Kamalini Mukherjee
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (India)

Exploring the subversive Indian:
Sexual dissidence and the "Queer"
in Indian popular culture

ABSTRACT. In this paper, the author primarily engages with the cultural tropes existing around the notions of gender, sex, sexuality and its alternatives within the Indian context, specifically to locate and explore the "subversive" expressions. The influences and interpretations put forward in this paper are based in a broader doctoral research, wherein personal narratives of "queer" individuals provide the qualitative basis for the projected discourse. The principal objective of this paper has been to explore the conceptual space the "queer" identity locates itself in, and thereby the cultural outlets of its expression. The paper trails various literary and academic sources, alongside field notes and narratives, to present a critical discourse of existing social tropes regarding the "queer" identity. The context of the entire engagement is positioned in a reexamination of the Indian cultural scope today, as a methodological approach to study the "queer" category in a postcolonial dialog.

KEYWORDS: alternative sexuality, sexual marginality, sexual subaltern, Indian queer culture, queer expression

Introduction

Following a conceptual trajectory, this paper (within its broader research scope) establishes the concept of alternative sexuality through its history in social theory, locating it in society and politics, and in the crevasses of everyday-life that mostly goes unnoticed. However, the one space where the everyday lives matter the most is in the representation of society through art, literature and cinema. In fact, when speaking of India as a cultural consolidate, it is crucial to include the rich history of mythologies and folklores, which have encompassed both our great and little traditions. The narratives that have been used in this research explore the experiential aspects of marginal identities of our society,

specifically the LGBTQI everyday life in an urban space. They are personal accounts of the "queer"[1] in Kolkata, individuals who shared their experience of social interaction and the element of cultural pedagogy, which ultimately determines identity.

However, there are volumes of narrative histories depicting life as a marginal individual from other aspect of life in India. The works[2] of academics and thinkers like Sudhir Kakar, Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai, Nivedita Menon, Dayanita Singh and Mona Ahmed, Arvind Narrain, Gautam Bhan, Sanjay Srivastav, Gayatri Gopinath, Suparna Bhaskaran, Brinda Bose, Devdutt Pattanaik, et al. in the area of experiential sexuality and its relationship with the everyday state. Apart from that, there are many literary publications that explore relationships existing in difficult situations, between individuals, and in between the individual and society. It becomes necessary to thus take into consideration the narrative histories explored through these avenues, personal stories, artistic representations, and its forms in literature and cinema in India today.

---

[1] The double quotation marks with the term *queer,* has been used contextually throughout this paper, with the deliberated attempt to explore, critique and reexamine the category signified by the term *queer*. Moving away from established definitions, this term has been used in this research to identify the socially marginalized on gendered and sexual markers. This provided for a wider field access, as well as a more inclusive approach to understanding the marginalized, without bracketing identities. A similar specification is attempted with the term *subversive* also, following the idea of not relegating a cultural expression as subversive based on its subaltern location.

[2] List of books by cited authors: M. Ahmed (2001) *Myself, Mona Ahmed*. Zurich: Scalo Verlag; G. Bhan & A. Narrain (eds.) (2005) *Because I Have a Voice: Queer Politics in India*. New Delhi: Yoda Press; S. Bhaskaran (2004) *Made in India: Decolonizations, Queer Sexualities, Trans/National Projects*. New York: Palgrave; B. Bose (ed.) (2002) *Translating Desire: The Politics of Gender and Culture in India*. Delhi: Katha (see also B. Bose & S. Bhattacharya (eds.) (2007) *The Phobic and the Erotic: Politics of Sexualities in India*. Oxford: Berg Publishers); G. Gopinath (2005) *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; S. Kakar (2007) *The Indians: Portrait of a People*. New Delhi: Pearson; N. Menon (2001) *Gender and Politics in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; A. Narrain (2004) *Queer: Despised Sexuality, Law, and Social Change*. Bangalore: Books for Change; D. Pattanaik (2002) *The Man who was a Woman and Other Queer Tales from Hindu Lore*, New York: Haworth Press; R. Vanita & S. Kidwai (eds.) (2008) *Same-Sex Love in India: A Literary History*. New Delhi: Penguin Books (and also see R. Vanita (2001) *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture*, New York: Routledge).

Who is the Indian Queer?

It is not a difficult question to answer, however, if described as a category, it is different than its Western understanding and counterpart. In the West, the movement toward individualism gave rise to "queer" identity, however in India it was always persisting in a cultural niche, where they were contained to ensure the sanctity of the larger social whole. Indian society, in fact, does make a space for the queer identity, and it is needless to say as a marginal identity the Indian queer has never been allowed into the mainstream, at least in the recent historical modernity. In the pre-modern era, however, the attitude towards the so-called was more functional and not as contriving.

To understand the "queer" as a category in India, we have to first look into the compositional character of the formation of the same. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson[3] speaks of the nation as an imagined political space. He argues, that it is *imagined* because the feeling of 'nationhood' in the citizens itself creates this political category. Although there is no possibility of a completely homogenous nation-state emerging out of this, it is the feeling of commonality in belonging that gives the category its formative premise. Similarly, the "queer" in India are also an imagined community; despite some effort at representation through census policy updates and referendums passed in the Upper House at the Parliament, only the transgender and to an extent the intersex fraction has received support. The LGB and Q (in LGBTQI) have yet to receive any mainstream state sponsored encouragement, so to speak. And this attitude prevails despite the fact that sexual orientation is largely a private matter. It is due to extreme discrimination and abuse in such cases that the sexual minority has become more vocal about the apparent homophobia, transphobia, and other issues faced by the community.

The category is imagined in its political aspect, as well as in its compositional quality. Being "queer" is essentially a choice, in which it means to be a part of this collective consciousness of belonging to a specific category—with structural hierarchies, functions, roles and expectations—one has to make a decision to be "queer". Now, this sense of being queer may arise from an apparent deviation from the mainstream in the gender-sexuality spectrum, or it may emerge from a deep awareness of

---

[3] See Anderson 1991.

fluidity in the experience of gender and sexuality. In either way, it is an intensely personal aspect of an individual's existence, and it is brought out into the public domain by politicizing it. This process is invasively coerced into the psyche of the person who is different by engaging with that *difference* to locate the identity within it. It is a deliberate attempt to categorize any non-heteronormative orientation as redundant.

To further that argument, let us take a very archaic parochial sub continental approach to locating gender and sexuality in the social structure: in patriarchy, the men are the providers and leaders, and women are the caregivers and child bearers, and by this binary understanding the society is perfectly balanced by these structural functional aspects of human identity. Therefore, in such a scenario the "queer" would actually be located outside this structure because they do not categorize as such. However, the reality of the matter is diversely different, a) this is not entirely an archaic parochial society, because there are progressive liberal elements within the society who stand up against such patriarchal stereotypes, b) again, the "queer" maybe apparently different, but their desires are quite similar to the heteronormative ideal. For example, most transgender individuals are trapped inside of opposite gendered bodies, and they aspire their true gender identities, which is either male or female. But that does not universalize the experience, because there are others who do not conform to the binary and seek a separate gender identity altogether. Therefore, it is not a homogenous understanding of a category by its experience alone, it is the politics that unites the community.

There are many online literary portals, and blogs, that present an entire inventory of opinions and perspectives on the issue of "queer" marginalization in India. Especially since the Delhi High Court issued the ruling of criminalizing homosexuality in India, the public opinion has seen an outpour on social media, and generally on the Internet[4]. This disproves the idea that India is principally a parochial nation, and pushes forth the argument that there is a healthy political aggression from the margins, supported by independent organizations and individuals who want to educate the vast population who still abide by provincial traditionalism, about the progressive ethics of postmodern global life choices. Thus, Anderson's discourse on *imagination* is crucial to the un-

---

[4] See: [Online] Available from: http://www.countercurrents.org/sonia171213.htm. [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

derstanding of the category of the Indian queer, and so it can be argued here that, the categorical politicization of the queer in India begins with the manifest marginalization of the community[5].

Gender and Sexuality

The passing of the Transgender Persons Rights Bill has paved the way for representation and reservation for only a section of the queer community of the country[6]. At the same time, the persecution and criminalization of homosexuality and homosexuals are increasingly becoming state-sponsored. With the new NDA-led rightwing government proposes more laws to ensure a *Hindu Nation* is propagated in every sphere of life, the political aspect of the queer identity becomes more and more cornered. The state level governance differs, but serves a common referendum of moralistic outlook towards the social aspects. The civil society to an extent upholds this view, which is why we don't see too many representatives in the queer movement and equal rights debate, other than academics, artists and independent social workers, organizations and individuals. On this note, one respondent reflects:

> Until the day we have doctors, engineers, corporate sectors, and the larger media join the cause, we will never find acceptance or even empathy from society. And for that we need to spread awareness, hold meetings and marches, walk for our pride and keep shouting; because we have been silent for so long that even in this day and age we need to *demand* our rights and we have to turn up the volume as society has resolved to deaf ears when it comes to us. Why, are we not human beings? Are we not capable of all those things that they are? Actually, as long as it is *us* and *them*, this fight will carry on.

Therefore, if the queer identity is manifest in one's *gender* then they may be considered to become a legitimate part of society with that different category identification; but the queer identity embedded in *sexual*

---

[5] This link follows a detailed event history of the development of the queer movement in India: [Online] Available from: http://www.huffingtonpost.in/2014/12/11/lgbt-movement-india_n_6307500.html [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[6] See also [Online] Available from: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rajya-sabha-passes-private-bill-on-transgenders/article7138056.ece [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

orientation has not been considered to be *natural* or as an equally legitimate section of society. In West Bengal, a new body was formed to ensure rights of transgenders in the state, under the TMC-led governance[7]. This has been a huge step in the recognition and rehabilitation of transgenders in the state, but it is not the first to recognize a "third gender" in this country, in fact, Tamil Nadu was the first state in India to recognize transgender and intersex persons and introduced the *hijra/aravani* welfare policy[8], followed by Kerala recently[9]. Also, in West Bengal, we also recently witnessed the appointment of the first transgender college Principal[10]. These have all been historic steps in a process that is yet in its nascent phase, and it requires a more holistic representation of the entire queer community in India.

Here, I would like to share a story I came across on Facebook and Instagram[11], because every source of reference is valuable here as every one of these are autobiographical accounts of the queer experience as manifested in our society.

> *Why is everyone so afraid of men in dresses?*[12]
> A confession. Every time I have a photo shoot, interview, or performance—
> I shave. I shave because later when I look at photos of me wearing a beard
> and lipstick or beard and dress I feel like I look disgusting. I shave because
> I know that people won't believe that I'm trans if I don't.
>
> I've been thinking a lot about what it means to be hairy and to be trans. How
> the days when I do not shave are actually the days that I experience the
> most harassment. Shaving is about the distance between, "You look like
> garbage", and "Hey baby." I've been thinking about how almost all of our

---

[7] [Online] Available from: http://www.gaylaxymag.com/latest-news/west-bengal-becomes-1st-indian-state-to-form-a-transgender-development-board/ [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[8] [Online] Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transgender_rights_in_Tamil_Nadu [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[9] [Online] Available from: http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/Transgender-Rights-New-Policy-Coming/2015/07/10/article2911808.ece [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[10] [Online] Available from: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/05/india-transgender-college-principal-150527080214140.html [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[11] See Source: [Online] Available from: https://www.instagram.com/darkmatterpoetry/ [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[12] See source: [Online] Available from: https://www.facebook.com/darkmatterpoetry/photos/a.450619138352342.1073741831.440542966026626/966479143433003/?type=3 [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

models of transfemininity are hairless—how when I post photos of myself online people tell me that if I want to be recognized as "real woman", I should AT LEAST shave, otherwise I look like a "beast", or "a monster." Sometimes when I look at photos of myself I see a monster.

So I've been thinking a lot about monsters. How the monster in the closet of so many of our feminist, queer, and trans politics continues to be the figure of the "man in a dress." I am not, in fact, a man in a dress. I am non-binary person, which means I do not identify as a man nor a woman. But "man in a dress", seems to be the only way that this particular culture recognizes me. So as someone who is so often read and treated as such I've developed a particular sense of empathy and awareness about how revolted our world is by the idea of gender non-conformity.

What is absent from so many discussions of body hair between cis women is why so many of them are offended from being read as "men in dresses", aka gender non-conforming people like me. What is absent from so many discussions of "passing", in trans communities is why should we have to be gender conforming in order to be regarded as beautiful (let alone safe?). And certainly not everyone should have to be gender non-conforming, but I wonder who is left to rage, to fight, to love, to find beauty in us when everyone is trying to run away from us.

Why do we think men in dresses are ugly? Why do we think gender non-conformity is suspicious, dirty, uncouth, unprofessional, tacky, wrong? Why do people spit at me, laugh at me, throw things at me, or shove me when I wear a beard and dress?

My experience and so many of the experiences of gender non-conforming people are a testament to the world that it's not just femininity that's being policed, it's the gender binary. Gender binarism teaches us that "masculinity" and "femininity", must always exist in opposition. So when we see people that have what society regards as "masculine" and "feminine", coexist in tandem we are motivated to disgust, rage, and sometimes even violence. Sometimes I can't tell if I've been harassed because of my perceived femininity, my perceived masculinity, both, or neither.

I earnestly wish we can imagine and build friendships and ideas and movements that challenge the deep and ingrained aversion to gender non-conformity we have been taught. But sometimes that project feels too daunting and naive. So this year I'm going to make a small commitment to not always shaving my beard. To looking at my photos and not seeing ugly or beauty, or masculinity or femininity, but just seeing me.

What a simple gesture, what an impossible task."

The alternative sexualities are, however, not only undermined socially and politically they are also legally misunderstood: the IPC section 377[13] clearly denotes the *unnaturalness* of "alternative sexualities" and thereby criminalizes the offence, even under private circumstances[14], and is punishable by incarceration. "In queer circles today, it is almost absurd to question the idea that each person simply has a sexuality—one that is somehow within the person, that is repressed by society and that needs to be expressed. In other words, the idea of 'sexuality' has come to be naturalized, that is, the relationship between the idea and 'reality' has been placed beyond question. In turn this has meant that we now imagine our sexual universes in terms of people, who have different types of sexuality. This also means that we are driven to translate diverse sexual behaviours, desires and politics into language that finds its base in the idea of sexuality as personhood." (Bhan & Narrain, 2005, p. 93). This idea assumes that the personhood is located in the sexuality of the individual, which is justifiably a postmodern approach to identity. However, the language with which it has to be described is bound in binaries and thus makes the whole space of defining sexualities a teleological labyrinth. "A recent protest against Section 377 in Delhi, which was widely covered by the Hindi media, was the first time that the framework of identity came to be articulated in Hindi, in a positive manner[15]. We are in the process of setting out the terms within which we shall be able to address the politics of sex. This places a responsibility on us to pause, historicize and recognize the potential and limitations of our discursive moves." (Bhan & Narrain, 2005, p. 93).

The idea that homosexuality has come from the West and is a threat to the 'Indian culture' is a theory very similar to that of the causal history of women's repression in the country as well. The feminist movement in India has been precursory in formulating a historical sense of gender

---

[13] See: [Online] Available from: http://iglhrc.org/sites/default/files/15-1.pdf [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[14] [Online] Available from: http://judis.nic.in/supremecourt/imgs1.aspx?filename= 41070 [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[15] Previous coverage of 'sexuality'-related issues revolved around the famous Lucknow case, where the term "gay" was used to describe a certain Western phenomenon polluting the purity of Indian culture. Similarly, the coverage during protests against *Fire* (a film by Mira Nair, with homosexual references) and *Girlfriend* (a mainstream Bollywood film depicting a lesbian relationship) controversy revolved around such an exclusionary framing of sexual identities, placing their existence outside 'Indian culture'.

and gender roles in India. The Hindu traditions, however, have always been repressive of women[16] and their rights, but the larger Indian context is not composed of merely Hindu traditions. It not only has spiritual inspirations, the context is also time specific because studying society always necessitates a historical reference. And urbanity is deeply invested in modern social structures, where women are considered inferior in all apparent perspectives, other than feminism perhaps. The position of women in our society can provide insights into gendered and sexual exclusion, which id often based in religious values. Prof. Renuka Singh writes, in her 1990s feminist exploration of class and women in urban Delhi, "In this fifth decade of development since the country acquired independence, India is undergoing a tremendously paradoxical transformation. The acceleration of the modernization process is prompting people towards the twenty first century, while religion, despite technological ethos, ecological awareness and socio-economic changes, remains a constant consolation in people's life. Religion has encountered secularism and, if modernity has eroded some of the religious beliefs and forms, it has also triggered a reaction to the notions of rationality, thereby, preserving religion albeit precariously (…) Our study reveals that when religion is internalized at a purely ritualistic level, i.e., when women live according to specific religious practices or adopt the ideology, then religion most often oppresses the believer." (Singh, 1990, p. 113.) The ritualistic aspect thus surfaces as the superficial level of religious expression, as opposed to a more holistic spiritual experience; the abject admiration of ritualistic religion by the proponents has alienated the natural instinct for spiritualism while fuelling the materialistic ritual-dependent aspect of religion. This view not only puts hierarchies into the structure, it also associates powers to certain higher levels while taking the power away completely from those placed lower on the structure. However, we will not digress into that debate at this time, instead we will engage with the literature that rose from these social cycles of power as viewed through religion.

Despite being the most influential in the subcontinent, other than the Aryan Hindu Gangetic influences there have been Dravidian traditions, tribal laws, Buddhist and Islamic components to the formation of how the category of women in this country was created. And engaging with

---

[16] See: [Online] Available from: http://nirmukta.com/2011/08/27/the-status-of-women-as-depicted-by-manu-in-the-manusmriti/ [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

the mythologies and folklores of the geographical nation would yield aspects of occurrence and subsequent inclusion of any or all dissidence, regardless of the identity being manifested on gender or sexual orientation. In fact, in this perspective the two are not separate, instead a fluid understanding of personhood incorporating both.

Mythology of the Indian Queer

"In Hindu mythology, the world goes through cycles of birth and death. Each lifetime or 'kalpa' is made up of four eras or 'yuga'. In the first, Satya yuga, categories exist with clear boundaries. Boundaries become increasingly weak and categories get increasingly contaminated in the Treta and Dvapara yugas, before the structure collapses in the Kali yuga, the fourth and final yuga. Then comes 'pralaya', the flood of doom, when nothing exists and then the world starts anew. This makes fixed categories the hallmark of purity and fluidity the hallmark of pollution and collapse. A common reading of Hindu mythology in western academia tends to be literal and so locates patriarchy in Satya yuga when structure is respected, and queerness in Kali yuga, when structure collapses. (…) A deeper Indian reading would locate the problem to the mind. The shift of yuga marks a mind that is increasingly losing faith, hence getting increasingly insecure, hence grabbing more and more power. When this happens, categories are no longer appreciated for their uniqueness. They are located in a hierarchy. Domination and oppression follows, resulting in calls for revolutions. Duties are enforced and rights are demanded in order to shift power" (Pattanaik, 2014, p. 5–6).

This excerpt from Indian mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik's book 'Shikhandi and Other Tales They Don't Tell You', essentially ties up the entire premise of the debate into gender-sexuality categorization and its location in society, from a historical point of view, with social and political aspects intertwined. The mythology represents a general consensus of perception. It also provides the backdrop of locating gender-sexuality as categories, first as historical, then social and lastly political—in such as: binary categories of gender incorporates sexuality within the structure based on its functionality, then the category is disrupted by the individual identity that removes itself from strict structure by defying the binary model and its functions, and finally it seeks to express its desire to exist independently of the structure as well as the functions. It is

quite evident that the perception of alternative sexualities in our society incurs the fear of an unknown category (outside the binary code), and hence the approach is always that of fear and the association of this category with chaos is a tendency.

In the introduction to their work, *Gender and Narrative in the Mahabharata*, Simon Brodbeck and Brian Black (2007) propose a realistic connection between studying gender in mythological narratives: "One of the reasons why we have chosen to examine gender in conjunction with narrative is to shift focus away from attempts to reconstruct a historical reality. This is not to deny that the Mahabharata is historically situated and that its production as a text is indelibly connected to real social and political events that took place in ancient India. Indeed, as a number of Gender Studies scholars have argued, gender cannot be discussed in a social vacuum, but needs to be considered in tandem with political, economic, and religious structures. However, due to the complexity of the Mahabharata and the probability that it contains material composed in different historical periods—not to mention a variety of regions and political regimes – it is very difficult to establish concrete connections between the text and the social worlds from which it might have emerged, particularly since those social worlds are not directly accessible and must be reconstructed in the first place largely on the basis of texts. Thus, while discussing gender as it intersects with social factors such as dharma, varna, marriage practices, family relations, and soteriological paths, it is important to emphasize that the world of the Mahabharata is a literary world, and not a direct reflection or representation of the ever-evasive 'reality' of ancient India. Furthermore, any discussion about gender in a literary product like the Mahabharata must necessarily address much more than the degree to which the text represents real life. Gender roles in narrative literature are not merely reflections of or instructions for the real world; they are always also artistic and metaphorical literary devices, and sometimes gendered symbolism in the text gives added meaning at a textual level without necessarily referring to a social reality."[17] (See Broadbeck & Black, 2007, p. 13–14) It is quite clear that engagement with India's past cultural history is manifest in delving into its religious history, and mythological traditions.

However, the analogy of mythological traditions with social perceptions isn't restricted to Hinduism or the Indian subcontinent. "The Inuit

---

[17] See Broadbeck & Black (2007, p. 13, 14).

of Arctic regions tell the story that the first couple on earth were two men but when they made love, the child conceived could not come out and so one of them was turned into a woman. North American tribes refer to 'two-spirits', people who express both male and female qualities, hence constitute a third gender, and who often serve as shamans as they are considered to be closer to the spirit world. Aztec mythology speaks of the effeminate flower prince Xochipilli, god of art, beauty, maize, dance, song and patron of pleasure and same-sex eroticism. (...) Japanese Shinto mythology speaks of the androgynous Inari, who is sometimes male and sometimes female. Chinese Taoist mythology has amongst its eight immortals Lan Caihe of ambiguous sexuality, dressed sometimes as male and sometimes as female: this places queerness firmly in the realm of nature. (...) In the ancient Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh, there is a story of the king's intense relationship with the savage warrior, Enkidu. On the latter's death, he weeps like a lover weeps for the beloved. Similar sentiments are seen in the words uttered by David at the death of Jonathan in the Bible and in the reaction of Achilles to the death of Patroclus, described in Homer's Greek Epic Iliad" (Pattanaik, 2014, p. 13–19).

There are many more of such mythological examples from all over the world, that can provide a strong argument for the fact that queerness is neither restricted to the West, nor is a strict sexual binary followed as the model for all societies. In fact, these examples give us an idea that every society has its own history that is deeply embedded in an ancient cultural liberalism, and thus the argument that segregated and categorized marginal identities based on gender and sexual dissidence is primarily a *modern* phenomenon[18].

In Pattanaik's queer reading of Indian mythology, he lists the chapters according to the popular tales of queer identities, experiences and folklores. He begins with *Shikhandi*, a princess who became a man to satisfy her wife; *Mahadeva*, who became a woman to deliver his devotees child; *Chudala*, who became a man to enlighten her husband; *Vishnu*, who became a woman to enchant gods, demons and a hermit, *Kali*, who became a man to enchant milkmaids, *Gopeshwar*, who became a woman

---

[18] The onset of orthodoxy can be historically determined to have begun with imperial colonialism. As the West began to expand into the rest of the world, the Catholic Orthodoxy is evidently transferred into regional cultures in the form of colonial traditions growing out of more native forms of social narratives.

to dance; *Samavan*, who became the wife of his male friend; *Ratnavali*, who became the companion of her female friend; *Mandhata*, whose mother was a man; *Bhangashvana*, who was a mother, and a man; *Urvashi*, who was born of no woman; *Bhagirath*, who was born of two women; *Skanda*, whose mothers were not all women; *Aravan*, whose wife was the complete man; *Bahuchara*, whose husband was an incomplete man; *Arjuna*, who was temporarily castrated for showing restraint; *Indra*, who was temporarily castrated for not showing restraint; *Aruna*, who became a woman when the sun paused; *Ila*, who became a woman when the moon waned; *Bhima*, who wore women' clothes to punish; *Vijaya*, who wore women's clothes to conquer; *Krishna*, who wore women's clothes in love; *Samba*, who wore women's clothes as a prank; *Alli*, the queen who did not want a man in her bed; *Kopperumcholam*, the king who wanted a man in the adjacent tomb; *Narada*, who forgot he was a man; *Pramila*, who knew no man; *Rishyashringa*, who knew no woman; *Shiva*, who included the female in his male body; and, *Ram*, who included all in his kingdom (Pattanaik, 2014).

Publications that further elaborate on the space of Indian sexuality experiences and its connections with the history of the landmass are not always moored on academic bonds, often arising out of cultural and historical critique, as well as postmodern, queer and feminist reading of earlier literatures. Sadashiv Dange compiled the *Encyclopaedia of Puranic Beliefs and Practices*, which provides access to a certain perspective of reading of Indian mythological traditions (Dange, 1990). A.K. Ramanujan's collected essays (Dharwerker & Blackburn, 2004) are also crucial in creating this strain of arguments based on Indian culture and Hindu history. Johann Meyer's *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (1989), and Subash Mazumdar's *Who is Who in the Mahabharata* (1988) are both queer readings of Indian mythological tales and lores, and presents a very unique perspective to further interpret and research this particular area, which has not yet been entirely tapped in its interpretative capacity. Also, Kamala Subramaniam's texts on *Ramayana* (1981), *Mahabharata* (1988), and *Srimad Bhagavatam* (1987); Benjamin Walker's expose on Indian and Hindu traditions over two volumes (Walker, 1983); and Heinrich Zimmer's interpretations of Hindu symbols and myths (Zimmer, 1963 [2015]), all encourage the reinterpretation and reimagination of the ancient literatures and theories, so as to enable an understanding of the diverse and rich sexual history of the subcontinent, contrary to the present right-wing political representation of the Hindu culture.

Queer Literature

To embrace Indian literature through a queer reading is to first acknowledge the contributions within the academic disciplines of history, political science, sociology and the languages. In 2009, Wendy Doniger published *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, in which she explores the history of Hindu India if it were told by the otherwise considered marginal—women, dogs and horses, and outcastes—in a playfully controversial retelling. This is a very exciting turn in narrative research, as it accounts for the voices that are largely overshadowed by more politically powerful narrative paradigms. It also allows the space for a discourse to be generated where there is presently none, supporting the *sexual subaltern* argument into further departures.

Ruth Vanita's work on Indian sexuality is paramount in the understanding of it both as a category, and at the same time as a metaphysical entity: *Same-Sex Love in India: A Literary History* maps the trajectory of the concept in terms of its narrative presence. The work is divided into four main sections, denoting ach section with a specific narrative timeframe—a) ancient Indian materials, b) medieval materials in the Sanskritik traditions, c) medieval materials in the Perso-Urdu traditions, and d) modern Indian materials. Her work collates literature with research, fiction with fact and myths with their traditional manifest forms; thereby creating a conclusive and comprehensive work detailing the interpretations and normative location of sexualities in the Indian context, in a space and time continuity. It also compiles a range of individualistic narratives, letters, teachings, personal stories, cultural critiques and poetry to draw inferences on the historical and cultural traditions. In the preface to the new edition (Vanita & Kidwai, 2008), the editors claim, "*It is not possible to list here all the fiction that depicts same-sex relations either as a major or minor theme. Some examples are R. Raj Rao's 'The Boyfriend', Manju Kapur's 'A Married Woman', Abha Dawesar's 'Babyji', Suniti Namjoshi's 'Sycorax: New Fables and Poems, and Amruta Patil's 'Kari'.*"[19]

---

[19] See: R. Raj Rao (2003) *The Boyfriend*. New Delhi: Penguin; M. Kapur (2004) *A Married Woman*. London: Faber; A. DAWESAR (2005) *Babyji*. New York: Anchor Books; S. Namjoshi (2006) *Sycorax: New Fables and Poems*. New Delhi: Penguin; A. Patil (2008) *Kari*. New Delhi: HaperCollins.

One literary work currently (2015) finding footing in Bengali language, on the subject of experiential gender and sexualities, at the same time persisting a progressive mode of breaking stigma and prejudice around the community, is *Holdey Golaap* (Yellow Rose) by author Swapnamoy Chakraborty[20]. It is a compilation of personal and biographical works, revolving around marginal identities and their everyday lives, relationships with others and society, and the degree of exploitation and abuse faced by them. The compilation had previously been published in the format of a continuous series in the magazine *Robbar* (*Sunday*) of *Sangbad Pratidin*, under the editorial reign of acclaimed Bengali director and actor Rituparno Ghosh[21]. The book is in Bengali, but may be soon translated in other Indian languages so that there is increased communication of experiences between the marginalized identities and communities.

In the introduction to another edited publication of compiled Indian queer interviews, the editors state the argument: "*Heterosexism is the fallacious belief that the prerequisite for sexual attraction is that the partners invariably be of opposite sexes, that is male and female. However, heterosexism serves the interests of homoerotically inclined men in most Eastern cultures, including India, by allowing them to establish an alibi: it guarantees that a homosexual liaison arouses no suspicion in the minds of one's immediate kith and kin, and indeed, society at large, by making the association seem like friendship, or, to use a more resonant word, 'yaari'. Two people of the same gender can never be lovers—they can only be friends. Conversely, two people of the opposite sex, when seen together, must inevitably be in a sexual relationship.*" (Rao & Sarma 2009, p. xix.) Thus, in the contextual background with this high degree of social pressure on pursuing "normal" lives, the queer literature that has emerged in this country reflects this sentiment and experiential scope.

Much has been written about and discussed about the growing trend of queer literature in the country, especially on the Internet, in the social media platforms and blogs. "*With more authors choosing homosexual themes for their work, a same-sex story no longer remains taboo for Indian writers. Earlier, novels on same-sex relationships were rare in Indian writ-*

---

[20] See: [Online] Available from: http://www.telegraphindia.com/1150426/jsp/calcutta/story_16710.jsp#.VcTt13iDTdk [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[21] See: [Online] Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rituparno_Ghosh [Accessed: 18th July 2017] and also http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0315916/ [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

ing in English. But in the past couple of years, this scenario is undergoing a change. Valsad-based interior designer Mayur Patel's novel, 'Vivek and I', is about a teacher who fancies a student in his school. The book was released in December 2010. In July last year (2010), R Raj Rao, a professor of literature in Pune, wrote 'Hostel Room 131' —a novel tracing a budding love story in the hostel of an engineering college. Incidentally, his novel, 'The Boyfriend' (2003) is among the first gay novels written in English in India. Also published last year was Rahul Mehta's 'Quarantine', a collection of short stories. Continuing the trend, this year will see the release of Ghalib Shiraz Dhalla's novel 'The Exiles', about a homosexual man's extra-marital relationship."[22] Another similar popular blog for queer discourse also published articles with the claim that India was increasingly becoming tolerant of the unabashed literary explorations of alternative sexualities. "*Gay literature found another champion in the works of Hoshang Merchant, who has, since the 1990s, created a vast body of work. The most significant are the anthologies he has edited, viz., Yaraana: Gay Writing from India (2000), and Forbidden Sex, Forbidden Texts: New India's Gay Poets (2008), as also The Man Who Would be Queen: Autobiographical Fictions (2011). Bindumadhav Khire, a gay rights and AIDS activist, is trying to carry a similar mantle in the realm of contemporary gay Marathi literature. His self-published novels Partner (2005), Indradhanu (2009) and Antarang (2013) were received with much enthusiasm by the queer community as significant firsts in regional literature.*"[23]

Another popular online media portal, places testaments from various publishers dealing with queer subjects, to exemplify the trend that is currently on the rise in India, albeit with its own set of difficulties and opposition from religious and right wing political organizations. "*Kartika VK, publisher and chief editor at Harper Collins, admits that there are gaps in the queer literature market "but writers are more willing to experiment" and "are less averse of being seen as queer writers". Priya, the chief editor of Gaysi Zine, testifies to this. "We have moved ahead of just writing about our identity and sexuality. We have many straight writers too and a lot of content that straight people would be interested in," says Priya,*

---

[22] See: Kim Arora's article in the Times of India, link: [Online] Available from: http://times ofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Authors-get-bold-as-gay-literature-picks-up-in-India/articles how/7440562.cms [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

[23] See for more information: [Online] Available from: http://scroll.in/article/742057/ gay-literature-is-firmly-out-of-the-closet-in-india-and-winning-readers-over [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

adding that 600 copies of the magazine have been printed this year. Most of the little that we do have in queer literature is in English, which is translated into hindi and Marathi to satisfy regional demand. "Our Hindi and Marathi books are mostly out of stock", says Shobhna, who is inundated with manuscripts and proposals and sees a promising trend of rising queer writers and acceptance by readers."[24]

Khushwant Singh is considered one of the most prolific modern writers of India, and he has been a vocal advocate of liberal thought that reflects in his stories and characters: sexuality and sexual freedom is an established theme of his work, and he has often brought to the front subjects that remain customarily disregarded in everyday life. *Delhi* (1990) is one such publication, which delves into the dark and unknown crevasses of human psyche revolving around sexualities. In this book, Singh explores the experience of having a transgender lover, and by the virtue of daring to go where no one goes openly he challenged the existing shackles of portraying non-normative relationships in popular literature. He is also largely considered a controversial author, for the same reason that he approached life with open eyes and open arms, which would often be at opposites with the social norms or ideal types.

Thus, we may conclude here: India is at the cusp of breaking through to liberal literature in queer reading and writing. Some regional literature has existed on the subject of same-sex love and/or transsexual romance, or stories of transgender lives; but this was mostly underground and considered pornographic to an extent. It was never considered a part of mainstream literary scoped, until now, when increasingly queer stories are becoming part of the mainstream publishing structure. People are not only reading them, they are replacing prejudice with curiosity. In a lot of ways, this is a progressive step in holistic awareness of the queer community and individual aspects.

Queer Cinema

Coming to the context of the film industry, popular cinema in India is engaged in a multilateral dialogue with sexualities; being overtly dominated by heteronormative sensibilities, mainstream commercial cinema has very rarely delved with the subject of alternative sexuality directly,

---

[24] See more at: [Online] Available from: http://www.dnaindia.com/lifestyle/report-the-rise-and-rise-of-queer-literature-2035552 [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

except for a few departures in the last two decades. And this is primarily because cinema in India is directly dependent on the cultural norms and restrictions, where the edicts of sensibilities are curated by traditions and heteropatriarchy. However, this is not to say that Indian cinema is devoid of sexual titillation or references, in fact, the queer also feature in some way in this aspect but largely as comical interjections or misunderstood character portrayals. "*Therefore, transformations in film narratives are shaped, among other factors, by cinema's reciprocal relationship to its audience who, on their part, accept some images while rejecting others.*" (Bose & Bhattacharya, 2007, p. 417.) Therefore, to read into the queer sub-narratives in commercial cinema, one needs to accommodate the subversion within the space of what is "accepted".

"*Although art house cinema in India has so far failed to treat the subject of alternative sexuality with sensitivity, mainstream cinema, ironically enough, especially the cinema of the 1970s and 1980s, featuring superstar Amitabh Bachchan, who disrupted the running-around-trees romantic flick of the 1960s through his sheer presence, is increasingly beginning to lend itself to queer interpretations. These films cash in on the idea of both male single-sex space and 'yaari', and were mostly scripted by male writer duo Salim-Javed. Queer readings are possible not just of the films themselves, but also of the songs. The 1975 blockbuster "Sholay", set in the wilderness of the imaginary Ramgarh with two tramps and former jailbirds, Jai and Veeru, for protagonists, is one such film that finds an excellent parallel in the overtly gay, 2007 film 'Brokeback Mountain' featuring two Wyoming cowboys, Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist. Brokeback Mountain is in fact the other side of Sholay, its off-screen side. The "Yeh Dosti..." number sung by Jai and Veeru on a motorbike emerges as a queer song when one scrutinizes its lyrics and imagery. If audiences are resistant to queer interpretations of the song, it is merely because heterosexism interferes: there is nothing latent in the song to prove that it is not queer.*" (Rao & Sarma, 2009, p. xxi, xxii) Clearly, in the absence of queer representation, the normative would be cast into ambiguously incorporating queer elements, or through suggestive subtext. It became something of a trend, to feature this male bonding in the form of brotherhood and/or friendship in mainstream commercial cinema in India during the later half of the last century; in films like *Deewar* (bond between brothers), *Zanjeer* (bond between two aggressive opposites), and *Anand* (bond between a doctor and his terminal patient) in the 70s; and followed by the likes of: *Ram Lakhan* (bond between brothers), *The Burning Train* (bond be-

tween friends); in the 90s came films like *Karan Arjun* (bond between brothers), and *Andaz Apna Apna* (Bond between friends), all filmed with the biggest film-stars of India in their early days; and more recently *Dil Chahta Hai* (bond between friends) and *Zindagi na Milegi Dobara* (bond between friends). In all these films we see protagonists and their friends compose of an almost *sacred* bond of alliance and trust, giving rise to the narrative plots, but the subtext remains queer in its basis.

Interestingly, films with narratives revolving around women who form close bonds of friendship are viewed and accepted differently. It reflects on the highly gendered and often deeply sexist prejudices around films with female protagonists being closely bonded, and any-time that it has been attempted to be portrayed on film, has inevitably encouraged sexual representation, which has been entirely absent in the male counterpart narratives. "*It became something of a rite of passage for the rebellious kids of the 1980s and 1990s. Watching Deepa Mehta's highly controversial film, 'Fire', felt like breaking a law and becoming a grown-up. It was, in fact, more exciting than watching one's first blue film, be-cause what did good middle class Indian kids know anything about two women kissing? And if the stalwarts of Indie films like Shabana Azmi and Nandita Das were in it, the premise MUST be true. For many like me, this landmark film was a portal to a reality neatly kept under wraps by our society. Fire also seemed to have opened artistic doors for many. Take 'Facing the Mirror: Lesbian Writing from India' edited by Ashwini Suk-thankar, which was published in 1999: it was among the first anthologies dedicated to stories about lesbian relationships.*"[25] When the general masses reject cinema representing same-sex love or transgender ro-mance, they argue with the life-imitating-art clause, fearing inspiration to experience one's gender and sexuality freely. It is a direct threat to the political functioning of a state, which is, in the first place, built upon structures revolving around a myopic vision of human sexuality.

The Desire of Dissidence

The queer identity is a hazard to the structural composition of social norms standardized around heterosexuality, which resultantly affects the order of the market economy, also standardized around heteronor-

---

[25] See more at [Online] Available from: http://scroll.in/article/742057/gay-literature-is-firmly-out-of-the-closet-in-india-and-winning-readers-over [Accessed: 18th July 2017].

mative life-goals; and when the economy is jeopardized with change it disturbs the political state of matters and power structures. This would mean that, if the individual is allowed to be completely independent of the social restraints to freely evolve into their associative gender and sexual identities, it would definitely upset the social order of things; and it is inevitable since this order of social structure and functions is also based upon modernity's obsession with controlling sexuality through state and church[26]. And despite the fact that India has its own intensely spiritual historical tradition of experiential sexuality, the postcolonial global expectations in the Western new-world order has created rifts between schools of thought: at one hand, there is a vast section of the Indian population who do not oppose sexual freedom because they re-call India's true history, which not only deems sexuality a spiritual experience, but also holds a venerable position in the social order for the gender non-binary as well; on the other hand, we have the religious extremist sections of the society, who insist on restricting and negating sexuality to control the *body* as much as it can be[27]. While the first category of Indians, resides mostly in urban areas and the latter in rural, there is no strict demarcation of the parochial and the liberal, as they intersect each other through expressions of homophobia and transphobia in both urban and rural spaces. In fact, the degree of abuse and exploitation is higher in the cities because of the higher density of population in such areas. As an urban space, it attracts all marginalities, as it holds possibilities that are absent outside the scope of a city.

Now, according to findings and conceptual explorations, one can argue that the "queer" as a category manifest in identity expressions, only

---

[26] This is a reference to the understanding in its Western conceptualization, in the modern era.

[27] The reflection of this control is also felt in the anti-abortion laws, while it is arguably the most preemptive policy reform against the massive statistics of female foeticide in this country, it also translates to the loss of rights of the woman over her own reproductive rights in other contexts. The clubbing of the diverse contexts into one policy reform, negates the idea of the control itself, however, the conceptual modern nation state has historically maintained firm control over the female body, to control in turn the politics of citizenship and economic parlance of population growth. However, very much like the idea discussed above, the control bases its politics in the rudiments of cultural notions of the social reality being ordered: while a ban on abortion would mean the immediate loss of control of the woman over her own body, but the cultural backwardness also translates to the fact that female foeticide and misogyny would be carried on through other methods (perhaps through the categorical subjugation of women throughout their lives?).

exist in urban spaces: this is to clarify that the agency of the "queer" identity dissipates outside the urban realms. Although, some of my respondents came from suburban Kolkata, the social characteristics of these areas are identical in many ways to the more urban psyche. On maneuvering this postcolonial multicultural character of Kolkata, Ananya Roy writes, "*At the fringes of the city, where its concrete density faded into verdant fields of paddy, I found the rural landless seeking to stake a claim to urban livelihood and shelter. On the teeming trains that ran restlessly between southern villages and middle-class urban neighborhoods, I found desperate women carving out a grueling commute against hunger and deprivation. If the city was urbanizing at a frantic pace, engulfing large swathes of agricultural land, then the villages of the southern delta were becoming ruralized, surviving as impoverished labor hinterlands of the metropolis. This rural-urban interface belonged to more than simply migrants, squatters, and commuters. It was here, in the historicized niches of the city, that the Left Front was seeking to implement liberalization, what I came to call a communism for the new millennium. What is striking about the New Communism is its territorialized flexibility, a volatile remaking of the city in and through which the hegemony of poverty is quietly reproduced.*" (Roy, 2003, p. ix) And although Roy's work is a few years behind, and the new state government of west Bengal arose from the Left Front opposition, the policies of urban development have remained the same, if not increased.

So, in the amalgamated urban space of Kolkata, the queer rise as a community who subsist on the agency of urbanity itself: outside of the city's fringes, the queer either deny themselves their true identity or dream of migrating to the urban space which is more accommodative of their true identities. However, that does not imply that the queer are *accepted* in the mainstream urban life, but merely tolerated. This tolerance, despite increasing voices for equal rights, is shadowed by abuse and prejudice.

During the fieldwork, I spoke to both normative and non-normative subjects, with the aim to deconstruct conceptually every aspect of the inquiry from both perspectives. Amongst the normative subjects, I finally chose only specific contextual narratives, while keeping others to exemplify or further arguments in the discourse. One of the normative respondents I spoke to was the domestic help of a close family relative, who knew a few boys who lived in her *jhuggi* (slum area) in the suburbs of the city, who work at a massage parlour for men. The following is an excerpt from our conversation.

How do you know these boys are homosexual?
They told my daughter. They told her they massage men in that parlour, and sometimes for extra money they also have sex with them.

So they are like prostitutes?
No not like that, it's just in the parlour. They don't have sex with men outside.

Did they say so?
I don't know, but I think they only do it for the money. Why would a man have sex with another man? All these gay and lesbian people, how do they do *it* with each other! It is unnatural. At the end of the day a man needs a woman, and a woman needs a man!

But have you never heard of homosexuals before?
Yes, once, when we were children, living in the village, there was a man who used to get drunk and get physical with other men. One day, the men of the village gave him a good beating. They made him understand that all this gay-lesbian nonsense is only for the city people, and if he had to live in the village he had to mend his ways. I remember that, we went to watch him get slapped by everyone.

What happened to that man, did he mend his ways?
I think he came to Kolkata a few months after that. Never heard of him again.

So, that's why you think those boys are just doing it for the money?
Yes, what else. In the cities, everybody is perverted. There is too much sex, in everything. In the village, we live like normal people: we work, we eat, we sleep, and we take care of our family. Here, there is too much happening, too many options, too much to experience, and people are going insane with bizarre thoughts. Its no wonder, everybody these days needs to go to psychiatrists. I work in so many homes, I see it everyday. Mother and father both work, never have time for their children, then they spoil them with money, and ten years later they become gay. These are things only rich people have time or energy for. Me? I have to work in six different homes to earn enough money so that my son can keep going to college next year.

But what if your son or daughter told you they are homosexual, or transgender?[28]
I will beat it out of them. I'll take them to a doctor; even a psychiatrist if that will make them realize how life works for us. People like us don't have the

---

[28] Here, I had already explained to her who or how a person is identified as homosexual or transgender.

luxury to do all this nonsense. Our lives are based on opportunities. If that doesn't work, I'll pray to god to show my family reason and mercy.

This notion, that alternative sexualities only occur in urban spaces, is neither rare nor new. The city has always been associated with absurdities and excesses: with anonymity and high population density provides for variety to coexist. However, this mutual agreement to exist co-dependently but separately also makes it a highly spatially segregated space, embedded in hierarchies. These hierarchies then create unequal distribution of rights and opportunities among those who have to remain in the fringes of the social order. Thus, the marginalized categories experience their subaltern trauma on a common platform. Thus, even the pattern of migration into the urban space reflects that desire to form dissidence together in a space that allows an extent of self-expression. That is why one has to study the queer as a *community*, to justify its parlance in conceptual exploration.

<div align="center">*</div>

Thus, we may conclude this paper with the following arguments: a) the category of queer is based upon the political imagination of an alternative social structure; b) it is composed of identity associations embedded in *both* gender and sexuality, c) the queer identity manifests through the knowledge of its own actuality; d) this knowledge in turn is largely dependent on ambiguity and postmodern liberalism, that hides more than it exposes; and finally, e) there are two primary perspectives of studying the queer: subjective and objective, and while both have their analytical parlance, only the subjective provides in-depth exploration into the everyday of queer existence. The Indian context, however, requires some more reflection, since the theoretical paradigms of studying Indian sexuality prerequisites perspectives contextual to the cultural and political history of the subcontinent.

REFERENCES

BHAN, G. & NARRAIN, A. (eds.) (2005) *Because I Have a Voice: Queer Politics in India*. New Delhi: Yoda Press.
BOSE, B. & BHATTACHARYA, S. (eds.) (2007) *The Phobic and the erotic: Politics of Sexualities in India*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

BRODBECK, S. & BLACK, B. (2007) *Gender and Narrative in the Mahabharata*. New York: Routledge.

DANGE, S. (1990) *Encyclopedia of Puranic Beliefs and Practices*. New Delhi: Navrang.

DHARWADKER, V. & BLACKBURN S. H. (eds.) (2004) *The Collected Essays of A. K. Ramanujan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

DONIGER, W. (2009) *The Hindus: An Alternative History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

MAZUMDAR, S. (1988) *Who is Who in the Mahabharata*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

MEYER, J. J. (1989) *Sexual Life in Ancient India.* New Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

PATTANAIK, D. (2014) *Shikhandi and other tales they don't tell you*. UK: Penguin Books.

RAO, R., R. & DIBYAJYOTI, S. (eds.) (2009) *Whistling in the Dark: Twenty One Queer Interviews*. New Delhi: Sage.

ROY, A. (2003) *City Requiem, Calcutta: Gender and the Politics of Poverty.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

SINGH, K. (1990) *Delhi. A Novel*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

SINGH, R. (1990) *The Womb of Mind: A Sociological Exploration of Status-Experience of Women in Delhi*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.

SUBRAMANIAM, K. (1981) *Ramayana*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

SUBRAMANIAM, K. (1987) *Srimad Bhagavatam.* Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

SUBRAMANIAM, K. (1988) *Mahabharata*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

VANITA, R. & KIDWAI, S.(2008) *Same-Sex Love in India: A Literary History*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

WALKER, B. (1983) *Hindu World: An Encyclopedic Survey of Hinduism in two volumes.* London: Allen & Unwin.

ZIMMER, H. & CAMPBELL J. (ed.) (1963 [2015]) *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization.* Bollingen Series VI. Princeton: Princeton University Press.