

Nandita Chaudhary · Pernille Hviid
Giuseppina Marsico · Jakob Waag Villadsen
Editors

Resistance in Everyday Life

Constructing Cultural Experiences

 Springer

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Epigraph

Retrospection on an Irresistible Seminar

We have needed persistence
And considerable assistance
To locate the actual existence
Of true Resistance!

Not enough, the wheat and maize
From fertile Indian fields.
We craved exotic specimens
And sought the rare botanic ones!

And did we locate resistance?
You bet we did!
Across the globe
In sailing boat and city bus
Diversity with common thread.

From Pyramid land came graffiti
Of extraordinary variety
Every artist paints a story, silently
Laughing at power.

From land's end in the Americas
And from Denmark's jagged coast
Child's mischief as protest
To sitting straight in school
And other inapt rules

From hearth and home,
 From mothers and daughters
 Voicing new found confidence
 Masked as compliance, slyly.

Acting as teacher
 Replaces acting out
 The sandal fits the wearer
 Its Eureka moment!

From the classic Indian stage
 A streak of zestful novelty
 'I'm not a clone of long ago
 But an artiste with a mind' you know.

We traversed miles of space
 From the wondrous city of Copenhagen
 To dismal Assamese tea estates
 And found the links we sought to trace.

Even imperious Indira's story
 Featured as her quest for glory
 Unrelenting dominance
 Was her nemesis.

Our complex mythologies
 Yielded epistemologies
 Mother-son dyads prevail
 Oedipus, not unique to Freud!

Guts and gumption, brass and boldness
 Not surrender, asserting rights
 Speech as weapon, silence as tool
 These are words for true resistance!

Let's thank our friends who travelled far
 Also those who travelled near!
 To confer on ideas, ancient and modern
 To meet old friends and make new ones.
 Farvel! Auf Wiedersehen! Au revoir! Adieu!
 Adios! Phir Milenge! Poittu Vaango! Namaste!

Chennai, India
 October 2016

Anandalakshmy

Foreword

Persisting Resistance as Resource for Development

This book is treacherous. At first glance, the notion of resistance is simple—a toddler who is performing a temper tantrum to parents’ orders, a protester facing the acts of police brutality, and the dieting person persuading oneself not to eat an appealing sweet—are all resisting some social or personal agenda. And as such agendas are everywhere in human lives and societal set-ups, resistance is so much an ordinary everyday life happening that it seems trivial to make it into an object of investigation. Yet, it is often the most ordinary phenomena that are of profound importance for understanding the world. I consider the phenomena of resistance in all of their variety of forms to be of such kind.

Resistance is a frequent phenomenon in human societies where the goal-oriented actions by some may be actively unappreciated by others. Frictions between social groups, social relationships that are of tumultuous nature, and simple petty jealousies can lead to dramatic resistance actions (Fig. 1).

The case of Gustave Courbet—by now a “classic” in realist painting in art history but then (1860s–1870s) a very controversial figure in the Parisian art and political worlds (Chu 1992)—illustrates the centrality of resistances in the ordinary life of any society. The international participants of the workshop in New Delhi experienced the resistance by the Indian consular authorities when revealing the goal to go to India to participate in a workshop on the topic of resistance. The topic became interpreted in terms of *political* resistance—and quite understandably made the officials wary about the strange caravan of foreign scholars wanting to come to Delhi all at the same time, and all proudly claiming they go to a workshop on that topic. As expected in the work of any organization, that wariness turned into demand for more documented support for the innocence of the academic activity. All got the visas needed, but the extended bureaucratic processes of resistance, triggered by the use of the word, is a good lesson for us in academia about the implications of our scientific terminology for ordinary social practices.

Fig. 1 ‘The Salon Resisting the Entrance’ by Gustave Courbet (caricature from 1873). *Source* LeGrelot, *Dimanche*, 25 Avril 1873



Resistance—as a word of common language—triggers the process of suspicion (resistance *to what?* resistance of *what kind?*). As a term to be used in scientific analysis, it is meant to be neutral—but, as it often happens, the connotations of everyday language terms can easily flavour the intended neutral term. The bureaucratic negotiations around getting the visas indicated it well.

Resistance as a Scientific Concept

The issue of resistance is not trivial for the purposes of science. Besides its use in the physical sciences (e.g. in case of electricity), it becomes particularly important as a basic process of survival and development in the case of all sciences that deal with open-systemic phenomena: biology, psychology, anthropology and sociology. These are sciences that struggle with the non-predictable nature of their object phenomena that is axiomatically guaranteed by the open-systemic nature of these phenomena.¹ For their theoretical innovation, concepts that overcome the implications of unilateral causality—“A causes B” without any assumption that B has anything to do with that causal process—need to be overcome. A focus on resistance—“A causes B *under the resistance* of B”—renders the unilateral causal scheme mute. If B resists A, is that resistance also “causal”, similarly to that posited for A? If so, What is “causality”—a posited act of impact or a negotiated settlement

¹In open systems—that depend for their existence upon exchange relations with their environments—the future state of the system cannot be predicted from the antecedent state.

between impact and counter-impact? The notion of causality itself becomes questionable as a viable way of thinking about the phenomena. And this would be a major revolution in science since Aristotle and Avicenna.

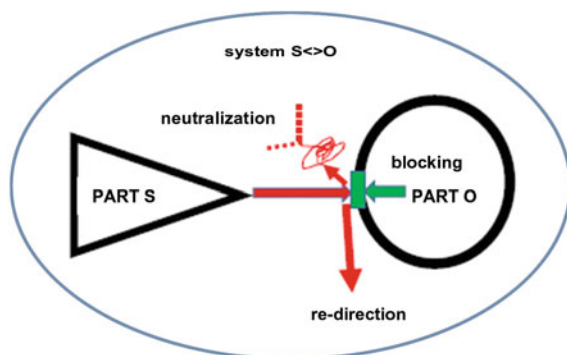
The Systemic Nature of Resistance

In the abstract world of science, resistance is the systemic counterpart of action—the two are mutually linked in an oppositional unity. There is no action without corresponding resistance, and—of course—no resistance without an action. Resistance is the process that unites a subject’s (S) action towards an object (S → O) that is linked with the object’s counteraction (O → S) in some form. Of the latter, there are many as follows: neutralization (the action rendered inconclusive by some blocking or diffusion), redirection (the action towards O is redirected towards some other, substitute, object, by the O). This entails the relevance of *co-agency* (both S and O are active in relation to their environments—of which each (other) is a part), *direction* (every action is directed towards some object), and *border* (the action and its resisting action are observable on their place of encounter, which constitutes a border). Furthermore, the parts of the system (S and O) are assumed to be in an asymmetric “power relation”—S is dominating O while the latter is resisting the act of dominance.

This abstract notion of resistance is a systemic version of the structural unit of *Gegenstand*—a long-used but by now forgotten structural unit of the human *psyche*. Resistance is located in the systemic structure of the *Gegenstand* (Fig. 2). It is thus a part of the “minimal Gestalt” of human psychological functioning—a unit with inherent location of the *directed* and *intentional* processes within the unit. Both of these notions are of fundamental importance for understanding the specific human features of the psyche.

First—as we operate in irreversible time that cannot be turned around—each and every phenomenon of the human psyche is directed to the always indeterminate future. The *intentional* extension of meanings in a simple association process—the

Fig. 2 Resistance in systemic *Gegenstand*. The relations of S and O lead to blocking, neutralization, and re-direction



word “cat” may evoke the associate of “mouse” (or, in our contemporary social ecological conditions—“a can of cat food”)—becomes directed when viewed within irreversible time. It may lead to the expectation of either the cat bringing a recently caught and now-dead mouse to the owner as a display of hunting success, or may trigger the owner to jump into the car and rush to the supermarket to buy appropriate can of the cat’s preferred gourmet food. In both cases, the simple act of association acquires the direction for the actions that are implied.

Secondly, the *Gegenstand* structure entails *inherent intentionality*. The notion of intentionality—the core of the psychological theory of Franz Brentano—has been a conceptual stumbling block for all of twentieth-century traditions in psychology that have attempted to reduce the psyche to the directly observable phenomena of behaviour or cognition (Valsiner 2012). Yet, human actions—from the non-conscious to the highly deliberate ones—are not only directional but also intentional—we want to act in ways we have set ourselves in terms of goals. Likewise, at the immediate perception-to-action chains, we act within the frame of affordances—as emphasized by James Gibson—of the objects that link their properties with our action options. From affordances up to premeditated actions, human beings are intentional in their actions. According to Brentano, every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on. This intentional in-existence is a characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We could, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which *contain an object intentionally within themselves* (Brentano 1995, pp. 88–89, added emphasis).

The “object” in the English translation of Brentano is *Gegenstand* in the original version (“*Gegenstand der innere Wahrnehmung*”—object of inner perception—Brentano, 1874, p. 127). As such, it entails the basic scheme as depicted in Fig. 2—the perceiving subject acts towards oneself (as object) in the process of presenting, judging, affirming or denying, and loving. These acts are being resisted by the object (which is the subject itself). In other terms—**resistance escalates intentionality**. Without resistance—of the self to one’s own self in the process of intra-psychical perception—intentionality of the human psyche could not have emerged.

Brentano did not include the focus on irreversible time into his theoretical system. This major oversight did not allow him to develop the notion of intentionality to cover its full implication in making sense of the human psyche. When we—in this book—bring into focus the notion of resistance and link its intentionality in irreversible time frame, we complete the theoretical whole that Brentano started but failed to complete. It was James Mark Baldwin a few decades later (Baldwin 1892) who made the notion of persistent imitation—or the notion of “trying, partially failing, and trying again”—into the central core of all developmental phenomena. The intermediate part in that sequence—partial failing—is the result of resistance.

What are the epistemological and practical implications of this completion of the Brentano tradition in the twenty-first century? First of all—it calls for a major change in the methodological practices of psychology that has—over the twentieth century—been caught in the proliferation of the belief in “measurement”. Measurement is important in any science—provided that what is being measured is (a) quantifiable and (b) has real existence. Physical objects in our everyday life certainly fit these demands—the length of distance or body height, or the weight of a bunch of bananas or body weight are indisputably real. All *existing objects*—in Alexius Meinong’s (1907) terms—can be measured. In contrast, the *non-existing objects*—that subsist, rather than exist—cannot be measured in ways similar to physical measurement or classical logic (Smith 1975).

The problem of twentieth-century psychology has been in the overlooking of the distinction between existing and subsisting objects that Meinong introduced. The phenomena of the *psyche* belong to the category of subsisting objects—all very important for human living, while not having direct physical form. We operate with the notions of *love, justice, fairness, corruption, democracy, quality of life*—to name a few—but all these important terms have no direct physical referents. Yet they are functional—and as such—psychologists have tried to “measure” them (e.g. standardized questionnaires to study “quality of life” or tests of personality and intelligence). By “measuring” the subsisting phenomenon, psychology has created the illusion of these phenomena being of objective existence—as subjectivity as a reality of human (being) existence has been denied a role in twentieth-century psychology.

There is a similar danger of turning the notion of resistance into an object of measurement. The history of psychology gives us many examples of how potentially useful notions—intelligence, attachment, to name a few—have been turned into scientifically useless labels by the way of developing standardized “instruments” for “measuring” them. I hope that our focusing on the phenomena of resistance would not lead to the invention of a “measure of resistance”.

There is a theoretical reason for this hope. Following Fig. 2—it should be clear why resistance in psychological systems cannot be “measured” as if it is independent. It is always contextualized with the structure of the *Gegenstand*—it is always resistance-in-relation with the object of resisting (which is the subject of the object-to-be resisted). Its outcomes are qualitative transformations in the structure of the whole. By focusing the attention of psychology at large—through the new developments in cultural psychology—to the conceptual realm of resistance, we return to the notion of the *Gegenstand* as the minimal structural unit of the psyche. It preserves the core—direction of intentional action and its resistance—together with openness to innovation. It lives up to Lev Vygotsky’s call for dialectical systemic units in psychological analysis:

Psychology, as it desires to study complex wholes needs to change the methods of analysis into elements by the analytic method that reveals the parts of the unit [literally: breaks the whole into linked units—*metod... analiza, ...razchleniyushhego na edinitsy*]. It has to find the further undividable, surviving features that are characteristic of the given

whole as a unity—units within which in mutually opposing ways these features are represented [Russian: *edinitisy, v kotorykh v protivopolozhnom vide predstavleny eti svoistva*]² (Vygotsky 1982, p. 16).

The structure in Fig. 2 elaborates the meaning of “mutual opposition”—including the S <> O opposition that is open to generativity. Innovations happen precisely at the border of the assailing and resisting parts of the *Gegenstand* structure. It can lead to a dialectical “leap” in the organization of the structure (redirection leading to new O), or simple attenuation of the current opposition (neutralization). Resistance leads to the emergence of a new form—the minimal structural unit is dynamic in its structure—and opens to qualitative transformation of itself.

Why is resistance important? It is the root for all developments that entails the emergence of the new under the resistance of the old. Hence, resistance not only exists but is necessary and persistent. It can be found in silent non-actions in everyday life (ignoring social demands) or in active displays of humorous or sarcastic distancing of oneself from the demands that parents or politicians make to be of absolute necessity. This book itself is an act of resistance—to the oversight of this topic by social sciences. The efforts reflected in this book—mostly highly descriptive of various cultural realities—are oriented towards making the dialectical framework of thought—usually left to philosophers to ponder—into a scientifically workable new framework in psychology.

Aalborg, Denmark
September, 2016

Jaak Valsiner

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September, 2016

²I include important parts—underlined—that occur in the Russian version but are omitted in English translation. The intricate link with the dialectical dynamicity of the units—which is present in the Russian original is lost once the underlined parts are left out.

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The journey of this volume has been rather long and arduous, with frenzied collaborations, dynamic discussions, extended pauses, and laboured activity. Each phase has contributed to the volume in its own way, even the pauses. The silent intervals helped us to return to our task with fresh resolve and renewed perspectives. Now that the moment of completion has arrived, we wish to express our gratitude to several institutions and individuals who facilitated our journey.

This manuscript has emerged from the proceedings of an International Seminar held in New Delhi in September, 2014, titled “Rhythms of Resistance”. The idea of the seminar and subsequent volume was conceived on a chilly autumn morning of 2013, in Jaan Valsiner’s living room in Aalborg. Five of us sat huddled around a coffee table in deep discussion, fuelled by numerous rounds of (excellent) coffee. Several months later, after some diplomatic hiccups about the title, the seminar was successfully organized in New Delhi. Somehow, the label of “Resistance” seems to have created some misgivings about our intended objectives. After having satisfied the visa authorities about our intended agenda, the scholars were permitted to travel. With this dramatic start, the discussions at the seminar received an extra impetus for enthusiastic dialogue and intense debate. Since all the participants of the event are not included in the list of chapters, we would like to express our thanks to all the participants who joined us for the seminar; the volume has greatly benefitted from the voices of so many scholars.

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November 2016

Nandita Chaudhary
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Rhythms of Resistance and Existence: An Introduction

Nandita Chaudhary, Pernille Hviid, Giuseppina Marsico
and Jakob Waag Villadsen

Abstract This book is about resistance in everyday life, illustrated through empirical contexts from different parts of the world. Resistance is a widespread phenomenon in biological, social and psychological domains of human cultural development. Yet, it is not well articulated in the academic literature and, when it is, resistance is most often considered counter-productive. Simple evaluations of resistance as positive or negative are avoided in this volume; instead it is conceptualised as a vital process for human development and well-being. While resistance is usually treated as an extraordinary occurrence, the focus here is on everyday resistance as an intentional process where new meaning constructions emerge in thinking, feeling, acting or simply living with others. Resistance is thus conceived as a meaning-making activity that operates at the intersection of personal and collective systems. The contributors deal with strategies for handling dissent by individuals or groups, specifically dissent through resistance. Resistance can be a location of intense personal, interpersonal and cultural negotiation, and that is the primary reason for interest in this phenomenon. Ordinary life events contain innumerable instances of agency and resistance. This volume discusses their manifestations, and it is therefore of interest for academics and researchers of cultural psychology, cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, and human development.

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This volume is a collection of essays and analysis around the phenomenon of resistance as it is manifested in everyday events within the life course. The chapters are revised and enriched versions of seminar presentations made by the authors in 2014. The seminar brought together cultural psychologists from eight different nationalities and diverse projects, focussed on conceptualizing and discussing experiences of resistance, whether it was in the area of family life, childhood, school, public spaces, art, theatre, politics or biography. Each scholar highlighted those aspects of his or her area of study where the phenomenon of resistance was in evidence. As a result, there was a wide range of topics and phenomena that were covered, all with the cross-cutting theme of resistance. Hot debates and intense discussions during the seminar were common. What was seen as resistance from one cultural standpoint (for instance, gender relations within marriage in India) was not necessarily understood as such from a different cultural standpoint (European tradition about gender relations). A rich dialogue emerged, which the authors have attempted to capture while revisiting their own presentations, thereby unearthing some of the cross-cutting processes in the development and expression of resistance in everyday settings.

Basic Assumptions

In order to introduce the chapters, we list some basic premises that guide our perspective on resistance and could illuminate the reason why a group of cultural psychologists spent three days in “highly spiced” discussions, with the objective of understanding the nature, rhythm and circumstances of resistance in our human existence.

We understand resistance as a widespread phenomenon to be found in a variety of contexts and practices, and we assume resistance to be vital to the life of any living organism. From biology, for instance, we learn that the most basic process of survival, whether of a cell or an organism, is that of maintaining life by resisting some of the external influences, while accepting others (Bertalanffy, 1968). Vaccination is a commonplace example of the development of resistance through exposure to small doses of toxic material which subsequently enables the organism to resist future infections. Resistance is treated here as a functional process of an organism. But what does resistance mean for the existence of a person who is not only a biological system, but a social and psychological being as well?

Human living is inherently intentional extending beyond the given, oriented towards the realization of something incipient, uncertain and not yet in existence (Valsiner, 2014a). From this vantage point, resistance is not conceived as a simple function, but as an intentional process where new meaning constructions emerge in the form of thinking, feeling, acting or fundamentally, simply living with others. We notice from therapy that resistance is important in human well-being. In traumatic, dangerous and chaotic situations, the subject’s psychological well-being is

dependent on his or her resistance to the meaninglessness of an event in life (Antonovsky, 1987).

Thus, the human being resists—but what does it mean to be a subject resisting a sociocultural environment and how does the meaning of resisting become meaningful in the life course of a person? The life course of Gandhi is an extraordinary historical example of how one man’s life created a social movement by resisting not only the colonial powers, but also traditional scripts (of violence and aggression, as well as of religious fundamentalism) of such resistance (Caygill, 2013), thereby operating on the border between resistance and non-resistance (Marsico, Cabell, Valsiner & Kharlamov, 2013). Human beings can be dedicated to ideas, movements or projects that necessitate consistent resistance to other intervening aspects. Due to the directionality of such engagements and thus resistance to others, these dedications mould the environment for the person to live in; in that sense, the dedicated person co-sculpts his or her own future. As Frost poetically expresses, there are roads not taken in life ...

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

(Robert Frost, 1916, *The Road Not Taken*, from last verse)

In politics, the resistance movement is “an organized effort by some portion of the civil population of a country to resist the legally established government or an occupying power and to disrupt civil order and stability. It may seek to achieve its objects through either the use of nonviolent resistance (sometimes called civil resistance) or the use of armed force.”¹ Although the modern usage of the term in political science refers primarily to underground resistance, this was popularized subsequent to the French revolution. In this volume, the term resistance will refer to any form of dissent towards a social phenomenon or social practice by an individual or group.

A Cultural Psychological Perspective on Resistance

From a cultural psychological perspective on human life course, we thus perceive resistance as a central part of maintenance as well as a generativity of ongoing meaning-making in and between persons. However, resistance is not well articulated in the literature and when it is, it is often considered as something counter-productive, immature or irrational. We notice this in the literature on children’s development, where phases (“terrible three’s”/“Youth”) are characterized by the child’s/young person’s resistance.

¹URL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resistance_movement.

Behind such theorizing, we witness a struggle between collective and personal culture. In these instances, the collective culture prescribes what subjects “ought not to” resist. By objectifying the resistance as caused by “the psychological illness” or “the developmental phase”, collective culture also shows that it feels neither responsibility for the trouble nor obliged to take the content of the resistance seriously. The collective understanding of resistance as immature and counterproductive is thus valuable to research on resistance in a cultural psychological perspective, but possibly for other reasons than intended.

Resistance, Meaning-Making and Everyday Life

Human beings live and work within social contexts which provide direction through social guidance from others. Everyday encounters with people, objects and events are attributed with value and meaning. These meaning-making practices can be considered as collective and personal configurations of general cultural systems. Although socially directed, these valuations are actively reorganized during every encounter, creating a unique combination of personal and collective culture for each person at any given time, in any given situation. Culture and person make each other up. Since culture is a process which brings unity to the individual and the collective level of meaning-making, generating a conceptual whole, the unique configuration of its units can be generalized into a process of human living (Valsiner, 2007).

Every encounter (between people, between people and objects and between groups) is novel, interactive, dynamic and potentially transformative. It is accepted that human environments will have collectively shared patterns of meaning, at least at the level of ideology, constituting pathways towards which conduct is steered. This is the core of culture. Culture has a collective manifestation: “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life” (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). This is shared, valued and understood by its members. Culture also has a personal dimension; an individually composed life-world, guided by the person’s biographical experiences and engagements in the world (Hviid & Villadsen, *in press*; Stern, 1938; Vygotsky, 1998). The relation to the social “other” is the basis from which such personal culture evolves and the influence of others is undeniable even in the most individualistic of societies. As a matter of fact, one can go further to say that individualism itself is a collectively shared ideology, and not a uniquely invented condition of the self (Bellah et al., 1985). Moghaddam (2003, 2010) calls these collective shared patterns “interobjectivity” as distinguishable from “intersubjectivity”, the positioning and coordination between any two perspectives. Intersubjectivity takes various forms as it relates with interobjectivity. These different strategies of subjectivity and intersubjectivity relating with interobjectivity create tensions that are confronted, resisted and resolved in a constant

state of renewal. As a fundamental activity, resistance characterizes the behaviour of all active agents with free will and goal-directedness (Valsiner, 2014a), as they construct their future within ongoing everyday lives.

The manifestation of resistance in everyday experiences is the intended agenda of this book. Even under extraordinary conditions, ordinary things continue to be done, and the braiding together of the ordinary and extraordinary is in need of greater attention (Das, 2006).

Approaching Resistance Through the Lens of Cultural Psychology

The roots of resistance are deep. From a very young age, children are taught to conduct themselves in the face of tensions and to develop the skills for negotiation. Tensions occur in all situations and between and among groups. How these conflicts are expressed, examined, resolved, whether the system remains intact or not, the ways in which dissent is expressed, what channels are used to communicate disagreement, covert and overt resistance—these are our concerns here.

It is possible to identify the patterns of resistance in cultural activity? “Patterns of resistance” implies practiced and popular taken-for-granted strategies, which then become incorporated as rhythms as the life course unfolds. However, these strategies have received little or no attention outside of the disciplines of history and political science. This volume attempts to bring these processes to the focus of cultural psychology in domains where resistance is omnipresent, habitually negotiated and largely overlooked as ordinary or passing.

It is believed that a study of these sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious and frequently ignored strategies has a lot to offer to the social sciences to widen the base of knowledge in conflict resolution as well as conflict maintenance in particular and cultural activity in general. Hence, the goal of this volume is to locate the *patterns of resistance* that—even if analysed on the basis of phenomena in the social life of any specific cultural group—exist in different forms in every society. We have tried to concentrate on the processes of how an act of resistance becomes transformed—in the dialogue of *resisting* and *counter-resisting*—into either acceptance or transformation of the object that is being resisted.

Resistance is non-acceptance. This refusal always involves an active agent in opposition with something outside, an object, image, idea, person or group. From a developmental perspective, resistance is part of every meaning-making process involving two positions. When two (or more) people relate, they become the *Gegenstand* for each other’s meaning-making. In such a situation, where persons make meaning of each other, they can either comply, resist each other or resist the resistance. Although inanimate objects can resist meaning-making (for instance a ball not standing still as desired by a child in play), this resistance is passive. Another example can be seen when children pick up sand and try to eat it, but the

sand “resists” becoming food. Interactions between active agents are far more complex on account of the mutual meaning-making processes. Resistance is thus part of a general process of relating to the sociocultural environment. The meta-theoretical scheme is the relation between the actor (meaning-maker) and the object (what the actor makes meaning of). As Valsiner (2014a) recently built on Naturphilosophie’s notion of “Gegenstand”, literally meaning to stand up against, objects in a person’s environment have different meanings for them. Some things which exist independent of the actor do not automatically transform reality for a person. However, as these enter into the sphere of the actor as meaningful objects, they may become significant in the actor’s life-world. Naturally, these general and undifferentiated principles of meaning-making are only to be found in concrete and uniquely configured forms. Nevertheless, the general principles are the very foundation of the unique concreteness and the infinite number of forms that can be taken.

Cultural psychology calls for both the situatedness of human experience and the theoretical generalizations of the *teleogenetic* nature of *psyche* (Valsiner, 2014b). Following this, the dynamics of resistance processes can be studied in all of life: education, child rearing, economics, political discourses, public culture and interpersonal relations. Through these explorations, the interaction between subjective intersubjective positions and interobjectivity will be explored. Personal and interpersonal dynamics can be addressed with due attention to collective patterns, thereby expanding the study of cultural processes. Through such processes, it is possible to unite episodic and transient meaning constructions and long-lasting emerging meanings (Valsiner, 2014b).

In this volume, we propose to expand the field of exploration of resistance. Expressions and experiences of resistance will be approached from different theoretical angles in this volume such as dialogical self theory, psychodynamic theory, cultural-historical, cultural psychological or any other which builds a unifying frame for personal meaning-making. Within this frame, the meta-theoretical scheme is the relation between the actor (meaning-maker) and the object (what the actor makes meaning of). The uniting frame in the cultural psychological perspective is the interest in personal meaning-making. Human beings can actively change their environment and things in their environment; they transform them through meaning-making. Pre-existing meanings can be resisted, and rudimentary attributions can be rendered meaningless by the object (another person rejecting a person’s attribution, for instance), whereas others gestalt into meaningful relationships, thereby gaining the status to transform a person’s reality.

By acting upon objects, persons create—through the resistance by, and modifiability of, these objects — their life space (Valsiner, 2014a, p. 4).

Approaching the process of meaning-making from the notion of *Gegenstand* brings the concept of “will” back into psychology—the actor wants to do something with the object. Apart from objects, created or pre-existing, another person or persons can also become potential ‘objects’. The traditional conceptualization “the

person in the environment” neglects this intentional² relationship and turns persons and everything else in the environment into things (Valsiner, 2014a). When perceiving person and environment as an interdependent relationship, things transform into objects, which only exist in their relation to one another, in a constant process of co-organization and co-regulation by intentional human actors. The recognition of dynamically changing relationships between humans and their environment is a key notion in cultural psychology.

India as Foreground for the Study of Resistance

Since the seminar was being planned in India, the historical relevance of Gandhi’s non-cooperation movement to the British rule in India was taken as a starting point for the seminar and an important instance of resistance. However, as we can see from the contents of the volume, the ideas travel far from this initial position. Public dissent during the Quit India movement in the freedom struggle of the country that lasted almost a century, the final culmination of events which can be attributed to the unique stance of Gandhi’s leadership; that of telling the British that they were no longer welcome, the fight for self-governance was peaceful in its core, although several instances of violence were experienced. This rather unconventional posturing was unprecedented and ultimately led to the departure of the British in India in 1947. Historically, people have chosen many different strategies to resist domination. The Singing Revolution in Estonia in the late 1980s constituted mass night-singing demonstrations at the Tallinn Song Festival Grounds, which proved to be effective in the face of a deterioration of conditions in the Baltic States. During the Soviet occupation, these songs were forbidden since they were patriotic. People of Estonia sang these songs in groups for four years and gained a bloodless independence.

Cultural processes are always in a state of flux. As a result, potential tension at the intersection between different positions is inevitable. Domination from any source, cultural, national, social or interpersonal, is a location for dramatic imposition of one person or group on another person or group. Such confrontations demand resolution, maybe even rupture. This may include the use of symbolic resources, physical and psychological movement or the integration of experiences (Zittoun & Gillespie, 2015).

The Goals of This Volume

In this volume, we deal particularly with strategies of resisting certain meanings while creating new ones, whether by individuals or collectives. Resistance can be a

²Intentionality is meant in the (Brentano) sense of the concept, as an “about-ness”, where intention is just the reflexive form of the relation between subject and object which is about something.

location of intense cultural, interpersonal and personal negotiation, whether it is a revolution, a public display of resistance, conflict with institutions or an interpersonal matter. Moreover, by examining the intersection of personal, interpersonal and social processes during resistance, the negotiations between different levels of activity can be addressed. Resistance offers specific strategic forms of disagreement that focus on confrontational or non-confrontational modes and methods of self-expression, whether by an individual or by a group.

The fragments of resistance that are presented in this volume deal with a variety of empirical examples. Among these are instances of art as resistance, where graffiti is used as an expression of political revolt, contemporary classical dance in modern urban India, children on the street and in classrooms in different cultures re-interpreting relationships, Dalit women defining what success means to them as members of a disadvantaged Indian community, Danish diplomats and their families making sense of their new lives in India with domestic helpers, young women resolving conflicts with families in India, understanding the relevance of psychoanalytic practice among Indians in Bangalore, biographical sketches of contradictory narratives among European women and an Indian leader, women and transgender people redefining sexual identity and Doublethink as resistance in meaning-making among young professionals in Chile. Additionally, the chapters are divided into three sections each with a separate introduction. We hope that the volume will provide rich material for cultural psychology, specifically the dynamics of resistance at the intersection of individual, interpersonal and collective activity in different cultures and different domains.

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Section I
Cultural Productions Through Resistance

Cultural Productions Through Resistance: An Introduction to Section I

Pernille Hviid

If we had not the power and right to oppose tyranny and obstinacy, caprice and tactlessness we could not endure relationships with people who betray such characteristics. We should be driven to deeds of desperation which would put the relationship to an end. (...) such disagreeable circumstances tend to become intensified if they are endured quietly and without protest ...

(Simmel, 1903, p. 493).

Abstract Building on cultural psychology and taking inspiration from the George Simmel's work, this introduction considers resistance as an act of human and societal creativity and thus as developmental at its core. Resistance can be local, such as fleeting moments in one person's life, or a collective and historical revolt. The chapters in this section introduce this variety.

Keywords Resistance · Cultural psychology · Cultural and personal creativity

Introduction

It is a privilege to introduce this first section, which is devoted to examining relations between resistance and cultural productions. I will do so within the framework of cultural psychology, already introduced in the foreword and the introduction to this volume (Valsiner, this volume).

Central to this developmental perspective is the conceptualization of interdependence in the relation of human beings and their sociocultural environment. From this interdependence human beings as well as cultural environments evolve (Valsiner, 2014). In this respect, the notion of *resistance* is refreshing and welcomed. Most conceptualizations of the dynamics between person and environment highlight how the subject embraces cultural meanings and is empowered by these cultural meanings, while making them into his or her own. This includes concepts such as internalization (Vygotsky, 1998), appropriation (for the varied use by

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earlier and contemporary researchers, see Valsiner, 1998) and notions that are part of developmental concepts such as making use of cultural resources in life (Zittoun, 2006). But contrary to this, we are here dealing with a concept that refers to processes by which human beings dismiss, refuse or oppose cultural meanings and practices from interfering in their lives—or looked upon from another angle—processes by which the environment resists or obstructs the intentionality of the person(s). Resistance is thus a specific developmental occasion that represents a sort of misfit and processually speaking it opens up to further and deeper tensions as well as new generative resolutions. The developmental potentials reside in resistance as germs or complex imaginary visions of other (and better) future states.

Resistance, Subjectivity and Cultural Creativity

As resistance fundamentally operates to reconfigure the relation between the person and her sociocultural living conditions, willpower (and emotions) comes to the fore of our attention. As such resistance is vivid, lively and personal; and this much more than many other phenomena, is given attention in psychological research. Whether loudly or discretely expressed, it contains self-affirmation and a self-experience,

(...) that we are not completely crushed in the relationship. It permits us to preserve a consciousness of energy, and thus lends a vitality and a reciprocity to relationships from which, without this corrective, we should have extricated ourselves at any price (Simmel, 1903, p. 493).

Such subjective messages to the environment might in some instances be tolerated without further notice, in one accepted as a standpoint from which to renegotiate the situation of the subject and yet in other situations retaliated with greater force, thus escalating the tension and maybe the resistance. A particular version of retaliation consists of attempts to de-subjectify the act and subscribe the behaviour to a particular mental disease or a natural period in life (e.g. “terrible twos”).

Resistance is a pathway to the *maintenance* of the dynamic and evolving relation between human beings and their environment; *an act of human and societal creativity, whether it be local and fleeting moments in one person’s life or a collective and historical revolt*. Traditional psychology might have missed this pathway all along its own attempt to understand the human psyche abstractly, and has thus contributed to the cleft between the individual and the collective.

Taking general cultural variability into account, resistance is absolutely necessary to human living. Ordinary, mundane everyday life would turn into an infinite pell-mell of environmental suggestions if persons didn’t resist at least some of them. Existentially speaking, the act of resisting guards and nurtures experiences of meaningfulness in living—irrespective of whether we have small temptations or everyday nuisances in mind or intolerable and life-threatening environmental conditions. Thus, the specific and concrete configuration of resistance, the processes

and outcomes of such developmental occasions are of immense variability and this section only represents glimpses into that variability. But for each and every occasion, “resistance” cannot be conceived other than as a relation.

The Chapters

The chapters are distinguished by very rich descriptions of the contexts and circumstances in which resistance takes place; the practices and the meaning-complexes which persons resist. This richness and historical depth is important to readers who are otherwise left to their own imagination and experience of resistance, which is—however “right” it is felt—always an experienced relationship with *particular* cultural circumstances. By explicating the qualities of the particular cultural circumstances in which resistance occurs, the chapters offer the readers insight into what, and how much is at stake to the persons involved.

To a female living in a Nordic context, the act of divorcing an oppressive and tyrant-husband is considered a completely legitimate and accepted form of resistance, whereas continuous marriage would be viewed with concern. Historically speaking, this societal suggestion is a result of generations of women fighting for equality, along with the general societal need for women in the labour market, trust in the competencies of women and lack of (or control of) fear, that could follow allowing particular groups of people more influential positions. Structural arrangements on state-level seek to compensate (to some degree) for the financial situation of single parents (be it mothers or fathers) although they as a group generally have less lucrative standards of living. Thus, a dense web of social representations and concrete support for those who choose to resist a life in marriage has developed through the history of societies. This affects the choice to divorce or not and the psychological experience of divorce. Divorce is thus not flavoured by feelings of shame today and not taken as a sign of failure as a woman (or man). None of this is the case for Indian females (or males) living in unbearable marriages; not discursively, financially or legally, and even a horrible husband can still be a considered “guard dog to keep other dogs away” (personal communication). The particular resistance, given by a subject or local collectives can thus only be understood—in its creativity or its hazardousness—as a meaningful form and direction, in relation to its specific context.

All the more astonishing is in the chapter by Savita Sagar and Vinita Bhargava: [Dalit women in India: Crafting narratives of success](#). This paper presents the history and present conditions of “untouchable” women; an almost infinite humiliation, exploitation and redundant de-subjectivation. The deep cultural representations and the severe injunctions applied to their living seem insurmountable for any living creature. Yet, we are presented to the efforts by (some) of these women, craving for dignity and recognition, raising their voices to the world and to Indian society through poetry. As an example, the poem below is excerpted from *Ms Militancy* (2011) by Meena Kandasamy (Navayana Books).

One eyed

the pot sees just another noisy child
 the glass sees an eager and clumsy hand
 the water sees a parched throat slaking thirst
 but the teacher sees a girl breaking the rule
 the doctor sees a medical emergency
 the school sees a potential embarrassment
 the press sees a headline and a photo feature
 Dhanam sees a world torn in half.
 her left eye, lid open but light slapped away,
 the price for a taste of that touchable water.

Chapter “[The Third Gender and Their Identity in Indian Society](#)”, by Nandita Chaudhary and Shashi Shukla, presents a very similar process of exclusion, suppression and exploitation of transgendered Indian persons. But the historic evolution of this situation is very different. *Hijras* represent the oldest transgendered community in the world. It has historically been surrounded by respect and awe, and third-gendered persons have been given special favourable conditions of living. But globalization, the authors reason, has changed the societal representation of the third gender and this strongly affects their living conditions and sense of dignity. “Within this frame, only binary gender division exists, which does not provide recognition to the entire community of people of the third gender”, the authors write. Rather than a very uniform discourse, as we saw in the Dalit case, we are presented to a blend of understandings, including more mythical interpretations of their power and abilities to bless as well as to blight. They are marginalized, unwelcome but also feared, and it is likely that this fear is their key to survival, in an ever more marginalized way.

In Chapter “[Trajectories of Resistance and Historical Reflections](#)”, we are taken to the context of Europe, by Constance de Saint-Laurent. The chapter is noteworthy in several aspects. Here, the resistance concerns the collective past, as it is lived with, and resisted and transformed as the analysis demonstrates. The empirical data stems from interviews with artists who grew up in politically very active communist families whose interpretations of the political history and situation consisted of hegemonic collective myths. Through the analysis, we follow two women’s work and struggle to disentangle the narratives, their omissions and lies by the aid of cultural resources such as schooling and textbooks and personal encounters. de Saint-Laurent offers an analysis of such creative reconstructive processes—which goes far beyond the traditional notion of “remembrance”: From discovery of nagging contradictory information, to resistance to smooth those crackles, their frustration, withdrawal and their creative work towards a more encompassing historical-political narrative along with their own personal and quite painful trajectory in this process.

I assume that people, in most cases, would prefer to change burdening cultural conditions once and for all, rather than circumvent these in a private, discrete and unimpeachable fashion. However, such radical showdown can be extremely costly, in both sociocultural and psychological terms as the first three papers already demonstrate. In Shipra Suneja's and Bhanumathi Sharma's Chapter "[Children Finding Their Ways Through Life Spaces: Glimpses from the Indian Ecology](#)", and in Neerja Sharma's Chapter "[Adolescent Dissent and Conflict Resolution in the Indian Context](#)", we are presented with cases and circumstances in which children and young persons resist collective systems of meaning and practise in their everyday lives, without collectively trying to reinstate another cultural-collective order, by making their perspectives explicit. In Chapter "[Children Finding Their Ways Through Life Spaces](#)" we are offered a very promising start of an analysis of childhood in India; based on descriptions of how children—in a small scale—creatively work with setting their own standards to a satisfying life without risking abandonment or the threat of retaliation—should they go public. The same is the case in Chapter "[Adolescent Dissent and Conflict Resolution in the Indian Context](#)", with a special focus on ambivalent processes living and cherishing family life as well as peer relationships and romantic involvements.

In the final chapter of this section, (Chapter "[Cultural Scripts, Dialogue and Performance: Creating Processes for Resistance and Resolve](#)"), Asha Singh takes us to school. Through a personal account of her own work as researcher and educator, readers are presented with her responsiveness to children's resistance, not only at an everyday-based interaction with children, but also proactively through initiating drama classes, where such tensions are safely examined and voiced. It is an interesting pedagogical case that somehow parallels other emancipatory pedagogical initiatives, such as the ones taken in the province of Emilia Romagna (Italy) in the wake of Mussolini's fascism. (Please read this without further comparison between Mussolini's Italy and present-day India.) Here, puppeteers were employed in the whole region and children were encouraged to do as if (imaginary) play. Artefacts were purposely "mis" placed (e.g. a plastic elephant walking on the ceiling or in an aquarium); all this in order to promote children's development of multiperspectivism, and to diminish a one-sided taken-for-granted perspective that once allowed fascism to grow strong. In Singh's case, the children perform, and play out critique and resistance, voicing their standpoints without risking persecution. It's an interesting case of school as mediating a conflictual relationship between person and society from the standpoint of the oppressed.

Taken together, the chapters of this section offer glimpses of insight into the developing dynamics of the individual and the collective through resistance, and to our understanding of how resistance contributes in drawing contours of futures for singular life courses as well as for communities (Fuhrer, 2004; Hviid & Villadsen, in press; Hviid & Villadsen, 2017).

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Dalit Women in India: Crafting Narratives of Success

Savita Sagar and Vinita Bhargava

Abstract This chapter outlines the positioning of Dalit women in the historical context and defines ways in which Dalit women envision success. It is an attempt to review the legislation and social action for the emancipation of the Dalit community. Have these efforts been successful in their objective to eradicate entrenched gender and caste based notions of (in)equality and (in)justice? Have they been effective enough to bring empowerment and success to women? The need of Dalit women for personal security, education, socio-economic development and social justice are priority areas for intervention. In order to understand the reality of Indian society in general, and of the Dalit community and Dalit women in particular, an analysis of caste–class–gender dynamics is imperative. Success as a notion for Dalit women can then be divined only upon understanding and incorporating political, cultural and social histories into contemporary narratives of women’s lives. Through the life experiences of Dalit women, we will explore some autobiographical narratives for their notions of success. The historical disadvantage faced by the Dalit community, added to the disadvantage of being women, becomes a powerful demonstration of resistance to the objective of gaining success in life.

Keywords Dalit women · Caste · Success

Introduction

“Success” and “Dalit women” as terms would rarely find comradeship in research and literature. Web searches show news articles on Dalit women, exploited, lynched, gang raped, paraded naked, assaulted and subjected to terrifying violence.

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Dalit women are vulnerably positioned at the bottom of India's caste, class and gender hierarchies. They experience endemic gender-and-caste discrimination and violence as the outcome of severely imbalanced social, economic and political power equations. The lack of political voice, when combined with the dominant risk factors of being Dalit and female, increases their exposure to potentially violent situations. They are further subordinated in terms of power relationships to men in a patriarchal society, as also against communities based on caste. Violence against Dalit women presents clear evidence of widespread exploitation and discrimination against them. Would the presence of laws and concerted efforts to emancipate the Dalit community and eradicate entrenched gender-and-caste-biased notions of (in) equality and (in)justice, be enough to bring empowerment and success to women? The Indian government has itself acknowledged that the institutional forces—caste, class, community and family—are powerful and shape people's mindsets to accept pervasive gender inequality. The need of Dalit women for personal security, education, socio-economic development and social justice are priority areas for intervention and can define success. In order to understand, therefore, the reality of Indian society in general, and the Dalit community and Dalit women in particular, an analysis of caste–class–gender dynamics is imperative. It is only by adopting this threefold lens focusing on the cultural and material dimensions of the intersection of gender-and-caste discrimination that a true comprehension of key social relations and social inequalities in India emerges. Success as a notion for Dalit women can then be defined only on understanding and incorporating political, cultural and social histories into contemporary narratives of women's lives.

Dalits in Indian Society

The term “Dalit” is well known in Indian society. Presently, the Dalit population distribution in Indian society is 16.64% of the total population of India (Census, 2011). In spite of the fact that the Dalit population is substantial, this section of society is not empowered or accepted by other sections of Indian society. To find out the reason behind this, we need to understand “who” the Dalits are, and “how” and “when” they emerged as a category in Indian society.

History indicates that there was segregation of communities based on division of work. Literature reveals that “Dalit” is a contemporary term used for the earlier term, “untouchables”. Some believe that the word Dalit has its origin in the Pali (a pre-Sanskrit language) word *Daliddh*, which means the deprived; in Sanskrit, it is derived from the root “*dal*” which means split, broken or cracked. Jyoti Rao Phule, a social reformer and revolutionary of Maharashtra, used this term to describe the outcastes and untouchables as oppressed and broken victims of the caste-ridden society. From the 1930s, the Arya Samaj (a Hindu reform movement) and then Ambedkar (eminent social reformer), used this term to describe “untouchable” castes in the public sphere. The use of degrading terms was changed in 1919 by the British administration to “deprived classes”. Gandhi called them *Harijans*

(people of God), in the place of untouchables. However, the word Dalit used by Ambedkar was an act of confident assertion, rejecting the nomenclature of *Harijan*. It was during the 1970s that the term gained popularity with the publication of the *Dalit Panthers* manifesto in 1973. The term Dalit has from its inception implications of struggle and was eminently political and often used as a politically correct term to refer to all formerly “untouchable” groups.

The origin of the Dalits goes back to 1500 BCE. Studies about their origin informs us that they were a people without a name and without a place in the social organization of the time. They were not only ostracized from mainstream society and relegated to the status of “untouchables” but were also subjected to various forms of exploitation and oppression, which have been supported by religion directly or indirectly. The term Dalit was not meant to refer to a caste. It symbolized the unity of all those who suffered at the hands of the unjust Brahminical (or upper caste) social order. In that sense, it is widespread in all classes and not confined to the Brahmins alone. It is also an undisputable fact that Brahminism gives certain classes an advantaged position. It denies equality of opportunity. The effects of Brahminism are not confined to social rights such as interdining or intermarriage. It extends even to civic rights and social rights. Exclusion from use of public facilities such as schools, wells, transport and tea shops is a denial of civic rights. Everything which is intended for the public or maintained out of public funds must be open to all citizens. But there are millions to whom these civic rights are denied. The word Dalit was expected to represent a symbol of change and revolution. However, today the term Dalit is generally used in a much narrower context of referring only to “untouchables” (socially excluded) and *Adivasis* (indigenous groups/geographically excluded) communities of the past.

Srinivas (1964) defined caste, “as a hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group, having a traditional association with an occupation and particular position in the local hierarchy of castes” (p. 27). According to Dumont (1970), caste endogamy is an expression of the principle of separation, where marriage, commensality and contact with members outside the group are forbidden, with varying degrees of strictness in that order. There are limits put on interaction and behaviour with people from other levels of social status. Historically, Indian society was stratified into the caste system. By looking back to the history of Indian society, Aryans in India started dividing people into clusters, based on the colour of skin (Kuppuswamy, 2010). According to legend, fairer people like the Aryans were given the higher social order and the darker-skinned people were put in the categories of non-Aryans. Customarily, social stratification in India divides caste system into four major groups. This classification of the people was based on skin colour known as *varna* system, which was slowly but surely changed to work-based functional order; that is popularly known as caste system. This system in India was a closed system of social stratification, which means that a person’s social status is defined by the caste into which he or she is born. The peculiar feature of this system is the linkage of status with birth and this is at the basis of Indian caste system. A man is *vaisya* (trader), not because he has an aptitude to produce wealth and engages himself in occupations connected with this, but because he is born into a

particular caste group. Secondly, all the various occupational groups become endogamous so a member following an occupation marries only into families, pursuing the same occupation and belonging to the same caste. Thus, it is birth and marriage rules that have given the unique features to the Indian caste system (Kuppuswamy, 2010).

This social structure was divided into four *varnas*: *brahmin* (priests), *kshatriya* (warriors), *vaishya* (traders) and *sudra* (labourers and servants). This fifth *varna* was added at a later stage to include the so-called untouchables, who were excluded from the other four *varna* (Elder, 1996). Based on socio-economic hierarchy, the *varna* system can be classified into four castes: upper (*brahmin*); middle *kshatriya* (warriors); *vaisya* (traders) and *sudra* (servants); and lower than *sudra*, *panchama*, (or fifth category). The *panchama* “untouchable” is known as Dalit. The key question that arises is, why these people were called untouchable? To comprehend this, we have to get a clear picture of the notion of untouchables. “Untouchable” is a category of people who were outside of society. They were that category of people, who were involved in the cleaning work and therefore believed to be “polluted” by the work they carried out. The concept of pollution and purity dominates this discourse. Pollution for the upper castes resulted due to touching, sitting and eating together, exchanging of things such as vessels, food, water, with the lower castes. The most regretful part was that even the shadow of people belonging to lower castes could also pollute the upper castes (Ghurye, 1957), it was believed.

According to Ghurye’s theory (Ghurye, 1957), the cradle of caste was the lands of the River Ganga, from where it was transferred to other parts of the India by the *brahmin* prospectors (Majumdar, 1973). People were segregated in groups according to traditional values and norms followed by the majority of Hindus in India. Whereas upper caste people did not have any contact with the lower castes directly, work division of each caste was defined, where each executed tasks within the system efficiently. The people at the lowest level of the hierarchy were denied their basic rights and were not even permitted to attend school.

One of earliest organized protest movements among the lower castes was due to the efforts of social reformer Jyoti Rao Phule (1827–1890) of Poona. He started a primary school for boys and girls of non-*brahmin* castes as early as 1848, and in 1851, he started a primary school for untouchable children in Poona. He exhorted the non-*brahmin* castes not to engage any *brahmin* priest to conduct their marriage rituals (Kuppuswamy, 2010). Gradually, changes occurred in Indian society, and Dalit communities started fighting for their rights. “The entry of a scheduled caste person into an educational institution in the country was recorded in the year 1856. It was in June 1856 that a scheduled caste boy applied for admission into a government school in Dharwar, Bombay Presidency” (Chalam, 1990, p. 2333). This incident created disruption in the administration and the board of directors was then forced to formulate an educational policy which stated that as long as the schools are maintained by government the “classes of its subjects” are to be given admission without any distinction of caste, religion and race. This policy was further strengthened with the enactment of the Caste Disabilities Act of 1872. This act weakened the social and legal inequalities suffered by the lower castes. This was a

small but significant beginning for the educational development which was later supported by other legislations (Chalam, 1990).

Movements of early nineteenth century led anti-*brahmin* currents to gain momentum. The movement had economic and social thrusts. It demanded education and land for the backward and freedom from caste rigidities present in Hindu society. Some economically strong but educationally backward non-*brahmin* groups resisted the hold of the upper castes on land, wealth, jobs in government and education. Another very important attempt of the non-*brahmins* happened in Madras. The non-*brahmin* elite found that the *brahmin* elite, because of their education, were able to get into offices of power in the government. They started this movement in order to take away the power from the hands of the *brahmin* elite. This was an elite conflict and there was no mass movement behind it (Kuppuswamy, 2010). The movement was supported by non-*brahmin* leaders; other backward communities—Muslims, Christians and lower caste Hindus—desired to secure a place for themselves and to obtain legal rights and position of power through government intervention. They succeeded in fixing up quotas in the state government jobs. During 1874 and 1885, the Mysore State reserved 20% of middle- and lower-level jobs in the police department for Brahmins and 80% for Muslims and non-*brahmin* Hindus. From government jobs, it spread to the educational field too, in order to prepare non-*brahmins* for government jobs.¹

Reservation Policy

The need for affirmative action or reservation policy in India was first understood by the British government during the pre-independence period. They had introduced special provisions and concessions for the educational advancement of these people, which were later converted into caste reservations in educational institutions and for jobs. Therefore, it is important to study the framework of education in the context of caste reservations in India. The term “affirmative action” was used in the American context and implied favouring those who suffer discrimination. In India, the term “reservation” is used and is an act of reserving in the forms of quota seats for education or employment for certain sections of society.

Special provision/reservation in education was given to certain categories of persons based on their community, for example, Scheduled Castes 15%, Scheduled Tribes 7% and Other Backward Castes 27%. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, known as the creator of the Indian Constitution, had noticed the need of special provisions for people belonging to lower and backward castes. He had given certain provisions as mandatory, to be followed for all government institutions in India. He was among the most educated persons from the lower castes who fought for rights of lower

¹See <http://latasinha.wordpress.com/2010/07/01/Dalits-movement-for-empowerment>, accessed on 19 December 2016.

castes. He created a ray of hope for children of lower castes and later on many people followed him. In particular, people from the scheduled castes were greatly influenced by him.

Education is looked at as one of the very efficient tools of eradicating caste barriers from society. It is an essential instrument to eliminate the gross injustices present in the society. Teachers' hostility towards Dalit children's education and society's discrimination against Dalit teachers arise from the idea that Dalits are not meant to receive education. Their becoming educated would most likely pose a threat to village hierarchies and power relations, it was assumed. Dalits face tremendous difficulties while gaining admissions, which is a major barrier in the path of bringing about change. The forms of structural discrimination, isolation and mistreatment that Dalit children face in schools are so stigmatizing that they are forced to drop out of school. One of the main issues is the discriminatory practice shown by many teachers. These include corporal punishment, denial of access to school water supplies, segregation in classrooms, and forcing Dalit children to perform manual scavenging in and around the school premises. Some teachers do, however, provide support to children of these communities and help them to become independent.

The Dalit Girl Child: Women and Caste

The situation of Dalit women in India is particularly deplorable. Dalit women have a triple disadvantage: being poor, being women and being Dalit. The traditional proscriptions are the same for Dalit men and women. Dalit women are discriminated against not only by people of higher castes, but also within their own communities. Certain kinds of violence were traditionally reserved for Dalit women: verbal abuse and sexual epithets, dismemberment, branding, pulling out of teeth, tongue and nails, and violence including murder after proclaiming witchcraft and naked parading. As part of collective violence by the higher castes, Dalit women are also threatened by rape. Women experience atrocities within their own communities as well. The suppression and rape of women could be a way by which Dalit men compensate for their own lack of power in society. Violence against Dalit women is often not registered. Many Dalit women are unable to approach the legal system to seek redress due to the lack of law enforcement. Their ignorance is exploited by their opponents, by the police, and by the judiciary. Even when cases are registered, the judge's own caste and gender biases, can lead to acquittal or lack of appropriate investigation.

Historian Romila Thapar has said that in Indian cultural context there are wide variation on the status of women based on family structure, caste, class, property rights and morals (Desai & Krishnaraj, 2004). Women had commanded great power and importance in our ancient culture. The irony lies in the fact that women are worshipped in different forms such as Goddess Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. The proof of this fact can be found in all the scriptures and even mythological

stories. There is the dual concept of the female in Hindu philosophy: on the one hand, the woman is fertile, benevolent, and a bestower of prosperity, and on the other hand, she is considered to be aggressive, malevolent and destructive (Desai & Krishnaraj, 2004).

Dalit children are born with their caste card. Desai and Krishnaraj (2004) mentioned that the birth of a daughter was celebrated in the Vedic period (the period of Indian history when the oldest Indic scriptures, the Vedas, were written). In the twentieth century, it has become a source of distress for most families in India. Thus, the birth of a son is bliss incarnate, while that of a daughter is the root of family misery.

Girls are discriminated against further when they reach the school-going age; but for Dalit girls, this starts from their birth. Many of them are dropouts from school due to roles and responsibilities they have to take over at home and most importantly the kinds of discrimination they have to go through at schools. These girls are assigned to do menial work at school just because they belong to the lower caste. Several news articles support this, and we are quoting one such instance, “Dalit girls clean school toilets in absence of sweepers in Jaipur.”² This is mainly seen in the rural settings but is not totally absent in urban areas. Other than this reason, girls are primary caretakers for their siblings and provide assistance to their mothers in household work. Thus, the exploitation starts from a young age for Dalit girls. Dalit girls feel insecure in school and dropout; due to lack of education, they get into manual scavenging or turn to other difficult or even revolting jobs that others will not do.

The Dalit girl is further discriminated against during puberty or before the pubertal phase. The *Devadasi* system is an example of such a phenomenon. *Devadasis*, also known as *Jogini*, in some places in India, are girls from lower castes (not necessarily Dalits) “married” to a temple deity. They are often expected to serve the Brahmins, who are the caretakers of the temples. These are low-caste poor girls who were initially sold at private auctions and later dedicated to the temples because they were not considered suitable from the matrimonial standpoint. They were then forced into the trade of prostitution.³

Next to caste, class acts as a significant function in Indian society. A visible example of class discrimination was the case of Devyani Khorbragade, Deputy Consul General (DCG) for political, economic, commercial and women’s affairs, who was arrested and humiliated in New York on 12 December 2013. This case was highly publicized by the Indian government. She was brought back home safely by the Indian government from New York. Yet at the same time, there was another case mentioned in the news. This was the case of Soni Sori, a tribal school teacher in Chhattisgarh. She was, on mere suspicion of having Maoist subversive links, arrested, stripped naked, allegedly raped and abused. She was not allowed to attend the funeral of her husband who ultimately died of police torture, not even permitted

²<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/Dalit-girls-clean-school-toilets-sweepers-jaipur-swachh-bharat-abhiyan/1/419692.html>, accessed on 19 February 2015.

³<http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Spring02/Chattaraj/genesis.html>, 2012.

to make arrangements for her children who were rendered parentless while she was still in custody. No one from the social media came forward to fight for her and nobody came out to protest for her (Teltumbde, 2015). The social distance between a diplomat and a tribal activist led to differences in media attention and action. The former a diplomat was clearly upper class and powerful and the latter a school teacher belonged to a lower class which clearly points to the importance of class.

Hindu marriage systems provide interesting examples of how gender-and-caste stratification systems are closely intertwined and how the marriage of a daughter can be used either to maintain the stratification system or to negotiate upward mobility for one's family and caste (Berreman, 1993). Caste-endogamous marriage affirms and maintains caste status, and on the other hand, marriage may also be the instrument whereby individual families and larger groups negotiate a higher status for themselves by marrying their daughters upwards in the caste hierarchy (Uberoi, 1993). This practice, termed hypergamy in the literature, is consistent with the Hindu ideology of *kanyadana* (gift of a girl) and is often facilitated by a large dowry—in effect, an exchange of wealth for status. However, increase in prestige can be attained only when a bride from a lower caste is given in marriage to a groom from a higher caste; marriages of brides from a higher caste with grooms from a lower caste actually reduce the prestige of the family (Srinivas, 1969).

Constitutional Provisions for Dalit Women

The Constitution of India guarantees equality of sexes and in fact grants special favours to women. These can be found in these articles of the Constitution.

- Article 14 says that the government shall not deny to any person equality before law or the equal protection of the laws.
- Article 15 declares that government shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of sex. Article 15(3) makes a special provision enabling the State to make affirmative discriminations in favour of women. Moreover, the government can pass special laws in favour of women.
- Article 16 guarantees that no citizen shall be discriminated against in matters of public employment on the grounds of sex.
- Article 42 directs the State to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
- Above all, the Constitution imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen through Articles 15(A)(e) to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

All of these are fundamental rights. Therefore, a woman can go to court if she is subjected to any discrimination. When we talk about constitutional rights of women in India, we mainly pertain to those areas where discrimination is perpetuated against women and special laws that are formulated to fight the bigotry.

Women and Success

Webster's dictionary defines success as the fact of getting or achieving wealth, respect or fame; the correct or desired result of an attempt. Success means different things to different people, whether they are men or women. An objective assessment of success is difficult to judge. Researchers have used multiple methods to ascertain people's sense of well-being that may be an outcome of feeling successful/positive. Indicators such as educational level, employment, land holding, health status, marital satisfaction, children, fame and power have been used as categories to define success. The space a person occupies in the public domain, print, television and digital media may be an attribute of their success, if positive. Thus in the context of Dalit women, it is evident from the discussions in the earlier part of this text that health, wealth, education, respect or fame would only be sparse and sporadically evident (Gangopadhyay, 2010). To a woman, success can be achieved in various ways. For example, if a woman is getting higher education she calls herself a successful woman. Employment, marriage, living a harmonious family life, a career, ownership of material things, all these are a range of examples of a successful life. Most importantly, a woman can achieve success only by making herself independent enough to take decisions for herself. Continuous learning and success are encouraged by the power of self-motivation, whatever a situation may be. Self-motivation can be achieved through communicating with others and being optimistic in any situation, encouraging oneself, self-acknowledgement and finding the best and most effective way to achieve one's goal. These dynamics play a significant role in a person's voyage to accomplish goals.

In every culture, gender dynamics has its own peculiar manifestation based on the history and culture of a people. The existential experience of Indian women also has specific sociological, religious and historical parameters that set them apart from women elsewhere. The sociocultural treatment of women varies considerably from region to region and from community to community, because the situation of women is determined by many factors—some of them invisible—like traditions or conventions. But one thing is common for all women across caste and class, i.e., they carry the burden of domestic work and lead subservient lives no matter what their professions may be (Kumar, 2010). A research undertaken by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2013 and the report entitled "Dalit Women and Resources: Accessing government schemes" concluded that more non-Dalit girls attended primary through secondary school and significantly more non-Dalit women were getting higher education.

Given the limited possibilities of redistributing economic resources like land or capital, higher or technical education is the only productive resource that the State can distribute. Taking into consideration occupation and income, the research clearly portrays that occupation is based on caste. Not many Dalits have access to land ownership as there is still high prevalence of land holdings in the hands of dominant castes. In the occupation of waste pickers, sanitary workers and

agricultural labourers, it is still the Dalits who are predominant. A finding from a national survey depicts a situation of Dalit women in India, in relation to their access to resources. The survey and secondary research clearly showed that the opportunities for improved quality of life and livelihood for Dalit women in India differ depending on the local area, district and states they live in. The characteristics of Dalit women across India are not homogenous. Yet many are forced to be bound to reproductive roles, as opportunities for productive work were absent near their place of habitation. Dalit women have less access to private hospitals as compared to non-Dalit, implying that they have lower capacity to pay for better services (WCD, 2013). Reservation policy in educational institutions and employment has given more Dalit men than Dalit women opportunities. Several research studies give us accounts of the poor status of Dalit women in India even today.

The media has played a very significant role in the development of women in our country. By covering the stories of Dalit women and of their situation, awareness in society is being raised. We provide case studies of two Dalit women that the media have reported recently. These case studies show contemporary life stories of Dalit women who have experienced success.

Two Case Studies

The first case is the story of a woman named Kalpana Saroj (her real name) who once attempted suicide to escape discrimination, poverty and physical abuse and then fought back to become the CEO of a multimillion-dollar company in Mumbai, India. Her story was covered by the BBC as a symbol of the Dalit struggle to reach the top. She was quoted saying that, "Some of my friends' parents would not let me in their homes, and I was not even allowed to participate in some school activities because I was a Dalit... I used to get angry (Desai & Krishnaraj, 2004). I felt really nervous because I thought even I am a human being."

She faced trouble in her marital life and was treated badly by her husband's elder brother and his wife. They would pull her hair and beat her. She felt broken with all the physical and verbal abuse. Her father was shocked after seeing his daughter's condition and took her back to his own village. She tried to ignore the judgemental comments thrown at her, focusing instead on getting a job. She learnt tailoring as a way to make money. But, even with some degree of financial independence, the pressure became too much. One day, she decided to end her life and drank three bottles of poisonous insecticide. However, when she survived despite this, it marked a big change in her attitude towards life. She decided to live life and do something big. So, at the age of 16, she moved to Mumbai to stay with an uncle and work as a tailor. But the money she earned was not enough to pay for her sister's treatment which could have saved her life, a moment which defined Kalpana's entrepreneurial spirit. She was highly disappointed and realized that money did matter in life and that she needed to make more. She took a government loan to open a furniture business and expand her tailoring work. Kalpana is one of the few

Dalits to have succeeded as an entrepreneur. She worked hard, remarried and had two children. Her reputation led to her being asked to take over the operations of a metal engineering company, which was in massive debt. By restructuring the company, she turned things around. She was not only changing her life but also wanted to give justice to people who were working there. Kalpana now employs hundreds of people, from all backgrounds and castes. In 2006, she won a prestigious award for her entrepreneurial spirit. As a Dalit and a woman, her story is all the more remarkable in a country where so few CEOs are from such a background. “If you give your heart and soul to your job and never give up, things can happen for you,” Kalpana says.⁴

The second case study is of Nauroti, a woman who belongs to a village of Rajasthan, a state in western India. Her journey starts from being a stone cutter in Buharu village to the *sarpanch* (village-level political leader) of Rajasthan’s Harmada *gram panchayat* (village local governance) and even to making a presentation at the United Nations in New York.

Nauroti has waged an unrelenting battle for empowering the marginalized. She was born in an extremely poor Dalit family and had to work on a road construction site as a stone cutter. But despite the toil, she and many fellow labourers were not paid full wages. Nauroti raised her voice against this injustice, mobilized labourers and became the voice of the agitation. From then till now, she has continued her unrelenting battle for empowerment of the marginalized. Hers is the story of a woman who has had unflinching courage and impeccable honesty in the face of every adversity. What made her stand apart from other women was her boldness, her ability to learn fast and above all the leadership qualities she displayed when she mobilized the construction workers. She became a *sathin* (social worker) for women’s empowerment and would travel to villages in the region and educate villagers about their rights. She also joined adult literacy classes and later learnt to work on computers. She says that above everything else, it is working among the people that gives her real satisfaction. As *sarpanch*, she waged a battle against the alcohol mafia and stopped encroachment of the graveyard in Harmara. Nauroti says that injustice and dishonesty are two things she cannot tolerate. When you ask her to speak, she says: “There is a lot more to be done before my tenure is over” and lists a number of projects that remain to be completed.

Both these case studies have been admirably covered by the media.⁵ Studying the two cases, it is evident that being from the Dalit community these women set an example for other women and for the next generation. For them, being successful in life did not simply mean earning money for themselves, but providing an example that working for others can also be a powerful motivation for an individual. If we look at every successful movement for change throughout history, its foundation has been built on a compelling and energizing opportunity that moved people to

⁴<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-18186908>, accessed on 7 July 2015.

⁵See, e.g., Nauroti’s story at <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/Dalit-woman-makes-history-in-rajasthan/article3910333.ece> accessed on 7 July 2015.

come together and act. We could learn a lot by analysing these narratives and understanding how they might help us craft new approaches while resisting traditional ones.

Redefining the Dalit Experience: Turning the Narrative Around

Research studies and media images of Dalit women have provided one kind of image of their lives, and until this point, we have highlighted the predominant images of Dalit women from the perspective of the dominant social position. There has been a marked absence of any significant representation of the Dalit experience in mainstream Indian literature and culture until very recently. In his paper titled “Dalit autobiographies: The artists’ representations of self and community”, Shrivastava (2015) highlights the fact that Dalits found textual space chiefly through the writings of the upper caste litterateurs and sociologists. However, these were unable to draw an “authentic” picture of Dalit life. Although these accounts were sympathetic, the writers were unable to transcend their own caste positions. Dalits were almost always portrayed as abject, submissive and pitifully resigned to the malice of caste and destiny. This lacuna has been sought to be rectified in writings of Dalits themselves. They have challenged the hegemonic conventions and the value system of the upper caste discourse, and in the process re-examined the authoritarian and unequal caste hierarchies in the society. Dalit literature is not only a presentation but also a re-presentation of its own sociocultural and political reality. The creativity and the inventiveness of a marginalized subculture and literature has attempted to alter the traditional Indian aesthetics and literary theories (Shrivastava, 2015).

Another essential feature of the Dalit autobiographical narratives is that the individual is embedded in the whole historical environment, family, community and society at large. The individual is illustrative of a “personal social practice not of an ego emerging and arising against his/her world, but of an individual within his family and community” (Poitevin, 2002). Dalit life-narratives of men and women vary in terms of emotions, nature of the narrative and a sense of family and community reflected in these accounts. While men choose to remember their humiliation and clamour for self-respect in society, women vocalize their concerns over the triple exploitation. Some exceptional life experiences of women have attracted attention towards their life stories. Women’s autobiographies/narratives have common aspects which revolve around their family life. The remarkable fact is that though domestic life is the major aspect of their writing; the autobiographies of the non-Dalit women are different from the Dalit women’s autobiographies. The basic reason is that the situation in which they lived was different. It affected the total colour of their literary composition (Radhakisan, 2011). The autobiographies of women revolve around the communities they are living in. There are various references to everyday activities and the problems they face both within and outside

the community. The focus is on the way they live, their culture and prevalent social practices of casteism as well as on the family, childhood and education. The larger issues affecting women, physical, mental or psychological torture are also depicted. The narrative is of agitation against upper caste men but also, and more importantly, against men of their own community.

Narrative representation raises questions of authenticity, selective perception and the role of imagination. An autobiography with its assertion of unpretentious remembrance and reiterating can also have a counter-claim of genuine forgetting and exclusion. The proliferation of evocative terminologies to describe this particular experience of subaltern voices testifies to the significance of naming for individuals and social groups, as well as the right to choose a label for oneself. Dalit literature, which saw its emergence in the twentieth century, offers this space to the Dalits for defining and redefining individuality and cultural identity. Dalit women not only questioned their victimization but also spoke for the upper and middle class women who met the same fate at home (Singh, 2014). Here, we can see a significant turn in the narrative.

During the course of writing this chapter, we interviewed Dalit women living in Delhi and who were educated and employed in Government Class I and Class II jobs (data drawn from the first author's ongoing doctoral research). All women were at least second generation literate, generally not exposed to the atrocities of an earlier generation, well-educated and settled in their careers through the "reservation" quota. We asked each woman to define what success meant to them. As discussed earlier, we found that each of them perceived that they were carrying out multiple roles and doing so successfully. Some of them also mentioned that they felt successful while performing these roles. Being in a patriarchal society, these women said that they have attained a good position and are living their lives "successfully". Women indicated that they have a well-organized list of priorities. For example, one respondent stated, "that achievement of goals, balanced personal and professional life and making others happy, are paradigms of her successful life." Another respondent defined what success meant to her by writing:

Success, for me is when students from other classes sit in your lecture and actually listen. 😊
 I feel successful as a professional.... When my husband comes home from a solo trip and says that he missed my presence around him, I feel I have succeeded as a wife.... When my child hugs me and says, 'Mamma you are the best'.... I have succeeded as a mother....
 When my parents proclaim that they see their efforts fructify in me, I feel successful as a daughter....
 When recently my in-laws stated that they would want their children to emulate me.... I felt I must be doing something right after all....
 Being thus successful is always measured by how others react to your presence in their lives....
 More than my merits it has been His grace.... I feel blessed 😊!!!

Another respondent said:

When I am in a happy and in a contented state of mind, you have responsibilities and you fulfil them to your best. Achieving small milestones which lead towards a bigger goal and of course when I say I am happy it means people around me i.e., my family and friends are happy too.

Concluding Comments

Contemporary Dalit narratives have been found to be open-ended, sometimes containing yet-to-be-resolved issues. As has been evidenced through the case profiles and the narratives of success, most of them focused on positives and the imagery was optimistic. These were in clear contrast to the narratives and autobiographies of an earlier period and social context. They were powerful motivators, capturing the imagination and initiating social movements. Their powerful call to action emphasized the ability that individuals in society have to make a difference, to resist the impositions of identity and life circumstances that are placed upon them. Social change and empowering policies have a lot to contribute in this regard, since they provide that extra support to individual resolve. The course of affirmative action through reservations has brought about some equity and justice to Dalit women in India. The narratives of success of Dalit women in contemporary India now bear closer resemblance to narratives of non-Dalit women. As affirmative action brings in greater equity and justice, the stark evidence of exploitation will be less visible in the narratives of Dalit women. On the one hand, affirmative actions and reservations are bringing equity and justice; on the other hand, these continue to mark and segregate educated Dalit women in society. This segregation continues to be a constant reminder to them that they belong, perhaps “elsewhere”. In the search for identity they have to continue to prove themselves capable and erase the difference between “them and others”, especially in workspaces that warrant high educational capabilities. Currently, many Dalit women are in positions of power. This has changed their standard of living and provided status to them. Yet, deep-rooted prejudices may take longer to disappear and the narratives to be cleansed of that tinge of colour.

One consistent thread in the narratives of these successful Dalit women needs to be noted: the emphasis on social relationships. Critical to emotional and social bonding is acceptance and honour in workspaces especially with colleagues, students and friends. It is evidenced that Dalit women’s relationship with colleagues significantly improved self-perceptions, which is reflected in notions of success in the narratives. Breaking limitations within disadvantaged settings of traditional collective subjugation requires a strong and sustained social support from within workspaces, as well as in family relationships. Affirmative action, family support and non-alienation within workspaces will reflect in narratives that evidence “success” in breaking barriers of subjugation and exploitation.

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The Third Gender and Their Identity in Indian Society

Nandita Chaudhary and Shashi Shukla

*I am neither male nor female.
I am both male and female.
I am firm and flexible.
I am aware and I am not.
To appreciate this fluidity of nature,
And the shifting rigidities of culture,
Is to appreciate queerness.*

Pattanaik (2014, pp. 3–4)

Abstract In India, people with a wide range of transgender-related identities, cultures, or experiences coexist—including *Hijras*, *Aravanis*, *Kothis* and *Jogtas/Jogappas*. These people have been part of the broader culture and were treated with respect in the past. Modernity has changed the situation for them, although on some occasions they are still accorded the same respect. History has proved the important position of Hijras in Indian society, but it is not so in today's India. Socialization, relationships and expectations, values and perceptions are shaped by whether one is a male or a female. What happens when one is neither a male nor a female but a third sex with features of either sex or both? The chapter presents the perceptions about Hijras and their status in the present Indian society.

Keywords Hijras · Identity · Sexuality · Society · Traditions

Indian mythology has always given significant importance to people of the third gender, also known as “Hijras” in the local language (Hindi). Hijras or eunuchs have a long recorded history portraying them in several ritual roles. This ancient recognition has resulted in some clearly defined roles as well as ascriptions to Hijras. They are both feared as well as celebrated, and somewhere between these scripted worlds, members of the third gender live their day-to-day lives.

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The earliest mention of Hijras is found in the epic Mahabharata when Prince Arjun, who was compelled to live in hiding, spent the last year of his exile obscured as a eunuch. This difficult task was imposed upon him after the legendary gambling session in which the five brothers who shared a wife lost their liberty to the rival prince due to their weak, though well-meaning, eldest brother. If discovered in their last year, they were required to go back into exile for another term. The rivalry between the Kaurava brothers and Pandava brothers (cousins to each other) is the story of the epic Mahabharata. Meanwhile, Arjun (a Pandava) was also burdened by an additional curse. Legend has it that Urvashi, one of the maidens of the Hindu god Indra,¹ was attracted to the handsome Arjun when he visited Indra's palace in the clouds. Rejecting her advances, he responded by saying she appeared to him as a mother-figure since she was the consort of Indra, an ancestor to the Kauravas. As the saying goes about a woman scorned, Urvashi's anger knew no bounds, and she cursed Arjun to live his life as a eunuch, a term which the mighty Indra reduced to a single year. It was also accepted that Arjun could choose to become a eunuch during the last year of his exile to help him live incognito. He lived under an alias, teaching song and dance to the daughter of the king of the Matsya kingdom.

An excerpt from the other Indian epic, Ramayana, also reflects the position of Hijras during the period of Ram, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu (one of the three major gods of the Hindu pantheon). Ram's life and journey are a story of perfect adherence to *dharma*, or righteousness, despite the harsh trials that he encountered. He is pictured as the ideal man and the perfect human being, always in adherence to the regulations of *dharma*. As the story goes, Ram faced a 14-year exile because his stepmother used her position with the king, Ram's father, to appoint her son (younger to Ram) as heir to the throne. At the gates of the city before departing for exile, Ram, a favourite of the kingdom, was followed by hordes of citizens to persuade him not to follow the king's instructions. The king too loved his eldest son, Ram, for he was an ideal son, but could not refuse his wife a commitment that she misused. Upon his return after the term, when Ram was entering the gates of his home, he saw a community of Hijras waiting there. "Why are you outside, not inside?" he asked. They replied, "Remember, the people of Ayodhya wanted to follow you into the forest? You told the men to go back. You told the women to go back. We are neither men nor women. You forgot to tell us what to do. O' Ram, we waited". Deeply saddened by the encounter and moved by their commitment, Ram embraced the members of this devoted group. With celebrated grandeur, he entered the city with his devoted subjects, the Hijras. To this day, Diwali is celebrated as a festival where Ram returns home to Ayodhya.

Within Indian society, several categories of transgender-related identities have been recognized. These include Hijras, Aravanis, Kothis, Jogtas or Jogappas, which are different communities of the third gender. With circumscribed roles for important social functions, they have held a significant place in the social fabric, family life as well as politics of the country. These roles bring them respect and

¹One of the three major gods of Hindus.

recognition. However, today, many members live in abject poverty and are exposed to exploitation and abuse, especially if they are not members of a close-knit group. Somewhere, modernity, the breaking up of traditional boundaries and processes, along with releasing people from being labelled, has had an impact also on their livelihood and identity. The criminalizing of Hijras by the British during the colonial rule in India seemed to have sparked this transformation.

In preparation for this chapter, several conversations with people around the issue of the third gender in India have been used. It was found that everyone we met knew about the community called Hijras. Although their social presence was known, the psychological and physical aspects of their lives were a shared mystery. No one seemed to know who they really are as persons, with the exception of knowing that “they are not like us”. Many explanations for their condition were attributed to the ubiquitous theory of *karma*. This person, or to be more precise, this soul in another body, must have done something seriously wrong to be born a Hijra in this life. Reincarnation and past lives were considered to be the primary reason for the present condition. There is no doubt that just a mention of the word Hijras raised a deep sense of mystery, curiosity, fear and even awe, it was reported. The brazen display of movements and song, fearless, brash and often considered vulgar, and deliberate uninhibited behaviour, a signature of the Hijras, contributes to these intense reactions from people. Some even said that as children, they were easily able to recognize, from a distance, the sounds of the Hijras, the cupped hand clapping, the lively drumbeats and the accompanying insults that they would freely hurl at people.

Who Are Hijras?

Sexual identity forms an integral part of any individual’s sense of self. As soon as a baby is delivered, this is perhaps the first feature that is identified by the community, “It’s a girl/boy!” The life of the child is configured around this primary reality. Socialization patterns, relationships, appearance, expectations, positions and perceptions are mediated by gender, the social manifestation of sex differences. What happens when one is neither a male nor female? The fact of their existence legitimizes discussions about and acceptance of the third gender, yet talk with or about them is minimal, and they are clearly marginalized from mainstream society. Gender, as we understand it, is a social construct and only exists for us in two categories and in the modern world we have not made spaces for anything in-between or beyond. Perhaps it would not be wrong to say that in the present times, we simply do not recognize the third gender. It is an invisible category. Just as there are areas of heightened activity in every cultural setting (Valsiner 2007), we argue that this has developed into a “silent zone”, one about which there is very little attention in public spaces. This has happened even in India where traditionally, the third gender occupied significant social space.

The most impenetrable struggle of the third gender is the dignified social recognition of them as an independent gender community. We as a society need to understand that dignified social recognition can only be achieved if the nomenclature of the gender category as a whole is newly constructed and framed so as to incorporate the existence of third gender as a normal, socially approved, dignified gender category.

The word Hijra is a Hindustani word, derived from the Arabic root *hjr* in the sense of leaving one's tribe, departure or exodus, referring to Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina. It is derived from the verb "*hájara*", meaning to emigrate, or to abandon. This is perhaps related to the fact that Hijras live in well-defined, organized, all-Hijra communities outside the mainstream. These groups have sustained themselves over generations by adopting children born with sexual abnormality who are either rejected by their family, or who flee their family of origin, or are sometimes forcefully taken away by the Hijras themselves, claiming that this is the best path for a child with an ambiguous sexual identity. A fully recognized Hijra is born intersex, that is an individual displaying both male and female sexual characteristics and features.

Hijras and Indian Society

Reference to Hijras is found in Indian classical literature to legitimize their existence and to reinforce their place in Indian society. In contemporary India, however, the scenario is quite different. They now face the consequences of a society where gender has become defined by global standards and guided by the social structures of modern society. Within this frame, only binary gender division exists, which does not provide recognition to the entire community of people of the third gender. Their socially sanctioned spaces are no longer available. The harbingers of good fortune and protection from evil, their blessings during family events, have all become like dreaded events. As residential colonies become gated apartment complexes, the easy access of an organic community is lost. Struggling to maintain and guard their community, many have built up strong social linkages. In a cultural setting with well-defined gender roles, children born with ambiguous sexual features were quickly handed over to the Hijras. They were seen to belong to the Hijra "family". It is believed that there was little or no resistance from the children's families in earlier years; however, in the absence of research in the area, what now remains is the common belief that this must be accepted as an eventuality.

As a reaction to decades of being marginalized, Hijras developed a characteristic style of their own. They conducted themselves with raucous, brash and brazen steps; adorned with intense make-up and colourful clothes, they walk along making loud inimitable claps using twists of splayed fingers and cupped palms that children frequently attempt to imitate, although in hiding from the adults who would certainly admonish them. Their approach and conduct fuels the marginalization, leading to a vicious cycle of fear and favour between society and Hijras. This visibly outrageous presence of the Hijras in public places has become their enduring

image in the Indian society, and they are certainly the most visible of the sexual minorities. And yet, despite this rather loud albeit marginalized presence, they are repeatedly shamed, victimized and often shunned. In response, their brashness escalates even further. On weddings, births and other festive occasions, their visits are seen as auspicious, but their arrival is dreaded. And when they return home to their gangs, they live circumscribed lives, guided by hierarchy and domination. This social group is their support system. The guru, or chief, is their leader, usually a long-standing member with persuasive powers. Their groups are strong and protective of each other. The Hijra communities have well-defined hierarchies and relationships. A secret language, understood only by them, helps them maintain their identity and privacy. The present chapter attempts to highlight the social status of the third sex, the Hijras, in the Indian context and the challenges they face in their struggle to create an identity in a predominantly bisexual society.

Discrimination and the Third Gender

In order to obtain ordinary people's views about Hijras and their lives, the authors of this chapter initiated a survey that was conducted online. Through this, views were elicited from a selected group of people who volunteered.² Before presenting the findings of this survey, a brief overview of the available literature is presented. A predominant belief among Hindus, who believe in reincarnation of the soul, was that the current suffering of the Hijras is an outcome of misdeeds in the past, as a consequence of which their lives are far from normal and they have tremendous difficulty. However, this misfortune is also believed to endow them with extra powers, both to bless as well as to blight. When they come to a person's home to ask for alms, the best strategy is to give them something so that they do not curse. On ordinary days, they are not visible, as it was reported. Recently, some Hijras have taken to begging on the streets, again using their characteristic style, and this was reported to be a successful strategy. While asking for money on the streets, they would complain saying that fewer people were having babies, so they had lost a major source of regular income they had from blessing new born children.

As Nanda (1999) reports:

Hijras fulfil their traditional ritual roles by dancing and singing at auspicious occasions and by conferring blessings of fertility on new born males and on newlyweds. In the process of conferring blessings in the name of *Bahuchara Mata*, Hijras are able to give what they do not have, that is, "the power of creating new life, of having many sons, and of carrying on the continuity of [the] family line. The faith in the powers of the Hijras rests on the Hindu belief in *Shakti*. In addition to having the power to bless, Hijras are also known to have the power to curse. If Hijras feel that they have not been compensated (*badhai*) fully for their performance their audiences may face some extremely outrageous behaviour. The effectiveness of extortion through public shaming by Hijras is legendary (p. 49).

²The authors would like to acknowledge Priyanka Gupta for her assistance in data gathering.

Although it seems legitimate that the Hijras' approach to mainstream society does not help their image, and it seems simple to blame their conduct for the marginalization, the reality of their lives is harsh and perhaps a consequence of their isolation. What do people do when the right to find an honest day's work is also stripped from them? Somewhere, our society has to answer for this victimization of Hijras, creating a vicious cycle of resistance and rupture.

In a ruling on 15 April 2014, the Supreme Court of India made a landmark judgement, declaring a "third gender" status for Hijras, or transgenders. Previously, they were forced to declare their sex as either male or female in all official documents. With this recent recognition, they have been recognized as a community and are to be treated along with others who have long been suppressed requiring affirmative action. The apex court directed that transgender people will be allowed admission in educational institutions and given employment on the basis that they belonged to the third gender category which has been deprived of fundamental rights for a long time. They were to receive seats in educational institutions and special considerations for jobs. However, for full integration in public life, it will take a long time since they are not part of the recognized labour force, not because they do not want to work, but no one hires them! It will take a while before the legal provisions, now incorporated into policy, have their effect on everyday lives.

One of the important outcomes of the marginalization of Hijras has been their vulnerability to crime, especially sexual exploitation. In the absence of protection from the State, they lie exposed to street violence and exploitation. With no access to school, health care or opportunity for work, they have to depend often on prostitution for making a living. This leaves them even more vulnerable as they cannot access even the basic services for personal protection. Whatever they have is within their small clan of relationships, of people with ambiguous gender features and identity who hang together simply because no one else accepts them.

The Hijra Community

The community of Hijras has clearly circumscribed roles and relationships, neatly bound into hierarchical relationships maintained by a strict order of their clan. The hierarchical structures seem inspired by the larger society. With a guru (teacher/leader) at the helm, the scores of others who live in the same group are referred unambiguously as *chelas* or students. The group is tightly bound together with clearly defined roles. In order to gain entry into a group, one must find sponsorship from the guru. Without this, no one is allowed in, thus maintaining clear leadership and control over the group. After gaining sponsorship, a fee (*dand*) has to be paid to the community after which the new member is finally accepted. For the most part, Hijras live together in a large household known as the family of the particular guru. They are expected to contribute part or all of their earnings to the household, as well as assist with household chores. In return, they get a roof

over their heads, food, police protection and a place to carry on their business, whether this is performing, begging, or prostitution (Nanda, 1999).

Prior to the 2014 court ruling, Hijras did not have access to democratic rights and a classified social status, as they were not recognized by the State. They faced political, economic and social exclusion in modern society. In the absence of such a protection from public services, the rigid boundaries and severe closeness of their own social group were protective shields, keeping external victimization at bay. However, within the community, it is perhaps possible that there may have been consequences to personal freedom and identity on account of the strict hierarchical structures. The community celebrates its own festivals and social events. Some of these are discussed here.

In the spring of every year, thousands of Hijras, cross-dressers and other transgender people from all over India and neighbouring countries flock to the southern Indian village of Koovagam in the State of Tamil Nadu, for a Hindu festival celebrating transgender people (see Fig. 1). The two-day festival at the Koothandavar Temple is held in the honour of the Hindu deity Aravan, who is believed to be the patron god of transgender communities. According to a Hindu legend, Aravan was the son of the legendary Pandava prince Arjun, well known for his valour and loyalty during the period of the epic Mahabharata. It is believed that Aravan sacrificed himself to ensure the victory of the clan, the five Pandava brothers, who were his uncles. It is documented that before he sacrificed himself, Aravan asked for three boons from the divine Krishna, one of which was that he be allowed to marry a beautiful woman before he died. To find a solution to the boon, Krishna himself transformed into a beautiful woman, Mohini, and married and stayed with Aravan for one night. However, the form of Mohini had a real existence for that day, and upon the death of Aravan, she was heartbroken and she grieved like a widow, breaking her bangles and beating her breasts (prescribed acts for a recently widowed woman among Hindus, still practised among some communities today). The mourning of Mohini (here considered a transgender) is re-enacted every year in an 18 day-long festival. There is a marriage of the deity (Aravan) to the gathered group, and the subsequent collective mourning the next

Fig. 1 Ceremonial gathering of the Hijra community.

Source http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/01/koovagam-festival-2012-india-hindu-transgender-photo_n_1468687.html?ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in

[huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/01/koovagam-festival-2012-india-hindu-transgender-photo_n_1468687.html?ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/01/koovagam-festival-2012-india-hindu-transgender-photo_n_1468687.html?ir=India&adsSiteOverride=in)



day, with enthusiastic participation and moving devotion. The Koovagam festival is one among a number of festivals in India connected to the worship of gender-variant deities that have traditionally been popular with Hindus from across the LGBT³ spectrum. Some of the most famous ones are the Ayyappa and Chamayavillaku festivals in Kerala, the Bahuchara-mata festival in Gujarat and the Yellamma-devi festival in Karnataka. One of the stories is that of Bahuchara Mata (Bahuchara mother), a Hindu goddess. She was the daughter of Charan Bapal, and with her sisters, she embarked on a journey with a caravan when an intruder attacked their caravan. It was common practice among this community that if they were overpowered by an enemy, they would rather die than be taken. Also, shedding the blood of Charan (an ethnic group) was considered a heinous sin. When Bapiya attacked the caravan, Bahuchara and her sisters announced self-immolation and cut off their breasts. Legend has it that the strength of the act and the curse of the women resulted in the attacker being rendered impotent. The curse was lifted only when he, in turn, began worshipping the form of Bahuchara Mata by dressing and acting like a woman. Today, Bahuchara Mata is considered patroness of and worshipped by the Hijra community in India.

Another tale of shifting genders in Hindu mythology is that of Shikhandi, who was granted the boon of remembering his past life by Shiva. This boon facilitated his memory of a past life of having been spurned by several men, including the legendary Bhishma in the Mahabharata. Also related to the epic battle of the Mahabharata, Shikhandi's life as a eunuch takes several dramatic turns after being born as a female child. As the story goes, he exchanges his sex with another deity and travels through a long and complex life remembering, avenging and completing his purpose. This tale demonstrates the permeable boundaries of sexuality in Hindu mythology. With a curse or boon, with penance and perseverance, characters managed to seek revenge, cement bonds and sustain memories. Neither mortality nor sexuality were believed to be barriers to emotion and determination. The cycle of birth and death, reincarnation and other sequences within lifetimes were seen to transcend biological limitations. Without claiming any "reality" to these legends, there is no doubt of the impact of these stories on the ways in which life, sexuality, brotherhood, conflict and conflict resolution have been culturally constructed. Regarding gender, what is eminently clear is that gender as a category is not immutable, and one can have innumerable permutations and combinations between being purely male and purely female. Gender and sex were traditionally not considered to be dichotomous. As Pattanaik (2014) writes about appreciating queerness:

I have a man's body. I accept this body. I offer it to everyone.

I have a woman's body. I accept this body. I offer it to everyone.

I have a man's body. I reject this body. I desire no one.

I have a woman's body. I reject this body. I desire no one.

I don't know if my body is a woman's or a man's. I feel I am a woman.

³Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

I don't know if my body is a man's or a woman's. I feel I am a man.
I have a man's body. It should be a woman's. I desire men.
I have a woman's body. It should be a man's. I desire women.
I have a man's body. It should be a woman's. I desire women.
I have a woman's body. It should be a man's. I desire men.
I have a man's body. I dress like a woman. I desire men.
I have a woman's body. I dress like a man. I desire women.
I have a man's body. I dress like a woman. I desire women.
I have a woman's body. I dress like a man. I desire men.
I have a man's body. I dress like a man. I desire both men and women.
I have a woman's body. I dress like a woman. I desire both women and men.
I have a man's body. I dress like a man. I desire men.
I have a woman's body. I dress like a woman. I desire women.
I have a man's body. I dress like a man. I desire women.
I have a woman's body. I dress like a woman. I desire men.
I am a man. I desire only one woman.
I am a woman. I desire only one man.
I am a man. I desire only one man.
I am a woman. I desire only one woman.
I am neither male nor female.
I am both male and female.
I am firm and flexible.
I am aware and I am not.
To appreciate this fluidity of nature
And the shifting rigidities of culture
Is to appreciate queerness (pp. 3-4).

Death of a Hijra

Among Hindus, the dead are cremated, traditionally on a funeral pyre constructed with logs of fragrant wood and herbs, and in more recent times using electricity. The last rites of Hijras carry a serious modification. Although brought out of the dwelling on the shoulders of four or more loved ones, Hindu Hijras are cremated and Muslims are buried. Not many have witnessed the death of a eunuch, since there is an additional ritual that borders on the bizarre. Since death is an abstemious event, burial or cremation takes place without any fanfare, and it is also believed that they carry out their death rituals at night. Developing filial and social relationships that cause

mourning on one's demise is limited to a handful of loved ones. En route to the funeral pyre, there is a symbolic beating of the corpse with footwear, justified to be driving out the soul from an undesirable form. This is, however, debated by many. According to Lakshmi, a well-known Hijra activist,

Yet another myth about us is that the funeral of a Hijra is performed late in the night and he is beaten with slippers. The unearthly hour is chosen, it is said, so that none should witness the funeral. But this is rubbish. Hijras belong to different religions, and our last rites depend on our religion. A Hijra who is a Hindu is cremated, while a Muslim is buried. When carrying the corpse of a dead Hijra to the graveyard, we shed all marking of women's clothing and dress the corpse instead in shirts and pants, or in a kurta and pajama pants. We do this to hide the fact that the deceased is a Hijra.⁴

A Struggle for Recognition

Transgender activist A. Revathi became the first Hijra to write about transgender issues and gender politics in Tamil. Her work, *Unarvum Uruvamum* (feeling and form), and other writings have been translated into more than eight languages and are primary resources for gender studies in Asia, included in the syllabi of more than a hundred universities. She has also acted in and directed several stage plays on gender and sexuality issues in Tamil and Kannada. Her book, *The truth about me: A Hijra life story*, is also a highly acclaimed work. In her autobiography, Revathi (2010) writes with confidence,

As a Hijra I get pushed to the fringes of society. Yet I have dared to share my innermost life with you—about being a Hijra and also doing sex work [...] My aim is to introduce to the readers the lives of Hijras, their distinct culture, and their dreams and desires [...] I hope now that by publishing my life story, larger changes can be achieved. I hope this book of mine will make people see that Hijras are capable of more than just begging and sex work. I do not seek sympathy from society or the government. I seek to show that we Hijras do have the rights to live in this society (pp. v–vi)

Saxena (2011) in his book, *Life of a eunuch*, states:

Not so long ago, eunuchs were much in demand as royal guards of harems, chamber maids and keepers of holy places. In olden days, employment as cooks in palace kitchens, body guards to queens, dance and etiquette tours to princesses and many other highly sought after duties were taken up by them. Not a single incident is recorded where they failed to perform the duties assigned. Traditionally, eunuchs were invited to sing and dance at the home of a new born. Even today, they drop in uninvited at the house of a new born and dance with fanfare. They are also found singing and dancing at marriages and other social gatherings, in exchange for a few hundred rupees.

However, in recent times, they are rarely called upon to celebrate the arrival of the new born or perform at wedding functions. During earlier days, singing and dancing

⁴<http://wordswithoutborders.org/article/lakshmis-story#ixzz3eYB5Oqyy>.

supplemented their income substantially. However, this declining popularity as entertainers has left them with little option other than begging and prostitution (p. 108).

Another well-known third gender activist, Laxmi Narayan Tripathi, was the first transgender person to represent the Asia-Pacific region at the United Nations and has represented her community and India on several international platforms including the World AIDS conference in Toronto. She currently runs Astitva, an organization for the support and development of sexual minorities. Laxmi recently published her autobiography in which she describes her journey as a young boy belonging to a conservative Brahmin family and conversion to the Hijra community by choice to deal with her inner call for satisfaction of being a woman. Laxmi is a trained classical dancer and is living life on her own terms, as well as fighting for the rights of others who are in need of assistance and recognition. She is a popular member on TV shows and media reports when there is a discussion on gender and politics. She represents the recent advances that our society has made in the acceptance and recognition of transgender people, but for the ordinary person, it remains a long and arduous struggle.

Other Eminent Transgenders

India can also boast of having one of the first transgender principals at a women's college. Manabi Bandopadhyay took charge of Krishnanagar Women's College in West Bengal on 9 June 2015. Following a successful career as a professor of Bengali at Vivekananda Satobarshiki Mahavidyalaya, she was recently selected as the principal of the college. Since 2009, India has allowed transgender people to vote by marking the option of "other" in the column of sex on ballot forms. Shabnam Mausi has succeeded to the other side of the political game and is the first MLA from the transgender community.⁵ Although she has only studied till primary school, she knows 12 languages. Fighting corruption is her main objective for embracing a political career, apart from fighting for the rights of her community. India now has a transgender anchor on a TV news show and a popular talk show host. Earlier this year, a transgender woman became the country's first to win municipal elections and be declared a mayor. At least two states—Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra—have government-mandated transgender welfare organizations for their social inclusion. The University of Delhi and other eminent universities of the country are now allowing admission to people belonging to the third gender category and provide an option of the third gender in the admission forms, in compliance with the directive of the Supreme Court of India.

The above instances indicate that although they may have had many hurdles in everyday life, people with firm conviction, confidence and acumen have found their way to make a difference, despite the challenges they faced as transgender people.

⁵https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shabnam_Mausi.

Just as instances of women's issues indicate, for the exceptional who can transcend social barriers, the sky is the limit; for the ordinary person, these patterns remain a defining feature of their lives. Hopefully, we will be looking forward to a more equitable future for people who live with difference.

Initiative of Its Kind in Tamil Nadu

In a pioneering effort to address the issues faced by Hijras and transgender people, the southern state government of Tamil Nadu established a transgender welfare board in April 2008. It is the first of its kind by any state in India. The Central Social Welfare minister serves as the president of the board. This effort is taken to be the first in India and in the Asia-Pacific region. The board potentially addresses a wide variety of concerns of transgender people that include education, income generation and issues of social security. As a first step, the board has conducted the enumeration of transgender populations in all 32 districts of Tamil Nadu, and in some places, identity cards—with the gender identity mentioned as *Aravani*—are being issued. The government has also started issuing ration cards (for buying food and other items from government-run fair-price shops) for transgender people, a facility to which they had no access earlier. In addition, Tamil Nadu government issued a government order in May 2008 to enrol transgender people in government educational institutions and to explicitly include “other” or “third gender” category in the forms for admission. Furthermore, only in the state of Tamil Nadu, in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Aravanigal Welfare Board, free sex-related corrective surgeries are performed in selected government hospitals. We have moved along a favourable approach to acceptance, and Tamil Nadu certainly takes the lead in that direction.

On the Street

A chance encounter with a Hijra at a traffic light in New Delhi displayed a dramatic appearance. The loud colours and caked foundation, several shades lighter than the skin, bright red lipstick and fluorescent eye make-up in the middle of a hot day were rather tragic. Approaching with her palm outstretched in a gesture for money is now a common sight. She was dressed as a woman and also wore several layers of bright, cheap jewellery. She claimed that the money was for her survival. Our sources of income are lost, and we have taken to the streets, she said. For those who gave money, they poured generous blessings, including blessing people that they should not have cursed children like them, and they should have every happiness and a successful career, married life, etc.

Moving between the cars with their characteristic swagger, this activity of begging is a serious come down from the traditionally prescribed roles they had. Between then and now, a lot has been lost, but specific sanctions and concerted efforts will certainly go a long way at creating and sustaining spaces for the many

manifestations of gender and sexuality, as is the fundamental right of every individual, to be accepted, and have a livelihood and family life as one pleases.

Concluding Comments

Sex is one of the most evident features of a person, one that is noticed instantly. Its social equivalent, gender, is fraught with cultural historic meaning-making on which much debate has been centred. However, both sex and gender intersect in many different ways as Pattanaik's quote (2014) above has highlighted. To assume that all people are biologically, psychologically and socially living as only men or women is a simplification. There are many permutations and combinations. Meaning-making is not simply about a man living with a man's body, dressing up as a man. Gender identity is layered and from the physical to the psychological and social, gender dynamics can become ambivalent, complicated and contentious. Whenever the three levels coincide (although that too is a grave simplification since there is a range of experiences and expressions even within the same gender), the complexity remains within the defined and developing expressions of being either man or woman. However, when there is any ambivalence at either of the three levels, physical, psychological or social, the phenomenon is somehow in conflict with mainstream meanings. In Indian society, there was a very clearly defined space for transgenders. Specific ceremonies, specific roles within ceremonies and circumscribed roles were the reality of their lives. With the advent of modernity, many of these traditions were lost, and Hijras searched for new spaces to call their own. Having maintained much of their outward persona, Hijras are still easily identifiable. However, with the loss of older modes of livelihood, they seem to have lost more than sources of income. The presence of Hijras on the street, fully dressed and still clapping, is heart-wrenching. There should be so much more that they could do. For some exceptionally brave individuals, life has given a second chance, and they have fought all odds to reach where they are. For others, social activists and non-governmental agencies are making many efforts; for other, their own strong and closed community still provides the best support services.

In this chapter, we have reviewed some of the work on the third gender in India as well as provided snippets from people's views about Hijras. In the process of meaning-making, it is possible to glean that despite the loss of traditional work, they have maintained their distinctive identity. They are still able to make people stop in their tracks and look at them. This strategy has also been successful in gaining attention from welfare groups, the government and individuals. Much more needs to be done in this regard. However, our chapter has provided a glimpse into the complex world of Hijras in public spaces, for whom the grand strategy that still remains successful, one that has been cultivated over centuries, is the characteristic conduct (swagger, clapping, loud voice, heavy make-up). From the responses given by lay persons, it was found that on account of the loud and highly distinctive exterior, although everyone knew about and could easily identify a Hijra when they saw one,

both men and women displayed complete ignorance about their psychological and physical characteristics. It almost seemed like when the outward identity and group definition are so strong, individual differences seem to have become blurred.

Regarding resistance, Hijras as a group are at the border of community life, coming and going occasionally, leaving people mostly with a sense of relief that they are not “like them”, as is frequently announced by Hijras as well. How this group stays in balance with the mainstream is a lesson in resistance. Even as society becomes more modernized, their distinct demeanour sustains, and they resist modernity in appearance, although having adopted other technological gadgets that facilitate their everyday interactions.

Hijras in India are therefore living their lives negotiating three quite distinct spaces, the collective, where they are easily recognized, feared and even avoided; the physical spaces where the only people on whom they can call on for support belong to their own community, mostly, and the psychological spaces, where their lives are full of mystery and mystique, inaccessible and unknown to the mainstream. Much more needs to be done with regard to their personal lives and provisions for health and welfare than is presently being done. Only some small interventions and exceptional individuals have managed to make their personal identity rise above the collective image of being Hijra.

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Trajectories of Resistance and Historical Reflections

Constance de Saint-Laurent

Resistance is not a mode of transformation but a process of reaffirmation. The proper object of resistance is to defend or restore a set of principles whose authority has been undermined. Pottage (2013, p. 263)

Abstract Collective memory, the one-sided and subjective vision the group holds of its own past, plays a central role in defining who we believe we are and what the world is supposed to be. As such, being able to challenge what is said of the past offers the possibility to imagine futures and build identities outside of what is commonly accepted in society, thus providing roots for resistance. This paper proposes to reconstruct the trajectories of two intellectuals and artists interviewed in Brussels to understand what may have led them to question traditional narratives of the past, and in some cases to actively resist them. It concludes that the encounter with several tools, such as historical books or the discovery of others' alternative narratives, may foster resistance; they not only encourage individuals to question specific historical discourses, but participate in the construction of a "meta-memory": a general representation of historical discourses.

Keywords Resistance · Collective memory · Life course · Trajectories of remembering · Meta-memory

There are many ideas, people would easily agree, worth resisting: freedom, human rights, the rights for all to a decent future, etc. but the duty to truthfully remember history probably would not be one of them. Or, clearly, it would not be very high in the list of our priorities. What is worth fighting for is what is ahead of us, not what once was and will never be again. In such a fast-paced world, one would have to be a fool to give priority to history and memory over information technology and creativity. Yet, what would the present and the future be without the past?

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When faced with a personal choice, don't you look into your past to try to find what could be the best solution? When imagining where you will be in 10 years, don't you draw on where you were 10 years ago and what you remember of others' evolution? It is not any different with history (Wertsch 1997): How can groups, such as nations, know who they are today and where they are going without looking at their past?

The way we, as groups, remember historical events—which constitute our *collective memory*—changes how we act in the present and plan for the future (Liu & Hilton, 2005). By transforming history into collective myths, we put forward versions of the group that are to our advantage (Wertsch & Batiashvili, 2012). Unfortunately, this is often done at the expense of others, who can be presented as essentially different (Raudsepp & Wagner, 2012) and with whom conflict may thus, at times, be encouraged (Delori, 2011). And because narratives on history illustrate certain ways of interacting with others (Leveau, 1994), they can also serve as the basis for the exclusion of others seen as historically “alien” to the group (de Saint-Laurent, 2014). By adopting specific narratives about the past of our social groups and, just as importantly, by forgetting other elements (Brockmeier, 2002), we position ourselves towards the present situation (Is it an injustice? The apogee of a century-long battle for our rights? The end of a golden age?) and give it meaning and direction. If the past matters, then, it is not so much in itself, but because of what it reveals about us and our future (Dudai & Carruthers, 2005).

Research on representations of history has, so far, mainly focused on how social groups remember past events. The conclusion has generally been that groups transform and deform history to show themselves in the best light possible (Wertsch & Batiashvili, 2012). It has opposed history and memory on the grounds that one is systematic and objective while the other is the subjective glorification of the group's past (Wertsch & Batiashvili, 2012). But how to understand, then, the processes by which some come to question history and doubt the greatness of the past actions of their group? If many do indeed defend and repeat narratives that serve the interests of their countrymen and their own—a quick look at any country's extreme right party discourses illustrates this—others do become critical. And criticizing the nation's past is a way to question the status quo: it has the potential of delegitimizing existing relations of power by uncovering the conditions under which they were forged. It is thus, in many ways, a matter of resistance.

This chapter proposes to look at the trajectory of two women who came to resist hegemonic discourses on the past of their group. By going beyond social representations of history, it aims to look at how individual people make sense of the past and, thus, illustrate how alternative understandings of the world may be forged. I will first introduce the concept of *trajectory of remembering*, which I will then use as an analytical tool in the presentation of two case studies: Dominique and Genevieve. The analysis of their trajectories will be used in an attempt to uncover the types of resources one may use to resist hegemonic representations of history. Finally, the effect of such resources on resistance will be discussed.

Trajectories of Remembering

In traditional collective memory studies, the “collective” part tends to get the better end of the stick. Indeed, it is often not so much about memory—after all, being French does not mean that I can “remember” the Napoleonic wars—but about social representations (Wagoner, 2015)—as a French person, I share with my fellow citizens certain representations, often historically dubious, of who Napoleon was. Research has thus focused on collective manifestations of representations of the past, as displayed in memorials, school history textbooks, commemorative practices, movies, and political discourses (Beim, 2007). Although this has made the discovery of extremely interesting mechanisms possible—for instance, how historical events tend to be systematically deformed by groups to fit their existing cultural narratives (e.g., de Saint Laurent, 2014; Liu & Hilton, 2005; Wertsch, 2008)—it has also occluded how the person locally produces discourses on the past. And indeed, I do not talk about Napoleon in the same way when I am back home, conversing about current politics with my family, or where I live in a Swiss Canton that was invaded and occupied by Napoleon’s army. And, perhaps more importantly, I would probably not have chosen him as an example if I had not been writing this chapter on the day of the 200th anniversary of the Waterloo battle and just read a newspaper article on the topic.

This is what the cultural psychology of collective memory—*collective remembering*—has tried to take into account when studying discourses on the past. First, it has focused on the tools one may use to remember (Wertsch, 2002)—textbooks, public discourses, memorials, etc.—and made a distinction between the production and the consumption of narratives (Wertsch, 1997). Collective manifestations of the past are not what people actually remember: they are cultural elements produced by the collective (often the state) to put forward a certain understanding of what happened. But when people use, in turn, these narratives, they do not do so passively: remembering history is an action (Wertsch, 2002), a reconstruction made in the specific context of the discourse (Wagoner, 2012). To go back to the example of Napoleon, being exposed to narratives about him in history classes as a child and reading an article about him today does not mean that I blindly repeat these discourses. However, they are resources that I use to talk about the past and advance, or resist, a certain representation of it.

Second, collective remembering studies have focused on another fundamental element of the context within which people remember: interactions with others. As any other human activity, collective remembering is not done in a vacuum, and even less in a social vacuum. Discourses on the past are always addressed to others (Wagoner, 2012), and shape and are shaped in interactions (Hirst & Echterhoff, 2012). That is, talking about history and the way it is done locates people in the social field—as members of a specific group, tenants of a specific worldview, etc.—and is a reply to what has been said by others (de Saint-Laurent, 2014). In that sense, collective remembering is *dialogical*: it is the product of interactions with present and absent others; the present others with whom I am conversing and the

absent others whom I am replying to and whose reactions I am anticipating (Bakhtin, 1986).

Going back to the example of Napoleon, it means that I produce different discourses with my family or with my colleagues at work because these are shaped in my interactions with them. When talking about Napoleon with my family, I am reacting to the comparisons they might make between him and current politicians, as well as prolonging a long public debate about whether he should be remembered as a military genius or a dictator. What I say about him positions me on the political spectrum and towards my own family's political orientations. However, when I talk about Napoleon with my Swiss colleagues, I am responding to a very different debate: the question is not whether he was a good or a bad leader—it is commonly accepted that he was a tyrannical invader—but whether I, as a French person, will attempt to defend him or side with the people he attacked. What I say about him in this context positions me as either a blind patriot or defender of my country (and in some ways as an ungrateful immigrant), or as enlightened enough to see the ills of my country and the goods of the one I live in (and thus as a good immigrant). That is not to say that I hold almost schizophrenic discourses on history: I do not defend Napoleon in one case and bash him in another. But the ways in which I talk about him and defend my opinion will be deeply different because I am addressing a very different audience, with whom I share very different resources and pursue different aims (see de Saint-Laurent & Zittoun, in press, for a full explanation of this model of remembering).

But what, then, explains how two different persons, in a similar context, will say very different things about history? How come my sister and I—sharing the same culture, broadly the same education and being from the same generation—will tell, in the same conversation, extremely different stories about Napoleon? Because we have, ourselves, our own history. What research on collective memory and on collective remembering has for now largely ignored is that people have a “history in front of history”, what I propose to call a *trajectory of remembering*. To conclude my Napoleon example—and I promise to drop it here—what would probably make my sister and me talk about him in different ways are our own different pasts. While I studied social sciences in the UK, my sister studied law and lived in the US. When I was in a context where Napoleon was considered to be the evil man finally defeated in Waterloo and the one who attempted to destroy local cultural differences, she studied the man at the origin of the first civil code and lived in a country where Napoleon was one of these French exotic things, almost at the same level as baguettes and berets. Thus, when we talk about him today, our discourses are not just forged in the interactions with others and objects—to borrow Grossen's notion of context (Grossen, 2001)—but also by our own past.

Humans live and develop in irreversible time (Valsiner, 1994), creating unique trajectories (Zittoun et al., 2013). These trajectories can account for how people relate to the world, give meaning to it and adopt or resist meanings proposed by others (Zittoun, 2006, 2012). Indeed, throughout our life, we internalize social and cultural values and systems of meaning and multiply experiences from which we can take a distance and draw generalizations (Zittoun, 2012). In time, we develop

personal life philosophies (PLP)—personal understanding of the meaning of life that take the form of more or less simple philosophical maxims—and we use them to interpret new experiences (Zittoun et al., 2013). Our past, through the experiences we have, the values and ideas we are introduced to, and the meanings we give to it, shapes how we understand and act in the present. And although this idea is, in the end, quite basic for any clinical psychologist, it is often forgotten in other areas of psychology.

What I propose here is thus to adapt this literature on trajectories and ruptures to collective remembering and to conceptualize the latter as the *developmental* process by which a socially located self, in interaction with a socially located present and imagined audience, uses cultural resources to produce a discourse on the historical past (see de Saint Laurent & Zittoun, in press, for a similar account but of autobiographical memory). By developmental process, I mean that such discourses are characterized by change and transformation across the life span and its study thus requires a life course perspective (Elder, 1998). Studying individual trajectories, then, implies focusing on the moments of transitions and ruptures, on the construction of new meanings they may lead to and on the resulting intransitive (irreversible) qualitative changes that can happen in any period of life (Zittoun, 2012). In other words, this perspective takes as the unit of analysis the interrelation between the discourses of the self and the unfolding course of one's life. It is thus especially interested in how experiences of change lead to the production of new meanings about the world and one's life.

In the following, I propose to apply these concepts to the trajectories of two Belgian women interviewed on their relationship to history. I hope thus to demonstrate: (1) that people's past accounts of history can indeed be understood as forming a trajectory; (2) that these trajectories can inform how people remember and understand the past; and thus I intend (3) to draw some insights, in the end, into how such trajectories can inform our understanding of resistance throughout the life course.

Reflecting on History

The data presented here is part of a wider project focusing on personal trajectories of remembering (de Saint-Laurent, in press). It is focused on a theatre play offering a critical-historical perspective on the Israel–Palestine conflict (Rosenstein, 2014). As the play was advertised as offering a critical perspective, it meant that it was likely that the members of the audience had developed at one point or another a critical outlook on history or were at least open to the idea. The semi-open interviews conducted with them aimed at uncovering how they came to see the play or participate in it, as well as their past encounters with history (in school, at home, during travels, etc.). Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 min and all were done in French.

Of the nine interviews conducted in Belgium and in Switzerland, two were chosen for this chapter: the cases of Dominique and Genevieve. Dominique and Genevieve are both women in their late fifties or early sixties, and both are involved in activities that could be described as “resistance” to the social situation in their country. While one is working for a charity helping local populations in social and cultural difficulties, the other has been involved in political and militant organizations. They were chosen because: (1) they are comparable on many aspects (age, gender, background, etc.) and yet illustrate different processes of remembering and using the collective past; and (2) they are both involved in “resistance” actions and are thus very good candidates for our purposes.

The data was first analysed with the help of narrative and trajectory analysis (Rosenthal, 1993). The interviews were cut into segments referring to different periods of the participants’ life and then organized in chronological order. This allowed me to focus on the transitions and ruptures in their understandings of history and their relation to it. Each period was analysed with the general model proposed above, which means, concretely, looking at: (1) the content of the discourses reported about history (e.g., what is the story about); (2) the resources that have been used to construct said discourses (e.g., referring to books, using metaphors ...); (3) the audiences to whom these discourses are addressed (e.g., traces of voices of others, replies to quoted discourses ...); and (4) the transformations and continuities with the previous period (e.g., Is the general narrative frame similar? Are the resources different?). However, the tendency to present the past as an explanation for the present (Cameron, Wilson & Ross, 2004)—probably especially strong when talking to a psychologist, whose job is often perceived as one of explaining people’s behaviours as a consequence of their past—needs to be taken into account to avoid overinterpretations.

Because of the vast amount of autobiographical data presented, important alterations were made to both cases in order to ensure anonymity. These modifications were done after the full analysis in order not to alter critical elements. These transformations concern names, places, dates, occupations, and when necessary historical events that were changed into equivalent ones for our purposes.

Case 1: Dominique

Dominique is a Belgian woman born in the 1950s in a family of communist artists. The first part of her life is characterized by the gap she feels between what she is told at home and what is taught to her in the religious school to which her parents sent her for education. This is how she explains it, by referring to an incident that took place when she was eight years old:

D: My parents always told me that Julien Lahaut — well, you’re not Belgian, so Julien Lahaut is a communist who screamed “long live the republic” when... when the King Baudouin was taking the oath. So you know there was Leopold III who collaborated [with the Nazis]... and he never came back, then there was a regency, and when his son came of

age... [...] Well, it was a huge mess. It was not just the question of the return of the king; it was that people had the option between [...] a more Socialist or a more Catholic Belgium. [...] So this guy yells “long live the republic” [...] and [later] he got shot down at home. They rang his bell, shot through the door, and they killed him. In 1950. Well... that’s what my parents always told me. And one day, at school, we talk... we talk about the king. And I tell this story. And they tell me it’s not true. [...] That it’s a lie. So I have always learned that the official story had nothing to do with the true story. [...]

C (the author): And how did you react when you were a little girl [...]?

D: I learned that I’d better shut up. [...] I didn’t belong to the right social class. [...] So pfff, I’d better not be... I would say politely, they would tell me it was wrong, and I would shut my mouth.

In this extract, Dominique shows the gap in understanding history between home and school. At home, her parents would tell her stories that illustrated their convictions and discuss historical events through these lenses. However, when she tries to talk about this with a different audience, she gets told off and learns to stay quiet. She clearly sides with her parents—they tell the “true story” she counterpose to the “official” one—but, perhaps, does not master enough, as a child, the resources they use to build this story and thus cannot defend it at school.

As she grows into an adolescent, however, her relation with both her parents and school changes. She says about school:

D: I was pretty happy about how I was taught history, because in my school there were humanists and leftists, and so I was always taught history between economical causes and consequences. [...] So I was always very conscious, well, made conscious, but in a well-argued manner, about the accumulation of capital [...] so each time I was reading a book about that I was thinking, well yes!

Here, we can note two main changes in this period, as compared to her early childhood. First, there seems to be a change in the type of audience that school represents: it is now a place where you can learn from “humanists”, and not a strict Catholic school where she feels she does not belong. Second, she starts being given resources to understand history: although we can assume that her parents—that she defines as very communist—already made her familiar with historical discourses centred on the notion of capital, she adds this time “but in a well-argued manner”. Where her parents’ stories had left her without the resources to defend them, she seems here to be introduced to new tools that help her forge her own opinion. If the last sentence gives us a clue about the type of resources she starts using, these are developed in the following extract about her relations at home, where she talks about her mother:

D: And it’s true that she used to annoy me a lot because for instance, when Stalin died she cried about it. And... well... she didn’t understand a thing about De-Stalinization. Yes, well, she didn’t read a thing either. But me, I had read, I was twelve and a half, thirteen, and I had read lot of things and I would think: but how can she not know? And how can she... I was shocked by the lack of analysis, [...] of objective support. [...] And for me, the historical critique was part of my survival, maybe. Because I had an extremely violent, extremely anger prone mother. And so it was in my best interest to know very well... that.

Here, we can see a shift at home: the family discourses that she used to take for granted are now considered as the ones without “objective support”. In the following years, Dominique enrolls in a Trotskyist group because it was “against Stalin” and her parents. She reports that she argued about these issues with her mother, and that she started reading a lot, not only about the roots of communism, but also World War II. From a little girl listening avidly to her parents’ stories about the past, she becomes an adolescent arguing against them with the help of what she learns in school and in books, which seems to be a way to resist her “extremely violent” mother. And in the following years, she takes part in political movements against colonialism and in women rights demonstrations, against her parents’ approval, and develops new friendships in these militant groups. But if she opposes her parents, she interestingly does so while remaining extremely close to their values: she still identifies herself as a communist, but of a different kind. It seems that she found a way to position herself that would not alienate her at home or in school and yet allow her to have her own voice.

Not much seems to change in Dominique’s relation to history in the following decades. While the late 1980s are marked by the birth of her two sons, she is surprisingly silent about the collapse of the USSR. But when asked, at the end of the interview, which historical event she would love to change most, she replies:

D: I don’t know. I don’t know, I don’t know. [3 s] Because I don’t see one event... ok, when the Vietnamese thumbed their nose at the Americans, we could only be happy. [2 s] To do what? [3 s] That’s it.

C: hum...

D: When the Chinese separated themselves from the yoke of... the soviets, but to do a cultural revolution... with the horrors they did. And a society, I would say, more than unequal... I am not talking about misery in... in economic misery. I’m talking about intellectual misery.

She does not seem to propose events she would like to change, but events on which her interpretation changed: from the hope of an international Trotskyist revolution that would show another communism than Stalinism, it turned into despair about yet another communist inspired dictatorship. The difficulty to make sense of this turn of events is made clearer when I ask her about how she thinks current events will be remembered in the future, for instance the Arab Spring (the interview took place in March 2014). She replies:

D: For me there is not one and only one Arab Spring. But for me all these stories about Islam I don’t care. [...] The Taliban are not funny, but the Red Guard was not either. [...] I don’t know what we will remember of it [4 s] these are countries... None of them, although they produce necessary resources, none of them has its own industry. [...] They are consumers of the powerful countries, [...] [like us] who are hands and feet tied to the American older brother.

After this, she goes on about the capitalist system, and concludes that we are all “fully enslaved” to it. What is interesting here is that Dominique’s discourse does not change: in the stories she tells about the 1990s and onward, she refers to the same audience (especially her mother and her friends in militant groups), uses the

same resources (mainly books and newspaper articles) and tells similar stories about class warfare and the opposition between the Americans and others, whether they are Soviets, communists, socialists, etc. The world, however, did change: communism ended in a way that did not leave much hope for its partisans in Western Europe, and international politics have seen the arrival of new major players—mainly India, China and Brazil—that make reading the world in terms of USA/Russia opposition look slightly dated. As a result, Dominique seems to take a certain distance from her past understandings of history—as for instance when she talks about Vietnam—and to take part in less political actions: she reports participating in unionist movements during these years, but no mention is made of political engagements, in stark contrast to what she reports of the previous decades. In today's world, her positioning seems at times problematic; she talks about a few recent incidents where she quite strongly argued against interlocutors in ways quite at odds with the situation.

However, this (relative) lack of change does not need to be interpreted as an inability to adapt to the present. Instead, it can be interpreted as quite functional: 40 years on, Dominique is still able to maintain a relationship with her difficult mother and yet to resist her by arguing for a different understanding of the collective past. If the end of communism is not evoked by Dominique as a strong transition in her relation to history, it may then be because it did not change much the opposition to her mother's favoured communism. If resisting hegemonic representations of history fuelled Dominique's social and political engagement, it seems also to have been a resource to resist difficulties in her own family.

Case 2: Genevieve

Genevieve is a social worker born in the 1960s to a Belgian father and a Polish mother. Although her father is fascinated by history, especially World War II, they do not talk much about it at home. Her mother, who left Poland after World War II, only tells stories about pre-war Poland, with one notable exception:

G: And my mother for instance, well... often in these situations people who suffered a lot they don't talk about, about that part of their life, me, when I was a kid, she would talk to me about her house that was like an absolute Eden. Until 39. [...] The only comments that I got when I was a child was if I did not eat, "you will finish your plate", very calmly, not even angry, not even, not even raising her voice, "you will finish your plate because people in the ghetto they ate the grass in between the pavements". Bang. [...] But this is, this a way to... how are we going to call this way to tell a story, for instance, what is this way to tell history, if your mother tells you that when you're a child? [...] And that, at the same time, you are nourished by what the ghetto was because we had books in the library with well, images and all, so I knew very well.

Here, it seems that while Genevieve gets knowledge about the past from books she reads on her own and does not discuss with her parents, such knowledge is made alive by her mother's discourses and is actually necessary to interpret them.

In interaction with her mother, and using the books she read as resources to represent the past, Genevieve builds a story of what happened, or at least an image strong enough to stick with her 40 years later. Very early on, then, she is put in a position where she has to construct her own understanding of the past, between the remarks of her mother—which do not really amount to a story—and what she discovers, alone, in books. In that sense, she is a quite obvious illustration of the model self-other-cultural tool presented above: she constructs a representation of history through the interaction with others and the use of cultural resources.

In the early 1980s, however, an experience profoundly changed her relation to history. She moved to Poland, against her mother's advice, and was asked by a Belgian newspaper to interview Polish people who resisted during World War II. As her mother had left her country before the 1950s, she had depicted a rather different Poland than what Genevieve found when she arrived, during a period of great repression. And she says:

G: I arrived, so naïve, thinking the Poles are such patriots it will be so easy to interview them on, on resistance during World War II. What I didn't know is that most of them thanks to the great Yalta were sent by Stalin to Siberia for 15 years. [...] It was dangerous to leave them in this new communist country that had such a radiant future, we were not going to keep people of the old regime who were going to mess it up. [...] If I had interviewed them one or two years before, when [...] when the wind of freedom was rising, I think they would have told me many things. But they had just had a lid closed on their faces [...] and Jaruzelski [the Soviet-controlled Polish president] was there with his tanks. So I was confronted with people who did not want to talk at all, because they were scared, simply. So I had to develop all sorts of strategies to interview them. And that's where I realised that there are really two histories, you see. [...] People would yell at me. [...] "you know that us, we fought for you, and we all ended up behind the iron curtain and that, we were here, and there", and it's true that the Poles were everywhere, in Africa and in the UK, that, that, "this is the payback we got, we ended up behind the iron curtain and in Siberia, so please excuse me but we don't really want to..." And we were never told that in school.

C: Yes...

G: Never never never never never. [2 s] And so there were really two readings of history that... that were, were... for me it was the first time that I was really shaken to the core thinking [2 s] things are never really black and white. Things are never told... It's not because I learnt it in school that it is true. It's not because I read it in a book that it is true. And ever since, I, I, I, well my parents used to read a lot [...] and they just died and, and, and I wonder but what am I going to do with all these history books because these are stories that are already not true anymore today because in the meantime researches were done that show [that they were wrong].

During her stay in Poland, two "lessons" seemed to change Genevieve's relation to history. First, as she says, she discovered that history is multiple and thus a matter of perspective. Interestingly, she did so by interacting with a group to which she, in some ways, belongs, being Polish and identifying as such (she reports being "yelled at" by these interviewees for being Polish and yet not speaking the language, which means that she introduced herself as Polish). Second, she learnt

something that was never (with much insistence on the never) introduced to her in school, and the intensity of her reaction looks like a response to the level of the betrayal. Interacting with these Polish resistants and discovering their story make her question what she has learnt so far and how simple—“black and white”—it looked. And these doubts seem to remain today, as the end of the excerpt shows.

If this event left Genevieve very sensitive to the perspectival nature of history, her journey does not end there. About ten years later, just after the Scud crisis with Saddam Hussein, she visited Israel, during a period of great tensions. She talks about the religious extremists there and how they have a very specific discourse on history. I ask her what they say:

G: Well, that it's the holy land and, there is no discussion to have. It's, it's always the same story, you see. It's, it's, they are the chosen people, the thingy, and well everything we know, you see. Without, with no possibility to have a dialogue with these people... they are really insane, you know. [...] I was walking with a friend who was 55 at time and who was wearing a shirt with sleeves up to here [*shows her wrists*] and who had just left this button open [*shows her neck*] and she was called a Nazi. Well first the insult has nothing to do with [*laughs*], well, nothing. You just want to tell them, “poor dude, just shut up”.

This experience seemed to have put a limit to her openness to the diversity of perspectives on history: if the others refuse dialogue—because they are not accessible to logic—then it is pointless to engage with them. If she can interact with their arguments and the resources they use to build their accounts of the past—she does so just after in the interview—she cannot or will not do so with their perspectives. And this leads her, at times, to a paradox: although she defends a perspectival understanding of history, she also insists on how “real facts” have shown these extremists were wrong about it, and she uses them to dismiss their perspective.

As a young girl, Genevieve's relations to history had been mainly centred on the books she would read and the remarks from her mother, full of connotations. A first transition, however, changed her understanding of “official” accounts of the past. Others, and what they had to say about history from their own perspective, thus became a great resource to understand the past. A second transition put a limit to this openness to other's discourses: those who are not rational and refuse alternatives should not be interacted with. In a way, it is possible to see this second transition as a “re-balancing” of Genevieve's relation to history. Indeed, although openness and flexibility are often considered as quite desirable psychological qualities—ensuring people's adaptability—taken to the extreme they also leave people at the mercy of any change in their environment and may threaten their sense of coherence and stability. In the case of Genevieve, it meant accepting discourses that ran contrary to other convictions she had—like the fact that a woman should be allowed to unbutton the uppermost button of her shirt in public. Hence, developing a “rule” to resist some perspective—history should not be discussed with those who are not accessible to logic and reason—may be a way to strike a necessary balance.

Resources for Resistance

Through these two case studies, I have attempted to show how people's relation to history can be understood as the product of a trajectory marked by ruptures and transitions, the internalization of social and cultural values, the construction of new meanings, and, in the end, by intransitive qualitative changes. In the first case, that of Dominique, the analysis highlighted how the internalization of her family's values created a rupture in school, from which she concluded that she did not fit in there and should therefore remain silent. This meaning was challenged during adolescence, when she was faced with teachers more open to her values and a difficult relation with her family. This second transition led her to develop her own version of her family's values—allowing her to both resist her mother and socialize in militant groups—through the use of books and various specialized texts. This second understanding is still what she uses today to interpret history. In the second case, that of Genevieve, the analysis showed how she started using books and pictures to make sense of the discourses of her mother, which were full of historical connotations. However, a strong rupture occurred when she visited Poland as a young adult and was confronted with new discourses about history. This made her question what she had learned before—and what she had not been told—and to develop a rather perspectival understanding of history. However, a second rupture occurred a decade later, limiting the discourses she would agree to be open to.

In both cases, personal trajectories shaped how the participants remember and understand the past, which is actively acknowledged in the interviews: both Dominique and Genevieve themselves refer to their past to explain their present understanding of history. Past events do not just influence their relationship to history: through time, experiences create layers of meaning through which the past can be understood. Indeed, meanings do not cancel each other out but, through consecutive ruptures, participate in the construction of a rich system of values and understanding of the world. Contradictions and paradoxes, then, are part of their trajectories and are forged through contradictory and paradoxical experiences. As a result, each person's representation of history is unique, even within a rather homogenous social group—here both participants belong to the same generation and grew up in quite close social classes with leftist values. This is especially clear in the way they react to the play they went to see: Genevieve questions the “missing perspectives” in the story and Dominique talks about her pro-Palestinian activism in her youth and economic questions.

Through these trajectories, Dominique and Genevieve seem to have developed a general understanding of history that they apply to the various events they talk about in the interviews. Indeed, they generalize from experience both how history is built or ought to be built—for instance, when Genevieve “discovers” that history is a matter of perspectives—and general story lines that organize how they talk about subsequent events—for example, when Dominique talks about the Arab Spring and develops a narrative based on economic transformations. I propose to call these generalizations about memory *meta-memory*. This form of memory rests on cultural

concepts and cultural narrative templates (as described, for instance, by Wertsch, 2008), which are culturally shared ways to understand the world or to tell a story, but it differs from them since it is built and given value and meaning through personal experiences. It thus has a deeply personal resonance, as do Personal Life Philosophies (Zittoun et al., 2013). For instance, one can learn in school that there is always more than one side to a story (cultural concept), but this is not the same thing as discovering it through the encounter with another telling an extremely different story about a past one considered to know, like Genevieve did.

What is also notable here is that two types of tools seem to play a central role in the transformation of these women's representations of history. First, books and other textual resources (as they may be presented in school) are recurrent resources. Surprisingly, however, very few references are made to historical movies and novels, when they are usually considered as extremely important resources for collective memory. However, participants may simply choose not to refer to those in the context of the interview. Second, interactions with others and the stories they tell are an important resource too. Interestingly, it seems that the "channel" through which a rupture is brought about is also the one that will be later favoured. Indeed, for instance, Genevieve's first rupture is introduced through the discourses of others, and it is what she later uses as a resource to build narratives on the past. Dominique, on the other hand, is first unsettled by discourses in school and yet it is through the textual resources introduced by teachers later in her life that she builds her representations of the past. But both tools—others and texts—share a common feature: neither is blindly used, but they are instead a resource with which one interacts and dialogues in order to build an account of the past. For instance, when Dominique reads, as a young teenager, Communist Manifestos and historical books, she agrees with some ("thinking well yes!") and yet remains critical in front of others (especially those which overlook economical dimensions, as she explains later in the interview). Remembering and resisting are thus, deeply oriented towards others and built in the interaction with their voices, whether it is in face to face or through books and other media.

Conclusion: Resisting Whom, Why and How?

In this chapter, I have argued that personal trajectories, through rupture and reorganizations, lead to specific ways of remembering the past and thus, potentially at least, to resistance towards hegemonic or one-sided representations of history. In the cases of Dominique and Genevieve, this was done through the use of textual and dialogical resources that helped them both build unique accounts of the past and criticize "official" narratives. Because it led them to activism and social action, through a critique of how power dynamics were forged, their "trajectories of remembering" are also trajectories of resistance. What the analysis showed, however, is that such resistances were first brought about by personal ruptures that needed to be overcome.

Reflecting further on the two stories discussed here we can conclude that, at a collective level, resistance presents us with three *paradoxes*. It is about resisting changes, yet time is irreversible, and this implies that often resistance is about bringing new changes to “restore” what was lost (the paradox of novelty). It is against a power whose legitimacy is seen as undermined, yet it uses (at least initially) “illegitimate” power to defend its cause (the paradox of power). And it is about ethics and rights, yet it also assumes to be defending higher values than others hold and thus ultimately depends on whose perspective you are taking (the paradox of ethics). Thus, if resistance is a collective phenomenon, embedded in social action, it is only at the level of the individual engaged in the act of resistance and in the light of his/her personal trajectory that it takes its full meaning. This leads us to the final paradox of resistance, that of otherness: resisting hegemonic representations of the world (here, in the form of the meaning given to its past) involves resisting the discourses of others, yet it is these discourses that shape personal trajectories.

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Children Finding Their Ways Through Life Spaces: Glimpses from the Indian Ecology

Shipra Suneja and Bhanumathi Sharma

Abstract It is common to see children in Indian families participating in all aspects of family living along with activities that have economic value. They perceive and articulate their capabilities to participate in a variety of familial and household responsibilities including that of taking care: of children, adults, animals, plants and the household. Children also go to school and engage in play. In their world of play, they build microcosms where they make sense of the ways of the world. The physical and social spaces, in which the children live, are densely populated in addition to being dominated by adult voices. A myriad of sociocultural features such as caste, class and gender are woven into the contours of daily living. Nevertheless, the children are not passive recipients. They actively reconcile their life-worlds, at times often subverting it. They develop strategies to find a way out: infusing their activities with a playful quality as they negotiate these ecological spaces. It is indeed through acts of defiance/resistance and compliance/conformity that children make sense of the cultural patterns of their society. Vignettes from the daily lives of children in rural and urban ecologies will be examined to locate the “rhythms of resistance”.

Keywords Children’s voices · Indian families · Rural India · Social spaces

Introduction

Our repertoire of knowledge about life and living, its scope and limits develops through participation in the daily modes of cultural behaviour, along with its compliances and divergences. The ordinary and extraordinary details of daily lives integrate the push and pull forces that weave back into a viable rhythm of everyday living. The present chapter specifically focuses on how children in families engage

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with these daily rhythms, and, in what ways their agency/voice animates a form of life. Children, in a world of adults, are largely seen as beneficiaries or sufferers of world happenings. The adult is not only a person with individual attributes but also an instituted body of role and power. In research too, we are familiarized with the child's world through the adult's account of it (Brannen & O'Brien, 1996). They are "gatekeepers" who have regulatory control, with varying extent, over the activities that children participate in, and the aspects of their lives that the researcher can access (Corsaro & Molinari, 2008). Besides this, children as "head of household" or living on their own on streets steer towards another level of power play and representation of children's voices.

Voice as a metaphor does not just constitute the child's agency as an active participant in her ecology but also the "other" life forms—persons, cultural patterns, beliefs, language, life histories—that influence the child. So even if it is the child's voice, is it the child's voice? And what if the child's voice is different from the adult voice? It is thus important to ask what culture and the processes of culture mean to the child, in the family, in the community and in other ecological constituents. Envisaging an entry into children's life-worlds entails privileging their views, mapping their cultural spaces, and observing children as actively contributing participants involved in making as well as producing meaning in their world. It is indeed essential to have a familiarity with the meaning-making frames of persons in order to explore how they enact their lives (Geertz, 2000).

Resistance and allied forms such as negotiation, navigation, confrontation and so on, aid to oppose a perceived imposition. It is not just about finding a way out or escaping from a situation. It is about devising and using of strategies to create leeway and even new ways that support self-preservation, and a consequent sense of well-being. They may playfully navigate through situations and at once participate in the task with a certain liberty that is not objected to by the adults. The extent of this liberty may vary for each child and its "over-play" (as recognized by the adult) may be met with consequences. Children are continuously engaged in the process of making sense of the cultural patterns and also contribute to them.

Experiences and observations of children and their life-worlds invoked in this chapter come from ethnographic fieldwork in a slum area in Delhi and rural Rajasthan.¹

Children's Narratives: Shared and Sharing of Experiences

While describing the ecological setting and everyday practices, children provide a sense of structure and belongingness to their sociocultural space. Even situations difficult to grasp such as poverty and episodes of violence are communicated by

¹The fieldwork is a part of the first author's on-going PhD study titled "Ecology of care of children by siblings", under the supervision of Dr. Nandita Chaudhary and Dr. Bhanumathi Sharma.

children in personal narratives. By telling stories about themselves and their interaction with the ecological settings, children share their knowledge and the ways in which they interpret and reproduce this knowledge. At times, they find their ways through life situations, building strategies that even become everyday lived practices. At other times, their depictions reveal a struggle; their expressions filled with utmost fear of situations that are incontestably harmful. Resistances and other ways are integrated into the everyday of these ordinary lives (Das, 2010). While narrating an experience, children take a situation, analyse it and give it another form that suits their individual needs and also falls back into being culturally negotiable and thereby culturally legitimate. Autobiographical narratives could become modes of resistance for children. What they decide to tell others and what shape their character takes in the narrative and enables insights into the children's construction of self.

In the Indian context, relationships with others are believed to be integral to the personal construction of self (Chaudhary, 2004). The presence of others was common in the telling of personal stories by the children in the study. They narrated stories of negotiation, navigation, resistance and even active confrontation by recounting experiences, often shared by others. They articulated their deepest of secrets in the collective. They opened up about the "worst of the situations" when they knew that they were sharing an experience with persons who were unthreatening or that others have also been in similar situations. Siblings and children in the neighbourhood were inseparable companions to each other. They told stories, completed each other's sentences, took sides, protected each other and ensured that secrets were kept. In a way, they taught each other how to manage their lives, not just how to comply but also how to resist. Every time children replay their narratives in the collective or participate in other children's narratives, they appropriate it and make it a personal extension of themselves (Goffman, 1974). The importance of a shared experience and sharing of experience is strikingly articulated by Das (2010) in an interview:

I find a great solace in the notion of the collective, which is not to say that I allow the collective to completely dominate my voice, but I cannot think about finding my voice without imagining what it is to find my voice in company of others (Das, 2010, p. 139).

Experiences of violence and trauma were reconstructed and retold, and in time, they became a settled narrative that helped them to deal with the situation. Children became partners in narratives and began to speak of them as shared experiences. Indeed, children's self-representations in narratives also reveal how they assimilate these emotions (Sharma, 2008).

Finding a Way Through Their Ecological Niche

Engaging in participatory research with children is not simply to highlight or give a consolidated account of conditions or events that affect them, such as socio-economic status, or, available care services in their ecological system. These

variables need to be explicitly identified and understood through interactions with children in their daily lives. It is therefore essential to map the features in the developmental niche of children that affect their experiences (Nsamenang, 1992). The purpose is not to determine a cause–effect relationship among the variables but as Berry, Poortinga, and Pandey (1997) observe, it is to gauge the contributions of these aspects to children’s life-worlds. Similarly, the notion of resistance needs to be understood in the dynamics of everyday events, spaces and characteristics of individuals and cultures. Children whose life experiences have been called upon in this chapter belonged to spaces that may be judged as poor in the larger framework of advantage and disadvantage. Children’s own assessment of their life situations was not of abject poverty, which they associated with not even a roof over the head and nothing to eat. Perhaps, in such ways, they resisted the despondence of situations.

The Ecological Spaces

The culture and community to which a person belongs runs with it a discourse of everyday life. Children engage with several spaces in their ecology: their homes, the neighbourhood, the school, the streets, the park or the fields. In the process, they continuously play with and evaluate the access and boundaries of these spaces. The process of finding their ways through these spaces is affected by the familiarity or its lack with the context. Let us look at the two settings in which the study was located to further deliberate on this point.

In the rural setting of Rajasthan, children lived in open spaces, unrestricted by boundary walls and streets, in spontaneous interaction with nature. The rhythms of nature were vital to all things that children did: the games they played, the skills they learnt and practiced and the relationships they developed. Anita,² (Age 2 years), would walk back alone half a kilometre to reach her home from the well where she would come with her sister to take a bath. On being asked, her sister Kiran, (Age 4 years), replied confidently, “She has gone many times, she knows”.³ People in the village commented that the children of the village were much stronger, “They are hardy”, do much more work and know the importance of each other much more than the children of the city.

The urban slum area in Delhi was more delimited and restrictive because of the inherent danger in the physical environment. Families of 4–6 members lived in small owned or rented rooms. The space was barely enough for their belongings and for members to sit or lie down. Movement was restricted due to space constraints inside the home and outside it. Parents as well as the children emphasized that in the *basti* (slum), children especially girls hardly played outside. Boys and

²Names of the participants have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

³Translated from Hindi. All the subsequent quotes by participants have been translated from Hindi or the local dialect spoken by participants in Rajasthan.

young girls played just outside the home or in the lane adjoining. The children mentioned their fear of the vehicular traffic on the streets. They narrated instances of accidents on the street and how they had to be vigilant. Nevertheless, the children were often observed on the streets, playing and moving across, in spaces even fleetingly found free of vehicles. In Paro's (Age 7 years) words,

I don't go on other streets. I play in my own street. I feel afraid there, not here.

Priya, (Age 12 years), went with her younger siblings to a nearby temple where they practiced running in the "bounded open space" of the temple. She was not allowed otherwise to play outside. So she found the temple as a sanctioned space to go out to play with her siblings. The child was aware that her ecological niche had potential for both good and bad. She looked for a leeway, for some elbow room. She found ways to manoeuvre the niche and gave a personal meaning to the spaces she inhabited. The process of finding a place to play in also became an inner experience of resisting the limitations of the physical space as well as the gendered confinement. While taking care of siblings, children especially girls, who were otherwise restrained from venturing outside and even playing, found an opportunity to get out while taking the younger siblings for a walk or buying sweets for them.

During the fieldwork, children performed spontaneous role-play around events from everyday living. Samar, (Age 12 years), his siblings, and cousins decided to enact a situation where all the children were at home, while their mother had gone out for work. With Samar leading the play situation, the characters, the dialogues and the direction of the scene unfolded as the play went on. The main characters were Samar, his younger siblings Fazan (Age 8 years), Sahil (Age 2 years) played by Ashia (Age 7 years) and his mother played by Rizwana (Age 11 years).

In one of the scenes, Samar was lying on the floor with other children. He pulled Sahil towards him,

Come, lie down here, lie down. Mother will get irritated when she comes. He looked up and remarked, "I put him to sleep so that I can play". He then lay down with Sahil, patting him on the back. Sahil was now asleep. Samar got up and looked at Fazan. "Fazan, take care of him and latch the door. I am going to play". He exclaimed, I make *namaz* as an excuse. I am going to read *namaz*.

In this episode, Samar explained and enacted several ways that he found to navigate and negotiate with his situation. He put his brother to sleep so that he could play. He handed over the responsibility of the child to another sibling, with instructions of how to take care of him, so that he could leave for a while. Later he also explained how he took the cover of going to the mosque to read *namaz* so that he could sneak out to play. All these actions did not happen at the same time nor did they happen every time Samar was with Sahil. He enacted nuanced aspects of plural life situations in a frame bound by time and space. Without much instruction, he layered these moments together to give a comprehensive sequence to the play.

Samar, like many other children, participated in household tasks including child care with a sense of continuity. This apparent seamlessness is a part of the games that children play—getting in, getting out, hiding, seeking and shifting emotions.

An observer could easily have construed Samar's conduct in the play as a form of negligence towards his brother. However, everyday life situations and their glimpses in the enactments spoke of a greater complexity. This was not about finding ways to not take care of the sibling but how they engaged in their rhythms of daily life. It was about taking care of siblings and on occasions turning away. It is how children maintained a balance, such that things were in some deliberated social and moral order, wherein confrontations were also not totally absent. There is an evident relationship between resistance and directionality that can produce different responses and outcomes (for further discussions on the relationship between resistance and directionality, see Tateo, this volume). Certainly, the act's moral significance is determined by the context in which the act is situated and the relation between the people involved (Trawick, 1992).

This instance is also another example of how children assess the spaces they are in. Samar, like Priya in the earlier episode, noted that bringing up a religious space was more appropriate and sanctioned. Yet, his sense of obligation made him entrust the responsibility of the child to another sibling. Although he ran away he did not break away from the frame completely.

Children developed frames of meaning-making through which they made sense of their life-worlds. They were constantly exploring the contours and limits of their schema. They discovered the extent to which their negotiations and/or resistances would be humoured and when the resistance itself would be resisted. There were also instances when the frame was pushed too far and the person in authority became overpowering. In the later part of the role-play, when Samar had left the house and gone away for long, he instructed Rizwana to enter as the mother who would run behind him with a stick to bring him back, and reprimand him for leaving the young one alone for a long period.

Finding Their Ways Through Familial and Cultural Spaces

Ways of living are anchored in social and physical spaces in which people live (Das, 1989). It is thus important to understand how tolerance, resistance and confrontation are perceived at the level of the individual, family, community and culture to which the person belongs. This knowledge incorporates a person's life history that gets woven into the present life-world. Often children are seen as part of the adult world. They have to be taken care of, bestowed with affection, assigned responsibilities, and disciplined within a system set by adults. Children figure ways to interpret this system, to negotiate, and navigate through obligations and also to maintain solidarity with the group. Not just children, but parents too are experimenting with ways of bringing up their children. They know that authority is not going to work all the time. Parents too allow elbow room and test their own limits of tolerance and acceptance.

During role-play, children recreated instances from their social worlds as they built "microcosms" of their ecological surroundings. They made sense of their

worlds in a world of adults by taking up adult roles, playing with power structures, enacting perceptions of their own selves, and others in those situations. They played out their thoughts and emotions, more so of circumstances where they felt constrained to express their thoughts directly to adults.

In one such case, Anjali, (Age 11 years), did a role-play with her siblings where she acted as the mother and other siblings were her children. In one of the scenes, the children were having food and she came in with grapes. Instead of playing on, Anjali, in an aside,

Mother gives my younger brother Pinku so many grapes and gives me only a few.

Like Anjali, many other children enacted authority figures that they observed in their daily lives. The children were aware that these were roles that they would take up as adults. They not only imbibed, as they imitated the behaviour of adults, what they would do but in the process also engaged in a dialogue. They reflected their awareness of the underlying messages that the adults were communicating in the roles they expected them to play. Children at times questioned them and also judged them as unfair. Often, the children expressed that girls had to do most of the work in the house and also outside.

Let us invoke another episode to further understand how children perceived gendered roles and played them out quite often. Naina, (Age 6 years), lived with her parents and two siblings in a village. She was irregular at school. Her older brother Raj went to school daily while the younger one was too young. Her mother claimed that Naina did not like to go to school and that she would come back crying when sent. One day, Naina, her brothers, Raj, (Age 9 years), and Raunak, (Age 2 years), were playing with a set of toys given to them. Naina focussed on three objects among the toys—a small bag, a piece of wood and a box. Raj arranged a kitchen on the bed and made food. Naina packed her lunch (the box), filled her bottle (the piece of wood) and put them in the bag. She then went out with young Raunak. Both sat awhile leaning against the wall. Naina took out her lunch, ate it and returned home. A few minutes later, she announced that it was time to go to school. This scene was repeated a couple of times. In later conversations when her mother mentioned that she just does not go to school, Naina spoke up, “you only stop me”.

Two points may be raised through this example. Naina decided to play the instance of going to school repeatedly. Through the play, she converted the situation into a counter-case of her reality, revealing her inner experience in some form. In a world governed by adults, she found her space to resist the passivity of acceptance that she showed to the authority in reality. The other point that comes forth is Naina’s quick retort to her mother. It was a breathe-easy reply, not an outburst which may be interpreted in many ways. Could it be the role-play that strengthened her resistance? The familiar presence of the first author perhaps became a relatively safe source of support. In a quick assessment of a safe space and moment, she said what she wanted to with little trouble. The intensity of the dyadic communication was brought down; the authority was somehow not as concentrated in the presence of this third party. This was observed in many other

situations as well. Komal, (Age 9 years), demonstrated that she could ask for money from her mother only in the safe presence of her grandmother.

Throughout the study, the children observed that parents and other adults gave more leeway to boys. Girl children were perceived as more competent carers. Mothers stressed that boys were less sensitive to the needs of the child. To cite as example, was Pavan, (Age 9 years), whose mother said of him, despite he being the eldest sibling,

...what care will he take! He just leaves her and runs away. If there was a girl, she would have kept the child.

Although older boys took care of their siblings, if there was a girl sibling old enough to take care of the younger ones, she had the stated or the unstated obligation to take care of her siblings. Boys would often run away and disappear from the frame to show resistance to authority whereas girls showed more silent forms of resistance. Some examples of subtle forms of resistance by girls were expressing their wishes through younger siblings or older male siblings, expressing their anger against the authority by mouthing words tightly in an under breath and yet managing to communicate it, and sometimes deliberately resisting a privilege. In the role-play by Samar and other children, when the “mother” brought them home, she scolded them all for watching TV and not studying. Later she asked them to have food. Immediately Ashia (Age 4 years) retorted, “We will not eat your food!” Through this response in the play, she clarified to the authority figure that she had a voice, and she resisted accepting commands. The mother would now have to surrender her authority, coax her and listen to her. Undeniably, the forms of resistance that the girls showed also reflected how they were socialized in the family system. Anandalakshmy (1994) in her study *The Girl Child and the Family* has also pointed out that children, especially girls with young siblings, always had something to do with child care and household chores.

Children also showed resistance to their own needs and wishes. They let go of immediate gratification in the interest of later goals. In many ways, children were taught to sacrifice their own desires and give priority to family needs. And yet, they would find ways of nurturing their wishes and fulfilling them too. Several instances reflected that the ways of resistance that the children took up were related to differences in their temperament. Some children would not comply by running away, or by maintaining silence. Others spoke up, saying things outright, with use of strong words that they observed among the adults in their environment. This at times was not perceived as insult or confrontation but as a quality or a characteristic of the individual child. Parents and other authority figures would often be appreciative. To quote Parveen, mother of two daughters, (Age 9 years) and (Age 8 years),

Oh this child is smart, and I am not worried about her. She knows how to get things done. I am worried about the older one.

We see that adults too interpreted the strategies that children used to find their way out in different ways. At times, the resistance was perceived as a challenge to the authority that cannot be tolerated and the children should be “put in place”; at

other times, this was perceived as a competency that enabled them to effectively interact with their often harsh environment.

In conditions of scarcity and poverty, children encountered multiple stressors that may have deleterious effects on them. Not just children but families, too, as social units showed resistance, developing ways and means to negotiate circumstances, to live and produce meaning, to go beyond mere survival. In the ecologies that were observed during the study, be it rural or urban, children were in and around the adult lives and conversations. They witnessed the everyday mundane talk, fights, secrets, difficult emotions, wishes and desires of the family members and the extended community. In their narratives and role-play, they often re-created and perhaps relived those situations making some meaning for themselves.

Preeti, (Age 9 years), engaged in role-play with her siblings. She played the mother and the siblings acted as her children. As the mother, she distributed some responsibility to each child before going to the fields to cut wheat. After she returned from a long day of work, she sat in the courtyard of the house and pretended to chat with a neighbour,

Oh sister, the husband beats you up. You don't listen to him...call your mother. She will straighten him.

In this episode, Preeti made some sense of an overheard conversation in her present situation, engaging with it momentarily during the role-play. Children's acute sense of observation provided them with the ability to pick nuances of adult interactions that eventually added on to their repertoire of strategies of resistance.

Children played an integral role in the socialization process of younger siblings. They also contributed to the construction of each others' selves. Usually children were not instructed as to how to perform a certain activity, or actively socialized into a cultural process. They observed other persons in their vicinity and made sense of the world. Siblings were constant companions to each other and played a major role in this process. Often children would speak aloud what they were thinking, or doing, sometimes intentionally, for the benefit of the younger ones. This is how children absorb cultural patterns, imitate, imagine, create, subvert and, in the process, engage in multiple dialogues with self and the sibling in order to construct their own life-worlds. They learn ways that work and experiment with the limits together.

Finding Their Ways to Play

During one of the visits to a school in Delhi, a classroom situation was observed. With desks arranged in rows and a teacher's mighty presence in the class, children were not allowed to speak with each other. They were incessantly reminded to not talk and to keep doing their work. Despite all this, children found several moments to interact with friends or just look around. They kept a vigilant eye on the teacher in case he looked in their direction. Some children got involved in a play where one

became the shopkeeper and the other a customer. These games were quickly dissolved and the children would come to their “properly behaved” selves when the teacher looked up.

In another situation, the teacher had gone out of the classroom. Upon his return, the monitor handed him a list of names of children who were “misbehaving”. The teacher looked at the list with indifference and called the names one by one. As the child came towards him, with fear on his face, the teacher bent him down and spanked him. The child turned to go back, meeting the looks of other children, and a shy smile emerged on his face. Another child got up and went through the same process. It almost became a game shared by several children. Fear that was visible when the child faced the teacher alone gave way to a playful endurance when he entered back into the group.

Undoubtedly, both the situations indicate dismal teaching practices and children do not deserve such harsh learning environments. But these are realities that many children face every day. They are aware that direct confrontation will be of no use and even complaining to parents seldom works. The transient quality of play, which fills almost all things that children do, provides a leeway. Play gives that freedom, that extra space to the child, and the child is the master of this world (Erikson, 1950).

Most of the time, a playful quality is attached to what children do: a quality that is inherent to the notions of children and childhood and also desirable to the adults. Hence to a greater extent, it is tolerated and accepted, even cherished. Often stories of *Krishna*⁴ with his mother *Yashoda* are woven on these lines. Despite all the “naughtiness” that *Krishna* displays, his mother can only show a fleeting instant of anger that is immediately replaced by the sweetness of adoration and unconditional love. Here is an evocative description by Trawick.

Love hidden beneath anger hidden beneath love, so that it is impossible to know which was the real and which the mock emotion. The transition between the extremes of rewards and punishments was so gradual that the boundary dividing them, if it existed was imperceptible (Trawick, 1992, p. 227).

A variety of emotions are soaked in play and the playful quality that the child exhibits. There is sudden burst of amazement, followed by impeccable laughter, along with moments of fear and anxiety, immediately replaced by exceptional focus and pleasure. What emotional state the child shows in situations goes beyond the momentary impressions of play. In their worlds of play, children build microcosms where they reconstruct and relive the ways of the world. Often the processes of these microcosms lead to children’s assimilation of the ecology they are in: multiple situations, layered with multiple emotions, and yet, magically coherent.

Siblings played with each other as playmates. At other times, they devised ways of keeping the sibling around by keeping them engaged in something. Play was integral to the lives of children and care for their younger siblings was deeply embedded in the daily rhythms of their lives. Children were both companions and carers to the younger siblings. Besides the siblings, children of the neighbourhood

⁴Krishna is a Hindu deity who is worshipped across India in various forms.

also became steady witnesses of each other's lives and narratives. When they told each other's stories, the narratives got intermingled, often taking on a new form.

We shall now explore the interactions between Kusum, (Age 7 years), her sibling, and friends from the neighbourhood in Delhi. They enacted an incident where Kusum's maternal uncle, who had come to live with her family after her father's death, spanked her and her brother Saagar for playing outside. In one of the scenes, Kusum was being punished by her uncle (played by Kusum's neighbour Isha). Kusum hid her face with her hand and started wailing. In between the action, her friend Kiran, (Age 8 years), held Kusum's hands and said,

You do like this when your uncle beats you.

She made a sulking face, demonstrating how Kusum behaved when she was being spanked by her uncle.

Often children would tell each other what they should do or say in a situation. Narratives of their observation in this particular case and several other instances reflected how they grasped a situation or a specific aspect and gave meaning to it. In this enactment of a rather disturbing incident, it was not just Kusum and her brother who faced the incident, but the other children who were either witness to the incident, or had heard stories from Kusum, relived the moments. They laughed as the play proceeded. Kusum laughed along as she pleaded with the uncle to not hit her. But in that moment when the uncle pushed her down, the fear was instantly visible on Kusum's face. The laughter illustrated the staged character of the play and how these children were playing the adult roles, even the disturbing part of the play. And in the midst of cheer, it was a glimpse of an expression revealing the difficult emotion that accompanied the lived experience. Although the child whose life situation is being played out here holds a special significance to the act, the intensity and emotion of the impact—pain, anger and fear were somewhat dissolved in this group situation; it became a shared experience.

Role-play enables children to give character to the dialogues of the self. Using imagination, children make sense of reality in abstracts and see abstractions as real objects. By taking up a role, they play out characters that influence them. They continuously weave the two aspects (the abstract and the real) with forms of resistances that contribute to their meaning-making processes (Tateo, this volume). Singh (this volume) provides several examples of children's play where role enactments become everyday frames within which resistance was expressed. How children find their own ways of showing the power play in relationships and how they give their own meaning to the abstract values and its enactments.

Discussion

Anand (1972) in his book *Seven Summers* captures the many frames of his childhood. In one of the frames here, he presents his thoughts as a child who is trying to find his way through life situations.

I had been relinquishing my status as the ‘baby’ of the house to Shiva for some time, quite willingly, because I liked him, and, being unacceptable to older children like Ganesh and his friends as a companion, I played with my baby brother and built up a joint front with him against my elder brother. I had also, of course, accepted the ‘don’t do this’ and ‘don’t do that’ from my father and mother with the characteristic nonchalance of the child who listens to an injunction with one ear and lets it go out through the other (Anand, 1972, p. 124).

Resistance and other processes of finding one’s way out of or through a situation, with a more powerful element, significantly contribute to the phenomenon of moving on in life with some sense of self-preservation and growth. Children emulate and even create these strategies for various reasons. The propensity to explore one’s environment, to break the monotony of everyday life, enables children to take risks with authority and test their own as well as others’ limits. These limits are not always defined, with boundaries that are capable of being pushed. In fact, sometimes children engage in just exploring these boundaries. We can imagine limits as some sort of lines joined to each other with the help of hinges. When one hinge is pushed, the other on the opposite side gets pulled in. The hinged parts are more flexible than the hard parts and yet the hinges too entail a limit that gets ascertained in time. For example, an elder sibling, who devises a way to run away to play instead of taking care of the youngest sibling, ensures that another sibling is in charge of the youngest one when he is away. This might work better than ensuring no alternative, and even this alternative will have its own limits that emerge sooner or later. Children mostly try to resist the authority through ways that are relatively gentle and playful. The frames are pushed and pulled. In the process of shifting one equilibrium, another one is established. The harmony is maintained. And yet sometimes, the frames are pushed too far and the child, who runs away, does not come back; a woman, who resists silently, mutes herself completely; and a child, who resists conflict situations, gets further embroiled in them.

The physical and social spaces of the child’s ecology also provide a varying degree of leeway within which children attempt to discern the mesh of customs, obligations and scarcely articulated rules that they encounter all the time. So at one level, an act of resistance by the child may be employed to manoeuvre familial obligation or an opposition by the authority, at another level it also supports her development within the family unit; the force becomes more enabling than disintegrating. All forms of meaning-making of cultural processes entail a weaving together of acts of resistance, negotiation, navigation and confrontation with those of acceptance and tolerance.

Indian culture has been described as more context-sensitive than context-free (Ramanujan, 1989) with the behaviour of a person to be seen in the light of *desh* (context), *kala* (time) and *patra* (person) (Sinha, 2002). The person displays a variety of ego positioning. This gives rise to plurality of thought processes and actions. A child, as an elder sister, with responsibilities of the home and siblings, will also run away to attend school. She will also on occasion stay out of school to play. She will love her brother openly and be appreciated by everyone, and yet

spank him without apparent reason and then hold him in tight embrace. This becoming of an individual depicts a sense of continuity, a river-like flow with its thrusts and resistances.

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Adolescent Dissent and Conflict Resolution in the Indian Context

Neerja Sharma

Abstract Discontent and conflict with authority are known to be integral to the emergent sense of identity during adolescence. Terming this search for identity as “identity crisis” Erikson (1971) called it a “turning point”, but a normative development, a period of active questioning. Acknowledging adolescent potential, measures to enable its realization, has been a subject of theorizing among researchers. This paper examines the issues that engender conflict in the Indian adolescent and discusses the role of conflict experiences and resolution in her/his identity formation. Recent socio-biological research has uncovered important relationships between teenage brain reorganization and some of the behaviours adolescents demonstrate involving peer relationships and risk-taking. It would be interesting to understand the relationship between neuro-developmental growth at adolescence and extreme behaviours, resistance patterns and adaptation. Ethnic, linguistic, caste, social class and educational diversity in India endows adolescent identity with immense variations. Keeping the universals in perspective, this paper explores the cultural specificity of dissent and defiance in familial and extra-familial contexts. Areas that are known to trigger adolescent-adult conflict within the family usually are to do with adolescent conduct, gender discrimination, academic performance and parental control. Outside the family, resistance is invited by institutional authority figures, and tension is closely linked to peer relationships, especially romantic involvements. The adolescent gives primary importance to the family above all other systems and agents of socialization. However, the family can also be a source of conflict, thus posing a dilemma for the young person. The paper also looks at the significance of the growing engagement of adolescents and youth in organized civic protests for seeking personal identity through collective dissent.

Keywords Adolescence · Resistance · Neuro-developmental · Bio-cultural · Order-chaos · Dilemma

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Introduction

Writing this paper gave me the opportunity to go back to the life of an adolescent who was the protagonist of a brief profile I had presented in my book “Understanding Adolescence” (Sharma, 1999, 2013, p. 7). I had known him in the 1960s, as he was growing up, and gave him the pseudonym Ashok to write the profile. At the time the book was first published, he was in his late forties. Once again now, I contacted Ashok on email and asked him if he would reflect and answer a few questions about his adolescent years. He agreed and sent back brief replies. Before I come to those, let me give a summary of the profile that I had penned to depict Ashok’s experience of coming of age.

Ashok was the youngest of three children, the older siblings being Rajan (brother) and Neera (sister). Ashok was quite intelligent, naughty, carefree but not very good in studies. The three siblings studied in the same private school. The parents and the teachers would often compare Ashok unfavourably with his siblings, pointing out that he should try to be like them in studies. Ashok’s interest was in making things with his hands and he would dismantle-assemble mechanical toys and objects in the house.

Around age 13, he became sensitive to constant criticism, comparisons and reprimand. He hated going to school. That year he fell sick with asthma, could not attend school for a long time; he started liking the idea of staying home and making artefacts with his tools. His parents decided to hold him back in class IX and not let him do his exams. The mother (who was a teacher) sensed his dilemma and told him that if he wished, he could go to a different school; Ashok agreed.

That was a turning point in Ashok’s life. He experienced being welcomed in the new school, made new friends, and there were no siblings to be compared with. In the next three years, Ashok’s academic performance improved tremendously, his relationships with his parents and siblings became comfortable. Ashok excelled in his end of school results, and joined a prestigious engineering institution.

Years later he became a professor. Currently in his sixties, he has retired from active teaching. The questions I sent him and his responses in verbatim are below:

Questions: Today, what is your memory of the experience of growing up as an adolescent with reference to:

What was it that you wanted to do?

Why was staying home a relief?

Your relations with parents – mother, father separately, if required;

Perception of your achievements/or lack of them in the two schools

Answer to - ‘Who am I’?

Change in persona after change in school;

People who influenced you, and why do you believe so?

Anything else you may want to add.

Answers:

I remember being interested in all things mechanical since my early childhood. School was not very interesting as my lack of good memory made it difficult to score well in the Indian schooling system, which relied much on regurgitation of definitions, facts and figures.

My parents would have liked me to score better, especially because my older siblings did very well. In 9th grade I scored very low marks in most subjects, but for Mechanical Drawing. My tonsils were operated upon, and I missed a few months of schooling. Also, my mother realized that I was being put under pressure, being compared to my siblings all the time.

As I was a bit under-age for my grade, my mother (herself a teacher) decided to change my school and make me repeat grade 9. In the new school I stood out in my class as I came from a better school and was repeating the subjects. From the very beginning I started scoring well, and got 50/50 in Math, which had not been my strong subject earlier.

Brimming with new confidence, and a realization that I have to do well in school to become an engineer, I devised techniques to remember subject content through deep understating, rather than memorizing it. Also, some of my teachers at the new school gave me special attention, which I had missed at the first school. My mother certainly played an important role in this transformation.

This could be the story of many Indian middle-class adolescents even today. An analysis of Ashok's plight shows that the fulcrum of his failure or success was academic performance, especially with reference to his siblings. Poor grades at the first school were attributed to his tardiness and lack of interest. Ashok felt that his existence as an individual with different needs was unacknowledged. His loathing of the first school is understandable; it was the reason for his low self-esteem.

Then came the turning point, coinciding with Ashok's mid-adolescent years. It appears that his emotional turmoil led to a biological breakdown in the body that was already under the stress of the growth spurt. He had developed asthma and tonsillitis the year he failed his grade IX exams. It is as though he wished to fall sick to drop out of school. The tonsils surgery and treatment for asthma kept him at home for a long time. Unlike most adolescents, he liked being at home all by himself. It must have given him the space for daydreaming and self-reflection, a developmental need of an emerging adolescent.

Ashok was fortunate to have a mother who realized that the academic pressure and comparison with the siblings were weighing him down. In his own words, his life changed with the change in school. He earned a new, positive identity. His disagreements with his parents faded with time.

Using Ashok's case profile, I wish to draw upon two themes as points for discussion on dissent and conflict resolution:

- The biological underpinnings of adolescent behaviour and
- The sociocultural dynamics of becoming and being an adolescent

Two operational terms that need clarification for this paper are "adolescent" and "dissent". These are defined below.

When is one an adolescent? Different societies accept different chronological age definitions of adolescence (Arnett, 2012). For this paper, the age range 10–19 years

seems most suitable, as recognized by the World Health Organization. There has been a secular trend in early onset of puberty in Indian populations where the status of health and nutrition has improved over the generations (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2012). Legally a person is recognized as an adult on attaining the age of 18, after which she/he has a voting right, and females can get married. However, according to Indian law, male members can not marry until they are 21.

Dissent means “to disagree”, “to differ in belief or opinion” (Webster’s New World Dictionary, 1988). Dissent comes naturally to adolescents as the stage itself is something of a paradox—the person is caught between the inevitability of change and resistance to it. Striving towards identity formation is universally recognized as one of the primary tasks of adolescence. Dissent is revealed in the process of seeking an identity that involves learning to master interactions with parents and peers, to respond to daily stresses, and to know where one belongs. Adolescent conflicts and attempts at their resolution form the hidden curriculum of emotional and social maturity.

The Biological Underpinnings of Adolescent Behaviour

Ashok’s case quite subtly points to a concordance between biology and psychology. He experienced emotional upheaval at the time his body was probably undergoing covert physiological growth spurt, that is, around 13–14 years. At this juncture, I would like to explore the biological underpinnings of “adolescing” for two reasons: One, to understand the inevitability of some distancing from the parents and family (actual or psychological) as a consequence of neuro-developmental changes that occur at adolescence; two, in order to appreciate the tantalizing diversity across cultures in adolescent behaviour, despite biological similarity.

Psycho-Social Correlates of Neurodevelopment at Adolescence

Alerting developmental psychologists and others engaged in the nature-nurture discourse to the nature of physiological upheaval at puberty, Spear (2003) submits an informed postulate that the adolescent brains mirror newborns in the sheer magnitude of transformations that occur in them. She further affirms that many of these neural changes and the concomitant behaviour patterns are observed not only in *homo sapiens*, but also in a variety of other species. In other words, puberty clearly arrives with a message of a spurt in psychological epigenesis in other organisms too.

Elaborating on what this implies, Spear (2003) states that there are two significant types of behaviour developments in *homo sapiens* and a variety of other species. These are—heightened social interactions with peers and an increase in behaviours classified as “risk-taking” and “novelty seeking”.

This preordained, non-negotiable bio-social development provides a basis for understanding the universality of adolescent dissent, which may take different forms depending on the sanctions and the social-ecology of the adolescent's context. To reiterate the affinity between adolescent biology and behaviour, Spear (2003) speculates that some of the typical adolescent behaviours may have evolved evolutionarily, to facilitate the transition of adolescents to maturity. In fact, attraction towards peers, according to her, is one such major step, as it serves to develop new social skills and supports.

Risk-taking behaviour usually takes the adolescent away from home and gratifies her/his urge for exploration. It also makes evolutionary sense as moving away serves as a "successful strategy to avoid inbreeding depression" (Spear, 2003, p. 63). If the adolescent brains are wired for proximity to peers and moving away from home, then inevitably distancing from the family (physically or psychologically) can be seen as a developmental norm, rather than an aberration. In other words, in all societies, the arrival of puberty coincides with the individual wanting to extend itself beyond the protective boundary of the family, and in the process, seeking novelty, some of which involves risk-taking. This explication fits well with Erikson's (1971) proposition of the adolescent's search for identity, and Piaget's formulation of appearance of formal operations at this stage (Santrock, 2007). But here is the problem. While these behaviours appear to be a developmental necessity for adolescent "existence", these also invite "resistance" both from the caregivers as well as the adolescents. The dynamics of this tussle forms the mainstay of this paper.

Bio-Cultural Approach to Understanding Adolescence

It is known that adolescence per se is a much broader concept than the period of puberty. The spurt of physiological changes associated with the attainment of puberty is universal (Tanner, 1975); however, the exact timing of these changes varies among individuals. Although many physiological events mark the adolescent years in both sexes, no single event signals the onset or termination of adolescence (Spear, 2003). It is this ambiguity that appears to play out to the advantage/disadvantage of adolescents and their mentors. It perhaps also accounts for the immense inter—and intra—cultural variations in the teenage experience of bridging the gap between childhood and adulthood.

Schlegel (2010), an anthropologist, proposed a "bio-cultural approach" for understanding cultural transmission. According to her, it "combines knowledge about cultures with knowledge about physical and mental growth" (p. 1). It allows one "to integrate findings of cultural and neuropsychological research into development theory of cultural transmission" (p. 1). According to this theory, the salient features of human development are generally consistent across cultures as these are the consequence of endogenous processes independent of the external environment (Schegel, 2010).

This theoretical construct is useful for understanding and debating the biology–culture relationship vis-a-vis adolescence. We now have access to researched accounts of adolescent lives in different regions of the world that illustrate similarities and differences in socialization processes and identity outcomes across cultures (e.g. Arnett, 2012; Brown et al., 2002; Schegel & Barry, 1991; Sharma, 1996).

The Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Becoming and Being an Adolescent

Construals About Childhood

In India, childhood is recognized as an important stage and the child is treated with particular affection and indulgence up to the time she/he goes to school (Kakar, 1981). Disciplining young children is not considered necessary; implicitly, each one is seen to have an individual “prehistory” from “previous lives” which must be allowed to unfold in the form of unique traits. A belief in the concept of rebirth is integral to the Hindu world-view (Kakar, 1981; Sharma, 1996). Hence every child is seen as “being fresh from God and having a trace of divine qualities” (Anandalakshmy, 2010, p. 27).

Once the children reach school age (5–6 years) they are expected to follow the path shown to them by the parents, grandparents and other significant adults in the process of caregiving. Their socialization is attuned to emotional dependence on parents (Kaur, 2014). From about 6 years to the beginning of young adulthood, the person is believed to be in apprenticeship—learning the social and emotional competencies of relationships (Sharma, 2008), and acquiring cognitive and vocational skills for earning a livelihood. This large age interval from 6–18 years encompasses two important stages—middle childhood (6–10) and adolescence (11–18). Traditionally in India, the adolescent years are not treated as a stage of moratorium—the time when the young person can have the leisure to experiment with different roles, unlike in Erikson’s epigenetic scheme of identity formation (1971).

Adolescence is Gendered

Socialization of children and adolescents is gendered in India. The norms of conduct and expectations from the two sexes are similar in some spheres, for example, with regard to respect towards family elders, and loyalty to the family (Kaura, 2004; Sharma, 2008), but quite different with reference to issues such as latitude in conduct and consumption of food (Anandalakshmy, 1994) (also refer to chapter by Konwar, Bhargava and Sharma in this volume). The adolescent girl, attending school or college, is exposed to the world through media and peers, and is quite resentful of the gender discrimination (Sharma, 1996).

Ambiguity About Adolescence

Chaudhary and Sharma (2012) are of the view that in the Indian society, perceptions about adolescence are ambiguous, although puberty is recognized, and in many part of the country, publicly celebrated through rites of passage (Sharma, 1999). According to a UNFPA report “Indians have a basic resistance to the idea of adolescence” (as cited in Chaudhary & Sharma, 2012, p. 104). The report attributes this resistance to a delay in the onset of puberty due to malnutrition and prevalence of early marriage (Shaikh, 2015), which, it maintains, leaves a short period between puberty and entry to adulthood.

It is possible to view this resistance from a sociocultural perspective. Despite the fact that India has a large number of people (21.92%) below the poverty line (Reserve Bank of India, 2012), it also has a very vast middle class of approximately 267 million (Economic Times, 2011). With multiple social and economic variations, children and adolescents in the middle socio-economic group have had access to cable TV for a long time, and for the last 5–10 years they have been users of the Internet and mobile phones. One of the globalizing impacts of media technology has been their exposure to international trends in attire, lexicon and youth behaviour, arising from a need to appear “smart” among peers. Overtly, both female and male teenagers display the adolescent-typical behaviours such as close alliances with peers, romantic heterosexual friendships, disagreements with parents and disdain of most figures of authority.

It is mostly this section of adolescents who seem to drive the thinking and theorizing of scholars on adolescence (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2012; Kaura, 2004; Saraswathi, 1999; Sharma & Chaudhary, 2009; Verma & Saraswathi, 2002) perhaps due to their easier availability for research. A review of these researches throws up some critical issues that lead one to examine how, in the struggle for finding a sense of identity, the adolescents encounter resistance and express their dissent. It also becomes imperative to study the processes involved in the resolution of their conflicts.

Finding “Order” in “Chaos”

Before these issues are addressed, it is important to dwell on a particular aspect of the nature of the Indian society that surrounds Indians as they go through life. Of course, in no way can one do full justice in elucidating the essence of one’s culture when the narrative is restricted to cryptic phrases (rule of word length). The reference is to “chaos” as against “order” in most actions, relationships, events and outcomes that occur in the Indian society. Those who belong here have no difficulty with it as they experience a certain “organization” in this chaos. In the Indian ethos, according to Malhotra (2013), “Chaos is natural and normal” (p. 168). He opines that, it arises from acceptance of “difference, unpredictability and uncertainty”

(p. 168). These features are not viewed as inherently negative. In fact, these impart Indians with the ability to engage in nonlinear thinking, be relaxed in unpredictable situations, multi-task and tackle complexities that cannot be reduced to simple concepts (Malhotra, 2013).

This chaos is very much a part of the lives of children and adolescents in a family, whether nuclear, extended or joint, as from the very beginning they deal with a myriad of relationships at multiple levels. They are socialized, cared for and disciplined not only just by their parents, but also by aunts, uncles, grandparents, older siblings and sometimes, by neighbours. In a recent study on socialization practices observed for 3-year-olds, Chaudhary (2013) found that exclusive dyadic interactions of children with mothers were rare; the most common context was care of many children with many adults. Confusing as it may sound to a non-Indian observer, somehow things fall in place; order is organically maintained in the “chaos” of socialization.

Nuclear families, though structurally nuclear, remain emotionally connected with the extended kin. The parents often consult their own parents, brothers and sisters when taking important decisions, including those related to their children’s education, conduct, career and marriage. In an extended or a joint family, the adolescent’s parents alone do not monitor her/his conduct. It is a common practice for a grandfather or father’s brother or his wife to reprimand the youngster for any “objectionable” activity. Actions that may bring a “bad” name to the family are discouraged. Among these would be doing poorly in academics, being too close to friends (as against siblings and cousins), demanding privacy (Kaura, 2004), not conducting oneself appropriately in the presence of kinfolk, or getting involved in romantic or sexual relationships.

Invoking the neuro-developmental argument here, the adolescents experience turmoil—biological and social. The same people who they fondly obeyed seem autocratic and interfering; and they wish to have their own space. As children they were socialized not to question adults, or even older siblings; now they disagree with them on many issues and do look for ways to express their dissent. While they are attracted to peers and wish to spend time with them, these relationships too are monitored by the adults. Quite often, they resist compliance in subtle or obvious ways. In extreme cases, an individual may have a psychological breakdown (Kaura, 2004), or the whole family may go through a crisis.

The Adolescent Dilemma

Families and their adolescent children face dilemmas which place young persons in conflicting situations with parents (and grandparents). While the parents want their earlier goal of children’s dependence on them to metamorphose into interdependence, the adolescents seek autonomy and privacy. Yet young persons do not want to break away at a stage of their life when decisions about their education and career will be crucial.

What emerges is that for adolescents the importance of the family overrides their need for personal gratification, including their want for peer relationships. On the whole, their loyalty is expected to be first to the family (Sharma & Chaudhary, 2009). How this tug of war between rootedness in the family and pull towards peers and non-familial others plays out and is resolved/or not resolved forms an interesting study.

To address this subject I would like to flag certain issues that engender adolescent dissent and conflict (a) within the family; and (b) beyond the family. An attempt would be made to speculate on the processes involved in conflict resolution.

Within the Family

As we saw in Ashok's case, even 50 years ago, in a middle-class family of Delhi, the single most characteristic of their teenage son that bothered the educated parents was his below expectation academic performance, although he had other talents. The family with a modest income saw academic achievement as a giant step towards its children's success in the future. A similar sentiment was expressed by Chaudhary (2004) with reference to her own life. In a more recent study of emotional competence in adolescents, Sharma (2008) reported that in her sample of peri-urban families the parents made a crucial linkage between educational attainment, future economic activity and advancement in life for the adolescents.

Parents' conviction about their children's goodness depends on the observations they receive about them from significant others. The parents believe that it is their duty to sermonize the children about "good" behaviour, and how they must conduct themselves in public. The children are socialized to believe that their actions are linked to the family honour. This often becomes a point of tension between the two, or even three, generations. The pressure on the female adolescent is greater than on the male. Any "blemish" on her reputation is believed to affect her character negatively and lower her value in the arranged marriage market. The female is always conscious of the subtle and obvious forms of gender discrimination in the family and in society (Sharma, 1996). Her school and college education helps her become acutely aware of her secondary status. This is often the cause of a silent rage among young women which may find expression as dissent at home, and/or as participation in activities away from home that permit self-expression.

The area of heterosexual relationships is not only sensitive, but also a topic of taboo in any family forum. In a recent study of middle-class fathers' involvement in their adolescents' lives, the fathers were asked about their son's/daughter's heterosexual friendships. Most of them were uncomfortable with the question and said that they did not approve "such" relationships either for their children or for adolescents in general (Sharma, 2015).

The adolescents' inherent attraction for the opposite sex peers and cousins is acknowledged, but there is always an attempt to mitigate this need through strict supervision, particularly for females. Male adolescents' "deviations" are tolerated

as long as these are casual and they do not get caught or bring a “bad” name to the family. When it comes to finding a marriage partner later, they are expected to comply with the family’s choice (called arranged marriage), except in rare cases, where the family agrees to the person the youngster has selected (called love marriage).

How do adolescents cope with these tensions? What gives them the resilience?

Internalizing the Primacy of the Family Over Non-family Relationships

As discussed earlier, from birth onwards the children receive the kind of care that reinforces physical and emotional dependence on caregivers, a goal that is culturally desirable. Chaudhary (2013) enlists some “contentious” parent–child interaction events she encountered in her study of 3-year-old children. Here are a few out of those that can be seen as exemplars of fostering dependence.

- Feeding the child, sometimes even “force-feeding”
- Breastfeeding the child beyond early childhood
- Children sleeping with their parents—which may continue into early adolescence or even later

Although the children’s circle of interactions increases with age, their reference point for decision-making remains the family. Most of them do not wish to displease their parents as they derive their sense of identity from the family. Any ideas of dissent and resistance are often dissipated by talking them out with siblings, cousins, a sister/brother in-law, or even peers. The family does not tolerate externalization of anger and revolt towards immediate members of the family. Any failure on the part of the young person, whether academic or interpersonal, is concealed by the family to the extent it is possible. A break with the family or discordant relationships become reasons for stress for the adolescent. The family is perceived as a protective factor by the adolescent in times of crisis (Sharma & Sen, 2011).

Close Emotional Bond with the Mother

If the family is central in the adolescent’s life, the mother occupies the core position (Chaudhary & Bhargava, 2006). Several decades ago, Kakar (1981) theorized that the Indian mother shares a special relationship with her infants and young children. She invests herself physically and emotionally in their care and well-being (Tuli et al., 2005). This bond continues to thrive right up to adolescence and adulthood, particularly because the father becomes a somewhat distant figure, once the child

crosses early childhood years. The mother's approach to care towards the female child is different from that of the male child, being nurturant and stern with the girl, while being indulgent, sometimes over-indulgent, towards the boy. Sex differences in care are a reflection of the society's patriarchal ethos that promotes a clear preference for the male child.

Combined with loyalty to the family, the emotional distancing from the father (and other male adults) and the need to confide with someone sympathetic, the growing teenagers become emotionally closer to the mother. She not only minds their conduct the most, but also protects them from the father's wrath, listens to their stories of anguish and pleasure, and cajoles them to become "good" human beings.

Adolescents acknowledge that they want to achieve a certain goal (such as winning a competition) because they want their mother to "hold her head high with pride", or that they could cope with a certain adversity because they had the mother's support. Less often, the same may be said about the father. The attachment with the mother seems to be a key factor in mitigating many interpersonal conflicts that need resolution. Sometimes it's the mother who is able to influence the adolescent to keep the peace. On other occasions, she takes on the executive role of disciplining the children, who listen to her because she is at the same time very expressive in communicating her love and affection. Sometimes when she is powerless in the face of patriarchal conventions, she pleads with the adolescent to be compliant. She thus exercises emotional and moral control over her adolescent children.

Zoom back to Ashok's case that I began with. Ashok ends his reflective narrative with "My mother certainly played an important role in this transformation". He perceives that he derived resilience to cope with his circumstances on account of his mother's role.

Beyond the Family

The school and issues related to it engage every middle-class family the most on an everyday basis. Most such families send their children to private schools. Children receive instructions from teachers to do a lot of work at home in almost all subjects. Class tests and examinations are a regular feature. The school expects the parents to be able to work with their children at home (Verma et al., 2002). The children find themselves pitted against each other in competition for academic achievement and rewards, goaded both by the teachers and the parents. Passing through years of such experiences, by the time they reach senior school, the adolescents earn several labels such as "average", "poor in studies", "not motivated", "rebellious", "not focused", "could do better", "distracted" apart from, may be, receiving a few positive ones. Students marked as "average" to "below average" go through schooling collecting a lot of negative points. They lose hope and develop a low self-esteem. Like Ashok, formal education produces antipathy towards authority, bordering on disgust for some.

Coping mechanisms trigger resistance towards school authorities and parent figures who have expressed disappointment and loss of hope in them. Externalizing behaviours such as expression of frustration through aggression or internalizing self-injurious behaviours become evident among many adolescents. Distrust of people in power is also generalized towards other figures of authority such as the police, and school/college administrations. Most of it is a part of adolescent defiance, although it can take a serious turn among maladjusted adolescents.

A significant phenomenon that has been observed among the Indian adolescents is their participation, along with the youth and adults, in political rallies and social unrest to express their discontent and dissent. Indians have inherited the legacy of “*Satyagraha*” (non-violent protest) from Mahatma Gandhi (Gandhi, 1927). A more recent event that triggered young people’s angry protests was the Nirbhaya rape case of December 2012 (Wikipedia, 2012). Adolescents have been observed to join protests related to school education, university systems, political activities, or to demand justice when injustice is perceived to be denied. When young persons engage collectively with what may be seen by figures of authority as “at-risk” behaviour, it meets their (adolescents’) need to challenge the status quo, feel one with one’s peers; at the same time experience themselves as acting for a cause, and not merely for personal gratification. Healthy collective dissent serves the purpose of socialization of emerging adults for assuming responsibility in civic life.

Conclusion

Indian adolescents share the neuro-developmental trigger for engaging in risk-taking novelty-seeking behaviours with adolescents across the world, as these are biological transformations and epigenetic in nature. Yet, what kind of risks will they take, and how far will they go to challenge the social system is guided by their family-oriented, collectivistic socialization. Adolescent dissent finds expression both within the family and outside in culturally determined ways. The consequences of gender discrimination are heightened during adolescence and impact the feminine identity significantly. The family and the society, in general, value internal resolution of interpersonal conflicts and dilemmas faced by the children, as the importance of family prestige overrides individual well-being.

This approach, however, does not always serve the purpose for the individual. Professional counseling services for adolescents are few and far between. Even those that are available are not accessed adequately by families or the adolescents themselves, as seeking help from mental health professionals is perceived as a sign of failure of the family in its primary role, that is, of looking after the well-being of its members. Young people usually seek guidance from some empathetic members of the extended family or talk to their peers. Organized civic engagements and protests help many adolescents seek redressal of personal tribulations through collective dissent.

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Cultural Scripts, Dialogue and Performance: Creating Processes for Resistance and Resolve

Asha Singh

Abstract Understanding human behaviour through frames of performance generates alternate cycle of friction, resistance, conflict and reaction. Resistance can be manifested in many ways, as silence, opposition, cooperation, or even ignoring the other. In everyday impositions by systems of power, the patterns of resistance emerge from a deep understanding as conveyed by defiance of rules in schools by children subjected to long periods of control. Depending on the context and actions, resistance creates changes or evokes resolve. This paper has talked about resistance as an everyday act or challenge. Theatre as an art-form opens human behaviour and its complex everyday rhythms through verbal and physical acts revealing diversities. Physical actions display power and resistance concealing no surprises. Social relations seemed imperative and inherently seeped in uneven power structures; social friction seemed organic to the warp and weft of the social fabric. The intertwining of the warp and weft create rhythms of resistance weaving new patterns. Resistance is thus an inherent aspect of social dynamics, either overtly or covertly. The hidden aspects of resistance are often not available to people in powerful positions, and can only be accessed through other means, like the informal expressions of individual and collective experience.

Keywords Resistance at school · Education · Dialogue · Cultural scripts

As a volunteer in Mobile Crèches¹ during my Master's course, I was engaged in a project on Early Childhood Development. Through stories and songs, I learnt that children of construction labourers had systems of knowledge that were different from the knowledge frames of school-going children I was familiar with. The colours used in their art were bright and vibrant and the flags they drew had loose strings not always bound to the pole. They drew baby birds contained within bird-bodies; birds cascading as if a small bird

¹A voluntary organization working for children of construction workers in New Delhi.

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waited within the mother bird to fly out; their houses were square and sometimes with sloping roofs. The children felt free to crowd around me and often trusted me enough to jump on my lap (New Delhi, 1975).

I finished my Master's and got a "job". I became a school supervisor in a government project...to oversee the transaction of projects in the classrooms. I now had an official entry to go to many schools and interact with children there. This assignment took me to several corporation schools² where the social and economic conditions for children were not very different from the children of the construction workers. The big difference was that these children went to schools organized at a mass level. I saw that they drew houses with triangles and sloping roofs with each chimney having intertwined common brackets coming out as smoke. Their [sketches of] flags were always on three steps with the string going twice around the pole. Children sat in neat rows with neatly combed hair. They did not jump into my lap, they moved back if I approached them as I symbolized the teacher (New Delhi, 1977).

The above two narratives are descriptions of children attending programmes set in parallel systems organized differently—one a voluntary programme and the other, a government-run service. The two streams: the governmental and the non-governmental coexist in India. These experiences have left a deep mark on me about the depth of interpretive genius among children. Within a span of two years I had become associated with power and my presence clearly restrained children's spontaneity in how they responded to me. As a young professional, I was unnerved because children classified me as an authoritarian adult that they were familiar with in schools. They expressed fear of power and that led to a suppression of their playfulness. I evoked resistance and restraint and not confidence and camaraderie.

During childhood, children express resistance when their spontaneous reactions are replaced by compulsions for appropriate behaviour in the presence of adults. This began my search for understanding power relations, pathways for negotiations and harmony in everyday lives at school. It soon started becoming clear that dominance of order and rigidity resulted in a sanitized version of a classroom that evoked compliance. Children suppressed childlike playfulness, which transformed their conduct. They exercised caution and restrained themselves before the "public transcripts" (Scott, 1990) of school life, becoming quiet, obedient children. Regimes of power and control become visible in school settings through both sartorial and architectural uniformity, with stress on adult-generated dialogue. This control favours conformity.

As my engagement with children at school continued, I observed the dynamics of their conduct very minutely, looking for signs of resistance. One day, with a ball in my hand, I noticed that I had generated surreptitious exchange of glances from the children. An object from child spaces in the formal setting of a classroom instantly gave me a new identity, or at least transformed the assumed one. Symbols of childhood may break the restraint or resistance to be natural and spontaneous in the presence of adults. Soon the ball was my mascot that I used discreetly and politely to initiate conversation by passing it to individual children by turn. From

²Schools run by the Municipal Corporation; a civic body in every city providing basic amenities.

then on, my entry generated excited squeals as they sighted my approach. Scott (1990) introduces the notion of public transcript such as subservient behaviour of the subordinates whereas hidden scripts, replete with secret discourse, are used as irreverent critiques of power. As observers, we often miss these hidden forms of resistance. Conflict is omnipresent, and responding to conflict and resisting domination is necessary part of everyday life. In fact, rhythms of resistance along with subversion are integral to development.

Covert Resistance and the Classroom

The central theme of this paper is to understand resistance and resolve towards overt and covert forms of power relations in ordinary routine social encounters. Several examples from the different forms of artistic expressions and social practices will be used to discuss the natural flow of conflict, resistance and subversion commonly seen among those vested with very little power. The fact that art forms are conducive to expression is undisputed. The well-known sculpture of the dancing girl from the Harappan culture of the Indus Valley civilization is a strong evidence that art has been sustained as a language across time and cultures. Wide ranges of performances comprising folk traditions of story, drama, dance, songs, cultural practices or episodic simulations become sources of expression and communication. Such performative opportunities offer spaces for collective witnessing and silent reflection on contentious social issues. Performances and their constituent narrative, as well as iconic content, generally mirror everyday social encounters through different theatrical devices. Anthropological inquiry presents the ubiquity of liminal spaces (Van Gennep, 1960), allowing suspension of reality and culturally sanctioned jocular attacks on roles of power and the stances of the dominated. Several examples that follow, will illustrate that performance and the manifestations of art forms serve as moments of resistance and reflection. Performances may be embedded cultural practices in festivities and celebrations or simulations in organized spaces. The many theatrical devices such as freezes, images, photo frames are conducive to the prompt representation epitomizing a social reality.

Resistance and Breaking the Cultural Glass Ceiling

Several cultural norms, especially in traditional societies, seem to perpetuate inequalities in social structures at both macro and micro levels. Talking with a child in a field setting, I encountered a deep-rooted acceptance of the caste roles and the metaphoric notion of the glass ceiling.

Almost three decades ago, working in a slum in central Delhi in mid-seventies, I soon noticed that there were boundaries based on occupation, in the way the houses were organized. While mapping the residential clusters, I realized that the houses were organized by occupation: of bangle makers or the *dholak*³ makers and the shoe makers. It was also evident that the groupings had overtones of prejudice and discrimination based on caste categorization. These families lived in close proximity and were thus very familiar with and aware of each other. However, I soon noticed some hesitation among the children. They seemed unwilling to mingle with each other. I asked one of them:

“Why don’t you all play together?” “Well they are children of sweepers” one child answered “Oh so what?” I probed gently. The 10-year-old boy seemed to explain the social norms in a manner meant for a newcomer unaware of social norms. “You see they touch dirt with their hands”, he answered. “Ok soon we can develop machines to pick up dirty matter and no one really touches anything *dirty*. Do you think then groups can mingle?” I provoked him.

There was visible resistance on the child’s face to take a position on this idea. I have often wondered what the response of a lower-caste child would be. Societal pressures promote prejudice and discrimination that penetrate childhood value systems. However, it is possible to counter this prevalence with social interventions. Attractive forces of action can foster resolve, without pushing individuals in positions of direct confrontation with symbols of authority. I cite a pro-active state verdict followed with intervention which has been slowly contributing to diffusion of traditional inequalities and ushering in slow waves of integration.

By the turn of the century, the Supreme Court of India directed all States to provide hot mid-day meals to all children. Like any scheme of such a wide-ranging outreach, there have been sporadic glitches. The supply of poor quality food and the segregation of specific social groups have caught the attention of media, raising doubts in the efficacy of state interventions. However, research by development workers has generated enough evidence of all children eating together, resulting in gender and social equity, reduced hunger and above all, an increase in both presence and attendance of children and teachers (Dreze & Goyal, 2007). Well-intentioned interventions by the State can spearhead desirable social change. Reduced social distance and semblances of parity become possible with large scale proactive measures for the marginalized groups. The powerful often resist such social change, since it is likely to prompt exposure of hidden scripts of hierarchy and domination that would become public (Scott, 1989). In many instances, the changed cultural scripts convey instances of overt resolve of resistance of the dominating forces of social inequity and injustice. Forms of art such as songs, poems, dance and drama are sites for expression.

³A kind of drum.

Writing and Resistance

The confidence in resisting the dominance of privileges noted among children living in poverty stirred a desire within me to listen to the voice of the socially victimized. The cognitive dissonance stemming from inequalities and the power of the elite in assuming a language of suppression, function as propellers for new forms of energy for resistance and subversion. Writing is an art and texts are often tools for subversion. I cite a story as example. This is a story by Premchand⁴ (1999) titled *Gullidanda*⁵ which is set in the backdrop of India's freedom struggle against the British. We find compelling struggles of the poor and the socially marginalized in the narrative. Premchand's stories were so powerful that they inspired a whole generation of Indians.

The children in a village play *Gullidanda* together irrespective of social distances. The sweeper's son Gaya and the School Master's son played daily and squabbled over scores, like arch rivals. Gaya would not compromise points fighting tooth and nail, despite the other boy offering trade objects at times such as fruits or some eatable not in easy access for Gaya. Gaya is firm about the game and is not lured by greed over skill and expertise. Class creates no deference or compromise to fair play. Childhood differences continue without disrupting daily dose of the game (p. 3).

As the story proceeds, the teacher's son moves away for higher study and returns to the village many moons later as an official (District Collector) of the local government. Nostalgia takes him back to his old neighbourhood and he longs to play *Gullidanda* with Gaya again. He seeks out Gaya and an arrangement for a game is agreed upon, although Gaya shows much reluctance. As the game proceeds, Gaya is easily defeated by the Collector. Gaya, always a stickler for norms of the game is self-conscious and restrained. The victory surprises the Collector, but he feels quite satisfied at not having lost native skills. As they part, Gaya invites the Collector to the Annual *Gullidanda* match in the Village grounds. As the Collector enters the grounds the next day, he watches in awe as Gaya is being cheered as the hero; he displays every trick of the game with mastery and skill. It soon dawns on the Collector that the game the day before was a sham, Gaya had simply humoured his old companion and playfully engaged in the game rather than really "play".

The story sketches the transformation of equity in peer relations which in adult interactions conforms to cultural dynamics and hierarchical social order. The developmental pattern in relations moving from equality to inequality is evident in the storyline. During childhood, conflict and opposition was dealt with by children within their own culture of childhood; while in contrast, societal hierarchies shape and guide adult reactions. In adult relations, reactions based on the voice of the heart to the voice of the mind force a loss of balance in viewing the other. Adult interpersonal dynamics deny the carefree memories of childhood, repressing the spontaneity, disallowing the negation of class and caste related cultural scripts. The

⁴A renowned nationalist author.

⁵A street game.

Collector displays no overt sign of oppression but he has begun to symbolize authority of power. He becomes an icon of the forces that perpetuate social inequalities and non-recognition of merit and competence. Yet the disempowered are not naturally intellectually disabled. The Jamaican proverb “play the fool to catch the wise” perhaps expresses the essence of the story. The disassembling of the weak in the face of power has often been the belief of the powerful. However, the irrepressible spirit and search for the self emerges in passive or in active resistance. Dialogues with frames of resistance and forces of action of the oppressed are discourses of deception which the weak and the powerless employ to subvert confrontations (Scott, 1990; Turiel, 2003). Performances in the daily play of life can lean on Scott’s analysis of the public script and the hidden scripts. The weak may often “stoop to conquer” resorting to “deference”. However, the hidden script facilitates a search for self-assertion as conveyed in the story. As Nussbaum (2000) observes,

...Cultures are not monoliths and people are not coins stamped out by power machines of social conventions. Social conventions are constructed and they are plural and people are devious. Even in problematic prescribed roles for men and women, people find ways to subvert conventions (p. 44).

Premchand’s story was read out to Class V children in an upper class school, recently. This group of urban children in contemporary India found the storyline to be quite alien. Living in gated colonies, these children are protected within the proverbial false reality, like the child Buddha.⁶ In the absence of social overlaps between the everyday social lives of the different people, particular populations are oblivious of social divide and diversity. Modernity and re-texturing of the social fabric creates new forms of resistance, conflicts and subversions.

Childhood, Schools and Hierarchy

The notions and negotiations of social dynamics through theatrical means are important strategies of exploring effective resistance. Arts and theatre are universal languages of communication and the presence of performance is ubiquitous. No culture, poor or rich, is deprived of rhythm, melody, mime, or movement leading to performance. Researchers are often surprised when the high measures of hunger and deprivation in remote tribal communities are countered by high levels of cultural literacy in their performances. In my recent encounters with tribal communities in Arraku valley in Andhra Pradesh,⁷ I witnessed a silent, disciplined group of 7–8 year

⁶The legend of the Buddha talks of a childhood where he was shielded by his royal parents, from all images and experiences of frailty, disease and death. He grew up in an artificially controlled reality of constant beauty and happiness. A ‘reality’ that he abandoned the instant he came face-to-face with the truth of suffering.

⁷Central India.

olds in an educational setting transformed into an energetic, orderly group of dancers performing their *Dhimsha* dance. Was the disciplinary regime of the school consuming the vibrancy of childhood? Is the drudgery and monotony of routines a necessary condition to become successful adults? Was it necessary to make children quiet and compliant in order for them to learn? The negotiations of children within the adult-generated interactions in schools continued to attract my gaze and create ripples of curiosity among the children. I have persisted in identifying ways to make pedagogical spaces more personalized by re-contextualizing notions about childhood and understanding appropriate and optimal mediation by adults.

Rhythms of Childhood

At this point I want to elaborate two points, one is the fact that art forms, especially drama, reveals more than it conceals and serves as a useful classroom resource. Drama is a very strong and effective tool. Acting itself may not change the world, but it will inspire the people who see it. Words are our primary way of communicating, but sometimes words fail us. People learn in diverse ways. Some people may prefer words while others may be visual learners and thinkers. We need to explore people's experiences through innovative tools. Visually powerful images capture people's minds and get them talking. Drama is able to capture images and animate them with instant verbalizations. The first step to changing something usually begins with conversation. You can start by talking, planning and follow that up with action. Art can incite conversation and when the image is powerful, it will lead to powerful exchanges inducing plurality and multiplicity of perspectives.

Secondly, the notion of resistance is part of everyday lives of children and teachers set within social norms that define schools. Social structures and conditions evoke opposition, resistance and subversion. Schools become sites where children spend a large part of their childhood years away from family and present an organized set of hierarchical order, which become everyday encounters for children. Within the educational setting, everyday resistance is mostly displayed through forms of silence or minor defiances such as running in the corridors, carelessness in wearing the uniform, keeping a distance between school and home. Everyday resistances are rhythms that are quiet and dispersed, very different from collective acts of rebellion, riots that are articulated forms of confrontation (Scott, 1985, 1990). Evidence of such episodes proliferates in every educational institution, and children have an intense, subliminal reality within which such resistance is transacted.

Children's apprehensions about hierarchy, adult controlled order, coupled with "their own diffidence in judgement and reason" (Cullingford, 1992), disadvantages them, leaving them vulnerable and in search of responsive and reassuring adults. They seek the teacher who will balance the love for learning with love for them as persons. In the words of a young child at school: "Teacher should teach when it is time to teach but also be approachable" (Voices of children in schools: Theatre workshop, during my doctoral research in 2000).

Simulations and Performances

Building on the evidence of “liminal space” as put forward by Van Gennep, Turner (1982) elaborated the concept to describe an intentional caving in of status-hierarchy during the period of a ritual transition. Role-play in a school setting constituted a liminal space, freeing children from following a rigid code of conduct. I used role-play as a method of exploring children’s reality at school for my own doctoral work. Children took it as an opportunity to challenge inflexible contexts in their own way, mingled with mental vigour. Dramaturgical tools link closely with interactive techniques organic to childhood. Children playfully engaged in representing their everyday classroom occurrences in improvisations, demonstrating children’s strategies of absorbing and dealing with stressful routines. Specific prompts were provided to children to elaborate on. Some experts are given below:

Role-Play 1.

Theme: When I reached the school late.

School: PS.I Class: III, 6–7 years old children

Script: C = Child actor, T = Child as teacher

Children act out the ringing of a bell (6 children: 4 girls and 2 boys)

The members all line up except two children. One of them starts walking down the row of children, brushing each child. (Audience laughs and murmurs: “PT⁸ Ma’am, PT” and there is visible excitement that is controlled both by the audience and actors)

One child slithers in and tries to merge with the group.

C as PTT⁹ (loud voice): Hey! What happened? Why are you late?

Anjit: (Eyes down, Silence)

PTT: Speak up! Why are you late? (Continues) Shoes are dirty. Is there no polish at home? Late comer¹⁰ (gently pushes the child) Silence!

PTT: Will you say something? You all come late and then stand “Silent”.

Anjit: (Softly, hesitating) Ma’am the bus

PTT: That is no excuse. Your parents should have brought you on time.

Anjit: My sister was not well so my.... (Voice drowns as the teacher commands)

PTT: What? You have no regard for school... (A light slap on the cheek).

Silence follows after the audience loudly disapproves the act.

Researcher (A): What happened? Is it over? (Breaking the inaction)

Child in Audience: Ma’am, Gopa (The child acting as PTT) hit Anjit. (Giggles).

The enactment ended as the rest of the class was temporarily silenced by the act of violence. They became quite restive, unable to handle the flexibility of boundaries and the limits of rule breaking. No further action could be possible as the children in the audience became unable to differentiate between the actor and

⁸Physical training.

⁹Physical training teacher.

¹⁰Punishment to stand in a specified corner of the classroom meant for late comers.

the person. They needed to understand this breach of conduct and were visibly distressed. The role-playing children stood without words as if ready for public scrutiny. All the children then started discussing the episode loudly. There was no amelioration for Gopa (acting as PTT), as she had clearly transgressed boundaries. Her team-mates denied any preplanning of such an action. The tacit understanding that fantasy could not violate the sanctioned code of peer sociality was clearly violated in this encounter, and the children were confused.

Discussion of the episode.

C#1: Gopa hit Anjit

I: But that was the play. Is it like that?

Gopa: Yes Ma'am that is what happens.

(Finally finding a voice of defence)

Silence...Then some of them reluctantly added, 'Yes it happens, when you are late'.

C#2: Gopa *ko marna nahi tha* (Gopa should not have hit)

I: (Restoring normalcy) Come let's do the next- it was just a game. Gopa just acted well....OK! Come Anjit you are fine. It was well done. Sometimes you can overact by mistake. OK? It's fine. Come. Let's ask the next group to perform.

Children acknowledged that teachers sometimes "slap" children as a part of school routine, however, with restraint and caution. Challenging adults went against the sociocultural norms and childhood understanding. The subdued voice indicated children's fear that collective acknowledging of "teachers slap children" may be an act of disloyalty, something that should not be talked about in front of others. It may also tarnish the image of the school for the "outsider" since it is against the code of the school for a teacher to use physical punishment with children. Interestingly, children also believed that teachers sometimes resort to punishment for the betterment of the children. Such behaviour was accepted even though it was forbidden by the system. The teacher has authority to discipline the "wards" in the manner deemed correct (a notion deeply internalized and emerged recurrently). Yet, one child slapping another in accordance with the "role" was unacceptable. In earlier researches it has been pointed out that children resist physical oppression of any sort even if it is declared as a code of conduct (Turiel, 2003).

In my study, older children were not so uncomfortable in their transgressions. They seemed to have worked out ways of confronting the monotony and evolved ways to create new rhythms. There was a wider range of adaptive as well as resistive arguments in their improvisations.

Rhythms of Childhood Resistances

The following example will convey children's frustration with the sense of being controlled which they defy in the mock situation.

Role-Play:2, Theme: A class you like

School: PS 2 Class: VII 7 children

Script (C = Child, T = Teacher) Ages of children: 12–13 years. 5–6 children sitting in a row (3-boys, 3-girls) One girl enters and everyone stands up to greet the teacher,

Chorus: “G-o-o-d Mor-n-ing Ma’am” (Sing-song and loud)

C as T: Why this song in the morning? Can you not say properly? (Sharp tone)

Today we will be doing GK.¹¹ Take out your notebooks. I will dictate.

C#1: Oh! Yes GK! (some others murmur a response)

C#2 & C#3: I have done my homework!... Me too ma’am.

C as T: Oh! What A wonderful surprise. (Forced emphasis of authority) We will talk about Presidents and democracy. Who was Abraham Lincoln? Did you know that he was killed?

C: Yes Ma’am. You killed him! (Spontaneously)

C as T: (Aghast. Moves body forward trying to stifle the laughter at the insolence. Mutters in between, quite dazed by the dialogue). What are you saying? I killed him? I was not even born.

C#1: You kill all children (defiantly) Studies kill children (Re-asserts)

C as T: Now that is nonsense (Recovered from what became momentarily a personal assault). All children have to study. What will you do? Become janitors? You have to study!

Being a protected space of non-judgmental participation, drama has the potential to provoke children into an expressive, reflective and communicative mould. The free verbal exchanges contain many subtle insights for the discerning adults. The older children performed beyond the limits of the assigned roles and were willing to defend the transgression of boundaries and were not rooted to social sanctions. The breakdown of social structure does not lead only to chaos, rather the suspension of boundaries within social-cultural spaces prompts the flow of “dissipative structure” that evolve their own dynamics and direction (Turner, 1982). Relating with strong emotions to schools is not entirely new. For children, school has a primacy of experience. *Letter to a teacher* (1980) by eight Italian students is a moving account of re-addressing the frames of institutional settings. *Death at an Early Age* (Kozol, 1967) is the story of the violence within the minds and hearts of black children in Boston public schools. Resentment against regimented learning appears repeatedly in the education literature, propounding resistance against the several dominant forces such as lack of relevance of educational content, fear or even absence of emotion. Children are unable to perform in environments based on fear or unresponsive environments.

The voices of young children demand time and space to express opinions and feel heard. They need to feel accepted as individuals, active and thinking, facilitating a sense of self-worth. The discussion following the improvisation rationally deconstructed the issue of educational decay. The 11–13 year olds keenly pursued an analysis of their everyday encounters. I had to steer the post-performance debate

¹¹General Knowledge.

as the defiant statement generated creative anxiety for me to follow their resolve and suggestions. Even though my presence slowly merged as a “participant” I would be jerked back to my role of a facilitator with the pupils as spectators. Each vignette was followed with a discussion:

- I: “What do you say? Any suggestions? You seem to have thought about it.”
 C#1: “Ma’am it was absolutely true.”
 C#2: “There are too many things happening.”
 C#3: “The NCERT syllabus is too much which becomes very killing.”
 C#4: “True, school kills!! the NCERT syllabus is too much.”
 C#1: “The teaching is not interesting.”
 C#4: “There are no new methods. We can learn well. We learn songs so well.”
 C#3: “Children should be taught through music. We liked the way you mimicked musically the movement of the planets.”
 C#1: “Ma’am Can I tell you that we have to hear a song and we all remember it - word to word.”
 C#5: (Agrees) “Somehow we give total attention to the song and we learn it and also enjoy it.”
 I: “OK. Let me sing for you. The earth, the earth goes
 And then it also moves Round round around the sun (Action)
 Venus, Mercury, Pluto and Mars.”
 Children laugh and in a chorus go “Yes! Yes!”
 C#5: “Ma’am we don’t know there must be some way to keep things interesting!”
 C#4: “Learning should be fun. We can learn on computers.”
 C#2: “Nobody has time we just have to keep doing things.”
 I: “You have heard this or you really feel it? Why are you saying all this?”
 C#3: “Ma’am we all feel like this.”
 C#2: “Ma’am it’s not the school that is killing us but the shortness of time—shortness of time.”
 C#4: “Sometimes too many things happen together, test, assignment and we get tired. We love talking.”
 I: “But now you have to go! Your buses will leave. I will be scolded. Please GO!”

Besides responding to the researcher, children had transformed the activity as a tactic to overcome their own state of experiencing control, and the play also acts as a source of and expression for resistance. In taking roles children present the nature of the enveloping social interactions and individual perceptions, and depict how they seek release of friction. In role-play, children usually constructed the socio-cultural contexts with replay as well as reframing of social reality. The evolved script is rooted in the social interactions. When children play, they create self-assigned liminal zones where they negotiate the roles and responsibilities of the adult world when they re-enact family scenes or play war games. It is within these forums that the communication was often beyond socially sanctioned rules of action

and discourse. So if the child is attacking the teacher, it is a glimpse of the secret discourse and part of everyday resistance to the actions and the dialogues of the dominated.

Relations of domination are at the same time situations of resistance. It was often noted that children's silence was seen as resistance to the ire of authorities and if explanations were offered, that was seen as insult to injury. Dismissal and rebuke became reactions to transgressions of norms. Role-play almost always mirrored "out of class behaviour" or the hidden script (Scott, 1990) where peer interactions would be replete with their secret symbols of labels for teachers, imitations of classroom behaviour and other subtle communications shared by the children. Adults have little or no access to this register. Children's play often revolves around social events in which family and school are important sources of the content. *Ghar-ghar* (house-house) or teacher-teacher are games familiar to most Indians. All such play and moments of suspension of social norms become practical devices that resist and thwart the idealization of domination.

In different schools, the phenomenally striking similarity in the content and form of the role-play was evident of the power assertive role of teachers. The teacher would almost always have a loud and commanding tone. The portals of power are fuelled by keeping up appearances that are deemed appropriate to their form of domination. The subordinates keep the balance for good reasons, and at least do not openly contradict the system (Vinthehan & Johansson, 2013). The two examples cited are role improvisations, disclosures of the code of subversive conduct, which allow children to sail through hegemonies operating in schools. The subtext of the dialogues also indicates that children can discriminate and be discerning partners in the processes of schooling. The reflections on the curricular transactions indicate children's search for making rhythms of resistance and create animated rhythms of learning.

School Processes, Identity and Exclusion

In my study of children at school, older children could talk about school rules and they could enact slices from teacher's perspectives and dialogues. They understood the school calendar and the load on the teacher, often absolving her of time-intensive tasks such as spending time with individual students. Children said they got their solutions from private tutors since teachers were overworked. From the discussions, it seemed that children felt neglected and left out as they could figure out the unwritten rules. For example, in one school they enacted the improvisation of an instruction received from a peon. The Principal of this school was popular, and through his acts of sensitive leadership, he had won the respect of most students. He had many ways to be connected with classroom transactions of which sending a peon to actually take stock of classroom activity and inform him about teacher absence or presence was one strategy. In this case, the children felt that the Principal cared about them and believed that he was a committed person. Children seemed to have keen knowledge about school operations. However, when

these formal positions were invisible or inaccessible to them, they felt cheated. A feelings of emotional closeness to systems that are part of a daily routine, produces a socially distanced “stranger feeling” when the children’s presence is cosmetic. Such moments of exclusion miss the adult attention. Despite the well-meaning and dedicated attitude of the Principal, there was dissatisfaction with the monotony of teaching and that did not reduce despite strategies like the one in the above example. The children did not view peon visits as spying on the system, but as a management strategy. There was no verbal or analytical resistance to the practice that furthered the interest of the system or those in authority, as the exercise of power was in sync with the goals to be achieved.

Usually it is noted that cultural practices that further the interests of those in power are resisted (Turiel, 2003). Going along with the interest of the powerful was not an issue of contest; the resistance was directed at the unfair favours that the teachers could carve out for themselves. Without any official communication regarding the system of a substitute teacher in the eventuality of teacher being on leave, the students in most schools were aware of this arrangement. However, no teacher actually did this duty, leaving classes unattended, much to the ire of the children, more so as they saw no disciplinary action against them. Children become anxious at the systemic ignoring of wrong acts (Cullingford, 1992) especially if teachers were unjustly advantaged. School attendance benefits children, but that they assess and interpret everyday routines is unknown to other stakeholders. Most administrators are quite unaware of the keen evaluations that children make of the school system as well as of the teaching practice, as my study demonstrated through the voices of children.

Women and Resistance to Rhythms of Cultural Practices

In the study of the seven schools from where I draw the responses of the children, it was noted that teachers were the pivots to the classroom processes. A subject became more interesting if the teacher was good and children lost interest if the teacher was strict and unfriendly. As revealed by the act of the peon going on rounds being judged as fair for the monitoring of classroom practices, it seems that children do not always resort to opposing authority, but arrive at a reasonable decision after reviewing things in context. The teachers on the other hand have their own realities. Their actions are guided by their specific personal circumstances, which are not always based on truth and honesty. The notion of devious (Nussbaum, 2000) or hidden (Scott, 1990) scripts have been reported as acts of subversion following conflict and passive resistance (Turiel, 2003). I share some actions of deference and even compliance that came as disclosures in workshops during my data collection. Before citing the improvisations, I would like to share the change in my own attitude in understanding women and work at school.

In the workshops one of the selected themes for enactment was “Staffroom¹²” with the intention of identifying themes related to childhood. During the many sessions, I discovered that the enactments usually centred around family dynamics, power play in role assertions or sharing experiences at market sales, rather than on childhood. I was stumped by this finding and my disappointment was instantly visible. Where are the children? Where is the exchange of teaching strategies? Soon my repetitive search for “perceived idealism” which provoked a dismissive stance from the teachers, emerged as voices of assertion. I began to *hear* and finally *listen* to the repeated text and subtext of the post-performance discussions with teachers themselves. Schools start early in the morning, and most of the teachers are women who have to fulfil responsibility towards the household and its members. Sharing of family dynamics provided an emotional outlet and an opportunity to discuss collective challenges of the dual roles of work and home. Besides, staffroom dialogues were often between mixed age-groups where the lived experiences of others were inspirational for many to take charge of their own lives, it emerged. These discussions raised a lot of humorous reflection, adding that “Eventually we do talk about children as it is most practical to share how the previous teacher managed and what more can I do.” It took me time to understand the real meaning of the data that was generated through the dramatic processes. My resistance to see things from their perspective was initially oppressive to my growth. I started to look deeper within the dialogues as this anecdote illustrates:

We were part of a theatre workshop and the participants were mostly women. The workshop was organized to understand orientations to work and professional growth. In one of the enactments, the woman was supposed to be joining work as an early childhood worker. It was to be her first day and she was all prepared to leave her own children in a relative’s house with packed food and other preparations. Just as she was locking up, someone arrives from the village, a relative. With momentary hesitation, she opens the door and makes him comfortable and offers tea. With no props, the dialogues were supported by actions with imaginary objects, so she picks up the tea cup and puts it for wash. She then tells the guest that she has to go for 4 to 5 h and that the children will be there to guide him for what is needed. There is food and material to make tea, she said and the enactment ended.

My first reaction was the usual, judgmental, and I asked “You did not share your triumph of getting a new job?” I asked the participant. She promptly said that everything is rushed in the mornings and she was trying to wind up the home. Agreeing to the urgency of leaving for work on the first day, I added “But you picked up the glass to wash up?” As we continued, she argued that she was not sure of the relative’s reaction and did not want anything to go wrong. The family dynamics had to be given consideration. Eventually, the fact will not be hidden, “but I would be only withholding information to make a neat beginning”, she said (Delhi, 1999).

The power relations in patriarchal societies are known to be skewed in favour of men. Women thus often initiate relationships with compliance and deference and create positions for negotiation. However, the Premchand story discussed earlier

¹²A room for teachers.

also reflects similar techniques for resisting opposition or conflict with the more powerful. The short-term conformity allows for new opportunities to emerge. The individual behaviour of deference in situations also find resonance in cultural practices, in slightly modified ways.

In traditional societies and joint family living, the systems place restrictions on women. Indian examples are similar to women's lives in earlier times, where they were given specific amounts of money for running the household. Women hid money in secret places in the collective mode of secrecy. Women in India live with everyday friction with compliance and civility of social practices. However, collective gatherings during festivities allow them the liminality of song, dance and satire. The songs are passed orally through generations and it is within these culturally scripted exchanges that women express their discontent, mock the power relations and deride the autocracy of matriarchs and patriarchs. Usually no offence is taken and the exchange serves as a source for initiating reflection and review of power structures. Space to resist and express conflict within cultural sanctions is a form of recognition of the oppressed as well as cultural identity for those lower in the social hierarchy. When the arts function as caved-in spaces for suspension of reality, there is a democratic trend, just as the family elder can be the object of irony and humour, cultural forms also have scripts that question changing values and decay in attitudes of reverence for the powerful. Songs as a vehicle for women to resist domination and subvert their frustrations become powerful tools to reflect on social relations. Women's creativity is not limited to family dynamics; recent researches have also recorded folk songs sung by women where their bonds with nature are in evidence (Capila, 1999).

Rhythms of Order and Patterns of Tensions

Understanding human behaviour through frames of performance generates alternate cycle of friction, resistance, conflict and reaction. Resistance can be manifested in many ways, as silence, opposition, cooperation, or even ignoring the other. In everyday impositions by systems of power, the patterns of resistance emerge from a deep understanding as conveyed by defiance of rules in schools by children subjected to long periods of control. Often the defiance is subtle through acts of fugitive communication, evolving a hidden script such as a coded language or ridicule and banter. Resistance may occur by deference or irreverence, by avoiding eye contact or lying without batting an eyelid. Resistance may also occur by a total second level of communication unknown to the reins of power. The wide diversity in resolving conflict is a natural flow for the omnipresent power structures of control, discipline and regulation. Resistance is about specific actions in specific contexts as an outcome of agency. Reacting or resisting is not within the subject but a response

arising out of subjectivity, context and interaction. Depending on the context and actions, resistance creates changes or evokes resolve.

This paper has talked about resistance as an everyday act or challenge, however the rhythms of collective actions of the Indian freedom movement are deeply entrenched in my socialization. The resistance of non-cooperation, silence in the face of rebuke, lack of deference, not irreverence, but continued creations, actions, boycott, non-acceptance of honorific titles defined the *Swadeshi* movement in the early twentieth century in the wake of the British partition of Bengal. The flow generated a force of collective tidal churning, emanating energy that created a fear of dominance of the colonized. The British were compelled to reunite Bengal. The hidden script threatened to replace the public diktats. The songs and silent performances spread the message of self-assertion. The arts were demonstrated to be persuasive forms of expression and inspiration.

Theatre as an art-form opens human behaviour and its complex everyday rhythms through verbal and physical acts revealing diversities. Physical actions display power and resistance concealing no surprises. Social relations seemed imperative and inherently seeped in uneven power structures; social friction seemed organic to the warp and weft of the social fabric. The intertwining of the warp and weft create rhythms of resistance weaving new patterns. Resistance is thus an inherent aspect of social dynamics, either overtly or covertly. The hidden aspects of resistance are often not available to people in powerful positions, and can only be accessed through other means, like the informal expressions of individual and collective experience.

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Section II
Stability, Conflict and Renewal

A History of Resisting the Concept of Resistance in Thinking about Human Thinking: An Introduction to Section II

Jakob Waag Villadsen 

Abstract This introductory chapter frames the dialogue between and beyond the chapters of this section. It focuses on the conceptual efforts related to the phenomenon of resistance and its role in development, discussed as movements between *Stability, Conflict and Renewal*. The basic argument is that science, in general, and developmental psychology, in particular, due to its preoccupation with defining the world as it *is* has neglected the developmental question, which relates the certainty of what *is in the present, what has been in the past* and *what might become the uncertain future*. This emphasis on certainty in the production of knowledge can be traced back to the classical logic of Aristotle and its law of the excluded middle; prescribing that a given phenomenon only can be either one (A) or the other thing (non-A). Building on this credo of developmental *processes*, moving the organism from one state to the other is blocked and labelled as invalid (uncertain) knowledge. This introduction presents Hegel's dialectical logic as an alternative frame that reorients attention towards the processual nature of developmental phenomena. By outlining central ideas of the dialectical schema, this introductory chapter points not only to the potential of dialectical thinking, but also to the necessity for the empirical sciences to elaborate on the processes behind the black box of dialectical leaps. The chapters within this section add to this elaboration in very different ways and from different, yet complementary, perspectives.

Keywords Developmental logic · Developmental psychology · Dialectics · Subjectivity · Temporality · Resistance · Recognition

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Introduction

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the second section of the book and the six chapters which make up the collective exploration of resistance in human living in this section. As the section title signifies, the conceptual efforts centre on resistance and its role in the dynamic processes of transformation, emphasized as movements between *Stability, Conflict and Renewal*. This conceptualization is in accordance with a well-known script coming from the developmental sciences, where one relative stable state (A) through a transformative process arrives at a novel state (B) of relative stability. Whereas much psychological theory and folk psychology take the transformation for granted and perceives states A and B as a matter of fact in a natural occurring line of development, this transformative process is (or ought to be) the very starting point for any developmental science (Valsiner, 1987). In everyday life, such “taken for granted” understandings are evident when parents “protect” their children from challenges or let conflicts go by, with the comment that their child “is not old enough yet”. The act of protecting the child as well as the act of letting a conflict pass might be very reasonable in relation to the developmental situation of children, but grounding this reason in the age of the child indicates that time (in the chronological sense of the term) in itself is taken as the determinant of children’s capacities. With such a rationality, the lifetime (age) and life experience of children become separated and yet the former becomes the determinate of the latter. Actually most mainstream psychology has totally abolished the transformative processes as part of their ontology, based on the objective efforts of conceptualizing only what *is in the world*. In that sense, psychology tends to follow Aristotle’s law of the excluded middle which prescribes that any proposition of a term predicating a subject is either true or false and that a given phenomenon for this reason only can be in either one or the other state. Operating with this “either-or” credo, mainstream psychology has excluded the very processes of both everyday meaning-making as well as the *transforming processes*, moving a system from one state into another.

Of course, Aristotle’s law of the excluded middle is a philosophical concept providing the logic to generate certain knowledge about the world and thus more obligated towards the concept of “knowing” than towards “the world which we come to know”. Although the empirical sciences obligate themselves to exactly this world—it is the phenomena of interest that makes the disciplines of science—the epistemology of Aristotle is evident as a logic foundation for all hypothesis testing we find in modern science, where an operationalized idea is either confirmed or refused. So despite the important difference between the philosophic logic which has epistemo-logic questions as its abstract objective, and the empirical sciences which has concrete phenomena as objective for epistemo-logic efforts, their history intertwines and becomes interdependent over time (Engelsted, 1989). By acknowledging the philosophical roots of contemporary scientific enterprise, we are offered a more nuanced understanding of contemporary sciences and its potentials, especially when it comes to the scientific discipline of psychology, which has human meaning-making (the epistemo-logic question in philosophy) as its phenomena.

The Philosophical Roots of the Static Ontology

The influence of Aristotle in modern science is ambivalent, and while his logic is widely acknowledged (as the foundation for the classical logic), the general framework within it is often unknown or even rejected as mythical. Labelling Aristotle's work as mythical is not all wrong, and his conceptual frame offers plenty examples of this (Lewin, 1987). These mythical aspects play an important part in validating the epistemic value of logic. To put it a bit simply, the *mythos* of Ancient Greece was concerned with the origin and destination of our (temporal) being, while the logic centred on the question of certain knowledge—what is and what is not. As such, the mythical aspect of Aristotle's work provides an ontological frame where epistemology becomes meaningful. The central aspect of Aristotle's work is that logic of the present being only gains its logical status in relation to a specific understanding of the temporal being, and thus, applying the epistemology naturally implies an import of the *mythos*.

In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle (1924) exemplifies his logic with the proposition of being a man:

... it will not be possible to be and not to be the same thing, except in virtue of an ambiguity, just as if one whom we call 'man', others were to call 'not-man'; but the point in question is not this, whether the same thing can at the same time be and not be a man in name, but whether it can in fact. Now if 'man' and 'not-man' mean nothing different, obviously 'not being a man' will mean nothing different from 'being a man'; so that 'being a man' will be 'not being a man'; for they will be one. (*Metaphysics*, Book IV, part 4).

Here, Aristotle not only makes a strong claim against relativism by pointing out that the epistemic value of the concept (name) lies in its correspondence to the world and its ability to distinguish between its subjects, and he also makes it clear that these subjects in themselves are *exclusively* separated from one another. Where the first point was important in synthesizing the dichotomy of that time, between the form theory in Plato's idealism and the atomic theory in Democritus's materialism,¹ the latter point generated a worldview for this synthesis in which the world is composed of independent substances, to which a range of properties can be ascribed through the use of proper logic.² This last point is evident when Aristotle (1924) argues that *there cannot be an intermediate between contradictories, but of one subject we must either affirm or deny any one predicate* (*Metaphysics*, Book IV, part 7). The fundamental consequence of this statement is that the substances of the

¹For introduction to Aristotle's epistemic project see Engelsted (2017, 1989).

²In this outline of Aristotle's work, I excluded the discussion of law of contradictions and restrict myself to the law of excluded middle. It is important to note that the two laws are not identical and that they do not necessarily follow one another either in Aristotle's work or in general, although it is the case in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In the modern application of the law of excluded middle, the law of contradiction is usually considered as equivalent to the law of excluded middle, as outlined by Whitehead and Russell in *Principia Mathematica* (McGill, 2004/1939).

world can either be one thing (A) or something else (not-A) and that the role of science to a large extent is the discovery of the properties that defines a thing as a thing and distinguishes it from other things.

Static Ontology and the Ever-Changing World

Building on this logic, psychology has defined a range of properties—usually operationalized as psychological functions—which characterize the (true) human psyche as it is, without questioning their developmental foundation (Hviid & Villadsen, in press) which is most often explained with references to some neurological or genetic structure. Such explanations comes close to Aristotle's own solution to the problem of change, pointing out that he was not ignorant to the fact that the world around us (and him) does change all the time. Aristotle's solution can be detected in the conceptual trick (Valsiner, 1987), of separating changes into two classes: qualitative and quantitative changes:

[I]n general if a thing is perishing, will be present something that exists; and if a thing is coming to be, there must be something from which it comes to be and something by which it is generated, and this process cannot go on ad infinitum.-But, leaving these arguments, let us insist on this, that it is not the same thing to change in quantity and in quality. Grant that in quantity a thing is not constant; still it is in respect of its form that we know each thing. (*Metaphysics*, Book IV, part 5)

By separating the qualitative and quantitative aspects of *things*, the contradiction between variation and sameness is resolved as logical aspects of the same world (Valsiner, 1987). From this perspective, things change at the surface, but the essence remains the same, since it is the very essence which causes the changes in appearance: *there is something which always moves the things that are in motion, and the first mover is itself unmoved* (*Metaphysics*, Book IV, part 8). The qualitative and stable aspect (the permanent essence) of things functions as the first mover in the on-going unfolding of the things, which generates the quantitative transformation in the appearance of the essence. Modern psychology is full of developmental explanatory constructions which follow this developmental logic: pointing to something essential within the person as the cause of specific variation in the person's behaviour (Valsiner, 1987)—for example, in child psychology where non-existing objects such as temperament, level of intelligence or developmental disorders such as autism spectrum, language, learning and motor disorders move from descriptive labels to explanatory entities within the child. The basics of such an explanatory construct derive naturally from the acceptance of the Aristotelian bi-valent logic of either truth or falsity.

Developmental psychology is an illustrative example of the consequence of this approach, since most of the empirical efforts within this field have been on the true functional level of the child at a given age, often obtained at the average of representative sample, which transform the permanent essence of *always* into a

permanent essence of *everyone*. On this basis, it has been possible to generate a developmental line of unfolding essence of children—to become a proper adult. Yet, the existence of such essence, which contains a pre-given plan of the development, remains a mystery and the application of logic of certain knowledge to the developmental process becomes mythologic with the installation of the first mover. Hence, the developmental process, which is the objective framing the developmental branch of psychology, is in this approach not only neglected but completely blocked as a valid question, since the search focuses on what truly *is* at a given age. By focusing on the “*what is*” of the subject (the children, or in more general terms, persons or groups of persons), the temporal being is conceptualized solely on the basis of its present appearance. It builds on the simple assumption that this is the only way to generate certain (valid) knowledge.

In the history of both philosophy and psychology, there have been attempts to overcome static ontology and to create a genetic logic which orients towards the meaning-making and developmental processes beyond the temporal structure of the present. I will outline some of these attempts here.

Developmental Synthesis

One of the most genuine attempts to overcome static ontology and its dualism of what is and what is not is found in the dialectical logic of Hegel. The Hegelian critique of the classical (bi-valent) logic was not aimed directly at the logic of Aristotle, but rather at the Kantian reconceptualization of the logic and the law of excluded middle in the shape of Kant’s exclusive separation of human knowledge and the objects in the world, which the knowledge concerned (Engelsted, 1989; Valsiner, 2012). This exclusive separation was conceptualized as *ding für uns* (thing for us) and *ding an sich* (thing in itself). The basic idea in Kant’s epistemology was that human knowledge production was caused by things “out there”, but the appearance of their content was determined by the a priori categories of the rational mind. Operating within the frame of *Naturphilosophie*, Hegel refused Kant’s rationalistic notion of fixed mental categories as the foundation of true knowledge and the dualistic separation of mind and nature that followed. To Hegel, knowledge was to be placed in nature as a whole and human knowledge was produced in our experience of ourselves in nature and nature in us.

Of course, it is problematic to accept Kant’s application within the classical logic of Aristotle, since it is a logical contradiction to assume that a phenomena (mind) is both A (self) and B (nature) at the same time. Hegel’s effort and the conceptualization of the dialectical logic is basically an attempt to break through this problem, by extending (not rejecting it) the logic of what is (A or not-A), with the intermediated and tension-filled relation which brings unity to the contradiction of what is and what is not, thereby also opening the question of what is not yet. The central argument here is that what a phenomenon is and what it is not is not exclusively separated from one another, but exists in a dynamic and oppositional relation with

each other. In other words, the certainty of the present being exists along with an equal certainty that this present being will become its opposite and that both kinds of certainties are united in the concept of becoming. In that sense, Hegel breaks the ground for a developmental ontology beyond Aristotle's concept of unfolding essence, since the constant process of relating among opposites generates a dynamic condition for the being where genuine novel qualities can emerge.

This is a fundamental shift in orientation in which the present state of the phenomena (in itself) can no longer be taken as the unit of development and but only as an outcome of development. As Baldwin remarks, the Hegelian dialectic makes it possible to move beyond the question of composition (e.g. $H_2O = \text{water}$) and on to the question of genetic progression (e.g. $H_2O <$ becomes water) (Baldwin, 1930). From this perspective, water is not simply H_2O : the latter can become water under some condition, but it can also exist as steam and ice under other conditions, while totally dissolving under yet other sets of conditions. In all cases, H_2O is not simply unfolding its permanent essence; rather, it develops in relation to what it is not.

The revolutionary "insight" of the dialectical logic was in that sense the being-becoming relationship in phenomena that unites the temporal structure of past, present and future. As Anisov has recently illustrated with regard to the system of temporal logic, there are central differences in the temporal structure of past-present-future that cannot be understood simply by acknowledging what certainly is at the moment of now, since what has been in the past can only be understood as an outcome of uncertainties, while the future is characterized by uncertainties of what is not yet (Anisov in Valsiner, 2009). Hegel's conceptualization of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis triad (or abstract-negative-concrete, as Hegel formulated it) is an attempt to outline the genetic progression by emphasizing exactly the dialectical leaps which makes and resolves uncertainties, thereby transforming phenomena—in opposition to the situation where no uncertainties emerge and the phenomena remains in a process of relative stability. In this triadic movement, the process of becoming emerges in the phenomena's dynamic and oppositional relationships between what is and is not (thesis), which breaks the ground for what is not yet (antithesis) and finally arriving at what actually becomes in the future (synthesis).

Like all other revolutions, the revolution of dialectical logic did not provide genuine scientific development, but only the conditions from where such a development is possible. The introduction of the dialectical leaps is, let alone, insufficient since it only highlights the black box to which the concept relates and thus lays the ground for the empirical investigation of the developmental question (Valsiner, 2009; Engelsted, 1989). The big breakthrough of Hegel's dialectical logic was thus first and foremost philosophical, while the central scientific question of how exactly such developmental leaps occur and become synthesized for a specific developmental phenomenon remains a challenge for the specific sciences. In psychology, many theoretical steps have been taken to resolve this question. For instance, concepts such as irritation (Peirce, 1878), crisis (Vygotsky, 1982; Erikson, 1956; Erikson & Erikson, 1998), disequilibrium (Piaget, 1971) and turning point (Rutter, 1994) have been used to elaborate on the developmental situations that emerge at

different levels of the relation between the human organism and its environment, in creating the conditional antithesis that makes development possible (for an overview see Zittoun, 2009).

An excellent example of this kind is the work by Piaget, who conceptualized the psychological system as the structural relations between the environment and cognition. Here, the cognitive structures that framed the thinking and actions of the individual transformed qualitatively due to the dynamic relation between the biological maturation and the personal experience of the external structure (Piaget, 1971). Based on this understanding, Piaget argued that children's development went through different developmental stages, where new stages emerged on the basis of the succession of the previous ones. A central characteristic of this transformation is that when the cognition of children progresses from one qualitative stage to another, their thinking proceeds from a stable but simpler, to more a complex but rather unstable mode of relating to the world, until the transformation is successfully completed. In Piaget's terminology, the developmental leaps can be described as movement between equilibration and disequilibration of the relation between cognitive and external structures. The whole idea in the developmental script is that children through their activities discover new forms of thinking about and acting in the world which generate a structural conflict (disequilibration) within the developing cognitive system between existing structures and emerging structures. Though this resolution of the conflict, the two sets of structures synthesize into a cognitive structure and thus a more complex way of relating to the external structures.

In the work of Erikson, the driving force of the development is the individual life circumstances and the demands it put upon the person. Erikson's developmental conceptualization describes eight stages of identity development running from infancy to late adulthood. Erikson argues that all eight stages are present at the beginning of development, but only gain their developmental importance in relation to particular life circumstances occurring in demarcated age periods (Erikson, 1956). Like Piaget, Erikson acknowledged the discovery of new aspects in the world as the crucial catalyser for the development. For Erikson, it was the transformation of the significant social relationships (e.g. friends and partners in early adulthood) which generated the core conflicts (e.g. intimacy versus isolation in early adulthood) in which the person needed to engage and resolve in order to maintain identity as person in the social world (Erikson & Erikson, 1998). A central developmental aspect of Erikson's theory is that resolution of the conflict in one stage is not required in order to proceed to the next stages, since the stages are not organized by the identity alone, but by life circumstances emerging between biological dispositions, sociocultural ecology and personal experience (Erikson & Erikson, 1998). Nevertheless, identity and its resolution to the conflicts (crises) between the personal and sociocultural organization of life set the stage for the conflicts that follow in the proceeding stages.

In both the cases, the relationship between different (analytical) units within the system generates disturbance which transforms the system from a state of stability into a state of conflict, which might or might not restabilize the system in a renewed

form. In both cases, it is the discovery of the new aspects of the external world, be it its structures or its sociality and generates the transitional conditions for further development.

In many ways, the chapters of this section can be understood as building on the same triadic developmental script, but by emphasizing that resistance is a vital part of the developmental process, the chapters highlight that the conflict is not just anchored in the disturbance of elements, but is just as well in conflict of interest. The genuine point in elaborating on the developmental process as social conflict is that the environment (as structure, sociocultural organization or any other conceptualization of third variable) is no longer just an opposition variable to the organism which calls for adaptation, but also a relation in which the organism engages in order—not just to adapt—but also to overcome. In neither Piaget's nor Erikson's work is this dimension incorporated. What follows from this omission is that the normative elements in the stages of development in their theoretical frames, to a large extent, are pre-given since the environment is conceived as a static condition. We thus end with a simplistic introduction of a third variable in a static logic. In that sense the triadic developmental script of Hegel dialectics is incorporated, but the relational characteristics are still those of interaction between exclusive separated parts operating *on* each other.

By the introduction of the dynamic concept of conflict of interests, the relation between the person (now as an intentional subject) and the environment (as sociocultural organized collective) takes a different form, where the reciprocity of active orientation towards one another generates a mutual process of recognizing and resisting of the established relationship—its limits and possibilities. Living *within* a social and cultural organized world incontrovertibly implies living to overcome (or as the Gegenstand notion indicates breakthrough—Chapter “[Rhythms of resistance and existence: An introduction](#)”, Introduction, this volume) the existing sociocultural organization of life, while remaining within (as a part of) this organization. Hence, in the following chapters, the relationship between person and environment is taken as an inclusive separation of parts developing *within* a systematic and dynamical whole. This orientation on the conflictual interests naturally implies an emphasis on the person as a subject, whose engagements in the world provide direction and purpose to the participation in sociocultural life. It is in the case of divergent interest within and among subjects that mutual re-organization becomes an issue and foundation to the future development of sociocultural life.

In many respects, this orientation was already present in Hegel's work on the dialectics of the subject as illustrated in his myth of the Lordship and Bondage (Hegel, 1807). This myth is an abstract and idealized outline of how the subjective (in sense of a self-conscious being) originates in the meeting with its otherness. As a hyper-generalized story, it can be read and interpreted in many ways and has been so over the years. In my outline below, I draw on Nissen's (2010) interpretation and Stern's (2002) discussion of the various interpretations of the past.

The Emergency of the Social Subject

In the story, Hegel portrays the meeting of two kinds of consciousness in the form of two individuals. Through this meeting, they come to experience themselves in the form of conscious objects of each other. In the astonishment of the object of consciousness being out of them, a struggle of life and death is initiated in order to regain autonomy of consciousness and the power to impose its will on the object. Through this struggle, a process of mutual recognition begins in the shape of resisting and counter-resisting the deathly desires of one's opponent. As Hegel put it: "*They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another*" (Hegel, 1807, § 184). In that sense, they become conscious of their own consciousness through the struggle and mutual recognition embedded in it. In this self-consciousness—the experience of being positioned as conscious subject—the desire of control transforms into a desire of being recognized. As the struggle moves on, the one opponent becomes superior and near defeat, and the beaten "*becomes aware that life is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness*" (Hegel, 1807, § 189). Here, he chooses life in favour of recognition from the Other. The superior, on the other hand, realizes that his desire of being recognized is dependent on the other as an object of this desire.

As a result, the trial by death becomes settled in the arrangement of a master–slave relation. Hence, the slave ends up in bondage, subjected to the desires of his master, who now has regained the control of his consciousness by excising power on the slave's body. Here, stability seems to have emerged, but Hegel quickly demonstrates that this is an illusion. By pointing at how the master–slave agreement in the case of the master('s attitude towards the slave) negate the experience of mutual recognition, since the master now perceive the slave as a simple instrument of his desires—including recognition of his will. As Hegel remarks: "*On that account a form of recognition has arisen that is one-sided and unequal*" (Hegel, 1807, § 191).

Here, the master is negated into the merely subject–object relation and remains fixated by his own desires in an enclosed system of desires and objects (including the bondage). The slave, on the other hand, gains subjectivity through the recognition of the needs of the master and the productions of things to satisfy those needs. Through the production, the slave becomes aware of his creativity and starts to perceive himself reflected in the products created, since he no longer just consumes things but also works on things while leaving them in existence. *Thus precisely in labour where there seemed to be merely some outsider's mind and ideas involved, the bondsman becomes aware, through this re-discovery of himself by himself, of having and being a 'mind of his own'* (Hegel, 1807, § 196).

Through the slavery for the master, the slave eventually realizes that the world around him is partly a product of his being in the world (including the master which need becomes mediated through the production of the slave) and thus begins to value the independent existence of the world around him. Hence, the slave gains the self-consciousness as an attuned subject being in the world, not merely because of the acquired skills which makes him master over "something", but because of the

acknowledgement of “universal formative activity” of forming and being formed, of recognizing and being recognized.

The central vehicle in this telling of the origin of subjectivity is the intersubjective conflict which develops in a triadic movement. First, the subject (the slave) moves from a situation of equality (identical subjects recognizing each other) to an oppositional relationship in terms of power balance (the one-sided recognition) and finally “back” to a symbolic equality where the subject through the meaningful practice no longer finds himself alienated from his life-world—the subject is through the meaningful practice both recognized and recognizing.

As an interesting aspect of the process Hegel describes, the process of mutuality is placed not just in the act of recognition but also in the act of resisting. Hegel makes clear in later discussions of the myth that the central foundation which initiates the conflict is the situation where the subject (self-consciousness) ... *must resist recognizing an other as a free being, just as, on the other hand, each must concern itself with eliciting recognition within the other’s self-consciousness, being posited as an independent being ...* (Hegel, *The Berlin Phenomenology* § 431, quoted in Stern, 2002, p. 82). Hence, a core aspect of the triadic movement is the transformation of the resistance, generating a sphere, where its opposite (in form of recognition) becomes possible. For this reason, it could be argued that it is in the process of resisting the other that the subject comes into being (Žižek, 1999). From this perspective, the development of subjectivity proceeds as an on-going process of recognizing and resisting the other. It is in this process of recognizing the subjectivity of the other and yet resisting it as the subjectivity of one’s (own) being that the individual comes into and maintain its existence as a subject being. In this process the subjective organization life is constantly reorganized in relation to the organization of the other and vice versa.

Despite the fact that the Master–Slave myth is abstract and fictional, its impact on Western philosophy and social sciences has been enormous. As Nissen (2010) remarks, Hegel’s myth of the master and slave has functioned as the background for a whole set of traditions within the social sciences, such as Althusser, Honneth, Foucault and Bateson, just to mention a few. Most interestingly, the legacy and influence of Hegel’s myth has focused more or less exclusively on the concept of recognition (most evident in point of reference such as the *Dialectics of Recognition*) and neglected the concept of resistance. Despite its more modest influence in the discipline of psychology, this still seems to be the case.

Baldwin has, for instance, used and elaborated on Hegel’s dialectical scheme in relation to psychological development and conceptualized children’s imitation as having central developmental potential (Baldwin, 1906a, Hviid & Villadsen, *in press*). It is clear that the act of imitating activities and persons in the environment is an act of recognizing some aspects of his or her environment. Moreover, when Baldwin uses the concept of persistent imitation, he makes clear that it is never a simple mirror of the environment, but a genuine personal version of what has been perceived as environmental suggestions (Baldwin, 1906b)—something Baldwin labels as “sembling”. With this concept of sembling, Baldwin points at the direction of the oppositional relation between recognition and resistance, but fails to

elaborate on the process both in the process of imitation and in the question of who is allowed to imitate the subject (Hviid & Villadsen, [in press](#)). The same can be found within the Vygotskian tradition which has been commonly criticized for overlooking conflictual aspects of the internalization of collective meanings—yet these are evident as ground for the work of the development of personality, presented by Leontjev (1977) and Vygotsky (2004). The chapters of this section, which I will address in the following attempt, elaborate empirically and conceptually on exactly this dimension in the inter- and intra-subjective life.

Processes of Resistance in the Subjective and Intersubjective Life Course

The section begins in the same storytelling universe as Hegel's Master-Slave myth. In the story *Anjani: Unspoken Resistance*, by Ayesha Sindhu, a young Indian scholar, journalist and author, the struggle of Hegel's story is repeated in the shape of the elderly Mrs. Mehta, who passes her well-kept secret on to Rhea, a friend of her grandchild. And with the same complexity as Hegel, Sindhu manages to address a variety of issues such a power and marital relationships, gender and upbringing, as well as attachment and existential grief unfolded in one conflictual story. The core conflict in the story centres on Mrs. Mehta's husband and his lack of affection for their daughter, the daughter's tragic death and Mrs. Mehta's dramatic action of swapping the baby boy that her husband so deeply desired with another boy at the maternity clinic—only awaiting the husband: *to fall asleep and then I'd whisper it in his ear. Every night.* Due to a variety of issues and multiplicity of layers, the interpretation of the story is not straightforward and I will leave the reader to make his or her own interpretation. Yet, by referring to Hegel, I asks: Who becomes the master of one's life-world and desires and who becomes the slave?

In the chapter *Resisting but accepting ideology: Making sense through doublethink*, the young Chilean Scholar David Carré follows this lead by illustrating how the Orwellian literary notion of *doublethink* can enlighten us about how a person manages to maintain the experience of being a singular subject, while making conflictual collective meanings *meaningful* within the personal life course. Carré investigates how a young economist makes sense of his entrance into the economic field. Through an analysis of a series of interviews, he identifies several contradicting meaning constructions in the shape of an ideological, scientific and pragmatic understanding of economy. By analysing how the person recognizes, engages in, yet resists these contradictory meaning constructs, Carré conceptualizes how contradictory relations provide the direction of a personal take on becoming an economist, in concordance with both the professional and societal life. In this sense, Carré's elaborations of the notion of doublethink emphasize the intrapersonal dimension of the becoming of a subject, while insisting that this subject is social and societal in its nature.

In Chapter *Making meaning out of a lifetime: The life and times of Indira Gandhi*, the microgenetic processes from Carré's interviews are extended by the Indian scholar Punya Pillai and her ontogenetic analysis of the life of Indira Gandhi. Pillai nicely illustrates this with the analysis of Indira Gandhi's political trajectory which was closely related to her dedication to her father (Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister). Still, the move from a political trajectory to a personal style of being a politician seems to certain degree to be shaped in resistance to her father. Moreover, Pillai's longitudinal analysis underlines the notion of *rhythms* of resistance when she portrays how different life conditions at different times of Indira Gandhi life generated waves of resistance towards her father, her marriage and her political life. Like other waves, these waves of resistance came over time to interfere and that created a sense of existential concern and purpose as well as a multiple set of borders towards the environment, in order to protect these existential concerns (Hviid, 2016). As such, the chapter points at the plurality and multitude of personal concerns in life and how tensions between these concerns provide the life course of the person with actual developmental directedness (Hviid, 2016)—something which is even present in Indira Gandhi's ambivalent legacy.

Chapter *The street art of resistance*, continues in the political arena—now in the aftermath of the Egyptian revolution. The chapter is written by Sarah H. Awad, Brady Wagoner and Vlad Glaveanu from the Aalborg University group of cultural psychology. It investigates the interrelation between resistance and novelty in the artistic practice of graffiti painting. Through their analysis, it becomes clear that revolution in itself is not developmental; yet, it is the outcome of development and functions as a catalyser for further development. In the multilevel analysis that includes the position of the graffiti painters, the authorities and the audience/pedestrians, various perspectives on the graffiti and the interrelatedness of the group of actors emerge. The temporal analysis draws attention to the transformative dialogical activity of both personal and social levels. The interviews of the graffiti painters echo Hegel's notion of labour on things as subjects' breakthrough of the alienation within power structures, since it is here that the subject finds himself reflected in world and the world reflected in him.

In Chapter *Resisting inequality but loving those cheap, ironed shirts: Danish expatriates' experiences of becoming employers of domestic staff in India*, the transformation of society is left in favour of the transition between societies. Here, the Danish scholar Sanna Schlieve investigates how Danish expatriates make sense of the transition of moving from the household setting contextualized within Danish society to a household setting within Indian society, mostly mediated by their terms of employment. Through the analysis of interview material on the new experiences of having domestic staff, Schlieve identifies oppositional norms and moral values between the former and the present life-world of the Danish expatriates. Based on the analysis, she illustrates how different sematic strategies are combined with concrete actions in order to overcome the oppositional value and to make pragmatic synthesis. In this way, Schlieve adds to Carré's concept of doublethink, by pointing at the synthesis in actions that makes it possible to maintain the oppositional

semantic position—which Carré conceptualized as a necessity to comply with oppositional demands in the personal life-world.

In the final chapter of this section, *Children's resistance in the emergence of learning as leading activity: Playfulness in the transformation of spaces of participation*, the issue of sociocultural organization of human life is continued from another angle. Drawing on a cultural historical approach, the Chilean scholar Paula Cavada-Hrepich investigates the role of resistance in children's transition into elementary school by comprehending the transition in a Chilean and a Danish context. Based on analysis of video material and observational records, the shift of activities—from playing to learning—is explored by focusing on resistance. By the unique combination of data from two relatively diverse organizations of preschool, Cavada-Hrepich adds to our general understanding of the transition to school and learning by pointing out that children's resistance towards the learning activity is a fundamental personal process in becoming a learner. The central argument of Cavada-Hrepich is that in the very resistance towards the learning motives of school practice, the children transform their own motives. By relating to the existing oppositional motives, school practice and eventually the learning activities transform into something meaningful.

I hope that readers will recognize my introduction of the chapters in their own reading, while resisting a bit in order to move the ideas further.

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Anjani: Unspoken Resistance

Ayesha Sindhu

Abstract This short story is a work of fiction. On a single night in transit at her friend's grandmother's home, Rhea shares an intense dialogue about Mrs. Mehta's past that lights up her life-world casting long shadows of a shocking secret.

Keywords Fiction · Gender dynamics · Resistance

The house smelled of menthol cigarettes and musty carpets. It was deathly quiet. Rhea's armpits felt damp in Delhi's midsummer heat.

The cream-coloured wall behind the chaise longue was covered in blue pottery plates; a few looked like they might be from Russia. Rhea sat down in an armchair upholstered in orange fabric placed in the corner of the room. She got up immediately to face it. It felt like she'd sat in the imprint of another human body.

"That was my husband's", a voice said from behind her.

She whipped around to meet the speaker: her college roommate Maya's grandmother. She stood in an arc of yellow light, her skin looking like the fawn of a deerskin coin pouch. Her hazel brown eyes peered out of a face lined with age. She was a dignified pretty.

"Hello, Mrs. Mehta, it's so nice to finally meet you", Rhea said, taking a step forward. "Maya talks about you all the time. Thank you for letting me stay with you tonight". She smiled, unsure of what to say next.

"It's very nice to meet you too, Rhea. You've had a long flight, would you like to freshen up before dinner? The bathroom's just down the hall, to the right". The old lady's tone was reserved, yet, her eyes were bright, her smile eager.

"Yes, please, that'll be great", Rhea responded, heading in the direction Mrs. Mehta pointed to with a slender finger.

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“There are some lovely photographs lining that corridor, of when I was younger...”

Rhea tried to hide her smile as she hurried out of the room, passing the wall of photographs swiftly. The bathroom door was shut. She turned the knob and stepped in. She breathed in sharply; the smell was nauseating.

There were dried roses on almost every flat surface of the bathroom, in small vases next to the soap dispenser on the granite sink, on either sides of the mirror and on the towel rack. Long stalks of dead flowers hung upside down, strung neatly on the rod of the shower curtain, the thorns useless and brittle. They smelled sickly sweet, like stale perfume.

Rhea looked at herself in the mirror; there were shrivelled flowers all around her in the reflection. She rubbed her hands together under the stream of cold water coming out of the shiny tap, splashing her face a few times before running them over her clean skin. She wiped her face on the fluffy, white towel, her lip gloss leaving a hurried red streak on one side. She turned the towel around and hung it back carefully, making sure the little stain was hidden.

Once back in the hallway, she stopped to look at the wall of photographs. There were around twenty frames of different sizes and shades lining the wall in uneven rows. There were a few colour photographs of who Rhea imagined was Maya’s father as a strapping young boy, playing football, grinning at the camera, gaps in his teeth.

The rest were mainly framed pictures of Mrs. Mehta, many only of her. “Well, if that’s not vain”, Rhea muttered as she looked them over one by one. Most of them had been taken at exotic locations, with stunning views in the background. Rolling hills, sand dunes and camels, monsoon showers, and in front of each of these backdrops stood the slender frame of a younger Mrs. Mehta. They were black and white images of a carefree young woman, her dark, flowing hair framing the alabaster of her skin. The colour of the boy’s childhood seemed almost tacky next to the monochrome of his mother’s youth.

“Rhea?” Mrs. Mehta called out. “Are you ready to see your room?”

“I’m just looking at these photographs. Is that Maya’s dad?”

There was silence for a moment. Mrs. Mehta appeared at the mouth of the passage.

“Which one?”

“In this black and white one”, Rhea pointed to a picture in a plain ochre frame. “You’re holding a baby in your arms”.

“No, that’s my daughter, Anjani”, she said, her voice suddenly steely. Rhea turned slowly to look at her. “Enough with the photographs, let me show you your room now. Dinner will be ready soon”. The thin skin on the old lady’s neck was quivering. She walked past Rhea slowly, her off-white cotton sari’s orange border swishing as it stroked the mosaic floor. She opened a door further down the passage and walked in. Rhea followed her wondering why Maya had never spoken of an aunt.

“I hope you’ll be comfortable here”, Mrs. Mehta smiled, her voice warm again. “I’ve put out fresh towels for you but this room doesn’t have an attached bathroom. You’ll have to use the one in the hallway. I’ll ask the maid to bring your bags in”, she added as she started to walk out.

She turned around suddenly and looked Rhea straight in the eye. “It’s nice to have a girl in here again”.

Rhea sat down heavily on the queen-sized bed. Her shoulders ached, and her eyes felt dry. The walls of the room were milky white and unadorned. There were no pictures and no streaks of dirt, just the stark white of the sterile paint. “Like a hospital”, she thought.

A single rose leaned languidly against the rim of its tubular vase on the dressing table. The water, reaching more than half way up the stem, was clean, barring the specks of dust roaming about in it lazily, like infinitesimal babies in amniotic fluid. The edges of the rose’s petals curled downward petulantly, seeming unhappy at the barren surroundings of the bare room.

The maid dragged Rhea’s suitcase in a few minutes later and told her dinner would be ready in half an hour. Rhea stretched back on the bed and shut her eyes.

Maya talked about her grandmother all the time, her voice always full of awe. They were stories of childhood summers spent in Delhi with Mrs. Mehta, long walks in Lodi Gardens, post-lunch treats of ice cream and kulfi and the late night drives down Rajpath to buy big, bubblegum-pink balloons.

Rhea loved the stories. She would listen to Maya and see herself in those memories. She imagined not one but two little girls with pigtails and denim shorts walking on either side of Mrs. Mehta, holding her hands as she told them about how Shivji chopped off his son Ganesh’s head and then replaced it with that of an elephant.

“Ganesh was only protecting his mother’s honour”, Maya would say, mimicking her grandmother. “But what can a father know about loving a child?” The two of them would laugh at Maya’s old woman voice.

Now Rhea was in that same grandmother’s home and all the stories came flooding back; stories she never had in her own childhood. Her own grandparents had either died before she was born or soon after, leaving her with few memories of the time she spent with them.

“Dinner!” Mrs. Mehta’s voice trilled from down the hall.

Rhea jumped up, rubbing her eyes awake. She pulled out a pair of linen shorts from her suitcase and replaced her airplane jeans with them. She smoothed the shorts down, flattening the fabric against her thighs and easing out the creases with her palms. As she left the room, she silently mouthed three syllables over and over again: “An-ja-ni”.

Maya had insisted that Rhea stay with Mrs. Mehta. They had been friends for six years, the first four as roommates in college in the States. They were in different cities now separated by their dreams and a thousand odd miles, but they spoke often, almost every week. Rhea had called Maya instinctively when she realized she’d be spending a night in Delhi, before heading north to her family in Dehradun.

Maya was ecstatic at the prospect of Rhea meeting Mrs. Mehta. “You have to stay with her, there’s no other way”, she said over the phone. “You’ll love her”.

Dried flowers dominated almost every flat surface in the dining room, the smell of dinner barely covering the nauseating sweetness of their artificial aroma. Lamps in different shapes and sizes bathed the room in a warm, mottled light.

Mrs. Mehta was seated at the head of a table big enough for six. Rhea sat down to her right, unfolded the white napkin and put it on her lap, wondering if the other chairs were ever used. The spread in front of her was spectacular. Egg curry, bhindi, dal, palak paneer and raita sat in large paisley patterned china bowls. Rings of onions and tomatoes and slivers of cucumber were assembled on a large platter at the centre of the table, wedges of lemon keeping them company.

“When I was twenty-five I was married. Quite late for the old days”, Mrs. Mehta said suddenly. Her gleaming eyes were fixed on the younger girl. “My life ended with that beginning”.

Rhea’s cheeks coloured as she bit into a cucumber sliver. She could feel the older woman’s gaze on the side of her face. She stared at the food in front of her.

“I travelled the world with my husband. He was seven years older than me. A doctor, you know. He had a successful private practice, earned well. ‘A perfect boy’ my parents called him. Who had a car back then? A left-hand drive, chocolate-brown Ford sedan. He’d smoke imported cigarettes as he drove around, quite dapper”.

Rhea kept quiet as she ladled the black dal into a bowl. She kept her eyes focused on the darkness of the lentils as she wondered how old her host was. Seventy-five?

The maid came in from the kitchen and placed a hot roti on a plate between Mrs. Mehta and Rhea.

The old lady ignored it and lit a cigarette, blowing out a delicate tendril of smoke. Rhea looked at her and then at the hot, fluffy orb of bread, ready for the taking, not sure of what to do next.

“Put some vegetables on that plate”, Mrs. Mehta snapped suddenly.

Rhea immediately reached out for the bowl of spinach and served herself a modest helping. She took a quick look at her host. Mrs. Mehta’s hazel eyes looked much darker in the light of the lamps.

“He loved taking photographs of me. Dr. Mehta. Rajeev. He took all the ones in the corridor. Obsessed. He’s dead now, been gone for more than ten years”.

Rhea smiled weakly and broke off a piece of roti and dunked it in the dal. The air smelled like stale mint.

“He would bring me red roses every Sunday. Twelve buds of blood-red perfection. They’d bloom in a few days, and then by Friday, they’d be dead. All twelve”.

“I love roses”, Rhea said between bites. “I like the white ones most”.

“Don’t be silly! What’s a flower without colour? A flower must be a hue”.

“White’s a colour”, Rhea began, but she forced her attention back to chewing her food.

“Then, four years after our wedding, Anjani was born. A perfect little bud, too. She had button eyes and a mop of black hair, like mine. My husband thought her

skin too sallow, her hair too dark. He wanted a boy. Never picked her up; said he was afraid he'd drop her. The roses stopped".

Rhea looked up and saw Mrs. Mehta staring ahead.

"It feels so good to eat home-cooked food after so long, you know Mrs. Mehta?" Rhea began. "Maya and I craved Indian all the time when we were in college. The restaurants were all right, but their food was nowhere near authentic. She'll be so jealous to know I'm eating this".

"Anjani was two when she died".

Rhea looked down at the shiny centre of her plate where the gravy of her egg curry had not yet reached. The patch was becoming smaller as the liquid spread.

"We buried her at the cemetery near the pir baba shrine on the road to the cantonment railway station. They don't cremate young children you know, so that later their souls can come back to reclaim their lost lives. Rajeev had to pick her up that day. Her tiny body wrapped in white, just the way it was when they put her in my arms for the first time".

The maid came in with more rotis, setting them down on the plate before walking out.

"I won't eat more roti, Mrs. Mehta. Can I pass you one?"

"My husband wanted another child very soon after. I think it was a month later when he started off. Bastard".

Rhea felt her eyes well up. The dal felt thick in her mouth, lining her palette and tongue.

"A brand new boy I had, eleven months after my little baby died. My husband, the doctor, the perfect boy was ecstatic. The day our son was born, he brought red roses for my bedside. Two dozen in a glass vase. Green stems in clear water".

"Could I have something to drink please, Mrs. Mehta?"

The old lady said nothing. She lifted her slightly bent frame off the chair and walked into the kitchen without saying a word. Rhea closed her eyes and exhaled. Her brain worked furiously trying to remember if Maya had ever mentioned her aunt, or even that name, Anjani. Never.

Mrs. Mehta walked back into the room and set a bottle of refrigerated water down on the table. Light brown freckles covered the backs of her hands, the raised green veins visible under her thin skin.

"What time is your train tomorrow?"

"At nine in the morning, I've already booked a cab for seven so I get to the station well in time, you never know with Delhi traffic", Rhea babbled, relieved at the turn in conversation. "That's quite early in the morning so I'll see myself out; you don't have to worry".

Mrs. Mehta finally began eating her dinner. The clock on the wall near the kitchen door was running a few minutes late. They ate in silence, Rhea's stomach was full but she kept spooning dal and spinach into her mouth periodically to keep from speaking. She thought of her friend's grandmother, the one Maya loved, the one who told fascinating stories. She looked up and met Mrs. Mehta's gaze.

“I got some ice cream put in the freezer for you”, she said, her voice softer now. “My Maya loves ice cream. I’ve dismissed the maid for the night. Go get it from the kitchen”.

It was a hot night. The air was swelling with premonsoon humidity. The bottle of water had been sweating profusely, leaving a circular stain of moistness on the tablecloth. Rhea was only too glad to leave the room. She was thankful for the tub of chocolate-chip ice cream.

She sat down at the dining table and began peeling off the lid. A few big scoops of the quickly softening ice cream made their way into the glass bowl in front of her. Rhea stuck a spoonful of it in her mouth, letting the cold blob melt inside.

“The night before I was to leave the hospital, I switched babies”.

The stainless steel in Rhea’s mouth turned sour.

“Rajeev spent his whole life doting on that boy; till the day he died. His pride and joy, no less. He sat for hours in that orange armchair, rocking the baby in his lap, soothing colic, humming rhymes and whatnot. Cricket on Sundays, math theorems for school, driving stick shifts; he taught that boy all of it”.

The fan creaked above their heads, the hot air churning under its blades.

“Did you ever tell him?” Rhea startled herself with her question.

“I’d wait for him to fall asleep and then I’d whisper it in his ear. Every night”.

Resisting but Accepting Ideology: Making Sense Through Doublethink

David Carré

*As men in society, scientists are sometimes the agents,
sometimes the objects, of resistance to their own discoveries.*
(Barber, 1961, p. 602)

Abstract Resistance implies, by definition, to stand against something—be it status quo or change—in order to promote something else. To consider those stances as proper resistance, however, it is common to assume them as fixed over time. Challenging this assumption, the present chapter explores how and why oppositional stances change over time, sometimes even to their exact opposite. Rather than pointing this phenomenon as a lack of logical consistency or cynicism, its purposefulness is explored from an alternative conceptual framework: doublethink. Following the contemporary, organizational understanding of this notion, the case of a young Chilean economist is analysed. This case provides a vivid example of how contradictory thinking is not necessarily experienced as problematic or unsettling, as largely assumed in the literature. Moreover, this example shows how switching between contradictory stances could support the organization of a complex, multilayered professional role, precisely by making quite different dimensions converge. Finally, implications for the current understanding of resistance and for social studies of science are presented.

Keywords Resistance · Cognitive polyphasia · Doublethink · Ideology · Economists

Resistance, as a general notion, evokes mixed impressions. On the one hand, it portrays the courageous, rebellious face-off of the weak against the powerful, the oppressor. History is generous with examples of this way of resisting: from *La Résistance française* fighting against Nazi occupiers to the non-violent resistance and civil disobedience movement led by Gandhi against the British colonial regime. Yet resistance might also stand for those holding stubborn positions, acting against everything without proposing any alternatives, for instance, reactionaries, those who strived for returning to the *status quo ante* and opposed to (what was presented as) the transformative forces of the French Revolution. Therefore, as these two sides

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of resistance show, there must be first a pushing, transformative force—oppressive or progressive—in order to be a resistance against it. Hence, regardless of whether its valuation is emancipatory or reactionary, resistance appears to exist primarily as an oppositional, negative force.

Going beyond this assumption, however, the present volume offers several examples (Cavada, 2017; Konwar and Bhargava, 2017; Sharma, 2017; *et passim*) of what emerges out of such “negative” forces. In brief, these works extensively emphasize how oppositional stances could become stepping-stones for creating novel psychological paths in human lives. In this sense, resisting against something—institutional settings, societal expectations, or family pressures—might begin as a blunt “no”; but it might also support the person into constructing something different, something better. Ultimately, as shown by the examples in the previous paragraph, those who have resisted against something have at the same time always strived for creating—or returning to—something other than the current state of affairs.

The general character of resistance is well summarized by Valsiner (2014), in particular through his A <>non-A schema—based on Alexius Meinong’s and the Graz School. In the context of his cultural psychology of semiotic dynamics, Valsiner proposes that for every node-point sign “A” there is necessarily a “non-A” field-like sign (Josephs et al., 1999). Here, it is worth noting that the “<>” symbol connecting A and non-A denotes a co-constitutive relation between them. In other terms, the nature of A is necessarily defined in relation to all the elements, or meanings that legitimately link with what A-is-not. This approach for defining the content of a sign reflects the existence—and creation—of mental objects as “*Gegenstand*”, German word for object that “entails the notion of position (*Stand*) against (*Gegen*) something” (Diriwächter and Valsiner 2008, p. 219). Therefore, for Valsiner (2014), resistance is one of the most basic drivers for the functioning and development of the human mind. In his words: “All psychological phenomena can be characterized by DIRECTION and COUNTER- DIRECTION (or—RESISTANCE to DIRECTION). The unity of such direction and counter-action creates for psychology the arena for conceptualizing dualities in their functions” (p. 13). As it will become clear, this is the general framework for the ideas presented from now on.

In this chapter, I look to further elaborate on the basic, driving role of resistance for human psychological functioning proposed by Valsiner (2014). In particular, I focus on the cases in which persons resist and forbid themselves certain opinions or interests in order to make sense of certain areas of their own lives. Interestingly, most of these self-/cultural-forbidden paths are not only to be avoided, but it becomes necessary to overtly stand against them, thus displaying an active resistance. As football hooliganism reminds us time and again, rooting is not enough for “true fans”. For hooligans, it seems more important to fight—sometimes to the death—against fans supporting other teams rather than do anything related to what happens in the pitch. Thus, standing for their team *equates* to be against other teams—even beyond football. In brief, as Nedergaard et al. (2015) argue: “We need fictions of not being in order to be, and being so as not be” (p. 261).

My elaboration, however, looks to explore the dynamic character of the latter claim, i.e. what happens when those “fictions”—of being and not being—are not fixed over time but actually exchanged during the span of an interaction. In particular, I aim to examine those situations in which strict stances-against-something coexist with positions that embrace such “against”; thus making the people doing this appear—to the outside observer—to be inconsistent and contradictory. More specifically, through this inquiry I look to understand the *purposefulness*¹ of such apparent inconsistencies—relying on the assumption that they are alternative ways for making sense of one’s own life and environment, rather than mere contradictions. By so doing, I take distance from existing views on the topic (e.g. Daniel et al., 2012; Higgins, 1987), which a priori assume the lack of verbal or behavioural consistency as flawed or problematic.

In fact, within psychology, inconsistency has commonly been associated either with cynicism—e.g. double standards—or some kind of mental slip that must be overcome—viz. cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1962; see also Boring, 1964). Contrary to this trend, I argue in favour of temporarily suspending such logicist standpoint² and ponder whether inconsistencies might be a potentially valid sense-making approach for persons. For this purpose, during this chapter I leave the term inconsistency, and its derogatory valence (see Abelson, 1983), behind. This is done for two reasons: first, while consistency is a logical necessity, there is no reason to assume beforehand that the same axiom applies to *every single instance* of psychological experience; second, because the notion of inconsistency presumes that there is no possibility for equilibrating two incongruent positions, neither *over time* nor in different *contexts*. Here, it is worth noting that through these ideas I do not intend to challenge—not to say deny—the relevance of consistency as a psychological principle in the least: Gestalt psychology and everyday experience should provide enough support to make its importance self-evident. If anything, in this chapter I am trying to suspend the assumption that every person, at every moment, must be looking to achieve full logical consistency in speech and action.

Following these ideas, in the present chapter an alternative psychological approach is introduced to understand why sometimes persons do not look for consistency, instead of plainly pointing to its logically flawed character. Thus, in the first place, the seminal hypothesis of *cognitive polyphasia* proposed by Moscovici (1961/2008) is discussed in relation to the presence of contradictions in everyday thinking. After this, the Orwellian notion of doublethink (1949/2013), i.e. simultaneously holding opposite discursive positions without any perceived dissonance, is traced into psychological research. Following the empirical ways that

¹For a deeper elaboration on how purposefulness is understood along this chapter, see Comejo’s ideas (2010) on the teleological structure of the human being-in-the-world.

²This position is perfectly depicted by Frege’s quote: “But what if beings were even found whose laws of thought flatly contradicted ours and therefore frequently led to contrary results even in practice? The psychological logician could only acknowledge the fact and simply say: ‘those laws hold for them, these laws hold for us’. I should say: ‘we have here a hitherto unknown type of madness’” (1893/1964, p. 14).

the latter notion opens for addressing contradictions as a *meaningful* resource, the case of a young Chilean economist is presented and analysed under the lens of doublethink. As it will be shown, this case provides a vivid example of how contradictory thinking might be not experienced as problematic per se, and how it could rather help to organize a complex, multilayered professional role.

Cognitive Polyphasia and the Ubiquity of Contradiction

In his seminal work on social representations, Moscovici (2008) introduced the hypothesis of cognitive polyphasia, i.e. “the dynamic co-existence—interference or specialization—of the distinct modalities of knowledge, corresponding to definite relations between man and his environment” (p. 190). This idea emerged from how individuals and groups used different, even contradictory, modalities of knowledge—political ideology, religion, common sense, medical science, etc.—for making sense of psychoanalysis in France. It is particularly interesting to note that Moscovici (2008) characterized this use of plural modes of thought as a “disturbing observation” (p. 185), a remark that Marková (2008, p. 477) elaborates as follows:

The reader, well educated in psychology, whether of the 1960s or in 2008, might be disturbed to learn that human thinking is full of contradictions and that people do not think according to the Aristotelian laws of thought; that they are influenced by thinking of others and by historical and cultural ideas transmitted over generations. But to this the author himself responds by saying that it is not the vocation of logic to enforce its laws on anybody.

In this sense, Moscovici (2008) and Marková (2008) are both fully aware of how much psychologists struggle to embrace the presence of contradictions. Notwithstanding this: “social psychology [is not] the guardian of the rules—even those of thought” (Moscovici, 2008, p. 163), and therefore it should not hold back from studying the lack of consistency in thought, speech, or action.

Considering the former, cognitive polyphasia appears as a key idea for approaching contradictions and its psychological sense. Its current understanding, however, involves a characteristic that does not make it fully suitable for the present study. This feature is aptly represented by Wagner et al. (2000) quote: “Even in the earliest studies it was clear that everyday thinking frequently embraces representations that carry contradictory meanings. Such contradictions are usually not disturbing so long as each representation is locally consistent and so long as they *are not simultaneously expressed in discourse*” (p. 303, emphasis added). As the case described later will show, the latter is not necessarily so, as it included numerous contradictions, simultaneously expressed, which did not convey disturbance. Hence, if cognitive polyphasia rules out the latter, how else could it be explained?

Doublethink Beyond Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

The term doublethink is introduced to the English vocabulary through George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949/2013). Within Orwell's fiction, "the labyrinthine world of doublethink" (p. 44) is presented as a crucial psychological process for keeping the authoritarian order in place. So it is described as:

To know and not to know, to be conscious of complete truthfulness while telling carefully constructed lies, to hold simultaneously two opinions which cancelled out, knowing them to be contradictory and believing in both of them, to use logic against logic, to repudiate morality while laying claim to it, to believe that democracy was impossible and that the Party was the guardian of democracy, to forget whatever it was necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it was needed, and then promptly to forget it again: and above all, to apply the same process to the process itself. (pp. 44–45)

The core idea of doublethink is crystal clear: to simultaneously embrace contradictory and inconsistent stances without noticing them as such. In Orwell's dystopia (2013), however, all the positions that constitute doublethink are twisted lies constructed by the propaganda machine of the authoritarian group in power in order to keep citizenry uncritical and under control, e.g. the Party's slogan: "War is peace, Freedom is slavery, Ignorance is strength" (p. 6). Hence, the "bad name" of this process, as Orwell introduced it, comes for its contents—propaganda—rather than its structure—coexisting contradictions that do not appear as problematic to those expressing them.

Whereas it is possible to trace the notion of doublethink into humanities and social sciences research, it is easy to note its scarce presence. This makes even more interesting to observe that it has been applied to a wide range of human phenomena: from patterns of illicit drug use among adolescents in Estonia (Allaste & Lagerspetz, 2005) to the widespread use of ambivalence in public relations (Willis, 2015), to the contradictory use that teachers make of educational data (Hardy & Lewis, 2016) and to its prevalence in the accounts of organizational life (El-Sawad et al., 2004). Despite their differences, all these studies present something similar: participants who express opinions, either about themselves or about activities they perform, that ultimately contradict each other.

Among these studies, the one conducted by El-Sawad et al. (2004) offers the most theoretical and empirical insight on doublethink. In particular, El-Sawad and his collaborators elaborate on the purpose of doublethink, which they report as a way in which their participants cope with different organizational settings demanding opposite positions at the same time. Let us look at two of their examples.³

³The examples shown purposely exclude any case that involves so-called non-professional roles; for instance, the tension—and associated doublethink—between career development and family planning, religious beliefs, etc. This is done with the sole purpose of addressing the usual concern of bringing "personal issues" into professional settings. Thus, I only focus in conflicting roles that "officially" pertain to organizational, professional environments—despite considering the former distinction as an analytical categorization rather than a psychologically grounded approach.

A participant identified as Alison, for instance, firstly explains the micropolitical nature of being promoted in her organization: “How [career management] happens here is that the first line work out who it is they think are stars, and the second line sort of collate that” (El-Sawad et al., 2004, p. 1189). Only to say later that: “From the political point of view, I don’t think it [career progression] is political... the people who call it political are the people who just do their job and who are only willing to do their job” (p. 1189). Thus, according to her account, being promoted involves navigating through organizational politics, in spite of claiming later that those who attribute career to politics are those who just work the bare minimum and do nothing to get promoted. Likewise, Adam declares that: “You can sort of steer your own path... there are a lot of opportunities that will allow you to more or less do what you want to do” (p. 1193). However, later on he acknowledges that: “Certainly earlier I would say that I was restricted in my [career] choices because I was recruited to do a specific role... if you just accept that and get on with it then you’ll be OK” (p. 1193). As contradictory as in the first example, Adam sees his career path as something that is fully crafted by him *and* shaped by the role he was hired for, despite the fact that these two positions oppose and exclude each other from a logical standpoint.

Following these and other examples, El-Sawad et al. (2004) note that: “There is no apparent tussle between our participants’ contradictory beliefs, no detectable sense of implacable struggle, and no need for one to win out over the other. One is not more true than the other” (p. 1198). An observation that leads to the most relevant conclusion this study for the present work:

As we have seen, participants in our study *have more than one personal narrative*. Whilst each *individual narrative may be internally consistent* and coherent, it frequently conflicts with and *contradicts other narratives* which the individual articulates. We see security as deriving from keeping separate or bracketing these contradictory and conflicting dimensions (p. 1198, emphases added).

Based on this, the authors elaborate on the purposefulness of doublethink, which “may be one way of containing the contradiction created by the performance of different roles” (p. 1195). As different roles have different, potentially contradictory, logics among them: “We suggest that, rather than confronting and attempting to resolve contradiction, people contain it by offering different (and separate) narratives” (p. 1199). And so it becomes not only possible, but also reasonable to enact two different, opposed roles and their associated narratives—as in the first case, one that links career progression with personal hard work and downplays micropolitics, and other that allows one to be aware and responsive to micropolitics, regardless of performance. In so doing, this person is certainly dealing better with the complexities of organizational life by simultaneously addressing two different dimensions of his professional role, even if she is not addressing this contradiction in a conscious, post-formal way of thinking, as scholars have theorized (e.g., Kramer, 1989).

In the following, a similar case to those discussed by El-Sawad et al. (2004) is presented—yet with a variation. While the former authors bring forth the use of doublethink in organizational contexts—implying for-profit companies—the following case relates to the less-addressed realm of science and scientists. Beyond the

scarce use of doublethink in studies of science (“Doublethink—Among Scientists and Others”, 1965; Merton 1963), this domain becomes especially interesting for the topic given the stark contrast between its public presentation—neat, objective—and how it is ordinarily lived by those involved in it—messy, passionate (see Shapin, 2008). The latter leads to think that the role of scientist is prone to contradictory stances that must be coped with somehow. Thereby, the single case of a young Chilean economist, working in the local branch of an international applied research network, is discussed next.

Doublethink in the Making of Science

As noted above, scientific activity—as many other occupations—might require its practitioners, i.e. scientists, to enact contradictory roles. For scientists in particular, one source for such opposition is the idealized image that the public ascribes to them. As Petkova and Boyadjieva (1994) show, the popular conception about them portrays a scholar who lives in an ivory tower, isolated from any worldly matter and solely devoted to his or her research. Such research preferably addresses material phenomena, as this assures that no social or moral biases could have an influence over its objective character (cf. Daston & Gallison, 2010). Thus, we see that the stereotypical image captured by Mead and Metraux (1975) forty years ago has not aged:

The scientist is a man who wears a white coat and works in a laboratory (...) He is surrounded by equipment: test tubes, benzene burners, flasks and bottles, a jungle gym of blown glass tubes and weird machines with dial (...) He is prepared to work for years without getting results and face the possibility of failure without discouragement; he will try again. He wants to know the answer (pp. 386–387)

Looking at this aseptic, lab-coated idea of what a scientist should be, it is simple to think of opposite roles to it. As discussed elsewhere (Carré, 2016), the most contrasting position to the former image of a scientist probably is that of an activist. While there are obvious differences—training, modes of argumentation, social impact, etc.—the borders between scientist and activist become blurred as soon as the phenomena at stake are not purely material but also social and human—thus having direct moral implications.⁴ Despite this reflection, practitioners of human sciences—either collective or individual—certainly adhere and look to enact the previously mentioned image of the objective, aseptic scientist. Thus any roles that bring moral orientations, ethical choices, or political orientations into scientific

⁴The activist position was purposefully chosen in the work mentioned (Carré 2016) in order to take the argument to its polar opposite. Yet it is clear that a more balanced position—like citizen—expresses better the relation that human scientists establish with their phenomena of study. This is being involved with these phenomena, committing to studying them exhaustively and caring about their implications; yet not compromising the inquiry for the sake of making the phenomena fit researcher’s expectations.

activity are forbidden: being a good (human) scientist demands avoiding and rejecting all the latter, as they are personal elements that *must not* influence the scientific work (cf. Polanyi, 1968⁵). It is difficult to conclude otherwise after looking at the methodological approaches and writing styles used by the sociologists, psychologists and economists currently publishing in the *American Journal of Sociology*, *Psychological Science* or the *Journal of Political Economy*—all of them top-tier journals for these disciplines.

Here the case of economics—and economists—becomes especially interesting since economic knowledge has been rarely detached from the sociopolitical realm—be it policy, polity, or politics. As a matter of fact, some of the most notorious economists in history, from Smith (1776/1910) to Ricardo (1821) to Mill (1848/1884) to Keynes (1936/2007), all published major works on *political economy*. In spite of this historical trend, there is a clear movement in economics of moving away from political issues and towards mathematical modelling, i.e. econometrics (see Qin, 2013). While this could be grasped in personal communications with—at least Chilean—economists (Carré, in preparation), it is also clearly expressed through the bibliographic data of the last 40 years. As Kim, Morse and Zingales (2006) comprehensively show, econometrics publications have overshadowed both micro- and macroeconomics—among papers with more than 500 citations for the period 1970–2005. Furthermore, according to these authors (pp. 15–16), 9 of the 20 most cited articles in economics have been published in *Econometrica*, the publishing outlet of The Econometric Society.

Notwithstanding the unavoidable simplifications contained in the previous argument, there certainly is a historically grounded tension in the roles that a professional economist might assume: on the one hand, the “modern” economist, who makes use of the most sophisticated mathematical techniques available to create systematic, objective evidence for scientific purposes only; on the other hand, the “classic” economist, who looks for answers to contingent, pressing social issues in order to have a voice in the political arena. Thus, while for the former having a political orientation could be a main source of bias for economic research, for the latter it could appear as the necessary framework to make sense of any economic data. As the following case will show, the tension existing between these positions is anything but abstract, or purely bibliographic. On the contrary, it appears as a compelling issue, in personal terms, for those who are initiating their careers as economists. Moreover, this example provides valuable ground to assess the usefulness of doublethink as an analytical approach.

⁵“Besides, the relation of the scientist to his surmises is one of passionate personal commitment. The effort that led to a surmise committed every fiber of his being to the quest; his surmises embody all his hopes. The current theory that ignores the mechanism of tacit knowing must ignore and indeed deny such commitments. The tentativeness of the scientist's every step is then taken to show that he is uncommitted. But every step made in the pursuit of science is definitive, definitive in the vital sense that it definitely disposes of the time, the effort, and the material resources used in making that step” (Polanyi 1968, p. 41).

Doublethink in Action: Ideology for a Young Economist

The case analysed corresponds to a 27-year-old, male Chilean economist (MSc), who worked as a full-time research assistant at the Latin American and Caribbean branch of a worldwide action research centre on poverty, located in Santiago de Chile. When the first interview was conducted, the participant had been working for 6 months at the research centre in a junior position, right after his graduation. The second interview was conducted 10 months later, when he had been promoted to senior research assistant—and had already applied to several PhD programmes abroad. Both interviews were guided through a semi-structured script and lasted for around 50–60 min. They were conducted in person by the present author in Spanish, which is the native language for both interviewer and interviewee. Hence, the excerpts provided in the following are all personal translations.

At the beginning of the first interview, the participant is openly asked about the objectives of the research centre where he works. About this he says that:

The idea they [research centre directors] have is, we have been doing a lot of public policies around the world to fight poverty, but truth is that we don't have evidence about what works and what doesn't. We have notions, many of them based in ideology...ideological thinking but we do not have evidence of what is useful, of what helps and what doesn't. [00:01:06]

Here, it is interesting to note the spontaneous wording used by him—particularly “ideology”—and also the relation he establishes: evidence is to be constructed in order to overcome ideological thinking. In this sense, he presents science as the opposite of ideology. Interestingly, this relation does not only pertain to the research centre but it is also linked to his career choice as an economist⁶:

I found it interesting to have an approach from social sciences that is more precise to understand problems. To understand problems beyond giving ideological interpretations of them, this [economics] is an approach that is more rigorous, more scientific. [00:08:48]

Here, the participant considers ideology-based thinking as a kind of limitation for understanding social problems, limitation that he wanted to overcome through learning economics and its rigorous approach. This excerpt, again, shows the opposed relation that he ascribes to science and ideology. This young economist, however, acknowledges that other fellow economists—at least in Chile—do not adhere to such standards. When he is asked about the prominent voice that economists typically have in Chile, he says that:

⁶In Chile, there is no bachelor-level education in economics, but it is offered as a major option to those who complete a bachelor on business and administration. It is important to note that typically, only a minor fraction—less than 20%—of students choose to follow economics, usually those with better grades. Notwithstanding its academic prestige, the major—and subsequent master—in economics tends to be discarded by students as it is considered a winding path to the job market, with no significant influence on the future wage compared to other easier major alternatives. In this scenario, those who pursue the “academic track” of economics after the master are a minority inside a minority.

There are a lot of people that are prone to use that technical recognition [having a Ph.D. in economics] to, instead of talking about technical things, talk in ideological terms about what is technical. And I do think that in Chile that definitely happens. [00:17:14]

In this excerpt, the participant again opposes a scientific, technical stance with a position based on ideology. Moreover, he calls out the misconduct of those who try to hide their ideological positions behind a technical façade—like having doctoral studies in economics.

So far, the position of the participant seems clear and consistent: politics and ideology must give way to technical knowledge, as the former is a limitation for understanding social issues. To a certain extent, this could be paralleled to the above-mentioned tension between scientific-mathematic and politico-normative economics, with the participant clearly endorsing the former. Yet, as the interview advances, he shares his vision of economics as a very narrow-minded discipline—a discipline that focuses on only one way of looking at social issues, and so it requires other disciplines to properly inform social initiatives, or public policies. When asked about such specific approach of economics, he says:

Economics usually does not assume that there is a certain ideology in its own way of looking at things. I mean, when I decide to look at an outcome it is because I have certain values. I'm not saying that this is bad or negative, but it just is. Economics does have certain values that sometimes it's hard, that sometimes it doesn't acknowledge. Economics does have a value; it puts efficiency above everything else. Is this something good or bad? It's neither good nor bad, it just is. It's something normative, where certain outcomes have been put above other equally useful outcomes. [00:21:22]

This opinion certainly represents a sharp turn from the previous excerpts, as the participant now refers to ideology as something ubiquitous in economics work, instead of a limitation or scientific misbehaviour, as previously asserted. Furthermore, he says that these value-orientations are something normative that should not be judged. Something that stands in stark contrast to labelling them as opposed to scientific work. Interestingly, he goes on over this idea with no further questions:

I think that we [economists] are missing a little bit of self-criticism, of acknowledging that we're doing those value judgments. We are missing taking a step back and saying: despite being a serious science, etc. economics also has value judgments when it makes its analyses. Like this critique of Heisenberg's uncertainty, where he says that if I observe an object I will necessarily modify that phenomenon. To a certain extent economics could also have the same, and I'm not sure if we economists are humble enough to acknowledge that. [00:21:56]

Surprising as it may be, in the two last excerpts the participant assumes a stance that is critical about the position he endorsed a couple of minutes ago. If he previously considered ideology as a limitation to overcome, now refers to it as something unavoidable despite economists' unwillingness to acknowledge it. Following up on this, he is asked about how is it for him to work in an academic environment where that self-criticism is mostly absent—as in the position he assumed at the beginning of the interview. To this, he replies:

It is a dialogue that sometimes creates friction, but the world is changing in that direction. All the social policies that the students' movement, the social movements [in Chile] are raising nowadays don't have so much to do with efficiency but with normative positions. For example, profit on education, I'm sure that is way more efficient to have for-profit schools. But normatively people don't want schools to be for-profit. Why? I have no clue. People just don't want see somebody profiting from education. And I don't know whether that is good or bad, but people just don't want it. And that becomes an element at the moment of making policies. This is valid, and economists from now on will have to start considering this as part of the equation. [00:24:48]

As the last excerpt shows, the participant moves a step forward into his new position by acknowledging that the ideological-normative positions from citizenry are elements that are becoming increasingly more relevant for economics. Even if he personally does not agree with some of them, the participant says that economists cannot try to step over them and impose their own scientific, efficient logic. Again, this claim goes further against his initial remarks on why he chose economics and what is the aim of the research centre where he worked. Only a couple a minutes later, however, he is asked about whether he considers his personal research interests as having the "trademark" of the centre, and to this he replies:

But, you know, [research centre name] honestly does not have a political orientation, the only orientation is: let's do scientific evidence. Scientific in what terms? In terms of measuring things through social experiments. And [research centre name] doesn't have a research program but a way of doing research. It's just a network of researchers that basically have one common way of doing research: experimental method. That's all. [00:26:58]

Puzzlingly enough, the participant now expresses an opinion much more aligned with his initial stance rather than with the one discussed in the previous paragraph. Thus, he goes back to exclude normative stances from economics work and putting forward the scientific rigour of the research centre. By so doing, within 30 minutes, the participant moved from a stance where he considers economics as the key for overcoming ideological thinking then to one in which ideology and normative positions are constitutive to economics—with this being considered as neither good nor bad—to finally one that reassures that his—and the centre's—research work has nothing to do with normative, ideological orientations as it is pure scientific evidence. If anything, the trajectory made between different, contradictory narratives about economics and economists certainly resembles the cases discussed by El-Sawad and his collaborators (2004) as *doublethink*.

Interestingly, instances of doublethink such as these were not exclusive to the first interview. During the second conversation, it was possible to observe this phenomenon in a different fashion. Instead of several jumps between opposed positions, the participant now displayed an approach that is well summarized by the following quote:

RCTs [methodology used at the research centre] are empirical, real data, without an ideology behind it. I mean there is some [ideology] to a certain extent, but in a different sense. But it is not like someone thought of a certain [mathematical] model, wrote it in a given way, and it gave this or that result. [00:07:31]

As seen, both the “scientific” and the “ideological” positions appear as opposed yet co-present—something that was not observed in the first interview. Far from a fluke, the same could be observed in a later answer, where the participant elaborates on how his research work as economist makes sense for him in personal terms:

First, I don't know what else could I do. I'm already into this like a lot, but I don't see myself doing something as fun as this. Second, ideology makes me sick. I mean, no, I like ideology in the sense that we live...we all have a certain degree of ideology...we live in an ideological context...but arbitrary, nonsense, and ill-considered decisions makes me sick. For example, religious ideology makes me sick, I also detest political ideology...and I see that economics is a good answer to ideology. What does economics allow you to do? To say: the cost of your ideology is this. You don't like for-profit schools? Ok, your ideology is fine, but it's going to cost you this. So it [economics] allows you to put a counterweight to ideology. [00:56:02]

This long excerpt does not only offer an instance of doublethink where opposite stances are co-present (“ideology makes me sick. I mean, no, I like ideology”), but also something that sheds light upon the core of the present article: the purposefulness of doublethink, understood as a lack of logical consistency. For here, it is possible to see how the participant entwines together two dimensions, scientific and ideological, within *his personal take on the role of economist*. And this articulation is made—as the latter excerpt shows—because both are important and necessary elements for *him* being an economist. As he expressed along both interviews, ideologies are ubiquitous in human life, as they give normative orientations to all of our actions, and he does not see economics as neutral on ideological grounds either, as it advocates for less costs—efficiency, in his words—in a *normative* rather than an empirical way. This standpoint on ideology, and its deep implications for economics and economists, however, does not lead him to blindly embrace any form of it either. He declares that he detests political or religious orientations that lead to “arbitrary, nonsense and ill-considered decisions”. Moreover, this position does not bar him either from being aware that normative orientations do have economic, monetary implications on the social world, something he defines as “costs”. And, for him, economics is the most accurate approach to assess these costs, but not to determine which costs *should* be assumed, as this is normative ground—like the debate of for- or non-profit schools. It is in this sense that economics is a counterweight to ideology *and vice versa*.

Thus presented, it seems quite reasonable for human scientists that inform social debates and public policies, like economists, to have a broader scope than scientific arguments only—something that, as mentioned above, was clear to early economists. Yet the personal articulation made by the participant, which assumes that economics has normative orientations, is made in spite of the contemporary, front-office economist role, which longs for empirical scientism—viz. reveal what data says—and reject any form of ideological thinking—as current trends in publications in top economic journals make clear. Furthermore, presenting economics just as a consulting voice, among others, informing social decision makers is especially controversial for Chilean economists, whom—at least for the last 40 years—have had a major, overt impact on public policy decisions—and even

politics—precisely by endorsing a technocratic stance (for historical reviews, see Markoff & Montecinos, 1993; Silva 2010; for a contemporary example, see Larroulet, 2016). Considering this cultural background, while it might seem reasonable for outsiders, it does not seem feasible for academic and professional Chilean economists to hold such an integrative stance—particularly for somebody that is looking to make his way into academia. And here is where doublethink, for this example, does not appear as a mere illogical way of thinking, but rather as a meaningful approach.

To make this point clearer, it is necessary to go back to El-Sawad, Arnold, and Cohen's (2004) previous ideas. As these authors note, "participants in our study have more than one personal narrative" (p. 1198), which, as seen, is the case of the participant analysed. Additionally, they claim that: "whilst each individual narrative may be internally consistent and coherent, it frequently conflicts with and contradicts other narratives which the individual articulates" (p. 1198), something that the first interview clearly portrays. And, more importantly for the aim of the present work, these authors see "*security* as deriving from keeping separate or bracketing these contradictory and conflicting dimensions" (p. 1198, emphasis added) rather than confronting them to "reduce cognitive dissonance". For the participant analysed, this security seems to be no other thing than the possibility of tailoring his role of economist, following both *his own particular view* of the discipline and the role that is culturally and institutionally presented to him as correct. Hence, doublethink appears here as a meaningful, personal way of both *resisting* the latter and *endorsing* the former. Furthermore, just as El-Sawad et al. propose (2004), the participant analysed reaches such security by keeping these two dimensions of being economist, and its associated narratives, isolated and bracketed from each other; even when he tries to make himself clear to somebody else, and with minor exceptions—as excerpts from the second interview reveal.

Conclusion: Inconsistency for Whom?

As initially noted, the psychological implications of resistance span well beyond a plain, stubborn "no". This idea, clearly portrayed by several works in the present volume (e.g. Chapters "[Adolescent Dissent and Conflict Resolution in the Indian Context](#)", "[Children's Resistance in the Emergence of Learning as Leading Activity: Playfulness in the Transformation of Spaces of Participation](#)" and "[Resisting Early Marriage—Case Study from Tea Gardens of Assam](#)", this volume), could be elaborated through Valsiner's (2014) A <>non-A principle. This principle poses that any meaning created and sustained around an element A is necessarily tied to all those elements we consider as opposed to it, i.e. non-A. Thus, as sometimes hooliganism reminds us, in order to stand for something, it is also required to stand against whatever is considered opposed to it.

Interestingly, such resistance might take many forms, some of them even contradictory, as positions that are intended to be resisted are simultaneously endorsed.

Looking for the purposefulness of such “inconsistent” phenomena made us look beyond the abundant literature that flags as problematic any psychological action that does not conform to logical standards (e.g., Daniel et al., 2012; Festinger, 1962; & Higgins, 1987). From this conceptual exploration, two notions emerged as pointing to the usefulness of resisting but at the same time endorsing something: cognitive polyphasia (Moscovici, 2008) and doublethink (Orwell, 2013). The former, as part of the Social Representation Theory, provided a general perspective of how often our ordinary, everyday thinking does not strictly follow the rules established by logic; and, given this, it could be—and usually is—contradictory between its different discursive forms. Doublethink complemented the former by shedding light upon how—and why—contradicting oneself within the same account might not create any psychological or experiential uneasiness.

In order to deepen why somebody might resort to doublethink, two interviews with a young economist were analysed. This example brought forward what is expected from scientists in general, and economists in specific, thus revealing the tensions existing between their public, “lab-coated” presentation and the personal, committed nature of their everyday work. Regarding this tension, several interview excerpts showed how the participant shifted between endorsing an objectivistic, technocratic standpoint on economics, and a perspective that considers ideology and normative orientations as constitutive of the works of economics. These positions, clearly opposed to each other, reveal quite a particular standpoint of the participant regarding his discipline: both embracing its mainstream and making a fundamental critique of it. As shown by the excerpts, the way in which he held these stances was not a display of cynicism, as they appeared to be isolated from each other. By keeping them separated, it seemed possible for him both to comply with the formal requirements to succeed in economics’ academia and also to imprint a personal perspective to this official role—by adding a normative insight into a technical discipline.

Summarizing, I consider doublethink as a subtle, meaningful way of resisting certain dimensions of a role that must be accepted in order to properly enact that role. Following this, I propose that this process hints on how roles, like the one of economist, are not merely socio-institutional constructions to be unquestionably accepted and endorsed. Quite differently, they appear to be accepted and endorsed although in ways that are *personally meaningful*—as an active internalization/externalization process (Valsiner, 2006). As shown by the participant, being an economist implies looking for the most precise—i.e. mathematic—ways of understanding and addressing social issues, which are undoubtedly part of the official economics manifesto. Yet, for him, the latter could not be done neglecting the normative, ideological orientations that these approaches to social matters imply—even though this personal commitment is considered as a source of unscientific bias. A number of questions emerge out of this conclusion: first and foremost, to understand in which ways this personally oriented construction of the scientific role has an impact in the scientific production, and therefore how the former sheds light on understanding the latter, also, where are the limits that keep such personal, normative involvement away from turning the scientific activity in self-validation

circle. Although relevant, all these inquiries ought to be addressed in future works, as they exceed the scope of the present chapter.

In a previously mentioned article, Wagner et al. (2000) claim that: “It is in the context of different life-worlds that holding on to ‘contradictory’ representations make sense” (p. 303). Looking at the case discussed, it is possible to say otherwise: within the same life-world, and even within the same role, it is possible, and sometimes very reasonable, to hold on to stances that oppose to each other. Therefore, for the study of resistance, doublethink offers an understanding of so-called inconsistent positions, re-framing them as an alternative way of making sense about heterogeneous realms of the social world. Hence, resisting against something or somebody does not necessarily imply a dogmatic positioning, but also flexible, context-bounded stances where resistances are also present. For the study of science, especially those disciplines concerning human phenomena, doublethink appears as another form of making knowledge—and its construction—personal (Polanyi, 1974).

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Making Meaning Out of a Lifetime: The Life and Times of Indira Gandhi

Punya Pillai

“This is what the painter does, and the poet, the speculative philosopher, the natural scientist, each in his own way. Into this image of the world and its formation, he places the centre of gravity of his emotional life, in order to attain the peace and serenity that he cannot find within the narrow confines of swirling personal experience.”

Albert Einstein (doi: http://101sharequotes.com/quote/albert_einstein-variant-translation-one-of-the-384382).

Abstract This chapter focuses on the life and times of Indira Gandhi, a phenomenal political leader, and the first and only woman prime minister of India. It dwells upon her early life as a child of a family that has come to be known as India’s first family and how her early life was embroiled in India’s historical freedom struggle. Her relationship of closeness coupled with separation and distance, from time to time, with her father, and with her ailing mother, and the experiences she had within the extended networks of her family set the tone for her individuation and metamorphosis into adulthood. Being at the helm of public life at all stages of the lifespan, she exhibited unique strength, stubborn resolve, and an often contested “method to the political madness” around her. Resistance was a continuing underlying theme in her life on the personal as well as on the public front. Through her life leading up to her political career, this chapter demonstrates how resistance is built up through a life course. An additional dynamics arises on account of the fact that Indira Gandhi shares Mahatma Gandhi’s family name. In her life and career, although she deeply admired Gandhi, her political strategies gradually developed very differently from the *Satyagraha* (Insistence on truth, Gandhi’s ideology for the freedom struggle in India) which was Gandhi’s method of political struggle.

Keywords Indira Gandhi · Biography · Indian political history

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Introduction

When a life story is approached, it becomes possible to discern the ways in which social situation, personal history and individual resolve can weave together a life. When the person concerned is well known as an exceptional leader, the details become even more dramatic. Indira Gandhi is known worldwide as a national leader of independent India. In her life, as in her death, she came face to face with some of the most difficult situations as a political leader. Some of her decisions ultimately led to her assassination. On 31st October 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her personal bodyguards for a confrontational decision she had taken for military action against a Sikh group after failed negotiations. She was well known as an expert in diplomatic matters, having served as a personal assistant, as well as a hostess for her father, the first prime minister of independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru. Her dramatic life circumstances, her life in the limelight as well as her violent death, all symbolize persistent resistance that evolved into persevering domination of others. In her cabinet as prime minister, she is supposed to have, at one point, been known to be the “only man”,¹ a label that symbolized not only her ruthless and unprecedented centralization of control but also the compliance that she was able to generate among her cabinet ministers. Indira Gandhi’s image is symbolic for strength and determination, or the ultimate resistance that was under constant threat of being and was ultimately destroyed.

Indira Gandhi was born into a milieu of political resistance, in a family that was completely immersed in India’s freedom struggle. In a way it can be said she was born to be “made” a leader. Her being the only child of an only child (Nehru) of his parents, the future was “certain”. Patriarchy was the norm in north India, and at the same time women were coming out of their homes in good numbers to join the freedom struggle. Little Indira too was initiated into the struggle.

Such was the extent of resistance of Indira’s family that they gave up affluence for a life of austerity and made huge personal sacrifices for their engagement with the national cause. Resistance, Indira admitted was an acquired taste, acquired in childhood under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. Although no relation, Mahatma Gandhi was a close friend of her family and his philosophy was their driving force. Mahatma Gandhi believed in austerity, democracy, non-violence and truth. The Nehrus were affluent, classy, well-educated, widely travelled and very anglicized. Such was the power of Mahatma Gandhi’s ideals that the Nehrus gave up their family house for the activities of the political party and invested their personal wealth in India’s resistance to the British rule. Little Indira thus came to be a child of the revolution. She with the guidance of her mother formed Children’s Collectives (*Bal Sangh*) and Monkey Brigades (*Vanar Sena*) that carried out social work activities laced with a good deal of activism. This was her first independent foray into politics.

¹Doi: <http://archive.deccanherald.com/Deccanherald/jun212005/national1937402005620.asp>.

Political Domination and Democracy

It is well accepted that India's democracy is both peculiar and precarious. As a society that is deeply committed to tradition, India's sustained democracy is a conundrum. Does it reflect genuine equality and equity? How has India managed to stay a military coup, for instance? These are all questions that have been the topics of serious national debate and discussion (Wilkinson, 2015). There has been only one event that stands out as a black mark on Indian democracy, the period of political emergency declared by Indira Gandhi (1975–1977). Unlike other leaders, and even her father, Indira Gandhi handled opposition by removing it and during this period, even incarceration of any opponent to her leadership.

Recently, the Indian media has been abuzz with abysmal reflections on “The Emergency”, on its 40th anniversary. As a political leader, Indira Gandhi was most controversial for her unprecedented decision of imposing “a state of emergency” in the country. Fearful of losing power at the hands of the opposition, after a judgment of the Allahabad High Court that implicated her for misuse of government machinery for her election campaign, Indira Gandhi unilaterally had a state of emergency declared across the nation by the President. This meant that people lost their autonomy in everyday life: freedom of expression/free speech, trade, personal safety, political “opposition”, and among other things, decision-making regarding personal fertility. These were all curtailed. The “sterilization drive” run in those days by the prime minister's younger son (and designated political heir), wherein people were forcefully picked up and sterilized so as to control the burgeoning population, was the nastiest of the excesses of the Emergency. There was in those days, a complete lack of objective law and order. Political opponents were jailed, and anybody speaking against the Emergency was confronted.

While such was the overall picture of the national capital and the country at large during this period, what was happening in New Delhi's elite circles was altogether a different story. Political journalist Singh (2013) describes how social life during the days of the Emergency was restricted to the drawing rooms of the social elite. The city became unsafe to venture out, and it became easy to form coterie and exchange “like-minded” views on the political scenario; private parties filled up people's evenings among the elite. Her book is aptly titled *Durbar* that can be loosely translated as “a congregation of like-minded sycophants” (Singh, 2013). In addition to Gandhi's excesses, her older son and his wife were often a part of these *Durbars*. Their presence apparently ensured that no one directly discussed the Emergency in a negative light. All forms of dissent were silenced. The agenda most often would be of pleasing the first family either by not discussing the topic altogether or expressing positive views on the Emergency.

The “Person” and the Leader

Indira Priyadarshini² Gandhi (1917–1984) was the only child of independent India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. She grew up in a highly politically engaged family during India’s freedom struggle. During her growing years as a child of the Nehru clan, she was mostly lonely as her father was often away directing political events or in prison for his freedom-related activities, and her mother was confined to bed with tuberculosis. In her early years, she had limited contact with her father, mostly through letters. Despite her ill health, her mother was politically instrumental in organizing awareness campaigns and social activities for India’s freedom struggle often involving little Indira, giving her the first taste of politics. Influenced by eminent personalities such as Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, Indira grew up to be an independent, free-thinking and bold person. She served many years as her father’s personal assistant in his days as prime minister, managing his political and personal life. When she did get married, to Feroze Gandhi with whom she had two sons, she was often torn between her need to be with her family—her husband and two sons, and her duties towards her father. Indira spent her time in a kind of ambivalence, something that only steered her towards the political direction. Frank (2001), her biographer, describes how Indira Gandhi often expressed her desire to be out of politics after she got married and had children, but her commitment towards her father Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India’s first prime Minister, never left her alone.

Though she is known to have enjoyed her work, worries of distances building up between her and her husband, and between the children and their father, often tormented her. She was, however, never able to break away from her father, psychologically trapped between the two persuasive images of her father, as a family man and as a leader: One, “the father figure”, was lonely after the passing away of his wife and having an only child in Indira, and “the Prime Minister” whose portfolio needed her sustenance, since after all, she had been nurtured by him for a political career. She continued to move apart from her husband Feroze Gandhi and having sent her children to boarding school, she devoted all her time and energies to her father’s affairs. After she lost her husband and later on her father, she retained her political space in order to keep a house and a base for her children. The historic family house she grew up in, Anand Bhawan, in Allahabad, had already been gifted by the family to the cause of the freedom struggle and was made into the headquarters of the Indian National Congress, and subsequently housed a planetarium for the purpose of inculcating the love of scientific temper among people. In 1970, Indira Gandhi gifted it to the Government of India.

²Her middle name was given to her by the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

Her Father's Daughter

Despite that fact that Indira was a child of India's struggle for freedom, in many ways, she remained her father's daughter throughout her life. "Letters from a Father to his Daughter", is a renowned book Nehru wrote for 10-year-old Indira, while he was in jail in the course of the freedom struggle. The letters reflect a great keenness on Nehru's part to educate Indira on science, history and civilization, and his active instruction for nurturing in his daughter a national feeling. The letters present liberated modern views and shun superstition while encouraging an understanding of culture, and an appreciation of science. In later life too, Indira and Nehru communicated very often and very effectively through letters. According to Frank (2001), the letters brought the father and daughter close to each other, creating an intimacy between them that was difficult to sustain in real life, with few opportunities to replicate this closeness in person. Indira and Nehru also disagreed on many fronts, especially political ones. But Indira always let Nehru's influence over her prevail. However, in her letters, the words and ideas flowed much more freely.

The closeness between the father and the daughter was strengthened in the wake of Indira's mother's failing health. Indira had to devote a large part of her early years in travelling with her mother to foreign sanatoria for the treatment for tuberculosis. Indira herself was of weak disposition and had to also undergo similar treatment at a later point of time. Her fragile disposition, weak health and a sallow look invited criticism and disapproval from her extended family members. Her mother also enjoyed little regard from the extended family because of her very Indian and less Western background, so different from the rest of the Nehrus. Later on, of course the Nehrus had embraced the indigenous in favour of anything remotely foreign, following Gandhi's emphasis on *Swaraj* or self-rule, under which the foreign ways were to be discarded. Her mother's low status in the family and quiet assertion in the public sphere presented for Indira much to learn from. Indira never forgave her paternal aunt for her unkindness to her mother.

Indira Gandhi, Some Glimpses of the Person

While making an attempt to understand Indira Gandhi, one is confounded by the several descriptions of her intense determination as a growing child. In some ways, the conflicting images of a rather fragile disposition as a companion of her ailing mother described above stands in stark contrast to her image as unforgiving person with an elephantine memory for any grudge. Her temperament was mercurial. As a child, she was a tomboy and signed her name as "Indu-boy". She is known to have been quite "political", even in her play as a child. Frank (2001) describes how Indira did not approve of one of her grandmother's female relatives who lived in their house and managed to playfully oust her when she needed her grandmother's attentions. She was attached to her doll—that may have served as a transitional

object as described by Winnicott (1971). Her play was mostly solitary, and she was left lonely on many occasions with family members in and out of jail. Any distress or feelings of suppression that may have been brought about by her childhood experiences found release when she went to Rabindranath Tagore's Shantiniketan.³ There she experienced learning amidst nature, with music and art for company. These positive experiences did not sustain her at Oxford where she continually failed the Latin language exam and eventually dropped out.

Indira Gandhi always seemed to have been in control of her life, a strength that characterized her image and sustained through her personal and public life, enduring much criticism, political success and failure, and her ultimate death.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi

Indira Gandhi was known to have had many biases and a neurotic disposition which made her a complex leader. Beyond a few trusted people, paranoia, neuroticism, contrariness, susceptibility to the "supernatural" and an interest in the occult characterized her personality as a senior leader. Among those who she trusted were her younger son Sanjay, her yoga instructor Dharendra Brahmachari, and a few in her office.

As ingrained in her upbringing in the Nehru family, she was on the side of nurture not nature, science not religion, yet she was privately religious and publicly secular (Guha, 2003). Sahgal (2012), her cousin and well-known author, describes her as a publically suave, popular, yet reticent person—someone who reaches out to the masses yet remains uninvolved in their lives. In descriptions of her childhood experiences, particularly how she grew up with apparent frailties both in person and in her environment, one finds certain duress.

As a leader and as a human being, she was time and again in the eye of a storm, but never seemed to lose her vision. Her strength in the face of personal tragedy as when she lost her younger son in a freak accident and the political gravity of the Emergency was enduring. She handled pressure extremely well almost seeming to enjoy the burdens that came with it.

Her decisions were bold. Some called her style of operating selfish-motive driven, ego-driven, power-crazed, or even plain ignorant. Ram Manohar Lohia, an eminent activist for India's Independence movement, once called her a *Gungi Gudiya* or dumb doll.⁴ She proved to be the reverse once she assumed power. It was thought generally that the senior leadership of the Congress party that she was a part of promoted her in order to gain an edge with the public and implement their own

³The University town near Kolkata in Bengal that was established by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

⁴doi: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Ram-Manohar-Lohia-The-Quota-Marshall/articleshow/5756713.cms>.

agenda through her. This was also not to be. She was so individualistic that she broke away from the original Congress party and started her own Congress (I), where I may stand for India or Indira, it was never clarified. In fact, a popular slogan of her times, promoted by her sycophants, was “India is Indira, Indira is India!”

She was heavily criticized for carrying out the Operation Blue Star in Punjab that eventually scripted her assassination on 31st October, 1984. She ordered the army to enter the Sikh religious shrine at Amritsar—The Golden Temple—to combat militants in hiding out there. In July 1982, Sikh extremist groups occupied the Golden Temple. In June 1984, Indira Gandhi ordered an attack on the Sikh holiest site, Golden Temple, to remove the Sikh separatists. There was much bloodshed. Many innocent people died. And the operation set the stage for Hindu–Sikh riots that followed the assassination of Indira Gandhi by two of her Sikh bodyguards. Her last speech made in the state of Orissa had references to how each drop of her blood that is shed would be in the service of the country. It was an intuitive remark made possibly in the light of an astute political assessment of the troubled times.

A Woman in a Man’s World

Indira Gandhi was politically steering a male dominated country. The Time magazine (1966) titled its cover “Troubled India in a Woman’s Hands”. References to her included “Iron Lady”, “emergency monster”, “*Ma Durga*” (after the 1971 war when Indian intervention helped Bangladesh get its independence from Pakistan), “Empress of India”, and “Woman of the Millennium”. The slogan “Indira *hatao*, *indri bachao*” literally translated as “Remove Indira, save your penis” with reference to the sterilization drive virtually portrayed her as a “castration goddess”! Her cabinet of ministers addressed her as “Sir”! She was the only Indian prime minister to have been imprisoned. There were several comparisons made with others, most prominently with Margaret Thatcher on the world stage, including comparisons of their hairstyles as well. Indira Gandhi was seen to be an extremely well-dressed person, choosing traditional hand-woven saris from different states of India’s handloom industry. She was well travelled, and despite the austerity that the Nehrus and Indira herself had embraced, she enjoyed and appreciated the good things in life.

Pluralistic in approach, she had open regard for world cultures and the cultural diversity in India. She was successful in creating improved relations with other countries. Her focus was on reducing poverty and hunger—“*Garibi hatao*” or “Eradicate poverty” being her tag line. She went on to nationalize banks, initiating the use of nuclear power, improving science and technology, successfully establishing India as a food exporter, launched the first satellite into space in 1971, and led India to become one of the fastest growing economies.

The Leader Herself

Kakar (2013) describes how major emotional conflicts could be a source of creativity and genius. Analysing the life of Rabindranath Tagore, he uses the constructs of “transitional” space (Winnicott), “self-effectance”, one’s work as “self-object” (Kohut) and the “mirroring” appreciation of the public to explain how genius comes about in a lifetime. Indira Gandhi lived and experienced all of these in abundance and intensity.

Through the story of her life, initially as a lonely child with few attachments, initiated early into austerity through the freedom movement amidst an affluent background, her life was punctuated by intense ambivalence. She was encouraged to be individualistic, determined, aware of the political happenings in the country and to imbibe the qualities of a good leader. Perhaps as an outcome of these tensions in her life, her later political decisions were often extremely self-driven. She was at the helm of things, directly reaching out to the country’s electorate. The adulation she received from the Indian public was tremendous. She became a famous face globally while travelling with her father, assisting him in his work. And the current political scenario is such that while her party and family members are being asked to apologize for The Emergency 40 years after it happened, thousands of people from villages and other cities line up every day to see her memorial in New Delhi.

Conclusion

Psycho-biographies provide insight into the meaningful nature of life events or life trajectory of a person. When the person is at the centre of national, political and public life, these life events acquire credits from the larger cultural meaning structures, of which the individual is a part. Comparisons are inevitable at the global level as well, especially in the case of national leaders. Psycho-biographies offer lessons for life and the world that are historically significant and create an agenda for analysis of not only the person’s life, but of turning points for society at large. Analysis is at once at both levels: personal and macro-structural. It may include the historical, political, artistic, or social—as the case maybe. The study of the life course can be especially enlightening about the nature of “resistance” as a quality that builds up and is lived over the course of a lifetime.

The life of Indira Gandhi is reflective of tensions of a psycho-analytic nature, especially with reference to the early father–daughter relationship of distance yet mutual influence and the later father–daughter relationship of Indira’s adult life, where the father was in quite a few ways overly dependent on her at home and in public life. Her inability to break free from the father even while wanting to be with her husband is uniquely Freudian, somewhat of a father complex. In the dialogical self-perspective (Hermans, 2001), the many personae Indira Gandhi assumes, at different points in her life trajectory, are encompassing of the many extensions of

the self she finds in her father, mother, the groups to which she belongs (the Nehru family Indian National Congress, and so on), influential figures to whom she was close like Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, and later (in her waning relationship) with her husband and her role as a mother. The particular tussle she faces between her commitment towards father and guilt of ignoring the husband highlights conflict in the domain of the other-in-self, where she finds she cannot do complete justice to either of the two, the father and the husband. And in the bargain, she is not fair to herself and the children. This self-other tension translates into her public life as a politician, where she finds she can trust very few individuals, so much so, that she ends up being completely controlled by her younger son, who is seen taking many rash political decisions despite her disagreement. As a result, she took unilateral decisions (like The Emergency) and ended up being lonely in her life as India's leader. It can be said that the loneliness of her childhood is resonated in her lonesome life as India's prime minister. Indira Gandhi was bold enough to almost always "defy the order", to be the one to persevere, to resist what she thought was not right and to march ahead on her chosen and somewhat "destined" path. She had a price to pay—the price being her life. History is witness to the fact that the life and times of people dedicated to resisting the social order and living for change have their own ups and downs, twists and turns, many-a-time even cruel twists of fate, but have always offered huge lessons to humanity at large. In the life story of Indira Gandhi, we find a multiplicity of such learning.

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The Street Art of Resistance

Sarah H. Awad, Brady Wagoner and Vlad Glaveanu

Abstract This chapter focuses on the interrelation between resistance, novelty and social change. We will consider resistance as both a social and individual phenomenon, as a constructive process that articulates continuity and change and as an act oriented towards an imagined future of different communities. In this account, resistance is thus a creative act having its own dynamic and, most of all, aesthetic dimension. In fact, it is one such visibly artistic form of resistance that will be considered here, the case of street art as a tool of social protest and revolution in Egypt. Street art is commonly defined in sharp contrast with high or fine art because of its collective nature, anonymity, its different kind of aesthetics and most of all its disruptive, “anti-social” outcomes. With the use of illustrations, we will argue here that street art is prototypical of a creative form of resistance, situated between revolutionary “artists” and their audiences, which includes both authorities and society at large. Furthermore, strategies of resistance will be shown to develop through time, as opposing social actors respond to one another’s tactics. This tension between actors is generative of new actions and strategies of resistance.

Keywords Street art · Graffiti · Resistance · Revolution · Social change · Egypt

Introduction

This chapter discusses resistance as an act of opposing dominant representations and affirming one’s perspective on social reality in their place. We start from the premise that resistance is (1) a social and individual phenomenon; (2) a constructive process that articulates continuity and change; and (3) an act oriented towards an imagined future of different communities. We will use the case study of an artistic

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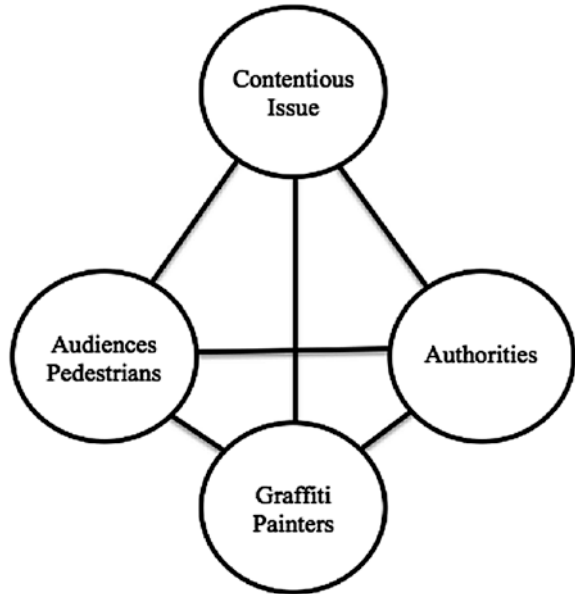
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form of resistance that took place over the past years in Egypt since the revolution started in 2011. We will follow how revolutionary graffiti has emerged and evolved within the sociopolitical context in Egypt, and the responses it triggered from the government and the general public. This form of resistance is seen as a tool that graffiti painters used to exercise their agency and reaffirm their presence within Egyptian society. It is one among many other forms of artistic expression of resistance in the past years in Egypt, including live street performances, underground music, and online comics. These different forms share a common goal of resisting certain social or political issues. “It is our act of self-defence, proclaiming our denied agency”, as Radwa Ashour, an Egyptian novelist and activist, describes it (Ashour, 2013).

Although when talking about revolutionary graffiti in Egypt we tend to think of politics, the rupture of the revolution and the art produced during it describe a more general form of resistance that is not only against authority but also against dominant ideas and practices. This includes issues such as gender roles, the role of religion in social life and ideas of citizenship. The art of resistance represented by the graffiti in Egypt is one that involves different actors and captures the unique temporal dialogue taking place between graffiti painters, authorities and pedestrians. Each has its own action and reaction in response to the other and in response to the changing sociopolitical situation in Egypt. The painters’ actions will be viewed as a social act, which requires several actors’ contributions to be completed (Mead, 1934). In this sense, the meaning of one’s actions is forged in relation to the meanings attributed by others and the way these meanings are understood by the actor himself or herself. More concretely, understanding graffiti as a social act involves not only being sensitive to the perspective of the painter but also the way in which the painter takes the perspective of others, like the authorities or the general public, and responds to them through his/her art. This approach builds on Marková’s (2003) epistemological triad of person-alter-object as well as Cornish’s (2012) application of it to the context of protest, to explore the interdependence of graffiti painters, audience and contentious issues, highlighting the social change that can result from the tension between them. A schematic conceptual model relating key actors and the contentious issue is included in Fig. 1.

In what follows, we will introduce the context of graffiti in Egypt’s 2011 revolution and its aftermath and unpack the notion of “resistance graffiti”, our focus in this chapter. Information concerning data collection and analysis, including participants in the study reported here, is presented next. The discussion of this fieldwork includes two parts. First, we focus on the “structural” aspects of the framework depicted in Fig. 1 in turn. Second, we offer a more dynamic interpretation of the relations between these elements by including a temporal dimension to our analysis as expressed in the dialogue between key actors and the relation between continuity and transformation in the practice of graffiti. We conclude with reflections on resistance as a fundamentally situated, constructive and future-oriented act.

Fig. 1 A schematic conceptual model relating key actors and the contentious issue



Background

From 1956 to 2011, Egypt was ruled by three presidents, each coming from the army: Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak. Mubarak had been in power for 30 years when he was ousted in 2011. Following a growing momentum of social movement in the preceding decade and the Tunisian revolution (Gunning & Baron, 2014), several groups organized for a protest on 25 January 2011. This event rapidly turned into a call for the “downfall of the regime” after masses of people who had seemed apolitical and largely apathetic, found their voice and joined in the protests (Alexander, 2011, p. 23). Crowds grew in number and stayed in multiple major squares in Egypt, in spite of the authority’s use of violence against them. After 18 days, on 11 February 2011, Mubarak was forced to step down, having lost the military’s support. Because the military abandoned Mubarak, the Egyptian revolution did not turn into the bloody civil war seen in Libya and Syria (Kandil, 2012).

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) took over for a transitional stage which lasted over a year, during which SCAF seemed to be keen to consolidate their grip on power through media propaganda and the delay of the hand-over of power (Teti & Gervasio, 2012). Later, in 2012, presidential elections took place; 13 candidates were qualified including secular, old regime and Islamist candidates. Mohamed Morsi from the previously banned Muslim Brotherhood group was elected. Over the following year, public dissatisfaction against Morsi grew for many reasons among which a deteriorating economy, fear of Egypt’s Islamic identity turning radical and Morsi’s move to give himself unprecedented presidential power. In April 2013, an initiative called “tamarod” (rebel) was formed

calling on people to sign a petition to withdraw confidence from Morsi's government. A year after Morsi had become president, on 30 June 2013, he faced widespread protests demanding his resignation.

Unlike the 2011 protest, however, these protests were supported from the beginning by the army and the ministry of interior. The army was likely unhappy with Morsi's poor governing and saw their moment to get back in the leading position of power. On July 2013, the army warned Morsi to step down or else they will intervene. With no response from Morsi, they arrested him, kept him in military custody and announced Adly Mansour as the interim president. This was followed by hundreds of arrests and violently dispersing the pro-Morsi sit-ins, the most famous of which was the Rabaa Massacre on 14 August 2013. Elections occurred again in May 2014, this time with only two candidates, former Defense Minister El Sisi, who just resigned from the military, and independent socialist candidate Hamdeen Sabahy. El Sisi won while many groups boycotted the elections questioning its legitimacy; those groups were mostly activists against army rule and Muslim Brotherhood supporters.

President El Sisi gained much support from the older generation promising stability and economic growth after the unrest of the past four years. By 2015, the Muslim Brotherhood group were declared a terrorist group, a new protest law became in action which limits the freedom of protesting, and the government drafted a law to ban "abusive" graffiti where defendants could go to jail for up to four years or pay 100,000 EGP (over 12,000 dollars) in fines (Rahimi & Shadi, 2013). Those security measures are supported by media and portrayed as legitimate and essential to save Egypt from terrorism, especially as the ISIS militant group is growing in neighbouring countries.

Having outlined the dramatic events and changes in Egypt since the revolution, we are now in a position to explore graffiti as an artistic response to them. Our aim is to show how history, culture and contemporary circumstances contribute to the triadic model introduced before. Though the events are presented in a linear form, they present in fact dynamic "waves" of social change. Through the four years following the uprising in 2011, the different acts of public resistance have known several such waves. The main object of resistance as well has shifted over time between the old regime, the Muslim brotherhood and the military. This rapid change in power and ideology of the authorities has also had its impact on the general public's opinions and the public's varying degrees of support for activist movements and resistance to authority.

Resistance Graffiti

The graffiti is presented here as "the object" in the triadic model (Marková, 2003) presenting the issue of contestation (Cornish, 2012). To examine graffiti, we shall first define which form of graffiti we are looking at and what distinguishes resistance graffiti from other uses of street art. Resistance graffiti presents an artistic form

of opposition that is unique in its form from other graffiti and tagging behaviour. It has a unique temporal context relating to a certain contested issue and oriented towards an imagined future. Examples of this form can be seen in the graffiti drawn on the west side of Berlin Wall in the 1960s–1980s (Stein, 1989) and the current Israel–West Bank barrier wall (Hanauer, 2011). Resistance graffiti, as Elias (2014, p. 89) describes it, has the unique ability to fuse aesthetics and politics, offering a new form of democratic participation in public space and fosters the emergence of a powerful revolutionary culture. Artists, as he argues, use playful and self-reflective sets of semiotic strategies to engage their audience.

Before the revolution, graffiti was not a significant part of Egypt's growing subculture. The elite private institutions of art in Egypt controlled the Egyptian art scene (Hamdy, 2014, p. 146). Rana Jarbou (2014, pp. 9–12) started a unique initiative of documenting street art in the Arab world from 2007 in search of a counter-narrative for the Arab identity. She documented various types of graffiti from pre-revolution Egypt. Topics ranged from personal expressions of love, to pilgrimage greetings, religious preaching and support for football teams. The more artistic-driven graffiti were mainly from young artists who were experimenting in the street, yet few had a political message. It is therefore argued that resistance graffiti in Egypt only gained momentum after the 2011 revolution.

Inspired by the Egyptian revolution, there was a wave of spontaneous novel artistic ways of resistance that used urban space in an innovative manner (Abaza, 2014). Graffiti was painted in main squares, especially the epicentre of protest Tahrir Square, where it was used as a tool to communicate revolution goals and to mobilize people (Awad & Wagoner, 2015). At this time, it was facilitated by a dynamic social movement and grabbed much attention from local and international media. As the political and security situation changed over the course of the four years following the revolution, fewer artists continued to do graffiti, and new forms and strategies emerged tackling more topics of contestation. The authorities also adapted to this new form of expression using different forms of resistance to it, as will be shown. Likewise, the audience showed diverse reactions to graffiti and in some instances had their own interventions, another issue discussed as follows.

Fieldwork

To help understand this form of graffiti and the background and motives of its actors, narrative interviews were conducted with eleven graffiti painters in Egypt. The interviews were conducted in the period from September 2014 to January 2015. Four artists were contacted directly through their online graffiti pages and agreed to meet the researcher and three were reached through social networks and common friends of the first author, while the remaining four were reached through referrals from the previously interviewed artists. The second and third forms of contact facilitated the meetings and provided a common ground of trust for the artists to agree to meet, given the heightened security situation as well as their saturation with

interviews from media and researchers given the growing popularity of the topic of revolutionary graffiti.

Interviews were conducted in public areas such as coffee shops and gardens. They were recorded after the permission of the interviewees. Participants were informed of the anonymous nature of the research. All participants had no issue with their graffiti name being used. However, as a precaution, the participants will be referred to using symbols (EZ, HY, HD...), as their real identity could easily be discovered from their graffiti names.

The interviews ranged in time from 45 min to 2 h. They were semi-structured and allowed for the participant to narrate their own story in a natural flow (Robson, 2011, p. 285). The interview also included photo elicitation of some of their graffiti pieces discussing their process of idea generation and how others perceived their graffiti. The topics discussed involved artist's motives, anonymity, idea generation, implementation strategies, collective nature of graffiti, perception by authority and pedestrians, city space, vandalism and their imagination of the future. All interviews were conducted in Arabic except for one English interview done with a foreign artist living in Egypt. They were then translated into English and transcribed.

The data was further supplemented by fieldwork in May and December 2015 starting conversations with the two other actors in the triadic relation: pedestrians and the authorities. Ten go-along interviews (Kusenbach, 2003) were conducted with pedestrians from the general public in areas where graffiti is still present in the street, in addition to two interviews done with ex-military officials. The research is still predominantly presented from the artist's perspective, yet those exploratory interviews, though few, added new angles of looking at the reception of this form of resistance. More details about participants from this group will be discussed in the authorities and pedestrians sections below.

The interviews were coded with the help of NVIVO and analysed using thematic network analysis. For the purpose of this chapter, the analysis was focused on codes relating to resistance and the different actors involved. In the first section of the analysis, we will follow Marková (2003) and Cornish's (2012) triadic relation model to consider how graffiti artists perceived the different social actors (viz. themselves, the authorities and the public) as well as the continuous issues they struggled with (see above). The second section will then highlight some of the factors involved in the interaction of these actors through time.

Actors of Resistance

For Marková (2003), the person-alter-object triad, going back to social psychologist Mead (1934; see also Gillespie, 2005), is the basic unit of social psychological analysis. The idea is that social action can only be done by two or more actors—for example, the act of purchasing needs both a buyer and a seller. The tension between these different parts in the whole is what leads to the social change. Social representations theory, for example, understands social change as a communicative

between differently positioned social actors around an issue of mutual interest. The general triadic model can be filled in with different social actors and issues, generating a variety of social forms of relation. More recently, Cornish (2012) applied the model to the context of protest action, analysing not only crowd members but also authorities as the targets of collective action. She found that in addition to protesting, social movements often use other forms of action, such as persuading and exchanging favours, as means of gaining influence. In the present analysis, we will describe the social act of graffiti painting from the position of different social actors involved and the contentious issues at stake, mainly as understood from the position of the graffiti painters.

The Graffiti Painters

Participants interviewed come from different social and educational backgrounds, and four of the eleven had no art practice before starting graffiti and would rather be called activists rather than artists. All participants did graffiti beside their main career except for KZ who quit his advertising career after 2011 and became a full-time graffiti painter. Their fields of work vary from engineering to fashion design to multidisciplinary art. Among the eleven participants, there are three females and eight males and their age ranging from 23 to 36.

The participants were triggered by the uprising to start this form of expression: nine out of the eleven participants only started using art for activism after the start of the revolution in 2011.

It all started right after the revolution (...) Just before the revolution I have seen how Banksy went to West Bank and drew on the Israeli-West Bank barrier. It was very iconic. At this time I didn't understand what graffiti is. But for me I was astonished how a person can go put what's in his head on a wall and impose it on all people (...) So it became a new way of objection for me. A new way of triggering authorities. Nothing more, just playing with the government. (EZ, a 24-year-old male engineer)

Even though their actions tend to initiate dialogue between different actors, where the "co-authors" dispute and negotiate certain ideas (Marková, 2003), when asked about their intentions the responses emphasized more the personal benefit they felt from this kind of expression rather than the impact intended on the other actors:

I do want to deliver a message to people. But it is not my first motive to paint, it is an end result, but my first reason to draw is very personal. I get the feeling that I want to go down to the street, stand in front of a wall and feel like I am doing something (HY, a 26-year-old male Architect).

Their act of resistance is represented as one of many other forms that were used in the uprising "the square didn't only have people fighting and killing, it had people drawing, singing and playing guitar. I don't know how to throw rocks or raise my voice and I don't have a weapon so I go to draw" (HY, a 26-year-old male

Architect). The heightened feeling of agency that came with the revolution inspired many to take part and express their views (Awad & Wagoner, 2015): “I started graffiti during a sit-in in Tahrir (...) Like many others after the revolution I felt like I can say my opinion too (...) I feel I do action with graffiti instead of just objecting in front of TV or social media” (HD, a 33-year-old fashion designer and a mother).

Even though for most participants the revolution initiated their involvement on the political level, three participants were already involved in other forms of regime resistance through joining groups such as “6th of April” and “Kefaya” movements or taking part in protests: “Since 2008 I used to go to protests. At that time Fine Arts graduates were not really involved at all as activists and my colleagues used to wonder why I join protests and strikes. Later on this image changed. Everyone now is a revolutionary” (IB, a 25-year-old female freelance artist).

The artistic skill of drawing did not seem to be a barrier in performing the act of graffiti as four of the participants had no artistic background and utilized computer software to do their designs and then used spray cans to implement the printed stencils on the walls:

I never painted, I don't know how to draw. For me I used computer designs to do graffiti (...) If I knew how to write I would have wrote. You have different ways to express yourself (...) we're in it for activism. It's an agreed upon rule. So go and write what you want. Be obscene. Draw things that would shock people (...) You shake people. You get them out of their boxes (NR, a 25-year-old male director in a media company).

The Authorities

In this section, we look at the response of the second actor, the authority, to the object created by the first actor, graffiti painters. The authority here is not seen as a passive recipient of an action but as an actor influencing the atmosphere and the contentious issue of the object. In many instances, the reaction of the authority unintentionally helped reinforce the power of the graffiti messages (Tripp, 2013, pp. 256–308). The authorities' presence in the street and reaction to graffiti varied greatly from 2011 to 2015. In the beginning of the revolution, many squares were occupied by protestors and graffiti was a way to personalize the “proclaimed space”. Later on, artists found little constraint in drawing during the Muslim Brotherhood rule due to the weak presence of security or army forces in the streets. Since the election of president Sisi, the presence of authorities in the streets has been rapidly increasing, especially with the continuous terror threats. The government has also drafted new laws to combat graffiti after the outset of Morsi as mentioned earlier. Also, many government efforts have been directed at erasing graffiti and repainting, especially in main squares and around army buildings.

The Muslim Brotherhood time was the time we felt most free (laughs). Really! The police was probably not cooperative with Morsi so they left us to do whatever we want. It is all about their interest and agenda. Later on it became really tough. The time we are in now is really scary (IB, a 25-year-old female freelance artist).

The authority response was not limited to passively erasing the graffiti signs and preventing new ones, but they also created their own signs. In Fig. 2, a government building wall close to Rab'aa square was repainted and over the new paint they put the statement: “Your opinion doesn't belong on the wall”.

This effort to erase is seen as indicative of something more than just cleaning a wall: “everything is being repainted from Mogama'a [government building on Tahrir square] and all around. This is very symbolic for what the government has been doing with people's consciousness and memory” (EM, a 30-year-old female European artist living in Egypt). This argument is supported by how the erasing is selective rather than random, depending on the message of the graffiti. MK, a 25-year-old male multidisciplinary artist, explains that all the graffiti he did against the current regime has been erased in contrast to his graffiti against Muslim Brotherhood that is still present in Tahrir Square. Also, HY, a 26-year-old male architect, argues that “Authorities erase for political reasons. Not for cleanliness. If it was for cleanliness they would paint over it nicely but they just erase it with spray too (...) they just erase statements that frustrate them”.

An example of selective erasing is shown in Fig. 3. This stencil graffiti was spread around Tahrir Square area during El Sisi election time. It shows an illustration of El Sisi with the text “vote for (curse word)”. The curse word was erased with a spray can, possibly by authorities or pedestrians, turning the meaning of the graffiti into a call to vote for El Sisi.



Fig. 2 Text: “Your opinion doesn't belong on the wall” (captured by author in August 2014)

Fig. 3 Text: “Vote for”
(captured by Author in June
2014)



Judging by the drafting of the new law, the authorities are against this form of expression and see it as vandalism, as well as an insult to authorities. One participant narrates the authorities' view that he experienced when arrested: “I got arrested while drawing (...) they said ‘you are part of the graffiti people vandalizing the country, if we see you here again, you will not get away with this’ (...) they told me what I am doing is political and against the government” (KZ, a male full-time graffiti artist, refused to disclose his age). Interestingly, another participant rhetorically turns the situation around and accuses the authorities of doing vandalism: “Real vandalism is coming from the corrupted state. If the political power in the country was cleaner, you wouldn't find people writing Sisi is a killer or a traitor. So authority can't come now and say that those people expressing their opinion are vandalizing the city space” (HY, a 26-year-old male Architect).

The concept of power becomes of interest in this dialogue between graffiti artists and authorities. The power relations are perceived differently by participants. For some, they acknowledge that they are the weaker side of this dialogue: “The government is afraid I don't know why, maybe because we reach people. Even though we are weaker than what they might imagine” (IB, a 25-year-old female freelance artist). On the other hand, some describe their actions as more powerful than that of the government: “Of course they fear graffiti, because if they didn't find

it powerful they would have left it. It makes me proud that a whole government is nervous about my work” (KZ, a male full-time graffiti artist, refused to disclose his age). Some graffiti pieces also express this power relation. Figure 4 illustrates this attitude in its portrayal of a woman and the statement “Government, fear us”.

It was challenging to get access to authority figures to understand this actor’s perspective. To get closer access, an interview was done with a 65-year-old retired military official. For him, graffiti represented chaos and obscene language with no real purpose. He saw aesthetic value in few of the pieces and thought the best solution is to neatly erase graffiti and set specific areas where artists can draw in an organized manner. For him, the graffiti artists focus on few cases and insult the government based on them while ignoring the bigger challenges the authority is facing. Another interview was done with a 24-year-old accountant who served his compulsory military year in Tahrir Square area. Even though he was involved in the revolution in 2011, he was very understanding regarding the authorities’ response. He explains how the context has changed much since 2011, and the military has much to resist with the current threats especially in a strategic area such as Tahrir Square.

The previous overview of the two actors of graffiti painters and authorities shows much tension in relation to issues such as power, vandalism and freedom of

Fig. 4 Text: “Government, fear us!!”. Photo Credit: Graffiti Artist Keizer



expression. This tension explains the contradicting ways by which the contentious issues expressed in graffiti are perceived by them as well as by the general public, as will be shown below.

The Audience: Pedestrians

The pedestrians in the city space are the natural audience of graffiti. The painters interviewed seemed to be more concerned with their message reaching and impacting the pedestrians rather than the authorities. The artists' intended impact on pedestrians varied; sometimes, it was an act of support "maybe my paintings can give light to a person who is devastated by what's happening, maybe this can help people continue their fight or it could help show them the path" (EZ, a 24-year-old male engineer). There was also a hope to have an impact on the way a passer-by thinks: "I see that if I do a strong mural with nice colours, I would definitely affect the psychology of the person passing by it" (HD, a 33-year-old fashion designer and a mother). And, therefore, to mobilize more people to join the cause "I wish for people who see my work to join us and leave the couch party. I want them to admit that there are mistakes, there are people who died..." (IB, a 25-year-old female freelance artist).

The existence of this dialogue in the street opened up new ways to reach citizens that are left out by other means of communication. The visual nature of the object as well as the presence of the artist in the street allowed a dialogue that transcended the illiteracy barrier. "It gave me the ability to talk to very ordinary people, illiterate, poor, and homeless people. You can't talk to them through exhibitions in the Opera House" (IB, a 25-year-old female freelance artist). Most artists agreed that doing graffiti connected them more with the street and opened up conversations, except for three artists who prefer to go to the street late at night when it is empty, and prefer their part of the dialogue to be limited to creating the object (graffiti). They see the object as initiating the conversation within the community.

Pedestrians' reactions as recipients of the object and responses as actors varied greatly to the graffiti as the context changed. The reactions, whether positive or negative, still served the intention of the artists to be heard and to confirm their presence. There was a general agreement among the painters interviewed that support and acceptance from the public have been declining over the four years reflecting the decline in the uprising popularity. "You get a cocktail of reactions. But lately the conspiracy theory has been all around. People are paranoid now" (MK, a 25-year-old male multidisciplinary artist). This paranoia has led pedestrians in many cases to take the role of authority, and they become concerned members of the public acting on behalf of the military, which is a structure of interpersonal censorship and surveillance that emerged post Mubarak (Elias, 2014, pp. 89–91).

The significance of the role of pedestrians as actors is not only in their reaction and response to the graffiti, but also in their power over what gets drawn in their area. In some instances, they provided protection for artists to draw, while in others

they erased what they did not like. The dynamics of the Egyptian streets are complex, and there are politics involved in who controls each part of the street from doormen to street vendors and others occupying the street space. One artist explains:

I enter the area, I usually go for a very old man, because I know he would have street credibility. Then I ask him to introduce me to an influential person in the area 'shab el mante'a'. They then become very supportive, offering protection, and showing how they control the area. It is all about street lingo and street code (KZ, a male full time graffiti artist).

Ten walk-along interviews were done with general public about how they see graffiti as pedestrians, as well as numerous discussions during field work. Participants' opinion towards graffiti seemed to be impacted mostly by their position towards the government, as well as by their definition of freedom of expression and vandalism. One participant, who is 34 years old, works in social development, and is a mother of two, supports this form of expression unconditionally: "Let them draw, spray, or even vandalize, at least they are finding an outlet to express themselves. It reassures me that someone still remembers and doesn't buy what the media is saying about the past".

Meanwhile, another participant, who is 54 years old, works as a production manager, and is a mother of two, sees graffiti artists as anarchists who are destroying what El Sisi is trying to build. She doubts the graffiti has any impact and does not see it as a dialogue since the message is not understood except by a few: "So when they draw this (referring to a portrait of a prisoner with no text), how do I know whether this person is in prison or a martyr or just a painting of a beautiful lady, only they know this person, they are not reaching the wider audience". This highlights the significance of the object and how it communicates the issue it tackles, from one hand "the piece of art must provoke, it must cause tension or attention, and it must create a challenge for the viewers. On the other hand if the problem is incomprehensible and if the artists distance themselves too much from accepted norms, then the viewers will not understand the painting and will reject it" (Marková, 2003, p. 155).

The Contentious Issues and the Object of Graffiti

Issues tackled in graffiti paintings and the way of implementing them varied over time. In the beginning of the revolution, graffiti targeted the specific goals of the revolution and was usually people scribbling free-hand messages or spraying small stencils calling for people to go to the streets rather than doing big paintings and murals. Later on, as protesters claimed certain areas, murals and large paintings became common, especially those done in honour of protestors who died at the hands of the security forces (see Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 Text: “Remember them, don’t forget the cause they died for”



As graffiti became widespread and more artists joined, the topics varied and started to tackle diverse issues, from challenging current social representations and traditional views to developing new representations of Egypt’s identity and future. Social representations of authority as powerful and the people as silent followers were challenged for instance. Traditional views of sheikhs as pure and pious were criticized as well by graffiti portraying how some Islamic figures used their religious authority for political gains, especially during Muslim Brotherhood ruling. Also, gender became a salient issue and the representation of women as important actors in the revolution was emphasized:

There was the Nefertiti one with the gas mask (see Fig. 6). I wanted to recognize women as part of the revolution; their presence, the physical harassments they face, their marginalization... And putting this painting in Mohamed Mahmoud which is in a way a very masculine street with all what happened in it of violence, it was a street of war, and in war – I don’t mean to segregate- there is no woman presence. So putting her there is a confirmation of her presence and the big role women played in the revolution. When I joined some of the clashes I was surprised to see brave girls beside me in the front line facing the forces (EZ, a 24-year-old male engineer).

Lately, under the current security situation, a lot of graffiti expresses frustration with the brutality of security forces in protests, universities and football stadiums. It also deals with lack of freedom of speech and calls for activist prisoners to be released. For example, during the feast in October 2014, photos of activists were spread on billboards to remind pedestrians that those activists “*are spending their feast in prison*”. The use of posters instead of painting was an adaptation that guaranteed faster application and better chance of not getting caught. All the posters were removed a few days later (see Fig. 7).

One consistent message that continued to be reaffirmed by graffiti is that of the presence and continuation of the revolutionary cause, which is a contested issue that causes tension with the current regime as well as with the general public who is no longer in support of the draining loop the revolution has caused economically and



Fig. 6 Captured in October 2012. Photo Credit: Ranya Habib



Fig. 7 Text: "Their feast is in prison". Captured by Author in October 2014

socially. Graffiti remains as one of the few visual manifestations of the uprising in the city space. This is changing, however, as graffiti is gradually disappearing and as many painters have stopped drawing anything new, out of fear for their safety or

a general feeling of disappointment and ambivalence with how events have unfolded in contrast to their hopes and expectations.

The Dynamic of Resistance

Actors in Dialogue

As was shown above, each actor had his own tools of intervention in the street; graffiti painters, authorities and pedestrians. Out of this situation, different forms of dialogue emerged. First, there was direct conversation between artists and people in the street; “It created a dialogue. People stop and ask us while drawing ‘what do you mean by this’ and a dialogue starts. And this is more important than the painting itself” (NR, a 25-year-old male director in a media company).

Second, the content of the image on the wall communicates. The graffiti in Fig. 8 is a good example of dialogue through the wall. One of the graffiti painters explained what he meant by it:

There were clashes on both sides of the wall: from the smiley face side, there were protesters, and from the other side, there were interior ministry forces. Stones and gas exchange from both sides and I am standing by the wall in the middle drawing a smiley face! (...) For me it meant, “you kill, we smile” We will not vanish and if the best you can do is to resist me by a bullet, then this smiley face is to tell you “show me the best you have got” (EZ, a 24-year-old male engineer).

Third, dialogue emerged from different actors changing the object on the wall. From one side the graffiti artists paint, then local authorities erase, and then painters paint again on the wall adding sarcastic statements such as “Congratulations on the new paint” or “Erase again and I will paint again”. Pedestrians also had their

Fig. 8 Barricade Wall. Photo Credit: Photo Journalist Amru Salahuddien



additions to graffiti, adding their own signs in the graffiti pieces and erasing what they did not agree with. For example, the message of the graffiti in Fig. 9 changed over time as the artist initially wrote: “I am among those who died a year ago and the killer was never prosecuted”. A year later the word “*a year ago*” was replaced by “*two years ago*”, then it was altered further by a pedestrian to “*three years ago*” expressing the continuity of the lack of justice.

In spite of the tension of this dialogue and its temporality, some artists seem keen on keeping this form of dialogue seeing it as a democratic process giving agency to each of the actors and creating social change:

...but people living in the neighbourhood sometimes erase too (...) who knows why. But I really like it when people take off my pieces. It is a very democratic process. I am doing it in the area where you live and you have the freedom to erase it just like I had the freedom to put it. It means I moved something in them so badly that they decided to erase it. I touched upon that anger. Maybe it made them think. It is a tool of dialogue between the artist and the masses in the most democratic form since the observer has the right to erase it. Which in reality is the first step in change since this will only happen through visual conversation, friction and provoking ideas, challenging stereotypes and a leap into the grey area (KZ, a male full time graffiti artist).



Fig. 9 Text: I am among those who died a year ago and the killer was never prosecuted. Photo Credit: Graffiti Artist Nazeer

Continuity and Transformation

Revolution graffiti in Egypt, though constrained by the government's increased control and resistance, continues in different forms. Groups of graffiti painters have been flexible and creative in finding ways to reach the public through the streets. This can be seen in the use of quick ready-made stencils to spray onto the walls and posters, instead of larger time-consuming paintings, that would increase their chances in getting caught by security forces.

Different projects have also emerged from graffiti. As MR explains, political messages are harder to communicate under the tightened security situation; so he decided with his group to do paintings for street vendors in Tahrir Square area that he hopes will build connection with the public there and change their views about graffiti into something useful that serves the people. Also, NR initiated "walls of corruption" project which uses only colours on certain walls to draw attention to the corruption behind them, such as walls hiding prison areas: "The idea of 'colouring through corruption' is to only do colouring with no text. Colour corrupted places. It is not an explicit message, because if it is direct and explicit they will stop us, but when we only colour police come and stand with us".

This continuity is giving all actors time to strategize and adapt to new ways of resistance:

Security forces were following the revolution and learning from it just like we were. So we both built expertise. So they know if they arrest me, for example, I will get support from other artists and get drawn. We were stronger than them. There was a limit they couldn't transcend. But now we are weaker and lost control. So now when we draw, they will see us and arrest us. In the beginning I would have an idea I would go do it right away whether alone or with a group. Now we could spend days thinking of how to implement something so fast that we don't get caught (MR, a 23-year-old male programmer).

Concluding Thoughts

The use of graffiti in the context of the Egyptian revolution offered us an ideal case study for unpacking the structures and dynamics of resistance. In so doing, we proposed a general framework that considers resistance as a situated act bringing together various social actors—in our case graffiti painters, authorities and the general public—related through their engagement with a series of contentious issues. Importantly, we wanted to underline the dynamic character of this model and consider the temporal unfolding of the dialogues between actors as reflected in the graffiti produced by both sides and its evolution across time. The fieldwork presented above sheds light on these processes, and it allows us to return to and qualify our initial description of resistance as (1) a social and individual phenomenon; (2) a constructive process that articulates continuity and change; and (3) an act oriented towards an imagined future of different communities.

First and foremost, resistance appears in our study as both a deeply personal act and one that requires and works with the means of the collective. Moreover, individual and group acts of resistance cannot be separated from the larger, historical picture of social movements within a given society. In our case, resistance graffiti is rendered intelligible by the different stages of the uprising in Egypt. Its development resonates with what happened during the 2011 revolution and the state of despair following an initial outburst of social activism. Activists and artists went from the spotlight into occupying the position of a persecuted minority. The survival of this minority may well depend on its capacity to be consistent and to make continuous efforts aimed at challenging hegemonic representations and practices within society (see Moscovici, 1976). They must also prove to be flexible and sensitive to changing social circumstances. The ways in which graffiti painters adapted to changing realities are worth contemplating.

Second, the production and reception of resistance graffiti expresses constructive and generative processes within society. The art of resistance we discuss here is not only seen in graffiti in Egypt; just like the revolution got people into the street, it transformed a significant portion of society: from art galleries to the walls of the city, from gated clubs to running groups and live street performances proclaiming streets of Egypt, in addition to creative forms of expression on social media such as political satire, comics and prisoners' letters and poems. In all these forms of expression there is resistance, resisting political power, social practices, capitalism, or class and gender divisions.

This observation leads us to the third conclusion, pointing to the deep connection between resistance acts and future-making. It might be premature to talk about the outcome of the Egyptian revolution at this point in time; however, we can confidently say that its artistic forms of resistance coming from different groups within the Egyptian society did play a major role in the cultural dynamics of the society. The comments and reflections of graffiti painters presented here are permeated by dreams of and for the future, even when they appear to us sarcastic or hopeless. There is an underlying altruistic dimension inherent to acts of resistance, and this dimension relates to the resisters' orientation towards a collective future.

As a final note, the Egyptian uprising is commonly considered to be facilitated by social media. Social media facilitated the creation of new social identities that challenged the social order (McGarty et al., 2013) and facilitated the mobilization of youth in protests (Tillinghast et al., 2012). On the ground, other forms of resistance also transformed the revolutionary goals from activists connected online to the general public. In all these, street art played a key role. However, to point out social media or street art as major factors in the resistance in Egypt and its uprising would undermine the real struggle and aspirations of those calling for change and those who lost their lives in the streets. Graffiti, like social media, are tools in the hand of people who oppose dominant representations, practices and institutions; in order to fully understand their role, we need to consider how and what they are meant to accomplish—in other words, the kinds of change they inspire, facilitate and ultimately bring forth.

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Resisting Inequality but Loving Those Cheap Ironed Shirts: Danish Expatriates' Experiences of Becoming Employers of Domestic Staff in India

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Abstract This chapter is based on empirical findings from a longitudinal study of Danish expatriates and their domestic staff in New Delhi. The premise is that most Danish expatriates strongly react—or resist—when they move to India and encounter what they experience as obvious inequality or inhumane work conditions in domestic service. I argue that “resistance” can be used as an analytical tool to explore transformative life situations, such as privileged migration when moving is not only a question of crossing national borders but also about moving up the social ladder in a place where poverty and inequality is explicitly present. The empirical findings show that the Danish expatriates have to negotiate embodied habits, moral values and images of themselves in their encounters with domestic staff. In their everyday life, they go to great lengths to provide decent work conditions for their domestic staff during their stay, and they use levelling strategies to overcome the uncomfortableness of their new social position. Moreover, the Danish expatriates draw on familiar discourses from back home along with novel local frameworks of understandings from middle class—and elite Indians—and other expatriates to justify their reactions and actions as employers. Thus, they seem to re-narrate their novel practices into frameworks that fit their prior value system, rather than transforming it.

Keywords Privileged migration • Domestic workers • Experiencing inequality • Resistance • Transformations • Moral values

Introduction

During her first week in New Delhi Jane feels uncomfortable with the case that her driver every time she calls him to go for a ride, he will hurry - sometimes even almost run - down the street to get the car. He drives the car up in front of her, and then he hurries to her side to open the door. She feels perfectly capable of opening the door herself. On top of this, he calls her Madam. Just as many other people around her do, such as at the office and in the

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shops. Jane tries whenever they reach their destination to open her door as quickly as possible, before the driver is able to get out of his own door and around the car to open hers. Sometimes he reaches her side in the last part of the process, holding the door handle when she is almost out of the car. She finds the situation that someone else is opening the door for her unsettling. It is like she is supposed to be someone superior. However, a few weeks later she has begun to let her driver open the door for her “He really thinks it is his job. And I really do not want to make obstacles to him feeling that he is doing his job probably” (field notes).

The above field note passage comes from my longitudinal qualitative research on how Danish people negotiate their encounters with domestic workers when living abroad as expatriates and privileged migrants (Amit, 2007) in New Delhi, due to their own or their spouse’s work in private business, NGO and diplomacy sectors.

The term expatriate comes from Latin “*ex-patria*” referring to a person who lives outside his or her native country and is commonly used to refer to highly skilled people often from Western countries who live in another country for a limited period of time (Fechter, 2007). Research on highly skilled people moving from “the West” has been sparse (Fechter & Walsh, 2010), but is now an upcoming field within the social sciences. My study seeks to explore the psychological dynamics of privileged migration. It focuses specifically on the case of Danish migrants, who, as a result of their relocation, move up in the economic hierarchy and simultaneously encounter socio-economic inequality in a way they did not experience before. This new exposure not only occurs at street level when they encounter beggars and poverty in the streets of Delhi, or at their workplaces with its novel forms of social organization, but also in the heart of their new homes when they employ domestic staff. Domestic work refers to service jobs within the households, where people are employed as, for example, maids, housekeepers, nannies, cooks, security guards, gardeners and drivers.

I found that the Danish expatriates very clearly react against—or “resist”—some of the domestic work practices they observe among local employers that they perceive as inhumane or unequal treatment of the domestic workers, for example, when domestic workers have 10–12 h shifts 6 days a week, or when their employers give them orders in a rough tone.

The term *resistance* is here understood within a psychological framework linked to psychological processes of change and transformation (Gillespie, Kadianaki & O’sullivan-Lago, 2012; Valsiner, 2014). In this chapter, I broadly use *resistance* to refer to all kinds of counter-reactions that the Danish expatriates experience and enact in relation to domestic service in India—for example, emotional uneasiness in the body or being judgemental towards others’ behaviour. More broadly, I will refer to various counteractions Danish expatriates perform in the outside world against the existing practices of domestic services, from automatic responses to well-planned strategies of action and verbalized justifications.

My research approach is a combination of a phenomenological methodology and cultural psychology theory. First, I approach the Danish expatriates with curiosity, aiming to describe their process of becoming employers of domestic staff, using resistance as a lens to unfold their experiences. Secondly, I move beyond their experience, adding a theoretical layer. Here, I try to outline the psychological processes at play in temporary privileged migration, while bearing in mind that human meaning-making occurs within a complex web of material, historical and social events and settings (Valsiner, 2014; Zittoun, 2012; Bruner, 1990).

The empirical findings come from my doctoral research where I have been conducting a longitudinal study of 12 Danish key participants and have also been a participant observer in the Danish Expatriate circles in New Delhi and Gurgaon—a modern satellite town 30 km south of New Delhi—for more than 12 months during the years 2013–2015.¹

In my longitudinal study, I am following 12 people closely through interviews and participant observations from the time of their arrival in India to 6–18 months into their stay. At the time of writing this chapter, each of these participants has been interviewed four times. Six of them had their first interview within 14 days of arrival and the others within 6 weeks of their arrival. Their second interview was approximately 14 days after the first. Besides these key participants, I interviewed eight other Danish expatriates—long termers and newcomers—one to two times. And I had several informal talks with other Danish people during my fieldwork. This data is also included in the following.

This chapter is organized as follows: firstly, I provide the theoretical and contextual background for my empirical findings; secondly, I present my research findings with a detailed description of the most common resistance strategies that the Danish employ, as well as typical situations of non-resistance; lastly, I discuss how the Danish expatriates transform over time and conclude the chapter.

Migration, Identity, Values and Meaning-Making

Migration is often described as a major rupture, in which significant changes in migrants' everyday life takes place. In this way, migrants' common-sense experience of their life-world can be radically shaken (Schutz, 2005). Everyday routines have to be re-established in the new setting where new social others are encountered. It is a process of both embracing novelty, while simultaneously holding on to

¹Gurgaon is often considered a suburb to the capital even though it belongs to a different state. And I will use the term 'New Delhi' in this chapter, also when I refer to Danes living in Gurgaon. As Gurgaon is a main center for international companies in the National Capital Region (Delhi NCR), many Danes working in the private sector choose to live there when they move to New Delhi.

continuity with life as it was before (Märtsin, 2012). An important finding for this study is that what Danish expatriates seem to react upon is closely related to their experiences of how the world around them ought to be, and their own positions within it. From this standpoint, resistance is closely connected to identity processes.

In line with meaning-centred approaches to psychology, such as cultural psychology, I understand identities as different angles or positions that the individual experiences. These positions are dialogically and socially constructed (Harré and Langenhove, 1999; Davies & Harré, 1990) and may be experienced as more or less comfortable and attractive, all depending upon the collective images and associations the particular positions evoke (Gillespie et al., 2012; Markova, 2003; Moscovici, 1984), and the real and imagined social others (Gillespie, 2006; Mead, 1925) that partake in the particular social setting. For example, being served a gin and tonic while the Sun goes down under a hazy sky on a rooftop in Delhi could evoke images of colonial times in a way that can be experienced as a kind of play that may be enjoyed by the participating expatriates. While on the other hand, the case of sitting at home on the couch and reading today's newspaper while the maid serves the midday tea may, through the eyes of friends and family back in Denmark, evoke uncomfortable images of an exploitative master and servant relationship.

Resistance emerges when the identity position provided for the individual reflect social representations and identities at odds with people's experience of themselves, and as they would like to be seen and described by others. Bruner's (1986) notion of the "dual landscape" is useful here. According to Bruner, a narrative consists of two layers or landscapes: the first is related to the concrete actions unfolding, and the second to the various interpretations and meanings that are linked to these events by the narrator of the story as well as its audience. Therefore, as I use this here, it is in between the different actions that people perform (or do not perform) and the possible interpretations of the *intentions* of these actions that divergent stories about people's identity can be created. When we create alternative stories of the intentions behind our actions, novel positions which may be more attuned to our preferred image of ourself can emerge out of these new interpretations—a case which has been used directly in postmodern-narrative therapeutic settings (see, e.g., White, 2007). Along these lines, when people perform certain actions, they may be able to actively transform their identities (Holland, 2010) and change the impressions they make on others (and themselves) (Goffman, 1959). For example, making a raise in the monthly payment for a driver can be interpreted as an active re-negotiation of a possible identity of an "exploitative employer".

However, everything in the human life-world is not just free-flowing or easily changeable. Values—here defined as affect-laden beliefs—can be seen as constituting personal and collective *moral horizons* that, even though they are ultimately culture bound and socially constructed, provide objective points for the individual to orient him or herself in relation to (Branco, 2012; Branco & Valsiner, 2012). Moral horizons thus become notions of how the world ought to be. They make it possible for people to evaluate individual life choices and the collective societal events they encounter (Brinkmann, 2008). Branco (2012) points out that values, when first established, seem particularly resistant to change as they create a sense of

personal continuity through the life course and as I will show in this chapter, instead of changing their values and moral horizons over time. The Danish expatriates seem to transform their experience of the practices that initially evoked discomfort and struggles for them.

If we want to explore the interconnectedness between values, beliefs, intentions and settings (Macintyre, 2011) in everyday human experiences, then processes of meaning-making need to be taken into account. In my view, this focus on meaning creation is where cultural psychology sets itself apart from traditional psychology (see also Bruner, 1990). It offers a more fluent and holistic entry into the topic of privileged migration processes than might be the case if we only used traditional American social psychology with its more schematized models of cognitive discrepancies, group dynamics and social identity (see, e.g., Festinger, 1957; Sheriff, 1936; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Here, the notion of the individual person as an active meaning creator within social settings and groups is easily lost. The same can be said to be the case within the traditional psychological approaches to global mobility and cultural adaption in psychology. The focus of this literature tends to be on culture shock, stress and coping, cultural learning and acculturation (see, e.g., Carr, 2010; Ward et al., 2001; Sam & Berry, 2006) without considering individual experiences of migration from a meaning-centred and social constructivist angle. This chapter is an attempt to illustrate the usefulness of the meaning-centred approach in this research field.

Moving into a Radical Different Sociocultural Set-up

The existing differences between Denmark and India in relation to state structure and economy, as well as historical practices and social organization, collective values and social representations, are important to outline briefly if we are to understand the transformation Danish expatriates go through as they become employers of domestic staff. Domestic work in general in the literature is described as an ambiguous type of work due to the mix of the intimacy, emotional care and professionalism inside another family's house (see, e.g., Adams & Dickey, 2000; Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2003; Mattila, 2011; Hochschild & Machung, 2012). But I found that in the case of Danish expatriates their resistance was also a reaction to the overall encounter with poverty and inequality in everyday life in New Delhi. India has one-third of the world's poor population. This is quite a change from the socio-economic landscape in the small affluent kingdom of Denmark, where poverty pales in comparison. Danish people are brought up in a system with extensive labour regulations and laws, and they carry a strong image of the welfare state with them to India (Savinetti, 2015). However, by hiring domestic staff they become a part of the unregulated informal work sector in India where few labour laws exist and work conditions and terms of employment are extremely diverse. This change in set-up in itself provides a predictable existential shock for the arriving Danes.

Furthermore, scholars such as Dumont (1970) point out that the social organization in India is hierarchical at its core. This has consequences for people's expression of their social position: their class and caste. In their well-known study of domestic service in Kolkata, Raka and Qayam (2009) argue that having domestic servants in India functions as an important sign of belonging to the middle class. Having people to carry out menial tasks for you creates symbolic boundaries between yourself and others below. This is at odds with the Danish expatriates' common sense in two ways. Firstly, it is the case that conducting everyday household tasks in a Danish setting may signify "competence", "autonomy" and "non-laziness" rather than loss of status. Secondly, the social structures appear in the Nordic countries in general as very egalitarian. The notion of *equality* among the Danish expatriates is linked to moral values, which at the core means that people ought to be treated equally and considered of equal worth no matter their social origin. Thus, the explicit difference in social status made between the service provider and the service receiver in domestic work is experienced as problematic. Furthermore, it is also in some Danish settings experienced as troublesome to promote superiority explicitly (for instance in terms of money or social status). As Pelle, a man in his twenties, put it, "In Denmark you do not get special privileges just because you earn more" (interview). However, when Danish expatriates are placed high in the Indian social stratum, special privileges *do* follow, such as access to cheap household labour.

Getting Staff: A Part of the Package

The terms of employment between expatriates and their drivers and housekeepers come in many forms and arrangements. The point to make here is that most expatriates end up experiencing that getting staff is mandatory when relocating to India. Also concretely, as Marianne experienced it, when renting the furniture for her new overseas home a housecleaner was included in the deal, meaning that not only did she get furniture, but also a person who came to clean during the week. Other expatriates move into guest house set-ups where a housekeeper is already installed. This is a common set-up for short termers staying in Delhi between one and 6 months. Many Danish expatriates get a driver from their organization, or move into apartments with staff that have been working for the same company for years. For those whose organization does not have some sort of predefined system regarding maids and drivers, an extensive informal network exists. It is common that predecessors at a work place contact newcomers before arrival to offer them to take over the contract with their staff. In the end, it is only very few who end up not having any sort of domestic help—at least someone to clean and do the dishes. However, only a few of the participants in my study had given it much thought prior to their travels that they were to have domestic staff. And none of them was really prepared for the reactions they got on arrival.

Resistance

Ella, an elderly lady who has spent a considerable time in India, tells me the story of her first visit to her neighbour one evening when we meet at a Danish event at a posh restaurant. The Indian neighbour wanted to offer her tea, but he could not get a hold of his housekeeper. He spent a considerable amount of time on his mobile phone, calling the housekeeper until he finds out that the housekeeper who lives in the house and works 24/7 is having a midday nap in his bed on the roof-top. Finally the neighbour gets him down to make the tea. It was Sunday. Ella found it horrifying. She would have been perfectly OK with being offered a glass of water or a cold drink that the neighbour could have taken himself in the kitchen. Waking the housekeeper was to make too much of an effort for all of it she thinks (field notes).

Most Danish expatriates react—in one way or the other—towards practices they witness within the domestic work sector in India that they experience as obvious exploitation or inhumane work conditions. And in this section, I will present some commonly occurring experiences among Danish expatriates in New Delhi. It should be noted, however, that everyone does not experience everything that I present here. People's unique life stories and their particular way of being in the world make them more prone to some experiences than others. That said, I heard many stories along the lines of the above. But I have to add that many Indian employers also go great lengths to secure the well-being of employees. And there are structural features, such as long-term security, that only can be provided by local Indian employers (Shalini Grover, personal communication).²

Changing Work Conditions

A classic reaction in those first weeks was to change the work conditions of their domestic staff in one way or another. For example, newcomers often notice that drivers often are called upon to wait outside the house from early morning until the employer knows where he might be going that day. Or the case of having people work 7 days a week or 10–12 h a day. All the Danes in my study started to create more regulated work conditions, for example by telling their drivers when they would need him next time in order to avoid having him wait the whole day in front of their house or office without any fixed hours. Some of the people who have staff on seven days a week contracts started to do all their shopping and outings when possible on Saturdays, so that they could ensure that their driver could have most

²Furthermore, employer practices that may seem radical from an outsiders' perspective may run by logic that makes sense for people living in the local setting. For example, having a nanny living in the house 24/7 by elite Indian families—with dual careers and children—may be experienced as the only way to guarantee reaching work punctually every day. As in New Delhi where formal institutional childcare opportunities are limited and issues such as frequent traffic jams delaying the domestic workers or workers, taking leave without prior notice can make everyday life quite unpredictable.

Sundays off. Many also regularly let their staff go earlier than the contract stated, so the working day became an 8-h shift. Giving a pay rise or an additional bonus and tips as compensation for odd work hours, overtime and extra duties is also very common.³

Overall, the Danish expatriates put up a great effort to secure good work conditions and ensure the well-being of their staff. Many of them spend quite a lot of time thinking about how to be good enough employers throughout their stay in India. But no matter which actions the Danish expatriates take, the gap between employer and employee is always there. It is materialized in the architectural layout of the houses. Most houses in New Delhi's nice neighbourhoods come with servant quarters, and the fancy new high-rise condominiums in Gurgaon often have separate elevators for the domestic worker that lack the wall paint and cleanliness that is usually provided for the residents of the building. In the beginning, the Danes react immediately and strongly to these new structures that they suddenly are a part of, not only by changing the work conditions for their staff, but also through subtle reactions and strategies in their everyday life.

Levelling Strategies—Embodied Reactions and Personal Values

Dennis recounts how he during his first day in the guesthouse rises from his chair at the morning table, holding his finished bowl of oats in the hand intending to place it in the kitchen sink. "Let it be [on the table]", his fellow colleague tells him, "That's the maid's job" (interview).

With Bourdieu's (1977) concept of habitus in mind, we can see Dennis' reaction as an embodiment of cultural traditions, values and practices. Dennis does not think about getting up from the table, his hand just automatically takes the bowl of oats as he was brought up to do, and he is used to placing it by the sink himself. Three months into his stay, Dennis still took the dirty dishes from his dinner out to the sink, and he would pour some water over it, so it was easier to wash the next day. As he said when I asked about this practice,

You just know how difficult it is to clean up a bowl of cooked rice the day after – if you haven't soaked it. And it only takes a few minutes to do so (interview).

People's prior experiences with manual labour—be it the household chores at home or experiences from service jobs—often played a role when they verbalized why they soaked their used utensils as many of them did. And almost everyone seemed to have small everyday practices they felt were important, such as not letting their staff take the plates and cutlery out to the kitchen after dinner or washing their dirty underwear.

³The latter also becomes a possibility for the expatriates due to their privileged economic position in India.

Other strategies seem to be focused on levelling out their relationship with the domestic staff directly, for example, telling their staff to call them by name and to call people Madam and Sir back; asking their driver or housekeeper to eat with them; or placing themselves in a novice position by asking their driver to teach them Hindi words.

Thus, it seems that it is not only a lack of embodied knowledge that makes the Danes behave in certain ways when others perform services for them; the actions taken by the Danish expatriates could, besides the genuine intention to treat other people fairly, also be understood as a way of re-creating and connecting to familiar discourses from the Danish societal setting.

Thus, by actively creating good work conditions and good relationships, they also become able to narrate more comforting stories of their relationships with domestic workers in India. How these everyday strategies are related to values is exemplified below.

It is Saturday morning. The second time Pelle encounters the woman who comes to clean and do the dishes. Pelle is in the living room when he heard a short knock, followed by keys opening the door. He just made coffee and in the process spilled a huge part of it on the floor in the kitchen. So he immediately runs back to the kitchen, starting to wipe the mess on the floor up. He finds it impolite not to. When Savitra comes in, she signals to him with hand movements and Hindi words that he should not clean the floor. She will do it. Pelle tells me afterwards that he did not feel comfortable letting the cleaner clean up his mess: she should not do it since it was him that had soiled the floor (interview).

The expatriates' positions and everyday life may have changed more or less drastically, but they still hold on to the values that they experience as part of who they are. This pattern emerged both in their immediate embodied reactions as well as when reflections were more prominent. For example, as Marianne told me as we stood together in her kitchen while the cook stood behind us chopping vegetables:

I am always attentive towards always saying 'hi' to my own driver and other people's staff. I have to acknowledge their presence, you know. We are three people in this room, you know: the cook, you and me (field notes).

However, in a setting where people's core values becomes challenged on a regular basis, they need additional means of negotiation—besides levelling strategies—to resist experiencing too much discrepancy between their own actions and identity. It is here the strategies of neutralization, excuses and justifications come in (Maruna & Copes, 2005).

Neutralization Strategies—Holding on to a Familiar Image of Yourself

Generally speaking, people are *not* congruent in terms of doing what they say they are doing and what they actually do. Narrative and verbal strategies to keep up your self-image are a part of everyday life, not an exception. Furthermore, the resistance

strategies I present in this section here could be seen as a reaction to protect ones familiar images of oneself, rather than as direct resistance towards established structures of domestic service in India.

Several of the neutralization strategies I present below may be linked to objective reality, such as “Yes, we DO pay our staff more than our Indian neighbour.” I am not, however, interested in the validity of the different verbalizations here. Instead, the focus will be on the content of typical verbalizations as they may help us to understand the experiences of privileged migrants more fully (Maruna & Copes, 2005). For example, the first two categories seem related to the specific structures Danes are placed in when moving to India and the liminality (Turner, 1979) inherent in the expatriate position, such as living in-between societies. These strategies follow.

Non-responsibility

For people who have not hired their staff directly, for instance if they are living in a guest house or if their driver is placed by their company, neutralization strategies of non-responsibility may be used along the logic lines of: “I have not hired these people, their work conditions [e.g. work hours] are not my responsibility” (interview).

At the same time, it is also common for people to simultaneously apply levelling strategies, such as those mentioned above in relation to their maids and drivers. In the cases where the organization provides the domestics salaries, but it is the expatriate who is responsible for giving the daily tasks and instructions, the expatriates may oscillate between being a colleague and being the boss him or herself; one situation may be explained by a reference to the company’s overall responsibility and another in terms of the expatriate’s position as employer of the domestic worker.

Special Circumstances

Special circumstances such as being in the process of moving into your new house, thus not yet knowing the actual needs of the household, can be used to justify why the final contract with one’s employees has not been made; or the temporary nature of one’s stay in India may provide foreground as excuse for not providing medical insurance.

Being Good Employers

This is a category used in many ways: “we give a high salary” or “work hours are less” and such are very common, as are statements about being an employer who focuses on creating a good mental work environment for the employee, for example, by showing appreciation (for instance by smiling and saying thanks) for their work and thus treating their workers with respect despite the unequal social status. This is in line with what other social researchers have found: people from the Nordic countries tend to draw upon discourses linked to “equality” when they narrate about their own performance as good employers of domestic staff. Barbara Johnston (Johnston, 2014) in her study on expatriate employers in Singapore shows that expatriate employers in general tend to construct themselves discursively along racial lines as “better employers” than locals, but the reference in these processes to equality or home country labour practices seems unique for people from the Nordic countries (see Lundström (2012) research on Swedish women expatriate employers in Singapore, Latvala (2009) on Finns in Kenya, and Gavanas (2010) on Swedes employing au pairs in Stockholm, Sweden).

Comparisons

Comparisons can be seen as a more general strategy to preserve a positive identity position. These are very common, for example, to other (worse) employers’ practices—be it the predecessor expatriate, other expatriate nationalities or elite Indians. Many stories concern locals (or other expatriates) using harsh language with their staff or demanding hard work for low payment. Comparison strategies may be a way to distinguishing one’s own identity from a negative “other” that one otherwise may seem very similar to (Copes et al., 2008)—for example, an exploitative employer who takes advantage of the availability of cheap labour in an informal unregulated market, or colonial masters speaking about their domestic staff as if they were animals or children as Anne and Anders talked about their predecessors doing.⁴

Another typical comparison strategy is comparing down for instance to people who live in poverty on the streets or in slums: compared to these people, the domestic servants’ general life conditions, salary and work tasks may start to appear quite appealing and good.

The last two frameworks of understanding relate to the Danish expatriates’ engagement with new social others at work and during leisure time. The local middle class, the elite Indians and other expatriates introduce the Danes to alternative interpretations of the employer–employee relationships. Thus, they function

⁴Western people referring to post-colonial locals along colonial discourses is a well-known phenomenon (see, e.g., [NCook 2007G] on women development workers in Pakistan).

as “moral guardians” (Shweder & Much, 1991) who help transform the newcomers’ ideas about right and wrong conduct. With time, these novel frameworks are incorporated into the Danes’ narrations about their experiences and actions in India.

Adaption to Local Ideas

Many expatriates refer to local practices among Indians or other expatriates as neutralizing strategies: “In India working 6 days a week is normal”, “Their former employer said this [...] is what they are used to”, “We have an oral contract, this is how they do it here in India”, “My Indian colleagues says that [...] Other expatriates also [...]” and so forth. Thus, in this type of verbalization, it is the local practices that become the framework for justification rather than the expatriates’ practices and values from Denmark. Local Indians and expatriate peers could be seen as two different frames of reference where the Danish expatriates can find divergent practices and ideas: for example, in terms of the level of salary and whether the education of the staff’s children is an employer’s responsibility. Furthermore, the expatriates may start to use “cultural explanations” (Paugam et al., forthcoming) to position the employees along the lines of radical otherness as a way to understand and justify, for example, the need for long work hours. As Kathrin said to me, “*They work so slowly here that you need to have a fulltime maid in order to get done what you yourself could do in a few hours.*”

Necessity and Moral Obligation

Local stories about the impossibility of fighting the ever present dust in Delhi without daily cleaning are very common. This links to the “myths of impossibility” (Fechter, 2007) to live in New Delhi without any kind of domestic help. Household chores, such as shopping, cleaning and washing vegetables as well as having someone at home to help with the constant flow of repairmen in one’s apartment, are often verbalized along the lines of being too much to handle on your own. Maids or drivers are often spoken about as useful translators with regard to culture and language. Furthermore, the case of employing staff is also presented as a moral obligation: a way to create jobs for the huge ever expanding Indian population. Furthermore, for some people, providing jobs becomes similar to small-scale charity projects. Instead of having to deal with the immense masses of poverty outdoors, expatriates may experience that they can support a low-income Indian family directly by providing work.

As mentioned previously, some of the verbalization may be linked to a kernel of truth. However, the interesting thing here is that the Danes, due to the temporary nature of their stay, their relocation situation as well as their exposure to local people (expatriates and Indian) gain additional meaning frameworks that they—as I

will show below—use to re-create familiar experiences of themselves. Moreover, it is important to underline the complexity of these neutralization strategies. The Danes switch very fast and smoothly between the different frameworks of explanations. In one instance, they may compare their own Danish values as superior, as opposed to local practices, and in the next use the local ideas and practices as justification. These different frameworks provide a mosaic of “symbolic resources” (Zittoun, 2006) the Danes can use to reinvent themselves with when the novel setting imposes obstacles and discrepancies. As Maja said after having spent almost a year in India: “*It is by far so much easier to be ‘a good human being’ in Denmark*”—there you do not have to negotiate around poverty, servitude and inequality in the same explicit way in everyday life.

Non-resistance

It is important to note that privileged migration does not mean that people just walk around as if in a war zone, having to protect themselves constantly. Relocation is also in many instances experienced as a vitalizing, freedom-filled and learning experience. And expressions of resistance occur alongside episodes of non-resistance. Thus, in the following I present typical situations where non-resistance in relation to domestic staff emerges.

Non-reflection

Non-reflection is here defined as *not* re-acting to the set-up surrounding the domestic staff. Part of this seems to happen to newly arrived expatriates, as they can be quite busy setting up their new careers and their new homes and everyday life in India. Thus, the process of hiring and having domestic staff—for example how the oral or written contract is formulated—only gets attention when the circumstances require it. Inherited staff’s original work routines is often continued with changes occurring only where the employers have felt compelled to make changes, as referred to in the section on work conditions above. The issue of not feeling responsible, also mentioned previously, plays a role in non-reflection. Examples include, for instance, people in guest houses reporting that they have not thought at all about the wages or bonuses their housekeepers get, as they do not experience these issues as their responsibility, or, cases where staff is employed through a third party, the expatriates may not know the salary of their household staff even after years of service.

Conflicting Needs

Non-resistance also emerges when the employer's needs conflict with the needs of the employee. For example, as mentioned under change of work conditions, many people let their staff go earlier every day after 8 h of work. But only a few change the original contract. Thus, people have (and use) the opportunity to keep their employee for longer if something special comes up such as having guests for dinner. Also, when staff request extra leave or holidays, they are often only given it if this do not conflict too much with the employers' schedule or weekend plans. Another typical example is asking the driver to work late hours if the expatriate is going out for dinner in spite of knowing that he would have to get up early the next morning. Another example is using him on Sundays even though the employer knows that the driver might prefer be with his family. These instances are often justified in terms of the extra tips for overtime that the driver is motivated to earn. I need to underline that most of the time the expatriates go to great lengths to include a concern for their employees' well-being as mentioned in terms of changing work conditions.⁵

Employers also often change their schedule so that they are not out dining too late, too many nights a week, or they get a taxi instead. However, in cases of major conflicts of needs, it is mostly the employers' interests that come first. In one case, a couple had to move from their current housing. When searching for a new home, they looked very carefully for a place where their live-in housekeeper would have a room at least as good as the old one. They eventually found the perfect place in close proximity to the husband's work. Everything was great, except the low quality of the servant's quarters, which they interestingly enough did not really notice was lower until they were confronted with explicit sadness from their housekeeper when he saw his new quarter. To solve this problem, the couple immediately decided to pay for a better room outside the housing complex. Thus, the relationship between resistance and non-resistance is in a constant oscillation. And the particular situation influences whose needs are in focus. Furthermore, the expatriates quickly start to experience new possibilities for well-being that emerge as a result of the service their domestic workers provide.

⁵This relationship can become really caring over time. And in times of major crises—for example the death of a close relative—the employer may provide financial support to help their domestic worker cope with the situation.

Getting Used to and Starting to Enjoy Having Domestic Workers

The expatriates get accustomed to having people around them doing manual service work all the time, and it does not take long before they also begin to experience the conveniences of domestic service. I present the most common instances below. Please note that this does not mean that Danish expatriates do not experience frustrations in relation to their staff. As in any other work relationship, negotiations are on-going between employer and employee. And in the line of domestic work, it can, for example, be difficult for the employer to create feelings of privacy when there is a maid in the house, and a driver and guards outside who know all about the family's whereabouts and general preferences.

Being Taken Care of

Having a person caring for your personal needs can be very comforting. Eskild, a middle-aged manager living in a high-rise building, explained that he just loved the fact that when he comes home from work there is cold coke in the fridge and someone to fetch cigarettes if he forgets them in his car 13 floors down. Many expatriates expressed immense gratitude of having to think less about practicalities in their daily life. As Karen portrays it, *“It’s like being a teenager. In principle, I could just throw my clothes on the floor and someone would come and pick it up.”* For people who have had many responsibilities for many years, such as demanding jobs and children to take care of, the new situation feels very liberating. Dual-working families could now spend their free time doing leisure activities with each other and their children, thus being liberated from “the second shift” (Hochschild & Machung, 2012) of household chores. For young, single expatriates or couples without or with grown up children, the chance to focus fully on their work and free time was also appreciated. Although their experienced need for someone to clean up and cook was not as present, several of the latter played with the idea of reducing their maids’ and housekeepers’ hours or maybe do without.

New Treats

Not only can domestic staff make life easier and more comfortable as they take over the everyday household tasks, new daily treats may also become possible. For example, the easy access to ironed shirts—either done by the household maid or a press-wallah on the street who in his outdoor stall uses brown coal to heat the irons and do it for five rupees a piece—became a daily pleasure, especially for the men. Most men I spoke with had never used shirts that needed ironing back in Denmark,

but had taken this habit up in India. And all enthusiastically exclaimed how they had started to love the feeling of these daily fresh-ironed shirts.

Another treat was having a driver. Although, drivers can be tricky in the sense that they provide a buffer between the expatriate house and the city outside that the expatriates depend upon, while at the same time the expatriates also need to feel as master of their own movements around. Several people also had conflicts with their drivers, and some decided it was easier to do without a driver completely. Not having to drive oneself was experienced as a major bonus in two cases in particular. Firstly, the considerable time that is often spent in the New Delhi traffic could turn into a calm period for the expatriates to unwind from work, check mails or chat if the partner was in the car; secondly, when dining out or going to a party, there was no need for a designated driver. Furthermore, the uneasiness that people experienced in the beginning about having a driver to sit and wait for them several hours in a row disappears with time.

Transformations Over Time

During the first days of her maid's employment, Maja reported much discomfort about having an all-around live-in maid in the apartment all the time. But after only 2 weeks, she had become quite used to it. Maja actually ended up a year later really enjoying the company of her maid who she like very much as a person.

I noticed a considerable change in the Danes' embodied reactions within the first few weeks of their stay in India. After a week or two, all the "door openers"—people at hotels, shops and restaurants employed to open doors for guests, as well as security guards—are not noticed as much anymore. And the Danes are now more at ease with having domestic staff inside their houses. People also get more used to the general encounter with poverty. Just as a soldier has to adapt to moving around in a killing field with dead bodies, the expatriates get used to having beggars knocking on the car windows or seeing families living on the pavement under flyovers. But although the Danes find their ways to live beside poverty and social inequality, most do not express this as a deep-felt acceptance of its presence. As Anne said 6 months into her stay when she was describing how she did not get emotional anymore when the beggars approached her as she had done in the beginning: "*I guess I have become more harsh*", a comment that points to a change in her in a potentially negative direction. Another interpretation could also have been that she had become more realistic in terms of how the world around her is. Therefore, although Danes' daily practices in some aspects may change dramatically, it seems like they still navigate according to the same moral horizon. Their values have not been changed or modified during their stay.

Along similar lines, Maja noted a few days before she left India after one and a half years "I do not feel I have changed, in the sense that my core values are, thank God, still the same. I still feel awful when I see poor people living under the flyovers." Maja was one of the people I met who most actively supported different

Indian NGOs during her stay, and her family had worked out very extensive and well thought out contracts for their employees. Treating her staff well and fair was essential for her. Still, some of her practices changed over time. For example, two days before our last interview, where she mentioned the above sense of not having changed, I was at her apartment. We sat and talked about her maid in Danish, frequently mentioning her name while she was in the kitchen within earshot. Something a newcomer may react against, as mentioning a person's name in a language they do not understand seems to reduce the domestic worker to an object.

However, it does not mean that the expatriates just let go of all of their resistance strategies. As mentioned above, people often continued to provide their staff with what they experienced as good working conditions, as well as continually engaging in other actions that reflect their ideas about how the world around them ought to be. In this regard, Pelle's case is illustrative. Pelle's change over time seems related to his success in creating personal relationships that reflected the kind of person he considers himself to be: As a young professional, Pelle felt deeply disturbed by being placed high in the social hierarchy despite his junior position. And during the first four months, he experienced a lot of emotional discomfort with everything that may have made him resemble a "colonial white male". Six months later, he found himself in a position where being called Sir or being treated like a superior did not make him shiver in the same way anymore. Pelle tells me how he has managed to establish a very good relationship with some people who were very low in the hierarchy at his work place. This was a situation he was very satisfied with, as it underlines his experience of who he is and his ideals about human interaction. Moreover, Pelle's acceptance of his new life style may have been further supported by upcoming prospects of an international career and a girlfriend who herself grew up with domestic staff.

Experiences with the domestic worker employer–employee relationships over time also open up for novel interpretations of the "right conduct". In a classic case, Maja got cheated by her driver who tried to make her pay for fake hospital bills. After this episode, she noted that she had been more naïve in the beginning. She and others also described how they became stricter with time. Thus, practices of local Indian elites and old-time expatriate employers, such as close supervision, concrete direct orders and lower monthly salaries, now do not look as unfounded or foreign as before. In addition, new actions become acceptable with time; for example, Signe, who for several months could not bear the thought of having someone else wash her dirty underwear, started to let her maid do it 8 months into her stay.

Conclusion

The cases presented in this chapter demonstrate the enormous flexibility human beings have to transform and adapt to new settings. By focusing on the dynamics of resistance, I have been able to unfold the experiences Danish expatriates go through

when they move abroad as privileged migrants to a country where socio-economic inequality and poverty is explicitly present. Many of the Danes in my study had not thought before leaving for New Delhi that they would start to accept and also enjoy having domestic workers, as practices of domestic service work in the Indian setting in several aspects seems in opposition to their values about equality in human relationships. However, as shown above, Danes do change when they arrive and become employers of domestic staff. First, immense resistance is experienced on a concrete embodied level: they start to change work conditions, and they apply various levelling strategies and use neutralization techniques to justify their novel social status as expatriate employers of domestic workers. Later on through interaction with local Indians and expatriate peers, the expatriates expand their interpretation repertoire. These additional meaning frameworks make it possible for the Danes to accept—and also enjoy—everyday practices that earlier were experienced as out of tune with their familiar sense of self. Accordingly, their resistance in many situations dissolves. However, this does not mean that all of their actions are changed. Holding on to some resistance practices can become important semantic anchors in their narratives about themselves abroad.

Furthermore, their use of these different narrative angles, social representations and justifications is complex. For example, a person may embrace the clean ironed shirt in the morning with gratitude and enjoyment and, in the next instance, criticize another expatriate's way of talking about his staff as servants, even though having shirts ironed by a personal helper each day could have been perceived as a servant situation before arriving in India.⁶

The shift between different meaning frameworks is on-going and constant. The only consistent thing, I would argue, is the case that the transformation in these people's experiences does not imply a change of their value system. Rather, the novel additional meaning frameworks make it possible for the Danish expatriates to interpret their new employer practices as consistent with the "moral horizon" of a Danish sociocultural setting.

Analytically we can understand the *moral horizon* as clusters of values in specific sociocultural settings that although socially constructed in appearance seems consistent over time. The moral horizon is connected to common sense and everyday action in these local spaces. Furthermore, just like a horizon, these values cannot be reached; rather, they function as a set of guidelines towards which the collective or individual can orient themselves and evaluate their actions. This constant orientation in a specific direction can help to create experiences of continuity and coherence over time and settings. However, it does not imply that these meaning-making processes are simple. As the individual persons move towards a moral horizon, they, at the same time, have to continuously reorganize their actions, relationships and experience of being in the world.

⁶Here, my findings link strongly with the work of Gillespie (2006) on divergences of perspective in Western tourists' experience of themselves and of other tourists in Northern India, where Gillespie's tourists distanced themselves from 'the others' (real or imagined) and their ridiculous tourist behavior.

Moreover, I argue that this process has to be hidden in order to be successful. In my study, the Danish expatriates do not change their experience of themselves over time—in relation to their core values—when they become employers of domestic staff.⁷ On the contrary, the Danes get used to and start to accept many novel practices related to employment of domestic staff that they first found so difficult exactly *because* they do not experience themselves as transformed.

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⁷This does not mean that expatriates do not experience being changed by their stay abroad. Many report experiencing being changed in many other matters related to their everyday life, such as getting used to and maybe starting to appreciate more unpredictable schedules, less fixed time plans, and so forth.

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Children's Resistance in the Emergence of Learning as Leading Activity: Playfulness in the Transformation of Spaces of Participation

Paula Cavada-Hrepich

Abstract Learning becomes the main activity of the traditional school practice from first-year primary school, and children are required to develop a new set of skills, attitudes and knowledge in the new classroom arrangements. As a consequence, a variety of reactions can be observed in children, from engagement to struggle, resistance and rebellion. This chapter presents observation of children actively engaged in changing and creating conditions of learning and development and the role played by resistance in the learning process. Inspired by a sociocultural theoretical perspective, this chapter seeks to respond to this question by drawing from research on children's transition to the first year of primary in two educational systems.

Keywords Transition to first-year primary school • Learning processes • Resistance

From first-year primary school (FYP), learning subject matter content becomes the main activity of the traditional school practice, replacing and clashing with the previous one: play. Thus, when starting FYP after summer holidays, children encounter an educational institutional practice related to learning subject matter that demands the display of new skills, attitudes and knowledge for ensuring their participation in a new socio-material arrangement. In this new scenario, children—now positioned as students (Cavada-Hrepich & Roncancio-Moreno, 2016)—might have different reactions: some easily engage in the learning activities, while others struggle to concentrate in the learning activities, seek to play, and even openly confront and rebel (Ebbeck, Saidon, nee Rajalachime & Teo, 2013C; Broström, 2007). Concerned about the impact of this rupture in students' successful learning trajectories, during the last decades several different pedagogical strategies inspired in the “school readiness” agenda have been displayed in the year(s) before FYP,

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moving downward the learning of academic subjects through the incorporation of structured learning activities in the classroom.¹ However, research on this transition shows that children in kindergarten expect to have fun at school, without necessarily being focused on academic aspects (Mirkhil, 2010). Meanwhile, children in FYP understand the learning subject matter orientation of this grade but openly report preferring play, recess and free time (Einarsdóttir, 2010). It can be argued that one of the main issues is still rather unknown process of the shift from play to subject matter learning as the main activity that organizes and structures children's everyday life. Based on the assumptions that children actively transform and create their conditions of learning and development (Hedegaard, 2011; Valsiner, 2014), exploring this transition requires us to look at children's conflicts and interests and, therefore, their resistant actions and attitudes when facing this new educational circumstance. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to **explore the activity shift from play to learning, focusing on the function of children's resistances to the new conditions that take place in the emergence of learning as a leading activity**. Inspired by a sociocultural theoretical perspective of human development, this chapter seeks to respond to this question drawing on a study taking the child's perspective on the transition to FYP in two educational traditions (Danish and Chilean) to support the following ideas: 1. resistance and transformation are part of the process of emergence of learning as the new leading activity; 2. resistance works on two intertwined levels, i.e., in the process of making sense of the demands required by the new social practice, individuals must also resist their own needs and wishes oriented to previous motives; 3. *playfulness* can be seen as a particular form of resisting and transforming the current conditions based on the functions of play as the previous leading activity; and 4. actions of resistance are shared and diverse at the same time, as the culturally and historically shaped set of demands must be personally related to the individual's trajectories and interests.

With this purpose, in the following sections, I first present a contextualization of the studies on children's resistances that leads to a brief presentation of the concepts of leading activity, motives, resistance and transformation. Afterwards, drawing in the analysis of two case studies, I illustrate and develop the selected points. Finally, the possible implications for the practice of these findings are discussed in the concluding remarks section.

Studies of Resistance in Preschool and School

The study of resistance of students in school has been a matter of sociological and educational psychology research attempting to understand a wide range of school phenomena that involves students' opposition and conflict, behaviours that reflect

¹The introduction of learning goals throughout the preschool curriculum has been traditionally formulated as *play-based learning*.

tensions between the students and the school. In the last 50 years, studies have formulated two main conceptualizations. In the first, students' resistance is understood as misbehaviour, a consequence of a deficiency within the student that is conflicting with the school's expectations (e.g. Dembo & Seli, 2004). Taking a more dialogical stance, a branch of studies articulate the relation between societal structures, inegalitarian power relations and students' overt rebellious acts (e.g. Giroux, 1983; McFadden, 1995). A small account is focused on understanding the subtle and revolutionary resistant acts of students during the daily routines of the instruction in the classroom, which might or might not lead to school failure or interfere in learning. They point out that resistance and compliance are influenced by the teacher's instructional approach, the inclusion of the students' culture and interest and the organizational characteristics of social settings (e.g. Alpert, 1991; Frykedal & Samuelsson, 2015; McFarland, 2001). However, Lanas and Corbett (2011) claim that considering the restrictions of the school system, any student's agentic action might be ascribed with the meaning of resistant to the power structure although they might have other reasons, such as pursuing knowledge that is relevant to them and dialogues in which they are heard.

The research on this matter is scarce in preschool education, even though the new worldwide educational goals expect children to experience formal preschooling. At this level, the studies are focused on children's resistance to the teachers, institutions and the social order (e.g. Markström, 2010, Corsaro & Nelson, 2003). Particularly, King (1985) explored children's classroom play as resistance. She proposed that different types of play take part in the everyday classroom activities: instrumental (assigned, required and controlled by the teacher in the classroom), recreational (sanctioned, initiated by the students and limited to free time) and illicit play (unsanctioned, initiated by the students in the classroom). Play, in King's formulation, includes both elements of resistance and accommodation to the demands of the classroom. However, she states that in illicit play, defiant aspects are more easily recognized by the teachers and children, which reflect what interests and matters to children.

Certainly, the lack of studies of preschoolers resistances can be explained by the relatively new attention that preschool has received in the educational research field and that, consequently, have barely explored the process of change between preschool and school from the child's perspective. The educational practice has prioritized a reductionist view of the complexity of this transition under the "readiness for school" agenda that, in its traditional understanding, emphasizes children's cognitive development for meeting the learning requirements and socio-emotional and behavioural skills for adjusting to the school system. Consequently, children's conflicts and struggles during the last year of preschool or FYP are interpreted as a "deficits" in the child capabilities, making him/her the one most responsible for school readiness (Burman, 2008; Britto, 2012; Dockett & Perry, 2009; Kagan, 2003).

However, sociocultural perspectives on human development have brought into the discussion the importance of the environment (home, school and communities) in which children engage and participate for understanding their transition to school

(Bodrova & Leong, 2005; Dockett, Petriwskyj & Perry, 2014; Dunlop & Fabian, 2002; Fleer, 2010). Children's development and learning are seen as actively transformed and situated (Stetsenko, 2009), taking place in their participation in diverse activities in several institutional practices (Rogoff, 2003; Hedegaard, 2012), changing (slow and fast) in irreversible time (Valsiner, 2011). Human beings are considered goal-oriented individuals that create and transform their conditions of living, where conflict and crisis are a fundamental part of development, instead of a threat or an obstacle in itself (Hedegaard, 2012; Vygotsky, 1998). Therefore, a sociocultural approach becomes an appropriate perspective when trying to understand children's resistances found in a process of change during their educational trajectories, as it is the entrance to FYP.

Activities, Motives and Leading Activities in Childhood

Aiming to overcome a dualistic perspective on human nature and inspired by an ideology of empowerment and transformation of society, the cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) tradition proposes that human development has to be understood as a dialectical relation between humans and their context, i.e., as an on-going mediated relation between individuals and their environment, aimed at transforming the latter (Vygotsky, 1997). Thus, the development of psychological processes is object related and emerges from social interactions in specific social situations, within changing socio-material practices, which in turn are embedded in culturally and historically built traditions (Stetsenko, 2009). More precisely, *activities*—object-related meaningful activities—are the source of human consciousness, where the psychological processes emerge (Leontiev, 1978). Activities are complex and dynamic and in constant development, where the object is a social process embedded in a social practice. In other words, there is a genetic link between external (material) and internal (psychic) activity, based on the process of internalization of mediational means.² Thereby, the internal activity cannot be separated from its external practical activity. In this sense, Davydov, Zinchenko and Talyzina (1983) state, “(the object is) that toward which an act is directed ... i.e., something to which a living being relates, as the *objective of his activity*—regardless of whether the activity is external or internal” (p. 31). Then, the object should not be understood as having existence in itself, nor as something that acts upon the subject.

Leontiev (1978) maintained that activities can be distinguished by the *motives* (material or ideal) that guide them, which emerge when a need meets a certain object. Motives energize the actions that constitute an activity and actions that are directed by a goal. The development of human activity hence results in the

²Even when children are doing activities by themselves, they are social activities as they are shaped by social practices, tools, social values, and so forth.

origination of new motives and accordingly, of new activities, i.e., over the course of mediation where a person acquires and masters new tools, and thus, his/her goals convert into new motives and his/her actions into new activities (Karpov, 2005; Leontiev, 1978). Motives are conceived as not belonging exclusively to the inner properties of the person, neither to the sociocultural world, but instead have to be understood in relational terms between a person and an object.³ Thus, a person's motives emerge from the interaction with others, in which the biological needs are transformed into cultural ones and then into personal motives. In other words, children acquire the motives of the practice in which they participate, motives that are put out through the demands in the activities, stimulating new needs in children that require the appropriation of tools and abilities (Elkonin, 1972). Personal motives, hence, result from experiences and competencies gained in earlier activities in which the children have participated, characterizing the individual's activities over a period of time (Leontiev, 1978; Hedegaard, 2002). However, when entering a new activity setting children are offered other possibilities of participation, promoting the emergence of new and meaningful motives. Thereby, at each period the child's motives are related to the dominating institutional practice and, at the same time, to what matters for him/her in the relations that he/she is involved (Hedegaard, 2002, 2012). However, based on how meaningful the activities are for children, they develop a hierarchy of motives; and yet, the child's leading motive will not necessarily be in line with the activity proposed by others (Leontiev, 1978; Hedegaard, 2002).

CHAT scholars propose that at a given age period in a given culture, there is a *leading activity* that produces the major developmental accomplishment in a certain period of life and prepares the child for the next one (Elkonin, 1972; Leontiev, 1978, 2009). Among the different activities that take place in the child's life, the leading activity is the one that promotes development in a certain practice through the creation of new and more complex cognitive, emotional and social relations and abilities, and also the restructuration of old ones (Leontiev, 2009). Elkonin (1972) adds that at each stage of mental development, there is an alternated progression of developmental stages in which the child's social or object orientations dominate.

During the preschool age, the leading role of *play*⁴ is widely recognized (Vygotsky, 1966). Play is formulated as an activity characterized by having symbolic actions and objects (substitution of real ones) in situations that are imagined, where the child's personal sense (affections and emotions) guides the actions and thus the activity. Play is also characterized by the agency by which children can transform their activity. Vygotsky (1966) pointed out that by playing children can open a zone of proximal development, functioning ahead of their age, behaviour

³Mariane Hedegaard made a detailed comparison of the causal humanistic, sociological and cognitive conceptualizations of motive (Hedegaard, 2011).

⁴These are the leading activities that have a specific developmental value in industrialized societies.

and context. In this line, Schousboe and Winther-Linqvist (2013) suggest that “In play, the child can express itself in a relatively uncensored connection, enabling it to indulge in a variety of spontaneous ideas” (p. 2). Moreover, Elkonin (1972) indicates that play (described as role play during preschool) is an activity oriented to the social others, modelling the motives and norms of human activity. However, this orientation changes into cultural objects (knowing the objects and their use in the world) when the child starts school, giving rise to learning as a leading activity.

Davydov (1999) emphasizes that *learning* as a leading activity for school-aged children aims to develop theoretical thinking in students. In fact, as Hedegaard (2001) points out, during this age children are eager to master the academic learning and the adult world and, at the same time, are expected to dominate the symbolic representations (fundaments of scientific knowledge in a societal connected system of knowledge). This leading activity is displayed traditionally by specific ways of organizing the practice (instruction) and in specific socio-material arrangements (in the classroom). In fact, learning is culturally highly valued as the expected thing to do in a major part of childhood and inside the school.

Nevertheless, the transition between leading activities remains theoretically unclear. Veresov (2006) points out that it should not be presupposed that one leading activity acts as direct base of the next one, but the new leading activity “... arises in the depths of the entire social situation of development of the pre-schooler” (p. 16). Regarding the transition from play to learning, he explains that within the child’s social situation of development: “Play passes the ‘baton’ to learning activity, ceding the position of leading activity, but it does not do so directly. It leaves this baton, as it were, on the ‘field’ of the social situation of development, on which the pre-conditions mature for the emergence of a learning activity that will be capable of picking up the baton” (p. 16). Nevertheless, the process by what this “taking over the baton” occurs remains unclear, neither offers an explanation for understanding children’s acts of resistant in the classroom.

Resistance and Transformation

Within the CHAT tradition, there is no clear elaboration on resistance in development as such, being addressed twice by Vygotsky. In his work on play, he states that play has to follow the principle of greatest and least resistance simultaneously (Vygotsky, 1966). Then, the action guided by one’s wishes and desires, at the same time, has to be subordinate to the meaning of objects and scenarios (rules). Vygotsky (1998) also talks about resistance at the critical age period of three for the change of the child’s social position relative to the adults around him/her and their authority. Both cases allude to one of the tenets of CHAT that refers to the agency of the individual, which can be determined and or constrained by the conditions in which he or she participates.

Moreover, within a broader sociocultural understanding of human development, children are considered as actively contributing to the creation and transformation

of social processes, which, at the same time, affects their possibilities of participation and development (Corsaro & Nelson, 2003; Hedegaard, 2012; Stetsenko, 2009). Children are intentional agents that make sense out of their circumstances and transform the world. Moreover, Valsiner (2014) points out that “By acting upon objects the persons create—through the resistance by, and modifiability of, these objects—their life space” (p. 4.). This idea brings back the intentionality of the individual's action and the interdependent relationship between person and object. At the same time, human action is mediated by the process of creating and giving personal meanings to the world through signs (Valsiner, 2007).

Thus, based on the analysis of children's activities, motives and conflicts in the classroom in the transition to FYP, it is possible to have a dialogical understanding of resistance that aims to understand the function of children's resistances in the emergence of learning subject matter as a new leading activity.

Researching Transition to First-Year Primary School from Children's Perspective

When starting in a new institution, like entering FYP, the known concrete environment, daily routines and usual positions are shaken, calling for the establishment of a new relation between the child and the socio-material world (Hedegaard, 2012; Rogoff, 2003; Zittoun, 2008). As it has been formulated, the change in the conditions of participation in a new social practice implies going through a *process of transition* that aims at a new sustainable fit between the child and his/her new context (Hviid & Zittoun, 2008; Zittoun, 2008). Thus, the study of the processes of transition is anchored in a generative, unified, open-systemic and future-oriented perspective on development that calls for looking at the changes that take place over time across children's everyday life contexts (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008, 2014; Valsiner, 2008, 2011; Winther-Lindqvist, 2009). Moreover, the study of children's transitions in educational settings, like starting school, has to take into account its spatial and temporal dimensions, requiring in practical terms to follow children in the change of settings during a certain time span (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008; Hviid & Zittoun, 2008). In this line, studying children's development requires exploring children's social situation of development (Vygotsky, 1998), which entails taking the perspective of the child, i.e., understanding how children try to make sense out of their activities and social relations (Hedegaard, 2012; Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008; Sommer, Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2010). However, the “child's perspective” must be understood as an analytical concept “based on an interpretation of a child's intentional activity and his or her motive orientation in a specific activity setting” (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2013 p. 22), which has to be explored in the relations established within the context, i.e., in children's interactions. This entails looking at the perspectives of those that participate in the particular practices, including the

researcher's own goals and motives (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008).⁵ For this purpose, Hedegaard and Fleer (2008) propose a dialectical-interactive methodological approach that aims to explore children's social situation in relation to the cultural and historical features (traditions and values) of the institutional practices that shapes the activity settings (in which children participate) and which set the direct conditions for children's social situation (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2013). At the personal level, children's motive orientations (what matters for children) are explored, expressed in their engagements,⁶ intentional activities and wishes, and competencies (Hedegaard, 2012). Having in mind the premise that people acts in ways that reflect how they related to the environment (i.e. participate in cultural practices) (van Oers, 2012)—where the meaning of separate actions depends on the overall motive of the activity to which they are subordinated (Leontiev, 1978)—the analysis of *patterns of interactions* and *conflicts* built over several observations gives an approach children's motive orientations (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008). In this context, “*resistances*” are hereby considered as children's refusals and oppositional acts towards the demands of the new institutional practice.

Inspired by these ideas, a study was conducted on the transition to FYP at the structured literacy activities in the classroom, aiming to answer how children's motive orientation changes in the emergence of a new leading activity, and how the institutional conditions support or constrain children's possibilities of learning and development throughout this transition.

Design of the Study

The research was designed to analyse how different institutional practices of transition related to children's change in leading activities. Therefore, a longitudinal research took place in Chile and in Denmark, educational systems that have different traditions for promoting an articulation between preschool and school. Nonetheless, considering the international trends in this area, the focus was placed in a common practice between the countries: structured literacy learning sessions

⁵In this chapter, I will use the concept child's and children's perspective indistinctively, although Sommer, Samuelsson and Hundeide (2010) make a distinction between them, specifying that the first refers to the reconstructive view of adults on children's perspective, while the second refers to the children's experiences, perspectives and understandings held by themselves. In this work, I have aimed to approach what they have called children's perspective. As the authors propose, the interpretations are based on the idea that “adults are potentially capable, emotionally and cognitively, of “taking the perspective of the other”, thus having the awareness and understanding of the other partner as a person with his or her idiosyncratic ways of construing the world” (p. ix).

⁶Taking Hviid's (2008) understanding, engagement refers to the child's involved participation, created by the child in the experienced situation, which at the same time stimulates such engagement.

that take place in the classroom. In both countries, I followed a group of children⁷ during their last period of the previous year to FYP, the beginning of FYP and the end of FYP. The field research lasted for 2 years, where I spent 4–6 weeks in each period, to explore the children's group and personal routines. At each stage, I video-recorded classroom observations and took field notes of two to three sessions of literacy activities per week and conducted two interviews with the teachers and registered children's productions. In this way, a detailed account of children's activities and their conditions was observed, giving an insight into children's participation in everyday practices.

The analysis of the data was conducted at different levels of changes: within each child, between children, within each group and between groups, following the personal, institutional and societal planes proposed by Hedegaard and Fleer (2008).

In most studies, resistance is related to school failure, low achievement and discrimination. Nonetheless, when looking at the classroom, it is possible to see resistant acts among students with different interests and levels of performance. For this chapter, two cases were selected, one case study from each educational system, which in both years had been identified by the educator as one of best literacy achievers of their class. However, in both cases, I identified resistant acts. With these cases, I intend to illustrate how resistance takes place in the process by which learning becomes a leading activity in the students' school transition and how these resistances are associated with particular institutional and cultural conditions.

Transition to First-Year Primary School in Chile

In Chile, *Second Level of Transition* (SLT—Segundo Nivel de Transición) is the last year of preschool education and the one before starting FYP, compulsory for children between 5 and 6 years old since 2015. Though these two years are under the Ministry of Education, they differ in the principles of their curriculum and teacher training. In SLT, an *educator* (Educadoras de Párvulos) and one assistant are in charge of children's development following the principles of well-being, activity, uniqueness, self-confidence, relation, wholeness, meaningful learning and play (Ministry of Education of Chile, 2005). In the observations, the school readiness orientation was intertwined in the daily activities of play and personal care, through structured literacy and numeracy learning activities, in which children are not only promoted in the development of preliteracy and prenumeracy skills but also on the expected school behaviour in the classroom. The SLT was located inside the building of the primary school, but its daily activities took place in independent locations, having their own colourful classroom, backyard, toilets and entrance to school (the schedule was different and shorter). There was an established routine:

⁷Five children in Denmark and six in Chile, of the same class in public urban school, which were selected by their teachers in relation to their literacy proficiency.

while children were seated in their seats, the educator opened the day with a song and a salutation in which children collectively shared and discussed news and personal stories, and identified the present day, month and weather. At the literacy activities, the educator used songs and a melodic tone for recalling the rules and capturing children's attention while guiding them through the activities. However, she would also raise her voice and call them out if they were not behaving as expected (e.g. working in silence, being well seated and raising their hand to talk). The majority of children seemed to enjoy the activities, though they were giggling, stretching, talking, smiling and copying each other while trying to do the tasks. The educator pointed out that the Ministry of Education and the Municipality defined most activities and that they tend to be too difficult and not related to children's interests. Under these circumstances, she tried to adapt the activities to children's knowledge level so that they could accomplish the formally scheduled learning goals. It was not unusual to see children distracted and mechanically copying in their workbooks the answers from the blackboard.

In FYP, the organization and infrastructure of daily school life changed. Children shared the playground with the rest of the school, and they entered the school building as any other student. The days went through different scheduled subjects, while eating, playing and personal care were restricted to breaks. Learning activities were mostly individually oriented, and children were expected to perform individually seated in rows of desks, each accommodating two. At least five times in the semester, children were tested in literacy competencies and received a public mark, a situation in which some children reacted with nervousness. The FYP teacher also shared the educator's apprehension about accomplishing the national educational curriculum and programmes, which were not necessarily in line with children's levels of achievement. During the observation, children tried to work in their tasks, but they got easily distracted socializing, playing, secretly eating and laughing. The room was noisy. Children were talking aloud, shouting for the teacher to help them or review their tasks, and some even screamed after arguing. The teacher was constantly shouting at children to shut up and concentrate, complaining of their lack of discipline and school habits (e.g. bringing their pencil case and having the right writing tools in it, raising their hand to speak and go to the toilet).

In the observations at the end of the year, the learning setting had changed. Children were more focused on their tasks, speaking quietly to each other. They were seated in groups, and the teacher had included more group tasks. Children have been encouraged to hang their works on the wall. At the literacy activities, the teacher introduced the task giving clear instructions on how to proceed; she recalled the importance to be quiet so everyone can listen and support each other. The teacher pointed out that the situation at the beginning of the year was not sustainable and decided to change strategies (i.e. group work) because even the good students were distracted. Thus, sometimes play and going out of the classroom was allowed before the break as a way of incentivizing children to finish their tasks. Children were engaged for longer time in the activities and worked in collaboration.

Oscar in SLT

Oscar had no difficulties in resolving the tasks. However, while working on the assignment, he was constantly moving around his chair, teasing his classmates, joking, giggling and talking aloud. In fact, more than once he finished the task quickly so he could go to his peer's desk to discuss and plan ahead the games that they would play during the break. Then, when the teacher called him out for standing he replied with an exaggerated winning voice "but I have finished my task, and I do not have anything else to do" followed with a smile and an accomplice wink referred to me. Oscar showed that while having the knowledge for resolving the tasks, his leading motive orientation was in relation to play and social interaction setting his learning achievement at their service.

The educator constantly recalled the rules in the classroom, but Oscar resisted. For example, more than once when she was stating that children should raise their hand to talk, Oscar would insistently raise his hand and say aloud "me, me, me, pick me!", while looking at his friends and giggling after being called out. There was an episode in which the educator asked children to sit properly while listening to the activity instructions, but Oscar was whispering with his friend, touching his classmate's hair, chewing his pencil and playing putting his tongue in and out. These actions were carefully made out of the educator's sight while pretending to be seriously listening when she looked at him. Though Oscar showed knowledge about the attitudes required for the learning activities, he used it according to what mattered for him, like capturing his peers' attention and playing around with them.

Oscar Starting FYP

In FYP, Oscar was again acknowledged as one of the best students in the classroom. He seemed to be more focused and engaged in the literacy tasks in those situations where he was allowed to share the activity with someone else. In fact, most of the time he put effort on finishing quickly, so afterwards he could help his friends while teasing, joking and laughing. Sometimes, while doing the activity he would get distracted by his classmates, but quickly try to get back to his task and afterwards, back to them. Oscar found that learning became a more prominent activity through which he also started to relate with his peers, though a playful attitude is there in his interactions. However, talking to each other is not allowed under any circumstance and several times he was called out by the teacher for turning around at his desk and "interrupting" his classmates. He followed her order exaggerating his posture and acting as if working hard, though standing up or turning as soon as she was focused on another child. On one occasion, he tried to explain to the teacher that his intention was to help his friend but the teacher just cut him off. At that time, Oscar did not finish his work and instead was leaning on the

table, and doodling on the borders of his worksheet. Here, it can be noticed that resistant acts, active and passive, keep being part of Oscar's repertoire in those situations that were not aligned with what matter for him.

Oscar Finishing FYP

In the observations during the end of FYP, learning has settled as a leading activity for Oscar as he seemed more focused and engaged in his work, and oriented in his interactions through learning, subordinating other actions. He was less distracted and shared his tasks with classmates, and they supported each other's work. The teacher was constantly reminding children to keep the tone of voice low, and Oscar reacted lowering his while gently shushing his friends. He still smiled and giggled, but did not get distracted from his work. I also noticed that when doing his work he would have self-talks without diverging from the activity as: "No, this is not right!" (erasing his worksheet), "Almost there", "What an ugly duck" (referring to a drawing in a story that he was reading). In this way, Oscar remained engaged in the activities until he was finished.

Transition to First-Year Primary School in Denmark

The transition to FYP is a continuation within the school system, as the first year in school called *Kindergarten Class* (Børnehaveklassen) is the first of the 10 years of compulsory education. Like in the Chilean system, children make the transition to year one with more or less the same group of children. In Kindergarten Class, children are 6 years old and intends to make the transition to school more gradual by covering through a play-based teaching approach, the themes related to language and forms of expression, nature and science, music, movement, social skills and cooperation (Ministry of Education, 2009). This independent educational guideline is put in practice by the "pedagogue" (Pædagog) and one assistant in preliteracy and pronomeracy activities. In the class I observed, though the classroom was located within the school buildings, children held breaks in their own playground following an independent schedule that incorporated free time for playing. The routine at the preliteracy sessions started with the pedagogue asking children about the date and the weather, children's shared personal news and sing a song about the festivities of the year, before introducing the task that she has planned for the day. Children were expected to be seated in their colour group desks and to listen attentively to the teacher's explanations and instructions of the individual and group activities. The pedagogue pointed out that the rules have been presented and discussed together with the children with the purpose of creating a respectful learning environment. Most of the children seemed attentive to the instructions, following the rules without difficulty and engaged in the activities. Children were allowed to support

each other if necessary, but they should not raise their tone of voice. They giggled, chitchatted and played with their pencils (e.g. selecting the right colour and discussing it) and pencil cases (e.g. covering their work so no one can copy) while they finish their tasks.

In FYP, the daily school setting changed. Toys were not available anymore; children were seated in pairs, followed the school's schedule and played in the common playground. Play was not allowed in the classroom and children followed different subjects with different teachers. Literacy activities were mostly individually based and part of a school reading and writing programme up to 3rd grade. As in kindergarten class, the day started with group activities of counting the number of children present, lost teeth and sharing personal experiences, in which children seemed highly engaged. The rules of the class have also been agreed altogether, and the teacher reminds them calmly from time to time (e.g. silence, concentration, staying seated, working individually and no playing or fussing around). Children still giggled and talked, diverting their attention from the task. However, they returned to them. They seemed more engaged and less distracted when they could choose what to do, work in groups or complete it all together with the teacher. This attitude was maintained by most of the students in the observations at the end of the FYP. However, the exaggerated overacted way of sitting properly or raising their hand for speaking that they had at the beginning of the year when the teacher was explaining the rules had disappeared.

Julian in KC

During the literacy activities, Julian did not seem to have much interest, though he finished all the tasks. His face changed to a rejection face when the teacher asked them to pick up the pencil case out from their bags while slipping down the chair. He openly complained "This is boring", "Why do we have to do this", and the pedagogue tended to respond with a joke or minimizing the complaint "Come on, is not that bad and you are good at it". During the individual activities, he started lying on the table until the pedagogue recalled the importance of being well seated, correcting exaggeratedly his posture as part of a **spontaneous competition** with the other children at the table. This situation was not unusual and was kept during the individual task, then finishing and doing the task properly was part of a game. Julian liked to comment with his peers on how to organize the play break and how to play with the football cards, getting distracted from the task. During the group activity, Julian is more engaged and takes a leading role in organizing how to finish it on time.

Certainly, Julian had the knowledge for completing the tasks and for participating in the new setting, but he was mainly oriented to play, trying from there to interact with the others and engage in the learning activity. His resistant acts can be interpreted as expressions that reflected how the demands of the new individual

learning activity do not yet make sense to him. On the contrary, the social aspects of the group learning activities allowed him to engage and position himself as a leader based on his knowledge and competencies for the accomplishment of the task.

Julian Starting FYP

During the observed session, it could be noticed that Julian was still not fully engaged when the literacy activities were starting. He rolled his eyes and laid on the table until the teacher repeated several times or directly asked him to pick up his work material. Julian still got easily distracted, giggling and talking to his peers about games or football, but he would return to his seat quickly. I observed that on a few occasions he looked inside his schoolbag aiming to take the folder with the football cards out, but he was just checking for something briefly or stopping before taking it out, leaving it inside and returning to the task. Julian seemed slightly more oriented to the learning activity and actively tried not to get carried away by his wishes of playing with the cards or giggling with his friends. On one occasion, the teacher saw this situation and gently reminded Julian to focus on his work. With no hesitation, he closed his backpack and got back to work.

Julian Finishing FYP

At the end of FYP, Julian seemed engaged in the individual learning activities as much as the group ones. He still talked to his friends (the same ones from kindergarten class) and they tried to support each other in finishing the tasks as soon as possible. Once he has finished the task, he asks the teacher for the next one, which he resolves with a classmate while joking and commenting on the content “Hey, look! It looks like the lion has a stomach ache or farting” (they both quietly laughed while pointing to a lion draw in the worksheet). The strategies of working in pairs and asking for more tasks was part of an agreement established together with the teacher after Julian expressed to her in the evaluation of the first semester that he found the activities too easy and boring. Julian conflicts are related to not being able to choose the tasks to do in the classroom. In several occasions, he seemed frustrated for not being able to do something different than the required activity (i.e. reading instead of doing vocabulary). Certainly, Julian had a strong orientation towards learning when interacting with others in the classroom setting and playfulness is present in his interactions but is part of the learning activity.

Discussion

The examples of Oscar from Chile and Julian from Denmark serve to illustrate how resistance is part of the process of emergence of a new developmental leading activity. As we could see for both children, entering FYP requires the acquisition of knowledge and development of attitudes to relate in a new fashion with their environment. In fact, both boys had the knowledge for participating in the learning activities, but their transition from play to learning as a leading activity was shaped by resistant acts in relation to both their personal interests and the traditions and values of their institutional practice. In the following paragraph, I will elaborate this proposal through four main ideas.

My argument is that resistance to the different demands of the new institutional practice is part of the process of emergence of learning as the new leading activity. It is important to see that this is not referring to the emergence of a new activity, but as Van Oers (2012) stated, is related to the placement as the leading one in children's life at that time. As Oscar and Julian showed, children develop a new motive through their recurrent participation in the new practice which, combined with children's interest and position, transforms children's goals. Progressively, Oscar and Julian interact with others mainly through the motivation of learning in the classroom, subordinating it to playful acts. In this way, through learning, children organize their relation to the socio-material world. The boys showed how resistant acts can be passive (e.g. not doing the required task) and active (i.e. saying out loud that they do not like the tasks); both cases reflect a process in which children are showing how they are making sense of the situation. So resistance acts are reflecting what matters to children, but they are interpreted regarding what matters for the institutional practice. For example, in the Chilean case children's socializing behaviour in the classroom goes against the rule of working by themselves, which is interpreted as a sign of confrontation to the teacher. Nevertheless, as we could see in Oscar's case, it represents a way of making sense of the situation and remaining engaged, drawing in an activity that is known and satisfying (i.e. play).

If we take Vygotsky's (1998) idea that development implies the necessity of deconstruction for a new formation, it is possible to understand that resistance as well as orientations to new activities take place together in children's participation. Moreover, through resistance children also have the possibility of transforming their conditions, that is, individual resistance and collective resistances might transform their possibilities of participation. In the case of Julian, we saw how his resistance was noticed by the teacher, and they both made an agreement on how to change his conditions of learning, according to what made sense to him. Likewise, in the Chilean case, we noticed how the resistance of the whole class in FYP put pressure on the teacher to modify her teaching strategies, thus modifying the conditions by which they learn.

The second idea is that resistance works on two intertwined levels during the process of making sense of the new institutional demands. When participating in the learning activities, children have to make sense of the demands required by the new

social practice. Although these practices have been to some extent anticipated during the previous year (Cavada-Hrepich & Roncancio-Moreno, 2016), there is a whole institutional setting that changes. In line with Alpert's (1991) findings, these cases show that children's resistance partly responds to the teaching style that does not promote a transformation of the contents nor relate to children's experiences or interests. In fact, more in Chile than in Denmark, most of the learning activities are created and structured beforehand by the teachers and children are expected to perform them (though they differ in the mediation for children's appropriation of its goal). In fact, in both cases, we could see that when children are offered the possibility of selecting the activities and material and have the possibility to work in groups, they seem more engaged and focused. This aspect of resistance is in line with the findings of Corsaro and Nelson (2003) that points out that children's resistance is in line with the values of peers with which they expand their control and knowledge. However, the learning activity in school demands more than just the fact of learning. It demands discipline, following the rules and scripts. Likewise, children resist following disciplinary orders if they do not make sense for the achievement of their purposes (i.e. Oscar trying to capture the attention). As Oscar showed at the end of FYP, when the goals changed through their sustained positive participation (these are students that are developing the expected learning skills) and the teacher's guidance, the resistance towards the new rules changes as well. In parallel to the process of making sense and resisting the demands, as Vygotsky (1966) hinted, these boys also showed how they must resist their own needs and wishes oriented to previous motives. In both cases, children returned to their tasks in episodes in which they postponed their wishes of playing and interacting. Therefore, I propose that in the process of internalizing learning as a motive, the previous motive has to be paused while the new goal is transformed into a new drive.

In both examples, children are laughing, giggling, teasing, making jokes, exaggerating their movements during the learning activities in the classroom. Thus, playfulness has a constant presence in the classroom supporting children's engagement in the new activity (Cavada-Hrepich, 2016) and promoting social interactions (King, 1985). The third idea involves expanding this understanding of playfulness, proposing that it could be regarded as a particular form of resisting and transforming the current conditions *based on the functions of play as the previous leading activity: an activity created by the child which expands the activity beyond the concrete conditions*. Through playfulness, Oscar and Julian briefly modify and expand the current meaning of school-related objects (e.g. the pencil becomes momentarily a gun; the lions seem to have a stomach ache; the worksheet becomes a space for doodling) remaining engaged in the task. Playfulness becomes a means by which children make sense of the new demands, appropriating and transforming these cultural objects regarding what matters to them. In this sense, playfulness should be seen beyond a way of resisting others (e.g. the teacher's authority), and as a means for creating personal meaning in the new internal and external circumstances and expanding their potency of action. In this way, children create possibilities of meaningful learning (Van Oers, 2012). Both boys also show that prevalence of playfulness changes in these 2 years as children's motives change

and learning activity becomes a major one, denoting that playfulness has a mediator role during this developmental transition. Playfulness is hence shaped regarding the demands and support that children find in the institutional practices, combined with their own trajectory of interests and needs.

This last idea leads to the fourth point of discussion related to how actions of resistance are common and diverse at the same time. Both children are participating in the school system that resembles in many aspects the goals and socio-material organization of their learning practices in the year previous to school and FYP. That said, they also differ in some societal values and conditions that shapes specific practices in the learning activities and regarding each particular child. In that sense, the reaction towards children's resistance is different between the countries but is also particular to each child. So while the educator and teacher in Chile call out Oscar when he is resisting, the pedagogue and teacher in Denmark remind him of the rules of the class. These differences could be certainly associated with different conceptions and values of adult–teacher vs. child–student relationship. In Denmark, there is a tradition that calls for children to be outspoken and to develop critical thinking transversally in their educational system; hence, children are asked about their meaning and thoughts. This value probably explains why children openly express their discomfort and ask the teacher. Meanwhile, in Chile in kindergarten expressing yourself is a regular and active demand, but in FYP, children are oriented and rewarded just for finding the “right” answer. That said, the institutional conditions also frame the practices. While in Denmark teachers have the freedom to adapt and select what is better for children's learning, in Chile they have to follow a prescribed programme and have the pressure to reach external assessment goals. Then, values and conditions relate to how the teacher interprets and reacts towards children's resistance. In this scenario, children's resistant acts built both in relation to what matters in the new setting and also in relation to what matters to them considering their own trajectories and interest.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I expect that I have contributed to the understanding on how the individual and the social co-transform, by proposing that resistance is part of the process of emergence of learning as a leading activity in children's developmental path, reflecting the misfit between children's motives and the demands of the learning activity. Throughout the paper, I have given examples of how resistance can be understood as part of the meaning-making process of developing a new motive, thus a new leading activity. Resistance is seen as an act that reflects children's attempts of making sense of the new socio-material conditions and demands of the new specific setting. Moreover, acts of resistance have interrelated internal and external dimensions that reflect this process. Children's passive and active resistance might transform their situations, by putting demands on others, hence creating spaces of participation in the classroom. Specifically, in the role of

learning as a leading activity, playfulness episodes can be formulated as a manifestation of this double character, which has the reminiscence of the previous activity, hence supporting the process of making sense of the new activity. Therefore, instead of interpreting playfulness as an indicator of disinterest or immaturity, it should be considered as an act by which children try to make sense. The exclusive negative and adult-centred interpretations of resistant acts that have guided the school transitional agenda have led us to misunderstand what really matters for children.

Throughout this elaboration, I am not suggesting that we ignore acts of resistance. They are part of development and its crises. On the contrary, it is proposed that resistances are not a property of the child, but they are co-created in cultural settings. Thus, the exploration of collective expressions and personal meanings of the students' resistances give educators a better understanding of the possibilities of development and learning that the institutional practice (e.g. instructional process) is offering to children as a group and to each child in particular. That said, when so little space is given for children to participate in the elaboration and transformation of the learning activities, it is impossible not to question the current traditional school system (structure and practices) and how it is ensuring children's meaningful learning and development.

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Section III
Resistance Serves the Transformation

Resistance Serves the Transformation: An Introduction to Section III

Giuseppina Marsico

Abstract Resistance has been frequently treated in psychology in its negative meaning of opposing, clashing, confronting and blocking. I claim, instead, that resistance serves life transformation and life regulation. In this paper, I will show the essential role played by resistance, providing examples from theoretical biology and physics. Then, I will introduce the third section of this volume. It is composed of six chapters written by Indian and European authors who showed the transformational and regulating role of resistance in everyday life. I will outline some of the issues raised by the authors in the light of my proposal of resistance as a developing force which serves transformation and regulation of our existence.

Keywords Resistance · Transformation · Regulation · Theoretical biology · Physics

Human beings need resistance to keep living. It is as essential to our life as to breathe or to eat. As the contributions in this volume have shown, resistance is present in everyday life in very many different ways. Sometimes it assumes the form of open confrontation, and at other times, it is very silent and might be even invisible to common people. Regrettably, even psychologists have been, for a long time, blind to the pervasiveness of resistance as one of the essential components of our individual and collective life, recognizing it only when it comes to the “surface” with its potential subversive power against the given order.

This reminds me one of the episodes of the Sanskrit play *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* (“of Śākuntalā, who is recognized” in English) written by Kalidasa (between the first century BCE and fourth century CE). In this episode, a sage is absorbed in meditation. Looking up he sees an elephant in front of him and says, “This is not an elephant.” After a while as the animal begins to slowly move away, the wise man wonders if it was an elephant. Only when the elephant has gone, seeing the

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footsteps that the animal has left, the man states with assurance: “There was an elephant here.”

The first time I heard this story was thanks to Bruner’s (1990) book, but later this was reported by Geertz (1995) and then by Mantovani (1998) as a metaphor of the cultural dimension of human experience. I arrogantly add myself to this array of great minds in a slightly different manner. To me, resistance is also like an “invisible elephant”: large and looming like an elephant if we have an idea of what we have to see; and at the same time invisible, if we do not know what to look for.

What I learnt from the Indian colleagues during my first visit to New Delhi in 2014 on the occasion of the international seminar from which this volume has come is exactly to enlarge my understanding of what resistance is, by looking at what is usually dismissed, denied or simply considered irrelevant in the “ordinary” life course trajectory.

I learnt about the gentle, but persistent forms of resistance of Indian women and I saw how much strength there is inside the folds of their beautiful saris.

Step by step, I have learnt to recognize the variety of resistances and their extraordinary value as a developing force.

From that point on, I started reflecting on the role played by resistance in our process of becoming human. Resistance, as many other notions, has been frequently treated in psychology in its negative meaning of opposing, clashing, confronting and blocking. I claim, instead, that resistance serves life transformation and life regulation. This is not only an axiomatic assumption. I will show in this introduction the essential role of resistance, by providing examples from theoretical biology and physics.

Basic Forms of Resistance

I will discuss here some basic forms of resistance that serve the origin, the transformation and regulation of the existence of a living organism.

First, I refer to the theory of *natural inclusionality* of Rayner (1997, 2004, 2011, 2017) one of the most advanced theories in theoretical biology. According to Rayner’s standpoint, any living system is constantly in dialogue with its natural neighbourhood on the basis of an interdependent and co-evolutionary process involving both the context and the organism. Rayner tries to answer the fundamental question of what the essential process is, through which any form or pattern of life comes into being. In his perspective, a new form of life emerges thanks to the inclusive relationship between emptiness, movement and bodily *resistance* to movement and implies an interplay between space, energy and material inertia.

In other words, for any form to come into being, there have to be at least two basic classifications: a form-receiving presence (which is motionless and receptive like an empty canvas) and a form-giving presence (which is intrinsically mobile and informative like a fluid paint). We can call the former space and the latter energy and they are applicable to patterns of life at different scales of organization: from

the microcosm (i.e. living cells, multi-cellular organisms) to the humans, to the macrocosm. They are in a complementary relation to one another (Tateo & Marsico, 2014) since space alone (the receptive presence) would be merely empty and energy alone would have no place for giving form in different shapes. In the *natural inclusionality*, perspective energy and space converge and give rise to local material bodies as living forms, which, while being made from movement, exert a certain degree of resistance in being moved or formed.

Without this minimum level of positive resistance, any pattern of life would even not exist or be identifiable as distinct. On the contrary, it would suffer some kind of fluctuation or deformation (that is not a transformation). Resistance results from the meeting between space and energy and provides the minimum indispensable level of structure for any form of life to come into being. Thus, resistance is at the origin of life.

The image of the yin and the yang (Fig. 1) focuses on the unity of two opposite forms of energy that do not conflate one another because of some resistance on the border of the two components. The “yin and yang” emerge and exist as such (and it is not subject of deformation) due to some resisting force there. Yet, this is a self-maintaining system (Valsiner, 2016) and we need to include in our theorization, the conditions under which the system can transform itself into a new state.

Here, I will bring into the discussion an example from the basic laws of motion in physics and some rudiments of motion that explain how sails work.

Sails are nothing but instruments that use the wind to propel a vessel over the water. The physics of sailing is a field where some important laws are applied: Newton’s laws, vector theory and Bernoulli effect, but, here I recall only a few notions to answer the simple question “How does a boat sail?”

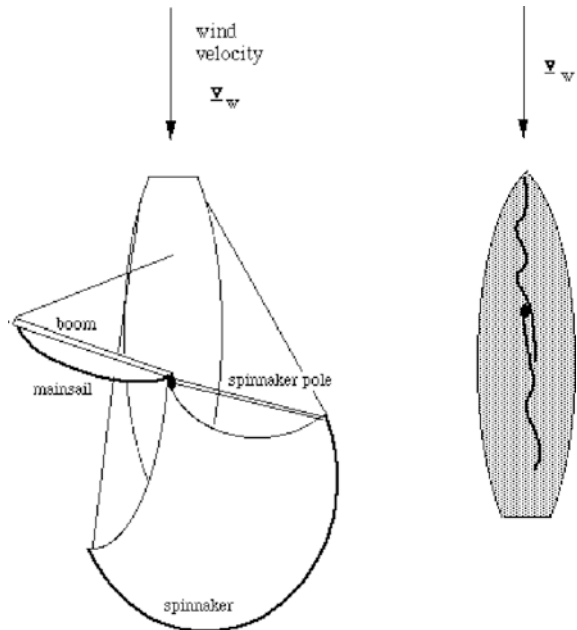
Sailboats can travel easily parallel to the wind (with the wind at their back) as the boat at the left in Fig. 2, but it may seem impossible to sail exactly anti-parallel to the wind (with the wind blowing straight against) as in the case of the boat on the right (Anderson, 2003).

Usually the wind is faster than the boat, so the air is slowed down by the sails. The basic principle is that *the sail resists the wind*. Technically, the sails push backwards against the wind, so the wind pushes forward on the sails. But how does it happen?

Fig. 1 The yin \leftrightarrow yang



Fig. 2 The physics of the sailing



The sail does not merely oppose the wind, but deflects the air downwards. The force that pushes the air down is the same as that which pushes the sail up. This resistance between the wind and the sail operates on the border of the sail, and it is ultimately the real cause of the movement of the boat. The moment in which the sails are inflated by the wind (and thus resisting the wind force) is the starting point for the boat to move in a specific direction.

The resistance here serves the movement, and then, in more general terms, it supports the transformation of an object from a static to a dynamic one. In my argument, the resistance (in this case between the sail and the wind) generates a change (now the boat starts sailing!) which would not be otherwise possible (Figs. 3 and 4).

Resistance is at work in other phenomena and not only with this propulsive function I have described so far, but also with a regulatory one which helps a system to work properly. Here, again, I borrow another example from physics referring to one of the most important laws in the field of electricity: Ohm's law.

Georg Simon Ohm was a German physicist who in 1827 published a treatise in which he stated that the electromotive force, acting between the extremities of any part of a circuit, is the product of the strength of the current and the resistance of that part of the circuit. The resistance determines the intensity of the current through an electrical circuit which has a different voltage in its extremities (Turchetti & Fasi, 1998). Electrical resistance (usually indicated with a zigzag symbol), in analogy with the notion of mechanical friction, measures the difficulty to pass through a conductor. In other words, resistance (R) is nothing but the relationship between the

Fig. 3 The sail's resistance

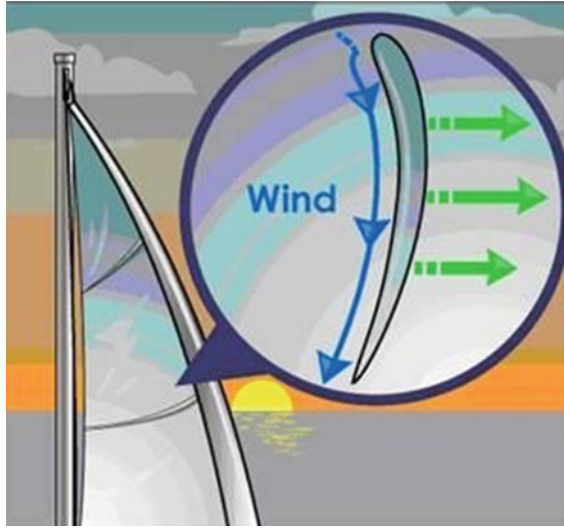
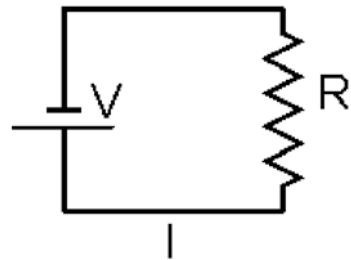


Fig. 4 The electrical resistance



tension of two extremities with different voltage and the intensity of the current that runs among them ($R = V/I$).

This is an empirical law that has several concrete applications: from the big devices in electrical engineering to many of our ordinary objects such as the hairdresser or the lamp. What does this mean for the understanding of human resistance?

Ohm's law clearly shows the regulatory function played by the resistance which is inserted in a circuit (on the basis of some specific criteria that Ohm's law elaborated) for the sake of creating the condition for the system to work.

This is not that alien to many of the human experiences when a certain resistance (being confrontational or more subtle) regulates the individual's life, while facing different requests. Think for instance of the student who adopts some special behaviour for resisting parents' and teachers' pressing demands (Marsico, 2013) or the microcommunication strategy for resisting all the ambivalent messages in an ordinary family network (Marsico, Chaudhary, Valsiner, & Lyberth, 2015). In the analogy of Ohm's law, we can add some little "psychological device" of resistance, in order to

regulate our existence. This is not a way for keeping life as it is (in the attempt of maintaining a possible equilibrium). On the contrary, it has more to do with the high human capability to circumnavigate the impeding difficulties and/or to regulate the strength of the “forces” (exerted by the others or by the so-called society) by inserting, in the expected ordinary conduct, some resistance for going on in our own way.

In this case, resistance serves the regulation of human experience in its uniqueness.

Resisting Conventional Positions and Creating New Ones

So far, in my little incursion in the field of theoretical biology and physics, I discussed some forms of resistance that serve the origin, transformation and regulation of existence. The third section of this volume is all about this. It is composed of six chapters written by Indian and European authors who demonstrate the transformational and regulating role of resistance in everyday life. I will outline here some of the issues raised by the authors, in the light of my proposal of resistance as a developing force which serves transformation and regulation of our existence.

In Chapter “[Seeing Imagination as Resistance and Resistance as Imagination](#)”, Luca Tateo discusses the relation between imaginative process and forms of resistance. For the author, all forms of resistance are part of a developmental process, since they are always future-oriented. The Wittgenstein terms of “seeing-as” is considered one of the important components in the imaginative process which *anticipates* the form of resistance by creating a Gegenstand. By stating that in the exact moment in which we start imagining the future, a thing is turned into a Gegenstand (which exerts a resistance), Tateo underlines the strict interconnection between directionality, imagination and resistance in the process of anticipation of the future (which is at the core of a developmental process). As in the case of the physics of sailing, here the dynamics of directionality/resistance promotes changes in the psychological experiences.

The tension between tradition and modernity in classical Indian dance, well depicted in Chapter “[Classical Indian Dance and the Dancer: Engaging with Tradition and Modernity](#)” by Vinita Bhargava and Priya Srinivasan, is a very special case of electrical resistance in Ohm’s words, applied to the human arena. In the midst of double tension between enduring tradition and compelling modernity, the performance of Indian dance seems to be a cultural and personal tool for resistance for the dancer. Indian classical dance resists both tradition and modernity while also acting as a means for the diaspora community to assert its presence in the larger sociocultural context of the Western world.

The ohmic resistance is also the case of Chapter “[Culture, Gender and Resistance: Perspectives from India](#)” written by Shraddha Kapoor, Varuna Nagpal and Pooja Maggu. The authors discuss the role of contemporary Indian women in education, marriage and public life and their day-to-day efforts in negotiating patriarchy, resisting conformity and transcending tradition. Negotiation, compassion and

contentment are three of the most common forms of silent resistance women adopt in the different spheres of existence. They seem to me concrete examples of electrical resistance in a circuit where the two different extremities are represented by the patriarchal framework and the Hindu tradition. Strategic and silent resistance (instead of a public one) is what the women predominately choose for keeping life going in a way that meets individual agency and compliance with the cultural norms.

Dominik Stefan Mihalits' chapter (Chapter "Oedipus Meets Ganesh: A Prospective Psychoanalyst's Encounter with India") nicely demonstrates the essential role of one of the two components I mentioned in the first form of biological resistance. In order for a new form of life to come into being, a receiving, receptive and empty presence needs to be there. In Mihalits' case, it is the space of the mind. He clearly shows, in his narrative, all the introspective work he has done for "cleaning up" the space of the mind from the Western-oriented psychoanalytic interpretation of human phenomena. This opens the possibility for new and alternative explanations of the human way of existing, in accordance with different mythological frames and systems of cultural values in the Indian context.

The Kamla case, well described by Dipjyoti Konwar, Vinita Bhargava and Bhanumathi Sharma in Chapter "Resisting Early Marriage—Case Study from Tea Gardens of Assam", is an in-depth analysis of how resistance is constructed and exerted in one's own life. Being educated is somehow a deviation to the normal prescribed female role in the Indian tea gardens community system, where young women are expected to get married after attainment of puberty and take care of the family. Their education is devalued since the cultural expectation is to continue the chain of the community as a tea garden worker and as a housekeeper. Kamla's desire to get a better life condition meets resistance in her large family network (grandmother, aunt, etc.) and in the neighbourhood. Education became the means for finding her own identity, but also what helps her in resisting early marriage. It acts like the sail which resists the wind making possible the movement of the boat in a different direction and transforming, in such a way, the reproduction of the set of collective beliefs in a new possible life course.

Chapter "Women in Indian Families: Resisting, Everyday" written by Mila Tuli is a vibrant essay of the hidden script of the everyday resistance of Indian women. The author shows how conformity and resistance always go together. She underlines that we should look at this ordinariness of the everyday resistance for understanding how spaces for resistance and self-affirmation are silently, but persistently generated within the restricted borders of patriarchal control. The real rhythm of resistance needs to be found in the interstitial spaces of the women's life. As Mila Tuli shows, Indian women resist conventional positions by creating a new one. Whether visible or invisible this is a deeply personal process and, very often, it is psychologically costly. The everyday resistance of the Indian women in patriarchal society exemplifies the developing force imbued in the act of challenging the borders of social expectations.

Once again, resistance serves the transformation of human beings, whatever rhythm, sound or shape suits the personal struggles, for finding themselves in the complexity of the human arena.

Acknowledgements In recognition of the thousands of people killed in the concentration and extermination camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau, after visiting those places, I cannot stop thinking about the crucial importance of resistance against any form of dehumanization.

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Seeing Imagination as Resistance and Resistance as Imagination

Luca Tateo

Abstract We dwell in the world and the world dwells in us. This happens through a complex meaning-making process that Wittgenstein called “seeing-as”. In this chapter, I try to develop the idea that the contextual and purposeful selection of some features establishes a meaningful relationship with the objects of experience that can then resist our actions and thus become Gegenstand. Directionality and resistance are fundamental parts of any developmental process and characterize such relationships with the phenomenon of Gegenstand. Finally, I argue that imaginative processes are the distinctive features that enable humans to deal with uncertainty and change. Imagination is related to the creation of Gegenstand from non-existing objects. Imagination is also the faculty to go beyond problems in order to solve them. That is the reason why imagination is so dangerous for every dictatorship.

Keywords Resistance and directionality • Gegenstand • Imagination • See-as

Introduction: Experiencing Resistance and Meaning-Making

You are unsuccessfully trying to unscrew the cap of a bottle, or your computer crashes while you are writing just before an important deadline. When things do not behave according to our expectations, the most common reaction is starting to say aloud “C’mon, don’t do this to me. C’mon!” Is this thinking aloud, or are you actually talking to the thing? Your 3-year-old kid starts obstinately answering “No!” to your requests. Are you thinking she is developing her own personality, beyond your disappointment as a parent not obeyed? What all these experiences have in common is the fact that you are acting upon something or someone (pulling, typing, asking) and the “thing” is opposing your will (by not-unscrewing, by

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crashing, by saying no). Suddenly, the status of the thing is changing. “The crucial role in this transformation is the role of the agent: by acting upon things in nature, these become objects. These objects can resist our actions (*stand against* us—*Gegen + stand*), or can evade us” (Valsiner, 2014a, p. 153). On the other hand, you would never admit that you are actually thinking that the objects are purposefully going counter to your action, even the 3-year-old child would reluctantly be attributed a full intentionality (this is probably the way the psychology of development invented the stage of negativity to explain the child’s behaviour by an attenuated form of will). Nevertheless, you could admit to “see-as” (Wittgenstein, 1958) the object would oppose a resistance to your will. In this respect, it makes little difference whether the object in question is inanimate or an animate being. The concept of “seeing-as” was introduced by Wittgenstein (1958) as a distinction between the perceptual act of vision (seeing) that could be more or less exact or deceptive (e.g. the series of optical illusions widely used in psychology), and the act of will implied in seeing some aspects of an object: “Now I see it as a... ‘goes with’ I am trying to see it as a... or I can’t see it as a... yet” (Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 206). To “see-as” is a deliberate establishment of a special relationship with an object (in a general sense) by an agent acting upon it. This relationship signals the “*dynamic qualitative nature*” (Valsiner, 2014a, p. 155) of the meaning-making process in relating with the world, so that the purposeful action on the object and its counteraction form a dynamic whole, including the specific conditions of the encounter that select some aspects of the object rather than others.

“Seeing-as” is a meaning-making process that altogether transforms the agent, the object and their relationship, at least temporarily. Once I have been able to unscrew the bottle, the tap becomes just a tap again and I would never address it under ordinary conditions. “Fundamentally, seeing-as involves the possibility of a certain kind of change in the object or illustration, a change of aspect” (Wilkerson, 1973, p. 484). Nevertheless, we can say that all meaningful relationships are characterized as a complex dance of meaning between “seeing” and “seeing-as”. In terms of semiotic dynamics, the two processes indicated by the double meaning of the verb “to see” in English are part of a future-oriented purposeful process of hierarchical construction of meanings (Fig. 1). Contemporary urban life in different cultures provides several examples of this semiotic dynamics in the tragic context of gender or ethnic violence. A person X is walking in the street at night when she sees a person Y coming. In Wittgenstein terms, “X sees Y” means that, given some environmental conditions or temporary defective faculties (e.g. illumination, fog, state of altered consciousness of the agent), X has a perception of the object Y that can be more or less accurate. “In the dark light, I may see a tree as a man, or a black shadow as a cat; in normal conditions, I will be expected to see a table as a table, and not as an elephant, and so on” (Wilkerson, 1973, p. 482). This corresponds to the Level 1 of the meaning-making process in Fig. 1, in which the agent is establishing a relationship with the “thing” implying first the recognition of the target. In semiotic hierarchical terms, this is not very different from what any living being could do when trying to make sense of an object in sight.

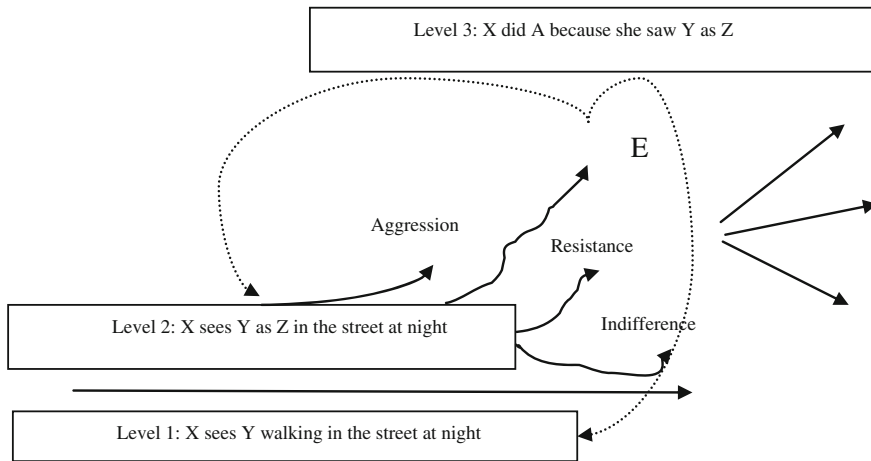


Fig. 1 See-as and meaning-making

But, according to Wittgenstein (1958), human beings do not only see things, but also see things *as something*. This is the Level 2 of meaning-making process, in which the production of meaning is already an action upon the thing that now becomes an object. What is relevant here is not the actual physical action (or non-action) upon the thing. As Valsiner (2014a) shows, the actual physical action upon a thing is the main road to meaning-making. At Level 2, human beings exert an act of will by selecting aspects of the object, establishing a relation that will stress some features rather than others (or the other way round, selecting some features leads to the establishment of a specific relationship with the object). From the establishment of this meaningful relationship, the object is able to counteract and becomes a Gegenstand (for a more detailed history of the development of the notion from German philosophy see Valsiner, 2014a, 2014b). This step opens the range of possible direction for the meaning-making process, so that the Gegenstand can counteract in different ways (aggression, escape, indifference or resistance in Fig. 1). At this level also, the range of potential future orientations of the agent X is opening, and the result of this field of potential actions and counteractions is not fixed but *vector-like* (V1, V2, V3 in Fig. 1). According to the specific conditions of any situation, the future course of action can take different directions.

Meaning-Making and Vectors

To illustrate the abstract model in Fig. 1, we can take two sadly recurrent events in contemporary life. The first one is that X is a man walking in the street at night who meets Y, a woman. Once X has seen Y, he can also see her *as Z* (a potential affair). He insistently starts to stare at her, provoking different potential counteractions

(indifference, escape, resistance, etc.). The type of relationship established by the agent and the specific conditions can lead to different vectors of action. In some contexts, these events too often lead to aggression and rape. Let us take another example. X is a white police officer walking in the street at night. He sees Y who in this case is a young black male. Even replacing the characters of the second scene, one can apply the model in Fig. 1 to imagine other tragic consequences. What is relevant now is the Level 3 of the model. In fact, in both cases, we know that the issue after the event occurs is to establish, sometimes but not always in a court trial, whether the act of “seeing Y as” is somehow consistent with the agent’s behaviour. This is not just a matter of legal justification, rather it is reconstructing the relationship between the agent and the *Gegenstand*. Thus, even if the woman is presenting resistance or showing indifference, the agent sees her *as* a person available for an affair, selecting some aspects of the perception, and will decide a potentially tragic vector of action. In the same way, if the police officer sees the black man as a criminal, the latter’s reaction of escape will be interpreted as guilt. The following question is thus why don’t all the night encounters in the street turn into tragic events? First of all, because the process of meaning-making is dynamic (that is why is represented as a set of vectors); that is, similar conditions can lead to different outcomes and different outcomes can be reached under different conditions. As an act of will, “seeing-as” also includes the possibility of “I don’t want to see Y *as*”. Secondly, because the meaning-making is hierarchical, the agent can always produce a higher level sign which can promote or inhibit a specific course of action (Valsiner, 2014a). All the production of meaning, “seeing-as” is cultural and value-guided. Paradoxically, a system of values can be so hyper-generalized and all-comprehensive to provide justifications and promote/inhibit opposite courses of action. For instance, the same cultural context can punish or justify women’s rape or public use of firearms. Finally, because one cannot only take into account the point of view of the agent, establishing a “seeing-as” relationship also implies the attribution of a will to the *Gegenstand* with which the agent must deal. I will come back later to the fact that the main way to access (or attribute) will to the *Gegenstand* is through imaginative processes.

The process represented in Fig. 1 is vectorial both in the vertical and in the longitudinal sense. Vertical vectors are produced by the fact that in a hierarchy, the meanings at different levels are not mutually exclusive. Though the person can produce a sign at Level 2, that temporarily inhibits/promotes the sign at Level 1 (in Wittgenstein’s terms: one can *see a tree as* a man even though she actually sees the tree) and so on. In the hierarchy, the higher level meaning is not perfectly overlapping, leaving a range of ambiguity (Tateo, 2015a). As we will see in the following sections, when the notion of imaginative process is introduced, the “see-as” process is not just an analogical (to find similarities between two objects) or metaphorical (representing an object as similar to another), it is a selection of features that involves a purposeful direction for the future action upon and with the object (e.g. to see a person as an end in herself or as a means). Nevertheless, the relationship between seeing-as and acting-as does not imply any causality: “seeing-as and treating-as, or seeing-as and regarding-as, are not to be conflated”

(Wilkerson, 1973, p. 484). Everyday life is full of events in which we engage in complex negotiations between seeing a person (e.g. a poorly dressed dark-skinned woman), seeing her as something (an immigrant) and deciding how to treat her (helping, rejecting, behaving superficially in polite way, etc.). The longitudinal vectors are instead produced in the irreversible course of time as the affective, cultural and conditional relationship the agent establishes with the object in developing through its own history. This history is a continuous flux of restricting point-like meanings (to the extent that the selective process in seeing-as is scaffolding some preferred meanings rather than others) and opening field-like meanings (that allow the ambiguity to emerge and produce new possibilities), as we will see in the next section.

Seeing Objects as People and People as Objects

Is the process of “seeing-as” unavoidable? I would tend to answer “Yes, it is unavoidable”! It is probably as necessary as the meaning-making process itself when human beings engage in a relationship with (or, better, when they travel and dwell in) the environment. Several scholars (including Kant, James, Baldwin and Freud) have shown how we cannot but relate in this way with “objects”, that is meaningful aspects of the world that we sometimes call things or people.

Of course, this feature of experiencing is strongly ambiguous as far as it is a dynamic process, a dance, between the way we see, the way we see-as, the way we want to see and the object that can resist semiotic (or material) actions. Ambiguity is produced by the oppositional nature of the relationship with the *Gegenstand*, whose characteristics are established through contextual dynamic oppositions (Valsiner, 2014a). The different levels of meaning-making (Levels 1 and 2 in Fig. 1) produce a “duality of meanings... in which one part is point-like (A), while its complement is (non-A) is of field-like form” (Valsiner, 2014a, p. 161). Going back to the examples, when X sees Y (a police officer sees a young black man) an opposition is established between a perceptual act (seeing a black man) and its complement (not-seeing a white man). According to Wittgenstein (1958), this act can be subject to a perceptual bias, but is completely different from the meaning of the utterance “the police officer sees a young black male walking in the street at night”. If we assume the unavoidability of the “seeing-as” process, the Level 2 is called into the experience, so that the police officer must see the black man as a passer-by, an aggressor, a thief, a beggar, a businessman, etc. (B), then is no longer a matter of perception, but a matter establishing a directional and affective sense-making relationship with a *Gegenstand*. At this level, another oppositional duality can be established (Fig. 2). Without the duality of meanings in opposition, there would not be the space for the development of a new meaning (B). This opposition is at the same time affective, cultural and contextual (Tateo, 2015b).

It is affective because the agent (the police officer) has emotional response to (and will towards) black people (can be negative or positive). It is cultural because

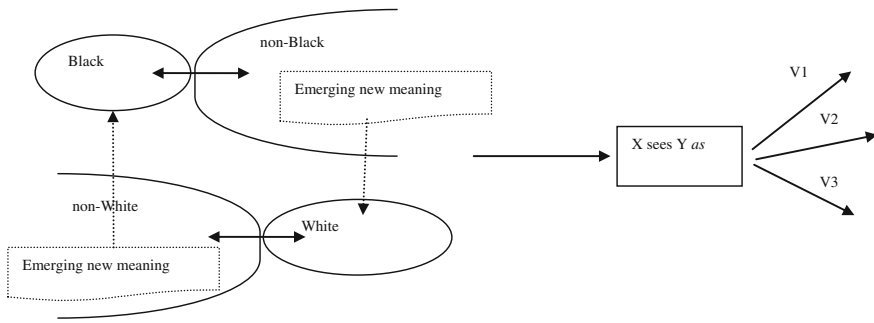


Fig. 2 The dynamic of the A <-> non-A meaning system (modified after Valsiner, 2014a, p 162)

the common-sense knowledge of what is at “the right place” is based on a set of values, rules and expectations about the kind of people we expect to meet late at night in the street. It is finally conditional because “where the common sense detects categories, the reality of the objects makes them negotiable (and negotiated), dependent on conditions” (Valsiner, 2014a, pp. 156–157). Thus, the process of seeing-as is not only the formation of an analogy (a black man in the street late at night must be...) but a real act of “locating” objects of experience in the world we live. This process is not only a matter of an agent’s selection of features or categorization. For instance, a police officer can shoot a black man in a street of New York when he sees the latter taking out a gun, but he actually saw the black man taking out his wallet. Confusing the wallet for a gun is a deficient perception, while seeing a black man *as* a villain is an act of will. In the case of misperception, the mistake can be confused by evidence; in the second case, no a posteriori evidence can alone convince the police officer to see the black man not as a villain, actually.

The Gegenstand can resist our action upon it. The black man can wear a very expensive suit and walk a pedigree dog, for instance. In this case, a new cycle of meaning-making is triggered and the agent is required to go up and down Levels 1 and 2 to select different affective, cultural and contextual meanings, in order to see X as a different Y. On the other hand, the Gegenstand herself can counteract to re-elaborate the field of oppositions and trigger a different process of seeing-as. This is the case with all the liberal and affirmative action movements, whose first steps are exactly those of denouncing the existing order of discourse and of creating new systems of meaning that modify the affective and cultural suggestions of “seeing-as”. So feminist movements had to fight against women “seen-as” objects, as well as the rainbow families’ movements fought against “not being seen-as” real families,” etc. On the other hand, social institutions have their reasons to promote or inhibit specific systems of meaning by suggesting a range of possible “seeing-as” forms. History is full of examples in which to *see* a person and to *see* her *as* an object was functional to the scope of an institution. Even in the most totalitarian institutions, though, the dance between the two ways of seeing was at play, allowing people to go back and see others *as* fellow humans, exactly because the objects started to act with resistance.

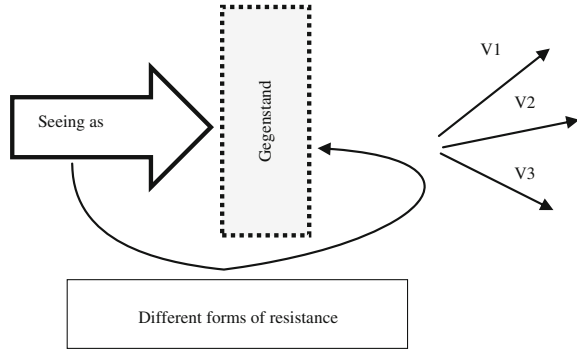
Forms of Resistance

Introducing a concept coming from other disciplines into psychology is always a hard task at the outset between metaphorical and literal use (Tateo & Marsico, 2014). There are many successful (or sometimes unsuccessful) attempts to use notions coming from natural sciences to model psychological phenomena, as for instance those of field (Lewin, 1936), catalysis (Cabell & Valsiner, 2013), and complementarity (Wagoner, Chaudhary, & Hviid, 2014). The first problem is that these notions, including “resistance”, are originally developed in a specific *milieu* and have a technical and more or less rigorous definition related to the field of knowledge in which these are used. The second problem is that they are sometimes socialized as common-sense notions, assuming a slightly different meaning which is brought into psychology when they start to be used by scholars. When psychologists find that a concept can be useful for conceptualizing phenomena, they must be aware of these problems and cope with them (Tateo & Marsico, 2014).

In the natural sciences, the terms “resistance” can refer to the measure of the degree to which a material opposes or facilitates the transmission of energy (electricity, heat, air, cohesion between molecules, penetration of external bodies). It is thus a measure of a magnitude, or, in other words, a twofold concept according to which something can be more or less resistant but never completely non-resistant. In medicine (and political or military sciences), the word “resistance” is instead related to the capability of a biological or social body to oppose the external influences and keep its own integrity (antibiotic resistance, resistance to diseases, resistance movements towards foreign occupation, etc.). Can psychology be satisfied with these definitions?

So far, I have provided only examples of oppositional forms of relationships (similar to most of the examples provided by the other authors in this volume), in which resistance is perceived as counteracting or opposing an action, as largely assumed by common-sense uses of the word. Nevertheless, if resistance is a complementary aspect of directionality in a meaningful relationship with the object, resulting in the complex semiotic process of seeing-as described above, then the phenomenology of resistance cannot be reduced to oppositional examples. For instance, the many life stories of the Indian women and young people explored in this volume show trajectories that generate a relationship between social expectations placed on women (thus becoming *Gegenstand*: objects of meaningful relationships like marriage) and the women themselves who resist such pressures/expectations. On the other hand, the women in the studies described in this volume establish a meaningful relationship with those expectations (that become in return *Gegenstand*: object of meaningful relationships like breaking traditional rules), that resist women’s will, plan and strategies to push the boundaries of social expectations in a patriarchal society (Tuli, Chap. [Women in Indian families: Resisting, everyday](#), this volume). The complementarity between directionality and resistance can lead to very different outcomes depending on the contextual social negotiation (acceptance of the expectations, refusal, escape, etc.), or the same outcome (e.g.

Fig. 3 The dynamics of directionality/resistance.
 Source Modified after Valsiner (2014a, p. 154)



unwanted marriage) can be reached through very different trajectories, showing the vectorial nature of the directionality/resistance dance. Such dynamics is indeed **INHIBITING** some developments while **PROMOTING** others, according to the conditions of the psychological experience, demonstrating how resistance has a qualitative magnitude also in the psyche.

Gegenstanden do not exist in themselves, they populate our lives, we live, miss, love, hate them: they exist as parts of meaning-making processes. “Seeing-as” can be the way they become *present* in our life and *meaningful*. Whether a *Gegenstand* is a person, a pet, a material (or immaterial) object, the agent establishes a relationship in which directionality and resistance are complementary phenomena: they appear as soon as an *orientation* emerges (Fig. 3).

If we understand resistance as complementary to directionality (in other words, they are both parts of our meaningful relationship with the otherness in the world), there cannot be an object of experience that is completely non-resistant. On the other hand, there cannot be a non-directional object of experience (even if it is just because life simply goes on anyway). Thus, we can find forms of resistance and directionality also with a *positive* magnitude. In other words, the concept of *Gegenstand* implies that we experience a *grip* on the meaningful world. Interestingly, everyday language has expressions such as “to clutch at straws”, “to melt away through the fingers”, “to climb the mirror” or “to do not catch it” that denote the importance of resistance as “grip” on the objects of experience. In the same way, objects of experience can have a “grip” on the subject. We sometimes become “slaves” of the meaningful objects we love, own or dwell in. The fixation of desires on a *Gegenstand* (e.g. one’s mother, money, a pair of shoes, a divinity, an unreachable star or woman) allows the object to exert a power on us, so that we create the *Gegenstand* that creates us. By perceptual activity, we interrogate the world, by “seeing-as” the world of *Gegenstand* interrogates us in return.

The dance of resistance and directionality can produce different vectors leading to processes of opposition, deviation, amplification or scaffolding through selective inhibition/promotion (Fig. 4).

All the forms of resistance share the characteristic of being part of a developmental process: though they do not necessarily lead to a positive or incremental

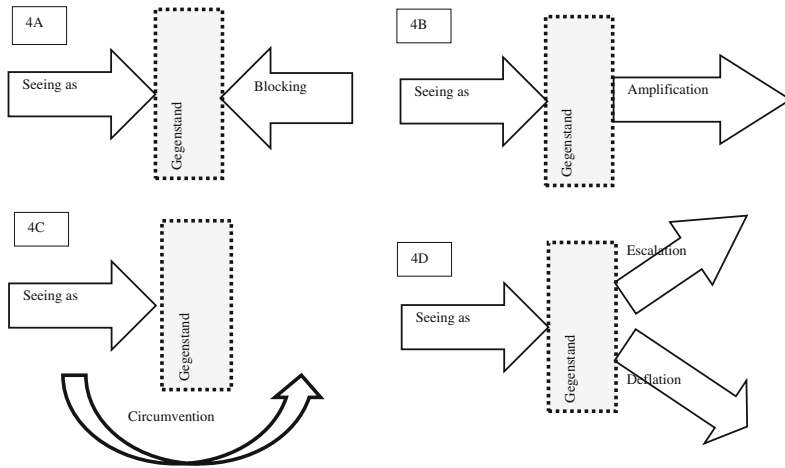


Fig. 4 Examples of different forms of directionality/resistance

outcome, they are always future-oriented. Resistance is a necessary complement of directionality in the developmental process. Besides, the different forms of resistance can be hierarchically organized in complexes of signs (Fig. 1) in which a sign produced at one level can be promoted/inhibited by a sign at a higher level, generating ambivalence in the relationship with the *Gegenstand*.

Kapoor, Nagpal and Maggu (Chap. [Culture, Gender and resistance: Perspectives from India](#), this volume) provide some examples of the different forms of resistance when they describe the experience of Indian women in the patriarchal social system. The three authors vividly describe the process through which a human being (namely a woman born in one of the Indian regions) can become a *Gegenstand*, the object/subject of a meaningful system of relationships within her community. Inevitably, although at the perceptual level one sees a woman, she is never just a woman: she is rather a meaningful “object” in a reified web of social relationships that make her body, honour, will, offspring, skills, etc., dimensions that are subject to the meaning-making process and the selection of “seeing-as”. Thus, as the authors diligently list, women in the Indian communities can be *seen-as* daughter, daughter-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, friend, aunt, sister, wife, temporary guest, symbols of the measure of a family’s honour, workforce, curse, you name it. On the other hand, the women studied in the literature discussed by these authors often face life events (marriage and maternity) or persons (parents, husbands) that become *Gegenstand* as they can be temporarily seen-as desirable objects of self-fulfilment or constraints to other kinds of personal expectations and plans.

The dance of directionality and resistance in developmental processes is especially visible in childhood and adolescence. Suneja and Sharma (Chap. [Children finding their ways through life spaces: Glimpses from the Indian ecology](#)) show how children in the family act by showing also “resistance to their own needs and wishes”. They act the different forms of resistance in Fig. 4. They can “let go of immediate gratification in the interest of later goals” (Fig. 4a); they “would find

ways of nurturing their wishes and fulfilling them too” (Fig. 4c); “some children would not comply by running away, or by maintaining silence. Others spoke up, saying things outright, with use of strong words that they observed among the adults in their environment” (Fig. 4b, d). On the other hand, “adults too interpret the strategies that children use to find their way out in different ways. At times, the resistance is perceived as a challenge to authority that cannot be tolerated and the children should be “put in their place”; at other times, this is perceived as a competency that enables them to effectively interact with their often harsh environment”. In all these examples, resistance and directionality are parts of the children’s developmental trajectory.

The dynamic dance between directionality and resistance can also take place in public spaces, at the collective level. Awad, Wagoner and Glaveanu (Chap. [The street art of resistance](#), this volume) use the example of the graffiti phenomenon in the context of the Egyptian revolution started in 2011 to describe the co-generation of creativity and resistance at both individual and social levels. The specific form of street art is acting upon a resisting surface (e.g. a public wall or a police barrier against protesters) establishing a meaningful relationship with the support. In the different examples of graffiti provided by Awad, Wagoner and Glaveanu (Chap. [The street art of resistance](#), this volume), the graffiti artists draw on the surface by producing complexes of signs that transform the matter into a meaningful Gegenstand. The artist’s creative process is a form of *seeing-as* that leads to different trajectories, so that the resistance of the surface can block the meaning-making (4a) (the surface is not allowing the permanence of the drawing); can amplify the meaning (4b) (the surface intensifies the effect of the drawing); or the surface can become circumnavigated (4c) (the wall or the barrier is no longer visible); or can lead to an escalation (4d) (the wall becomes the public place of a dialogue between different artists that overwrite each other). The resistance of the surface, on the one hand, is seen-as the resistance of the political power, which cannot be directly drawn (though it is always possible to draw on the objects of this power, like a police car). Besides, the graffiti becomes a Gegenstand for the by-passer and the authority, triggering a further process of meaning-making (indifference, inhibiting or promoting change, aggression, etc.). The case of graffiti shows the strong relationship between directionality of the action (the orientation towards a future state) and resistance (the Gegenstand resists as it is implied in the directionality) is a process of anticipation rather than a reaction: a thing is turned into a Gegenstand in the very same moment in which the future is imagined.

Imagination of Resistance and Resistance to Imagination

The notion of *seeing-as* could be put in conjunction with the ideas of symbolic play, fantasy and imagination, though avoiding being trapped in considering such psychological processes as forms of escape or suspension of the reality (Tateo, 2015c). They are instead the forms of meaning-making that create our meaningful relations

with the world, by turning things into *Gegenstand*, as a function of future orientations. A very similar concept was expressed by Baldwin (1908) about the way children develop meaningful relationships with objects through:

The semblant or make-believe use of an object having merely inner character or fancy as image, whereby it is treated for playful or other personal purposes as having further meaning or reference. The object thus becomes a “scheme”, a *Schema*, charged with further meaning which has not as yet been found in its own right (Baldwin, 1908, p. 5).

If the child is asked to describe the object at the level of seeing, he is perfectly aware that a piece of wood is a piece of wood. Nevertheless, the very same child is able to establish a meaningful relationship with the piece of wood and temporarily *see it as* something else (a rifle, a sword, etc.) for “playful or other personal purposes”, and losing later on any interest for the same piece of wood but keeping the “scheme” for future use. “The result is a never-ending forward-oriented construction cycle where established schemas lead to new created roles for new objects of exploration, while the latter lead to the establishment of ever new schemas” (Valsiner, 2009, p. 61).

So far, I have developed the idea of *seeing-as* and its role in the construction of meaningful relationships with *Gegenstand* (both persons and objects) characterized by the complementarity of directionality and resistance. According to Wittgenstein (1958), the level of perception and the level of purposeful relations with the object can be distinguished and hierarchically organized. Nevertheless, there is a special class of objects, very large indeed in everyday life, which includes non-existing objects that we nevertheless relate with as *Gegenstand* (e.g. love, culture, divinity, freedom, atmosphere, mood, the invisible hand of the market, Paradise, Hell, Santa Claus, creativity and faith). Through imaginative processes, we “produce self-regulatory, continuously and hierarchically abstracted and reified signs to promote or inhibit change and resistance to change. Therefore, imagination is a fundamental part of any developmental process” (Tateo, 2015c, pp. 157–158). All the non-existing objects that populate our existence and that we deal with (our fatherland, our guardian angel, our zodiac, our mood, our family’s honour, etc.) become *Gegenstand* through the work of imagination: “we build things acting as if they were abstractions, and build abstractions acting as if they were real things” (Tateo, 2015c, p. 157). These non-existing objects, once become *Gegenstand*, live in us, in return, and can really orient our lives, to the extent that one can kill or die for the fatherland, or that our zodiac can resist the achievement of our career. As “imagination is a higher psychological function that enables us to manipulate complex meanings of both linguistic and iconic forms in the process of experiencing” (Tateo, 2015c, p. 146), “seeing-as” can continuously jump from the concrete object to the abstract concept in order to produce meaningful relationships. Thus, a piece of fabric can be temporarily *seen-as* a flag of an ideal fatherland for which one ought to fight a war, or a piece of wood can be temporarily *seen-as* a divinity that can make a “real” miracle. On the other hand, the abstract concept is provided with a body and matter through imagination. An abstract social value such as the honour of the family is actually embodied by the woman’s body, or the concept of absolute Good and Evil

receives a concrete and scary (or attractive) existence in the forms of the Garden of Delights or the Abyss of Fire. This imaginative process is distinct from fantasy and deals with the different levels of reality, as you can easily verify by asking any of the Egyptian people studied by Awad, Wagoner and Glaveanu (Chap. [The street art of resistance](#)) or the Indian women of the several studies presented in this book.

Conclusion: How Resistance of Psychology Can Develop Psychology

I have tried to figure out how psychological experience can be a complex dance between future-oriented and value-guided levels of reality, “as-is” and “as-if” (Vaihinger, 1935), populated by Gegenstand, relationships characterized by directionality and resistance. The experiencing of Gegenstand is the result of the interaction between the subject, the object and the cultural contextual conditions; thus, the development of the experience is a vector whose direction and magnitude cannot be determined a priori. Imaginative processes anticipate the forms of resistance and change by creating a Gegenstand through the selection of some aspects of the object in the “seeing-as” meaning-making process. I have also tried to theoretically develop some concepts in the history of psychology and to show that the studies presented in this volume can be understood in the light of these ideas. Nevertheless, a fundamental issue emerges: what methodology would be useful to study such non-existing objects and imaginary phenomena?

Psychological sciences seem still stuck on the eternal debate between realism, idealism and constructivism. These are all Gegenstand that have so far resisted the attempts to achieve a dialectical synthesis. Once we bring to the front, a class of psychological phenomena that deal with non-existing objects that make our life full of meaning, it is bound (a statement of value) to find new methodologies that can enable scholars to deal with the ethical, aesthetic and affective relationships with the world implied in the notion of Gegenstand. This cannot be done by reductionist approaches (either physiological or linguistic), because it requires focus on complexes of signs and products of human activity that make visible the dance between directionality and resistance. I wonder how the resistance of psychological sciences to deal with the products of imaginative processes can be used to promote (rather than to inhibit) this developmental process.

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Classical Indian Dance and the Dancer: Engaging with Tradition and Modernity

Vinita Bhargava and Priya Srinivasan

Abstract The chapter will use the personal narrative of a professional *Bharata Natyam* dancer in contemporary India to outline some issues of conflict that have overwhelmed the dance space and the dancer. Practising *Bharata Natyam* in India today means negotiating its history and navigating identities of religion, region, class and sexuality. The attempt is to highlight how the dance and the dancer continually negotiate the space between tradition and modernity. The conflict of maintaining the purity of form, yet allowing for creativity becomes a constant endeavour and tussle. In this chapter, we will attempt to trace the course of initiation into the classical arts, from the self-taught gyrations of Bollywood items to the serious rigours of a classical Indian dance form. The conflicts during dance training and the metamorphosis of a “modern” young girl to the “tradition-”bound dancer reveal the resistance in this context. Constructing the self as a dancer is not just a physical transformation, but a way of life. The chapter will also briefly trace the historical journey of *Bharata Natyam*. There has been local, national and global impact on the dance form, creating discourse on whether the newer forms are classical or should be deemed neoclassical. Since Independence, the post-colonial governments have used dance as part of a nation building agenda, projecting a packaged vision of tradition, culture and identity.

Keywords *Bharata Natyam* • Bollywood • Dance • Classical traditions

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Introduction

The legacies of the past have had an incredibly powerful influence on our present. These persist in countless ways in our present culture. This heritage affects our beliefs, languages, actions and creative expressions. The various political, social and economic changes that have resulted due to the several conquests and to British colonial rule in India have left an indelible imprint, which is sometime subtle in its presence. Those who have never experienced colonization cannot understand how culturally disruptive it is. And while we are still unravelling the impact of colonization, globalization and its overwhelming presence will take over our collective psyche in more undefinable ways. Historical truths register political happenings and form evidence for social changes in the lives of people. Culture endures modification and that gets registered in the more symbolic forms such as language and the arts of people. The arts encompass literature, theatre, dance, music, sculpture, painting and architecture. One way in which many of us re-appropriate our cultural identity is through the learning of the classical arts. This rests on the belief that by embracing a predetermined and sacrosanct classicism embedded in the art, we re-define ourselves as cultural entities discovering our lost past. The idealization of the imagined aesthetics of a static and ancient form, preserved carefully and handed down, in all its purity is the purpose. In the same way, when Indians cross borders to seek a living and assimilation in foreign lands, Indian dance becomes a cultural tool by which the diaspora community asserts its presence and its roots to a heritage.

As practitioners of the performing arts, we will focus on *Bharata Natyam*, one of the several classical Indian dance forms of India and engage with the tensions within the dance and the dancer in traversing modernity. There is a constant play between enduring traditions and compelling modernity, and the dancer has to maintain a balance, often by resisting both.

Classical Indian Dance

Indian classical dance is a relatively new overarching term for various codified art forms rooted in *Natya Sastra*, the ancient text of sacred Hindu musical theatre styles. For lack of any better equivalents in the European culture, the British colonial authorities called any performing art forms using music and movement found in India as “Indian dance”. Even though the art of Natya includes *nritta*, or dance, *Natya* has never been limited to dancing and includes singing and *abhinaya* (facial expressions). These features are common to all the Indian classical styles. The term “classical” was introduced by Sangeet Natak Akademi to denote the Natya Shastra-based performing art styles. The Sangeet Natak Akademi is India’s national academy for music, dance and drama. It is the first National Academy of the arts set up by the Republic of India in May 1952. As the apex body specializing in the performing arts of the country, the Akademi also renders advice and

assistance to the Government of India in the task of formulating and implementing policies and programmes in the field. Additionally, it carries a part of the responsibilities of the State for fostering cultural contacts between various regions in India, and between India and the world.

Eight Indian dance styles have been currently conferred the status of classical dance by the Sangeet Natak Akademi. Out of the eight styles, only two temple dance styles that have their origin in *Natya Shastra* and are prescribed by the *Agamas* are *Bharata Natyam* and *Odissi*. These two styles strictly adhere to the *Natya Shastra*. *Kathakali*, *Manipuri* and *Sattriya* are relatively recent forms of *Darbari Aatam*, which is a form of dance that appealed more to commoners and educated them about religion, culture and social life. These dances were performed outside the temple and in courtyards. Manipuri and *Sattriya* are both very similar eastern Indian styles. *Kathak* originated as a temple dance, but it is believed that it evolved from Lord Krishna's "*raas lilas*". The style gradually changed during the Mughal period under the influence of Persian dance. The temple dances were performed inside the sanctum of the temple according to the rituals that were called *Agama Nartanam*. *Natya Shastra* classifies this type of dance form as *margi*, or the soul-liberating dance, unlike the *desi* (purely entertaining) forms.

The terms *margi* and *desi* in dance implied the older and newer forms, respectively. The extemporaneous creativity of the artistes of various regions was also codified under the name of "*desi*"; "*margi*" signified Bharata's tradition. The performing arts of India are a living language and have been changing constantly. According to Subramaniam, it did not mean that they ever lost their roots at any point of time. The artistes using the rules laid down in the *Sastras* have created their own worlds of art (Subramaniam, 2010).

It is somewhat challenging to address the issue of "classical" in the Indian dance forms. The problem arises from the definition of the word "classical" and from the nature of the Indian dance forms. The Encyclopaedia Britannica talks about six acknowledged schools and other sources mention there are eight forms of classical dance. The Ministry of Culture, Government of India recognizes 11 dances as classical forms, which therefore problematizes the definition of "classical". One definition of classical dance states that "Dance that has been developed into highly stylized structures within a culture and developed within the court or circle of power in a society."

Indices that are used to determine whether something is "classical" are confounding when applied to classical dances in India. It is generally acknowledged that for something to be considered classical, it must have existed for a considerable period. That dance existed in some forms in India has historical evidence. But the form or genre in which it had existed and then evolved over time is in question.

The second is its ability to cross ethnic boundaries and spread. This is best illustrated by the anthropologist, Robert Redfield in the early to middle part of the twentieth century. According to Redfield's model, there are "great" and "little" traditions. The "great" tradition of European classical music was able to span the different ethnic groups that extend from Russia, throughout Western Europe. The "little"/folk traditions remained isolated to smaller geographical areas. This view

was criticized by Timbiah (Curtze & Slobodin, 1994) who asserted the idea that there are two levels of tradition is an artefact of anthropological method: the idea of two levels (of tradition) is an invention of the anthropologist dictated not so much by the reality he studied but by his professional perspective. The question one can ask is: How wide is “wide”, to determine spread and call the dance a classical form?

An association with social class may be a possible reason to define a standard. The appropriation of various dance forms by the elite of the society provided it the status to be called a classical form.

Origins of Dance in India

Dance origins in India stride the fine line between mythology and history. The spirituality in content and the physicality in form are exemplified in a complicated struggle between the two. The modern classicization of the dance form in the twentieth century and the creation of a new standard and of a re-appropriation of an ancient form have strategically reformed the practise.

There exists a tremendous amount of literary, sculptural and historical evidence to suggest that Indian classical dance is among the oldest in the world. Bharata's *Natya Sastra*, of which the first parts were written around 500 B.C, is the earliest surviving work on dance. Its complexity and methodological listing of all aspects of dance, music and drama have led scholars to believe that *Bharata Natyam* is probably the oldest codified dance form. Scholars have suggested the possibility of *Natya Sastra* being evolved through the contributions of various artists at different points of time. Art historians like Kapila Vatsyayan have inferred it to be the work of a single person and that Bharata could be a generic name for the performer taking on many roles. Thus, there are many uncertainties regarding the historicity of the origin of *Natya Sastra*. During the period of 1886–1888, fragmented forms of this text were discovered by Orientalist scholars from France, England and Germany. The history of Indian dance can broadly be divided into three periods based on historical sources (Kapila, 1979). In the first period 500 B.C to 900 A.D, Sanskrit exercised a firm hold on the intellectual life of the people and norms formulated by the *Natya Shastra* were strictly adhered to. In the second period, from 1100 to 1900 A.D, there was a marked development of regional styles in vernacular languages. The third period, from the late twentieth century to the present day, Indian dance and especially *Bharata Natyam* has developed essentially from the temple dances and dancers of Tamil Nadu.

The beginning of the contemporary classical dance styles in India today can be traced back to the second period. *Bharata Natyam* is most likely the oldest of these dance forms and is so named probably because it is the one school that has preserved in comparative purity, the traditions of Bharata's *Natya Shastra* (Narasimhan, 2002).

The performance of *Sadir* or *Chinamelam*, later called *Bharata Natyam* was a dance form practised by the devadasis or *nityasumangalis* (literally, ever—auspicious women), who dedicated their lives to the deity in Hindu Temples.

The tradition of *nityasumangali* was prevalent in South India during the Chola and Vijayanagara periods. These dancers were part of the courts or temples, and their dance was believed to protect the king from evil. The symbolic marriage to the deity gave her the rights to perform ritualistic and artistic duties in the temple. The temple itself was at the heart of village society. The devadasis received lands or portion of the produce from temple grants. Men with wealth and standing in society had social sanction to “keep” devadasis outside marriage. Over time, the climate changed, leading to a breaking down of the norms of the system itself. Society no longer appreciated the dance form as it was suggestive of immorality. Meanwhile, there was a new awareness among women who were part of the national freedom struggle. For them and many educated Indians, it was shocking that at the turn of the century, many young girls were still being dedicated to the temples. A campaign against the dedication of women for temple services led by the educated Hindu community began in 1892. Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy, the first female doctor in Madras presidency was instrumental in implementing legal interventions to regulate the life of devadasis. She was responsible for drafting a bill to prevent dedication of women to Hindu temples in 1930. There was support as well as protest from the devadasi community for these movements. The Madras Devadasis Act implemented in 1947 officially banned the practices of devadasi tradition and criminalized the ritual of “*Pottukkattutal*”. “*Pottukkattutal*” was a ritual where a “Pottu” (emblem) is tied around the neck of the girl and symbolizes the dedication of that girl to the temple. It commits her to intensive training to become a professional dancer. On reaching puberty, ceremonies are performed with an emblem or the image of God as a bridegroom.¹

Along with the reform movements that aimed at social cleansing through the eradication of devadasi tradition, attempts to re-construct India’s artistic legacy were progressing, propelled by the nationalistic ideology and the notions of religiosity it had invoked. Establishing the antiquity of *Bharata Natyam* through retrieval of Sanskrit texts was part of this revival movement. This process of “sanskritization” propagated an idealized, nationalistic interpretation of the history of *Bharata Natyam*, and its heterogenous past was disregarded. The *Sadirattam* performed by devadasis was renamed as *Bharata Natyam* during this period as part of the efforts to accentuate its classical status.

E. Krishna Iyer was one of the main opponents of the anti-Nautch movement in the 1930s which had gathered petitions and signatures from prominent members of society in order to abolish dance. In 1932–1933, he helped stop a government regulation banning the art of the devadasis. His constant articles, rejoinders, speeches and presentations, all contributed towards the dance form’s survival until 1947 when India became independent and many others had joined his efforts to save Bharatanatyam. He also persuaded the Music Academy, till then a bastion of brahminical domination and music, to showcase Bharatanatyam by devadasis

¹(<http://aksharamonline.com/feature/indu-kala-ramachandran/reflections-on-the-evolution-of-indian-classical-dance>).

Varalakshmi and Bhanumati and later, Bala Saraswathi. In 1933, E. Krishna Iyer himself danced at the Music Academy and Rukmini Devi Arundale gave her first public performance in 1936. In spite of their elite upper class lineage, they came forward to revive the stigmatized *Bharata Natyam* with an objective to revive it and give back the art form its lost dignity. These efforts played a significant role in reviving the dance form and giving it respectability in Indian society (Samson, 2010). The reform movement had reached its pinnacle with the infusion of sanitized spiritual themes by the celebrated revivalist and theosophist Rukmini Devi Arundale. By codifying the movement and body vocabulary of *Bharata Natyam*, Rukmini Devi initiated the archetype of the classical Indian dance body. Thus, the proliferation on the religious dimensions of dance by the Brahmin revivalists in 1930s had metamorphosed the art form into a “spiritual exercise” and elevated its status to a classical art patronized by the elite class. While she is recognized for “reviving a tradition”, she is often criticized particularly by feminists for “sanitizing” the dance form. However, Ratnam suggests that the dance form as it was practised by the devadasis was a lost art, and Rukmini Devi could not have revived it at all without making it palatable to a conservative upper class, coaxing them to send their young daughters and sons to learn the art. Ratnam elaborates that once the devadasi way of life ceased to exist, the desexualization of the repertoire and choosing to go the “*bhakti route*” (spiritual path) was a prerequisite in order to make the dance agreeable to an audience that had aligned it with women living the life of the devadasis. The desexualization of the dance allowed its comeback, giving artistes an opportunity to view it through a modern lens and shape it to reflect modern sensibilities of gender and sexuality (Krishnan, 2015).

Thus, classical dance presented through the lens of nation building moved to proscenium spaces. It was reformatted and fitted into the necessary idiom of classifications. It was important for the anti-colonial nationalists who needed to define cultural symbols/heritage and for European modernists to label them “traditional” in opposition to what they deemed culturally modern in their own works. The entitlement to ancient tradition emerges as an important means of legitimizing the modern “classical” practise as authentic and related to divine origin. Reconstruction of *Bharata Natyam* at the verge of Independence and according it classicism created dance as a national symbol. Young dancers from middle/upper class families became cultural ambassadors showcasing dance as part of Festivals of India. (Munsi & Burrige, 2012).

Hybridity was already part of the post-colonial modernity that was being constructed. Many believe that the classical Indian dance styles that exist today are neoclassical. They are a modern version of an earlier tradition deemed to be classical and a direct outcome of re-codification and systemization. Uttara Asha Coorlawala suggests that Indian classical dance was earlier understood as an ancient fossil, she emphasizes that narratives, however, now focus on the invented traditions of the Thanjavur court and modernist reconstructions of the later Indian Nationalist movements (Munsi & Burrige, 2012).

The dichotomy for the scholar and the dancer lies in the notion of “creativity”. Dance itself attempts to communicative, restructure and reiterate its roots through a

historical story interwoven into its content. There are a number of choreographies built upon the origin of the dance with the cosmic dance of Shiva and other divinities and codified in *Natya Shastra* within the repertoire of Indian classical dance, thus reclaiming and enunciating the divine origin and *Sastric* (classical) authenticity of the dance form. Two opposing theoretical paradigms, one that is rooted within practice and the other which is the framework that questions the concepts of tradition and classical thus co-exist. The Indian classical dance is wedged between these two paradigms of classical and neoclassical notions. This is one of the major causes of divide between scholars and practitioners in the Indian classical dance sphere.

Several practitioners of dance have adapted repertoires and cast them in altered templates for modern audiences. There is a tendency to imagine that the narratives of classical dance are ancient legacies and that the sexualities portrayed on stage are continuous with imaginations of gender and sexuality from an ancient time. However, dancers have continuously reinterpreted sexuality and love and transformed them into forms that will appeal to the audience.

In a chapter entitled, “Motion, emotion, commotion: a note on contemporary choreography”, Ratnam (Narasimhan, 2002) writes that to create new dance in India necessitates an entire new attitude about oneself and one’s relationship to the creation of dance. The vocabulary of *Bharata Natyam* she says is, “wide and diverse” and has been recognized in recent times by modern dance practitioners such as Mark Morris, Paul Taylor and Ralph Lemon who have created repertory pieces with Carnatic music and *Bharata Natyam*. In Great Britain, this dance form has been recognized as a world dance form, alongside ballet, jazz and flamenco.

The Dancer: A Narrative

One day when I was 5 years old my mother noticed me standing in front of the television and contorting and gyrating my rather skinny body much like the women of the Indian cinema. Bollywood dancing was becoming my penchant. Every time the Hindi film music came on, my body would rather reflexively start its movements. These to my mother’s sensibilities were obnoxious, and had I been a few years older bordering on obscenity. Not much time elapsed before I was taken to a neighbourhood dance class where an elderly lady trained at the “Kalakshetra Foundation” a performing art school in Chennai set up by Rukmini Devi Arundale took me under her wing to transform my proclivities.

Three times a week for one hour each evening a transformation took place. Adorning a specially stitched salwar kameez, dangling little earrings and applying a tiny red dot on my forehead, I walked down to my dance class. This transformation I believed was essential to the learning of this new kind of dance called *Bharata Natyam*. There were other children who attended the class as well. Five girls and one boy (who happened to be my brother) were also part of the class that took place in the living room space of the teacher.

For several months we did exercises and dance steps that were called *adavus* by my teacher. She taught us classical music as well. On her persuasion, soon we were enrolled in a Carnatic music class as well by my parents. The two were complementary and required for the learning of this art was my new teacher’s advice.

Learning to align my body to the discipline of straight lines and harmonizing it with head, neck and eye movements was magical. Soon my Bollywood dance movements had a new vocabulary of dance which my parents greatly approved of and I would get several opportunities to showcase this skill at festivals, marriages and events at school functions. I was soon aspiring to be a “classical dancer”. It was my badge of honour and soon I was enrolled into a class run by an eminent proponent of this dance form, a teacher who was to become my “guru and mentor”. On completion of school education, I was determined to pursue dance as a profession. Most people were amazed that my parents did not resist this move and allowed me to explore the possibility of enrolling in the prestigious dance school that my guru had attended. If I was dissuaded, it was by my own guru whose descriptions of Kalakshetra were rather bleak and fearful to the “urban, middle class, techno-savvy girl” I thought myself to be. She told me, “no wearing jeans, no T.V., no cell phone, no smoking or drinking, only vegetarian food and each morning you will begin your day at 6.00 am. This was not just an empty threat but was to be my life for the next 5 years that I spent pursuing serious dance training at Kalakshetra.

Woken at 6.00 am, bathed and dressed in a dance sari, modestly pinned as not to move out of place while dancing vigorously, tightly braided hair, dangling earrings, the red dot on my forehead, *kajal* (kohl) in my eyes and anklets on my feet I was ready to leave for prayers and college. This was not what I had imagined college to be. Strict discipline and rigorous dance schedules, together with the differences of culture embodied in language, food and clothing needed to be contended with. I sang for my dance without too much understanding of ancient Telugu, or Tamil or Sanskrit. I do hope in time I will get under the skin of the protagonists of the divine stories told in the song and *padams* and live them in the context of here and now. I believe I am here to learn the craft and art of the movements. I hope I will in time assimilate it and learn to innovate. I learn not to be sensitive to the parochial chauvinism of the local girls who think that my belonging to the north of India makes me less entitled to learn the art. I want not to focus on the opportunities that some students get to perform over others due to their colour, ethnicity, and gender.

Sometimes I did complain, only to be told that I was free to leave both by my parents and guru. This only made my resolve to stay on and complete what I had come for even stronger. My life was unimaginable to my friends who were enrolled in universities around the country.

In the last year of the post diploma course we all hoped that we would not need to leave the security and fold of the institution. We would find work in the repertory company and travel and perform. That was not to be. I came back to Delhi wondering how I would step into the world of dance on my own. My goal was to be a performer but soon I realized that youth festivals and opportunities to be on stage were few and far between. Forty-year-old dancers were deemed as young dancer so I would need to wait much longer. My career took off with my being offered employment at a recognized performing art institution in New Delhi. That gave me stability of income but not much satisfaction. A bunch of 80 students and most not really interested in dance but pushed by ambitious parents to attend and get a chance to be quickly on stage. Beggars can't be choosers and so I accepted this gracefully. Most of my classmates had taken up employment as dance teachers in regular schools and were teaching an eclectic mix of what was definitely not *Bharata Natyam*. By the second year most of them were married and some had children too. To keep my head up I was giving lecture demonstrations, writing curricula, compering dance programmes, and if I was lucky, getting a programme or two. I may say I am fortunate to have my own dance group and my own dance school with 25 children.

The lure of stardom has drawn many from my dance classmates to join the film world. I too have had my moments of confusion but decided to stay in what I marked as my space. I do not regret the decision today but ... Time will tell if I make the right choice to stick to the path of “classical” dance (Priya Srinivasan, a personal narrative).

Dance Education

The challenges present in the area of dance education and performance are enormous; produced by the unstructured nature of training. Dance education in India today is basically inconsistent. A large number of schools do not have basic equipment, blackboards, chalks or toilets, let alone a dance teacher. Yet there are other schools with studios and extensive performing arts departments. For most young people in the country, the only exposure to dance is through films or the dancing they learn by participating in festivals and marriages. In some regions and communities, dance education is considered to be an important aspect of a child's socialization, and in others, it is considered an undignified activity and definitely improper profession. Primarily dance training has been relegated to an extracurricular activity rather than one that will provide opportunity to be taken up as a performer or teacher. Dance education is imparted mostly in private classes, conducted by performing artists. These performers may or may not necessarily have adequate skills for teaching dance. Yet dance education is thus propagated to a large numbers of youngsters in the country. With some exclusion, most educational institutions have not been conducive to producing performers, academicians or researchers of dance.

Dance education in India was largely nurtured through the *guru-shishya parampara*, an oral tradition of transferring knowledge which is characterized by living and learning with the teacher. For centuries, dance was taught in a way where the personal relationship between the teacher and the student determined what was taught. Through an oral pedagogy, communication of knowledge and skill took place. It was much like an "apprenticeship". Dance teachers of the traditional forms are continuously grappling with this issue, as it is no longer viable to teach in the way they were taught. For them, it was a "*sadhna*", where even a lifetime was not enough for learning. This method of teaching has become obsolete as interactions between the teacher and students are limited by time and space. The *guru-shishya parampara* sought unquestioning intellectual and spiritual surrender to the guru. In this process, the tradition of learning and performing became more important than thinking and questioning.

Within an institutional setup, be it schools or universities, certain teaching qualifications are required to transfer knowledge. Hence, a professional cannot teach young people until he/she has received the appropriate training. Teachers of the performing arts were not required to undergo any specific training to teach, although several school boards do recognize music and dance as academic subjects which can be pursued at university level. The opportunity for good quality skill training is lacking due to this dichotomy between good teachers and good performers. Often dance theory takes precedence over dance practice in these institutions. Great performers at the peak of their careers rarely want to spend time in teaching. Only those, who find very few opportunities for performing, choose teaching as an option.

Ashish Mohan Khokar a reputed dance historian, biographer, critic and author reflects on the tomorrow of dance and the tensions of the young dancers. He writes, “Young India wants to ‘do’, not merely ‘know.’ Most are not interested in knowing Indian heritage and history or even watching other dancers’ works. They want to be on stage and perform. The urge to get noticed and find fame within the shortest span is the aim. They are so ‘self-absorbed’ in their journey of ‘self-discovery’ and ‘self-projection’”.

In most cities, no neutral and appropriate spaces are available for young dancers to create, rehearse or perform. Large halls are expensive and even if one could get sponsors, where would they get audiences to fill them up? Very few dance spaces are available for young dancers. Indifferent government bodies, elderly “*sabha*” secretaries or fellow gurus and dancers often need to be cajoled to put them on stage. “You come to my festival and I come to yours ...” is a practice that is pervasive. Young dancers are juggling multiple jobs, running businesses in addition to dance and performance tours. They want to know what determines quality of a dance: true skill of the dancer, awards, brand creation, more shows or tours. Who decides what defines quality in dance? PR agents palmed off as critics with no integrity, or TV talk shows and dance marketing or publicity of a show is its true worth. Thus, who decides the value of a production?

Earlier the guru rarely offered much praise or opportunities to perform. Students were taught patience and acceptance of the guru’s words. It was the guru’s prerogative to provide the chance to be on stage and the student’s to tolerate the decision. Khokar proclaims,

Try doing that today. Young India has no time, no patience, no real tolerance. They have much choice and some money to buy an expensive piece of gadget, but not a book. They roam from guru to guru without having heard the adage, “A rolling stone (real ones, not the rock group!) gathers no moss.” They are hungry and want more. The real area of concern is; where does this want stop? What’s the glass ceiling? (Khokar, 2015).

Today lack of support for Gurus has made them commercially conscious. Charging money for each item taught is the deal. Having many students, poor commitment, superficiality in teaching and greater exhibitionism are becoming hallmarks of the art.

In the University, we often ask our students if they have witnessed a live classical dance performance or even on television, and we find discomfiture in the class. In a class of 50, at the most two students would have seen a show. In the cultural festivals of colleges, the category “classical dance” is often missing. Contemporary solo, folk or “choreo” categories feature. What does this spell for the future of this dance tradition? Indian classical dance is obliged to re-evaluate and revalidate itself, say many practitioners. Since accelerated transformation are the norm today so Indian dance too, must be proficient at prophesying the next move for its inherent survival. McCarthy states that,

Fortunately, the dance milieu in modern India began serious self-evaluation in its nascent period, and this process of analysis continues up to the present with seminars and colloquia accompanying most major dance events and festivals. The discussions within these

symposia, however, often lead rather quickly to the inevitable ancient vs. modern impasse; a simplistic reduction at best.

He states that to understand the situation with more clarity, an alternate model of three broad dance groupings should be considered.

The first group are the “classicists”, who with self-imposed rigour, try to adhere to the grammar, vision and construct of what was arrived at by the mid-twentieth century. The second group are the “moderates”, who retain what is perceived to be its most essential signifiers but recast the themes to more contemporary contexts. The third group are the “contemporaries”, a new wave of Indian dancers who, in their work, either pay homage to or consciously invert representations of their “classical” past.

McCarthy claims that

... the contemporaries are the newest and most controversial entrants on the scene. Their work is most likely to contain fragments of past, present, and future ideas of body politics and music ranging from primeval thumping to high-tech pulses. At their worst, they can be dismissive in the most simplistic of manners. But in a positive sense, they can act as a refractive barometer of the state of Indian so-called classical dance, as well as a harbinger of things to come.

The moderates are the most in number and well-positioned. They are more likely to mix genres and time periods and express a willingness to engage with the larger world. This group has the greatest mass appeal. The first category of pure classicists is mostly conspicuous by its near invisibility. McCarthy says, “At its best, this dance can connect to a sense of deep poetic repose which does, surprisingly, filter the past in a positive, albeit curatorial, sense. It is characterized by simplicity in delineation and sobriety of music. Yet, on the negative side, it can be frumpy and uninspired” (McCarthy, 2011, p. 1). Many of its practitioners feel tangible apprehension for the predicament of the “classical” in the present situation.

Concluding Comments

We find ourselves today in the thick of a polemic with opposing forces, as they were in literary feuds of eighteenth century France between the “ancients and the moderns”. The ancients draw strength from the justification of a fixed classicism. In the face of evidence based on informed readings of a plurality of histories, they resort to an artefact of conviction that says, that many believe, therefore it is so, “And such is the strength of the ideology that those who differ are constantly impelled to use this fictive ‘classical’ as a reference point for their views”. The challenges in India’s classical arts, evolving for years in a cyclical society are now confronted with linearity, where the struggle for change and being innovative have cut into the in-depth approach required in these art forms. Some feel that *Bharata Natyam* has been preserved for years and believe that one cannot play with the grammar of the form. Some seniors despair that the itemized approach today, with a

disinterest in the “*margam*” is like the “*prana*” (*soul*) of the dance being lost. Some bemoan the exhibitionistic nature of performance art, leading to the loss of the meditative strength. Others proclaim that if in a climate where the economics of dance is skewed, gurus, in all fairness, cannot ask even the really talented students to take up dance as a full time career. The young handle and voice the challenges of making their respective classical dance forms relevant to the compulsions of the present, rather than what constitutes classical dance. Kapila Vatsyayan referring to the dialectics between performers and audience in a changing spatial–cultural context, maintains that the ultimate decision remains with the dancer whether or not to make compromises with the classical dance form and to aim at “transcending the body through the body”—reaching out for the formless through the form. And that the grammar and rigour of classical dance and the body as instrument are only means to an end. These, beyond the individual and market concerns, are aspects that need to be understood (Leela, 2013).

The attempt in this paper has been to highlight how the dance and the dancer continually negotiate the space between tradition and modernity. The redeemed and reconstructed past stands as stepping stone and guarantees the self a conscious and purposeful control of one’s future course of life. No secure or meaningful future is viable without roots in the past, shared experiences and values, and a definite self-image. Anxious to tune ourselves to the present times, we cut ourselves off from the roots and negate the past. The cognition of one’s future cannot but be based on the critical self-recognition of one’s own past. One needs a reassessed memory of the past to draw from. A change determined by challenges in a new and constantly self-redefining social context and audience expectation needs a process of negotiation and re-negotiation. Would these be acceptable to the custodians of the art? Practising *Bharata Natyam* in India today means negotiating its history and navigating identities of religion, region, class and sexuality.

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Culture, Gender and Resistance: Perspectives from India

Shraddha Kapoor, Varuna Nagpal and Pooja Maggu

Abstract Every person plays multiple roles in a lifetime, and a sense of self is guided by the dialogical nature of relationships. Shared meanings and interpersonal interactions are the substance from which the sense of self is constructed. Gender can be approached from several perspectives in order to understand the social representations of women and men, femininity and masculinity. Within patriarchal communities, the status of women is a matter of concern. Movement away from essentialist notions of sex differences evolved into the feminist movement towards equality. Much ground has been covered in this regard. Womanhood remains a complex, contested domain as traditional notions of patriarchy persist in different ways in many parts of the world. This chapter deals with the lives of women in India, highlighting a range of phenomena that are relevant to the study of gender. The positions and counter-positions that are created in social interactions provide evidence for active meaning-making by individuals, who are not simply passive recipients of culture, but active agents who strategically choose compliance, resistance, renewal or rupture during their life course. Through stories of specific women, we provide illustrations of resistance to traditional forms of family life, sometimes from within the system and sometimes in confrontation with it.

Keywords Gender · Indian society · Patriarchy · Feminism

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Introduction

India continues to report poor statistics for women in health, education, economic status and employment. Beliefs and practices related to gender are perpetuated through socialization from early childhood onwards, and in many communities, girls grow up with the understanding that they will be subservient to men in their lives. Yet, gender is a complex and contentious issue and not a simple story of dominated, disempowered women. India has had some of the earliest instances of women in powerful roles, whether as religious leaders, businesswomen, political leaders or scientists. For centuries, women have resisted imposed meanings through active struggle, confrontation, non-cooperation or passive resistance. The role of prominent social reformers (men and women) and collective movements before and during the period of the freedom struggle bolstered the recognition of the need for social change. Women's lives continue to sway between the complex collective images of women as goddesses, in mother-sister roles, as dependent spouses, as powerful politicians and religious leaders, social activists or disadvantaged offspring.

Complexity in human phenomena is a result of the interaction between the different layers of activity (Tateo, this volume), and individuals are not passive products of the environment. They can resist and reinterpret prevailing practices. Individual agency and collective culture are in constant dynamic exchange, within which individuals can be seen to comply, conform or resist meanings imposed upon them by others through covert and overt means. Further, there is no denying the impact of modernizing influences such as mobility, economic progress, employment and education. There is sufficient research to demonstrate the impact of these factors on women's lives and choices. Educational accomplishment is a significant means for providing greater autonomy and confidence to mediate successfully between personal, familial and collective culture. Ramanujan (1991) examines this complexity in Indian society and concludes that there are opposing ways in which women are treated. On the one hand, Indian goddesses and gurus are worshipped, and on the other, women are subjected to violence, dominance and subjugation. How does one reconcile this dramatic opposition in the collective culture? We decided to take the lives of individual women as a landscape within which to examine the complexity of gender relations. The stories discussed in the chapter are of women who have gained significant recognition in different fields such as politics, defence services or the police force, areas that have been known to be the preserve of men. Through a description of their lives, we hope to demonstrate the dynamics of gender in contemporary Indian society.

Persistent Patriarchy: Feminism and Gender Dynamics in India

Patriarchy has both a narrow and a broad meaning. It is a father's or eldest male's superiority in the narrower sense, and in its broader sense, it replicates male dominance in all other areas of life (Simai, 1996). One often hears that it is not just men who perpetuate patriarchy, but women are equally responsible. In fact, women have been known to become active participants in the phenomenon of patriarchy. Consider the stereotype of the "mother-in-law" in many cultures. Family hierarchy supersedes gender relations, and the mother of a young man believes that she has control over the younger, disempowered women who have entered the family from outside. This affiliation, not to be understood as passive compliance, creates a strong belief in the family hierarchy as the "right" way of doing things (Kapoor, 2013). According to Mitchell (1974), this power is responsible for the "inferiorized" psychology of women. The cooperation of women is secured by many means, which include deprivation and denial of their education, history and access to economic resources (Lener, 1986). The term empowerment is appropriate in this regard since it provides space for negotiating meaning. Power is closely linked to empowerment, as power provides direct access to the three indicators: resources, agency and achievement (Kabeer, 1999). Also, empowerment indicates an inner strength, not always evident through quantitative measures. It implies the subjective feeling of being in control of oneself.

Society makes every attempt to shape our identity, beliefs and conduct according to established notions of "truth", and for women living within patriarchal systems, the guidance will be in that direction (Bhasin, 1993). Chakravarti (1993) argues that mechanisms of control of patriarchy are operated through three devices namely ideology, custom and State. "Through a rich and imaginative mythology women were narcotised into accepting the ideology that genuine power lies in women's ability to sacrifice, in gaining spiritual strength by denying themselves access to power" (p. 17). The historical context of patriarchy may have lost relevance for contemporary social practice, yet centuries of habitual ways seem to be sustained in the minds and lives of people. According to Kabeer (1994), gender inequalities stem from relations of power and authority, class, religion–caste–ethnic hierarchies and sociocultural traditions, customs and norms. Women living in poverty experience a double disadvantage, economic and social.

In the feminist tradition, Saxena (1994) labels the patriarchal system as a negation of democracy, explaining that "society ... considered a woman only as an 'object', a thing and not a person. Her value was to provide an heir ... and to provide sustenance to the family by taking care of the home, by remaining within the four walls of that home" (p. 391).

Most ethnic groups in India are patriarchal, and it is difficult to alter the practices and ideologies of people since these are within the framework of social acceptability, and boundaries are not clearly defined. Matriarchy is rare, although there are some groups in northeast India and in Kerala (southern India) that can be called

“matrifocal” (Smith, 2002) where mothers occupy a central position and assume the role of running the family, though the eldest male was seen as the legitimate power to head the family (Arunima, 2003).

India’s Daughters

Daughters are often labelled as “temporary guests” in their family, treated either with distant sternness, or with loving indulgence, protective care and a lurking sense of fear about her impending departure to marital life. They may also be treated with overt strictness, as they are believed to be symbols of the measure of a family’s honour, to be shared with another family and thus the outside world. In contrast, they may also be overly indulged since the time in the natal family is believed to be brief. They are considered messengers who represent the honour of the family to larger society. The stern upbringing is believed to give them the necessary training for future discipline. In traditional households, far fewer restrictions are placed on boys as they are believed to “remain” within the family. There is a constant censure of actions and misdeeds often seen as hurtful by the growing women (Sharma, 1996) but justified by the family. Sharma found in her study of adolescents that between the mother and daughter, intimacy was latent through middle childhood and adolescence with strict rules and regulations. However, once the daughter was married, this became transformed into a comfortable and close relationship, and mothers and daughters shared an unprecedented intimacy after this event. It was almost as if the mother was withholding her affections until the time the daughter left her natal home.

The symbolic place of a daughter in the family life cycle is supposed to be deeply significant. Not having a daughter is often looked upon as a disadvantage, as if a family is missing out on something beautiful and valuable. Additionally, daughters also have an important place in the Hindu life cycle. The giving away of a daughter in marriage is believed to be the parting of a beloved member, one that is an essential step in the completion of the life cycle through this self-cleansing sacrifice. The care from birth through childhood and the giving away of a girl in a highly emotional ceremony called “*kanyadaan*” is an essential milestone in the cosmic life cycle of Hindus. Sometimes, family members argue that the departure of a girl can justify a lower investment in her, as she will “belong” to another family. However, the same reason has also been used as a justification for preparing daughters well as custodians of family honour. Herein lies the complexity of women’s lives in a cultural context (Kapoor, 2013). The same outcome can be used to justify completely different strategies. The severest outcome of patriarchy is expressed in the phenomenon of female foeticide, practised surreptitiously by some, and clearly against the law. The strict implementation of the law has diminished female foeticide in India. Peasant communities all over the world have been known to favour male children (Schlegel & Barry, 1991), although the degrees to which this is expressed and the practices that support patriarchy are diverse.

Gender Dynamics and Positioning

In an attempt to understand the cultural complexity of gender in India, the process of positioning and counter-positioning (Valsiner, 2007) seems like an appropriate theoretical model to adopt. Although Hermans (2001) used these ideas to refer primarily to personal psychological processes, we will attempt to expand this to collective phenomena as well. Here, we will argue that the contrasts in Indian society regarding the lives of women, the worship as well as the subjugation, are in fact theoretically and ideologically linked. Women's positions fluctuate within these two extremes precisely because of the fact that they do not fall within the limited patriarchal framework: The diverse myths of the Hindu tradition are invoked to first transcend and then expand the various manifestations, whether as leader, guru or goddess on the one hand, wife or daughter on the other (see Kurtz, 1992, for more discussion). Within the prescribed positioning, patriarchy prevails, but when the domestic barrier is crossed, it appears as if there are no limits. Perhaps this is the reason why, also, India has had some of the most powerful women the world has known in political and spiritual leadership. The Nobel laureate Amartya Sen commented (Sen, 2005) that as he moved westwards in his career, from Bengal to Delhi to England and then the USA, the proportion of women academics in higher education and scholarship gradually diminished!

Women take several positions in their lives. Negotiating these positions gives them the means for manipulating relationships, decisions and resource distribution. Much is accomplished within the domestic framework. The high value that is placed on the role of women, even when these are prescribed roles, provides them the power for negotiation. When a mother is believed to be all-powerful as a mother, she can also put that power to use. Mothers, sisters and caregivers are all glorified in Indian tradition, and many stories (folk and religious) centre around the significance of mothers (Ramanujan, 1991).

Cultural processes are not singular, and they provide people the possibility to make multiple interpretations and to select alternatives from within the varied scripts. Within this continuum, lies the dynamics of resistance. Two different directions can emerge from an act of resistance, to change reality or to change oneself to survive within reality (Crawley, Foley, & Shehan, 2008). Between individual agency and compliance with cultural norms, human beings find ways and means to negotiate choices. However, collective processes and family relationships are so strong that these influences result in profound personal negotiations for individual women, thus the resistance! Subliminal negotiation is a popular covert strategy among women for expressing resistance. Predominantly, they seem to choose silence and passive resistance over retaliation, whether out of fear (of breakdown of relationships) or favour (priority to family cohesion) is perhaps known only to the individual in question. Passive resistance is an example of covert strategies, the hidden transcripts of resistance as opposed to the overt or public ones (Scott, 1990) also discussed by Singh (this volume).

Culturally, the pattern of accepting, adopting and adapting to changing ideals has made the Indian a rather versatile person (Kakar & Kakar, 2007). Perhaps this adaptability also fuels continuity of older ways, since they simply persist, expanding the repertoire rather than rupturing it. In verse, we find resonance of this thought in the words of Rich.

Silence can be a plan,
Rigorously executed
The blueprint to a life,
It is a presence
It has a history, a form,
Do not confuse it
With any kind of absence

Adrienne Rich, "Cartographies of silence"

(Glenn, 2004).

Going Beyond Prescribed Roles: Emerging Resistance

Resistance can take its form in focussing on needs and negotiating relationships within the family. For an employed woman, keeping the system intact ensures the continued care of children and family members. It is never easy to sustain a balance when work and family life are opposed, wherever in the world a person is living. These struggles are not unique to India, although each context will have unique features. From another part of the world (Nigeria),

We say to girls, you can have ambition, but not too much. You should aim to be successful, but not too successful. Otherwise, you would threaten the man (Adichie, 2014, p. 28).

Silence as a strategy has been written about quite often in literature, even in the West. In the novel, *The Summer before the Dark*, Doris Lessing writes about a woman in her mid-forties who serves cake and coffee to her husband and his male friends in the garden, sits with them, smiles and "turns off her mind then", pouring herself in her own thoughts as she finds the conversation boring but she still sits there. This "woman's public/private behaviour is an example of an apparent acquiescence in the role of dutiful, submissive wife, but is in fact an accommodation with a critical edge: it contains an internal resistance; a separateness' and an internal non-subordination," (Anyon, 1983, p. 24). In another instance of a similar evaluation, Laurence (1994) highlights the work of novelists Jane Austen and Virginia Woolf, narrating:

The inwardness of female listeners and observers in convectional frameworks in life and texts, inviting us to interpret their silence not as passivity, submission and oppression, but as an enlightened presence (pp. 156–157).

Hence, silence is a way of accessing deep-nested feelings of women, their ideas and perceptions dealing with likes or dislikes of the environment they live in. It was further explained that the variety of silences opens up diverse explanations, and these may be viewed as alternative codes of truth, or an expression of anger, but the only kind that would be socially tolerated. Women’s silence may thus be read as a strategy of resistance and a choice, “a ritual of truth” (Laurence, 1994, p. 157). In another instance of feminist writing, Glenn (2004) explains silence shaping gender as:

Silence has long been considered a lamentable essence of femininity, a trope for oppression, passivity, emptiness, stupidity or obedience (p. 2).

Education as a Medium of Resistance

Discussing recent changes in women’s lives, Kakar and Kakar (2007) report:

Earlier, it would have been unthinkable for a girl from a respectable family to enter the labour market and look for work. This process of middle-class women working for pay has accelerated since the 1970s, chiefly due to two reasons: one, the change in the traditional view about the education of a daughter which now encourages higher education for girls and thus makes their participation in socially respectable work possible; and two, the growing financial needs of middle-class families partly due to their higher consumption aspirations (p. 66).

What are some of the paths that permit women greater mobility and flexibility? In this volume, Konwar demonstrates through the life of Kamla, how the path of education as a personal choice, supported by her mother, facilitates her capacity to resist two dominant scripts. One the one hand, Kamla was faced with the pressure from other family members to have an early marriage, and on the other, to elope with a young man of her choice as other young women, asserting their individuality and antagonism towards their parents were doing. The support of the mother was crucial. In this example, one hears the same theme:

I was being told by my mother, repeatedly, what education will do to me. She is a graduate. But she was not permitted to go for higher studies as it was believed to be of no use. Ultimately, the woman has to serve the home she is married into. Even though my mother did not get the opportunity to study further, she wanted me to go for higher education so that I can feel secure and empowered - personally and professionally” – (Sonia, 26 year-old, personal communication, March 10th, 2015¹).

¹As narrated to one of the authors.

Education is empowering. It endows a person with power to take decisions. Women see education as a stepping stone that offers greater social mobility in their professional life. Besides fostering professional growth, education contributes positively to the personal lives of the women. It has been established that education and employment empower women to negotiate and take decisions. For instance, Bhopal (2011) found that women's participation in higher education contributes to their active participation even in conventional, arranged marriages. An educated woman was found to have a much greater say about the type of family, the kind of husband she would like. In an instance from the research study, one young woman reported: "I think it just makes you have more say in the way your life goes and what you want to do with it and who you want to ultimately marry. And that can be a powerful thing, that can make the difference to how your life will turn out" (Bhopal, 2011, p. 437). The National Census of India (2011) reports that there is a dramatic rise of women passing out as graduates (116% between 2001 and 2011) compared to 65% increase among men. More women are taking technical courses as it increases job opportunities for them.² With the increased confidence and greater options for employment, higher study clearly resulted in the ability and permission to transcend traditional structures. Clear evidence has also been found regarding the rise in age at marriage as well (Kazi & Ghadially, 1979).

Educational opportunity also results in higher chances of employment outside the home and family occupation. As Bhopal (2011) found, Indian women want greater independence in their lives after acquiring a career, and by keeping the critical roles intact along with their success, this allows the expansion of personal ambition. Kandiyoti (1988) called it the patriarchal bargain:

I will argue that women strategize within a set of concrete constraints that reveal and define the blueprint of what I will term the 'patriarchal bargain' of any given society, which may exhibit variations according to class, caste, and ethnicity. These patriarchal bargains exert a powerful influence on the shaping of women's gendered subjectivity and determine the nature of gender ideology in different contexts (p. 275).

Marriage and Family Life

In India, marriage and motherhood are believed to be essential experiences for both men and women according to the traditionally prescribed view of the life cycle (Krishnan, Pande, Mathur, Subbiah, & Roca, 2005). To decide who one should marry is thus a life-transforming decision, especially since it is expected to be for keeps. In Indian society, marriages are supposed to be a transaction between two families rather than between two individuals, and that traditional ideology still persists among many. Thus, the search for a prospective groom within one's religious, ethnic and caste group is a common trend. This contrasts with the practice of

²The Times of India, 2nd August, 2015.

choosing one's own spouse and is well known as the arranged marriage system. However, it must be noted that between the two ends of completely parent-determined and exclusively individual decisions, there is a whole range of combinations that are permitted. The two must not be seen as dichotomous (arranged and love marriages). Between these two choices, the young woman in India clearly finds herself with far greater leverage to make her own choice when she has education and a job.

Coontz (2008) wrote about how marriages have evolved over the years. A distinct shift to love marriages is also quite apparent. Even with this shift, the number of arranged marriages continues to outnumber 'love' or 'self-arranged' marriages. In Mohini Nagar, for instance, a low-income neighbourhood in South Delhi, arranged marriages are seen as robust and long-lasting whereas love marriages are viewed as "inferior, conflict-ridden, less successful and ephemeral" (Grover, 2007, p. 2). Education and employment raise the status of a woman to negotiate or bargain with the family, if she makes her own choices regarding who and when to marry. However, it was found that women in love marriages feel a greater need to work at their marriages and are frequently "urged and advised to compromise and accept responsibility for their own marital choices" (Grover, 2007, p. 33). Further, it was found that couples who manage to attain parental consent while negotiating a love marriage also "use epithets such as 'arranged-love-marriage' signifying the clear stamp of parental approval" (p. 33).

Between the continuum of arranged and love marriage, lies what Ralson (1997) called a semi-arranged marriage, an increasing trend being practised in Indian families. This arrangement allows men and women freedom of choice of entering the marriage contract. The process of finding a prospective groom may even be the same as that of arranged marriage—through a mediator or advertisement. As Fuller and Narsimhan (2008) noted, times have changed and parents are appearing to take into consideration the couple's prospective personal happiness into account, even in arranged marriages. He explained this arrangement, where both parents and children select partners together, for a person's emotional satisfaction that is not premised on young people's unfettered personal choices. "This Indian option partially reflects a rise in affective individualism linked with relatively more concern than in the past with individual personality, self-expression, and free will, which is in turn connected with improved education (especially for girls), the rising age of marriage, and reduced gender inequality". This research further argues that the "middle class marriage has progressively developed in recent years into a companionate form, a bond between two intimate selves". This companionate marriage is seen to be linked with higher education as "educated women were likely to be better companions for educated, middle-class men, and because they demanded a greater say in selecting their husband and running their family" (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008, pp. 751–752). Economically independent women have been found to be more selective in marrying, and they also have more negotiating power within the marriage (Parker, 2010).

In an attempt to find out from Indian women the secret of long-lasting marriage, Bumiller (1991) found compromise and perseverance was important for a

successful marriage. Being patient, compassionate and contented in relationships was the key to long-lasting bonds. She found a new definition of love—“long-term commitment and devotion to family, which can be developed only with much patience and time”. She felt that in an Indian’s view, “Americans define love as passion—which inevitably leads to disappointment in marriage after the glow of those first romantic years wears off. This reasoning always seemed to me a striking example of the Indian belief in their moral superiority over what many of them see as the decadent West, with its dismal record of divorce. Americans just give up, Indians believe, when the marriage hits the rough spots and falls short of an unattainable ideal” (p. 31). Women acknowledge that life will never be easy and continue to negotiate and silently resist their everyday problems rather than walk out from the marriage. And yet, whether these beliefs will stand the strain of a changing world is yet to be seen (Trawick, 2003).

Women in Politics

Apart from education and employment, political activity is another path taken by many Indian women. In stark contrast to the discourse about the submissive majority, India has had an inordinate number of women leaders in political life. Additionally, these have been among the most powerful women the world has ever known. Since the times of the Rani of Jhansi (1828–1858), a brave warrior, and even before that, the predominantly patriarchal India has seen many prominent women leaders. Fighting for a space at the top in a male-dominated society is surely not easy (Singh, 2014), especially when there is a clear mandate for women’s lives, marriage and raising a family, and as the children get older, supporting the elderly. However, we will argue here that it is precisely the patriarchal majority and the closely bound rules that provide the escape velocity for these women when they resist and transcend conventions. We can argue that once the boundary of patriarchy is crossed, these women find themselves free and powerful, especially if they also have the personal temperament for leadership. As an example, Indira Gandhi (Pillai, this volume) was often referred to as the only “man” in her cabinet.³ Such a comment may be unkind, but it demonstrates the dialogicality and counter-positioning related to gender dynamics. If she was not in a traditional role (giving up family life for her career in politics), she may as well be considered a man, and therefore she can do anything!

In striking contrast to the upper class, political lineage of Indira Gandhi, the case of Kumari Mayawati is an important example. Mayawati’s career was described as a miracle of democracy by a former prime minister of India. Commonly known as

³DOI <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-remembering-the-only-man-in-her-cabinet-1304800>. Accessed on 11th August, 2016.

Behen-ji (sister, respectfully), Mayawati is an inspiration to millions of Dalits.⁴ She was born in a low-caste, Dalit family (see Sagar & Bhargava, this volume, for more detail on Dalit women). Her father was a post office employee in Delhi. As was the local practice, her brothers were educated in fee-paying private schools and she and her sisters in poorer government-run schools. She obtained her undergraduate and law degrees from University of Delhi, as well as a bachelor's degree in education. She took up a job as a school teacher until the day she met a local Dalit activist and politician, Kanshi Ram. Impressed by her personality, he soon became her mentor and inducted her into a local political party as a member. Since then her rise has been meteoric, and this single woman from a relatively poor background became one of the most powerful chief ministers of the state of Uttar Pradesh, one of the largest in the country. She is reputed to have done a lot for the cause of the Dalit community and the success of her family members. Although her initiation and career were bolstered by her mentor, there is no denying that her own determination to define her political career has been in opposition to the traditional template of a woman. What makes it even more dramatic is the fact that she belongs to one of the most socially disadvantaged communities in India.

Women in Public Service

Indian women have also made their mark in several other spheres of public life. The police, administrative service, air force and army have seen many successful women officers. More women are also now visible in conventionally male professions such as commercial flying, and sports like tennis, wrestling and boxing. Commercial pilots in India are way above the global average. For instance, Jet Airways has 194 women commercial pilots in their fleet.⁵ Interestingly, this article argues that the network of the extended family with substitute caregivers is the condition that permits women to take up careers like commercial flying, making it easier for them to travel. However, this cannot be the only reason. Several women wrestlers have recently been in the news since they come from one of the most gender-backward states of the country, Haryana. These women from families where participation in sports is highly encouraged have chosen Olympic medals as their objective and symbolize a trend that is complex and again, opposed to the dominant mode of life for women. A significant number of women in the Indian subcontinent have left an indelible mark on the recent history and continue to inspire other young women. Most of these women remain within the framework of family life, as they pursue their careers.

⁴A group of castes that have been selected for affirmative action on account of long-standing occupational, social and economic disadvantage.

⁵DOI: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Indian-women-pilots-soar-past-global-average/articleshow/45253431.cms>. Accessed on August 11th, 2016.

Spiritual leaders provide yet another dramatic example. India has several women gurus who have a large following of devotees. Spiritual leadership is closely related to issues of authority and power, which is largely male-dominated (Pechilis, 2004). A woman taking this path of becoming a spiritual leader could be argued as a path of resistance where the traditional roles of homemaker and mother are abandoned for a life as an ascetic. Although not one that was traditionally cast for women, they have found great success and followership in this role, as the numbers of women gurus in India increases.

Far from being an obstacle to freedom, the ascetic way of life, with or without social restrictions, is experienced by female gurus and their followers as profoundly emancipating. First of all, given the long Indian tradition of female exclusion from public religious life, women's participation in religiosity is in itself transgressive. Further, by adopting the role of spiritual leaders, and thus rejecting the way of obedient service to the husband, most female gurus profoundly challenge the prescriptions of *stri-dharma*. (Charpentier 2010, p. 293).

The Hindu worship many goddesses, consorts of male gods, whose stories reinforce the socially approved behaviour and attitudes expected from a woman. Yet, they are also worshipped and have powerful moments of opposition, resistance and conflict with male gods and other goddesses. An Indian goddess is seen as "*Shakti*", meaning power, which is actively demonstrated in mythology. Powerful goddesses have frequently exhibited their strength over male gods. In fact, the male god is believed to be ineffective without *Shakti*. Pattanaik (2006) writes that the two goddesses:

Kali and Gauri are (respectively) the untamed and domestic forms of the goddess. One is naked, the other fully dressed. One's hair is unbound. The other's is tied with a string of flowers. The form that is Durga stands in between, reconciling the two extreme forms (p. 186).

Apparently, the worship of goddesses paves the way for accepting women as gurus which contrasts with conventional practice. Female gurus, like their male counterparts, hold public religious positions, have their own *Ashramas* (religious centres), impart their own teachings, guide large crowds of devotees and follow busy schedules of spiritual gatherings. Understood to be the embodiment of divine knowledge by their followers, they hold positions of authority and respect. Significant numbers of them are growing in reputation and popularity internationally as well (Charpentier, 2010). Here are some examples: Amritanandamayi, a woman from a poor low-caste fishing community from Kerala, has succeeded in becoming one of the most well known female gurus in India. "Her success can partly be understood as due to her ascetic mode of living in which severe spiritual austerities have been part of her daily routines since childhood" (Charpentier, 2010, p. 99). Anandmurti Gurumaa hails from an affluent Sikh family from Punjab and revealed a special interest in religion since childhood.⁶ She obtained a B.A. degree from the Government College for Women in Punjab. While studying in college, she

⁶This is a common theme.

used to deliver spiritual lectures during religious meetings. Charpentier (2010) interviewed Gurumaa and found that she travels within India and abroad to deliver lectures and to conduct yoga and meditation camps. She has written many books on meditation and philosophy. Concerned greatly about women's status in Indian society, through her lectures, she questions the traditional Hindu beliefs and patriarchal views that hold women in subordination. She has started with a special assistance programme called *Shakti* with the aim to bring about economic, academic, social and spiritual empowerment of women (see Wessinger, 1996).

Anasuya Devi is a spiritual leader; as she expanded her practice as a guru, she did not find approval from her husband for close interactions with devotees as many of them were men. In response to this criticism, rather than confronting him, she waited until the day he changed his mind and resumed her close interactions with her devotees. Charpentier (2010) writes that instead of confronting her husband or even abandoning him, Anasuya Devi in this gentle gesture of compliance to her husband's request was able to bring home an important point. That there is no need to respond or react, things will ultimately come your way. "She did not preach the power of women—she demonstrated it ... that subtle strategy was more subversive and thus more efficient than straightforward demand" (Schiffman, 2001, p. 224); it can be surmised.

Cultural Explanation for Resistance Among Women

In the Bhagavad Gita—one of the religious books of Hindus, freedom is believed to have nothing to do with issues of social justice; it should be understood as a state of mind. The emphasis is placed on the subjective, internal freedom, rather than otherwise. Exceptional women and their unconventional ways have been accepted and "If they were not accepted, they might become real alternatives. The acceptance ... takes the sting out of it. That's one reason why *bhakti* movements, radical in their beginnings, got routinized" (Ramanujan, 1989, p. 14). It is thus assumed that the primary duty of human beings is to practise peacefulness of mind and detachment in order to dig deeper into levels of consciousness and gain new insights. Transformation is slow, gentle, subtle and silent. External conditions are underplayed in spiritual discourse, and people are guided towards looking beyond physical reality, which is considered as ephemeral, "*maya*".

And yet, social customs demand compliance of conduct. Indian daughters are taught from an early age to be soft spoken, to lower their voices and keep a control on their language. Seymour (1999) explains that Indian girls at a young age are socialized to be humble, respectful, dutiful, adjusting and sacrificing, as these qualities would make them a perfect wife, daughter, daughter-in-law and mother. In a song by Shubha Mudgal titled *Seekho na*, the lyrics talk about how a married woman uses silence as a mode to plead with her husband to understand the language of the eyes. Silence in this song is resistance, to express oneself with gestures along with persuasion to understand her feelings and desires. In many Indian

families, daughters-in-law are expected to speak less with their husbands and use more subtle forms of communication like gestures and eye-contact in the presence of others.

Recently, the father of a successful film star⁷ was quoted in the media saying “Priyanka is my son”. He was praising his daughter for looking after the family. As a successful actress, Priyanka provides financial support to her family which is traditionally believed to be a son’s role. Controversial writer Taslima Nasreen reacted to the statement on Twitter saying “Daughter hatred has not yet gone. I am waiting for the day when fathers would feel proud of their sons and say ‘my son is like a daughter to me’.” She also quoted the renowned feminist Gloria Steinem who said that, “We’ve begun to raise daughters more like sons, but few have the courage to raise our sons more like our daughters.” Supporting parents economically is associated only with sons, although a significant number of women are performing the responsibilities of emotional, social as well as economic support for their parents.

Conclusion

Resistance is a complex phenomenon that can be evidenced in every sphere of life. During childhood, children make sense of their world around through playful activities. In these activities, they are constantly making and breaking the acts of conflict and conformity. When children are presented with a task, they interpret the overall situation and deploy strategies that are culturally appropriate and feasible. During play, among children who care for their younger siblings, there is a constant negotiation and resistance in choosing the physical space as there are predefined limits that are gender specific. Thus, through these varying degrees of adjustments, children learn to negotiate rules, orders and customs that are prevalent in their ecology. Children resist so as to explore novel ideas, bringing some freshness and break the boredom, handle risk and understand authority and self-evaluation.

Thus, the story of women in India is an instantiation of the phenomenon of “seeing-as” as opposed to simply “seeing” (Tateo, this volume). Gender is a complex field-like concept that is dense with historical and cultural meaning. Even collectively there is heterogeneity and opposition in the ways in which gender is approached (as spiritual or domestic). This makes it impossible to disentangle its conceptualization from the context. When we make an attempt to understand gender dynamics in India from an outside stance, the conclusions can be highly misleading. Just as Mihalits (this volume) explains about the practice of

⁷Priyanka Chopra, who has since become an international celebrity with her recent role in a Hollywood series.

psychoanalysis in India, heterogeneity is fundamental to culture and it thus becomes imperative to look at any phenomenon from “within” to grasp the prevailing meaning-making processes. Once that is accomplished, one can go forward to more culturally relevant interpretations and interventions.

The path of resistance related to gender dynamics has demonstrated the phenomenon of positioning and counter-positioning. In everyday life, as the examples of these outstanding women have shown, people redefine their existence through resistance. Although a person may not describe herself as weak, social patterns may place barriers on her individuality through conventional practice. A person who experiences suppression has an active role to play in how that suppression is handled. Resistance is thus also about survival, as much as it is about positive change and transformation of society.

Resistance in women’s lives is a constant presence, although it is hard to observe and define from the outside, since much of this defiance is covert and hidden. Public (travelling in public transport, working space and more) and private spaces (family) both throw challenges to women on a day-to-day basis and women resist, accommodate, adapt and develop strategies to overcome it. In this chapter, we have scanned several instances of how the dominant script is reversed in instances of women who have chosen to resist, as well as redefine their lives. Some have become powerful politicians, while others have become officers. The success of several women spiritual leaders is yet another instance of a strongly opposed positioning between women and others. Women seem to have employed the three threads of resistance namely, negotiation, compassion and contentment to go beyond their roles. Education and employment have been found to be important facilitators of opening up traditional boundaries, giving women greater voice and freedom of choice. But this is also accomplished from within rather than from outside. Although they stand beyond tradition, they continue to adopt roles and responsibilities that clearly support some traditions as well. Although this may seem personally contradictory, the satisfactory fulfilment of social roles along with personal ones is a common gain. As Ramanujan once said, “It has been said more than once, that whatever you can truly say about India, you can also say the exact opposite with equal truthfulness” (Ramanujan, 1991, p. xv). This seems to fit the lives of women in India very well, who live between the wide ranging variety of situations, negotiating patriarchy, resisting conformity and transcending tradition.

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Oedipus Meets Ganesha: A Prospective Psychoanalyst's Encounter with India

Dominik Stefan Mihalits

Abstract Psychoanalytic concepts are well known to many therapists in their clinical practice. Some of them hear about psychoanalysis in training and education, others read up on it out of personal interest. No matter what the source of the interest is, the impact of how psychoanalysis enters therapeutic work in different cultural settings has not been studied thoroughly. From a Eurocentric point of view, which sadly often accompanies psychoanalytic thoughts, presumptions are, nevertheless, made too easily. On the individual level, the egocentric standpoint of psychoanalysis becomes quickly evident—and is sometimes even proven wrong—when travelling to foreign countries, in this case: India. From the perspective of an Austrian coming from Sigmund Freud's home country, this chapter deals with the understanding of psychoanalysis in India. The leading question is: How is it possible that psychoanalysis is known by many in India, but used by only a few? Observing cultural traditions of a society quite different from the European might shed light on culture-specific approaches: How universal is the psychoanalytic interpretation of the Oedipus complex or ought we speak about the Ganesha complex in India? To broaden the egocentric view of the author, Indian healthcare professionals (psychiatrists) were interviewed to discuss the observations made by a European.

Keywords Psychoanalysis · India · Ganesha complex · Cultural interpretations · Oedipus complex

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Introduction

During the time of my psychoanalytic education, I got the chance of travelling to India for the very first time. I did not know (at that time) that many journeys would be following, because of a certain curiosity about people in this country in my mind. For me, a never-before-seen pluralism in culture and the tremendous number of human beings in all public spaces fascinated, frightened me from the very beginning. Fascination, because of my very subjective experience that showed me the values and evaluations I had packed in a suitcase were neither right nor wrong—and it seemed to me that in India I was “out of place”. So my interest started to grow fast in “repacking” or maybe tidying up my suitcase and getting rid of personal prejudices, including the idea of European “superiority”. It might sound a little bit like doing my dirty colonial laundry, getting rid of some stains but indeed it was more difficult than I previously assumed, for two reasons.

First, sticking to my laundry metaphor, the supposed European ‘superiority’ appeared not merely like a white shirt with stains that gets washed, cleaned and afterwards neatly ironed. I found it was highly dependent on light conditions in which the shirt is displayed as well as on the magnification used for observing the stains. Superficially, it might look clean but if you look more carefully, you will still find dirty spots. Accepting these facts was a kind of first step towards a possible right direction.

The second half of the problem appeared much more complicated, scary and difficult to detect, hidden behind colonial history. Every now and then when I was ready to leave the “comfort zone” of imagined European “supremacy”, there were several occasions when I felt I was being pushed back into old colonial beliefs. So it might not only be about European modern touristic “conquerors” like me who need to get rid of behaving “supreme”, it is also about the other half, the “conquered”, who persist in participating in this act.

At this point, it seems obvious to many readers that my observations are not unique. Indeed, I totally agree and even want to add that I know of several people (in my case all Westerners) who mentioned similar experiences. Furthermore, even travel agencies and the official tourism board of India seem to be specialized in advertisements containing slogans and movies with the catchy headline “Incredible India”, showing interminable possibilities of ways to spend your leisure time, bringing to realization the wildest of illusions for foreigners. Let me here say that in order to become conscious of how limited my assumptions were, I ventured to interview a few professionals, as that seemed to be the only possible way to approach discussions about a country with more than a billion people. Statistics, in this case, seemed illusory.

So far, still caught in my average westernized India experience and out of preoccupation with my “suitcase tidying attempt”, I remembered psychoanalysis classes back in Europe. Immediately, I tried to shed light into my dark suitcase by applying European psychoanalysis to the vast new field of my investigation, called India. But it did not turn out to be easy at all. The following shall be understood as a

starting point for further consideration. Investigating the fullness of Indian society and conducting interviews with people in different economic positions, my interview partners often felt curious about my “European” way of asking questions. Indeed, not only about the questions themselves, which mostly belonged to the topics of personality, identification and cultural surroundings with a little excursus on how other nationalities are recognized by them. They were surprised that I was interested in their personal opinions. Therefore, I mostly got different answers than those that I was expecting. The wide range of answers travelled between myths, native tales and society regulations, as well as “how a real gentleman” would behave in a certain situation. It was more about storytelling than giving personal opinions and concrete answers on a theme. Nevertheless, I would not say that the information was inadequate or inappropriate for scientific development, it was simply not what I was expecting or prepared for; the information was provided in a different way. Now, as I am analysing and summarizing the findings and putting them into form, I am even more elated about how lively these stories were, and how they have stayed in my mind and helped me to focus on what I want to say. Out of these preliminary findings, using mythology for further explanation sounded quite reasonable.

The Central Concept of Oedipus in Psychoanalysis

I decided to focus on the Oedipus complex as a central concept in psychoanalysis to examine cultural differences. Both examples from Indian as well as Western mythology will be discussed along with the Oedipal structure of the myth. Sigmund Freud first introduced the concept of Oedipus complex in his book “*Interpretation of Dreams*” (1900). The term is derived from Greek mythology and is about the Theban hero Oedipus, a legend, who unknowingly killed his father and afterwards married his mother. Exemplarily, Freud uses this legend to show one’s desire for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex and simultaneous rivalry with the parent of the same sex. Freud identifies this stage as crucial for normal child development and understands it as one of the central elements in child development.

Variations on Oedipus Within Indian Mythology

The concept of Oedipus can also be found outside of Greek mythology. The first example is out of a myth collection of Ramanujan (1983) mainly originating in Karnataka state in southern India, the same area in which interviews of the investigation were done. The stories of the collection were recorded by non-professional storytellers, women who look after children and prepare their food in the evening. The selection of the tale that follows is about showing the style of

Indian answers as well as the counter positioning of Freudian Oedipus by pushing the story into the mirror perspective, through the substitution of male and female positions and giving Jocasta, the mother of Oedipus, the leading character.

A girl is born with a curse on her head that she would marry her own son and beget a son by him. As soon as she hears of the curse, she wilfully vows she would try and escape it: she secludes herself in a dense forest, eating only fruit, forswearing all male company. But when she attains puberty, as fate would have it, she eats a mango from a tree under which a passing king has urinated. The mango impregnates her; bewildered, she gives birth to a male child; she wraps him in a piece of her sari and throws him in a nearby stream. The child is picked up by the king of the next kingdom, and he grows up to be a handsome young adventurous prince. He comes hunting in the self-same jungle, and the cursed woman falls in love with the stranger, telling herself she is not in danger any more as she has no son alive. She marries him and bears a child. According to custom, the father's swaddling clothes are preserved and brought out for the newborn son. The woman recognizes at once the piece of sari with which she had swaddled her first son, now her husband, and understands that her fate had really caught up with her. She waits till everyone is asleep, and sings a lullaby to her newborn baby:

Sleep

O Son

O Grandson

O Brother to my husband

sleep O sleep

sleep well

and hangs herself by the rafter with her sari twisted to a rope (p. 237).

Ramanujan describes the tale as "strikingly exact in its parallel to the Greek Oedipus" whereas the "narrative point of view is entirely different" (p. 238). Not only different, it is exactly the reverse. Obeyesekere (1990) summarizes Ramanujan's insights by focusing on an interesting detail. Beside the tragic figure of Jocasta, there are many variations of the tale in its narrative style:

[...] the prophecy, the nature of impregnation with all sorts of bodily fluids through different body apertures, the lullaby, and the conclusions. In some there is humour [sic.] (the absurdity of it all!); in others the protagonists accept their fate and live happily ever after. [...] One must also not assume that one version excludes another: it is possible for the same person or the same village to relate different versions of the same myth. The parody can co-exist with the tragic version [...]. (p. 77)

The existing plurality in the tale's end might be a small but remarkable difference compared to the classical Oedipus myth. At first glance, it appeared to be typically Indian to me, which simply is not true, since in the Western world also stories exist as the following example of the book of Genesis (19:30–36) will show precisely.

Variations in Oedipus Within Western Mythology

In this story, god sends two angels to the city of Sodom. They should look for righteous men who will be saved while the sinful city shall be completely destroyed. Only one man of this kind was found by the angels, called Lot: he is allowed to leave the city together with his family. As the story continues, the city of Sodom and Gomorra get destroyed and only Lot and his two daughters survive. Now being the only ones able to care for their offspring, the story continues as following:

30. And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.
31. And the firstborn said unto the younger, our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:
32. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.
33. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.
34. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.
35. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.
36. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

As it appears, the moral understanding in the biblical manuscript is quite different to the Indian one: the survival of the tribe is more important as a moral value than the idea of being involved in incest. Therefore, incest is acceptable in contrast to the individual conflict of the Indian woman who is compelled to take her life when she discovers her inadvertent error. This indicates conditional freedom from socially set norms and simultaneously existing personally internalized norms. These norms are set up to stand strong—yet with openness to their own modification if the circumstances require it. Such encoding of the potential modification of a dominant social norm itself opens the possibility of adaptation of the normative system to new environmental conditions.

Allowing incest taboo to be broken under specific circumstances is an indicator of constrained heterogeneity. It is more than an interesting coincidence acknowledging that both ways of storytelling conclude in the Oedipus complex, no matter if there is diversity in detail. Both stories, the Indian as well as the European, tend to have various similarities which are easily detected. But I incline to be critical about this observation. We always tend to find what we are looking for. So no matter where my psychoanalytic suitcase travels with me, Oedipus will already have arrived before me. If not, unpacking my suitcase will simultaneously unclose Pandora's box. Pandora's release of evil is not meant to be the transcultural transformation of the Oedipus complex. It is more or less the simplification

and uni-dimensional interpretation of the complex by only looking at the story itself, and while doing so, missing out the possibility of heterogeneity in its interpretation.

Approaching Heterogeneity: Methodological Considerations

Continuing with my example so far, there are two possible ways of understanding the mythological examples cited: first, the Bible appears to be entirely Indian, proclaiming heterogeneity to be an Indian phenomenon. There is no specific proof needed to declare that this is simply wrong. The Bible is not Indian, for sure. Secondly, overcoming East/West comparison, heterogeneity exists as a global phenomenon. It can be found in Indian as well as European mythologies. But the simple presence of heterogeneity does not mean that it gets notified by psychoanalysis contemporaneously. Roland (1996) comes straight to the point when he mentions that:

Culture and socio-historical change are with rare exceptions the missing dimensions in psychoanalysis. It is not that psychoanalysis has been uninvolved with culture. But it is usually more of a one-way street to see what light psychoanalysis can shed on various areas of culture, rather than how culture influences psychoanalysis in its theory and therapy (p. xii).

Opening the one-way street for at least three-way traffic, we have to acknowledge that different levels of analysis do exist in parallel, as described by Jaspal, Carriere and Moghaddam (2016):

- The *micro* level constitutes the smallest unit of analysis, typically the individual. This may include *inter alia* personality traits, cognitive styles, attributional tendencies and individual attitudes;
- The *meso* level focuses on the various social group memberships of the individual, such as their family, neighbourhood, ethnicity, and nationality;
- the *macro* level may be considered the highest level of analysis and would include societal ideologies and social representations, such as the Indian caste system which organizes caste groups within a hierarchical system, or the state ideologies of assimilation versus multiculturalism (p. 265).

If we look at mythology in transcultural settings as primarily shown by analysing micro- as well as mesogenetic levels, not encountering a macrolevel of interpretation, we miss out to see its tendency towards heterogeneity. Focussing on figures in action (microgenetic) and their relationships and interactions to each other (mesogenetic), macrogenetic considerations are simply not taken into account and are missed out. Individual statements do contain macrogenetic information as the following examples will show.

Interpretations of an Indian Psychoanalyst

In my movement towards “re-packing my suitcase”, Indian culture appears to me as one of the heterogeneity. My hypothesis might be further supported by the following excerpt of an interview by Ramin Jahanbegloo (RJ) with Sudhir Kakar (SK), out of their book *India analysed* (2009). In this particular part of the interview, they speak about conflicts between private and public domains, the same central motive as in the story of Lot and his daughters mentioned before.

RJ: In India, do we have a rupture between the private and the public?

SK: Very much so. For instance, *izzat* or honour of the family, which is more a public than a private construct, becomes extremely important because what happens to *izzat* is not only important for your own self-esteem and the way it influences your life, but is also important for the fate of your family; a loss of *izzat* may mean that your sister and brother will not find suitable spouses.

RJ: So it's not an individual morality but a communitarian one?

SK: Yes.

RJ: So you always have to keep that aspect in your mind when you are dealing with an Indian patient to whom the idea of community is more important than the idea of the self?

SK: Yes, but I have to make him realize that the individual part of him is as important as the communitarian one and then leave him to make his own choices in different situations.

RJ: And the choice is usually communitarian (p. 47).

Kakar highlights the preference of communitarian morality in Indian society which contrasts the proximity of psychoanalysis to individualism described by Roland (1996): “More specifically, we shall have to explore how psychoanalytic theory and practice is profoundly related to Northern European and North American cultural values and philosophical assumptions involving individualism (p. 5).” The psychoanalytic treatment by Freud (1949) was invented to cure neurotic functional diseases by bringing the unconscious parts of personality into conscious surroundings. Therefore, he used the technique of free association as a core element. This, in the original called “basic rule of psychoanalysis”, opens up a central position in understanding the misguidance which leads to the claim of homogeneity in the Westerners' personality. Freud's assumed free association takes place through the effort of delimiting the patient's behaviour by understanding his individualistic perspectives. That also means that answers given by the patient are needed to proclaim therapeutic progress and that the patient's statements emerge from an individualistic point of view. But does it need to be that way? No, taking the possibility of heterogeneity into account, as another example within Kakar's interview shows:

RJ: Sexuality doesn't work in India as it works in the West, and so you suggest the Ganesha complex, which is also the hegemonic development of the narrative of the male self in Hindu India. How do you distinguish between the Oedipus complex and the Ganesha complex?

SK: The Oedipus complex is about the son's rivalry with the father in relation to the mother and his fantasized patricide. In the Ganesha complex, the son withdraws from this sexual rivalry by renouncing sexual activity. In the *Mahabharata*, for instance, Bhishma and Puru are examples of the Ganesha complex.

RJ: It also goes back to the idea of an ideal woman in India. An ideal woman is defined by her relation with her husband and her sons, and being a good daughter or wife.

SK: The father-son rivalry in India is also very different from that in Western mythology. In Indian imagination, that is, in its folk tales and legends, it is not the son who is jealous of the father for possessing the mother, but the father who is envious of the son because of the mother's emotional investment in her son.

RJ: So it has mostly to do with the image of the mother in the Indian family, the husband-wife bond is not as strong as the mother-son bond? The maternal images that we have in India also have a darker side in Indian mythology, which are the hideous goddesses. How do they go together—the hideous and the brighter parts?

SK: The hideous mother is one who is so involved in the son that she smothers him with her love, leaving him with little room to become a man who functions independently of her. The image of the mother is both of a beneficent, nurturant goddess, and a darker, devouring one.

RJ: Is the maternal part more important than the paternal part in Indian sexuality?

SK: Yes, paternal gods are like the elder males of the family who are respected but who are remote from the day-to-day affairs of the family that concern the child, and are thus less important in the child's scheme of things than the women of the family, the various 'mothers'. In the hierarchical structure of the family, the eldest male may be the titular head but important decisions regarding daily life are taken by the female with the highest status. (pp. 51–52).

Kakar speaks about the plurality of versions in the concept of Oedipal complex. I thus recommend the focus on homogeneity and heterogeneity in interpretation than on individualism and collectivism of personality. My personal observations during invited visits at psychiatric clinics indicated that the Indian way of healing has to be understood as a heterogeneous one. The central idea of Indian healing traditions is not about being idealistic in any purpose by following a certain method, it is dedicated to the possibility of bringing effort to cure the client, sometimes even being satisfied without knowing exactly how it worked out, as I observed in clinics.

Interpretations of a Non-psychoanalyst

My interpretation of the phenomena described so far has been influenced by what I learned from four interviews with healthcare professionals (psychiatrists) during my second journey to Karnataka, India, in 2013. At the time of the research encounters, all four interviewees were married and had children. All of them were active participants in Hindu religion and lively members in the local psychiatric community. Each of them had heard about psychoanalysis during their education but did not read or participate in any extra-analytic or dynamic psychotherapeutic training. All four participants were between the ages of 50 and 60 years, working in

leading positions in the psychiatric field. Due to confirmation of anonymity and the right of privacy, no more details can be provided as interviews were done in a rural area and could be backtracked easily. Narrative interviews were started with the single question of how would they identify the Indian sense of self or Indian personality? It was quite remarkable to me that egocentric tendencies are connoted very negatively in India. Egocentrism easily gets translated as being selfish and an egomaniac. It seems, therefore, that there is no need or even desire to foster these tendencies in Indian society. Contrarily, transforming individual wishes into higher ranked altruistic needs is assumed as an inevitable aspect for succeeding in relationships in India and delivered to me as the first basis in understanding joint family systems. The appearance of *collectivism gets described as a unique Indian concept* and becomes manifested in a unique and distinct way from the Western notion of collectivism. Indian ideology can thus be seen as differentiated from the Western. The concern about homogeneity in the Western mind also exists in Indian consideration. Maybe this is about postcolonial relics, since interview partners had never been to Europe and neither did they have any personal contact with European foreigners or emigrants. Additionally, it is also possible that the unique way in which individualism is expressed in India (in the notion of *Karma*, for instance), and it is not easily detectable as individualism in common understanding. The interaction between persons in India gets described as a very easy and familiar one that they also label as typical Indian. The reason for ease and comfort is observable in the constant transgenerational communication between family members. A participant explains that this “around-the-clock” possibility of communication does not appear to interfere with private lives. Indeed, *joint family systems become understood as an expansion of private life*, as family duties can be shared easily and lead to more spare time. Heterogeneity again seems to find its place. Individual personality traits or characteristics were only mentioned once by an interview partner. The participant talks about his personal feelings and reactions to foreigners from experience. He speaks about feeling inferior to foreigners, what I translate in this context as inferior to Western people, as we talked about foreigners like me. It is also possible that the inferiority is based on a post-colonial construction of the West as more affluent and progressive, and therefore superior in the economic sense.

Former Western colonization seems still to be part of personal concerns, as evidenced by the prolific writing on post-colonialism and public culture in the global south. As a ‘European’ science, psychoanalysis might also assume acceptance and practice in India. Furthermore, the changing socioeconomic status and education of the Indian population might impact the proliferation of psychoanalysis on account of the changes in society as well as increased mobility of the younger populations, who are in greater contact with the Western world than their predecessors. But still, in one participant’s description attributes like “having a pale skin” or “being tall” get described as western and with some sort of superiority. Therefore, being tall or white may have harmed the Indian self-confidence during colonial times: “Equality was not in the society at that time”, he mentioned.

While differentiating Indians from Westerners, we also need to consider integrations that are taking place. Let us take the example of the celebration of Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day in the West. Indian societies' understanding of worship is a continuous one, and being grateful to your parents is not something that can be reduced to a single day in the year. It is believed to be a continuous and life-long dedication. Yet we can see the recent popularity of such celebrations entering urban areas through global influences, sales techniques and market forces. Personal relationships between children and their parents are also to be seen in this form of daily anticipation. *Interaction between relationships does gain more attention than personal individuality. Integration as a personality concept* can be found in various examples: The parallel existence of ancient beliefs and modern science does not cause any problems, as this prospect leads to a dynamic interaction in relationships. The concept of integration in Indian society leads to problems only where integration does not seem possible any more. Due to urbanization of rural areas, joint family systems are increasingly under pressure and leave an open and empty space which gets associated with fear. Integration and transgenerational understanding seem to be abating, resulting in an *increased need for psychiatric care*. Indian society seems to be on the move. Educational advancement has resulted in profound social change. Interview partners mentioned that this results in a high usage of radio and electronic media which have significant impact on personalities and society. It is questionable if education in that sense implies information, especially information which gives individuals the possibility of self-reflection and a higher level of participation in society. Another participant gives an example from his student days. Medical college opened up possibility of gaining self-confidence resulting in increasing extroversion, as, he said, he was "too shy" earlier. Another hypothesis that seems to emerge from the participants' stories is that the use of mass media leads to the loosening of joint family ties, like a side effect of increasing levels of education. Once a person gains higher education, a move to urban centres is inevitable. A kind of vicious circle where education and the modern use of mass media leading to more and more disengagement of joint families was articulated. Thus there seems to be an increasing distance between generations as a consequence of education. These movements have direct impact on personality issues as a result of confusions that arise in the absence of the support of the joint family. Education, from this point of view, does not only refer to media, it is also an asset given by elders of the family. There are worries that plenty of values that are needed for constructive interaction in families might get lost through progressive urbanization. "The world is changing with an enormous speed" as one correspondent puts in at the beginning of the interview. Changes in society are a dominant factor which will surely affect Indian personality in the present times. The country has never seen so much mobility within and outside its borders; undoubtedly, these movements will have important influences on the way the self is structured. A majority of the population participated in agricultural life and was tied to their fields. "Moving" is also used in the context of "making people move into right positions by family members" and family guidance is seen as disturbed by changes such as single parent households. Shared parenting within joint families is very common. The

change in familiar structures does not only open up to different ways of parenting, it can also be seen as having an impact on intra-psychic phenomena like increased feelings of loneliness. Perhaps vanishing of joint families also means a loss in correspondence and interaction between family members which might lead to an increase in psychiatric patients since the traditional system of care and protection have been lost.

Conclusions

The tradition of Western dualistic ways of thinking in psychoanalysis has left their mark on the contemporary situation of dealing with persons. What cannot be understood as part within a homogeneous journey towards a single outcome, has to be seen as an outer perspective, an outer position. In fact, it means that what cannot be included must be separated and therefore understood as something coming from the outside: The object can never be part of the subject and this determines an eternal duality of action and reaction leading to a homogeneous way. Radcliffe-Brown (1952) describes duality in the following passage.

The most usual way of representing [...] unity in duality, [e.g.] linking two groups into one society, is by pairs of opposites... as in the philosophy of Heraclitus [or in the Chinese philosophy]... and the dictum is that *yang* and *yin* together are required to make a unity or harmony (tao) as in the union of husband and wife, or the union of winter and summer to make a year... The conception of unity in duality has been used by man not only in the establishment of systems of cosmology but also in organising social structures (p. 114).

Contrarily, Indian observations lead to the conclusion that heterogeneity is an inevitable part in mind and society and one has to transcend dualisms in order to grasp this ideology. Solving duality by accepting homogeneity is in this case not necessary. "Therefore psychoanalysis could be understood as the therapy of modern

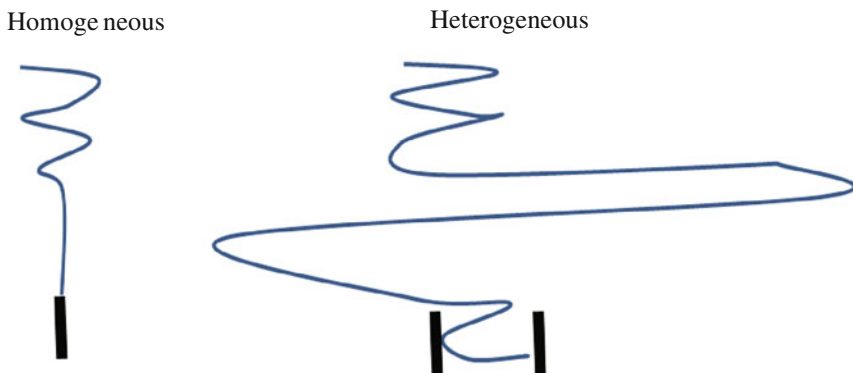


Fig. 1 Homogeneous versus heterogeneous oscillation in comparison

Western individualism” (p. 7), as Roland (1996) points out. The contrast between homogeneity and heterogeneity shall be clearly visualized in Fig. 1.

Different developmental trajectories (blue line) in the homogeneous and heterogeneous environments can be perceived as reaching one determined end-stage (single black bar—homogeneous) or fluctuating between different possible end-stages complementing each other (heterogeneous). Heterogeneous perspectives can accept a parallelism of perspectives rather than forcing it into one category. An analogy to Bohr’s (1949) complementary notion seems practical at this point, as he describes that two opposites can be true from two perspectives at the same time. This principle can also be seen in Indian perspectives and is inevitable for further understanding: There is not only one truth to be given about Indian society. This does not mean that heterogeneity in this sense does not exist in other cultures. Maruyama (1963, 1980, 1991, 1995) points out in his contributions to epistemology and scientific theory, the tendency to be focused on heterogeneity varies enormously by cultural diversity. Making a clear point by now, psychoanalysis is not to be seen as an exception in this case.

Summarizing theoretical as well as empirical considerations, evidence of the Oedipus complex can be also found in India following Ramanujan (1983, 1991) and Obeyesekere (1990). The classic psychoanalytic uni-dimensional interpretation of Sophocles’ play could easily lead to a misinterpretation by simplification and is therefore not universally valid without restrictions. Oedipus complex cannot be interpreted independently of cultural boundaries. Providing mythological as well as empirical examples within interviews, heterogeneous interpretations including macrogenetic considerations of current cultural framework are suggested. In addition, it needs to be highlighted that the automatic tendency of psychoanalysis towards homogeneity in interpretation might even have had an impact on cultural conditions of the nineteenth and twentieth century in Western Europe. Taking into account that psychoanalysis is dependent on cultural boundaries and understanding culture is an ongoing process, Bernal and Domenech Rodríguez (2012) point this out precisely:

Yet if psychotherapy is viewed as a cultural phenomenon that emerged at a particular point in history and is evolving over time, the issue at hand is not so much the influence of culture on psychotherapy but the effort to make visible the culture within models of psychotherapy and to carefully examine the challenges involved in transporting and adapting these models to other cultural and linguistic groups (p. 4).

Following Devereux (1967) who says that behavioural scientists need to be aware that their observations never meet the full point of authenticity and identical characteristics of behaviour in research as the original event of investigation gets re-narrated, I hope to point out clearly that travelling abroad and opening the suitcase of “conquest” of psychoanalysis, the Indian subcontinent seems unimpressed to the present day.¹ The simple misconduct of failing to accept

¹Currently there are 32 active members in the Indian Psychoanalytical Society. Information retrieved from their webpage <http://ipsindiaonline.com/> 18.07.2016, 00:28 AM.

heterogeneity in interpretation of psychoanalysis makes India go to the barricades in resisting psychoanalytic homogeneity by allowing its presence out of its own existing heterogeneity.

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Resisting Early Marriage—Case Study from Tea Gardens of Assam

Dipjyoti Konwar, Vinita Bhargava and Bhanumathi Sharma

Abstract In this paper, we try to construct the dynamics of the lives of unmarried adolescent girls of families living in the tea gardens of Assam through the narratives of Kamala (All persons are anonymized). It describes the sociocultural profile of the “tea tribe” and the multiplicity of their struggles for existence. It also discusses the lives of adolescent girls and their ongoing norms of relationship, marriage and kinship including early marriage, elopement and confinement within the tea community. Tea tribes work mainly in the tea gardens of Assam, and they are part of the larger informal economy and unorganized sector of India. Assam is the biggest producer of tea in India and thus contributions of these people are enormous in the State economy. However, this community has been oppressed for centuries despite their substantial contribution to the State’s tea-growing economy. Being a girl from an underprivileged and so-called lower caste family doubles her vulnerability in society. As a daughter, the girl is expected to follow certain norms such as entering into early marriage, developing expertise in household chores and in tea plucking. However, due to regular intervention of State agencies, and exposure to the outer world, a few people from this community have started opting for better education and aspiring for a respectable life. In this paper, we discuss the historical background of the community as a whole and the process of the development of identity of a girl within this community who faces resistance in all spheres of life.

Keywords Tea tribes · Adolescent · Early marriage · Resistance · Affirmative action

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Introduction

Assam is a State in the north-eastern part of India and is known for its tea, the “Assam tea”. The State is the pioneer of tea production in India. The growth of the tea industry has a history that dates back to the “British Raj”. According to the provincial Census Report-2011, the total population of Assam stands at around 31 million. The population of the State is very heterogeneous in composition. The Hindu caste communities include the Assamese, Bengalese, Nepalese and a good number of floating populations along with many ethnic tribes who have been living there for centuries. Besides, a large section of the population consists of Muslims and tea gardens labourers from across India (Kaniampady, 2003).

Tea gardens play an important role in Assam’s economy as well as culture. Assam’s tea industry is dependent on “Sah Janagosthi” or the tea tribe labourers. According to Chatterjee and Das Gupta (1981), they were brought to Assam as slaves, first by the East India Company and later by the British rulers and native entrepreneurs from the period between 1830s and 1920s, mostly from the Santhal Parganas district of Bihar (now in Jharkhand State), Orissa and West Bengal. The descendants of these slaves are now called tea tribes or “Sah Janagosthi” in Assam. Since then, they have been working primarily in the tea gardens. Some of their sub-castes are called Santhali, Kurmi and Tanti all recognized as tribal communities in their respective States.

The lives of these people, who eventually formed a unique community themselves, have been a struggle for decades. Resistance in different forms, from collective to individual, is evident in their lives. Collective resistance is demonstrated by them from time to time for human rights, proper wages, basic needs, education and social recognition. At the individual level, a desire to live a decent life is every person’s dream. The same dream has been shared by Kamala whose story has been narrated in this chapter. She wants to be educated and get a decent job. She is facing obstacles to fulfil her dreams. Her extended family itself is the source of her difficulties. Despite this, she continues to persevere with her dreams.

At this juncture, it is relevant to describe the historical background of her community to understand the structure of the society. This is followed by a depiction of the resistance faced by the community to understand how struggle and resistance flow in their veins. The status of women in the community is also discussed to get a sense of the collective resistance of gender-specific inequalities. Family dynamics and everyday lives are also portrayed to understand their roots and beliefs. Finally, the individual story enables a brave account of creating an identity amidst resistance. It becomes evident through this narrative that the crafting of an individual’s personality is an evolving, multidimensional, multi-layered process.

The “Sah Janagosthi” or Tea Tribes Community of Assam

In one of his famous songs, Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, a prominent musician from Assam expresses the tea tribe’s pain thus “...*O Bidexi Sham, faaki diya anila Assam.*” (Oh dear foreign friends (British ruler), you cheated us to come to Assam).

At present, the estimated population of tea tribes in Assam is around five million. In the early days, scarcity of labour supply was a hindrance to the expansion of tea plantations which required large numbers of people for the processing of tea. Saikia (1978) suggested three possible reasons for the dearth of local labour in Assam. First, the local people owned sufficient land for cultivation and did not need to work as wage earners for their livelihood. Second, they were freedom lovers and did not like the idea of toiling under the supervision of foreigners. The social status of women was high, hence the tea companies never succeeded in engaging the Assamese women in the tea gardens. Third, the natives were addicted to opium at that time which made them very weak and lethargic. Thus, immigration of labour became imperative. Under these circumstances, the labourers were recruited from other States, mainly Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu (Kar, 1981a). Various push and pull factors such as desperate poverty, indebtedness and land alienation in the countryside, and false promises of “less work and high wages” probably made this huge supply of labour force available for the tea plantations (Kaniampady, 2003).

It is also relevant to note that despite the heterogeneous composition of the population, they exhibit an apparent integrity among themselves probably due to their common causes of struggle in daily lives and a common workplace. Reasons such as poverty, unemployment, lack of basic facilities and struggle for survival perhaps lead to a sense of compassion for one another and belongingness. They exhibit brotherhood and unity within their community. This phenomenon has been frequently noticed among Indians, and has, as a matter of fact, become a part of India’s identity as well as a slogan (unity in diversity), and appears to be applicable to the tea labourers in Assam (Kar, 1975, 1997; Kar & Barua, 1979).

Resistance in Tea Tribe Lives

The Sah Janagosthi tea tribes have been facing exploitation and discrimination for almost two centuries now. The government regulation of the Plantation Labour Act 1951(PLA), which regulates the wages of tea garden workers has not been implemented adequately by tea plantation authorities in the State. This Act ensures duty hours and amenities that the management is supposed to provide to the workers such as housing, drinking water, education and health care, child care facilities such as crèche, accident cover and protective equipment. Amenities, where provided, are of very poor quality. Except for a few who work in the tea processing section, all other workers engaged in plucking and tilling jobs are considered

unskilled labourers. They do not get employment privileges such as dearness allowance, provident fund or gratuity. In several gardens, wages have not been paid for 2–3 years; in many others, payment is irregular. This Act is applicable to gardens with more than five hectares. Small tea growers are exempt from this legislation. Since legal provisions pertaining to wages, working hours and amenities apply only to permanent labourers; tea companies have been taking on more employees as casual labourers and sacking permanent workers for petty reasons. Needless to say, the casual labourers are paid far less. In some gardens, a casual labour (*faltu*) is paid INR.126/-daily if he/she plucks 25 kgs of leaves in a day. INR 1/-per kg is added for the additional leaves plucked. In case of contractual plucking, INR 3/-per kg is applicable to the total amount of tea leaves plucked. To protect themselves, the labourers have formed unions across Assam and as a State-level trade union, the “Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha” (Assam Tea Labour Association). The State Government also has a separate dedicated department for the welfare of this community called the Tea Tribes Welfare Department, Assam. As mentioned earlier, the tea garden community is heterogenous in composition with various sub-tribes. They work together, feast together and sometimes quarrel among themselves, but they stand together in their struggle for existence and the fight against exploitation. Despite having lived in Assam for more than a century, the “Sah Janagosthi” is not yet integrated into Assamese society. Their business is restricted to the gardens and they do not mix with the local public. Marital relationships between the Assamese and tea tribe community happen rarely. Being a minority group in the area, they have little influence in the Panchayats¹ and are frequently denied their entitlements under government schemes. Moreover, cases of migration and trafficking of women have also been reported (ActionAid, 2015).

Status of Women Among Tea Tribes

In an analysis of gender relations among tribal communities, Majumdar and Madan (1956) held the opinion that several primitive societies generally assign a high status to women, whereas Spencer (1966) suggested the opposite, that in primitive societies, women received harsh and cruel treatment. They were generally a depressed group, having low status, suffering subjugation and oppression. While working with women workers (mostly tribal women) in the tea plantations of North Bengal and Assam several decades later, Das Gupta (1978) observed that the womenfolk who had involved themselves in plantation work were shackled to their traditional domestic responsibilities such as cooking and managing household affairs. Lactating mothers carried their babies to the garden and kept them under the shade of a tree or in a crèche in select gardens while they were busy in plucking.

¹Panchayats are local governance bodies at the village level governed by five persons selected by the villagers themselves.

The babies were looked after by an older woman called *Dhai-ma* (midwife) employed for the purpose by the management in some gardens. Sometimes, the older siblings did the babysitting. The mothers suckled their babies at regular intervals. More recently, Bhadra (1997) carried out a study in North Bengal to understand the family authority, role and status of the tribal women workers of Chandmani Tea Plantation. She found that women, by and large, worked due to economic necessity and with the full knowledge and consent of their husbands and other members of the family. They seemed to be happy with their jobs. They did not appear to be experiencing any role conflict in their family as wives, mothers and as workers. They generally integrated their work and the family in an accommodative manner. Further, Bhadra (1997) observed that the working women of plantations did not have any role in the decision-making process in the industry, especially related to trade unions, even though they were its members.

Family Dynamics in Tea Tribes

Tea tribe families generally live in quarters provided by the garden authority called “coolie line” or “labour line” most commonly within the garden vicinity. Kaniampady (2003) broadly classified the tea tribe’s families as patrilocal²; in fact, they are neolocal in the sense that after marriage a couple generally settles in separate individual quarters as soon as a house becomes available. It is thus neolocal³ even though patrivincinal.⁴ There are, however, instances where patriliney⁵ is not associated with virilocality (patrilocality) or neolocality as in the case of *gharjuwai*⁶ or stay-at-home sons-in-law. Elopement at a younger age and living together thereafter is a usual occurrence in tea gardens. Their society does not accept the marriage to be a “social marriage” until they perform some specific marriage rituals and give a feast to the community. Generally, couples carry on without following the social marriage norms. People reported that they could not afford the cost of setting up a new household and expenses of the feast at the same time. Therefore, they tend to keep postponing the community feast programme. However, they are compelled to get married any time before they give their children away in marriage.

Most of the women do not have a perceptible role in the decision-making process within the family. It is the husband who decides the issues either independently or having the final say on the matter after discussions. On certain vital

²A pattern of marriage in which the couple settles in the husband’s home or community.

³A type of post-marital residence when a newly married couple resides separately from both the husband’s and wife’s natal households.

⁴A residence in the ward or village of the groom’s patrilineal kinsmen.

⁵Descent by the male line.

⁶When a man comes to stay in the house of his father-in-law.

issues in the family, such as marriage and education of children, discussions appear to take place between a married couple, and regarding day-to-day family expenditure and domestic activities, these were a woman's responsibility. Husbands mostly take decisions about financial, social and religious matters of the household. As an earning wife, the woman spends all her wages on the maintenance of the family but men contribute to the household expenses according to their wish. A good number of husbands spend their earnings in drinking rice beer (*haria*).

Everyday Life in a Tea Garden

Within a tea garden, a small accommodation provided by the authorities called "labour lines" or "coolie line" is the immediate neighbourhood of the families, where they experience a close-knit relationship among the members of the respective "lines". They share their daily life of joys and sorrows with one another. Also they come in contact with the members of the "lines" during the weekly market. This market has social significance along with its economic purpose. It is used as a platform to strengthen existing relationships as well as initiating new relationships.

The day-to-day activities of these people vary from season to season. Most of the adult members of both the sexes are wage earners. During the tea plucking season (March–Dec) and in the rice farming season (July–Nov), they are busier than at other times. A major section of the otherwise unemployed youth is also engaged during the plucking season as temporary (*faltu*) labourers. People generally rise very early in the morning. There is gender-based work-specialization, whether in industry, service or farming.

After attending to personal routines, men who possess cows bring them out of the shed, give them fresh fodder and water, and milk them. Some of them possess goats and fowls. Later, watering of the plants in the kitchen garden and planting of new saplings, weeding etc. are done. They also help in some domestic work if necessary. Normally, breakfast is over by 7.30 a.m. They have to report at the garden by 8 a.m. The daily working hours are generally from 8 a.m to 4 p.m with a lunch break at 1 p.m. After the daily garden duty, the men folk are generally free. They have a bath and some of them go out with their friends to take "*haria*" (home-made rice beer) or "*chulai*" (country liquor). Consumption of liquor varies from place to place and garden to garden. Very few of them own rice fields of their own. During the agricultural season, those who have rice fields get up earlier and go to the field to till the land and do other related work adjusting their garden duties with the paddy cultivation work. Sometimes, they skip their garden duties for 3–4 months when they are busy in agriculture. After the season is over, they resume their tea garden work. They usually take their night meal between 8 and 8.30 p.m. and retire to bed early. Most of the unmarried and unemployed boys get up late in the morning and spend the day in wandering the streets when they are not employed in the gardens.

For most women, family and work are constantly tied together. Whether employed or not, a woman has the responsibility of the household chores, child care and looking after other family members. The women folk generally get up before dawn, usually earlier than the men. After personal grooming, they clean the kitchen (particularly the place where the hearth is located) and also the utensils. They sweep their homes and courtyards and prepare the morning meal, which generally consists of rice with some cooked vegetables or *daal* (pulses); sometimes they take leftover *daal* with *roti* (Indian bread) from the earlier day as well. If there are women in the family who are not employed outside the home, they assist with housekeeping. When breakfast is ready, they prepare lunchboxes for the working people and serve breakfast to all the members. After having their own food, they keep aside food for their children and leave for work. Black tea is served to all the labourers at their work places during short breaks. After returning from work, a woman normally prepares black tea, serves it to all the family members and then has a bath. Just after dusk, the women start cooking the night meal. Normally, the meal consists of rice and *daal* with or without vegetables. Fish and meat are prepared occasionally. Casual labourers in tea gardens are generally paid twice a month and on the day of payment, they usually purchase fish or meat from the garden market. Between 8.00 p.m. and 8.30 p.m. most of them retire for the night.

On Sundays and other holidays, the women plaster their walls and floors of the house with red mud paste, bathe their children and wash their clothes etc. many of them also sell home-made rice beer on these days. Even the retired elderly women spend their time and earn their living by preparing and selling rice beer. Women generally do not get much leisure time in the midst of their domestic and job occupations.

Resisting Early Marriage in Tea Tribe Community—*The Story of Kamala*

To comprehend the lives of girls in the tea tribe community, we could refer to the Trajectories Equifinality Model (TEM) by Valsiner and Sato (2006). According to the TEM concept, all historical phenomena move in time on their unique trajectories that at times converge at equifinality points. Development occurs in irreversible time and the varied trajectories may entail Obligatory Passage Points (OPP). Every individual forms a finite world around himself or herself based on the prevalent cultural practices. In the case of Kamala and other adolescent girls like her, the OPP is to get married soon after attainment of puberty and continue the cultural chain of the community as a tea garden worker.

Although formal child marriage is not practised among the tea garden communities, it has been observed that for girls of 15–18 years of age, elopement is quite common. They become involved in romantic relationships with men mostly from the same community at around that age. As tea garden workers' lives are very

hectic and rigorous, this sometimes takes a toll on family relationships and marriage. Domestic violence and marital dispute are common among them.

During my⁷ data collection for doctoral work among the young women of the tea tribe, many girls reported to having eloped as they were fed up of the unpleasant environment in their homes, mostly on account of regular conflict between parents. Most parents also silently sanction this elopement since this obviates the need to find her a match and have a formal wedding ceremony, which can prove to be an expensive proposition. Some parents, who give importance to their honour in sanctioning a marriage of their offspring, ask their daughter and son-in-law to return home after the elopement and participate in a recognized ceremony and obligatory feast. Many people still have the traditional notion that girls are the property of another family and have eventually to leave the natal home. As a result, not much value is placed on women's education, since the primary requirement is believed to be the knowledge of housekeeping.

However, Kamala and her mother chose a different path. Here is Kamala's story. Kamala is an 18-year-old girl residing in a village called Rongamati, Assam. Rongamati is a village with a tea garden and most of the activities here revolve around the tea garden. She lives with both parents and is the eldest of the four daughters at home. The older generations of the family have been tea garden labourers. Her father initially worked in the Rongamati tea garden as casual labour but later he left that job and started working as daily wage worker at private homes. Now, he works as a night watchman at a privately owned godown.⁸ He has been working there for the last two years. Her mother is a housewife and stays at home. She does traditional handloom and weaving work that most of Assamese women are skilled at and weaves mainly *Mekhela Sador*-traditional Assamese attire, *Gamusa*-traditional Assamese hand towel. Kamala studies in B.A. 1st year at a nearby suburban college. Daily, she travels almost 15 km up and down to attend college, partially by bus and partially on foot. She received a scholarship provided for scheduled caste⁹ students that she has been awarded every year since primary school. Kamala said:

I have found interest in studies and realized that through education only I can earn a decent living and a respectable job. My parents, especially my mother, is keen on ensuring that we four sisters should have a decent life different from what they have been living in the gardens for generations. My sister who is two years younger to me is a good dancer. She has been performing traditional Assamese dances 'Bihu' and 'Jhumur' since childhood. She is good at studies also. Two years ago, she took training in contemporary dance forms at a modern dance school in a nearby Dergaon town, five km away. The dance school has a

⁷The first author.

⁸Storage facility.

⁹The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are official designations given to various groups of historically disadvantaged people in India. The terms are recognised in the Constitution of India. Interestingly, the tea tribes in Assam are STs in their respective original States but in Assam, they are categorised under the Scheduled Caste. There has been a demand from their community for a long time to recognise them as Scheduled Tribes of Assam as well.

dance troupe which travels around the country to perform contemporary dance. Thus my younger sister has got exposure to the bigger world. Since then, she has been performing with the troupe and more recently opened a small dance class with the neighbourhood children. Her dance classes have been doing well for the past few months and she can manage to earn around INR. 3000–4000/-per month. I feel proud of my sister and do realize that my sister is very confident and economically independent at this young age. In a way, my sister inspires me and I too want to be economically independent and build a secure life. I know some beauty parlour work such as threading eyebrows, facial massage etc. Occasionally, girls from my neighbourhood come to me for these services and I charge them Rs.100/-. I think am good at studies because until now, I could manage well to sail through the upper school level and was able to get admission into the graduation classes. I never failed at any of the high school classes so I believe I am good at studies. I do also believe that through education, I could earn myself a respectable living. I want to be a teacher. I feel ‘teaching’ is the most respectable and decent job in the world. My father has been doing casual work and opted for short term employment throughout his life, and therefore, my family has faced a lot of struggle and resistance in our lives.

Due to their economic limitation, Kamala sometimes faced situations when she was advised to drop out of school. Her grandmother and paternal aunt have persisted in pressurizing her to get married and set up a home, as women should do.

They think I am growing old and by this time I should have got married and have had a child at least. They also comment that girls are a burden to a family. Whenever they visit my home they raise the issue of my marriage. I feel disturbed by this attitude of my relatives. This thing affects me so much that I could not concentrate on my studies at times. I am horrified at the thought what if my relatives had convinced my parents to marry me off. Every time they visited, they used to bring matrimonial offers for me. These things bother me a lot. Fortunately, my mother has been supporting me to continue my education. She does not care what my grandmother and aunt have to say. My mother says we need to have a better life and get rid of the age old deprivation. She realizes we must study to get out of our life of misery. She supports all of us four sisters to get educated and pursue our interests. Like other women in our community, my mother also got married at an early age. I guess she was 15 or 16 years old when she had fallen in love with my father and both of them eloped. Both of them worked in Rongamati tea garden. I remember during my early childhood years, I used to accompany my mother to the garden. Later she left her job as we were four sisters at home and no elder person was around to look after us. My father is a man of few words and is fine with what my mother decides for us. Therefore, I am able to continue my studies and feel a relief that our mother understands us. She has been the biggest support for us to overcome many barriers to grow to be the person we want. I get scholarship and that makes me feel good. I use most of my scholarship money to pay the annual admission fees, buy books and copies. In a way, scholarship money has been very helpful for me in pursuing my education as it gives me financial support as well as a moral encouragement to continue. Indirectly, it is resisting my marriage also. I feel some sort of confidence with the money in my hand although it is not a big sum. Something is better than nothing and whatever I have been receiving is helpful for me. I am hopeful, as soon as I complete my graduation I will get a teacher job in any school.

Kamala’s determination and resilience has been inspiring for other young women as well. Amidst the traditional discourse of a woman’s place in society, brought home by her grandmother and aunt, she has struggled to make her own identity, with the support of her mother.

The self is an important construct capable of providing a comprehensive understanding of human behaviour from person–context relationships (Bhargava, 2001).

Individuals experience themselves, in a sense, indirectly from the perspective of other individual members of the same social group or from the standpoint of the social group as a whole to which they belong (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). Therefore, they become an object to themselves by taking the attitudes of other individuals towards themselves within a social environment. As early as 1902, the sociologist Charles Horton Cooley developed the theory that one's ideas of self are significantly affected by what one imagines others think of one. The result is a "looking-glass" self, one that reflects the imagined appraisals of others. This explains the case of Kamala how she has been inspired by her mother's aspirations. She faces conflict within herself and gets emotional and is affected by her relatives' views, as they have a significant role in her life as well. Her journey of developing her own identity has been supported by her mother's strong presence as well as her father's support and her sister's success. Thus, she aspires to be liberated from traditional roles and anticipates a better life.

Using another perspective, the ecological system theory, the child is viewed as developing within a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment. Because the child's biologically influenced dispositions join with environmental forces towards development, Bronfenbrenner characterized his perspective as a bio-ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Bronfenbrenner envisioned the environment as a series of nested structures that form a complex functioning system. These include and also extend beyond the home, school and neighbourhood settings in which children spend their everyday lives. Each layer of the environment joins with the others to powerfully affect development.

There is an assumption of an active interaction between growing individuals and their environments, as well as with the components of the environment, which jointly affect the process of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). The contextual perspective holds that the process of development within certain micro-contexts, or immediate settings, such as the home, the school, and the playground, and macro-context, such as the culture. The fundamental theoretical principle used by Bronfenbrenner and underlying the bio-ecological model emerges from research on theories of genetic transmission. It states that, "genetic material does not produce finished traits but rather interacts with environmental experience in determining developmental outcomes" (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994, p. 571). The principle implies that genetic material does not carry the basic psychological processes of perception, cognition, emotion and motivation. Entities that exist outside the person become internal through the process of interaction. The bidirectional nature of these transformations is rooted in the fact that genetic potential for development is not merely a passive possibility but active disposition expressed in selective patterns of attention, action and response. Human development takes place through the process of complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving bio-psychological organism and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate environment. Effectiveness increases if this interaction is regular, consistent and over extended periods of time. Bronfenbrenner (1986) refers to these

enduring forms of interactions as proximal processes. Mother–infant interaction is one such process. The behaviour of other persons towards the child is distinguishable from this process as distinctly different. Within this framework, Kamala has created for herself a point of equifinality that she has actively chosen, one that resists the traditional messages and fosters a more creative and constructive future for herself. One can see why Kamala is an inspiration for so many other young girls growing up in that neighbourhood. The Government provides scholarships for the education of girls of economically disadvantaged homes; Kamala has availed of annual scholarships since she was a young child. She is a shining example of how personal resolve and welfare provisions can match to transform society.

Conclusions

In the lives of Kamala and other girls like her in the tea gardens, it is clearly visible how they encounter resistance in three spheres, i.e. at home–family pressure, at school–peer pressure, in the neighbourhood–societal pressure. Family pressure would not only be financial but there is also the burden of traditional belief sets intended particularly for girls. The marital harmony of parents plays an important role in the lives of their children. Many girls reported they eloped because they no longer found peace at home. At school/college, among teenagers, they have their own set of views. As soon as they attain puberty and enter into teenage years, girls start dating and preparing for elopement. Young adolescent girls get a chance to interact with boys on the way to school, or in weekly markets. Some of them have romantic relationship within the classroom, but they keep it a secret. In the neighbourhood, girls experience prejudices that exist in their society. At each step, they are reminded by so-called well-wishers about what they should or should not do. For example, learning household chores is very important for a girl. This signifies for their freedom from their paternal homes, yet, as Kamala’s life demonstrates, this too is a collective path that interferes with her objective, to lead a better life. She chose to resist each one of the paths “given” to her, and forged one of her own.

According to Digmurti and Digmurti (1998), educating women is a high-return investment in socio-economic development for society as a whole, since by educating a woman; one is in effect enriching an entire family. The Zambian Declaration on Girl Child Education states that the high levels of adult illiteracy represent profound personal privations for the large number of people who are not able to read, write or make simple numerical computations. Their state of illiteracy also has a bearing on the education of the next generation. The importance of women’s education can be marked by quoting the words of Mahatma Gandhi: “You educate a man you educate an individual; educate a woman, you educate a family” (Cited in Veeramani and Ravi, 1999, p. 58).

Recently, UNICEF India's programme like Village Planning has had life-saving impact for the tea tribes in Assam. They did this study in Chabua Tea Estate in Dibrugarh District in Assam. According to Rusdia (2015),

The work on the estates is labour-intensive and the communities are tight knit, yet what is most lacking in their lives is knowledge of basic health and hygiene practices that can have lifesaving impact for themselves and their children. "Village planning" is a process whereby trained facilitators go out to village communities and initiate dialogue about these basic health and hygiene issues, bringing with them invaluable information. The facilitators ask the communities to identify some of the issues that are of most concern to them. Common themes that come out in discussions within the tea tribe communities are: maternal mortality, early marriage, excessive alcoholism, and lack of access to basic healthcare.

Through the village planning process, hand washing becomes a family practice; the age at marriage is postponed and HIV prevention is understood; exclusive breast feeding replaces powdered milk and a girls' education is valued. These are small bits of knowledge imparted that have lasting impact on generations to come, and most importantly, they become life decisions made by a community that has been empowered to take their future into their own hands (UNICEF India, 2015). This type of intervention on a larger scale is needed at the moment to bring about changes in the Sah Janagosthi community.

As mentioned earlier, Government of Assam has a welfare board ensuring affirmative action for upliftment of tea tribes. Girl child well-being and promotion of their education is also a priority for the State. However, these efforts need a more proactive approach. Macro-level policies hardly reach the people at grass roots. Although, tea labour unions exist in gardens, their leadership does not show the potential to disseminate the state's affirmative action to the micro-level. Here, we feel the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) has great importance. NGOs in India have a proactive grass roots approach. No other agencies could reach the masses at the grass roots better than them. In India, subjective well-being and individual mental health are sometimes undervalued. Counselling practices for students, adolescents and adults are not included widely in public policies since health education and economic development take priority. Only selected governmental agencies and NGOs are working actively in the field of counselling and guidance. To promote girls like Kamala along with affirmative action of income security, we also need to support people who lack family assistance for making a change. When resistance to traditional practices as well as peer groups is supported by the immediate family, it is possible for a Kamala to break out from a defined life course. This needs to become a reality for many more.

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Women in Indian Families: Resisting, Everyday

Mila Tuli

Abstract This paper explores the idea of everyday or routine resistance in the lives of Indian women. Using ethnographic accounts of the experiences of women at distinctly different life stages, the paper attempts to explore their response to social and familial expectations. Women from diverse social and economic backgrounds and of ages ranging from 18 to 65 years shared their experiences, aspirations and insights related to personal and social identity. Across generations, women have responded to the boundaries set by social institutions (family, religion and community) with varying degrees of compliance and resistance. Depending on the spheres within which they find themselves confined and on their personal aspirations and intra-familial dynamics, women have selectively accepted norms or engaged with strategies to resist. For all women, there must be some spaces within which they find themselves compelled to resist and oppose systems that are oppressive. Through interactions with women of different ages, an effort was made to enter these “spaces or realms” of resistance and develop an understanding of how women find themselves in these spaces and the manner in which they develop strategies to push the boundaries of social expectations in a patriarchal society. How do acts of resistance impact the identity of these women? In what ways does the social group respond to resistance? Does resistance interrupt continuity? These are some additional questions that this paper will attempt to answer.

Keywords Women • Indian families • Roles • Resistance

Resistance is an important social phenomenon that has been addressed by social scientists in the recent past, particularly in the field of political science. Although lacking a single definition, the term resistance is typically used to describe an opposition to conformity or expectations. Therefore, resistance has more frequently been associated with the political struggles of those without power against the

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powerful. According to Foucault (1978), resistance exists in the same space as power. Within the dynamic, “habitus” variability and conflict are inevitable (Bourdieu, 1977). Ideas of passive conformity that were presented in early studies on the psychology and behaviour of prison inmates (Milgram, 1974; Zimbardo, 1989) were challenged by later studies on social identification. Identification with a social group was seen as a powerful motivator for internalizing “roles and rules” that eventually determine behaviour (Haslam & Reicher, 2012). A review of existing research on conformity and resistance compels the researchers to ask whether we suffer from a “conformity bias”. Can it be that by focusing only on conformity, we deliberately deny the existence of disobedience and resistance?

Rhythms of Resistance

The term resistance is used to describe all kinds of struggle (political, social and cultural) at individual, collective and institutional levels (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). Resistance displays a wide diversity of modes (physical, material, symbolic and private or public), scale (individual or collective, local or widespread), has different targets (individuals, groups, institutions and organizations), direction or goals (to promote or prevent change) and can be understood as a political act or as an act of identity. From an analysis of the published work on resistance, Hollander and Einwohner (2004) have identified seven different types of resistance: overt, covert, unwitting, target-defined, externally defined, missed and attempted. Another categorization of resistance suggests that resistance may exist as publicly declared resistance (open revolt, demonstrations and petitions) against material domination, assertion of worth or counter-ideologies against ideological domination or resistance in the disguised form of everyday resistance (squatting, poaching, desertion and evasion) which may be direct resistance against material domination, hidden transcripts or disguised discourses against status domination and dissident sub-cultures against ideological domination (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013).

Everyday Resistance

In the literature on resistance, the focus has largely been on overt, visible, collective mobilization of individuals or groups in opposition to oppression. The less visible, often undetected forms of protest that constitute the daily lives of men and women have gone unrecognized. These everyday, ordinary acts of dissent and imperceptible conflict called everyday resistance are recognized as being different from the institutionalized opposition through formal channels. They are relatively “safe” and require “little or no formal coordination” (Scott, 1985). Everyday resistance refers to the less explicitly confrontational, low-profile activities, overt or covert but rarely recognized as resistant by the powerful. Because of the ordinary nature of acts such

as feigned ignorance, silence, deliberate slowing down of work, false compliance, pilferage and their non-confrontational position, these activities are more likely to go unnoticed and have a lower chance of attracting repressive reactions (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). Whether visible or invisible, because they are intended to express dissent and make a difference, acts of everyday resistance serve to challenge and weaken authority. More importantly, creating spaces to express dissent in any form contributes to preserving a sense of identity.

The routine, non-dramatic and non-confrontational character of everyday resistance has led some authors to suggest that everyday resistance provides a “continuum” between open confrontation and unseen agitation and further proof of the belief that resistance is actually built into our daily existence (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013).

Women in India

The paradox of our reality is that violence, oppression, neglect, high female mortality, confinement, passive existence, regressive attitudes and expectations continue to be a dominant part of the lives of women in India. Nothing seems to have changed, and yet, we know that many of us have come a long way. Despite the dismal rankings in global indices such as the gender gap index (India ranks 53 among 58 nations) or in terms of % of women legislatures (India ranks 134 among 183 countries), there are pockets of progress that reflect some change in the situation of women in India. While attitudes and cultural values remain impervious to obvious global influences, the range of opportunities available to women has certainly expanded. India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world today. Economic reforms, globalization and high-speed information and communication technology are transforming aspirations and social and cultural roles, relations and gender identity.

Gender Identity

Gender identity is firmly entrenched as a social and cultural construction. Growing up female in India is for a majority of young girls and women, a journey along a narrowly defined path. The trajectory of this path is typically drawn out within the parameters of social, religious, family, caste and class traditions and expectations. It goes without saying that the opportunities for a girl in India have been dramatically different from the prospects presented to boys. However, within urban society, education and exposure to global influences are bringing about a change in the manner in which many young women view their lives.

In India, the family is central to social interaction and activity. The socialization of young girls and boys ensures that they learn their place in the family and their

role in society at an early age. The fact that girls are undervalued is a well-articulated one. The patriarchal control over women within the home finds resonance in religious, political and state practices. Despite economic and educational progress, families strongly believe that it is their moral obligation to curtail, control and regulate the lives of all females, young or old. Violence within and outside the home continues to be used to ensure that women do not step outside the “threshold” of familial and social propriety.

I work all day, go home late at night and then cook, give my children dinner and take care of my home...it's my duty (40-year-old domestic worker).

Traditions, values, beliefs and practices are the public face of the mechanisms of control used by the family and culture to ensure a reproduction of the structures and values of a patriarchal society. Identities that are valued are offered as the ideal ... the ones we must aspire for ... and therefore we are expected to orient ourselves to fit into these.

We can do anything we want to...our parents don't stop us...as long as we stay within social limits (Group discussion, Final year graduate students).

Interface with global cultures offers a range of ideas, resources and symbols for reconstructing individual identities. In the study of gender identity of the contemporary urban woman in India, it is therefore not surprising to find many “continuities and discontinuities with social and cultural practices pertaining to the social construction of gender identities” (Thapan, 2007, p. 32)

Next time I must have a son...I will do whatever is necessary... (24-year-old, with MBA and mother of a 4-year-old daughter)

While subordination and unquestioning acceptance, even endorsement of patriarchal beliefs, may be the dominant responses by women over the centuries, the everyday negotiations for power have been until recently, largely ignored. It would be completely inaccurate to believe that the dominant practices and traditions exist uncontested and unchallenged. Besides the extraordinary moments of protest and collective, public demonstrations, there is an increasing recognition of the “everyday resistance constantly present in the behaviours and traditions of the subordinated” (Haynes & Prakash, 1992, p. 1). Recent publications on the struggles of women in South Asia and colonial India (Ghosh, 2007; Kosambi, 2007) emphasize the agency of women in adopting “multiple strategies in constructing selfhood” (Ghosh, 2007, p. 2). The everydayness of struggles within the confines of ordinary life is well documented in the work of Haynes and Prakash (1992). The popular narrative of benevolent harmony between the dominant patriarch and the subordinated women in the family does not succeed in concealing the underlying disquiet of relentless negotiation for agency and self-hood.

According to Miller (1997), dividing a social group into powerful and powerless, dominators and resisters is limiting. In the hierarchy of power, a person can be both powerful and powerless depending on the position that is being called into use at any given time. It is also important to recognize that women may struggle with each

other and also against each other. The struggle for power within patriarchal hierarchies does not leave the women of the family unaffected. It is not unusual to find women making use of the dominant discourse to promote their own position. Historically, the solidarity of the gendered struggle coexists with the fractious interactions typical of women within the family, as seen between a woman and her mother-in-law and between sisters-in-law (Ghosh, 2007). While gender is an important criterion of social ordering, caste and class contribute an additional level of complexity. A detailed collection of historical feminist essays on women in Maharashtra in the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries describes the struggle for social reform and resistance to the dominant discourse by women such as Ramabai Ranade and Anandibai Joshi who worked to provide health care and other benefits to lower caste women. However, here too, caste loyalty would invariably override the gender allegiance (Kosambi, 2007).

Negotiating Roles: Compliance and Resistance

The term “Indian woman” typically conjures up a series of images and roles, i.e. traditional, subservient, wife, mother, accommodating, adjusting. Many women struggle to resist this, linear identity and try to develop and share new aspirations. Even in the most routine reproduction of gender identity, there is an element of surprise, struggle and creativity (Thapan, 2007). Despite the overriding value for conformity, there is evidence of the “subtle and ambivalent ways in which women negotiate at the margins of power” (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004, p. 18). The daily struggles are not always about recognizably “important” issues; in fact, most of these are deeply personal. Nor is the act of resistance always successful in making a change. Sometimes, it is simply necessary to be able to express dissent and disagreement in order to reaffirm a sense of agency. The following sections present some of the acts and experiences of everyday resistance used by young girls and women of various ages. These instances occur within the reality of everyday life, sometimes almost unknowingly. The conversations and interactions with a cross section of women from different backgrounds indicate that conflict and negotiation are the most frequent in the domains that are assigned “high value”. Adolescent girls frequently emphasized the need to assert their independence in the choices they make (going out, making friends and dressing). Not all of them are always able to convince their parents about this. Non-disclosure is a common strategy to avoid conflict.

I don't always tell them (parents) what I am doing...I know they will stop me...I'll tell them afterwards...or maybe not (19 year old college student)

I use a password on my phone. That way all my messages are private (16-year-old school student).

Silence has long been used as a form of resistance. Mahatma Gandhi's *mauna vrat* (vow of silence) was used effectively by him to convey disagreement, distress

and dissent during the freedom struggle. In the domestic sphere too, silence is regularly used as a form of resistance. Often interpreted as passive conformity to the beliefs and wishes of others, silence is also a powerful form of disagreement in a non-confrontationist manner.

A recently married 19-year-old domestic worker explains how she uses the very silence expected from her by her mother-in-law as a form of resistance

I am the new daughter-in-law...they don't want to hear my voice...when she (mother-in-law) is angry I just keep quiet, I don't say anything, not even when she asks me a question...then she says speak up, answer me....

Describing how she maintains "peace" in the house, a 45-year-old university professor says:

I have decided that sometimes it is best to keep quiet. That way I can ignore what he (husband) says and continue doing what I want to. There is no point arguing.

Conformity and resistance are usually found to coexist. There is no radical breaking away from roles and customs that are prevalent in the ordinary lives of women. But there may be many small efforts at assertion and self-expression. As a mother of 3 children, Asha, a domestic worker frequently arrives at work with visible signs of physical abuse by an alcoholic husband. Sometimes, she cries but mostly she smiles and shrugs it off. She has a bank account, and every month, she goes to the bank to deposit money from her income as a saving for her children's education. When asked why she tolerates her husband's violence she says:

He is my husband...He can beat me but I will do what is good for my children... this is my hard earned money and I won't let him touch it. I don't even tell him about this...

While some strategies of resistance are overt and openly confrontational, others are deliberately hidden.

My uncle would never let me marry him, so one night I just stayed out of the house and then ran away with him (male friend). We waited a few days until they came to fetch us... they had to get us married (19-year-old domestic worker).

I used to spit in the glass when my brother would ask me to bring him some water (63-year-old woman recalling growing up as the youngest of 6 siblings).

Rituals and symbols are a key feature in sustaining social and religious practices in India for centuries. Fasting and feasting, taboos and ceremonies and a range of markers have been used to announce caste (the sacred thread worn by *brahmins*, the segregation of places of worship), gender (women are expected to fast to ensure good fortune and longevity for their families and husbands), marital status (ornaments and vermilion must be worn by married Hindu women) and widowhood (austerity in dress and conduct is expected of a widow). Each of these rituals and markers is designed to maintain the unequal ordering of patriarchal society. An interesting change is visible in the response of contemporary women to these social practices. Some women are making a conscious choice to resist these symbols of patriarchy and have opted out of giving up their family name after they get married.

Some deliberately do not wear the traditional markers expected of a married woman, and many have given up the traditional fasting *karvachauth* which is done for the long life of the husband.

I have kept my maiden name even after I got married...it was my identity for 25 years... I also do not wear the *mangalsutra* or *sindoor*...(jewelry and vermillion, symbols of a married Hindu woman) why should I have to tell the world that I am married? (48-year-old doctor).

The hierarchy of social reality in India is multi layered and multidimensional. The same individual can be powerless or can exert control depending on the position and role they operate from at any given time. As a daughter-in-law, a woman may be dominated by her mother-in-law and other older women in the family. As a mother of children, her position changes dramatically. The centrality of mothers in the lives of their children provides them with a powerful advantage in negotiating interactions for their children with other family members. The term “elective interdependence” describes how the choices for children’s agency are made by mothers and how this intersects with interpersonal interactions within families in urban India (Tuli & Chaudhary, 2010).

I tell them (my children) ‘I will serve you food when we are at dadi’s [paternal grandmother’s] house.’ Then I try and work around it so that other people also don’t try and impose rules... finish everything that’s on your plate... which I don’t agree with. (mother of 5-year-old on her response to mealtimes at her in-laws’ house).

Within the patriarchal structure of Indian families, the theme of elective interdependence highlights the strong sense of a mother’s volition about the extent to which she requires the involvement of others and the extent to which autonomy for children is negotiated in everyday interactions. An act of everyday resistance can be inferred when mothers elect to align with or distance themselves and their children from other persons in the family.

I lived with my in-laws for 10 years...it was horrible. I could not take one decision in that house. But I raised my children the way I wanted to... she (mother-in-law) had no say here. If she wanted the children in her room she knew she would have to turn off the television. And I cooked what I thought was necessary for my kids to eat. (47-year-old Bio-technologist recalling her early years of marriage).

Resistance in the Public Sphere: Stepping Out

Navigating public spaces and using public transport in urban cities is a challenge that women face everyday. Public spaces are almost exclusively inhabited by men; the presence of women is “unwarranted” and unwelcome. The cultural boundaries place restrictions on female access to areas considered traditionally male. They

reinforce that a woman's presence in public space must only be in transit from one shelter to another. A woman must have a clear purpose to be outside—something that is not only apparent to her, but also to those around her. Safety for women does not come automatically from the city and its infrastructure; it has to be actively produced by women on a daily basis (Phadke, 2012). Typically, the production of safety by women involves parameters of time “How late is it?”, company “Who is she out with?” and appearance “What is she wearing?” Many students talked about the constant need for vigilance and the different ways in which they respond to the restrictions on their freedom and mobility.

“Just because I am a girl does not mean that I have to step back all the time”. “For a girl to survive in Delhi you have to make up your mind to be strong” (20-year-old Undergraduate student).

A survey by undergraduate students of 50 women aged 14–55 years on the use of public spaces in Delhi (2015) found that when not going out of the house for work/school/college, women most commonly step out to go to the market. Only 12% of the women surveyed went out to the park and only 1% to the bank. 84% of the women said they preferred to go out of the house in groups or with another person, than go out alone. About 70% women never used public toilets because they found them unsafe. Mostly, they avoid being out late, they move in groups, and stay alert, and some (11%) carry safety equipment such as cutters and pepper spray with them. All respondents shared how they dress “carefully” when they step outside the house but will not be forced to wear only traditional Indian attire. For each of these women, stepping outside the home continues to be an act of resistance against social barriers and disincentives.

Cultures of Resistance

Sometimes, spaces for self-expression and resistance are silently created and even endorsed within restrictive social boundaries. Folklore, songs and sometimes even ceremonies offer opportunities for symbolic freedom from domination and expression of veiled dissent. Ramanujan (1983) describes how the coarse and often lewd expressions in the stories of old women are an amusing way of expressing discontent and the women's point of view through a traditional medium. Wedding songs in Punjab provide young brides and their families a legitimate channel to vent their apprehensions about getting married. These traditional songs, sung in ceremonies preceding the wedding, describe the groom and his family in a manner that is rude and often offensive.

My-father-in-law is a drunk,
My mother-in-law is a shrew,
Go back home, I am not coming with you.¹

The work of Raheja and Gold (1994) on women's songs in North India emphasizes the layering of social relationships and positioning within Indian families. Through the traditional songs of women in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, the authors examine the "hidden transcripts" (Scott, 1990) used by women to express alternate views and communicate their resistance to the dominant. Embedded within the traditional songs, along with the verses of subjugation and submission are critical commentaries on patriarchal norms and expectations. The coexistence of subjugation and resistance, of silence and bold representation of multiple roles, is a powerful representation of the duality of women's identity.

Besides expressing dissent, these songs, stories, drama and some rituals place women in roles and positions traditionally occupied by men. Such role reversal presents the idea of women being capable and deserving of position and status equal to men. Symbolic resistance offers the possibility of alternate realities.

In traditional, nineteenth-century Bengal, there was a persistent effort to censor the practice of *basar* or traditional wedding songs that were sung by a substantial section of middle-class Bengali women. The tradition of *basar* was widely criticized by reformists, missionaries and Bengali men. The songs, which were available in print, were sung by the women of the household on the wedding night in the bridal chamber in the presence of the bride and groom. The songs involved a good deal of teasing and verbal banter with the groom and were a source of bawdy, disruptive behaviour by the women. Love, lust and an earthy expression of sexuality were depicted through verse, action and gestures. The songs were considered distasteful and immoral by the *bhadralok* (genteel folk) of the time, and the practice was attacked by the administration and newspapers. Despite the strong censorship, the women were unwilling to submit and give up the traditional entertainment of their feminine world that allowed an unrestricted expression of female sexuality and sexual autonomy (Ghosh, 2007).

More recently, a young female graduate student, Verma (2015) has been in the news for the rap song that she has written and sung to share her resentment to popular rap artist Honey Singh. She says she finds the lyrics of these songs offensive and derogatory towards women. Her rap song is a unique expression of resistance to music with mindless, regressive lyrics that reinforce expectations of "size zero figure", "tiny dresses" and "hypnotizing blue eyes" from young girls and encourages them to make themselves desirable for men.

In parts of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana in North India, the traditional festival of Holi (in which men and women celebrate the coming of spring by throwing coloured powder on each other) involves a unique ritual that represents a reversal of roles in many ways. On that one day, all rules of patriarchy are broken and even end

¹From the author's childhood memories.

up becoming an exaggerated bizarre manifestation of collective aggression. Village women gather on the streets on Holi day, prepared with wet ropes with knotted ends and sticks with which they inflict blows onto passing men. Dressed in traditional attire, their head and faces covered with a veil, the women present a paradoxical image. This ritual is not encountered in the southern States of India, although Holi is celebrated, where the roles of men and women are differently defined. Perhaps the manifestation of the violence could be linked to the patriarchal domination that characterizes the relationships through the rest of the year. This domination, a meaning-making of gender relations, creates a role reversal as a collective means of resistance.

Concluding Remarks

While still being rooted in tradition, women in India struggle to redefine their roles and relations. Resistance can be seen both at the individual and collective levels (as in Holi festivities). Conflict and negotiation are the most frequent in the domains that are assigned “high value” by individuals and by social groups. The coexistence of plural identities is crucial in order to understand the lives of women in India. It is not unusual to find compliance and alignment with patriarchal norms and values in some domains and a resistance and struggle against these norms in other domains. The struggle to assert themselves may not alter reality very much, but the act of self-expression is an important one. The ordinariness of everyday resistance is what allows many women to gradually modify the boundaries of patriarchal control. Reproduction and change in social and personal identity are both recognizable realities for contemporary women in India. Despite conflict and the overriding insistence on compliance, resistance is an important tool to negotiate personal and social identities. The “hidden transcripts” (Scott, 1990) of everyday social and cultural practices are critical to foster an enduring sense of resistance to the dominant social order.

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Rhythms of Resistance: A Way Forward

Nandita Chaudhary and Jaan Valsiner

Abstract Resistance is a notion that can be viewed both from a common-sense perspective and from a scientific one. This volume contains a diverse range of empirical evidences of common-sense resistance in different cultural conditions. In each case, there is linkage with theoretical dimensions. These experiences facilitate a focus on resistance as a potential event for meaning-making, when faced with alternative perspectives. The common meaning of resistance has a loaded social value of opposition or contradiction. However, in recent psychological theory building, the term is value-free. Through explorations of life course dynamics in different domains, the process of active meaning-making has emerged from the instances of resistance. The primary focus of this book is to demonstrate how resistance as a phenomenon is key to human activity. We come to the conclusion that different forms of resistance have a similar process: neutralization, followed by one of the different forms: (a) counter-action (active event or symbolic), (b) escalated symbolic acceptance (of no action consequences) and (c) transversal displacement of action. Additionally, we have found some evidence to suggest that culturally significant issues or areas of heightened activity are more likely to elicit instances of resistance, in comparison with areas of lower significance. Thus, examples of resistance in different cultural settings can, in fact, provide evidence of the symbolic landscape of culture, making it possible to identify the contours of interaction through the study of resistance.

Keywords Resistance • Common sense • Theory • Neutralization • Substitution • Idle protest

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Psychology needs phenomena-bound general theories. In the last century, these have gradually vanished, leaving the discursive space in the discipline to quasi-theoretical and phenomena-averse creation of socially acceptable myths. Some of these involve labelling (diagnosis); others, healing (the claims of cure by different therapies); and still others, moral imperatives in bringing up children or how to become rich and happy. The basic topics of psychology today are no longer those of fundamental laws of the *psyche*, but rather of practical guidelines for institutions and “self-help” books for the reading public.

If that avalanche of “practically useful knowledge” (as it is labelled) had succeeded, humankind would have been in a veritable haven or perhaps in complete confusion. Fortunately, most of the practical advice is unable to reach the ground or be “implemented” in ways that are intended. This has not hindered the industry of manufacturing solutions for imagined conditions such as perfect happiness, brilliant babies, flawless bodies or ideal relationships. The resistance to them by the intended recipients makes the correction. So resistance is necessary, functional, plural and omnipresent!

The topic of resistance is far from being socially neutral.¹ That social non-neutrality itself is a form of resistance—resistance to the possible “dangers” to the well-being of the powerful in any society. The “resistance” of a newly emerged influenza virus to vaccination efforts (resistance to disease), based on the earlier versions of the virus, is not a pleasant situation for health professionals who are trying to control an epidemic. The inherent resistance makes the task of controlling a virus nearly impossible to achieve.

The Road to Resistance

There were two important directions in the road to resistance as the focus of a seminar that has evolved into the present book. The significance of resistance for the political history of the Indian people was an important initial reason, and it seemed fitting to focus on resistance in an Indian location. However, this was not intended as a seminar in political science, nor was it an engagement with the history of India’s struggle for freedom. We needed to use that event as a springboard for our ideas, not a frame within which to include all forms of resistance. We wanted to focus on resistance as an epigenetic phenomenon and learn from a variety of empirical examples from different parts of the world. Resistance was considered as something that exists between two positions, as a vital component. With even one

¹It is not inconsequential that the title of our seminar caused some hurdles for international travel. The first signs of “trouble” appeared when one participant submitted his application for a visa. A seminar on “Rhythms of Resistance” must have conjured up antagonistic images for the Ministry of External Affairs in India. It appeared as if this was a potentially subversive gathering of scholars in Delhi. However, the problems were soon resolved through discussions with relevant authorities.

agent, the other (object, event, image, person, group, idea) can be responded to in many different ways. Piaget's notions of assimilation and accommodation during adaptation could be seen as an example. When confronted with an image which has its own features, a child can either choose to accept it as it is and expand its understanding, or transform the object to be included within an existing knowledge base. Every encounter is thus potentially a location for resistance. From this very basic notion of resistance in the course of meaning-making during the life course, our volume has travelled through different social and personal scenarios. Drawn from a variety of contexts and experiences, these yield interesting feed-forward projections towards developing a unified theoretical position.

The Contexts of Resistance

Extending Ashis Nandy's perceptive comment about the Indian cultural context that it is inherently complex, India is difficult to understand, and there are several interpretations of perceptible events and encounters.

India has always been a separate world, hard for any outsider, Eastern or Western, to penetrate. Such a culture becomes a projective test, revealing the interpreter rather than the interpreted. All interpretations of India are ultimately autobiographical (Nandy, 2009, pp. 79–80).

In this volume, a wide range of locations has been explored and context is assumed to be a crucial component of the human dynamics, rather than an incidental detail or distraction. For occidental psychology born in the context of German Protestant ideologies in the eighteenth century, almost any other country is an enigma. The world is a circus arena on which self-selected interpreters insert their autobiographical experiences into the lives of others. Under these conditions, the need for resistance to such insertions is a healthy survival kit for anybody in any society. Yet India is special, with its multicultural society, where a wide spectrum of different forms of social living coexists. Looking for the full richness of the phenomena of resistance in India seems opportune and a better alternative to locating resistance processes in Estonian or Danish settings. Hence, the move of the focus in this book is to India first and then beyond.

Logic of Difference—and Difference in Logics

In a recent publication, Vishwanathan (2016) urges the revival and sustenance of diversity in the social sciences. He argues that diversity is not just about difference, it is about how the logic of difference can potentially create new ways of understanding variation and thereby sustain democracy. We have a similar agenda for the interpretation of phenomena in this volume: to understand differences, celebrate

diversity from an equitable stance, not just between people, but between interpreters and phenomena as well. In a parallel vein, Singh (2015) selects a landscape of tribal Rajasthan to illustrate the lives of the Shariya community, the poorest among the poor. Through his compelling exposition on power and ethics, Singh succeeds in providing an alternative position on poverty, after having lived among the tribals for an extended period of time. His narrative transcends the dichotomies of religion-secularism and material-cultural frames. The perseverance of people to survive, as resources are depleted, is taken as evidence for the vitality that sustains the community. Poverty is neither romanticized nor dismissed, it is described and discussed from the perspective of the people who live their lives in the shadows of the public image. One is not moved to pity or anger about why people should live with so little, but with a sense of respect for humankind that survives even under very difficult circumstances. Through his insightful examination, Singh finds that his subjects resist being reduced to categories.

There are several other stories about India's poor, where the reader is emotionally depleted by the time the reading is done (See Boo, 2014 as an example). One reviewer describes it thus: "I couldn't put *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* down even when I wanted to—when the misery, abuse and filth that Boo so elegantly and understatedly describes became almost overwhelming. Her book, situated in a slum on the edge of Mumbai's international airport, is one of the most powerful indictments of economic inequality I've ever read."² For a change, in Singh's descriptions, the poor are not described by **what they do not have**, but **what they do** in their everyday lives. This becomes possible only when there is close engagement with people and their circumstances such that situated meaning-making becomes evident.

Nations are imagined communities and national identity is a popular myth in present times (Anderson, 1983/1991), because the definition of the term varies across a wide spectrum. There are some in India today, who would consider this specific discussion as dangerous or subversive, even anti-national. Patriotism has been used and misused to rouse people to action, even aggression. Figuring out the components of identity as a nation can lead to a thousand different definitions. Looking from outside in adds to the complexity. The interpretation of phenomena from outside the culture may be problematic on several counts. Apart from the inherent and hidden complexity of the culture, the interpreters tend to be driven by their own views of the world, which makes it near-impossible to access reality. However, it must be acknowledged that some of the most insightful analyses of India, for instance, have come from the outsider-experts. Admittedly, some of the instant overgeneralizations with no anthro-sensitivity have also come from an outsider's perspective. Analysing cultural processes requires deep understanding of historical events, social changes and economic development, since all these have significant impact on social phenomena. What is resisted, whether by a person or a collective, has important relevance for the resistor and can provide evidence for the exploration of social-psychological phenomena across cultures. What we fight against collectively depends on our social

²doi:<http://www.amazon.in/Behind-Beautiful-Forevers-Mumbai-undercity/dp/081297932X>.

history as a people. Gandhi was inspirational in this regard, not only because of his successful campaign against the British in India, but also for his social experiments in other fields, related to constructing a sense of pride and integrity in self-governance, both as person and as nation.

In a recent commentary on subaltern, post-colonial cultures, Khair (2016) argues that on account of the collective struggle against the colonial forces of the West, several Asian States failed to address some of the indigenous hegemonies that persist till today, whether these are based on caste, class, region or gender. The collective resistance towards colonialism perhaps left some other issues unattended. What we choose to resist means something for us. One would not resist an insignificant object, person or perspective. The study of resistance is thus a critical element in human cultural processes, and by finding what is being resisted, one can effectively gather evidence of symbolic culture and meaning. In order to explore such terrains across cultures, we need to provide the conditions for different identities and histories to surface and claim space in the academic discourse (Spivak, 1988). This has been a consistent focus of this volume.

Resistance and Imagination as Meaning-Making

There is something basic about disagreement. In the process of ontogenesis, a child discovers the power of refusal around the second year of life. The child learns that she can resist others, generally the adult world, in many different ways. This is the origin of agency. When a child learns that a wooden stick can become a horse to ride on, the sort of playful endeavour marks the genesis of imagination. Imagination is quintessentially human. It fails to be defined by past experiences alone and looks ahead to redefining the past, the present and even the future. This uniquely human quality is the foundation of disagreement, of resistance. We can only disagree with something when we are able to imagine an alternative, whether it is an object, action, event, idea or person.

The capacity for disagreement lies behind every potential act of resistance. From the chapters in this book, it is apparent that each setting, whether it is a preschool programme or corporate office in Chile, the street in Egypt, or a home in India, each cultural context has specific configurations that have been accumulated over decades of meaning-making. People live within these contours, negotiating the social spaces activated by collective beliefs and values, gathering their sense of identity and place in this world. For instance, the caste system is a unique example of social stratification in India, from which Hindu communities and individuals draw a historically and socially textured identity. The reality of caste membership is not simply a social aberration (as it has been argued in the modern world) but a unique constellation of factors that needs to be understood in order to develop an authentic interpretation of the social dynamics of personhood, whether as Dalit or Brahmin. All societies, including modern, democratic and technologically governed ones, have social stratification developed through their own history. The caste system may be unique

to the Hindus, but it can surely contribute towards understanding hierarchical configurations in all human societies. Each phenomenon has the potential for informing the knowledge base of the current social sciences, however different from the known. This is another important underlying assumption in this volume.

Crossing Borders and Negotiating Contours

Between an individual and the universe, social life is textured by contours of different kinds. To cross the national border today, specific documents are required before embarking on the journey. But people—with or without “papers” given by power holders—have migrated throughout the history of mankind, overcoming physical obstacles and serious logistic or symbolic differences (O’Byrne, 2001). Studying the movement of people across borders provides us with contrasting meanings and contentious debates about identity and membership in differently valued social or ethnic groups. A “migrant” is somebody who crosses a border not to return, while a “guest worker” is a migrant who might return, or who might be returned, once the “work” ends and the “guest” status becomes withdrawn. A “tourist” is a “guest worker” whose “work” is to not work but to spend resources after crossing the border, returning with new impressions and loads of (useless) souvenirs! A “spy” is a “guest worker” who keeps working for the interests of the organizations from the country of his or her origin. All these categories of people keep crossing the border, and doing something on the other side of the border, which relate to their receiving societies. “Migrants” may be a threat to the local customs and mores and continue to be so, even when becoming “guest workers”. “Tourists” are needed for local economies while not necessary for social textures—they remain objects of goal-oriented actions by local business owners and pick-pockets. “Spies” are important for being caught and often exchanged between countries who send them reciprocally across borders. The story goes on. People cross borders and *by that very act* enter into new social roles.

How migrants are studied and represented is a matter of politics as Aiyar (2015) demonstrates in her study of Indian immigrants to Kenya. Immigrant identities are entangled within narratives of people, place and movement, all of which have important relevance for the place of origin, country of residence and choice of nationality. Indians started moving to Kenya for work as early as 1865 and were successful in making a place for themselves in the administration and commerce in that country. Yet, when they were given a choice between British and Kenyan passports, many chose the former. Although actively engaged in anti-colonial activism, many Indians displayed subimperialist colonizing ambitions that were tinged with racial prejudice (Aiyar, 2015). Movement is not a simple matter of linear progression; many complex dynamics are unearthed when one moves in closer to the ground, to listen to individual voices. Whether it is Danish diplomats posted to India, a psychoanalyst’s search for the practice of psychoanalysis in Bangalore, or artists engaged in a discourse about identity in Brussels, transcending

boundaries provides rich evidence of resistance in meaning-making. The chapters in this volume demonstrate this process.

Movement of any kind will display heightened meaning-making. We find evidence of a shift in positioning even among children moving from the relative flexibility of the preschool to a primary class, or adolescent girls living within traditional families in modern spaces. New spaces provide novel challenges. Within these journeys, one finds resonance with Piaget's descriptions of assimilation and accommodation processes, which appear as defining moments for the constant renewal of culture. These intersections of personal and collective culture manifest the "inclusive separation" (Valsiner, 2007) of both levels of activity (person oneself, and within society) where it is possible to recognize older meanings alongside newly emerging ones. Which meaning will sustain and which will submerge is impossible to predict beforehand, as these chapters illustrate. The moment of confrontation becomes a defining moment.

As Awad, Wagoner and Glaveanu argue (this volume), we can view resistance as

- (1) a social and individual phenomenon,
- (2) a constructive process that articulates continuity and change, and
- (3) an act oriented towards an imagined future of different communities.

The intersection is between a known past, an active present and an imagined future, through the collective and personal contours where individuals negotiate meaning-making. Each of these intersection points becomes a potential space of resistance.

Between a Person and the Universe: Who or What Is Our "Subject"?

What is the smallest unit of the social sciences? Is it an individual, an encounter, or an event? Psychology has, for most of its history, used intra-psychic phenomena of individuals (of a specific measurable sort), as its primary domain of study. As Moghaddam argues, this is false (the embryonic fallacy) since there is an assumption that individuals are the "source and centre" of all psychological phenomena (Moghaddam, 2010, p. 465). What we believe about individuals is significantly impacted by what others around us believe, making psychologists move from intra-psychic to social phenomena.

Collective Subjectivity

How do collective meanings emerge? This question is crucial for understanding the relations between people—in order to make sense of "resistance" or other acts of communicative nature—"conversion", "ignorance", "obligations", etc. There has to

be some kind of collective process that coordinates the various personal inventions that guide a person's feeling about one's role in a society. If I feel "obligation" to "help" the other ("the poor", "the migrants"), there needs to be established a version of illusory intersubjectivity (Rommetveit, 1985). Based on that illusion, actual intersubjectivity can be built. A celebrity arriving in a helicopter at a refugee camp to hand out blankets under the eye of television cameras has mastered the social presentation of illusory intersubjectivity *as if* that were real. Help of such kind may often end up useful only for the helper and at the expense of those helped.

Moghaddam (1997) argues that Western individualism sustains and even depends upon the government's provisions of basic services. The ideology of individualism is thus dependent upon State services and the belief that people can live relatively autonomous lives. It would not be possible to sustain such an existence in other parts of the world, especially in poorer countries, and we must conclude that individualism is a luxury that has been enabled by the relative affluence of a resource-rich economy. The State has enabled its people to accept the myth of the independent individual. The economic structure of a country therefore facilitates the formation of contours between self and others.

When we examine the chapters in this book on Indian society, it becomes evident that there is something else at play, something other than individualism that defines the social-psychological continuum. In almost every chapter, the family displays its overarching importance. The adolescent struggling for self-fulfilment, the woman resisting patriarchy, the Dalit woman enjoying success, or the transgender activist straddling complex worlds, all demonstrate the key place of family life, both in the resistance and in its alternative. The lowest common multiple (LCM) seems to be the family! This is the phenomenon of familism, discussed at length by Roland (1988). In a commentary on the Indian psyche, Mariott (1990) has argued that Indians are "*dividuals*" and not *individuals*, with a very different configuration of self-other relations as compared with other cultures. Hence, the collective meaning-making of the space between self and other has different contours in different societies, as is the imagined configuration of social groups. Berreby (2005) has described this in an excellent essay.

Theoretically, the exclusive opposition *individualism versus collectivism* is simply a result of an axiomatic "false start" of Western cross-cultural psychology since the 1970s. It has been pointed out that each and every society, and even more—every person in each society—is a system where the individual and collective parts are integrated into a dynamic whole (Sinha & Tripathi, 1994; Tripathi, in print). Hence, there is no surprise that the Indians are found to be *dividuals*—so would other people from around the world be, if psychology were to start from an axiomatic basis that transcends its occidental origins. It is not the Oedipus myth that fits into the origin of psychological science (if we need such a myth at all), but better the Kali/Durga myth of transformation of feminine origins of power between constructive and destructive domains. There is much that psychology as science can learn from India—rather than make yet another effort of neocolonial intervention to teach the "science of psychology" to the social heterogeneity that constitutes "Indian society".

Conclusion: Resistance Makes Development Possible

From the various discussions, both of theory and of phenomena, it becomes increasingly clear that we need to go beyond the grand narratives of culture. It is in the everyday instances of people in dynamic interaction with others that these nuances of cultural processes can be effectively explored. Resistance is a crucial phenomenon in this interface. The chapters of this volume have demonstrated how resistance is a pervasive phenomenon, and in examining it in depth, we are able to come closer to individual and collective meaning-making.

However, resistance is even more important as a core of any theory of development—be that of the psychological, social or economic kind. Every established structure in these domains includes, at the same time, dynamic tendencies that strive towards its transformation which block that very striving. As a result, these structures are both closed and open to development at the same time. They are “conservative”—due to the resistance against striving for novelty—while it is precisely on the basis of such resistance that innovation of the structures becomes possible. Such innovation may take varied forms that we are tempted to label by different stereotypes—“creativity”, “development”, “advancement” and so on—but the core structure of all these transformations is the nature of the changing structure as a *Gegenstand*. Human beings, societies and economic systems undergo transformation due to the systemic tensions in their lives and in their relationships with their environment. Resistance is the basis of persistence on the course of constant innovation. Additionally, there is some evidence to suggest that culturally significant issues or areas of heightened activity are more like to show resistance, in comparison with neutral issues or areas of lower significance. Examples of resistance in different cultural settings do, in fact, provide evidence of the symbolic landscape of culture. Thus, it is possible to study the contours of interaction in societies through the study of resistance.

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