

**TEXT AND CONTEXTS OF MADNESS IN INDIAN SOCIETY:
ANCIENT TO EARLY COLONIAL (C. 300 BCE TO C 1700 CE)**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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This is to certify that this thesis entitled “**Text and Contexts of Madness in Indian Society: Ancient to Early Colonial (C. 300 BCE TO C 1700 CE)**”, submitted by **Saudamini Zutshi** in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** is a bonafide work to the best of our knowledge, and may be placed before the examiners for their consideration.

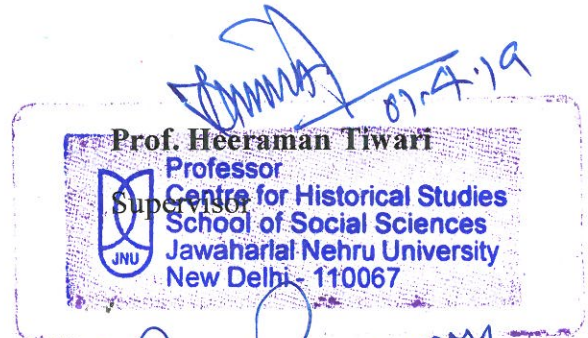
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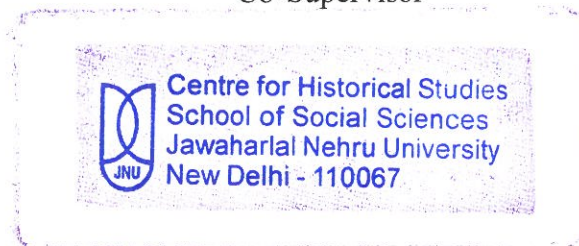
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Mad, mad
we are all mad.
Why is this word
so derogatory then?
Diving deep into the heart's stream
you will find
that no one is better
than the one who is mad.

Some are mad after wealth
and others for glory.
Some go mad
with poverty,
and others with aesthetic forms,
the flavours of feelings.
Some are madly in love.
And some of those who go mad
only laugh or cry.
The glamour of madness is great.

Mad and mad!
Madness does not grow
on the tree-
but only when
the fake and the fact
are meaningless-
and all, being equal,
are bitter sweet.

Anon
Songs of the bards of Bengal, trans Deben Bhattacharya

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INTRODUCTION

The human condition consists in its entirety of the social, political and economic life that a person leads. This human condition has always been described in the context of its environment. Within the ambit of this human conditions, the individual 'state of being', is described in reference to man's locale/surroundings.

Hence, man and his natural habitat have always been in a dynamic and interactive relationship. The individual has always made sense of their own condition through observing nature and its systems. Just as man through stages of his physical evolution made imprints on nature by modifying and transmuting landscape, tilling forests and incorporating natural resources through tools and other accessories/instruments used in daily living, Nature made an impression on man's ideas and beliefs of social organisation and community living in man's social evolution.

The human condition has been marked by a preoccupation of health and well-being, this is a result of the need to ensure survival of the population. With health and well-being becoming the standard of living, sickness and ill health become the deviation.¹ Furthermore, with the intention of preserving and sustaining life, the human body becomes the locus of conserving this physical health. Afflictions of the body that compromise bodily integrity become a source of anxiety and perplexity. Madness, in its manifestation compromises the individual bodily and socially and therefore is relegated to a form of abnormality, difference and disease.

1 Chandra Chakberty. *An interpretation of Ancient Hindu Medicine*. Calcutta: Ramchandra Chakraberty, 58, Cornwallis Street, 1923. He states that health is the foundation of all wealth and progress, as a nation we cannot afford to carry dead weight of the past. page xxi.

In this context, madness as a concept is moulded through centuries and civilisations as a deviation, a distinct difference, a state of change and an absence of what is regarded as 'normal'. However, we should be mindful of the dual process at play, even as madness is characterised and designated in opposition to health, well-being and normalcy, it is not merely a lack of these aspirations and standards, but it also becomes the register that defines what normalcy is by negation. Normalcy is ascribed with features that are in opposition to madness. This dual process allows for a generation of metric that create a continuum between what is considered normal and abnormal. This metric flourishes in the context of the social, cultural and political environment of a given individual and social group. The modern metric that has been developed and distilled through the late 19th and early 20th century is found in the records of medical literature and official records of state and government papers. This metric is not consolidated or unified and has to be gleaned through different prisms.

In the West, modern times inherited varied models of madness. Within Christendom, abnormality was seen and therefore commonly diagnosed as supernatural or divine. Renaissance humanism and scientific rationalism by contrast advanced naturalistic and medical concepts. Roy Porter says "The new science of the 17th century replaced Greek thinking where mental disorders could be by excess of both blood and yellow bile could lead to mania, whereas surplus of black bile resulted in lowness, melancholia and depression."² This was replaced with new models of body, brain and disease. The early psychiatric theories and practices derived from the rationality and irrationality of the mind. It was in the 17th century that the mind became cardinal to philosophical models of men and madness was no longer identified with demons,

2 Roy Porter. *Madness: A Brief History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. page 41

humours or even passions but with irrationality. In this model of mind rationality of self was a guarantee of soundness of mind. René Descartes was the one who postulated that reason alone could rescue mankind from drowning in ignorance, confusion and error. 'René Descartes furthered the cause of Cartesian dualism by rethinking philosophy and medicine. He speculated about madness, mental disorder and put them down to other complexities where mind and body 'touched' base with each other.'³ His reasoning of madness lent itself to the contemporary belief that consciousness was inherently and definitionally rational and precisely for that reason physical illness must derive from the body, or be a consequence of some precarious connections in the brain. There was a radical shift from religious specifically Christian understanding of madness. Demystification of the world, considered devoid of spirit and god who was considered the primary power was a result of the world being realised as a material continuum. Roy Porter demonstrates this shift through the work of Thomas Hobbes, who deemed the universe as devoid of spirits and a materialist reading of human action was made that permitted Hobbes to dismiss religious beliefs about spirits and witches as hallucinations spawned by the fevered operations of the brain. Madness was considered to be an erroneous thought caused by some defects in the body's machinery. The new science referred the body in mechanical terms which highlighted the solids like organs, nerves and fibres rather than fluids. Within this framework the soul became definitionally inviolable and doctors started instead referring to insanity to lesions of the body.

'After 1750, there was a theoretical turn because of the philosophical theories of sensation and perception as propounded by John Locke. John Locke part of the

³ Roy Porter. *Madness: A Brief History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. page 58.

somatic turn made the nervous system the focal point of enquiry and explanation.’⁴ Madness was suggested to be due to faulty associations in the processes whereby sense data were transformed into ideas. Lockean ideas were further medicalised by William Cullen, who produced a more psychological paradigm for insanity. Cullen imputed madness to excessive irritation of the nerves and hence promoted the notion that the precipitating cause of derangement lay in acute cerebral activity. Insanity was now considered a nervous disorder, which arose when there was ‘some inequality in the excitement of the brain’; it was William Cullen who coined the term ‘neurosis’ to denote any illness consequent upon disorder of the nervous system. Another attempt in demonstrating the organic nature of insanity was made by German Somatist, who staked bold claims for science’s capacity, through slicing brains in labs and performing animal experiments, to provide explanations for the pathological and neurological mechanisms of psychiatric disorders and to map onto structures of brain and their lesions. By the beginning of the 19th century, the physiological conception had attained almost universal acceptance. Anatomical structure of the brain was worked out in its most minute details and the application of experimental methods to cerebral physiology led to still further advances⁵.

Emil Kraepelin thought, ‘sense deceptions were the cause of mental illnesses that were the result of the loss of one or more of senses that modified mental development in proportion to the importance of the sensory material lost.’⁶ These were divided clinically into hallucinations and illusion. ‘Diseases were generally understood as caused by disturbances. The first of the disturbances to be elucidated

4 Roy Porter. *Madness: A Brief History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press,2002. page 127.

5 Bernard Hart. *The Psychology of Insanity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press,2002. page 128.

6 Emil Kraepelin. *Clinical Psychiatry: A Text Book for Students and Physicians*. London: The MacMillan Company, 1907. page3.

was the disturbance of mental elaboration'; the many diseases caused by this were listed out as senile dementia, korsakow's disease and paresis. 'Then there were the disturbances of the content of thought followed by the disturbances of judgement and reasoning.'

Eugene Bleuler's classic *Dementia Praecox* appearing in 1911, argued that a number of apparently discrete psychotic states could be grouped together on the basis of recurrent 'primary symptom' into a category he called schizophrenia. Bleuler considered schizophrenia a disease caused by undiscovered toxins or metabolic defect. He posited a medical condition and concentrated description and classification of patient's production not necessarily the meaning of the production.

Psychological conception is based on the view that mental processes can be directly studied without any reference to the accompanying changes which are presumed to take place in the brain. Thus, according to Bernard Hart mental disorders could be properly and effectively attacked from the standpoint of psychology.

Emerging model of madness as a psychological condition pointed to an alternatives target for psychiatric enquiry: rather than the organs of the body, the doctor had to address the patient's psyche, as evidenced by his behaviour, the transformation of the craft of minding the insane into the pursuit of systematic psychological observation. 'Freud played a great role in this transition as the question of whether to treat the body or mind, who should treat the mind and whether the mind should be 'treated' or 'understood' came to the fore'.

The psychological conception of mental disorders while treating the phenomena of states of mind, regards the phenomena as actually involving consciousness with

which it wants to deal. Its ultimate aim is the discovery of 'convenient laws' which will shortly and comprehensively describe these conscious processes to.

In the last 1950s and early 1960s several authors began to attack the assumption that mental illness is an illness. Bennett Simon questioned at what point were distinctions and lines drawn between innovative and insane, between visionary and psychotic? 'Madness is not always easily distinguished from other categories of thought and behaviour. Further problems occur in separating madness from states of disturbances that occur in connection with particular life events or stages of life: sickness, separation, death and condolence.'⁷

Thomas Szasz argued that 'mental illness' is considered an illness not because its victims give evidence of medical or biological disorder but because of particular historical and social needs. He argued that the 'sick role' for the 'mentally ill' was convenient for doctors, patients and the public because it begged and concealed certain moral issues. Michel Foucault states, 'Madness is associated with weakness, madness post the 13th century prefigures in the list of vices and is given the absolute privilege to rein over whatever is bad in man. This weakness of man is not external to him but rather belongs to him, his dreams and illusions.'⁸

In the 1960s R.D Laing, published his book 'The Divided Self, which attacked the notion of mental illness. In contrast to Szasz early focus on hysteria, Laing concentrated on schizophrenia and schizoid states. According to him, 'schizoid state refers to an individual the totality of whose experience is split in two ways.'⁹ Laing opined that the issue could not be grasped through clinical psychiatry and

7 Simon, Bennett, *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press,1980. page 31

8 See Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*. London: Routledge,2006.

9 R.D Laing. *The Divided Self*. London: Penguin Books, 1990.page 17

psychopathology as they stand. 'On the contrary, they require the existential phenomenological method to demonstrate their true human relevance and significance.'¹⁰

The critique of the medical model offered by Szasz and Laing has been augmented by a line of thinking which has risen among some sociologists. Such as the work of Albert Blumenthal and Thomas Scheff have developed and has come to be known as social labelling theory and the corollary notion of secondary deviance. 'Labelling theory of mental illness is a sensitising theory; it can be used to evaluate evidence in a provisional way. It proposes that the patient's condition is only one of a number of contingencies affecting the societal reactions and therefore the patient's fate.'¹¹ In the simplest form, these theories argued that some behaviour may be disturbed or deviant which is when it is termed as primary deviance but it is only because of social interaction and social labelling that people become converted from peculiar and mildly asocial individuals into mental patients. Allan Horwitz states that 'behaviour is labelled mental illness because of the reaction of other people and from social contingencies or because of underlying individual pathology.'¹² The labelling of mental illness serves three major functions; to give order and to explain the behaviour, to predict the occurrence of these behaviours. 'Mental illness is one category observers use to explain rule violating behaviour when they are unable to explain it through other culturally recognisable categories.'¹³

10 Ibid. page 19.

11 T.J. Scheff, 'The Labelling Theory of Mental Illness'. *American Sociological Review*, Vol 39, No. 3. (June 1974).

12 Allan Horwitz, 'Models, Muddles and Mental Illness Labelling', *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, Vol 20, No. 3 (Sept 1979)

13 Allan Horwitz, 'Models, Muddles and Mental Illness Labelling', *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, Vol 20, No. 3 (Sept 1979)

James Aho and Kevin Aho believe that, 'Sickness presents itself as a kind of deviance. From the view point of society, bodily infirmity shows up as sickness that is as deviation from the standards that define normality and health.'¹⁴ They suggest that it to be a form of passive aggressive resistance against the standards of bodily normality and more generally, against the routines of the ordinary life worlds. By means of sickness one can communicate his or her disgust of everyday affairs. Sickness usually provides a safe way of avoiding one's putative responsibilities as a slave, an oppressed worker, a disgruntled wife or bored student.

All social deviation disrupts the world. Various different forms of social deviations ultimately cause chaos and this could lead to disaster. The manner in which deviation manifests itself or is recognised by society and how it is handled changes over time. This difference in management of deviation is because of the struggle between three different bodies or institutions over jurisdiction of stubborn bodies: religious authorities, legal authorities and medical authorities. As the different institutions usurp power and achieve ascendancy, the ways that deviance is experienced, changes dramatically.

From the dawn of the modern era, priestly authority has been taken over by police, whose role is now being usurped by physicians. As a result, the nature of deviance has changed. These alterations can be summarised by the phrase 'medicalisation of deviance'. The presumed cause of deviance has shifted. Sin is explained by the absence of moral virtue, an inability to control one's sinful proclivities. Crime in contrast, is identified as a particular kind of presence, a conscious intention to do wrong. A sickness, on the other hand, is a different matter, it is not a choice made by an active agent. Remedies for deviance have also mutated through times. Sins call for

14 James Aho and Kevin Aho, *Body Matters: A Phenomenology of Sickness, Disease and Illness*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2009, page 55.

confession to a priest who then recommends penance, felonies are mediated by punishment. Sickness, on the other hand, requires medical intervention.

Good health is defined in political terms not only as a state of physical or emotional wellbeing but as ‘access to and control over’ the basic material and non-material resources that sustain and promote life at high level of satisfaction. Through the decades since the prevalence of biomedicine over other alternative healing systems, momentum has garnered of the notion of the invincibility of the human body. Biomedicine is now seen as a weapon against disease, death and this has generated the fantastical idea that denies the fragility and mortality of the human body. Illness is considered an unnatural state of the human body, causing both physical and social dysfunction and therefore a state which must be alleviated as soon as possible.

Deborah Lupton says that, ‘a person with afflictions only as a transient sufferer, the patient is therefore scrutinised and placed in the role of the socially vulnerable supplicant. A patient in this view is compliant, passive and grateful while doctors are represented as universally beneficent, competent and altruistic.’¹⁵

There has been a concentrated effort to convert human problems or problems of living as medical problems. Medicalisation describes a process by which non-medical problems become defined and treated as medical problems, usually in terms of illness or disorders. A problem is defined in medical terms, described using medical language, understood through the adoption of a medical framework, or ‘treated’ with medical intervention¹⁶. The main point in considering medicalisation is

15 Deborah Lupton, *Medicine as Culture*, London: Sage Publications, 2003. page 6.

16 Peter Conrad, *The Medicalisation of Society*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007. page 5.

that an entity that is regarded as an illness or disease is not ipso facto a medical problem; rather, it needs to become defined as one.

‘Medicalisation’ thesis was adopted because medicine became a major institution of social control superseding the influence of religion and law as a ‘repository of truth’. The institution of medicine in this framework exists as an attempt to ensure that the population remains healthy enough to contribute to the economic system as workers and consumers. Medicine serves to perpetuate social inequalities such as the divide between the privileged and the underprivileged, rather than ameliorate them. The maintenance of social order is thus the nature of illness and medical encounter with medicine being viewed as an important mechanism to control the potentially descriptive nature of illness. By the use of medicine, an exercise is made on the moral aspects of societal functioning, it is used to define normality, punish deviance and thus by extension maintain social order. Many early studies assumed that physicians were key to understanding medicalisation. Soon it became clear, that medicalisation was more complicated than the annexation of new problems by doctors and the medical profession. Medical power not only resides in institution or elite individuals, but is deployed by every individual by way of socialisation to accept certain values and norms of behaviour.

Medicalisation occurs primarily with deviance and normal life events; it cuts a wide swath through our society and encompasses broad areas of human life. Behaviour that was once defined as immoral, sinful or criminal has been given medical meaning, moving them from badness to sickness. Some cases of a condition may not be medicalised, competing definitions may exist, or remnants of a previous definition may cloud the picture. Medical categories can also expand or contract, one

dimension of the degree of medicalisation is the elasticity of a medical category. For demedicalisation to occur, the problem must no longer be defined in medical terms, and medical term can no longer be deemed appropriate interventions.

Writing on madness in the Indian context, becomes complicated due to the complex working of our colonial past. The machinery of colonial enterprise was in a sense foundational and added an additional layer to the discourse on madness that has been recorded in texts of the period. In these texts, first evidences of metrics were developed to delineate the comprehensive understanding of madness. We shall begin with the metric that was developed through the writing of western scholars of Sanskrit and other ancient texts, superintendents of asylums and other public thinkers of the time.

The environment in its physical and social aspect, becomes the first metric. Colonisers writing in the early 1900, stated that madness was modified by the environment, habits and customs of the people. The different types of madness and allied mental illnesses witnessed and observed in India were very different than the ones seen in Europe¹⁷. Along with the type of madness, the difference in estimated total accounted population of individuals afflicted from madness was relatively smaller than found in Europe. These figures were of inmates admitted to asylums under the authority of Act 36 of 1858 by which asylums may be established by government. The low figures of inmates were in part also ascribed to the environment, climate, relative simplicity of life of the native and the strong objection they have to allow sick relatives to leave their charge.

17 G.F.W Ewens, *Insanity in India, Its symptoms and diagnosis*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co, 1908.

Another striking peculiarity is the number of women afflicted; they have never been more than 128/600 of the male, though this refers to those seen. Any objection the people have to allow male relatives to enter an asylum increases a thousand-fold where women are concerned. Diseases affecting women were studiously concealed and probably those that were known were a small portion of the actual number afflicted. In most cases, those that have been found wandering and unprotected were a result of their illness slipping away in an unguarded moment from their caregivers.

The cultural environment is another source of wealth of information about the psychological nature of the sane and mad. William A. White opined, that psychoses were more prevalent among most highly civilised with congested centers of population, where civilisation had reached its greatest development and struggle for existence was most severe¹⁸.

On the other hand, western scholars marked all cultural and social activities meal, labour and even sleep as religious acts in the Indian civilisation. It was opined that, the history of India in its psychological fixity, affords fertile ground for superstition, fatalism. There was implication made that intellectual isolation, that is ideas and beliefs of Indians was without exchange of ideas with other people¹⁹. T.A Wise observed that Hindoos appear to have been satisfied with the knowledge and power they acquired at an early period²⁰. The psychological character of Indians was defined in religious terms. All psychopathological manifestations were rare and with

18 William A White, *Outlines of Psychiatry*, New York: The Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company. 1915.

19 D. Hack Tuke. ed., *A Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*. Philadelphia: P. Blakiston, Son & Co .1892.

20 T.A Wise, *Commentary on the Hindu System of Medicine*. Calcutta: Messrs, Thacker & Co. Ostell, Lepage & Co.1845.

difficulty distinguished from that of religious mysticism. Those few endemic forms of mental disorder which do occur, reflect an entirely religious character.²¹ Western observers were particularly churlish of asceticism and the faqir, who to them was emblematic of the religious point of view adopted by the natives to insanity.

G.F.W. Ewens stated, 'with the majority of Hindoos, asceticism or relinquishment of family ties ranks highest in their estimation as proof of religion. They do not look at disordered men or nakedness or wandering in that condition throughout the country as anything unusual. People as a whole are slaves to customs and habits.'²² Causation of insanity if recognised is also condones insane acts as god-inspired man and are thus normalised and venerated by the community. These beliefs are not limited to the poor and illiterate but are widespread among the population and therefore the colonisers find resistance in admitting insane persons into the asylums.

The second metric is the adaptability and functionality of the person to the environment, in order to pronounce their condition as insanity. The assumption made is that the individual is viewed as a biological unit and their reactions must be considered constantly in relation to other individuals and society as a whole. A person is regarded as insane if they cannot look after themselves and their affairs. Their adjustment to the environment is of prime importance in describing them as insane.²³ William A White stated, 'the most complete mental life is that which best

21 D. Hack Tuke. Ed., *A Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*. Philadelphia: P. Blakiston, Son & Co. 1892.

22 G.F.W Ewens, *Insanity in India, Its symptoms and diagnosis*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co. 1908. page 4.

23 G.F.W Ewens, *Insanity in India, Its symptoms and diagnosis*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co. 1908. page 11.

adjust the individual, both passively and actively in the sense to the conditions of their environment.²⁴

The third metric employed is that of loss of control. The 'insane' person was always characterised as one with the defining attribute of being solitary and never gregarious, peculiarity in speech, act and dressing, devoid of respect for authority and culminating feature of loss of self-control.²⁵ This loss of control in turn is measured by the scale of harm that the insane person can do to their self and unto others.

This is reflected in Maudsley's definition of insanity, 'derangement of the leading functions of thoughts, feelings and will together or separately as disables the person's thinking the thoughts, feeling the feelings and doing the duties of the social body in, for and by which he lives.'²⁶ Thus, it isn't a matter of beliefs that are absurd but action on that will that attributes insanity, as the contemplation of an idea on its own would be considered harmless, whereas the enforcement of the improbable idea against the rights and impinging on persons is what is cautioned against. Ewen's states, 'the loss of will power and self-control is perhaps the most fundamental symptom of all form of insanity, as the insane has no self-control, it does just what he pleases and also en passant. It may be added that he will do nothing that is asked of him, it is this which makes him dangerous and obnoxious.'²⁷ This change or transition in behaviour of an insane with the development of habits different from

24 William A White. *Outlines of Psychiatry*, New York: The Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company. 1915. page 10.

25 They have lost all the higher refinement of manner and bearing. They have no regard for persons and consideration for others, and are most unreasonable.

26 G.F.W Ewens, *Insanity in India, Its symptoms and diagnosis*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co. 1908. page 10.

27 G.F.W Ewens, *Insanity in India, Its symptoms and diagnosis*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co. 1908. page 14

normal self and compromised power of reasoning along with loss of self-control, the western scholars were quick to point out that these insane persons were liable to be dangerous and of criminal nature. In fact, Ewens made a broad stroke when he stated that every lunatic was a potential criminal.

The social conduct of person was the most imperative to ascribe insanity to their behaviour. As Charles Mercier who was the proponent of the distinction and correlation of crime and insanity pointed out, crime consisted of acts that are forbidden by law and are resultant of the disorder of highest level of mind and conduct²⁸. The insanities that are most associated with crime were drunkenness, feeble-mindedness, epileptics, paranoia, general paralysis and deep melancholia²⁹.

The biological standpoint that is used to ascertain the militating against the welfare of society by an insane person is extended to systematising bodily peculiarities of the insane person. These bodily peculiarities were also considered factors in production of the crime. For instance, the average size of the head is partially the same as that of the ordinary population, there is a larger proportion of small and large size i.e. medium size is deficient. There is a preponderance of larger facial development with small anterior canal. There is found to be an average deficiency of weight of cranial content and prognathous face along with receding chin and projecting ears is common. This evidence is often considered atavistic and taken as a whole criminals

28 Charles Mercier, *Crime and Insanity*, London: William and Northgate. page 41.

29 Charles Mercier, *Crime and Insanity*. London: William and Northgate. page 55-72, 'feeble-mindedness leads to crime as a person is usually silly, reticent and born of suspicion and antagonism to constituted authority, the crimes committed are usually petty thefts. Epileptics almost always commit crimes that are violent. Paranoia or systematic delusions are of persons who think they are subject to a plot. They are particularly apt to make attacks on persons in high places in order that the notoriety they achieve may draw attention to the case. General paralysis of the insane believe that they are persons of great possession and rarely make assaults. The deeply melancholic are possessed of the enduring belief in their own weakness and incompetence and are suicidal by nature'.

of either sex resembling insane are rarely considered beauty, therefore European scholars created a certain conformity in the general appearance of the insane, criminal person.

European scholars and particularly colonial administrators were keen to use this opportunity of drawing the boundary of sanity and the insane with distinct character of 'indianess'. This exercise of defining insanity in the colonised subcontinent came with the social control of marking behaviour, customs and traditions of the Indians as sane or insane. The scholars made a categorical distinction between quite ordinary insane that tend to stay in their own villages and others that are admitted to the asylum for being too dangerous. G.F.W Ewens states that the natural tendency of the people of north western and another part of the country is more rambunctious.

There is a civilising tone to the detailing of behaviour as described by him that, the natural self of a Pathan, an afghan, or any other frontier tribe, or men from Punjab are not docile, amenable in description- quite the contrary. Noise, turbulence, violence, aggressiveness and reckless action become their predominant features.

Further, in detailing the types of insanities that are found in India, a judgement is made on the nature of the Indian personhood and nature. It is decreed that the most prevalent type of insanity that is found is that of acute mania and this is quite contrary to the suicidal melancholia that one frequently comes across in Britain³⁰. Ewen states, that those of whom are suicidal melancholics are in a convenient condition to be retained at home and allowed to follow their wishes. If they show any troublesome tendencies, as is the custom they are tied to the leg of a bedstead,

30 Based on government classification during 1906, the examples of insanity- total population of inmates with acute/chronic mania was 409, total population of inmates with idiocy was 44 and total population of inmates with melancholia was 40.

bled at intervals and taken to *pirs* and *faqirs* to be treated by charms and other such methods.

Just as certain types of insanities were predominantly registered/accounted for in colonised India, so were certain symptoms keenly highlighted and made examples of in the effort to demonstrate the peculiarity of Indian insanity. The first among many symptoms were, the insane person's affinity to being filthy with their excreta. This symptom which was usually found in the acutely insane was according to the European scholars a result of the cultural habits of people using open grounds in the vicinity of their village as latrine, who regularly plaster with their own hand liquid cow dung on their floors. Nakedness is another marked attribute of the insane person's behaviour and is often insisted upon by the insane person according to European scholars. The rationalisation given is far more sympathetic, that of climatic conditions for six month in the year, forcing Indians to be sparsely dressed. The example used as an illustration is that of a coolie (carrier of load) dressed naked albeit for a minute shred of clothing covering his loins.³¹

The symptoms described are upon closer reading found to be behaviour displayed by the insane. The behaviour documented is not only in terms of personal appearance and habits but also of response and reaction of the insane person to his environmental surroundings. These reactions were observed through the face of the insane person, who often expresses a persistent emotion of exaltation, pride, gloomy rage or depression towards others. The description of the language and negative often hostile interactions of the insane are keenly documented by European scholars. The exposition for this behaviour is as expected found in the cultural practices of the

31 G.F.W Ewens, *Insanity in India, Its symptoms and diagnosis*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co, 1908. Page 3.

indigenous persons. It is stated that, in a country where small children are heard proficient in the most vulgar language, it is then quite easy to imagine that the insane would behave in such uncivilised ways³².

The morality that is covertly at play in the description of insane persons, is definitely more proclaimed whilst discussing the social conduct and symptoms of insane persons. However, the European scholars demarcated a specific category called moral insanity, to curtail the regressions of its colonised society. Maurice de Fleury, was one of the early proponents to discuss the diminishing moral strength and the form of fatigue that he termed as indolence³³. This indolence or moral imbecility was a result of the inability of the individual to subordinate their animal impulses and desires to that which is at any rate regarded among one's own race and period as right and wrong and consideration for others. There is a loss of ethical standards of conducting life and maintaining justice, truth and wisdom³⁴. Insane persons suffer from a loss of 'moral sense' and commit acts of lying, stealing and injuring. They are not influenced by exhorting or punishment and yet otherwise appear to be intellectually coherent and sane. It is a result of condition developed from previous insanities or being a symptom of another mental diseases. Subsequently, an exhaustive list was developed of causes of this moral insanity which included;

32 G.F.W Ewens, *Insanity in India, Its symptoms and diagnosis*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co, 1908. page 4

33 Maurice de Fleury, *Medicine and the Mind*, London: Downey & Co. Limited, 1900. page 219.

34 G.F.W Ewens, *Insanity in India, Its symptoms and diagnosis*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1908. page 256

acquired as result of head injury; as a feature of simple mania, epilepsy and in the example of one-sided genius³⁵.

Treatment meted out to the insane allows one to reconstruct the societal processes in place by institutions of colonial administration to work around the problem of insane persons. The preventive strategies give a glimpse into what the colonial administrator believe are the societal and moral failings of the Indian population, these include unhygienic living conditions, over studying and lack of proper physical development in the youth which also results in lack of proper rest and sleep. They promote from an early life the habits of self-restraint, consideration for others, abstinence and continence.

The act of exclusion and isolation as the only means of treatment, though frowned upon by the colonial administration, they do believe that the disease could be 'managed' by the practical solution of not allowing the insane, epileptic to marry and reproduce. The European scholars saw merit in seclusion, but were averse to reducing treatment methodology to be limited to it. They opined that the insane person could in the asylum do as he/she likes and feel free and untrammelled, they can shout, be restless, petulant in a changed environment and freed from excitants to worry and anxiety. Acute cases of mania, the essential factor treatment is regular and ample feeding. This feeding at regular intervals of food, is considered critical. If the insane individual refuses full then they should be put on a diet of milk, which is abundantly found in the country. Another means of treatment that is promulgated is provision of most insane of some form of occupation. This does great service to insane individual. It renders their days less monotonous, they are far easier managed

35 G.F.W Ewens, *Insanity in India, Its symptoms and diagnosis*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink &Co., 1908. Page 260.

and controlled. In many it gives an outlet for energy that would otherwise be directed to destruction and violence³⁶.

In response to the metrics and discourse created by the colonial intelligentsia, Indian scholar in the late 19th and early 20th century responded with their own formulations on the conception of madness and its allied manifestations. The methods employed by Indian scholars were ingenious and industrious given their limited resources. The painstaking effort made by Indian scholars followed a double trajectory. The first was to buttress the knowledge disseminated by the western scholars by adding to their corpus of information and within the framework of western science. This was done by the likes of Girindrashekar Bose, began trying out psychoanalytic concepts and methods in his clinical practice towards the end of the 1910s, when the swadeshi movement had become a significant political movement. He founded the psychoanalytic society in 1921, while the non-cooperation movement started. Thus it would seem that psychoanalytic came to represent more than a therapeutic technique that could be adapted to the mental health problems of India. It also served as an instrument of social criticism and as a dissenting western school of thought³⁷

In his seminal book, *Concept of Repression*, Girindrashekar Bose, while accepting the premise of concept of repression and recognising its contribution to psychopathology and determining psychoneurosis³⁸. Bose added the definition of two types of unconscious mental activities; where the unconscious results from a

36 G.F.W Ewens, *Insanity in India, Its symptoms and diagnosis*. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink &Co., 1908,page 216.

37 Ashis, Nandy. *The Savage Freud: The First Non-Western Psychoanalyst and the Politics of Secrets in India*.Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

38 Girindrashekar Bose, *Concept of Repression*.Calcutta:14, Parsi Bagan,1921, 'Not only has this theory been used in elucidating the complicated phenomenon of psychoneurosis and allied disorders but in the sphere of normal mental life. Also, immense significance in sociology, anthropology and literature. page 25.

conflict between two contradictory wishes and where the unconscious is not the result of a conflict but is a natural process³⁹. However, he did challenge the factors ascribed for repression and suggested that they be viewed from a psychological standpoint. He disagreed with Freud's assumption of relegation of repression factors to the social and cultural requirements only⁴⁰.

Amongst the foremost proponents on the study of madness and its clinical form of insanity was Bhagvan Das, who in the science of emotions explicated the division to be noted between desire and emotion⁴¹. Extending this rationale of desire and emotional arousal, Das demonstrated how emotions aroused and prevented from venting itself in the body of the subject himself then display reactions akin to madness; movement which find climax in hysterical or frantic and frenzied cries, sobbing, grimaces, beating of one's own head with hands or against the wall⁴². The conceptual understanding of madness⁴³, takes cue from this rationale and is understood to be essentially emotions run amuck, which has broken down all the barriers of opposite emotion-desire which reason has brought forward to restrain and confine it within bounds and now vents itself in wild and grotesque ways⁴⁴.

39 The state of consciousness are believed to be a product of the activity of the nervous apparatus. This theory is based on the observation that mental states depend on the integrity of the nervous apparatus and that lesions and toxins affecting the brain influence the mental state also.

40 Girindrashekar Bose, *Concept of Repression*. Calcutta:14, Parsi Bagan,1921 no amount of cultural requirement or deprivation or abstinence would render a craving unconscious unless and until it was opposed by some inner wish of a contradictory nature. page 30.

41 Bhagvan Das, *The Science of Emotion*. London: Theosophical Publishing Society,1900. He stated that emotion is a desire plus the cognition involved in the attitude of one living person towards another. Page 77

42 Bhagvan Das, *The Science of Emotion*.London: Theosophical Publishing Society,1900. page 82.

43 Chandra Chakraberty, *An Interpretation of Ancient Hindu Medicine*, Calcutta: Ramchandraa Chakraberty, 58, Cornwallis Street. 1923.page iii

44 Bhagvan Das, *The Science of Emotion*.London: Theosophical Publishing Society,1900. page 130.

The other method was to demonstrate a relative comparative and similarity between eastern and western civilisation. This project sought to indicate what of modern western civilisation knowledge owed itself to ancient Hindu medicine. According to Girindranath Mukhopadhaya, the influence of hindu medicine on materia medica, the absence of hindu medicine from the annals, accounted from the geographical position of India with respect to Europe, and the total unacquaintance with refined language of Europe⁴⁵.

Chandra Chakraberty asserted that ancient Greek school of medicine were indebted to the hindu system⁴⁶. This is summarised via the argument that India is directly mentioned in association with some of the drugs such as kardamomon from kardama and kostos from *kúṣṭha*. In Peri Physios Anthropoy (On the Nature of Man), Hippocrates advances an arguement of the superiority of the principle four humours in the body to preserve health which clearly shows knowledge borrowed from hindu system of medicine. Indirect inferences were also made, urine of the cow (gau-mutra) was seen as recommendation as a therapeutic agent in fistulas for washing genitals and cow dung was considered appropriate for fumigation in female diseases. The cow being regarded as a sacred animal of the Hindus; it can be imagined that their excretory products may be used in India as therapeutic agents. But, their use among Greeks who had no such passions indicate foreign importation⁴⁷.

45 Girindranath Mukhopadhaya, *History of Indian Medicine*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1923 page 7.

46 Chandra Chakraberty, *An Interpretation of Ancient Hindu Medicine*. Calcutta: Ramchandra Chakraberty, 58, Cornwallis Street, 1923. Hindu thought deeply influenced the Greek medical literature in the 5th and 4th century B.C.E. We do not yet definitely know how the medical science reached Hellas, perhaps by Persian intermediaries. page x

47 Chandra Chakraberty, *An Interpretation of Ancient Hindu Medicine*, Calcutta: Ramchandra Chakraberty, 58, Cornwallis Street, 1923-page x.

The second method employed was of creating a cultural entity out of this system of medicine. This system of medicine was also used to dispel the preconceived notions of European scholars of the merit and worth of Sanskrit literature especially of medical nature. Marked by the realisation that the ancient medical work couldn't be employed in the present milieu for communal health.

Indian scholars suggested that this rich material would provide a prolific vocabulary and might be profitably utilised to create a national school of medicine for continuity of historic consciousness and use it to activate and act as a stimulus for progress⁴⁸. This medical system was privileged as an achievement of the past.

This exercise of reclaiming the past through a study of ancient medical and scientific writing from being relegated as religious compositions and being grossly misunderstood⁴⁹. This realisation was meant to inspire the population as Chandra Chakraberty stated, ' For a race that does not take the utmost care and the most advanced methods for the prevention of disease and preservation of health, cannot effectively compete in the struggle for existence, with more forward races and succeed in the survival of the fittest'⁵⁰.

This cultural entity in turn made a positive contribution to the image of the nation that was being constructed in our consciousness. This history of medical ideas, was crucial to understanding the past, to comprehend history of medical concepts and processes by which science of healing gradually developed and built up. It was promulgated that Sanskrit medical books would also provide an account of obsolete

48 Chandra Chakraberty, *An Interpretation of Ancient Hindu Medicine*, Calcutta: Ramchandra Chakraberty, 58, Cornwallis Street, 1923 page xx.

49 Girindranath Mukhopadhaya, *History of Indian Medicine*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1923 page 35.

50 Chandra Chakraberty, *An Interpretation of Ancient Hindu Medicine*, Calcutta: Ramchandra Chakraberty, 58, Cornwallis Street, 1923 page xx.

customs, which were unknown to any other countries in ancient times. Even the therapeutic measures that are rediscovered and appearing from time to time as new and original, can be found to date back to the ancient Sanskrit works on the art of healing and particularly in surgery⁵¹. The institutionalisation of this effort to reclaim and rehabilitate the body of knowledge of ancient hindu medical system came in the way of a plea for a chair of pharmacology and history of medicine to be set up in Calcutta University⁵². This mandated that students would henceforth be able to comprehend the origin of medicine and understand the Indian tendency of medical thought that had its roots in these ancient medical systems.

Post-independence there was an upsurge in the study of insanity and allied illnesses. In the early decades (1947-1960) of nation building, most research done was theoretical and had strong inclination towards psychoanalysis and other disciplines of depth psychology⁵³. From 1960-1980, with resources being earmarked for infrastructure and technology, the meagre resources that were available to the Indian practitioners was used to focus on the community rather than the individual and thus in this manner cultural tools were used in sociology of psychiatric disorders. This in turn propelled great contributions in the field of psychiatric epidemiology, phenomenology and therapeutics⁵⁴.

51 Girindranath Mukhopadhaya, *History of Indian Medicine*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1923 page 86.

52 Girindranath Mukhopadhaya, *History of Indian Medicine*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1923 page 41

53 N.N Wig & Salman Akhtar, 'Twenty-Five Years of Psychiatric Research in India'. *Indian J. Psychiatry*, Vol 16, 1974 (Page 48- 64.).

54 N.N. Wig & Salman Akhtar, 'Twenty-Five Years of Psychiatric Research in India'. *Indian J. Psychiatry*, Vol 16, 1974 (Page 48- 64.).

The project of indianising psychiatry was one of establishing freedom and difference from the British premises that until then were the norm. There was an expansion on the understanding of health, that wasn't merely restricted to physical wellness but more broadly holistic wellbeing⁵⁵. There was also a demarcation of difference between western understanding of ideal mental health; which was a search for intrapsychic integration and an Indian ideal; which implied disassociation between the different aspect of thinking, feeling and acting⁵⁶.

This project of indianisation seen in the wider context of building a national consciousness and imagery, was done with gusto and using the handy means of the cultural artefacts at their disposal. Certain key interventions that were taken included; Redefining concept of madness and create models of psychotherapy for Indian patients that were culturally oriented⁵⁷. This redefinition of madness and allied diseases was done through a display of the distinctive systematised knowledge that was found in the corpus of sanskritic literature and particularly the Ayurveda. The systematised knowledge that was earlier looked upon as an achievement but rarely employed. This corpus was now being deployed as part of the cultural logic in defining madness and illnesses. The language of the corpus was employed to displace the western language and conceptual framework which was foreign to the milieu and had definite conative aspect to them⁵⁸.

55 N.N. Wig, 'Indian Concept of Mental Health and Their Impact on Care of Mentally Ill', *International Journal of Mental Health*, Vol 187, No.3. In any Indian definition of health there is always a reference to mental harmony and potential for spiritual growth.

56 N.C. Surya & S.S Jayaram, 'Some Considerations in the Practice of Psychotherapy in the Indian Setting'. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 38.1964.

57 Shiv Gautam, 'Mental Health in Ancient India & Its relevance to Modern Psychiatry', *Indian J. Psychiatry*, 1999, Vol 41 (1).

58 N.C Surya & S.S. Jayaram, 'Some Considerations in the Practice of Psychotherapy in the Indian Setting'. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 38.1964 Language sums up the whole distance of an individual and the people in all the three tenses.

This is reflected in the work Venkoba Rao, 'that psychological beliefs of a period form as response to environmental challenges or man's inner pressure and needs and it is this reason that prevedic and post Vedic psychiatric thought followed the contributions from philosophical systems and gave rise to medical schools in ancient India.'⁵⁹

The first intervention made was that of responding to the Kraepelin and Fleury's summation of the doctrine of localisation of the mind⁶⁰. Having established the ancestry/ antecedents of the concept of the mind right from the time of the Veda⁶¹, Indian scholars were the first to admit that the concept of *manas* postulated in the ayurvedic texts is different from and not equivalent to concept of mind in modern psychology and current usage. After distinguishing the mind from *manas* Indian scholars postulated the distinction between mental organs and faculties of thought, mental vision and *kratu*⁶². Establishing physicality (*dravytva*) of the mind was one the mainstay arguments made by Indian scholars, this was done through demonstrating how innate in human being *manas* and *hrdya* are as agents through which mental faculties operate.

The next intervention made was in diagnosing disorders with a cultural lens, with weightage being given to individual's socio-cultural beliefs and interpretation of

59 Venkoba A. Rao, 'Psychiatric Thought in Ancient India', *Indian J. Psychiatry*, Vol 20. 1978)(page 107- 119). page 108.

60 Maurice De Fluery, *Medicine and Mind*, London: Downey & Co. Limited,1900 ' the anatomical seat of the function of the senses and intelligence either in the ventricles or cerebral cavities, or in the body of encephalus itself.

61Shiv Gautam, 'Mental Health in Ancient India and Its Relevance to Modern Psychiatry'. *Indian J. Psychiatry*,1999, Vol 41 (1)'Mind has been conceived to be a functional element of atman in the Veda which are the earliest written script of human race'

62Vaidya Vilas M. Nanal, *Mental Health in Traditional Medicine*.Chennai: Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems,1998.

what is considered normal across cultures. This indianisation of diagnoses was based on the distinctiveness of Indians from the rest of the world. This distinction maybe in their individual personality and psyche⁶³. As illness is shaped by personality and the socio-cultural circumstances that the individual found themselves in, thus the task of diagnosis becomes even more complex as so far the method employed was to use the classification that had been evolved in Europe and the United States of America i.e. IC Mental and Behavioural Disorder and Diagnostic and Stastic Manual of Mental Disorder⁶⁴.

M.A Thiravukarasu, added to the above discourse by stressing that criteria for diagnosis requires revisitation. Challenging the western scholar's assumption that was rooted in identifying illness and not health. He stated that critical evaluation and diagnoses cannot be statistically derived based on scoring systems and should start by the postulation of health and move towards illness not the other way around⁶⁵. N.N Wig and Gurmeet Singh, pointed out to the lack of common classification that leads to difficulty of comparing psychiatric observations and the results of treatment given especially given the trans-cultural variation in symptomatology of psychiatric disorders⁶⁶.

For J.S Neki, 'western psychotherapy is not appropriate to Indian culture because the Indian psyche looks for sources of problem outside the self, in astrological

63 Ajit Avasthi, 'Indianizing Psychiatry- Is There a Case Enough?' *Indian J. Psychiatry*, Vol 53 92. 2011. For average person, the inner self is lodged in a circle of intimacy or family, unlike the western man whose selfhood is confined to his own body.

64 Jitendra K Trivedi, Maya Bajpai and Mohan Dhyani, 'Indian Experience with International Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorder.' *Indian J. Psychiatry*, Vol 53, No 3. (2011, July-Sep) page 229-233.

65 M.A Thiravukarasu. 'A Utilitarian Concept of Manas and Mental Health'. *Indian J. Psychiatry* 53, No.2 (2011).

66 N.N Wig & Gurmeet Singh, 'A Proposed Classification of Psychiatric Disorder for Use in India'. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol IX, No.2. April 1967. page 158.

influences, evil spirits, witchcraft or transgressions and karma'. Another field of research was yoga and meditation; these two techniques were used particularly privileged for indianisation due to their origin. Interest in techniques of concentration (*dharana*) and meditation (*dhyana*) that they considered efficient in relieving disorders; *astha* and aggression.

Another intervention made in the project of indianization of psychiatry was changing the norm of standardising tests and Indian performance on these tests. Along with modification of certain existing tests to suit our specific needs and designing some original psychosomatic tools are among other tasks taken on in this process of indianization.

The Indian patient being part of a larger relationship structures of family, occupation and community structures requires to be seen more sociologically⁶⁷. With time, Indian psychiatrist in India have felt the need for modification of psychotherapy techniques in order to make them applicable to the Indian patients. Because, 'the Indian patient is more ready to expect and accept dependency relationship; more ready to accept overt situational support and more ready to disregard ego bounds and involve the therapist in direct role relationship and finally his ideal or idealised support is the joint family elder'. Indian patient expects the therapist to play an active and authoritarian role. Knowing this it is incumbent on the psychiatrist to understand the patient's approach to mental illness and give up the 'therapeutic neutrality', which is an important part of western psychotherapy. Ajit Avasthi notes, 'that psychotherapy in India should be short term, crisis oriented, supportive, flexible and tuned to cultural and social conditions'.

67 Brij Mohan, 'Sociology of Mental Illness, In India', *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*. 1970. page 278.

The thesis has been divided into five chapters. In Chapter One, the vast corpus of the *Atharva Veda* is surveyed to construct the earliest engagement of individual and society with madness. This survey looks at the positionality of the corpus in juxtaposition to the other Vedas (*Rg, Sāma and Yajur*) to determine whether atharvanic rites of healing were connected with *gr̥hya sutra* or from the greater *śrauta sutra*. The *Atharva Veda*'s social and moral universe offers a conceptual and visual understanding on the body, illness, disease and madness based on evil, demons, sin and repentance. The second chapter delineates how madness was defined in the Ayurvedic corpus: the subtle shift made from the earlier Atharvanic understanding to that of madness based on humours, personality and nature. This understanding of madness is formed through the intervention of the physician and the treatment of madness takes place in the first hospitals that are recorded in the *Caraka Samhitā*. In the third chapter, the performative aspect of madness as a behaviour is postulated and the physicality of madness through performance of gestures, gait and acting is also described here. The emotionality of madness as evoked in the audience through the performance of an actor, demonstrates the shared understanding of how madness was visually constituted in ancient Indian theatre and society. A special focus is made on the role of the *Vidūṣaka*, the actor and dramatic character that was conceived by Bharata. The *Vidūṣaka*, characterised along the same lines as a mad person, is almost a corollary for how madness in this personification is deployed to propel the narrative forward. Madness in the ancient sanskrit literature allows reprieve to the character in their regimented doctrine of *rasas* and *bhava*. The chapter will describe these scenarios of reprieve through an examination of different scenarios of madness and especially of lovers in separation. The fourth chapter, makes an inversion of madness as an illness. The mad person is taken off the stage and put in the middle of the streets of the real world. The deviational aspect of madness is scrutinised through the lens of devotion, and through the devotion of

saints belonging to Saivite and Vaisnavite sects. Madness is taken out of the mould of being seen as debilitating or crippling and is seen as empowering the myths and legend of three women saints: Akka Mahadevī, Lal Ded and Mīrabāī. While examining the hagiographies and songs of these saints, we appraise the feminine aspect of this madness. This madness is manifested differently for the three saints of different sects, reflecting a devotion derived from the philosophies of these sects itself. The madness of these saints allows for engagement with the larger social world without mediation of institutionalised religions. In Chapter Five, we go into the institutional management of madness, in the precinct of the temple. The three temples that we survey, Gunaseelam, Chottanikkara and Sankarnarayan Kovil, are considered centres of healing. In this chapter, the dynamics of Sanskritisation of the deity and her healing powers and rituals is promulgated. This is juxtaposed to the different rituals found in the Vaisnavite temple of Sri Prasanna Venkatchalapathy Perumal. This chapter navigates the writings with evidence on treatment to the ritual ceremonies that are conducted based on these textual elaborations. The difference in these rituals depicts the difference in the sectarian understanding and treatment of madness, where the formulas employed for the Devi are different from that of Perumal.

Chapter One: The Manifestation of Madness in the Atharva Veda Samhitā

Introduction

Western scholars and Indian scholars alike have raced to declare the *Atharva Veda Samhitā* as the foundational literature in ancient Indian civilisation on disease, treatment and medicine. This supposition is made on the basis of the vast evidence that they have gathered in the texts through verses on specific diseases and methods of treatment. There is a questionable rationale to the work of P.V Sharma and Kenneth Zysk that individuals emphasised the integration of physical and mental by means of hymns to the gods, sought a longevity of life and health of the body, mind and moral fortitude. I argue, to the contrary that human suffering, discontent, disease and social conflict were recognised separately but not neatly described and compartmentalised as physical and mental things.

Though one must admit that there is a vast expanse of information cited in the Atharvanic corpus on sickness, disease, healing and treatment, it would be a gross overreach to declare the *Atharva Veda* as a system of knowledge of medicine. We need to maintain a cautionary approach in opposition to Kenneth Zysk and Horacio Fabrega who would have us believe when examining Rg Veda and *Atharva Veda* together, we can formulate a fundamental doctrine of ‘vedic medical tradition’. This doctrine that they espouse is considered ‘magico-ritual’ in its origin. It is important to dispute the nomenclature of magico-ritual as it undermines the functional and utilitarian aspect of the hymns and shrouds them as ‘primitive’. The binary of magico-ritual to science and medicine is self-generating and perpetuating through their understanding of vedic texts. The reasons they elaborate for this summation

include, the attribution and causation of diseases and other forms of sickness to external forces/beings of demonic nature rather than to physiological function to produce sickness and disease. This view is most easily detected in Horacio Fabrega's contention that troubles of secular character were cast in metaphysical terms and solved by magical incantations, since demons and sorcerers were viewed as prominent source of disease¹. These mythicisation of disease also adds to Fabrega and Zysk's resolve of calling the *Atharva Veda* magico-ritual in nature. Zysk in particular felt that mythology formed a significant part of the charms and hymns recited by healers. Major disease demons, in addition to being deified, were often mythologised, pointing to the important and long-lasting impact they had on people. Similarly, certain curative herbs were given mythical beginnings, often personified and worshipped as gods and more commonly as goddesses².

I contend, this apparent opposition that the scholars note of empiricism to potent and efficacious ritual practices and of rationality to spiritually and religiously idiomatic understanding of health and sickness is anachronistic on the part of their scholastic endeavours. Kenneth Zysk belies his trust of the *Atharva Veda* when he finds the treatise wanting in a 'positive understanding of health'. He states that any notion of the concept of health is to be found in the negative or opposite of what is understood as disease, or more specifically in the absence of particular disease-causing demons, of injuries and damages and of toxins³. The conceptual understanding therefore is that the ancient Indian idea of health rests not on general notion about body or person

1 Horacio Fabrega Jr, *History of Mental Illness in India, A Cultural Psychiatry Retrospective*. Delhi: Motilal Benarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 2009. page 200

2 Kenneth G. R Zysk, *Medicine in the Veda, Religious Healing in the Veda*. Delhi: Motilal Benarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2009. page 9

3 Kenneth G. R Zysk, *Medicine in the Veda, Religious Healing in the Veda*. Delhi: Motilal Benarasidass Publisher Private Limited. 2009. page 8.

but rather on the absence of specific and culturally constituted conditions of disease or physical afflictions⁴. This is squarely untrue as throughout the *Atharva Veda* one encounters an envisioning of health and wellbeing. The envisioning of health is actually a step away from abstraction and a move towards understanding health in terms of prolonging life, having synchronic breathe and maintenance of mind and limbs⁵.

It is necessary to revisit this proposition of the *Atharva Veda* as a proto- scientific treatise of ancient India. Admittedly, the Atharvanic treatise does possess the focus on *bodily materialism* that is sought after by orientalist and Indian scholars. By bodily materialism, I contend that with the body at the centre of concern and affectation of body being primary, solutions of both material based and of social nature were sought. However, it might seem premature to use this body centrism through the characterisation of human anatomy, observation and inference made on diagnosis and prognosis in these texts as definitive to describe the texts as containing medical rituals as done by S.S. Bahulkar⁶. The treatise in no way can be demarcated as a ‘holistic system’ with ideas and practices that address all types of medical and scientific i.e. psychological, physiological and spiritual problems that were part of the human predicament posed by the day to day living and suffering experienced.

The search for a separate, overarching specialised system of knowledge of medicine that was secular in nature afforded the idea to scholars and historians of medicine such as N.J. Shende, to contain their desires in the *Atharva Veda* whilst being

4 Horacio Fabrega Jr, *History of Mental Illness in India, A Cultural Psychiatry Retrospective*. Delhi: Motilal Benarsidass Publishers Private Limited.2009. page 201

5 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993.page 477.

6 S.S. Bahulkar, *Medical Rituals in the Veda and AyurVeda*. Pune: Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth,1994.

disparaging about the treatises inability to disassociate itself from its religious hereditary⁷.The religious hereditary of Atharva and Angiras brahmans is lamentfully considered the cause of magic to be inextricably linked to medicine.

In the first section of this chapter, a survey is done of the extent of the Atharvanic text that are available to us in the form of recensions and redactions. We purview the literature to find how the Atharvanic text were viewed in Indic scholarship and simultaneously also examine the inner dialogue of the texts itself⁸. Raising the question of exactly how did the *Atharva Veda* view itself independently and in relation to other vedic texts that were going through a period of canonisation. In the next section of the chapter, we look at what constitutes black and white magic in the Atharvanic text what was the rationale and internal logic being applied in order to categorise these texts⁹. The next section of the chapter focuses dissecting the veracity of the claims by above mentioned scholars on the scientific nature and temper of the *Atharva Veda*. We reflect on the Atharvanic understanding of the body and the metaphors used to describe and discuss the anatomy of the Atharvanic individual¹⁰. The subsequent sections, contend with the classification of diseases and

7 N. J. Shende, *Religion and Philosophy of the Atharva Veda*.Pune: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1952.page 6.

8 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993.

9 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 19, Hymn 22. page 929.

10 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898 Book 2, Hymn 32, Verse 1-5'From thy eyes, thy nostrils, ears, andchin-the disease which is seated in thy head-from thy brain and tongue I do tear it out. From thy neck, nape of the neck, ribs, and spine-the disease which is seated in thy fore-arm from thy shoulders and arms I do tear it out. From thy heart, thy lungs, viscera, and sides; from thy kidneys, spleen, and liver we do tear out the disease. From thy entrails, canals, rectum, and abdomen; from thy belly, gut and navel I do tear out the disease. From thy thighs, knees, heels and the tips of thy feet-from thy hips I do tear out the disease seated in thy buttocks, from thy bottom the seated in thy buttocks'. page 44.

observing what constituted sickness and disease in the context of the contemporary milieu.

A section is devoted to understanding how demonology help construct a cultural understanding of disease and what social tool were used to visualise and describe disease through an understanding of what is considered evil. This personification of evil is described through an understanding of the figure of a demon. This demonically character of diseases and illness give further insight into the social anxiety of the Atharvanic community in relation to their health and wellbeing practices¹¹. A special focus is made on how madness, seizure and possession are distinguished and dealt with in the *Atharva Veda*. This section, intertwines the strand of social control through normative texts such as the *Atharva Veda* instilling rules and regulations while promulgating ideas around sickness, disease and remedies to affect them.

The last section of the chapter focuses on the management of these illnesses required identifying and employing natural resources in order to mitigate the internal or external diseases that were contracted. The section details the different approaches applied to contend with wounds, injuries, diseases and elongation of life¹².

1: Setting the context of the *Atharva Veda*

The *Atharva Veda* has been designated with several names based on the parentage of priests of different time periods. These different priestly clans, often serve as

11 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 10, Hymn 1, Verse 24, 'If thou camest (as) biped, as quadruped, put together by the witchcraft-maker, all-formed, do thou, becoming octopus, go away again from here, O misfortune!'. page 566.

12 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn 109, Verse 2. page 360.

principle indexes of the nature of the hymn mentioned. The most eminent contribution to the corpus, was of sage Atharvan ascribed 175 hymns and then of sage Brahman who is ascribed 100 hymns, this consequently led to the title of *Atharva Veda* and *Brahma Veda*¹³.

The *Atharva Veda* is categorised into 20 books of 730 hymns. The *Atharva Veda* is divided into *kāṇḍa* 'books', *anuvāka* 'lessons', and *sūkta* 'hymns'. In addition to *sūkta* there is also a parallel division of each *kāṇḍa* in *arthasūkta* 'hymns divided off according to sense, and *parydyasikta*, briefer subdivisions into groups of verses, usually ten a group¹⁴. About 1/6th of the text is written in prose similar in style and language to the Brahmana the rest is written in verse. This bolsters the evidence for the argument of multiple authorship and speaks to the heterogeneity of the text itself. There are three great divisions which were made on two principles miscellaneous or unity of subject and length of the *sūkta*, Books 1-7 is considered the original nucleus with shorter hymns with the largest number of hymns addressing diseases and illness. Book 7-12 is the second division and the third major division is of Book 13-20 with the largest number of hymns addressing remedies, treatment and protection for long life, especially in Book 19 with a total number of 28 hymns. The hymns of each book are regulated by a lower limit in the number of their stanzas. Whitney has appended order and tried to find some semblance through this order in the *kāṇḍa* division. First, from ascending order, the hymns of books 1—5, each containing about the same number of hymns, have respectively at least 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 stanzas; this ascending scale seems to be repeated in a way inside of book 5, the norm of whose first two *anuvāka* (hymns i—x) seems to be 8 or 9 stanzas followed in the rest of the

13 Ed. Suryakant Bali, *Historical and Critical Studies in the Atharva Veda*, Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1981.page 45.

14 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993.page cxli

book by hymns consisting at least of 11, and rising as high as 18 stanzas (hymn xvii). After book 5 there is an obvious break in the arrangement: the number of hymns increases vastly but the scale of stanzas descends; book 6 contains 142 hymns of at least 3 stanzas each; book 7 contains 118 hymns of two, or even as low as one stanza each. The lower limit of stanzas in the hymns of each book may therefore be regarded in a certain sense as the normal number of stanzas of that book '7' suggesting critical operations in connection with those hymns that have more than the normal number.

The *Atharva Veda* in its present form has come to us through the redactions, corroborations and collation from nine different *śākhā*. The difference of these schools is based on the collection of hymns, their arrangement and functional employment assigned for the ritual itself. Information of these various schools comes from the two *Cāraṇvyūha* of the *Yajur Veda*, Panini's *Mahabhasya*, *Purana* and *Sayana's* commentary¹⁵. The list of 9 *śākhā* include; *Paippalāda*, *Śaunakīya*, *Mauda* or *Maudāyana* are mentioned several times, the third and fourth is *śākhā Jājala* and *Jalada* respectively¹⁶. The *Brahmavada* and the *Devadarśa* whose reference one finds in the *Kāūsika sūtra* are the fifth and sixth *śākhā*. The seventh *śākhā* is *cāraṇavaidya*¹⁷.

Out of the nine *śākhās* that have been mentioned, 7 have been lost to us. The two *śākhās* that have come down to us include *Paippalāda* founded by pippalada and saunakiya called after Śaunaka. There are considerable differences in these two

15 Maurice Bloomfield, *The Atharva Veda*, Strasbourg: Verlag Von Karl J. Trübner, 1899. page 12.

16 Maurice Bloomfield, *The Atharva Veda*, Strasbourg: Verlag Von Karl J. Trübner, 1899. page 13

17 Maurice Bloomfield, *The Atharva Veda*, Strasbourg: Verlag Von Karl J. Trübner, 1899. page 13

schools including arrangement of content and content of hymns¹⁸. The *Paippalāda* text has hundreds of stanzas amounting to 1/8th of the *Atharva Veda* more not found in the *saunakiya* recension. The *saunakiya* recension is much better preserved through numerous manuscripts. Śaunakiya has a *saṃhitā* patha, a *padapāṭha*¹⁹. The ancillary texts of the *Atharva Veda*, provide an elucidation of all that is presumed and sifted out of the *Atharva Veda* as a matter of expediency and in pursuit of comprehensive brevity.

Two texts of intrinsic importance are associated with the *Atharva Veda* are called *Atharva Veda kalpas* and *Laksagana kalpa*. These five kalpas collectively are known *pañcakalpin*. The rather variable nomenclature of these texts is: 1. The *Kāuśika-sūtra*, or *Samhitā-vidhi*, or *Samhitā-kalpa*. 2. The *Vāitāna sūtra*, or *Vitana-kalpa* 3. The *Nakṣatralpa*. 4. The *Śānti-kalpa*. 5. the *Āṅgīrasa-kalpa*, or *Abhicāra-kalpa*, or *Vidhāna-kalpa*²⁰.

The most important accessory text of the *Atharva Veda* is the *sūtra* of *Kāuśika*. *Kāuśika sūtra* comprises along with a good deal of peculiar matter is divided into 14 *adhyayas*, the themes ordinarily treated in the *gṛhya sūtra*.²¹ The fourth *adhyaya* of the *sūtra* is particularly important to engage with as well as lays down the use of various charms in the treatment of diseases. The *Atharva Veda* also have a *śrauta sūtra* which is the authorless *Vāitāna sūtra* which belongs to the school of Śaunaka,

18 For further discussion on textual criticism via comparison of variant versions of hymns of Atharva Veda, See Stanley Insler, 'On the Recensions of the Atharva Veda and Atharvan Hymn Composition', *Vienna Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol.42 (1998) page 5-21.

19 Maurice Bloomfield, *The Atharva Veda*, Strasbourg: Verlag Von Karl J. Trübner.1899. page 16

20 Jan Gonda, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol I', Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag. 1975. page 276

21 Maurice Bloomfield, 'The Kāuśika-sūtra of the Atharva-Veda', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol 14 (1890). page xvi.

the published text has eight adhyayas an appendix called *yajna prayascitta* with further division into 43 *kandikas*²².

Gopatha Brahmana is divided into two parts, the *purva-brahmana* in five *prāpāṭhakas*, and the *uttara- brahmana* in six *prāpāṭhakas*. The *purva* shows considerable originality, especially when it is engaged in the glorification of the Atharvan and its priests; this is indeed its main purpose. Its materials are by no means all of the usual Brahmana- character; they broach frequently upon the domain of Upanisad²³. *Gopatha brahmans's Uttar brahmana* first *prāpāṭhaka* provides the most valuable information (in *kāṇḍa* 19-26) of the *cāturmāsya* sacrifice which is also called *bhaisajyayajña* i.e. rites to avert maladies that start or particular to a season²⁴. These remedial rites reflect the preventive approach taken and precautionary nature that developed because of received information over time.

Scholars have drawn lines demarcating religious learning between the three Vedas (*Rg*, *Sāma* and *Yajur*) and *Atharva Veda* based on several criterion. Maurice Bloomfield observed that, Atharvanic rites are connected with home life (*gr̥hya*) centre about the fire in distinction from the greater vedic ceremonies (*śrauta*) which are mainly concerned with oblations of soma²⁵. Though it must be stated that the *Atharva Veda* does give evidence of acquaintance with *śrauta* rites on which better source of information can be found in the *Rg Veda*. Some rites were performed that may be regarded as counterpart of *śrauta* ceremonies. Jan Gonda, on the other hand,

22 Maurice Bloomfield, 'On the position of the Vāitāna-Sūtra in the literature of the Atharva-Veda'. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol II (1885). page 376.

23 Rajendralala Mitra, & Harachandra Vidyabhusana.ed., *The Gopatha Brahmana*, Asiatic Society of Bengal, New Series No. 215 and 252. Calcutta. The Ganges Press. 1872. page 12.

24 B. R Modak, *The Ancillary Literature of the Atharva Veda*, Pune: Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan, 1993.page 41.

25 Maurice Bloomfield, *The Atharva Veda*, Strasbourg: Verlag Von Karl J. Trübner,1899.

is of the opinion that while other Vedas developed, systematised and came to enjoy a good reputation, the largely private rites intended to supply immediate wants of common people assumed the character of something extraneous²⁶. The *Atharva Veda* speaks of its own character adding to its own narrative. Book 7, has three specific hymns where the Atharvan individual identifies himself assigned with agency, through one's own mind can sacrifice be carried out²⁷. The verse, chants are considered inextricable for proper performance of the rite. The *Atharva Veda* considers sacrificial formula to give strength and prevent injury²⁸. The treatise makes allowances for loss of the sacred knowledge and gives means of recovering this knowledge²⁹.

The *Atharva Veda* texts and its rites bear a close correlation to the *grhya sūtra* rites. The *grhya sūtra* (house books) were composed as formal treatises that defined body of facts connected with everyday existence of the individual and the family. According to Maurice Bloomfield, the *grhya sūtra* and *śrauta sūtra* resulted from the codification of popular beliefs. I argue, that this distinction drawn between what is regarded as popular belief and what is considered cosmological is too straight-jacketed. It is fact, made by the observation that Atharvans were preoccupied with ways to conduct marriage ceremonies, burial rites, medical charms, exorcism with prayers. However, there is also vast amount of evidence made of cosmogenic questions that are grappled with.

26 Jan Gonda, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol I, Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag. 1975. page 274.

27 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 7, Hymn 2, Verse 1. page 390

28 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 7, Hymn 54. page 424.

29 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 7, Hymn 66. page 432

The *grhya sūtra* restricted to the most pious and orderly aspect of daily life, but they deal mainly with those practices which are of a regular, permanent or periodic character *nityakarmāṇi* as the theologians call them whereas the *Atharva Veda* is engaged largely with occasional and optional practices (*naimittika, kāmya*)³⁰. I argue, the *nityakarmāṇi* practices of *naimittika* and *kāmya* allows the *grhyasūtra* to order daily life. This regimentation was critical to the survival of the vedic religion and thought.

2: Magico–Ritual Aspect of the *Atharva Veda*

The *Atharva Veda* whilst dealing with ‘practical matters’ and conundrums of external forces man-made or natural employs magic and non-magic ‘solutions’. According to Stanley Tambiah, Magic comes with its own cosmology and is created from a distinct sort of ritual action. Magic as a form of ritual action that is immediately effective and this efficacious quality is felt in the realm of the real world. It is part of the ritual action that dabbles with forces and objects outside the scope or independent of gods. Magical acts in the ideal form are thought to have an intrinsic and automatic way of being felt and seen³¹.

Atharva Veda cannot be essentialised into collection of magical formulas. It would be impossible to draw a distinct line between ‘black’ and ‘white’ elements of the material originating from *Aṅgiras* and Atharvan which is often associated with sorcery in the *Atharva Veda* is amorphous. The difference between *Atharva Veda* on the one hand and the *Rg* and *Yajur Veda* on the other as regards 'magic' lies not in the degree of its prominence and applicability but in what I'd like to call intentional

30 Maurice Bloomfield, *The Atharva Veda*, Strasbourg: Verlag Von Karl J. Trübner, 1899. Page 7.

31 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 14, Hymn 1, Verse 23. ‘These two move on one after the other by magic; two sporting young ones go about the ocean; the one looks abroad upon all beings; thou, the other, disposing the seasons art born new’. page 744.

functionality. Moreover, many passages are ritualistic without being 'magic', and part of them are interlarded with 'philosophical' speculations that in their turn are also included without any apparent ritualistic purpose³².

According to the *Āṅgirasakalpa* of the *Atharva Veda* there are in the Atharvanic tradition ten classes of rites, viz. those that, like the German *Segen*, are to appease or avert evil (*Santika*), that are to promote welfare (*pauṣṭikā*), to bring others into subjection by means of charms (*vasa*)³³, to hinder or paralyse (*stambhana*), to bewilder (*mohana*), to bring about hatred (*dvesana*), to eradicate (*uccatana*), to kill (*māraṇa*), to seduce (*akarsana*)³⁴, and to scare away (*vidravana*)³⁵. In surveying the pertinent literature one may however follow the simpler division suggested in the commentary attributed to Sayana the 'magical' elements of this Veda are to accompany (consecrate) rites relating to this world (*aihika*) and these are either *mntika* and *puṣṭika*³⁶, or imprecatory (*abhicārika*) and rites relating to the other world (*amusmika*). In an attempt to streamline, end up reducing this distinction to defensive or offensive magic instead of viewing them as preemptive or preventive.

In the Atharvanic tradition, rites are distinguished as offensive (*abhicārika*) and defensive or retaliatory practices. Since this 'sorcery' is by no means limited to the

32 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 8, Hymn 9, Verse 1. 'Whence (were) those two born? which side (ārdha) was that? Out of what world? out of which earth? the two young (vatsā) of the virāj rose out of the sea (salilā); of those I ask thee: by whether (of them was) milked?' page 507.

33 For an early intervention on witchcraft by herbs, See H.W. Magoun, 'The Asuri-Kalpa; A Witchcraft Practice of the Atharva Veda', *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 10, No.2 (1889), page 165-197.

34 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 6, Hymn 31. page 380.

35 Jan Gonda, *A History of Indian Literature, Vol I*, Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1975. page 277

36 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 9, Hymn4. page 529

Atharva Veda the formulas frequently return in the ritual texts of the other Vedas³⁷. Magic reflected as supernatural in opposition to other more natural based sections of the *Atharva Veda* is employed under very specific circumstances cognisantly³⁸. There is also everything to be said for the supposition that the non-metrical texts (of 5 lines each) Book 2, Hymn 20-23 constitute a secondary development in accordance with specific Atharvanic cosmological ideas out which is identical with Book 2, Hymn 19: while here Agni is in a repeated scheme invoked to be hot, to rage, burn etc. against the enemy, the other texts are literal repetitions of its words, substituting only the names of Wind, Sun, Moon, and Waters for the god of Fire³⁹. Formulas similar to those prescribed at *Kausika*. 49, 7 are banded together as *sūktas* in 4, 40 and 5, 10 which are to counteract inimical attacks from the different quarters of the universe. A large variety of demons and other evil beings, often obscure as to their individual designations, but described as greedy and voracious, are addressed in more or less elaborate conjurations in order to prevent them from attacking men and cattle or spreading diseases. Among these is the curious Book 1, Hymn 29, formulas reverentially to force the *apsarases* to go away⁴⁰. The usage of charms, furthering the argument of intentional functionality is driven by competition over limited resources. This magic takes the form of curses, wrath, jealousy and sin. Some of them are mere curses intended to injure the enemies, to deprive them of their strength, to destroy

37 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 19, Hymn 23. page 931.

38 For a more detailed understanding on role of materiality in the functioning of magic, See Gustavo Benavides, 'Magic, Religion and Materiality', *Historical Reflections*, Vol.23, No.3, Cultural and Historical Interpretation Through NonTextual Material (1997), page 301-330.

39 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 2, Hymn 19, Verse 1-5. page 63.

40 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 1, Hymn 29. page 29.

their spells⁴¹. Others however are more characteristic or even singular: Book 7, 95 and 96 are directed against the ureter and kidneys of the enemy; conjures one's own food to swallow up the breath of the antagonist⁴². The *sūktas* of Book7, Hymn 70 are to prevent the gods from hearing the enemy's call and to frustrate his sacrifice⁴³. Elsewhere attention is mainly focussed on, or the invocation addressed to, some object which is supposed to be especially offensive to demons: in Book10, Hymn 3 an amulet made of *varanā* tree which is considered to be all healing and is recognised as imperative in warding off witchcraft and shielding men against other men and evil⁴⁴. Thus, magic can neither be seen as linearly prescience nor can it be seen as a phase in the evolution of logic. Magic in this sense, is not an opposition to logic nor should it be seen as popular religion of the masses. I contend that magic and its corollary wrath and sin were part of the 'empirical temper' forming world view of the Atharvanic individual.

3: Pre-science and Wrath of God

Wrath is a fascinating manner in which disease is perpetuated onto a person. The site on which all the wrath of curses, charms, imprecation are made is the individual's

41 For the working of this magic for functional purpose, See Gustavo Benavide, 'Magic, Religion, Materiality', *Historical Reflections*, Vol.23, No.3 Cultural and Historical Interpretation Through NonTextual Material (1997).

42 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 7, Hymn 95-96, Verse 3. 'The (two) on-thruster, down-thrusters, also together-thrusters: I shut up his urinator who bore (away) from here -(whether) woman (or) man'. page 457

43 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 7, Hymn 70, Verse 1, 'Whatsoever he yonder offers with mind, and what with voice, with sacrifice, with oblation, with sacred formula (*yajus*), that let perdition, in concord with death, smite, his offering, before it comes true'. page 434.

44 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 10, Hymn3, Verse 2, 'Crush them, slaughter, take hold; be the amulet thy forerunner in front; the gods by the *varanā* warded off the hostile practice (*abhyācārā*) of the Asura from one morrow to another'. page 572.

body. The rationale for disease generation and perpetuation is explained in terms of god's agency of wrath⁴⁵. Wrath in the treatise is always seen as an assault as it is noted in Book 1, Hymn 26, the wrath is in the form of a figurative missile and bolt that strikes the human being. This is most visible in *apanodanāni* hymn⁴⁶. This notion of wrath is one of the examples of what is considered antithetical to scholars who connote the notion of rationality and scientific temper to the *Atharva Veda*. Certain gods are associated specifically associated with certain diseases. The wrath of god, is definitely one of the main disease causing conditions. There are several gods to whom the Atharvans pray in order to appease or invoke in the hope to secure prevention from disease⁴⁷.

Varuṇa is one of the most prominent god's whose wrath the Atharvans were fearful of attested most in Book 6 of the *Atharva Veda*⁴⁸. Varuṇa is systematically associated with dropsy, it is considered Varuṇa's special infliction and is likened to a flood in the treatise, 'I release thee out of the universal, the great flood (arṇavá); speak, O formidable one, unto (thy) fellows here, and reverence our incantation (*bráhman*)'⁴⁹. Varuṇa's fetters have also been associated with forms of madness such as evil dreaming. The *Atharva Veda* in Book 7, hymn 83 discusses that it is only Varuṇa

45 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 6, Hymn 42, Verse 2. page 312

46 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. page 26.

47 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 9, Hymn 8, Verse 1-22. page 552.

48 For further discussion on *Varuna*, See Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas, Vol I, From Stone Ages to the Eleusinian Mysteries*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press,1978. page199-203.

49 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 1, Hymn 10, Verse 4. page 10.

who can release an individual from the fetters of such a difficulty⁵⁰. Certain wrath, in the form of anger is mentioned in specific to women and their bodies. The wrath is said to be produced due to the fury of the heart. The appeasement of wrath has special ceremonial rites including *manyuṣamanadevatākam* in the *Kāuśika sūtra*⁵¹.

4: The Body in the *Atharva Veda*

In this section, we examine the ‘vedic body’, which in a sense could be seen as a product of deep penetrative cultural forces and structures of power. It was also the body of practitioners in the tradition, the existential modes by which human beings inhabited and negotiated the world⁵². The physical body of the human being is consensually constructed and understood under specificities of brahmanic tradition. Subsequently, the understanding of illness, disease and madness reflects this understanding of the body and alternatively, shows how illness, disease and madness left imprints on the construction of the idea of the body.

This reading of the *Atharva Veda* attempts to unpack how the body was represented in the text itself. To qualify this reading, it is essential to note that, this representation of the body doesn't take place in a vacuum. This reading of conceptual schemes, images and practices was impacted and informed by the environment, social and political structures of the contemporary milieu⁵³. Thus, the understanding of the body

50 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993, Book 7, Hymn 83, Verse 4, ‘release from us O Varuna, all fetters, that are uppermost, lowest, that are Varuna’s; remove from us evil dreaming (and) difficulty; then may we go to the world of the well done. page 450.

51 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 6, Hymn 43, Verse 1-3. page 312.

52 Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body, The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion*. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.,2006. page 32.

53 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993, Book 9, Hymn 7, Verse 1-26. page 549.

coterminous to the religious tradition is located within the political and social history of the period. However, it is necessary to be wary of reductivism that entails such a reading. We need to be mindful of the processes at play whilst recovering and interpreting the meaning given by the texts on notions of body. As sometimes we find that the meaning of the text exceed social and cultural particularities as the texts are constantly being redacted and therefore are reimagining the conceptual notions of the body.

In the context of the *Atharva Veda*, it is important to acknowledge the authorship and readership of the texts in order to set preliminary assumption of the intention of the corpus itself. The *Atharva Veda* can be primarily described to fall within the ambit of the brahmanic tradition and therefore consequently the intended readership of the corpus was the brahmanic population⁵⁴. Thus, the representation of the body in the *Atharva Veda*, cannot be consigned as a representation of the Atharvanic worldview but rather the world view of a certain select portion of the population, the brahmanic echelon of society. Brahmanic discourse affected the brahmanic representation of the body which was then closely related to the different realms of value in the brahmanical universe and different conception of the what was considered ‘good’ and ‘appropriate’ for an individual and community as a whole⁵⁵.

The brahmanic representation of the body within the *Atharva Veda* came to exemplify processes put in motion by the authors of the text to use the body as a

54 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993, Book 19, Hymn 42, Verse 1 ‘The brāhman is invoker (hótr); the officiating priest (adhvaryú) is born from the brāhman; within the brāhman is put the oblation’. page 963.

55 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993, Book 18, Hymn 1, Verse 11. ‘Verily there shall come those later ages (yugá) in which next of kin (jamí) shall do what is unlikely. Put thine arm underneath a hero; seek, O fortunate one, another husband than me’. page 818.

means of social control and power⁵⁶. The processes being employed to describe, designate and discipline the body were answering the purposes of the larger vision held by the brahmanic group of an ideal vedic body. This representation of the body is done textually through scriptures and visually through iconography. These representations are not passive but should be considered performative in action. These representations worked as social and religious cues for the brahmanic society that were used in life practices and the body itself embodied these representations especially in an event of a ritual being conducted⁵⁷. Therefore, we can summarise that the act of writing about the body was an act of moulding the body through a larger pedagogy of religion within the constraints of the historical backdrop. This process of writing is what Gavin Flood describes as entextualisation of the body. The body become a vehicle for imagining and conceptualising tradition and cosmos⁵⁸. Such that the structures of the cosmos, forms of language and text and tradition are understood in terms of the body⁵⁹. The human body in this sense becomes a text in itself on which inscriptions of scriptural tradition are documented.

It is necessary to rehabilitated the vedic body from writing of the western scholarship on the subject. The west has examined the human body from the perspective of anatomy and relationship and networks in relation to modernity and post modernity.

56 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993, Book 9, Hymn 10, Verse 27. 'Speech (is) four measured out quarters (pada); those known by Brahmans who are skilful; three deposited in secret, they do not set in motion (ingay); a fourth of speech human beings speak'. page 560.

57 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 11, Hymn 2, Verse 5. 'To thy face, O lord of cattle, the eyes that thou hast, O Bhava; to (thy) skin, form, aspect, to thee standing opposite (be) homage. page 621.

58 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 13, Hymn 4, Verse 29-38. page 734.

59 Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body, The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion*. New York. I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.2006. page 5.

It is in this usage of a modernist perspective that a reflection of the reifying tendencies can be detected along with the undue stress and emphasis that is laid on the idea of science and medicine in correspondence to the body. It is within this background and juxtaposing the context that we should remember that the brahmanic understanding of the *Atharva Veda* body is more fluid in terms of its lack of reification. However, at the same time, we find that the texts and perceptions associated with the compilation of world view around the body are cautious by being deeply engrained in traditional understanding and embedded in categories that seek to regulate the body.

On reading of the *Atharva Veda*, we find that there is a certain latitude with which the body is addressed in terms of identity. The body is carefully regarded as a marker of social identity. The human body is converted into a social body by investing it with being the site of social location in hierarchised social relationships⁶⁰. The *Atharva Veda* distinguishes the body as an apparatus to mark a person with affiliation to a particular social group or caste. This most reflected in the hymns of Book 11, ‘Both knowledge and ignorances, and what else is to be taught (upa-dic); the brahman entered the body; the verses, the chant, also the formula’⁶¹.

As an index of identity, the Atharvanic body was never seen as belonging to an individual’s personal identity on the contrary it was always understood in relation to a group identity. This collectivisation of a person’s bodily identity was critical to the

60 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 19, Hymn 6, Verse 6. ‘The Brahman was his face; the Ksatriya (rājanyà) became his (two) arms; the vāiçya (was) his middle; from his (two) feet was born the Çudra’. page 905.

61 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 11, Hymn 8, Verse 23. page 649.

notion of the human body being part of the matrix of collective selfhood⁶². Therefore, we find that the experience of living in the body, as a social body in a collective setting only allowed for certain lived experiences and constrained and regulated all cultural and religious expressions that were performed through the body⁶³.

So far, we have focused only on the Atharvanic understanding of the human body and what we may vulgarly describe as in the realm of the real. There is another dimension in which the tools of body were applied in order to create a rationality around the cosmos and that we find to be the divinity of the pantheon⁶⁴. As suggested by Doris Srinivasan, there are a considerable number of gods in the vedic pantheon that are denoted by multiple body parts. In fact, we could go further to state that these body parts are used to exemplify the divine potential and capacity of these vedic gods⁶⁵.

5: The 'Proto- Scientific' revelations of the *Atharva Veda* in reference to the body

The *Atharva Veda* as a tract records man's most nascent and concern with his health to the most dramatic and anxiety causing sufferings of body and mind. This suffering

62 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā*' Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 14, Hymn 2, Verse 9, 'Pray hear ye now of me, O men, by what blessing the two spouses attain what is agreeable: what Gandharvaa (there are) and heavenly apsarases, who stand upon these forest trees (vānaspatyā), let them be pleasant unto this bride; let them not injure the bridal-car'. page 755.

63 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā*' Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 15, Hymn 1, Verse 3, 'That became one; that became star-marked (lalāma); that became great; that became chief; that became brāhman; that became fervour; that became truth; therewith he had progeny'. page 773.

64 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā*' Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 18, Hymn 2, Verse 13. 'Broad-nosed, feeding on lives, copper coloured, Yama's two messengers go about after men (jāna); let them give us back here today excellent life, to see the sun'. page 835.

65 Doris Srinivasan, 'The Religious Significance of Divine Multiple Body Parts in the Atharva Veda'. *Numen*, Vol.25, Fasc.3 (Dec 1978) page 196.

takes the form of disease, dreams and understanding of what is evil in the world. The *Atharva Veda* is nebulous in its attempt to draw out the quantum of preoccupation of man and his health and wellbeing⁶⁶. However, it must be pointed out that man's concern with his health was one of the oldest preoccupations of mankind. The body was required to function efficiently for the sake of survival. This necessity was greater than even in our present times because the individual had to contend with challenges from nature, the terror of the wild and vagaries of the weather that held out as risks to him. According to S.K.R. Rao, the fear of death haunted man and was the most potent motivation for the development and discovery of techniques to prolong life. The goal of all endeavours and interventions made on behalf of man's wellbeing was for continued existence. The early attempt was to prolong the physical existence itself and make the body strong enough to survive the odds⁶⁷.

However, as mentioned above, there wasn't a distinct separate socially recognised domain of study of science and medicine. The ideas and practices found in the *Atharva Veda* point to addressing of all types of bodily, spiritually and materially inclined problems that were part of the human predicament.

Scholars have limited their understanding of science in ancient India to more or less the field of medicine. Within the ambit of this, they point to treatment of particular ailments and diseases of the body and scarcely point out the afflictions of the mind. Science therefore is defined here, as a set of behaviours by which man acquires mastery over his environment. In this sense, it becomes an active process of

66 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 19, Hymn 10, Verse 6. 'Weal for us be god Indra with the Vasus; weal Varuna of excellent praise (su-çānsa) with the Ādityas; weal for us healing (jālāsa). Rudra with the Rudra; unto weal for us let Tvashtar listen here with his spouses (gnā).page 916.

67 S.K.R Rao, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Medicine Vol 1, Historical Perspectives*. Mumbai: Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd.1985. page 3.

knowledge making. This production of knowledge is orderly, systematic, comprehensive in its description and explanation of natural phenomenon. Notwithstanding the brief and varied descriptions given in the *Atharva Veda* of different sort of predilections of the body, the *Atharva Veda* cannot be called a proto-scientific treatise⁶⁸. The ‘scientific temper’ found in the Atharvanic treatise extends to a reflected curiosity and spirit of inquiry that the individuals possessed. There isn't a conscious demarcation of nature as separate from the supernatural⁶⁹. What is natural and unnatural are constantly ebbing and flowing into each other as fluid categories. Furthermore, we cannot say with absolute certainty that there was a framework of tools that were developed to give cogent rational logic to the causation and pathology that is described in the treatise. Here we need to keep in mind, that the *Atharva Veda* does display an internal logic in its ascribing and ascertainment of natural phenomenon but this logic doesn't follow the modernist route of rational causality. The treatise also, marks void the presence of a ‘standard notion/qualification’ that is essential for a treatise to be scientific and that is the demonstration of proof by empirical observation⁷⁰.

The binary created between science and religion is intended to make the treatise fall short on several accounts. The *Atharva Veda* as a treatise, uses the religious idiom to make sense of the surrounding that man inhabits and documents the phenomena that

68 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 19, Hymn 60, Verse 1-2. ‘Speech in my mouth, breath in my nostrils, sight in my eyes, hearing in my ears, hair not gray, my teeth not broken, much strength in my arms’. Force in my thighs, speed in my calves, firm standing in my feet, all things uninjured, myself not down-fallen’. page 1002.

69 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 1, Hymn 32, Verse 2, ‘In the atmosphere is the station of them, as of those sitting wearied; the station of this that exists (bhūtā): that the pious know or they do not’. page 32.

70 Stanley J Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion and the scope of Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1990. page 9.

man encounters and is affected by. As Stephen Engler, points out that a push for recognition of the treatise as a proto-scientific writing is also problematic as it shows the craving of legitimation by overstating the claim that science was the authentic core of the *Atharva Veda*⁷¹.

The *Atharva Veda* as a compendium on the literal surface sparsely if ever used nature to give itself a framework of causality on disease, health and by extension medicine. It would be hard to dismiss the treatise for it does have segments that weigh itself toward naturalism. However, this tendency towards naturalism is only in the purpose of treatments that are observed to be efficacious. Even so, by and large the treatise does not use nature as a theoretical ground to postulate on the human tendencies towards injury, illness and disease. The passages of the *Atharva Veda* do not show a commitment to the notion of nature as a ground of causality where nature as a uniform domain is subject to regular laws and functions as a belief system that gives verified objective truth⁷². The aspects of nature that were mirrored and found in the *Atharva Veda* were generally constituted in their divinised form. Thus, in the *Atharva Veda* we can summarise that divinity especially of religious colouring pervaded all aspects of Atharvanic life⁷³.

After the *Rg Veda* which in the Xth mandal describe the creation of man, it is the *Atharva Veda* that sporadically documents knowledge of the human body and its anatomy. The verses of the *Atharva Veda* are populated with references to the

71 Stephen Engler, 'Science vs Religion in Classical AyurVeda'. *Numen*, Vol 50. No.4 (2003) page 459

72 Stanley J Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion and the scope of Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. page 12.

73 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 4, Hymn 15. For abundant rain the mārutāni is *Kausika* sūtra are used to procure rain. page 172.

anatomy. Book 10 of the *Atharva Veda* in its second hymn makes particular references to the anatomy of man⁷⁴. Identification of anatomical terms clearly brings out a surprising amount of correct knowledge of the anatomy of the human skeleton possessed by ancient Indians.

It is also crucial to note their query on substantive nature of the body; the organic matter is sought to be understood⁷⁵. This substantiation of the body was closely identified with the mind. The body and the mind were verily associated and further the heart and the mind were inextricably linked. This is clear from the hymns that deal with jealousy and guilt. Jealousy is also seen as a sort of affliction and the remedy of which is found from sources other than the authors of the texts⁷⁶. Jealousy also bears physical manifestations as Book 7, Hymn 74 depicts how *apacīts* manifest on a person's body as a result of jealousy. Thus, we see that the mind is called into action when feelings of guilt mostly associated with sin are acknowledged and dealt with in hymns that describe guilt as Varuṇa's fetters⁷⁷.

The preoccupation with physiology of the anatomy is evident in the above-mentioned hymn⁷⁸. Whilst the hymn is a survey on the exteriority of the physiology of the body

74 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 10, Hymn 2. page 568.

75 William Dwight Whitney, ' *Atharva Veda Samhitā*' Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 10, Hymn 2, Verse 2, 'From what now, did they make a man's two ankle joints below, his two knee joints above? Separating his two back-thighs where forsooth, did they set them in? the two joints of his knees-who indeed understands (cit) that?' page 567.

76 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 7, Hymn 45, Verse 2. page 417

77 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn119, Verse 3. page 369.

78 For an index of equivalent modern anatomical references made in *Atharva Veda*, See A.F. Rudolf Hoernle, 'Studies in Ancient Indian Medicine', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*. (1906), page 915-941.

it also takes cognisance of the sense organs⁷⁹, it is critical to note that the distinguishing feature according to the *Atharva Veda* was bi pedism⁸⁰, it is this ability that characteristically distinguishes human beings from other beings in the living world. The physiology of the human body is nuanced to the degree that it delineates the constitution of the brain in the verse that reflects the importance and significance of the brain, ‘verily that head of Atharvan (is) a god- vessel, pressed together; breath defends that, the head, food also mind. The different parts of the brain are mapped out and there is specific reference to the special protective covering of the brain that is known as the skull⁸¹. It also examines the respiration system and process of respiration⁸².

The materialist query extends to man’s interaction with the outside world, while acknowledging physical activities and burden on the body, the text also reflects on behaviour and emotion that is elicited in interaction with forces of the outside world in the verse, ‘numerous things dear and not dear, sleep, oppressions and weariness, delights and pleasures- from where does formidable man bring them?’⁸³‘The anatomy

79 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 10, Hymn 2, Verse 6 ‘Who bored out the seven apertures in his head-these ears, the nostrils, the eyes, the mouth? In might of whose conquest (vijaya) in many places quadrupeds (and) bipeds go there way.’ page 568

80 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 10, Hymn 2, Verse 1 ‘By whom were brought the two heels of a man? By whom was his flesh put together? By whom his two ankle joints by whom his cunning fingers? By whom his apertures? By whom his (two) uchlakhas in the midst? Who (put together) his footing (pratistha)’. page 567

81 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 10, Hymn 2, Verse 8, ‘Which was that god who (produced) his brain, his forehead, his hind head, who first his skull, who, having gathered a gathering in man’s jaw, ascended to heaven.’ page 568

82 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 10, Hymn 2, Verse 13, ‘Who wove in him breath? who expiration and respiration? What god attached conspiratio (samana) to man here?’ page 569

83 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 10, Hymn 9.page 602.

is also the site of social construction; by which what is meant is that in defining and creating a definition of what the body 'is' and what the body should 'be' massive amount of social control can be placed on different sections of society. As is mentioned in Book 8, Hymn 2, Verse 16 that details ways and means on how to properly treat one's body.

By the different treatment meted out to the body of different social groups, not only is the body of certain individuals privileged but restrictions are also placed on the access of this treatment to other sections of society. The body is also a necessary visual tool and thus is the first thing that is expounded when personification of a phenomena, concept, deity takes place, for instance; not only are gods and goddesses personified but diseases are personified too, most often the personification takes place on the basis of a human body⁸⁴.

The body is susceptible to harm through innumerable means, these could be either natural forces, disease, injury or accident. It is interesting to note that the body also acts as a site of retribution. If a person has committed a sin or folly, the body can be persecuted as a means of teaching a lesson⁸⁵.

6: Ailment and Disease

The classification of hymns of the *Atharva Veda* for disease is difficult for various reasons: the meaning of the names of the diseases is often obscure, along with the ritual application of the hymn itself. Illness and disease as 'social experiences' were

84Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 5, Hymn 22, Verse 3, 'The *takman* that is spotted, covered with spots, like reddish sediment, him thou, (O plant) of unremitting potency drive away down below'. page 1.

85 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 6, Hymn 116, Verse 3. 'If from (our) mother or if from our father, forth from brother, from son, from thought (cétas), this sin hath come to (us) - as many Fathers as have fastened on (sac), of them all be the fury propitious (to us)'. page 366.

not isolated from other lived experiences as sharply as one finds in our present-day existence. The same hymns are utilised for obstructing injury as they are for disease. It is interesting to note, that the battle hymn of *aparājita gaṇa* are the same ones that are used for diarrhoea. Similarly, the same hymn of *takmanagaṇa* is used as a healing as it is used for preventing rainfall⁸⁶. Diseases also uses metaphors of possession as the individual is always seized and possessed and must always be ‘released’ from this perdition.

Treatment of disease in the *Atharva Veda* is preoccupied with real exigencies primarily of which include management of injuries and wounds, as is the case in Book 7, Hymn 107 that is meant to relieve stinging pain⁸⁷. Given that in the pastoral context, a number of clan wars were constantly being fought for cattle and other wealth, injury during battle was a real fear and therefore it is quite telling that in the Book 1 is against injury and disease, these fall under the rubric of the battle hymn ‘*sāmgrāmikāṇi*’⁸⁸. The *Atharva Veda* pragmatically concerns itself with avoidance and healing of wounds. The hymn illustrates that avoidance of wounds by arrow could be achieved by the reed where, ‘as between both heaven and earth stands the bamboo (*téjana*), so let the reed –stalk stand between both the disease and the flux (*āsrāvā*)’⁸⁹. The healing of wounds is done by the *aparājita gaṇa* where the wound is

86 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 1, Hymn 12. page 7.

87 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 7, Hymn 107, Verse 1. ‘Down from the sky the seven rays of the sun make pass the waters, streams of ocean, they have made fall thy sting (çalyá)’. page 463.

88 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 1, Hymn 19 -the hymn is found in the *Kausika* sūtra and is among the *sāmgrāmikāṇi* or battle hymn. page 20.

89 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 1, Hymn 2, Verse 4. page 9.

assuaged in a healing ceremony'⁹⁰.

The *Atharva Veda* in contrast to the *Rg Veda* draws a distinction also between ailments and diseases⁹¹. In Book 1, Hymn 12, an explication is made on the numerous ailments that can plague a person, these include ailments arising from hurtful changes of wind, bile or phlegm⁹² on one hand and coughs and headaches on the other⁹³. It also makes a distinction for what is considered an epidemic⁹⁴.

The diseases enumerated in the *Atharva Veda* give a glimpse of the belief and understanding of the body and infractions made on it, that was held by the Atharvans. The details of the pathology of diseases were remarkable to the extent that their descriptions painted a picture of the disease in a comprehensive manner. The pathology of certain diseases though idiomatically was in a religious manner; its content was dramatically ordered to create a consequence based rationale for contracting disease. The hymn that describes contracting a fever in Book I, which is described in the *Paippalāda* text, 'if heating (*çokā*) or if scorching (*abhiçokā*) or if

90 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 1, Hymn 2, Verse1. page 3.

91 For an early discussion on disease, See Ed. James Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol IV. Edinburgh: T&T. Clarks,1911. page 753-755.

92 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 1, Hymn 12, Verse 1, 'First born of the afterbirth, the ruddy (*usriya*) bull, born of wind and cloud goes thundering with rain; may he be merciful to our body, going straight on, breaking; he who, one force, hath stridden out threefold'. page 13

93 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 1, Hymn 12, Verse3, 'Release thou from headache and from cough-whoever hath entered each joint of him; the blast that is cloud born and that is wind-born, let it attach itself to forest-trees (*Vanaspati*) and mountains'. page 13.

94 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 2, Hymn 8. page 48.

thou art son of king Varuṇa, hridu by name etc'⁹⁵. The symptoms of the fever are best described in Book 6, hymn 20, 'Thou here who, scorching greatly, dost make all forms yellow- to thee here, the ruddy, the brown, the woody takman, do I pay homage'⁹⁶. The phase of the disease and the seasonality of the fevers are also recorded⁹⁷.

Balása is another disease, that though cannot be pinned down in modern lexicon but comes closest to pulmonary disorder⁹⁸. The disorder can be vitiated by administering water to the patient, the disorder is said to dissolve bones, and affect the limbs. An affective antidote to this is found and reflected in Book 6, hymn 14 'fly out forth from here, O *balása*, like a young *āçumgá*; then, like the (last) years bulrush, scud away, innocuous to the heroes'⁹⁹. *Yákṣma* is another disease that though may not be correlated to a modern disease plagued the people of the *Atharva Veda* greatly, the text catalogues comprehensively and systematic manner in which expulsion of *Yákṣma* should be carried out 'Forth from thy (two) eyes, (two) nostrils, (two) ears, chin, brain, tongue, I eject (*vi-vṛh*) for thee the *yákṣma* of the head'¹⁰⁰. For instance, the preoccupation with yellowness, 'let them (both) go up toward the sun, thy heart-burn (*dyota*) and yellowness; with the colour of the red bull' and leprosy, 'the

95 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 1, Hymn 25, Verse 3. page 26.

96 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 6, Hymn 20 Verse3. page 295.

97 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 5, Hymn 22, Verse 13. page 261.

98 Maurice Bloomfield, *The Atharva Veda*. Strassburg. Verlag Von Karl J. Trübner. 1899 page 60

99 For further discussion on *Balasa*, See N.J. Shende, 'The Foundation of the Atharvanic Religion', *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol.9, No.3/4 (1949),page 369.

100 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 2, Hymn 33, Verse 1. page 76.

leprous spot, what is pale, do thou cause to disappear from hence, the speckled; let thine own colour enter thee; make white things (*çuklā*) fly away' demonstrates the clinical observation that was exercised in identifying diseases¹⁰¹.

Treatment of illness, ailment and disease involved according the *Atharva Veda*, a number of different approaches, the texts resorts to different resources , it enumerates healing for injuries and wounds and also details curtailment of symptoms for other diseases, for instance the text is quite forthright about cessation of disease when it states, 'the heaven hath stood ; the earth hath stood; all the creatures hath stood; the trees that sleep erect have stood still; may this disease of thine stand'¹⁰².

The healing of wounds also broaches an unfettered recognition of rejuvenation, the Atharvan were well aware that bones can regenerate, 'grower art thou, grower; grower of severed bone; make this grow, O Arundhati¹⁰³'. There is visible familiarity and sound knowledge on repair of bones, marrow and joints¹⁰⁴. Healing of bruises is done through the *brhachanti gaṇa* in which the foam of urine is used as a remedy, 'this verily is a remedy; this is the remedy of *Rudra*; with which one may charm away the arrow that has one shaft and a hundred points!'¹⁰⁵.

101 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 1, Hymn22, Verse 1. page 23.

102 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 6, Hymn 44, Verse I. page 10.

103 Whitney, William Dwight, ' *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 4, Hymn 12, Verse 1. page 166.

104 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 4, Hymn 12, Verse 2. 'What of thee is torn (ric), what of thee is inflamed? (dyut) is crushed (psetra) in thyself-may Dhatar excellently put that together again, joint with joint'. 'Let thy marrow come together with marrow, and thy joint together with joint; together let what of thy flesh has fallen apart, together let thy bone grow over'. page 167

105 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898 Book 6, Hymn 57. page 19.

Management of illnesses or disease is often sought by ejection of the disease from the body, this is referred to as freedom from disease (*ārogaṇa*)¹⁰⁶. This ejection is often followed by transference which is recognised as an effective mechanism of successfully getting rid of the illness. This transference is made to an opposing clan as well as different animals and birds such as frogs and parrots¹⁰⁷. Healing is undertaken through various means, by chanting of mantras, ‘Both, O ye gods, him that is put down, O ye gods, ye lead up again, and him that hath done evil (*agas*), O ye gods, ye make to live again’¹⁰⁸. The Atharvan individual understanding the potency of mantra promulgated that words and voices spoken for the vedic pantheon and by them could ward off disease¹⁰⁹.

Plants are considered indispensable to the healing process¹¹⁰. The *Atharva Veda* posits that plants are the most excellent remedies as is stated in Book 6, Hymn 21 ‘Thou art the most excellent of remedies, the best of plants; as Soma, lord (*bhaga*) in the night watches (*yama*), like Varuṇa among the gods’¹¹¹. Healing takes place from various herbs as well especially in the hymn of *laksalingas*. Plants are considered crucial to healing rites especially those related to the eyes, as is witnessed in Book 6,

106 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book2, Hymn 3, Verse 2. page 41.

107 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 7, Hymn 116, Verse 2. page 470.

108 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 4, Hymn 13, Verse 1. page 168.

109 Through the replication of the divine world in sacrifice and the chanting of Mantra, the inversion of sickness i.e. health is restored, for further discussion, See Brian K. Smith, ‘Ritual Perfection and Ritual Sabotage’, *History of Religions*, Vol.35, No. 4(1996), page 285-306.

110 For further discussion on plants as remedial herbs, See N.J. Shende, ‘The Foundations of the Atharvanic Religion’, *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol.9, No.3/4 (1949), page 343-360.

111 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 6, Hymn 21, Verse 2. page 296.

Hymn 16, ‘O, *abayu*, non-*abayu*! Thy juice is sharp (*ugrá*), O *abayu*! Unto thy broth do we eat’¹¹². This hymn intended for the disease caused by *tāuvilikā piçācī* is restored to good condition by use of mustard seed. *Kúṣṭha* is considered the highest(*uttamā*) of herbs, its legitimacy is increased by associating it with the acvattha seat of the gods, *kúṣṭha* is given properties of immortality¹¹³. It is found in the mountains, the snowy Himalayas are specifically mentioned, it is used in curing a fever, heart diseases and ailments of the eye. *Guggulu* helps through its potent smell/odour in curing *yakṣma*¹¹⁴. *Pippali* is a berry found that is used as a remedy for bruises and lesions on the skin. They are also considered remedies for *vatikrta* (discovered by the asura)¹¹⁵. *Apamarga*; this plant is used as a cleansing plant, its essential function is to remove pollution, evil and curses¹¹⁶. Parts of the animal are also utilised for treatment, for instance the horn of a gazelle(*hariṇá*)¹¹⁷.

For the remedy of disease, there are certain healing rites that give greater preponderance to water¹¹⁸. In Book 6, Hymn 91, explicates a hymn found in the *Paippalāda* and found in the *Kāusika sūtra* which is used against all diseases with binding on of a barley amulet. It is stated, ‘The waters verily are remedial; the

112 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 6, Hymn 16, Verse 1. page 292.

113 For further discussion on *Kúṣṭha*, See N.J. Shende, ‘The Foundations of the Atharvanic Religion’, *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol.9, No.3/4 (1949), page 343-360.

114 For a discussion on etymology of *Guggulu*, See Daniel T. Potts, Asko Parpola, Simo Parpola and J. Tidmarsh, ‘Guhlu and Guggulu’, *Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes* 86 (1996):291-305.

115 For further discussion on nature and qualities of *Pippali* as a herb, See N.J. Shende, ‘The Foundations of the Atharvanic Religion’, *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol.9, No.3/4 (1949), page 355.

116 N.J. Shende, ‘The Foundations of the Atharvanic Religion’, *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol.9, No.3/4 (1949), page 351.

117 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 3, Hymn 7. page94.

118 For further discussion, See Vinaya Madhav Kshirsagar, ‘Water as a Means of Pacification’, *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol 47/48(1988-89), pp.147-150.

waters are disease expelling; the waters are remedial of everything; let them make remedy for thee'¹¹⁹. Diseases are also dealt with physical interventions by introducing things surgically into a human's body as is alluded to in a hymn against obstruction of urine¹²⁰. To the cure of ills of a more external character, especially skin-diseases, a considerable number of charms address themselves¹²¹. Leprosy (*kildsa*) is cured in Book 1, Hymn 23 and 24 by applying black plants, *rajanī* and *syama* (allopathic symbolism)¹²²; abscesses (*vidradhá*) are mentioned with other diseases in Book 6, Hymn 127¹²³. Of particular interest are the charms directed against scrofulous sores called *apacit* (later *apacit*), The sores, tumours, and pustules apparent in this disease are conjured in the hymns themselves to fall off, or fly away, because in the naive view of the folk they were supposed to have settled like birds upon the afflicted person¹²⁴.

Healing manages to give a general scheme through inversion of what is considered health. As most hymns that address the issue of healing, engage with the notion of restoration of health. The first sign of health is to be free from distress and strength is crucial for proper health. Another very important indicator of good health is proper breathing; this is greatly stressed in the text. Health is seen as an indispensable

119 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 6, Hymn 91, Verse 3. page 348.

120 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 1, Hymn 3. page 4.

121 For an early descriptive intervention made, See G.M. Bolling, 'Charms and Amulets' in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol III*, Ed. By James Hastings. Edinburgh: T&T. Clarks,1900(page 441-448).

122 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 1, Hymn23-24. page 24-25.

123 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 6. Hymn 127, Verse 3, 'The *visálpaka*, the *vidradhá*, the heart disease; we impel away downward that unknown *yákma*'. page 376.

124 For further discussion on healing of *apacit*, See N.J. Shende, 'The Foundations of the Atharvanic Religion', *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol.9, No.3/4 (1949).page 371.

indicator of a long life associated with old age. Attaining a long life is possible according to the texts when one maintains balance¹²⁵.

Healing is done based on the observation of physiological aberrations and complaints made by the people suffering from the infirmity. Virility and Healing, there is anxiety related to the reproductive functioning of the male population and clearly it must have been poignant enough for the authors of the *Atharva Veda* to write chants for it with metaphors of bulls and stags being used¹²⁶. Problem of virility is understood as the inability of the phallus to get potency. The remedy seen here is to regain energy¹²⁷. Healing done by plants, which is considered important enough to have kingdoms designated to them; there is an acknowledgement made by the writers to the role of earth and soil necessary for resources of medicine¹²⁸.

The healer is at the centre of the healing process along with the afflicted individual. This is evident from the fact that the healer is considered the repository of remedies as is evident in Book 2, Hymn 9, Verse 5. Through various hymns in the *Atharva Veda* we can form a distinct impression that healing was not necessarily only part of the domain of the Brahmin, the hymns illustrate how other sections of society also added to the ever-expanding repository of knowledge. This is attested by the hymns of Book 2 Hymn 3 Verse 3, 'Deep down the *Asuras* bury this great healer of wounds:

125 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 8, Hymn1, Verse 7. page 473.

126 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book3, Hymn 23. page 123.

127 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 4, Hymn 4, Verse 1 'Thee that the Gandharava dug for Varuna whose virility was dead, thee here do we dig, a penis erecting herb'. page 149.

128 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā*' Second Half Books VIII to Book XIX. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 12, Hymn 1, Verse 62. 'Let standers upon thee, free from disease, free from yáksma, be produced (prásūta) for us, O earth; awakening to meet our long lifetime, may we be tribute bearers to thee'. page 672.

that this is the cure for discharges, and that hath remove diseases.¹²⁹ *Asura* women are also engendered with finding certain cures to specific diseases.¹³⁰

7: Demon and Disease

In this section, we survey the noesis of linkages of demons and disease to the understanding of the human body. Numerous hymns are imprecations directed against demons, *yātudhāna* 'sorcerers' and various classes of enemies, between whom there is no clear distinction. The sorcerers are usually identified as male but there is evidence from Book 1, Hymn 28, Verse 4 of female sorcerer too. A large variety of demons and other evil beings, often obscure as to their individual designations, but described as greedy and voracious, are addressed in more or less elaborate conjurations in order to prevent them from attacking men and cattle or spreading diseases¹³¹. The *Atharva Veda* has a special category of hymns called *cātana* that are found in the *Kāūsika sūtra* to propitiate these demons.

The demons described take several actions, some of which are violent and gory others are milder and fall under the rubric of creating obstacles¹³². The more barbaric facet of demonic action include; devouring¹³³, flesh eating¹³⁴ and mind

129Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897. Book 2, Hymn3, Verse 3. page 9.

130 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book1, Hymn 24, Verse 2. page 25.

131William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book7, Hymn 76, Verse 4. 'Having wings, the *jāyānya* flies, it enters into a man; this is the remedy of both, of the *āksita* and of the *súksata*'. page 442.

132 For a discussion on Demons causing distress, See H.W. Bodewitz, 'The Vedic Concepts 'ágas' and 'énas', *Indo-Iranian Journal* 49, No.3/4 (2006).page 261.

133 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 1, Hymn 16, Verse 1 'What devourers, on the night of new moon, have arisen troop-wise (?) – the fourth Agni is the demon slayer; he shall bless us'. page 17

134 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book5 Hymn 29, Verse 8. 'In the drinking of waters whatever flesh-eater hath injured me lying (ci) in the lair (cayana) of the familiar demons (yatu) – that let the picaca etc'. page 275

slaying¹³⁵. The activities of witchcraft take place with the use of symbols and vessels. There is use of raw flesh and designated earthen bowls that are used along with certain animals such as cocks, goat and cattle in whom witchcraft is hidden. The areas of activities that the witchcraft intervenes in includes household's fires, assemblies with gambling boards and in the army.¹³⁶

Demons engage with humans only in a negative manner, by distracting people from their course¹³⁷, by defiling their prayers. There is a constant struggle (*vyāyāmá*) that Atharvanic people are described to be in with the demons. There are several classes of demons that are categorised in the Atharvanic text that are responsible for inflicting particular diseases onto a person. The several demons that are enumerated in the text include *picacas*, *sadānvās*, *bhratrvyas* and *kīmdīns*¹³⁸. There are certain demons of specific female characteristics known for roaming the nights like owls¹³⁹.

Among these is the curious *Atharva Veda* Book 2, Hymn 2, formulas reverentially to force the *apsarases* to go away. Their physical approximation is dusky and their habits include love for dice and being noisy¹⁴⁰. There are particular *matrnamani* rites

135 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 5, Hymn 29, Verse 10. 'The flesh-eating, bloody (*rudhira*), mind slaying *picaca* do thou slay, O Agni, *JataVedas*; let the vigorous Indra slay him with the thunderbolt; let bold Soma cut (off) his head'. page 275

136 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 5, Hymn 3, Verse 6, page 279.

137 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 8, Hymn 4, verse 9, 'they who distract (*vi-hr*) with their courses him of simple intent, or who spoil at their will (*svadhabhis*) what is excellent- let Soma either deliver them up to the serpent, or let set them in the lap of perdition'. page 487

138 For Further discussion on Demons, See Vaibhavi Sanjeev Kulkarni, 'Sadānvā: A group of Evil Beings', *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol 74 (2014), pp. 272-282.

139 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 8, Hymn 4, verse 17, 'she who goes forth in the night like an owl, hateful hiding herself away-may she fall down into an endless hole (*vavra*); let the (pressing) stones smite the demoniac with their noises'. page 488.

140 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 2, Hymn2, Verse 1-5, page 40.

that are employed as remedial rites against seizure and possession. Several charms used against portents (*adbhutani*) in the acvamedha sacrifice for the mind confusion that they cause.

Charms against the demons are directed to expels and destroy them¹⁴¹, Book 5, Hymn 29 has a graphic description of resolution of the fate of demons, ‘pierce thou into his eyes, pierce into his heart, bore into his tongue, destroy (*pra-mr*) his teeth; whatsoever picaca hath devoured of him, that one, O Agni, youngest (god), do thou crush back’¹⁴². Along with this witchcraft spoiling amulets are also another means devised to protect the individuals.

Charms directed against human adversaries or intended to counteract their practices are more numerous but on the other hand often quite general, colourless and stereotyped. Some of them are mere curses intended to injure the enemies, to deprive them of their strength, to destroy their spells. Others however are more characteristic or even singular: AVS\ 7, 95 and 96 are directed against the ureter and kidneys of the enemy; 6, 135 conjures one's own food to swallow up the breath of the antagonist. There are, to begin with, many charms to cure diseases and exorcise demons (the so-called 'medical' charms: *bhesaja*, *bhaisajydni*), both sorts of evil being not clearly distinguished. The demons are often disease carrying themselves and are often found to possess the individual.

Demons are a personification of all that is rejected in the Atharvanic society. They are the entities on the margin of society as is seen in the grouping of demons with

141 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book2, Hymn 18, Verse 4. ‘*Pisaca* destroying art thou; *pisaca*-expulsion mayest thou give me: hail!’ page 63.

142 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book5, Hymn 29, Verse 4. page 275.

savages and thieves. Thus, by extension it would seem like a suitable progression that demons are often depicted to be the personification of diseases, certain diseases are given attributes and adjectives associated with demons¹⁴³. Demons in the *Atharva Veda* have been associated with magic, this we know from the several hymns quoted in the texts to counteract magic.

The acts and rituals of witchcraft have been identified in Book 5, Hymn 31, ‘what (witchcraft) they have made for thee in a raw vessel, what they have made in one of mixed grain; in raw flesh what witchcraft they have made- I take that back again¹⁴⁴’. The text makes a great effort to identify the demons and discover their place of hiding. The hymns intend for the sorcerers to reveal themselves, they are prompted to speak up and cry out (*vi-lap*) in order to be vanquished. A special hymn is chanted in Book 4, hymn 20 in a healing ceremony where an amulet of *sadampuspā* is tied, there is a call to the individual to look in all directions, that is be observant, using sight as a primary sense to make out *Çūdra* and *Aryan*¹⁴⁵. Invoking gods to make manifest sorcerers and sorceresses which are hiding in shelters (*paripāṇa*). The plant *prisniparni* is specially utilised in order to bring deliverance from these demons. There are incidents that have been highlighted in the text that are moments when witchcraft has been applied include householder’s fire, assembly (*sabha*), gambling

143 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897. Book 2, Hymn 25, Verse 3. ‘The bloodsucking demon, and him that tries to rob (our) health, *kanva*, the devourer of our offsprings, destroy, O *Prisniparni*, and overcome’. page 36.

144 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993 Book 4, Hymn 31, Verse 5. page 279.

145 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 4, hymn 20, verse 4, ‘may the thousand-eyed god set it in my right hand; with it do I see everyone, both who is Cudra and (who) Aryan’. page 185.

board, army (*sena*)¹⁴⁶. The demons are identified as originating from someone's action, in Book 4, Hymn 18, the text states that 'whoso, having made evil at home, desires to slay another with it-numerous stones make a loud crash when it is burned'¹⁴⁷.

7.1: Demons and Possession

The demon seizes people of all sorts of nature, he seizes people of different *vrātas*, people with families and people of means with wealth and stronghold¹⁴⁸. The texts further detail the points of time in the day that the demons are likely to possess people, this could be at the midnight of a day of a new moon¹⁴⁹.

The demon appearing in the form of a dog, an ape and a boy with luxuriant locks¹⁵⁰. Alternatively, demon's may be among people in disguise as is stated in the text, 'a men-watcher, do thou look around for the demon among the people (*vikśū*); crush back his three points (*ágra*); crush, O Agni, his ribs with flame (*haras*); cut up threefold the root of the sorcerers'¹⁵¹. The text further cautions that apart from being

146 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 5, hymn 31, verse 8, 'what witchcraft they have put down for thee in the well, or have dug in at the cemetery; in the seat (*sádmán*) what witchcraft they have made- I take that back again'. page 279.

147 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books 1 to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 4, Hymn 18, Verse 3. page 181.

148 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 2, hymn 9, verse 3 'he hath attained attainment; he hath attained the strongholds (*pura*) of the living; for a hundred healers are his, also a thousand plants'. page 50.

149 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897.1993. Book 4, hymn 36, verse 3 'those who hound us in our chambers while shouting goes on in the night of the new moon, and the other flesh-devourers who plan to injure us, all of them do overcome with might.' page 35.

150 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897. Book 4, Hymn 37, Verse 11. page 33

151 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 8, Hymn 3, Verse 10. page 483.

in disguise , there are hiding places that the demons retreat to, these places by their very nature are darkness ridden and inaccessible reflecting on the tedious task of dealing with the demons , ‘O- Indra and Soma, pierce ye the evil doers within their hiding place (*vavrá*), in untenable darkness, when there shall not come up again any one soever of them; be that your furious might unto overpowering’¹⁵². Though the demons cause possession, this may be seen as a cosmic reproach that comes in the form of difficulty and distressed caused by the same. As is noted in Book 2, Hymn 11 where there is a call made for the unfettering of seizures and simultaneously from hatred and sin.

Several gods are specifically invoked to deal with the remedial rites against demons, Indra mets out the most crushing treatment¹⁵³ , followed by Mitra and Varuṇa¹⁵⁴ and finally Aditi and Savitar¹⁵⁵. Agni is singularly invoked the most number of times to contend with the demons and sorcerers. Agni is called upon to crush the sorcerers with heat, striking of shafts (*rch*) and to burn them with flame (*hāras*) the wicked one (*vrijná*)¹⁵⁶. Several exorcism hymns also point to the use of plants as apavaktár

152 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā*’ Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 8, hymn 4, verse 3. Page 486.

153 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897. Book 6, hymn 2, ‘Do thou, O Indra, whom the drops of soma enter as birds a tree, beat off the hostile brood of the *Raksas*’. page 66

154 Whitney, William Dwight, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, hymn 32, verse 3, ‘fearlessness, O Mitra and Varuna, be ours here, drive ye backwards the devourers with your gleam; let them not find a knower, nor a foundation; mutually destroying one another let them go unto death’. page 304.

155 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 8, hymn 3, ‘Let the sorcerers bear off poison of the kine; let them of evil courses fall under the wrath of Aditi; let god Savitar abandon them; let them lose their share of the herbs’. page 484.

156 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 8, hymn 3, verse 15, ‘ the sorcerers that smears himself (*sam-anj*) with the flesh of men, who with that of horses, with cattle, who bears (off) the milk of the inviolable cow, O Agni- their heads cut thou into with flame’. page 483.

as in Book 5, Hymn 15, ‘Both, one of me and ten of me (are) the exorciser, O herb; thou born of right (*rtá*), thou rich in right, mayest thou, honeyed, make honey for me¹⁵⁷’.

7.2: Evils and Disease

Atharvans deconstructed their context, to find and categorise their illness into conditions and beings, often described as evil (*pāpmán*). Illness was objectified and experientially catalogued into evil-dreaming, evil living, demon, monster, hags, all the ill named, ill voiced which could be propelled by accumulation of sin¹⁵⁸. Evil has also been personified in the form of the brahman’s cow, a long hymn is dedicated in Book 12, to establish in a detailed manner the consequences and aftermath of improper obtainment of a brahman’s cow. The brahman’s cow becomes all things terrible and is associated with death, becoming all men’s killer (*puruṣavadhá*). The evil the cow embodies is revealed when the cow is taken creates discord by smell, pain thus causing disaster and perdition¹⁵⁹.

Atharvans bore these experiences and thought of them as hinderance, difficulty and distress¹⁶⁰, the evil that call befall people includes death by hunger and thirst,

157 H.W. Bodewitz, ‘The Vedic Concepts “ágas” and “énas”’, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 49, No.3/4 (2006), page 226.

158 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 7, hymn 23(24). page 404.

159 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 12, Hymn 5, verse 30, ‘evil when being set on, harshness when being set down, poison when heating, takman when heated’. page 704.

160 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 2, Hymn 10 ‘Thou hast been released from *yakṣma*, from difficulty (*durita*), from reproach (*avadya*); from the fetter of hatred and from seizure hast thou been released: so from *ksetriya*, etc’. page 51.

childlessness, kinelessness and defeat at dice¹⁶¹. This evil is made through witchcraft could be man-made or god-send¹⁶². This evil can be brought on by cursing, as the treatise reflects that the agency of the individual allows for social retribution meted out through the act of cursing which is made at the homes of people¹⁶³.

Evil is often a manifestation of disease, evil is described in the same tenor as symptoms of disease are depicted, evil is supposed to be able to control and not leave the person¹⁶⁴. People are bound by disease in the same manner they are bound by evil, the fetters are described as ‘an untier, do thou untie off us the fetters that are the highest, lowest, that are Varuṇa’s; remove from us evil dreaming and difficulty; then may we go the world of the well done¹⁶⁵. They imagine that negotiating evil can cause only harm. The power of evil is likened to that of gods with asura’s magic (*māyā*) as is said in Book 3 hymn 9, ‘Of the karcapha, of the *viṣaphá*, heaven (is) father, earth mother: as O gods, ye have inflicted (*abhi-kr*), so do ye remove (*apa-kr*) again’. There are several sorts of evil that are differentiated in the text which include *jambha*, *vicara*, *viṣkandha*¹⁶⁶ and the action of scorching (*abhicocana*). More often

161 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 4, Hymn 17,Verse 7 ‘Death by hunger, death by thirst, kinelessness, childlessness-through thee, O off-wiper (*apamarga*), we wipe off all that’. page180.

162 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 5, Hymn14.page 245.

163 For a detailed survey on concept of evil, See H.W. Bodewitz ‘The Vedic Concepts “ágas” and énas”’, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 49.,No. ¾ (2006): pp 225-271.

164 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn 26, ‘Thou who, O evil, dost not leave us, thee here do we leave; along at the turning apart of the ways, let evil go after another’. page 299.

165 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, hymn 121.page 370.

166 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 3, Hymn 9, ‘A hundred and one *viṣkandhas* (are) distributed over the earth; thee have they first taken up, of them the *viṣkandha* spoiling amulet’. page 98.

than not this evil said to manifest itself in the night time as is depicted in Book 19 in the ‘sense hymn’ (*artha sūkta*) in a ceremony of the worship of night¹⁶⁷.

Several ways to deal with evil include by thwarting it and off setting its niggardly effects, by conquering them, repelling and reverting their curses and overcoming them¹⁶⁸. One manner in which these texts have sought to tackle the evil dimension includes amulets¹⁶⁹, for instance the *jangida* amulet¹⁷⁰, with *khrgala*¹⁷¹, with a pearl shell amulet, herbs¹⁷². Agni is one of the gods that is evoked through the *brhachanti gaṇa* and the *papma gaṇa* in a ceremony of expiation for seeing ill omened sights¹⁷³. Agni through its magnificent lustre (bhanu) goes forth in every direction and gleams away evil. The destruction of evil is always visualised in a human/anthropomorphic form with the crushing of specific joints and bones of the ‘body of the evil’. The eventual end of evil is found in a way to vanquish them as mortals as is described in

167 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993 Book 19, hymn 47, ‘let no demon, (no) mischief –plotter master us let no evil-plotter master us; let no thief today master our kine, nor a wolf our sheep’. page 975

168 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 4, Hymn 17, Verse 2 ‘the truly conquering, the curse- repelling, the overcoming, the reverted one (punahsara)-all the herbs have I called together, saying ‘may they (?) save us from this’. Page 179.

169 For further discussion on amulets, See Mrunal S. Patki, ‘Concepts of *Mani* (Amulets) in the Atharva Vedic Ritual’, *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol.74 (2014), page 283-290.

170 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 2, Hymn 4 ‘with the amulet given by the gods, the kindly *jangida*, we overpower in the struggle (*vyayama*) the *viṣkandha* and all demons’. page 42.

171 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 3 Hymn 9, ‘On a reddish string a *khrgala*-that the pious (*vedhas*) bind on; let the binders make impotent the flowing (?) puffing (?) *kābavā*’. page 98

172 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 4, hymn 17, verse 1, ‘Thee, the mistress of remedies, O conquering one (*ujesa*), we take hold of; I have made thee a thing of thousand-fold energy (*virya*) for every one, O herb’. page 179.

173 For further discussion of expiation in rituals, See Ariel Glucklich, ‘A Cognitive Analysis of Sin and Expiation in Early Hindu Literature’, *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol.7, No. 1/3 (2003), page 55-73.

Book 8, Hymn 3, Verse 14 ‘Let the gods crush away today the wicked one (*vrjiná*); let (his) curses sent forth go back upon him; let shafts strike(*rch*) in the vitals him who steals by (magic) speech; let the sorcerers come within everyone’s reach’¹⁷⁴.

Another tactic employed is by delineating the different ill omens and influences that anticipate disaster and distress¹⁷⁵. The birds of ill omen are considered messengers of perdition which are astutely dealt with in *Kāūsika sūtra* and in the *Atharva Veda* in book 6, hymn 29, ‘may it fly hither in order to non-destruction of heroes; may it settle (*ā-sad*) here in order to abundance of heroes; turned away, do thou speak away, toward a distant stretch; so that in Yama’s house they may look upon thee (as) sapless, may look upon (thee as) empty (*ābhūka*)’¹⁷⁶. Whilst discussing evil influence, the *Atharva Veda* describes the evil influence of a sky drop, the hymn employed is that of the *Kāūsika sūtra* in an expiatory rite that describes how from the sky a drop of water can carry an essence (*rasa*); with Indra’s power, with milk¹⁷⁷.

8: Madness and its Form in the Text

Sanity, in the *Atharva Veda* is promulgated as soundness of mind. Book 8, Hymn 2, Verse 3 states that when the mind is maintained and there is concord with the limbs

174 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 8, Hymn 3, Verse 14. page 483.

175 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 7, Hymn 115, Verse 1. ‘Fly forth from here, O evil sign (*laksmī*); disappear from here; fly forth from yonder; with a hook of metal (*ayasmāya*) we attach thee to him that hates (us)’. page 469.

176 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn 29, Verse 3. page 301.

177 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, hymn 124, verse 3 ‘A fragrant ointment, a success is that, gold splendour, just purifying is that. All purifiers (are) stretched out from us; let not perdition pass that, nor the niggard’. page 374.

and comprehensible speech without babbling that would be the state of sanity¹⁷⁸. The diseases of the head are discussed separately in Book 9, Hymn 8, they include headaches, head ailments, mutism (*pramóta*) and blindness¹⁷⁹. However, there isn't mention of madness as being part of the rubric of head diseases.

It is interesting that madness in the text is recognised as an ailment, whether or not it was considered a disease is open to questioning and further analysis. The reason why we can critically accept that madness was recognised as an ailment is because the *Kāuśika sūtra* recognises madness in the 111th hymn in book 6 of the first grand division of the *Atharva Veda* as a *māṭṛnāmāni* which aligns it to being a remedial rite against demon. The positioning of the hymn is reflective as it posits itself as a remedial rite¹⁸⁰.

The structure of the hymn is significant as it reflects the manner in which the author chooses to engage with madness, the hymn at the starts with the delineation of the physical nature of madness, how it manifests itself, then goes on to find causality and the reason for madness to manifest itself and ends with the remedy. The physical manifestation that relates to madness in the *Atharva Veda* explicitly is the act of crying aloud. The texts state explicitly that madness in this context is a loss of restraint which leads to the person being uninhibited. Notionally this lack of inhibition that the person suffers from is external, a hint at the exteriority of the

178 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 8, Hymn 2, Verse 3. page 477.

179 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book9, Hymn 8, Verse 1-5. page 550.

180Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 6, Hymn 111.page 32.

madness is brought to light by the text itself when it states, ‘free thou this man for me, O Agni, who here bound, well restrained, cries loudly’¹⁸¹.

The pathology for this madness is sought in the excitement of the mind, here the text doesn’t refer to the physical substantive mind but the more metaphorical mind which can’t necessarily be pinned to an anatomical part of the body. The quieting of the mind is considered a remedy for a crazed person¹⁸². The madness that has been established as exterior to the person or has been brought onto the person, as is stated in ‘crazed from sin against the gods, crazed from a demon-I, knowing make a remedy, when he shall be uncrazed’¹⁸³. This is brought on by a complex relationship and consequence of sinning, sinning against gods and crazed by demons. The juxtaposition of sinning and attack of the demons is curious as on one hand it reflects the notion of propriety and therefore can be considered a prescription on the other hand it also acts as a cautionary tale and consequently is a negative normative principle¹⁸⁴. The texts reflect usage of retribution as a tool in which religious authority holder power of people necessarily. However, there is also instance made of fever causing madness in its extreme form¹⁸⁵.

The act of remedying rests solely in the hands of the gods, this is made clear by the last section of the hymn that states, ‘may the *apsaras* restore thee, may indra, may

181 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn 111, Verse 1. page 361.

182 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn 111, Verse 2, page 361.

183 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn 111, Verse 3. page 361.

184 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn 111, Verse 4. page 361.

185 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn 20. page 295.

bhaga restore thee, may all the gods restore thee, that thou mayest be freed from madness!¹⁸⁶ What is interesting to note here is that the hymn never states that it seeks to cure or heal the madness on the contrary it states that the purpose of the hymn is to bring relief. This relief is manifested through a restoration of senses (*indriyā*)¹⁸⁷. Relief doesn't necessarily ensure restoration to health or wellbeing of the individual. Relief functions in silos where there is specific and targeted intervention to a certain ailment¹⁸⁸.

8.1: Against Evil Dreaming

Apart from the hymns on insanity, the onslaught on the Atharvanic mind is captured in the hymns against evil dreaming. Ongoing of the night are considered to be ill fated, this one is acutely made aware of by the number of hymns addressed to protection in the night from robberies, evil plotters and sorcerers in Book 19. Simultaneously, prayers are made for refuge to the night for peaceful sleep¹⁸⁹. Sleep and consequently dreams have in the *Atharva Veda* been systematically decoded via myths and legends with *varunani* designated as the mother and *yama* the father of sleep¹⁹⁰. The *Atharva Veda*'s preoccupation with sleep is shown in Book 4, Hymn 5, Verse 6 which is an incantation to put to sleep, which states, ' Let the mother sleep, the father sleep, the dog sleep, the housemaster (*viçpāti*) sleep; let the relatives (*jñati*)

186 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 6, Hymn 111. page 33.

187 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 7, Hymn 67, Verse 1. page 433.

188 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 3, Hymn 11, Verse 3. 'With an oblation having a thousand eyes, a hundred heroisms, a hundred lifetimes, have I taken him, in order that Indra may lead him unto autumns, across to the further shore of all difficulty (*duritā*)'. page 103.

189 For further discussion on night, See Suryakant Bali, ed., *Historical and Critical Studies in the Atharva Veda*, Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1981. page 67.

190 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 6, hymn 46, Verse 1 'Thou who art neither alive nor dead, the immortal child of the god's art thou, O sleep, *Varunani* is thy mother, *Yama* thy father; *Araru* is thy name'. page 167.

of her sleep; let this folk round about sleep.¹⁹¹ The *Atharva Veda* also associates sleep with bad dreams and death¹⁹².

Dreams in the *Atharva Veda* are almost a manifestation of the mental state a person is in, a distinction is made between good and bad dreams. Evil dream in the *Atharva Veda* is called *duḥsvapna* and the rite to propitiate the evil dream is called *duḥsvapnāçana gaṇa*¹⁹³. A mythology is created around the existence of evil dreaming which is purported to have come from Yama's world to make an alliance (saratham) with mortal who is lonely having left his son, wife and relatives¹⁹⁴.

These evil dreams are also a consequence of transgressions made of 'down utterance, out-utterance, forth-utterance we have offended (*upa-r*), waking or (*yát*) sleeping, let Agni put far away from us all disagreeable ill-deeds'¹⁹⁵. Evil dreaming is likened to ill success (*ābhūti*), there are several sorts of ill dreams that a person can have for instance, food that you eat in your dream may have ill effects¹⁹⁶. Evil dreaming is symptomatic of certain maladies that a person faces, it is stated that evil dreaming is capable of hiding its symptoms from the physician.¹⁹⁷ Certain evil dreams are dreamt

191 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 4, Hymn 5, Verse 6. page 152.

192 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn 46, Verse 2. 'We know thy place of birth O sleep; thou art the son of the gods sisters agent of Yama; end maker art thou; death art thou; so, O sleep, do we comprehend thee here; do thou, O sleep, protect us from evil-dreaming'. page 315.

193 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 7, Hymn 100, Verse 1. page 461

194 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 16, Hymn 5, Verse 1-6. page 798.

195 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 6, Hymn 45, Verse 2. page 163.

196, William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book7, hymn 100, 'What food I eat in dream (and that) is not found in the morning- be all that propitious to me, for that is not seen by day'. page 461.

197 Whitney, William Dwight, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 19, hymn 56, 'the all vigorous bond saw thee in the beginning, in the one day before the birth of night, from thence, O sleep, didst thou come (a-bhu) hither, hiding thy form from the physician'. page 994.

by certain people, for instance the text states that the king is susceptible to evil dreams.¹⁹⁸ Evil dreams are also used as weapons against enemies, these dreams are deemed as transferable as the expiation of these bad dreams calls for sending them to people who hate the person praying.¹⁹⁹ These dreams have the power to be immensely painful even in the state of waking and thus evil dreaming is the tenuous connection one finds in the treatise of how the mind and body are fraught with linkages of sensation and feeling.

8.2 Against Seizures

Much like the hymn on insanity, the hymns against seizures speaks to the physicality of symptoms that are recorded. Seizures in the *Atharva Veda*, take the form of illness and metaphor of bonds and fetters. The metaphor and illness borrow and attribute character to one another. Seizures in the *Atharva Veda* is described in Book 12, in the hymn to the earth, the text states that chaos or breakdown of order is cause for seizures of households²⁰⁰. The seizure mostly associated with evil is considered a fatal obstacle that needs to be passed in order to reach the heaven²⁰¹. In the *Atharva Veda*, while describing the illness, it is noted that misconduct leads to seizures befalling a person. Seizures as identified in the *Atharva Veda* are called

198 Whitney, William Dwight, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 19, Hymn 57, 'kings have gathered (*sam-gā*) debts have gathered, kúṣṭha have gathered, sixteenth have gathered; all evil dreaming that is in us-let us impel away evil-dreaming to him that hates us'. page 996.

199 Whitney, William Dwight, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 19, Hymn 57 'As the sixteenth, as an eight, as a (whole) debt they bring together, so do we bring together all evil dreaming for him who hates us'. page 996.

200 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 12, Hymn 2, Verse 39, 'the houses are united with seizures (*grahi*) when a woman's husband dies; a knowing priest (*brahman*) is to be sought, who shall remove the flesh eating one'. page 679.

201 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* Second Half Books VIII to XIX, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 12, Hymn 3, verse 18, 'the seizure (*grahi*), evil (*papman*)- may go beyond them dissipate thou the darkness; mayest thou speak forth what is agreeable; made of forest tree, uplifted, do not injure; do not crush to pieces the god-loving rice grain'. page 685.

grāhi and they are an accompaniment to transgressions made by individuals such as overslaughting or the marriage of a younger brother before an elder brother²⁰². Healing of these seizure requires overpowering the forces present and therefore the exorcism mentioned involves the exorciser (*apavaktár*) to state his position of dominance in comparison to the force being combatted²⁰³.

8.3: Against ksetriya

Kṣetriyá is described as a disease that affects the entire body, it affects the heart as is cited in the text, ‘do thou unfasten (*vi-sa*) the *Kṣetriyá* that is compacted in his heart’²⁰⁴. In book 2, hymn 10, whilst describing the perdition one faces when confronted with *Kṣetriyá*, the texts suggest that there is a loss of vigor²⁰⁵, *yakṣma*, *durita* and *avadyá* that is encountered. The cause of this perdition is attributed to *enas* (sin), from guilt and from hatred²⁰⁶.

One of the treatments of *Kṣetriyá* is by putting the individual in an empty house (*ṣunyaṣālā*) and further in an old hole (*jaratkhātā*) that has housegrass (*ṣālātrṇa*) in

202 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 6, Hymn 112, Verse 3. ‘The fetters with which the older brother, whose younger has married before him, has been bound, with which he has been encumbered and shackled limb by limb, may they be loosened; since fit for loosening they are! Wipe off, O *Pāshan*, the misdeeds upon him that practiseth abortion!’. page 164.

203 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 5, Hymn 15. page 246.

204 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Saṃhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers. 1993. Book 3, hymn 7, verse 2. page 94

205 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 2, hymn 10, Verse 6. ‘Thou has been released from *yakṣma*, from difficulty, from reproach (*avadya*); from the fetters of hatred and from seizures has thou been released: so from *ksetriya* etc.’ page 15.

206 Maurice Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva Veda*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898. Book 2, hymn 10, ‘from *ksetriya*, from perdition, from imprecation of sister (*jami*) from hatred (*druh*) do I release thee, from Varuna’s fetters; free from guilt (*agas*) I make thee by (my) incantations; be heaven and earth both propitious to thee’. page 16.

it, and is there doused and mouth rinsed²⁰⁷. However, Water is considered the most effective remedy of all, ‘the waters verily (are) remedial, the waters disease expelling, the waters remedial of everything; let them release thee from *stray*²⁰⁸’.

Conclusion

Through a reading of the hymns of fear, guilt and distress that are recorded in the *Atharva Veda* more often we observe a dimension about illness and its association with death²⁰⁹. The fear of dying is in symbiotic juxtaposition to wishing for a long life²¹⁰. Hymns describing the negotiation of fear are dealt with in rites related to *godana* ceremony²¹¹. The understanding of fear is also looked in correlation with heroism, the might of the gods, of the atmosphere, heaven and other natural forces are evoked to demonstrate valour²¹². It can thus be surmised that the bodily afflictions were not yet distinguished from the emotional frailties that the Atharvans suffered as we shall see as were later demarcated in the ayurvedic texts and the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

207 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 2, hymn 8, verse 5, ‘homage to them of constantly falling eyes, homage to them of the same region (*samdeçyá*), homage to the lord of field: let the ksetriya- effacing etc’. page 49

208 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 3, hymn 7, verse 5. page 95.

209 For a longer discussion on death and life after death, See H.W. Bodewitz, ‘Yonder World in the Atharva Veda’, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 42, No.2(1999).pp107-120.

210 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 6, Hymn 40, Verse 1. ‘Let fearlessness, O heaven-and earth, be here for us; let Soma, Savitar, make us fearlessness; be the wide atmosphere fearlessness for us; and by the oblation of the seven seers be there fearlessness for us’. page 310.

211 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 2, Hymn 15. Found in the *Paippalāda* in 13 verses and is mostly related to *āyuskāma*. page 59.

212 William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva Veda Samhitā* First Half Books I to Book VII, Delhi. Motilal Benarsidass Publishers.1993. Book 2, hymn 15, verse 6, ‘As both what is (*bhūta*) and what is to be (*bhāvya*) do not fear, are not harmed, so, my breath, fear not’. page 60.

The *Atharva Veda*'s understanding of madness, illness and disease is to be looked upon in the framework of *vini-yoga* (practical application). The Atharvanic formulations of hymns and chants were geared towards pacification, avertion and expiation. The process of healing was not divorced or separated from the aforementioned rites. These individual and collective rites were employed based on the circumstances that presented themselves to the Atharvanic individual. In the case of individual rites these are life cycle rites that subsume the process of healing within them. The collective rituals are usually the *śrauta* rituals that tend to focus on matters of societal importance; wars and famines.

Chapter Two: Madness in Texts within the Medical Tradition

1: Situating madness within Ayurvedic texts

The issue of madness as an illness occurs only in the margin of consciousness of majority of ancient Indian text. The vast compendium of sanskritic text pertaining to the Ayurvedic corpus are by nature and structure found to be didactic and normative. Psychiatry, the science of understanding the mind and the functioning of the brain, was not systemised as a separate school of science in ancient time and is wholly recognised as a modern import into our lives. With change in political, social structure and the economy, one also finds a shift in the understanding of illness, disease and madness from the *Atharva Veda* to the Ayurvedic treatises.

There developed over time, a social codification of normal and abnormal experiences and behaviour. This social codification was possible through the intellectual churning of a specific social group in this instance; the brahmins. The brahmanic values can be gleaned through the texts that reflect this codification through the mediums of empiricism, naturalism and metaphysical thought. In a very fundamental way a vocabulary and idiom was developed that helped to articulate afflictions of a person's mind and brain, which helped to differentiate and make sense of different sorts of abnormal experiences and breakdowns in behaviour.

The focus of the texts is on the normative, these prescriptive texts have details on appropriate and approved behaviour as it is a societal construct and a reflection of local standards of morality and abnormality. If we were to use a different lens of 'modern' psychological/ psychiatric enquiry, sources are left only to a few scattered

medical texts to study or socially engage with phenomenon that is generically termed madness.

The world view prevalent at the time, operated from the twin premise of wellbeing and ill being. Sickness was referred to as misfortune, suffering or absence of wellbeing, which when looked narrowly are part of the human condition of distress and social maladaptation. The human condition is according to most of the normative texts alleviated through proper concurrence of rituals, rules and regulations. The mainstay idea of the principles of this tradition include following practices that support human well-being with recognition of the common ground between cooperation of health and *samvata* (equipoise/balance of physical and mental). Healing and health was not seen as a separate sphere from other socially lived experiences. As referred to in Chapter 1, debunking the notion of magico- religious healing, within the conduct of life, healing was a mere part of it as is indicated in the notion of health in sanskrit word for health, *svasthya* and *svastha* which when translated literally means self-abiding or coinciding with oneself.

Before delving into the conceptual category of madness, I would like to consider how disease was posited in the Ayurvedic corpus of treatises. According to the ancient texts, ‘any disturbances in equilibrium of *dhātus* are known as disease. *Dhātus* consist of *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha* any deficiency or excess in the normal quantity of the *dhātus* causes *vikāra* or disease’¹. There are three courses of disease in the body, *śākhā* (peripheral system), *marmāsthisandhi* (vital organs and joints of

¹ See Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*. Volume I. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series.2011. page 184.

bones) and *koṣṭha* (central system)². On the other hand, the state of equilibrium is called health; this state is also called *prakriti*. Health and disease are also defined in terms of pleasure and pain.

1.1-A study of terms used in relation to madness

The Sanskrit word for insanity is *unmāda*. *Unmāda* is not considered so much as a ‘mental disorder’ as it was considered a behavioural condition in which a person acts as if he was intoxicated. Another form of disease of the afflicted mind found in early medical treatises was possession³. There are several words used for insanity, each word demonstrates a different facet of insanity and adds a dimension to the understanding of insanity.

The Caraka *Samhitā* views *unmāda* as a bewilderment or excitement; this is learnt from the word used *samudbhrama*, as the text states that in this ailment, the intellect, the mind and the memory get excited. The *Suśruta Samhitā* takes a slightly different view on the meaning of insanity, the focus is on the irregular pathways taken by the aggravated *dosas* causing this ailment, known as *unmāda* (insanity). The *Aṣṭāṅga Hrdayam* understanding is similar to *Suśruta Samhitā*, however, according to the text *unmāda* is made as result of toxicity of the *manas* (mind) produced by the increased *dosas* (*vāta*, *kapha* and *pitta*) moving in incorrect paths. The *Bhela Samhitā*, describes *unmāda* as a dysfunction of *citta*, *buddhi* and *indriya*. The *Hārīta Samhitā*, echoes Caraka *Samhitā* adding that the divergent paths taken by the *dosas* is for the

2 Ibid, p 228

3 Fredrick Smith has clarified the idea of possession in South Asia, by showing that there was both good and bad possession; the former associated with religious rites and activities, the later with morbid conditions and the medical tradition of AyurVeda.

purpose of seeking shelter (*unmārgāśritā*)⁴. *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā* doesn't define insanity but states it as a manifestation of the morbidity of the mind. *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā*, being the text on treatment of children's ailment and diseases does however, give a detailed account of different seizures and epilepsy related to children that will be discussed later in the chapter. In the process of enlisting the definitional change made in each of these treatises, we observe not necessarily a definitional refinement but a change in the thrust of understanding of madness with a change in consideration of madness as excitement due to *dosas* to a more process based understanding of physiology of blockage and channels. Then with the introduction of *citta* and *hridaya* and sense perception.

There are variants of the word *unmāda*, they each lend a different meaning and help unearth a different facet of madness. The words described will always make a distinction between the state of insanity and the person who is afflicted with insanity⁵. *Unmātta*, *unmātak*, *unmāda* refer to the actual person being afflicted with madness. There is a distinction also made of when the mind is intoxicated and when the mind is agitated, when the mind is intoxicated it is referred to as *unmataḥ*. However, when the mind is agitated or excited it is referred to as *unmānas*, *unmānayat* and the person who is excited is referred to as *unmāni*. There is also a distinction made between a person who is excited and a person who is absent minded who is called *unmānibhav*⁶. Further, we note a finer distinction made between passion and excitement. There are words that are consigned to explain passion and

4 Gyanendra Pandey, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, Vol I. Varanasi. Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series Office.2014. page 696.

5 Vaman Shivaram Apte, *The Practical Sanskrit- English Dictionary*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2007. page 436.

6 Ibid, p 437.

associated madness in love, *unmādan* means to be affected or inflamed in love, it also refers to one of the five arrows of cupid.

Another word that is often associated with madness is confusion; medical texts while enumerating madness often use certain words synonymously. For instance, *mohuka* is defined as falling into confusion, *mohin* is the object causing confusion and *mohaniya* is the state of delusion resulting from illusion, error or infatuation and *mohita* is the person who is stupefied, infatuated and bewildered. *Vibhranti* is another word that indicated the physicality associated with the understanding of madness, a person is understood as insane by his actions and these generally include non-rational actions that are physically very pronounced through movement of the body⁷. *Vibhram* means to wander and make errors, more specifically caused by the flurry of the mind by love. In this context, *vibhranti* means to whirl about in an agitated and bewildered fashion.

Apasmāra is used to define epilepsy, according to the Caraka *Samhitā*, *Suśruta Samhitā* and *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*, *Apasmāra* denotes the loss of memory, the patient loses memory during the period of attack. Loss of consciousness results in manifestation of physical activities, like foam coming out of the mouth and convulsive movements of the limbs. The term associated with *Apasmāra* is *samplava* which implies unnatural state of derangement.

One has to be wary of the false understanding that there was one monolithic medical-healing tradition. The treatises were written, corroborated and interpreted in the light of new clinical experience and knowledge and thus modified and the corpus enlarged and eroded, simultaneously. It was not a stagnant tradition but was rather a living one

⁷ Ibid, p 1457.

which was constantly evolving. This is reflective of how literate, scholarly, academic tradition thought about madness over a long expanse of time. This was then orally and in writing disseminated to a larger population which were the patients and their families who imbibed the tenets of the traditions, who must have contributed to the tradition through informal channels of households and market places.

Consequently, the medical texts of ancient India accomplished a lot in terms of defining and demarking the scope of madness. They delineated and objectified the territory of what was referred to as madness and insanity, namely conditions of impaired physical and mental health and their social and physiological interpretation and treatment. The several texts including *Atharva Veda*, *Caraka Samhitā*, *Suśruta Samhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* and *Bhela, Hārīta* and *Kāśyapa Samhitā* articulate sets of concepts and empirical tenets pertaining to behaviour, pathology, diagnostics and therapeutics. These were brought to bear on the individuals whose inner complexity and outer interconnectedness with nature, the social fabric, the spiritual and the cosmic and timeless, were never slighted.

As societies and cultures evolve, so do the idioms for making sense of madness and insanity, as the abnormality in individuals become more socially recognisable and their behaviour magnifies in times of systematisation and institutionalisation of healing. This could also lead to changes in the perceptions and understandings of patients as well as doctors/physicians. We conclude, that symbols and idioms used to describe mental conditions are subject to historical change.

1.2 Delineating the texts

The structure and content of each of the *Samhitā* has similarities as well as divergences that lend uniqueness and separate character to each of the treatises

surveyed. The *Caraka Saṃhitā* contains 120 chapters. The number 120 appears to bear some significance in as much as the other two texts *Suśruta* and *Saṃhitā* and *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*, among the Great trio also contain 12 chapters excluding, of course, *Uttaratantra* of the *Suśruta* which appears to be added at a later stage⁸. The *Bhela Saṃhitā* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* have 107 and 103 chapters respectively. The largest number of chapters are found in the Kāśyapa *Saṃhitā* at a grand total of 200.

These chapters outline the functioning and dysfunctionality observed in the body and mind of the individuals. The demographic groups of women, children and old aged person are dealt with separately. These treatises lay down principles of prognostic signs and summarise therapeutics to be administered. These chapters in the various *Saṃhitās* form parts of the following eight *sthanas*;

Sūtra Sthāna is part of every *Saṃhitā*. It deals with fundamental principles governing the science of life both for the maintenance of health and prevention as well as cure of disease. This contains 30 chapters⁹. It deals with the origin and propagation of AyurVeda, the *mahābhautika* composition of the universe, their relationship with the composition of the human body with special reference to the *dhātus* or the basic tissue elements of the body. The composition of the drug and the mode of drug action are also described. Various attributes of food ingredients including method of preparation and effects of food ingredient on the human body are also delineated. Fundamental principles governing the line of treatment and contents of the entire work in brief. *Nidāna Sthāna* is discussed in every *Saṃhitā* apart from the *Hārīta Saṃhitā*. There are lengthy descriptions of etiology, pathogenesis and diagnosis of

8 R.K Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol 1. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. Varanasi, Introduction, page XXII.

9 Ibid, Introduction, page XXIII.

diseases that are contained in eight chapters. It postulates and diagnosis's a few diseases that were perhaps predominant at the time. It is interesting to note that the *Nidāna Sthāna* delineates *unmāda* and *apasmāra* separately along with six other diseases including *jvara*, *raktapitta*, *gulma*, *meha*, *kuṣṭha* and *śoṣa*. In some cases, the line of treatment (drugs and diet) is also furnished¹⁰. *Vimāna Sthāna* is found in the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, *Bhela Saṃhitā* and *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā* but is conspicuous in its absence from *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā*. It engages with the principles governing the bodily factors that cause diseases. The classification of diseases and especially *janapadodhvaśma* (epidemics). As well as the principles governing the drugs and medicaments with curative value. *Vimāna Sthāna* contains eight chapter in this section mostly looks into the fundamental principles governing the administration of drugs and diet; the procedure to be followed for ascertaining the nature of disease and at the end of this section, guidelines for entering into debates on various aspects of the 'science of life' are promulgated. *Śarīra Sthāna* much like the *Sūtra sthana* has the distinction of being found in all the *saṃhitās*. It contains material on the principles governing the birth and death of living beings. This contains eight chapters¹¹. In these chapters the principles governing the creation of universe and human body, embryological developments and the description of organs and parts of the human body are furnished. *Indriya Sthāna* attends to prognostic signs and symptoms. This contains twelve chapters. These chapters exclusively deal with the bad prognostic signs and fundamental principles governing them¹². *Cikitsā Sthāna* enumerates the treatment of diseases. This contains thirty chapters. In these chapters, management of healthy

10 R.K Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol I. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. Varanasi, Introduction, page XXIII

11 Ibid, p XXIII

12 Ibid, p XXIII

person as well as treatment of diseases are described. The prescriptions deal more with the applied rather than theoretical aspects. *Kalpa Sthāna* elaborated formulary for administering emesis, purgation and inhalation therapies. This contains twelve chapters. These chapters deal with the pharmaceutical aspects of certain medical preparation and their utilisation¹³. *Siddhi Sthāna* engages with principles governing the administration of elimination therapies. This contains twelve chapters. These chapters look intensively into the various aspects of the classical form of Ayurvedic treatment popularly known as ‘*pañcakarma*’. *Uttara Sthana* is found in the *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hrdayam* and *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā* and is absent from *Caraka*, *Bhela* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā*. It covers no less than sixty-six chapters.

While discussing the style, and writing technique of *Saṃhitās*; we gather a lot of useful information, most of the *Saṃhitā* is written in both prose and verse form¹⁴. Some chapters are written exclusively in verse except the beginning and the colophon which are invariably in the prose form. There are several metres used in the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, these include *Anuṣṭubh*, *Indravajrā*, *Upendravajrā*, *Upajāti*, *Vamśasthā*, *Indravamśa*, *Svāgatā*, *Puṣpitāgrā*¹⁵. The titles of some chapters are based on the first word occurring in the chapters which are also suggestive of its contents. In some other cases, the name of a chapter is based upon the subject matter discussed. Here the chapter does not start with the words used in the title; the title is suggestive of the contents of the chapter. In the *Caraka Saṃhitā* the tradition of describing a topic in the order of *uddeśya* (statement in brief), *nirdeśa* (detailed expansion of the brief statement referred to above) and *lakṣaṇa* (definition) is

13 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol 1. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. Varanasi, 2011. Introduction, page XXIII.

14 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol 1. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2011. p XXIII

15 Ibid, p. XXVII

followed¹⁶. The text is presented in a structured manner and follows a standard pattern; The style of writing differs for chapters, there are five chapters in which proceedings of seminars are recorded. Thirty chapters are written in the form of question and answer and the remaining 82 chapters contain statements narrating instructions on various aspects of the science¹⁷.

The codification of the texts is done in the form of proceedings of a seminar or debate quite deliberately. The debates conducted are of two types which are *sandhāya sambhāṣā* or friendly debate which is participated with a view to ascertain the truth and *vigṛhya sambhāṣā* or debate that is conducted with the whole purpose of defeating the opponent¹⁸. These can be recognised as tools of writing used effectively to streamline knowledge and provide legitimacy to the information presented in the texts, it also became an effective tool to debunk other heterodox theories and universalise their own teachings.

There are 43 *saṃskṛta* commentaries on the work of Caraka. Out of these known 43 commentaries, 8 of these are available either partially or fully. These include *Caraka nyāsa* by Bhattara Haricandra (4th CE), *Caraka pañjikā* by Svami Kumara (after 4th CE), *Nirantara pada vyākhyā* by Jejjata (6th CE), *Tattvacandrikā* by Sivadasa Sena (15th CE), *Jalpa-kalpa taru* by Gangadhara Sena (19th CE)¹⁹. The most authoritative commentary on the *Caraka Saṃhitā* is called *Caraka pāṇi* (also known as *Caraka*

16 Ibid, p. XXVIII

17 Ibid, p XXIX.

18 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol I, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2011. Introduction, page XXIX.

19 Ibid, p XXXIX

caturanāma). It is completely aware of the additions made by Drdhabala²⁰ and works of earlier commentators²¹. It notes several variations in the reading of the *Caraka Saṃhitā* and has rejected some readings as unauthoritative. In his commentary, Cakrapani has endeavoured to justify the sequence of arrangement of various sections (*sthanas*), chapters and even statements in each chapter. An effort has also been made by him to coordinate facts scattered in various chapters of the work. In addition to this, he has also provided grammatical, philosophical and syntactic interpretation of difficult and technical terms used in the text²².

With the crystallisation of *Caraka Saṃhitā*, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hrdayam*, *Bhela Saṃhitā*, *Hārīta Saṃhitā* and *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā*, there was an advent of Ayurvedic system of healing. The cultural evolution of these texts in Indian subcontinent allowed for the cementing of thought on disease and illness. An understanding of the body developed not necessarily divorced from cosmogony but more integrated with nature and its elements. This became important in diagnosis and treatment and it spread to families, priests, nomadic mendicants and royal patronage of networks of knowledge. The tradition evolved as compilers of medical wisdom, theoreticians and renowned physicians commented on reinterpreted key tenets of Ayurvedic theory. In other words, as explanations and interpretations of sickness and insanity changed and elaborated, so did the conditions for physical observation, queries and treatment emphases were communicated to patients and their families.

20 Drdhabala lived prior to 3CE, considered to be the court physician of Kaniska.

21 Ibid, p XL

22 Cakrapani has also provided colloquial and vernacular names of drugs and food ingredients. While explaining textual statements he has cited examples which indicate the contemporaneous customs, manners and even colloquial language of the people.

In South India, the academic, scientific indigenous tradition of siddha medicine became an important component of Indian medicine²³. It drew from Dravidian culture and Tamil literature, but also had connections to Ayurvedic medicine. Consequently, the material on insanity in the medical texts indicates strategies to cope with human emotional and behavioural problems. The texts can give an insight into a host of medical and non-medical approaches and solutions to the lived problems caused by natural and socio-political context in the form of madness and other mental ailments.

We need to take into account not only an understanding of its medicine but also an appreciation of its diverse intellectual and cultural traditions and social practices and institutions outside of medicine per se, for these were also necessarily involved in formulating, appropriating, domesticating, coping with processual moments of healing of the madness that was located in the person.

2: Chronology and Authorship of the Medical texts.

Contemporary scholarship considers the medical texts to have been received in the form of the Brhatrayi²⁴. The first instance of rudimentary information on healing is found in the *Rg Veda* and the hymns of the *Atharva Veda* which have great amount of information spread throughout on disease, healing and natural resources. Enlisted healing hymns, can be found to be for multiple purposes of success in war, agricultures, rainfall, weddings, funerals as well as curing disease and keeping evils and demons away.

23 Siddha medicine embodied complex features of tantra, yoga and alchemy.

24 The Great trio includes *Caraka Samhitā*, *Suśruta Samhitā* and the *Aṣṭāṅga Hrdayam*.

As found in the *Atharva Veda*, where hymns are addressed to Varuṇa and Indra among others. The *Caraka Saṃhitā*, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Bhela Saṃhitā* imply a divine origin for themselves, vast myths and legends are associated with their authorship and they do not concede to being products of human minds but have been received and recorded by them. The texts were formulated over a long period and time and assertion of the texts being divine revelations are exercises in establishing and increasing their legitimacy. Legends and traditions arose among the class of healers, which gave dignity to their profession by connecting them with the gods and divine sages of the mythical past. The sacredness of the medical texts was stated for the purpose of establishing ascendancy in opposition to other texts²⁵. The texts show a gradual transformation; the shift in the *Veda* from being less categorised on definitive subjects and more integrated to the *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā* which are mostly concerned with illness and healing.

The figures that predominate the text include the Ashwins²⁶, they are the main deities of the vedic text who promote health and rejuvenation on all levels besides which they also had a reputation of being divine doctors. They passed the knowledge to Indra after receiving it from Prajapati²⁷. The difference the origin legends of the *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā* lie in the transmission of knowledge from Indra to Rsi

25 Some scholars have cited this as a primary reason for the text not being scientific, as they consider it as an obstacle to fundamental innovation with regard to theory. However, these texts were never a closed system of knowledge.

26 'The twins represent the dual nature of the life force as expansion and contraction and the need to create a balance, which is the essence of all lasting healing'.

27 J. Filliozat, *The Classical Doctrine of Indian Medicine*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers. 1964. page 3.

Bhardvaja²⁸ in the case of *Caraka Saṃhitā* and Indra to Dhanvantri²⁹; first described in the puranas as the king of kasi and is credited with discovering secrets of the Ayurveda, in the case of the *Suśruta Saṃhitā*. According to J. Filliozat, Dhanvantri and Rsi Bharadwaj are closely interconnected, he states that they could be easily become substitutes of each other and that the tradition of *Suśruta* and *Caraka* regarding the pupil of Indra, reach back to the same texts³⁰. Filliozat points out to the *Sankhayana- grhyasūtra* where the notion of a relationship between Dhanvantri and Bhardwaja is present, similar to the *Rg Veda* where reproachment has been made between Bhardwaja and Divodasa.

Questions can be raised as to why *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā* borrowed from a single source of legends the names of masters of medicine. According to Filliozat quite frequently the sects or schools imitate one another and resort to plagiarising, by changing the names of personages from whom they quote.

Caraka Saṃhitā is the oldest of the texts written on health, wellbeing and illness. *Caraka* represents the Atreya school of physicians, whose approach is mainly herbal³¹. The *Caraka Saṃhitā* written in prose as well as in beautiful poetry, comparable to any Sanskrit classic. Certain parts of the texts are in prose combined

28 Rsi Bhardvaja communicated his knowledge to other rsis, one of them being *Atreya Punarvasu*, who subsequently trained six disciples: *Agnivesa*, *Bhela*, *Jaukarna*, *Parasara*, *Hārīta* and *Ksarapani*. Of these, Agnivesa is supposed to have been the first to compose a book of teaching. Thus, the *Caraka Saṃhitā* represents a manual “composed” by Agnivesa and reconstituted by *Caraka*.

29 *Dhanvantri* is said to be the incarnation of *Visnu*, this is befitting given that *Visnu* is said to be the cosmic power of preservation, who maintains health, harmony and well-being in creation. Dhanvantri on the prayer of a group consisting of *Aupadhenava*, *Vaitrana*, *Aurabhra*, *Pauskalavata* and *Suśruta* taught it to men. *Suśruta* is supposed to have recorded the very words of *Dhanvantri* himself.

30 He basis this on the premise that Dhanvantri, mentioned by Suśruta is a post vedic god and Bhardwaja mentioned by Caraka is vedic rsi. His contention is that Dhanvantri mentioned by Suśruta is also Divodasa, and Divodasa is a vedic mentioned in association with Bhardwaja in three passages of the *Rg Veda*.

31 David Frawley and Subhash Ranade, *AyurVeda Nature's Medicine*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers, 2004. page 15

with mnemonic verses or in alternating verse and prose; other parts are entirely in verse. This manner of presentation brings the texts near certain parts in prose and verse to the Mahabharata and the Arthasastra, which would belong to approximately 300 B.C.E. Scholars have dated it to 1500 B.C.³². *Caraka Samhitā* has been considered the primary textbook of Ayurveda in the Indian subcontinent. It describes the fundamental principles of Ayurveda, elaborating the physiology and anatomical structure of the human body. *Caraka* emphasises the living body, he also postulates on the signs and symptoms of various diseases. The treatment of disease is done after examination of the patient and prognosis of disease. The preventive aspects of treatment include daily and seasonal regimes³³, dietics and social behaviour conducive to mental health. The personage of *Caraka* is attested in Chinese sources³⁴, thus *Caraka* if he existed must have lived after 2nd century.

Suśruta Samhitā claims that surgery is the first and foremost speciality of Ayurveda. The text describes various surgical procedures and delineates specialised procedures. It is encyclopaedic in its knowledge of fractures, wounds, abscesses and burns, as well as its procedures for plastic surgery and anal-rectal surgery. There is vast information on anatomy- bones, joints, nerves, heart blood vessels and circulation. *Suśruta* clearly states the importance of both theoretical and practical knowledge and explains ways and means to develop surgical skills. The personage of *Suśruta* may not be historical as the *Suśruta Samhitā* shows itself to be, not as the personal work

32 David Frawley and Subhash Ranade, *AyurVeda Nature's Medicine*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers, 2004. page 14

33 The seasons, the habitat, the type of life and the various types of nourishment help or hinder the action of the wind, fire and water as they affect the activity, the overheating or the cooling of the body.

34 Certain Buddhist text in Chinese talk of a certain Tche lo kia or Tche le, i.e Caraka, who was the doctor of king Kaniska. The second source that talks of this relationship is Fou fa tsang yin yuan tchouan.

of a certain *Suśruta*, but as the anonymously edited manual of a school which selected *Suśruta* as its patron. Though the *Suśruta Saṃhitā* in its totality goes back at least to the first centuries of our era. In its present form, after having being redacted and re adapted it was crystallised in the 6th century. The extant *Suśruta Saṃhitā* according to the testimony of its commentators Dallanacraya (12th century), a recension by the alchemist Nagarjuna from an earlier one. The original *Suśruta Saṃhitā* was rather a representation of a series of discourses by the holy sage Dhanvantri to his disciples, *Suśruta* and others. None of the works of surgery by Aupadhenava, Aurabhra or Pauskalavata have been traced so far. Only Nagarjuna's revised version of science of surgery.

The name of Dhanvantri, the so-called creator of the science of surgery and medicine appears in many passages in the Vedas, the puranas and the classical Sanskrit literature, where he is regarded as a sage of divine origin. In the text of *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Suśruta* is described as the son of Visvamitra. In Rajasekhara's *Balaramayana* and in Bhavamisra's *Bhava Saṃhitā* we find that the sage Visvamitra had a son named *Suśruta* who was sent to the Sage Dhanvantri to learn medical science. Panini, the famous grammarian, uses derivatives of the name *susuta* as an adjective and derives similar adjectives from the name Agnivesa, parasara. He also enumerates many names of objects, terms and concepts, special to Ayurvedic works, which have been repeatedly used in the *Suśruta Saṃhitā*. It can therefore be supposed that these Ayurvedic authorities were famous and commonly known in Panini's time.

There is evidence to indicate that the original *Suśruta Saṃhitā* was composed in a period intermediate between the time of Gautam Buddha (6th B.C.E) and that of

Katyayana (contemporary of king Nanda lived 350 B.C) On evidence of the Jataka and other canonical literature of the Buddhist, Subhuti one of the direct disciples of Buddha. The clear reference to Dhanvantri as a contemporary of a personal follower of Buddha suggests *Suśruta*, a direct disciple of Dhanvantri, belongs to late 6th century or early 5th century B.C.

As to Nagarjuna, the redactor of the extant *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, there is much controversy to his date. The name of Nagarjuna as a great alchemist has been mentioned by many authors belonging to different ages. The Rajatarangini of Kalhana refers to Nagarjuna, who lived a century and a half after Gautam Buddha. Hiuen Tsiang, who lived in India at about 630 A.D states that Nagarjuna was a great alchemist and authority on medicine, famous in India for several centuries before his own time. I-Tsing who also came to India at about 675 A.D mentions one Nagarjuna who flourishes during the time of Asvaghosa (first century A.D). Subsequently, many centuries later Al Beruni, the great Arab traveller describes Nagarjuna as a great alchemist who lived a century before his time i.e. in the first half of the ninth century A.D

It would seem that apart from Nagarjuna, the founder of the *Madhyamika* school, there were at least three other Nagarjuna who were experts in alchemy and medicine. The redactor of the *Suśruta Saṃhitā* may be one of them. The practice of adopting the name of a previous authority as a title, or a pseudonym, is fairly common in history. The next text written of important authority in Ayurveda was Vagbhata's *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. This treatise was written at some point in the 6th century. The text presents a summary of *Caraka* and *Suśruta* with gleaning from other Ayurvedic writers. He introduced a number of new herbs and made valuable modifications and

additions to surgery. The book is written in succinct and beautiful poetry, making it easier to memorise.

Indian medicine reached its classical form in the early centuries of the Christian era. The knowledge of Ayurveda spread far beyond the bounds of India. The knowledge of the texts was spreading far and wide, evidence of this was Ayurvedic physicians were invited to Baghdad and the Middle East for consultation and were given authoritative positions in hospitals³⁵. During this time, the texts were also translated into Arabic. The unani system of medicine was to a great extent founded on Ayurvedic knowledge³⁶. There were many texts written in later centuries as well. As general compendia, specialised handbooks composed on pharmacy, medical botany and veterinary sciences. The medical literature noteworthy is Anandaraya's Jivananda³⁷. The later texts are marked by introduction of new drugs such as mercury and opium, learnt from the Arabs and new diseases such as syphilis, acquired directly or indirectly from the Europeans.

3: Manifestations of Madness and other Illnesses

3.1: Diagnosis

Diagnosis is the first step taken towards the treatment of the individual by identifying and determining the nature and cause of disease. The process of diagnosis should be considered a cultural interaction with participants of shared understanding of their

35 David Frawley and Subhash Ranade, *AyurVeda Nature's Medicine*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers. 2004.page 20

36 The Indian unani system, which grew up under Muslim rule in India, never lost touch with its parental source and continued the practiced tradition of using mainly herbs.

37 It is a 17th century allegorical drama in which a host of personified diseases besiege king Jiva. The enemy is defeated by joint effort of medicine, religious devotion and yoga.

roles of healer and patient³⁸. This shared understanding allows for these participants with assigned roles to play out their parts. The need for diagnosis and seeking help outside the realm of the household/family gives a glimpse of the understanding of symptoms and the need for specialised involvement by healers with specialised knowledge.

The therapeutic system of *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā* is based on the concept of *yukti* (rational application). The *Caraka Saṃhitā* states ‘*mātrā-kāla āśrayā yuktiḥ, siddhiḥ yuktāu pratiṣṭhitā*³⁹. The ancient physicians rejected the absolute in favour of relative resulting⁴⁰. The success of a diagnosis depends upon looking at the patient in relation to other things and not in isolation.

The *Caraka Saṃhitā* talks of the importance of ‘prognostic consideration’ in the management of illness. A physician’s discernment of curability and incurability is essential to the exercise of curing the disease⁴¹. On the other hand, the social cost of treating an incurable disease borne by the physician includes loss of faith, reputation and wealth. According to prognosis, there has also been a classification of diseases. The *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, categorises diseases on the basis of their origin, *janma vala pravitta* (improper conduct of the mother), *adi- vala pravitta* (defect in semen or ovum), *dosa-vala pravitta* (fundamental bodily humour disarranged), *samghāta vala pravitta* (trauma), *daiva vala pravitta* (embodiment of curse), *kala- vala pravitta*

38 Judith Felson Duchan and Dana Kovarsky, *Diagnosis as Cultural Practice*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2005. page 2.

39 Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Science and Society in Ancient India*, Calcutta: Research India Publication, 1979. page 172.

40 This meant the rejection of the isolated view of cause and effect, but on understanding of relations as they actually belong in a vast complex of the interconnections in nature.

41 R.K Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol 1. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2011. page 196.

(variation in atmospheric heat or humidity), *svabháva-vala pravitta* (natural phenomenon)⁴². Curable diseases are of two dichotomous types, one that can be cured with less effort and the other labouriously. Within the curable category of diseases require different types of treatment. Some of them can be cured by simple method, some by moderate method and others by the best possible devices; it depends on the seriousness and severity of the disease. Similarly, incurable diseases are of two types which are palliable and the other is absolutely irreversible i.e. resulting in death. The *Bhela Saṃhitā* distinguishes between a gravely ill person and mildly ill person by choosing to focus on the external form of the *mūrtyā* (disease) and strength possessed⁴³. The *Hārīta Saṃhitā* definitionally categories diseases into four types *sādhyā* (curable), *asādhyā* (incurable), *yāpya* (curing with treatment till there is a feeling of relief) and *kr̥chrasādhyā* (difficult to cure)⁴⁴.

There are several factors that influence a good prognosis. These include mild causes and premonitory symptoms along with the location of the disease being confined to only one system. The involvement of only one dosa is also a good sign⁴⁵. There are several factors responsible for bad prognosis. The causes and premonitory symptoms are of a serious nature, there are moderate complications like the person suffering from the disease is a pregnant woman, old person or child. The disease is in vital parts and joints and the disease extends to two systems of the body and is caused by two different vitiated *dosas*⁴⁶.

⁴² Kaviraj Kunja Lal, *Susruta Saṃhitā*, Vol I, Calcutta: Kashi Ghose's Lane, 1907.page 229.

⁴³K.H. Krishnamurthy, *Bhela Saṃhitā*. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati.2008. page 187

⁴⁴Gyanendra Pandey, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, Vol I. Varanasi: Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2014.page 13

⁴⁵ R.K. Sharma and Bhgwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol I.Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2011.page 196.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p 199

The *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā* respectively state that a good or bad prognosis can only be done after a thorough examination. The importance of a thorough examination is stressed in Chapter 10, Verse 21, ‘A wise physician should examine the distinctive features of the diseases beforehand and then he should start his treatment of only curable diseases. So, a physician who can distinguish between curable and incurable diseases, he with his right application will not subscribe to the wrong notions prevailing among the pseudo –physicians’⁴⁷.

3.2: Unmāda

In Chapter VIII, Verse IV of the *Sūtra Sthana*, the text of the *Caraka Saṃhitā* describes in detail the qualities of the mind, ‘mind transcends all sense perceptions. It is known as ‘*sattva*’; some call it ‘*cetas*’. Its action is determined by its contact with its objects (like happiness, misery etc) and the soul; this acts as a driving force for all the sense faculties’⁴⁸ Mind transcends all the sense faculties which are responsible for the perception of external objects. Even though, mind is also to be regarded as a sense faculty in as much as it is responsible for experiencing happiness etc still it is above the other sense faculties. So far as its transcendental qualities are concerned, they are even attributed to other sense faculties; but they are more so in relation to the mind which is more subtle than the other sense faculties.

The ancient texts go on to state that the mind ‘appears’ to be multiple in character due to variations relating to the experience of its objects, perceptions of the objects of the sense faculties, its disposition and also its contact with *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva*

47 Ibid, p 200.

48 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol 1. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2011. page 164.

qualities⁴⁹. The medical texts are categorical in stating that there is no multiplicity of mind. It is one and only one. So, it does not motivate more than one sense faculty at a time; and that is why all the sense organs are not active simultaneously. Had the mind been multiple in nature, one could have all perceptions like olfactory, visual, auditory and tactile ones at a time even as different individuals possessing different minds have such perceptions at a time. Through this logic the text proves that one individual possess only one mind.

Before the physician can make a diagnosis of the aberrations of functioning of the mind, the quality of the mind is determined. The *Caraka Saṃhitā* states, ‘According to Acarya the mind of a person is qualified on the basis of the type of his repeated actions; It is so because that quality must be predominating in him’⁵⁰. The text use a person’s state of mind as a key to their mental condition, which is why according to the mental conditions are flexible; sometimes it is *rajasa*, sometimes *sattvika* and sometimes *tamasa*. In spite of the ever-changing state of mind, there is one and only one quality which predominates an individual⁵¹. So, if somebody frequently displays the quality of *sattva*, they will be known as the persons of *sattvika* nature.

In *Kiyantah Sirasiya*, which is the 17th chapter that deals with the diseases of the head. ‘The head in the living being is considered the substratum of life force and all the sense faculties and thus occupies the first place among all the sense organs’⁵². We find an enumeration of various types of diseases associated with the head. The

49 Dominik Wujastyk, *The Roots of Ayurveda*. Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998. page 4.

50 Ibid, page 165.

51 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol 1. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2011. page 166.

52 Ibid, page 312.

chapter constitutes a discussion on the number of diseases, what the causes of the diseases are and what is the suggested treatment.

The aetiology of the diseases of the head as discussed in the texts indicate that habits contrary to prescribed and preferred regime which also include suppression of natural urges, sleep during the day time, vigil during night, intoxication, speaking aloud, exposure to frost, sexual indulgence, inhalation of undesirable smell, exposure to dust, smoke, intake of heavy and sour food and aggravation of *dosas* which lead to the vitiation of *raktadhatu* and thus causes diseases with various symptoms⁵³.

The *vātika* type of head diseases are characterised by the location of the pain; in the temporal region and cracking sensation in the nape and the head and the central part of eyebrows have also excessive pain and burning sensation. There is pain and noise in the ears. There is giddiness, the joints are severed as it were, and there is excessive throbbing of the vein, the neck is stiffened.

The *paitika* type of disease of the head is exacerbated by intake of substances having acidic, sour and saline tastes, alkalis and alcohol, by anger, by exposure to sun and fire. There is a feeling of burning sensation in the eyes and the patient is subjected to thirst, giddiness and perspiration in excess. The *kapha* type of head diseases occur when one sleeps during the day, by having sedentary habits, and by consuming heavy and unctuous food. The vitiated *kapha* manifests itself in dull pain and numbness. The patient feels as if he is wet and is loaded with too heavy a burden; there is drowsiness, laziness and anorexia.

53 Ibid, p 314.

The diseases of the head according to the ancient texts can also be aggravated by all the three *dosas*. In the event of head diseases being caused by all the three *dosas*, there is pain, giddiness, shaking of the head due to morbid *vāta*, burning sensation, intoxication and thirst due to morbid *pitta* and heaviness and drowsiness due to morbid *kapha*⁵⁴.

In chapter IX of *Cikitsāsthānam* of the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, the aetiology, signs and symptoms of *unmāda* are discussed as an excitement of intellect, memory and mind. *Suśruta Saṃhitā* adds phases to the ailment, the initial stage of which is called *mada* with symptoms of fevers⁵⁵. According to the text, the *vāta* gets aggravated by the intake of unctuous food which if cold would be harmful too⁵⁶. The *vāta* can potentially be aggravated by elimination of *dosas* and diminution of tissue element. This aggravated *vayu* adversely affects the heart afflicted with mental agony and instantaneously affects the intellect and memory⁵⁷. The signs and symptoms that are manifest in a person are laughing, smiling, dancing, singing, speaking, moving limbs of the body and weeping in inappropriate places at inopportune moments and roughness of skin, emaciation and reddish coloration of the skin. According to the texts, these signs and symptoms become more conspicuous after the digestion of food, when the *vayu* get aggravated. The *Suśruta Saṃhitā* focuses more on physicality of the disease than behaviour, the texts points out prominent veins, twitching of joints. The *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* adds to the long laundry list of symptoms,

54 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol 1. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2011. page 314.

55 P.V. Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi: Chaukhambha Visvabharati, 2010, page 605.

56 Ibid, page 412.

57 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol 1. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2011. According to the text, mental agony is recognized as worry, passion and anger.

frothing at the mouth, roaming around speaking too much, Akin to *Caraka Saṃhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* concurs that appears after digestion of food. The *Bhela Saṃhitā* adds to this long list more visible symptoms of behaviour including anger, no shame, looks in front of himself but can't see anything(*yathāvṛtta*)⁵⁸.

The *Saṃhitās* discusses the etiology, signs and symptoms of *Paittika unmāda*. In this type of *unmāda*, the accumulated pitta gets aggravated by indigestion, intake of pungent, sour or *vidāhī* food⁵⁹. The aggravated *pitta* afflicts the heart of a patient devoid of self-control and leads to serious type of *unmāda*. *Pitta unmāda* in *Caraka Saṃhitā* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* is characterised by certain specific signs and symptoms which include; intolerance, over daring, nakedness, intimidation, excessive anger⁶⁰. There is a desire for a shady place, cold food and cold water, the complexion is turns yellow⁶¹. The *Suśruta Saṃhitā* doesn't mention nearly any of the signs and symptoms mentioned in the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, instead focusing on the manifested bodily reactions of excessive sweating, thirst burning sensation, gluttonous appetite and sleeplessness⁶². Both the *Suśruta Saṃhitā* and the *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* concur on the individual's deluded state with proclamations of seeing fire/light where there isn't any visible⁶³. The *Bhela Saṃhitā* makes a demographic distinctions while pointing

58 K.H Krishnamurthy, *Bhela Saṃhitā*. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2008.page 348.

59 *vidāhī* is food which causes burning sensation.

60 Gyanendra Pandey, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, Vol I. Varanasi: Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2014.page 702.

61 R.K Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol 3, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office 2011.page 413.

62 P.V. Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*. Vol III, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2010.page 605.

63 K.R Srikantha Murthy, *Vagbhata's Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy. 2009. page 58.

the enfeeblement of older people that takes place due to the preponderance of *pitta unmāda*.

The *Caraka Saṃhitā* while discussing *kaphaja unmāda* states that *sampūrana* (over nourishment) is the cause for kapha to get aggravated along with indolence. This aggravated *kapha* afflicts the vital organ which is the heart., adversely affecting the intellect, memory and vitiates the mind which leads to morbidity. According to the texts, the *kapha* alone is incapable of causing insanity, it is only in association with *pitta*, that it produces *unmāda*. ‘The symptoms that get manifested if a person is afflicted with *unmāda* include; sluggishness in speech and activities, anorexia, excessive sleeping, vomiting, salivation, liking for women, lonely places and whiteness of nails. The condition is aggravated immediately after a meal time. According to the *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, the *kaphaja unmāda* strikes during the night’⁶⁴.

Sānnipātika type of *unmāda* is caused by the simultaneous vitiation of all three dosas by their respective causative factors. In this condition, signs and symptoms of all three dosas are manifested. Such a condition needs therapeutic measures that are mutually contradictory⁶⁵.

The *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* add another form of insanity, this is the insanity caused by poison. In this type of insanity, the eyes become red and there is a loss of strength, sense and lustre. *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* reckon a loss of balance and seizures to the list of symptoms

64 P.V. Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*.Vol III, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2010,page 605.

65 R. K Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office 2011.page 414.

observed According to the text, it is highly unlikely that the physician can save the patient from death if he were to be poisoned⁶⁶.

Apart from the above mentioned *unmāda*, there are other forms of *unmāda* that find a place in the discussions of *Suśruta*, *Hārīta Saṃhitā* and *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. These include *citta ghataja unmāda* which is brought on by shock of loss, this loss could be of material wealth, close family and others. Similarly, *manodukkhajonmāda* is another type of *unmāda* considered *paramotkata unmāda*.

3.3: Possession

Agantu (exogenous type of) *unmāda* have been discussed in the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, as a result of improper observance of *niyama* in the present life and improper conduct of the past life which leads to seizures by the gods, *ṛṣi*, *gandharva*, *piśāca*, *yakṣa*, *rākṣasa* and *pitṛs*. The general signs and symptoms that are characteristics of *bhūtonmāda* include supernatural speech, valour, potency and activities manifested as a result of supernatural knowledge (*jñāna*) and intellectual excellence (*viñāna*) as well as strength. Unlike *unmāda* caused by different *dosas* which have a fixed time to get aggravated. In the case of exogenous *unmāda*, it may occur unpredictably. According to the *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, the surgical patient should be protected from night roamers. ‘The seizing agents or *graha* as they are known inflict the person who is unclean and acts breaking all rules, either injured or not, for sporting in violence or to demand worship⁶⁷.’ According to both *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, the act of

66 P.V. Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*. Vol III, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2010. page 606.

67 P.V Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2010. page 587.

affliction or invasion is not visible to the human eye. The text is particularly emphatic about the affliction not being of the mind and doesn't affect the body⁶⁸.

According to the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, insanity caused by the seizure of gods is manifest with patient looking gentle, earnest, invincible, free from anger, sleep and desire for food, having less sweat, urine, stool and flatus, emitting good aroma from the body. The gods possess a person fond of purity, good conduct, penance⁶⁹. The person is possessed generally on the first and thirteenth day of the fortnight (*sukla paksa*).

The *Caraka Saṃhitā* is the only *Saṃhitā* that elaborates on insanity caused by seizure of *ṛṣis*, a person having speech as ordained by *abhiśāpa* (curse), *abhicāra* (spell) and *abhidhyāna* (desire to transform on the basis of will power) of preceptors and *ṛṣi*⁷⁰. *Ṛṣis* possess people fond of bath, purity, lonely places and people familiar with religious scriptures. The person is possessed on the sixth or the ninth day of the fortnight (*paksa*).

Caraka Saṃhitā, *Suśruta Saṃhitā* and the *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* describes insanity caused by seizure of *Pitṛ*, a person suffering from unmāda caused by the seizure of *pitṛ* is characterised by unhappy look, inability to see, sleepiness, interrupted speech, lack of desire for food and anorexia and indigestion⁷¹. *Pitṛ* possess a person devoted to the service of his parents, gurus and *vridhha* (old persons). The person is possessed on the tenth day of the fortnight or on the new moon day.

68 P.V Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2010.page 589.

69 R. K Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office 2011.page 416.

70 R. K Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office 2011.page 417.

71 K.R Srikantha Murthy, *Vagbhata's Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy,2009. page 45.

Caraka Saṃhitā, *Suśruta* and *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* define a person suffering from *unmāda* caused by the seizure of *gandharva* as characterised by violent acts, over bravery, sharpness, seriousness and liking for *mukhavādyā* (vocal music or musical instrument played with the help of mouth), dancing, singing, good food and drink, and engagement in pleasant conversation⁷². *Gandharava* possess a person fond of hymns, songs and musical instruments, women of other persons. The person is generally possessed on the twelfth or the fourteenth day of a fortnight⁷³.

Caraka Saṃhitā, *Suśruta Saṃhitā* and *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* delineate madness caused by the seizure of *yakṣa*⁷⁴, it is characterised by frequent sleep, crying and laughter. The person has a fondness for dancing and singing, playing musical instruments. Another patent characteristic is the strong dislike for *dvijas* and physicians. They possess a person endowed with mental and physical strength, someone with good complexion, ego and valour. The person is generally possessed on the seventh or eleventh day if the fortnight⁷⁵.

Madness caused by the seizure of demons is defined as when a person manifests signs of sleeplessness, hatred for food and drinks, excessive strength of the person in spite of aversion to food, liking for weapons, blood, meat and red garlands in the *Caraka Saṃhitā*⁷⁶.

72 K.R. Srikantha Murthy, *Vagbhata's Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, 2009, page 41.

73 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2011, page 419.

74 They are semi divine celestial beings and are attendants of Kubera, the god of wealth.

75 P.V. Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati, 2010, page 589.

76 R.K. Sharma and Bhgwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2011, page 417.

Caraka Saṃhitā, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* enumerate madness caused by the seizure of *brahmarākṣasa* as characterised by excessive laughter, dance, hatred and disobedience to the gods, *vipras* and physicians. The person afflicted recites illustrations from hymns, the Vedas and mantras⁷⁷. They possess Brahman or non-Brahman claiming to be brahmin, who have abhorrence for the study of scriptures, *upavāsa* (fasting), *brahmacarya* (celibacy) and respect for gods, *yati* (recluses) and gurus. The person is possessed on the fifth day of the fortnight⁷⁸. Similar to this, *Suśruta Saṃhitā* enumerates the symptoms of a person invaded by *daitya graham* which are not mentioned in the *Caraka Saṃhitā* but find a mention in the *Hārīta Saṃhitā* and the *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. The person perspires excessively, speaks ill of Brahmans, elders and gods. He is fearless, atheist and never satisfied with food and drinks.⁷⁹

Madness caused by the seizure of *piśāca* is discussed in *Caraka Saṃhitā* states that it is characterised by fickle mindedness. The person complains of having no place to stay and roams about unwilling to stay in a single place. He engages himself in dancing, singing, laughing and incoherent speech; such a person does not stick to one place. He always complains of his miseries before others and suffers from memory loss⁸⁰. Possessing a person who is devoid of will power, who is a backbiter, who is fond of women and who is greedy. This person possessed on the third or eighth of the fortnight.

77 R.K Sharma and Bhgwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2011.page 417.

78 K.R Srikantha Murthy, *Vagbhata's Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, 2009.page 42.

79 P.V. Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2010. page 588.

80 K.R. Srikantha Murthy, *Vagbhata's Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, 2009.page 43.

Suśruta Saṃhitā adds to *Caraka Saṃhitā* list of graham by describing a person who scrawls on the floor, occasionally licking the corners of lips with tongue, is sleepy and likes jiggery, honey, milk and payasa, this is known as *bhujangama graha*⁸¹. This graham is also found in the *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* which identify this state with redness of eyes, fixity in vision and unsteady gait. The *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* add a plethora of seizures to ones mentioned in *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā*. These include *Nisadagraha*, *preta graham*, *aukirana*, *vetala* and *kīsmānda*⁸². The *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā*, though silent on other forms of possession through seizures talks extensively on *balagraha* (children afflicted with seizures). The *Hārīta* and *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā* delineate different seizures that afflict the new born infant in the first week of its birth. *Lohita*, *Revati*, *Vāyasīm Kumārī*, *Śākunī*, *Śivā* and *Ūrdhvakeśī*⁸³. The general features described of this seizure are fewer, yawning in excess, eyebrow movement, froth discharged from the mouth and fixity in an upward gaze⁸⁴.

3.4 Epilepsy

According to the *Saṃhitās*, *dosas* located in the vessels afflict the heart and cause disturbances in its functions. The person once affected is then afflicted with stupor and malfunctioning of the mental activities. He visualises none existent forms, falls down and gets tremors. His eyes and eyebrows become distorted, saliva comes from

81 P.V. Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, Vol III, 2010. Chaukhamba Visvabharati. Varanasi. page 589.

82 Gyanendra Pandey, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, Vol II Varanasi. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2014. page 1372.

83 P.V. Tewari, *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā*. Varanasi. Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2016. page 168.

84 Gyanendra Pandey, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, Vol II Varanasi. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2014. page 1367.

his mouth and his hands and legs get convulsed⁸⁵. The *Suśruta Saṃhitā* adds on what the *Caraka Saṃhitā* has proffered and stated how epilepsy is quite different from seizures, demonstrating that there was meditation on the similarity and difference of epilepsy and seizures in the treatises. There are several types of *apasmāra* that have been detailed in the medical texts.

Vātika type of *apasmāra*, this is characterised by trembling, gnashing of teeth, throwing out of foam from the mouth and panting. The person afflicted with this type of *apasmāra* gets visual aura of forms which are rough, pink or black in colour. ‘The *Suśruta Saṃhitā* goes a step further and defines this black aura as a ‘terrific black creature’ who runs after him. The text states that the creature is a hallucination and is not real’⁸⁶. The *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* states that the person fingers get bent and the person mutilates and contorts himself by striking his head and bulging his shoulders respectively⁸⁷.

Paittika type of *apasmāra* is characterised by yellowness of the foam, limbs, face and eyes. He gets visual aura of yellow or blood red objects. He suffers from morbid thirst and heat. He visualises the whole world as if set in flames. *Suśruta Saṃhitā* adds that the creature running after the person is yellow in colour, whereas *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* describes bright red coloured objects⁸⁸.

85 R.K Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2011. page 442.

86 See P.V Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*. Vol III, 2010. Chaukhamba Visvabharati. Varanasi. page 598.

87 K.R Srikantha Murthy, *Vagbhata’s Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, 2009. page 69

88 K.R Srikantha Murthy, *Vagbhata’s Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, 2009. page 69.

The *ślaiṣmika* type of *apasmāra* is characterised by white colour of the foam from the mouth. The body and specifically the face and eyes feel cold. The patient visualises the aura of white objects and in *Suśruta* this visualisation changes to a white creature. He recovers from fits after a long time as opposed to a patient having attack of *vātika* and *paittika* type who recover quicker. *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* corroborating the other treatises, additionally points out that the seizures are slower.

In *Sānnipātika* type of *apasmāra*, signs and symptoms of all the above mentioned three varieties of epilepsy are manifested. The treatises declare vitiation of three dosas simultaneously to be incurable epilepsy.

4: Treatment of Insanity; the Role of the Physician and the Agency of the Patient

4.1 Treatment

In this section, attempt is made to configure an understanding of treatment as it was construed in the contemporary milieu. Along with different varieties of treatment that have been prescribed in the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*, *Bhela Saṃhitā*, *Hārīta Saṃhitā* and *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā* have created an entire corpus of treatment for madness and epilepsy based on the principles of prevention, cure and accurate consumption of medicine.

In the *Sūtra Sthana* of the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, the text explicates in verse 62 and 63 means of alleviating diseases. According to the text, the curable diseases are cured by medicines possessing opposite qualities⁸⁹. For incurable forms of disease, no medicines are purportedly assigned. A disease is deemed as incurable if the

89 It is necessary to take into account the place where the drugs are produced, the physical condition of the patient as well as the age of the patient, the appropriate dosage of the drug. There is a tenfold classification of the factors to be examined in connection with the cure of diseases.

symptoms of the disease are indicative of approaching death (*arista laksana*)⁹⁰. In chapter IX of the Sūtra Sthana, verse 3 indicates that there are four aspects of therapeutics which are the physician, the medicament, the attendant and the patient. These four factors are enumerated from the point of view of action leading to cure of diseases. In this framework, the patient doesn't play an important role and thus comes last in the order of importance.

The texts being cognisant of different forms the particular diseases of madness and epilepsy recommend tailor made treatments. This is reflected in the significant attention given to *desa* (region), time of onset, nature of vitiated *dosa* and age of the person afflicted by the disease⁹¹.

The treatment of endogenous types of *unmāda* centres around aggravated *dosas*. The objective of the treatment is to cleanse the body by flushing out the unwanted substances. The sense organs, heart, *kostha* (gastro- intestinal tract) and head get cleansed with the result that the patient regains consciousness and memory.

In *vātika* type of *unmāda*, the physician is expected to ascertain the exact nature of *vayu* and is supposed to administer *sneha* (oil or ghee) to a patient if the passage of the *vayu* is not obstructed. The oleation technique is further enhanced by laxatives if the passages of *vayu* are blocked⁹².

90 Whenever the symptoms indicate approaching death, it is to be concluded that the patient must die, sooner or later.

91 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2011. page 438.

92 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2011. page 422.

Different in *kapha* or *pitta* type *unmāda*, is the use of purgation and emetic therapies. After the administration of fermentation and oleation therapies the purified body, is put on *samsarjana karma* (from lighter to heavier diet). Thereafter the next step is administration of *niruha* (a type of medicated enema prepared along with oil, ghee etc) and *sirovirecana* (therapies for the elimination of dosa from the head)⁹³. Bloodletting is an alternative therapy that is recommended, which is administered by venesection, at the joint of the hairline and temporal region.

The *Suśruta Saṃhitā* does not differentiate treatment on the basis of vitiated *dosa*, but added a treatment method of shock therapy, the patient is shown surprising things or is told of disturbing things, for instances, of the death of a near one, he is terrorised by fierce looking men, tamed elephants and poison less snakes⁹⁴. The *Aṣṭāṅga Hrdayam* talks of how the fear of death is more powerful than the fear of troubles of the body; hence by the threat of loss of life, his mind becomes relieved of all its abnormalities. According to the text, these methods have proven efficacy and should be adopted as found appropriate to the place, time etc⁹⁵.

There are various medicines that are prescribed for someone who has been inflicted with madness. The medicines that one finds synonymously in the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, and *Aṣṭāṅga Hrdayam* are following; *hingvādyā ghr̥ta* which contains two palas of *hingu*, *sauvarcala*, *śuṅṭhī*, *marica* which is made into a paste and cooked with ghee⁹⁶.

93 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2011.page 422.

94 See P.V. Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*. Vol III, 2010.Chaukhamba Visvabharati. Varanasi. page 607

95 K.R. Murthy Srikantha, *Vagbhata's Aṣṭāṅga Hrdayam*. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, 2009.page 64

96 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. 3, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2011.page 424.

The next one mentioned is *kalyāṇaka ghr̥ta*, this includes one akṣa of twenty-eight drugs, namely *viśālā*, *bibhītakī*, *āmalakī*, *devadāru* etc should be made into a paste, this paste should be added to ghee and cooked by adding four times prasthas of water⁹⁷. *Mahākalyāṇaka ghr̥ta* is a decoction prepared of 21 drugs beginning with *sthirā*, *elā*, *dāḍīma*, *keśara*, *candana*, *bṛhatī*, to this decoction add ghee, four times *gr̥ṣṭikṣīra* (milk collected from the cow after its first delivery) and the paste of *vira*, green *masa* and *meda*. This decoction is exceedingly nourishing and it cures diseases caused by *sannipata*⁹⁸. *Mahapaiscaka* is a ghee paste cooked with *jatilā*, *pūtana*, *keśi*, *cāraṭi*. This medicated ghee is considered effective for epilepsy as well as madness along with treatment of *grahas*⁹⁹. However, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* additionally mentions, medicine called *Brahmi ghr̥ta*, this is prepared with two *prastha* of fresh juice of *brahmi*, one *prastha* of ghee and paste of one *akṣa* each of *vyosa*, *syama*, *trivrt*, *danti*, *sankhapuspi*, *nṛpadruma*, *saptala* and *krmihara*. It is supposed to cure insanity, leprosy, epilepsy, produces good speech, voice, memory and intelligence and thus is considered to be very beneficial¹⁰⁰. It should be noted that in the treatment of madness, the use of ghee seems to be crucial. The texts of *Caraka Saṃhitā* devote an entire passage to the component of old ghee and its therapeutic utility. The text states, ‘The patient suffering from *unmāda* (insanity) should be given old ghee by the physician to alleviate all the three dosas, and because of its sacred nature, it specially cures demonic seizures. When taken internally, it has better

97 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. III, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2011.page 425.

98 R.K. Sharma and Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol. III, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office 2011.page 427.

99 K.H. Krishnamurthy, *Bhela Saṃhitā*. Varanasi. Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2008. page 349.

100 K.R Srikantha Murthy, *Vagbhata's Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy. 2009. page 60

properties and therapeutic utilities. In taste, old ghee is pungent and bitter and has a sharp smell. It promotes intellect and as a purgative is excellent. The ghee which is stored for more than ten years, is called *prapurana ghrta*. Even the look, smell, touch of this ghee cure all demonic seizures¹⁰¹.

Treatment of exogenous types of *unmāda*; *daitya*, *r̥sis*, *pitṛ*, *brahmaraksis*, *piśāca* and *yakṣa* gets cured by *bali* (sacrifices), *mangala* (auspicious mantras recitation), *homa* (offering oblation to the fire), antitoxic herbs talisman, being truthful, observing good conduct and recourse of knowledge, charity and observance of scriptural rules and religious vows. It is stated that for certain types of seizures (those including *devas*, *r̥sis* and *gandharva*) no recourse to violence should be made. Thus, one notes how the physiological anomalies of the individual are depicted as moral transgressions and the act of treatment is not only corrective medicinally but socially reforming too.

Along with the treatment of insanity, the text also gives recommendations on how best to avoid exogenous insanity. The text states that worship of lord Siva, the controller of all *bhutas*, with regular devotion to a person becomes free from the attack of *unmāda* (insanity). Besides the worship of Siva, the worship of *pramathas*, the attendants of Rudra, who roam about the universe, make the patients free from *unmāda*¹⁰². The corpus of treatises, particularly the *Caraka Saṃhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* delineate signs of healing (*vigatonmādalaksanam*). It can be ascertained from a reading of the texts a return to state where perception of

101 See R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series.2011.page 432.

102 Gyanendra Pandey, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, Vol I Varanasi. Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series Office.2014.page 722

object via clarity of sense faculties and normalcy is reached is determined as a state of normalcy¹⁰³.

The Treatment of epilepsy as prescribed in the *Caraka Saṃhitā* requires the physician to restore the activities of the heart and the mind that is occluded by *dosas*. The *vātika* epilepsy should be administered mainly *basti* (medicated enema), one suffering from *paitika* epilepsy should be given *virecana* (purgation) therapy and the one suffering from *slaiṣmika* type of epilepsy should mainly be given *vamana* (emetic) therapy¹⁰⁴. The *Hārīta Saṃhitā* makes a mention of *dāhakarma* (cauterisation) with a heated iron-rod on the selected site of frontal part of the head, which is further located between the middle of the eyebrow of the afflicted person¹⁰⁵.

There is one difference between treatment of epilepsy in the *Caraka Saṃhitā* and the *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, the *Caraka Saṃhitā* adds a different line of treatment for *attatvābhinveśa* which is aggravated due to predominance of *rajas* and *tamas*, which perverts judgements regarding eternal and ephemeral events and wholesome and unwholesome objects¹⁰⁶. Such a patient should first be administered oleation and fomentation therapies followed by elimination or cleansing therapies like emetics¹⁰⁷.

103 K.R. Srikantha Murthy, *Vagbhata's Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy.2009. page 66.

104 See R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series.2011. page 445.

105 Gyanendra Pandey, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, Vol I Varanasi. Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 2014.page 687

106 See R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series.2011. page 455.

107 R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi.Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series.2011. page 456.

4.2 Diet, Food as Medicinal

In keeping with the naturalistic formulations of disease, illness and treatment, the *Hārīta Saṃhitā* leverages and recognises food as medicinal and determined source of strength which is then justified by examples¹⁰⁸. Food is given the stature of being the origin of our body and thus becomes ‘building blocks’ of the body and the engine of growth. In the sphere of treatment, it becomes the vehicle of repair in the face of *vaishamyā*(irregularity) of diet and ill health. The Ayurvedic corpus starting with *Caraka*, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*, *Bhela* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* have designated a separate section on *mātrāsītiyā adhyaya*, in which the treatise reveal that within the ambit of diet, quantity, quality and consumption of food is essential to treatment and maintenance of health. In the *Sūtra sthana* of *Caraka Saṃhitā* the quantity of food is measured according to digestion and rate of metabolism. Through accumulated wisdom one is privy to certain food that are recognised as avoidable and necessarily taken. The quality of the food we eat has direct bearing on the quality of our consciousness. Different foods affect the body differently; food that is heavy like meats can cause irritability, dullness and depression. Foods that are light like green and leafy vegetables make the mind light, however in excess it can cause light-headedness and insomnia. The medical texts state that in order to change our consciousness, there needs to be an alternation and modification in the food consumed. The texts state that food that is balanced and is full of life force improves sensory function and promotes mental harmony and clarity. The dimension of time is considered another factor, *Bhela Saṃhitā* adds that the time of consumption of food

108 Gyanendra Pandey, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, Vol I Varanasi. Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series Office. 2014, page 122.

is critical to whether the food will in turn become disease causing or not¹⁰⁹. The extension of the dimension of time is made when seasons are discussed, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, is of the opinion that in certain seasons, certain food should be partaken and others to be avoided¹¹⁰. The manner in which food is ingested also makes for an interesting observation in moderation that is consistently preached in all the treatises but most valiantly in the *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā* where sequence of eating and proportions are exhaustively described, initially with the pacification of thirst with 1/3rd space designated, then with appropriate food in 1/3rd the quantity and another 1/3rd left vacant¹¹¹.

According to Debiprasad Chattopadhyay, there are no religious or other considerations made in the ancient texts when they prescribe certain food in a diet, ‘Food is all of one kind, eat ability being the common feature, but it is of two kinds as regards its source, one kind being inanimate and other being animate. It is also twofold in respect its action, consequent of being wholesome or unwholesome in effect’¹¹². The *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, is the first to delineate the fourfold manner in which food is consumed through the means of solid food, *leedham*, *khadittam* and drink¹¹³.

Thus, diet becomes central to treating afflictions of *citta*, *buddhi* and *hṛdayam* which are all essential part of *unmāda* and *apasmāra*, therefore cannot be ignored. Food provides three levels of nutrition, first the physical or outer level, second the

109 K.H. Krishnamurthy, *Bhela Saṃhitā*. Varanasi. Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2008.page 126.

110 Gyanendra Pandey, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, Vol I Varanasi. Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series Office.2014. page 29.

111 P.V. Tewari, *Kāśyapa Saṃhitā*. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati, 2016.page 379.

112 Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Science and Society*, Calcutta: Research India Publication, 1977.page 387.

113 Kaviraj Kunja Lal, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, Vol I, Calcutta. No.10 Kashi Ghose’s Lane.1907. page 469

mental or inner level and third the spiritual level. The first level of nutrition is provided directly and the other two are provided indirectly¹¹⁴. The treatment of endogenous madness requisites a special diet, this recommendation in the *Caraka* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* includes drinking and eating ghee and meat and subsequently sleeping in a house without cross ventilation¹¹⁵. The *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, agrees that a person should eat what he finds appetising doesn't recommend meat, alternatively recommends roasted grain of barley and flour in the form of gruel.

4.3 Role of Doctors in Treatment

The treatment in the Ayurvedic corpus is the prerogative of the physician, the role and responsibility that has been specified by the medical texts for the physicians. The development of the physician from being a healer in the vedic texts to being the sole person responsible for management of illness in the *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā* and the corresponding social status that was given to him. The layers added to the capacity and influence exercised by him gives an insight into how medicine came to be institutionalised and how this institutionalisation affected treatment of *unmāda* and *apasmāra*. The treatment of a person should be understood in the context of *pāda catustaya*, *bhisak*, *upasthātā*, *dravya* and *rogi*¹¹⁶. In the postulation of therapeutics in the chapter of *khuddākacatuspāda*¹¹⁷, the physician occupies the most important place due to the virtue of his knowledge, administration position and by

114 'Food affects the other levels of our nature through a physical medium, it takes the influence deep into the unconscious. Food nourishes the vital force that sustains autonomic and instinctual reflexes. Through the vital forces, the food drives us to particular activities, according to its nature'.

115 See R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series.2011 page 435.

116 R. Vidyanath, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*, Vol I. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan.2013. page 20.

117 The chapter on therapeutics is called *khuddakacatuspada* as it is brief in comparison to the succeeding one which is called *mahacatuspada*.

prescribing capacity. This is the reason why his qualifications and duties are enumerated the first when a discussion on therapeutics is done in *cikitsāprābhṛtīya*. The qualities that are mentioned of the physician indicate that he must have excellent medical knowledge¹¹⁸, extensive practical experience and dexterity. The *Caraka Saṃhitā* recognises three sources of medical knowledge: instruction from an authoritative teacher; *aptopadesa*, *pratyaksa* (direct observation) and *anumana* (inference). With a basis of authoritative instruction, the *vaidya* should continue to improve his knowledge by the study of his patients¹¹⁹. This is what the text calls proficiency in *vaidyatvam* (medicine).

It is interesting to note that in the prescribed qualities is also the quality of purity, according to the text purity in a physician helps the patient by dint of its spiritual force. Thus, there can be seen a transference of spiritual force, where the physicians accumulated social capital is converted for the purpose of medical exigencies. The *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, with a thrust on surgery, privileged emphasis on skilfulness along with knowledge, this is depicted in the attributes of light-handed, boldness, equipped with instruments are desired qualities.¹²⁰

The importance of the physician is understood by the simile used in the treatises to elucidate the importance and requirement of the physician. The text states ‘just as the vessel, fuel and fire are the helping factors for the cook in the process of cooking and

118 In Chapter 1, Verse 134, It is stated that having extensive medical knowledge entails knowing the principles for correct application of medicine. Unless this knowledge is not obtained the physician will not be able to relieve the patients of their ailments. Thus, only he who can, by merit of his proficiency in science, select proper medicine and help cure diseases can be regarded as a proficient physician.

119 Another valuable means of widening the *vaidya*’s knowledge was *sambhasa* (gatherings) or colloquia where case histories of individual patients and records of remarkable cures were discussed.

120 Kaviraj Kunja Lal, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, Vol I, Calcutta: No.10 Kashi Ghose’s Lane.1907. page 31.

for the victory, a conqueror needs favourable topographical position, army and weapon; Similarly, in the success of treatment the patient, attendant and medicament are helpers only to the physician¹²¹. The simile of cooking and victory are action based where the action is performed by attendants as fire and army respectively. The simile implies and gives us insight into the framework of therapeutics where the patient is passive and non-participating, the onus of treatment is on the physician who is always an active agent¹²². Thus, the physician plays the most prominent role in management of illness.

Among the various duties of the *vaidya*, foremost is to understand the nature of various substances, which they have to prescribe as diets and drugs¹²³. Another role of the physician is to save the medical text and practice from metaphysics, morality and mythology. Debiprasad Chattopadhyay points out that the text fix for the physician a role of safeguarding the integrity of his science¹²⁴. The physician is meant to focus his attention on medicine alone, anything without strict relevance for medicine is supposed to be rejected as extrinsic to medicine¹²⁵. The various duties of the *vaidya* cannot be discussed without discussing the morality and ethic that the *vaidya* was expected to have. From a discussion in the *Cikitsā Sthana* we find that if

121 See R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Samhitā*, Vol I, Varanasi Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series.2011. page 188

122 Another reference made to the necessity of a doctor is when discussing how the clod of earth, the wheel, the thread is of no use in making a pitcher without the help of the potter. Pointing out to the fact that without the help of a physician, the other three factors (patients, attendants and the medicaments) do not serve the purpose.

123 The only possibility they find open for this purpose is to depend on their tastes or rasas. Both the Caraka and Suśruta *Samhitā* take great care to instruct the doctor how to determine these taste qualities of substances. They also explain the origin of the taste qualities in different substances in terms of the view of fivefold matter.

124 No proposition is to be allowed which did not belong to the strictly medical context. No proposition belonging to the context of ritual or that of moksa is to be allowed in medicine.

125 Medical treatise must confine itself exclusively to topics having strict relevance for medical science., it must not mix up (*asamkula*) with anything else.

there is a clash between medicine and morality in the abstract sense, the physician in his capacity as a physician/healer must choose the former as is stated in the *Caraka Samhitā* 'For him there is no clash between scruple and medicine, for the real scruple that he is aware of is that of curing the patient'¹²⁶.

In the vedic texts contains numerous references to various diseases¹²⁷ and people who treat these diseases who are referred to as healers. The information is accumulated from the *Rg Veda* through dispersed references of vedic deities who occasionally have a medical role¹²⁸. The word used the *Rg Veda* for the healer is *bhisaj*, however, Jean Filliozat points out more accurately that the *bhisaj* denotes more precisely the bone setter¹²⁹. In classical Sanskrit, the physician became increasingly known as the *vaidya*. The term was derived from the Sanskrit word *vidya* which meant knowledge. By the time of crystallisation of the medical text, *vaidya* formed a recognised craft group, people who were referred to as *vaidyas* were often seen to be following the profession of their fathers and forefathers'¹³⁰. The *Caraka Samhitā* has a section on condemnation of quacks. In Chapter IX, verse 15, 'It is better to die than to be treated by a physician ignorant of the science of medicine, because like a blind person moving with the help of his hands or like a

126 R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Samhitā*, Vol I, Varanasi Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series.2011. page 60.

127 Several scholars have attempted to make a detailed account of the description of the morbid states in the various vedic texts.

128 In the first rank of the vedic healers are the twins Asvins, the ones provided with horses. Among the physician deities of *Rg Veda* include Soma, who treats the ailing ones on earth. Varuna is eulogised as possessing a hundred *bhisajah* which means either hundred medicines or a hundred physician

129 See Jean Filliozat, *The Classical Doctrine of Indian Medicine*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.1964. page 87.

130 The study of medicine was not the preserve of a special class. But it might have been taken up by members of the three higher orders of Indian society-by Brahmins to give satisfaction (*anugraha*) to all beings, by the *ksetriya* as part of their duty to protect and by the *vaisyas* as a means of earning a living.

boat being driven by wind, a quack physician applies the course of treatment with apprehension because of his ignorance¹³¹. Thus, the text is certain that quackery may cure a few persons by chance, but is likely to kill others. This can be seen as an attempt to separate and distinguish the *vaidya* from other non doctrinated healers.

Along with the *vaidya* another figure that makes his appearance is *paricaraka*, he was the trained nurse that assisted the *vaidya*. Nursing appears to have been a definite profession or trade and not merely a task performed by any domestic servant. In Chapter 9, Verse 8 of the *Sūtra Sthana*, there is a discussion on the qualities required to be a medical attendant, they are knowledge of nursing, dexterity, affection and purity. This can indicate to us that nursing was considered important to the treatment of a patient. The infrastructure and systems of support surrounding treatment were fairly complex and required secondary and tertiary level of help in carrying out treatment.

The social status of the *vaidya* can be determined from the medical text, they were clearly not a caste but rather a fraternity of men from the three castes. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya notes in the *Rg Veda* a thought-world in which healers and everything connected with the healing art to be held in great esteem¹³². A.L Basham points to the Law Books of Manu to make a finer distinction between the *vaidya* and the *ambastha*¹³³. To illustrate the point further, in the *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, we find the root

131 See R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol I, Varanasi. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series. 2011 Page 188

132 See, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Science and Society*, Calcutta: Research India Publication. 1977. 'An entire hymn in of the Rg Veda is in praise of the healing herb or osodhi. The poet to whom it is attributed is mentioned as 'the seer called Physician, son of the Atharavan'.

133 This group was believed to be the descendants from Brahman fathers and vaisya mothers, who were specially equipped by nature for the art of healing. Manu respected the *ambastha*, thought ill of the *vaidya*.

usage of vaidya, where knowledge of a disease along with investigating its root cause (*vyādhettuvapari*) and elimination of vedāna/roga is actually the 'vaidyatva'. The vaidya was also critical to the functioning of the court, he wasn't just summoned when the king felt sick but was constantly in attendance to promote his health, longevity, virility. In times of war, the *vaidya*'s services was in much demand. A.L Basham has found, 'references to physicians attached to army mentioned in the epics and *Suśruta* recognises the army doctor, whose quarters on campaign should have a special flag, so that the wounded could easily find him'¹³⁴. However, the most succinct summary of the position of the physician with regard to the individual and society at large is found in the *Hārīta Saṃhitā*. In the treatise, the physician is squarely located in the realm of mundane world, where every day living and its realities can't be escaped. Located in this context, the workings of the physician are circumscribed, the physician is not a provider of *sukha* or *dukha*¹³⁵. Within this location, there is another temporal circumscription that the physician contends with, that of the king's command. The practice of the physician is possible only with the permission of the king of the land and within the ambit of the law of the land.

4.4 Position of Patient

The Patient is not just someone who bears affliction, this category of personhood, also is constructed in *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* where the mention of a wealthy and obedient patients¹³⁶. In Chapter IX, Verse IX of the *Sūtra Sthana*, *Caraka Saṃhitā* details the qualities of a patient; a patient is expected to have good memory, obedience,

134 A.L Basham, *Practice of Medicine in Ancient India*, Pan MacMillan Limited. 2004. page 32.

135 Gyanendra Pandey, *Hārīta Saṃhitā*, Vol I Varanasi. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series Office.2014. page 16.

136 R. Vidyanath, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*, Vol I. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan,2013. page 20.

fearlessness and uninhibited expression. The classification of patients according to set of qualities is described in the *vimānasthāna* as *vyādhitarūpīya*. To this *Hārīta Saṃhitā* adds relaying correct information, respect to divine power, brahmana and teachers. This is contradictory to what the text has to recommend when treatment of madness is discussed. Even though fearlessness and good memory are regarded as qualities of a patient, terror and loss of memory are prescribed as positive treatment for patients. For example, one of the treatments prescribed for patient suffering from madness is that s/he should be terrified by snake. It would be clear that the text even had codes for the sort of patient to be treated and the sort of patient to avoid. The text stipulates the avoidance of patients of ill repute and of low, polluting occupations and households and enjoined the treatment of patients who in the estimation of physicians were curable.

The ancient Indian texts take the view that *daiva* and *purusakara* are causatory participants in the patient's health and illness¹³⁷. *Daiva* refers to the destiny of a person as determined by his own past actions, while *purusakara* refers to the role of his present active effort.

The *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā* have a section that delves into the doctor and patient relationship which can reflect on the social dynamics at play especially in the treatment of madness and epilepsy. The *Saṃhitās* display a deep scope in the interaction of the physician with the patient being treated. There are guidelines for laudable and morally valued behaviour appropriate for clinical practice. This 'medical ethic' spanned aspect from diagnosis and treatment decisions as well as

137 We see that action is of three kinds- mild, moderate and strong. When both types of action (destiny and effort are of the best character, then they make for a long and happy life. The reverse is the case when both types of action are of the reverse character; when they are moderate, then the life too is moderate.

conduct with patients, their families. In Chapter IX, Verse 26 of the *Sūtra Sthana*, the texts talk of how the doctor should be sympathetic and kind to all patients, should be concerned with all those who are likely to be cured and should feel detached with those who are towards death. The prescriptions of volume I of both the *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā* are quite contrary to the way the patient is treated in volume 3 of *Caraka* and *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, where there is a discussion of treatment of insanity is given in a detailed manner. In Chapter IX of the *Cikitsāsthānam*, the text says that shouting with anger, terrorising the person should be used to bring back the natural state of the mind by counteracting the causes of his loss of memory. At no point in the various medical texts have the views of the patient been sought in his own treatment, throughout the text the patient is seen as passive and silent, he is treated as an object that reacts to different stimuli. The only caveat to this, is the agency, the patient exercises in choosing a physician, the *Caraka Saṃhitā* notes, that a wise patient should not accept any medicine prescribed by physician ignorant of principles of treatment. Thus, demonstrating that nascent information on healing was desired in a patient in order to recognise an authentic healer. However, at no point was self-treatment encouraged or desired in the treatises. To a certain extent one can note a great deal of de-humanisation of the patient in the treatment of madness is seen in *varjanīyarogī lakṣmana* (patients to be rejected). There were patients that were outrightly rejected before treatment began, as is mentioned in the *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam* of those individuals who were hated by the physician and/or king, or who weren't respectful and attentive of the process of treatment,

5.0 Stigmatisation of the Patient Treatment.

The stigmatisation of the patient is done at two levels or more succinctly at two separate phases of treatment of the patient. In the first instance, the person is stigmatised when s/he is being diagnosed and the causes of the infliction of the diseases are described and discussed in the medical texts. The causes described in these treatises reflect most strongly the social mores and anxieties of the time that were sought to be controlled. These include causes of lust, grief, anger, jealousy and greed. These were attempted to be mitigated by exposing the individual to the respective opposite qualities¹³⁸. The next level of stigmatisation takes place when the patient is actually treated, this can be seen by the treatment meted out to the patient. These treatments are meant as curative as well as social punishments. The treatment becomes a social occasion of correcting moral transgressions.

In this section, we will look at the various ways in which the patient has been describe, this will be done by enumerating the adjectives that are associated the patient and the various moral judgements that are made in the texts with regards to the patient. We will also observe the various practices of the physician in the treatment meted out to the patient, look at how the patient was either confined or integrated and productively included into society.

The patient is given the onus of the illness on some occasions as the medical texts describe following an unwholesome regime which include an improper diet of less food in the case of *vāta unmāda* or more food than necessary in the case of *kaphaja unmāda*, polluted food. It is fairly more common to locate a comment on the

138 K.R Srikantha Murthy, *Vagbhata's Aṣṭāṅga Hr̥dayam*. Varanasi. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy. .2009. page 65.

character of a patient who has been afflicted by exogenous type of insanity rather than endogenous type of insanity. The corpus of texts state that if one were not complying with spiritual observances or did not have proper social conduct in the past life then such a person was more susceptible to exogenous type of *unmāda*. ‘Patients are possessed by creatures that are closer to their own character, for instance *rākṣasa* and *piśāca* possess people devoid of will power, who are backbiters and who are greedy and cheat¹³⁹. The patient is often tied with ropes, the texts mention that this should be done to someone of strong physique, however it remains unclear if such treatment was meted out to only men or to women and old people too. The *Suśruta Saṃhitā* recommends using a strong built person to dip a person in water and keep the person in a house that could be ignited providing him protection while igniting hay(*trnāgni*)¹⁴⁰. *Bhela Saṃhitā*, additionally mentions scattering of burning coal (*paribhadra*)¹⁴¹.

Another socially sanctioned act, which is considered normal and is not considered morally or ethically inappropriate is terrorising the patient. The medical texts advise to get the person bitten by snakes having their fangs removed or with lions tamed as well as enemies with weapons in their hands. Alternatively, he should be terrorised by police, with the threat of execution. The danger to life is taken seriously than the fear for life. The patient is brandished with hot iron or burnt with hot oil or water¹⁴². Social isolation is recommended where a person is instructed to left alone in a

139 See R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol III. 2011. Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series. Varanasi. page 420.

140 P.V. Sharma, *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi. Chaukhamba Visvabharati. 2010. page 607.

141 K.H. Krishnamurthy, *Bhela Saṃhitā*. Varanasi. Chaukhamba Visvabharati, 2008. page 349.

142 R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Vol III, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series. 2011 page 436

dark room. This confinement of a person to a lonely house, the aim of confining an individual is to help or assist in making the perturbed mind regain composure¹⁴³. The texts also state that a patient should be put in a well without water, made to suffer from hunger¹⁴⁴. The two-pronged rationale of confinement is stated as containing acts of violence against self and others.

There are instances enumerated in the texts where a patient is denied any form of treatment, in the situation where a person is afflicted with *Sānnipātika unmāda*, the therapeutic measures required to be employed would be mutually contradictory. The physician is advised in the medical texts not to take on such patients as they would end in the death of the patient and thus would be a failed pursuit and thus diminish the physician's reputation.

A lot can be said of the stigma attached to the treatment of madness, keeping with ancient moral, ethical and religious wisdom about social life. Within the context of emphasis on duty and obligation in social relations. Peppered throughout the various compilations are references to outcast groups of unwanted, rejected, sullied, polluted, discredited and marginalised persons, castes and occupations. Individuals exhibiting insanity are frequently included in these lists of ostracised, along with thieves, murderers, transgressors of basic norms of perceived human decency. Weiss examines explicit references to insanity as a social category in his review of moral and legal issues in the Dharmasastra. He provides details of how persons classed as insane are to be regarded and dealt with in different social and legal institutions.

More specifically in The Laws of Manu one finds that a condition of insanity is an

143 R.K. Sharma & Bhagwan Dash, *Caraka Samhitā*, Vol III. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series. 2011. page 456

144 K.R Srikantha Murthy, *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdayam*, Vol III. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy. 2009. page 64

excuse for nullifying marital obligation, undoing social contracts and avoiding full responsibility in the case of slander and criminal offence. These references to insanity underscore the identity, visibility and problematic legal and moral valuation assigned to varieties of psychopathology in ancient Indian society. The laws explicitly condemned but also protected those non- persons who were socially recognised as insane. The insane, who behaved in transgressive ways were censured and discredited.

Conclusion

The treatises of the Ayurveda create a fertile ground on which to peg the canvas of social engineering that took place in the first millennium. The philosophical systems of *Nyaya*, *Vaiśeṣika* and *Sāṃkhya* philosophy inspired and informed much of the writing of these treatises¹⁴⁵. Gregory Field purports that *Sāṃkhya* and *Vaiśeṣika*'s metaphysics were utilised by the Ayurvedic treatises to determine the concepts of personhood. The person as a subject of science within a context of living life¹⁴⁶. The Ayurveda in its conception of the body deviated from the *Atharva Veda* in that the *tridosas* became central to defining the person and the quality s/he embodied. The treatment is discussed with the individual at the centre of it. This individualised treatment was influenced and in turn shaped by the turn of naturalism that one witnesses in the Ayurveda, with attention to region, season, diet and time. This individualised treatment in turn, determined the nature of definitional sensitivity displayed in the diagnosis and aetiology of madness. Madness became the corner stone on which normalcy and abnormalcy was decided and thus particular attention

145 Jan Meulenbeld & Dominik Wujastyk, *Studies on Indian Medical History*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2001. page 39.

146 Gregory Fields, *Religious Therapeutics, Body and Health in Yoga, Ayurveda and Tantra*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2001. page 40.

was paid to create causation of socially unacceptable behaviour. The infrastructure of treatment with the physician and hospitals being setup and paraphernalia of attendants created an institutionalisation of the meaning of madness and the behaviour that was sought in a mad person. The institutionalisation of healing and therapeutics through the construction of hospitals, allowed illnesses to have their tangible space in the visual consciousness of the people. Thus, we witness a performance of madness by patients and performance of treatment by the physician, not in a vacuum but in a socially sanctioned space provided by the king and recognised by the people.

Chapter Three: Madness in Sanskrit Literary Tradition

Introduction

The vast literary tradition of ancient India, comprises of a composite landscape of drama, poetry and treatises. *Kāvya*, as a poetic composition in sanskritic literary tradition was a departure from the earlier vedic literature. *Kāvya* is categorised into *dṛśya* (audio-visual) and *śrāvya* (aural). Of the audio visual they are further systematised into *Nāṭya* (drama) and *Nṛtta* (representation by gestures with a musical background)¹. In this chapter, we shall be focusing on literary pieces of *Nāṭya* that were meant for representation on stage for consumption by audience. According to Bharata, drama is defined as the representation of actions and moods of human and other beings inhabiting the three worlds. When the vast universe is sought to be represented on stage there are limitations imposed on the poet or dramatist. To overcome these limitations the dramatist employs a classification of *Nāṭya*². The ‘representation’ of actions and moods for stage is significant in the context of representation of behaviour of madness. The written descriptors and words used to define madness are translated into actions that are both aural and visual. With this thrust, the chapter, explores the physicality displayed of the character of the mad person.

Classification of *Nāṭya* (drama) by Bharata is twofold; *Lokadharmī* and *Nāṭyadharmī*. According to scholars of classical Indian theatre, this classification is

1 Surendra Nath Shastri, *The Law and Practice of Sanskrit Drama*, Vol I. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office.1961

2 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol I, Delhi: Nag Publishers, 1998.page 178.

based on distinction of improvisation and depiction³. In *lokadharmī*, natural behaviour of characters is depicted, where news and events of the world are performed by actions with natural movements of limbs, eschewing gait of grace and pomp, where the mental states of characters are shown⁴. The role of women was to be donned by women while men should be represented by men folk. *Nāṭyadharmī*'s depiction, is where speech, action, nature and expression are all exaggerated, where playfulness, embellished body movements (*aṅgahāras*) are employed⁵. Unlike *lokadharmī*, *nāṭyadharmī* actors are far more skilful to take on more than one role. Improvisation is another marker of distinction, *lokadharmī* depicts the story as it is received (as a myth/tale) without any alterations. *Nāṭyadharmī* on the other hand, is called *ativakyakriyopetam*, when the story is improvised for the purpose of aesthetic pleasure, this can be done by revealing the inner wishes of characters in personified form⁶. Among the *dasarupaka*, there are certain types of plays such as *prakaraṇa*, *prahasana* and *bhāṇa* that are considered *lokadharmī*, on the other hand *nāṭaka* is considered the perfection of *nāṭyadharmī*⁷. Within this chapter, plays have been selected from both categories of *nāṭyadharmī* and *lokadharmī* in order to postulate the different treatment of similar theme of madness found in the plays.

3 See Bhart Gupta, *Dramatic Concepts Greek and Indian; A Study of the Poetics and the Nāṭyaśāstra*, New Delhi: D.K.Printworld, 2006. He notes that European and orientalist classification of Indian cultural life slots of binary opposites like folk vs classical, popular vs elitist, Aryan vs Dravidian, brahmin vs unvedic, Great tradition vs Little Tradition.

4 See Bhart Gupta, Bhart Gupta, *Dramatic Concepts Greek and Indian; A Study of the Poetics and the Nāṭyaśāstra*, New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2006, He states that *abhinaya* of *lokadharmī* are of two kinds, internal and external. Internal are the gestures expressive of the mental states or external in nature where one is trying to denote an object.

5 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol I, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998 'extraordinary feats, excessive emotional outburst, graceful movements, gaudy dresses, use of figurative language, imitation of the feeling of others, representation of aerial vehicles, mountains, shields, weapons and flagstaff as endowed with human limbs are conventions of Nāṭyadharmī'. page 170.

6 Bhart Gupta, *Dramatic Concepts Greek and Indian; A Study of the Poetics and the Nāṭyaśāstra*, New Delhi: D.K.Printworld, 2006. page 244.

7 N.P Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol I, Delhi: Nag Publishers,1998. page 168.

The treatise of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* postulates on character/traits; sentiments, emotions, gestural representations, natural disposition, behaviour and on accompaniments in the play; song, instruments of music and the stage. The *nāṭyadharmī* and *lokadharmī* are an amalgamation of these different postulations, as it is within the confines of the regulations and limitations of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* that these plays depict and reveal madness in the theatrical performance.

Dramatic representation in *nāṭyadharmī* and *lokadharmī* literature takes place through a conjunction of *vis* (determinants) and *anus* (consequents)⁸. The intent of transferring meaning from the performer through his performance to the audience takes place through four channels of communication; the actor, the events transpiring in the play, the environment and seasonal background⁹. This meaning of *bhāva* and *artha* are conveyed through the help of verbal and bodily *abhinaya*. *Anu* is the verbal and bodily *abhinaya* including the gestures of limbs, heads and torso by which meaning is experienced *anubhavyate*¹⁰. *Vis* are of two kinds: one circumstantial and the other personal. The circumstantial or direct *vis* are those which constitute the circumstances giving rise to a particular feeling (*uddipana-vi*)¹¹. The personal or indirect *vis* are those persons by reference to whom a particular feeling arises in the mind of another, this is called *alambana*. Consequently, when surveying the moments, acts of madness in these plays, we will have to take into account the actor

8N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Vol II, Delhi: Nag Publishers,1998. page 158.

9 Bhart Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts Greek and Indian; A Study of the Poetics and the Nāṭyaśāstra*, New Delhi: D.K. Printworld. 2006. page 254.

10 Bhart Gupt, *Dramatic Concepts Greek and Indian; A Study of the Poetics and the Nāṭyaśāstra*, New Delhi: D.K. Printworld,2006. page 254.

11 Surendra Nath Shastri, *The Law and Practice of Sanskrit Drama*. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1961.page 257.

playing the part, the dramatic situation which culminates into revealing the madness and the catalysing force of nature and seasonal backdrop.

1: Sentiments in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* in postulating an exposition on sentiments delineates the process and system by which sentiments were recognised and categorised. Thus, reflecting on the nature of control and demarcation being made in human expression and manifestation of emotion for the sake of exhibition.

The fixity in number of sentiments promulgated speaks to the mechanisms of control and social regulation in place. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* enumerates *śṛṅgāra* (the erotic), *hāsya* (the comic), *kāruṇa* (the pathetic), *raudra* (the furious), *vīra* (the heroic), *bhayānaka* (the terrible), *bībhatsa* (the disgusting) and *adbhuta* (the marvellous) revealing the extant of the emotional range that was permissible in the treatise¹². It is critical to note that there is consensus on the ‘production’ of the *rasā*, a *rasā* is produced and is not innate to a person’s being. Contestation arises on the ‘means of production’ of the *rasa*. The notion of conjunction of different variables that results in *rasa* development is different from origination of the sentiment from within. This discussion on internal versus external stimulation is key to how madness is configured in the plays. By this, we essentially refer to the ‘triggering’ of madness that we witness in the dramatic literature.

There is a similarity of ingesting and consuming *rasā*, that makes a useful conceptual demarcation between the *rasā* *Caraka* expounds on and the *rasā* Bharata postulates. *Caraka*’s *rasā* has a decidedly physiological function whereas Bharat’s *rasā* veers on the psychological aspects of an individual.

12 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol II. Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 154

Question on whether *rasā* produces *bhāva* or *bhāva* produces *rasā*. This is summed up in a discussion in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* that proclaims permanent moods transform into *rasā*. It is interesting to note, the enumeration of *bhāvas*, which are categorised into *sthāyi* (permanent moods), *sañcārī* (transitory moods) and *sattvaja* (temperamental or originating from the mind)¹³.

In the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, madness is grouped under *vyabhicāri bhāva* (transitory moods). Among the other transitory moods enumerated, a number of them are symptoms or corollaries of (madness as depicted) such as *nirveda* (self-disparagement), *glāni* (debility), *śaṅkā* (apprehension), *asūyā* (envy), *vrīḍā* (shame), *mada* (intoxication), *ālasya* (indolence), *dainya* (depression), *capalatā* (unsteadiness), *viṣāda* (despondency), *amarṣa* (impatience of opposition), *apasmāra* (dementedness) and *vyādhi* (sickness). Along with this, there is also a correlation to be made between the involuntary evidences of internal feeling and the transitory moods. The specific *stambha* (stupor), *sveda*(perspiration), *pralaya* (loss of consciousness) are all symptoms of madness too¹⁴.

The question to be asked from the text itself is whether *bhāva* is to be ‘conveyed’ or does it become apparent in its own existence. The meaning brought about by the *vi*(excitant) are suggested by *anus* (ensuants) by means of production of speech, bodily movement a mental feeling and hence termed as *bhāva*¹⁵. Consequently, the production of meaning is a process that is witnessed from the endearment, association and affiliation of being drawn to a meaning either by the privileging of intention of the poet. The intentionality of the poet is represented through

13 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol II. Delhi. Nag Publishers, 1998. page 154.

14 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers, 1998. page 156.

15 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers, 1998. page 186.

physiological functions of speech, facial expressions that are intended to depict mental feeling or these feelings are mental; as in feelings are generated mentally. The question raised is whether internal feelings are the ones that are generated from the mind. The connection between internal feeling and the mind is suggested in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* through concentration of the mind.¹⁶

Another pertinent question that begets an answer is what determines a permanent mood and what determines a transitory mood/emotion. The representation of permanent mood and transitory emotion requires different engagement by the actor in the permanent mood the stress is laid on mental involvement, in transitory mood gestures and postures suffice. Madness poses as the only paradox as it is considered an affliction of the mind and is yet considered a transitory feeling.

Permanent mood of sorrow is produced due to the separation and loss. This separation and loss material wealth and kin is represented by the ensuants like shedding of tears, lamentation, moans, paleness, crying aloud, weeping bitterly, deep sighs, distraction and death as well as madness. Permanent mood of fear which is applicable to the ladies and people of lower type, men become afraid when their mental fortitude is shaken and its representation need trembling of limbs, tremulous eyes and fluttering of eyelashes¹⁷. Though doesn't explicitly state madness as an ensuant, the anus mentioned are similar to those used for madness such as trembling of hands and feet, palpitation of heart, stupor, parched mouth, licking the lips with the tongue, sweat, trembling of limbs and loud lamentation.

16 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers, 1998. page 223

17 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998 page 195

Transitory feeling of *glāni* (debility) is in the nature of moroseness or a particular type of uneasiness¹⁸, generated by determinants like vomiting, purging, ailments, penance, vows, mental agony, indulgence in sex, drinking of liquor. It is represented by ensuants like feeble utterance, eyes lacking lustre, lean and emaciated limbs, change of colour, break of voice.

Transitory feeling of *mada*, originates from the use of intoxicating drinks, the person inebriated in is an infatuated state of mind. Inebriety has different stages as well, in its initial stage it is depicted by means of indistinct voice, stammering speech, disconnected talk and faltering pace, in its slightly advanced stage it is betokened by waving arms, tumbling down. its most virulent form, which is shown by reference to base characters it presents as loss of memory and in such a state the mouth of the person is sometimes full of foam or remains wide agape¹⁹. It is well attested to subsequently in the plays discussed of how similar the description of *mada* is to *unmāda*, taking from the same etymological root.

Transitory emotion of indolence results from determinants like natural disposition, worry, fatigue, disease, satiety, pregnancy in women and low types of characters. This is considered a natural mood, and is represented by absence of interest in all kinds of activities, lying down, sitting idle, going to sleep, drowsiness²⁰. Transitory feeling of depression results from wretchedness, mental distress. Men experience this transitory feeling due to excessive anxiety. Its ensuants like unhappiness, headache, paralysis of the limbs, mental imbalance, rubbing of the body represent the feeling of depression. It is depicted by uncleanliness, heaviness of body and parlour and lack of energy.

18 Surendra Nath Shastri, *Laws of Sanskrit Drama*, Vol. I. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1961. page 234.

19 Surendra Nath Shastri, *Laws of Sanskrit Drama*, Vol. I. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1961. page 235.

20 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers. 1998. page 203.

Distraction as a transitory feeling is produced by *vis* like cruel stroke of fate, affliction, disease and anxiety from helplessness. It should be represented by *anu* like loss of consciousness, giddiness, falling down, rolling on the ground, loss of sight, essentially a complete loss of senses. Transitory feeling of *avega* (flurry) is produced by *vis* like portents (as an earthquake), gust of winds, rains, fire, mad rush of elephants, hearing excessively good or extremely bad news. This is represented by the loosening of all the limbs, mental distraction, change of the colour of the face, sorrow, wonder. The excitement of the mind should be shown by veiling of the face, rubbing the eyes and hurried movements. Feeling caused by bad news should be represented by falling on the ground, rolling, running, crying and wailing aloud. Transitory feeling of *jadatā* (stupefaction) is characterised by a reluctance in all kinds of activities. It is produced by *vis* like hearing and seeing of miserable or undesirable objects, feeling of sickness etc. It results in dumbfoundedness, steadfast gaze and loss of energy and physical movements²¹. Transitory feeling of dementedness is produced by the *vibhāva* like the possession of spirits of superhuman powers such as an evil deity, *yakṣa*, *nāga*, *brahma rākṣasa* and *piśāca*. This should be represented by the *anu* like foaming at the mouth, causing hiccups, paralyzing, falling down and licking with the tongue. Transitory feeling of *trasā* (alarm/fright) is produced by *vibhāva* such as lightening, fall of comet, strike of thunderbolt. This affliction causes shuddering, screaming, horripilation and getting bodily stunned.

Transitory feeling of sickness is produced by the vitiation of the humours of wind, bile and phlegm and their cumulative effect.²² Fever is the only sickness that is postulated on, is it because several illnesses akin to fever has made it an umbrella

21 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 210.

22 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 218..

term for illness or possibly because its symptoms were demonstrable. We should note that madness is distinguished from the rubric of sickness. Madness is produced due to vi like separation from the near and dear one, loss of wealth and vitiation of three humours. The representation of madness is based on the ‘premise of inappropriate -ness’, laughing without a cause, crying, shrieking, prattling, running about, dancing, wearing ornaments made of grass, withered or cast off flowers. The emulations of various actions without any order or propriety is considered representative of and is a representation of madness according to the text. Inappropriate behaviour is formed on the grounds of ‘lack’ - ‘devoid’ or against reason.

The transitory feelings should be seen in juxtaposition to certain feelings that have been recognised as the *sāttvika bhāva* (internal feelings). These mental dispositions are originated from the mind²³.

Most of these internal feelings of *stambha* (stupor)²⁴, *sveda* (perspiration)²⁵, *asru* (tears)²⁶, *vaivarṇya* (change of colour)²⁷, *romāñca* (horripilation), *svarabheda* (break of voice)²⁸ and *pralaya* (loss of consciousness) is produced by the feeling of sickness. The internal feelings are also manifested involuntarily.

23 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi: Nag Publishers,1998. page 223- they are external manifestations of internal feelings and explained so since feelings like tears and horripilation can be represented (on the stage) by persons who are not at all happy or worried.

24 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi: Nag Publishers,1998. Results from emotions like Joy, fear, sickness, wonder and sadness. page 224.

25 N.P. Unni. *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. It is produced from emotions like anger, fear, joy, bashfulness, fatigue, sadness and sickness. page 224

26 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers, 1998. It is produced from emotions like happiness, indignation, smoke, yawning, staring, sickness and coldness. page 225

27 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers,1998. It results from emotions such as tiredness, heat, anger, fatigue and sickness. page 225

28 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. It is the resultant of the feelings of joy, anger, old age, fury, sickness and intoxication. page 225.

2: Theatrical Representation of Emotions through Gestures

The emotional arousal of transformation of *rasā* is possible due to the physical embodiment of the written word mentioned earlier. As stated by Rachel Van M. Baumer, Sanskrit dramas developed use of the spoken word, so as to underline it, reinforce it interpret and enrich it with appropriate movement of torso, legs, expressions of parts of the face and with parallel language of gestures of hand which helps with clarifying the written word²⁹. *Nāṭyaśāstra* has general principles of representation as Sukumari Bhattacharjee states the need for these principles develop as action predominate and narration and descriptions are subordinate, even the dialogues are meant to realise or embellish this action. *Samanyabhinaya* consists of the equal sharing of action among the limbs like the head, the hand, the waist, the belly, the shanks and the thighs. *Abhiyantara* is traditional or conventional representation known as the one in which the movements of the limbs should be without flurry, hurry and complexity. It becomes so, when the movements are made according to one's own liking and without the accompaniment of music and instrumental support.

When these conventional of aesthetics are applied to scenes depicting madness in an event, nature of an actor/character we gauge the nature of aesthetics of madness. This aesthetic madness is based on four kinds of gestural representations of emotions have been espoused; *āṅgika* (conveyed by bodily action), *vācika* (conveyed by words), *āhārya* (conveyed by dress-ornaments) and *sāttvika* (conveyed by internal feelings such as perspiration)³⁰.

29 Rachel Van M Baumer & James R. Brandon.ed., *Sanskrit Drama in Performance*, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii,1981. page 30.

30 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 232

It is interesting to note that there is a demarcation and privileging of certain bodily limbs for presentation over others; the *āṅgas* the major limbs consist of head, hand, hips, chest, sides and feet, the minor limbs are the eyes, eyebrows, nose lips, cheeks, and chin. One wonders whether it is so because the movement /mobility that the limbs are capable of or the propensity to be deployed for exaggerated representation. The movement of the head that is of concern are the ones that depict madness and abnormal behaviours, these specifically include-;

Vidhutam, a sudden bending down of the head is employed and is resorted to in the representation of chilliness, fear, frightening, fever, drinking of liquor etc. *Nihañcitam* with the head held upwards with raised shoulders and slanting of the neck on a side, it is used in the representation of erotic feeling like silly pride, intoxication and dalliance³¹. *Kilikincita* (hysterical laughter) and *lolitama* rolling of the head alternatively on all directions, is employed in the representation of loss of consciousness ailment, intoxication, flurry, affliction due to malignant planets and drowsiness. The aforementioned aesthetic of madness aligns itself with grosser exaggerated movements as outlines above and doesn't necessarily lend itself to subtlety.

There are certain glances that are employed; *Madirā* (intoxicated) this glance is characterised by rolling of the pupils in the middle of the eyes and expansion of the corners. This is to be employed in the representation of intoxication at its highest point. The glances called *śunyā* and *abhitaptā* are to employed in the transitory emotion called *cintā*. The one called *malinā* is to be used in the transitory called nerved and *sāttvikabhāva* called *vaivarṇya*. The glance called *viplutā* is employed in

31 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 236.

the emotional states like unsteadiness, madness, sorrow, pain and death³². Manfred Pfister talks of the demand and duties of speech in relation to action and gestures³³, Sanskrit plays employ gestures and actions to compliment particular speech. The actions and events related to madness translate the written word into spoken word and thus not entirely autonomous of it.

3: Love in separation

Madness in Sanskrit plays is most often witnessed in dramatic situations involving separated lovers. It is necessary to note, this affection and love that we delineate has an external and internal aspect to it. The love in these plays though borne in the mind and heart of the individual is unrecognised until it is displayed externally. Hence, the display of this love is what makes it conceptually tangible. The feeling of love, pegs its exhibition on the canvas of madness in order to magnify its presence and make it visible in the proceedings of the play to the audience.

In this event, the internal and transitory feeling of love collude to manifest madness. The sentiment of *śṛṅgāra* has its origin from the permanent mood called *rati* (love)³⁴. This love is of two kinds, *sambhoga* (love in union) and *vipralambha- śṛṅgāra* (love in separation)³⁵. Love as a motif runs through most of the episodic stories, what is principally idealised is conjugal love; but its obligation of chastity was laid on the weaker sex, and practically no limits were set to the license of men³⁶. In

32 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 250.

33 Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*, New York: Cambridge University Press,1988. page 16.

34 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. 'In this world whatever is clean, pure, gay and worth seeing, all that is likened to the sentiment of Erotic'. page 164

35 Surendra Nath Shastri, *The Law and Practice of Sanskrit Drama*, Vol I. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office,1961. page 266.

36 Sushil Kumar De, *Treatment of Love in Sanskrit Literature*, Calcutta: Prabasu Press ,1929. page 11

Abhijñānaśākuntala, the king admits to Mathavya (*vidūṣaka*), *Śākuntala* was reserved and averted her eyes and stated modesty prevented a full display and concealed the course of love³⁷.

In order to understand the interplay of madness in the thematic of love in Sanskrit drama, it is requisite to set the context of what Sanskrit playwrights describe as love. The love depicted in the play is borne out of the mind of the characters, as is commented by Udayan in *Svapnavāsavadattam*, thus in matter of love, the effect and afflictions faced are thus of bodily and mental faculties³⁸. Thus, if love is borne out of the mind, by extension it is the mind that is most overwrought in moment of separation. There are ten stages of love-that are related to both men and women; *Abhilāṣa* (longing)³⁹, *cintāna* (thinking)⁴⁰, *anusmṛti* (recalling)⁴¹, *guṇakīrtana* (extolling the qualities)⁴², *udvega* (anxiety)⁴³, *vilāpa* (wailing)⁴⁴, *unmāda*

37 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays* Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2005. *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, Act II, pp 11

38 Ved Prakash Shastri, *The Svapnavāsavadattam of Mahakavi Bhāsa*. Delhi: Chaukhamba Orientalia Svapnavāsavadattam, Act IV 'though Padmavati is regarded by me of her beauty, chastity, sweetness etc, qualities, but does not attract my mind (towards herself) which is attached to Vasavadatta.

39 Surendra Nath Shastri, *The Law and Practice of Sanskrit Drama*, Vol I. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1961. The search for union after having known the partner as induced by a wish and desire. page 268.

40 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III. Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. thoughts of the heroine after listening to the condition of the lover as narrated by the female messenger. page 668

41 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III. Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. exemplified as the frequent sighing, imagining of the attainment of the desire and despising of all other activities. page 669

42 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III. Delhi. Nag Publishers, 1998. extolling of the lover that 'there is nobody like him in the matter of the movement of limbs and minor limbs of the body, speech, action, smile, look'. page 669

43 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III. Delhi. Nag Publishers, 1998. state where the loving one could not get respite in sitting or lying in bed, always feeling anxiety. page 670.

44 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III. Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. lamentation may be employed by a woman like 'here he was saying', 'here he was met by me' and such other wailings. page 670.

(madness)⁴⁵, *vyādhi* (sickness)⁴⁶, *jadta* (stupor)⁴⁷ and *marana*(death)⁴⁸.The depiction of the stages of love is recommended on stage- where portraying feelings of men and women in separation is represented by remaining in a reclining position⁴⁹

In the theatrical representation of love, it is depicted as a sickness and malady that needs often to be remedied. Love as an illness that befalls someone and the nature of disorder causes wasting away of limbs, emaciation and waning of complexion⁵⁰.The pain of love is also unbearable⁵¹. Love akin to disease is similarly contracted. It is amorphous in nature and as its origins is both from within and due to external forces.

Vipralambha (separation) which is due to love in is unaccomplished stage is called *Pūrva rāga* (love in longing). The course of courtship runs three ways *prauḍha*, *samañjasa* and *sādharaṇa*⁵². There are several causes of separation, separation caused by *pravāsa* (sojourn) is classified under three heads *kāryaja* (voluntarily or on purpose), *śāpaja* (due to malediction of someone) and *sambhramaja* (due to calamity

45 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III. Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. ‘As the state where the woman always asks for the tales of the beloved one and shows hatred towards all other men’.page 670.

46 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III. Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. the state of love where one does not get ant respite after cajoling, provided with comforts and desires, fanning etc which fail to produce any effect. Page 670.

47 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III. Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. Is the stage where one does not answer after being solicited, fails to hear or see things. One will just utter the word alas! or may even remain speechless losing memory. page 671.

48 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III. Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. The stage of death occurs when all efforts when all efforts fail to bring about the union with lover and the woman succumbs to the blazing fire of love. page 671.

49 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III. Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 672

50 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,2005. *Abhijñānaśākuntala* Act III pp 9

51 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,2005 *Vikramōrvaśīya* Act II pp 4

52 Surendra Nath Shastri, *The Law and Practice of Sanskrit Drama*, Vol I. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office,1961. page 267.

proceeding from human and natural forces)⁵³. The second important cause of separation is *mana* or disagreement between loving couples. This manifests in the perverseness of mind which does not permit one to enjoy the company of the other, though there is proximity of situation and mutual affection. *Mana* is generally found among couples whose love has deepened into *praṇaya* (attachment).

Apart from pre-union and post union separation, there is *kāruna vipralamba* which is pathetic love in separation and contemplates of a situation where the lovers are separated and one of them knows or believes that his/her partner has passed away from this world but has been given an assurance by some supernatural power that s/he will reunite with the lost partner. The love in separation is to be represented by the transitory feeling of *bhaya* (fear), *vyādhi*(sickness), *unmāda* (madness) and *apasmāra* (dementedness) among others⁵⁴. The sentiment of *kāruna* (pathos) is generated out of the permanent mood called *śoka* (sorrow) determined by irreversible loss, this sentiment similar to *śrngāra* also has *bhrama* (confusion), *moha* (distraction), *vyādhi* (sickness), *unmāda* (madness) as its transitory feelings.

Separation of love, can be of non-amorous love, as is witnessed in the play, *Pratimā Nāṭaka*, by King Dasaratha, has a burning heart due to the separation from his son *Rama*, lying in ocean pavilion, talking excessively and incoherently⁵⁵. He is unable to recognise Kausalya, his queen. He states that he has lost control over his senses, neither can he put up with the sorrow nor can he do away with it, this is sorrow is

53 Surendra Nath Shastri, *The Law and Practice of Sanskrit Drama*, Vol I. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1961. page 269.

54 N.P Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers. 1998. page 166.

55 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratima Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1930. Act II, the lord of men whose body and mind having being languid on account of sorrow, appears to be like the Meru mountain, that begins to shake, page 88.

excessively unbearable⁵⁶. This state of Dasaratha is described as a disease of the body, here it is addressed as a mental malady with no recourse to treatment by a physician⁵⁷. It is critical to note that sentiment of pathos is distinguished from love in separation. The *rasā* of pathos on account of curse, loss of wealth, loss of life has little hope for reunion. On the other hand, separation of love involves hopeful expectation of reunion.

The sentiment called *adbhuta* (the marvellous) has its origin from the permanent mood *vismaya* (wonder). The determinants of this are *divyajananadarśana* (seeing of celestial beings). It is represented by the employment of ensuants such as *nayanavistāra*, *animesāprekṣaṇa*, *aśru* and *bāhuvadana celāṅgulibhramāṇa* (movement of hands, face, cloth and fingers)⁵⁸. It is interesting to note that certain sentiments do not have specific reference to madness as a transitory feeling. These include *bhaya*, however, *bhaya* has all other transitory feelings that are usually clubbed with *unmāda* (madness), *śānta* (quietistic), comic, heroic, furious etc. The comic sentiment doesn't have any reference to madness, does this imply that there was no ridiculing.

There is madness to be witnessed in love in union too, the frenzy felt by Sita in the company of Rama in *Uttarā-Rāmācharita*, she states, 'I can't determine whether it is pleasure or pain, whether stupor or sleep, whether the working of poison, or

56 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratima Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1930. *Pratima Nāṭaka* Act II page 91

57 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratima Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1930. Act III page 97

58 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers. 1998. page 178

rapturous joy, at every touch of thine a certain sensation comes upon me, which stupefying all my senses, now bewilders my consciousness, now paralysis it'⁵⁹.

4: Audience and their role

Performative action depicting madness is also received/consumed by the passive audience. Thus, the understanding of madness in performative plays requires us to delve into the 'production of madness' for the stage for the purpose of consumption by the audience. Nelvin Vos, points out how this reception is individual and collective simultaneously which allows for seeking meaning and unity beyond oneself⁶⁰. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* has expectations on the reception of a play from the spectators. Thus, the spectators must carry with them cultural and social knowledge in order to appreciate the nuances of the drama. There is a subtle class distinction made where *nanalok* (common folk) are not expected to have qualities to understand the inner significance and meaning of a staged play. In ancient Indian theatre, the treatise doesn't expect a suspension of belief as it does in western theatre. On the contrary, the setting of the theatre becomes a conduit for a form of social escapism. This social escapism allows for *vibhavita* (conceiving) and *vijnata* (comprehension) to go hand in hand in the norms of dramatist. The conception of madness as a literary device and literary mechanism to elicit a response that can be consumed by the spectator allows for a certain social engineering that creates a visual reality where there is validation for social beliefs in a fantastical world.

59 M.R Kale, *The Uttara-Rāmacharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass Publisher Private Limited, 2003. *Uttara-Rāmacharita*, Act I, pp 33-36, page 11.

60 Nelvin Vos, *Inter-Actions Relationship of Religion and Drama*, London: University Press of America., 2009. page 26.

According to Surendra Nath Sastri, the very connotation of the term *rasā* is that which can be relished⁶¹, effect of this relish of the *rasā* is wonderful. It creates ecstatic joy in the heart of the enjoyer and leaves upon him an impression of *camatkāra* (wonder)⁶², which is the source of *lokottara-ānanda* (uncommon delight).

This reception defines loosely as *siddhi* is divided into *manusi* (human) and *daivi* (divine)⁶³. The mortals are attributed physical and vocal expression of their response. The human responses are of vocal and physical form. They stand for encouraging responses of the audience to the actors in the play. The vocal and physical responses are five each in number, making a total of ten elements. *Smita* (a gentle smile) when there is a humorous situation represented on the stage, *ardhahasa* (a subdued laughter) when there is an indecent joke, *atihasa* (loud laughter) at the funny talk and ludicrous actions of the *vidūṣaka*; exclamations like *sadhu* (good! well done!) at the impressive representation of something virtuous, Aho (Ho) at the striking spectacle of something palpably pathetic and *prabaddhananda*, long and loud cheering at something wonderful are the seven vocal responses⁶⁴. However, it is only the divine response that pertains to mental faculties.

The composition of the audience inevitably fore soothes the reception to be received by a particular play, therefore Bharata stoically understanding the heterogeneous nature of the theatre goer defines the qualities of an ideal spectator; *sahrdaya*.

61 The relish of *Rasā* creates a concentrated state of mental harmony (*sattvodreka*) unadulterated with any other element of human nature; and for this reason, irrespective of the nature and substratum of a particular type of *rasā* which is relished, there is an outcome of joy to a sensible person.

62 Surendra Nath Sastri, *The Law and Practice of Sanskrit Drama*, Vol I. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1961. page 258

63 N.P Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol I Delhi. Nag Publishers. 1998. The divine is twofold. The first is the wholesome disposition of the spectators, fully imbued with the appropriate moods. The second is the fullness of auditorium and the prevalence therein of an atmosphere of undisturbed calm. page 181.

64 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol I, Delhi. Nag Publishers. 1998. page 180.

Sahrdaya being a person of 'one heart' with the playwright and character. Thus, it is easy to imagine that audiences whilst witnessing scenes/emotions of madness could move with the actor and become one with him thus intensely and personally feeling his high joys and low sorrows⁶⁵. This allows for absorption of feeling that transposes an individual to mundane to bliss state. The production of harmonious emotional impression expressed by *rasa*. When spectators feel at harmony with themselves and nature. This is true for when the audience experience the madness of a character, the temporary madness witnessed allows for inner conflicts to come to the surface. These conflicts then get resolved at the end of the play and afford aesthetic pleasure.

5: Character of Mad Person

The character and characteristics of the mad person are based on the normative understanding detailed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* on the nature of characters. In doing so, the theatrical play offers models of behaviour. Within this model, throughout the plot, story and characterisation social cues are made on desirability. People are classified into three types based on their natural disposition into *Uttama* (the best), *Madhyama* (the middle) and *adhama* (the lower)⁶⁶. The *Nāṭyaśāstra*, whilst distinguishing disposition and thereby making judgement on different types of people, pigeonholing them and creating another mechanism of social control differentiates patterns of behaviour on two grounds of internal and external. The question arises whether patterns of behaviour creates these classifications or classifications create patterns of behaviour. This is precisely when madness in a person is regarded as a temporary feeling as it would be uneasy to set it within the bounds of natural dispositions.

65 Jan C Storey & Arlene Allan, *A Guide to Ancient Greek Drama*. London: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. page 50.

66 N.P Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 158.

There is a delineation and division of the tasks/ assigned duties per gender in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Men are entrusted with task of reciting the text while females should be assigned the task of singing as generally the nature of ladies is suitable to the song as they are naturally sweet, while men are suitable for recitation as they are forceful⁶⁷. Even the plays that women are engaged in are defined and limited to sukumara which are the themes that require delicate performances intended for reception of the king.

The characterisation is based on ability where a man of superior character will have control over his senses, skills in various arts and artefacts, selfless affection, accomplishment, dexterity, inclination to help the poor, scholarship in various shastras, deep-heartedness, munificence, courage and willingness to give away gifts⁶⁸. This is antithetical to the notion of the mad person who is depicted as a ‘wild man’ in most western literature⁶⁹. A man of middling character will be helpful to others, scholarship in arts and crafts, worldly knowledge and sweetness in words. A man of inferior class possesses the characteristics of harsh words, bad habits, evil mindedness, inferior intelligence, laziness, failure to distinguish between good and bad people, covetous, proneness to evil deeds and theft of properties belonging to others⁷⁰.

Similarly, the model of characterisation extends to women. The superior type of women possesses the characteristics of gentle speech, absence of fickleness, nature of speaking with a smile, absence of harshness, abeyance to the words of elders.

67 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol IV, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 1081

68 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol IV, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 1060.

69 See Femi Oyeboade, *Madness at the Theatre*. London: Royal College of Psychiatrists.2012.

70 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol IV, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 1061

sweetness in words and tendency to give away gifts⁷¹. A female of middling character, somewhat possesses the aforementioned qualities though not of a higher order. she will have some faults which are of minor nature. A female of inferior type, almost possesses all the characteristic of the inferior class of male character.

Within the schema of character of a person, there is a further distinction between types of characters essayed by an actor. According to Sukumari Bhattacharjee, Sanskrit dramaturgy prescribed outlines for characters to the extent that they did not allow for individual voices of the character to unfold instead we witness the predomination of stereotype.

There are three types of characters that are represented in *nāṭya*, *anurūpā* (natural)⁷², *virūpā* (unnatural)⁷³ and *rāpānusāraṇī* (imitative)⁷⁴. Four types of heroes are classified belonging to the superior and middling types possessing different characteristics. They are known as *Dhīroddhātas* (vehement in nature), *Dhīralalitas* (brave and lighthearted) and *dhīraprasāntas* (self-controlled and calm). Gods are *Dhīroddhātas*, kings are *Dhīralalitas* and brahmins and merchants are *dhīraprasāntas*⁷⁵. The classification of these heroes and the caste distinction-should draw our attention to the hierarchisation taking place by vertically assigning virtuosity to those higher in the caste hierarchy.

71 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol IV, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 1062.

72 This is where ladies put on the roles of ladies and men put on the roles of men taking into consideration the age and status of character.

73 A boy puts on the role of an older man and vice versa representing the particular mood. In dramas, the females could put on the roles of males if they are inclined to do so. But an old man and boy should not imitate the role of another.

74 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol IV, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 1080

75 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol IV, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 1063

The engendering of role with qualities of delicacy allows the playwright to create characters that are idealised ideas of effeminacy. There are also four types of heroines that are described- the celestial and queen are who possesses the characteristics of courage, exaltedness and modesty; the noble heroine possesses characters of exaltedness and modesty. A courtesan, however, possesses light-heartedness, expertise in dance, music and other arts⁷⁶. The texts states that a wise teacher should not leave it to the ladies to train themselves in the performance of roles⁷⁷.

According to the text, certain sort of people are selected to play and are considered fit to play certain sort of roles. After taking into consideration the aspects like gait, speech, movement of limbs, actions, mental fortitude and nature of the character, should employ particular person for that role. The actor is scrutinised and assessed for qualities to represent character on stage. The aesthetic requirement defined here stresses largely on conventional physical standards.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* enshrines distinction of the actor's identity from the character he portrays when it advocates for the actor to He should conceal his form by using paint, ornaments and the particular attire of the character represented in the play taking into consideration the age and form.

However, this separation of individual identity does not however forbid an affiliation of personhood to the character portrayed as certain roles are considered superior/more prestigious than others. For the role of gods, a person with well-defined major and minor limbs should be selected. There should not be any physical

76 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol IV, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 1064

77 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol IV, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 1082

deformity in him. For a role of the king, should be assigned to a person who possess the characteristic like well-formed eyes, brows, forehead, nose, lips, cheeks and other limbs both major and minor. Assigning the roles of *raksasas*, *danavas* and *daityas*, a person should possess a fat, tall body, voice like the peal of thunder, furious looking eyes and well-knit eye brows.⁷⁸ Manfred Pfister, talks of the analogue scale of relationship observed existing between the actor as an actual human being and the fictional figure⁷⁹. As there are few references to a person of mad character, temporary madness can be portrayed by several characters. This enjoins the questions to what extent is the behaviour of fictional character afflicted with madness rounded off by actor with realistic details.

The heroines are known to belong to eight types are categorised in relation only to their lovers and do not hold position apart from their relation to male counterpart as consort, sister, mother or wife. *Vāsakasajjā*, woman dressed up carefully to receive her lover. in all eagerness for sexual enjoyment, *vīrahotkaṇṭhita* distressed due to separation from the lover who could not arrive since he was engaged in several matters, *svadhinabharṭṛka*- having control over the husband, since the hero is eager for constant sexual union. *Kalahāntarītā*, temporarily estranged due to quarrel in love matters. *Khaṇḍitā*, offended by the lover and remains in the house separated from her lover since he is sexually attached to some other girl. *Vipralabhdā*, jilted by the lover, one who is deceived by the lover in spite of the arrival of female messenger sent my him with a message fixing the rendezvous⁸⁰. *Proṣitabharṭṛka*, one whose husband is away on a soujourn and whose hair remains dishevelled.

78 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol IV, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 1077

79 Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.page 23.

80 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III, Delhi: Nag Publishers,1998. page 675.

Abhisārikā, one who approaches the lover on her own compelled by intoxication and lust.

The heroines of the type of *khaṇḍitā*, *vipralabhdā*, *kalahāntarītā* and *proṣitabhartṛka* should convey their feelings by anxiety, sighs, lassitude, heart burns, conversation with maids, looking at one's own condition, weakness, depression, shedding of tears, showing anger, remaining without vath, eschewing ornaments, misery and lamentation.⁸¹ These are the types of heroines that we find in the plays are most likely to have episodes of madness.

The character of a mad person is included in namely *Mattavilāsa Prahasana*, however, largely people are shown with either tendencies or afflicted with short term madness that is transient due to a dramatic context of loss or separation. There is however, one character in *Mattavilāsa Prahasana*, who is called *unmattakah* (the madman). This madman, has an amplified presence on stage, as he speaks in exclamations and his speech is visual in itself, his dialogues are intended to draw pictures of gore and physical action on stage. His delusions are fantastical, he claims to have climbed on the back of a village pig, jumped high into the sky and wielded the ocean. The delusions also have elements of grandeur and bravery; he claims to have smashed the elephant. Iravat and caught shakra, the monster whale⁸².

His social interactions with the world are tenuous as he is aware of being an outcaste, when he acknowledges that he is called a liar but his asunder grip on reality makes it hard for him to have meaningful communication with other people. He also seems

81 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol III, Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 676.

82 Michael Lockwood and A. Visnu Bhat, *Mattavilāsa Prahasana* by King Mahendravikramavarma. Madras: The Christian Literature Society. 1981. *Mattavilāsa Prahasana* Act I pp 154, page 87

unaware of his standing in society, as he doesn't view himself as the madman and asks to be introduced to him⁸³. Perception of society of his madness, come from his appearances, he is visibly dishevelled, wearing discarded rags in shreds and patches, with matted hair full of dust and ash. In the height of his ridicule, he is likened to trash of the village in human form⁸⁴.

Contrarily, we find the king afflicted with temporary madness in *Vikramōrvaśīya*, when the king is separated from Urvashi, he enters Scene 4 as a madman. This temporary madness is different from *unmattakah*. It is indicated in the play's instructions that the king enters the stag dressed as a mad person. He roams through the forest reflecting on his loss and is driven to questioning the peacock and Koil of the whereabouts of his lost love⁸⁵. The king mishears things such as swans as imaginary anklets of his lovers and wilfully misunderstands and deludes himself to conjure a conversation with an elephant and mountains.

6: Nature mirroring the state of madness

In the play of Kālidāsa, Bhāvabhūti, Bhāsa and Śūdraka, nature is the canvas on which the play is propped and is an integral character in the play itself. Nature is inseparable from the content of the play; the plot of the play is a product and constituent of nature itself. Consequently, madness as a theme found in the plays is influenced by nature, in a way that it borrows from the visuals, substance and

83 Michael Lockwood and A. Visnu Bhat, *Mattavilāsa Prahāsana* by King Mahendravikramavarma'. Madras. The Christian Literature Society. 1981. *Mattavilāsa Prahāsana* Act I pp176 'I often hear the word 'madman'. Here, take this and show me the madman. page 97

84 Michael Lockwood and A. Visnu Bhat, *Mattavilāsa Prahāsana* by King Mahendravikramavarma'. Madras. The Christian Literature Society. 1981. *Mattavilāsa Prahāsana* Act I pp 155 page 91

85 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2005. *Vikramōrvaśīya* Act Iv pp 11

qualities of nature. The quality of nature that allows for it to be part of the plot and narrative of the play, is the agency of being impressed upon. By this what is essentially meant is that nature accommodates and takes on the form of the play by mirroring the *rasā* and *bhāva* being elicited in the play at that dramatic moment.

Nature allows for the *bhāva* to be visualised through the narration and dialogues made observationally by the actor. The playwright uses nature as a device to portray complex emotions that the character is feeling by mirroring them in nature. The invisible and subtle *rasās* can bring to fruition the *bhāva* and thus coax the audience through suggestion using nature to imitate the *bhāva* presented by nature. This is done in several moments of pathos felt by the hero and heroines in separation from one another.

In the social context, on nature is ascribed the social norms that are conditioned to society through subtle referencing in the play, In *Pratimā Nāṭaka*, when Sita pledges to follow Rama to the forest, Lakshmana explicates moral code of conduct by stating, ‘a star follows the moon even at the time of the eclipse by Rahu: a creeper falls down to the ground when a forest tree tumbles down; and a female elephant never abandons a mate. So, let her accompany you and discharge her duty. Because women are dependent on their husbands^{86c}. Suggestion is made to set new doctrines, in Act III, Bharata in a fit of rage, proposes a new doctrine in which even a mother may be looked down upon as no mother, if she is undutiful towards (and causes death of) her

86 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratima Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*, Poona: Oriental Book Agency.1930. *Pratima Nāṭaka* Act I page 85.

own husband⁸⁷. The allegory of nature is used to soften the blow of the suggested change and legitimise the claim in a way.

Nature is personified with human traits, and is used as an estimation of internal and external beauty, precluding the state of mind of the characters in the play. There is a personification of beauty in nature, such as in *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, where Dusyanta states that Śākuntala's lower lip glows like a tender leaf, her arms resemble flexible stalks. And youth bewitching like a blossom, shines in all her lineaments⁸⁸. There is also a personification of nature's emotions, when king Dusyanta tell the general that he is requiting hunting, the general makes a rejoinder by stating that the spirit of beast is observed to be affected with various emotions, through fear and anger⁸⁹. However, alternatively, there is an anthromorphisation that also takes place in the plays, for instance, in Act IV of *Vikramōrvaśīya*, on entering the forbidden sacred grove of Kumara, Urvashi was turned into a creeper⁹⁰.

Nature is foregrounded in *prakarna* form of dramatic composition. Since the subject matter of *prakarna* must be drawn from worldly life. The context of the play is of utmost importance to the play. Nature doesn't necessarily have a passive role/agency, it is called upon by the narrative to participate in the play and is often seen as using its own agency, in the *Uttarā-Rāmacarita*, Vasanti addressing Sita says, 'let the trees dripping with floral juice offer their oblations of flowers and fruit; let the

87 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratima Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*, Poona: Oriental Book Agency.1930. *Pratima Nāṭaka Act I* page 107.

88 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,2005. *Abhijñānaśākuntala Act I*, pp 21

89 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,2005. *Abhijñānaśākuntala Act II*, pp 5.

90 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,2005. *Vikramōrvaśīya Act IV*.page 103.

sylvan zephyrs blow, wafting the sweet odour of blooming lotuses; and let the birds with melodious voices incessantly pour forth their sweet songs, for here has king Rama come again in persons to this wood⁹¹. In *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, Priyamvada points to evocative interaction of nature with the characters of the play, she observes, that the pious grove feels distress at the separation from Śākuntala and is in the same destitute condition with the deer leaving morsels of darbha grass, peacocks abort dancing and the creepers pale leaves fall off in the same condition as being felt by the Śākuntala⁹².

Nature in the form of forest and gardens, is constantly used as a dissimilitude for the condition of the hero/heroine in their love frenzy. It is interesting to point out that this lover's frenzy that cannot be contained in the inner compartment of the privacy of the household looks for an outlet in natural setting and is therefore displayed in gardens and forests.

In *Mālatīmādhava*, the setting of the meeting of Malati and Madhava is at first the *madana* garden. Madhava's condition of being love lorn is contrasted and nature is almost a palliative in this case, his friend Makaranda insists that Madhava sit underneath kanchauara tree which had perfumed the garden by the cooling and fragrant perfume of the filament of its flowers which had blown up⁹³. Often this palliative care is consciously acknowledged by the characters of the play, 'O breeze charged with the fragrance of the thick floral juice trickling from the calyces of the

91 M.R. Kale, *The Uttarā-Rāmacharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2003. *Uttarā-Rāmacharita*, Act III pp 78-80, page 33.

92 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2005. *Abhijñānaśākuntala* Act IV pp 11.

93 M.R. Kale, *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 1997. *Malati Madhav*, Act 1, 20, page 23-25

Kunda flowers gaping on account of the opening buds, touch every part of my body after having gently embraced that hair one with tremulous eyes⁹⁴. Then again, the setting of the meeting between Malati and Madhava is kusumkara garden with the śankāra temple⁹⁵. Then again when Madhava is in a swoon, in act IX, pp. 186-189' new cloud with the deep bright hue of a fresh polished rajapatta calls back my friend to life by a shower of water drops'. Fortunately, he has recovered. In *Svapnavāsavadattam*, Vasavadatta contrasts her separation from Udayan from the union in nature of the female chakravaka and male chakravaka⁹⁶. Her description in Act III, with her vacant heart in thought, seated on a stone slab under the priyangu creeper, wearing a natural unadorned dress like the crescent of the moon dimmed by mist.

The similes of nature are also used to describe the maddening torture of love. The use of similes is in order to magnify and embellish the frenzy of love⁹⁷. Lavāṅgika describes malati's state in the following stanza ' because that person, on whose account you drooping like a fading navamalika flower, pine away like a tender leaf of Asoka, plucked off its stem, even he is made to know by the revered god of love

94 M.R. Kale, *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 1997. Malati Madhav Act 1, 38, page 40-42.

95 M.R. Kale, *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 1997 Malati Madhav Act III- pp 64-66 this breeze from the kusumkara garden embraces you, the breeze which is delightful on account of the odour of the opened champaka flower, the petals of which have been reft asunder by the contact of the active swarm of bees that have flown from the tops of the fragrant mango trees resounding with the mingled notes of the cuckoos sweetly warbling in the act of playfully eating the blossoms filled with the sweet honey, and touch of which is cool like sandal paste to your sweet moon-like face bristling with the ambrosial drops of perspiration brought on by the slow gait of the movement of your feet uneven and faltering.

96 Ved Prakash Shastri, *The Svapnavāsavadattam of Mahakavi Bhāsa*. Delhi: Chaukhamba Orientalia. Svapnavāsavadattam Act III

97 Jan Gonda, *Remarks on Similar in Sanskrit Literature*. Leiden: E.J Brill, 1949. page 8.

the unbearableness of anguish⁹⁸. The ardent passion is expressed through metaphors of nature and particularly fauna- in act III- the mind being burnt with heat of passion, just as the lightening that preceded the shower does the heart of the young peacock oppressed with the heat⁹⁹. Vatsaraja, in *Priyadarśikā*, act II, the love birds stands, like me on the marge of the lotus-pool, thinking of his mate; the regions of the world too have suddenly grown dark like the depths of my own heart¹⁰⁰. In *Priyadarśikā*, in act III, in between the play being staged for the queen, Aranyaka sings a song- the honey making bee, smitten with new passion through adverse love, pines with longing to see her mate, who is lovely to look upon¹⁰¹.

Nature is capable of expressing *bhāva* and *rasā* that are indescribable and transcend the power of speech, it enables the disclosure of several emotional changes caused by love. This potentially so, as nature in these plays are idealised and therefore are perfect to represent the undefinable¹⁰². Thus, expression that is then configured into words expressed through nature is employed to create a visual image through acting and singing. In *Mālatīmādhava*, having limbs extremely emaciated, graceful like the interior of a living plantain tree, giving delight to the eyes like the moon with only a single digit left, and reduced to a condition lamentable on account of the burning heat

98 M.R. Kale, *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass Publisher Private Limited, 1997. *Malati Madhava Act II* pp 49-52.

99 M.R. Kale, *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass Publisher Private Limited, 1997. *Malati Madhava Act III* pp 64-66

100 G.K. Nariman, A.V. Williams Jackson and Charles J. Ogden, *Priyadarśikā by Harsha*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd. 1995. *Priyadarśikā Act II* page 37

101 G.K. Nariman, A.V. Williams Jackson and Charles J. Ogden, *Priyadarśikā by Harsha*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd. 1995. *Priyadarśikā Act III*, page 59

102 Jan Gonda, *Remarks on Similar in Sanskrit Literature*. Leiden: E.J Brill, 1949. page 18.

the fire of love, this blessed one pleases our mind and also causes it to tremble¹⁰³. In *Priyadarśikā*, Aranyakas talks of her passion as being greatly distressed by the autumn heat and even yet find no relief from their distress¹⁰⁴. Nature, in the *Pratimā Nāṭaka*, also estimates the sorrowful morbidity that took over Ayodhya when Rama, Lakshmana and Sita left for the forest, the madness of loss is described as ‘ lords of elephants are averse from desiring to eat their fodder; horses with tears in their eyes, have their mouth devoid of neighing; and these citizens , including old men, women and children, having given up all the talking about taking food, have melancholy faces, while crying loudly, gazing towards that very direction whereby Rama departed with his wife and brother¹⁰⁵. Nature, in a sense provides models loss, through the motifs of nature this loss leading to madness can be depicted.

Nature is also used to express *bhāva* and *rasā* to evoke feelings of grief, frenzied angst, for instance, in *Pratimā Nāṭaka*, Act V, the condition of Sita after her abduction, is surmised by ‘like the fruit of penance, from the penance grove, by the villainous ten mouthed Ravana, appears like a serpent, quivering in a serpentine manner and like a flowering creeper being shaken by a breeze’¹⁰⁶. This motif of nature is employed several times as strong emotion causes repetition and the idea is explained through nature being narrativised thus making emotion more lasting.

103 M.R. Kale, *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass Publisher Private Limited, 1997. Malati Madhav Act II, pp52-53

104 G.K. Nariman, A.V. Williams Jackson and Charles J. Ogden, *Priyadarśikā by Harsha*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd., 1995. *Priyadarśikā* Act III, page 41

105 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratima Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1930. *Pratima Nāṭaka* Act II page 88.

106 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratima Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1930. *Pratima Nāṭaka* Act V, page 131.

Nature is used to subtly expand on the dangers of unbridled youth, the need to stem it, in *Malati Madhava*, whilst kamandaki is postulating malati's lovelorn state, there is a tiger roaming freely modelled on the youthful vigour needs to be bridled ' the tiger is playing the part of enraged god of destruction; the tiger, the form of whose body is fierce on account of pomp of the formidable banner in the shape of his thick and long tail waving high in the exercise of natural sports regained by his breaking through the restraint of the chain with which he was tied in the cage'. In consequence of the union of unbearable anger and furry brought about by the pride of the prime of youth¹⁰⁷. The metaphor of tiger is not only for identification but also an opinion on quality and tends to hierarchise nature and cultures of man by extension.

The locale as a backdrop of contrast of the surrounding of the cemetery and nature of danger possessed in the context of cemetery with the soliloquy of madhava about his love of malati- the stark contrast that is created- 'the darkness , hideous by its extent and thick on account of its unctuous mass which hems in from all sides (the funeral pyres) , display advantage their brilliancy; while the ghosts, the goblins and others, frantic with joy and engaged in their wild and confused sport are making one universal clamour by their mingled *kilakila* sounds'¹⁰⁸. The fear elicited from the evocative description of the sky being filled with the faces of fiery mouthed spirits flitting about, whose lank and long bodies are scarcely visible from the fires is blazing forth on account of the horrible opening of their mouth with the corner stretched to the borders of the ears. This allows for the playwright to quicken the pace of the play without necessarily having to. display action.

107 M.R. Kale, *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass Publisher Private Limited, 1997. *Malati Madhav Act III* pp 77-79.

108 M.R. Kale, *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass Publisher Private Limited, 1997. *Mālatīmādhava Act V* pp 102-104

Nature is also the store of memories for the play and acts as the keeper of recollections. The garland of flowers of the beautiful cesura tree that adorns the groves of *kama*, the witness of the deep attachment produced in me by the first sight of Malati¹⁰⁹. Aranyaka remembers the place in the garden that the bees tormented her and she clung to the king¹¹⁰. In the *Uttamaramcarita*, the peacock and *Kadamba* tree are mentioned that were reared by Sita are mentioned by Rama- this is regarded as familiarity as tangible history¹¹¹.

Nature is not only the backdrop to the play, but also sets the setting, under the cover of the girdle of broad rivers the para and the sindhu, with their ellucid water, Padmavati appears to possess the sky as it were, fallen down after being torn off by being rubbed against her lofty mansions, temples and the turrets of the town gates¹¹². James Brandon talks of this locative quality of nature that affects the characters and the audience a like¹¹³.

Nature is used to change scene's setting and pace; this essentially implies that it is with the narrative description of nature that affords the playwright an opportunity to engage with space and time in a malleable manner. *Mālatīmādhava* Act IX- a frightful blending of darkness and lightening obstructing the function of the eye

109, M.R Kale. *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,1997. Malati Madhav Act VIII pp 163-165

110 G.K. Nariman, Williams Jackson, A.V and Charles J. Ogden, *Priyadarśikā by Harsha*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd.,1995. Priyadarśikā Act III page 41

111 M.R Kale, *The Uttara-Rāmacharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,2003. Uttara-Rāmacharita Act III. page 32.

112 M.R. Kale, *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,1997. Malati Madhav Act IX pp 176-177

113 Rachel Van M Baumer, & James R. Brandon.ed., *Sanskrit Drama in Performance*. Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1981. page 5.

appeared for a moment and then disappeared¹¹⁴. In *Priyadarśikā*, in Act 2, the king uses the guise of the bees following Aranyaka to make contact with her with the false pretence of being Indivarika¹¹⁵. In *Uttara-Râmacarita*, Sita's fondling (baby elephant) is rescued by Rama and thus allows for the hero and heroine to come face to face¹¹⁶.

Nature is also used as a trope for sensual pleasure in *Priyadarśikā* of Harsa, the hero talks of receiving through senses, excesses in pleasure, 'the note of the swans here, resembling the tinkling of the loved one's anklets, delights the ear; the outline of the palace, described through the trees on the bank, give pleasures to the eyes, the sense of smell is charmed by the perfume of lotuses; the breeze cooled by contact with waters, diffuse delight through the limbs¹¹⁷. It is precisely because of this pleasure that the senses are exposed to nature that allows for madness to be depicted and felt in the environs of the gardens and forests.

Nature is also ascribed madness, to explicate the love of the hero and heroine, in *Priyadarśikā*, when the play is being performed by the king and aranyaka, sankryayani describes the character of the king such 'here is that self-same form which causes delight to the eyes, the same splendid raiment, here, the same

114 M.R. Kale, *Bhāvabhūti's Mālatīmādhava*. Delhi. Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited.1997. Malati Madhav Act IX pp 201-203.

115 G.K. Nariman, A.V. Williams Jackson and Charles J. Ogden, *Priyadarśikā by Harsha*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd.,1995. *Priyadarśikā*, Act II 'ah, timid one, dismiss thy fear! these bees light upon thy lotus face, lured by the fragrance of its perfume. If, with thine eyes dilated and trembling through fear, thou still wilt shed. Loveliness like that of a cluster of water lilies, how then will they leave thee'. page 33

116 M.R Kale, *The Uttarā-Râmācharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,2003. *Uttamarāmcarita* Act III page 31

117 G.K. Nariman A.V. Williams, Jackson and Charles J. Ogden, *Priyadarśikā by Harsha*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd., 1995. *Priyadarśikā* Act II. page 27.

characteristic gait of the maddened elephant and the lofty dignity¹¹⁸. This ascription of madness to animals, wind and weather are plethora in the dramatic texts. Nature was used to mirror the scene being played out, in *Priyadarśikā*, Act IV, when Aranyaka has consumed poison, the king encapsulating the episode suggests, ‘the bee in its course went to sip the lotus bud sweet with the rich sector that it distils, but it was blasted by a frost that had suddenly fallen upon it! When fate is adverse, wishes bear no fruit’¹¹⁹.

Another instance where the metaphor of bees is employed is in *Svapnavāsavadattam*, Act IV, when Udayan asks the vidūṣaka not to perturb the bees, as the male bee sweetly humming in intoxication by their passionate beloved would have been separated like Udayan from Vasavadatta¹²⁰. In the *Uttara-Râmacarita*, in the battle between Chandraketu and Lava, the atmosphere described evokes terror through celestial drums and rumbling of thunder clouds¹²¹

7: Acts of Madness

The acts associated with madness, allow us to understand the visual code developed and standardised to display depict madness in particular settings. The attendants are referred to as insane, when they don't heed the command of the hero/heroine, in *Pratimā Nāṭaka*, whilst avadatika has made an ethical/moral transgression, on asked

118 G.K. Nariman, A.V. Williams Jackson and Charles J. Ogden, *Priyadarśikā by Harsha*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd.,1995. *Priyadarśikā* Act III page 57.

119 G.K. Nariman, A.V. Williams Jackson and Charles J. Ogden, *Priyadarśikā by Harsha*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd.,1995. *Priyadarśikā* Act IV page 87.

120 Ved Prakash Shastri, *The Svapnavāsavadattam of Mahakavi Bhāsa*. Delhi: Chaukhamba Orientalia. *Svapnavāsavadattam* Act IV.

121 M.R Kale, *The Uttara-Râmacharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,2003. *Uttara-Râmacharita* Act VI pp 140-142.page 62

to rectify the mistake by Sita, her rationalisation of her mistake proclaims her as insane by Sita¹²².

The hero and heroine often refer to their own plight of love as madness, such as Vasavadatta in *Svapnavāsavadattam*, when she is revealing Udayan's good qualities to Padmavati¹²³. Thus, actions done whilst in love are forgiven or seen as less of a transgression because of the spell of love. Dusyanta reproaching the ring and berating it in verse, 'how couldst thou leave that hand with its slender delicate fingers and fall into the water? Or a lifeless thing may well not appreciate excellence. But how could I scorn my beloved?'¹²⁴ Dusyanata also falsely takes a picture of Śākuntala to be real and is in enraptures conversation with the bee in the picture of Śākuntala recollecting his time in the forest with her¹²⁵. Madness that unveils itself through the heightened emotions of anxiety or jealousy reveal how the playwright circumnavigates the idea of reason. This reasonability is debunked and no violation is apprehended because of the temporary cloak of madness.

8: Scenarios of Madness

In this section, we survey the dramatic circumstances and theatrical situation that could culminate into madness. The question raised is whether the dramatic situation itself innately holds the potential to 'drive' a person temporarily insane or does this madness develop due to forces acting out in the dramatic situation. The scenarios that

122 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratimā Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1930. *Pratim Nāṭaka*, Act I, page 76.

123 Ved Prakash Shastri, *The Svapnavāsavadattam of Mahakavi Bhāsa*. Delhi: Chaukhamba Orientalia. *Svapnavāsavadattam* Act II.

124 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2005. *Abhijñānaśākuntala* Act VI pp 13.

125 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2005. *Abhijñānaśākuntala* Act VI pp 21.

are mentioned all have the commonality of the person ‘becoming’ or triggered and therefore lends itself to the idea that there have to be reasons pre-existing or developed to cause madness. These scenarios bring out inner conflict or frustrations, tension and anxieties that on an extreme spectrum appear to be akin to madness. This madness allows uncontrolled emotions, thereby permitting a person to operate outside the regulated framework of behaviour and acting on stage. I disagree with Branimir Reiger who postulates that mad character portrays how societies dominant cultural values are often irreconcilable with character’s lives¹²⁶. I postulate that in Sanskrit dramatic texts its precisely this madness that allows for a resolution to an inner conflict that might be a taboo by couching it in terms outside of regulation and through the depiction and restitution of madness allow for a resolution and normalisation of that conflict. The first scenario of captivity is what sends person to their physical limits by the restrictions placed on the captive. These physical limitations and restrictions send the person into a madness that is paralysing .In *Priyadarśikā*, the *vidūṣaka* at the beginning of the play alludes to the torment faced by the king Vatsaraja, he talks of bondage through the aphorism of an elephant being shackled by iron chains as they rattle again and again, whose torment of heart is futile and hard to bear, whose eye is in a fixed stare through the force of his rage, whose heavy trunk tears up the ground without the joy of sleep even at night¹²⁷. Similarly, in *Vikramōrvaśīya*, Urvashi is in a mental stupor caused by fear, she loses consciousness and is barely being able to breathe¹²⁸.

126Branimir R Reiger.ed., *Dionysus in Literature; Essays in Literary Madness*, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1994. page 8.

127 G.K. Nariman, A.V. Williams Jackson, and Charles J. Ogden, *Priyadarśikā by Harsha*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd.1995. *Priyadarśikā* Act I, page 11.

128 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2005. *Vikramōrvaśīya* Act I, pp 5-6.

Another scenario, that is pervasive in the plays is memory that becomes another catalyst for temporary madness. In the *Uttararāmacaritam*, whilst going over the paintings that were to depict the life of Rama , Sita and Laxman in exile, the episode of Sita's abduction from *janasthana* when viewed , the fire of grief arising from the separation of my beloved however fierce, was at that time born by me through the desire for retaliation, but now revives in my breast, to causes agony like a wound festering in the vital part of my heart, this entire incidence appears as if it were taking place contemporaneously¹²⁹. Rama asks Laxman to desist from recounting the separation as the memory is too strong and painful for him to bear.

Extreme emotional upheavals mirror physical manifestations of madness. In the *Uttara-Rāmacarita*, Rama faces the guilt of having to send *Sita* away, he starts calling out to people. This guilt of bearing the onus of separation causes deep mental anguish. This memory of separation, isn't limited to amorous love, familial love and affection also causes the same level of mental anguish, as is witnessed in *Kausalaya* in Act 4, 'that king, that happiness, that knot of children, and those days-all this stood before her mind's eye at the sight of you, her friend, in that hour of this terrible calamity and then she fainted: for the heart of the matron is as tender as a flower'¹³⁰.

Besides guilt, grief also evokes the same visceral feeling akin to madness. In *Uttarā-Rāmacharita*, murala talks of the grief induced madness that Rama is enduring- in consequence of the torment caused by the continuous grief arising from the befalling of calamity on a beloved person of that sort, and which has gone to excess, good

129 M.R Kale, *The Uttara-Rāmacharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,2003. *Uttara-Rāmacharita* Act I, pp 29-31.page 9

130 M.R Kale, *The Uttara-Rāmacharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited,2003. *Uttara-Rāmacarita* Act IV pp 108-110 page 46

Rama is now exceedingly emaciated¹³¹. Rama identifies his own grief as a stupor, though it were a column of smoke of the fire of my grief concealed within but about to break out fiercely to-day envelops me first¹³². Similarly, the grief of death of Vasavaddata, led Udayan into a swoon that made him unconscious whilst he embraced the burnt remnants of her garments¹³³. Udayan's madness is described as his figure being pale red with dust trough rolling on the ground, muttering gibberish in a pool of tears. In his condition, he refused food and drink that led to severe emaciation. The grief of remorse, led Dusyanta to have deep mental derangement, he sighs deeply, has very red eyes from sleeplessness and grows emaciated¹³⁴. *Moha* (delusion)- Act III, Rama identifies his own behaviour as delusion, caused by his cleverness in constantly entertaining thoughts about Sita¹³⁵. Vasanti also pronounces Rama's behaviour as insanity, when he states that joy has paralysed his senses; excitement has overpowered him, his eyes become unsteady, fixed, stupefied and roll about as he is not able to compose himself¹³⁶. The play alludes delusions to dreams that are perpetuated by various fantasies. In *Svapnavāsavadattam* Act V, King Udayan's dream/ reality is depicted as an antithesis to delusion, where he temporarily reunites with Vasavadatta.

131 M.R Kale, *The Uttara-Râmācharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2003. *Uttara-Râmācarita*, Act III pp 64-65, page 25.

132 M.R Kale, *The Uttara-Râmācharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2003. *Uttara-Râmācarita* Act III pp 69-71 page 28

133 Ved Prakash Shastri, *The Svapnavāsavadattam of Mahakavi Bhāsa*. Delhi: Chaukhamba Orientalia. *Svapnavāsavadattam* Act I

134 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2005. *Abhijñānaśākuntala* Act V. pp 5-6

135 M.R Kale, *The Uttara-Râmācharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2003. *Uttara-Râmācarita* Act III pp 73-75 page 30.

136 M.R. Kale, *The Uttarā-Râmācharita of Bhāvabhūti*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2003. *Uttarā-Râmācarita* Act III pp 88-90 page 38.

Anger of an extreme sort is likened to insanity, as is depicted in Act I of the *Pratimā Nāṭak* by Bhāsa, provoked by injustice meted out to Rama at the hands of king Dasaratha due to the workings of Kaikeyi¹³⁷. Anxiety witnessed in Act V, Rama describes the anxiety caused by the *sraddhaa* ceremony of king Dasaratha, ‘ as wounds to the heart, in his body assaulted with javelin of death¹³⁸. Jealously- In *Vikramōrvaśīya*, Urvashi’s mind is darkened by jealousy on seeing the king looking intently at Udayavati, a *vidhyadhara* damsel. According to the text, the intensity of the love caused madness¹³⁹. Her mind was already darkened by a curse.

Death being the ultimate source of physical distancing and separation is the cause of great anxiety and fear. News of death, is a particular trope that is used in plays to depict physical action that is elaborated by swoons. In *Pratimā Nāṭaka*, on hearing news of his father’s death, Bharata falls down in a swoon, on hearing the news of Rama’s exile, Bharata falls into a doubly violent swoon¹⁴⁰. The plays in a view similar to medical treatises often give a solution remedial treatment. In *Svapnavāsavadattam*, it is shown that this grief is only mitigated by the custom of shedding tears and paying the debt, brings the mind calmness¹⁴¹.

137 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratimā Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1930. *Pratimā Nāṭaka* Act I. page 83.

138 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratimā Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1930. *Pratimā Nāṭaka* Act V, page 122

139 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2005. *Vikramōrvaśīya* Act IV pp 1.

140 Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape, *Pratimā Nāṭaka of Bhāsa*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency. 1930. *Pratimā Nāṭaka* Act III page 103

141 Ved Prakash Shastri, *The Svapnavāsavadattam of Mahakavi Bhāsa*. Delhi: Chaukhamba Orientalia. *Svapnavāsavadattam* Act IV.

9: Medical Descriptions and Theatrical Representation of Disease and Madness

In this section, we will survey, how deep the knowledge network between Ayurvedic understanding of disease, specifically madness and the *kāvya*s based on the theoretical rules of Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* run. R.K Sen, believes that Bharata extensively borrowed from *Caraka* in his treatment of *vyabhicharibhāva* from the *yoga sūtra* and *Caraka saṁhitā*¹⁴².

There are several allusions made to disease, physicians and nature of madness in the theatrical plays of Bhāsa, Bhāvaabhuṭi and Kālidāsa. These allusions are partly made to the human participation in the play and therefore disease, madness and death were well within the ambit of thematic scheme and partly because of the literary tradition in which the playwright had to showcase his knowledge of other fields of study apart from poetics and grammar.

A large number of *vyabhicharibhāva* discussed by Bharata come under *agnatu* division, while the rest fall under the class of *nija* disease¹⁴³. The *vyabhaicharibhāva* of *śrama*, *abega*, *apasmāra*, *ugrata*, *abhighataja*, *trasā* and *moha* are incidentally the same that we deal with in the plays. Bharata seems to have been deeply influenced by Caraka's analysis of *agnatu* causes leading to diseases. The causes of *agnatu* diseases may thus be traced to interference by supernatural powers¹⁴⁴.

142 R.K. Sen, *Aesthetic Enjoyment; its background in Philosophy and Medicine*, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1966. page 294

143 R.K. Sen, *Aesthetic Enjoyment; its background in Philosophy and Medicine*, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1966. page 301

144 R.K. Sen, *Aesthetic Enjoyment; its background in Philosophy and Medicine*, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1966. Page 305- the associated causes *mocha* are *daivo-paghata*, *vyasana*, *vyādhi*, *bray* and all kinds of mental derangement like envy, grief, anger and hate.

Bharata discusses another branch of *agnatu* disease, those resulted from the interference of devas, *nagas*, *piśācas*, *yakṣa*¹⁴⁵. The *apasmāra* as defined by Bharata focus mainly on *pitr* and *piśāca*; impurities, untimely journeys, jumping, running, falling down, sweating, paralysing, foaming at the mouth and licking with the tongue¹⁴⁶.

Unmāda resulting from a derangement of *vāta*, *pitta* and *ślesmā* as well as *unmāda* of *agnatu* nature. Bharata knows almost all the varieties of *unmāda*, known in the medical treatise. Bharata discusses *unmāda* separate from other diseases and not within the rubric of illness. All that give rise from the derangement of *vāta*, this includes the symptoms of laughing, crying, shrieking and prattling at inopportune moments and at inappropriate time. Whilst discussing *pitta unmāda*, Bharata mentions running about. Bharata includes *kapha unmāda* that points to morbidity by mentioning sluggishness in activities and speech especially the will to recline and lie down. Bharata enumerates exogenous types of *unmāda* caused by extraneous causes which lead to seizures by the gods etc. Bharata speaks of a mad man who sings and dances who seems to be possessed by *gandharava*, he speaks of mad man who throws dust, dirt and grass over the body and wears rags who seems to be possessed by *piśāca*. There is still another type of madman who dresses himself with garlands and puts on ornaments¹⁴⁷. *Jadatā* (stupefaction) is similar to *kapha unmāda*; a man is called stupid when due to senselessness he cannot distinguish between good and bad,

145 R.K Sen, *Aesthetic Enjoyment; its background in Philosophy and Medicine*, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1966. page 306

146 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II Delhi. Nag Publishers. 1998. page 214.

147 M.M. Ghosh, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol I. Calcutta: Grathalaya Pvt. Ltd. 1967. Chapter VII page 140.

happiness and misery, remains silent and dependent on others¹⁴⁸. *Visāda* (despair) also has *kapha unmāda* traits, these include absent mindedness, drowsiness, sighs and contemplation, looking for lonely places¹⁴⁹. The depiction of these emotional states is configured in opposition to what is considered wellbeing and socially acceptable and therefore become part of the cultural assumption which is internalised by the actor and the audience¹⁵⁰. *Glāni* (debility) is also associated with *kapha unmāda*, the similarity of sexual appetitive, along with purging lack of enthusiasm-weakness is shown on stage with weak voice, weakness of eyesight, poor gait and tremor of limbs¹⁵¹. *Dainya* (depression) is also associated with the pathology of *kapha unmāda*; the paralysis of the limbs and mental imbalance is similar to those that are represented in the *Caraka Samhitā*¹⁵². *Avega* or flurry produced by vis such as earthquakes, meteors gust of winds and mad rush of elephants have combination of *vāta* and *pitta unmāda* running about, distraction of mind, moving over of the limbs.

10: Vidūṣaka as a Mad Person

The characteristics of a mad person have been detailed in a previous section, in this section we look at the embodiment of those characteristics in a stock figure of the *vidūṣaka*. The comic sentiment is born out of the permanent or dominant mood called *hasa* (mirth). It is generated by the determinants such as *vikṛtaparaveṣa* (ludicrous imitation of another dress), *vikṛtālankāra* (misplaced ornaments), *dhārṣṭya*

148 M.M. Ghosh, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol I. Calcutta. Grathalaya Pvt. Ltd. 1967. Chapter VII page 135.

149 M.M. Ghosh, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol I. Calcutta. Grathalaya Pvt. Ltd. 1967. Chapter VII page 136

150 Lillian Feder, *Madness in Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. page 7.

151 M.M. Ghosh, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol I. Calcutta: Grathalaya Pvt. Ltd. 1967. Chapter VII page 127.

152 M.M. Ghosh, *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol I. Calcutta: Grathalaya Pvt. Ltd. 1967. Chapter VII page 130.

(impudence), *laulya* (fickleness), *kuhaka* (tickling), *asatpralāpa* (prattle), *vyāṅgadarśana* (display of deformities) and *doṣodāharana* (showing of the faults of others with pointed remarks). These characteristics are symbolic of what constituted as acts of madness which were steeped representationally in the ludicrous and absurd. It should be represented by gestures like *oṣthaspandana* (twitching of the lip), *nāsāspandana* (trembling of the nose), *kapolaspandana* (throbbing of the cheek), *drṣṭivṛyākośa* (opening and closing of the eyes). *Drṣṭyākuñcana* (contraction of the eyes), *sveda* (perspiration), *āsyarāga* (colour of the face) and *pārśvagrahaṇa* (pressing of the sides)¹⁵³. The transitory sentiments are *ālasya* (indolence), *avahittha* (dissembling), *tandrā* (weariness), *Swapna* (dreaming), *prabodha* (awakening), *asūyā* (envy).

This comic of is of two kinds, *atmasta* (based on oneself) and *parasta* (based on others). When one laughs at oneself it's called *atmasta* and when one makes other's laugh it's called *parasta*¹⁵⁴. The *vidūṣaka* as an embodiment of the madness we've come to define is closer to the *atmasta*. This sentiment is mostly common in women and characters of lower type. Lillian Feder, notes the consistency in the descriptors that capture the attitude of society towards madness¹⁵⁵. This has got six varieties, *Smita* (smile), *hasita* (laughter), *vihasita* (gentle smile), *upahasita* (ridicule)¹⁵⁶, *apahasita* (mocking)¹⁵⁷ and *atihāsita* (boisterous laughter)¹⁵⁸. *Apahasita* and

153 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers, 1998. page 168.

154 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol II, Delhi. Nag Publishers, 1998. page 168

155 See Lillian Feder, *Madness in Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1983.

156 *Upahasita*, the nostrils are blown, the eyes get contracted and crooked, and the shoulders as well as the head become bent slightly.

157 *Apahasita*, is misplaced act with eye moistened with tears and shoulders and head shaking violently

158 *Atihāsita*, is characterised by agitation, shedding tears, change of voice in an increased pitch and hands holding on to the side (at the hips).

atihāsita are for the lowest type of people. The *vidūṣaka*, along with the *samara* and similar characters in a play are of mixed nature¹⁵⁹.

The *vidūṣaka* functions as an assistant to the hero in his love affair. Based on the nature of the hero, the role of the *vidūṣaka* being subsidiary is adapted. The *vidūṣaka* role in a dramatic setting with pertaining to gods was to instigate quarrels between gods and demons, this is made possible because of his honest nature, encyclopaedic knowledge of history and ethics.

Dvijā (brahmin) with reference to a king, he provokes laughter among the cultured people, the jokes which the *vidūṣaka* cuts in the presence of the king, particularly those directed against the hero themselves have quality of wisdom inspired by the knowledge of the world. The *vidūṣaka* has free access to the harem and is also liked by the maids, he is the instigator of jealousies and quarrels and depend on the dramatic situation in the play.¹⁶⁰

Rajjivi (an officer in employ of the king) with reference to a minister, he should possess qualities such as use obscene expression, reveal faults of the couple, he loves all kind of food, prescribed and prohibited, he always touches the weak spots of other and talks wittily. These utterances of the *vidūṣaka* are often diametrically opposite to the real situation and therefore on surface may seem as candid madness but often are a tool employed by the playwright to layer the true intention of the plot bare¹⁶¹. His

159 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol IV Delhi. Nag Publishers.1998. page 1062

160 GK Bhat, *Viduska*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959. page 99

161 Lillian Feder, *Madness in Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.page 17.

utterances are mostly jocular and he likes talk which is full of fun serving some purpose of his own, ¹⁶².

Vidūṣaka is one of the pegs of the canvas on which social realities are depicted in plays. Even when the hero is drawn from either mythology or legend, the contemporary social setting appears to have been regarded as the most essential element for the particular pattern of court comedy¹⁶³. The *vidūṣaka* is integral to the narrative structure of the plot as it is him often who seen to perform one or both functions of describing a change in scene or introducing the hero whose companion he is¹⁶⁴.

The catalysing role of liasoning meetings between the lovers falls to the *vidūṣaka*. The hero needed an intimate and trustworthy friend, who could act as liaison between the prince and his love, as the hero belonged to a noble and high class family, he is not expected to repose confidence in a low or minor character or even in an elderly minister, because none of them could be treated on a friendly level¹⁶⁵. the low could not find access to prince's chambers and his harem and the elderly minister belonged to a different age group. Naturally, such an important function could only be satisfactorily discharged by a brahmana, the highest of the high born¹⁶⁶. F.B. Kuiper, is of the view that *vidūṣaka* is the only character on stage who meets the king on an equal footing, this is borne from the observation that the king

162 GK Bhat, *Viduska*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959. page 101.

163 G.K. Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959. page 39.

164 G.K. Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co. 1959. page 130.

165 For instance, in the case of *Svapnavāsavadattam*, *Udayan* is only willing to admit his confidence to *Vasantaka* of his greater love for *Vasavadatta* over *Padmavati*.

166 I. Shekhar, *Sanskrit Drama, Its Origin and Decline*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960. page 76.

and *vidūṣaka* address each other as friend (*vayasya*), which is a form of address that is exclusively permitted between people of equal standing¹⁶⁷.

For gods, kings, ministers and brahmins in their condition of love-in separation, *vidūṣaka* and others who are experts in storytelling and conversation provide assistance¹⁶⁸. As a companion to the hero in separation, the *vidūṣaka* comforts the hero through diversion. If the *vidūṣaka* adopts the mode of laughter for this purpose and does not give practical or wise counsel the effect is of comic relief. Relief of comedy for the insanity of love. The *vidūṣaka*'s humour in play works certainly as a psychological relief both for the hero and the spectator. It enables a comic situation to return the necessary emotional equilibrium¹⁶⁹.

Vidūṣaka also performs the function of bringing news or carrying a message to the harem thus supplying a link in the development of story. *Vidūṣaka*'s follies are used for the purpose of plot development. *Vidūṣaka*'s idiocy is used to create opportunities for others for doing their work and therefore bringing about certain developments in the story. The *vidūṣaka* interferes with the plot but in very specific ways, as the counter stroke of the spirit of the play itself: the loftiness of the sentiment comes from contrast of the vulgarity of the *vidūṣaka*¹⁷⁰.

Vidūṣaka includes in himself the caricature of brahman, as a true mark of art that a person who laughs at others should possess the disarming ability to laugh at himself.

Vidūṣaka should exhibit a humorous side, so that he can show a mirror to the king of

167 F.B. Kuiper, *Varuna and Vidūṣaka*, Amsterdam: Letterkunde N.S. Deel, 1979. page 205

168 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol IV, Delhi. Nag Publishers. 1998. page 1064

169 GK Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co. 1959. page 140.

170 F.B. Kuiper, *Varun and Vidūṣaka*, Amsterdam: Letterkunde N.S. Deel, 1979. page 206.

his insanity¹⁷¹ - continue to openly or covertly at the cost of the royal hero in love situations¹⁷². *Vidūṣaka* came to typify the brahmin class, some of the familiar traits came to be attached to him as popular devices for evoking laughter, as other traits, like ignorance of sastra and ugliness of figure¹⁷³. The complex of hunger with implied gluttony which also explained both on psychological and physical levels, this greed for food is unlimited and is expressed in various ways¹⁷⁴. *Vidūṣaka*'s gargantuan appetite is aptly described in *Vikramōrvaśīya*, where he salivates over preparation of different kinds of dishes with all the material put together¹⁷⁵. The *vidūṣaka* holds to ridicule, in his own character, the brahmin caste and this ridicule is a social satire on the pretensions, privileges and the parasitic encumbrances of this class. This is reflected in the terms designated to him of *mahabrahmana*, the phrase indicating a stupid and ignorant brahmin¹⁷⁶.

According to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the role of the *vidūṣaka* should be assigned to a person who is short-statured, with protruding teeth, hunchbacked, with ugly face, bald headed and red-eyed¹⁷⁷. The appearance of the *vidūṣaka* is of great importance, he is described by the phrase '*cheda-vibhusitavadano*' this refers to the stripes of colour put on the face, *vidūṣaka* is painted with black soot, brown soft stone. The Sanskrit

171 *Svapnavāsavadattam*, the garland, lying on the floor of the summer house is mistaken for a snake by *Vidūṣaka*, he is chastised by King Udayan.

172 G.K. Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959. page 43

173 G.K. Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959. page 47

174 In *Svapnavāsavadattam*, *Vidūṣaka* states that his food isn't being digested well, he can't sleep and feels gout. the pleasure of the palaces are overpowered by illness.

175 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2005, *Vikramōrvaśīya*, Act II, pp 2.

176 In *Svapnavāsavadattam*, Udayan mocks Vasantaka as mahabrahman when vasantaka refused to divulge his preference of Queen.

177 N.P. Unni, *Nāṭyaśāstra* Vol IV. Delhi. Nag Publishers. 1998. page 1089

dramatist assume the peculiar appearance of the *vidūṣaka*. The repulsion of these aberrations were used to draw out a reaction from the audience, hence ugliness and deformity became mechanisms to illicit to responses from spectators. In *Abhijñānaśankātulam*, the *vidūṣaka* after complaining of the hardships of the forest, and recollecting the luxuries of city life, to catch the attention of the King, stands crippled as if he had paralysis of the limbs and pretends is unable to move his hands¹⁷⁸.

This appearance is accentuated by designated head-dresses(*pratisira*) that were assigned to each dramatic character. Bharata prescribes three locks of hair or completely shaven head for the *ceta* and for the *vidūṣaka* ‘*khallikakapada*’ bald pate with two side locks (in the manner of crow’s feet). The *vidūṣaka*’s appearance is exaggerated to make it uglier, *vidūṣakas* in Sanskrit plays are described as having head resembling camel knees, monkey like appearance and voices of an ass¹⁷⁹. His appearance is marked by the clothes that are intended to elicit laughter. It is mentioned that *vidūṣaka* should wear a choice of bark (deer skin probably), a brown robe, or a loose lower garment¹⁸⁰. This is done in order to enhance the ‘ugliness’ and ‘shapelessness’ of the *vidūṣaka*. All accessories put on or used by the *vidūṣaka* are employed to produce laughter, thus the *yagnopavita* (sacred thread) is put to comic use. The *vidūṣaka* carries in his hand a stick called ‘*danda-kastha*’ or *kutilaka*, such a

178 C.R. Devadhar, *Works of Kālidāsa: Three Plays*, Vol I. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publisher Private Limited, 2005, *Abhijñānaśākuntala* Act II pp 1.

179 G.K. Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959, page 51.

180 G.K. Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959, page 59.

stick was made out of *kapittha* or bilva wood¹⁸¹, the stick became an accessory to and the *vidūṣaka* used it to chase away bees and pigeons in a comic show of heroism.

Vidūṣaka is described to be ‘*dvijihva*’, double tongued, serpent like, which a reference to the inconsistent speech and bluffing which are characteristic of the *vidūṣaka*. Speech is extremely important to the character of the *vidūṣaka*, he is talkative and that is precisely his weapon for producing laughter. *Vidūṣaka* might exhibit mental instability, dullness or stupidity. May fail to understand a point or misunderstand it. *Vidūṣaka* is shown as a character with low threshold of emotional excitation, given the slightest hint as to the nature of the expected reaction to a situation, they are liable to produce it in an exaggerated form¹⁸².

In the *purvanga*, the *vidūṣaka* suddenly steps on the stage and delivers a discourse consisting mostly of irrelevant narration which evokes a smile from the *sūtradhara*, the *vidūṣaka* enters controversial topics, makes abrupt remarks, talk enigmatically and asks questions. The conversation between the assistant and the *vidūṣaka* in which the *vidūṣaka* finds faults with the speech of the assistant and which the *sūtradhar* establishes as *trigata*¹⁸³. This according to Lillian Feder, is a depiction of distorting reality where the character allows himself to build a parallel reality in order to retribute himself from his/her psychic deprivations¹⁸⁴. Timidity or cowardice which is

181 G.K. Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959. Originally it was the weapon of brahman, given by him and was meant to instil fear into the *vighna*, or the dangers, which had threatened the dramatic performance; the *vighna* were beaten of stage with this staff which came to be known as *jarjara*. The *vidūṣaka* carried the *jarjara* as a symbol of protection in the *Purvanga*.

182 GK Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959. page 157

183 G.K Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959. page 109

184 Lillian Feder, *Madness in Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. page 27.

to be seen in most *vidūṣaka* from a denigrating comedic perspective. the reaction of fear which would be expressed by appropriate gesticulations will elicit laughter.

Vidūṣaka often conceals real practical wisdom under the cloak of his foolishness. When it takes the form of playful criticism, the *vidūṣaka* takes on the role of the critic, symbolising as it were the conscience of the play¹⁸⁵. *Vidūṣaka* as privileged jester fires a broadside at the social and moral defects, Humour through acts of madness on this level takes on verbal form and appears as witty remarks the *vidūṣaka*, by giving rhyming sound effects and double meanings and hence providing insight.

Vidūṣaka's wit manifests itself very often as innocent nonsense. In fact, *vidūṣaka* often becomes the mouth piece of common sense. the quality of wit, illustrates the most essential condition of humour, acute observation and intelligence¹⁸⁶. Different forms of incongruity produce variant natures of humour. there could be pure ridicule, caricature or parody. given the context of literary presentation, there could be verbal humour, humour of the situation and humour of the character¹⁸⁷.

Conclusion

In the setting of the sanskrit dramatic texts we contend with layered realities. In this make-believe world of theatre what is real and unreal take on a significantly different meaning. Thus, by extension in theatrical reality, notions of madness are different than from what we encounter in the real world.

185 GK Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co., 1959. page 139.

186 GK Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co, 1959. Page 168

187 GK Bhat, *Vidūṣaka*, Ahmedabad: The New Order Book Co, 1959. page 155.

The dramatic treatises meant for performance allow for the writing to convert into speech and therefore madness transposes from the written word into action and gestures. The physicality of madness extends beyond depiction and acting but to the cultural performance of madness. This as we have now seen required an encoding of visual and aural information that was commonly agreed to by spectators and actors and therefore was part of the cultural information that was also enshrined in the medical treatises of the time. In these plays, set pieces of events played out by stock characters and not individuals ironically allow audiences to distantly experience personal episodes of tension, anxiety and madness. As Branmir Reiger points out, these experiences ‘overemphasise; one element of basic anxiety: helplessness, hostility or isolation’¹⁸⁸.

The Sanskrit plays that are have fixity in content in terms of theme predominantly love and morality and obstacles that impede causing conflict, have common motivation of reconciliation and achieving success in love. Madness in this context, becomes part of the roadblock when frustration mounts and conflicts are mapped out by allowing the lovers to frenzy and swoon. This magnification of separation allows for embellishment of different emotions and allows for the playwright to quicken the pace of the narrative. Thus, we realise how critical madness becomes in the satiation of love and realisation of aesthetic pleasure for the audience.

188 Branimir R. Reiger.ed., *Dionysus in Literature; Essays in Literary Madness* ,Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press,1994. page 23.

Chapter Four: Madness in Devotional Tradition

From the previous chapter, we noted the pulls and pushes of literary love felt by fictional character that led to a state of madness. In this chapter, we survey love set in the dye of devotion. In this temporal space of the 'real world', the saints of medieval India share a seemingly homologous emotional arch with the literary figures of Kālidās, Bhāvabhūti and Bhāsa. The love of the literary characters, sedation and union that is considered success in love is on the surface demonstrated by the saints. However, this love is transformed into devotional love where we witness a loss of personhood/self. The separation and ensuing suffering felt is considered to be the path of spiritual journey. The union that is envisioned is a spiritual union not with a lover but with the Supreme being. In the following chapter, we shall examine madness in the context of this nature of devotional love, the suffering experienced and felt, culminating with the union.

1: Mysticism in the context of Devotional Traditions

Devotional traditions transformed the manner in which religion was practiced in medieval India. The impulse towards a personal devotional faith profoundly changed both the quality and structure of the structure of religious life. Starting in South India in the 7th C.E, it spread northward through Karnataka and Maharashtra and reached North India and Bengal from the 15th C.E. onwards. From ritual observances and the observances and performances of prescribed duties, there was a shift to ascetic withdrawal in search of speculative knowledge of the divine.

The devotional traditions found in India are numerous and are strongly regional, sectarian and distinguished not only by their doctrinal content but by their separate

histories. An imitable aspect of these different devotional traditions are poet saints who are moral, ethical exemplars attached to devotional groups or traditions. Some poets were devoted to Shiva, others to Vishnu or one of his incarnations, yet others to the goddess in one or another form., while still others worshipped supreme god transcending all these concrete manifestations. The poet saints have devotional fervour that is unmatched, often this expression of devotion led to mystical experiences. These mystical experiences often have the same characteristics in manifestation as that of a mad person. The differentiation between the mystical behaviour displayed by poet saints of different devotional tradition will be juxtaposed to the madness of individual deemed as sick.

Many historians, philosophers and theologians alike have attempted to create broad categories in order to make sense of mysticism and the mystical experience per se. The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Mysticism compiled by John Ferguson, attempts to define mysticism as union with the ultimate reality with immediate relation to God¹. Denise and John Carmody have constructed a tool for analysing the theories of mysticism. According to them, theories of mysticism are broadly camped into two; '1) the essentialist theory which stresses the sameness of the peak experiences that human beings are likely to nominate as instances of mysticism'². The criticism drawn by such a theory is that it tends to assume that human nature does not vary from culture to culture or historic period to historic period. '2) the empiricist theory comprise the second category, this view is more concerned with the particulars of the

1 John Ferguson, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mysticism and the Mystery Religion*. London: Thames and Hudson.1977. page 126.

2 Denise Lardner Carmody and John Tully Carmody, *Mysticism; Holiness East and West*, Oxford: Oxford University Press,1996. page 6.

mystical experience than the essentialist view is'³. It gives more weight to the language, the historic period, the other aspects of an individual's culture. These two broad categorisations though strive to preclude Indian mysticism, unfortunately fall short. Giving precedence as they do to the written word, they do not take into account the orality of Indian culture and overlook the Bhakti aspect of Indian mysticism in which spoken words are knitted together intricately in metre and rhyme and have just as much importance as the content of the lyrics⁴.

William James in his seminal work; elucidating varieties of religious experience⁵, was one of the first to propose a functional definition of mystical experiences. The ineffability of the experience is the first characteristic postulated upon. William James remarks on the inarticulation of the experience and triumphs the feeling of the experience over the cognitive processing of it. The second characteristic is noetic quality; mystical states seem to those who experience them to be also states of knowledge. This knowledge in Indian mysticism is derived from internal reflection and not sought outside of the self⁶. They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain, and as a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time. Transiency is the third characteristic, where it is understood that mystical states cannot be sustained for

3 Ibid. p 6.

4 F. Kingsbury and G.E. Phillips, *Hymns of the Tamil Śaivite Saints*. Calcutta: Association Press, 1921, page 4.

5 William James, *Varieties of Religious Experiences*, Calcutta: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920.

6 George Grieson and Lionel Barnett, *Lallā Vākyāni The Wise Sayings of Lal Ded*, London: The Royal Asiatic Society. 1920. 'Jñānāk ambar pairith tanē yim pad lali dāpi tim hrēdi òkh kārāni pranawāk lay kor Lalē tēth. Jyōto kōsu maranūñū shōkh' 'Arise mount, pierce through the sun's disk. Then will flee from thee the fear of death. Clothe thou thy body in the garb of knowledge. Brand thou thy heart the verses that Lalla spake.' page 90

long. The fourth characteristic being passivity. The oncoming of mystical states may be facilitated by preliminary voluntary operations, as by fixing attention, or going through certain bodily performances, or in other ways which manuals of mysticism prescribe. Yet when the characteristic sort of consciousness once has set in, the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power.

2: Mystical Experience: An Overview

There is a difference made among scholars such as R.C Zaehner on the plethora of mystical experiences, namely, panenhenic, monistic and theistic mystical experience. The panahenic experience may be described as an experience which leads to the 'oneness' of all things. In the monistic experience, there is a withdrawal of senses from their objects, the experience is non-sensory. Thus, the monistic experience means, the isolation of the soul from all that is other than itself. While discussing the mystical experience in theistic system Zaehner points out that while monistic experiences within the self, the theistic maintains the distinction between man and God⁷.

The mystical experience has been documented in all cultural traditions of the east and west. Mystics themselves have used images and metaphors to describe their mystical experiences and have had their lives and experiences been written in anthologies and hagiographies by later generations.

According to Boreham, 'most mystics have experienced 'introvert mysticism', where the mystic turn inwards and there finds the One at the bottom of the self. Introverted

⁷ Philip C. Almond, *Mystical Experiences and Religious Doctrines*. Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1982. page 32.

mysticism is concerned with the total suppression of the sensory intellect and the disappearance of the empirical content of consciousness. This is achieved by fixing the mind on a single point to the exclusion of all other mental content⁸. Poet saints of the Bhakti tradition do not draw such strict boundaries between conscious and unconscious and do not recommend suppression of sensory intellect. They promulgate an inseparability of conscious and subconscious.

‘Faculty of intuition’ is the closest western scholars have come to describing the mystics unity of all⁹. It is intuition, the faculty whereby knowledge is obtained not by normal reasoning processes, but by direct experience of God, which leads man to God and remains the fount of knowledge whereby the mystic interprets his experience of the union with Reality. The union of *Akka Mahadevi* describes how *Cennamallikārjunā* drew her into his arms compassionately as though she were his child. The mystics of the poet saint traditions are not consumed in same way with the western notion of reality¹⁰.

Mystics often talk of direct contact with the Ultimate Reality, this they define as per their own cultural symbolisation. Direct contact here necessarily needs to be looked upon as an experience and not an idea (that is feeling rather than thinking, as opposed to when one is discussing intuition)¹¹. Boreham’s suggestion is steeped in materiality of the world when he promulgates that God ceases to be an object and

8 N.A. Boreham, *Mysticism in the Indian Tradition*. Delhi: Sri SatGuru Publications, 1989.page 3.

9 Ibid Page 3.

10 S.S. Bhoosnumarth, Armando Menezes, *Śūnyasampādane*, Vol IV, Dharwar. Karnāṭaka University, 1970.‘*Kadaliyembude geddi tale baduki bando, kadaliya banadalli bhavaharana bhavagettu banda magalendu kandenu karunadim tegedu bigijappidare, Cennamallikārjunā hrdayakamaladalli adagidenu*’. page 368

11 Ibid, p 4.

becomes the experience, the object and subject lose their distinction, and thereby the mystic experiences the undifferentiated unity of all. The unitive state is beyond an experience or revelation it is an emergence of complete silence of articulation.¹².

The expression of 'mystical feeling' has been another source of debate and discussion. It is believed that God while being omnipresent is paradoxically only present to the mystic in the deepest and most central part of the soul. When this centre does become reunited with the 'infinity of God', the mystics have often used the term 'joy' to explain the feeling which the experience has on them. This joy is of such intensity that it manifests itself in action of love. The mystic finds it difficult to contain this love and it pervades their writings and activities immensely. This immense joy is akin to madness as when describing beseechingly awakening and thus uniting with God. B.K Matilal on the other hand, propounds the ineffability doctrine¹³ to explain the peak experience in *Brahman* realisation. Mystics use different methods by which they the notion of the ineffable ultimate reality may be effectively conveyed. The poetic metaphor and rhetoric are devices used to convey the notion that is in principle, incommunicable. Poet's language or mystic's language is a different sort of symbolism, where what is ineffable in ordinary everyday language is at least communicable or presentable in a sense¹⁴. Paradox is the second method used along with contradictions. Paradoxes can only be used to communicate

12 Ibid.page 369 '*lingavanne, lingaikyavanne saṅgavanne, nissaṅgavanne. ayittene, āgadenne, nīnenne, nānenne*' 'I call it not Linga, nor union with Linga, I call it not touch, nor yet absence of touch, I do not, I do not say it occurred nor say it cannot be, I call it not Thou or I'

13 In which the ultimate reality is considered ineffable and the mystical experience in which the Ultimate Reality is supposed to be revealed is also beyond words.

14 B.K. Matilal, *Perception; An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

effectively if we do not try to comprehend them with our familiar symbols¹⁵.

Paradoxes are used by asserting two mutually contradictory statements to get the point across¹⁶.

Via Negativa is traditionally called *neti*, this means that the ineffable can be communicated in our language by denying or negating all the predicates of our language when they are applied to the ineffable.

Every mystic appears to undergo the same basic ‘ordered movement’, and it is this commonality that binds mystical experiences across the board. As experienced and reported by the mystics, this is the sudden conversion that follows a long period of great unrest and disquiet. Known as ‘the awakening of the Self’, it is the sudden realisation of a strikingly new and different emotional experience that seems to exist beyond sensation, and that carries with it the awareness of a ‘higher’, more desirable level of experience¹⁷. After the mystic experiences this deeper level of consciousness, s/he finds that his /her former pattern of living no longer satisfying. There is an intense desire to purge oneself, this has been termed as ‘the purification of Self’. The behaviours that involved in his/her everyday functioning in the social world are not applicable to this more personal experience and so must be discarded¹⁸.

This purification of self is problematic in the context of the poet saints of the Bhakti

15 Ibid, p 45.

16 S.S. Bhoosnumarth, Armando Menezes, *Śūnyasampādane*, Vol IV, Karnāṭaka University, Dharwar, 1970. page 308 ‘*kāyadolage akāyavāyittu. jīvadolage nirjīvavāyittu. bhavadolage nirbhavavāyittu. Enna manadolage ghana nenahāyittu .enna tale molegala nōdi salahidirāgi*’ ‘Within my body there is now a disembodied state, within my life there is a state transcending life, Within my will there is a willlessness’.

17 Richard Woods, *Understanding Mysticism*, New York. Image Books,1980 page 323.

18‘The extreme ascetic practices that are of many mystics that occur during this stage are designed to purge the individual of his/her need for old connections with social reality. Once this is accomplished the process of purgation ceases. The goal of mortification for the mystic is life, but this life can only come through the “death” of the “old Self”’.

context as poet saint talk of the self amorphously and are ambiguous about delineating boundaries of the realm of Self¹⁹. After the person, has purged him/herself of his former interest and involvement with the social world, he enters the third stage called ‘Illumination of Self’. Here the mystic’s experiences more fully what lays beyond the boundaries of his immediate senses. The main reported characteristic of this stage is the joyous apprehension of what the mystic experiences to be absolute²⁰.

‘This is perhaps the most striking stage of the mystical process; here there is a total negation and rejection of the joy of the preceding stage. The person feels totally removed and alienated from his previous experiences and feels alone and depressed’²¹. This state of western fugue is less pronounced in the mystical experience of Bhakti poet saints as the social boundaries between asceticism and the social world are far more liminal in the Indian subcontinent. The western conceptual understanding of renunciation is based on detachment and is markedly anti-social, on the contrary the bhakti-poet’s documented experience is not isolationary at all.

Though not the final stage, this is the culmination of the mystic’s quest: the complete and total absorption in the asocial, personal world, what has been called ‘the unitive life’. Consideration of the obliteration of the senses, and even the sense

19 George Grieson and Lionel Barnett, *Lallā Vākyāni The Wise Sayings of Lal Ded*, London. The Royal Asiatic Society, 1920. ‘*Sahasas shēmta dam nō gatshi, yitshi nō prāwakh mōkti-dwar, Salilas lawan-zan mīlith gatshi to-ti chubby durlab sahaza vētsār*’ Quietism and self command are not required for (the knowledge of) the self, Nor by the mere wish, wilt thou reach the door of final release. page 50.

20 S.S. Bhoosnumarth and Armando Menezes, *Śūnyasampādane, Vol IV*, Karnāṭaka University, Dharwar, 1970. ‘*kūdalacennasaṅgayana hridayakamalava bagidu hokku nijapadavaneydida Mahadeviakkana Śrīpādakke namō namō enutirdenu.*’ ‘To the holy feet of Mahadevi Akka, who, cleaving her way into the lotus heart of Lord Kudala Cennasaṅga, has won The station of the Absolute’.page 370

21 Richard Woods, *Understanding Mysticism*. New York: Image Books, 1980.page 324.

of self, resulting in the experience of unity with the universe. ‘This state has been described as a state of pure consciousness, in which the individual experiences nothing. The individual has seemingly made contact with the deepest-region of his consciousness and experiences the process as having been completed. Emotionally, the person feels totally tranquil and at peace’²². The ‘Self’ in the Bhakti tradition is different from the individuality of western perspective. There is no anxiety of loss of personhood instead we witness an integration and merging²³.

3: Mysticism as a Psychological Concept

In their historical engagements metaphysics and theology have distanced themselves from mysticism in order to validate their disciplines on grounds of rationality. William Ernest Hocking states that psychology scores over mysticism in the ability to give meaning to signs through cause and effect as mysticism is not entrenched in particular doctrine; mysticism is looked upon as a community of experience²⁴. I contend, on the contrary that mysticism in medieval India becomes part of the doctrine of bhakti through a transition of oral to written documentation of the mystical experience of the poet saints. In fact, the *vaakh*, *pada* and *vacana*’s of the saints without privileging the mystical experience and ephemeral union legitimises the bhakti doctrine.

22 Richard Woods, *Understanding Mysticism*. New York: Image Books, 1980. page 324.

23 Grieson, George and Lionel, Barnett, *Lallā Vākyāni: The Wise Sayings of Lal Ded*, London: The Royal Asiatic Society. 1920. page 85. ‘*Lal bōh tsāyēs sōman-bāga-baras wuchum skiwas shēkath milith ta wāh tat lay kūrūm amrēta- saras zinday maras ta mē kari kyāh*’ I. Lallā, passed in through the door of the jasmine-garden of my soul. And there, O Joy! Saw I Śiva seated united with His Sakti.

24 William Ernest Hocking, ‘The Meaning of Mysticism as Seen Through Its Psychology’. *Mind* 21, no. 81 (1912): 38-61.

Psychological engagement with mysticism has been to the extent of studying mystical experiences in their content and value. The mystical experiences are taken at face value and are put under the scanner of psychological concepts that may not necessarily take into account the cultural context of the process of genesis of such experiences. Psychologists have been eager to dissect mystical experiences as narrated by mystics and bracket them based chiefly on the cognition of the experience. George A. Coe states, that 'having surrendered self-control the mystical consciousness cannot be analytical or critical'²⁵.

Western psychologists give precedence to intention of the mystic. There was such uneasiness in western academia with the notion of mysticism that the motivation of the mystic was privileged for scrutiny to understand passive and impassive individuals in relation to normality and abnormality. This is in stark contrast to the ease with Indian psychologists entrenched in cultural assumptions that were not binaries of passive and active individuals and sanguine in the cultural matrix of Indian society saw the Indian mystic.

Mysticism, with its centrality on the individual was considered as a process of cognition different from discursive thought. Mysticism seems to affect a rapport between the individual and his object in its integrity, and thus looks to the future and to the past, thus the defining mark of mysticism lies in its other than theoretical relation to the object and the active destruction of objectivity²⁶.

25 George A Coe, 'The Mystical as a Psychological Concept.' *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 6, no. 8 (1909): 197-202.

26 William Ernest Hocking, 'The Meaning of Mysticism as Seen Through Its Psychology.' *Mind* 21, no. 81 (1912): 38-61.

Mysticism is also made on the basis of inference, if we were to characterise the mystical experience, we would fumble with words such as ‘unitary’, ‘total’, ‘immediate’ to describe the experience. It is important to note that immediacy, unity and totality are not disparate but different stages of the process, what is meant that there is a certain plurality in the experience that cannot be encompassed through the language of being used.

Mysticism is often referred to in terms of transiency, psychologists are of the opinion that alternation of states is a broader and better suited category. There has been a great effort spent on suggesting that mystic’s intense experience is concomitant with certain physiological ups and downs²⁷. The scientific development of these suggestions has been done by Delacroix and De Montmorand. The transiency is realised by the mystic himself, in several accounts of mystics there is a clear lack of surprise at the lack of endurance of the mystical experience. This leads us to believe and illustrates the point that the immediacy of the state is never so whole to be without fringes- some awareness of the empirical self and clearly even in the state, some ties remain. The radical alternation in consciousness may involve the disconnection of the two alternate strands one from another, as in the case of sleeping and waking.

Western psychologist understands this as mystical detachment and disconnection; it follows the principle of alternation that we have just become familiar with. The detachment and disassociation is between the whole of the system of things temporal on one side, and on the other heart of the eternal, which he hopes to make

27 William Ernest Hocking, ‘The Meaning of Mysticism as Seen Through Its Psychology.’ *Mind* 21, no. 81 (1912): 38-61

empirically present to his consciousness²⁸. In the mystic's detachment of the ecstatic form there is union of voluntary and involuntary factors. The mystic goes through voluntary preparation to evade the insistence of the senses, to withdraw thoughts and desires from interests of current living, to enter solitude and silence. The Bhakti poet saint's experiences are contrary to what western scholars have promulgated. There is no dichotomy in the literal and non-literal world. The hard separation drawn between the two planes of social and spiritual existence do not have pan out in many poet saint's lives after the union with ultimate reality. The process is guided by positive direction of mind to some object and is sustained by lively religious impulse which rather engulfs the other desires rather than destroy them. The other desires are renounced and not suppressed as is described in western discourse. It is a positive step and doesn't carry the baggage of lack of. In the following passages, a brief survey will be made of psychological/ psychiatric conditions that are considered akin to mysticism or often whose experiences are equated with mysticism. This mysticism is looked upon from a gendered lens, as notions of gender influence the image developed of 'ideal mystical experience' and psychological conditions based on the cultural framework of what constitute rationality, inferiority and vulnerability to madness.

3.1: Mysticism and Hysteria

In the case of mystics, the disease of hysteria with its astounding variety of mental symptoms, its strange power of disintegrating, rearranging and enhancing the elements of consciousness, its tendencies to automatism and ecstasy, has been most often invoked to provide an explanation of the observed phenomenon.

28 Meena Khandelwal, Sondra L. Hausner and Ann Grodzins Gold.ed., *Women's Renunciation in South Asia: Nuns, Yoginis, Saints and Singers*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. page 12.

Evelyn Underhill opines, ‘Both mysticism and hysteria have to do with the domination of consciousness by one fixed and intense idea or intuition, which rules the life and is able to produce amazing physical and psychical results’²⁹. This is possibly an essentialisation of the mystical quest that tries to bind the quest to laws of logic and science.

In the hysteric patient, the idea has become is often trivial or morbid but has become thanks to the self’s unstable mental condition-an obsession. Underhill states, ‘In the mystic the dominant idea is a great one: so great in fact, that when it is received in its completeness by the human consciousness, almost of necessity it ousts all else. Hence, the mono-ideism of the mystic is rationale whilst that of the hysteric patient is invariably irrational’³⁰. The poet saint is not curbed by rationalism of mono-ideaism. This is depicted most thoroughly in *Lalla Vākyāni* in Verse 29 that quietism and self-command are not necessary for knowledge that leads to unitive state³¹. This disintegration of the privileging of rationality is a strong blow to wester feminist adage of women being linked to irrational and passivity that underpins the boundaries of mental disorder³².

3.2: *Mysticism and Depression*

J.M Masson in an attempt to focus on psychological characteristics of asceticism states, ‘Mystics have been associated with *vairagya* ‘world weariness’ or ‘disgust’; it

29 Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism, A Study in the Nature and Development of Man’s Spiritual Consciousness*. New York: The Noontday Press.1995.page 60.

30 Ibid, p 60.

31 George Grieso and Lionel Barnett, *Lallā Vākyāni: The Wise Sayings of Lal Ded*. London: The Royal Asiatic Society.1920 Verse 29, ‘*Svabhavalabdhou na samō stī karanam tathā damah kimt param vivēkah nirāikarūpam lavanam yathā bhavēt tathāikataptāv apo nāisa labhyah*’. page 50.

32 Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, London: Penguin Books,1985. page 107.

is an oblique reference to the affective disorder known as sadness when mild, depression when strong, and melancholia when severe³³. It is characteristic of the depressed individual to lose interest in his own family, his friends, his work and his surroundings. 'It seems plausible that the ascetics is originally in the midst of a potential depression (evidenced by his concern with the peculiar mental state of *vairagya*), which he attempts to negate by adopting one solution- flight and eventually discovers that manic forms we are accustomed to find in mysticism, along with true meaning of these acts'³⁴. There are certain *vaakhs* of *Lal Ded* which express the state of her mind when she has an overpowering sense of desolation and aloneness. She seems to have developed an overwhelming sense of emptiness within her and in the world about her. The metaphors she uses are those of towing a boat upon a sea with untwisted rope and wasting away like waters in cup of unbaked clay. However, this emptiness is not of a negative connotation, this emptiness is a sign of real freed on the path to final release.

3.3: Mysticism and Schizophrenia

Scholars have often linked mysticism and a special form of schizophrenia. William James notes the similarity between mystics and schizophrenia; he distinguished between two kinds of mysticism; a higher and a lower. The former included the classical mystical experiences, while the latter James identified with insanity, which he termed a 'diabolical mysticism'.

33 J.M. Masson, 'The Psychology of the Ascetic', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol XXXV, No 4, August, 1976. page 618.

34 J.M Masson, 'The Psychology of the Ascetic', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol XXXV, No. 4, August, 1976. The pain that the ascetic feels is the condition rather than the source of his pleasure, which is often of a displaced sexual variety. The mystic wishes to abandon his physical self for a better more purified self; in order to do this, he engages in an activity that is nothing less than a form of hypochondria- a total and often exclusive preoccupation with the body.

It would be necessary to delineate the moment or phase when we consider schizophrenia and mysticism to be akin to one another. The process of the mystic attaining realisation is lifelong and entails tremendous pain, both physical and mental, and culminates in the complete cessation of external involvement and the experience of 'Union with God'. The most painful stage of the process occurred immediately before the experience of union. At this time the mystic severs ties with the social world, but hasn't yet experienced unity with God. Akka Mahadevi expresses her suffering from pangs of separation beseeching *Chennamallikarjuna* to unite with her³⁵. The mystic is then able to renew their activity in the social world, deriving greater satisfaction and fulfilment in these activities than before. Schizophrenia on the other hand³⁶, is the condition wherein the individual experiences himself and the world about him in a manner distinctly different from that of most members of society.

The similarity between the two extends to psychosis which consists of the breakdown of control, which enables feelings to emerge. Impulses erupted with an explosive power that could potentially terrify the person, at the same time liberate them with a feeling of exultation.

'Their experience is similarly dichotomous at two levels of experience the outer or social, as opposed to the inner and personal.; the breakdown of attachment to the

35 S.S. Bhoosnumarth, Armando Menezes, *Śūnyasampādane*, Vol IV, Karnāṭaka University , Dharwar, 1970, page 358 '*indranīlada giriyanērikondu, candrakāntada śilegalanappikondu, komba bārisutta śivane, nimma nenevutta endippeno? Aṅgabhaṅga manabhaṅgavalidu nimmanendige nerevenayyā cennamallikārjunā*'.

36 Recently in psychology a new direction in the understanding and treatment of schizophrenia has developed. A primary tenet of this position is that the psychosis is part of an ongoing, constructive process, wherein the individual attempts to correct the inadequacy of his functioning. Schizophrenia redefined, denotes a process or experience of the individual that moves beyond the mind or what we conceptualise as the ego. The behavioral accompaniments to this movement are not bizarre but rather expressive of the unusual experiences the individual is undergoing.

social world; experience of pain and terror as they entered ‘the inner world’³⁷; feeling of peace following the end of terror; and their ‘return’ to the social world, deriving more satisfaction in their social functioning than before their experiences’³⁸.

There are differences in the experience of mystics and schizophrenics too, those that can be easily pointed out are; the mystical experience is life long, whereas a schizophrenic’s experience of the inner world is compressed into a much shorter period of time. The mystics experience culminated with experience of Unity, while the schizophrenic has no such experience. The mystic is able to live in a cloister and the decision to isolate themselves which is within his/her conscious control. The schizophrenic on the other hand, experience a loss of consciousness and breakdown in social functioning. The mystic is better prepared for the experience³⁹ than the schizophrenic⁴⁰ who is overwhelmed by the inner experience.

The mystic’s goal is his/her dedication to the absolute, to gradually expand his consciousness by moving more deeply into the ‘inner world’ of feelings, where eventually the inner most depth is referred to as Self or God. The mystic’s abandonment of social world is his own dependent attachment to it⁴¹. Once the state of total independence is reached, the mystic is able to once again involve himself in

37 A.J. Alston, *The Devotional Poems of Mīrabāī*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.1980. Page 63. The link between me and Shyam cannot be broken. I went yellow as the autumn leaf. And the people thought I had jaundice. My father sent for the doctor, who felt my pulse. It was my heart that was breaking, But the doctor did not know the secret . My lord, Mira is distressed in Your absence come and grant her your sight’.

38 John White. ed., *Highest State of Consciousness*, Garden City, New York; Double Day and Company Inc, 1972 Page 153.

39 See Kenneth Wapnick, *Mysticism and Madness*, Pg (325); the mystical process is understood as a strengthening where the mystic is able to handle long periods of suffering and fallowness.

40 The schizophrenic goes through no training or strengthening and is thus not equipped to deal with his experiences and has no conviction that he will survive it.

41 John White, ed., *Highest State of Consciousness.*, Garden City, New York; Double Day and Company Inc. 1972, page 173

social activities. The schizophrenic on the other hand, has as the purpose his/her 'psychosis', the escape from social world within which s/he is unable to function. The inner world becomes a refuge from the impossibility of existing in the outer world⁴². There has been a tendency to define behaviour of female mystics in this rubric as behaviour of women bhakti saints is defined and interpreted as a difference from male and thus the degree of deflection from man's behaviour is looked upon disorderly.

4: Mysticism; Visions and Voices

Visions and voices are part and parcel of mystic life. 'Super sensual intuitions, the contact between man's finite being and the Infinite Being in which it is immersed can express themselves by means of almost any kind of sensory automatism'⁴³. The mystics visualise their union, through these illusions as *Mīrabāī* talks of her eyes playing tricks on her⁴⁴.

What do the visions do for people? 'The visions experienced by great minds of power and richness, which are crucial for those who have them. These bring wisdom to the simple and ignorant, sudden calm to those who were tormented by doubts'⁴⁵. These vision and voices are the media by which 'seeing self' truly approaches the absolute; which are the formulae under which ontological perceptions are expressed they infuse something new in the way of strength, knowledge, direction, and leave it-

42 Unlike the mystic, whose inner experiences are consciously chosen over a period of time and developed within the cultural context, the schizophrenic's experience of his deepest feelings is sudden and occurs in the denial of his social functioning.

43 Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism, A Study of the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*, New York: The Noonday Press, 1995. Page 268.

44 A.J Alston, *The Devotional Poems of Mīrabāī*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. 1980. Verse 14, 'O Companion, Strange is the behaviour of my eyes. That sweet form has entered my mind. And pierced its way into my heart. How long have I been standing in my house gazing down the road? My very existence depends on Shyam, the beloved. He is the herb that grants me life. Mira has become the personal property of Giridhar. The people say she is mad'. page 38.

45 Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism, A Study of the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*, New York: The Noonday Press 1995. p 269.

physically, mentally, spiritually better than they found it. However, we must rehabilitate this vision and voices from the plane of reality and fantasy dichotomy that western scholars have created.

‘Visions and voices belong to another higher plane of experience, they can be seen as a passage from one spiritual state to another, it can arrive at a moment of indecision, bringing with them authoritative counsel and command, opposed to inclination of the self. It could also confer convinced knowledge of some department of the spiritual life before unknown’⁴⁶. In the case of Akka Mahadevi, we find that as she inches closer to her unitive state visions and voices help articulate the ineffable unitive that state that can’t be marred by direct perception.

The voices can be heard by (1) immediate or articulate voice, which the audative mystic knows so well⁴⁷; (2) the distinct interior voice, perfectly articulate, but recognised as speaking only within the mind; (3) by hallucination which we have all experienced in dreams or reverie, the exterior voice, which appears to be speaking externally to the subject and is heard by the outward ear⁴⁸. True auditions are usually heard when the mind is in a state of deep absorption without conscious thought: that is to say, at the most favourable of all moments for contact with the transcendental world. They translate into articulate language some aspect of that ineffable apprehension of Reality which the contemplative enjoys: crystallize those clairvoyant intuitions, those prophetic hints which surge in on him so soon as he lays himself open to the influence of the supra sensible. Sometimes, mystical intuition takes the

46 Ibid, p 269.

47 A.J Alston, *The Devotional Poems of Mīrabāī*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980. Verse 167. page 103. ‘Sister, the sound fo the flute, Has driven me crazy. Without Hari, nothing avails. On hearing the sounds I loose body-consciousness, My heart well caught In the meshes of the net’.

48 Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism, A Study of the Nature and Development of Man’s Spiritual Consciousness*, New York: The Noonday Press, 1995. page 273

form of a sudden and ungovernable rush of knowledge from the deeps of personality⁴⁹. When auditions may break in upon the normal activities of the mystic with startling abruptness, it is in such cases that their unobjective and uncontrollable character is most sharply felt. Sometimes the mystical assumes a musical rather than a verbal character: a form of perception which probably corresponds to the temperamental bias of the self⁵⁰.

In Lal Ded's *Vaakh*⁵¹, the sensory perceptions impinge on the mind, however, the voice from within is the one that the mind discerns and follows. It is evident that the mind with intention differentiates these various stimuli. Visions are recognised by the true contemplative as at best an imperfect, oblique, and untrustworthy method of apprehension. Mystics distinguish various kinds and classes of visionary experience; and differentiate sharply between the value of the vision which is 'felt' rather than seen, and the true optical hallucination which is perceived, exterior to the subject, by the physical sight. Lal Ded's *Vaakh* give the distinct impression that there is a difference to be made between visions and illusions⁵².

5: Mysticism, A Comparison: Hindu, Sufi and Christian Mysticism

Mysticism in India has had a long lineage in the spiritual tradition of India; one cannot speak of a consistent encouragement in the texts; of alternate or divergent

49 A.J Alston, *The Devotional Poems of Mīrabāī*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.1980. Verse 184. 'The impulse comes into my mind To rove about in company with Gopal. When I beheld the beauty of His lotus face I lost control of my faculties'.page 110

50 Ibid, p 275.

51 Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. 1973.Vaakh 42, Ill or well, whatever befalls let it come. My ears will not hear, My eyes will not see, When the Voice calls from within the inmost mind. The lamp of faith burns steady and bright even in the wind. page 103

52 Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*. New Delhi. Sahitya Akademi. 1973.Vaakh 10, 'da'mī dīṭhu'm nad vahavu'nī' 'Now I saw stream flowing; Now neither bank nor bridge was seen. Now I saw a bush in bloom; now neither rose nor thorn was seen'. Page 93 Vaakh 11, 'da'mī dīṭhu'm ga'j dazū'vu'nī' ' Now I saw the hearth ablaze, Now I saw not fire nor smoke. Now I saw the Pandava mother, Now she was a potters aunt'. page 94.

interpretations of Reality being accepted. The Brahmanic system grappled with these alternate discourses of mysticism and attempted to reclaim lost ground by engaging with mysticism from the very beginning. There have been discussions on mysticism right from the *Upanishad* and *Bhagavad Gita* (500-200 CE). The later commentaries of *Shankara* in (9th CE) further develop interpretations of the experience of reality, or *Brahman*. These three pinnacles of Brahmanic understanding of mysticism form the basis of most of later Brahman spiritual ideas and practices.

To trace a very limited trajectory of traditional Brahmanic thought on Mysticism, we can glean attitudes from the *Upanishad*, the most important teaching in the *Upanishad* is the idea of that the individual soul is identical with the ultimate Reality. Mysticism in the *Upanishad* is of a pantheistic form, for God is to be found in all creation because all creation essentially contains God⁵³. The great discovery of the *Upanishad* was that man's real self is identical to the ultimate reality. The self is called *Atman* and the universal spirit is called *Brahman*, thus by this logic *Atman* is *Brahman*. This is the essence of *Upanishad*, where man is able to know God because he is God. Some philosophers consider this to be a certain brand of 'introvert mysticism'⁵⁴. This notion is found throughout the *Upanishad* from the earlier *Chandyog* and *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* to the later *Svetasvara Upanishad*.

The *Bhagavad Gita* further develops several notions from Upanishadic mysticism, and in doing so, explicates various paths available for man to achieve union with God: the path of *jnanan yoga* (knowledge), *karma yoga* (action) and *bhakti yoga* (devotion)⁵⁵. The *Bhagavad Gita* extended the interpretation of mystical

53 The *Chandyog Upanishad* is one of the most important writings in mysticism, as are the *Brihadaranyak* and *Svetaswara Upanishad*, for they describe the nature of the *Ultimate* (often referred to as the spirit.) and they explain man's relationship with the Ultimate.

54 Where mystic has sought within himself the undifferentiated unity of all.

55 'Aspirants may find enlightenment by two different paths. For the contemplative is the path of knowledge; for the active is the path of selfless action'.

consciousness. The universal spirit became in a sense personalised, as it took the form of loving Krishna. The *Bhagvad Gita* personalised God and so asked man to worship God as a deity. It emphasises that the worshipper must not worship Krishna's attributes, but must worship the Divine in Krishna, the one true reality. The devotion to Krishna is a means to an end- the liberation to be found in mystical consciousness. Thus, the Bhagvad Gita was not so much a reform but an extension of the Upanishads and one which allows for further philosophical development of *Vedanta* mysticism.

The next great development in the Brahmanic interpretation of mystical experience came with the teaching of Shankara⁵⁶. Shankara's major works consisted of commentaries written on the *Upanishad*, the *Bhagvad Gita* and the *Brahma Sūtra*⁵⁷. *Shankara* considered the world, the individual soul and God as being phenomenal creations of *Brahman* was to *Shankara* beyond subject and object. The essence of Sankara's explanation is that man 'superimposes' things on to Reality because he is not yet aware of Reality, the Oneness of all. This *maya* is not reality, it is not the realisation of the undifferentiated unity of all; it is not pure consciousness. Until man realises the real nature of self and he still holds to the belief that the phenomenal world is Reality, he is illusion and is unable to realise *Atman-Brahman*.

The essential mysticism of Brahmanic teaching; the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagvad Gita* and *Sankara's* teaching all reveal the interpretation of the experience of undifferentiated unity of all. By whichever path man chooses to follow; knowledge, devotion or action, there must be overcome with obstacles which *maya* sets before

56 Lived on the early part of 9th CE and spent his life travelling throughout India teaching what he considered to be the highest truth contained in the Upanishads and continued the non-dualist tradition.

57 A collection of several hundred aphorisms composed between 200 BC and 200AD, which attempted to systematise the teachings of the Upanishad.

him. The belief in a separate existence or reality is an illusion, and it is only when one realises that his true Self – *Atman* is a part of the whole, then can he appreciate things what they really are.

5.1: *Sufism Mysticism*

Sufi philosophy reflects on the ineffability of mysticism and commutes a difference between formal religious practices and mystical experiences. Imagination becomes a ladder on the path of the mystic. When imagination can produce beauty outwardly in the form of poetry, music, art or literature, it can produce beauty of much higher and greater value when it is directed inwards. Naturally the mystic begins his work with the ladder of imagination, and actual experience follows.

Imparting mysticism to a seeking soul is an automatic action on the part of the pupil and also on the part of the mystic, for what the mystic gives to the pupil is not his own, it is God's, and the pupil is a kind of vessel that receives this blessing.

The process of mystical development is the annihilation of the false ego in the real ego. Sufis call the false ego *Nafs*, and the real ego Allah or God⁵⁸. The Sufis recognise four stages in the development of the ego. The ordinary ego is called *Ammara*, which means a mechanical reaction of mind, the mind which is conditioned to react against something to the same extent: tooth for tooth and measure for measure. When either suffering has developed the ego, or a person has learned to be different in life, then he becomes what the sufis call *Lauwama*, which means self-disciplined. When the ego is developed still more it becomes *mutmaina*. This is a certain rhythm of mind; where the mind has risen above chaotic motion and the

58 Narendra Kr Singh, *Islamic Mysticism in India*, New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.1996. page 7.

mentality has become rhythmic, and where the reaction of the mind is not only a control, but a deliberate control. When the ego is developed still further it becomes *Salima*, which means peaceful. According to the mystic this is the normal state for a person to be in, though if we took that point of view we would not be able to find many normal souls.

There are four different stages of God – realisation of the sufi. The first and primitive stage is to make a god. If he does not make Him out of a rock or out of wood, he makes Him out of his thought. The next stage is the stage of lover of God. In this stage, he begins to look upon God as his Beloved, and only then does he begin to learn the manner of true love; for love begins in man and culminates in God, the perfect ideal and object of love. In the third stage, he considers all earthly sources, whether favourable or unfavourable, all that comes to him, as God. If a friend comes to meet him; if a beggar is asking for a penny, it is God whom the Sufi recognises in that form; if a wretched man is suffering misery, he sees also in this the existence of God. Naturally when this attitude is developed he develops a saintly spirit. Then he begins to see in this world of variety the only Being playing His role as various beings, and for him every moment of his life is full of worship. The fourth development of the God- ideal is in the loss of the self. The false self is lost, and the true self is gained. In this stage the sufi hears through the ears of God, sees through the eyes of God, works with the hands of God, walks with the feet of God; then his thought is the thought of God and his feeling is the feeling of God. There are five things to consider when one is trying to understand the nature of a mystic: his temperament, his dream, his outlook, his meditation and his realisation.

The temperament of a mystic is a kingly temperament. The difference between a king and a mystic is that the mystic is a king without worry. With open eyes or closed eyes: the mystic can dream both ways. He may be in a crowd or in the solitude, in both places he can dream. Thirdly there is the outlook of the mystic. The mystic not only sees the first reason of everything and anything; he sees the reason behind the reason, and behind that still another reason, until he touches the essence of reason. In regard to meditation of the mystic one should remember that he is born with a meditative nature as an inner disposition, and every day, even without ever having learned any meditation, he has some way of meditating. Lastly there is the mystic's realisation which is *al-aql al kulli* (universal intellect). It is the mystic who realises the latent power in man, and his consciousness of his undifferentiation from God himself⁵⁹.

5.2: *Christian Mysticism*

Christian mysticism as a whole owes more to Hellenistic than Jewish conception. Christian masters as Origen and Augustine draw their outlook in reality and analytic tools for interpreting mystical experiences, from the Hellenistic cultural world rather than from the world of rabbinic Judaism.

The writings of Paul indicate that death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus were enough to pronounce him to be the Messiah. The portrait drawn of Jesus in the New Testament gives him immense mystical colouring. 'What stands out most mystical is his intimacy with the God he called Father. The fact that the voice from the cloud calls Jesus 'Son' and 'Beloved' squares with the fact that the evangelist has Jesus

59 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Sufi Essays*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972. page 54.

comport himself as a trusting child of God⁶⁰. The intimacy with the Father bestowed on the incarnate Son, the word became flesh, was bound to reflect this identity. certainly, one could call the intimacy of the man Jesus, his full identification with his Father, mystical, as it goes beyond the ordinary union that humans have reported, into a directly experiential union with ultimate reality.

The Platonist instinctively thought of mystical progress towards direct experiences of God as an ascent toward the light. In the presence of the light, which gave one's mind understanding, one might find that the light was too bright for human comprehension and so might enter upon a great darkness. Augustine became the father of western mysticism because he struggled so diligently for so many days, his enormous corpus of writing became the foremost patrimony of western Christian intellectualism, desire for light became part of the western spiritual mainstream.

In the medieval period a highly romantic, nuptial symbolism was born to define mysticism. Bernard of Clairvaux depicted Christ as the bridegroom. In Christian mystical progress, the Christian soul, considered feminine (receptive and not passive) in relation to God, prospers best by loving wholeheartedly, as though complete devotion was the core of her being.

Direct experience of ultimate reality on the model that Christian faith finds best is a passionate marital union between creature and creator, sinner and saviour. On the surface, this may show similarities to bridal imagery in bhakti poet saint's. However, on closer examination we find that this imagery of union doesn't necessarily pan out

60 Denise Carmody and John Tully Carmody, *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.page 195.

identical to the Christian mysticism as the union doesn't necessarily have to take place in the ambit of marriage and neither do all saints have heterosexual unions.

In the late medieval period, Christian masters and masters of other mystical traditions became preoccupied with the question of how best to relate the imagination to the intellect and to the will. The medieval theorist believed that the life of contemplation and prayer was above practical life. The anonymous writer of *The Cloud of Unknowing* states, 'the best portion of Christian prayer is where the contemplative rests in a cloud of unknowing, unconcerned with images or practical thoughts, concerned only to abide with God, the ungraspable divine mystery, in love.

The most advantageous way to approach to God is to put aside everything that is not God. The contemplative work is nothing but God's transforming you through love into union with divinity. The action of God in the Cloud, the significance of your response through the darts, movements, desires of love, is to make you one with God.

This was followed by a period of Protestant reform where there was a thorough rejection of the notion of monastic life is superior to lay life. According to Carmody, 'they translated the Bible into the vernacular, put the liturgy into the vernacular, and established the primacy of the individual conscience over external authority of the Church'⁶¹. A new era in Christian faith, a new stress in Christian mysticism on psychology, the self- awareness of the individual contemplative.

Teresa (1515- 1582) created a new form of the old bridal mysticism that we saw in Bernard of Clairvaux. In addition, she described in considerable detail the various

61 Denise Carmody and John Tully Carmody. *Mysticism Holiness East and West*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.page 221.

stages of progress in the mystical life, from initial contemplation to the highest, nearly continual union of the individual soul with God through Christian suffering considered good suffering⁶². This is anti-thetical to the bhakti notion of suffering which isn't a moral imperative rather is a signification of devotion.

6: Madness in Devotional Tradition

In the previous chapter an attempt was made to draw attention to the wilful espousal of madness by the treatises of *Caraka*, *Suśruta* and classical literature's conception of madness. Madness in those texts were seen from the critical lens of illness, treatment, characterisation and performance.

In this chapter, an attempt at inversion of madness in terms of illness is made. Madness is now looked upon in the context of the different devotional traditions describing states of trance and intense emotions. Madness that is usually seen as a deviation from the norm, a type of behaviour that is outrageous and contrary to defined patterns of behaviour. This madness on the contrary is not seen as crippling, it does not reduce the person to a less than human state or into animal like behaviour. Here it is reaffirmation of an ecstatic state full of love and passion.

Devotional madness is the madness that not only has a religious idiom or language, but that is caused by a devotional fervour. There are various types of devotional madness that are identified by scholars and academics alike. There is distinction being made between madness of gods and madness of humans. Divine madness is common in Saivite, Vaisnavite and Śakta traditions. “Some deities are characterised as wider more tumultuous, more outrageous than others, some Hindu Gods are more

62 Joseph Marechal, *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics*. Albany: Magi Books, Inc., 1964. page 323.

frequently pictured as acting out of control⁶³. Divine madness suggests transcendence, it affirms that the gods ultimately cannot be circumscribed by the mind of man. In juxtaposition to divine madness, is the madness of saints and mystics, this madness also claims divinity but only in extension to achieving god's grace. A variety of texts state that among the marks of a saint is madness or possession. Madness of the saints suggests total absorption in the divine⁶⁴. The absorption in god is total and all absorbing, the passion is extreme that the devotee can barely cope with the mundane world, nothing else matters except the obsession with God⁶⁵.

The saint acquires the mark of madness by becoming the mythical lover of the godhead or companion of the god, so in a sense the madness of saints is a sign of divine grace. June McDaniel opines that direct experience of divine comes in natural and spontaneous (*sahaja*) or particular individual path (*svabhāvika*)⁶⁶. Madness of saints is not of one type, variations in madness can be explained not merely as individual peculiarities but in terms of the deities that the saints worship. That is to say, the nature of the madness seems to be determined by the presence which possess the saint. However, unlike Christian mysticism that states it is grace that comes down to the saint, the mystic in the Indian context plays an active role in seeking this unitive state.

63 David Kinsley, 'Through the looking glass: Divine Madness in the Hindu Religious tradition', *History of Religions* 13, no. 4 (1974): 270-305. page 271.

64 A.J. Alston, *The Devotional Poems of Mīrabāī*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980. page 67 ' I have taken off all my gems and pearls And donned the yogi's beads. Neither food nor house please me, The beloved has driven me mad'.

65 Ibid. Verse 174. Page 106 'O Companion, the sight of Shyām is like a dagger. I have lost body-consciousness. And am reduced to a ruinous state. My body is pervaded by pain, My heart in a state of intoxication. Three or four companions are with me, All in a state of madness'.

66 June Mc Daniel, *The Madness of Saints*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989. page 6.

Madness of the saint marks them as someone who is often indifferent to the mechanisations of the world. The saint is totally absorbed in reverence of the spiritual goal, because his participation is directly in the presence of the god, there is no longer active participation in the ordinary humdrum world of other men in the way other men do. Madness is illustrative of the saintliness, as in the case of the gods, indicates that the saint is free not to behave in accordance with accepted patterns of behaviour. Divine madness is seen as something that deviates from the norm, a type of behaviour that is outrageous and as a result becomes a cultural attraction and generates relevance for the saint. However, I disagree with June McDaniel's promulgation that a saint is cultural and *adharmic*. On the contrary, the madness of saints is steeped in cultural signification and the poet-saint is operating at a supra level where dharma has not been shorn off but superseded. Understanding of divinity and the man's spiritual goal, then, madness appears to be almost an essential mark of the gods and saints.

7: Women saints in India

Spirituality has always provided Indian women with the liminal space to be deviant and dissent as well as remain in the fold of societal mores. In this context, women were dissenting against their station in the family and in society and oppression of their individuality along with sexual exploitation. 'In traditional society, women were assigned the role of sacrificing mother, dutiful daughters and wives. The spiritual path enabled women to break out of all these stereotypes'⁶⁷. The women saints refuse to accept any authority other than that of the Godhead and Guru. Nancy M Martin states that such a stance poses threat to centralised institutional authority as

67 Vijaya Ramaswamy, 'Rebels- Conformist? Women Saints in Medieval South India. Women in Virasaivism.' *India International Centre Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (2001): 315-26

well as hierarchical social structures defined by gender⁶⁸. Most of the *Vaakhs*, *Vacanas* and *Padavalis* have been put under the rubric of religious lyrics written in verse in vernacular languages, whether it be Kashmiri, Kannada or Gujrati respectively⁶⁹. The mysticism and spirituality of the lyrics overshadows the religiosity that are fairly visible in the texts. These writings espouse these mystics as great devotees but are uncomfortable to rehabilitate them as women.

The women saint's lives that we abbreviated discuss have a similar trajectory. They all go through similar rites of passage of finding god in the early part of their childhood, being forced into marriage and abandoning marriages on account of being tortured and mistreated for their devotion to the godhead. Having been released from the bonds of marriage and man, these women saints give up prescribed notions of modesty and chastity. This is in stark contrast to the Christian notion of mysticism where the guilt of the body, forces suffering and seeks redemption because of the ownership of the body belonging to the scriptures. This is symbolic of overturning of social convention which A.K Ramanujan thinks is signification of being open to the experience of god and more importantly throwing away attractive parts of womanhood⁷⁰.

7.1: *Vacanas*

Surveying *Akka Mahadevi's* life's major events broadly to contextualise her poetry and writing. She was born to *Nirmala* and *Sumati Shetty* in the village of Udutadi, Shimoga district. At the age of 16, she was betrothed to king *Kaushika*. However, she

68 Nancy M Martin in Ed. Steven J. Rosen, *Vaisnavi: Women and the Worship of Krishna*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publisher, 1997. page 36.

69 See Jane Hirshfield, ed. *Women in Praise of the Sacred*. New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 1994.

70 A.K Ramanujan, 'Talking to God in the Mother Tongue'. *India International Quarterly* 19, no.4 (1992) 53-64.

walked out of the marriage. There are conflicting accounts post this stage. Some accounts state she went on her spiritual journey while others interlude this with her interactions with other *Saranas* at Kalyana. The *Vacanas* combine both the high Sanskritic tradition and local desi tradition in their literary expression. Though they do combine sanskritic tradition, they reflect an equity of *vacanas* between the male and female *saranas*, especially *Akka Mahadevi*⁷¹. The *vacanas* speak in the religious idiom of the virasaivite ideology, this *virasaivism* was spearheaded by Basava of the *lingayat* movement. The *Virasaiva* philosophy is based upon the principle that the *sarana* (devotee) is the bride and the *linga* the bridegroom. Many of the saints believe that all creations being the product of *sakti* or the supreme creative power to be feminine. *Vacanas* of *Akka Mahadevi* play a significant role in positing the Virasaiva doctrine through her treatises *Yogānga Trividhi*, *Sristiya Cacana* and *Padagalu*⁷². R. Blake Michael cites examples from the 15th century *Virasaiva* text *Sunyasampadane*, which exhibits an equality of opportunity and of qualification in the quest for spiritual perfection⁷³.

Speaking in a religious idiom the lyrics actually lend themselves to the endeavour of spiritual expression that women saints had taken on their path of deviance⁷⁴. This deviance has been contextualised by Vijaya Ramaswamy, ‘*vacanas* combine divinity and defiance, transcendentalism with powerful social protest and flouting of all

71 S.S. Bhoosnumarth, Armando Menezes, *Śūnyasampādane*, Vol IV, Dharwar:Karnāṭaka University,1970.page 339 The ancient’ sixty *vacanas* are worth twenty of Basavanna’s’ The Great Leader’s twenty, Prabhudeva’s ten, Prabhudeva’s ten are worth Ajaganna’s five; Ajaganna’s five , in Lord Kudala Cennasanga, Are worth one of Mahadevi Akka; see that, Siddharāmaya’.

72 Alka Tyagi, *Andal and Akka Mahadevi: Feminity to Divinity*. Delhi: DK Printworld.2013. page 120.

73 Blake R Michael, ‘Women of the Sunyasampadane: Housewives and Saints in Virasaivism’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103, no. 2 (1983): 361-68.page 361.

74 This deviance is sketched and elaborated by Prof. Vijaya Ramaswamy in a lot of her writings.

conventions, whether social or literary'⁷⁵. As is expected in this social scenario, women virasaivite demonstrate dual defiance of brahmanical system as well as patriarchal structure by rejecting marriage, walking out of marriages or declaring themselves married to god and no one else. The women saint's rejection of men is only in the space of marriage. I would argue that it is not patriarchy that is being dismantled as the relationship with *Cennamallikārjunā* remains within the bounds of marriage or fatherhood, thus the hierarchical male relationship pervades. These women perceived the object of their love and passion in the '*ishta linga*' they held in their hands. Spiritually inclined women would have to opt out of society dominated by brahmanical norms as well as marriage, since marriage would entail a patriarchal structure to function within.

For Akka Mahadevi, her lover was *Cennamallikārjunā*, the lord of the temple at Srisailam. This love is stripped off lust, as in mention in vacanas of Akka Mahadevi where she talks of a love beyond lust, '*Kāmana gellidenayyā Basavanna, Nina dayadinda sōmadharna hiditappenayyā Basavanna, ninna dayadinda. Nāmmadalli hēnnurupallade*'⁷⁶.

Some scholars such as H.S Shivaprakash believe that Akka Mahadevi's Vacanas are full of images of a journey through villages, towns and forests. He postulates that she is one of the foremost nature poets and points to the vacanas that where she demonstrates a keen sensitiveness to sights and sounds of nature. This is true as her *vacanas* do have clear spacio- temporal coordinates to mark her journey to Sri Sailam. I would postulate that observations of travel are a declaration about mobility

75 Vijaya Ramaswamy, 'Madness, Holiness, Poetry The Vachanas Of Virasaivite Women' *Indian Literature* 39, no. 3 (173) (1996): 147-55

76 S.S. Bhoosnumarth, Armando Menezes, *Śūnyasampādane*, Vol IV, Dharwar: Karnāṭaka University, 1970, page 320 'Through your grace Sir Basavanna, I have conquered lust. Through your grace, Sir Basavanna, I will make captive of the holder of the moon'.

but differing from Meena Khandelwal I don't think that it comes from the anxiety of losing the householder status⁷⁷.

According to Prof Ramaswamy, women saints used very strong sexual imagery in their union with the supreme. Eroticism mysticism is believed to be a major feature of the poetry of these virasaivite women. The poetry of love and passion expressed in strongly erotic terms is to be found at the two extremes of virasaivite spectrum of the upper caste and the lower marginalised. According to Ramaswamy, 'The majority of the *vacanas* of the virasaivite saints tend towards sexual sublimation. In the ultimate analysis, even for women mystics the body was inevitably the only vehicle for self-expression and self-realisation'⁷⁸. It is important to state that the transcendence over what is normally regarded feminine virtues such as beauty, modesty and gentleness is most sought in the bhakti saints. I would postulate that what is considered sexual sublimation may actually be an ungendering of the women saints as described in several verses⁷⁹. The women bhakti saints is pointedly ungendered by diminishing the importance of form, the women personhood is rehabilitated outside the category of body by mitigating the dichotomy of body and mind⁸⁰.

77 Meena Khandelwal, Sondra L. Hausner and Ann Grodzins Gold.ed., *Women's Renunciation in South Asia: Nuns, Yoginis, Saints and Singers*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.page10.

78 Vijaya Ramaswamy, 'Rebels, Mystics or Housewives? Women in Virasaivism'. *India International Centre Quarterly* 28, no. 4 (2001): 315-26.page 318.

79 S.S. Bhoosnumarth, Armando Menezes, *Śūnyasampādane*, Vol IV, Dharwar: Karnāṭaka University.1970 Page 297 '*Kāya karramne kandidateṇayya? Kāya mirage miñcidadēṇayyā? Antaranga śuddhavāda balika, Cennamallikārjunalingavu olida kāy'avu hēgiddadēṇayyā.*' 'What if the body darkens black as black? What if the body flashes light as light? When once your heart is purified. What does it signify what body it is that Cennamallikārjunā loves'.

80 Ibid, page 317. 'The body is a woman's form: the mind, one with.The spirit of the thing and yet you came down here.Because you had a reason to come,and this you have done!'

7.2: Vaakh

Lal Ded lived in Kashmir in the 14th century, roughly between (1320-1390). She was married to a man living at Drangabal Mahal at Pampor and was cruelly treated by her mother in law. She led a spiritual life interacting with many saints, intellectual in syncretic Kashmir. Legend has it that one day she sat in a large earthen tub like *tagāra* (vessel) and placed another vessel on her head concealing herself between the two. When the vessel was removed, there was no trace of her left. Lal Ded's *vaakhs* are mostly four-line stanza and independent in themselves, sententious gnomic verse. The *vaakh* are independent and do not carry meaning from one to another. There are several *vaakhs* that have common refrain, and a few of them are put in the form of question and answers⁸¹. Each line of Lal ded's *vaakh* completes the sense, it does not overflow into the line that follows and therefore it has both the compactness as well as the pointedness, giving it the edge of a proverb.

An exploration of Lal Ded's *vaakh* will lead us to great insight about psychological terrain which constitutes of a cluster of ideas that are usually historically derived that has structured the belief and behaviour of society. Lal Ded's *vaakh*, first and foremost, are an index of her preoccupations and apprehensions regarding society. Her *vaakh*'s not only postulate about spiritual tribulations but also very worldly or mundane crises. She mentions financial crises that she suffers⁸²; she is plagued by

81 Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. 1973. Vaakh 68 '*kus push ta kwasa pushā'nī*' 'Who is the florist, who is the flower girl? With what flowers should He be worshipped? In what water should He be bathed? With what mantra should we awaken Shankara, Who abides in the Self?' page 111. Vaakh 69- Mind is the florist; devotion is the flower girl, who bring flower wreaths for him. He should be worshipped with the flowers of faith, And bathed in the nectar of the mystic moon. Silence is the mantra that awakens Him. page 111.

82 Ibid. page 92. Vaakh 5, '*āyas vate gayas na vate*' 'And the day is done, the light has failed. I search my pockets but not a cowrie find: What shall I pay for the ferry fee'.

the state of the affairs of the world around her and the injustice of it all⁸³. Lal Ded reiterates the need for self-restraint and awareness of greed, lust and pride in everyday interactions⁸⁴. She breaks down religious taboos of commensality, ‘*mithyā karat ash trovum*’⁸⁵

Lal Ded’s *vaakh* give a glimpse of world image conjured either by consensus or imitation by members of society; with sanctioned pattern, a template which can be superimposed on the outer world with all its uncertainties and on the flow of inner experiences in all its turbulence⁸⁶, thus helping the individual to make sense of their own lives. The direct agency employed by Lal Ded is when she figures herself directly in her *vaakh* in order to address her own image of deviance and reference to character that has come at a tremendous cost⁸⁷. She recognises her the potency of her own reputation to demystify unitive states and elucidate the path to reach it⁸⁸.

83Ibid. page 93. Vaakh 9, *gāṭulah akh vuchum bwachi sū’ty marān*. ‘I have seen a learned man die of hunger, A sere leaf drop in winter wind; I have seen an utter fool beat his cook. Since then I, Lalla anxiously await, The day when the lure of the world will fall away’.

84Ibid. page 101. ‘*mārukh mārabūth kām krūd lūb*’ Slay the murderous demons, ‘Lust, anger and Greed; Or, aiming their arrow at you, they will surely shoot you dead. Take care, feed them on self restraint and discrimination of the Self; Thus starved these demons will become powerless and weak’.

85Ibid. page 107. Vaakh 58. ‘*mithyā kapaṭ asath trovum*’. ‘I renounced fraud, untruth, deceit; I taught my mind to see the One in ally fellow-men How could I then discriminate between man and man, And not accept the food offered to me by brother man?’

86 Ibid. page 92. Vaakh 4, ‘*Hacivi hā’rinji pyatsuv kān gom*’ ‘A wooden bow and rush grass for an arrow; A carpenter unskilled and a palace to build; A shop unlocked in a busy bazaar; A body uncleaned by waters holy- Oh dear! Who knows what hath befallen me?’

87 George Grieson and Lionel Barnett, *Lallā Vākyāni The Wise Sayings of Lal Ded*, London: The Royal Asiatic Society.1920.page 67, ‘*mal wōndi zolum zigar mōrum tēli Lal nāv dram yēli dāl trōvmas tāt*’ ‘Foulness burnt I from my soul (with its desires) did I slay and then did my name of Lālla spread abroad, when I sat, just there, with bended knee’.

88. Ibid. page 115. *sūtsas na sātaspūtsas na rumas.suh mas mē lali cyauv panunuy wākh andarim gatakāh raṭith ta wolum tsaṭith ta dyutmas tatiy cākh* I hoped not in it for a moment, I trusted it not by a hair. Still I, Lallā, drank the wine of mine own sayings. Yet, then did I seize an inner darkness and bring it down. And tear it, and cut it to pieces.

Lal Ded understanding of the mind needs to be understood in a certain context, the mind here is referred to far more than in just its physiological or spiritual aspects. The mind at certain point is seen as the controller of the senses⁸⁹. It is responsible for the five *bhuttas* and ten *indriyas*⁹⁰, which are considered to be the cause of the minds defilement⁹¹. One of the skills of the mind that is emphasised in the *vaakhs* is the quality of discernment⁹². The *vaakhs* are emphatic about the necessity to steer clear of memorisation and instead use reasoning and rationale that will eventually lead to non-duality of the mind⁹³. The *vaakh* demonstrate how the mystic attempts to throw light on the wandering mind and how it impacts the mystic, the inference that can be drawn here is that the mind has a will of its own and the consequence of this unregulated will is seen in the human life. This wandering can also be brought on by the power of imagination, the *vaakh* illustrate how the steed of the mind speeds over the sky, it is only with discipline that *prana* and *apana* can be controlled. The potentiality of the mind is also stressed upon, the mind has a limitless expanse, however what needs to be noted is that this expanse also has the latent possibility to be very destructive⁹⁴. The *vaakh* also demonstrate how the mystical enlightenment is

89 Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*. New Delhi. Sahitya Akademi. 1973. Vaakh 55, *gwarashabdās yus yatsh patsh bare* ‘ he who holds his senses in control, Tis he enjoys the peace of mind. He will not die, nor be slain’. Page 106.

90 Ibid. page 92. Vaakh 6, ‘ *kyāh kara pāntsan dahan ta kāhan*’ ‘ Ah me! The Five (Bhuta-s), the Ten (Indriyas), And the Eleventh, their lord the mind, scraped this pot and went away. Had all together pulled on the rope, Why should the Eleven have lost the cow?’

91 Ibid. page 117. Vaakh 88, ‘ *po’t zūni vo’tthith mo’t bolanvum*’ ‘ Gently accosting myself, Olalla, Lalla, Lalla. I woke my love, my Lord and Master, In whom absorbed, my mind was cleansed of its defilement by Ten’.

92 Ibid. page 96. Vaakh 19, ‘I might disperse the southern cloud, I might drain out the sea, I might cure the incurable sick, But I cannot convince a fool’.

93 Ibid. page 103. Vaakh 44, ‘I have worn out my palate and tongue reading the holy books, but I have not learnt the practices that would please my Lord’. Vaakh 45, ‘The thoughtless read the holy books As parrots, in their cage, recite ‘ Ram, Ram’

94 Ibid. page 102. Vaakh 41, ‘Ocean and the mind of man are both alike: Under the ocean’s bottom lies the destructive fire, vadvagni; And in the breast of man doth rage, the fire of wrath.’

equated to madness. *Vaakh* 87 states, I had nowhere to go in search of Him. This was the Truth of a hundred truths. Whoever learn of it, will they not wonder? Will they not be mad for joy?⁹⁵. One of the express functions of the mind is to gain knowledge, this knowledge is identified in the text as the appreciation of lack of desire, one is considered truly knowledgeable when one is dead to desire⁹⁶. The path to gaining this knowledge is necessarily understood as self-restraint. It is interesting that the mind and *karma* are related in the access to knowledge; there is a call for pious deeds to be done in order to gain this knowledge. The *vaakh* also demonstrate the grief and anxiety that is borne by the mind⁹⁷. The *vaakh* give a glimpse at the pressing feeling of *bhaya* (fear) of death, she states that yama drags the bleeding body to death and emphasises the need to dispel fear of death⁹⁸.

The *vaakh* first and foremost, highlight the vulnerability of the body, the psychological preoccupation is with the lack of endurance of the body and the eventual emaciation that comes with age. The body is also used as a context to talk about materialism, thus making the body a site of social commentary⁹⁹. Lal Ded does not have a distaste for the body, she reiterates caution¹⁰⁰ and moderation¹⁰¹ when

95 Ibid.page 117.

96 Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*. New Delhi. Sahitya Akademi. 1973.Vaakh 48, 'Only he has true knowledge; who, though alive, is as one dead, dead to all desire.'page 105.

97 Ibid. page 91. Vaakh 2, '*la'lith la'lith vaday bo dā'y*' 'I weep and weep for you, my soul; the world hath caught you in it's spell.'

98 Ibid. page 94. Vaakh13 '*kyāh bo'dukh muha bhava-so'dri dare*' 'Why have you sunk deep in the sea of the illusory pleasures of the world? Why have you pulled down the high banked road which could have led you safe across? The dense darkness of tamas surrounds you now, and, at the appointed time, Yama's apparitions prepare to drag you body bleeding to death. Who can dispel your fear of death?'

99 Ibid page 100.Vaakh 31, '*kandyav karat Kandi kande*','O embodied One, dote not upon the body thus, embellishing it, adorning it, providing luxuries for it. Even its ashes will not endure'.

100 Ibid page 100.Vaakh 33, '*yava tū'r tsalī tim ambar he'tā*', 'This counsel to the body give, O soul: Wear only such clothes as ward off cold; Eat only to satisfy hunger'.

101 Ibid page 100.Vaakh 34, '*treshi bwachi mo kreshināvun*' 'Let not your body suffer from hunger and thirst, Feed it whenever it feels famished.'

dealing with the body. The body is not considered an obstacle in reaching unitive state, once disciplined it becomes a vehicle of the mystical experience especially given Lal Ded's *śakta* and tantric learning.

The first thing that strikes one about Lal Ded's mystical experience is that there is much agency of her in reaching this experience, she very actively sought it, she is determined and her *vaakhs* are full of this conviction. She describes the various paths that one can lead to fruition of will¹⁰².

Lal Ded's precept to reach a mystical experience is to withdraw one's gaze from the world and fix it on the Self¹⁰³. This in psychology is termed as psychological contemplation. Psychological contemplation is the act of contemplation is for the mystics a psychic getaway; a method of going from one level of consciousness to another. In technical language, it is the condition under which the shift in 'field of perception' and the mystic obtains his characteristic outlook on the universe. The *citta* emerges when the mind is free from desires and imaginings.

Illumination that Lal Ded receives absorbs her in the lake of immortality, she had *samavesha*, absorption in the divine. Lal Ded has the direct perception of One Self, 'Sahaz', abiding in all, of the unity of all in One Self;

'Here there is neither thou nor I,

No 'postured thought', nothing to contemplate,

Even the All- Creator is forgot.'

102 Ibid. page 97. *Vaakh 20*, '*tyoṭh mo 'dur myūṭh zahar*' 'What is bitter at first, is sweet in the end, What is sweet at first is poison in the end. It all depends on the effort put in, and the unflagging determined will'.

103 Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*. New Delhi. Sahitya Akademi. 1973. *Vaakh 59*, '*mūḍo kray chay na dhārun ta pārun*' 'O fool, right action does not lie in observing fasts and ceremonial rites. O fool, right action does not lie in providing for bodily comfort and ease. In contemplation of the Self alone is right action and right counsel for you.' page 107.

This is what is termed as the Way of Unity, it is not a temporary *Samadhi* but *jivan mukti*, not pure contemplative state for the time being, but constant Self-awareness, firm consciousness of identity with *Cit*¹⁰⁴, in all states and conditions in the world- it is this that constitutes liberation of one still alive and embodied.

The transcendence has been described vividly and descriptively in the *vaakhs*. She talks of hearing the bells of truth and soaring the sky¹⁰⁵. There is emergence of transcendental self, it captures of the field of consciousness, and the opening up of those paths which permit the inflow of a larger spiritual life, the perception of a higher reality. This, in so far as it was an isolated act, was ‘contemplation’. When it was part of the general life process, and had permanent results, they call it the New Birth. The faculty or personality concerned in the ‘New Birth’, capable of spiritual vision and life, which was disassociated from the ‘earthly man’ adapted only to the natural life, was distinguished by them from the total personality, conscious or unconscious. *Lal Ded* does this when she talks of entering her mind and seeing *Shiva* and *Śakti* sealed as one, after this vision she claims to have been unchained from the wheel of birth and death.

7.3: *Padavali*

The account of *Mīrabāī*’s life we get in *Bhaktamāl* of *Nabhadas*. She was devoted to Krishna from childhood and was unwillingly married off to Rana. She was dissuaded from her devotion by her in laws and there are several myths of poison and cobras being sent to her. *Mīrabāī*’s padas were written in more verse than in prose. *Mīra*’s

104 The experience of the identification of the individual consciousness with the universal consciousness has to be carried out into the experience of the outer world.

105 Ibid page 130. Vaakh 126, ‘*tana mana gayas bo tas kunuy*’ ‘I turned to Him heart and soul, And heard the ringing of the Bell of truth. There, in *dhāraṇa* fixed in thought, I soared the Sky and the Region of Light’.

songs make use of *alamkara* which broadly fall under three heads –*sabda alamkara* (the adornment of words); *arth alamkara* (heightening the effect of poetry by subtleness of meaning) and third, *ubhaya alamkara* (perfect fusion of both word and meaning)¹⁰⁶. We find a number of figure of speech in *Mīra*'s songs like alliteration; repetition and comparison using both metaphor and simile.

She conformed to no particular school of poetry and did not have a guru. Most critics are of the view that *Mīrabāī* did not deliberately choose her words to create effect, rather her poetry was the spontaneous outpouring of her heart, and achieved perfection because of her artless and deep emotions. Her songs were sung in various assemblies of sadhus in many parts of the country, giving the dialect a twist to conform to the one spoken there. Even the number of verses attributed to her varies beyond measure. The collection of Dakor and Kashi has 103 and the *Mira-sudha-sindhu* has 1312. *Mīrabāī*'s songs have been current in three vernaculars- Hindi, Marwari and Gujrati. It is probable that she herself being a Rajputani, used a mixture of these three dialects.

Mīrabāī's *padas* were predominantly an expression of her oneness with Krsna and end with the words *Mīra*'s lord is none other than Giridhara (Krishna). *Mīra*'s love for Krsna was many faceted. She looked on him as the Lord and Creator, the Saviour, Preserver and the Supreme Being who absolved his devotees of all sins and freed them from the rounds of rebirths. More than this she surrendered herself wholly to him, body, mind, heart and soul. She never thought of herself as separate from Krsna.

Though her symbolism is in place erotic as Akka Mahadevi, there is nothing obscene. *Mīrabāī*'s love was divine as she had merged with Krsna. It was the pure

106 Krishna P. Bahadur, *Mīrabāī and Her Padas*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1998. page 30.

kind of love the gopis of Vrindavana had for him-selfless all absorbing, immaculate and endless, love which knew no satiety.

While Akka Mahadevi and Lal Ded's lyrics might have focused on truth, karma and other philosophical subject, Mīrabaī only occasionally would speak of the worldliness of people where people are stuck in cycles of rebirth¹⁰⁷, to her with was with love that she would commune with God and that is what was most important to her. She rejects entanglements of martial relationships for herself¹⁰⁸.

Mīrabaī much like Akka Mahadevi also wrote about nature, Mīrabaī wrote about the loveliness and grandeur of nature. Some of her padas are almost exclusively descriptions of such natural beauty. In one of them she describes the changing seasons, month after month.

There is a tone of distress and anguish that is specific to the padavalis of Mīrabaī, her *śoka* (grief) is likened by her to a sickness, in the text she says that her sorrow could not be alleviated with drugs and no physician could heal her¹⁰⁹. Along with *śoka*, there are also references made to *Nidranasa* (insomnia), she says that she can't eat and she can't sleep at night. She states in Padavali 52;

'my heart is restless;

I long for Krsna

sleeping not a wink,

his name on my lips

107 Krishna P. Bahadur, *Mīrabaī and Her Padas*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1998. 'Ramaiyā bina yau Jivaro dukha pāvai, kano kuna dhīra bamdhāvai, yā samsāra kubudha ko bhāmdo, sādha-sangati nahim bhāvai'.

108 Krishna P. Bahadur, *Mīrabaī and Her Padas*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1998, page 94. *Yo samsara biraro kāmto, gela prītama atakāsyām. Mira re prabhu giridhara nāgara, guna gavam pasyam.*

109 Krishna P, Bahadur, *Mīrabaī and her Padas*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers. 1998, page 98.

nightlong¹¹⁰,

The love evoked by *Mīrabāī* is quite similar to intoxication, intoxication on the other hand is one of the most pronounced and proclaimed ways of describing madness. There are references made to people getting drunk on distilled wine, however *Mīrabāī* gets drunk on love day and night¹¹¹. The love that *Mīrabāī* feels is related to sickness, there are several padavalis that speak of using amulets to counter spells and the use of grinded herbs¹¹². The most telling of the padavalis is Padavali 79:

‘They called a physician

Who felt my pulse

and to relieve me

he gave me drugs;

but what can drugs do

when the sickness is love?¹¹³,

Mīrabāī’s love is a love similar to the literary figures of classical literature of love in separation, this pain of separation causes deep anguish and the frenzy of which is termed madness¹¹⁴. *Mīrabāī*’s mystical revelation uses several metaphors of light, she states that her mind was dark as night but by the guru’s grace, her mind was awoken and she had seen the light. *Mīrabāī*’s mystical state when described is a visualisation of her godhead, she visualises her godhead in great and painstaking detail, she describes Kṛṣṇa’s peacock feathered crown, His tilak, earring, lips and black locks.

110 Ibid, p 84.

111 Ibid,p 77.

112 Krishna P, Bahadur, *Mīrabāī and her Padas*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.1998.Padavali 26, ‘Shall I bring you an amulet, to counter his spell, or grind some herb to make you well? But if love ails you friend there’s no help’.

113 Krishna P. Bahadur, *Mīrabāī and her Padas*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.1998. page 105.

114 Ibid. page 47 ‘*heri, maim to Prem divani mero darada na janai koya. Ghayala ki gata ghayal janai, jo koi ghayal hoi. Darada kī mārī dara-dara dolūm, vaidā milā nahim koya. Mīra kī Prabhu pīra mitaigī, jaba vida sāmvaro hoyā.*’

She exclaims and announces that seeing *Krsna* lovely face makes her go into raptures¹¹⁵.

Conclusion

In this chapter, unlike the previous chapter, the focus shifts twofold manner; madness outside the normative understanding of literature and ayurvedic texts and madness in women of a devotional persuasion. Madness of these saints has come to be a defining feature of their spirituality and asceticism. The categories of ideals of personhood are gendered male, by this we mean that allocation of categories are gender related. By extension we question if the qualities and descriptions of madness in devotion are gendered female as they fall short of the ideal? As the behaviour and the roles women play in society are already devalued, thus their ascetic and spiritual responses will be fraught with contestation through the labelling of madness.

The subsequent question to be raised, is madness a women's category of description in bhakti? There has been work done previously to answer this question in the context of modern medical treatment.¹¹⁶ However such questions have not been raised in the context of the ascription to madness to women bhakti poet saints. There is evidence to identify a strong cultural association between conceptions of madness and femininity throughout bhakti literature. I would submit, that madness as demonstrated to us in the hagiographies of *Akka Mahadevi*, *Lal Ded* and *Mīrabai* is tool of idealisation of feminine devotion through the ascription of madness. Extending Elaine Showalter's argument of the dualistic system of representation and

115 Ibid.page 42. 'Adhara Madhura para Bansi bāje, rījha rījhāvai brajanārī. yā chabi dekha magana bhai mira, mohana givrera dhārī jī'

116 Joan Busfield, *Men, Women and Madness: Understanding Gender and Mental Disorder*, London: Macmillan Press Ltd,1996. page 4.

language, women are situated on the side of irrationality, nature and body¹¹⁷. I would qualify that ascription that even though women are situated in this position, unlike western notions of passivity and silence as opposed to the masculine active agency, in the Indian context, specifically with reference to śakti and the female principle, women saints are rehabilitated outside the fold of sanity with more agency and mobility and specific forms of male domination.

The madness of bhakti saints, in mystical states and their recorded transactions and negotiations in their contemporary milieu allow us to view madness as an exceptional virtue rather than as an inhibiting attribute. The mysticism and allied asceticism practiced by the bhakti poets was dissimilar to the khanqahs and missionaries as they were not institutionalised in the same manner. On the other hand, they were tenuously threaded to a sect in terms of the godhead that they invoked in their path to find the Ultimate Reality. The bhakti poet saints were in no way or form forced isolationist. In fact, on the contrary, the bhakti poets by going against the grain of society and flourishing in a particularly unique context of transgressors who had achieved unitive state, solidified the society mores that they had forsaken. The devotional madness of bhakti poets put them in a unique position of erasing the conventional gender boundaries as is found in their own songs. This erasure further permitted an attraction and reverence that was bestowed on these bhakti poet saints through hagiographies and legends. Erasure of mind/body duality was a key distinction that the bhakti poets achieved especially Lal Ded and Akka Mahadevi. This expunction led to the ungendering of the bhakti poet saints and permitted them significant loci stand in society. This position is often, accepted and spoken of in the songs and verses themselves.

117 Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, London: Penguin Books, 1985, page 3.

Chapter Five: Madness in Ritual Practices in the Temple

Introduction

The articulation of what constitutes madness, the diagnosis of madness and the subsequent healing and treatment of madness in the ayurvedic and ancillary corpus are discussed in chapter 2. The theatrical performance of acts of madness as prescribed in the didactic literature of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the descriptive nature of madness in the *kāvya* literature are discussed in chapter 3.

In contrast to the textually determined understanding of madness in the previously mentioned chapters, in this chapter we embark on a reflection of what constitutes as madness in a different context. By examining the healing of madness in the setting of the temple complex. The temple becomes 'the site' and cultural base where madness is witnessed, performed and healing takes place in the purview of a larger social community. I'd like to survey the imprint made by these brahmanic treatises and texts into the social praxis of the temple community. Temple sites and complexes here, are viewed as materially ascribed objectification of all the social, religious, moral and ethical assumptions made by a society. They should be viewed as material expressions of the afore mentioned assumptions that then becomes the site of healing of madness.

In the first section of the chapter, we establish the temple as a site beyond the pale of religious performances and activities including praying, pujas and vows. Temples in this sense, are considered in this chapter as a site for the resolution for all the cosmic, spiritual, temporal concerns and conflicts of the individual, whilst the individual maintains an identity of being part of a larger religious and social community

patronising the temple establishment¹¹⁸. The conceptual understanding of the temple is stretched beyond the purview of rites and rituals to embrace a larger role in the socio-cultural processes of defining phenomenon and events in society. Temples as a conceptual category are scrutinised to further determine the relation of the individual to the temple vis a vis the religious and social community. In this manner, we also, observe the locus standi of the temple vis-a-vis its cultural and physical environment in which it is located. This section goes on to establish the similarity of the structural aspects of a temple's physical construction to that of a human body. Thus, reflecting how the temple becomes a physical map of the ideological and religious aspirations and understanding of a community whilst they visualise a human body and in turn sacralise it through the construction of a temple. Conversely, we note how the individual's body in the precinct of the temple converts into a social body and this body in turn marked by the experience of the temple complex¹¹⁹.

The next section we proceed to is looking at the imagery of the presiding deity in the temple complex and the role this visual in the experience felt by the worshipper individually and as part of the larger social community¹²⁰. There is a special focus on the female aspect of a deity. The thrust of this chapter is on the imagery and iconography of the goddess in south Indian temples especially in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The iconography of the goddesses is scrutinised in relation to their described

118 Ramanatha Pillai, *Vendukoll Padhigangal*, Vol. V Tinnevely: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1954. 'kalai ezhundhu tholuvarthangal kavalaigalai kalaivai' 'The people who pray to him (Siva) in the morning, find their sorrows fade away'. page 3.

119 Ramanatha Pillai, *Vendukoll Padhigangal*, Vol I., Tinnevely: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1954. page 4. 'Aakkai yalpayanen-aran koyil valam vandhu poonkayyal atti potriyen naadha aakkai yalpayanen' O body! Circumambulate the temple to gain the benefit of the worship'. Page 4.

120 Ramanatha Pillai, *Vendukoll Padhigangal*, Vol I., Tinnevely: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1954.

and designated characters as powerful deities and their functional and utilitarian role in the lives of their worshippers. The deities that have been chosen create a complex liminality between what has been termed the Great and Little Traditions. These deities draw an amorphous line as they are begetting in textual evidence and are acknowledged and referenced in sanskrit and puranic scriptures. However, the process and systems of daily liturgical practice show a confluence with local and village practices that these deities' temples are situated in. These deities are concerned with long term welfare, human condition and personal and local exigencies of the laity.

As Edward Harper points out that there is a universalisation and parochialisation of the deity that we witness through the transcendental and pragmatic worship that takes place for these deities¹²¹.

The two goddesses that are being used as examples are the *Chottanikkara* Devi, Bhagwathy Devi in *Chottanikkara* temple in Ernakulam and goddess *Gomathi Amman* in *Sankaranayinar Kovil* in Tirunelveli. Moving from the iconography of the goddess to the specificity of the rituals that are performed in their temple complexes is the next section of the chapter.

The successive section contends with description and delineation of madness as possession within the complex of the temple. This section looks to investigate how cultural meaning is employed to define the phenomenon of madness as possession. The act of defining this phenomenon requires the employment of several symbols and idioms that we attempt to corroborate.

121 Edward B Harper, ed., *Religion in South Asia*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964. page 17.

The rituals that we concern ourselves most with are the rituals that become associated with healing, that are carried out within the temple complex. We ascertain that the environment of the temple and the spacial organisation of the temple allow for a certain set of rituals to be performed, enacted and carried out that heal the person, in a socially recognised way. These rituals have several components to them that include daily worship, special festival worship and personalised worship as required and requested by the laity¹²². The temple rituals facilitate communication and provide access to the laity to the divine aspect. The ritual performance allows for the community to transform into a coherent audience that is necessary and mandated in order to witness healing of the afflicted taking place. This viewership and witnessing is necessary as it is with the consensus of the social group that experiences the reality of healing together does transformation of the afflicted person to health proclaimed and accepted in the larger social community. The structure of the rituals gives an insight into the working and processes by which the internal mechanism of control is performed and exercised in society of the human body and the human mind. Within the structures of daily worship, we pay close attention to the daily liturgy and mantras that are employed in healing rituals. The last section, attempts to see the quasi democratisation of worship, through the engagement of the laity with ritual vows. There is a need to juxtapose the formal ritual practices of healing with singular human efforts in the form of ritual vows. These informal vows do not necessarily run at cross purposes with the more formal institutionalised forms of worship.

122 Ramanatha Pillai, *Vendukoll Padhigangal*, Vol V. Tinnevely: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1954. '*Undaai nanjai umaiyor pangaa yenrulkith thondrai thiriyum adiyar thangal thuyargal, andaa vannam aruppaan yendhai oorpolum vendaa maraimel karuvan daazjsei venkaade*' For those spreading the message of siva, protect them from pain and sorrow. page 4.

Thus, looking at the temple as an active agent of religious, social beliefs and action. We move towards an understanding of madness and healing within the material world and find how these healing rituals manage to create a social rationale for cohesion in society within the rubric of the religious community.

1: Temple as the Site of Healing

The temple as a site, marks out socio-religious and geographical territory. The temple, at once, becomes part of the description of landscape and geography as a visual and temporal landmark¹²³. However cleaving, apart from getting drafted into narratives, the temple has the agency to inform economic trade routes, social assembly and making of centres of devotion. The temple by demarcating and cleaving out land becomes an organising principle of space and society. This demarcation reflects another process of the individual's relationship with nature. According to Daud Ali, temple building activities, documented strategies that human developed for the transformation of nature for the subsistence and maintenance of society¹²⁴. This transformed space that temples organise in and around its environment is not egalitarian, in fact, it reveals a systematic hierarchy of space within the context of social relations¹²⁵.

Temple construction in south India, came out of the process of the spread of the religious movement of bhakti. As Noburu Karashima demonstrates, between the 6th-9th century, with the canonisation of the *naynars* and *alvars* saints, the temple became the central institution of worship. This social institution was organised

123 Muthuveerapa, *Sankarnarayan Swami Kovil Purana*, Thenakasi: Sri Meenakshi Press, 5th Ed., 1948, page 56.

124 Martha Ann Selby and Indira Vishwanath Peterson, ed., *Tamil Geography: Cultural Construction of space and place in South India*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008. page 117.

125 Muthuveerapa, *Sankarnarayan Swami Kovil Purana*, Thenakasi: Sri Meenakshi Press, 5th Ed., 1948. 'Even people from the lower caste and those who do not pray often if they are to pray in Sankarnarayan Kovil, would attain great prosperity and peace'. page 56.

around the social participation of the king as the patron, the brahmin priest as the chief functionary and the layperson as the laity¹²⁶.

In the south Indian regional setting, the brahmanic worship of brahmin gods (Siva and Visnu) as pointed out by Martha Ann and Indira Visvanath was done in specific locations that became the dwelling of particular personae of the godhead¹²⁷. Thus, in this sense, the temple becomes the extension of a certain sort of domesticity which extends to then the contending with trials and tribulations associated with such domesticity. The 'place' where the temple is constructed is in itself, shrouded with significance. Hilltops, rock out croppings, headwaters, confluence of rivers and pool and groves of forests are traditionally linked to ritual and reverence.

The sacredness of the site is emitted intrinsically and is bolstered outwardly. The place of worship gains its legitimacy through the process of legends, folklore and witnessing of miracles including those of healing, especially in this case of madness. Thus, the site of dispensation of boons and exoneration of sin through innate power becomes the site of worship. This is also reinforced by the attention of the people directed and concentrated on the spot in such places¹²⁸.

As Diana Eck states, there is a locative form of religiousness, the place itself is the primary locus of devotion¹²⁹. This locus of the temple, is considered a liminal place, a threshold, betwixt, which links this world and the other. This interaction of location

126 Noboru Karashima, ed., *A Concise History of South India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004, page 11.

127 Martha Ann Selby and Indira Vishwanath Peterson, ed., *Tamil Geography : Cultural Construction of space and place in South India*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008, page 7.

128 Muthuveerapa, *Sankarnarayan Swami Kovil Purana*, Thenakasi: Sri Meenakshi Press, 5th Ed. 1948. Thala Viseda Sarukam- The temple gives the devotee blessings of this life and beyond through the water, idol and temple space itself. page 54.

129 Diana Eck, 'India's 'Tirtha': 'Crossing' in Sacred Geography', *History of Religion*. Vol 20, No. 4 (May, 1981) page 323.

between mundane and ordinary allows for possibilities of transcendence¹³⁰. It is this same possibility that makes the temple an opportune place to manage and alleviate madness inflicted on the person that in social understanding amorously arises through the combination of ordinary and extra-ordinary means of sin or past life.

Tantra Samuccaya, the treatise that has been recognised as the authority on temple architecture would have us believe that, 'This (temple) place is where an individual launches out on a journey between heaven and earth. It is a threshold of time, space and ritual, where persons destroy sins, sins of a lifetime or many lifetimes The entire cosmos is revealed in the symmetry and contours of the temple in a 'tīrtha''¹³¹. Thus revealing how anthropocentric and functional, the social orientation of the temple is, by allowing the devotee/worshipper to experience catharsis and absolutions from sins acquired in this life and past.

Moving forward from the assignation of place, space and location of the temple. The physical structure of the temple is an embodiment of the conception of the human body. The human body is the visual template used traditionally to build a temple, which is encapsulated in the principles of *vastupurusamandala*. There is also a cosmic compression taking place where the entire world (cosmos) is transmigrated into the measure of the temple and made accessible to man at the temple¹³².

130 George Pati, 'Temples and Human Bodies: Representing Hinduism'. *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol 15. No.2 (August 2011).

131 Mahadev K.S. Sastry, *Tantra Samuccaya of Narayan*, Vol III Trivandrum: Government Central Press.1958. Verse 50. page 96.

132 Ramanatha Pillai, *Vendukoll Padhigangal*, Vol I. Tinnevely: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society,1954. '*Thenavar pozhi kola alai vilai chennel, thunnivalar chembon engum thigaza. Naan mugan aadhiyaya biramapurathu narai jnana jnana munivan. Thanuru kolu naalum adiyaral vandhu naliyatha vannam urai chei, aana chol maalai oodhum adiyargal vaanil arasalur aanai namathe*'Is ordering that those devotees who read this garland of words, would not suffer the ill effects of planets, stars and other constellations and would rule the heavens. page 12.

This is most systematically discussed in Stella Kramrsich's seminal work, 'The Hindu Temple' Vol I. In this, she states, 'that the measures used to delineate the *vastumandala* are *prana* (immanent breathes or energy). These breathes are the immortal parts of the body. With them drawn in a network of lines, the body of the *vastupurusa* lasts as long as the present aeon'¹³³.

According to Kramrsich, the building draws its power from the *vastupurusa* who lies at the base and converts by his name and presence the plan of existence (*vastumandala*) into the shape of the Purusa, in whose image the temple is set up. The beginning of any construction of physical artifice, begins with a plan. In the case of a hindu temple, the plans made are also done with references and identifications to parts and limbs of the human body. Kramrsich states, 'It affords a means of location of the several parts within the whole and an identification by transfer of one's own bodily frame into the special design as well as an introduction of that image into corresponding disposition of one's own body'¹³⁴. Thus, Kramrsich, here views the body as a map, where coordinated religious activities for special functions are performed.

The *vastupurusamandal*, constructed with 32 bricks, 8 in each quarter with a centre called *yajnatanu*. It extends the notion of the body (in this case that of a fallen asura) agnate to the ritual body.

The physical structure of the temple as an embodiment of the human body speaks to the dual processes of conceiving regulated physical social actions and on the other hand being informed of social and aesthetic realities that help actualise the design

133 Stella Kramrsich, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol I. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1946. page 51.

134 Stella Kramrsich, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol I. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1946. page 71.

and execution of temple complexes. The functionality of the physical forms of temple complexes adds another layer to the discussion on viewing the temple as an embodiment of the human body. This interaction of the functionality of space and the individual's physical negotiation of space can be seen in George Michell's descriptions of temple complexes especially in the region of Tamil nadu.

‘Long pillared corridors linking different parts of the temple, creating architectural frames to unify earlier assembly of structures. Galleries in many temples surround sanctuaries and sub shrines of four sides, serving as ambulatory passageways crowded with worshippers. They also create transverse axes within temple interiors, with spacious crossings acting as ritual focal points Colonnades also define open spaces within the complex, surrounding open courts with tanks, flagpoles and altars’¹³⁵.

The temple's functional role that is perceived and prescribed by the normative texts of Mayamata and *Tantrasamuccaya* allow us to better understand the corollary between the temple building and the human body¹³⁶.

The temple was not only imprinted by the visual and physical form of the human body but in turn it did affect the human body through the experiences that were generated/ met with in the temple complex. The temple complex was considered an environment for generating haptic experiences as the temple served as a bodily complex for individual experiences and embodied practices. The individual worshipper's body was engaged in a process, a process of disintegration of the self

135 George Michell, *Architecture and Art of Southern India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. page 76

136 These treatises and manuals contain temple oriented rituals ranging from construction of a new temple, to installation of new deity to expiatory rituals.

and embodiment of divine and human union¹³⁷. Individual's experience of worship allows the body to become the site of imprinting ideas of self. The temple whilst containing specific socially and religiously sanctioned moral and aesthetic qualities through spatial features represented concentration of cosmic space on earth. This enabled the temple complexes to actively engage with the human body at an experiential level. This subsequently was reflected in social relations and economic practices that were associated with the temple complexes.

2: Forms of Madness Present in the Context of the Temple

Any aberration in behaviour including madness in the context of a temple is almost always viewed as manifesting as a possession. Religious tradition in which people are possessed have existed and recorded throughout recorded history and continue to exist in this ever-changing globalising world.

Possession has been summarily defined as any complete but temporary domination of a person's body, and the blotting of that person's consciousness, by a distinct alien power of known or unknown¹³⁸. Karin Kapadia insists that this the duration of possession is indicative of the nature of possession, and longer possession are reflective of illness¹³⁹. Thus, if we were to unpack the layers of this definition we would find that possession externality and external nature of possession of the body and thus compromise the autonomy and agency of the person is what is most significantly surmised as definitionally important. This external force that the

137 George Pati, 'Temples and Human Bodies: Representing Hinduism'. *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, Vol 15.No.2 (August 2011).

138 Mary Keller, *The Hammer and the Flute: Women, Power and Spirit Possession*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. page 4.

139 Karin Kapadia, 'Dancing the Goddess: Possession and Class in Tamil South India', *Modern Asia Studies*, Vol 30. No.2 (May 1996).

individual in this context in the form of a worshipper is overcome by are designated as ancestors, deities or spirits. Additionally, possession would also be qualified as an altered state of consciousness as a result of the incorporation of the above mentioned superhuman forms of ancestors, deities and spirits.

The onset of this possession is always witnessed as being sudden, without preamble and notice¹⁴⁰. The transformation of the individual into a possessed individual has been much of what the initial scholarship focused on. This descriptive nature of possession and modalities associated with possession is noted in early work in this area of study by T.K Oesterreich. He stated with relative certainty that possession of the two types can be delineated; voluntary and involuntary, manifested in three distinct ways in the person afflicted with possession. In the first place, the possessed individual non-consensually takes on a new physiognomy. This physiognomy is not a choice made by the possessed individual. The features which in a habitual state expressed serenity and benevolence were now changed at the moment of being overcome by external agency/force to be superseded by a new personality and individuality¹⁴¹. Thus, the first external sign of possession is noted as a change in countenance via observations of the afflicted person's facial expression. Closely associated with this change of physiognomy is change in bearing and gait which when combined with facial expression can elucidate the complete physical transformation of the affected personality. In the second place, the new personality that embodies the afflicted person reveals itself through a new voice. At the time, when the countenance of the afflicted person alters, a sharply different voice emits from the possessed individual. The new character that has subsumed the afflicted

140 Ramanath Pillai, Vendukol Pathigangal, Vol II. Muyalagan Neekiya Pathigam. Tinnevely: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1954. page 7.

141 T.K. Oesterreich, *Possession Demoniactal and Other. Among Primitive Races, In Antiquity, The Middle Ages and Modern Times*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., 1930. page 17.

person and projects itself through the afflicted person via speech and new intonation¹⁴². In the third place, what is observed as the most important and is paramount in terms of specificities of the afflicted person by an external agent is delineated in this observation of T.K Oesterriech. He postulates that the altered countenance of the individual bearing a new voice does not speak according to the 'spirit' of the erstwhile conditioned personality. On the contrary, the afflicted person speaks in terms of the new personality. The person's ego is replaced with the latter and is in conflict with the normal character of the individual¹⁴³. Thus, it can be summarily pointed out that in Oesterriech's reading of possession of an individual, the individual is always approximated with notions of passivity and weakness. There isn't scope or room for the agency of the afflicted person and given that possession is relegated to the realm of the embodiment of possession, there was no further delving into situating this possession in a context and within a larger framework of socio-religious functioning of a society.

Scholars of history, psychology and religious studies have assiduously located the site of possession to be the body, much time and research has been spent on describing the religious nature of this possession and the body earmarked as a religious body. Possession has been constructed as a religious behaviour and the overcome body by extension has been viewed as a religious body. Thus, religious beliefs were seen as the driving force behind the erratic behaviour displayed by the afflicted individual. In constructing their theories of possession around religious beliefs, scholars have manoeuvred the understanding of possession from the real to the unreal. Religious beliefs in these cultures are viewed to be unreal and set in

142 T.K Oesterreich, *Possession Demoniactal and Other. Among Primitive Races, In Antiquity, The Middle Ages and Modern Times*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd.,1930. page 20.

143 The words uttered by the strange voice generally betray a coarse and filthy attitude, fundamentally opposed to all accepted ethical and religious ideas.

fantastical notions. Erika Bourguignon states, that religious life is a matter of belief, then possession as a belief, allows a schematic where possession beliefs are located in the psyche of the person of that culture¹⁴⁴.

Western scholars have with arduous intention worked to keep, possession out of the realm of the real and within the oriental framework of fantastical. So far, we find that possession is not viewed from the lens of being biologically determined. Extolled as a religious belief, it is mirrored as an alternate reality being experienced an afflicted person¹⁴⁵.

I am inclined to agree with Frederick M. Smith, who rehabilitates the conceptual roots of possession in the matrix of personhood. He postulates that human beings have always been aware of their body, but also of their individuality, both spiritual and physical¹⁴⁶. Therefore, Frederick Smith widened the scope of possession by expounding the need to understand possession within the domain of personhood, with cultural and behavioural elements that these perforce require and refer to emergent selfhood when the context is dictated¹⁴⁷. I would further argue that this culturally constituted madness, is done specifically in the domain of the temple. The precinct of the temple allows for the deity to transact in defining the madness and in turn also allows the deity to manifest itself through the healing of the afflicted person.

144 Erika Bourguignon, *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness and Social Change*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press. 1973. page 54.

145 This alternate reality is not a neutral dimension or landscape. It is loaded with connotations of power, it is perceived as a place where this power hovers and is patiently waiting to exercise itself on an afflicted person.

146 Frederick M. Smith, *The Self Possessed Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilisation*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. page 18.

147 Frederick M. Smith, *The Self Possessed Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilisation*, New York: Columbia University Press. 2006. page 21.

I would like to contend that against the grain of separating insanity from the possession in western scholarship, it might be far more beneficial to look at possession as culturally constituted madness. This is possible if we turn our attention to the self-signification done by the afflicted persons and the institutional temple authority. By which i mean that madness that is defined in socio-religious terms and especially in terms of the temple setting being described in religious idioms.

The question I would like to raise here, is what sort of agency does this afflicted individual have in terms of their own body, how is this afflicted individual's agency which is circumvented through appropriation by the external force recognised in the context of the temple. More so, it is important to survey the role played by the institution of the temple in the temple setting of informing the discourse that is created around different modes of knowing and recognising possession in individuals.

Possession of women and possessed woman both have been subject of great speculation and research in the recent academic endeavours of south Asia. The subjectivity of woman is drawn from the framework of situating them as marginalised persons within a framework of a power dynamic that is asymmetric, that is beset in intersections of class and caste. This possession of women in a system of power that is operating in society through structures of relationships and customs is viewed as pitting the women in positions of vulnerability. According to early scholars, possessed woman are vulnerable and susceptible because of their weak position and constitutional makeup.

3: Temple Origin Myths: Character of Healing Centres

We now turn our focus to three temples Sri Prasanna Venkatachalapathy Perumal, Chhotanikkara and Sankaranarayan Kovil. These temples have risen in fame through word of mouth and myth surrounding them as centres of healing. The legend and myth that are associated with the three temples helps in demystifying the historical processes that led to the temples becoming centres of healing for devotees. The myths around the origin of the temple may not reflect the facts surrounding the temple's coming into existence though they will serve as vehicles of transporting us to the kernel of imagination and culture that was in motion at the time that these temples began to gain prominence as healing centres. Our attention needs to be drawn to the continuities and similarities in structure of the myth and legend surrounding the three temples that are aforementioned. These similarities suggest that at the deepest level similar historical processes were at play in the emergence of these centres of faith and subsequently healing.

The first part of legends surrounding the temple, involves the visitation of the God and Goddess themselves in the dreams of the protagonist. In these dreams, it is the deity themselves who instruct the devotee on the course of action to follow. In most cases, it is the deity who presents itself in the form of *swayambhu* to the devotee. The idol of the deity is within the ambit of the care of person, this figure maintains the idol of the deity in his personal capacity and the deity isn't part of a formal institutional religious setting. The deity in this sense possesses liminal character of being outside the 'civilised order'.

The second part of the legend involves the neglect of the deity. This is a crucial part of the story as it reflects the historical processes of migration, urbanisation and

brahmanisation of these local cults. All the three myths, have initial ‘event-moment’ of being discovered and then with movement of social groups and clans the worship of the deity and daily liturgy falls to despair. The neglect of the idol forces the idol to contend with natural elements, animals and devastation of being unprotected. It is necessary for these deities to be left in wilderness, so that they may lose some of their former identity and assimilate into the brahmanic sectarian pantheons seamlessly. This neglect helps the idol to lose its association with archaic or ‘pagan’ traditions and also allows the nature of the deity from being unsophisticated and peripheral to more conventionally brahmanic in their nature.

The third part of the story, is the process of rediscovery. This part of the story allows us to see the mechanisms of legitimacy at play. In all the three stories, the deity’s idol is initially found by someone outside the twice born varna. However, it is the brahmin priest in each instance that makes the revelation of the idol’s powers and provides the ‘right’ solution and enlightens the social group present on how to consecrate the idol found. It is in this ‘event-moment of being rediscovered that the powers of the idols are also witnessed. The stories revolving around the idol’s manifest power to heal are manifest at this junction in the legend.

4: Gunaseelam

Sri Prasanna Venkatachalapathy Perumal Temple is located 26.5 km away from the city of present day Tiruchirappalli. To contextualise the temple to its socio-political environment, it is necessary that we briefly describe the political occupation of Tiruchirappalli. Tiruchirappalli was an important centre under the chola dynasty due

the river Kaveri¹⁴⁸. The significance of this town to the empire can be witnessed in the large hydraulic projects that were undertaken under the aegis of the empire in the 11th -12th centuries. The grand Anicut was built 14kms downstream(east) of the city. It was a long earthen dam that traversed the Kaveri river with side channels to divert water for irrigation. Later a permanent dam was constructed on the same path was built by Sir Arthur Cotton in 1839. Tiruchirappalli's political significance didn't wane with the decline of the Chola empire, the city served as a second capital for the Nayaks of Madurai and was also the theatre of a fierce battle fought between the Nayaks and Mughals in the 17th century¹⁴⁹.

The temple covers an area of 1.45 acres, called *neelivanam* (as neeli was a kind of tree found locally). The temple is believed to be over 200 years old and all the pillars in the temple are built of granite. The presiding deity *Sri Prasanna Venkatachalapathy* is represented by a 51/2 high stone idol in a standing repose with *Alamelumangai Thayar* as his consort, this is known through the *Padadhi Kesanda Varnanam*¹⁵⁰.

The temple is first mentioned *Bhavishyotarra Purana*. However, the myth and folklore around the temple's conception and consecration is painted as the motifs on bas relief. The story of the *Gunaseelar* penance, sage, considered to be responsible for bringing lord *Perumal* to the banks of the river Kaveri is critical to the origination myth built around the temple. According to legend, it is believed that *Gunaseelar*, a

148 Ramadesigacharya Swamingal, *Sri Gunaseelam Srinivasa Suprabhatam*, Bombay: S. Srinivasan, 5, Visnu Mahal, D-Road, Marine Drive. 1979. page (i).

149 George Michell, *Southern India. A Guide to Monuments, Sites and Museums*, New Delhi: Roli Books, 2013. page 652.

150 Ramadesigacharya Swamingal, *Sri Gunaseelam Srinivasa Suprabhatam*, Bombay: S. Srinivasan, 5, Visnu Mahal, D-Road, Marine Drive. 1979. page (iii)

disciple of *Thalpier*, visited Tirupati and had darshan of lord *Venkateshwara*¹⁵¹. This visitation had such an impact on *Gunaseelar*, that he felt, he could no longer be separated from *Venkateshwara* anymore. *Gunaseelar* implored with *Venkateshwara* to go with him to his *asrama*. *Venkateswara*, though moved by *Gunaseelar's* devotion was indebted and obligated to stay at Tirumala. He directed *Gunaseelar* to return to his retreat and perform penance¹⁵². The lord told the saint that none other than *Vaikuntasa Sri Narayana* would appear before him.

Gunaseelar, as per the instructions of the lord conducted penance, during his penance, *Gunaseelar* braved forces of nature sent by Lord Indra and successfully completed his penance. Many years later in the kritha yuga, on a Saturday in the month of purattasi, on sravana naksatram, venkatachalapathy appeared in the *asrama* of *Gunaseelar* as a swayambhu. *Gunaseelar* was overjoyed and spent the day performing pooja to the lord.

After many years, *Gunaseelar* on behest of his guru left for the Himalaya's and deputed a small boy in charge of the vigraham and the daily pujas. Unfortunately, the boy grew fearful of the wild animals and the swirling river in spate, ran away and abandoned the idol. Neglect over time allowed an anthill to grow over the vigraham of venkatachalapathy and serpents lived in it. Thus, in the treta and dwapan yuga no pooja took place of the idol.

In the beginning of Kaliyug, this *vigraham*, now under the influence of chola dynasty, was discovered in the most interesting manner. A local king, *Gnana*

151 Ramadesigacharya Swamingal, *Sri Gunaseelam Srinivasa Suprabhatam*, Bombay: S. Srinivasan, 5, Visnu Mahal, D-Road, Marine Drive. 1979. page (vi)

152 P.S Venkatraman (Head Priest) in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi, 19th February 2016.

Varman, who had established his capital at Uraiyur constructed a cowshed in Kalur. One day, the cowherds noticed that the level of milk in the collection jugs had reduced mysteriously. This was reported to the king, who came to investigate the matter himself. At this point, a brahmin appeared and advised the king to pour 1000 pots of cow's milk onto the structure. The anthill was dissolved and the idol of Venkatchalapaty with a conch, discus, whip and sceptre was revealed. The lord appeared before the king and blessed him. The king immediately took on the onus and task of constructing the temple as we now see it in its present form¹⁵³.

The treatment of the persons affected by mental maladies is done over the prescribed course of 48 days. Every person that comes for treatment to the temple is required to stay the entire duration of treatment at the temple with abstention of outside food¹⁵⁴. It is also requisite that they are accompanied by caretakers for all the poojas that are compulsory to attend.

The day of the patient starts at 5.30 in the morning with a bath at the holy river Kaveri. They then arrive at the temple for vishwarupam pooja at 6.30 am. For an hour after that, at the time of *Abhiṣekam* from 7.30-8.30 the patients are instructed to do either 100/104 *pradakṣiṇa*. There has been a lot written on the healing aspect of circumambulation. Diane P Mines opines that the technique of circumambulation fact allows for a physical demarcation of forces and allows extradition from places or bodies of negative forces such as evil, sin, negative vision and diseases¹⁵⁵. At 8.30

153 K.R Pichamani Iyengar (Temple Trustee) in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi, 20th February 2016.

154 O. Somasundaram, 'Religious Treatment of Mental Illness in Tamil Nadu'. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* (1973) 15, 38.48.

155 Diane P. Mines, *Fierce Gods: Inequality, Ritual and the Politics of Dignity in South Indian Village*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. page 39.

am, the *naivedyam* is done, the god is decorated and kal sandhi pooja is conducted. Holy water and tulsi is given to the patients after which they are permitted to consume breakfast. The breakfast includes regular food that is cooked in the temple complex. After breakfast, the patients are expected to help with temple chores by making malas and other paraphernalia required in temple poojas.

In the afternoon, at 12.30pm, the patients return to the temple for *uchchikal pooja* and the holy water which is used to bathe the godhead which consists of camphor, saffron, elaichi is distributed to the patients. They proceed for lunch and are advised to rest for the afternoon. In the evening at 4.30, the afflicted worshippers are again taken to bathe in the river Kaveri. At 5.30, they are taken back to the temple for 54/24 *pradakṣiṇa* while the *sairaksa* is performed in the temple, the priest distributes holy water and tulsi to them. This is followed by the *vishwaroopam pooja*, in which the aarti is done without any garlands or fineries, milk is offered as prasada. At 6.30-7.30 am, the afflicted person is instructed to attend bhajans and subsequently rest. At 8.30pm, they return to the temple for the *ardhjaam pooja*, at the end of this pooja, holy water is sprayed on the people. This is the final pooja for the day after which they are to return to their living quarters, have dinner that has been prepared in the temple complex and retire for the evening.

In the book of *Sri Gunaseel Srinivasa Prakati*, there are verses that surmise anecdotal evidence of the curing power/ability of the temple's godhead. The text tackle diseases/ailments with a certain naturalistic rationale. The texts begin with combating sensory ailments and go onto other sorts of diseases and allied health related problems that individuals often suffer from.

The incident of Srutadeva is the first to be documented in which Srutadeva who suffered from being visually impaired and couldn't see. Through his stay at the temple, maintaining the strictures and not eating food from outside, which is vehemently forbidden, maintaining his *patya* (diet), he regained his eyesight. This emphasis on eyesight is emphasised in the work of Diana L Eck, she propounds that the first contact made by the devotee with the deity is visually¹⁵⁶. Thus, the rationale extends that the text would contend with eyesight (as an ailment) to begin with. The visual perception of the deity is akin to *darśan* (worship), which is main purpose of all pilgrimages. The next is Devadasa's case found in verse 8, who was a dumb merchant, he was instructed to only consume consecrated milk through his stay at the temple, the result was that at the end of his stay, his speech was restored¹⁵⁷. Another early verse, documents how Bahuvraja who couldn't walk and was lame, with his devotion to the godhead was after his stay at the temple able to run.

The next category of verses that one finds plenty of examples in the texts is that of infertility and anxiety related to childlessness. In verse 9, Srivishwa Gupta, a merchant who was childless, came to the temple and was prescribed *panchgavyam*, this resulted in Srivishwa Gupta begetting a son¹⁵⁸. In juxtaposition to this, was the ruler of Vangadesa who was also childless and was prescribed paysam to consume during his stay in the temple. After one mandalam, he begot a son, who grew up to be famous and renowned according to the text¹⁵⁹.

The next text that we use to reconstruct the diseases and ailments that were healed, along with their healing methodology is the *Navrathna maligai*. This text was

156 Diana L. Eck, *Darśan, Seeing the Divine Image in India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited. 2007, page 7.

157 Ramadesigacharya Swamingal, *Sri Gunaseelam Srinivasa Suprabhatam*, Bombay: S. Srinivasan, 5, Visnu Mahal, D-Road, Marine Drive, 1979. page 25

158 Ibid. page 25.

159 Ibid. page Page 25

composed in the 19th century by a devotee called Santankrishna in a village called Suthirtam in the fourth street of the village. In this texts, similar to the *Sri Gunaseel Srinivasa Prabandhi* the discussion of disease moves from the physical to mental in nature. The text states, ‘I salute and pray to Srinivasa Perumal who blesses and heals people who suffer from leprosy, madness and *billisuniyam*’¹⁶⁰.

5: Chhotanikkara

The *Sree Chhotanikkara* temple is situated about 10 kilometres outside present day, the city of Ernakulam in a hilly terrain. Previously, this area was densely forested and was inhabited by malayarayanmars and was called *chincharanyam* (forest filled with tamarind trees)¹⁶¹. The name of the temple is related to a legend associated with Adi Sankaracharya, who brought the jyothis of Mookambika Devi to the village and hence this place was called Jyothiyanikkara which later came to be pronounced as *Chhotanikkara*.

The iconography of *Chhotanikkara* is symbolically carries a sickle-headed sword in her right upper arm and trishul in lower right arm, this is indicative of her determination and strength to strike terror to evil forces and severe the heads of *adharma* and *adharmis*¹⁶². She carries a conch in one hand a mild sign of softness which is also a characteristic of the Devi. This is perhaps meant to instil confidence in devotees and engender love for her despite her carrying threatening arms. The

160 Ramadesigacharya Swamingal, *Sri Gunaseelam Srinivasa Suprabhatam*, Bombay: S. Srinivasan, 5, Visnu Mahal, D-Road, Marine Drive. 1979,page 31.

161 B. Balakrishna Pillai, *Lakshmi Narayaneeyam*. Cochin: Vidhya Offset Printers, 2015. page 65.

162 For further discussion on the iconography of sickle as an implement of harvest and repellent of spirits, See Sarah Caldwell, *Oh Terrifying Mother: Sexuality, Violence and Worship of the Goddess Kali*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001,page 111.

Devi's powers are described as her ability to destroy all adharmi, impurities as well as internal enemies like *kama*, *krodha*, *mada* and *moha*¹⁶³.

The legend of the temple of *Chhotanikkara* is mentioned in the *Sreemad Bhagvatham*. The legend is as follows, there was a dacoit named Kannapan, who by the virtue of his strength and bravery was made the chief of his tribe. He lived alone with his daughter called Thevi (which is the tribal way of saying Devi) who was the closest to his heart. Kannapan was a devotee of the Devi and practiced the ritual of slaughtering a cow as an offering to the Devi every day. Kannapan believed that this ritual offering of a holy and pure animal would bestow upon him strength and good fortune. One night when he was returning after stealing two cows, he found a calf along the way and took all three animals to his cowshed to be tied. Kannapan's daughter over time got attached to the calf and named it Kochukarambi, she tended to the cow with food and water. One day, when Kannapan failed to catch a cow to sacrifice, he made up his mind to slaughter Kochukarambi.

Kannapan's daughter vehemently opposed her father and insisted that he give up his violent ways by making a plea of getting real '*punyam*' by giving *dharma* and not violence. A while later, his daughter passed away, a grief stricken *Kannapan* spent all his energy on the calf and his cowshed. A year after Thevi's passing, *Bhagvati* appeared in his dream and revealed to him that it was she who had come to him in the form of a calf. Subsequently, in another dream soon after Kannapan saw that divine person standing near his cow. He woke up from his slumber and went to inspect the cowshed, once there he found nothing untowardly¹⁶⁴.

163 Ibid. page 106.

164 Narayan Namboodri (Devesom Board Member), in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi, February 2016.

The next day, he went to the cowshed in the morning and was dumbfounded by what he witnessed. He saw an enormous perforated stone at the site where the cow was resting the night before. Frenzied by the miracle he witnessed, he gathered a crowd of people with his cries and in that gathering an old sage, who later people believed was Parashar Maharishi placated Kannapan by enlightening him on the true meaning of the miracle. He stated that the perforated stone was swayambhoov of the goddess Mahalakshmi and the stone near that is Lord Narayan Moorthy. From that day onwards, Kannapan took on the task of worshipping the idols and maintaining the place of worship. After the death of Kannapan, the wandering tribals left the place in search of new pastures and migrated to Kakkanad. Subsequently, the place where the idols were found and consecrated once again became a thick forest.

The forest dwellers who later came to inhabit the area, would make a living by rearing cattle and livestock. To rear the cattle, the grass was brought from the wooded valley. Once a harijan girl, went into the forest in search of fodder to the area where Kannapan had once dwelled. To cut the grass, she had to sharpen her sickle. She noticed a raised stone nearby and proceeded to sharpen her sickle on top of it. On doing so, she realised much to her surprise and horror that the stone was oozing blood. In her panic-stricken condition, she raised an alarm with cries of help and soon the local hurried to the spot and witnessed the same miracle. They also found the girl to be in a possessed state¹⁶⁵.

It was at this point, that Edatt Namboodri who was on his way to Muriamangalam chanced to reach there. He quickly realised that it was a divine energy making itself

165 For detailed discussion on significance of discovery of 'divine' image, See Sarah Caldwell, *Oh Terrifying Mother: Sexuality, Violence and Worship of the Goddess Kali*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.page 26.

known. He rushed to find material for ritual worship and returned to the site. On his way back to the site, he enlisted the services of a goldsmith to carry a bronze lamp. The Namboodri prostrated himself before the divine stone and to propitiate the Devi, he made the first offering of coconut shell containing *malar* (fried paddy) to the deity¹⁶⁶.

The individuals ailing with madness or similar afflictions come to *Chottanikkara* temple to perform the *bhajnam*. The *bhajnam* is a means through devotion, where the individual concentrates his attention on the Devi and this surrender to the Devi alleviates the suffering of individuals¹⁶⁷. The *bhajnam* which usually is done on a Friday, starts at 4 in the morning and therefore the afflicted individuals are requested to come on the previous evening¹⁶⁸. At 4 am, the *Nirmalaya darshan* is done of both *Melkavu* and *Kizhukavu* temple. They have to conduct pradakshinam around the *Nalambalam* chanting the name of the Devi. At 5 am, the afflicted persons are supposed to go to the *Sivan Nada* and have a darshan of Sivandhara. At 5.30 am, they are to witness the *Ethirtha pooja* at the temple of *Melkaav Devi*. This is followed by a pradakshnam during *Seeveli*. They then proceed to the *Keezhkavu* temple to attend the *guruthi pooja* and receive *prasadam*. At 8 am, they are to pray to Melkaav Devi during the *Pantheeradi Pooja* and receive *Bhajana Ghee*. It is after this that the afflicted person is coaxed to have the *bhajana ghee, guruthi prasadam* and is allowed to have breakfast. After breakfast, they are instructed to do *pradakṣiṇa* in the temple chanting the name of the Devi. At 11am, they are required to attend the

166 Narayan Namboodri (Devesom Board Member), in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi, February 2016

167 Prasanth P.S (Tanthri for *Chottanikkara* Devi) in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi, February 2016.

168 For more explanation on the why *vyālarāḷca* (Friday's) which is ruled by Venus is associated with *Bhadrakali*, See Sarah Caldwell, *Oh Terrifying Mother: Sexuality, Violence and Worship of the Goddess Kali*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, page 134.

dhara at *Sivan Nada* and at 12pm they are supposed to attend the *Ucchapooja* at Melkaavu Temple and the *Ucchseeveli*. The afflicted persons then receive naivedyam choru (naivedyam rice) for lunch. The individual is not required to do any tasks in the afternoon and is permitted to rest, however, it is explicitly stated that the afflicted person should avoid sleeping during the day.

At 4pm, when the temple reopens they are expected to do the pradakṣiṇa and attend at 6.30pm, the *Deepadharana*, *Athazha pooja* and *seeveli* in *Melkaavu* temple and follow that with the Guruthi pooja and darshan in *Keezhkavu* temple, receive the *guruthi prasadam*. They are then required to have their dinner. All meals during the bhajnam should be taken from the temple, the individual is forbidden from consuming food from outside the temple premise from the fear of consuming salty, sour and chilly food¹⁶⁹. Persons afflicted are put in the diet of fruit and milk. The *Sree kovil* of *Dharmasatha*, where he is flanked by wives *Poorna* and *Pushkala* facing west in the direction of the Devi is the first place that the afflicted go to pray after which they are directed to the temple of *Keezhkavu*.

The temple of *Keezhkavu* on the eastern side of the temple pond facing *Chottanikkara* Devi is the *vigraham* of *Bhadrakali*. This *vigraham* was installed by *Villwamanagalathu swamiyar*. After the performance of the aforementioned *Athazha pooja* in the evening at the main temple, the chief priest comes down to the *Keezhkaavu* temple to perform the *Valia guruthi* at 8.45pm¹⁷⁰. It starts with a *guru ganapathi vandanam* which is meant to thwart away hinderances to the pooja. After which a *pitha pooja* is conducted in the place where the goddess is to be seated (of her *aadhar shakti/mula shakti*). The devi is evoked through *avahana* and is then

169 Melashanti (Priest), in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi 13, February 2016.

170 For more discussion on Guruthi pooja and its connection to harvest, cultivation and fertility. See Caldwell, *Oh Terrifying Mother: Sexuality, Violence and Worship of the Goddess Kali*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, page 115.

seated and welcomed through offerings this is called *asana swagatha*. In the *shodhsha upachara pooja*, 16 different types of offerings are made to the Devi which are supposed to enhance her power. This notion challenges Eck's argument that the purpose of ritual offering is for exhibitions human devotion¹⁷¹. She is worshipped through different *mantras* and *stutis*. After which the *visarjanam* takes place, where the Devi is sent back to the place where she was invoked from¹⁷². A representational illustration depicts the various components of this pooja. The *guruthi* is performed with 12 cauldrons which are filled with turmeric, lime water and tender coconut which gives it the red colour, additionally fried rice and *varapodi* (a special powder) is added to it¹⁷³. Along with these 12 vessels there are 12 offerings made to the deity. Out of these 12 offerings only 2 are made from the priest and the other 10 are made from the *chenda/marara*. The water from the vessels does not come into contact with the individual suffering. Looking into the red water solution is supposed to change the mindset of the afflicted persons¹⁷⁴.

171 Diana L. Eck, *Darśan, Seeing the Divine Image in India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited. 2007, page 48.

172 Prasanth P.S (Tanthri for *Chottanikkara* Devi) in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi, February 2016.

173 For further discussion on the significance of red colour, See Brenda E.F. Beck, 'Colour and Heat in South Indian Ritual', *Man*, New Series, Vol.4, No.4. 1969, page 558.

174 Prasanth P.S (Tanthri for *Chottanikkara* Devi) in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi, February 2016

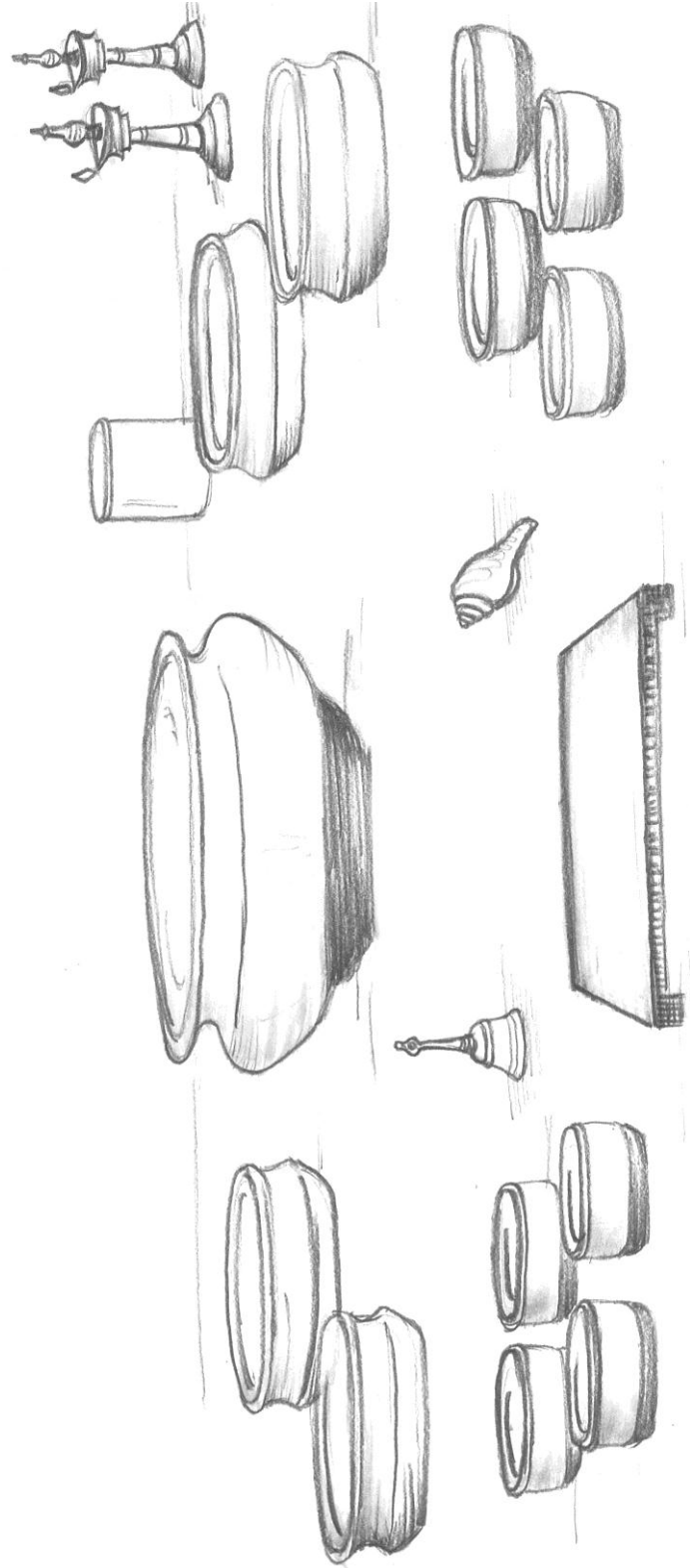


Figure 2: Artist's impression of Guruthi Pooja



Figure 2: *Guruthi Pooja*



Figure 3: Paala Tree

In the *valia guruthi pooja*, there is supposedly an argument that takes place between the devi and the evil spirit. It is believed that the sound of bhagvathy devi and the spirit can be recognised from the tone and difference in language, despite the fact that both the sounds are coming from the afflicted person's speech¹⁷⁵. After a long debate, the evil spirit is defeated and swears by the burning lamp to leave the body of the afflicted.

If the Devi feels that the spirit is likely to cause trouble to another person, the spirit is tied to the pala tree with iron nails. Adjacent to the *Keezhkaavu* temple, on its northern side stands a pala tree with hundreds of nails driven into its trunks. The nails symbolise that the devotee concerned has been treated here¹⁷⁶. It is the worship here by devotees with an attitude of surrender and devotion that has rid them of the evils spirits and its influence of *bhada* and culturally constituted psychological ailments.

The affected person drives nails into the tree with his/her forehead or fists. After finishing the nailing of the spirit, the afflicted person falls down unconscious with blood flowing from him/her. When the caretaker of the person, who has accompanied them for the *bhajnam* conducts the necessary preliminary treatment, the person regains consciousness and is considered free from the ailment. After this, they receive the Devi's *prasadam* and are allowed to return to their home after the proper completion of the *bhajnam*¹⁷⁷.

175 Pillai, B.Balakrishna, Lakshmi Narayaneeyam. Cochin.Vidhya Offset Printers. 2015. page 134.

176 Reverend Henry Whitehead, *The Village Goddess of South India*. Calcutta: Association Press,1921. page 162.

177 For a longer discussion on the role of prasad in maintaining the divinity of the godhead, See Lawrence A. Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy: popular Hinduism in Central India*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.page 53-60.

6: Sankaranayinar Kovil

Sri Sankaranayinar Kovil, is situated at a distance of 54 kilometres from Tirunelveli, midway between Tenaksi and Srivilliputtur of Ramnad District. The temple of Sri Sankaranayinar Kovil built in the vicinity of the city of Tirunelveli warrants a broad sketch of the social and political environment in which the temple came to be constructed and survived in. Tirunelveli located on the banks of the river Tambraparni was fertile ground to host several religious centres as a strategy to consolidate the political powers of the several empires that flourished in its background. This city was extensively developed by the Madurai Nayaks in the 16th-17th century. By the beginning of the 18th century, Tirunelveli's power base had shifted and was occupied by a fragmented and long line of local chiefs. These local chiefs found themselves to be part of a constant struggle with rulers of the adjacent Travencore kingdom. The Tirunelveli chiefs eventually lost their political authority to the Nawabs of Arcot but the city was finally ceded to the British in 1797¹⁷⁸.

The image of *Sankaranayinar Kovil* is *mrittika* (earth) *lingam*¹⁷⁹. The temple covers an area about 4 acres. Its enclosed by huge walls on all the four sides. The main gopuram is 125 feet high with 9 tiers decorated with beautiful plaster figures. There are 9 colossal *kalasams* on its top each about 71/2 feet in height¹⁸⁰.

The iconography of the main temple is of Sri Sankaranayinar, interesting as it is half sankara and half Visnu. The right portion of the image is smeared with sandal paste and has emblems of siva, with cobra around his head, moon and deer. The left side is

178 George Michell, *Southern India, A Guide to Monuments Sites and Museums*. New Delhi: Roli Books, 2013. page 700.

179 R.K. Das, *Temples of TamilNad*, Bombay. Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan,1991. page 46.

180 P.K. Nambiar and K.C Narayana Kurup, *Census of India 1961, Vol IX Madras Part XI-D Temples of Madras State*,1968.

Narayana with the sankha and chakra. The other presiding deities of the temple are Sri Sankaralingaswamy which is the prithvi lingam and a swayambhu (as the one found out of the ant-hill.) His consort is Sri Gomathi Amman also referred to as Avoodaiyal which in tamil is translated as Goddess possessing cows.

The temple was built by Ugra Pandeyan, who ruled over this area in the early part of the 11th CE. The historic date of the temple itself is corroborated by the temple inscriptions in tamil and grantha. These inscriptions reflect land grants made to individuals, village grants made to the goddess and special privileges to people during the annual festivals that were given¹⁸¹.

181 V. A. Rangacharya, *Topographical List of Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency*. Vol III, Government Press, Madras. 1919.



Figure 4: Gomathi Amman Temple



Figure 5: Sree Chakram

It was the practice of the ruler in the month of *Chitra* to visit Madurai frequently to worship Lord Somasundra; he usually rode on an elephant. On one occasion, when the King was at a distance of three and half miles at Perunkotoor from the spot where the temple was built later, his elephant dug a pit with its trunk, fell and rolled over earth. The king was greatly puzzled at the elephant's behaviour¹⁸².

Just then, one Manikreevan, a harijan farmer came up running and informed him of the existence of a *Sivalingam* with a cobra near an ant-hill, in a *Punnai* (forest) nearby that he discovered when he had accidentally cut a snake sculpture and a cobra came out of it. Simultaneously, he heard a voice from the skies, which catalysed him to build a small temple for the deity. The temple was in the 12th century renovated by a successor of Ugra Pandeyan and several land endowments were made by the Pandya rulers for the upkeep and maintenance of the temple.

According to *Thiruneetru Pathigam* (song of the Ash) written by Thirujnana Samvandar¹⁸³, the earth obtained from the *Putham* (ant-hill) is said to have wonderful powers of healing especially of any skin disease or abscess and more generally is believed to be panacea for all kinds of bodily diseases¹⁸⁴. Several scholars have discussed the curative properties such as cooling and generative nature of ash in their study of south Indian temples¹⁸⁵. This sacred earth is sold in precincts

182 Sankar Bhattar (Priest) in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi, 15th February, 2016.

183 Ramanatha Pillai, *Vendukoll Padhigangal*, Vol I. Tinnevely: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1954.page 6.

184 Ibid. page 6 '*Mandhiram aavadhum neeru vaanavar melidhum neeru sundharam maavadhum neeru. Thudhikkapaduvadhun neeru thadhiram aavadhum neeru samayathil ulla dhum neeru sendhuvar vaai umai pangan thiru aalavayan thiru neerae*' The ash is magical, above the gods, it is beatific, it is praised and is the means to attain god and is the proverbial truth. Thiru Aalavayan's neeru has all the qualities.

185 Diane P. Mines, *Fierce Gods: Inequality, Ritual and the Politics of Dignity in South Indian Village*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 2005.page 31.

of the temple in the form of globules. This is the only temple in the country that gives sand along with vibhuti from the snake house. The pure sand along with a holy bath in the tank is said to cure all diseases¹⁸⁶.

A *Sri Chakram* installed in front of the Devi, this circular hole, 8 metres in diameter with a design of chakram inside it. N.N. Bhattacharya describes the *Sri Chakra* as a symbolic union of the principles of siva and shakti depicted through the 4 male triangles and 5 female triangles with the Bindu in the centre where *Kameshwar* and *Lalita* reside in union¹⁸⁷. The *Sri Chakram* was installed by the king *Virasivala Mara Pandeyan*, who ruled after king Ugra Pandeyan. King *Virasivala* was proficient in yoga and ensured the building of *gopuram* of *Sankaranayinar kovil*. Despite his great devotion to the gods and all that he did for siva dharma, his queen consort was plagued with skin diseases (in the form of white patches). Dejected at the failing of his ascetic exercises he went to his guru *Velappa Desigar*, who was the tenth *gurumaha sanidanam* of *thiruvadagurai adinam madam*. The guru in order to find a solution for the King, prayed to the Goddess *Gomathi Amman*. The goddess revealed herself in a dream to the guru and instructed him to build the *agya chakra* in front of the *Gomathi samadhi*.

The people afflicted with madness and allied afflictions are supposed to take part in all the pujas that take place at the temple through the day and are permitted and restricted to eating only food offered in the temple. The process of ritualised activity is supposed to last for 11 or 21 days depending on the infirmed person's will and the priests. The day for the afflicted person starts with a bath in the holy tank of nagai

186 Ramaswamy Bhattar in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi, 16th February, 2016

187 N.N. Bhattacharya, *The History of Śakta Religion*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Private Limited. 1974. page 122.

sunai tapan¹⁸⁸. They are then expected to reach the temple at 5.30 am for the morning puja called *Ucchakala puja (thiruvananda puja)* where siva is symbolically brought to the temple. At 6.00 am they proceed to attend the *abhiṣekam* followed by the *vila pooja* at 6.30 am. The individuals suffering from ailments and mental maladies are then instructed to have their breakfast by 8.30 am. The food they partake in is provided by the temple within the complex. They return to the shrine at 8.30 am for the *Sri Kala Sandhi* and stay for the *Kala Sandhi pooja* that takes place at 10.30 am and *Ucchikala pooja* that takes place at 12.30 pm. After the day's poojas are performed the infirmed are sent to eat their lunch. This light lunch usually included *taer/pulli sadam* (yogurt /tamarind rice). The infirmed persons have the afternoon to rest but are instructed to return to the temple at 4pm, when the temple is reopened for worship. The infirmed persons are not permitted to sleep on a bed as it is part of the *vrāta*(vow) that they have taken. They return to the temple after taking a bath in the *tapan* again.

At 5.30 pm, the persons are instructed to attend the *saiyairijay pooja* and at 8.30pm they proceed for the *ardhjama pooja* (where Siva goes to Parvati room). The infirmed persons are then shepherded to eat dinner.

People with physical or mental afflictions, usually come to the temple on what are regarded as auspicious days such as Fridays or during *Adi Tapas*¹⁸⁹. *Adi Tapas* is a

188 For more details on purpose of ritual bathing, See Brenda E.F. Beck, 'Colour and Heat in South Indian Ritual', *Man*, New Series, Vol.4, No.4 1969. page 557.

189 Ramanatha Pillai, *Vendukoll Padhigangal*, Vol I. Tinnevely: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, 1954. '*Cheppila mulai nan mangai oru bhagamaga vidai yeru chelvan adaivaar, oppilamathyum appum mudi mel aninthen clame pugantha athanaal, veppodu kulirum vadam migayana pithum, vinayana vandhu naliyaa, appadi nalla avi nalla nalla adiyaar avarkku migave*' With the famous good young damsel on one side, he (Siva) is the source of all wealth, And keeping on his head, the incomparable moon as well as the river (Ganga), he enters into my mind, and so fevers with chills, rheumatism, excess of pitta (madness) which comes and troubles. Do only good and good with love, for they are good, good for the devotees of Siva. page 11.

ten-day festival that takes place during the month of July in commemoration of the penance done by Gomathi Amman to see Siva and Visnu as one god in the same image. The sick from the district and other parts of the country flock to the temple with the hope of getting a cure from the Goddess when she is benevolent in a blissful mood to give relief to her devotees¹⁹⁰. People suffering from severe diseases throw salt and sugar into the square tank within the temple hoping that their ailment may disappear as rapidly as the offering dissolves¹⁹¹. In case of bodily pain, a dab of rice flour on a leaf is placed on the body affected, a hole is scooped out of this paste and in it ghee is poured. Subsequently, the ghee is set alight and when it is burnt out, the cure is complete.

7: The Female Deity as the Healer

In South India, the temple complexes are often given the names of the presiding female deity as it is conjectural that given the fact that the goddess was previously a local deity that was subsequently transformed and co-opted into the pantheon. This is for instance, the case of *Chottanikkara* Devi who had her name retained as a signifier and potentially to continue as a legion landmark. According to N.N Bhattacharya, this is found to be the case as the female deities tend to have more localised origins and therefore symbolise village life, not the greater world forces that are at play in the larger context. I disagree with Bhattacharya's summation that this co-option was a result of 'higher religions' in order to gain favour with larger mass population co-opted the female deity into the pantheon. I think it would serve us well to bear witness to the cultural formation of *Chottanikkara* Temple that

190 Muthuveerapa, *Sankarnarayan Swami Kovil Purana*, Thenakasi: Sri Meenakshi Press, 5th Ed. 1948. page 70.

191 Sankar V in discussion with Saudamini Zutshi 16th February, 2016.

complicates this easy divide of higher and lower religious traditions and necessarily demands a context sensitive argument be created. The temple complex is required to be seen as a whole and within the complex the deities of *Chottanikkara* Devi and Keezhkavu need to be viewed in conjunction with one another and not necessarily as separate.

Within the temple complexes, it is generally found that it is the female goddess who is prescribed the onus of relieving and healing the sick and afflicted. This connection of the goddess with healing comes from the ideological mores of the goddess's ability to stimulate generative powers in nature given her active role in commanding the forces of nature¹⁹². The *Keezhkavu* temple within the *Chottanikkara* temple complex along with the *Gomathi Amman* shrine within the Sankaranarayan Kovil temple are the two goddesses that we have mentioned that are consigned as deities with powers of healing. These two goddesses belong two separate religious traditions; where Keezhkavu temple has a form of *Bhadrakali* consecrated, *Gomathi Amman* is a village goddess that was made part of the larger Sankaranarayan Kovil. The historical processes involved in the formation of these two deities impacted the image/embodiment, ritual and cultural processes involved in healing of the afflicted. The distinction in the manner in which these two temples have been consecrated is also noteworthy. N.N Bhattacharya categorises this into two types of temples; *Sri Koyil* (male gods) and *Tirymurram* (female gods)¹⁹³. The Keezhkavu temple is consecrated independently, whereas Gomathi Amman configured as a consort of

192For discussion on Śakta conception of ultimate reality and Goddess visioned as Prakriti and Maya, See N.N Bhattacharya, *The History of Śakta Religion*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Private Limited. 1974.

193 N.N. Bhattacharya, *The History of Śakta Religion*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Private Limited. 1974.page 118.

Siva is a typical Śakta shrine raising itself within the compound of the greater Siva temple.

Divine embodiment of the two goddesses differs in the cultural imagery that has been conjured for the two Devis. In order to break the mould of dichotomy and in avoidance of pitting the Devis against one another, the tenor in which i wish to present the distinct features of the Devis is on a continuum. Where *Bhadrakali* in the *Keezhkaavu* temple is found to be in a fierce state with iconography of sickle headed sword in her right upper hand and trishul in lower right arm showing her determination to strike terror and vanquish evil forces. The goddess is characterised as fierce by nature as she is found to be in an *raudra* (angry form) as it is argued is due to the heat from ‘excesses’¹⁹⁴. This emotive state of the goddess corresponds to the way illness of madness is described in the Ayurvedic texts as the state of excessive heating¹⁹⁵. Thus, we see that the propitiating rites of the goddess and the treatment to be administered to a person afflicted is a similar process of cooling down the over-heated body.

The imagery of the goddess is especially intriguing, as pointed out by Leslie Orr that the imagery is fashioned much less like that of mother and child and more often singularly positioned in a temple complex¹⁹⁶. This according to Stella Kramrisch is a result of the female deity being all encompassing. With the goddess’s ultimate power, she constitutes everything within herself and therefore she exercises comprehensive power not by giving birth but dealing in a resolute manner with all

194 Joyce Burkhalter Flueckiger, *When the world becomes Female: Guises of a South Indian Goddess*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013. page 17.

195 For further discussion on association of heat with life and fertility, Brenda E.F. Beck, ‘Colour and Heat in South Indian Ritual’, *Man*, New Series, Vol.4, No.4 1969. page 553.

196 Leslie Orr, ‘Identity and Divinity: Boundary Crossing Goddesses in Medieval South India’. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol 73, No.1 (March 2005) page 25.

that is enshrined in the universe. For instance, she slays demons such as mahisasura with brute power by being herself and all and every energy¹⁹⁷. This destructive power that the goddess possesses is the reason that the deity is treated at the same time as malevolent and benevolent by worshippers.

On the other hand, *Gomathi Amman*'s imagery is far more beatific with her holding a conch in her right hand and her left hand facing the devotee in order to bless them. David Kinsley, observes in an oversimplification that goddess such as *Gomathi Amman*'s association with motherhood comes from domination of earth and fertility with her character¹⁹⁸. This notion of village goddess predates David Kinsley and Thomas Coburn and is a legacy of Whitehead and his terse understanding of *gramdevata*¹⁹⁹. The oriental scholarship of Whitehead brandished the village goddess as crude animism and unfairly minimised the social role the goddess played in the functioning of village life by hierarchising her gambit of influence only to the village and having no scope to relate to the universe and cosmos.

The rituals performed for both the Devis help in articulating the identity of the deities with a particular cultural domain. The ritualist approach to *Keezkavu* and *Gomathi Amman* differs greatly and falls within the paradigm of *Sri Kula* and *Kaminga Agama* respectively. *Keezkavu* deity is most often associated with animals, she is either escorted by an animal of particular significance or is propitiated by animal sacrifice. This is in keeping with the common nature of the deity that is consistently found throughout south India. *Gomathi Amman* on the other hand, having been

197 Stella Kramrisch, 'The Indian Great Goddess', *History of Religion*, Vol 14. No.4 (May 1975) page 264.

198 David Kinsley, *The Goddess's Mirror Visions of the Divine from the East and the West*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989. page x.

199 Rev Henry Whitehead, *The Village Gods of South India*. Calcutta: Association Press, 1921.

through the process of sanskritisation and becoming part of the brahmanic pantheon does not have animal sacrifices as offerings. This ritual construction of both the deities allows us to examine the historical process that were involved in formation of the identities of the deities by the treatises and texts used in recitation on one hand and on the other, the formation of identity of the deity based on the perception of the social group that were her devotees. However, i would be cautious to use the essentialised categorisation of ritual practices based on worldview of social group of the Devi according to caste distinction²⁰⁰.Rituals surrounding the healing of madness done for both the deities illustrate the symbolic identities that are assigned to both the deities. The rituals used for the purposes of healing are discussed to a greater degree in the next section.

Scholars such as Brown, would be willing to bifurcate two examples made of the *Keezkavu Devi* and Gomathi Amman as illustration of the process of androgenised and pacified/domesticated goddess traditions²⁰¹. However, i would resist that temptation of bifurcation and attempt to redirect attention of the functional aspect of the deities. The deities' roles were formulated based on the social groups that imprinted symbolism onto the deity. This point is made most arduously by Sarah Caldwell, 'as the goddess began to embody a set of common symbols, her form nonetheless crystallised according to the concerns of each group'²⁰². These concerns of the groups delineate the varied nature and actions of the goddesses. In this case, Gomathi Amman becomes the mother figure whose identity is created as a consort

200 In Tracey Pintchman.ed., *Seeking Mahadevi Constructing the Identities of the Hindu Great Goddess*, Albany: State University of New York Press. 2001. page 95. Sorcery (sudra), martial (ksatriya) and priestly (brahmin).

201 Makenzie C. Brown, *The Triumph of the Goddess, The Canonical Models and Theological Visions of the Devi Bhagvathi Purana*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 1990. page 122.

202 In Tracey Pintchman.ed., *Seeking Mahadevi Constructing the Identities of the Hindu Great Goddess*, Albany: State University of New York Press. 2001. page 95.

and on the other hand Keezkavu Devi in the *Chottanikkara* complex becomes the ambiguous goddess. This ambiguous goddess was an active power in the world with creative and destructive forces at her disposal²⁰³.

8: Ritual Actions; Religious Healing of the Social Body

The gods and goddesses are prayed to and invoked primarily by rituals performed by designated priestly class of persons. Rituals are social actions performed in a social setting with the confines of a designated social space (i.e. temple). Stanley Tambiah, designates rituals as a non-rational and fundamentally symbolic form of communication. He states that these rites and rituals are irrational with respect to science but rational in term of internal coherence and purpose²⁰⁴.

Rituals are layered activities that are imbued with multiple meanings designated by both the performer and audience/spectator of these rituals. First and foremost, these rituals should be contextualised as human activities. These rituals as human activities involve negotiating with local material, food stuff, the weather and environment consensually by the entire community and then individually²⁰⁵. Evan Pritchard states that rituals indicate a system of ordered relationship of mutual dependency that links humans, animals, ancestors and gods²⁰⁶.

Rituals as social actions are borne within the structure of different levels of social relationships and can be used to organise these relationships too. The symbolism of rituals reflects these social relationships and are constantly linked back to the

203 Tracy Pintchman, *Rise of the Goddess in the Hindu Tradition*, Albany: State University of New York Press. 1994. page 198.

204 Stanley J. Tambiah, *Magic, Science and the Scope of Rationality*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990 page 15.

205 Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. page 29

206 Ibid. page 35.

hierarchy of these relationships and the assiduous maintenance and perpetuation of the structure of hierarchy²⁰⁷. In this context, rituals used for healing undertaken specifically in relation to those afflicted with madness could be viewed as socially rehabilitating the afflicted person within the domain of society.

Rituals as social actions become a channel to manage communally held symbolic thoughts. According to Max Gluckman, rituals are an expression of social tension rather than affirmation of social unity²⁰⁸. According to Catherine Bell, these symbolic thoughts have a harmful tendency to cause great individual anxiety that in turn feeds into excessive and larger community anxiety leading to the disruption of social harmony²⁰⁹. This is precisely why society chooses to manage the aberration of madness within the religious institution of the temple. Therefore, it can be noted that rituals of the goddesses are a means to manage social order and affect social identity in the way they are perceived and conducted by an individual and the community.

The individual as a performer and observer of rites and rituals, experience ritual not just as stimulus to the senses but bodily due to actions and epidermatic engagement. The individual body is always transformed socially and experientially by the ritual witnessed and participated in. The body is a medium for internalising and reproduction of social values and for the simultaneous constitution of both the self and world of social relations.

207 Ibid. page 34.

208 Max, Gluckman, *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society*, London: Aldine Transaction Publishers, 2009. page 268.

209 Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1997. page 33.

First we shall discuss the social transformation that takes place to the human body when it engages in rites and rituals. When an individual engages in a ritual, s/he by accepting the diktat of religious-societal norms and is afforded a particular sense of identity vis-a-vis others in a group. Axel Michael and Christopher Wulf opine that the relationship between body and symbolic representation is mimetic: the body is understood as a symbolic system with whose help the position of the person in the cosmos is determined²¹⁰. This social construction of the body through ritual constructs a social body befitting the specific historic circumstances in which these rituals operate, each addressing different concerns and ritualising different contrasts²¹¹. The process by which this ritual body is developed is through a series of physical movements, ritual practices that construct an environment structured by practical schemes of privileged contrast. The construction of this environment is simultaneously the moulding of the bodies with it. The social body internalises the principles of the environment being generated. According to Catherine Bell, ‘A ritualised body is a body aware of a privileged contrast with respect to other bodies, that is, a body invested with schemes the deployment of which can shift a variety of socio-cultural situations into one that the ritualised body can dominate in some way’²¹². This privileged contrast of the social body is reflected in notions of purity and pollution in the larger context of the body being sacralised. The social body that

210 Axel Michael and Christopher Wulf, ed., *Images of the Body in India*. New Delhi: Routledge, 2011.

211 Catherine Bell, ‘The Ritual Body and the Dynamic of Ritual Power’, *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 1990, page 307.

212 Ibid, page 304.

is being ritualised finds it necessary to maintain its purity and is forbidden from contact with any substance/person that could sully its purity²¹³.

These rituals have a marked influence of the mental content of our thoughts and beliefs and are continuously impacted by them. Rituals bring action to the imagined world, they help articulate the ideologies, beliefs and world views with the help of standardised symbols and forms²¹⁴. The content of these thoughts that are being channelled in rituals could be wish fulfilling, protection giving or related to anxiety and fears. In the case of persons afflicted with madness, it tends to be to ward off the culturally constituted madness in the form of possession.

Through the process of the ritual itself, there is a manifestation of real conflict that is often exaggerated in this context in order to release social tension and afford catharsis²¹⁵. This is done by the acting out of the social relationship in ritual form in order to express and alter them. In the healing of the person afflicted with madness, removal through either transference or absorption into the deity itself of the external forces.

According to scholars, rituals do not necessarily alleviate the intensity of prior mental states, they see rituals as generating mental states instead of merely expressing them²¹⁶. The cultural performance of a ritual, that one can describe as a

213 Axel Michael and Christopher Wulf. ed., *Images of the Body in India*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2011.

214 Emile Durkheim stated that religious beliefs are representations that express the nature of sacred things, while rituals are 'rules of conduct' governing how people should act in the presence of sacred objects.

215 Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992. page 71.

216 Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspective and Dimension*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. page 28.

'social drama' is also an event that takes place. In this event, the social tension isn't necessarily resolved but it is transformed. This transformation takes place as a result of the dialectics that the ritual encompasses of separating and then bringing back into the fold. Ritual is an effective medium as it provides a container for expressing the repressed and socially hostile anxious feeling. By expressing these emotions while allowing change to occur, all the ritual performers and ritual participants can return to society anew²¹⁷. This is especially true for person's recognised with affection as there is a social recognition of healing that is taking place. By these actions, rituals allow for communitarian bonding and a *communitas* where instead of an identifiable location there is a feeling of commonality that binds each member of the community together.

Rituals in the brahmanic context are often posited as binaries. Scholars have neatened the complexities of the function, structure and purpose of these rituals by categories that they have drawn out for them. The means of worship in these rituals have generated two distinct modes of ritual activity; transcendental and pragmatic. Subsequently, all brahmanic rituals are divided into categories of pure/ impure deity, priesthood/possession or textual/local. It is commonly assumed that the dualism of ritual reflects a deeper duality of worldview which underlies not only the ritual but also the social structures and relationships. The rituals which heal allow us to complicate these neat binaries as they involve brahmanic recognition of other gods and goddesses. For instance, in the case of the *Chottanikkara* Devi, those that are not cured of their afflictions by worshipping *Chottanikkara* Devi are sent to the Bhadrakali temple of Keezkavu Devi who in turn is supposed to be powerful enough to cure powerful afflictions.

217 Mark Franko.ed., *Ritual and Event*. New York: Routledge, 2007. page 56.

Contrary to Bryan Pfaffenberger, the rituals performed in a temple built for gods doesn't necessarily control the god's power.²¹⁸ Pfaffenberger falls prey to the paradigm of appeasement of fierce gods and doesn't necessarily reflect on the world view of harnessing the ambivalent power of the gods and in our case the goddesses.

The ritual in these temples take on the form of *parartha puja* (public worship) benefitting the entire cosmos considered infinite worship and *atmarthapuja* (personal worship) which is meant for one's own personal self²¹⁹. The purpose of the daily worship is perpetuation of cosmic stability. However, within the ambit of the general worship that takes place an individual may through the means of resources made available to the temple have greater influence over the yield of the spiritual benefits that can be accrued from the ritual that are performed. In all the three temples, rituals that are performed on a daily basis are precisely what propel the healing of the afflicted person.

Every south Indian temple has a daily liturgy that is performed with modifications during festival seasons. In saivite, vaisnavite and *śakta* cults that have temples dedicated to deities, one can find normative literature that assigns rules and protocols to be followed in the daily liturgy in the saivagamanibandhana of muraribhatta, prayogmanjari of ravi, visnu ascribed to sumati and tantric treatises of *tantrasamuccaya* and *sesamuccaya*²²⁰.

218 Bryan Pfaffenberger, 'Social Communication in Dravidian Ritual'. *Journal of Anthropological Research*. Vol 36. No.2 (Summer 1980) page 211.

219 Anthony Good, 'The Structure and Meaning of Daily Worship in a South Indian Temple', *Anthropos*, Bd. 96. H.2 (2001) page 493.

220 S.A.S Sarma, 'Why have the later Ritual Manuals of Kerala forgotten initiation?' *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol 63. No. 4 (December 2010) page 443.

We will now review the similarities of the daily liturgical processes of the three temples that have been surveyed above. Further how the practices of daily liturgy help in healing. Before the liturgy of temple services begin, it mandated in the scriptures that purification be ensured. Purification is requisite of the worship materials, place of worship, mantra and icon. This *panca-suddhi* enables transformation of instruments of worship into divine instruments and place of worship into pure place. The next step in the liturgical process is the invocation of the deity (*avahana*) into its icon. The god's seat or throne is prepared, his pure spirit form is provided with a body (*murti*) constructed by appropriate mantra, this body is then placed on a throne and god is invoked into it. The consecrated deity is then offered service (*upacara*), in the form of intense devotion²²¹.

Within every service the *puja* that is conducted has four key stages that are passed, however, the details of each stage and the composition of each stage differs considerably on the basis of tradition, custom, resources and patronage of diverse temples in south India. These four stages preclude; *apicekam* (unction), the image is undressed and the priest pours water over it to the sound of drumming and conch blowing, prior to these substances are rubbed on the idol depending on the characteristic of the particular deity²²². The regular daily worship uses liquid only. This unction becomes meaningful as it endows divine powers to the image of the deity.

Alankaram (decoration) of the image of the deity reveals the specific nature and makes the deity visually distinct by marking permanent; form of the deity as

221 Anthony Good, 'The Structure and Meaning of Daily Worship in a South Indian Temple', *Anthropos*, Bd. 96. H.2 (2001) page 500.

222 Every consecration uses consecrated water from round-bottomed pot of copper, brass or silver.

warrior/hunter or unmarried/married and ad-hoc differences as the kinds of garments donated by devotees and the artistry of the priest. The *alankaram* is meant to provide deities with component parts or *ankam* (limbs). *Alankaram* conveys the making of adequacy, completeness and making ready, it is not merely decoration but a means of imbuing the image with form and strength²²³. The *naivettiyam* (food offering) made to the deity is considered to be too powerful to be shared with the lay worshipper. There is conflict between scholars on the notion of *piracatam* (as divine offering), within the framework of purity, this *piracatam* is designated as ‘divine leftovers’²²⁴. The preparatory stages of worship, priest provide the deities with bodies through which they can experience the world's possessions. Just as they are equipped with limbs embodying their specific powers, in the same manner these personified deities are endowed with *bhoganga*, ‘limbs for experience and pleasure’, allowing them to enjoy the offerings which they subsequently receive²²⁵. These offerings of *naivettiyam* have been culturally invested with medicinal properties in all the three temples and forms part of the curing process that is employed in the temple. *Tiparatanai* (lamp showing) is most elaborate in the evening service. This service recognising the divine body created at the earlier stage of worship is meant to enhance the personification of the deity²²⁶. The priest intends to show each lamp or light to the *mukam*(face), eyes, tip of the nose, throat, heart and feet of the image of the idol in a clockwise hand gesture in the figure of the sacred syllable 'Om'

223 Anthony Good, ‘The Structure and Meaning of Daily Worship in a South Indian Temple’, *Anthropos*, Bd. 96. H.2 (2001) page 503

224 For the imagery of purity and pollution, See Lawrence A.Babb, *The Divine Hierarchy:popular Hinduism in Central India*,New York:Columbia University Press,1975.

225Anthony Good, ‘The Structure and Meaning of Daily Worship in a South Indian Temple’, *Anthropos*, Bd. 96. H.2 (2001).page 504

226 Ibid. page 506.

(piranavam). The showing of the lamp is part of the concerted effort to appease the deity by satisfying all the senses with which his newly materialised body is endowed. This darn is also part of the visual perception of the worshipper and is intended to have a healing effect on the afflicted.

9: Ritual Mantra: Power of Healing through the word

Within the daily liturgy, the worship would be incomplete without the employment of mantras. Ritual mantras have been a distinctive feature of brahmanic traditions since the most ancient texts were redacted and found in written form. We note that the vedas (1500-1000 BCE), earliest upanishads (800-500 BCE) to the Tantras (600 CE) which in the most central capacity have ritual mantras at the core of their text. The tantric practioners, sadhaka, utilises mantra in sadhana, a programme of spiritual exercise one of whose essential component is ritual worship of the deity²²⁷.

According to the oxford english dictionary, mantras are sacred texts and passages that are often spoken and read in repetition. Mantras are considered to be meaningful not merely because of the intellectual nature consigned to them but because of the *śakti* (special power) that resides in them. Mantras have the power to remove *avidya* (ignorance), *dharma* (reveal truth) and realise *mokṣa* (release from the life cycle and human condition). There is great deal of emphasis that is laid on mantra as a liturgical utterance and the role it plays in the ritual performance. Mantras efficaciously indicate the procedures and things employed in the temple rituals that are being conducted. Some of the mantras do it through indicative statements, other

227 Harvey P. Alper, ed., *Mantra*. Albany. State University New York Press. 1989. page 96.

do it covertly, through oblique forms of repetition, directives and expressions of interest and hope²²⁸.

In corollary to the daily worship that is employed for cosmic stability or human intention, similarly mantra can be deployed for both spiritual and mundane purposes. Mantras thus can be viewed as finely honed instruments to exercise power in healing, it is essence a tool designed to achieve curing of the afflicted. However, success in the task is only possible when the mantra is used in a conventionalised and normatively determined manner. Given the complexity of human life, mantras act as a framework to facilitate the individual's attempt to propitiate, acquire and identify causes of sickness and particularly madness which employ specific mantra in the three temples that we discuss, these *mantras* differ based on the sectarian godhead being worshipped.

The Vedas and Upanishads are extolled as the creative power of language, which was held to express the secret connection (*bandhu*) among the sacrifice, the cosmos and the microcosm of the human body, knowledge of which connections rendered the sacrifice effective²²⁹. Speech is viewed distinctly in the context of mantra. The words of *mantra* are privileged over the speaker of the *mantra*; this is indicated in the designation *mantra ka-visasta*²³⁰. Thus, the pronouncer is a de-personalised tool

228 Harvey P. Alper, ed., *Mantra*. Albany. State University New York Press. 1989. page 149

229 Robert Yelle, *Explaining Mantra; Ritual, Rhetoric and Dream of Natural Language in Hindu Tantra*. New York: Routledge, 2003. page 5

230 Harvey P. Alper, ed., *Mantra*, Albany: State University New York Press, 1989. page 29.

secondary to what is empowering the worship i.e. mantra. The centrality is placed on what is uttered and that is where the locus of power rests in mantric conception²³¹.

Subsequently, the priest's vocation enables him to possess '*mati*', which can be described as the ability of formulating thoughts into prayers that come from the source of *vipra* (inspiration) and the ability to speak from the *hrd* (heart). In opposition to this, is the notion of '*amati*' which is feared and dreaded by the priest, this precludes the consistent lack of thought or inspiration and poverty of ideas or spirit. For the purpose of looking at how healing takes place through mantras in the context of the temple, the conceptual category that we find ourselves preoccupied with is that of '*durmati*' which entails evil thoughts²³². In the context of goddess worship, the mantras are root sounds that are recognised to resemble the goddess's form itself. The use of *mantra* for healing of the afflicted persons is recommended by the priests and within the religious healing framework, both the afflicted persons and the priest use silent mantras to heal the afflicted persons but with different capacities. Many healing *mantras* are *anirukta* (not enunciated), *upāṃśu* (inaudible), and are recited *tūṣṇīm* (in silence) or *mānasa* (mentally)²³³.

In the context of healing in a temple, where *mantras* are meticulously used in daily liturgy, takes place due to the archaic nature of *mantra*. According to Frits Staal, the archaic nature of the *mantra* lends itself to mystical qualities and phenomena. I contend that this mystical quality that Staal discusses with the aid of mantra, is precisely the tool that allows an afflicted person in a temple setting to reach a state of

231 'The *mantra* should be pronounced correctly and completely, it should be recited with the appropriate degree of alacrity at the correct pitch of voice and keeping appropriate pace'.

232 K.S Sastry Mahadev, *Tantra Samuccaya of Narayan Vol III*, Trivandrum: Government Central Press. 1958. Verse 4, page 72.

233 Harvey P. Alper, ed., *Mantra*. Albany: State University New York Press, 1989. page 60.

awareness. When the afflicted person has given up speech and communicating, this use of mantra enables the individual to reach a prelinguistic state of mind where language is renounced and engagement with the outside world is encouraged through silence, mantras and rituals. The liturgical rites that are associated with these mantra formulations fall into what Wade T. Wheelock calls the yajamana group, which revolves around the expression of desires for personal prosperity and protection both by means of pleasing the invited gods and by connecting himself to the power concretised in ritual symbol²³⁴.

This state of mind is then further enhanced when the silent mantra is verbally reiterated. *Medā* (intelligence) which is pointedly associated with speech is mobile and this embodiment of intelligence of speech acts as a marker for rejuvenation of the afflicted person.

The *mantra* allows for the negative and incoherent speech of the afflicted person to be counteracted and transformed with refined and eloquent speech. This is the ultimate example of returning of mental powers as a result of verbal iteration of *mantra*²³⁵. Further, the power of sound in the mantra also enables transition in our state of being. *Mantras* also allow for us to consider the passive approach of receiving vibrations into our body and mind and active approach of enunciating and centring the body and mind through chanting²³⁶. The listening and speaking (chanting) of *mantra* offers a cathartic and cleansing experience to the afflicted

234 Wade T. Wheelock, 'Patterns of Mantra Use in Vedic Rituals', *Numen*, Vol 32. Fasc 2 (Dec 1985). page 171.

235 Laurie L. Patton, *Bringing the Gods to Mind: Mantra and Ritual Sacrifice in Early Indian Sacrifice*. London: University of California Press, 2005. page 150.

236 James D. Angelo, *The Healing Power of the Human Voice: Mantras, Chants and Seed Sounds for Health and Harmony*. Vermont: Healing Arts Press, 2000. page 6.

worshippers body and mind. *Mantras* do not transform a person or lead to a new existence on the contrary they give access to a state or condition that at all times was inhabiting with the afflicted persons²³⁷.

10: Ritual Vows: Healing Delivered Through the Intervention of the Devotee

Healing of afflicted persons through ritual mantras and rites of daily liturgy are fairly well ascertained and documented through normative didactic literature throughout south India. We now turn our attention to the act of ritual vows that are used as a medium to heal an afflicted person. This quasi ritual tool enables the worshipper to negotiate the exigencies of daily life and helps them take larger challenges besetting their human condition.

The three temples that we have surveyed have designated seasonal ritual festivals. Devotees perform life cycle rituals during the festive season and otherwise on a daily basis based on their age, gender and astrological charts. The ritual vows undertaken for healing of madness or other mental afflictions are different from these life cycle rituals.

Rituals vows are not part of the daily liturgical practices and therefore in a sense can be seen as a system of healing of the afflicted person that runs parallel to the conventional healing that takes place in a temple complex. Ritual vows are ritual observances that are made within the ambit of the temple worship, by the lay worshipper. In the three temples, we see that ritual vows last for extended period of time closer to nearly 40 days in Gunaseelam, Chottanikkara and Sankaranarayan Kovil.

237 Frits Staal, *Ritual and Mantra: Rules without Meaning*. Delhi: Motilal Benarsi Das Publishing, 1996, page 121.

'*Vrāta*' (ritual vows) in the conditions are undertaken to attain health, this is conceptualised as removal of external forces and return to former state of being. The didactic text tends to articulate two compelling reasons to undertake a vow: *mukti* (liberation from the rounds of existence) and *bhukti* (material possessions)²³⁸.

Definitionally Selva J Raj states, that the point of origination of the vow is the laity itself, the layperson, initiates the vow and therefore this transaction through worship is intensely personal and unmediated by the priestly class of the temple²³⁹. Consequently, we find a certain democratisation and reclamation of agency of the laity in the healing process.

However, a caveat in this understanding is that the priestly class, though doesn't interfere with the ritual observances of vows and doesn't have agency over the ritual action can definitely influence the nature and duration of the vow undertaken by the laity. The ritual vow is segregated into two types, one is an institutional vow, where the priest and temple is involved in an indirect capacity and the other type of vow is that of a lay vow. The institutional vows that are taken are public and formal, in the sense that they the rules of engagement are predetermined and the time taken to complete the vow is prescribed. The lay vow on the other hand, is flexible, informal and private in their intention.

The lay vows thus can be coined as self-monitored and self-fulfilling acts that can be viewed as public display of piety. This outward element of ritual vows is as Selvraj and Harman state considerably important to the vitality of the vow. As the vow

238 Donald S Lopez Jr.ed., *Religion of India in Practice*.New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995.page 352.

239 Selva J. Raj and William P. Harman.ed., *Dealing with Deities: The Ritual Vow in South Asia*, Albany: State University of New York, 2006.page 3.

requires an outward element that expresses, ritualises and sustains an interior dimension of personal wish fulfilling/devotion. This wish fulfilment or in the case of the afflicted person, the sparing of the worshipper from their current state of being makes the vow a plea of mercy that can be considered a reciprocal act²⁴⁰.

However, this reciprocal act and the completion of vow by paying obeisance requires the worshipper to take a certain amount of time, dedicate themselves by concentration and spiritual preparation before taking a ritual vow. The three temples having sectarian gods with specific liturgical practices, require different forms of obeisance based on their personality and requirement to appease the godhead. This knowledge is useful for the worshipper who intends to take on a vow as it hints at the preference for particular kinds of gifts and offerings that would appease the deity and expedite the fulfilment of the vow undertaken. In *Chottanikkara* Temple, the *Keezkavu* devi having *Bhadrakali*'s form is given cooling substances in order to affect the ugram and pacify the devi.

In the case of *Sankaranayinar kovil*, relative contributions that are self-selected can be made based on the wherewithal of the worshipper as compensation for the fulfilment of the ritual vow undertaken. It is stated that obeisance can be paid in the most meagre manner by offering *tanga/pawadai* (flowers) to the goddess Gomathi Amman. In a more elaborate fashion, a pooja can be held to offer a silver *kawach* to lord ganesh and to the shiva lingam. Further, in a grander form, a golden *kawach* can be plied to Gomathi Amman and a *rath* (golden car) that would then be used for circumambulating the goddess during the festival processions. On a daily basis for lay vows that are undertaken, Pattar Sankar V stated that, replicas of a snake,

240 Mergo Lemessa, Anil Kishore Sinha and Krishan Sharma, 'Sacrifice Vow and Ritual Feast among the Oromo of Horro Guduru Hinterland (Ethopia)', *Anthropos, Bd.* 109.H2 (2014) page 436.

scorpion and centipede made of silver and gold are put into the hundi of the temple on a daily basis. For contending with illnesses, offerings of replicas of organs such as the eyes, feet, hands or at times of the entire anatomy of the individual made of silver are put into the hundi in large numbers.

Thus, it can be summarised that this transaction made in the completion of the ritual vow is part of a mode of exchange with the divine in the form of a sacred figure, where debt is paid in lieu of divine service that is provided. Ritual vows can thus be seen as a strategy concerning human collaboration and interaction with the divine. This access to the divine, however, is customarily understood to be temporary and an allowance of access is made in specific circumstances for a specific purpose.

In this manner, the individual through the act of the ritual vow enables him/herself to have direct form of access to the divine. In the case of ritual vows undertaken for the purpose of mitigating illness and especially ones affected by madness and allied ailments, this access to divine through the ritual vows takes the illness itself out of the realm of reality and converts the illness into a form that can be manoeuvred by the divine form of the sacred figure.

Conclusion

Temple based rituals of healing practices continue to thrive in contemporary times. The modern milieu partaking and ingesting systems of biomedicine have left temple based rituals of healing practices unhampered. As Richard S. Weiss states, 'contrary to popular perception and scholarly analysis the tradition and modern do co-exist,

due to the appeal to a range of human concerns, emotions and distresses'²⁴¹. The authenticity and veracity of the 'healing powers' of this traditional strand of temple practices is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, in this chapter we do engaged with the socially constructed rationale for temple healing practices and their supposed efficacy.

The survey and examination of temple based ritual healing of culturally constituted madness, in some cases as described as possession in the chapter was mitigated by the paucity of primary locally generated written sources. Manuscripts on ritual healing practices in the context of the temple were mostly in tamil with a splattering few in malyalam. These manuscripts were typically in possession of the head priest belonging to the hereditary priestly family who had served the temple for generations. The head priest was unwilling to share the textual documents that they had inherited as part of their training and described the concealment as part of the 'rahsya'. Roman Sieler states, that concealment of textual information has social implications of secrecy. These discursive and performative articulation of dissimulation and disclosure are important parts of practices: discourse on therapy, diagnosis and treatment procedures of temple based therapeutic healing²⁴².

With reduced accessibility to the locally generated sources that were purposely withheld and not revealed, a recourse was made to corroborate the interviews that were taken with the published and marketed texts available in the temple stalls such as the sthala purana and ksētra purana. These *Mahatmaya* and *Sthala puranas* are the poetic form given to records that are available on the traditions that have grown up

241 Richard S Weiss, *Recipes for Immortality, Medicine, Religion and Community in South India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.page 3.

242 Roman Sieler, *Lethal Spots, Vital Secrets. Medicine and Martial Arts in South India*.New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.page 270.

and around the shrine and its locale and these sankritic and often vernacular texts are used to sustain the particular shrine and the temple complexes claim on sanctity²⁴³.

Simultaneously, the second pronged approach that was applied was to glean from the larger historical texts that charted the history of the region, along with the reading of the hagiographic and narrative literature of the region, a particular effort was made to glean appropriate information from the didactic textual resources that the temple proclaimed to follow in the form of tantric, agamic and siddhant texts.

The three temples that were chosen for the purposes of elucidating the understanding of ritual healing of madness were all hindu temples. These temples were chosen in part for their self-proclaimed status as centres of healing of madness as opposed to possession. Two of the three temples were devi temples that formed part of a wider understanding of the goddess as a healer. However, juxtaposing these goddess temples was the visnu temple of Perumal Gunaseela. This juxtaposition afforded us with insight into the difference in *Śakta* and vaisnavite ritual practices in relation to healing of madness. The myths and legends surrounding the temple and its activities are vital to discover the formal and informal ideas that the society of the time formed around notions of health, sickness and wellbeing in relation to the temple as a space of healing and treatment.

In this chapter, we find that the temple itself built in the physical form of a human body is a space that negotiates human anatomy in its own structure. Whilst the temple negotiates having the notional and visual of a human body, it also through its

243 David Shulman, *Tamil Temple Myths, Sacrifice and Divine Marriage in the South Indian Saiva Tradition*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980. page 4.

own architectural mapping affects and effects the human body and an individual's experience of traversing the temple in a regulated and customarily manner.

This intersection and agency employed by the temple as a space on the body, is particularly true for women participants and worshippers. It is in this chapter, that we find the most exacting and detailed narratives of women's social and religious roles and lives. As Arjun Appadurai observes, the role of gender in cultural expressions is basic and pervasive in all the myths and folklores recorded and passed down to us. As a conceptual category, gender in the context of the rituals in the temple setting defies generalisations beyond the staid observation that it is thoroughly pervasive in a cross section of society. The chapter focuses on the agency of the goddess in the form of Gomathi Amman and Chhotanikkara Devi in the healing of the afflicted persons. The divine aspect of engagement with the sick is juxtaposed with the detailing of female worshippers who primarily are found to be the afflicted in south Indian society.

We find that the human anatomy through rituals transforms into a social body. This transformation is possible because of the social actions involved in rituals that are laden with significant religious and cultural meaning. This conversion of the human anatomy into a social body plays a significant role in the ritual processes of healing and allied treatments that are meted out in the institution of the temple. Undergoing a symbolic and functional analysis of ritual we note that it is the specificity of ritual form that allows us to gain insight into the meaning of madness. It is through the structure of ritual itself which corroborate the myths and legends that the cultural meaning comes to the fore and expresses itself in the form of the ritual.

In the context of ritual healing, ritual practices take the form of an event and performance which is not only meant for the afflicted person but also for the larger

laity. It should be noted that even though healing transpires through the processes of the ritual. This passive audience in the form of the laity is also part of the pronouncement of a return to health of the afflicted person. Thus, religious processes intertwined with social processes in the temple setting are crucial to the management of treatment of the individual afflicted with madness. The rituals of healing we find in the text, raise paradoxical questions to the theorised assumptions made by scholars on the binaries of pragmatic and transcendental worship. As we gain insight on the coterminous functioning of daily liturgy and specific rituals of healing.

CONCLUSION

The *Ājīvika* sect was the third in the 'heretical religion' trifecta which precluded Buddhism and Jainism. The *Ājīvika* sect, propounded a doctrine of strict determinism that left no room for human agency or volition in the life cycle of a person. This contrary position of fatalism was taken by Makkali Gosala to the karmic theory of brahmanical understanding of the time and path to salvation, who was claimed to be the founder of the *Ājīvika* sect. A reading of madness from the vantage point of Makkali Gosala will helpfully throw light in a summary fashion to the main arguments made in the previous chapters. We position Makkali Gosala as a peripheral player in the religious-ideological complex which was hegemonised by the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain milieu. However, despite being situated in the periphery, the processes and engagement of madness was identical to the aforementioned religion's social and cultural practices.

Makkali Gosala, a figure shrouded in contradictions encapsulates the vast undulating landscape of madness conceptually, as a *performed* and a witnessed *action*. As the head of the *Ājīvika* sect¹, Makkai Gosala's madness was not just attributed to him as an ostracising category but was intended to be a deterrent for affiliating and associating with the *Ājīvika* sect in the writing of Buddhist and Jain treatises. This tension between the Jain tradition and the *Ājīvika* sect is vividly described in the accounts of *Bhagavati Sutra* and *Samanna-phala Sutta*². Assigning madness as an attribution of the individual, in the broader context of religious and theological

1See Haripada Chakraborti, *Asceticism in India; in Brahmanical, Buddhist, Jaina and Ājīvika societies*. Calcutta. Punthi Pustak. 1973 (page 449-472)

2See A.L. Basham, *History and Doctrines of the Ājīvikas: A vanished Indian Religion*. London: Luzac & Company Ltd.1951.

conflict allows us to see socially constructed madness beyond the medical assignments that are usually provided to it.

Accounts of Makkai Gosala's madness have been flattened by time and writing. Much like all accounts of madness in ancient, medieval and early modern (colonial) India, Gosala's madness is captured through written documentation, thus the visual and tactile dimensionality of madness is lost to us. The very act of writing reduces the different dimensions of madness and reduces it to linear bi-polarity which is unable to capture the experiential paradigms of madness. Bipolarity that positions madness as an opposition to reason, normality and social good. This bi-polarity, a hand me down of the research questions and methodology that we have had to unlearn through the process of 'decolonisation of our minds' is an entry point in the writing we find on madness.

This writing is immersed in the power and hierarchical mould of social, religious and political relations of the time. These writings entrenched in dominant, authoritative voice of majority need to be rescued and rehabilitated by an investigation of madness outside the domain of normative texts through historical characters, literary figures, myths, songs and legends.

In the case of Gosala, the incidence of his madness are not first person narratives or witness accounts, they are normative texts of competing sects that are intended to decry the very existence of the *Ājīvika* sect itself. The account of his madness briefly described is as follows; Gosala and Mahavira got into a volatile argument at *Kottaga Caitya*, where Gosala expounded the doctrine of transmigration under the control of *niyati*. The conclusion of the heated debate was the reversal of a magical curse that Gosala had put on Mahavira which entailed perishing by a bilious fever (*pittajjara*)

within seven days. The initial reaction of the magic was that Gosala was recorded to have torn his beard, stomped on the ground and decried his ruination. The relations between the *Ājīvikas* and the nirgranthas deteriorated beyond repair and were openly hostile to one another. Back at Halahala's pottery, Gosala clutched a mango stone in his hand, drank spirits, sang continuously and drank uncontrollably. He showered reverence to his patron Halahala and sprinkled his fevered limbs with cool muddy water in which the potter's clay had been mixed. Finally, at the end of the seventh day, Gosala came back to his senses, this 'coming back' to his senses is an important trope that we will expound on further in our discussion but suffice to say for now is important in the resolution of the conflict between the Jain and *Ājīvika* sects. The Jain sect are sanctimonious in stating that Gosala realised how evil his past conduct was. He was extremely remorseful of his lived actions. He pronounced himself to be a fraudulent impostor and spoke disparagingly of his own teachings and philosophy. Whilst simultaneously, recognised Mahavira as the supreme teacher and approbated the primacy of the Jain philosophy.

The circumstances and signs of Gosala's madness is an admixture of the Atharvanic understanding of madness in terms of curses and magic, and the crystallising *Caraka* and *Susruta Saṃhitā's* person specific rationale of fevered madness. Gosala's madness was brought on according to Mahavira by magical heat (*teye*) consequently leading to a bilious fever which was responsible for destroying Gosala. From our reading of Chapter 1, we observe the Atharvanic understanding of evil, demons, curses, illness, disease and madness did not differentiate between distress and discomfort in different spheres of life. Atharvanic man found solace and remedy for madness in the same formulaes as used for the injured in war, the one's suffering from sleeplessness and the sick. This confabulation was a result of the Atharvanic

outlook of externality in daily life. This was realised in a sanguine understanding of how the world was ordered, the methodology and pedagogy of the *Atharva Veda* and its ancillary texts are those of revered appeasement of demons, *piśāca*, gods and forces of nature alike. In Chapter 2, we observed, the Ayurvedic texts externality included nature as a chief agent. This understanding of nature also propelled a unique understanding of nature in relation to the individual and the individual in relation to nature. The personhood that developed in the treatises of the *Caraka*, *Suśruta*, *Bhela*, *Kāśyapa* and *Hārīta Saṃhitā* though was distinctly defined into personality types but took its cue from the humours of *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha*. This personhood indebted to nature also allowed for demarcation of the natural and social world. It was in this social world that infrastructure and institutions mitigating madness and other ancillary illnesses originated. This social world enhanced the definition of madness in terms of treatability, non-treatability and codified the treatment and access to this treatment.

This madness was similar to the Atharvanic madness in which the physical manifestation of madness was purported to be the most important. The physicality of Gosala's madness falls within the indexes of *Atharva Veda* and Ayurvedic texts of crying out loudly, singing, dancing and rage. This physicality of madness is exterior to the person, where it is noticeable, attention-grabbing and witnessed. The interiority of the madness in terms of feeling is unknown and undocumented. The only interiority that is captured in the writing is that of helplessness. The other interior feelings purportedly reported are all in actuality adverbs such as being loud, sluggish or lonely.

The madness of Gosala as well as those documented in the *Atharva Veda* and Ayurvedic texts is objectified into traits. These objectified traits do not necessarily allow for nuanced subjectivity about madness. Having said that, it does urge the physician and reader of the text to pay attention to context, in terms of times of day and season of affliction. This context, is developed in a natural and social world, where there is a hegemonic framework of good and bad and sacred and profane. This context imprints madness as an excess, which is articulated in the treatise as a lack of moderation. This excess converts actions, moods and feelings into aberrations that need to be quelled and subdued with rites, ritual and remedies.

However, this madness unlike its western counterpart wasn't considered to be deforming, in its most extreme form madness was seen to be self-injurious. Although, at no point madness found to be culturally threatening as in the western literature of the same period. One formulation that could be extended for madness not being culturally threatening the Atharvanic and subsequent societies is because the aforementioned polarities of madness did not exist. Given that madness was not seen in opposition to rationale and sanity, madness was not considered a civilisational threat at all. This attribution of madness in the form of delirium is made by Mahavira. Gosala though frustrated by his state does not proclaim madness, it is Mahavir that pronounces the state of madness. Madness in this instance is seen as social consequence of relegation to the margin of a theological debate that was raging in the contemporary milieu between the Buddhist, Jain and *Ājīvika* sects.

Madness in the case of Gosala as well as those we find in the literary texts of Kālidāsa, *Bhāvabhūti* and Bana is of a temporary nature as we have surveyed in Chapter 3. This temporary state, however, is no less intensely experienced by the

fictional literary figures or Gosala for that matter. The distinction of the temporary states of madness is the reason they have been brought in the literary figures and in Gosala. In the sanskritic literature, these states are brought on by lover's separation, in Gosala, they are brought on by the reversal of the curse cast by him on to Mahavira, which reflects a retribitional aspect to the madness witnessed. Aforementioned 'coming back to the sense' is important in the case of Gosala as it isn't enough for Mahavira to denounce Gosala, there has to be admittance by Gosala and therefore his return to sanity is necessary for the legitimacy of Mahavira's proclamation.

This literary madness that is meant for the stage of the theatre, allows for us to see the physicality of madness as a performed and witnessed act, rather than experienced. It is interesting that in opposition to the Atharvanic, Ayurvedic and other didactic texts that in an attempt to normativise madness conceptually lead to writing a linear dimensional understanding of madness. The plays on the other hand, achieve multi-dimensionality to their character as they are meant for stage rather than being read.

The experience of this madness by the actor or the witnessing audience is what brings subjectivity of feeling. This subjectivity of feeling of the reaction and more sub-conscious response to madness separates it from the objectivity of the Atharvanic and Ayurvedic texts that seek to objectify madness into traits and categories. In the sanskritic literary texts, the exteriority of performance is based on the interiority of feeling and emotion that are processed by the actor. It is suffice to say that madness in this context, is just as much of an internal articulation for the actor as it is an exterior performance for him. As well as for the audience, that

experience the madness communally in a public setting of the theatre, however, they internalise and respond to this visceral emotion in an interior, by which we mean quiet, subdued manner. Unless of course, the intention of the depicted madness is by the *Vidūṣaka*, which is meant to elicit laughter and evoke humour.

It is important to note a contradiction at this stage, of how the only 'mad character' that we can speak of in ancient sanskrit literature comes from King Mahendravarman's satirical play of *Mattavilasa Prahāsana*. This mad person, does not suffer from temporary madness. In fact, he seems to be in this state of perpetual madness, not suffering but revelling in his condition. This play intended to satirise the heretic sects similar condition of revelling in falsehood. The play's setting is South India during the seventh century in the context of the churning of the 'hindu revival movement' that is contemporaneously taking place. The positioning of Gosala and Unmattakah of *Mattavilasa Prahāsana* shows a thread of knotted continuity in the understanding of madness in brahmanic worldview and extending it to other heretic sects of Buddhism and Jainism. Madness as a cultural tool in a civilisational project has been employed by the hegemonic religious traditions several times through the literary tradition. The assignation of madness to Gosala and Unmattakah was a cultural tool used by the Jain and sanskrit scholars respectively in order to repudiate the *Ājīvika* sect and Kapallika sect and promote a more enlightened favourable view of themselves. Consequently, making them personified examples of this proclaimed madness of Gosala and Unmattakah intends to devoid them of agency, in a manner of not being able to state their own condition.

For the purpose of the narrative structure in the story or folklore, it is important that we observe exactly at what point madness is employed in the plays and life of

Gosala. Firstly, Madness in the case of the literary figures of sanskrit figure of lovers and Gosala is to amplify a particular state of being. In the case of the lovers it is that of separation, in Gosala, it extends the idea of his degradation and ruination. Madness casts a longer shadow on their feeling of helplessness in the obstacle in their path to union and salvation respectively. Secondly, madness of *Vidūṣaka*, *unmattakah* and Gosala are figures of ridicule. The madness is invoked or induced to delegitimise all that the character stands for or represents. It is precisely for this reason that we find, Gosala espouses his sermon on *niyati* only after he has been attacked by delirium. It is in this delirium that he espoused his doctrine of eight last things (*carimaim*) which included four drinks(*panagaim*)³ and four non-drinks⁴ which Mahavira precludes as an action to cover up his despicable and objectionable conduct. However, it is this same madness, that also works as a currency of rehabilitation for the afflicted. Madness acts as a guard against expulsion, as the agency denied to *Unmattakah*, the separated lover and Gosala is the same reason why they are not considered responsible for their own actions and are embraced into society fold. In this framework of madness, the intentionality of the person afflicted with madness or proclaimed to suffer from madness is not of consequence⁵. This lack of ascription of intentionality makes the act of madness ephemeral and softens the impact of acts of madness especially in the context of religious and theological debates.

3' *Goputthae* (cow urine), *Hatthamaddiyae* (water soiled by hand), *Atavatattae* (drink heated by the sunshine), *Silapabbhattae* (water dripping from a rock).'

4' *Sthalapanaya* (water from an earthen jar), *Tayapanaya* (juice squeezed out of a green mango by putting it into your mouth), *Simbalipanaya* (juice chewed from the raw pulses under your teeth), *Suddhapanaya* (the touch of limbs of dying monks with their wet and cold hands).'

5See Similar argument for Heresy in Sabina Flanagan, 'Heresy, Madness and Possession in High Middle Ages' in Ian Hunter, *Heresy in Transistion: Transforming Ideas of Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Aldershot. Ashgate.2005.

In this respect, attribution of madness in this sense acquires tonality of humanness. It is the trait of madness that allows the person to be forgiven for their transgressions, they are not held accountable and no punitive action is taken against them.

This humane madness, in certain contexts is also elevated to the status of mystics as we examined in Chapter 4. This is especially so for the poet saints that we survey; *Akka Mahadevi*, Lal Ded and *Mīra Baī*. However, it would be interesting to note the path of *Akka Mahadevi*, Lal Ded and *Mīra Baī* in relation to Gosala. Gosala's path was one of severe asceticism as described in the *Bhagvatti Sutta* as severe penances like raising his hands high in the sunshine, rejection of six consecutive meals, living on mere beans or rice gruels (*kulmasa*) and on a sip of water at the beginning of his ascetism. In the Jain text of *Aupapatika* sutra further restrictions on houses to be approached for alms, viz *dugharantariya*, i.e. beg for food at every third, fourth or eighth house. The *Sthananga* sutra elaborates an elongated list of rejection of ghee (*ghrtadi-rasa-parityaga*) and other pleasure of the senses among others that are mentioned, highlighted ones being *uggatava*, *ghoratava*, *rasa-nijjuhanata* and *jihvendriya-pratisamlinata*. Whereas, *Akka Mahadevi*, *Mīra Baī* and Lal Ded's mystical journey was far more affective in nature. This distinction is partly due to the nature of devotional tradition that was contemporary in their time and partly due to their own personal experiences. This mystical experience was based on encountering specific godheads and realising the ultimate reality. It is interesting to note that where Gosala's asceticism relegated him to ineffectual humane madness, the madness of the three poet saints that we surveyed in our text were inscribed a certain special status thanks to their display of madness and aberrated behaviour.

This survey leads us to a preliminary conclusion of the gendered nature of this madness especially in relation to mystical states. Madness, in the case of the three poet saints, becomes an interface between divinity and humanity. In this regard, the observation that should be made is whether this divinity is a confabulation with being other-worldly. By extension, it is pertinent to question whether it is the extraordinary that is configured as madness or does the madness give the saints a cloak of extra-ordinary. Either way, this madness allows them to be perceived as special, in their appearance (of being naked, in the case of *Akka Mahadevi*) and in their powers (of withstanding poison and poisonous snakes, in the case of *Mīrabāī*). It is precisely for this reason that the three poet saints proclaim themselves to be mad or driven mad and also note the taunts of others when they call them mad or insane, almost as a badge of recognition but also seldomly as part of their trial and tribulations on their path to realisation of the ultimate reality.

On the other hand, the treatment of madness forms a part of our everyday living. The treatment of madness in the *Atharva Veda*, Ayurvedic Corpus, Buddhist and Tantric treatises come from our kitchens and gardens from rituals and herbs. Madness is part of the social and cultural domain of Indian living. Treatment of madness in the Indian setting happens in the public domain especially in the precinct of temples as we have promulgated in Chapter 5. Healing in this setting is as much a personal journey as it is a socially and communally recognised exercise that an afflicted person goes through in order to reintegrate into society. It is for this reason, that we find several temples speckled over the breadth of India that are considered primary centres of healing. However, what is interesting to note from our chapter is that the temples that we surveyed; of *Chottanikkara*, Sankarnarayan Kovil and Gunaseelam despite belonging to different sectarian affiliations didn't not have specific

prescribed rituals designated for ritual healing. The temple complex and the daily pooja itself was considered to be a potent device and space to alleviate the afflicted individual. The performance of the rituals by priests and the audience of the laity mirrors the performance of madness on stage that we have aforementioned. The performance of madness on stage and displayed in the temple complex by the afflicted point to a social conditioning of the visual, depiction and recognition of madness.

The socio-cultural construction of madness allows for the creation of exhilarating intersectionalities of madness. Madness draws from and feeds into literature, normative texts belonging to different sectarian affiliations and presently lived experiences of those that choose to engage in healing in the context of temple complexes.

There is a need to rescue madness from the dichotomies of rationality and irrationality, natural and unnatural. It would be interesting to further delve into madness as a tool of the power and the tool of the weak. Madness as tool instrumentally is employed in very different ways and different purposes by different groups. Madness, once rehabilitated from labels allows for us to see how conceptually madness enriches understanding of folklore, ritual practice and even normative treatises when they are juxtaposed to it. In the contradictions of what is espoused as the as the principles of theory and practice can we find new ground to position madness.

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