2. Basic Postulates of Subjectivism

Subjectivism can be conveniently divided into several compartments for the purpose of our research such as:

(1) Ideological Prejudice
(2) Racial Prejudice
(3) Reflective Prejudice
(4) Political Prejudice
(5) Emotional Prejudice
(6) Regional Prejudice
(7) Literary Prejudice

Ideological Prejudice:

Theoretical prejudice in certain specific cases tends to become dogmatic and in certain other cases erupts into ideological prejudices.

Romila Thapar, stung by the theory of oriental despotism, attempts to prove that there was significant industrial development in West Bengal and other
parts of India well before the arrival of the Eurasians in her Sardar Patel Memorial Lectures in 1972.¹

Her sensitive mind seems to have been over exercised on the statement of K.W.Kapp "Hindu Culture and Hindu Social Organizations are determining factors in India's low rate of development".²

While K.W. Kapp's observation is tendentious generalization, one cannot say by any stretch of imagination that he is not backed by facts at all.

Romila Thapar has gently reprimanded Max Weber and Gunnar Myrdal, for their pre-conceived notions on Indian society which were based on Indological studies tinged in pride and prejudice.

Max Weber concludes that the other worldliness and rigid caste system of the Hindus were the cardinal impediments for social change in India. Gunnar Myrdal faces charges from Romila Thapar since he too was influenced by the indoctrination of Max Weber, which was explicit in his 'Asian Drama'.

"The theory of the instinctive unconcern of Indians for worldly things is found particularly useful in minimizing such obvious factors as colonialism in economic under-development", observes Romila Thapar.³

As Max Weber, Gunnar Myrdal, Nirad C. Choudri and others have all been orchestrated by 'Oriental Despotism', Romila Thapar, for her part is not free either from 'occidental anathema'.

The theories and interpretations pertaining to 'orient' and 'occident' though natural corollaries to actuals, have been largely influenced by Greek thinkers.
Divisions, bifurcations, principalities, polarities, minute analytical tools to keep the areas guarded were the results of Greek thinkers.

Greek thought placed ‘Mind’ at the highest pedestal in cosmic preference and mind keeps on dividing and differentiating one object from the other. Later this thought in ultimate ramifications, resulted in ‘occident’ and ‘orient’ dispensations.

As already mentioned Aldous Huxley's proclamation on East and West leads one to believe that it is impossible for the two to shake hands. Dr. Fulton J. Sheen, a popular theological philosopher of Christian shade, amplified East and West to represent Heart and Mind respectively. Some have extended the theme further on broad divisions for the purpose of philosophical discourse and assessment of social lives. But do they fall strictly into water-tight compartments by taking recourse to passion and reason. There are scholars who have been repeating that Easterners subserve to elements and westerners mastermind. East is identified with more of its religion; West with science. Of course, through striking acts of balance, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Rudyard Kipling and a host of others explored the possibility of East-West Meet.

Chinese and Indian thinkers of every shade have stifled these seemingly water-tight compartments.

As we perceive from Hegel's suggestion, a thesis invariably invites an anti-thesis, which converges in synthesis. For any opinion expressed there is yet another, nay many more opinions. This is one of the basic reasons why literature surfaces from a mind in conflict and not in an icy-equilibrium as Wordsworth suggests.
If legends tendentiously suggest that Dasaratha, King of Ayodya had sixty thousand wives, it draws the attention of Valmiki, Tamil Kamban, Thulasidas and host of others to react to the licentious behaviour of Dasharatha in creating Shri Rama devoted to a singular wife, Seetha. One stereotype breeds another.

Of course Western authors and their westernized counterparts in India and elsewhere are not prepared to concede a pride of place to ancient India in the comity of political assortments, which she richly reserves.

A country where Vedas and Upanishads with reservations of course, were the off shoots of a civilization of the first order, should not be looked down with contempt.

One should not also forget the fact that despite the prayer in Upanishads “Lead me from darkness to light; from death to life; from mortality to immorality, half of the humanity in India was relegated to the untouchable oblivion”.

Romila Thapar, though progressive in her ideas, is constrained in her perceptions since she subscribes to yet another theory diametrically opposed to the theories floated by westerners.

Her diatribes against Western scholars who were of the view but for caste and Varnashrama Dharma, social change in India could have been a possibility are the results of her theoretical affiliation.

While it is true those western preachers were not free from prejudices against Indians, Romila Thapar herself defends medieval Indian society rather irrationally. Her idea on caste and Varnashrama Dharma are superficial contrivances, to say the least.
While she speaks of certain later day additions to Rig Veda such as ‘From his feet Sudhra was produced’ she has not pointed out those artful interpolations were designed to mutilate an already deformed class of mean beats of burden. Why does she make such a passage which is more than a poetic fallacy? It is a design to denigrate certain men and women. It is only a research piece biased instead of creating a necessary condition for social change.

It is true Dr. D.D. Kosambi is no ordinary historian. But he too is not free from theoretical prejudice. His history is the history of people and he represents the men and women tethered to land. Apart from his ‘credo’ for the downtrodden which is welcome despite his act of entrenching himself on the saddle of prejudice, his mind seems to have been obsessed with ideological mornings.

While this researcher appreciates Dr. D.D. Kosambi for his views on Indian history, his analysis seems to be one of impersonal subjectivism. The proverbial charge that Indians did not have history worth the name seems to have pained him.

His observation in one of his works wherein he declares “changes in the means of production and relations is the history” is an oversimplification of history.

Dr. D.D. Kosambi subscribes to the Marxian view of history which is still valid. But his ideological assertion that precludes all other points of views shows his theoretical bias. One should understand in Dr. D.D. Kosambi's violent reaction in the backdrop of the white man's charge that India has no history at all; he fulminates with anger. When he declares that history is a pack of senseless wars and liturgical litanies on emperors India had no history while what kind of plough or an agricultural instrument a peasant had in India, is history, India has it
in abundance. He is right. Then why we are upset when someone accuses us of other worldliness? Too much of other worldliness and unmindfulness of material prosperity do not allow people to record their history.

Therefore Romila Thapar and DD Kosambi, though historians of the first order are not free from either theoretical or ideological subjectivism.

Racial Prejudices:

'Hundred great lives' 'Hundred great men' 'Hundred great scientists' - such books are a common lot in the West. It is always a painful experience for an Indian Tamil to tunnel through them. Either they would not mention an Indian; in case they did on one, by accident two, they would not lay their anointed hands on a Tamil. It is not a child's prattle to say that those authors, most of them, are under the mistaken impression that all great men are confined to the modest limits of the West.

'The Hundred' by Michael Hart is one such work. In this laborious work he sets up certain qualifications for his preferential choice of men, in his honours list. He has allowed Mahatma Gandhi a narrow stretch to thrive, out of compassion, basic qualification for entry into his race for glory. Men who changed the course of history and men who have wielded influence among larger sections of people have been consigned to oblivion. Mahatma Gandhi is not one among the hundred. It is not only an injustice perpetrated on India but the unkindest cut on humanity. A researcher like me does not hold a brief for Mahatma. But my charge against Michael Hart is, he is not faithful to the postulates he himself has drawn for his choice of the Hundred.

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He prescribes that one who has changed the course of history can find a place in the hall of honour. Mahatma Gandhi was definitely one and still he holds the key to India’s baffling multiplicity of problems. To cite only one example in an India, bogged down in mass production due to liberalization, his feeble but authentically articulated voice, pleading for ‘production for the masses’ still shows the way.

Michael Hart opines that for India, freedom could have been possible had it not been for Mahatma Gandhi himself. Many inventions, liberation movements might have been possible in the absence of those leaders with whom momentous occurrences are related to.

Many were witnesses to apple that was always falling. Then, why we accord the place of honour to Sri Issac Newton? He says that be borrowed his concepts from many of his predecessors and contemporaries. Can he point out anyone who has neither borrowed nor was influenced by other great men?

In ‘The History of Christianity’ the most unexpected work wherein Mahatma Gandhi could have found a place, it is observed ‘there was nothing novel about non-cooperation, the boycott, or the demonstration; these had been used for centuries as a means of protest. But Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King popularized them as instruments for reshowing conflict constructively. Mahatma Gandhi himself has said that Non-violence is as old as hills.’

‘The History of Christianity’ has a revelation to Hart when it observes,

“His (Martin Luther King) combination of the message of Jesus (love your enemies) and the method of Gandhi (non-violence) gave birth to a philosophy and strategy to Civil Rights Movement.”
Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela have spoken at length how far they could battle against an oppressive regime with Gandhian philosophy and techniques.

This sort of irreverential treatment to Mahatma Gandhi despite his worthy qualifications for an entry into 100 may be out of racial prejudice.

Katherine Mayo’s ‘Mother India’ published in momentous rage is a fact proof of racial prejudice. It is dotted with slanderous remarks against Indians of the twenties of last century. In her journalistic bonanza she observes that Indian males, were senile after the age of 24.

In retaliation to what Mayo has scribbled C.S.Rangaiar has written a book ‘India Pitha’, in English in 1921 which has seen nine imprints within two months of its publication. A Tamil translation of C.S.Rangaiar’s English work was brought out by K.S. Muthia Company in 1929. C.S.Rangiar’s book is full of angry retorts against the racial prejudice paraded in Katherine Mayo’s work. He has quoted extensively from Annie Besant who has defended Indians, in the face of Mayo’s uncharitable remarks against Indians in general and widows and young men in particular.

In the second reading now much in vogue in literary circles Ki.Raja Narayanan a liberal thinker and writer mainly agrees with P. Varadharajulu and K.S.Sundaram for their wordy duel with Mayo but facts which Mayo had said on untouchability are still prevalent among us.

‘Legends, Lies & Cherished Myths of World History’ is another striking example of racial prejudice against Indians. A chapter in this work under the caption ‘Gandhi’ begins with a statement – “Gandhi” used to go around
saying, 'I am a true Mahatma'. There is no instance whatsoever wherever -
Gandhiji called himself Mahatma.

The blatant story surges ahead. One of the strangest things about him is
that as an old man he liked to sleep with naked young women. It is true that he
conducted one such experiment. But one has to mark the words "he liked to
sleep" while his sleeping was purely for the purpose of experiment.

The author speaks on Gandhi's opinion on ejaculation. "Ability to retain
and assimilation of the vital fluid is a matter of long training. When properly
conserved, it is transmitted into matchless energy and strength. Gandhi was not
singular in such seemingly uncultivated views. Chinese sex scientists of yore
have exposed at length on how 'sex' should be performed to the advantage of the
performing parties. Though there are areas wherein East and West could meet, it
seems virtually impossible to meet and they drift apart on 'vital fluid'.

While this drifting apart is a lullabic grafting to many men and women in
the two hemispheres, Richard Shankman makes a colourful lesson out of
Mahatma Gandhi.

While in part 8 of the same book Shankman approaches Machiavelli,
Catherine the Great, Sun-Yat-Sen, Ciang- Kai-Shek with awe, he handles only
Mahatma Gandhi in a light vein.

His diction too in this area seems to have been deliberately couched in
irrelevant epithets against Mahatma Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi need not be defended at all. He has said enough and
more to defend himself. Mahatma Gandhi was imperfect as many other leaders
were. But objective studies on Mahatma Gandhi are only a few. One should
agree that his biography ‘My Experiments with Truth’ is one of the objective studies on himself. Here, he has stood apart from his self and analyzed his actions. M.M. Verma in his “Gandhi’s Technique of Mass Mobilization” quotes extensively from M.S.Namboodripad’s “The Mahatma and the Islam”.  

“Even the Marxist historians like Namboodripad could not afford to overlook this point. He conceded that Gandhi completely identified himself with the life and problems, sentiments and aspirations of the people. He associated himself with everything that was of the people. Politics for Gandhi was a matter of selfless service to the people. This is a clue to understanding his techniques of mass mobilization and struggle”.

While E.M.S. Namppoodripad’s work seems to have been objective on Gandhiji, “Mahatma Gandhi - The Sole Hope and Alternative” by Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan, wherein from P.V. Narasimha Rao to Nani Palkhivala have contributed articles which are more or less sentimental shibboleths, as the caption itself suggests. This compilation is yet another example of racial preconception.

Reflective prejudice:

‘Reactionary’ is a much misunderstood word. While ‘reaction’ is placed at a pedestal high above, in common parlance, ‘retrograde’ and ‘reactionary’ are mistakenly believed to be complementary!

Since the word reactionary is mistaken as antithetical to ‘progressive’ a modest word ‘reflective’ is employed here.
As the prologue itself suggests "Nation and Nation Worship in India" is an exercise in reconstruction. 'It seeks to reassess in national and ethical terms the viability of Indian theory of nationalism by considering in some detail its internal logic as well as its implications for the Indian people'.

Jalalul Haq's reflective reaction to the concept of nationalism brings Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Viayak Damodar Savarkar such unlikely bedfellows, huddled together for his drastic criticism. Throughout his work Jalalul Haq attempts to prove how nationalism, beyond a certain point would be counter-productive and can thrive only at the cost of soul.

Bakim Channdra Chatterji’s celebrated Bengali Novel ‘Anand Math’, though rich in dramatics and symbolism, in whole, is highly suggestive in parts. Its attempt to make a Nation-Goddess, all conclusively pervading in the pantheon of ancestral mother goddesses of Indians is alarming.

Bibin Chandra Pal said "Patriotism is not mere love of the fatherland but an organized cult, through which this love develops and seeks to fulfill itself. It is the religion of those that love country, the ism of the patriot, just as the Christianity is the ism of the Christians and the Hinduism that of Hindus".

It is from earth, we came and to earth we return was an elemental belief of a few religions. And therefore it is no surprise that ancient Hindus travelling from Earth, through the tracts of ages return to Mother Goddesses of different hew and finally to yet another Goddess ‘Nation’. Had it been for the dispassionate analysis on the dictum ‘necessity is the mother of all inventions’, ‘Motherland’ too seems to have been an invention of articulated Hindu minds since there was a desired need for it.
The secular school of composite nationalism of Pandit Nehru has been grossly misrepresented by Prof. Haq in his reflective prejudice to that extent that such a paragon of virtue among academics, he labours out fundamental similarities between the Hindustan of Vinayaka Damodara Sarvarkar and composite nationalism of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Numerals do not end up with one and two. The biblical adage ‘Any one who is not with me, is against me’ has been grossly misunderstood. When exploring the meeting ground of the major principalities is the crying need of the hour, any work which stifles the spirt of the possibility of a third dimension does no good.

This is not to mean one of the wonderful works of Prof. Haq but to tell only that his academic exercise should heal wounds instead of making fresh ones. Nehru might have some similarities with Savarkar in basics but is he not a pole apart from Savarkar, in his international outlook, to the point of compromising national interests?

‘Suthanthira Sarithiram’ (in Tamil) seems to have been written in the first few years after Independence, by M.S. Subramania Iyer 15 is a classic example of reflective prejudice. Reflective prejudice is more in the nature of “rightful” reaction.

Possibly M.S.Subramania Iyer, a matchless patriot, highly disturbed by the way Indian freedom movement was depicted with more slant to the leaders of the North, though some of them are all Indian phenomenon, has dealt at length on Pooili Thevan, Veerapandiya Kattamboman, Oomaithuri, Veluthambi and a host of others from South.
Political Prejudice:

J.B. Priestly’s *Block Thinking* exposes us to a stark reality that middle of the road policy does not pay. If someone does not find a place in either of the blocks, he is declared to be the enemy of both the camps.

Mahatma Gandhi was not the architect of India’s freedom. There were others too; but he was the one who consolidated the movement, imported an all India character into it, extended in action when people were only passive spectators. This is a new but not novel technique.

Society as complex as it was in India of the Pre-Independence era could have produced only a man like Gandhiji. He is not free from flaws or infirmities. And to say Indian National Congress alone was responsible for the final dawn of freedom is a fallacy of the worst kind.

There were others who left Congress for various reasons but still stood for the goal of independence. But to describe Gandhiji and Congress as two treacherous entities is intimately biased.

One such work ‘Gandhiyum Congressum-Oru Throga Varalaru’ in Tamil (Gandhi and Congress—a story of treachery) had seen several imprints since it was first published in 1985.

This booklet charges Dadabai Naoroji (1893) Anand Mohan Bose (1898) and Surendranath Banerjee of a Congress resolution of 1901 and a portion of the reported speech of Gandhiji in the Second Round Table Conference as manifestations of anti-revolutionary forces in India.
Indian National Congress started by Englishmen for limited purposes, only later became a powerful instrument of national resurgence.

Scathing attacks on the admitted errors of Gandhiji and follies of Indian National Congress, in political vengeance is not historical writing since these are fulminations of political commitment to an extra revolutionary ideology.

**Emotional Prejudice:**

The same authors with the favourable bias towards Sanskrit say without reservation that “In due course the Dravidian languages of the South absorbed a great many Sanskrit words and became themselves media for the expression of new cultural values.” When it has been established beyond confusion that while Tamil has absorbed certain Sanskrit words, Sanskrit too has availed number of Tamil words. The authors’ insidious attempt to portray Dravidian languages to have expressed cultural values because of the blessings of Sanskrit is a fabulous fallacy. On the other hand Sanskrit has been enriched by the contribution of Tamil ethos. He should only refer to Soviet indologists and Prof. Hart of the California University to arrive at a balanced view. If they could have convinced Tamils that their words have enriched Sanskrit, they would have felt that Sanskrit too is their language. But Max Muller put the last nail on the cordiality between Tamil and Sanskrit.
Regional Prejudice:

Regional Prejudice is prevalent throughout history writing. HG Wells who dreamed one world government, Arnold Toynbee who contributed to Story of civilization, Edward Gibbons who wrote *The Rise and Fall of Roman Empire* and Indian authors who have extensively written on the freedom movement have been regionally biased.

The portrayal of the India’s movement for freedom had been presented as if it was a north Indian affair. Stalin Gunasekaran in his voluminous work on the participation of Tamils in the freedom movement has eloquently presented this lacuna and condemned for this partisan subjectivism found in great authors.

In any world anthology of poems or short stories Asian continent is given a go by and every syllable of these compendiums is westernized. Otherwise Will Durant in his *Story of Philosophy* would not have deleted a galaxy of great philosophers from the east. It shows how regional prejudices are abound in history writing.

Among historians there have always been thinkers who belong to a block. And this is why they speak of Western Hemisphere and Eastern Hemisphere. They wrongly portray that the west is unbridled free economy and in the east in the erstwhile Soviet and China the commanding heights of Economy is controlled by the state.

To them these two are water tight compartments. But, JK Galbraith in his BBC Reith lectures 1965 has drawn attention of the block thinkers to strange developments in the contemporary history. While there is nationalization move
in the west, profit mechanism is not totally absent from the controlled economy
of the fellow-travelers.

Literary Prejudice:

In literary history it is difficult to avoid passion. Language, which is the
vehicle of a specific literature, makes one emotional, however one tries to be
impartial.

For example some of the western scholars who had never visited either
India or Tamilnadu, one of its provinces have been influenced by some of the
interested scholars of the North.

St. Thiruvalluvar's Thirukkural is the greatest contribution of Tamils to
world literature. Many western scholars exhibit their ignorance when they
assertively venture to say that the third portion on 'Love' is in a way the replica
of 'Kama Shutra' of Vatsayana.

Colonel Ellies was one of the reasonable scholars apart from Dr.
G.U.Pope who could find out this strikingly different treatise on love. He points
out as Prof. A. Chakravarthy "European scholars who imbibed such prejudices
from the Indian commentators, developed an unjustifiable prejudice against the
third book of Thirukkural".16

While Prof. A. Chakravarthy raises his voice against subjectivism of the
western scholars, himself is not free from subjectivism either. This is religious
bias teetering on the jaws of emotional or literary prejudice.
Since Prof. A. Chakravarthy is a Jain himself, he tries to establish his theory that St. Thiruvalluvar was a Jain. The author of this worthy work might have been influenced by Jainism in the 1st century A.D itself. But to say that St. Thiruvalluvar was totally a Jain is subjectivism of the worst kind.

Let me explain why. In the 1st century A.D there were Thihambaras and Swadembras among Jain monks. The first category of people was naked. They were ascetics who commanded the reverence of the then some of the Tamils who were Jains. If Saint Thiruvalluvar was one among them, could be ever say ‘As one’s hand rushing down to dress up’. Therefore emotional outbursts can never be part of history.

For the purpose of being concise the researcher confines him within the modest limits criticism alone.

In the last 100 years only a few critics had been active. Dr. Kailasapathy a critic of Marxian shade; K.N.Subramaniam, a free thinker. Thamizavan and Venkat Swaminathan are some of the critics. This researcher had been close to K.N.Subramanian & Tamizavan. Among them K.N. Subramanian a global trotter is of a prejudiced mind. He has criticized unjustly the diction of the researcher. Later, he made amends by inviting him to preside over Puthumaipithan 100 years in sahithya academy, New Delhi. Tamizavan too had a dig at the diction of this researcher; but it was the latest. These critics do live in their own world of creation. First of all, they misunderstand a writer is not identified with his diction, then only with the thought process. These minds race against the popularity of some writers. If you are popular you are not a literary genius is their Fatwa. They are afraid of men & matters and are against Tamil
tradition; they lull themselves into a false sense of security wherein they are dictatorial in imposing their perverted will on the common populace.

For these critics what is not understandable is literature. They have no intention to carry the message to the masses. To them masses are the literal ones who are still in the first standard; never promoted therefore they prattle from the elevated pulpits of literature. Underrating others has prejudiced their criticisms and in general are comedies of errors.

For the purpose of subjectivism in Tamil Literary history, I have taken ‘Sila Elakiya Allumigal’ (A few literary personalities) by Venkatswaminathan, published by Kavya publications, Bangalore, India (a reputed publication of considerable importance run by Dr. Shanmugasundaram an expert in folklore).

First of all Venkant Swaminathan’s book surfaces from an innate hatred against the Non-Brahmins.

To cite the two examples, commenting upon the colloquial slang of Jayakanthan; he has lot of appreciation for the way he employs the slang. V.Swaminathan has a convenient dig at the Brahminical slang of Dravidian writers. Perhaps Venkat Swaminathan might not have read Anna’s “Solratha Yezhuthenda” (write what I say). It is a rare story of Anna wherein he has utilized Bharaminical slang with ease and perfection.

Among the writers he has picked up, ninety percent are of upper caste origin.

While he generously devotes lot pages to Rajam Iyer he makes only a passing reference to Vedanayagam Pillai of “Prathapa Mudaliyar Charithiram”
(The story of Prathapa Mudaliyar) There is no justification for overlooking Vedanayagam Pillai who was the first Tamil Novelist.

In his second article he tries to portray U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, a composer of our literature to be a creative writer. While all Tamils remember U.V. Swaminatha Iyer's contribution towards publication of Tamil literature no one would agree to address him a creative writer. His next article on Thiru-Vi-Ka is noteworthy.

Here too V. Swaminathan portrays Thiru-Vi-Ka to be a passionate warrior of Saivitic tradition concealing the basic fact that he has composed poems on Jesus Christ.

In para 27 he has expressed his anti-Communist stance. He should understand as long as poverty, unemployment and injustice rule the roost the compelling need for communism would not go.

As he has not observed Thiru-Vi-Ka's inter religious dialogues his gentleness in elevating his reader to the level of a partaker in the art of creation has not been seen. His not imposing a specific caption but providing a choice have been sidelined by the critic.

In page 40 from writing on Pitchamoorthy he turns away to attack the titles commoners had invested on Anna, Karunanidhi and C.P.Cittarasu. However he concedes his bitterness against these popular leaders who were writers of considerable repute he couldn't.

In page 56 Venkatswaminathan praises Pitchamoorthy. While Pitchamoorthy richly deserves unqualified encomium for this creative piece, Venkatswaminathan in singling out for his love of birds and animals slips down
from the elevated pedestal of a critic to the slippery ground of a devotee. It is all due to subjectivism.
References

2. Basic Postulates of subjectivism


7. Katherine Mayo - 'Mother India' (India Matha) Tamil Translation, Ps.17, 23,27.


9. Katherine Mayo, 'Inthia Matha- Second' heading Karmugil Pathipagam, Madurai p-VII.