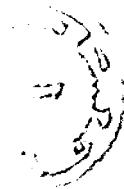


FOLK NARRATIVES AND CULTURAL SYSTEMS IN SOUTHERN INDIA : A THEORETICAL STUDY

*Dissertation submitted to the
Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the
award of the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY



C. JEYA SELVIN

**CENTRE OF LINGUISTICS & ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI
INDIA
1997**



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067

CENTRE OF LINGUISTICS & ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

21st July 1997

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify the dissertation entitled "**FOLK NARRATIVES AND CULTURAL SYSTEMS IN SOUTHERN INDIA : A THEORETICAL STUDY**" submitted by **C. JEYA SELVIN** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy of this university, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university. This in an original work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

PROF. KAPIL KAPOOR
CHAIRPERSON

DR. FRANISON D. MANJALI
SUPERVISOR



CONTENTS

CHAPTER NO.		PAGE NO.
	Acknowledgement	iv
Chapter I	Introduction	1
Chapter II	Trends in Folk Narrative Research	5
Chapter III	Ideational Theory of Culture	30
Chapter IV	Narrative Process And The Symbolic Components of <i>Venkalarajan Kathai</i>	51
Chapter V	Conclusion	87
	Notes	90
	Bibliography	



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have enjoyed writing this dissertation and I would like to take this opportunity to express by gratefulness to those who have either directly or indirectly helped me in this work.

At the outset, my sincere thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Franson D. Manjali for his guidance and continuous inspiration throughout the course of this study.

My thanks are also due to Mr. G. Stephen, Mr. N. Ramachandaran Nair and Mr. Arivazhagan for their timely help by sending the primary sources for this study.

I also extend my sincere thanks to the library staffs and authorities of Teen Murti House, Sahitya Accademy and FRRRC, Palayam Kottai for their excellent facilities and co-operation throughout this study.

I am also grateful to my friends Pavananthi Vembulu, Kanagaraj and Nedunkilli for their help in preparing this study. And also, I am obliged to Mr. Jayakumar, Mr. Sakthivel and Mr. Ramakrishnan for their help in computer work.

At last, I express my utmost gratitude to my parents, Chelliah and Devasundaram and my brothers Ravi and Seelan for their constant source of inspiration and financial support throughout this course of study.

Station : New Delhi
Date : 21st July, 1997

Ch. Selvin jeya

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Folk narratives cover a wide range of oral literature including myths, legends and tales. On the basis of the specificity in the content, Linda Degh has classified the various genres of narrative forms. According to her the main features of telling a tale are 'for entertainment', 'believed to be fictitious' and 'creation of human fantasy' (Degh 1972, p .72). But the prime aim of a legenderical form is not to entertain people but 'to educate' them about the present world and the past. Due to this typical nature, this form is "rooted in the their social environment" and sensitivises the group and the individual attitudes (ibid. p.72).

Due to its local habituation 'a legend is very near to history'. She also stressed that the "understanding of legend is possible if one views through the general living conditions, belief and ideology of culture" (ibid. p.72). The other form which closely links with the legendrical form is myth , which is in turn linked with the religious system and hence taken to be sacred.

In oral societies telling a tale encompasses many social functions. A narrative is told by an elderly experienced person

to the younger members. It may be a part of the every day events. And it might take place in the street, during working hours or some other informal settings. But telling or narrating a myth or legend is a different thing, it will be a special occasion. It will also be accompanied by other events associated with the enactments. One cannot narrate a myth or legend on other occasions without societal approval. Narrating of tales is not governed by such restrictions. Hence, telling a narrative is governed by culturally constituted rules which play a major role in understanding a narrative.

According to the cognitivist view, the constitution of culture can be understood in terms of specific cultural constitutions at a particular time. Human beings' day-to-day life presupposes and are continuously rationalised through such narratives. Every human group for clear cut activity need presupposed imagination and rationality. This perspective brings folk narratives and culture closer. Society's activities, imagination and rationality that govern an individual's day-to-day life are apparently reflected in the narrative forms. Spiro views narratives as 'culturally constituted projective system' (Spiro 1984 p.324). They are constituted on the basis of the human beings' social experience. These constitutions give 'cognitive orientations' to the individuals (ibid. p.324).

Viewing folk narratives in this way, various generic systems which are experientially generated by human individuals can be treated as the constituted world of the individuals. This constituted world gives order to the world in which the individuals live. This constituted world shows how a community make sense of the world, and how members of a community interact with each other. Such an experientially created world defines the domains of individuals' interactions.

During the eighties this understanding of human activities is conceived as a 'system' in anthropology. This system is constituted of 'various organisation and evaluation schemes, embodied with institutional, symbolic and material forms' (Ortner 1994, p.397). Thus, cultural system with its presupposed domains of interactions constrains human activities by limiting various cultural formations and transformation of cultural forms. With the specific cultural formations, cultural groups constitute its own boundaries. And also, these formations by constraining the individual's interactions maintain the cultural boundaries.

From various discussions in Anthropology, Linguistics and Cognitive science, it is assumed that the formation of a cultural system is understandable by how a speech community creates its space and meaning for their various activities by

generic systems. With this assumption the following questions may reveal the formation of a cultural system.

- 1) How does a speech community through meaning creations bring diverse people together.
- 2) What are the basic units in which meaning is constituted.

We have attempted to answer these questions. In the first chapter, various approaches on narrative systems are discussed. And also, how human beings with their intrinsic capacity for meaning creation are bound up with the embodiment of cultural traditions. In the second chapter, the different shifts in the ideational theory of culture are discussed. The definition of culture as shared symbol system is a clear advance in the understanding of a cultural systems. The shared models that constitute such a system and which are experientially created, are also discussed. These two chapters, show that the recent developments which took place in the fields of cognitive science and anthropology are useful to understand the constitution of people's reality in their day-to-day life interactions.

In the third chapter, the narrative process of and the symbolic components of bow song are discussed. This chapter tries to understand the meaning creation of a ~~due~~ narrative through people's interpretative systems. And also how the created meaning is foreclosed by the selection of the delivery media and the culturally constituted symbols.

CHAPTER II

TRENDS IN FOLK NARRATIVE RESEARCH

With the work of Levi-Strauss on myth, the field of folk narrative research changed dramatically. Before him the anthropologists considered myth as a story about the past and interpreted it as a theological phenomenon rather than as one of the social institutions. Levi-Strauss viewed myth as a synchronic reconstruction of culture, as a combination of 'narrated text' and 'activated script'. The enunciation of this form is like a language system, so it has to be viewed as a part of human speech. According to him, "... mythical discourse is a kind of metalanguage of which the constitutive units were theses or sequences devoid of significance in themselves in the same way as the phonemes of a language, and assuming a sense only through their articulation in a system" (Levi-Strauss 1987, p.200).

Levi-Strauss regarded the characteristic feature of mythical thought as a kind of intellectual 'bricolage' a term used with the connotation of 'extraneous movement'. A bricoleur is a person who does not have any kind of project but creates with whatever is available new things. Levi-Strauss stressed that

mythical thought which operates in the same way, "lies halfway between percepts and concepts" (Levi-Strauss, 1972, p.16 & 17). Apart from identifying the characteristics of mythical narrative, he gave it historical validity by saying that, myths represent the 'ethnographic and historical evolution' of the people. Every culture defines its actors by its own structures. So the different versions and the structural variations exhibit great regularity and highly systematic characteristics, which correspond to the economic and sociological conditions in which each indigenous group lived and developed (Levi-Strauss 1987, P.201).

His analysis of myth has lead us to understand the complex constitution of human thinking faculty, the collective and the individual identity created by man in the form of culture towards his environment. So the constitution of a myth is in relation to the cultural process which varies with variation in the environment. Consequently, the infrastructure of a myth is densely deposited with the cultural symbols and local knowledge system. In every changing social cultural sphere the myth will also transform but the infrastructure of the myth remains the same. Every sequence of transformation is in accordance with the mediatory process of social life, which according to him, takes place by the mutual interactions of social structure and social relations. So Levi-Strauss's claim that mythical structure parallels with social structures, is not based on the idea that

myth reflects society. Instead, he argues that both social organisation and myth shared a common underlying structure.

Levi-Strauss's model of myth developed in the sixties was influenced by linguistics and communication theory. He sought to establish a universal grammar of culture. In reaction to this view, in folklore and linguistics, scholars like Lauri Honko, Richard Bauman and Mark Johnson treat linguistic and other cultural expressions as embodied with local habituation. In this chapter, however, the aim is to develop an interdisciplinary perspective on narrative.

Genre Theory :

Levi-Strauss's model aimed to understand the universal grammar through narratives, treating narratives as uniform mass. Against this view genre theory treats oral tradition as embodied with local habituation. According to this view, oral tradition is not uniform mass as far as its nature and information value are concerned. According to Lauri Honko, "... various folklore genres of the oral literature are the system of different channels of cultural communication" (Honko 1989, p.13). A special group in a speech community is in command with wide range of genres and are capable of applying these channels for various occasions according to the "cultural conventions". For example, the concept of death expressed in the narratives such as, legend and myth is not the same as the one in ceremonial song. They

express something meaningful about death but not the something as in a death ceremonial song. So the distinctiveness of messages in particular genres is in relation to the distribution of genres in the given culture. Based on these 'culturally defined rules' the messages in the folkloric genres are distributed (ibid. p.13).

Without a consideration of the distribution of genres, the universal taxonomy of narrative forms merely guides and limits the understanding of narrative genres. Here, the idea of genre is dependent on culturally occupied 'canons of differentiation' rather than universal categories (ibid. p.14). Parallel with this understanding Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger in her article Genre and Community in the Folklore System of Chattisgarh, notices strong identification between particular genre, regional culture and the region. It is very evident in oral commentaries and metafolklore. Any generic system is interlinked with regional culture and community and to understand this relation one must place a genre in its local habituation. Because, only through the indigenous folkloric 'repertoire' the identification of a particular narrative genre is possible. In accordance with this indigenous organization of folklore genres, any genres from a cultural region, interact as a system.

On the basis of her study on the Chhattisgarh cultural region, Flueckiger identified three kinds of embodied relation

within genres (Flueckiger 1991, p.185). 1) A genre is associated with every day interactions in which a group of people takes part directly. This kind of interactive group one can identify by the social variables such as caste, poor group, etc. Membership of each group is dependent on the categories of social status, age limitation, martial status, etc.. 2) The second level of community identified by genre is the folklore community. This grouping is characterised by the shared notion of the particular folklore repertoire. 3) Another level of identification of a community by a genre is understandable through the boundedness of a genre with a regionally constituted cultural universe. The cultural boundedness of the narrative is linked to the tradition of a community. It differs from other genres by selecting its regionally bounded delivery media. Due to this uniqueness, the oral tradition is divided into genres and generic systems. This is a fundamental shift in folk narrative research. In telling or during the time of enunciation, according to the presupposed purpose, culturally differentiated generic form will be selected. So the selection of a particular genre and the delivery media are crucial. It is woven with the narrative telling tradition of the speech community.

Telling a narrative is linked to the communication of culture. Because telling involves performance and it is not a one way process, various social and cultural forces influence a narrating event. Generally, telling a narrative means, informing

the audience of something by using traditional channels. It involves transmission of knowledge. In cultural anthropology, this information transmission from one generation to another is described generally by the name of 'culture'. Pentikainan has observed that this transmission process within a social group is based on the transmission of information 'on tradition' and during this transmission, the information is getting loaded into a new tradition. Thus the transmission process pointed out by her involves two modes of access, 'tradition' and 'creative process' (Pentikainan 1978, P. 237). The formation of new information process is also tied up with the culture's spawning inventions. The individual narrator who comes to narrate a narrative to a social group does not create a content of his own but rather the group activities and his surroundings stimulates its development. During this process, the individual narrator adapts, transfers and applies the cultural tradition, and while adopting a tradition, the choices made in accordance with various norms of the social group are crucial.

If information from a narrative which is received by an individual has no continuity it is not handed down to the next generation. The emergence of a narrative is a continuous process of negotiation which takes place between various cultural, social and political domains. This negotiation process takes place also at the intersubjective level. If traditional information is not at all valid in the new socio-political situation, the content

and form of a narrative will change in accordance with the change in socio-political arena. But the change in content and form of a narrative form is filtered through narrator's and social individual's tradition.

Pentikainen argues in favour of the folkloristic approach towards a text wherein '....not only the traditional text be the object of study but also the events that accompany the transmission of the tradition should be treated' (ibid. p.237). Her argument is that both the oral communication and the channels used to convey the information stimulates the various domains of social activities. This approach according to her is the 'basic model of human intercourse'. (ibid. p.237). So the narrative tradition is inextricably linked with the socio-political conditions and the historical discontinuities of the social group in which the narrative practice is accepted as a part of tradition.

Performance Theory :

Pentikainen's views on folk narratives, as discussed above are further stressed and explained by Bauman's performance approach. This approach centres around performativity and contextualization. Folklore is seen as a social-behavioural process and situated communicative interaction. Bauman relates his concept of performance to contemporary socio-cultural analysis. Its subject matter is the use of genre in the context

of social life. However, it is perfectly compatible with a continued interest in a range of problems that have been of longstanding concern within linguistic anthropology. This area in anthropology study the grammatical rules by which the language is organised. With this influence from linguistic anthropology, Bauman's performance theory is concerned with the cultural rules by which the social use and non-use of the genre is organised. One of the main concern is the elucidation of the complex system of resources (models) available to the community and how they are effectively utilised by the members of a community in the conduct of social interaction. So identifying such resources involves speaking in relation to a totality. Bauman calls it the linguistic repertoire out of which the linguistic utterances such as genres, cultural models available to the members of the community are generated in the socio-cultural life.

Bauman's performance approach is regarded as situated day-to-day cultural practices forming part of the Marxian concept of praxis, and is closely identified with the concept of 'enactment' proposed by Victor Turner in *Symbolic Anthropology*. Bauman noticed that all these approaches are "convergent in many ways". (Limo & Young 1986, p. 439). He defines performance as an, "organising principle within a single conceptual response and that does so in terms of locally defined, culture specific category and contexts" (Bauman 1972, p. xi). The central focus of his performance approach is on the process rather than on the

product. The story teller/composer of a text is seen as integrated with the events he creates and also with the members of the surrounding community who evaluate his narration process from the perspective of a traditional canon. Consequent to this view, the understanding of a narrative should extend beyond its 'telling context' to other levels of social contexts. The reference is to 'collective contexts' or how human participants are collectively constructing the world around them. Here Bauman expands the Malinowskian notion of context and equates it with the 'objective description' of everything that surrounds a set of utterances, i.e., all aspects of life behind the telling of a narrative form. These narrative utterances and the social context which govern the telling process, emerge from the interaction between the participants and social relations. Bauman calls it 'contextualization', and argues that, "the communicative contexts are not dictated by social and the physical environment but emerge in negotiations between participants in social relations" (Bauman & Briggs 1990, p.68).

Obviously, performance theory calls for the integration of the historical background of the performer, the performance and the context, for a full understanding of generic event. This means a generic performance should be seen in its total integration with history, community and culture. The performance approach, noticeably breaks with the tradition of objectivism of

studying merely the performance of a text. This understanding of a narrative text emerged during the eighties when the social sciences became practice-based. Similar shift occurred in other disciplines also. In cognitive linguistics there is a questioning of the objectivist semantics of an earlier period.

SCHEMA THEORY:

The Schema theory arose in opposition to the objectivist view that argued that human thought is merely a mechanical manipulation of symbols and hence disembodied. For the schema theory, human bodily experience and the way the humans use the imaginative mechanism are central.

The schema theory was developed in the works of Bartlett, Minsky, Rosch and Taylor. The term is used somewhat differently in different fields for the same process. In cognitive science, this process is regarded as one of the main organising principles of human thinking. Though Immanuel Kant was the first modern philosopher to use the term 'schema' as a non-propositional structure of the thinking faculty, in cognitive psychology it is used to refer to the inference-based organising of information.

The Schema theory has been applied in folk narrative research. According to this theory, narratives are a kind of

knowledge systems, fundamental to the human thinking process which enable to experience, understand and reason about the world in which people live. Narratives are seen as embodied phenomena and embedded within people's experiential world. The Schema for 'going to a restaurant' is due to the presupposed experience of a person who already has that experience. The knowledge a person has acquired of all the sequential events of going to restaurant generate a schema which enable to cope efficiently with the various events which occur in any particular instance or to understand the stories of what happened when some one went to a restaurant on a particular occasion. Therefore, schemata are where the habitual cultural knowledge is stored.

In cognitive science, the term 'schema' is widely used as knowledge structures. According to Casson, 'schemata are conceptual abstractions that mediate between stimuli received by the sense organs and behaviour responses. They are abstractions that serve as basis for all human information processing eg. perception and comprehension, categorization and planning, recognition and recall and problem solving and decision making' (Casson 1983, p. 430). These knowledge structures also act as the 'building blocks of cognition' (ibid. p. 429). These knowledge structures are not only data structures but also data processors, since they help to execute and plan actions during encounters. So these structures play a major role in the

construction of human interpretative models and in evaluating and judging human experience.

While describing a past incident or interpreting an event these schematic structures are used to construct a narrative form and for the transmission of that form. Because this schematic abstraction is common for the speech community, it is bound up with the interpretative models. So these models are employed to provide a general model of the world for the construction or deconstruction of the information coming from the environment. Without these models a narrative couldn't exist for a social group. So the general model of a narrative and the enunciation of a narrative co-exist and are inextricably linked with each other.

Such is the notion of schema put forth by Bartlett, a psychologist strongly influenced by ethnological studies, and who concentrated on the experimental study of perception and memory. His special stress was on the attitude, interest and social conventions that govern human memory and behaviour. Bartlett took account of the 'social conditions' in the understanding of cognitive processes. According to Saitro, Bartlett attempted to reintegrate the 'social perspective' into cognitive research. Thus the cognitive process is seen as mediated through various day-to-day human life interventions. He includes in his theory various forms of social interactions such as, intergroup

interactions and the interactions between various individuals of different social positions.

As said earlier Bartlett's main interest in such a kind of approach is to understand the schematic processing of perception and memory. He viewed this process as taking place largely through the 'social conventions' of a social group. He calls the conventions which form part of the cognitive process, the 'persistent tendencies' of a social group. And Bartlett called this approach the 'social constructionist approach' to cognitive research (Saito 1996, p. 402). This kind of understanding of cognition shifts the form of cognitive research from experimental investigation to sociological, anthropological and even historical research methods.

A perspective on the cultural and historical origins of cognition is present in L.Vygotsky's work. J. Bruner, has proposed the 'narrative approach', placing human mind within the interpersonal interaction of culture. In the newly emerging field of 'cultural psychology', human cognition and psychological phenomena are studied with reference to indigineous socio-cultural contexts. Some neuroscientists are also sensitive to a socially-based understanding of cognition. Maturana and Varela's 'biology of cognition', is noteworthy in this regard.

The 'embodied mind' approach presents the view that each individual has unique experience of his own environment. Cognition is contingent upon the neural networks formed on the basis of bodily experience in a particular environment. Cognitive maps are formed by the neural connections which are governed by a natural selection principle. These maps are developed through long evolution of the human species, and they encompass both biological and socio-cultural aspects. The biological and the socio-cultural experiences of human beings give rise to basic 'innate' feelings (Saito 1996, p. 413). This approach is related to the schema theory.

BIOLOGY OF COGNITION :

The assumption in neuro-physiology is that cognition is merely a biological phenomenon. Maturana and Varela, both neurophysiologists, assume that the cognitive process is intimately tied to the operation of the living system. They introduced the term 'autopoiesis', to refer to the internal existence of a living system. According to them, this internal existence characterise the organisation of a living system which is a central feature of a organism. It also determines the autonomy of an organism. Hence, it defines an organism's existence as a unity. It is generated through the organisms self-contained, bounded interactions with various domains. At the same time these bounded systems exist outside, and determine the interactions of living organisms.

The linguistically expressive and non-expressive systems are part of such a presupposed system. By using language and other interpretive systems which are part of this presupposed objective reality, human beings categorise the world around them. At the same time with the adequate use of the linguistic descriptions they orient themselves differently and generate new traditions. Creation of descriptions from the presupposed world is basically due to the human beings' psychological necessity. So the human biological foundation of cognition guides them to understand this 'universe' and to act. Maturana and Varela call 'linguistic description', that which enable human beings to handle the universe in a more systematic and predictable way.

The autopoietic system which is a central feature of human existence, desirable how human beings are structurally coupled within the social system. Individuals interact with each other, constituting a system which operates as the medium of interactions. The realisation of existence as human social groups, according to Maturana has taken place through the 'language-centered culture' (Maturana and Varela 1980, p. xxvi). Structural couplings through language-centered cultural descriptions constitute the cognitive domain. This cognitive domain has developed during through mutually orienting behaviour.

The human interactive cognitive process takes place in a closed domain of interaction which is specified to the human individuals. Without this closure no interaction is possible. This cognitive process is different from that of other living organisms. Because human beings undertake complex linguistic interactions. These linguistic interactions orient the listener within his cognitive domain. According to Maturana and Varela these descriptions are generated through interactions with other similar systems. The basic function of language as a system of orienting behaviour is not the transmission of information or the description of an independent universe about which we can talk, but it is the creation of a consensual domain of behaviour between linguistically interacting systems through the development of a cooperative domain of interactions (Maturana and Varela 1980, p. 50).

Through language and other linguistically expressive systems human beings interact in a domain of description and create consensus. Without this linguistically and non linguistically derived descriptions humans can't make assertions about the universe. So the cognitive process of human beings are different from that of other living system due to the capacity for generating linguistic interactions and descriptions. Every living organisms' domain of interactions is understandable through the 'descriptions' which living systems generate. Every living system is capable of making 'descriptions' because living

systems are self referring systems. But the 'descriptions' which a human being or other living organisms possess cannot determine the living system, but in principle are a part of it. Their relations with other parts characterise the system. These relations cannot be governed by a description which lies in the cognitive domain of the individuals. It could reflect only during the interaction with new units. The new units don't have parts and they act as wholes through the domain of interaction.

The main function of language is to orient the orientee within this cognitive domain. As a result, the orientee undertakes introspection, so as to reorient his or her cognitive domain. The choice is induced by the nature of 'message', which stimulates the point of orientation in his cognitive domain. The meaning produced as a result of a particular orientation by the receiver is independent of what the message represents for the orienter. The receiver creates information through his interaction with his own cognitive domain. The common sharing of information is possible only through the consensual co-operation between the two communicating individuals. This is possible through the consensus which arises by the cooperative interactions between individuals. The consensual interaction can take place only if both the individuals can maintain their interests. During such an orientation process, there can be a partial loss of identity enabling the individuals to create a new consensus.

DISS 0,03:9(Y).44-99 N7
774-6738

The orientation of the individuals within the cognitive domain is not genetically determined but is specified through the interactions with other individuals with homogeneous cognitive domains. Such consensual interactions are possible only individuals who are able to develop some conventional but specific systems of communicative descriptions. These descriptions are possible only between individuals who can interact with each other without a total loss of identity.

So the descriptions resulting from the cooperative interactions are determined by the cognitive domain of the individuals. Without having a shared cognitive domain, consensus and cooperative interactions are not possible. The consensual domain can develop only through the selection of recursive patterns of communicative elements. The consensual domain evolves through the evolution of the system of cooperative consensual interactions between various human individuals across generations. This evolutionary history is reflected in the linguistic descriptions and in natural language. So the evolution of these communicative systems are determined by the historical process of selecting units of interaction in the given systems.

Maturana and Varela's formulations about the consensual domain and its historical evolution can be seen as crystallized in narrative forms. Cognition is understandable through the

evolution of the consensual domain which emerges through the cooperative interactions of individuals across historical time. A similar approach is also proposed in Mark Johnson's work. His main intention is to understand the human meaning systems in terms of the human bodily experience. The constant bodily activities of human beings to maintain their existence in the world continuously create meaning systems. This creative process of meaning system according to Johnson is based in 'schematic' forms.

JOHNSON'S THEORY OF IMAGE SCHEMAS :

Johnson and Lakoff's theory of 'image-schemas' add another dimension to the schema theory. They argue that our language, and cultural systems are rooted in bodily schemas. These schemas are the bases of metaphors which can express a large number of more complex ideas. This theory has many implications for our understanding of culture and its development. Lakoff and Johnson's intention is to understand the emergence of meanings and rationality in human experience. How can an event, a narrative, be meaningful to a person ?. Traditionally, linguistics and philosophy of language have assumed that meaning is derived from sentences, phrases and words. But Johnson's inquiry reveals that meaning of any phrase or sentence or passage are based on preconceptual structures of experience. It also depends on publically shared meaning structure. Meanings emerge from the human being's bodily experience of force, dynamics, etc.

According to Johnson, we begin to grasp the meaning of physical force from the day we are born (or even before). We have bodies that are acted upon by "external" and "internal" forces such as gravity, light, heat, wind, bodily processes and the obtrusion of other physical objects (Johnson 1987, p.13). Such interactions and recurring patterns are embodied and they give rise to a coherent, meaning system to human beings at a preconceptual level. Johnson's aim is to explore these preconceptual, non-propositional structures of meaning. He calls these image-schemas, which are non-propositional, abstract patterns of human, bodily experience. These structures are dynamic in character. They function like the abstract structures of an image and they connect up a vast range of different experiences. He claims that "the way in which our perceptual interactions and bodily movements within our environment generate these schematic structures that make it possible for us to experience, understand and reason about our world" (Johnson : 1987, p.19).

However, human perceptual interactions, which enable human beings to experience the world are determined by physical structures which limit the human bodily experiences. According to Johnson 'we are intimately aware of our bodies as three-dimensional containers in which we put certain things (food, water, air) and out of which other things emerge (food and water wastes, air, blood, etc.) (ibid p.21). This physical container pattern which human beings experience develop from the very early

days. Their recurring system of spatial and temporal organisations generate image-schematic structures'. Johnson notices five important entailments of these image schematic structures.

1. 'The experience of containment typically involves protection from, or resistance to external forces'.
2. 'Containment also limits and restricts forces within the container'.
3. 'Because of this restraint of forces, the contained object gets a relative fixity of location'.
4. 'This relative fixing of location within the container means that the contained object becomes either accessible or inaccessible to the view of some observer'.
5. 'Finally, we experience transitivity of containment'.
If one is in bed and the bed is in his room, then he is in the room (ibid. p.22).

These are important in the structuring of the image-schema. These structures which exist preconceptually can be used to describe an experience or an event propositionally. At the same time these structures are redefined as coherent, meaningful, unified wholes with gestalt characteristics. It is not an image, instead it is a means of structuring particular experiences schematically, and of ordering human beings' experience. These

structures can appear as the source of metaphors in the human meaning systems. Often metaphor is treated as a rhetorical device or an artistic figure of speech. But recent work in cognitive science extend the scope of metaphor as a pervasive principle of human understanding. Metaphor plays a role in scientific reasoning, in generating meaning structure, and influences the nature of meanings and constrain our rational inferences. Metaphors as part of meaning systems are involved in constituting people's experiences. This commonality of experience emerges from the orientation of bodily schemas.

Johnson proposes two kinds of features as the central core of his study. These are :1) Image schema and 2) Metaphorical projections. Image schema is a recurring, dynamic pattern of the human being's bodily experience, which is integral to meaning and rationality. Metaphor is conceived as a pervasive mode of understanding, involving transfer of patterns from one domain of experience to another. Through metaphorical patterns which emerge from physical experiences, people organise their abstract understandings.

According to Johnson, both image-schema and metaphorical systems help to constitute the internal structures which constrain meaning and generate definite patterns of inferences which arise from bodily experiences, such as containment. More basically one's understanding is one's way of being in a world.

All these are a matter of human beings' embeddedness within culture, language, institutions and historical tradition.

Johnson's main attempt is to understand the processing of events, objects, narratives, etc by the imaginative systems. All these structures and patterns are matters of imagination. Generally, the term imagination connotes artistic creativity. This is chiefly a result of nineteenth century romantic views of art and imagination. But for Johnson, imagination is a description which is deeply constrained by image-schematic structures and metaphorical projections generated from the bodily experiences. To understand a meaning system he has proposed 'a theory of imagination' which includes the following major components.

- 1) Categorization : The way human beings break up their experiences.
- 2) Schemata : How knowledge structures develop metaphorically and their complex inter-relations.
- 3) Metaphorical Projections : Through metaphors new connections and organisations of meaning develop. These metaphorical projections limit the source domain and hence constrains the meaning.
- 4) Metonymy : Like metaphor, metonymy is also a basic form of projection crucial for the development of meaning.

5) Narrative Structure : It interprets the human beings' experience in their world. Human rationality is expressed through narrative structures.

Johnson's theory helps us to understand meaning systems and embodiment. Folk narratives can be seen as meaning systems synthesizing the various events that happen in a people's day-to-day life. Through this meaning system people experience, cognize and generate their own reason. And also, these meaning systems embody, spatially, temporally and culturally formed understanding of a community.

CONCLUSION :

The genre theory, performance theory and schema theories reveal the recent changes in the human and social sciences. These theories argue for the understanding of a narrative in terms of its cultural and historical embodiments. Genre theory argues that cultural boundedness differentiates a genre and its communicative message. According to Bauman, to understand this cultural boundedness one must place a narrative in its historical and social-communicative events. This understanding comes closer to the embodiment approaches. The embodiment of history and cultural traditions contribute to the boundedness. So in any human system the actor is bounded with the embodied intentional world. The human activities in such an intentional world generate schemas which are referred to by Johnson and Maturana as

image-schema and cognitive domain respectively. These presupposed structures also help to understand new experiences in a new environment. The presupposed world of an individual is scripted in the meaning system he uses to interpret all his activities. So these theories argue that any meaning system such as myths, legends and tales, arise through the embodiment of history and culture. Such an understanding of meaning systems is a clear advance in folk narrative research.

CHAPTER III

IDEATIONAL THEORY OF CULTURE

The word 'culture' is a technical term in anthropology, extensively used in many different senses and is too wide in its various connotations. The different connotations of this term are due to the process of conception of culture by various anthropologists at different historical points of time. In anthropological literature there is a lot of interpretation, explanation and conceptualisation about culture. In 'Culture and Behaviour', Kloukhon identified one hundred and fifty definitions of culture. Definitions of culture have stemmed from the researcher's experience towards a particular culture, which he/she was investigating.

Major expansion of theorising culture has come from viewing culture in the evolutionary perspective. Applying the evolutionary model of natural selection to the constitution of culture has led the anthropologist to ask questions about the various dimensions of the cultural patterns noticed among human communities. The evolutionary - theoretical assumption about culture is that it is as an adaptive system (Keesing 1974, p.74). Human communities develop particular behavioural patterns in relation to their ecological settings. The main argument of the

evolutionary theory is concerned with the 'adaptive process' which principally takes place through the mediation of culture. The adaptive theory was later seen as directly connected to changes in social organisation and the productive relations in the works of cultural materialist school exemplified by that of Merrin Harris.

Keesing (1974) describes the part of anthropology which is concerned with studying shared knowledge structures as ideational theories of culture. Questions about culture typically have to do with how and why human beings differ in their social forms. In the earlier era of anthropology, i.e., during the dominant paradigm of evolutionary theory, culture was regarded as the traditional way of life, which is embodied in a particular ensemble of customary behaviour, institutions and artefact. But later this emphasis shifted from manifest patterns of behaviour to underlying structures of symbolic meaning. This fundamental shift in cultural anthropology was against the behavioural paradigms. In this new sphere, culture was seen to consist in a shared system of concepts or mental representations established by convention and reproduced by traditional transmissions. These are trends indicating a shift from the behavioural to a cognitive paradigm. 'Cognition' here refers to the knowledge that human beings are able to draw upon to make sense of their own environment. It is usually contrasted with perception which is the way people receive information from their social environment.

However, this understanding of cognition changed radically after the expansion of ideational theories of culture. The study of cognition is the study of how human knowledge is acquired, stored and retrieved. Clearly, what people know includes what they have learnt from others and what they will pass on to the next generation. This is what in anthropology is usually called 'culture' and which the anthropologists consider the subject matter of cultural anthropology.

With the influence of cognitivism, ideational approach to culture has expanded. Cultural anthropology now incorporates contribution from the cognitive science. One can find this kind of influence in Roy D'Andrade's work. In the long anthropological tradition the concept of culture is treated without much reference to the psychological processes. There was an implicit assumption in anthropology that anything that is known to involve complex psychological process cannot be cultural. Thus human attitudes, needs, goals and differences which are complex psychological processes are typically considered to be a part of personality and thus more concerned with individuals and hence not pertaining to culture. But ideational theories of culture, are concerned with how culture is shared or institutionally used as a particular model. With the influence of 'cognitivism' there are studies on how most human behaviour involves complex psychological processes. There is also interest in the psychological process of knowledge

transmission. These shared systems of meaning are present in various interpretative systems. This kind of inquiry on culture is noticeable in various anthropological works, especially those of D'Andrade and Naomi Quinn. In this chapter, we shall trace the changes in and the conceptual development of the ideational theory of culture.

Ideational theory of culture focus on the organisation of people's experience of their environment as evident in their cognitive worlds. From this understanding the concept of culture has been redefined and reinterpreted by various schools. This redefinition of culture has led to the questioning of earlier classical anthropological views on culture. This rethinking of culture against the classical objectivist paradigms and under the influence of new ethnography began to appear during the cognitive phase in the social sciences.

1. Cognitive Anthropology and Cognitivism :

Cognitive anthropology is a sub-field of cultural anthropology which concerns itself with the relationships among language, culture and cognition. It is based on the notion that culture is an ideational system, that is, a system of knowledge and concepts. The relationship between culture and cognition has been a serious concern of this field which emerged during the sixties, in opposition to the behavioural paradigm. The cognitive anthropology regards culture as consisting not of behaviours or

even of patterns of behaviour, but rather of shared information encoded in systems of symbols and meanings, communicated primarily by means of natural language and other non-linguistic expressions. This branch of anthropology is concerned with what people perceive, think and know. Generally, an anthropologist while describing a culture, gives an account of what the people in a particular society think, perceive and know. Thus, the ethnographic materials are a repository of the information available about human beings' cognition regarding the principal aspects of his existence.

In recent years, there has been a radical change in the traditional humanistic and formal ethnographic methodology. This change favours the identification of various kinds of cognitions that are associated with a culture. With this new turn, anthropologists devote considerable attention to accurate ethnographic accounts, particularly of the communicative systems. These communicative descriptions are what people employ in order to organize their every day activities. In this context, the anthropologist focuses on the ordering of the natural world by a particular community, their ethnoscience, their classification systems, etc. Folklore and related generic systems have a close connection with the classificatory systems. These classification systems are systems of common knowledge that influence everyday human decision making. People's judgements employ these classificatory systems. Hence, the cognitive

anthropologists consider them to be meaning systems. These meanings and understandings are not just representations about the external world but guide the individuals to construct meanings and perform actions. Through these meaning systems and understandings the individuals interact and adapt to their social environment. According to D'Andrade, 'through these systems of meanings and understanding, individuals adapt to their physical environment, structure interpersonal relationships and adjust psychologically to problems and conflicts'. Further, 'these systems of meanings and understanding are only one set of variables that influence human behaviour, social and environmental conditions. Distribution of power, economic opportunity, personal characteristics, genetic constitution and other classes of variables also influence what people do and think' (D'Andrade 1990 p. 65). D'Andrade's definition of culture as meanings and understandings emerge from an interdisciplinary inquiry within cognitive science. John Haugeland characterises this trend as an attempt to understand the 'organising principles underlying human behaviour' (Haugeland 1981, P. 243 ; quoted in Kamppinen 1989 P.23). This trend is discussed in the last part of this chapter under the heading 'culture as meaning system'.

In W. Goodenough's formulation culture is a system of standards or rules for perceiving, believing and acting, that one needs to know in order to operate in a manner acceptable to the members of a community. So, culture is constituted of various

rules of individuals' daily interactions. According to Goodenough's definition, 'a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members' (quoted in D'Andrade 1984, p.84). So culture provides information to the individuals for self-regulation. The manner of behaviour of individuals possessing such information is culturally acceptable.

Goodenough's concept of culture also takes into account the inter-subjective transmission of knowledge and sharing of information. For him, this process of transmission of knowledge and information takes place through language which is a subsystem of culture. So, he directly adopts linguistic methods and models for the analysis of culture. Individuals through their language learning process, also acquire knowledge of cultural rules. GoodEnough brings the concept of culture closer to language. Culture and language are seen as belonging to the same epistemological realm.

Goodenough's formulation of culture as shared systems of knowledge, and transmitted through language link up with the cognitivist's notion of language as rule-governed system. The general interpretative systems guide human beings to act, and to interpret cultural interactions. Early 'cognitivism' believed in interpretative systems outside the human beings. In the later phase of 'cognitivism' particularly with the influence of

cultural models and schema theory, this idea was reformulated.

2. Cognitive Systems :

Human behaviour is guided by beliefs, desires, and human intentions. These guiding systems represent various cognitive states. These systems are not coherent and rational. Due to the situational sensitivity, the system operates in modulation with the momentary nature of culture. The different situations trigger different conceptual systems, and hence overall coherence is not guaranteed. Because of cognitive economy, the cognitive systems change the definitions of the crucial terms when it faces contradictory experiences. Hence due to the limited interpretative models available the human cognitive economy tells the system to believe and what is contextually implied. Such a system of presuppositions underlie human interactions. Different communities have different sets of cultural rules which constitute their cognitive systems, and which are generated through their interactions with their own environment. In spite of this, human beings may have a common 'cognitive system' due to the commonality in the biological evolution of the human race. But the cognitive contents like beliefs and values may differ due to specific cultural interactions. Leonard Talmy notes that this system is an 'innately structured program' among human individuals. He calls this structured program a 'cognitive culture system' and its functions are 'acquisition, exercise and

imparting of culture' (Talmy 1995, p.1). The acquisition of this structured program begins in early childhood and it remains in operation throughout an individual's lifetime.

The issue of a universal cultural cognitive system and of cultural differences must be approached within the perspective of a theory of cultural cognition. Talmy believes that, even though cognitive cultural systems exhibit some range of variation across individuals, the main functions of the system are uniform (ibid. p.2). Cultures differ in many respects, but there seems to be a commonality in the ways cultures are structured and in the types of cultural phenomena. This is due to the 'complex requirements, constraints and parameters that underlie most of the structural commonalities (ibid., p.2).

Spiro also views culture as a 'cognitive' system consisting of the experiences of individuals in a society. On the basis of their social experience, people construct a conception of social universe. It is these experiential structures transmitted by means of 'intentional enumerative process', which Spiro calls 'cognitive' (Spiro 1984, p.324). These constructions are found in the culturally-constituted meaning systems, such as, myths, legends and other narratives which Spiro regards as 'propositions'. These cultural propositions are on the one hand traditional developments in the historical experience of social groups, and on the other hand, they have 'emotional antecedents',

they arouse 'emotional responses' in the social actors because they are encoded in the collective cultural representations. The 'propositions' of Spiro are similar to the 'cultural models' of D'Andrade and Quinn and to Shweder's 'frames'. The cultural environment supplies cognitive systems with representations referred to as cultural models.

3. Culture as Symbolic System :

Spiro's formulation of 'propositions' as encoded with collective experiences, resembles anthropologist's treatment of symbol system. Symbolic anthropology treats culture as a symbolic system that encodes collective experience of people across generations. Culture is not itself formed of symbols, but of meaning that lies behind them. Symbolic anthropologist believes, that these meanings exist in the minds of the people who are the participants of a culture. Meanings are generated during social interactions which are interlinked with other symbols and interpretative systems. So the anthropologist's task is to understand such an interpretative web of significations from where the meanings are derived. Clifford Geertz's theoretical formulations on symbolic systems are intended to understand the dynamics of symbolic action in a culture.

Geertz defines culture as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions' expressed in symbolic form by means of which men

communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (Geertz, 1973, P.89). But, in this definition of culture, the meaning, symbol and conceptions of culture comes from the ability to construe people's modes of expression. As symbol systems they are imbued with local knowledge systems. So culture is to be studied as a "symbolic system by isolating its elements, specifying the internal relationships among those elements, and then characterising the whole system in some general way according to the core symbols around which it is organised, the underlying structures of which it is a surface expression, or the ideological principles upon which it is based" (Geertz 1973, p.17). Geertz's definition of 'culture as symbolic system' is linked with his methodology for understanding culture. Culture can be understood only through the interrelationship of symbols which generate a system. For that he recommended, an approach involving an examination of the cultural symbols in terms of how a particular people think. So cultural analysis involves looking through the 'native's point of view' which is locally constituted and interlinked with locally constituted symbols. Human beings are suspended in such locally constituted significations that bind men together as a community. This inter-linking signification is not governed by general laws but by the subjective experience of human beings. So the role of anthropology is therefore not as an experiential science in search of laws but an interpretative one in search of meaning which is generated through subjective experiences. The

interpretative model that Geertz proposed to study the symbol systems is derived from both hermeneutics and semiotics.

The core of Geertz argument is that cultures as symbolic systems are encoded with collective subjective experiences of the people. These systems are man-made, embodied in a signifiatory web and hence, cultural analysis is a matter of interpretation of the embodied signification rather than a matter of explanation. We note that rather than symbolic systems Roy D'Andrade sees cultures as shared meaning systems. The change in terminology indicates a change in methodology within an ideational theory of culture. According to D'Andrade, cultural meaning is generated as a result of the 'interaction between what is contained in cultural messages and what is contained in the interpretative system of the mind' (D'Andrade 1984 : P.103). Generally, the term symbols refer to the physical thing that carries the meaning and to the meaning carried by the physical thing. But both are different things, physical thing is manipulated to generate a particular message.

Current work in cognitive psychology suggests that meanings are not the representation of external form but they are the distinct entities, having different principles of organisation which are called as 'schemata', composed of abstract propositional networks. These abstract propositions are the 'internal representation of external forms which play a major

role in generating meaning. D'Andrade use of the term 'meaning system' is similar to this understanding of meaning creation. It has also been referred to as 'mental structures and processes' (D'Andrade 1984 , p.104).

4. Cultural Meaning System :

D'Andrade's proposals mark a clear advance over earlier ideational theories of culture. This turn in theorising culture is derived from various fields such as cognitive science and linguistics. D'Andrade treats culture as 'constituted' by knowledge, meanings and symbol systems. This shift in the concept of culture broadens the concept of meaning beyond the referential function of language, and includes the consideration of language in its directive, emotive and constitutive functions.

D'Andrade identifies three major problems in the earlier approaches on culture : 'first, many things one would want to call cultural are not completely or even generally shared; second, culture consists of more than just knowledge; and third, it is not clear whether cultural systems are to be found "inside" or "outside" the minds of individuals' (D'Andrade 1984 : p.90). For example, the Oedipal complex exists in every cultural setting. But it is not cultural according to most cultural anthropologists. Such complexes, even though widely shared by all societies are not a part of culture, and it does not directly

influence or affect the cultural patterns. D'Andrade's understanding of culture is 'constructive' in that he tries to understand culture through the particular content and nature of a particular culture.

For example, marriage is a part of any culture, but it is not the same thing as knowing how to marry people or knowing about marriage. It is a special kind of social fact which is associated with various ritualistic movements, that make it a cultural institution. The physical movements and the other events which are associated with the marriage give it a certain content which is part of the institution. It is the 'constitutive rules' of marriage that make it a meaningful entity for the individuals. So, marriage is a part of any culture in that there is a constitutive system of rules which are intersubjectively shared by the individuals of a given society. The constitutive rule system which governs the marriage as a meaningful entity is generated by the general 'agreement' of individuals and this marriage a culturally created entity. The agreement that creates a cultural entity involves the adherence of a group of people. D'Andrade suggests that to understand a culturally created entity one must be able to isolate the system of constitutive rules that counts it as an entity. Such culturally constituted models or categories generated by social agreements impose order upon the people's social world which is shared by the participants.

To understand the status of constitutive ones, D'Andrade gives examples from the sphere of games. 'Games make the most effective illustrations of constitutive rule systems. Perhaps because of their arbitrary nature games makes the separation between the physical events of the game and what these events count as quite apparent. When a football player is declared "out of bounds" everyone understands that the physical fact of stepping over the line count as being out of bounds only with respect to the game being played (D'Andrade 1984, p.91). However, events which human beings face in their daily life interactions are culturally created entities. If a human being new to a cultural environment faces an event, to understand this culturally created entity he must be able to isolate the system of rules about what constitutes that event as a culturally created entity. If he can't isolate and understand that constitutive system of rules he will not be in a position to interact in that particular social environment.

This kind of categorisation process is present in every human interaction. Every cultural interaction, which is intersubjective in character is possible because of the common culturally constituted categories. D'Andrade's conceptual model of culture centres around these arguments. Culture is organised through various human activities, and hence the generative nature of culture. D'Andrade suggests that the generation of culture is a kind of 'packaging' which involves the constitutive rule

system governed by the social agreements. Such agreements generated through recurring human interactions, impose order on the social world which shape the human interactions. D'Andarde call this a 'meaning system' which according to him, in response to the individual function act at three different levels : 1) Cultural meaning system consisting of conceptual structures that create a central reality to the inhabited individuals. 2) Knowledge system which represents the intentional world. 3) Cultural knowledge system and cultural conceptual structures, which conventionalise human behaviour in general. These proposed views are related to the various functional aspects of culture. D'Andarde's (1984) characterisation of culture in response to the functional aspect of individuals clearly manifests the changes in the ideational theory of culture. It is a result of the integration of cognitive anthropology and the influence of cognitive science.

5. Culture, Cultural Models and Schema :

The functional notion of culture that D'Andrade presents helps us to understand the various aspects of the generative mechanism of culture. It depends on the individuals' involvement in a cultural system. The involvement of individuals in a cultural system determines the cultural meaning creation. According to 'cognitivism' this meaning creation depends on the various cognitive elements such as, categorisation and other kinds of knowledge structures. These knowledge structures, in

cognitive science literature are referred to as mental models, cultural models, frames or schemata.

These models serves the speech community as a guide in their interpretation of events and elements within their culture. So cultural models underlie a speech community's explanations of recurrent circumstances, events and situations in various domains of their life. Various cognitive scientists have noted that these models are also used to organize the knowledge about recurrent events and situations. So these knowledge structures, develop through a people's collective historical experience.

Naomi Quinn and Dorothy Holland claim that human perceptual processes utilize these models which involve a representation of the world. The formation of such models is part of cultural meaning creation. In any interactive situation human beings need presupposed judgements about the activities which they undertake. The shared models which are created by 'social agreement', specify the salient aspects of the world. These models are presupposed by social agreements. And since they are generated by the common constitutive rule system, they can produce intersubjectiveness. According to Naomi Quinn, "cultural models are presupposed, taken for granted models of the world that are widely shared by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of that world and their behaviour in it" (Quinn & Holland 1984, p.4). In the tradition of

ideational culture theory in cultural anthropology the main question was to understand the process of organization of meaning systems and as to how they are shared by the members of a community. Naomi Quinn's definition of cultural models helps us to understand this process of organization and the packaging of meaning systems. According to her, the cultural meaning systems are presupposed and they are imbued with a conceptual world. This means that the individual in a cultural system recreates that world in his day-to-day interactions.

The cultural models which are generated through day-to-day human interactions 'packages' the cultural knowledge. As world-views, these knowledge structures are interrelated with various other cultural models to form a coherent ideological system. These cultural world-views are called as 'cultural idea systems'. In anthropology they are primarily expressed in the collective representations of various kinds of interpretative systems such as myths, legends and other narrative structures. These systems describe and justify the nature of working of cultural practices which are inextricably interlinked with individuals everyday interactions.

The cultural models help the individuals to act in a situation. At the time of such an action the models are recreated and generated by the self as a new model for action. So cultural models are thus constitutive and are a part of the

every day interactions of people. The human beings capacity to 'analogize' from various other domains play a major role in the construction of such models. Allan Collins and Deidre Gentner call this process of constructing models 'analogical mappings'. An individual's everyday experience towards various domains, generate predictions about what happens in various situations in the real world. These predictions will help in a situation when an individual faces a new task. By such predictions, the experiences an individual has in various domains are brought together. People respond in new situations, by analogy from various domains. They use analogies to map the set of transition rules from a known domain (the base) into the new domain (the target) and thereby constructing a mental model that can generate inferences in the target domain. (Allan & Gentner 1991, p. 247 & 248). Generally, analogical mapping involves a mapping of structural relations between different domains. This process involves carrying the constitutive rule from a base domain to a target domain to get a particular inference. So constructing a model involves bringing together abstract experiences from various domains. According to D'Andrade, the construction of any kind of cultural model requires 'explication of the basic cognitive schemas' which are generated from various cultural and 'conceptual abstractions'. (D'Andrade 1991, P. 97). These abstractions serve as the basis for all kind of human cultural constructions. So the constructions of people which are considered to be the representations of cultural meanings are

generated from the schemas which contain imagistic, acoustic, sensory and propositional materials received from various contexts.

A schema is not a mere mental picture but contains an organisation of objects or events. This organisation of a particular schema is formed from a great simplification of the potential visual, acoustic, sensory and propositional information that could be obtained from experience.

Cultural models result from various inter-related schemata generated by recurring physical and bodily experiences. According to D'Andrade, "a cultural model is a cognitive schema that is intersubjectively shared by a social group. Because cultural models are intersubjectively shared, interpretations made about the world on the basis of a cultural model are experienced as obvious facts of the world" (ibid. p.99).

The notion of schema, resulting from human experience, helps us to do away with the traditional idealist notions of culture. These experientially generated schemas are readily available for any kind of interpretative practices. With the influence of this view, knowing a culture require at least knowing the cultural models that are widely used (D'Andrade 1991, p. 49). These models operate analogically. Such experientially formed models underlie people's interpretative systems.

The real world objects and events, as they are caught up in the nexus of analogical relations, can become a model. This analogical drive, can be found in the interpretative systems, such as myths, folk taxonomy, etc. These interpretative systems are the 'cultural experience' of the people and are the repository of cultural meaning. So, to understand a culture one must understand the core models and its relations with other models. To understand this relationship one must understand the overall interpretative system of a community of people.

Chapter IV

NARRATIVE PROCESS AND THE SYMBOLIC COMPONENTS OF VENKALARAJAN KATHAI

A definite shift occurred in cultural studies, when the anthropologist began to formulate the concept of culture as shared system of symbols. This formulation of culture as shared symbols, was explained by D'Andrade as shared 'symbolic meaning system'. These perspectives of culture as shared and meaningful symbolic system are relevant in understanding the 'making' of culture in a community. According to cognitive anthropologists such a kind making process are found in the community's thick descriptions such as myths, legends and other narratives. Consequently, these approaches in cognitive anthropology help to study the genres in a community's generic system.

The generic systems are differentiated by its specific content and are distinguished in relation to the individuals. An individual gives more importance to a legend than a tale, because that particular legend may have some close relation with his local habituation or with his ancestor's or his own experience. This embodied experience will have a specific meaning to the individuals of a particular community. This unique relationship of a narrative to its speech community or a cultural group is of great importance in the understanding of a narrative. Hence, the

understanding of folk narratives has to resort to the culturally constituted historical experience of a community.

Apart from this, every genre of culturally significant texts, makes its own selection of facts. A 'fact' for a myth is not the one for a tale. So from the point of view of the addressee, a fact is selected out of the surrounding events according to the historical necessity of the narrator or the speech community. Hence, to understand a text better, it is necessary to place the text in narrator's and speech community's historical and cultural embodiment.

With this understanding of narratives, in this chapter, we try to understand the Tamil legend *Venkalarajan kathai*. In this regard, the ethnographic and historical background and the symbolic component of the text is presented here with the conceptual understanding of regional culture where *Venkalarajan kathai* is a part of the tradition.

1) The text of Venkalarajan kathai:

Venkalarajan kathai, a narrative glorifying a particular section of people of southern India, is available in more than one generic form. It is available in *kummi*¹, a legenderical form, in the form of story which could be narrated in the everyday interactions. The form given here is the ballad form which is composed for the purpose of performing a *bow song*², a

ritualistic performing tradition of southern Tamil Nadu and part of southern Kerala, adjoining Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu. A English translated version of this ballad is published in the name of *Dateless Muse*'.

The brief story of this ballad runs as follows:

A sage of divine power, *Vittiyatarar*, has been doing penance in a place called *Ervati* in the midst of hilly surroundings. An undoing distraction to his penance comes in the form of seven bewitching, celestial maids who come for bathing in a spring nearby. The sage gives in to his instincts and has sexual union with those women by invoking his powers of magic. The women, who fall hapless prey to his lust, aided by the divine will, give birth to a male child each, leave the children to the care of the sage and go back to their celestial abode. Mother *Kali* adopts these seven children, tends them with grace and invests them with divine powers. Under the protective eye of the Supreme Lord and the motherly solicitude of *Kali*, these boys achieve feats of extraordinary valour and grow to become men of unsurpassing courage, with the attendant name and glory. Once when *Kali* is looking for water to quench her thirst, she finds that a disgraced sage and his wife, after drinking all the water in the tank there, have been hiding in the bushes thereabout. It is the ambrosial water which this sage had brought down to the earth on his being thrown to the earth from his celestial home by the ire

of *Intira*. *Kali* becomes enraged at the guile of the sage and curses him and his wife to become palmyra trees, male and female respectively. The goddess then blesses her seven sons with the vocation of tapping the ambrosial juice from the palmyra tree, imparts them with the art proper for the vocation and gives them the implements necessary for climbing the trees and extracting their juice. She goes leaving them on the earth with the divine command that they take the heavenly drink of this tree unflinching and live to supply it to the men of the world as well as to the celestial Gods above.

These seven men, known thenceforth as *Valankai* men meet the *Chola* ruler *Karikalan* who keeps them with him as his principal warriors. They undertake many a heroic quest, winning formidable enemies of the land and earning the acclaim of the *Chola* king and his subjects as well. An unprecedented rain then causes a great havoc to the *Chola* land breaching the rivers and the tanks. On advice from a lowly *Ilavan*, *Karikalan* orders these *Valankai* men to mend the breaches, which they strongly resent as not becoming of their standing and demeaning to their clan's name and eminence. The adamant attitude of the brothers incurs the wrath of the *Chola* who then orders their heads to be trod by an elephant. Two of the *Valankai* men lose their lives. The other five remain unrelenting still and refuse to touch the sand basket. Thwarted, *Karikalan* lets them off. The five men appeal to Mother *Kali* whose divine fury causes severe famine in the *Chola* country. Having come to see the cause behind this, the

Chola king propitiates *Kali*. The *Valankai* men then ask the king to bring that *Ilavan* on whose suggestion he demeaned the *Valankai* clan. He is brought before the brothers who drag him along the streets in revenge. Thenceforth the clan of this lowly man comes to be called *Ilavan*, one who is dragged on the floor.

The *Valankai* clan grows by divine grace and multiplies to seven hundred. By their deeds of valour and benevolence, they rise to great fame and popularity. They live in glory befitting the title *canror* (meaning the 'eminent' or the 'superior' one) by which they came to be called. While the other four of the *Valankai* men live in power and contentment in the native soil, the fifth brother goes to the Lanka country where he makes a prosperous and happy life extracting the ambrosial juice from the palm trees which have grown in abundance in that country. Meanwhile, sage *Vittiyatarar* the father comes there searching for his son and blesses him with a herbal magic by which one could turn the baser metals into gold. Using the herb, the *Valankai* chief turns pieces of iron into gold, and soon finds himself in the midst of heaps of gold. As a means of protecting this wealth, he buries the bars of gold around his fort and in that place he raises plantain trees. The trees grow luxuriant to bear clusters of golden fruits. Hearing of that the Englishmen press him to reveal the secret. Before letting the secret of the herb known to the alien White people, the *Valankai* chief gets them issue coins of gold that bear on one side the ensign of the

Valanakai clan along with the implements of their vocation. He also reveals this secret to his grandson Venkalarajan who has been growing into a youth of promise and a quintessential embodiment of the aspirations and spirit of the clan. The secret revealed, the Whites cut off the head of the Valankai chief.

Fearing further trouble from the inimical aliens, Venkalarajan leaves the Lanka soil along with his people, voyages along several places and settles down finally at *Camikkattuvilai*. He has two sons *Calaikkulattampi* and *Cinnattampi* and two lovely daughters *Tiraimukattalaki* and *Cankumukattalaki*. He has by now raised a small army for the security of his fort and the protection of his clan of which his sons are made the chiefs. Meanwhile the two of maids go to the *Parakkai* town to witness the Bathing Festival of the Lord much against the advice of their father and brothers. The Chera king of the province who also comes to the Festival sights these two maids and loses his heart in the captivating beauty of the Valankai maids. He sends word to Venkalarajan seeking his daughters' hands in marriage, which the Valankai chief contemptuously rejects in a moment of overweening pride in the superiority of his clan. The offended Chera besieges the ramparts of the Valankai chief. With no matching army to counter and with his native pride preventing him from giving in, Venkalarajan severs *Tiraimuhattalaki's* head, albeit with her willing consent, and throws it out. The Vanci king, thwarted, goes back to his country.

Apprehending further trouble from the Chera king, Venkalarajan leaves Camikkattuvilai and goes in search of a congenial land. He settles at length at Kurumpur. The father, apparently being tortured by his conscience for having sacrificed his elder daughter at the altar of the swelling pride of his clan's superiority, and Cankumukattalaki having lost her dearly loved sister in the most tragic circumstances are marked by inner anguish, desperation and despondence though the world around looks seemingly propitious and receptive. After remaining confined at home for a long time, Cankumukattalaki one day goes out to have a bath in the tank nearby. By sheer will of destiny, as she is drying her tresses, a strand of hair falls into the hand of Nalarajan, the ruler of the province who passes along that way. Marvelled by the extraordinary length and comeliness of the hair, Nalarajan wants to have Cankumukattalaki in marriage. Venkalarajan scornfully rebuffs the offer with his characteristic conceit and pride. Unable to bear the slight and humiliation, the Kurumpur ruler vows to bring dishonour on the Valankai maid's virtue as well as destruction on Venkalarajan and clan. He raises a sacrificial fire, wherein he invokes malevolent deities. On appeasement by Nalarajan, Cenkitaykkaran one of the invoked deities takes the form of a mango fruit and gets himself dropped into the water vessel which Cankumukattalaki carries. Branding her a thief Nalarajan subjects her to insufferable humiliation, indignities, disgrace and physical torment. Unable to bear the ignominy, Venkalarajan shuts himself

and his men inside the fort and they take to death. And heeding *Cankumukattalahi's* prayer, Lord Civan causes a storm of sand and dust which devastates the country of *Nalarajan*, who meets his doom along with his kin, counsellors and all. *Venkalarajan's* fort too gets completely destroyed. *Cankumukattalahi* submits herself to the Lord and breathes her last.

ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA AND HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE NARRATIVE

The narrative given above according to the palm-leaf manuscripts was recopied and completed on saturday 21 in the month of *Pankunni*' (Kollam era)⁵1101 (1926 A.D). The story narrates and glorifies a community called *Nadars*, who forms a section of people thickly populated in southern Tamil Nadu and adjoining districts of southern Kerala. In the narrative form this community is mentioned as *canror*, *Valankaiyar* and *Nadars*. The first part of the narrative, presents the origin of the community and the second part deals with the story of *Venkalarajan*, who was a king from the same community. Both parts operate in mythical and historical planes. Both parts of the narrative are distinct in their theme and composition. In the first part of the narrative which portrays the origin of '*Nadars*', the unity of space and time is not found. But in the second part of the narrative which depicts *Venkalarajan's* story one can find the unique legenderical and historical embodiment of the indivisibility of the region. Otherwise stated, the story

narrates the movement of a character from one place to another, which are places in southern Tamil Nadu. These places are dry land areas surrounded by palmyrah forests which according to the community's oral tradition the birth place of the Nadar community. *Venkalarajan* first settles down at *Camikkattuvilai*, a village in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu. In some other versions the near by towns of *Chamikkattuvilai*, *Parrakkai* or *Muttom* is mentioned. After the death of his elder daughter he leaves the place and settles at *Kurumpur*, a place in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. In fact, the fort constructed by him in *Kurumpur* at that time, though in ruins, is still being identified by the locals.

In the ballad form 66, places are mentioned as travelling places' of *Venkalarajan* between *Parrakkai* and *Kurumpur*, which are situated in southern Tamil Nadu. All the places mentioned in the ballad are regions thickly populated by Nadar community and located in the dry land, adjoining the palmyrah forests. In *Kurumpur* where both *Venkalarajan* and *Chankumukathalahi* commit suicide to safeguard their clan's prestige, there exists a shrine constructed by the kinsmen. It is located near the fort. In the shrine *Venkalarajan* and *Chankumuhathalahi* receive respects, worship and offerings from the native people. According to the native people's belief, the human beings who meet with unnatural or violent death, are to be honoured by such ritualistic practices and offerings. They remember the particular day by

giving offerings and conducting special festivals. By such practices, people believe, the soul of the concerned individuals will rest in peace.

As said earlier, the ballad is composed for the bow-song. This particular performance takes place in the shrines during the special festival conducted for giving offerings to the deities. This performance is prevalent in Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari districts of Tamil Nadu and adjoining districts of southern Kerala. These regions are linked with the bow-song tradition and the associated ritualistic enactment. This performance is also done for entertainment. But then the content of the performance may be less ritualistic and more informative.

Obviously any text which was composed for the purpose of singing in bow, is 'imagined' by the people of the whole geographical region. It is related to common folk religious worships, and offering patterns. Such an imagined text can make common subjectivities through its enunciation. Generally in the bow song tradition, the form selected for performing is a non-fictional narrative. Jonathan Culler while describing the non-fictional narratives, identifies some special qualities of such narratives. Though such a narrative structure addresses different people who don't know each other, it will bring them under a common narrative space. By doing so, a narrative can produce history by establishing a community or group identity

(Culler 1990, p.6). By using a text for the purpose of such a kind of imagination, the people who do not know of each other's existence might be brought together as 'we' by the discursive structure of the text.

In *Venkalarajan kathai* this imagination operates in two different ways. On the one hand, the text, by selecting its delivery media 'imagines' a community which can participate in the space created by the bow song tradition. On the other hand, the content of *Venkalarajan kathai* by glorifying a particular community, manipulates its embodied symbols and sentiments, and thereby imagines a community. The key symbols used to build up a narrative actually prevents its symbols being used by 'others'. By incorporating their culturally embodied symbols the text tries to create a common history in which all members can participate.

The 'imagined' nature of the text can interpenetrate across the boundaries. The region was clearly divided into two political groupings when the text was composed for the bow-song. From 15th century onwards Kanyakumari region was under Travancore and Tirunelveli under Pandya and Nayak kingdoms respectively. The interaction between the two political boundaries was effected by three factors : 1) Traditional migration of palmyrah climbers from Kanyakumari to Tirunelveli palmyrah forest regions; 2) Migration of professional folk performers of bow-song tradition

was possible as both the regions have similar folk religious practices; 3) By missionaries and the British bureaucratic system.

The first two factors mentioned above may have influenced *Venkalarajan kathai*. Because, *Venkalarajan* and the characters mentioned in the narrative were part of folk religious system of the region. These folk religious practices are inextricably linked with the bow-song tradition where the role of the performance is to initiate and activate such religious practices. These religious practices which are initiated by the bow-song tradition are called *Kodai* which literally means offering to god. The interlinkage between *Kodai* and the bow-song is well explained by a proverb which says 'without bow-song there is no *Kodai*', So *Kodai* is inextricably connected with the regional performative tradition. It gathers the experience of the people who can participate in the performance.

Even though the collective experience of the people of this region conventionalizes the bow-songs, every sub-culture has its own texts in connection with their deities, and their genealogy and origins. The professional singers before starting their performance get to know the story of the shrine and deities from the local people. However, there is every possibility that the singers manipulate the story with their own experience of the regional tradition. So, the relation between the text and the people, and between the text and the performance is pre-

determined by local history, religious system and other regional cultural transactions. Therefore, despite the political boundaries, the nature of the bow-song tradition and the associated folk religious practices bring the people of this region under an 'imagination' which may help to create a single community.

Another important factor is the seasonal migration of palmyrah climbers and their interpretative system. This arises because the regions under study (Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari) are covered by different palmyrah seasons. In Tirunelveli, palmyrah season is from March to September while in Kanyakumari it is from August to February. During the off-season, the palmyrah climbers from both the regions migrate to the regions where the tapping is available. They stay there for six months and come back after the end of the season. Towards the end of every season the palmyrah climbers from both the regions assemble in one area and give *Kodai* to their mother goddess *Kali*. This grouping is associated with the ritualistic enactments. This seasonal migration is a regular phenomenon during which the people of the two regions reassess their cultural link.

At the interpretative level, this seasonal migration and the palmyrah climbers subsistence are interpreted directly with the mother goddess *Kali*. The palmyrah extract is metaphorically referred to as the 'milk of *Kali*'. During the palmyrah season

Kanyakumari people believe that *Kali* will stay with them and at the end of the season She will go to Tirunelveli. Even in conversations, promises are made in the name of *Kali*. So all their economic and cultural activities are interpreted through *Kali* which in turn is linked with the folk religious practices. Obviously, the whole of local knowledge systems and religious practices are interlinked.

History of the Region and the Emergence of the Text:

The 'bow-song' region is bordered on two sides by the two branches of Tambrabarani river, and on the other two sides by the Indian ocean and the Western Ghats. The people living in this region are, *Mukkuvar*⁶ (a fisherman community), *Nayars*, *Thevars*⁷, *Pallars*⁸, *Parayars*⁹, *Brahmins*, *Pillais*¹⁰ and *Nadars*. The Brahmin, Pallar, Pillai, Thevar and Nayar communities are settled in the fertile landscape of this region, while Mukkuvars cover the whole area around the sea-shore. Apart from these landscapes, the sandy barren land, called 'Teri'¹¹ is densely populated by the Nadar community. These dryland regions are also known as palmyrah forest. Alongwith this unique feature of their environment, their employment and means of subsistence constitute the Nadar community as a spatially contiguous social group.

According to the Tamil legends, *Cheran*, *Cholan* and *Pandiyan* were three brothers who lived and ruled together at their capital

of *Korkai*¹², near the mouth of the *Tambraparani* river in the present district of Tirunelveli. *Korkai* was the port, the centre of India's pearl trade with the west, particularly with the Greeks during early Christian era. In 1292 A.D., *Korkai* was abandoned as the capital in favour of Madurai. Soon the identity of Pandians was lost with their final defeat at the hands of Nayaks. As the Nayaks established their dynasty firmly, they were ruling from Madurai and brought the southern districts of Ramnad and Tirunelveli under their control, while Kanyakumari (Nanjil Nadu) remained with Travancore.

The Nayaks divided their territories into seventy two *Palayams* and placed each division in the charge of a local chieftain owing loyalty to the Nayak. The palayam was divided into *Nadu*, each containing a number of villages. During the period of Pandian's decline, the Maravars had sought to establish their position against the central authority in Madurai. But with the defeat of Pandians, the Maravars were confined in their power by the *Nayaks*, who sought their alliance and loyalty. Under the *Nayaks* administrative system, *Kaaval* (village watch) system developed, in which Maravar watchmen were paid by villagers to protect their lives and property.

At the end of 18th century, the whole region was taken over by East India Company. The last *Palayakarar* to fall was Kattabomman in 1801. However, the king of Travancore was able to

hold on even after the British took over the rule of the whole region.

In the 19th century this whole region was affected by constant riots between the Nadars and the Maravars. Due to the development of transportation under the British rule, Nadars constructed *Pettai* (trading centre). They moved out of the *Teri* land from Tirunelveli and settled in the *pettai*. When rail road connected these trading centres, again Nadars took advantage of this and increased their trade further north, towards Tiruchi and Madras. Nadars in these trading centres routinely used the title name Nadar and vehemently opposed the usage of names like *Shanan*, *Shanar*, or *Marameri*". And also they started wearing dhoti like the Brahmins.

But, still they were forbidden entry into Hindu temples, and their use of public wells was strictly prohibited. In spite of their success in business and other areas, Nadars were not allowed to enter the temples by the other castes like Vellalas (also called as Pillai) and maravas. The misunderstanding and ill-feeling among Nadars and other caste groups like Vellalas and Maravas got worse, when Nadars became wealthy and their life style changed. In 1872, a suit was brought against Nadars of Tiruchendur for entering the temple of Brahmins and Vellalas. In 1874, Mookanadar filed a suit against the servants of the Meenakshi Temple of Madurai after he was forcibly removed from

the temple. In 1876, another case was filed in Tiruthangal and many other suits were also filed (Nagendran 1996, p.236). This is the manifestation of an emerging class of business community struggling for their social status.

A British bureaucrat and anthropologist, Edgar Thurston has reported some of these trials in his ethnographic notes. In another incident, Nadar community members tried to enter the Hindu temple but Maravars and other caste Hindus organized many attacks on them. The most serious of these attacks, had occurred at Sivakasi in 1899, involving over five thousand Maravars (Thurston 1909, p.364). A census superintendent has also mentioned this claim of Nadars. According to the Agama Shastra, toddy-tappers are not to be allowed in the temple. During this period, Nadars were active constructing various academies, schools, etc. They started wearing sacred thread like the Brahmins. Scholars from this community did etymological and historical studies on their caste on the basis of oral and classical Tamil literatures. During the period from 1857 to 1932, forty four books, pamphlets, and periodicals were published. These works referred to the descriptive ethnographies of the missionaries and the bureaucrats.

The main features of these reconstructive works are:

- i. They vehemently denounced the derogatory terms such as *Shanans*, *Marameri* used by the British Missionaries and other previlaged groups.
- ii. Historical reconstructions of places inhabited by the Nadar community.
- iii. Attempts to prove that Nadars are *Kshatriyas*.
- iv. The claim that Nadars are the decendants of the Pandya kings.

Edgar Thurston has noted that during the same period people composed 'poems on their kingly origin' (ibid. p.366). From the ethnographical descriptions of Edgar Thurston, it is evident that, poems and epics were composed through the traditional media to convey political messages. From these descriptions one can say that *Venkalarajan kathai* which reappeared around 1926 A.D. was one such narrative. It describes the ideological practices and attempts to bridge the gap between the English educated Nadars, the 'caste historians' and the Nadar folks who lived in the '*Teri*'.

COMPOSITION OF TEXT :

The ethnographic and historical details given above may help to understand the construction of meaning and the historical relevance of the narrative. The symbols of *Kali* and *Venkalarajan* play a key role in the folk's overall interpretative system. These symbols are interlinked with their religious practices and other interpretative systems. These symbols are effectively used in such a manner as to evoke sentiments and feelings with the themes present in the narrative. The first part of the story which narrates the origin of the *Nadar* community the symbol of *Kali* is used and in the second part, which narrates the story of a king from the same community the symbol of *Venkalarajan* used. Both these symbols and events associated with these symbols are interconnected with the folks' stereotyped sequence of habituated knowledge structures. The stereotyped sequence of their knowledge structures, enables people of this region to cope efficiently with the various events presented in the text.

Certain events mentioned in the text in relation to the basic themes are harnessed for glorifying the community. The basic themes in turn are interlinked with the key symbols of *Kali* and *Venkalarajan*. These basic themes of the text are the following:

- 1) Involving *Kali* or *bathrakali*

- i) *Kali* as mother of *Valankaiyar*;
- ii) joint activities of *Kali* and *Valankaiyar*;
- iii) advices of *Kali* to *Valankaiyars*;
- iv) linking their traditional occupation with *Kali*;
- v) *Kali's* training of *Valankaiyar* in martial arts and palmyrah climbing;

2) Involving *Venkalarajan*

- i) safeguarding the clan's prestige.
- ii) the notion of kingly clan.
- iii) Unbending attitude vis-a-vis his status.

These basic themes are interlinked with various events used to glorify the community. All these events with glorification themes are fused with the two key symbols. Both the key symbols which are the integral part of the various interpretative systems of religious practices contain the cultural messages, including information on palmyrah tappings and day-to-day interactions. Apart from these embodied key symbols, the intended meaning of *Venkalarajan kathai* is generated through various other events connected with the *Valankaiyar* clan.

The forefathers of the community, who are glorified in this narrative, were fostered by *Kali* and she protected them from dangerous *Ashuras*. The events narrating the creation of palmyrah trees, *Kali's* training for climbing on the palmyrah tree, and the joint activities of *Kali* with *Valankaiyar* against *Ashuras*, and

the narrative on the community's various life activities abound. The narrative's intention is very clear: it creates new meaning for the folk's traditional occupation which was considered as low in status by the privileged classes. The narrative by connecting their traditional occupation and their forefathers with divinely symbols, creates a meaning for the people. There are other episodes that try to uphold and maintain the superior standing of *Valankaiyar* clan. *Venkalarajan's* tragic flaw lies in his unbending belief in the superiority of his clan. Many episodes like *Venkalarajan's* refusal of marriage alliances for his daughters with kings from other clans, *Valankaiyar's* refusal of abject job ordered by the *Chola* king, when Britishmen questioned the secret of changing iron into gold, *Valankai* asked the chief to honour his clan by issuing coins in the name of his clan are recurring references regarding the community's fame.

But these events do not directly concern the movement of the narrative. There are several events that seek to equate the *Valankaiyar* clan with the culturally and politically important sections like the Brahmins, the trading class and the princely class. Such comparisons of *Valankaiyar* clan with the upper class symbols clearly indicate the composer's sense of the political necessity of the time. These are:

1) Comparison with Brahmins :

In the *Venkalarajan* narrative, the comparison of *Valankaiyars* with Brahmins can be found in some places. The narrative while speaking about the origin of the *Valankaiyar* clan, tells us that, the children of *Valankaiyar* were born by the sexual union of the celestial maids and *Vithyatharamuni*, a sage portrayed like a Brahmin with sacred thread. Thus the composer of the narrative gives sacred and socially respectable status to the children of *Valankaiyar*.

In another episode, *Valankaiyar* people are compared with brahmins who have close links with the king. For example, the *Valankaiyar* people are portrayed as advisors to the king. Once in the *Chola* kingdom rains failed and the king asked his men to explain why. However, the king's advisers were unable to give the reason. A *Valankai* chief told the king that a chaste woman could command rain. The king was pleased with the advice and summoned the woman, of *Valankai* chief's choice. Due to the chaste woman's prayer the *Chola* kingdom got plentiful rain. As a token of his gratitude, the king granted the title of *Santor* (nobleman) to *Valankai* chief. In another episode, the community's occupation, palmyrah climbing is associated with Brahmins. Once, *Kali* who was fostering the *Valankai* children told them to find some water source. The children found the water source in a tank but when *Kali* and *Valankaiyar* were coming towards the tank, a sage wearing

sacred thread and his wife drank the entire water and vanished. But, *Kali* discovered the sage and his wife hiding in the bushes, seized them and planted them upside down, and they were transformed into palmyrah trees.

2) COMPARISON WITH PRINCELY CLASS :

There are many episodes in the narrative, comparing the *Valankaiyar* community with the princely class. As said earlier the narrative is composed of two different narrative sections: the origin of *Valankaiyar* community, and the story of the king *Venkalarajan* of the *Valankaiyar* community. In both these narrative pinches which are operating in mythical and legenderical planes, the comparison with princely class is found in various places. *Venkalarajan*, a king of the *Valankaiyars* has his own fort and warriors, suggesting that he belonged to the princely class. Later, the description of the fort, and his dialogue with other king's messenger and with his generals, suggest *Venkalarajan's* Princely States. In addition, *Venkalarajan's* throne is described in great detail.

In the first narrative pinch, which operates in the mythical plane *Kali* is a symbol for bravery. The narrative describes the training imparted by *Kali* to the *Valankaiyar* community. After *Kali* had trained *Valankaiyars* both did joint battles against the *Ashuras*. The epithets relating to battle with various groups can

be found in two places. In one episode, *Valankaiyar* takes part in a battle under the great *Chola* king *Karikalan* and the king won the battle against a group led by *Amanthihan*. According to the text, *Amanthihan* was one of the formidable warriors of the period, and he was destroyed by *Valankaiyar* community in the battle. After returning from the battle-field, the ministers of the *Chola* king praised *Valankaiyar* for their victory in the battle and they recommended the king to give him the warrior title. Later, when *Chola* king ordered *Valankaiyar* to do abject work, *Valankaiyar* refused to do so.

3) COMPARISON WITH THE TRADING CLASS :

By comparing *Valankaiyar* community with the trading class the narrative tries to prove that the community's higher social position. For example, the traders seek *Valankaiyar's* help to solve their problem. By solving the problem of the trading class, *Valankaiyars* get special treatment from the *Chola* king and other privileged classes. *Valankaiyar* community is also given the title of '*Tholerum Perumal*'.

The various episodes portraying the community's enhanced social status reflect the composer's intention to glorify the community. All these independent episodes are linked with other narrative sequences through the mediation of the key symbols of *Kali* and *Venkalarajan*. This in turn is intended to construct a

particular meaning system about the status of the community, their traditional occupation, its past, etc. To construct the meaning system, the community's cultural and spatial knowledge systems are manipulated. The composer unconsciously adopts perspectives of the 19th century academic scholars belonging to the Nadar community. Forty four caste histories which were published during that period try to reconstruct the Nadar community's past. Thus, we see that the content and meaning of the narrative is connected with the political necessity of the that period.

The content of *Venkalarajan* narrative is schematically transfused with the reconstructive practice of the period. This assumption about the schematic transfusion of content in *Venkalarajan* kathai which was recopied during 1926 A.D., can possibly be understood from an earlier version of *Venkalarajan* narrative which emerged in 1606 A.D. (Kollam Year 781). The version runs as follows :

Venkalarajan, a *canror* chieftain had migrated from northern part of Ceylon and settled down near Muttam in Tamil Nadu. He constructed his own fort there. *Thankammai* was his mother, he had two daughters - *Thiraimuhathalahi* and *Chankamuhathalahi* and two sons - *Chinathampi* and *Chalaikulathampi*.

Once his two daughters went to a car festival held in a nearby town with their maids. A king from the neighbouring country saw these two girls and desired to marry the elder one, *Thiraimuhathalahi*. So, he sent envoys to *Venkalarajan* conveying his desire to marry his elder daughter. But *Venkalarajan* refused to accept the offer. Consequently, the king surrounded the fort of *Venkalarajan* with his army and demanded his daughter be sent along with him. But *Venkalarajan* refused to do so. *Thirumuhathalahi* did not want to be responsible for the destruction of the fort and for the death of her kith and kin inside the fort. Therefore, she requested her father to cut off her head and throw it outside the fort, towards the king. The father painfully did so.

Daunted by the anger of the king, *Venkalarajan* left *Nanjilnadu* and moved to *Manaviravalanadu*, where his community people were residing. The place he thus settled down was the northern part of *Manaviravalanadu*. He once again constructed a fort there, adjacent to a beautiful lake and an *Ayyanar*⁴ temple. On the western side of the fort, there was one cantonment area which belonged to the *Kurumpur** king *Nalarajan*.

Often, *Chankumuhathalahi* the second daughter of *Venkalarajan* would go to the lake, near by the fort, to take bath and fetch water. One day after taking bath, she was drying her dresses at the balcony of the fort. Incidentally, a strand of her hair fell

down and got wound round the pole of *Nalarajan's* palanquin. Astonished by the extraordinary length of the hair, the king wanted to see the possessor of the hair, who was nobody else but the daughter of *Venkalarajan*. Determined to marry her, the king sent envoys to him.

But *Venkalarajan* refused to get his daughter married by a man other than of his own clan. Raged with anger, the perfidious *Nalarajan* desired to own *Chankumuhathalahi* by trick. He created a magical mango fruit and made it hung in a mango tree near the lake. The king ordered his soldiers to guard the mango tree, night and day. People around that area, without knowing its magic praised the greatness of the mango. One day *Chankumuhathalahi* after taking bath in the lake, fetched water in a pot. Without her knowledge, the magical mango fell into the lake and got into her pot. Due to the extra-weight of the magical mango, she could not lift the pot. Without knowing anything of the trick of *Nalarajan*, she got frightened and prayed god for help. With the blessings of god, she was able to lift the pot but, still the evil spirit was intact and followed her. The soldiers got frightened on seeing the tree without the mango. They started searching for the mango in the houses of women who came to take water from the lake. They found the mango in *Chankumuhathalahi's* pot and implicated her for the act. So, they brought her before the king *Nalan*. He tried to humiliate *Chankumuhathalahi* by tonsuring her head. She argued against him

like *Kannahi*¹⁵ and tried to prove her innocence. But *Nalarajan* refused to accept her argument and ordered to punish her.

Venkalarajan heard about the false and deceptive charges on *Chankumuhathalahi* and did not wish to live anymore. He committed suicide and so did his entire family in the fort. Despite this happening *Nalarajan* was vehemently rigid in his decision of punishing *Chankumuhathalahi*. When she came to know the sad plight of her family, she wished the Gods had taken away her life. Finally, she prayed for curses from Heaven upon the king and his kingdom be wiped off by sand-fall, and at the end she gave up her life.

This version directly narrates the story and the events related to *Venkalarajan* and his family. But the narrative which was recopied during 1926 A.D, narrating *Venkalarajan's* story with other events intentionally reunites for the purpose of 'glorifying' the Nadar community. However, the events which intentionally interlinks with the other themes and symbols in the narrative of 1926 A.D, was missing in the narrative of 1606 A.D.

These are the following:

- 1) Origin and fostering of the clan;
- 2) Traditional occupation of *Valankaiyar* ;
- 3) Narrating the origin and the fame of palmyrah tree;
- 4) Clan's prestige;
- 5) Description of Special titles;
- 6) Episode relating to *Valankaiyar's* firm principles;

These events are composed in the *Venkalarajan kathai* in conjunction with the reconstructive practices of the members of the Nadar community during 19th century when about forty four caste histories and other narratives were written. Through the description of various ethnographic works, the people from this community reconstructed their history.

The narrative which appeared around 1926 A.D. put forward the same claims as that of the caste historians. For this purpose the composer, utilizes various culturally embodied symbols like *Kali* and *Venkalarajan*. The comparison of the Nadar community's fore fathers with the Brahmins the princely class, and the trading class are scripted with the political messages of that time. These events are also entangled with the two key symbols of *Kali* and *Venkalarajan*, interpenetrating the mythical and historical planes. By seeing the text in this manner, one can say that by selecting its genres and delivery media *Venkalarajan kathai* was putting forth an ideological perspective to the members of the community. The inter-related events and other themes in the text proclaim the common destiny of the Nadar community. This ideological perspective has a relatively coherent discourse that connects highly selective elements of the oral tradition of Nadar community.

Symbols and Meaning :

The culturally embodied symbols such as, *Kali* and *Venkalarajan* play a key role in the creation of meaning. These symbols are in turn interlinked with various events associated with the socially significant images which revolve around the glorification of the community's history, its symbols and their traditional occupation. Any communication is possible only through the subjectivities of the sender and the receiver who has the same set of meanings. Further, the sender must assume that the receiver have the same set of meanings and vice versa. So communication is possible only between two individuals who have a common inter-subjectivity. This means that both the individuals must have a shared systems of symbols. With this shared systems of symbols, individuals can create similar cultural realities. So any kind of symbolic communication requires the establishment of inter-subjectivity which rests on the limited commonality of symbols and models.

Consequently, it is obvious that commonly shared symbols such as *Kali* and *Venkalarajan* were manipulated for the communicative effects. And in turn, the whole text is interspersed with the symbols of *Kali* and *Venkalarajan*, the community's life activities and their traditional occupation. This occurs in the origin of the community, the origin of palmyrah tree, of the season for palmyrah tapping and in the

comparison of palmyrah juice with *Kali*. The key symbol of *Kali* is used for interpretation. So the *Kali* symbol can be related to various cultural models, events and experiences for creating specific meanings. Hence, one can say that there is a semantic resonance underlying the various interactive and interpretative systems where *Kali* is used as the key symbol.

This also applies in the case of the *Venkalarajan* symbol. As the symbol is a part of folk religious system which describes his suicide, it can bring forth the various individual religious experiences for the creation of meaning.

Both the key symbols associated with other events selected from the cultural environment of the folks generate a particular political meaning. The meaning generated through this process is constrained due to: 1) the culturally embodied symbols; 2) the selection of the delivery style. Due to the geographical limitation of the bow-song performance, *Venkalarajan kathai* is communicable only in a limited region. Its narrative style, prevents the 'others' from decoding the performance, and hence from participating in the narrative space of the story. The narrative is composed of the context specific symbols of *Kali* and *Venkalarajan* which can't be symbols without their relationship with other events and interpretative systems.

Thus, the symbols of *Kali* and *Venkalarajan* can create a narrative space for the members of the particular community. These symbols invite the participation of the people having the same signficatory web of interpretation. Hence, for the people who have this presupposed space, the symbols of *Kali* and *Venkalarajan* function as a meaningful system. And for 'others', who are not in this embodiment, these symbols function as a closed one. The Nadars who are embodied with the folk religious practices of and other interpretative systems about *Kali* and *Venkalarajan* can easily identify themselves with *Venkalarajan kathai* without losing their identity. Here, the narrative creates, initiates and invites whoever having common habitual knowledge systems.

Narrative, Imagination and Ideological Practice :

As mentioned earlier, *Venkalarajan kathai* was composed for the bow song. This particular performing tradition because of its own specific delivery style is limited to a particular region, i.e. parts of southern Tamil Nadu and southern Kerala. The text composed for the bow-song actually reflects the regional culture and the people. The imagination of the text is influenced by various other factors as well. The symbols, the various events of the text and the folk's interpretative system may constrain the communicative process. This is more specific to the symbols and interpretative systems of Nadar community. So

the embodied imagination proclaimed in the *Venkalarajan kathai*, involves selection of symbols and narrative events from the Nadar community's oral tradition.

The narrative process in the *Venkalarajan kathai* is determined by the following selections : 1) Selection of delivery media ; 2) Selection of genres; 3) Selection of symbols.

1) Selection of Delivery Media :

Any territorially bounded delivery media may obtain the cultural consensus of all sub-cultures within its boundary. bow-song performance which territorially bounded can create a common presupposed world among the people of the region. Since, this performance as a delivery media takes place in large groupings, it can possibly create a mass appeal.

Even though *Venkalarajan kathai* is available in various generic systems like *kummi* form and other narratives, the version which was composed for the bow-song performance has much more significance due to its mass appeal. Because the performance takes place in larger group settings it is possible to bring members of different sub-cultures under one narrative space. Hence, the selection of the delivery media involves 'imagining' a commonness, and the constitution of individuals as 'we' by the discursive structures of the text.

2) Selection of genres and variants :

Venkalarajan kathai was composed by selecting various genres to create a specific meaning. In the oral tradition of Nadar community, there are number of variations on the theme of the origin of the community. But the composer of the text selected specific variants to create a larger narrative. A village survey monograph version published in 1961, adds Lord Brahma as the father of the seven children who were the forefathers of the Nadar community. Another version, collected by Robert L. Hardgrave from a village near Kamudi in Ramanathapuram district, says that the father was a *rishi*, who seduced virgins (Hardgrave 1967, p.273).

A completely different story about the origin of Nadars was given during 19th century by Rev. Samuel Mateer from his knowledge of Kanyakumari (Rev. Samuel Mateer 1883). According to his account, the Nadars descended from *Adi*, the daughter of a *paraiya* woman, who taught them to climb the palmyrah tree. Among the various genres about the events narrated in the *Venkalarajan kathai*, the composer of the text selected only the variant suitable to convey a particular political message that would mobilize and organize the individuals.

3) Selection of Symbols :

The parts of the narrative which operate in the mythical and historical plane have the culturally constituted symbols of *Kali* and *Venkalarajan*. By interspersing the whole narrative with these key symbols, the composer of the text reproduces various recurring narrative pinches from the Nadar community's oral tradition, in a manner that would evoke collectivism.

By deploying the sacred symbols of *Kali* and *Venkalarajan* and the associated genres the *Venkalarajan kathai* creates a particular identity so that the individuals who have this identity can participate. Such a composition of the text forcefully the system for 'others' and thus, constrains the meaning. The individuals who have the same set of embodied symbols and interpretative systems can bring in their various experiences and decipher the meaning. Hence, the composition of the text brings the individuals having similar embodied symbols and interpretative systems under one narrative space.

This narrative space brings together various individuals who have no idea about each other's existence under one 'imaginative' space. This 'imaginative' space is created in the text by the culturally embodied symbols and the territorially bounded delivery media. The selection of various genres and events with

the delivery media create a special political message in people who have similar experiences. This investment of special meanings to the various life activities of Nadar community, constitutes the ideological selection and revision of various localised images of the community. This manipulation of embodied symbols also create new meanings for their traditional occupation and for their cultural practices in the new political situation which emerged during the colonial period.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The concept of culture changed radically when anthropologists defined culture as shared symbolic meaning system. These meaning systems represent cultural facts and create culturally constituted entities, through which individuals strategically select and express their identities as social beings. Individuals are guided by such a constituted meaning system in many ways. The relation between meaning system and individuals is well described by D'Andrade : "One of the basic things that meanings do for individuals is to guide their reactions and behaviour. Given a systematic distribution of meaning systems across individuals - a system of systems - the reactions and behaviour of groups of people can be guided in an organized and co-ordinated fashion". (D'Andrade 1984, p.109 & 110).

According to the cognitive view, this kind of meaning system can be understood in terms of specific cultural constructs at a particular period of time in a community. This formulation of culture gives more importance to the people's narratives which help them identify themselves in the social world and also maintain their psychological realities. Such a meaning creation

redefine the people's goals and their sentiments through the constant interactive practice of the individuals.

Individuals in a social group construct and categorize the world in which they live. Such constructions represent the constituted intentional worlds of the people and their domains of interaction. The constitution of these domains are conventionalised through various human interactive process. So, the understanding of various social conventions, cultural practices and the narrative structure and their hierarchical relationship with one another may help to understand the formation of a system and also the human bounded interactive practices towards the system.

The *Venkalarajan kathai* has selected a delivery media of a particular cultural region. The various folk cultural practices associated with this delivery media and other symbols are exploited in the text for bringing together the people who have similar cultural practices. This 'imagination' created by the text may bring together different sub-cultures under one narrative space. It may also give similar cultural experience to individuals from different subcultures. At the same time, *Venkalarajan kathai* is also conventionalised through these experiences.

On the other hand, the key symbols used to construct the narrative is part of the interpretative systems of the Nadar community across many subcultures in the bow song region. The interpenetration of the shared symbols of *kali* and *Venkalarajan* play a major role in the creation of meaning.

In *Venkalarajan kathai* these symbols are manipulated with the folk's stereotyped sequence of knowledge structures. The stereotyped knowledge structures enable people who are living with these embodiments to cope with the various events presented in the text.

With this shared system of symbols *Venkalarajan kathai* can create similar cultural realities among the individuals who have a common shared symbols. From the ethnographic details of Nadar community, we see that these symbols play a key role in interpreting their cultural activities. While narrating their traditional occupation, seasonal migration and their religious practices, these symbols are used for interpretation.

These two symbols cannot be a symbol without carrying the messages created by various interpretations. Hence, this narrative functions as a meaningful symbol system for the Nadar people.

Notes :

1. *Kummi* is a dance form with clapping of hands and songs, performed by girls.
2. *Bow-song* is a traditional performing art in southern Tamil Nadu. It is big bow which provides accompaniment to a ballad singer. The instrument is made to rest on the neck of a huge earthen pot. The main singer sits at the centre of the bow to strike it with painted sticks for rhythmic aid. This performance is like kabigan of Bengal.
3. John Samuel, 1988, Dateless Muse, The Story of Venkalarajan.
4. *Pankuni*, a month in the native calendar.
5. *Kollam era* is a native calendar which began from 825 A.D.
6. *Mukkuvars* are a fishermen community of Malabar coast. During the 15th century this community from the coastal areas of Tuticorin of Tamil Nadu to Vizhagam of Kerala converted themselves into catholicism under the influence of Saint Francis Xavier.
7. *Thevars*, are called *Maravars* are found chiefly in Madurai and Tirunelvi. During the Nayak period, their army gave valuable assistance to Tirumala Nayakan who established a strong Nayaka kingdom. They gave much trouble to the British bureaucrats and to the Christians during the 18th century. Various British documents describe them as 'lawless' and were included under the Criminal Tribe Act.
8. *Pallars* are found in Vellala region. *Pallars* are agricultural labourers found chiefly in Tanjore, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Tirunelveli. The meaning of this word, is connected with wet land agriculture. Their principal occupation was ploughing the lands of the vellalas.
9. *Paraiyar* community is basically agricultural labourers, according to the colonial documents. A Tamil word 'parai' means drum and certain Paraiyars act as drummers at marriages,

funerals, village festivals. This community is densely present in northern Tamil Nadu and are found in other districts upto Tirunelveli.

10. Pillai's are also called in the title Vellalas. They are the land-owning farmers present in all Tamil Nadu districts.

11. A Tamil word referring to 'land covered with sand'.

12. Korkai was once the capital of Pandiya kingdoms. At present it is called as Tuticorin of southern Tamil Nadu.

13. Tamil word which refers to climber of trees.

14. A folk deity of southern Tamil Nadu.

15. Kannahi is one of the character in one of the Tamil epic called Silappathiharam. The epic narrates the story of Kannahi and Kovalan. Kannahi, is a mother goddess, worshipped by people in some parts of Tamil Nadu. In the Tamil epic Kannahi is depicted as a chaste woman who argued against the Pandya king who charged her for theft. With her divinely powers she burnt the Pandya kingdom.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bauman, Richard (ed.) (1977), Verbal Art as Performance, Rowley, Mass:New Bury Books.
- Bauman, R and C.L. Briggs (1990), "Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life", Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol.19, (59-88).
- Ben-Amos, Don (1982), Folklore in Context Essays, New Delhi:South Asian Publishers.
- Blackburn, Stuart H. and A.K. Ramanujam (eds.)(1986), Another Harmony : New Essays on the Folklore of India, Berkeley : University of California.
- Bremond, Claude (1977), "The Morphology of the French Fairy Tale : The Ethical Model", in Patterns in Oral Literature, Heda Jason and Dimitri Segal (eds.), The Hague : Mouton Publishers.
- Casson, Ronald W (1981), Language, Culture and Cognition : Anthropological Perspectives, New York :Macmillan Publishing Co.
- Casson, Ronald W (1983), "Schemata in Cognitive Anthropology", Annual Review of Anthropology", Vol.12, (429-62).
- Claus, Peter J. and Frank J. Korom (1991), Folkloristics and Indian Folklore, Udupi : Regional Resources Centre for Folk Performing Art.
- Collins, Allan and D. Gentner (1987), "How People Construct Mental Models", in D. Holland & N. Quinn (ed.), Cultural Models in Language and Thought (243-265), Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Crick, M. (1982), "Anthropology of Knowledge", Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 11, (287-313).
- Cronk, Lee (1991), "Human Behavioural Ecology", Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol.20, (25-53).
- Culler, Jonathan (1994), "Making History : The Power of Narrative", in Amiya Dev (ed.) Narrative : A Seminar, New Delhi : Sahitya Akademi, (5-12).
- D'Andrade, R (1987), "A Folk Model of the Mind", in D. Holland and N. Quinn (ed.), in Cultural Models in Language and Thought, Cambridge :Cambridge University Press, (112-148).
- D'Andrade, R (1984), "Cultural Meaning System", in Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. Le Vine (ed.), Culture Theory : Essays on

Mind, Self and Emotion, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, (88-119).

D'Andrade, R (1990), "Some Propositions About the Relations Between Culture and Human Cognition", in James W. Stigler et.al (ed), Cultural Psychology, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, (65-128).

Degh, Linda (1972), "Folk Narrative" in Richard M. Dorson (ed) Folklore and Folklife : An Introduction Chicago : Chicago University Press. (53-83)

Dorson, Richard, M. (ed.) (1972), Folklore and Folklife, Chicago : University of Chicago Press.

Dorson, Richard, M. (ed.) (1978), Folklore in the Modern World, The Hague : Mouton Publishers.

Dundes, Alan (1962), "From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales", Journal of American Folklore, 75 (95-105).

Dundes, Alan (1964), "The Morphology of North American Indian Folk Tales", FFC 195, Helsinki.

Dundes, Alan (ed.) (1965), The Study of Folklore, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice Hall.

Flueckiger, J.B (1991), "Genre and Community in the Folklore System of Chhattisgarh", in Arjun Appadurai, et.al (ed.), Gender, Genre and Power in South Asian Expressive Traditions, Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gardner, Howard (1987), The Mind's New Science : A History of the Cognitive Revolution, London : Basic Books, (181-200).

Geertz, Clifford (1973), The Interpretation of Cultures", New York: Basic Books.

Geertz, Clifford (1983), Local Knowledge : Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology, New York : Basic Books.

Handoo, Jawaharlal (1979), Current Trends in Indian Folkloristics, Mysore : Institute of Kannada Studies, Mysore University.

Handoo, Jawaharlal (1977), A Bibliography of Indian Folk Literature, Mysore : Central Institute of Indian Languages.

Holland, D and Naomi Quinn (1987), Cultural Models in Language and Thought, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Holloway, Ralph, Jr. (1969), "Culture, A Human Domain", Current Anthropology, Vol.10 (395-412).

- Islam, Mazharul (1985), Folklore, The Pulse of the People : In the Context of Indian Folklore, New Delhi : Concept Publishing Company.
- Johnson, M. (1987), The Body In The Mind : The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination and Reason, Chicago : Chicago University Press.
- Kamippinen, Matti (1989), Cognitive Systems and Cultural Models of Illness : A Study of Two Mestizo Peasant Communities of the Peruvian Amazon, Helsinki : Academic Scientiarum Fennica.
- Keesing, R.M. (1974), "Theories of culture", Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 3, (73-97)
- Lakoff, George (1987), Women, Fire and Dangerous Things : What Categories Reveal About the Mind, Chicago : Chicago University Press
- LaKoff, George (1992), "Metaphor and War : The Metaphor System to Justify War in the Gulf", in Martin Putz (ed) Thirty Years of Linguistic Evolution, Philadelphia, Amsterdam : John Benjamins Publishing Company, (463-481).
- Lakoff, G and Mark Johnson (1980), Metaphors We Live By, Chicago : Chicago University Press.
- Levi-Strauss, C (1963), Structural Anthropology-I, New York : Basil Books.
- Levi-Strauss, C (1972), The Savage Mind, London : Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Levi-Strauss, C (1987), "Anthropology and Myth : Lectures 1951-1982", Oxford : Basil Blackwell.
- Limon, J.E and M.J. Young (1986), "Frontiers, Settlements and Development in Folklore Studies 1972-1985", Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol.15, (437-460).
- Maturana, H.R. and F.J. Varela (1980), Autopoiesis and Cognition : The Realisation of the Living, Dordrecht : D.Reidel Publishing Company.
- Mallaury, Robert E. (1991), "Prototypes Revisited", Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol.20, (55-74).
- Manjali, Franson D. (ed) (1993), Language and Cognition. New Delhi: Bahri Publications
- Nagendran, T (1996), "The Struggle and Success of Nadars of Tamil Nadu", Man In India, Vol. 76(3), (229-237).

Orther, Sherry B (1994), "Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties", in Nicholas B. Dirks, et.al (ed.), Culture/Power/History, Princeton : Princeton University Press.

Pandian, M.S.S. (1987), "Peasants, Natural Resource Use and State Intervention in Nanchil Nadu, 1850-1940", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XXII, No.26, (1032-1040).

Propp, V (1968), Morphology of the Folklore, Austin and London : University of Texas Press.

Pentikainen, Juha (1978), "Oral Transmission of Knowledge", in Richard M. Dorson (ed.), Folklore in the Modern World, The Hague : Mouton Publishers (237-252).

Rumelhart, D.E (1980), "Schemata : The Building Blocks of Cognition", in Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension : Prespective from Cognitive Psychology, Linguistics, Artificial Intelligence and Education, Hilldale : N.J. : Erlbaum.

Saito, Akiko (1996), "Social Origins of Cognition : Bartlett, Evolutionary Perspective and Embodied Mind Approach", Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, Vol. 26(4) : (399-422).

Samuel, John G. (ed.) (1988), The Dateless Muse : The Story of Venkalarajan, Madras : Institute of Asian Studies.

Siikala, Anna-Leena (1990), Interpreting Oral Narrative, Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, FFC 245.

Sivasubramanian, A (1981), "A Communal Riot and Folksongs of Tamil Nadu", Folklore, Vol. 22, No.4, (207-213).

Spiro, Richard A. (1984), "Some Reflections on Cultural Determinism and Relativism with Special Reference to Emotion and Reason", in Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. Levine (eds), Culture Theory : Essays on Mind, Self and Emotion, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, (323-346).

Stigler, James W. et.al (ed.) (1990), Cultural Psychology, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

..... (1994), The Polity Reader in Cultural Theory, Cambridge : Polity Press.

Talmy, Leonard (1995), "The Cognitive Cultural System", The Monist, January, Vol.78, No.1

Thurston, Edgar (1909), Castes and Tribes of Southern India, 7 Vols. Madras : Government Press.

Vanamamalai, N (1990), "Tamil Folk Ballads With Social Themes", in Nayak & Gopal (ed.) South Indian Studies, Mysore : Geetha Book House, (981-987).

TAMIL SOURCES :

Mahalingam, (), Origin and History of Nadars, Chennai : Manachachi Kudam.

Thasarathan, A. (1995), Arunchunai Kaatha Ayyanar, Madras : Centre for Preservation of Tamil Palm-leaf Manuscripts.

Thasarathan, A. (1995), Valankai Canrorum Colarum, Madras : Centre for Preservation of Tamil Palm-leaf Manuscripts.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES :

Valankaimalai, Ballad from Oral Tradition, collected from K.K. DT, 1986, Ref No: P-B/25.3/14,15,16,17 : FRRRC Archives, Palayamkottai.