not aware of the directions such choices may take”. (ibid)

Tracing the history of this tribe, Haladi (1988) states that the Gavadas were the first settlers in Goa. The Gazeteer of the erstwhile Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu (1979) reports that the Gavadas belong to the Astroid race and are believed to have migrated from South East Asia to Assam, Orissa, Bengal, Kerala, Malabar, and Goa. Though the time of their migration to Goa is uncertain, it is certain that the Gavadas were the first to settle in Goa.
CHAPTER 3. GOAN CULTURAL NARRATIVES

even before the Aryans and Dravidians. The Gazateer also reports that the Gawadas were responsible for introducing crops such as rice, coconut, arecanut, plantains, black pepper, etc. into this region.

Religion in Goa: Religion in Goa, particularly Christianity, has always displayed a local fervour with mixed symbolisms of Hinduism, Christianity and even Muslim. Even before Christianity the die had been cast in favour of a synthesis as Goa had reeled under a series of rulers, starting with the Vijayanagar Empire, ruled by the Kadamba dynasty. Adil Shah took over later and was followed by the Portuguese who ruled for 500 years. The Portuguese came with a world-view that religion (in their case Christianity) was the dominant force and politics, kinship and economics all found their place in relation to it. Their first desire was to attack the Muslims, who were historically their arch religious enemies. Secondly, their contact with the Hindus who had been inhabiting this region was initially a confused one. They mistook temples for churches and Hindu goddesses for variations of the Virgin Mary. The entire process of converting the Hindus, who were not enemies in the sense the Muslims were, required a strategic interaction with them. Even if they did eventually resort to extremely harsh tactics of conversion, initially, later they sought allies.

The attempts were to set apart a Catholic community on whose patronage the Hindus would depend. Remuneration posts and offices were offered as incentives. When this pace proved to be slow, in 1548, the conversions underwent draconian proportions and entire villages were taken over, temples destroyed and a cross implanted in the places
of original worship. It was around this time that several Hindus ran away from Goa to neighbouring states of Karnataka and Maharashtra, taking their idols with them, which were later brought back and reinstalled. Kale (1986) points out that “during the first three centuries of colonial rule, both the Portuguese administrators through enactment of a series of harsh measures and promulgation of forals, and the Catholic church through the Holy office (Inquisition) tried to drive out all Hindu population from the three districts of ‘Velhas Conquistas’ (Old Conquests). When this was found to be impracticable, they embarked upon a policy of setting up two completely segregated societies in Goa - the Hindus and the Christians”.

The Gawadas, the original settlers among them, are said to have been neither Hindus nor Christians. After the invasion by the Aryans, they are supposed to have adopted Hinduism as their religion, but continued their own form of worship and religious rituals and never really adopted idol worship. During the Portuguese regime in Goa, some of them, as the Gazateer claims, were forcibly converted to Christianity in the 17th century. Subsequently, in 1928, some of them were reconverted to Hinduism by a religious leader called Masurker Maharaj. These reconvertees, not accepted by either the Hindus or the Christians, maintain a separate identity and are called Nav-Hindu Gawadas. Religion in the form of idol worship or institutionalised worship was previously unknown to the Gawadas. The shift to a new form of religion was thus a gradual process and not a sudden one, because a shared ritual is always a local law, and to transgress it or even
to appropriate, requires a consent, a collaboration and a willingness to accept even the liabilities that accompany it.

We have attempted to attribute utmost importance to the notion of Identity and give religion a secondary importance because ultimately the socio-economic benefits matter more than which religion one belongs to, as long as there exists some form of symbolic worship. This we shall corroborate in a later section while discussing the Gawadas, who associate religion with socio-economic benefits and shift their religious conformity according to their hopes. Pearson (1987) investigating on what conversion meant and what exactly was the impact on Christianity, starts at the top, where he expects to find the greatest impact and 'purity': the seminary of St. Paul set up in 1541 to train local clergy. Although he says at first sight it appears to be an institution pointing to major social change, closer examination shows this to be not completely the case: the trainees become only secular, not regular priests, and in any case, the great majority of them were converted Brahmins. These men thus changed from being Hindu priests to being Catholic priests: their status positions remained constant. Similarly, from 1541 much land whose revenue had supported temples was used for financing Christian institutions and the Orders. But the sums involved were small and the point in any case is surely that these lands continued to finance religious activities. For their cultivators the move from Hindu to Christian can have made little difference.

The rulers could not exercise much control over the forms of reli-
gious worship as the lower classes lived in geographically remote areas. Initially, there were attempts to control the heterogeneous nature of worship where symbols of Hinduism and Christianity (even Muslim) co-existed, and make it a far more monolithic form of warship. But this did not work and people hold on to their 'essential' impulses as Kale (1986) describes them, while incorporating 'epochalist' elements (which basically referred to the Catholic religion and culture). While Kale's division (on the lines of Geertz's argument) stands perfectly valid as a way of understanding the kind of synthesis that took place, a culture requires an understanding as a 'process' also. While the 'essential' impulses, as older, well-formed structures provide a springboard like effect, with the help of which they make sense of the 'epochalist', it is a form of intertextuality. The 'essentialist' impulses are older 'intersubjective' spaces and it is through these that new intersubjective thresholds come about.

Kale argues that Goans have held on to the 'essentialist' impulses even in the post-Independence era where new cultural forms like the Tiatr have evolved out of older theatrical forms like Khel and Zagor. We argue, that cultural texts reflect social changes and further are themselves junctures of political action. While forms like Tiatr are (according to practitioners) 'refined' versions of indigenous theatrical forms like the Zagor it is proposed that, these traditional forms are important carriers of the society's belief system and any change that people desire. Everything has a significance, and even the so-called 'vulgarity' has a role to perform.
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But more important is the system internal to traditional cultural forms. It is in this system that lies the clues to a society’s behavioural pattern adhering to self-perpetuating laws. The strictness of the structure is such that it provides no possibility of a commentary on itself and if there is any such hint, then the whole ritual collapses in favour of a new form, like the Tiatr. But, however much the Tiatrists would like to believe that they are different from the traditional forms, they share a common discourse which rests on similar symbols and the difference lies at the level of narration. This has been excellently brought out in Kale’s analysis. What we are putting forth is an observation of the discourse itself, whose path is inevitable linked to the socio-political changes.

Forms like the Tiatr cannot be representatives of a common Goan discourse. One has to look at all forms for their individual motivations. The Tiatr for example represents the sentiments of upwardly mobile middle-class in Goa and the upper classes do not necessarily share the revelry of these forms. Essentially, then, discourse speaks reflectively. The lower classes are mobile, in the present context, with changing socio-economic conditions in Goa. With these changes taking place, the Gawadas are finding it increasingly difficult to relate to older forms and feel the need for newer and far more self-critical narratives. The role of literacy and consequently the written language cannot be undermined. For language plays a crucial role in the construction of an identity. We would stress on this point further by stating that the Gawadas have found a space to ‘write’ about them-
selves, as writing has distanced them in time and space. And it is only this distance which can give them the 'transgression' if they desire it.

The conversion to a Nav-Hindu status is an important indicator of changing life scripts. In an older era when the first conversion took place, the appropriations helped people to cope with the surrounding atmosphere. The situation of confrontation led to a co-operation among the lower classes. Later, in an attempt to make their presence felt they tried to mould themselves in the commonly held religious discourse. While these attempts, of appropriating discourse through myths and legends can be a cause for celebration, one must also be aware of the fact that their subjectivities are being constituted by the narrative life scripts, that they adhere towards, and in the process have not really improved their own status in an anthropological sense. This kind of awareness was witnessed in a tiny village Naveshim, which is situated on the seashore of the Tiswadi taluka of the Bardez district in Goa. The village consists of the Gawada population and these Gawadas share a similar history with the rest of their brethren. They are, however, today the Nav-Hindu Gawadas, who practise certain Christian rituals because it gives them a cultural identity and also a fear of the dyonchar (Devil) who might harm them, and so the rituals are assurances of a divine protection. The village, by and large, has given up the Christian life and is trying to adapt itself to Hindu religious festivals like the Ganesh-Chaturthi, or Diwali. This is a far cry from their original status as nature worshippers. On public ritual days like Zagor there is a religious synthesis and the vil-
lagers pray to the Christian saints, the tribal deities, as well as their new Hindu gods. While the reason given is for a cultural identity sake, it is also a reflection of the transitory nature of their identity. They are unsure about their status and hence continue to perform a 'known' form of ritual.

The Zagor in Naveshim reflects the divisions amongst the villagers. Those who believe in the older form and those who don't. Those who believe are part of existing symbolic redundancy achieved by the performance style of symbolic discourses all over Goa as we shall see in a later section. Those who don't believe see alternative ways of life and this is reflected in their active participation in the comic mose of the ritual. In this sense, we are extending Turner's notion of 'reflexivity', on the lines of Kapferer's (1984:179) argument, stating that the ritual shifts between reflexive and non-reflexive modes of signification. The inherent multivocality of the symbol which Turner talks about, and which is in keeping with the general trend in linguistic theory (where the semantic multivocality is an inherent property of the sign), is possible only if the audience who are active participants in the event, whose standpoints in the structuring of the ritual enable this seeing.

However, this is only a partial account of the successful performance. The role of the audience is far more than that. It is a 'conscious collaboration' and a putting oneself in another's shoes. We ally to Mead's theory of the self and to that of others who share analytical concerns similar to that of Mead. Individuals and groups in nearly all action situations are at one and the same time actors in particular
roles and audiences to them. Individuals have a Self and an awareness and consciousness of it; in other words, they reflect upon it if they take the attitude of the Other and respond in accordance with a set of social and cultural typifications, what Mead called the "generalized other". Fundamental to participation in everyday social life, to communication and meaning is the act of reflexivity, whereby individuals can engage in a conversation with Self and with the Other. The Self is constituted out of the interaction between the I and the Me and the latter articulating the I with the Other. The Me is to a large extent emergent from the interaction of the I with the Other and in turn comes to mediate this relation. It is through the Me that the individual becomes an audience to himself. A Self can be negated or transcended, transcendence here being a special form of negation. In both instances, the individual fails to objectify a Me, either as a result of the loss of distance between the I or by a loss of distance between the Me and the Other. The Me becomes identified with the Other so that the individuality of the I is lost entirely. Examples of these processes result in their extreme manifestation in the negation or transcendence of Self and are a variety of the mutually induced trance (Mead, 1934).

'Complicity' as Kapur(1992) says, involves both partial and faulty vision. We have to delineate, under the circumstances the public spaces and the private spaces (the normal day-to-day life) on the ground that people differentiate among themselves, and the public events attempt to bring the contradictions to the fore. Essentially,
the argument is, that differences are maintained and while people of different religious affiliations will take part in each other’s celebrations for a common purpose, they will not participate in other sect’s liturgies or rituals when these conflict with the articles or practices of faith in their own sectarian communities. A shift in context will, in other words lead to a re-definition of Identity; what is interpreted in a space read as ‘public’ as national and inclusive will be seen as religious and exclusive when participants are put into subject positions (Althusser, 1971) emphasizing their identities as members of a specific religious community.

The Nav-Hindu Gawadas: A Shift from Orality to Literacy: The Gawadas by changing their status, to being part of the Hindu world have not only undergone religious change, but by educating themselves in institutions, have shifted from orality to literacy. This also means that the earlier intersubjective communication had given rise to new spaces and facilitates possibilities of individual interpolations. But first, on the implications of the spoken discourse. One of the essential differences between spoken and written language, states Jakobson (1985) is that, the former is purely temporal in character whereas the latter connects time and space. Speech is transmitted at a rapid rate and demands that the auditor grasp a considerable part, if not all of the elements that are needed for comprehension of the utterance. While the sounds that we hear disappear when we read, we usually have immobile letters before us and the time of the written flow of words is reversible. We can read, re-read, and what is more, we can
be ahead of an event. Anticipation which is subjective in the listener, becomes objective in the reader, who can read the end of a letter or novel before reading the earlier parts" (1985).

Communication is intersubjective which is a distinctive feature of speech. It exists because speech is a ‘dialogue’ or as Heidegger would say, "we people are a dialogue". Dialogue, explains Jakobson means, the speaking with each other about something. In the course of this, the speaking with each other mediates the coming together. Language according to Jakobson - "both code and message, is a system of signs, a sign being an intrinsic and insoluble combination of a perceptible signans and an interpretable signatum. Some linguistic signs occur both in the code and in the messages. In fact, given this definition of sign, the message itself is a system of systems of signs and at the same time a sign (of some complexity) with both a signans and signatum. The act of verbal communication, is in effect, an exchange of signs between speaker and addressee" (Jakobson, 1985). Jakobson's signs form a part-whole hierarchy from the ultimate units (the distinctive features) to the largest units (discourses). He divided them into three types of words - which are codified such as prefabricated wholes; discourses - which are not codified as such, yet the structures and possibilities of their formation are provided by the code. These are signs which occur in, or as messages. They are codified as a general matrix or pattern of combination. On these lines, we will look at prefabricated or ritualised discourse as the code for a community's experience. The common code between the speaker and the addressee
enables the interpretation of even a new intersubjective sign.

The oral text in the form of ritualized discourse, is a combination of oral hermeneutics and individual compositional flexibility, dependent on the time, place and audience. Clearly then, selection is the basic criterion to orient the text to the needs of the society even if various texts are about the same subject. On a purely formal level, the text is organised on a strict grammatical pattern and if it is poetic, then on a strict rhyming, repetitive style which renders the text easily to memorisation, easy recall. In the Goan context, the 'langue' was a result of socio-historical influences on the Konkani language. But first, let us explore the notion of 'langue'.

The Coded Texts: 'Langue': Going by the Structuralist notion of 'equivalence', it is found most effectively in the metaphoric forms like poetry. Oral poetry in particular is the synthesis of a meter beating time in regular periods. The 'langue', is a collection of habitual and redundant phases and learned linguistic patterns that function almost automatically in verse, whether they were orally composed or are habitual responses. But all of this is certainly not consciously perceived by either poet or audience. Because of the habitual orality of the language, it seems to have communicated on a level below that of conscious attention - quite unlike the close conscious attention that must be paid to literary language.

In one of Jakobson's (1985) illuminating studies on verbal patterning in poetry, particularly the kind available in non-literate atmospheres, he finds the verbal structure heavily loaded and highly
efficient despite its habitual freedom from any control of abstract reasoning. Even such compulsory constituents as the number of syllables in a syllabic line, the constant position of the break or the regular distribution of prosodic features are not adduced and recognised per se by a carrier of oral tradition. When he is faced with two versions of a line, one of which disregards the metrical standard, this narrator or listener may qualify the deviating variant as less suitable or totally unacceptable, but he usually shows no capacity for defining the crux of a given deviation. Examples which display the compositional organization in oral narratives are the following:- These examples have been taken from the work done by on the rhythmic patterning in oral poetry in Goa. The model we follow in order to arrive at a pattern is that of sanskrit meter, which forms a stylistic pattern not on the basis of syllables, but on the basis of lengthening and shortening of vowels. The work which we use for this purpose is Kale’s, ‘A Higher Sanskrit Grammar’. We begin with 1. the voles, which literally means oars 1. They are sung by the fishermen at sea to the rhythmic movement of the oars of their boats. These are short stanzas of two or three lines, composed in such a deft manner as can be sung with proper accompaniment to the strokes of the oars.

varsun lagla paus bale \hspace{1cm} \text{From above the rains fall, O Maiden!}
khalte vaha loudha ga \hspace{1cm} \text{The current runs on earth below}
panyane bhijla kensamabha \hspace{1cm} \text{How it has met, O!}

1These examples have been taken from analysis of some folk songs in Goa (by
tuja reshim gonda ga

The silken tassel in your hair.

Malyant fulolyat mogri re

Jasmine petals blow in the garden,
tancho parimal jace re

Their fragrance is scattered, O!
varyane sarya nagri re

All over the village by the running wind
bhulalya tyala nari re

Women are enraptured by that fragrance, O!

Another instance of a very deft blend of strict poetic structure and a theme is in this song where the physical qualities of some vegetables has been compared with the evil qualities of humans.

vainghan login zata munn

Since the brinjal was getting married
missanghan tambden kelam tondd

the chillies’ face has turned red
poddonlean vorzem kelam sondd

the snake gourd has wrinkled his nose
bobran ghetlam mone ponn

And the pumpkin has fallen silent.

adivane deva ga bappa santavanta The first prayers to Father, Saint,Eternal God
bappa ani putra ga ispirita santa Father and son O (are) spirit, saint
tiguya meluna ga eka santavanta The three together are one saint
krupa diga bappa adira chandara Grant us mercy O first moon
khurusa tuka namana naman Holy Cross, to you my prayers

This stanza of five lines has a metrical structure of thirteen matras
in a pada, in the first few lines and a change in the last two lines when in the fourth line the particle 'O' is dropped, leaving twelve matras to a pada and in line four, then there are ten matras to a pada, indicating a close of the first stanza. This pattern is followed in most of the stanzas of the invocation as we shall see now.

namana majhe ga adi samesta  Prayers mine, O eternal, all-pervasive
Jeju kristache ga baray bagata  Jesus Christ has twelve devotees, O!
baraya bagata ga bagevanta  The twelve devotees are blessed, O!
Nijaputra balga mukhi dharila  (He) held the child to (his) mouth, O!
Khurusa tuka namana naman  Holy Cross, to you, prayers - prayers.

The metre in this stanza is of 11 matras to a pada, in the first three lines and 12 matras to a pada in the 4th. line, ending with the usual 10 matras to a pada.

namana majhe ga nama sunvanta  Prayers mine, O eternal, all-pervasive
jejukristache ga charani lagata  (I) fall at Jesus Christ's feet
charani lagata ga bagevanta  (Those who) fall at his feet are blessed
khurusa tuka namana naman  Holy Cross, to You, my prayers!
Namana mhojhe ga mhojhyagurukayMy prayers to my Guru
tane dharila ga sarwayancho mula  He held everybody's roots, O!
tane shkayila ga boro avatara  He taught good morals, O!
tajo upakara ga dev bapalo  God's, father's, favours, O!
khurusa tuka namana naman  Holy Cross, to You, my prayers!
These lines from the text of the Zagor can be called part of a ‘stock formula’. Khedekar (1994, unpublished Manuscript) has documented similar lines in other texts as well which are used in ritual invocations. In case of a different context, the names of the deities are changed, but the meter, the rhyming pattern and the stock phrases remain the same. Such repetitions are part of a formulaic system as investigated by Parry and Lord (1954), Finnegan (1977), Ben-Amos (1981) and not to forget Jakobson himself. The Redundancy in language achieved by parallelism and repetition is said to provide greater efficiency in the listener’s response, because highly probable phenomenon are immediately and easily recognised while less probable phenomena requires some time to assimilate. According to Wittig (1978) in addition to carrying a minimal amount of narrative information the language carries at least one other level of social meaning as well. That is, she says, it carries the additional messages which are encoded within the semiology of social gestures, the language of social ritual.

*Konkani: The language of the masses* The lower classes, particularly the Kunbi-Gawadas in Goa, have always been mono-lingual communicating in Konkani unlike the other literate classes who have had the advantage of bi-lingual and multi-lingual proficiency. Konkani itself with its innumerable dialects has faced difficulties in being able to standardize itself. The influence of language from neighbouring states and the added entry of Portuguese words due to religious affinities with Christianity has added to the standardizing difficulties in standardization. The fate of konkani has been controlled by the series
of influences the State underwent under different rulers. The early colonization is ascribed to aboriginal tribes (Gaudes, Karvis, Kunbis and Mahars) also called the Desajas (literally meaning 'indigenous' or country-born) who are said to come from the Southern region of Kanada and finding it unoccupied and with a fertile soil, began to cultivate. In the course of time, agriculture improved, the country grew rich, and trade became developed, which attracted the notice of a powerful prince, who descended from the Ghats and conquered this population, bringing in high-class Hindus. The identity of the Prince is not known, nor the time of entry of the Hindus. The Portuguese chroniclers have recorded these probable facts (Da Cunha, 1991).

When the Portuguese arrived, the prevailing Konkani was already under the influence of Marathi, kannada, Sanskrit, etc. They had to confront the difficult task of learning this language, during the missionary zeal. This led to the rise of dialects, the users of which were unaware of the grammatical changes Konkani was undergoing due to the influencing language. Gerson da Cunha (1991; 29) illustrates on the early form of Konkani which was interpreted by the Portuguese by giving the example of Thomas Stephens, a priest (who yielded considerable respect) who gives the following declension of the noun ritu, 'Custom':-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom. Ritu</td>
<td>Nom. Ritu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. Ritu</td>
<td>Gen. Ritu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Dat. Ritu  Dat. Ritu
Acc. Ritu  Acc. Ritu
Voc. Ritu  Voc. Ritu
Abl. Ritu  Abl. Ritu

The influence of the case system of the Latin and Romance languages shows very clearly here. The declension ought to be:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>PLURAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ritu</td>
<td>Riti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituecho,chi,chem</td>
<td>Riticho,chi,chem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituku</td>
<td>Ritiku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritu or Rituku</td>
<td>Riti or Ritiku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritu</td>
<td>Riti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritun, Ritur</td>
<td>Ritin, Ritir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In another example, DaCunha(1991:21) illustrates the inflection rule of Konkani which was imposed upon borrowed Portuguese words in the lyrics of the Mando, which is a popular country dance. The Portuguese words are underlined -

*Vell Zallo bencavancho*  It is the time of benedictions
*Bitor abalo zala maramcho*  Inside are concerned old relations
*Estilo zicounchae etai tuea*  Who come to teach you
*amcha goracho*  Our home style
The Nominative becomes Genetive in Konkani with the addition of the morpheme 'Cho'. The Portuguese nouns have been subjected to similar grammatical rules in the text.

During the time of compositions of the Christian Puranas on the lines of the Hindu Puranas by missionaries like Thomas Stephens the status of Konkani was in consideration. Some even considered it to be a development of one of the Prakrits or common colloquial speech of ancient India, descended from Sanskrit. These Christian Puranas reports DaCunha were mostly composed in the Ovi metre, a particular measure of four lines, in which stanzas of Prakrit verses, such as the airs of Muktesvar and the Duyanesvari, a paraphrase in Marathi, of the Bhagavad Gita by Dnyanoba, are written. The Ovi metre is a popular form of the poetic discourse among the lower classes of the Roman Catholics in the Konkan. An illustration of this is given by DaCunha (ibid:31):

- **Qhuda truna vorzuni** Condemning hunger and thirst
- **Sito usno sahun** Breaking heat and cold
- **Deho danddo coruni** Striking the body
- **Hota Nitco** He was always
- **Swamiache bobbhocht vanchoni** Besides the love of the Lord
- **Dugi vassona nahi moni** Had no other thought in mind
- **Dheani moni ontocorim** Neither perception nor consciousness
CHAPTER 3. GOAN CULTURAL NARRATIVES

This Purana is a selection from the Bible, or rather an abridgement of the New Testament, accompanied by explanatory remarks on the subject of the incarnation, Passion and Resurrection of Christ, the Saviour.

In this situation marked by chaos as far as the linguistic status, of Konkani is concerned, a very interesting set of codes arose among communities. The language of the day-to-day conversation was different from the high-flown, ritualized language of the religious discourse which was an interesting mix of Sanskrit, Prakrit, Latin and Roman apart from the local Konkani. This ritual 'langue' became a new code, whose main purpose was to give a religious and social message. Most of the use of words in the 'langue' escaped semantic comprehension but they continued to use it as carriers of religious messages. But this 'langue' is important to the community precisely because it has a narrative support. It is the cause for the poetic discourse and even if the narrative itself is not highlighted as in most story-telling sessions, the existence of such a background discourse cannot be ignored.

We now take up a reading into what we call the 'essential' narratives of Goa and in particular the village Naveshim. Similarity in the ritual and festive purposes in most purposes in most parts of Goa makes one realise that there is a governing narrative form which most communities appropriate in an effort to construct a religious
identity for themselves. The narrative lifescript legitimizes such religious preoccupations and the community does not require any further legitimacy. Moreover, it is the very property of a narrative to establish identifiable features, which particularly in the context of an oral tradition marks communication. It provides them with structured behaviour. Every narration is someone's model of how to behave: of the kinds of things to say to ourselves and to each other, of what comes first, what comes last, what doesn't matter, and what shouldn't be said or thought at all, at least not in public (Nash. Cited in Ashley 1989).

Religious discourse as narrative: To illustrate narrative culture in Goa we will at the outset describe some of the religious and cultural events:- Zagor: Zagor (the word is borrowed from Jagar a Hindu performance genre in Goa) was performed at the time of certain village feasts and church festivals sponsored by the village community as a whole. The expenses for these performances came from the common village funds. The audience and the performers of 'Zagor' were co-celebrants and not buyers and sellers or patrons and beneficiaries. (Among the Hindus there are two distinct kinds of Jagar performance. Perani Jagar is a ritual performance of the Perni community and Gawada Jagar which is performed by the members of the aboriginal Gawada tribe: ) The word Jagar is itself revived from Sanskrit and refers to night long performance, a vigil (Kale, ibid.). Zagors are performed by Hindus, Christians, and Nav- Hindus in various parts of Goa.
The structure of the Zagor revolves around two purposes: (1) A religious invocation of the Rakhno (protector) deity among other things. (2) Entertainment through the dramatic display of anti-structural acts (like wife kicking husbands, women having affairs while their husbands are away, children singing songs of wish-fulfillment - them becoming doctors, etc.). This is called in general anthropological thought, as a means of resolving societal tensions which otherwise seem formidable pressures. It is an all-night performance, performed in the months of May-June.

St. Juan:- This is an event which stands witness to the religious submission which Goans from the lower classes experience. It requires a self-sacrificing motivation to jump into water in the early days of the monsoon season. Many a time casualties have been reported, but the festivities continue to be performed undeterred, with the chants - Viva-Viva St. Juan! Most Goan performances - with the Fire (God) as witness, to the beat of the ghumot and other indigenous instruments. There are induced by both the musical beat and the feni which they consume, the event begins to gain momentum. It is to the continuous beat of the instruments, the singing, and the enthusiastic shouting by the rest of the participants, that the jumping in the well takes place. One after the other, people jump into, either the river or the well and become one with the formidable force of nature. Why do people do it? Despite the risks involved this ritual is a social sanction. There is a myth behind it. It goes like this - in a tiny village there once lived a couple - Elizabeth and Jakrish. They work very hard and
lived happily. But they were unhappy that they did not have a child. One morning Jakrish went to the church and prayed, telling God his grievances. God is pleased with him and after a few days a son is born to them who is named Juan. Time passes and Juan grows big. He wins everyone's heart by his friendly and sweet nature. He constantly strives to work for people's welfare. He acquires divine powers by adorning ascetism in the jungle. The king of the township is to get married. But the bride-to-be puts up a condition that she will give her consent only if the king offers her Juan's head as a gift. The king is confused. As soon as Juan hears of this demand, he goes to the king and offers his head as a sacrifice, and it is given to the queen as a gift.

The festivities of St. Juan are celebrated on 21st. June, his birthday with intense fervour. (See Khedekar, 1980).

We have given these two events to illustrate the way discourses are structured. In the first example of Zagor it is the model (as we shall see later) which is projected and not the narrative. The narrative life-script here makes it necessity, an obligation to perform the Zagor or eventually incur the divine wrath. In the second, St. Juan, the ritual dramatizes the story thus giving it more importance. People are tellers of stories and makers of models, and from recognizing this we can know better what they do. There seem to be two ways of doing things, by way of metaphor or by way of a story, through something like a poem or through something like a novel. Supposing we were to ask the participants of these events, why are the Zagors, or St. Juan
festivities performed as they are, they have two possibilities.

Either they can call on a model - a metaphor of rationality inside Goan society which explains that locating these events contextually maximizes the functioning of the society particularly if it places utmost importance to life-cycle rituals. Or they can tell a story, of how Goans without these festivities would fail to be part of the identity which is constructed around religious symbols. If they are lucky with the former, the modelling, they will discover some soluble differential equations. If they are lucky with the latter they will discover some maladapted aspects of Goan society, showing that the traditional constructs of identity are breaking up.

It has been noticed before that the two ways explain each other. If the participant chooses to offer his metaphor first, it will be his society involved in creating and performing Zagors and St. Juan according to a traditional system. If they are asked why do they do this? the answer will be with the help of a story: The reason why these festivities must take place is that, if they don't, there would be no unity, and the Gods will get angry. The story answers a model.

But likewise, a model answers a story. If they give the story first, and is asked why, the answer will be with the help of a metaphor: the reason why there would not be a unity, or God's would get angry, is because we don't follow the religious model, that's why.

Perhaps there is something to treating the cultural texts in Goan society particularly those of the marginal groups as stories. It would give us a place to look in from outside. Narration, according to Ly-
otard (1979) is the quintessential form of customary knowledge in more ways than one. By 'knowledge' he means not just a set of denotative statements, but far from it. It includes according to him, notions of "know-how", "knowing how to live", "how to listen", etc. "Knowledge coincides with an extensive array of competence building measures and is the only form embodied in a subject constituted by the various areas of competence composing it. Calling attention to the relation between the kind of knowledge and custom, he says that a good prescriptive or evaluative utterance, 'a good' performance are all judged to be 'good' because they all conform to the relevant criteria (of justice, beauty, truth and efficiency respectively) adapted in the social circle. The consensus that permits such knowledge to be circumscribed and makes it possible to distinguish one who knows from one who doesn't (the foreigner, the child) is what constitutes the culture of a people.

In Lyotard's conception, the narrative allows the society to define its criteria of competence and also to evaluate according to those criteria. What is performed or can be performed within it, like the successes or failure greeting the hero's undertakings. These successes or failures bestow legitimacy upon social institutions (the function of myths) or represent positive or negative models (the successful and unsuccessful hero) of integration into established institutions (legends and tales).

Elaborating further on the properties of narrative Lyotard refers to the pragmatics of narrative which is intrinsic to it. The pragmatic
rule which cannot be universalised stands more as an example of traditional knowledge. "The narrative 'posts' (sender, addressee, hero) are so organised that the right to occupy the post of sender receives the following double grounding. It is based upon the fact of having occupied the post of addressee and of having been recounted oneself, by virtue of the name one bears, by a previous narrative - in other words having been positioned as the diegetic reference of other narrative events". The knowledge transmitted by these narratives, Lyotard states, is in no way limited to the functions of enunciation; it determines in a single stroke what one must say in order to be heard, what one must listen to in order to speak and what role one must play (on the scene of diegetic reality) to be the object of a narrative.

These pragmatic rules are said to constitute the social bond. The speaker and the listener, as well as the third party referred to perform the speech acts. Calling this a condensed knowledge in comparison with developed knowledge he illustrates that a narrative tradition is also the tradition of the criterion defining a three-fold competence - 'know-how', 'knowing how to speak', and 'knowing how to hear' - through which the community's relationship to itself and its environment is played out.

The Narrative Themes of Self-Sacrifice and divine grace: Self-sacrifice, like St. Juan. described earlier, is one of the dominant narrative themes. The umbrella festival at Cuncolim and Fatorpa, Goa, for example, celebrates the bravery of the Kshatriya clan which protected the idol of Shanta Durga during the Inquisition. The Kshatriyas are
the main celebrants of this festival. This festival is related to the myth of the Seven Sisters whose temples were spread in various parts of Goa. These Sisters are seven mother goddesses and are considered to be important pilgrimage centres for Goans. In Goa, Shanta Durga is seen as an all powerful mother who heals from all kinds of suffering. Legend has it, that the Portuguese converted some of these Seven Sisters to Catholicism, to being the Churches of Our Lady of Cures at Cansaulim and Our Lady of the Miracles at Mapusa. The others remained Hindu. Among these is the Shanta Durga temple at Fatorpa.

During the Inquisition in 1570s the warriors of Shanta Durga, the Mahajan of the temple, the twelve Kshatriya clans took the image of Shanta Durga to Fatorpa from its original dwelling in Cuncolim to protect it from being destroyed. In an open rebellion in 1583 the slain bodies of Hindus and Jesuits were thrown into a well which later became a symbol of martyrdom. Despite every effort by the Portuguese to abolish every possible right of the Hindus (land-owning, religion) and to maintain a segregated society, the Catholics continued to participate in Hindu festivals which irked the Portuguese no less. Newman reports that a whole culture of myth making helped to overcome and justify their growing participation particularly in the festivities of the Mother Goddess, Shanta Durga.

On the level of symbolic discourse, the two themes of sacrifice and divine grace was carried forward from the legend of the Kshatriya clan. The Mother Goddess appeared in dreams and demanded a sacrifice
of any object (furniture, church-bell, etc.) which signified a Christian world. Drawing parallels with the legend the dreams constituted the subjects governed by these two universals. This was in later years, particularly the case with the Kunbi-Gawadas who participated in the festivals too. Can one attempt to call the 'enunciated' discourse a 'disguise' behind which the repressed (enunciation) sentiments lie? The Catholics who were forbidden from taking part in the Hindu rituals thus created narratives which constituted their subjectivities. "The symbolic order cannot be understood as constituted by man, but as that which constitutes" (Rector, 1984). The Christian Gawadas who were not exactly welcomed with open arms by the Kshatriya clan created further narratives when they spoke of having 'dreams' and 'visions' (See Newman, 1990, 1992) in which Shanta Durga appeared asking them to sacrifice something in order to be her worshipper.

In another instance of Divine Grace a community of Gawadas in the village Barad is given special privileges as priests in the local temple for three days, as they are supposed to have the Zagrut devosponn (divine revelation) with them. In normal life these Gawadas belong to the servile class, but on the day of the public ritual called Mell their lower status is subverted. The myth behind this Zagrut devesponn is that a casket which was flowing in the river could not be lifted by members of any other class except the Gawadas. The casket contained the body of a Muslim Pir. Thinking this to be a divine intervention,

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2For details, see Gomes(1993), Paper presented at a seminar on Oral History, Goa University
great significance was attached to this incident and the Gawadas were considered to be the chosen ones.

All these narratives have something inherently common in them - a structure. These symbolic discourses, as stated earlier constitute the subjectivities - 'Man is spoken about'. Thus, we notice signifying markers - 'Zagrut devosponn', 'Perni Zagor', 'Warriors of Shanta Durga', etc. The performers are cloaked in an Identity which is given to them externally. They are not the Gawadas, or the Kunbis, or the Kshatriyas. They are so because of the markers. This only further reinforces our first remark about the story as a life-script. If they didn't possess these status markers, they are mere Gawadas or Kunbis.

"In order to ascertain their real opinions, I ought to take cognizance of what they practised rather than of what they said not only because, in the corruption of manners, there are few disposed to speak exactly as they believe, for as the act of mind by which a thing is believed is different from that by which we know we believe it, the one act is often found without the other." (Descartes, 'Discourse on Method', III)

Every production comes from a certain silence, a matter which it endows with form, a ground on which it traces a figure. Hence, as Macharey observes, what is explicit is not self-sufficient: it is necessarily accompanied by a certain absence without which it would not exist. For, in order to say something, there are other things which must not be said. Freud, says Macharey, relegated this absence of certain words to a new place which he was first to explore, and which
he paradoxically named: the unconscious.

It is often stated that there is something inherently soothing in a Narrative. It helps to make sense of an experience. And this ought to do with the structuring of the Narrative itself. It takes the addressee to a world of innumerable choices so that if the listener wants, he can steer unwanted details out of the text. Linking the concept of absence to this property in a Narrative, we say that it promotes it and displaces details in order to render it a desirable form.

In Goa, socio-economic benefits were closely linked to religion during the Portuguese rule. Further, as stated in an earlier section the Portuguese for various reasons favoured the upper-classes and offered them prominent positions in the offices. This policy of the Portuguese was believed to be uniform and most converts expected good remuneration for their having adopted the catholic religion and practice. Why this policy did not benefit the lower classes to the extent it helped the others is not our concern, but the fact that this did give rise to or rather did not change the socio-economic status of the marginal groups is a historical fact we will rely upon in order to prove the hypothesis about the nature of the discourse of the marginal groups.

Religious symbols in Goa, like any other society where religion is the central link, were always potentially contestable spaces. The Goan migrants to the Gulf and other African and European countries, in a post-independence era used their improved socio-economic positions to 'buy' back land and as a result some amount of social standing even if they did not belong to the upper-classes. This bettered lot
even managed to gain entry into the religious sanctoriums and thus were able to contest the status accorded to them earlier. But the tribal groups in Goa, who due to their physical and mental distance from the rest of the mobile society, continued to lead a comparatively obscure existence. When the awareness among these groups increased, the process of reassimilation into the Goan society began and this led to a whole new culture which was characterized by the kind of Narrative culture we will discuss now.

We will attempt to understand the structure of the narratives in keeping with the changing religious and social status of the tribal groups also called the Kunbi-Gawadas, as mentioned earlier. Newman has accorded a religious synthesis to the culture of these groups. But as has been postulated, this synthesis depends upon how the communities choose to interpret the religion around them in a new context. In the past and to a certain extent in the present in many villages in Goa, Hindus and Christians are co-celebrants in the local festivals. There are two reasons for this phenomenon. One is, that it signifies the existing symbolic discourse and secondly, it could be interpreted as means of assimilating into existing religious culture to call attention to oneself as being part of the larger Goan identity. The centre of these narratives is well defined. A symbolic discourse, by its very nature, seeks a resolution. It always gets back to the centre (the cross, or shanta Durga for example). Everything revolves around this centre and hence the subjectivities are constituted, as mentioned earlier. All the narratives, whether they were dreams or visions (see Newman1919)
expound this belief in the symbol. The text, to a large extent signals determinate meanings.

What is highlighted here, is that, when a cultural discourse appears to absorb people from different backgrounds, it does not necessarily imply that, there actually exists an underlying, cohesive unity. The perception of the people, their desires, and also the fact that the narrative structure offers itself as a popular discourse constitute this apparent cohesion. There is no ready sum between the manifested discourse and the actual feelings of the people who are part of it. As Newman himself observes, Goans perceive ambivalent structures in cultural events (Hindu vs Christian), but finally opt for a cohesive culture. While the stability interpreted in the present, does portray a symbolic unity, the possibility of change cannot be denied (and there have been changes). The village, Naveshim, for example, is moving towards a new narrative. The new narrative talks of them being Hindus and rejecting the earlier, ambivalent discourse. The text, of their Zagor, which so far signified a peaceful co-existence for the Hindus and the Christians seems to signify a colonized phase of their lives and they want to change it to suit their present needs. There is a sudden desire to control their lives, acquire a new identity and uncover the past historically, and for once openly contest the treatment meted out to them because they belong to the tribal community.

Clearly then, there was something unspoken in the 'symbolic' discourse which they held on to, in the hope of being included in the Goan cultural discourse. The 'symbols' of unity are now being sub-
jected to a new awareness. The question is, how did the earlier system function and what was left unsaid? Their identities as Hindus or Christians or as both, depended upon the space in which this was to be stressed. The merger of the two identities essentially relied on a mythical system which helped them to come to terms with the existing life-situation. In some villages, as illustrated earlier in the chapter, the groups gained a new social status as a result of narrativizing the myths. The discourse which was common in large parts of Goa, was a 'popular' form. Popular literature is categorical, in Gramsci's use of the term (non-historical and non-dialectical) and in fact, is structured around a series of categories which are adduced as timeless and universal. It is a mode of communication dominated by 'feeling', 'personal experience' and immediate empirical perception. The suppressions and absences are part of the social function of this kind of text. It is typical of common sense thinking. In dealing with common sense Gramsci was concerned with ideology at its lower levels (levels which do not simply repeat the dominant but assimilate, transpose and domesticate it), as the repository of popular beliefs and myths etc; as a means of dealing with everyday life. It has a confirmatory and consensual effect. This consensualising effect is one of the functions of popular discourse, a mode of inserting the reader through its various devices, at the level of consent not just to its 'story', but to its structurings of the story. It offers as obvious, natural and universal

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3Cited in Ashley, 1989
what are in fact, the values and ideas of the implanted 'other'. 'Naturalisation' was seen by Gramsci as a key mechanism of common-sense thought as it closes knowledge, ends debate and dissolves contradictions.

Earlier, we described the culture of the Kunbi-Gawadas as Narrative tradition. The various legends of Shanta Durga, of the Christians Saints of the local heroes who fought the oppression of the Brahmins or the Portuguese can be defined as the crystalisation of a folk belief into a strong narrative tradition, which has the power to survive in a tradition. The reason for the selection of certain legends, like those listed above, rather than others, has to do with their general interest. The surviving legends concern unusual events of a mythical or historical nature.

In discussing aspects of mass culture, the so-called 'shared-culture' among certain sections of Goan society, we seek to analyse the social stereotypes passed off as natural, unmasking 'what-goes-on-without-saying' as an ideological position. The mythical world is a foundation of collective morality. To believe in mythical constructs is a coercive collective act, and a ritual of social integration. In generating mythical meaning, cultures seek to make their own norms seem facts of nature. Barthes emphasized that myth is a form of communication, a 'language', a system of second-order meaning. According to him, the first-order linguistic meaning is much less important than the second-order meaning the sentence conveys. In culture, he says, everything signifies: a loaf of bread signifies Frenchness. Thus, when
Goans perpetuate a common identity- 'we are Goans first, Hindus and Christians later' they are speaking a symbolic language. In Barthian terms, this shared identity is objectively harmonious, but the harmony in the sharing, is a myth. Not being able to counter the power of Myths, Barthes concludes that the myth is a 'protean, and perhaps indomitable'. What one would discover during the analysis of myths, he says is that, the most natural remark about the world, like commenting on the weather perhaps, depends on cultural codes.

The mythical world is symbolic. One has to be able to keep in mind the fact that the context is that of an oral tradition. The implication of which have already been discussed. Kristeva calls the symbol, 'a cosmogenic practice where the elements (symbols) refer back to one or more knowable and unrepresentable universal transcendence (s); univocal connections link the transcendences to the units evoking them; the symbol does not 'resemble' the object it symbolizes; the two spaces (symbolized-symbolizer) are separate and cannot communicate. The symbol assumes that the symbolized (the universals) is irreducible to the symbolizer (the markings). Mythical thought operates within the sphere of the symbol (as in the epic, folk tales etc) through symbolic units that are 'units of restrictions' in relation to the symbolized universals ('heroism', 'courage', 'nobility' 'virtue', 'fear', 'treason', etc). In the field of the symbol, good and bad are incompatible; the raw and the cooked, honey and ashes, etc. The contradiction, once it appears, 'immediately demands a solution, and is thus resolved and put aside. (Moi, 1986: 44).
Every narrative contains elements, both universal and specific to the culture. The elements specific to the culture contain sociological relevance because they serve a social function. Like the Kunbi-Gawadas who invoke the cosmic, the divine, inorder to gain space in the common religious discourse. What is interesting in the Shanta Durga myth for example is the different meanings it has for different people. To the upper classes, she symbolizes divine blessing and they consider it to be their right to be her privileged worshippers. To the lower classes, she symbolizes power and they seek a rationale behind their status as her worshippers. In their perception, she is a giver as well as a taker. In order to be a Hindu, you have to surrender a part of your catholic symbolism. Or, the goddess should have appeared in your dreams and given you the privilege of being her worshipper. In other myths, the subjectivities revolve around a heroic status or a divinely ordained relationship with the deity.

As far as the universal structure of the narrative is concerned, it is based on a series of contrasts or oppositions which are ultimately resolved by obliterating tensions between the oppositions of Human / Divine, Brahmin / Shudras, Lower classes / Upper classes, Hindu / Christian, Male / Female etc. By structuring the narrative in a particular way, these tensions are taken care of, and the narrative accords its users a well-defined system of knowing how to relate in a culture ridden with class-caste biases.

Scholes and Kellogg(1966) draw attention to the conventionality of all narrative In one of the earliest studies in the field, they say,
'All knowing and all telling are subject to the conventions of art. Because we apprehend reality through culturally determined types, we can report the most particular event only in the form of representational fiction.' The repertoire of life-scripts available in a culture will form the basis of any narrative. It will inevitably draw upon character types, the images, the standard scenes, the narrative formulas of the culture. All this particularly in cases where there is the need to shape a life-story. The projection of the ideal onto the time of personal history will require that it be narrativized. Obviously then, the reality-effect is a product of fictional narrative.

Forms of narrative, are functional and not episodic. Its logic, as Barthes describes, is consequential and not consecutive: "all contemporary researchers (Levi-Strauss, Greimas, Bremond, Todorov) would subscribe to Levi-Straussian proposition that order of chronological succession is absorbed in an atemporal matrix structure." The time in a narrative is considered to be effected by narrative logic which is in turn governed by the model or the life-script and not real time. It emerges as the mouth-piece of some over-arching truth which exists prior to discourse. It places the narrator, 'the present 'I' in a privileged relation to past selves, who more or less function as protagonists in a novel. The mode of address used by the privileged narrator slides between what Emile Benveniste describes as 'discourse', in which every utterance inscribes a definite speaker ('I') and a hearer ('you') and history, in which the narrator is not foregrounded as a person, the 'I' is not enunciated, and events seem to narrate themselves."
(Tharu, 1986) Thus, a privileged historic mode of address is used in order to produce a coherent non-contradictory narrative. In order to comply with this form, the reader has to move along with the defining scope of the narrative.

With specific reference to the folk tradition in Goa, we read the narratives against its structural closure to arrive at an understanding of the politics that determines the meaning of people’s lives. The narratives, we notice, implies the attempts to gain ground on religion through ‘visions’ ‘miracles’, ‘myths’, in order to make themselves part of the mainstream religious community. Foregrounded here, is the contradiction posed as one between the exigencies of the ‘divine’ blessed status (on the basis of myths and miracles) and their basic human right to live like others. Linking this to the concept of an ‘imagined community’, it should be considered so, because the kind of identity constructed by the believers in this kind of community where visions, dreams, possessions, divinations and spirits are a regular feature, indicates it.

In an interesting account of the elements which relate to the way images are produced and society is imagined, Newman lists the features thus: ‘First, there is a strong awareness of common ancestory or kinship even though conversions took place mainly in the 16th century. Second, while Goan churches and temples continue to provide traditionally distinct content to the people who worship there, in form and style, religious practices have tended to move closer together over the past few centuries. Large number of people from
nearly all castes; both nominally Hindu or Catholic, worship or honour the same deities. Among such events are the Zatras of Shantadurga Kunkallikarin, Shantadurga Verodikarin, the Zagor at Siolim, the firewalking rituals at Sirigao and the feast day of Our Lady of Miracles at Mapusa. Third, Goans of all formal religious denominations share similar beliefs about ghosts, spirit possession, going into trance and communicating with deities or spirits. Fourth, Goans revere the Mother Goddess in a number of forms and have done so since long before the Portuguese arrives. Santeri or Shantarupi Devi is perhaps of Dravidian origin, while other forms are known as Amba, Bhumka, Rohan, Bhavani, Uma, Parvati, Mahamaya, Navadurga Vijayadurga and Shantadurga. The list is not complete. When the Portuguese came, introducing the Virgin Mary in her various aspects, Goans merely turned from one form of Mother Goddess worship to another. Freeman's description of the mother goddess could not fit more perfectly. He says, she is a central cultural symbol that, both, contains multiple meanings in different contexts and serves as a unifying symbol for widely divergent elements of a culture'(1981).

Newman sees the goddess of dreams—the mother figure, whether Shanta Durga or the virgin Mary, as a metaphor for power, help, protection, cures and for the Goan motherland. It seems to link up even distant Goans in an imagined identity. He quotes Ewing who calls a particular set of signs or a set of meanings agreed upon in a 'cultural template', and says that such models are available for dreamers in societies where 'dreams are regarded as socially significant.' Similar
metaphors can be seen in other kinds of rituals as well. With the subjectivities of the various groups having been constituted, it becomes what Gramsci calls, a common sense discourse. To the Kunbi-Gawadas, apart from the obvious religious significance, it also means opening up one’s discourse to that of others. Rituals are more than just invocations of authority, they are the means of transforming a monologic performance into a dialogue. ‘They are also a way of interpreting and commenting on one’s own text, of acknowledging that any cultural performance involves appropriating absorbing and transforming the texts of others.’ (Babcock, 1984:107)

One is then, inclined to take the position that thinking like writing always involves a dialogue with other texts, that ‘all knowledge is a knowledge of complex and interwoven textuality.’ There is a system behind the togetherness in a public, ‘liminal’ space. It is the structure of the Narratives which takes care of this cohesion. The Kunbi-Gawadas are in an ironical state themselves. They perform the ritual inorder to make their presence felt. But the ritual subsumes their identity as members of a particular group. This does not worry them unduly in the present circumstances, but it does worry them enough, like for the people of Naveshim to look for other possible spaces of expressing an uninterrupted stream of desires.

This is stated in the light of the argument that religious identity is not the only thing that is sought by these groups. And the very nature of a folk culture, is such that it seeks to highlight all possible tensions in a society apart from other functions. There are and have
to be instances in folk tales and songs, where the issues regarding societal tension, of caste biases, of oppression, of a foreign presence etc, like in the performance of Zagor are foregrounded. But the fact that it is only the religious identity which has been highlighted has a lot to do with the motivations of the communities and the nature of the discourse they opted for.

Critiquing Newman's observation that these visions, dreams, or festivals are attempts by the people to draw attention to themselves, We wish to state that these attempts are more a reflexive means of coming to terms with a given situation. For, while perceiving ambivalences, they do not attempt to transgress, instead re-enter what Bakhtin calls a monologic discourse. In a monologic discourse, the dialogue with the texts of others takes place only at the level of narration and not at a deeper level of cognition, like in a carnivalesque text. Saussure's 'Course in General Linguistics', gave modern linguistic theory the much needed respite from the earlier thinking which held words important because they were thought to represent things in the external world. The normative world of language is, what Kristeva calls 'thetic', paternal language, suggesting a language which is interested in meaning and representation: It inhabits the symbolic order. For Kristeva, the symbolic is linked with the idea of language as nomination. It is an order of cultural and social meaning, an order whose language is the language of the group. Moreover, it is a realm in which symbols have fixed, determinate meanings. Kristeva is able to associate it with the role of the father as an authority figure. It pre-
supposes a world of shared meanings not only between the performers but also between the performer and the listener.

In oral traditions, the text is a combination of oral hermeneutics and individual compositional flexibility, dependent on the time, place and audience of the author. Clearly, then, selection is the basic criteria to orient the text to the needs of the society, even if various texts are about the same subject. On a purely formal level, the text is organized on a strict grammatical pattern and if it is poetic, then on a strict rhyming, repetitive style, which render the text easily to memorization, easy recall and reiterative of collective values. The normative phase was an attempt to provide a strong and well-founded harmony. The texts 'meant something', and that something is regardless of its stylistic considerations, part of the Goan psyche, as it incorporates and dictates religious dogma of their culture. Infact, the religiosity prevailed strongly even when the portuguese arrived and they exploited it during their conversion zeal.

These groups which shared a common culture seeped in mythical and symbolic thought, perceived the ambivalence of life. Goa has been under constant invasions and in such shifting 'contexts', the texts were means of coming to terms with the life-situation, of collapsing differences and making the text univocal. The festive occasions, according to Cox(1969:22) have three essential ingredients: (1) Conscious excess (2) Celebrative affirmation (3) Juxtaposition The formal structuring of the text is part of the celebrative affirmation, which is part of the 'langue', the code. It sets out to create identifiable structures
which provide psychological support to the listeners. On the systematic axis of language, this discourse is in an analogous relationship to grammatical affirmation and negation. It is structured at the limits of syncretism and the utterance of a subject ('I') is inevitably penetrated by language as a carrier of the concrete, universal and collective. The logic is therefore causal, that is, theological; it is a belief in the literal sense of the word. The language is a conscious representation of collective thought. It is in keeping with an 'identity', a willingness to be part of the common discourse.

In a public space occupied by festivities, the communicative mode becomes part of a 'liminal' experience, excluded from the centers of daily action. And it is here, that the 'conscious excess' (practiced par excellence in the comic mode) takes place. Liminality, Turner (1984) says, 'itself is a complex phase or condition. It is often the scene and time for the emergence of society's deepest values in the form of sacred dramas and objects-sometimes the reenactment periodically of cosmogenic Narratives or deeds of saintly, godly or heroic beings or powers. But, it may also be the venue and occasion for the most radical skepticism-always relative, of course, to the given culture's repertoire of areas of skepticism about cherished values and rules. Bateson (Cited in Turner, 1984:22) calls this metalanguage and meta-communication. He begins with prepositions expressions in which the predicate affirms or denies something about the subject, the predicate being an assertion or affirmation based on given facts. Propositions flourish best in the indicative mood of the cultural process. They de-
pend upon conventions of codification, verbal or non-verbal, most of which lie below the threshold of conscious awareness of members of a given group, and upon tacit agreements between speakers that they be true. But some propositions are not in these cultural codes, but about them. They are liminal in the sense that they are suspensions of daily reality, occupying privileged spaces, where people are allowed to think about how they think.

It is this very space which offers possibilities of metacommunication, that we believe, has given rise to a change in the religious status of the people of Naveshim. In a new, literate atmosphere, individual motivations are beginning to replace collective ones held together by the 'langue'. What implications this has for the ritual as a whole will be discussed in a later chapter. For the present, we take note of the effects of writing on expression of the people. Having distanced themselves in time and space due to the power of the written word, we look at two poems written by individuals from the Gawada community. For the first time we notice an attempt to talk about themselves as Gawadas and not as part of a generalized religious or cultural code. The language, in sharp contrast to that of the oral tradition is far more grammatically correct and significantly, does not adhere to any strict rhyming pattern. The purpose of these texts is very obviously, not to produce a collective code, but to express their hitherto unexpressed feelings about their position in the Goan society. (See appendix 1+2).