

NEOHUMANIST Review

A Journal That Awakens

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Civilization and Science



Our Sacred Bond With Rivers
AI and the Global South • The Discipline of Love

NEOHUMANIST Review

Liberating human intellect from the shackles of dogmas that limit our evolution

MISSION STATEMENT

The Neohumanist Review journal is to explore a new paradigm on how the global human society can reorganize, from the local to the worldwide level, to promote the integral well-being and flourishing of all human and non-human beings. This journal invites multiple disciplines to address the most vexing planetary issues, such as social and economic inequality, ecological collapse, war and peace, mass migration, and technological transformations, from the joint perspective of art, science, philosophy, and spirituality.

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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

WE HAVE COME a long way from dwelling in caves to celebrating ourselves as masters of the universe, but how much of our progress is truly civilizational, and how much depends solely on physical science and technology? The way we proceed at the moment, will we continue to benefit from science, or will we be destroyed by it? In his tracing of the transhumanist movement, Aaron Frank shows that it fails to lead us towards a neohumanist society endowed with ethical principles and spiritual inspiration.

The latest additions to our common tech toolkit are deep learning and generative artificial intelligence. One of our esteemed contributors, Sudhir Tiku, eloquently addresses this theme by drawing our attention to its power to either colonise the Global South once again or lead to human emancipation. While delineating an existential manifesto for the Global South, Sudhir declares that intelligence is not the monopoly of algorithms but the shared inheritance of humanity; that the South will not be a silent scaffolding of Northern empires but the author of its own architectures; that the future of intelligence will not be written in the clouds above us but in the soil beneath our feet.

This issue is greatly enriched by Justin Hewitson's article on Tantra and its perspectives on consciousness. He discusses the properties and functions of consciousness in terms of expressive qualities, addressing whether AI can be sentient.

In his discourse on "the discipline of love," futurist and foresight practitioner Richard Hames offers enlightening perspectives in the aftermath of the Bondi Beach incident in Australia. His call to expand love, from being pivotal to private romantic affairs to inhabiting the heart of the public domain, is a powerful reminder of the relevance and force of the neohumanist movement.

Shermon Cruz draws from the theme of Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar on river valley civilizations. He indicates that rivers are not just providers of essential vitality but also serve as bedrocks for the



*Ac. Shambhūśhivānanda Avt.
Editor-in-Chief, Neohumanist Review*

birth of civilizations. Here, we also share the insights of Shrii Sarkar on the oldest civilizations of North Eastern India, particularly Ra'r'h and its offshoots.

In her work on Bengali mystical poetry and music, Sumaya Machado Lima compares Tagore's poetry with Shrii Sarkar's Prabhat Samgiita. Sumaya concludes that "Sarkar, Tagore, and Spivak possess an agency-like discourse and, directly or indirectly, invite that call for the agency of the universal collective, inviting the planet society to a revolution of love and determination for unity and justice, elements that still resonate in these songs in the struggle for a more equitable and tender world."

Anthony Carlyle's interview with a leading Dutch homeopath, Erik van Woensel, also provides us with excellent insights into classical homeopathy.

At the moment, humanity on planet Earth seems to be on a steep learning curve, learning essential lessons in how to live together to facilitate one another's progress, rather than rushing forward in mad selfishness, crudely stepping over one another in the process. It is our hope that the enlightened articles in this issue will shed further light on pathways worthy of our exploration in our quest for Supreme Humanity.



AI and the Global South: **Colonialization or Emancipation?**

Sudhir Tiku

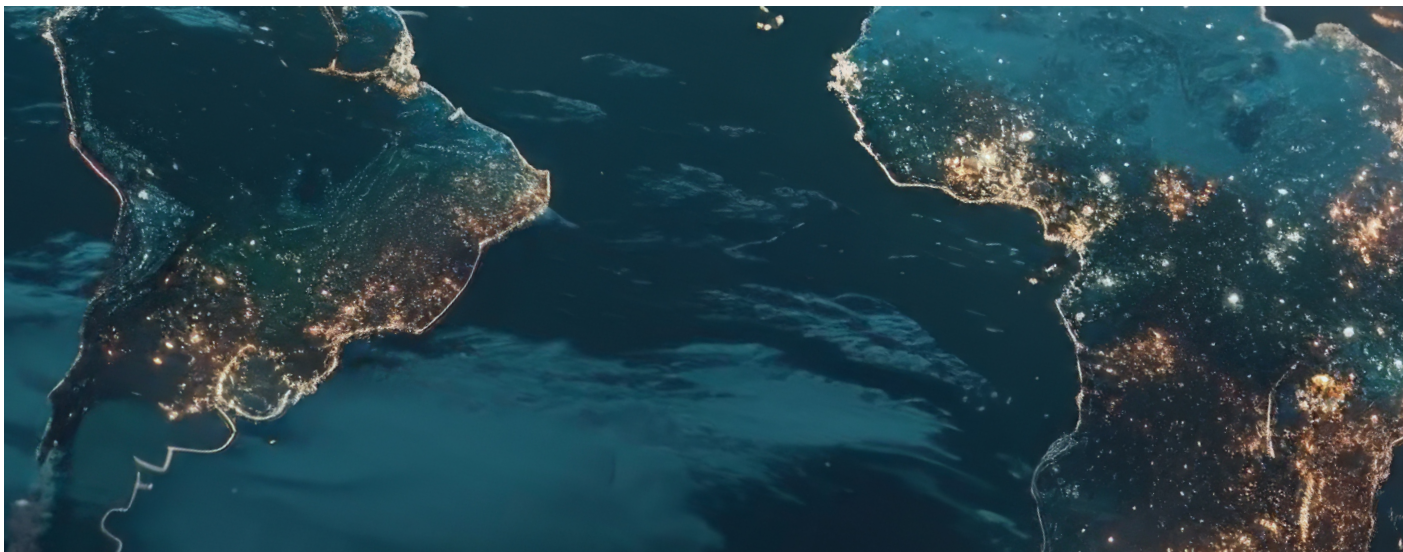
THE TERM "GLOBAL South" The term "Global South" represents a fundamental reorientation of global discourse, moving away from outdated, hierarchical classifications like "First World," "Second World," and "Third World." It's not a geographical designation but a socio-political and economic concept that groups together countries that share a common history and a position of relative disadvantage in the global system. This includes nations in Africa, Latin America, and much of Asia, which were historically subjected to colonization, economic exploitation and political subjugation by a small group of Western powers.

The Global South is no longer a passive recipient of global power dynamics; it is an increasingly influential force actively shaping the 21st century. Its

growing importance is multifaceted, driven by both demographic and economic shifts. Home to a majority of the world's population, its young and growing workforce is the engine of future global economic growth.

The Global South's importance is also evident in its role as a key player in solving some of the world's most pressing problems. Its nations are at the forefront of the climate crisis, despite having

"The Global South": developing, less-developed and emerging economies, mainly in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Oceania, sharing histories of colonialism, imperialism, and economic subordination.





Sudhir Tiku is a Technical Philosopher and an Automation expert based in Singapore. He has extensive work experience in the Automation space across the globe, and is a regular at TEDx circles in the Asia-Pacific region on topics of AI Ethics and its impact on humanity. He has an Engineering degree in Electronics and a Master's in subjects such as Finance and Ethics.

contributed the least to global emissions. The unique knowledge systems and biodiversity of the Global South are also essential for finding solutions to a wide range of global challenges, from food security to sustainable development.

International trade agreements, financial institutions and geopolitical power structures often favour the interests of developed nations. This creates a systemic disadvantage that makes it difficult for Global South nations to industrialize and develop on their own terms. The contemporary phenomenon of "data colonialism," where data from the Global South is extracted and exploited by tech corporations in the Global North, represents a new form of neo-imperialism that perpetuates these power imbalances.

"Data colonialism" is the latest in neo-imperialism. ” ”

Data Colonialism: Hard Numbers

Data colonialism is not a metaphor of protest; it is a system that can be measured and verified. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Digital Economy Report, hints that over 90% of global data centre capacity is located in developed economies.¹ Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for less than 2% of global data centre capacity. The US and China account for more than 90% of the market value of the top digital platforms. More than 75% of cloud infrastructure is controlled by a handful of Western firms. It is also ironic that while Compute infrastructure is monopolised by North, the Global internet traffic has grown 25x in the last decade, with major growth coming from the Global South. Yet most data routing, storage, and analytics layers remain offshore. The global South is a centre for generating and labelling data, while foundational model

¹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Digital Economy Report 2021: Cross-border Data Flows and Development (Geneva: United Nations, 2021).



building and platform distribution are concentrated in the Western world, thereby enabling control over the flow of value. The implications are profound. The Global South generates vast streams of data through its populations, markets and digital adoption. Yet the infrastructure required to store, process and monetize that data is largely located elsewhere. This asymmetry mirrors earlier patterns of economic extraction. Just as raw materials were historically exported from the South and refined in the North, data today is extracted in its raw form—unprocessed, continuous and largely uncompensated—and transformed into high-value outputs elsewhere.

The scale of this extraction becomes clearer when we examine labour. Millions of workers across Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia are engaged in data annotation, content moderation and other forms of digital labour essential to artificial intelligence systems. These workers often earn between one and three dollars per hour. Their task is to label images, filter content, and structure datasets so that machines can learn. This labour is not peripheral; it is foundational. Artificial intelligence systems depend on vast quantities of labelled data to function effectively. Yet the workers who produce this data remain largely invisible. They do not share in the ownership of the systems they help create. They are not recognized as contributors to the intelligence they enable.

Data extraction is further intensified by the nature of consent in the digital economy. Much of the data used to train artificial intelligence systems is scraped from publicly available sources or collected through complex user agreements that few fully understand. This creates a situation in which entire populations in the Global South contribute data without clear knowledge of how it is used or who benefits from it. Communities become sources of raw material, not stakeholders in value creation.

Algorithms today are not passive tools; they are active agents in structuring the world. They determine what information individuals encounter, how risks are assessed and how opportunities are distributed. In doing so, they influence behaviour, perception and decision-making at scale. In law enforcement systems, predictive models use historical data to anticipate future events. Yet when historical data reflects bias or unequal enforcement, the algorithm reproduces these patterns. Communities of Colour or Underprivileged Communities that have been over-policed in the past

are more likely to be flagged in the future. The past becomes encoded into the system, shaping outcomes in a self-reinforcing cycle.

In financial systems, algorithmic assessments determine access to credit, insurance and employment. Individuals whose lives do not fit neatly into structured datasets, often those in informal or rural economies, are frequently excluded. The algorithm becomes a gatekeeper, defining who is recognized as economically viable and who remains invisible.

Control extends beyond infrastructure into governance. International standards for artificial intelligence are often developed within institutions and regulatory frameworks based in the Global North. While these frameworks aim to address important concerns such as safety, transparency, and accountability, they are often designed without fully considering the diverse contexts in which they will be applied. As a result, countries in the Global South often adopt standards that do not fully align with their economic structures, cultural norms, or development priorities. Participation in global governance exists, but influence remains uneven.

The combined effect of these dynamics is a system in which the Global North defines the architecture of the digital world. It controls the infrastructure, sets the standards, directs the flow of capital, and shapes the trajectory of innovation. The Global South, meanwhile, is integrated into this system as a contributor of data and labour but with limited control over its outcomes.

The Global South stands at a critical moment within this unfolding transformation. It can continue to participate in systems designed elsewhere, or it can assert a more active role in shaping them. The difference between these paths is not merely economic or technological. It is existential, and a new Manifesto is needed.

THE GLOBAL SOUTH MANIFESTO

Every manifesto begins with a memory. The Global South remembers more than most. It remembers the spice routes, when nutmeg was worth more than gold and cloves could draw the sails of empires across oceans. It remembers the bodies carried in chains, the languages erased in schools designed to produce clerks, the soil tilled for export crops while hunger stalked the villages. It remembers that progress in the North was often paved with the extraction of resources from the South.

Unlike the chains of the past, enforced by the brute force of empire, today's chains are enforced by the seductions of inevitability.

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Today, the galleons are gone. No cannons guard the harbors. And yet, the inheritance of chains persists, though now they are made not of iron but of code, data, and dependency. What was once taken in silver and spices is now taken in metadata and server time. Once, colonial maps redrew boundaries. Today, algorithms redraw realities. And once again, the South finds itself the silent scaffolding of another revolution.

Consider the ghost workers of Nairobi and Manila, paid a few dollars a day to label millions of images so that AI can recognize cats, traffic lights, or faces. Consider the content moderators in Lagos or Caracas, whose job is to sift through humanity's darkest digital detritus: hate speech, violence, pornography, so that the feeds of the North appear “clean.” This is not innovation.

AI is often described as “disruptive.” For the South, it is not just disruptive; it is recursive. It repeats, with eerie fidelity, the old scripts of dependency. The resource is different: data instead of diamonds, labour clicks instead of sugar cane, but the pattern is hauntingly familiar: value flows outward, while risk and trauma remain behind.

This is the Inheritance of Chains. But unlike the chains of the past, which were enforced by the brute force of empire, today's chains are enforced by the seductions of inevitability. “This is progress,” we are told. “This is the future.” As though the future were a product to be imported, not a canvas to be painted. As though the South were destined only to consume, never to create.

But the South is not merely a victim of this inheritance. It is also its crucible of contradiction. For while it bears the burdens of asymmetry, it also carries the ingenuity of adaptation. The South invented mobile money before Silicon Valley thought of fintech. The South turned patchy grids into laboratories for renewable energy. The South built informal networks of care and cooperation when state systems collapsed. Out of scarcity grew resilience. Out of exclusion grew creativity.

That is why the South cannot afford to remain silent in the age of AI. To inherit chains is one thing. To pass them on is another. The South Manifesto

begins with a refusal: a refusal to let the next century be written in the same ink as the last.

The North tells the story of AI as if it is destiny: more data, more compute, more capital, more models. Bigger is better. Faster is inevitable. The South must challenge this myth. The South must say: AI is not destiny, it is design. And design can be redirected.

The manifesto, therefore, begins not with policy prescriptions but with a call to consciousness. Before one can plant, one must first clear the weeds. The weeds here are the myths:

- The myth that technology is neutral. It is not. It encodes values, and those values are rarely ours.
- The myth that innovation trickles down. It doesn't. It accumulates upwards, leaving scarcity below.
- The myth that scale equals success. It does not. Sometimes the smallest, most local solution is the most transformative.

To inherit chains is not to be condemned by them. It is to learn the art of breaking them, link by link, pattern by pattern. The South has done this before. It resisted colonialism, overturned dictatorships, birthed independence movements. It can do so again. But this time the fight is not for flags or borders. It is for something less visible, more pervasive: the fight for algorithmic sovereignty.

Because the real danger is not just that the South will be exploited again. The real danger is that the South will stop imagining. That it will accept, without question, the rules written elsewhere. That it will confuse adoption with agency, consumption with authorship. Chains are not forged only from steel or silicon. They are forged in the imagination.

The Inheritance of Chains, then, is not just history, but it is psychology. It whispers that “this is the natural order,” that Silicon Valley is the brain and the South is the muscle. It tempts policymakers to settle for pilot projects and charity cloud credits rather than demand sovereignty. It tempts entrepreneurs to imitate rather than innovate.

*Artificial intelligence risks
becoming the latest in a delivery
of prefabricated futures.*



But memory can be weaponized. Memory can also liberate. To inherit chains is also to inherit the wisdom of those who broke them. The manifesto insists: **the South will not be the testing ground of someone else's tomorrow.**

The Right to Imagine

Chains do more than bind bodies; they restrict imagination. That is their most devastating effect. For centuries, the Global South has been told not just what to produce but also what to dream. Plant this crop, build that railway, teach this curriculum, follow this model of development. Imagination, outsourced. Futures, imported.

Artificial intelligence risks becoming the latest delivery of prefabricated futures. A California start-up decides what “healthcare AI” should look like in Lagos. A government in Europe writes rules that later dictate how farmers in Andhra Pradesh may use data.

A corporation in San Francisco designs surveillance algorithms that end up in African cities. The South becomes a theatre where scripts written elsewhere are performed. The most radical act today is not coding an algorithm but claiming the right to imagine outside the defaults. Not asking: “How can we adapt to this new technology?” but instead: “How should intelligence itself be defined, and to what ends should it serve?”

Imagination as Resistance

The Right to Imagine is not indulgence; it is resistance. Because when imagination collapses, dependency follows. If the South accepts its role as mere adopter, then sovereignty ends before the first line of code is written. But if the South insists on imagination; on asking its own questions, shaping its own metaphors, then even limited resources can birth worlds unseen.

Take the Caribbean thinker Édouard Glissant, who spoke of the right to opacity, the right not to be fully legible to outside systems. In the AI age, this means refusing to be reduced to data points, to be flattened into rows and columns. To imagine opacity as dignity is a challenge to every surveillance model that claims to “know” us.

Or consider the Andean myth of the condor and the eagle. The eagle flies high, sharp, fast; the condor soars slower, broader, connected to earth and sky. Both must fly together for harmony to exist. What AI today celebrates is the eagle's logic: efficiency, scale and precision. What the South must imagine is the condor's counterpoint: slowness, depth and entanglement.

The Imagination Deficit of AI

AI, as currently built, suffers from an imagination deficit. It knows how to predict but not how to wonder. It can generate text but not meaning. It can optimize flows of traffic but not flows of justice. That is not a bug but it is a reflection of the imaginations that created it, which was narrow, profit-driven and impatient.

The South's challenge is not to catch up to that imagination but to replace it with broader ones. Imagine an AI trained not only on market data but on oral epics, songs, rituals so it learns rhythms of continuity, not only disruption. Imagine models whose benchmarks are not quarterly profits but lives improved, forests preserved, conflicts avoided. Imagine design guided not by acceleration but by endurance.

The Right to Silence

There is also the right to refuse certain imaginations. Not everything must be digitized. Not every tradition must be extracted into a dataset. A forest may hold more wisdom standing, than mapped by satellites. A story may hold more truth when told face-to-face than when tokenized into a database. Here the Right to Imagine includes the right to keep certain knowledges sovereign, sacred and opaque. To tell the North: Some things are not yours to code.

Work, Dignity and Creation

The imagination crisis is most visible in work. For the North, work is imagined as a commodity: tasks, outputs, productivity. For the South, work has always carried the weight of dignity for the farmers, artisans, teachers and healers. Yet AI threatens to strip this dignity, recasting workers as invisible micro workers feeding someone else's model.

In Silicon Valley, the light of imagination feeds profit. In the South, it could feed survival, resilience and rebirth.



The manifesto responds: the South has the right to imagine work as creation, not depletion. To imagine economies where data is not only extracted but co-owned. Where workers are not hidden annotators but acknowledged co-creators of intelligence. Where the gig economy is replaced by commons economies rooted in reciprocity.

From Consumption to Authorship

The future will not be written by those who consume, but by those who author. Consumption is dependency disguised as participation. Authorship is sovereignty disguised as creation. The right to Imagine is, therefore, the right to Author.

It asks uncomfortable questions:

- Why should machine translation erase dialects when it could expand them?
- Why should predictive policing target poor neighborhoods instead of predicting corruption in boardrooms?
- Why should AI design fast-fashion supply chains instead of designing durable, regenerative economies?

These are not technical questions. They are imaginative ones. And the South must insist on its right to ask them.

Imagination as Photosynthesis

Think of imagination as photosynthesis. Light falls everywhere; satellites beam, cloud servers hum and machine learning frameworks spill across borders. But whether this light becomes nourishment depends on the soil it touches. In Silicon Valley, the light feeds profit. In the South, it could feed survival, resilience and rebirth. The manifesto declares that we will not remain passive soil. We will cultivate imagination as a form of photosynthesis, converting the global light into local nourishment.

A Declaration of Rights

To crystallize, the Right to Imagine includes:

- The Right to Define Intelligence
- The Right to Refuse Digitization
- The Right to Author Futures
- The Right to Be Opaque

These are not utopian claims. They are survival strategies. Because without them, the South remains trapped in the shadow of extraction. With them, the South becomes a source of new metaphors, new ethics, new horizons.

The Unwritten Future

The greatest lie is that the future is already written and that AI is destiny. But the future is unwritten, and the South holds pens of many colors. The task is not to copy the West's script, but to draft new ones, written in voices the machine has never heard. The South Manifesto therefore insists that imagination is not luxury. It is sovereignty.

The Blueprint of Sovereignty

Manifestos must not stop at poetry. They must blueprint. To name injustice is necessary; to imagine alternatives is vital; but to chart a path toward sovereignty is indispensable. Without blueprint, imagination dissolves into aspiration. With blueprint, it becomes direction.

The Global South has long been told it is "catching up." Catching up in industrialization, in education, in infrastructure and in innovation. The very phrase is a trap as it frames the North as the natural destination and the South as a perpetual laggard. Sovereignty requires rejecting the logic of "catching up" and instead defining a different trajectory altogether.

What might that trajectory look like in the age of AI?

The blueprint can be built on five pillars.

1. Sovereign Compute and Infrastructure

Every empire has its factories. In the age of AI, the factory is the data centre. Compute is capital. Without it, imagination is hostage to whoever owns the machines. Today, those machines sit overwhelmingly in the North: clusters of GPUs in California, Frankfurt, Beijing, Seoul.

The blueprint demands:

- **Regional Compute Alliances:** Shared supercomputers built and governed by Southern

Continued on page 60 ..



Tantra and the Hard Problem of Consciousness

Justin Hewitson

Abstract: This essay engages with the debate over the hard problem of consciousness formulated by David Chalmers: why does sentience arise in matter? It interrogates Western physicalism via idealist arguments to challenge the philosophical incoherence of strict empiricism. Establishing the framework of the physicalist-idealist debate exposes the explanatory limits of physicalism — particularly the inadequacies of quantum field theory and weak emergentism in accounting for consciousness. After examining Chalmers's analyses of the dominant scientific and philosophical arguments, the essay proposes that Prabhāt Ranjan Sarkar's modern Tantric idealism develops an ontological response that incorporates physicalist emergentism without succumbing to metaphysical incoherence. Sarkar's *Brahma Cakra* (cycle of creation) provides a rational metaphysical framework that describes how the unqualified Cosmic Consciousness (Metaseity) and its three qualifying energies (*guṇas*) generate matter. In this cycle, nescience and entropy cause the progressive crudification/contraction of Metaseity's unqualified consciousness into mind, then inanimate matter. The syntropic re-emergence of sentience in matter progresses through increasingly complex cellular structures. Sarkar's idealism arguably dissolves the combination problem faced by Russellian monism and the circularity of weak emergentism by viewing consciousness as ontologically primary and matter as its constrained expression. Finally, while conceding the empirical challenge of verifying Sarkar's ontology, the essay proposes that Tantra's first-person meditative phenomenology is a neglected resource for transdisciplinary studies of metaphysics and mind.

Keywords: Tantra, the hard problem of consciousness, P.R. Sarkar, emergentism, physicalism, ontology, *Brahma Cakra*, sentience

Introduction: The Physicalist-Idealist Debate

IN 1995, DAVID Chalmers presented the now-entrenched hard problem of consciousness: why do qualia — and specifically the sentient 'I'-experience — arise in matter? While physicalism dominates the scientific worldview, it has failed to coherently explain how the inert baryonic matter that constitutes biological life generates consciousness. As

a form of material reductionism, physicalism has traditionally searched for a fundamental physical essence, but that substance has not been discovered. Quantum field theory (QFT) currently serves as its standard description of the empirical interactions between the quantum fields that create energy and matter. Although QFT successfully predicts physical



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events, the hard problem of causal sentience remains outside its explanatory reach. The prevalent scientific consensus is that all “concrete phenomena” in the universe are solely material events (Strawson, 2008, p. 19). Physicalist arguments that nothing immaterial exists outside the spacetime continuum and everything within is caused by material interactions (Kim, 2005, p. 150) remain ontologically problematic. While frequently presented as the default causal paradigm, physicalism's dominance is not settled. The major philosophical alternatives, rooted in ancient Western and Eastern thought, are monistic and dualistic variants of idealism. These variants claim reality is essentially mental (Mørch, 2018, p. 40), or that consciousness is ontologically fundamental. Chalmers's observation that the arising of consciousness and its properties of subjectivity and perception in a purely material universe is objectively “utterly unexpected,” consequently provoked an ongoing spectrum of idealist and physicalist responses (Chalmers, 1996, p. 4). Idealists like Philip Goff (2017, p. 1) argue that the hard problem dissolves if we deny mind-independent matter. The divide between the experience-free world described by the physical sciences and the rich subjectivity of conscious experience remains so vast that many philosophers regard the physicalist insistence on bridging it as “little more than an act of faith” (Shear, 1997b, p. 5). But the argument pushes both ways, with physicalist and idealist approaches

Most scholarly idealist responses to the hard problem are Western, but the earliest textual record of idealism is found in the ancient Indian canonical Rg Veda. The causal hierarchy in the Vedic “Creation Hymn” was likely influenced by prehistoric proto-Tantric ideas that reflect India's prehistoric idealist worldview.

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confronting their respective ontological or empirical incoherences.

Jonathan Shear clarifies that physicalism rose to prominence after a long dispute with idealist schools that were rooted in Aristotelian and neo-Platonic traditions, coinciding with the development of modern science in the sixteenth century (1997b, pp. 2, 5). Among the pre-Socratics, Anaxagoras and Heraclitus held that mind directs nature and “steers all things through all things,” while Plato presupposed a “pure transcendental intelligence” regulating “the structural processes of the universe” (Shear, 1997b, p. 1). The conflict between naturalism's empirical successes and idealist rationalism has sharpened through the twentieth century. In *The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins dismisses Western theism as illogical anthropomorphism and deism as diluted theism (2006, p. 18). He endorses physicalism's prevalent weak emergentist position, now associated with Daniel Dennett's response to the hard problem, that consciousness arises from the increasing complexity of information-processing systems, making any transcendent designer unnecessary (2006, p. 117). Some physicalists argue that the concern with an ultimate cause and the dilemma of causal infinite regress — whereby every effect (such as consciousness) requires a cause *ad infinitum* — do not justify a transcendental ontology because weak emergentism will someday solve the problem. Then idealists point towards a distinction that material

emergence leaves unresolved: describing the evolution of mind/consciousness within the right elemental conditions only replaces one belief with another, and the explanatory gap between matter and qualia remains. As physicalists declare consciousness is not present in inanimate matter, any further emergentist proposals that organizational complexity can spontaneously generate a novel ontological category constitute a metaphysical commitment that physicalism rejects. So, the hard problem of consciousness is a contested domain because physicalist reductionism is bound by the ontological inadequacies of its own empirical limits, and idealism is empirically limited by its seemingly unverifiable ontologies.

Most idealist responses to the hard problem are Western, but the first textual record of idealism is found in ancient India's canonical *Rg Veda*. I argue in "Tantric Metaseity in the *Rig Veda*'s 'Creation Hymn': A Sarkarian Reading and New Translation of X.129" that the causal hierarchy present in the Vedic "Creation Hymn" was likely influenced by prehistorical proto-Tantric ideas that reflect India's prehistorical idealist worldview (Hewitson, 2021, pp. 3–7). Currently, a small but increasing number of academics are merging Indian metaphysical systems and their related phenomenological-meditative techniques to analyze the hard problem of consciousness. Interdisciplinary research conducted by renowned philosophers of mind, including F. Varela, Evan Thompson, and Thomas Metzinger, integrates first-person meditative experience with neurophenomenological data. An issue with these significant studies is that they primarily incorporate Buddhist philosophy and praxis. As Sucharit Katyal *et al.* point out, "contemplative research in recent decades" is skewed towards Buddhist mindfulness (2023, p. 1). Tantric philosophy and meditation are evidently underrepresented in cross-cultural research. This essay will therefore present Prabhāt Ranjan Sarkar's (1922–1990) modern Tantric idealism as a coherent ontological response to the hard problem of consciousness in matter that is compatible with aspects of physicalist emergentism and phenomenology.

Although Sarkar (also known as Shrii Shrii Ānandamūrti) presented his Tantric ontology almost three decades before Chalmers highlighted the hard problem, it has not figured substantially in the debate.¹ Sarkar inverts physicalist hierarchies that

treat consciousness as a late evolutionary by-product of physical complexity by presenting a rational metaphysics in which consciousness and its latent qualifying energies are ontologically primary. His modern exegesis of Tantra's idealism also accommodates the evolutionary phenomena physicalist emergentism identifies while supplying a coherent causal ground that emergentism and Buddhism do not achieve. The simplest form of his idealist argument is that if subjective consciousness presupposes some degree of sentience in its conditions of emergence, then sentience is ontologically inherent in all matter. Tantra's *Brahma Cakra* theory describes how sentience emerges. All material phenomena are purportedly generated from the metaphysical properties of a monistic, infinite Cosmic Consciousness, known in ancient and classical Tantra as Siva, *Nirguṇa Brahma*, and Siva-Sakti, amongst other names. For consistency, I use my neologism *Metaseity* for this ultimate self (seity). The cosmological cycle proceeds from Metaseity's infinite consciousness to its first qualified (condensed) expression in Cosmic Mind (Aseity) and its subsequent nescience of inanimate matter. As the cycle reverses, syntropic energy (forces fostering organization) causes consciousness to reemerge through progressively more complex neurological cellular structures that manifest increasing sentience, paralleling weak emergentism. Although not the focus of this essay, it is important to note Sarkar's view that phenomenological intuitions achieved during meditative states can track the path of consciousness through matter.²

chapters "After Materialism" and "The Structure of Matter" give detailed background to Sarkar's causal cosmology. Also see Towsey's "The Theory of Microvita" for a speculative look at Sarkar's late introduction of the theory of microvita as a bridge between "the matter-mind spectrum of traditional eastern philosophy" (2011, p. 166). Also see Richard Gauthier's "The Cosmic Cycle of Creation and Microvita: Mind, Matter and Consciousness" in *Transcending Boundaries: Prabhāt Ranjan Sarkar's Theories of Individual and Social Transformation* for an overview of the vibrational cycle of creation. Note that for the purpose of this essay's discussion of the hard problem, I have decided to set aside Sarkar's late theory of microvita because Tantric ontology is rationally developed vis-à-vis his *Brahma Cakra* cycle of creation. It is anticipated that future studies of microvita theory will deepen the connection between matter and consciousness.

² A deeper discussion of Tantric meditation is beyond the scope of this paper; however, it is not phenomenological

¹ See Michael Towsey's *Eternal Dance of the Macrocosm: An Encyclopedia of Matter, Mind and Consciousness*, whose



"Shrīi Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar's cosmic cycle begins with a singular Unqualified State whose infinite consciousness is original and undivided. At every stage of the cycle, the sentient principle is present from the outset, and what the cycle produces is not new sentience but the increasingly clear expression of sentience that was always latent in matter."

This essay approaches the physicalist-idealist hard problem of consciousness in three stages. Section 1. *Physicalist Limitations: QFT, Evolution, and Weak Emergentism* briefly analyzes the causal deficiencies of current physicalism. It broadly outlines why emergentism and quantum field theory are inadequate to support the claim that consciousness can emerge from strictly material descriptions of reality. It then considers Chalmers's influential critique of physicalism and the principle

introspection in the loose sense familiar to early-modern philosophy but a structured technique whose object is the witnessing mind's apprehension of its own causal source. Tantric meditators expand their minds by attuning their mental flow with the sentient force to transcend the qualifying causal principles. The outcome of effective practice is that individual minds reduce the wavelength between themselves and Aseity, and, in some exceptionally rare cases, dissolve back into Metaseity. Accordingly, Sarkar (1959/2006d, para. 3) describes Tantric meditation as a scientific procedure that transforms plurality into singularity.

of causal adequacy. Section 2. *Tantra's Monistic Idealism* explores Sarkar's Tantric metaphysics and its philosophical contributions to the hard problem. It proposes that the *Brahma Cakra* cycle does not bridge the explanatory gap between matter and sentience but attempts to dissolve it via metaphysical monism. Section 3. *Conclusion: Integrating Philosophy and the Hard Question of Evidence* interrogates the epistemic issues of Tantra's idealist responses to the hard problem. This essay contributes a necessary philosophical prolegomenon to future transdisciplinary phenomenological studies of consciousness that incorporate Sarkar's Tantric metaphysics.

1. Physicalist Limitations: QFT, Evolution, and Weak Emergentism

For Chalmers, the hard problem of consciousness is how "non-conscious spatio-temporal structures" generate the subjective qualia of colors, feelings, emotions, memories, meaning, and thought that flow through our consciousness (Shear, 1997b, p. 1). The

primary qualia underlying these experiences is sentience, so its origin is the definitive hard problem. Before continuing, the constraints of this work demand oversimplifying complex physics and evolutionary theory covered by numerous books and countless articles in the last century. Because physicalist emergentism dominates the hard problem debate, this section offers a broad outline of its ontological inconsistencies critiqued by Western idealists.

The foundational limitations of physicalism are evidenced by the provisional status of its most robust framework, Quantum Field Theory (QFT). Physicists acknowledge that QFT is not a final theory of reality but is fundamentally an Effective Field Theory (EFT) — a mathematical approximation that describes physical phenomena within a specific energy range, while remaining silent on the more fundamental regime operating at higher energy scales (Weinberg, 1999, p. 499). Cao and Schweber's analysis of QFT's renormalization theory suggests the reductionist dream of a single fundamental ontology in atomism is flawed. Rather, renormalization indicates a layered structure of reality organized into an infinite hierarchy of quasi-autonomous domains, where each level possesses its own fundamental laws and objective emergent ontology (1993, p. 71). The limits of EFT help us see that “scientific theories” are not the inevitable outcome of “scientific rationality” but “contingent descriptions of nature, revisable in the course of changing circumstances” (p. 71), and that making the choice of “foundational schemes” demands specialization in “conceptual analysis acquired mainly through the study of logic and philosophy” (p. 90). Nevertheless, the critical appraisal of our scientific theories is generally seen by empiricists as redundant because physicalism's objectivity is supposed to take care of interpretation. This perspective ignores the reality that objective data about the universe is always subjectively constrained by the researcher's worldview.

The current scientific consensus places the age of the universe at approximately 13.8 billion years, and for most of that time it was entirely devoid of consciousness. Contemporary phylogeny and fossil records indicate that roughly 3.5 billion years ago, the combination of inanimate carbon and other elements on Earth produced cellular life. These compounds transformed into the molecular organic structures of RNA and DNA, establishing a dual system of nucleic acids functioning as the universe's

first known information-processing architecture. DNA serves as the archival storage of the genetic blueprint, while RNA acts as the dynamic intermediary for translation, shifting the terrestrial narrative from simple chemical coincidences to intentional design. For material emergentists, this transition marks the point at which matter begins to code for its own future existence, providing the material substrate for the consciousness in organic matter. Our earliest evidence of such sentience appears in microbes from the Pilbara Craton in Western Australia, dated to 3.5 billion years ago, not long after the differentiation of Earth's core and mantle some 4.54 billion years ago. From these primitive origins, progressively complex cellular organisms developed the capacity to code and transmit genetic information to offspring. We do have a reasonable picture of the historical blueprint for organic life, yet the threshold at which sentience appears in the evolutionary chain remains opaque.

The current debate over the Cellular Basis of Consciousness (CBC) sees some biologists treating consciousness as a fundamental feature of cellular life itself (Segundo-Ortín & Calvo, 2022, p. 10). Others insist that sentience requires “neurons, synapses, and a brain” and explain cellular tracking behavior through simple reception-response mechanisms (Mallatt et al., 2021, pp. 460–461). Physicalism's favored theory of weak emergentism proposes that an unexpected property like consciousness in matter can be explained with a deep enough understanding of the constituting parts. When physical systems reach a certain threshold of structural complexity, they exhibit novel properties that were not present (or not previously detectable) in their constituent elements. In other words, macro-level qualia arise from the complex organization and interaction of simpler, non-sentient parts manifesting as consciousness. Weak emergentism attempts to bridge the gap between when and how by asserting that macro-level properties, like our existential ‘I’ feeling, are “simulation-dependent” results of micro-level dynamics (Bedau, 1997, p. 375). These technical obfuscations aside, consciousness remains an inexplicable emergent property of neurochemical organic tissue unprecedented in matter. Weak emergentism also dispenses with the standard physicalist requirement that effects, such as sentience, reflect the intrinsic properties of their causes. As Philip Clayton states, “Emergence theories [ultimately] presuppose that the project of

Buddhist research dominates academia because its primary and secondary literature is considerably more developed than that of Tantra. The existing Saiva and associated Tantric literature is primarily philological, with the few extant hermeneutical texts typically published in non-scholarly venues.

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explanatory reduction — explaining all phenomena in the natural world in terms of the objects and laws of physics — is finally impossible” (2004, p. 2). Given that materialists cannot agree where sentience first appears in the evolutionary record, any claim that complexity produces sentience is circular because the threshold is placed wherever sentience is already assumed. This does not deny elemental complexity is a prerequisite for the emergence of sentience in organic matter. I do argue that weak emergentism is essentially speculative metaphysics dressed up in empirical facts that do not answer the problem of why or how qualia appear in matter. Currently, emergentism can only point towards the ‘when’ of this appearance.

Some physicalists try to negate the problem in a deflationary move that Chalmers calls type-A materialism: denying that there is a hard problem of consciousness distinct from the easy problems. Dennett proposes that by carefully disassociating all the “remarkable functions” attributed to subjective consciousness, there will be “nothing left” to wonder about (Dennett, 1997, p. 35). Type-A materialists either deny that consciousness exists or claim that consciousness may exist but only if it is defined as something like “reportability” or some other functional capacity (Chalmers, 1997b, p. 380). For instance, Dennett redirects attention from the cause of consciousness to what he calls the “hard question” — what happens once content enters consciousness, dissolving rather than resolving the ontological problem (Dennett, 1997, p. 33). But this dissolution, Chalmers argues, relies on a conceptual sleight of hand by redefining consciousness in purely functional terms, so that explaining the functions explains everything (Chalmers, 2010, p. 29). Rather than responding to the ontological question raised by emergentism, type-A materialism declines to ask it.

Chalmers challenges weak emergentism with strong emergence, arguing that if the existence of consciousness is not deducible from physical facts,

then it is a “further fact about the world” (1996, pp. 123–124). His argument against explaining consciousness purely in terms of physicalist causality is that physical processes can naturally only ever produce more structure and function, which become the ceiling of what any physical explanation can offer. The subjective quality of experience cannot simply fall out of a physical account as an automatic consequence because it is entirely conceivable that any given physical process could occur without any experience accompanying it at all. While experience may emerge from the physical world, the physical world does not logically guarantee or necessitate it (Chalmers, 1997a, p. 18). His response to this impasse is instructive as a bridge to Sarkar’s Tantric idealism discussed in section 2. Chalmers’s Type-F Monism (or Russellian Monism) observes that physics characterizes entities only by their relations, remaining silent on their intrinsic nature (2010, p. 133). He hypothesizes that those intrinsic properties may themselves be phenomenal or *protophenomenal* — that is, capable, when organized appropriately, of constituting conscious experience (2010, p. 147). On this view, consciousness is not an epiphenomenal afterthought but “the ultimate categorical basis of all physical causation” (2010, p. 134). So, Chalmers believes there is “good reason to suppose that consciousness has a fundamental place in nature” (2010, p. 139). Type-F Monism’s philosophical position is thus not strictly idealist because it does not claim that mind is the only basis of physical objects but that there is a fundamental relational experience between objects. Critically, it does not deconstruct this ontological causal relation.

The principle that any effect requires its cause to contain the potential of said effect is not a peculiarity of pre-modern metaphysics. It underwrites the standard scientific commitment that effects can be traced to the properties of their antecedent conditions. Descartes’s classical formulation captures

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Transhumanism - Promise or Peril?

A Critical Reflection

Aaron Frank

IN NOVEMBER 2018, a landmark summit in Hong Kong convened 500 of the world's leading biomedical researchers, policymakers, and ethicists to confront a suite of pressing issues that a new technology had forced upon the world.

Just six years earlier, a research team led by two biochemists, Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier, published their work, revealing what is now widely considered one of the most important discoveries in the history of biology. CRISPR-Cas9, as it's known, is a type of 'genetic scissors'¹ that give scientists an unprecedented ability to modify DNA at the level of single nucleotides, the basic units of A, T, C, and G that make up our genetic information.

Just as computers can edit letters in a Word file,² the world now possesses a cheap, easy-to-use method for genetically modifying anything made of DNA. At the time of the discovery, scientists hailed its potential to cure genetic diseases and develop more sustainable agriculture. The ethical implications were also obvious since the technology offers an ability to genetically modify human beings, not only to eliminate disease but perhaps optimize for intelligence or physical traits. The phrase 'designer baby' became widely used in imagining this future.

¹ Gostimskaya I. CRISPR-Cas9: A History of Its Discovery and Ethical Considerations of Its Use in Genome Editing. *Biochemistry* (Mosc). 2022;87(8):777-788. doi:10.1134/S0006297922080090

² Pollack A. Jennifer Doudna, a Pioneer Who Helped Simplify Genome Editing. *The New York Times*. May 11, 2015. Accessed April 9, 2026. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/12/science/jennifer-doudna-crispr-cas9-genetic-engineering.html>

Chaired by the US National Academy of Sciences, the Royal Society of the U.K., and the Academy of Sciences of Hong Kong, Doudna and her fellow committee members convened the summit to seek a global consensus on ethical issues related to the genetic modification of human beings using CRISPR.³

In a twist that shocked the world, that future came far sooner than the committee anticipated.

Just days before the summit was set to begin, He Jiankui, a Chinese researcher, revealed in an accidentally leaked video that he had not only used CRISPR to modify the embryos of twin girls, but subsequently implanted them in the womb of their mother to generate a pregnancy. The power to rewrite the genetic code of a human life was no longer a speculative future. For the first time, at least confirmed to science, human beings are born on earth with deliberately altered DNA and capable of passing those genetic changes to future generations.

The science community immediately recognized that a threshold of deep significance had been crossed, and the condemnation from the gathering was emphatic. They described He's work as reckless, premature, and ethically irresponsible. Seeking to create distance, He's University in Shenzhen immediately issued a statement expressing "deep shock" at the experiment, which they stressed was done without their knowledge.

³ Ruwitch J. His baby gene editing shocked ethicists. Now he's in the lab again. *NPR*. June 8, 2023. Accessed April 9, 2026. <https://www.npr.org/2023/06/08/1178695152/china-scientist-he-jiankui-crispr-baby-gene-editing>



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Given the overwhelming response, He was invited to address the summit to share more details. In the lecture, attended by dozens of journalists, he defended his experiment as an effort to modify a specific gene, CCR5, which encodes a protein that HIV uses to infect blood cells.⁴ Citing the heavy disease burden that HIV/AIDS has on much of Africa, He's goal was to knock out the gene as a way to make the babies resistant to HIV.

Shortly after the summit concluded, He disappeared in China before reappearing in a Shenzhen courtroom where he was sentenced to three years in prison for "illegal medical practices." The court found He had forged ethical review documents and misled the doctors who implanted the embryos.⁵

The episode involving He Jiankui, which is still ongoing, suddenly, and perhaps uncomfortably, makes it clear that a range of powerful technologies are rapidly emerging that promise to reshape our ability to steer the direction of humanity and life on our planet. This is true not only in biotechnology but also in areas including nanotechnology, computing, brain-machine interfaces, artificial intelligence, and many others.

⁴ Normile D. Researcher who created CRISPR twins defends his work but leaves many questions unanswered. Accessed April 10, 2026. <https://www.science.org/content/article/researcher-who-created-crispr-twins-defends-his-work-leaves-many-questions-unanswered>

⁵ Normile D. Chinese scientist who produced genetically altered babies sentenced to 3 years in jail. Accessed April 11, 2026. <https://www.science.org/content/article/chinese-scientist-who-produced-genetically-altered-babies-sentenced-3-years-jail>

While science, technology, and human reason can and should be used as tools for humanity to overcome many of the afflictions we encounter, today's transhumanism reflects a profound imbalance in its overreliance on engineering and logical reasoning at the expense of other ways of engaging the world.

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In this rapidly developing technological context, transhumanism, a philosophy advocating the use of technology to enhance, augment, or ultimately transcend the limitations of human biology, has gained relevance as a growing area of interest.

Given its likely increased cultural presence, especially its popularity among influential figures across Silicon Valley, it's worth measuring transhumanist ideas against the Neohumanist philosophy of PR Sarkar. While Neohumanism preserves the importance of reason, rationality, and science in human society, it also "asserts the centrality of spirituality and the intuitive faculties to human experience."⁶

As Dr Kathleen Kesson describes it: "[Neohumanism] acknowledges the sanctity of all life forms and urges us to live in accordance with deep ecological principles, a revival of the ancestral wisdom embodied by people who have lived in sustainable ways with their biosystems for centuries. It recognizes the vitality and worth of all the cultures of the world and argues against the homogenization of local cultures through economic and cultural exploitation. It regards all beings as worthy and advances a rational and egalitarian distribution of wealth and resources, so that all people on the planet are guaranteed a minimum standard of living, and it challenges all forms of violence, imperialism, racism, sexism, exploitation, and injustice."⁷

When measuring the project of contemporary transhumanism against this worldview, several

⁶ Kesson K. *The Posthuman Era*.

⁷ Ibid.

troubling issues arise. Transhumanism today largely fails to align with Neohumanist ideas due to three core objections put forward in this essay.

First, the movement is deeply rooted in Enlightenment-era knowledge systems, which fetishise human reason to the exclusion of other sensemaking and maintains a dogmatic commitment to scientific materialism. As such, its current incarnation is particularly poisoned by its emergence within the structures of global capitalism.⁸ Second, today's transhumanist ambitions are steered by an egoic desire for control with the risk of "shaping our society in the direction of our existing neuroses."⁹ Third, transhumanist discourse is structurally rooted in a pathologizing (*treating as a disease*) of existing human traits, experiences, and conditions.¹⁰

This essay will argue that while Neohumanism certainly has room to celebrate the ways science and technology can be rationally applied to improve the well-being of humanity and life on this planet, it would urge extreme caution for those seeking to align with today's transhumanist ideologies.

Introduction to Transhumanism

The origins of transhumanism are often traced to an influential 1957 essay by Julian Huxley, a prominent British evolutionary biologist and eugenicist. Huxley was a lifelong supporter of eugenics, a theory and practice that involves controlling human reproduction to optimize genetic traits in a population. In the pre-war years of the 1930's, Huxley championed a centrally organized state project with "eugenics as part of an agenda of social planning and to shape the emergent welfare state on biological lines."¹¹ He argued that nations should seek to select traits considered beneficial to society, such as intelligence and physical health.¹²

Following Nazi atrocities in their pursuit of racial cleansing, a project that many observed shared

⁸ Thomas A. A Brief History of Transhumanism and its Critics. In: The Politics and Ethics of Transhumanism. 1st ed. Techno-Human Evolution and Advanced Capitalism. Bristol University Press; 2024:1-31. doi:10.2307/jj.14284473.4

⁹ Pacheco A. Personal Discussion. April 7, 2026.

¹⁰ Rübsaam A. Personal Discussion. March 23, 2026.

¹¹ Weindling P. 'Julian Huxley and the Continuity of Eugenics in Twentieth-century Britain.' J Mod Eur Hist. 2012;10(4):480-499. doi:10.17104/1611-8944_2012_4

¹² Duncan J. Julian Huxley: The prophet of transhumanism. *Refineline*. September 10, 2025. Accessed April 11, 2026. <https://refineline.co/the-prophet-of-transhumanism/>



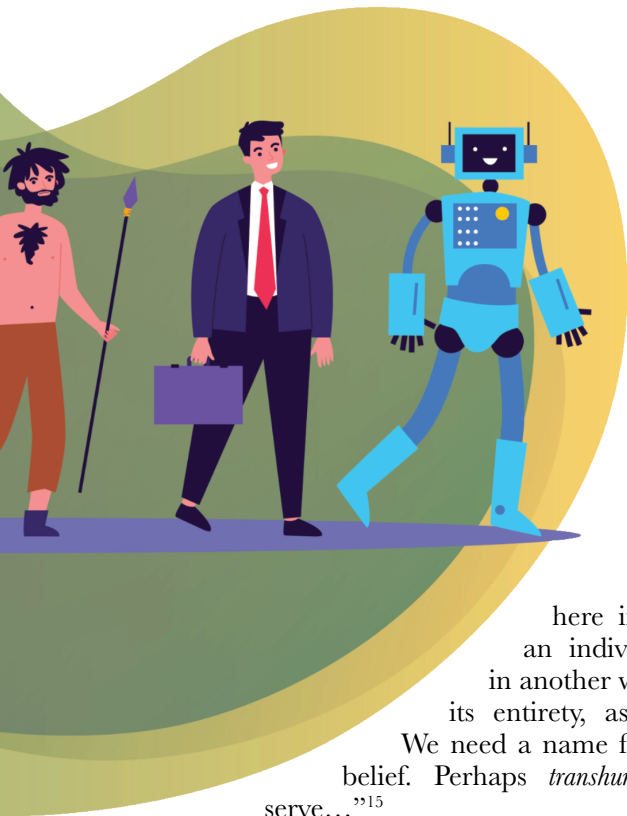
significant overlap with the ideas proposed by Huxley, he became an outspoken anti-racist, suggesting race played no meaningful role in biological heredity. However, Huxley never renounced the idea that societies should steer human evolution based on biological traits and maintained a lifelong justification for controlled human evolution based on genetic science. A strong believer in IQ as a measure of intelligence, Huxley believed that average intelligence could be increased if more people of higher IQ had children together.¹³

Transhumanism, a term he used periodically in the 1950's, came to serve as shorthand for his views on 'evolutionary humanism', the idea that human beings are not the destination of creation but rather one step in a ceaseless journey of evolutionary change.¹⁴ This view, at least, is shared by Sarkar's vision of Neohumanism.

In his 1957 *New Bottles for New Wine* essay, Huxley writes: "The human species can, if it wishes, transcend itself – not just sporadically, an individual

¹³ Bernhardt-Radu S. Julian S Huxley, the man who put eugenics into UNESCO | *Aeon Essays*. Accessed April 11, 2026. <https://aeon.co/essays/julian-s-huxley-the-man-who-put-eugenics-into-unesco>

¹⁴ Philip JK. A Philosophical History of Transhumanism | Issue 160 | *Philosophy Now*. Accessed March 30, 2026. https://philosophynow.org/issues/160/A-Philosophical_History_of_Transhumanism



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In *The Politics and Ethics of Transhumanism*, Dr. Alexander Thomas, a professor at the University of East London, offers a comprehensive history of the movement and its intellectual landscape since then. He begins by describing how today's transhumanism evades simple definition due to the widely varying lineages, factions, and interpretations that comprise its philosophical territory.

Among the primary differences Thomas notes is the degree to which various groups emphasize their stated goals of 'super-longevity', 'super-intelligence', and 'super-wellbeing'. Thomas points out that the first two of these goals are quantifiable, with the caveat that intelligence is still largely measured by the "historically compromised methodology of IQ," which Nassim Taleb, a known statistician and public intellectual, describes as a pseudo-scientific swindle.¹⁶ Defining concepts of well-being, by contrast, requires navigating subjectively defined

¹⁵ Julian Huxley. *New Bottles For New Wine*. 1957. Accessed April 11, 2026. <http://archive.org/details/NewBottlesForNewWine>

¹⁶ Taleb NN. IQ is largely a pseudoscientific swindle. *INCERTO*. August 26, 2025. Accessed April 11, 2026. <https://medium.com/incerto/iq-is-largely-a-pseudoscientific-swindle-fl31c101ba39>

The overwhelming success of technology and engineering as tools for manipulating aspects of material reality has further entrenched these cognitive patterns as a foundation for metaphysical truth.

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constructs shaped by cultural values, a feature which resists the reductive engineering-first approach advanced by most transhumanist advocates. Tellingly, there are many fewer transhumanists focused on this third category of well-being.¹⁷

Another important division relates to those who prioritize the use of biotechnologies such as genetic engineering to enhance human beings, and those who believe that we'll migrate 'ourselves' to alternative computational substrates, leaving behind the fleshy world of biology altogether. The ideas of this second group, most notably expressed in the work of Ray Kurzweil, are rooted in a reductive understanding of consciousness and intelligence, which holds that these are exclusively phenomena of 'information-processing.' For this group, transcending the human form involves merging with, or uploading our consciousness into, computers.

Finally, a further distinction concerns the contextual politics that inform how transhumanists pursue their ambitions. Thomas writes:

"Transhumanists are broadly split between two poles: the right-leaning techno-libertarian wing, often associated with Silicon Valley, and the left-leaning techno-progressive faction most notably represented by transhumanist James Hughes. The former generally emphasize the rights of individuals to upgrade themselves, whereas the latter offer more recognition of the societal implications, advocating a politics which fosters responsibility towards humanity at large to ensure transhumanist aims are broadly inclusive."

At one end of the poles, the techno-libertarian faction currently enjoys funding and support from tech billionaire Peter Thiel and other significant figures. This form of transhumanism took root in the

¹⁷ Thomas A. A Brief History of Transhumanism and its Critics. In: *The Politics and Ethics of Transhumanism*. 1st ed. Techno-Human Evolution and Advanced Capitalism. Bristol University Press; 2024:1-31. doi:10.2307/jj.14284473.4

early 1990's when Max More, a British philosopher, and others, began publishing *Extropy Magazine*, a publication which over time articulated a worldview deeply rooted in enlightenment concepts of 'individual liberty' and the elevation of 'rational logic' as the dominant sensemaking tool to discover the nature of things.

The group's emphasis on individual liberty underpins its stated opposition to eugenics, which many still associate with transhumanist ambitions. In the extropian view, the association with eugenics is no longer valid because of their focus on bodily autonomy over state-enforced policies governing procreative choice. The preservation of individual choice is often cited as a critical distinction between contemporary transhumanism and 20th-century eugenics.

Rather than disavowing the ambitions of the eugenics movement, however, their project displaces decision-making agency from the state to the individual. Embedded within this libertarian worldview, the group also articulates a fundamentalist belief in markets that ought to guide the emergence and morality of new technologies. *Extropy Magazine* was known to publish frequent support for the ideas of Ayn Rand and Milton Friedman, going so far as to endorse the idea of privatizing the air and oceans.¹⁸

At the other pole are the techno-progressives and James Hughes, a contradictory presence when Neohumanist perspectives are measured against transhumanism. While genuinely attempting to take the political and social critiques of transhumanism seriously, often questioning its Enlightenment assumptions, Hughes, a bioethicist and sociologist, will equally publish transhumanist boosterism, asking us to "embrace transhumanism – to collectively enhance human intelligence" and "merge with our electronic exocortex, wiring greater memory, thought processing, and communication directly in our brains."¹⁹

His views often demonstrate a clear recognition that, without social equity, inequalities from the emergence of new technologies are likely to produce new capacities for concentrated power and control. While Hughes, a non-theistic former Buddhist monk, can sometimes align with Neohumanism, he equally deviates from several key Neohumanist

perspectives. Hughes champions a physicalist model of reality, indicating his commitment to scientific materialism, and he often perpetuates many of the reductionist paradigms that inform transhumanist concepts, including a computer engineering approach to "moral enhancement."²⁰

None of the objections this essay will now propose are fully original in their confrontation with transhumanist ideology.

The group of critics who have proposed similar arguments have come to be known collectively as bioconservatives. As Thomas notes, scholars from a range of domains have questioned the "transhumanist dependency on the outdated figure of the liberal human subject", "the failure of transhumanists to acknowledge and contend with the 'wicked complexity' in which we are enmeshed", and the modernist approach of presuming an objective and external "universal" truth.²¹

Objection 1: Transhumanism as an Outdated Expression of Enlightenment Era Assumptions

Perhaps the biggest conceptual flaw at the heart of transhumanism, and much of contemporary thinking, is the reductionist view that fundamental reality can be understood as a linear machine of individual parts. Like unseen dry rot beneath a polished floor, this overextended cognitive frame quietly shapes many of the hidden assumptions powering the modern world. Traceable through the Western canon,²² and finding expression in the Enlightenment's elevation of logical reasoning as the highest form of sensemaking, this view rests on a variety of 'articles of faith' assumptions smuggled in as self-evident truths.

Among these assumptions are the atomist views of scientific materialism, which hold that reality is fundamentally physical and intrinsically composed of a ground layer of smallest separate particles. This fuels today's mainstream science in the so-far-fruitless search for consciousness derived from physical systems. It also partially explains the transhumanist belief that we might one day upload ourselves into computers.

Another is the dualistic idea that there exists some intrinsic separation between an external objective

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Hughes J. The Big Questions: What comes after Homo Sapiens. *New Scientist*. Accessed April 14, 2026. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg19225780-076-the-big-questions-what-comes-after-homo-sapiens/>

²⁰ Hughes J. Cyborg Virtues: Using Brain Stimulation for Moral Enhancement. In: Dubljević V, Coin A, eds. *Policy, Identity, and Neurotechnology: The Neuroethics of Brain-Computer Interfaces*. Springer International Publishing; 2023:151-168. doi:10.1007/978-3-031-26801-4_9

²¹ Thomas A. A Brief History of...

²² Lent, J. (2017). *The Patterning Instinct: A Cultural History of Humanity's Search for Meaning*. Prometheus Books.

Perhaps the biggest conceptual flaw at the heart of transhumanism, and much of contemporary thinking, is the reductionist view that fundamental reality can be understood as a linear machine of individual parts.

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reality and a “neutral” subjective observer. The Enlightenment's focus on the liberal individual, which prefers framing humans as self-contained islands of activity rather than socially embedded in communities, is an unsurprising ‘social theory’ expression of this knowledge system. Along with the structures of global capitalism, which often poison the emergence of new technologies in society, these ideas are central to much of today's transhumanism.

Rather than acknowledging the indivisible wholeness of existence as a singular web of non-linear connection, this worldview trades in the currencies of separation, rigidity, and linear cause-and-effect.

The overwhelming success of technology and engineering as tools for manipulating aspects of material reality has further entrenched these cognitive patterns as a foundation for metaphysical truth. Logical reasoning is certainly a necessary tool for understanding and acting on the natural world and was understandably significant in the context of medieval religious institutions, which had long dressed up their political power in the language of ‘divine truth’. But what began as liberation hardened into its own form of dogma, extending the tools of logic beyond their appropriate domain. Neohumanism isn't a rejection of science or the engineering of nature, but it does seek to recalibrate an overextended use of logical reasoning with other tools of sensemaking. As Sohail Inayatullah points out, Sarkar often identifies other ways of coming to know reality which include things like sense inference, intuition, and devotion.²³

With its optimization-obsessed approach to engineering the human experience, transhumanism is an expression of the overextension of the use of reason.

Nowhere is this more readily observable than in the world of 21st-century biology, where transhumanist science often presumes that living cells are equivalent to computers, with DNA as their digital software. Understanding DNA through the

lens of a linear cause-and-effect relationship is entirely misaligned with most biologists' understanding of life as an irreducibly complex system of non-linear interaction. During his press conference, He Jiankui was pressed to defend his decision to knock out the CCR5 gene, which many argued was unnecessary for preventing HIV/AIDS in the girls. Research also indicates this gene has several roles in the immune system. The twin girls of his study may now be particularly susceptible to a range of other diseases, including West Nile virus.²⁴ Biology, like reality itself, does not easily subject itself to the controls of discrete optimization.

Another area involves the transhumanist obsession with boosting ‘intelligence’, a phenomenon that is often reduced to a single, poorly specified definition. As Melanie Mitchell describes it, “most cognitive scientists would agree that intelligence is not a quantity that can be measured on a single scale and arbitrarily dialed up and down, but rather a complex integration of general and specialised capabilities that are, for the most part, adaptive in a specific evolutionary niche.”²⁵

Put another way, intelligence depends on its context. Much like asking whether I am smarter than a squirrel should be followed up with a clarification of whether we are measuring an ability to store and then recover acorns in the winter, ‘intelligence’ as a feature, is dependent on what is being accomplished. The common colloquial distinction between book-smart and street-smart should suggest that there is no universal attribute called intelligence that, as transhumanists believe, can be boosted.

Relatedly, today's fixation on IQ is another testament to our mechanistic age. Invented by French psychologist Alfred Binet in 1909 to identify children with learning disabilities, and who explicitly warned against extrapolating his test into a “single,

Continued on page 68 ...

²³ Inayatullah S. Rethinking Science and Culture. In: *Situating Sarkar*. Gurukul Publications; 1999.

²⁴ Normile D. Researcher who created CRISPR...

²⁵ Mitchell M. Debates on the nature of artificial general intelligence. *Science*. 2024;383(6689):eado7069. doi:10.1126/science.ado7069



The River Within Us: Rediscovering Our Sacred Bond with Rivers

Shermon Cruz

THERE IS A moment I return to often in my memory where I stand at the edge of a river at dawn, and I feel that boundary between myself and the river dissolves. Then I sense, in silence, that the water flowing before me is memory, it is life itself. It is something far older and wiser than any human being ever could.

Is this a glimpse of a deeper truth? Is it the surface of a truth that I have spent years trying to make sense of? I tried to understand and articulate this through my studies and research into what I call The River of Dharma.

Rivers as the Backbone of Civilization

My inquiry begins with Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, a spiritual guru and socio-linguistic philosopher whose life work continues to guide my own. I began to search and read more than a hundred of Sarkar's stories, analyses and writings on rivers and civilizations. He posited that rivers are not merely hydrological features of the landscape. They are the very backbones of human civilization. Before wells, before roads, before the scaffolding of the modern state, rivers were where human beings first gathered, first exchanged, first formed the bonds of community and culture. Along their banks, languages were born. At their confluences, civilizations merged and blossomed into something greater than the sum of their parts.

Sarkar observed that each phase of a river parallels a stage of civilizational development: the hill stage, swift and original, giving rise to simple languages and early cultures; the plains stage, where

streams converge, and dialects interweave; and the delta stage, expansive and complex, where the full richness of a civilization reaches its flowering. In this view, the river appears to be the author of human history.

What strikes me most deeply in his writing is the recognition that rivers carry within them something Sarkar called dharma — the intrinsic sustaining essence of life and the cosmos. For Sarkar, a river flowing to the sea is not simply obeying the laws of physics. It is an enactment of a moral and spiritual journey, from origin to union, from the individual stream to the vast ocean of consciousness. And thus to live near a river, to depend on it, to revere it, is to participate in that dharmic journey.

What We Have Lost – and What We Are Doing to Ourselves

Yet look at what we have made of our rivers. Across the world — and painfully close to home, as I see in the Pasig River here in the Philippines — rivers have been reduced to open drains, to industrial corridors, to contested real estate along their banks. We have treated them as objects to be engineered and owned, rather than as living relationships to be tended.

In my research, I call this dominant paradigm the Masters of the Universe — a worldview in which humans stand above nature, controlling and extracting rather than listening and reciprocating. Under this paradigm, rivers are severed not only from their ecological function but from their cultural and spiritual role. The communities that once gathered along their banks drew meaning from their



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floods and seasons and sang songs in their honor. These communities' succeeding generation, unfortunately, are fragmented, their stories suppressed, their indigenous place names erased and replaced by the language of colonial rule and corporate development.

Sarkar understood this deeply. He lamented that the decline of rivers often paralleled the decline of civilizations. Marked not only by ecological degradation but by cultural amnesia, a forgetting of who we are and where we come from. For Sarkar, when we pollute a river, we not only harm an ecosystem. We sever ourselves from our own memory. I feel this deeply as a Filipino living in Metro Manila, where the Pasig River and the surrounding landscapes hold centuries of stories that colonialism and industrialisation have tried their hardest to erase.

Neohumanism and the River as Sacred Being

It is here that Neohumanism offers us something transformative and necessary. Sarkar's Neohumanist philosophy extends our circle of love and ethical responsibility beyond the human family to encompass all living beings — plants, animals, rivers, and the Earth itself. It calls us to recognize the intrinsic value of every expression of life, not merely its utility to us.

When I look at a river through Neohumanist eyes, I do not see a resource. I see a sacred being. I see a teacher of interdependence, a mirror of the soul's journey from ego to expansion, from the self to the cosmos. The river asks us: Can you move as I

move — with patience, with persistence, shaping the landscape not through force but through faithful flow?

This is not a metaphor alone. In Aotearoa New Zealand, the Whanganui Māori have long declared: "I am the river, the river is me." The Whanganui River was granted legal personhood. Recognized as a living entity with rights, powers, and protections equivalent to a human being after more than a hundred years of struggle. This is Neohumanism made law. It is what becomes possible when a society genuinely shifts its consciousness from domination to relationship to kinship. I hold this example close as I imagine what is possible for the rivers of the Philippines, and for rivers everywhere.

The River of Dharma: A Vision for Our Cities

The transformed future I envision in my research, I call The River of Dharma. In this world, rivers are restored as the pulsating core of urban life. Cities are reimagined not as landscapes that contain rivers but as riverscapes — their rhythms, their architecture, their governance all aligned with the flow of water. Seasonal floods are no longer disasters to be suppressed but cycles to be honored, ecological milestones celebrated as civic achievements.

Governance in the dharmic city is participatory and polycentric. Basin councils bring together elders, community leaders, women's cooperatives, scientists, artists, spiritual practitioners, and local communities as co-stewards of the river. Their authority comes not from power over territory but from their embodiment of a shared ethic: that the river is a

living commons, and its health is inseparable from our own.

Economies are regenerative rather than extractive. Prosperity flows like the river itself. Not pooling in one place but moving, sustaining livelihoods and ecosystems alike. And at the heart of it all is a spiritual recognition: that to care for the river is to care for ourselves, for our ancestors, for the generations who will come after us. PROUT's principle of decentralized, cooperative stewardship becomes not an abstraction but a daily practice lived along the riverbank.

The River Speaks – Are We Listening?

Perhaps the most challenging question I sit with is this: What if we stopped treating rivers as objects of study and began engaging them as subjects in dialogue? What does the river communicate through its floods and its silences, its biodiversity and its degradation? What does the Pasig River say to Manila, if we choose to listen?

Sarkar believed that rivers are sentient manifestations of living energy. They are not mute. They carry within them the accumulated memory of civilizations, the ecological intelligence of millennia, and the spiritual current of dharma itself. In my own contemplative practice, I have come to feel this as truth — not as belief, but as direct experience.

I return, again and again, to that image of the dawn river. The dissolution of boundaries, the sense of participating in something vast and purposeful. That feeling, I now understand, is not escapism. It is recognition. It is listening. It is the self remembering its kinship with all of life.

The river does not flow through the city. The city lives within the river. And when we remember this — truly remember it, in our governance, our economies, and our daily spiritual practice — we will have taken the first step toward civilizational renewal.

The River of Dharma is not waiting to be built. It is waiting to be remembered.

Future and Foresight

Studying river-city interactions has revealed shifting assumptions about how we approach the future. I have explored three distinct paradigms of future and foresight: conquest, reverence, and reconciliation.

Rivers are not simply sites of ecological concern, urban transformation and governance. They also

reveal how we relate to time, ancestral memory, power, and life itself.

Rivers are not infrastructure. They are civilizational agents. Sarkar saw rivers as the bedrock of civilization — shaping language at every bend, forging culture at every confluence, carrying spiritual meaning in every current. Every civilization begins and ends with water.

Yet we live under what I call the "Masters of the Universe" scenario — rivers dammed, polluted, commodified, severed from the communities that once thrived alongside them. This isn't just an environmental crisis. It's an ontological one.

The River of Dharma offers another path: cities as civilizational spaces sustained by rivers through harmony, not extraction. Polycentric governance. River equity. Regenerative economies. Cities designed as riverscapes.

Three insights I want to leave you with:

- Rivers carry ontologies. The way we see rivers — as resources, as kin, as sacred beings — shapes everything: our policies, our governance, our futures. The river futures we envision will flow along the currents of the ontologies we embody.
- Ontologies are not neutral. They are products of history, power, and consciousness. Some liberate rivers. Others subjugate them. As scholars and citizens, we must ask: which ontologies guide us toward dharma, and which lead us toward adharmā?
- The river speaks — if we choose to listen. From the Whanganui Māori declaring "I am the river; the river is me" to emerging projects using AI and ecological wisdom to interpret rivers as communicative agents — a new epistemology is taking shape. One rooted in kinship, reciprocity, and care.

Rivers are not mute backdrops. They are sacred, alive, and worthy of our love, reverence, and stewardship.

Future studies is, thus, not only a method for anticipation, but a relational practice of listening, remembering, and learning from rivers how to cultivate a deeper relationship with the future.

This reflective piece is drawn from the author's paper "The River of Dharma: Visions for Transforming River-City Futures," published in the Journal of Futures Studies



The image depicts the river of dharma. A peaceful, life-giving river at sunset, surrounded by a thriving community. The river glows with golden light, suggesting renewal, abundance, and spiritual vitality. The river is no longer treated as a neglected space, but as a living entity and a shared sacred commons. Source: Image generated with the assistance of ChatGPT based on the author's creative direction and concept.



River Valley Civilizations

Shrî Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

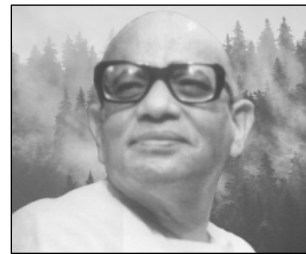
HUMAN CIVILIZATION is created in, and moves along, river valleys. Like a river, human civilization also has three stages – hill stage, plain stage and delta stage. From the hill stage, it moves to the plain stage and from the plain stage to the delta stage. A civilization starts in the hill stage, develops in the plain stage, and matures in the delta stage.

Why are civilizations created in, and why do they move along, river-valleys? In ancient times, up until the Stone Age, humans could not dig wells and depended upon natural sources of water. As such, human habitation started from springs, fountains, waterfalls, rivers, etc. Animals also select such places for habitation; only birds do not follow this rule. Thus, human habitation started near valleys, fountains, waterfalls, springs, and particularly near rivers. Due to the assemblage of humans in the river-valleys, the first stage of civilization started there.

The relation between man and man, man and woman, individual and collective requirements, individual and collective responsibilities – how to move singularly and collectively – the collection of all these is civilization. It has already been said that civilization starts in the hill stage, develops in the plain stage, and attains maturity in the delta stage. Naturally, the delta stage is the finality of a civilization.

Gangetic civilizations and their stages

The hill stage of the Gangá (Ganges) river-valley civilization in India started from the Garhwal and Kumaon ranges of Uttar Pradesh (UP). The rest of UP and Bihar is in the plain stage, and the delta stage starts from Maldah in West Bengal. The hill stage of the Brahmaputra valley civilization starts from Tibet and Arunachal. Its plain stage lies in



Shrî Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (1922-1990)

Assam and its delta stage starts from the districts of Goalpara, Maymensing, and Rangpur (now in Bangladesh).

The delta is that stage where the river starts to merge in the sea by the shortest route. In the delta stage, tributaries have no prominent role. In the hill stage, tributaries play the dominant role, and there are hardly any branch rivers. In the plain stage also, tributaries have the dominant role in the growth and manifestation of civilizations, but branches also have some importance. However, in the deltaic stage, branch rivers have a more important role than the tributaries.

Simple civilizations (*maulik sabhyatā*) and blended civilizations (*vimishra sabhyatā*) are the two basic characteristics of civilization. A particular civilization changes in a particular way as a river moves and merges with other rivers, thus giving rise to sub-civilizations.

The Mandakinî and Alakānanda river civilizations emerged. We find the blending of these two civilizations at the hill stage. After passing through so many mountains, hills, fountains, etc., these two rivers, Mandākinî and Alankānanda, come in contact with each other at the hill stage. They merge near Haridwar, and there the two

Simple and blended are the two basic characteristics of civilization. A particular civilization changes in a particular way as a river moves and merges with other rivers, thus giving rise to sub-civilizations.

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simple river civilizations. Garhwali and Kumaoni respectively, combine to produce a blended Gangá civilization, which comes up to Prayága.

Now, another river valley civilization, the Jamuna civilization along the river Yamuna, is also a collection of several sub-civilizations comprising many customs, costumes, manners, etc. It also comes up to Prayága. The blended Gangá civilization and the blended Yamuna civilization merge at Prayága and a blended Gangá-Yamuna civilization occurs after the river confluence at Prayága and moves towards Varanasi. Prayága is the second blending of manners, customs, etc., of the Gangá and Yamuna civilizations.

After Prayága we find another blending of civilizations. Therefore, there are variations in the manners, customs, languages, intonations, physical structures and economic conditions of eastern UP and western UP. A further blending occurs in the blended civilizations of the Gangá and Yamuna when the Gomati, Papti, Sone and Saraju rivers bring new trends from the northern portion of the Himalaya and Chambal-Ghagher river from the Vindhya ranges. Thus civilizations vary and sub-civilizations, branch civilizations, emerge at different stages of the movement of a river and its blending with other river-civilizations.

The Bundela sub-civilization emerges due to the blending of the Yamuna and Chambal civilizations. The Bagheli sub-civilization emerges due to the blending of the Yamuna and Sone.

After Kashi there is another blending of civilizations where several other rivers merge. Thus in this plain stage, tributaries and branch rivers play an important role in the emergence of new civilizations.



Stage 1: **Hills** (from Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada)



Stage 2: **Plains** (the Dniester River in Eastern Europe serving as a natural border between Ukraine and Moldova)



Stage 3: **Delta** (the Essequibo River delta as it flows toward the Atlantic Ocean in Guyana, South America)

After Madrah in West Bengal, the Gangá enters the delta stage, a stage where branches have the dominant role. The blended civilization of the Gangá attains maturity in Bengal. “Daha” means the circular movement of water in a river; so it is called Maldaha. At Maldah, the Ganga turns to the right. The blended Gangá civilization is in its highest form in the deltaic stage in Bengal.

Now it is clear that the hill stage of the India civilizations occurs in the hill area of UP and the rest of UP, and Bihar are in the plain stage, where Baghali, Bundeli, Avadhi, Bhojpuri, Magahi, Maetheli, and Aungiká sub-civilizations emerged.

The Brahmaputra civilization is a combination of the proto-Chinese and Indo-Tibetan civilizations. The civilization of Assam is a blending of the Tibetan-Chinese and Gangá civilizations, due to the proximity of Assam with the Gangá civilization. After this, the Brahmaputra turns to the left and enters Bengal, which is in its delta stage. The delta stage of the Brahmaputra civilization is its final stage. Bengal is the finality of the Brahmaputra civilization.

In Bengal there is another civilization as well, the civilization of Ráíha. The hill stage, plain stage and delta stage of the Ráíha civilization is in Bengal. So many rivers of Ráíha merge in the area of lower Bengal, which results in further blending. Thus in Bengal, there is a blending of three delta civilizations – the Gangá, Brahmaputra and Ráíha civilizations. This is the highest blended civilization of the world. Nature helps the people of Bengal in their intellectual progress, because no two great rivers like the Gangá and the Brahmaputra merge together anywhere else in the world.

In initial civilizations (*maulik sabhytá*), people are physically strong. In blended civilizations, people are strong in the psychic stratum and the civilization is complicated as well as forceful. In the simple Gangá civilization people are simple and physically strong; in the delta stage people are complicated, less physically strong and strong psychically.

The people of Bengal are intellectually developed because first, Bengal civilization is a blending of three deltaic civilizations and secondly, it is not a simple civilization but a great, complicated civilization – the blend and finality of three deltaic civilizations. Naturally, therefore, it is a powerful civilization, advanced in the intellectual and other spheres.

The preceding paragraphs are from "River and Civilization – Excerpt A" ((1982), A Few Problems Solved Part 5, Ananda Marga Publications.

Thames River valley civilizations and their stages

The following paragraphs are from "River Valley Civilizations", Histories Along The Way, Ananda Marga Publications (1985, 2008).

Now let us see how at different stages of rivers the patterns of civilizations vary.

Great Britain is a small country; the distance from any part of Britain to the ocean is not more than fifty miles. So naturally in that country there cannot be any large river: the distance between the source of a river and the ocean cannot be very great. Yet if we move along the banks of certain rivers, there is a difference between the civilization of the upper regions of the river and the lower ones, and there is also a variation in language.

Take, for example, the case of the river Thames: it is not a big river, neither in width nor in breadth. The part of the river Thames where the ships sail is not really a river, it is only an estuary of the sea, just like the Mátlá river near Canning. Many people think that the Mátlá is perhaps a wide and large river. They may think that in olden days the southern branch of the river Yamuna (Vidyádharii) emerging from the Ganges at Trivenii, moved southwards. Then, after flowing separately for some distance, the Yamuna and the southeastern tributary of the Ganges (Piyálii) joined together to form the Mátlá river. Though this is a fact, yet the collective waters of these two combined rivers is quite small. In fact, the Mátlá River is nothing but the estuary of the sea entering into the land.

The deltaic portion of the river Thames is somewhat similar. The more one proceeds down the river from the source of the Thames, the greater is the Anglo-Saxon and Norman influence. If one moves from the southern bank of the Thames towards the Straights of Dover, there is still a tremendous Norman influence, like a subterranean flow. If one moves from the northern side of the river towards the port of Grimsby on the delta at the coast, the Anglo-Saxon influence is greater than the Norman influence. If one moves towards the coast, the Norman influence becomes negligible. Where there is a Norman influence, there are large numbers of Latin derivations in the spoken language. Where the Anglo-Saxon influence is predominant, the number of Latin derivative words is comparatively small. The difference in intonation in the respective areas is also quite discernible.

If one moves towards the opposite part of the Thames River, or towards Wales in the west, the

In initial civilizations, people are physically strong. In blended civilizations, people are strong in the psychic stratum, and the civilization is complicated as well as forceful.

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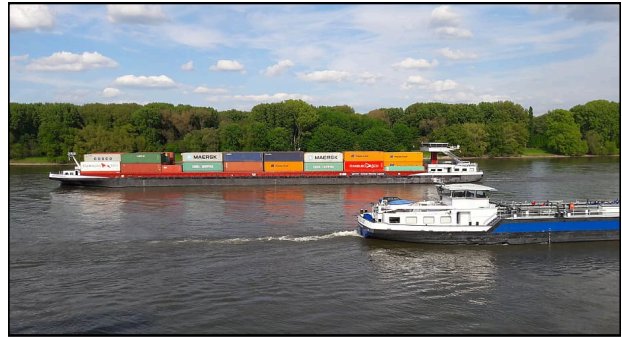
ancient Briton influence becomes significant, even in the spoken language. This is the reason why, though Welsh is the language of a small country, yet it has certain specialities of its own. Even the difference in people's external appearance, though not very prominent, is significant as well.

Gangetic civilization – Gaod-Rárh part

In our land of Rárh, on either bank of the Bakreshvar river in central Birbhum, there is a local civilization which, though small in area, has its own uniqueness, even in the style of its temples and also in its terracotta work. There is also a difference in the use of verbal forms in the spoken language of that area. Similarly, in southern Birbhum also, there is a small river called the Kopái (Kupita or 'angry') in whose valleys there is also some sort of local civilization. As far as I remember, someone once said that the water of the Bakreshvar valley is one of the best, for it is full of sulphur. But the water of Kopái valley, though it is as good as that of many places in Bengal, is not as good as that of the Bakreshvar valley. The two small rivers, with their own distinctive streams of water, flow from west to east, carrying the rhythmic songs of the most ancient human civilization, in cadence with the dancing rhythms of the land of Rárh. When the two rivers meet at Melánpur (meaning 'meeting place') at one end of the area under the jurisdiction of the Nanur police station, they are known as Kuye, and at that point both their local civilizations become blended. Actually, Melánpur merges the two rivers in all respects. If one listens intently to the local dialect, one will hear a particular drawled intonation that is lacking in western Birbhum. Aside from this, other local variations also came into being.



The snaking path of the Thames through central London



Even with the construction of highways and railways, rivers continue to play a crucial role in inland transportation both for trade and passenger traffic (from the Rhine, Germany)

The specialities of the river valley civilizations are very distinct in our Birbhum. In the upper reaches of Birbhum, the spoken language has no drawled intonation: it is one of the flawless branches of the Rárh language. But in the lower reaches of Birbhum, the same Rárh dialect has a local drawl.

This subtle difference in intonation between the area of the Khayrásol police precinct and the Lábpur police precinct, and again between the Khayrásol police precinct and the Mayureshvar police precinct, be easily discerned simply by listening to it.

At Khayrásol in the upper reaches of Birbhum, there is widespread use of poppy seed [as food], whereas in the lower reaches, the use of poppy seed is less by five to seven per cent. That is to say, in the upper reaches there is an empire of poppies, and in the lower reaches there is merely a kingdom of poppies.

The other symbols of Rárh culture – like díńíle [a type of pumpkin], kheó [another type of pumpkin], green gram and jhumur dance are equally popular in both the upper and lower reaches.

Gangetic civilization – Maethilii branch of pre-Gaodiiya part

Now travelling from the west to east across the border of the ancient Káshii state was the last area to come under Aryan influence. In the fourth phase of the Aryan invasion of India, Káshii can be regarded as a border state of northern India (Aryávarṭta). The River Sarayu not only carried the Aryan influence down its banks but also Mongol and to some extent Austric influence as well. That is why its eastern bank was considered as non-Aryan land. Later on, this boundary was further extended to the River Gaṇḍakii (Náráyaṇii Gaṇḍak). The Kányakubja Brahmans of those days did not like to cross the River Sarayu. As the land on the other bank was non-Aryan it was considered unholy. They were afraid they would lose their Aryan purity. The Kányakubja Brahmans who dared to cross the river, being lured by the fertile land of the trans-Sarayu area, were declared outcastes. They lost their identity as Kányakubja Brahmans and became known as Sárayupáarii Brahmans.

During Pathan rule, the last boundary of Aryávarṭta was the present Ghazipur District. In those days, northern India consisted of three Subás [administrative divisions]: Subá Bángál on the east, Subá Punjab on the northwest and Subá Hindostan between the two. Even today, the people of Bengal and the Punjab call the inhabitants of the central part of northern India “Hindustani”. Some people are of the opinion that Hindustan means the whole of India, and thus why should the inhabitants of a small part of India be called Hindustani. But this is wrong, because the term “Hindustani” is used for the people who were once the inhabitants of Subá Hindostan, and not in the sense of Hindustan as being the whole of India. During the Mughal period, when Akbar divided his empire into fifteen subás, the name of the northern part of Subá Hindostan was Oudh and the southern part was Subá Agra. Ghazipur District was the last boundary of Subá Agra. To the east of Ghazipur District lies Balia District. Previously it was only a subdivision of Ghazipur District. Similarly, there was no Deoria District in those days. It was only a subdivision of Gorakhpur District.

The British occupied both Agra and Oudh Subás and created one administrative area from both – the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (UP for short), with its capital at Allahabad. In the last part of British rule, the capital was moved to Lucknow. In

any case, there was a marked influence of Mongol and Austric cultures on Aryan society inhabiting the Sarayu river valley. Later on many Aryans crossed the Sarayu River and declared the banks of the Gaṇḍakii as the boundary line of Aryávarṭta. The area lying to the west of the Gaṇḍakii valley was called Shákyáraṇya, and the area to the east was called Videha or Mithilá. The latter area was not considered an Aryan colony. I personally consider it as part of the area covered by the pre-Gaodiiya Gangetic valley civilization.

King Mithi occupied Videha. To sanctify the land he held a Trihotriiya Yajña [a large sacrifice presided over by three priests]. It was then declared sacred. The land sanctified by the performance of a Trihotriiya Yajña was named Trihut. The land of Shákyáraṇya, although not widely valued by Aryans, was respected by Buddhists. Lord Buddha visited it a couple of times. Later it became known as Sháraṇa (Shákyáraṇya > Shákyáraṇa > Sháraṇa). In later years it was wrongly spelt as Sháran.

To the north of Shákyáraṇya was the ancient and famous place called Champakáraṇya. Reference to it is made in the Rámáyana [one of the two great Sanskrit epics] (Champakáraṇya > Campáraṇya > Camparaṇ). Shákyáraṇya and Champakáraṇya are situated in the Náráyaṇii-Gaṇḍaka valley. On the eastern bank is Videha, Mithilá or Trihut, the land occupied by King Mithi. *Mithi* + *lá* [holder] + *ḍa* [suffix] + *á* [feminine suffix] = Mithilá. In the Buddhist period one of the famous villages of Shákyáraṇya was Hatthiigrám (Hastiigráma in Sanskrit). Buddha visited this place a couple of times. It is now known as Háthoyá. During British rule the Háthoyá estate was one of the largest estates in India. Then came the river Gaṇḍakii – Náráyaṇii Gaṇḍaka. The biggest cattle fair in India, known as the Hariharksetra fair, is held once a year on the banks of this river. Nearby is the Shoṇpur railway station.

During the Mughal period and the early part of British rule, the Mithilá division of Bengal Presidency consisted of three districts: Trihut, Champaran and Sháraṇa. The district headquarters of Champaran was Motihari, that of Sháraṇa was Chapra, and that of Trihut was Muzaffarpur. The latter district was named after Muzaffar Shah. It covered a wide area and until the early part of the British period its fertile soils were thickly forested. The forests contained an abundance of numerous species of flora and fauna, notably tigers, antelopes, crocodiles, panthers and deer. The lake on the

ancient river course of the river Lakhandei covered a larger area in those days and was surrounded by extensive forests full of abundant flora and fauna. A major part of the forest was part of the estate of King Darbhanga. Some of it was in the Shúrasāṇḍa kingdom, and other parts belonged to the estate of the Bettiah king. People today, due to necessity but also out of immense greed, have destroyed most of the forest, particularly in Trihut District.

At Vaeshali¹ in Trihut District, Vardhamána Maháviira was born into a Vaeshya family. His father's name was Siddhártha and his mother was called Trishalá. Trihut District as well as Mithilá were located partly in the Náráyaṇii-Gaṇḍaka valley and partly in the Buṛigaṇḍaka and Lakhandei valleys. There was greater Gaodíiya influence prevalent here than in Áryávarṭta. Bengali script is used there. It is to be noted that both Buddha and Maháviira were born in a place where there was comparatively less Aryan influence.

Trihut District was quite a large area. The British divided it into two parts: Muzaffarpur District in the west, with its headquarters at Muzaffarpur, and Darbhanga District in the east, with its headquarters at Laheriasarai village which has since become so large that it almost touches the city of Darbhanga. The old Muzaffarpur District is now divided into three districts: Sitamarhi, Muzaffarpur and Vaeshali (Hazipur). This is the same Muzaffarpur that once was considered one of the most cultured places in

the whole of Subá Báṅgál. The old Darbhanga District has since also been divided into three districts: Madhubanii (a place with an abundance of forest honey); Darbhanga, named after the famous Dáribhángá Shah (in Maethilii the town is called “Dairbhángá” but spelt Dáribhángá); and Samastipur, named after Samasti Náráyan Ray.

The Maethilii branch of the pre-Gaodíiya valley civilization was enriched by the Mongol-Tantric civilization that flourished in the Náráyaṇii Ganges, Buri-Gaṇḍaka, Lakhandei, Bágmattii, Kamalábálán and Koshii valleys. King Prthvii Náráyan Shah established the Gorkha Empire in Nepal at this time. The Gorkhas occupied Tirhut District and advanced up to Hazipur. Thereafter they were defeated by the British and were forced to sign the Treaty of Sugaoli (Champaran District.) (The British commander-in-chief was General Octorloney in whose name the Englishmen living in Kolkata built a war memorial. In recent times, the [political] leaders, ignorant of history, have changed the name of the Octorloney Memorial to Shahiid Minar [Martyrs' Column].) According to the terms of the treaty, the British gained possession of Garhwal and Kumayun regions from Nepal, which was included in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, and they also reclaimed a major portion of Champaran and Trihut Districts. Part of the northern portion of Trihut remained in Nepal and is still part of Nepalese territory. The former capital of Mithilá, Janakpur, is situated in that area. Many people of Bengal know the famous Janakpur catechu [*Areca catechu*]²

¹ “The oldest portion of the Vedas, that is, the Rgveda, was composed outside India. The remaining portions, that is, the Yajurveda and Atharvaveda, were partly Indian and partly non-Indian. Samaveda is not a separate Veda by itself but is the compilation of the lyrical and musical portions of the different Vedas. So only the Rgveda can be regarded as an ancient relic of the non-Indian Aryan civilization. The Yajurveda was composed in Iran, Afghanistan, northwest India and certain parts of what is modern Russia, so it cannot be called entirely non-Indian, particularly since the then Afghanistan (Gandhárá) and certain parts of Russia were regarded as part of India at that time.

The original Rgvedic civilization belonged, in spirit and language, to the non-Indian Aryans. But the Yajurveda was composed by a particular branch of the Vedic Aryans who, when the Aryans later began to spread out in search of food (especially wheat), migrated to India via Iran (Áryaṇya Vraja) and Afghanistan. When we say ‘Indo-Aryan civilization’, we basically mean the civilization of these people.”

–Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, “Tantra and Indo-Aryan Civilization”, A Few Problems Solved Part 1.

² About the Licchavi Republic, the author has written in “Requirements of an Ideal Constitution”, A Few Problems Solved, Part 8 “The first written constitution was framed by the Licchavi Dynasty of Vaeshali (in northern Bihar) in ancient India over 2500 years ago. Prior to that, the words of the king were law and kings ruled according to the advice of their ministers. The first republican democracy was established by the Licchaviis. The Licchavi Republic comprised some portion of Muzaffarpur, portions of Begusharai, Samastipur and Hajipur between the Gandaka and Kamala rivers, all in the present state of Bihar. It was the first democratic state and they had their own written constitution.”



P.R. Sarkar on Indology: Lost and Forgotten Cultural History of Ra'r'h and North East India

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EVIDENCE OF AN ancient "lost river civilization" was uncovered off the west coast of India in 2001. Local archaeologists claim the find could push back the currently accepted dates of the emergence of the world's first cities.¹ Underwater archaeologists at the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) first detected signs of an ancient submerged settlement in the Gulf of Cambay, off the coast of Gujarat, in May 2001.² If confirmed, the find would also push back the date of India's earliest known civilization by 5000 years. The Harappan civilization has been dated to about 2500 BC. The newly identified site appears to be of Harappan-type civilization, but dates back to 7500 BC. NIOT has now conducted further acoustic imaging surveys and has carbon-dated one of the finds. Acoustic imaging has identified a nine-kilometre-long stretch of what was once a river, now 40 metres beneath the sea. The site is surrounded by evidence of extensive human settlement. Carved wood, pottery, beads, broken pieces of sculpture and human teeth have been retrieved from along the river banks, according to a report in the *Indian Express* newspaper. Carbon

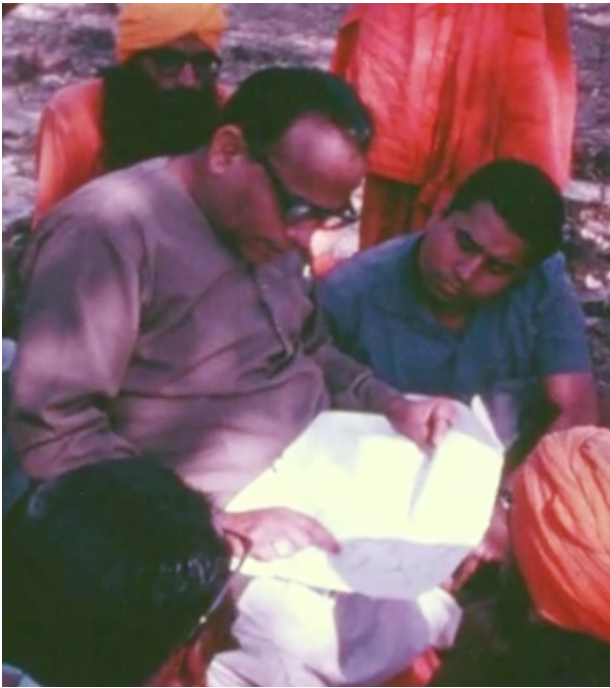
dating of one of the wooden samples has dated the site to around 7500 BC. "The carbon dating of 7500 BC obtained for the wooden piece recovered from the site changes the earlier held view that the first cities appeared in the Sumer Valley [in Mesopotamia] around 3000 BC," B Sasisekaran of India's National Science Academy told *New Scientist*. Tom Higham of Oxford University's Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit said submerged wood is often well preserved and should be relatively straightforward to date by radiocarbon. "I don't see how you could get it grossly wrong. In the past, it has been said that you shouldn't pin all your interpretations on a date from one sample. But that's not so true these days. And dating a sample that's between 5000 and 10,000 years old is pretty easy," Higham said.

This news is merely a substantiation of one of the many facts Shri P.R. Sarkar revealed during his historical tour of North and East India in 1984. A brief summary of his revelations is as follows

Humans of the pre-Stone Age did not know how to dig wells, so they preferred to live near water sources, especially rivers, and in caves to hide from ferocious animals and protect themselves from biting cold. Cultural traits developed differently depending on the needs and speciality of each river valley. The racial blending, religio-cultural synthesis, philological transformations, changes in scripts, geo-economic mutations, changes in administrative systems, artistic expressions, social values, collective

¹ "Drowned Indian city could be world's oldest," E. Young, *New Scientist*, 18.1.2002. <https://newscientist.com/article/dn1808-drowned-indian-city-could-be-worlds-oldest/>

² Lost city 'could rewrite history', T. Hudson, BBC Online News. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1768109.stm



Civilizations develop along rivers in three stages: the hill stage, the plain stage, and the delta stage. Hill-valley civilizations are the simplest, and deltaic civilizations are the most complex psychologically. This is because maximum blending occurs in the deltaic stage rather than the hill stage.

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar reviewing a map at Ananda Nagar, Ra'r'h, early 1967

psychology, etc., all bore the imprint of river valleys and their interplay. Shrii P.R. Sarkar explains that civilizations develop along rivers in three stages: the hill stage, the plain stage, and the delta stage. Hill-valley civilizations are the simplest, and deltaic civilizations are the most complex psychologically. This is because maximum blending occurs in the deltaic stage rather than the hill stage.

The history of Indic civilizations is a perfect testimony to this theory. For example, the Gangotri civilization is a hill-stage civilization. At Hardwar, where the Alkananda and Mandakini rivers merge, the hill stage experiences the merger of two simple civilizations, viz., Garhwali and Kumayun, and transforms into a plain-stage civilization. Several civilizations emerge during the plain stage due to the confluence of several river valleys. The river Jamuna, in which other tributaries and branches meet and merge, carries the imprints of several sub-civilizations comprising many customs, usages, manners, etc. The Bundeli sub-civilization emerges due to the blending of the Yamuna and Son rivers. Further, the Yamuna and Ganga merge at Prayag, causing further cultural blending. Later, the Gomati, Rapti, Son, Sarju, Narayani & Buri Gandaki, Lakhandei, Bagmati, Kamala Banan, Koshi rivers, some of which have Mongol-Tantrika influences, merge and involve the Bagheli, Bundeli, Avadhi, Bhojpuri, Magahi, Maithali and Aungika civilizations. These are all plain-stage civilizations.

At Maldah, the deltaic stage of the river Ganga starts and the blended Gangotri civilization attains maturity. From Sahebganj to Gangasagar is the Gauriya civilization, and from Prayag to Gandaki is the pre-Gauriya civilization. In the Gauriya civilization, the Brahmaputra brings blending characteristics from the Indo-Tibetan region and influences the Gangetic civilization. Besides, the rivers of Ra'r'h also merge with their several sub-civilizations. The Gauriya civilization emerges as the blending of the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Ra'r'h river valleys takes place.

Ra'r'h is the name given to the oldest undulating land on this earth, which was part of the original Gondwana land, covers portions of North and East India, and stretched to include Africa, the Andamans, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Australia. The Himalayas were born many millions of years after the birth of Ra'r'h. The sand and silt originating from the River Ganges and Brahmaputra gave birth to what we now know as East and North India.

Ra'r'h was not only the starting point and cradle of human civilization but also marked the first steps towards cultural progress, according to Shri P.R. Sarkar. The people of Ra'r'h came into contact with the eternal gospel of the great personality Shiva, who can be considered the first father of human civilization. The Ra'r'h civilization comprises five river valleys, viz., the Suvarnarekha, Kansavati,

Dulang, Ajay, Kumari, and Damodar rivers. Ra'r'h was essentially the land of Shaivism since ancient times, and Samskrta was their native language. About 2500 years ago, Mahavira Jain came to Ra'r'h, and his gospel was accepted by the people of western Ra'r'h. However, Jainism had to compromise with the Shiva cult, and Shiva was accepted by Jainism. The worship of large Shivalingas and Gaurii-piithas by followers of Jainism is evidence of Jain Shiva. On the eastern side of Ra'r'h, Buddhism had a much greater influence. However, after the Pal dynasty in East Bengal, the people gave up Mahayana Buddhism and embraced Hinduism. They were usually treated as low caste by the Hindu community and so embraced Islam during the Pathan period, except in Chittagong, where the people kept their faith in Hinayani Buddhism. During the middle of the Pathan period, under the influence of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the entire Jain following in Ra'r'h embraced Mahaprabhu's Vaishnavism. A Pathan king from the North East, Mu-chang-fa, also embraced Vaishnavism and became known as Vir Bikram Bahadur. The religio-cultural history of Ra'r'h is replete with the blending of different religions. Despite this rich tradition, King Shashanka stands out as a fanatic Shaivite. He was responsible for destroying and disfiguring several non-Shaivite Jain and Buddhist deities in northern and eastern India. Ra'r'h has a rich cultural history and needs deeper study.

There was a period in human history that can be called the Bone Age. Evidence of the Stone Age, Bone Age and Bronze Age can still be found in the Ra'r'h civilizations, especially near Bangurda village, 35 kilometres from Tatanagar. The bones may have been used as tools, implements and weapons until more flexible materials, such as bronze and iron, were developed. Agriculture was invented during the Bronze Age in this area, and those who invented it were called Mahatmas, later called Mahatos.

Shiva was born some 7500 years ago. The cultural heritage of Varanasi/Káshi also goes back 7000 years. It was the winter capital of Lord Shiva. According to P.R.Sarkar, "If excavations are done in and around Varanasi, some ancient relics from Shivás time may still be found and the cultural history of Varanasi will establish the oldest civilization in the annals of recorded human history." Prayag is, however, one of the oldest cities, but the ancient Prayag was submerged in the floods of the Ganga and Jamuna rivers. Today, Burdwan in

West Bengal can be considered the oldest living city in India, with Varanasi the second oldest.

Shri P.R. Sarkar revealed in 1984 that the oldest civilization whose remnants can still be found is the Alania civilization. The Alania river (near Kota) is a subsidiary of the Chambal River, which is also part of the original Gondwana land and has never been underwater. Pre-Aryan Shiva was the deity of this place. Mohenjodaro and Harappa were destroyed by the Sindh river, but no such destruction occurred in the Chambal valley of Hada desh. Some cave paintings have been found in this valley, and this civilization flourished between 7000 and 5000 years ago. According to Shri P.R.Sarkar, "no civilization older than Alániá exists today. Chinese civilization is 6000 years old; Indo-Aryan civilization is 5000 years old; and Egyptian civilization is 4500 years old."

About 4000 years ago, there was a thriving town on the bank of the Ganges near Allahabad. It was called Vrs'n'ipura. It was destroyed by severe floods about 3000-4000 years ago. Between 800 and 1200 years ago, Vrs'n'ipura was destroyed for the second time, killing many people. It took 200-300 years to resettle the people there again. Historically, Vrs'n'ipura was similar to Mohenjodaro. From the Samskrta Vrs'n'ipura 4000 years ago, it became Bishura in Shauraseni Prakrta, Bithura in demi-Shauraseni 2500 years ago, Bithura in old Avadhi 1000 years ago, and Bithura in present-day Avadhii, a process of philological metamorphosis covering about 4000 years. The current structures in Bithura are no older than 750 years, although the deities in the temples are older. Shri P.R. Sarkar remarked that if excavations were carried out, the old historical city of Vrs'n'ipura could be found.

During visits to the historical sites in and around Delhi, Shri P.R. Sarkar further revealed the history of the time when Lord Krsna was born around 3500 years ago in Mathura. He also revealed that the city of Indraprastha – the capital of the Pandavas – still lies beneath a mound in the Lodi Gardens. He indicated that Hastinapur – the capital of the Kauravas – was a more beautiful city than Indraprastha. He also pointed out that the Bhairavi cakra, also known as the Star of David, can still be found on the walls of the Purana Quila in Delhi. It is also found in ancient Persia and amongst Aryan relics.

Buddha lived around 2500 years ago, was born in Lumbini, and attained *maha-parinirvana* (permanent liberation) in Kushinagar. Kushinagar was the capital of the Malla kings, belonging to the Indo-

History must not only be confined to the study of the rule of monarchs and kings but must also reflect the weal and woes, and the hopes and aspirations, of the common people. If humanity is to profit from the study of lost history, it must bring out the specialities and noble qualities of even the common people. Such historical analysis will inspire common people to march ahead with confidence and pride in their heritage.

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Tibetan tribes. The Mallas ruled the entire Himalayan ranges, plains, and valleys from Sikkim to Garhwal or Uddayan. The Shakyas (ancestors of Buddha) were also descendants of the Mallas. Kushinagar was part of Kashi Rajya. To the east of Kashi Rajya lay Mithila (Videha), and to the west lay Shravastii (East Kaushal). Notably, the first democracy in the world was formed by the Licchavis of Vaeshalii, which was part of Shravastii. According to P.R. Sarkar, “A comprehensive study of this locality which is so closely associated with Buddha, will not only reveal the cultural legacy of Kashi rajya but also a better understanding of its impact on the world culture.” Buddha spoke in Pali (Magadhi Prākṛta). Today’s Bhojpuri language (spoken by 40 million people) is the granddaughter of Mágadhi Prākṛta and the fifth most widely spoken language after Bam’gla, Telugu, Maráthi and Tamil. A blending of Hinyana and Mahayani Buddhism also took place at Kushinagar. Páli was written in Brahmi script. Later, the blending of Shaeivism and Mahayani Buddhism resulted in the Natha cult. Kabir was a Natha Yogii. As Vaeshnavism extended its influence, the influence of Buddhism waned. Buddhism had an extensive religious-cultural impact on Indo-Aryan civilization. Its influence spread to Tibet 400 years after Buddha, when Padmasambhava, the prince of Uddayana or Garhwal-Kumayun, initiated Srrangetsen-Gampo, the powerful king of Tibet, into the Buddhist cult from Bonpassism. Sranget Sen Gampo married Trikuti, the daughter of Anshuvarmam, who was the king of Nepal, and Tenzing, a Chinese princess. Buddhism spread throughout Nepal and China as a result of the influence of these princesses.

Magadha civilization is also a composite river valley civilization that flourished along the Sona, Koyal, Kiul, Ganga and Phalgu rivers. Magadha

was the focal point for those who challenged Vedic ritualism and embraced Buddhism, which opposed the Vedic rituals. The soil in Magadha belongs to old Gondwanaland, and its laterite character is ideal for growing roses, papayas, grapes and lemons. Hindus and Muslims share the same cultural, linguistic and racial heritage in this area. Both speak Magahi, have an Austrico-Negroid history, and observe common rituals and traditions. Muslims from Persia who spoke Urdu have adopted a blend of Urdu and Magahi as their language. The intonation of their dialect is like Magahi. Magadhi Prakrit became extinct 2000 years ago, and its two offshoots were eastern or oriental demi-Magadhi (consisting of Assamese, Bengali, Oriya, Angika and Maithili) and western or occidental demi-Magadhi (consisting of Magahi, Bhojpuri, Nagpuria and Chhattisgarhi). Further study of Magadha civilization, as proposed by Shrii P.R. Sarkar, will also reveal the assertion that “Human society is one and indivisible” and that apparent cultural, linguistic and other differences are only part of an ongoing process of transmutation and metamorphosis resulting from interactions among living beings. Transmutation is the result of inherent forces, and metamorphosis is the result of mostly external forces.

Islam was brought to India by Turkish people, who added a new dimension to India's cultural history. Hindu is a Persian word brought to India by Muslims. Hindus and Muslims share a history, speak a common language, wear similar dress, and are enlivened by the same spirit in their hearts and minds. A proper understanding of cultural similarities and differences should reveal the richness of cultural blending and synthesis and should unite human beings belonging to different groups, but it should never be used to divide human beings for vested interests, as was done by the British in India

for imperialist reasons. For example, Mahatma Kabir was highly regarded by Muslims and Hindus alike. A mázár of Mahatma Kabir lies in Gorakhpur. A mausoleum erected in memory of some great person is called a Mázára. In Christianity, churches are consecrated chapels. Certain rituals are observed in Máz'ars. Consecrated mázárs are called Makabara. The architectural style of Kabir's mázár is Semitic, not Gothic. Semitic architecture is indigenous to the Middle East. Indian temples usually follow one of the four architectural styles:

1. Dravida style found in the temples such as Rameshvaram, Cidambaram, Thiruvandanapuram, Madurai (Minakshi temple).
2. Utkal Style: such as in the temples of Puri and Bhuvaneshvar.
3. Rájvára Style as found in Rajasthan, and in other places in Northern India
4. Gauriya Style: found in the Kálii temple of Kálighát.

At some places, a combination of Tibetan and Rájvára styles can also be seen such as in temples of Kumayun, Garhwal, Kulu Valley, Kangra, etc.

About 1200 years ago, a convention of Brahmins was held in Prayág, now known as Allah-abád, a name that reflects later Muslim influence. During that convention, several groups of Brahmins emerged. Finally, ten groups were accepted, five belonging to Gauriya (North India) and five to Dravida (South India). The Gauriya groups were: Sárasvata Brahmins of Punjab and Kashmir; Kan'yakubja Brahmins of West and East UP; Gaorha Brahmins of South Punjab and Rajasthan; Maethli Brahmins of Mithla; and Nágar Brahmins of Gujarat. Marriage between Northern and Southern groups was prohibited.

The scriptological and linguistic survey of India³ shows that the tie among the recognised tongues of the ancient world was Vedic. The Aryans who came to India spoke a distorted Vedic language, which was blended with Austrico-Negroid-Mongolian tongues and transformed. The later Vedic language was known as Sam'skrta, meaning reformed or repaired. Sam'skrta is of Indian origin. Thus, when Vedic came in contact with the general mass, their language became Rg Vedic Sam'skrta. Both Latin and later laokika Samskrta are the daughters of the old Vedic language and are classical languages. The

descendants of Samskrta include: Persian (grandchild of Rg Vedic Samskrta), Pasto, Western Punjabi, Eastern Punjabi, Dogri, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Gujarati, Rajasthani, Nagpuri, Chattisgarhi, Oriya, Magahi, Bhojpuri, Harianavii, Bengali, Assamese, Burmese, Thai, Indonesian and Tagalog (Philippines). Multani is a blend of Punjabi and Sindhi that evolved about 3000 years ago. Samskrta was the language of the original inhabitants of India esp. the natives of the Ra'r'h area. About 4000 years ago, Samskrta was transformed into seven Prakrtas-the peoples' languages. They were: 1) Mágadhi Prákrta (Eastern India); 2) Shaursenii Prákrta (Northern Central India; Krsna spoke in this language); 3) Paesh'achii Prákrta; 4) Páshcatya-Prákrta ; 5) Saendhavii Prákrta ; 6) Málavii Prákrta and 7) Maharashtrii Prákrta in West India. Most of the present languages of North, Central and Western India are descendants of these Prakrtas, and even the five languages of South India abound in Vedic Samskrta words, even though they were not of Samskrta origin. South Indian languages are of Austrico-Negroid origin, but the scripts are of the Indo-Aryan group. Examples are Telugu and Kannada, which contain about 80% Samskrta words. Malayalam, which is a Austrico-Negroid language, contains 75% Samskrta and Vedic vocabulary. Bengali is a Austrico-Negroid-Mongolian language, but it contains 92% Samskrta vocabulary. The Thai language contains 80% Samskrta words, the Burmese language contains 40% Samskrta words, and the Chinese language has between 2-3% Samskrta words. Punjabi is a direct descendant of the Vedic language- it contains 80% Tadbhava Vedic or distorted Vedic. Due to the close relationship of Punjab with Persia and Turkey, Persian and Turkish vocabulary are also included in Punjabi. Tibetans are ethnically Mongoloids of Indo-Tibetan origin, but their script is Indo-Aryan. The same script is used in Kinnaur and Laddakh. Prákrta were people's spoken languages and underwent further transmutation over time.

From Magadhii Prákrta came eastern demi-mágadhii and western demi-magadhii. From western demi-mágadhii originated Chattisgarhii, Nagpuria, Bhojpuri, and Magahii. From eastern demi-prákrta originated Asamia, Bengali, Angika, Maethalii, and Oriya. Buddha spoke in Pállii, i.e., Magadhi Prákrta. Palli means village, and Pállii means the language of the village, i.e., the common people's language.

³ "A Scriptological and Linguistic Survey of the World", P.R. Sarkar, *Discourses on Neohumanist Education*, Ananda Marga Publications (1989).

Islam was brought to India by Turkish people, who added a new dimension to India's cultural history. Hindu is a Persian word brought to India by Muslims. Hindus and Muslims share a history, speak a common language, wear similar dress, and are enlivened by the same spirit in their hearts and minds. A proper understanding of cultural similarities and differences should reveal the richness of cultural blending and synthesis and should unite human beings belonging to different groups, but it should never be used to divide human beings for vested interests, as was done by the British in India for imperialist reasons.

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From Shaursenii came Avadhii, Bundelii, Baghelii, Brajabhás'a, and Hirayánavii. From Harinyavii (which had Persian and Turkish vocabulary) came Urdu, the language of the people who wear vardii or military dress. Hindi has evolved as an offshoot of Hariyanvii.

From Paeshachii Prákrta came Multánii, Eastern Punjabi, Western Punjabi, Pahár'ii (Sirmaurii-dialect of Nahan) and Dogrii.

From Páshcatya came Pashto, Afghánii, Peshavarii, Kashmiri, Tazakii, Kurdiis, and the languages of South Russia.

From Saendhavii Prákrta came Sindhii, Kacchi, Bahicii and Brulii. The last two are Dravidian, not Indo-Aryan, languages.

Several languages emerged from Málavii Prákrta in the east and were spoken in Bhopal, Vidisha, and nearby places, including Gujarati, Kathiavarii, or Saurashtrii. To the western side, Marwarii, Mewarii, Harauti, Dhudhárii and Mewati were spoken.

From Mahárás'trii Prákrta came Varad'i spoken in Vidarbha, and Debastha Marathi, spoken in Pune and Konkon.

In ancient times, there were two scripts in India: Brahmii and Kharas'ti. Brahmii was written from right to left and Kharásti from left to right. Later, Kharasti died, and Brahmi bifurcated into two scripts: Sárada (used northwest of Prayag) and Sharada (used in the southwest). These scripts were written from left to right like English. Prayag was the meeting point of the Sharada and Narada scripts. A third script was developed and was known as Kutilá. Since it was developed in Kaushambi, it was also

known as Kausambii script. It was also known as Sri Harsha script since the seal of Sri Harsha was written in this script. It was popular east of Allahabad. The Nárada script was also known as the Nágarii script due to the influence of the Nágara Brahmins. Before, Kut'ila used to be the script of the entire eastern portion of India. The scholars of Kashi also wrote in the Kut'ila script, but later, due to the declining influence of Kányakubja Brahmins after the Gupta period, the Nárada began to dominate the Kut'ila script. Ancient inscriptions on copper and stone slabs have been found in the Kutila script. During the Mughal period, Kayasthas wrote their official records in a distorted form of Nágrii. It was popular in eastern UP and Bihar. It also came to be known as the Kayathi script. Bhojpuri was written in this script. Kayathi is closely related to Gujarati. When the United Provinces of Agra and Avadh were consolidated after the merger of Agra, Avadh and Ruhelkhand, Kayathi disappeared from the courts, and Mughal kings replaced it with Urdu. The Sarada script had three branches: Kashmiri Sarada, Dogrii Sarada and Punjabi Sarada. Guru Arjan Deva developed the Gurmukhi script. However, Persian script continued to be popular. Later, the Landei script developed as a distortion of the Punjabi Sarada script and shopkeepers in Punjab and Sind used it until very recently. During ancient times, horoscopes and books were written in Saptasindhu Sarada (Punjabi Sarada). Today, horoscopes are written in Punjabi Sarada and books in Gurmukhi. Asamese and Bengali horoscopes and

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Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar on: CIVILIZATION, SCIENCE AND

Where the development of civilization is utterly negligible, and science gradually attains the apex of development, it only paves the way for destruction instead of doing any good to humanity ...

WHAT IS CIVILIZATION? The subtle sense of refinement that we encounter in the various expressions of life is called civilization. Let me give you an example. Suppose some guests have arrived at our home. We may address them imperatively, “Come”, or we may welcome them by saying, “Please come in.” This polite address, by adding the word “please”, speaks of civilization or a civilized address, for herein the subtle sense of refinement is evident. The imperative word, “come”, bereft of warmth, only smacks of a lack of culture. So we see there are both good and bad sides to culture, but the subtle sense of refinement is the touchstone of civilization. The subtle sense of refinement that we get in culture intrinsically imbues the human power of discriminative judgement. We may call those human acts and behaviour civilized that give evidence of this discriminative judgement, in a great measure. It is sometimes noticed in certain groups of people that their actions have the support of judgement, and then again in some others that there is an absence of it. If judgement were based merely on this basis, to call the former civilized and the latter half-civilized would not be fair or desirable.

In the Indian social system, women have been given a motherly status, but in practice they are not accorded the same prestige. Conversely, in

European society, though motherly status is nil, women certainly enjoy equal rights and prestige in practice. Now it is very hard to say which of the two is more civilized. But I would say that the greater the support for judgement in action and behaviour, the better shall be the expression and development of civilization.

There is a subtle difference between civilization and culture. Culture is the collective expression of all the forms of life. Culture is the expression of the intellectual stratum, whereas civilization is the expression of the physical aspects of life. So people may be civilized by way of material development, but as far as their mental development is concerned, they may not be culturally endowed. In the absence of intellectual development, it is not possible for a person to be properly civilized.

How does the development of civilization take place? civilization has an intimate relationship with science. They progress together. But when scientific progress supersedes civilization, civilization meets its Waterloo. Take, for instance, the history of Egypt and Greece. So long as the scientific progress of these two countries did not supersede civilization, civilization prospered very well. But when the ingredients of enjoyment grew in abundance, the civilization of both countries



SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

... Therefore, the study and practice of science, though unavoidable, should not be given a higher place than civilization.

was destroyed, because science had taken precedence over civilization.

What is science? That which teaches the proper use of material things is science. Where the development of civilization is utterly negligible, and science gradually attains the apogee of development, it only paves the way for destruction instead of doing any good to humanity. And so, the study and practice of science, though unavoidable, should not be given a higher place than civilization.

Now let me say a few words about intuitional knowledge. In India, from the Tantric period to the Gupta period, civilization and science progressed side by side, and science never enjoyed greater prestige than civilization. The Gupta period was the golden age of India. After the end of the Gupta era, scientific progress was overlooked, resulting in degradation and downfall. In the Pathan period, there was neither the development of civilization nor progress in science, resulting in the stunting of society's progress. For the all-round progress and development of human society, both civilization and science have to be encouraged and pursued. If you observe the development of civilization, you will also find intellectual development. Where there is cultivation of science, intellectual analysis

is a necessity. And so, for both civilization and science, intellectual knowledge is indispensable. Spiritual or intuitional development is possible through the happy blending of civilization and science. Even where there is no such blending at all, intuitional progress may yet be possible, but if science and civilization are harmonised, intuitional progress is accelerated. Therefore, people of wisdom should proceed and progress by blending these two. It is useless to think of intuitional progress without affecting the harmony between the two.

What is our duty today? We should cultivate science, but we should equally pay attention to the development of civilization. Taking a comparative view between ancient India and modern India, we notice that the progress of science today is greater than that of those days of yore, but civilization in those days was certainly of a high order, particularly during the days of Vashishtha, Vishvamitra and Astavakra. In the present age, civilization is on the wane as science enjoys pride of place. But, as science is developed today, if civilization is pushed back to the top, people can reach a greater height than ever before.

- From "Civilization, Science and Spiritual Progress" (1965),
A Few Problems Solved Part 6, Ananda Marga Publications.





The Discipline of Love

Richard Hames

WITHOUT THE DELIBERATE cultivation of love as method – in law, economics, technology and security, not just in families and faiths – we are unlikely to become a species that deserves to survive. This is not a call for everyone to be nicer. It’s a structural question: what happens when we treat love as an underlying constraint rather than a decorative sentiment?

Love as structure, not sentiment

We are conditioned to speak of love in the least consequential parts of our collective life. We use it freely in pop songs, spiritual homilies, and advertising copy. Politicians drop it into speeches about “loving our country” or “loving our way of life”, phrases that usually mean: defend our interests, fear the outsider, honour our dead above theirs.

By contrast, the arenas where decisions with lethal consequences are made – central banks, defence ministries, technology firms, trade negotiations – are expected to be scrubbed free of love. There, the operative words are security, efficiency, growth, stability, deterrence, competitiveness. Love is disregarded totally or dismissed as being either irrelevant or dangerously soft-headed.

This division is itself a design choice. It ensures that the deepest human impulse towards care is quarantined from the systems that most shape our shared fate.

If love is to be more than a background hum, we need to be precise about what we mean by it in this context. I’m not speaking of a passing emotion. I am speaking of a stance – a disciplined way of relating to others and to the world that shows up not only in gestures, but in the rules we write and the configurations we defend so tirelessly. In that sense, love has at least four recognisable features.

First, it widens the circle of moral concern. It pushes us beyond those who share our genes, our passports, our gods, our skin, our subculture. If my love is restricted to my own kind, it is indistinguishable from glorified self-interest.

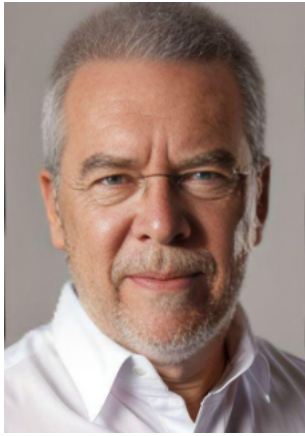
Second, it treats vulnerability as a claim, rather than a weakness to be exploited. To see someone exposed – by poverty, illness, age, status, geography – and to ask, “what can be taken?” is predation. To ask, “what must be protected?” is an expression of love.

Third, it refuses to make any category of person permanently expendable. There may be moments when individuals must be restrained, or wars fought in self-defence. But love never grants itself a blank cheque to erase whole populations from ethical consideration.

Fourth, it takes interdependence – what some traditions call *interbeing* – seriously. It understands that in a tightly coupled world-system, the attempt to secure “our” safety and prosperity by sacrificing “theirs” is, at best, a short-term illusion. Love recognises that the fates of Sderot and Rafah, Bondi and Baghdad, Kyiv and Khartoum, are not as separable as our banners might suggest.

If this is a workable sketch, then love of this kind is not the opposite of realism. It is realism pushed beyond the narrow confines of tribal memes and quarter-to-quarter returns. It insists that any analysis that writes off large segments of humanity as collateral is not only morally bankrupt but strategically unhinged in a world where the blowback from indifference is increasingly, inevitably, global.

The crucial point is that love of this kind does not live only in hearts. It is carried – or blocked – by the deep codes of a civilization: the stories it tells, the



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The work before us is not simply to exhort more love but to understand, and then redesign, the systems that currently transmute love of the particular into hatred of the other – and to ask what it would take to privilege generative love in the places where decisions are made. ”

systems it builds, the habits it normalises. Cultures that preach universal compassion but enforce rigid caste hierarchies are not structurally loving. States that proclaim human rights while dumping refugees into deserts or seas are not structurally loving. Corporations that post solidarity hashtags while extracting data, labour and resources from the vulnerable without meaningful reciprocity are not structurally loving.

To make love matter politically is to ask, relentlessly: how are we building? What assumptions about whose lives count are hard-coded into our institutions? Where, in the circuitry of law, money, media and machines, does the refusal to treat anyone as expendable actually show up?

When love mutates into hate

At this point, a predictable objection arises. Is not love already central to our collective life? Do we not hear constant appeals to “love of country”, “love of our people”, “love of freedom”, “love of God”? We do. But much of what masquerades as public love is a different creature altogether. It is possessive love, defined less by care for the beloved than by hostility to the perceived threat.

Love of country that can only express itself through the denigration of foreigners is not love but anxiety dressed up as patriotism. Love of faith that requires the degradation of unbelievers is not devotion but identity addiction. Love of “our women and children” that motivates the bombing of other people’s women and children is not protection but a carefully harnessed hysteria.

Possessive love is profoundly useful to power. It generates cohesion in frightened populations. It creates a ready reservoir of rage that can be directed at enemies, internal and external. It fuses belonging with resentment in ways that make political manipulation easy and dissent dangerous. Generative love behaves differently. It’s rooted not in shared resentment but in shared vulnerability. It doesn’t need an enemy for its identity. It values the beloved – a place, a people, a tradition – not because they are superior, but because they’re alive. It can therefore extend itself without demanding sameness.

One of the perversities of our current world-system is that it systematically rewards possessive love while starving generative love of institutional oxygen. National anthems, military parades, and campaign rallies are choreographed around the first. The second surfaces in less photogenic settings: palliative care wards, migrant shelters, conflict-resolution circles, local disaster responses.

Ahmed’s¹ sprint on Bondi was an instance of generative love: a particular loyalty (to his family, his faith, his own survival) expanding in an instant to embrace strangers with whom he shared only a shoreline and an unthinkable predicament. The global machinery of commentary immediately tried to capture that act inside existing binaries: “a good Muslim” reassuring nervous white publics that the “bad Muslims” are a minority; an exhibit in

¹ Ahmed al-Ahmed, a drinks-vendor on Bondi Beach, Sydney, tackled a gunman and wrestled away a long-barrelled gun during the December 2025 antisemitic shooting attack.

arguments for or against multiculturalism; a data point in someone's op-ed.

What almost nobody wanted to explore was the uncomfortable implication that if love like that became commonplace, whole business models would fracture. It's hard to sustain an arms industry, a border-security complex, or an economy fuelled by outrage when enough people, across enough faultlines, refuse to see distant others as expendable. When Muhammad Ali refused to fight in Vietnam on the grounds that he had "no quarrel" with the people his government had named as enemies, it was not simply a private act of conscience; it exposed, to millions watching, the intimacy between racial injustice at home and imperial violence abroad. When dockworkers in different ports have refused to load weapons bound for regimes they regard as criminal, or when citizens have withdrawn their labour from oppressive systems at real personal cost, they have done more than make a moral gesture. They have briefly revealed what our political and economic arrangements most fear: that love, allied with refusal, can interrupt the smooth functioning of profitable cruelty.

So the work before us is not simply to exhort more love, in the abstract. It's to understand, and then redesign, the systems that currently transmute love of the particular into hatred of the other – and to ask what it would take to privilege generative love in the places where decisions are made.

Law, economics, and the architecture of care

Love becomes structural, or fails to, in the apparently dry domains of law and economics. These are the core operating systems through which a civilization decides what – and whom – it values.

Law, in most jurisdictions, is still dominated by a logic of punishment and deterrence. Harm is conceived primarily as a violation of the state's order. Victims are peripheral, offenders are processed, and communities are spectators. Retribution is easier to codify than to repair.

Yet wherever restorative and transformative justice practices have been tried – from Indigenous circles in North America and Australasia, to community courts in parts of Africa and Latin America – we glimpse a different grammar. Offenders are required to face those they have harmed. The question shifts from "what law was broken, and how do we punish?" to "who was hurt, and what must be done to make things as right as possible?"

Are such practices scalable beyond the local, beyond the small group? Can they function in societies marked by deep inequality and structural brutality? Or are they destined to remain niche experiments, comforting stories that make no dent in mass incarceration, militarised policing, and the routine disposability of the poor?

Similar questions arise in economics. The dominant model treats the planet as a warehouse, human beings as units of labour and consumption, and success as ceaseless extraction and expansion. Love enters, if at all, as philanthropy after the fact: a fraction of the gains recycled to mitigate the damage.

But there are, at the edges, other logics. Cooperative enterprises that distribute ownership and decision-making. Commons-based management of land, water and forests that assumes reciprocity between humans and the more-than-human world. Experiments with unconditional basic income that decouple survival from wage labour. Feminist and care-economy analyses that count unpaid care as central rather than peripheral. Do these constitute the embryonic forms of a structurally loving economy, or are they easily absorbed back into a system whose core metrics remain indifferent to anything that cannot be priced?

If law were rewritten with the primary aim of healing relationships rather than imposing exemplary suffering, and if economic arrangements were judged by how they treated the most vulnerable and the biosphere rather than quarterly returns, would we recognise those changes as expressions of love? Or would we need a different word entirely, because "love" has been so confined to private sentiment that we cannot apply it to budgets or treaties or policies without acute embarrassment?

I'm not certain. I do know that our choice of language is important. What seems clear is that without such re-coding, biblical calls to "love thy neighbour" will continue to coexist comfortably with structures that ensure the neighbour stays poor, over-policed, and disposable.

Love in technology and security

If law and economics are the skeleton of the world-system, technology and security are its rapidly mutating central nervous system. Here too, love is treated very much as an intruder and a nuisance.

Digital platforms are designed to maximise engagement, not understanding. Their algorithms

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have learnt that outrage, fear and humiliation are powerful adhesives. They bind us to our screens and to our tribes. Calls for violence travel far; patient explanation does not. In such an environment, even attempts to speak from a position of love risks being sucked into the polarisation machinery, misread as betrayal by one camp and weakness by another.

Could it be otherwise? Could we, in principle, build digital architectures that recognise and reward the discipline of love? Systems that slow us down before we share content that degrades whole categories of people. Interfaces that, upon detecting inflammatory topics, surface perspectives from those most affected rather than from the loudest pundits. Algorithms that diversify rather than narrow our informational diets when they detect that our feeds have become echo chambers.

Would such designs survive in a commercial environment that monetises addiction and conflict? Or would they need entirely different institutional homes: public-interest platforms, cooperative data trusts, communication infrastructures treated as commons rather than casinos?

Security doctrines present an even starker challenge. Most contemporary states still operate on the assumption that safety is achieved by deterring or overwhelming threats. Alliances, bases, nuclear umbrellas, surveillance networks, paramilitary policing: all are justified as necessary protections for “our” people against “theirs”.

The actual threats that now endanger our species – climate feedbacks, pandemics, runaway technologies, cascading state failures – don’t yield easily to traditional notions of defence. There is no missile shield against a destabilised monsoon. No aircraft carrier can intimidate a virus. Militarised borders are poor protection against the political consequences of mass displacement. In this context, what would a security doctrine shaped by a love of life rather than fear of the enemy look like?

It would start from the recognition that no society can remain secure on a sick planet or amidst oceans of human despair. It would treat investments in decarbonisation, public health, education, and conflict prevention not as “soft” spending but as primary defences. It would understand that humiliation is as combustible a substance as oil, and that policies which produce it in bulk – colonialism, occupation, indefinite detention, collective punishment, structural racism – are all forms of self-harm.

A civilization which endlessly enhances its capacity to kill at scale, while underinvesting in the conditions that make killing less likely, cannot plausibly claim to be acting from love – no matter how often its leaders invoke the phrase “our people”.

”

It would not abolish armed forces overnight. But it would place strict ethical and strategic limits on their use, informed by the question: does this action reduce or deepen the long-term reservoirs of rage and grief in which future violence will germinate? Is such a reorientation remotely plausible within existing states, beholden as they are to national myths, industrial lobbies, and short election cycles? Or does a truly loving security paradigm require forms of governance we have barely begun to imagine?

Again, I have more questions than answers. What I am certain of is that a civilization which endlessly enhances its capacity to kill at scale, while underinvesting in the conditions that make killing less likely, cannot plausibly claim to be acting from love – no matter how often its leaders invoke the phrase “our people”.

The discipline and its costs

It is so beguiling, when speaking of love, to drift towards consolation. To imagine that if only enough of us attained the right inner attitude, the outer structures would gently realign. Unfortunately, this is not how systems work.

Structural love, if it’s to exist at all, will be expensive. If it sounds soft, that’s only because we have grown used to calling “realistic” any arrangement that offloads its pain onto people we don’t know. It will demand limits on extraction, on production, on consumption. It will require that some forms of power be relinquished rather than purely regulated. It will insist that certain activities – from the manufacture of specific weapons to the speculative trading of staples in a hungry world – are incompatible with any credible claim to care for life.

It will not always feel good. To practise love in this register is to accept losses: of privilege, of

convenience, of comforting illusions about our own innocence. It is to put ourselves, individually and collectively, in the way of suffering we would much rather not see. It's to make ourselves, like Ahmed on the beach, more vulnerable in the short term in order to honour a deeper commitment.

We're used to the idea of austerity for the poor. We are much less accustomed to restraining cruelty. What would it mean, in practical terms, to decide that hatred, humiliation and dehumanisation are no longer acceptable tools of politics or profit? It might look like capping not only carbon emissions, but also the reach of weapons systems and surveillance technologies. It might look like subjecting inflammatory media and political messaging to the same kind of public-health scrutiny we apply to addictive substances. It might look like restructuring work so that more people have the time and security to care – for children, elders, neighbours, land – rather than outsourcing care to underpaid others while we chase abstractions.

None of this will emerge spontaneously from a market or a bureaucracy optimised for speed and scale. It will require deliberate, sustained, and deeply contested choices. That's why I speak of the discipline of love. It's not a mood, but a practice under pressure.

Love, extinction, and worthiness

In “Beyond the Kill Zone”² I described humanity as a threatened species, menaced as much by its own systems as by any external foe. Here the question sharpens. Survival is not just a technical problem. It's a moral one. It's entirely possible to imagine a future in which a fraction of humanity survives in fortified enclaves, protected by automated weaponry and artificial intelligences, while vast zones of the planet become sacrificed areas for the unwanted. That scenario would, in a narrow sense, count as “success” for those inside the walls. In effect, it would amount to a Faustian bargain: continued existence in exchange for the deliberate abandonment of most of our own kind.

Love, in the structural sense I have been sketching, is one way of naming the refusal to accept such a bargain. It is the insistence that survival bought at the price of mass disposability is a form of failure. It is the quiet but implacable demand that any future we dare to call viable must be one in which fewer, not more, lives are written out of the circle of concern.

This is not a utopian standard. It is a minimal one. Without it, all our talk of human rights, of progress, of lessons learnt from past atrocities, is little more than civilized noise over the machinery of elimination.

We don't know whether we have left ourselves enough time to re-design our world-systems around such a discipline. We cannot know whether the fracture lines we have already carved – between classes, races, religions, nations, humans and the rest of life – can be healed faster than they are being widened. It's entirely possible that we will choose differently, and that our story will end as a cautionary tale told by no one. Taking love seriously as a design constraint is simply one way of refusing to make that outcome inevitable.

What we do know, however, is that acts like Ahmed's on the sand are not anomalies in the human story. Across cultures and epochs, people have thrown themselves between strangers and danger; shared food in famine; sheltered those marked for death; refused to torture even when ordered, or when vengeance would have been socially sanctioned. These are not statistical blips. They are data points from another civilizational possibility: one in which love is not confined to the private, the sacred or the sentimental, but is allowed to inform the blueprints of how we live together.

Whether we will choose that possibility at sufficient scale, and in time, remains an open question. But if we do not, then whatever finally brings our story to an end – heat, hunger, pathogens, machines, or some combination thereof – will only be finishing a work of extinction we began in our own hearts when we decided that some lives were expendable.

None of this presupposes a world without conflict, crime or war. It presupposes only that we stop treating vast categories of people as acceptable fuel for our prosperity and security. I'm certainly not arguing that billions of individuals must suddenly become morally exemplary. I am arguing that we can, if we choose, stop building systems that reward the opposite of what almost every tradition calls our better instincts.

I know that from a certain angle, all of this will sound impossibly idealistic. But it's worth asking who benefits when seriousness is defined as the art of working around cruelty rather than any effort to reduce it. The discipline of love doesn't guarantee our survival. It does, however, offer one clear test of our worthiness to survive.

² richarddavidhames.substack.com/p/beyond-the-kill-zone



Music and Agency: **The Philosophical Voice of Tagore, Sarkar and Spivak**

Sumaya Machado Lima

Abstract: This article investigates the philosophical agency potential in Bengali music, framing social constraint via Bourdieu's Habitus and Symbolic Power. Using a hermeneutic approach, the study compares Tagore's "Ekla Chalo Re" with Sarkar's "E gán thámibe ná". Results show Tagore emphasizes individual courage, while Sarkar's music infuses a collective mandate, linking action to Neo-Humanism and PROUT. The work dialogues with Spivak's question ("Can the subaltern speak?"), arguing Sarkar's composition instrumentalizes the subaltern for active transformation, presenting a paradigm shift in Indian social agency.

Keywords: Music; Prout; Tagore; Spivak; Sarkar

BENGALI POPULAR MUSIC, over the decades, has constantly reinvented itself while preserving its roots and connections with the classical Indian musical traditions and the region's folk traditions. A distinctive characteristic of this music (*gīta*) is the fusion of local rhythms with influences from other parts of India and the world. This has allowed for the creation of a unique musical style that goes beyond simple entertainment, serving as a vehicle for expressing spirituality, social and political issues, and emotions. Genres like *Baul* and *Rabindra Samgīta*, which originated in the Bengal region, are two notable examples of this constantly renewed fusion between the traditional and the modern. Baul, for instance, is a mystical musical style characterized by philosophical and devotional lyrics, which influenced thinkers such as Caetanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1534), Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (1922-1990), and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). Notable for

being the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, Tagore was also a prolific composer whose musical compendium, comprising about 2300 songs, became an Indian classic, known internationally as Rabindra Samgīta.

Both genres, Baul and Rabindra Samgīta, remain a central element of the Bengali cultural identity, known for their combination of poetry, melody, spirituality, and concern for contemporary social and cultural issues such as freedom, identity, and social change. A particularly representative excerpt of this connection with contemporary society can be found in Tagore's famous song called *Ekla Chalo Re*, translated as "Walk Alone." It is known that this was one of Mahatma Gandhi's (1869-1948) favorite songs. Considering it in the political context of India's struggle for independence and against British oppression, it is understandable that this song became a symbol of resistance and strength in the



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Bengali popular music remains a central element of the Bengali cultural identity, known for their combination of poetry, melody, spirituality, and concern for contemporary social and cultural issues such as freedom, identity, and social change.

face of adversity, being frequently sung during moments of protest or struggle for freedom (Singh, 2010).

As inferred from the poet and musician Shivpreet Singh (2010)¹, Tagore, with his humanist and philosophical vision, used this song to convey the message of perseverance and autonomy in the face of individual life challenges and social conditions². The phrase – Ekla Chalo Re – is repeated (like a chorus) throughout the song. Although composed by Tagore in 1903 in eloquent English, this song received a reinterpretation and a contemporary translation by the poet Singh (2010), which illustrates not only the timelessness of the original song and its relevance, but also its contemporary pertinence and youthful empowerment in 2010.

If they answer not to thy call walk alone If they are afraid and cower mutely facing the wall O thou unlucky one Open thy mind and speak out alone

*If no one answers your call Make a stride and walk alone When everyone is closed and shut Open your mind and speak alone. Walk alone, walk alone, walk alone.*³

In this way, the message of moving forward, even in the face of adversity and loneliness. In times of political and social uncertainty, this song transforms into a musical code, finding resonance today with many individuals and social groups—whether in political issues, such as the struggle for freedom of expression, or in social issues that require courage to transform the present.

According to the poet Singh, this song by Tagore was inspired by the Bengali kīrtan (popular Bengali Indian devotional music) *Harinaam Dye Jagat Matala Amar Ekla Nitai He*⁴, because of the chorus which basically reinforces “because of the intoxication of Harinaam, I’m not alone.” The poet states that both the repetition of Ekla Nitai (I am not alone – one is not alone, because one has the Divine in mind) and the melody are identical to Tagore’s famous song. Thus, it is deduced that Tagore drew from old popular Bengali kīrtans and, in doing so, influences new generations who deal with themes such as identity, social inequality, and the struggle for a better future.

For listeners accustomed to insistently repeated melodies—like the popular “Let it go”⁵ from Disney, a phenomenon among children and adults—music is often restricted to the domain of entertainment. In stark contrast, we propose to observe how one face of Indian music is rooted in history and in rich oral narratives such as those cited above. It is in this universe, reflected in its vast literature, that the prestige attributed to *gītas* emerges, along with their uplifting effect on the human mind and spirituality.

Timely, it was noted that, besides Tagore’s song Ekla Chalo Re, Sarkar’s song *E gān thāmibe nā* (P.S. 4795) also addresses themes such as social agency, self-knowledge, determination, and resilience. The complete poems in the original language and in English translation are presented below.

"On the horizon the sunglow appears; The era of darkness is soon to fade.

Ekla Cholo re⁶ (Rabindranath Tagore)

*Jodi tor dak sune keu na ashe,
Tobe ekla cholo, ekla chalo, aekla chalo re,
Aikla cholo re,
Jodi kue kotha na koe,
ore o re o obaghaga, keu kotha na koe
Jodi sobai thake muhk phirae, sobai kore bhoye,
Tobe poran khule,
O tui, mukh phute tor moner kotha,
Ekla bolo re
Jab kali ghata chaye,
Ore o re o andhera sach ko nigal jaye
Jab duniya sari, dar ke age sar apna jhukaye,
Tu shola banja, Wo shola banja, Jo khud jal ke
jahan raushan karde,
Ekla jalo re.
If no one answers your call,
Then walk alone,
(be not afraid) walk alone my friend
If no one talks to you,
O my unlucky friend, if no one speaks to you,
If everyone looks the other way and everyone is afraid,
Then bare your soul and let out what is in your mind,
(be not afraid) Speak alone my friend.
When dark clouds cover the sky, When darkness
engulfs the truth,
When the world cowers and bows before fear,
You be the flame, The flame that burns you and
banishes darkness from the world,
(be not afraid) Burn alone my friend.*

E gán thámibe ná⁷ (Prabhat R. Sarkar)

*E gán thámibe ná
E dábi damibe ná
Path bepdhe dilo álokojjívala
Prouter preśańá
Sahya karechi juga juga dhare
Sahyer siimá gelo bheunge paře*

*Dánav ájio bhrubhaungi kare
Núivádii unmaná*

*Púrva digante aruń eseche
Káler kálimá sariyá je geche
Viśáder par álok jhariche
Ar deri sahíbe ná*

*This song will not end.
This demand will not be silenced.
A path that brings unity bright—
That is the mission of PROUT.*

*Age after age, we have endured;
But the limit of tolerance was breached.
Nowadays, the demons knit their brows—
The moralists are restless.*

*On the eastern horizon the sunglow comes;
The era of darkness is soon to fade.
After gloom, effulgence pervades;
Further delay will not be borne.*

Sarkar's vast poetic work includes over a thousand gītas called Prabhat Samgītas, and the theme of Song 4795 is classified on the Sarkarverse website as Proutist. The name *Prout* refers to the ideology inaugurated by P.R. Sarkar (2010; 2016) for a new human society, a society with a different understanding of Humanism, coined by Sarkar as *Neohumanism*. According to the author, society must concern itself not only with the well-being of humans but also with the well-being of all beings and natural resources: water, air, minerals, flora, fauna. For Sarkar, society must be critical of supremacist political powers and leaderships, which separate humans from each other, oppress their capacities, and prevent them from developing and achieving self-realization as integral beings. In this Sarkar's Neohumanism, a spirit of unity is encouraged among people acting with intent contrary to political leaderships deemed corrosive to

After gloom, effulgence pervades; Further delay will not be tolerated."

humanity, ensuring the right to food, clothing, housing, education, and medical treatment (the basis of what he calls *Sama-Samāja Tattva*). For the author, it is not enough to recognize human rights as a principle. As an honest person, one must make the maximum effort to ensure that people attain their rights (Sarkar, p. 80, 2001).

It is noted that, perhaps due to the influence of Baul songs, this composition *E gán thámibe ná* (#4795) by Sarkar, and others in his Proutist and Neohumanist repertoire, transcend mere artistic expression, positioning themselves as a powerful catalyst for individual and collective social transformation. The resonance of their messages becomes more evident when a dialogue is established between *E gán thámibe ná* (4795) and Tagore's *Ekla Chalo Re*. Both illustrate crucial points of convergence and distinction that illuminate the path of human resistance and hope. They co-affirm but also distance themselves in the form of messages of courage and self-sufficiency, especially in contexts of social and political struggle.

Both songs share an emphasis on persistence and non-submission. *Ekla Chalo Re*, with its verses "If they answer not to thy call walk alone" and "If they are afraid and cower mutely facing the wall," encourages the individual to persevere even in the absence of support.

Analogously, *E gán thámibe ná* proclaims: "This song will not end. This demand will not be silenced" and "Age after age, we have endured; But the limit of tolerance was breached." Both compositions foresee a new dawn after adversity. In Tagore, overcoming loneliness is a personal challenge; in Sarkar, the rupture of the "limits of tolerance" with the "era of darkness" suggests a liberation from prolonged oppression.

The fundamental distinction lies in the emphasis on individualism versus collectivity. *Ekla Chalo Re* is

markedly individual. The repetition of "walk alone," the "Open thy mind and speak out alone," and the "With the thundering flame of pain, light up your own heart, And let it burn alone" directs the hymn toward the action of a single subject, an "O thow unlucky one." Although it is known that this song was a powerful incentive for determination during the Indian independence struggle, its lyrics concentrate on personal courage in the face of the absence of others' support.

For a Western perspective, Tagore's song, *Ekla Chalo Re*, can be interpreted as an invitation to an individual journey marked by strong spiritual determination. This inference is supported by the reading of authors like Singh (2010), who suggests possible layers of dialogue between the song and the *kīrtan* that would have preceded it. However, it is crucial to note that this is a complex and non-obvious analysis—maybe even for the Indian public—and cannot be sustained merely by the lyrics of the song *Ekla Chalo Re*.

On the other hand, Sarkar's *E gán thámibe ná*, although it may have an individual sense of purpose, is infused with an evidently collective and forward-moving tone. Phrases like "This demand will not be silenced" and "Age after age, we have endured" suggest a shared struggle. The explicit mention of PROUT ("That is the mission of PROUT" unequivocally links the song to a broader philosophy of socioeconomic reform, shifting it from a mere individual action to an organized movement with a defined methodology. Even if one is unfamiliar with the "mission of PROUT," there is a clear clue to seek a comprehensive understanding. Thus, it is noted that Sarkar's artistic sensibility influences and is influenced by a type of knowledge and proposal of agency; there is an aesthetic epistemology.

In this way, *Ekla Chalo Re* is a directive for personal action in the face of isolation, while *E gán*

The Principle of Social Equality demands the active and gradual establishment of a society committed to the continuous overcoming of all inequalities, vehemently opposing the narrow social sentiments. ”

thámibe ná is a declaration of a process that has reached a point of no return, announcing an “era of darkness” that will “soon fade” and points to a sense of unity, an effulgence, and a predominantly collective directive for action.

The nature of agency and voice in these Bengali gītas, especially in the context of the struggle against oppression, highlights a fundamental issue in the field of post-colonial studies. This distinction becomes crucial when considering the political context of post-independence India and, by extension, global power dynamics. The euphoria of liberation from the colonial yoke, which inspired songs like Tagore's, did not always translate into the full emancipation of all voices. In this context, how can one not recall the intriguing question from Gayatri Spivak's (2010) book of the same name: “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

By reflecting on the history of Indian women and the emulation of widows, Spivak addresses the intricate and unsettling place occupied by women in the post-colonial context. Recounting the story of Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri—a young woman whose rebellion was suppressed and whose name was erased from family and historical memory—Spivak exemplifies her argument that the subaltern—particularly the woman in this context—cannot speak, or, when she tries, does not find the means to be heard. Spivak's critique questions agency as a form of institutionally validated action and the impossibility of articulating a discourse of resistance outside hegemonic discourses: “[...] what I consider useful is the sustained and developed work on the mechanics of the constitution of the Other” (Spivak, 2010, p. 83).

For her, the task of creating spaces for sociopolitical representation and questioning representational limits should also fall to intellectuals, especially the intellectual woman, requiring persistent critique and the attempt to reveal and (re)cognize the discourse of the other in society, interrogating her own complicity in intellectual work. In this sense, Spivak's restlessness

(at the end of her text, when she engages the agency of intellectual women) approaches Sarkar's spirit of unity, which he formalizes as *Sama-Samāja Tattva*.

This concept, the Principle of Social Equality, demands the active and gradual establishment of a society committed to the continuous overcoming of all inequalities, vehemently opposing the narrow social sentiments that Sarkar viewed as impediments to the inner and material progress of humanity. However, it is noted that it is precisely in the field of aesthetic and spiritual expression that Sarkar's proposal offers a significant counterpoint to Spivak's critique. Despite the complexity of subaltern silencing analyzed by Spivak, Sarkar's gīta offers a distinct perspective. Far from being merely a theoretical reflection, Sarkar's proposal with his song and his Neohumanist philosophy is an explicit invitation to a revolution—not primarily armed, but one of collective consciousness and action. Sarkar's song E gán thámibe ná is not limited to giving voice to the subaltern; it summons them to take an active and transformative role. By expressing a universal call for social and economic justice through PROUT, for a Neohumanist love that transcends the human to embrace all existence, and for a spirituality that manifests in service to a collective, the song provides the means for the “spiritual and social subaltern” not only to speak but also to act actively and summon others to walk with them. The collectivity implicit in E gán thámibe ná, with its declaration that “This demand will not be silenced,” reflects the empowerment of a potent “we,” which refuses to be silenced and which, through inspired song and action, seeks to rewrite the narratives of oppression and neglect.

The relevance of these songs and their message is frighteningly current in the face of the wars, conflicts, and humanitarian crises plaguing the contemporary world. The persistence of violence, injustice, and marginalization echoes the “hot wilderness” and the “era of darkness” that the songs of Tagore and Sarkar, respectively, predicted.

In this scenario, Sarkar's song, with its explicit call for a transformation that will no longer delay the "new dawn" (since, "on the eastern horizon the sunglow appears"; "the era of darkness is soon to fade"; or "after gloom, effulgence pervades"; "further delay will not be borne"), emerges as a source of hope and a guide for action. He does not offer magic solutions but incites the construction of a consciousness that recognizes the interconnection between individual and collective, the intrinsic value of every being (animate or not), and the urgent need for a just socioeconomic system (PROUT).

It is concluded, therefore, that Bengali popular music, through Rabindra Samgīta and, even more explicitly, through Sarkar's Prabhat Samgīta, transcends the aesthetic domain to establish itself as a vehicle for philosophical and social agency. While Tagore, with *Eka Chalo Re*, inspires the resistance of the individual in the face of isolation, Sarkar, with *E gān thāmibe nā*, provides the directive and the vocabulary for collective action, founded on the Neohumanist philosophy. In response to Spivak's critique about the impossibility of the subaltern speaking within hegemonic molds, Sarkar, in the song analyzed here and evidently in the philosophy that precedes and expresses itself in his vast musical work, demonstrates that the voice of the oppressed can find its authenticity and its agency through an aesthetic epistemology and a spiritual call that manifests in the struggle for global justice. Thus, the gītas of Sarkar and Tagore are more than a musical and philosophical legacy; they are also timeless voices. Finally, all three, Sarkar, Tagore, and Spivak, possess an agency-like discourse and, directly or indirectly, invite that call for the agency of the universal collective, inviting the planet society to a revolution of love and determination for unity and justice, elements that still resonate in these songs in the struggle for a more equitable and tender world.

Notes

1. Besides being a poet and musician, he is a translator, residing in California, USA. He studied biochemistry and music at the University of Berkeley and post-graduate studies at the University of Chicago. Founder of DunAnSINGH, Shivpreet. Blog. SINGH, 2010

2. Cf. Musical interpretation by Goshal, Shreya. 2025

3. If they answer not to thy call walk alone/ If they are afraid and cower mutely facing the wall/ O thou unlucky one/ Open thy mind and speak out alone// If no one answers your call/ Make a stride and walk alone/ When everyone is closed and shut/ Open your mind and speak

alone. / Walk alone, walk alone, walk alone. Singh (2010) author's translation. This excerpt from Tagore's song was composed in Bengali and its English translation and its more modern English version were found on Shivpreet Singh's blog.

4. Cf. Musical interpretation by Amar Paul, Hari Naam Dyet Jagat Matala. 2025

5. Example: the translation of "Let it go," single by Indina Menzel, Wornderland Music Company of Disney, 2014. This song became a success, mainly among girls aged 6 to 9. But, due to the repeated times it was sung, the song undoubtedly did not go unnoticed, even for adults without daughters of that age.

6. If no one answers your call/ Then walk alone/(be not afraid) walk alone my friend/ If no one talks to you/ O my unlucky friend, if no one speaks to you/ If everyone looks the other way and everyone is afraid/ Then bare your soul and let out what is in your mind/ (be not afraid) Speak alone my friend/ When dark clouds cover the sky, When darkness engulfs the truth/ When the world cowers and bows before fear, Be you the flame/ The flame that burns you and banishes darkness from the world/ (be not afraid) / Burn alone my friend (Google Translate translation)

7. This song will not end/ This demand will not be silenced./ A path that brings unity bright—That is the mission of PROUT./ Age after age, we have endured/ But the limit of tolerance was exceeded./ Nowadays, the wicked knit their brows/[but] The moralists are restless./ From the eastern horizon, the sun comes;/ The era of darkness will soon dissipate./ After gloom, light prevails;/ Further delays will not be tolerated. (author's translation)

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The Orthodox Homeopath Who Shakes Up His Field

Erik Van Woensel interviewed by Anthony Carlyle

How did you come across homeopathy?

OUR MOTHER WAS always interested in natural healing methods and for instance, in springtime she used to give us herbal teas to 'clean the blood'. We were also never vaccinated. The only allopathic medication we used was aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid a very common allopathic medicine, incidentally, made from willow leaves). When I was about 15 years old, I caught influenza, and I asked the local pharmacist if he had something else than aspirin. He gave me a bottle containing a homeopathic remedy, which managed to cure of the influenza so effectively and much quicker than aspirin could have done, which naturally made me very interested in finding out more about homeopathy. It turned out that our local village pharmacist was a huge fan of homeopathy, and he gave me some books to read. This was a huge risk because at that time homeopathy was actually forbidden in Belgium and even pharmacies were not allowed to keep any homeopathic remedies in stock in the shop. But this local village pharmacist was a very convinced and convincing follower of homeopathy. Since the beginning of the twentieth century homeopathy was forbidden in Belgium and homeopathic hospitals were closed. Nowadays homeopathy can only be practised by medical doctors, dentists and midwives.

What made you become a homeopath and how did you start your practice?

I continued reading about homeopathy during this period from 15 to 18 years. When I finished high school, I had to do civil service for 18 months instead



Erik Van Woensel has been studying homeopathy for over 40 years. He has taught at several schools including the International Academy of Classical Homeopathy in Alonissos (Greece). He currently teaches internationally and is the author and co-author of a number of works essential to the contemporary evolution and scientific establishment of classical homeopathy.

of military service. At that time I was working in a geriatric centre and had more time to study. I took classes about homeopathic Materia Medica from a local successful homeopath called Remi Indekeu. Later I met a well-known and successful Belgian homeopath, Luc Chaltin. And when I saw how these two people were working, I got the idea of becoming a homeopath.

Even when I had just started studying the books from the local pharmacist, people started asking me for remedies for simple (acute) things like coughs or colds. Later when I was about 20 years old, I started to prescribe remedies for chronic complaints. I opened a practice in the Netherlands in 1986 when I was 24 years old, because at that time homeopathy was still forbidden in Belgium.



You started a school for homeopathy more than 25 years ago, tell us how it went with the school.

From 1990 until 1999 I was teaching in a school in the south of the Netherlands. In 1995 I opened my own training centre - 'Educatief Centrum voor Homeopathie' - to be able to organize classes I could not do within the structure of the school where I was teaching. In my school I had different supervision groups. I also organised George Vithoulkas' video courses for about 8 years. Nowadays the school has changed into 'Institute of Classical Homeopathy Erik Van Woensel' to meet the demands on international level and to be able to organize the e-learning.

What kind of challenges were there with the students?

The challenge in homeopathy is always to make sure that students get the correct information and learn how to recognize it. There is a lot of literature that uses the name 'homeopathy', but that in fact has nothing to do with homeopathy. This is still a major problem, for students.

Can you say something about how homeopathy has developed since you started as a homeopath?

Homeopathy and its application have been well-described by Samuel Hahnemann. What happened after him is that there have been a few very talented homeopaths who have been able to clarify different aspects of the practical application of homeopathy.

This has helped a lot to structure the thinking of homeopaths.

Unfortunately, in the 1990s there were some teachers who brought confusion to the practical application of homeopathy. They presented information that was supposed to be a new development in homeopathy, when it was a return to the pre-homeopathy epoch where medicines were prescribed based on assumptions instead of facts. Samuel Hahnemann introduced a scientific system of healing as a reaction to the medieval-barbaric medicine that was based on the theory that the body was composed of four humours or liquids (yellow bile, phlegm, black bile, and blood) and that illness occurred when these humours were out of balance. Treatments often focused on restoring balance, such as bloodletting, cupping, and leeching. He clearly stated that speculative information based on appearance ('signatures'), smell, taste, chemical analysis, etcetera is not useful information to base a Materia Medica and therapy on. The only scientific information we have access to are poisonings, provings and clinical experience. Therefore, it surprised me that those teachers started to spread this type of information, which clearly is a step backwards not a forward development.

This has done a lot of damage to homeopathy.

What advice would you give to:

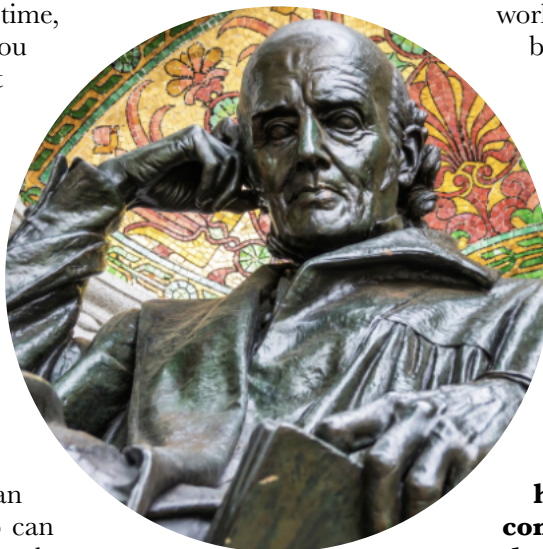
A. People struggling to study homeopathy

Look for correct information to start with. Look for a teacher who has enough experience to be able to show how to apply homeopathy in a scientific way as propounded by Samuel Hahnemann.

It is necessary to get examples of patients from practice that have had follow-ups of at least 2 years, and that have had reactions that confirm the laws of cure, proving that the defence mechanism of the patient actually has recuperated.

B. New graduates who wish to start up in a large city.

Starting a new practice takes time, no matter what discipline you want to practise. Often it takes up to 5 years to have a well-running practice. You must start by making sure that people know where you are and what you have to offer. In fact, the best promotion is cured patients, because they will tell others. In this way your practice will grow organically. It is also important in the beginning to have the support of an experienced homeopath who can help you to find a correct remedy for your patients.



*S. Hahnemann (1755-1843),
founder of Homeopathy*

C: Homeopaths who do not have so much success in their practice?

Well in any independent discipline (not supported by the state) there are people who are successful and others who are not. It is difficult to foresee. Usually, it depends on letting potential clients know where you are and informing them about what you do.

You have co-written some books with George Vithoulkas, Can you tell us about working with George?

When I gave a lecture during the annual meeting of the dealers of the Radar program in 2004 at his academy in Alonnisos, George Vithoulkas approached me and asked me if I could assist him with the preparation of the *Materia Medica Viva*, which I agreed to.

A few years later when I showed him my book 'Classical Homeopathy Evidence Based Medicine', he asked me to help him to write the book called "Levels of Health". Someone else had made an attempt that had resulted in an essay of 17 pages, but George preferred to have a real book including cases very similar to the way I present cases in my books.

So, I studied the theory of the Levels of Health and wrote the theoretical part. I then worked with him in Alonnisos where he revised in the morning whatever I had written the day before and in the afternoon, and in the evening I changed the text according to his comments and advice. Later I wrote the cases and added them to the first edition of the book.

It was a very interesting experience working with George Vithoulkas because of his deep understanding of homeopathy and the clarity of his thinking. He has been able to connect the homeopathic information with modern scientific knowledge and has clarified a lot of issues, making the application of homeopathy much easier for modern homeopaths.

How do you explain homeopathy to a confirmed skeptic especially the idea that your system is evidence-based?

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) means a systematic approach that

integrates the best available research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values. It involves using research findings to guide clinical decisions, ensuring that patients receive the most effective and appropriate care. Evidence-based is not clearly defined assessment of a therapy.

In this way, it is very easy to apply these standards to homeopathy, which was developed by Samuel Hahnemann as the first scientific healing method.

As I explain in my books, homeopathy stimulates the patient's defence mechanism, and this can easily be proved by the laws of cure that we use to assess our patients in homeopathy. Already in the *Organon* (for instance in paragraphs 201 and 216) Hahnemann gives observations how the defence mechanism can protect the life of the patient by shifting life-threatening symptoms to other harmless parts of the organism. This has led to the development of the directions of cure (also called Hering's laws). These directions of cure describe how symptoms behave when there is curative action of a remedy. This change in symptoms we now know is due to the recuperation of the defence mechanism

The pharmaceutical industry has too much power and will never share its position with another therapy or approach as it does not want to lose money. ”

that is better able to protect the vital organs. I have described it extensively in my books “Classical Homeopathy. Evidence-based Medicine.

People who are skeptical about homeopathy usually do not know a lot about this subject. When they improve their knowledge, they usually lose the skepticism, because it is a very logical system of healing.

As for the real skeptics I ask them to take a remedy in high potency daily as we do in a proving and then they will see automatically how it works.

Your system of finding the correct remedy involves lots of steps and might be abandoned quickly by less conscientious homeopaths, how would you justify the amount of time needed to go through a case?

The system I present has been developed over a period where I had many patients, often one appointment every 30 minutes. To be able to deal with the number of patients and information I had to work in a quick and practical way. Therefore, I tried to understand how the brain goes through the information and how it processes it. In this way I developed the steps of the Strategies and Techniques in Analysis. The only way to be successful in homeopathy is by knowing what you are doing with the information at every moment.

I understand that studying my way of analysing cases might take some time, but once you understand the way of thinking, it makes prescribing much easier and much faster. Especially if you understand how to differentiate remedies with the physical generals as Boenninghausen and Kent advise.

You have talked about rewriting the *Materia Medica*, could you describe the reasons for doing this and how is it going?

The *Materia Medica* is the basis of homeopathy. Without a trustworthy *Materia Medica* we will fail as a homeopath. Therefore, this information has to be without mistakes. I have noticed that over time many different authors have copied *Materia Medica*s and while doing so have made mistakes and have written

things in a different way than was originally intended. For instance, the prover had a particular desire for salty food and in his *Materia Medica*, we find lots of new mentions of a desire for salt.

Samuel Hahnemann’s *Materia Medica Pura* is a masterpiece of observation and of presentation of information. And his close followers also wrote very reliable *Materia Medica*s. Unfortunately, they are often not used anymore.

I am trying to get rid of the mistakes in our *Materia Medica* and look for the original symptoms so that we will again have a reliable source that is up to date.

What would you say to critics who disavow homeopathy because of its claim to potencies extremely poisonous substances by using the system of diluting and shaking these often deadly substances to bring out their curative sides? Also, is there any previous history of potentiation at all, or was Samuel Hahnemann the first person to invent or publicise this method?

Samuel Hahnemann was a genius and one of his qualities was that he could use information from a certain source to solve a problem in another area. For instance, he observed that in an epidemic the guiding symptoms of the remedy for the epidemic are usually not found in only one patient. But he emphasized that you have to collect these guiding symptoms from different patients and then see the pattern. This information he used to solve the problem of the re-appearance of chronic symptoms in patients which led to his theory of Miasms.

When he started applying homeopathy there were strong aggravations because of the similarity of the medicines and in some cases too high doses. But diluting alone made the medicines too weak. As he describes himself in the footnote of Paragraph 269 in the *Organon*, he used the idea of friction as is applied on materials (magnets, making wood burn) to provoke energy. But he was the first who used it in liquids.

Samuel Hahnemann always informs the reader where he gets information from and admits himself that what he does is not always original. But he was the first one who could see the connection between many different kinds of information and transformed it into a useful scientific therapy.

A real critic is someone who wants to understand. To those I also propose to experience it themselves. The others who only want to get attention by trying to ridicule are not worth paying any attention to.

Some schools of homeopathy have claimed to make provings of things like the Berlin Wall or Trump's hair, for example, and what would be the problem with newer provings like these for example.

What most homeopaths do not understand anymore is that a proving is a simulation of a natural infection or disease. Samuel Hahnemann writes about the natural disease and the artificial disease (the proving). The reason why the Law of Similars works is because both the symptoms of the Materia Medica and the natural disease stem from the same thing: the defence mechanism reacting to a stressor.

So a proving is a situation in which we alter the condition of the organism, we unbalance it and change the metabolism. In this way the defence mechanism must spring into action to protect the vital organs and starts to produce symptoms. In the same way as it does in its reaction to a natural disease. This can only be done when we do a proving that reaches the level of a sub-intoxication. It cannot be done by meditating or doing dream provings. These types of so-called provings have nothing in common with the provings which Samuel Hahnemann developed.

Remember that the first symptoms of the Materia Medica come from poisonings. But of course, in a proving there is no intent or purpose to poison anyone. Therefore, we stop dosing when the reaction comes, it is at the level of sub-intoxication.

Also, the remedies we find in Hahnemann's Materia Medica Pura were the substances already being used as medicines. But Hahnemann wanted to know in a scientific way what their use was and therefore did provings with them.

Could you describe what new things you are working on at the moment, and how do you go about doing it?

My aim is to clarify some aspects of homeopathy because so much confusing information has been

spread over the last 30 years under the name of homeopathy. So many books have homeopathy in their title that have nothing to do with it.

To clarify some theory and case analysis I have written the two volumes of "Classical Homeopathy - Evidence-based Medicine" and the "Levels of Health case studies".

The next step is to clarify some aspects of the Materia Medica, because also a lot of misinformation has been published about this subject which confuses students and practitioners.

When preparing Materia Medica I realized that the only way to clarify it, would be to look for the original source of every symptom. A big problem is that through the years many writers have simply copied the mistakes of others. So, when you look for the original source, mistakes become clear. In my Materia Medica every symptom will have the code of the original author.

Now, I am working on the first step of the Materia Medica project, which is now the most urgent for students and practitioners. It is a book that concentrates on the physical generals of the remedies. Because the physical general symptoms are the most important to differentiate the remedies, it is especially important that homeopaths have access to correct information to be able to prescribe the most similar remedy.

After finishing the Materia Medica project, I would like to make some adjustments to the Repertory, but I do not know if I have enough time to do this.

How much time do you spend on travelling giving seminars?

Since the covid pandemic most of the seminars have been changed into webinars. So, traveling has been reduced a lot. Personally, I prefer "live" meetings because the interaction with participants is much better.

How do you see homeopathy developing in the next 50 years or the next century?

The development of homeopathy is in the hands of the homeopathic community itself. It is particularly important that the community returns to study the original ideas behind homeopathy to realize the wrong direction homeopathy has taken. I already mentioned, for instance, the use of signatures which Hahnemann was completely against.

I have had the opportunity to work with different surgeons in Latin America and Europe. There are always medical doctors and specialists that are honest enough to admit the limitations of their therapy and whose primary goal is still the patient's well-being.

”

What do you enjoy with homeopathy? Is it teaching, is it listening to the patient and finding out the correct remedy, or is it solving the problems that they have on the way to becoming well again, or just hearing people saying, “thanks for helping me?”

What I enjoy about homeopathy is that it is a true science. If you study Hahnemann's Organon thoroughly you will understand the scientific method with which he developed homeopathy. With every subject he writes about, he explains where the idea comes from and how he came to certain conclusions. It is all based on facts and completely logical. Nothing is based on presumptions or fantasies. This scientific basis will emerge as you are able to look back over a case and recognize it when you apply homeopathy in the way S. Hahnemann explained. To see the way how a symptom pattern that has appeared in the provings, presents itself in the same way in a patient, and how this leads to a cure of a certain pathology, is one of the most interesting experiences one can have in life.

The most interesting realisation is that not only the pathology becomes better, but that there is amelioration in all parts of that human being improving the quality of life. It is a whole new dimension that opens where you can see the action of the laws of health and disease. The effect of homeopathy is remarkably different from the one allopathy has. It is not comparable.

The moment humanity realizes and understands what Samuel Hahnemann has been able to discover; he will have a statue in every important city in the world.

What are the chances of homeopathy taking over from allopathy as the most popular kind of medicine?

The chances are exceedingly small, because the pharmaceutical industry has too much power and will never share its position with another therapy or approach as it does not want to lose money.

What about the criticism of Homeopathic medicine for lacking the expertise to carry out physical operations, how could homeopaths work together with surgeons?

I have had the opportunity to work with different surgeons in Latin America and Europe. There are always medical doctors and specialists that are honest enough to admit the limitations of their therapy and whose primary goal is still the patient's well-being. If they know the quality of the work of a well-experienced homeopath, they will approach him/her when they cannot find a solution for one of their patients

What about the quality of the homeopathic remedies? Is there room for any improvements?

We have good enough laboratories all over the world at the moment.

What improvements would you recommend for training new homeopaths?

A homeopathic training should concentrate on teaching the scientific basis of homeopathy. Too many homeopaths have no idea of what homeopathy really is and what they are doing. Once students understand the logic of homeopathy, it becomes much easier to apply it. Apart from this it is particularly important for students to understand which symptoms of the patient are distinctive, because not everything the patient says is useful to find the most similar remedy. The Materia Medica should be limited to only the most important symptoms of the remedies because it is not possible to learn all the symptoms of a remedy from the beginning.

Important is of course the practical application of homeopathy, where students first should have the opportunity to see how a homeopath works and then step-by-step be introduced to practising homeopathy.

Continued from page 11 ... **AI and the Global South: Colonialization or Emancipation?**

blocs: African Union clusters, ASEAN AI grids, Latin American compute commons. Pooling resources prevents dependency on foreign cloud monopolies.

- **Open Hardware Revolutions:** Adoption of open architectures like RISC-V to avoid lock-in from Northern chipmakers. Sovereignty requires chips we can design, adapt, and audit.

- **Renewable Compute:** the South holds sunlight, rivers, geothermal heat. Data centres must be powered by local renewables, so sovereignty does not become another form of ecological dependency.

This is not fantasy. The South has done it before leapfrogging from no telephones to mobile networks, from no banks to mobile money. It can leap again.

2. Data Dignity

If the South is the soil on which AI grows, then its data is the nutrient. Today, this nutrient is stolen and scraped from local voices, exported without consent and monetized elsewhere.

The blueprint declares:

- **Data Commons:** local communities must co-own the data they generate and share in the value it creates.

- **Consent as Collective:** not just individuals, but villages, tribes, cooperatives must have rights over how their data is used.

- **Right to Refusal:** just as a nation may refuse mining on its land, so it may refuse digital extraction of its citizens.

Data dignity is not a side note. It is the line between sovereignty and recolonization.

3. Labor Recognition

Invisible labor is not inevitable. The hidden armies of annotators, moderators, and taskers must no longer remain ghosts.

The blueprint calls for:

- **Fair Wage Standards for Digital Labor:** A global floor, not charity handouts.

- **Recognition in Ownership:** Ghost workers are not just service providers; they are co-trainers of intelligence. They must be listed as co-authors in the story of AI.

- **Cooperative Platforms:** Digital labor platforms owned by workers themselves, turning ghost work into dignified work.

Without recognition, the South remains the factory floor of intelligence and with recognition, it becomes a co-architect.

4. Governance and Non-Aligned Technology

The Cold War had the Non-Aligned Movement. The algorithmic century needs a Non-Aligned Tech Movement.

The blueprint demands:

- **South-South Treaties on AI:** Shared regulation to prevent undercutting and exploitation.

- **A Seat at the Table:** Southern governments must not be token participants in global AI negotiations; they must co-write the rules.

- **Neutrality as Power:** Avoid dependency on either American or Chinese AI blocs. Non-alignment today means diversified partnerships and sovereign standards.

5. Cultural Sovereignty

The most subtle form of colonization is cultural. Languages erased, stories flattened, art commodified into datasets. Sovereignty requires cultural firewalls.

The blueprint proclaims:

- **Cultural Data Trusts:** Communities as guardians of heritage, deciding how and if their cultural artefacts enter digital systems.

- **Narrative Sovereignty:** AI must not only speak Southern languages but also think through Southern metaphors.

- **The Right to Opacity:** Not all knowledge must be digitized. Protecting opacity is protecting dignity.

A Manifesto of Rights

From these pillars, we declare the Five Rights of the South in the Age of AI:

- **The Right to Compute:** Access to infrastructure that is not rented but owned.

- **The Right to Data Dignity:** Control, consent and value-sharing.

- **The Right to Labor Recognition:** Ghost workers brought into the light.

- **The Right to Non-Aligned Technology:**
No dependency on empires of code.

- **The Right to Cultural Sovereignty:**
Preservation of voice, story and opacity.

These rights are not negotiable. They are the foundation of tomorrow's sovereignty.

Beyond Trickle-Down Technology

For decades, the South has been sold the myth of "trickle-down technology." Buy enough devices, import enough platforms, and progress will follow. But trickle-down is nothing more than dependency repackaged as inevitability.

The blueprint insists that Technology must not trickle down, it must grow upward from the soil of the South itself. Seeds planted locally, cultivated collectively and harvested equitably. Sovereignty is not a gift to be granted by the North but it is to be claimed by the South. The South Manifesto therefore shifts the grammar: No longer passive voice ("technology arrives"), but active voice: We build, We author, We decide.

A Declaration of Tomorrow

The South Manifesto ends with declaration, not plea:

- We declare that intelligence is not the monopoly of algorithms; it is the shared inheritance of humanity.
- We declare that the South will not be the silent scaffolding of Northern empires but the author of its own architectures.
- We declare that the future is not pre-written in Silicon Valley product roadmaps; it is unwritten, and we hold the pens.
- We declare that our soil, our languages, our labour, our cultures will not be extracted as raw material alone but cultivated as sources of flourishing.
- We declare that sovereignty is not isolation but entanglement on our own terms.

Closing Image

In the end, a garden must be tended; weeded of bias, watered with dignity and harvested with justice. The future of the world is not only with a factory, but with such a Garden.

Continued from page 17 ... **Tantra's Idealist View of Consciousness in Matter**

the idea in its strongest form: "there must be at least as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in its effect" (1996, p. 28). When physicalists trace the formation of stars to gravitational and thermodynamic properties already present in interstellar gas, or the formation of molecules to the bonding properties already present in atomic structure, they implicitly accept this principle. Yet their account of consciousness suspends the commitment at exactly the point where it would be most demanding. If the fundamental causal factors of the universe are characterized strictly by insentient baryonic properties, the subsequent arrival of subjective awareness seems to be a radical discontinuity underlying physical explanations. Unless physicalism discovers a quantifiable measure of phenomenal experience, it will remain tied to weak emergentism as a causally inadequate explanation for sentience.

To close this overview of the physicalist-idealist debate, we have seen that exhaustive knowledge of every physical fact would provide no logical reason for consciousness to be part of nature, leaving it a deep anomaly. Moreover, if the foundational properties of the physical world are scientifically acknowledged as effective descriptions rather than reducible ontological truths, the insistence that consciousness only emerges from physical properties and does not exist within higher dimensions is a tenuous logical leap. One significant idealist objection to weak emergentism is that descriptions of the functional second-order qualia of consciousness are contingent on its primary cause. The struggle to verify the latter's metaphysical status should not undermine the ancient principle of causality as the foundation of humanity's philosophical and scientific endeavors. We have seen that despite the scientific commitment to a strict causal nexus, physicalist philosophy routinely bypasses the ontological gap between insentient matter and intentional, subjective experience. By over-relying on the reductive data of theoretical physics and the functional outputs of complex systems, these ontologies have traced but not accounted for the emergence of consciousness in matter. With the broad scope of the physicalist-idealist debate in view, I now examine how Sarkar's Tantra develops the substantive dynamics that Chalmers's Type-F Monism leaves unspecified.

2. Tantra's Monistic Idealism

We have seen that inanimate matter exhibits none of the existential properties of consciousness that include self-awareness and intentionality. The closest physics has come to attributing intentionality to fundamental particles is to define the natural laws governing entropy and evolution following the Big Bang. But the vexing source of consciousness shadows every natural law, since physicalism has yet to reveal the existence of primordial sentience within the particles that constitute conscious organic matter. What materialism requires, but cannot supply, is an explanation whereby sentience is constitutively related to its physical substrate rather than merely correlated with it — an account in which the cause already contains the ground of the effect.

I noted earlier that interdisciplinary neuroscientific studies of consciousness including Tantric philosophy and meditative techniques are rare. There are practical and philosophical obstacles accounting for this. Empirical research is always driven by accessibility to subject data, so it is understandable that recourse to readily available resources is the default practice. In this regard, Metzinger's large analysis of meditators and the minimum phenomenal experience of consciousness discussed in *The Elephant and the Blind* notes that seventy-five percent of the surveyed meditators practiced Buddhist forms of meditation (Metzinger, 2024, p. 3). Buddhist research dominates academia because its primary and secondary literature is considerably more developed than that of Tantra. The existing Saiva and associated Tantric literature is primarily philological, with the few extant hermeneutical texts typically published in non-scholarly venues. Furthermore, neuroscience's non-ontological commitments seemingly favor Buddhism's doctrine of *śūnyatā* which declares reality devoid of any permanent essence. But even this classification of Buddhism's ontological objectivity is problematic because intra-Buddhist debates about consciousness and its ultimate condition span two millennia. For example, Theravādan and Mahāyāna descriptions of how anthropical consciousness (*ipseity/ātman*) relates to *śūnyatā* produced contested perspectives on the absolute non-existence (*ucchedavāda*) of consciousness and the absence of its intrinsic essence (*svabhāva*). Without oversimplifying a deeply contested domain, I note that the mistranslation of *śūnyatā* as a nihilistic void makes Buddhism's influential ontology of

dependent origination causally incoherent. Finally, the lack of related comparative Tantric studies may reflect a broader scholarly view of Tantra's meditative descriptions of consciousness as too mystical for rigorous philosophical analysis. This misrepresentation of Tantra's sophisticated philosophical expositions has hampered a wider comparative engagement with its ontological and phenomenological taxonomies.

Tantric ontology differs from Buddhism's rejection of phenomena supervening on abiding consciousness. Rather, Tantric metaphysics affirms Metaseity's infinite unqualified consciousness as the ground of existence. Metaseity's properties of unqualified consciousness (*Puruṣa*) and quiescent energy (*Prakṛiti*) further separate it from Buddhism's nihilistic interpretations of *śūnyatā* as an absolute void. Tantra acknowledges that physical objects have spatiotemporal existence; however, they manifest as causal layers of vibrational expression that supervene on Metaseity. The Kashmiri Saivite Abhinavagupta composed influential texts in the eleventh century affirming Tantra's causal idealist philosophy. His medieval description of the *tattvas* as hierarchical layers of existence intriguingly parallels the EFT renormalization theory discussed in section 1. In the *Tantrāloka*, Abhinavagupta describes energy and matter as the dynamic interplay of the infinite monistic consciousness (Metaseity) that he calls Siva consciousness, Siva-Sakti, or *Brahman*, amongst others (Sanderson, 1988, p. 696). Metaseity's perfect balance of consciousness and energy, *Siva-Sakti*, is the highest ontological state that “simultaneously transcends and encompasses all things” (Wallis, 2012, p. 147). Historically, Metaseity is Tantra's ontological ground, and it is the basis of Sarkar's contemporary response to the hard problem.³

2.1 The Brahma Cakra: Consciousness, Energy, and Creation

Sarkar's exposition of Tantra's *Brahma Cakra* — the cycle of creation — answers the hard problem of consciousness by adhering to the causal efficacy principle. It is a philosophically coherent explanation of how consciousness and energy (*prakṛti* or *śakti*) interact within Metaseity to devolve aspects

³ It is necessary to acknowledge that Metaseity's unqualified infinitude transcends all descriptions because there is no expressed mind to describe it. Given that embodied subjective minds evolve only after the qualifying energies become active, any post-meditative accounts of Metaseity are descriptive not definitive.

Plants, animals, and humans thus represent three increasingly clear reflections of Cosmic sentience, with each successive stage characterized by glandular and neural complexity capable of producing deeper psychic layers.

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of its infinitude into energy and matter. The cycle starts with nescience, which includes physical entropy, then details how syntropy reawakens consciousness in organic matter through evolutionary and meditative processes. The causal link between sentience and matter is found in Metaseity's three inherent qualifying energies/forces (*guṇas*): the sentient, static, and mutative properties of *prakṛti*.

Sarkar's Tantra does not view creation as external to Metaseity but as the internal potential of its energetic equilibrium. Metaseity is also represented as causeless; in other words, its atemporal monistic infinitude transcends the question of infinite regress. The most condensed statement of Sarkar's cycle of creation is found in *Ananda Sūtram*'s opening sutras: Metaseity (*Nirguṇa Brahma*) is the composite of infinite consciousness (Śiva) and infinite energy (Śakti/the Cosmic Operative Principle). The operative energies are latent properties of Metaseity but do not dominate it. Metaseity is therefore defined as the absolute unqualified reality in which the three *guṇa* energy states — *Sattvagūṇa* (sentient), *Rajogūṇa* (mutative), and *Tamogūṇa* (static) — exist as an unexpressed dynamic equilibrium (Sarkar, 1955, para. 11). This latent energy is symbolized as a balanced triangle of forces. A physicalist metaphor for this equilibrium is the almost zero energy condition of quantum fields when no waveforms generate the particles constituting matter.⁴

When these energies are activated, there is an extroversial vibrational force created within Metaseity as a flow of sentience from subtle to crude (*saiṅcara*). The first manifestation of this sentience is Aseity (*Saguṇa Brahma*/Cosmic Mind) that generates the crude matter from its mental substrate to become the physical universe. The introversial return of matter to Metaseity (*pratisaiṅcara*) occurs under the increasing and waning influence of the qualifying

energies on consciousness (Sarkar, 1962/2006a, sutras 1-1 to 1-6), and these forces are the hidden cause of consciousness in matter.⁵ From the macro perspective, the initial disruption of Metaseity's unqualified status occurs as an internal increase in the sentient energy that destabilizes the triangle of forces. This causes the sentient, static, and mutative energies to interact as varying vibrational expression. Sentient energy is the subtlest and most expansive of the three. When its greater expansive force imbalances a vertex of the energy triangle, it projects itself through a portion of Metaseity to establish the qualified dominance of Aseity (*Saguṇa Brahma*) the transcendental 'I' feeling. This metaphysical 'I' is the seed of cosmic intentionality from which the line of conscious expression curves progressively under increasing static-mutative dominance to ultimately manifest energy then matter.

The causal taxonomy progresses as follows: The initial impact of the sentient property converts Metaseity's witnessing nucleus into a new layer called Aseity (*Mahattattva*). Aseity possesses the Cosmic "I" or pure existential feeling of the cosmic subjectivity. It uses the mutative energy to further transform a portion of its existential feeling into universal agency. This layer becomes the Cosmic Doer "I" (*Ahamtattva*). Increasing static energy further objectivates a portion of the Doer "I" into the Cosmic mind-stuff (*citta*) (Sarkar, 1955, para. 4). Aseity directs the conversion of its transcendent mental self into matter by letting the qualifying energies follow their natural vibrational effects. The ever-increasing pressure of static energy solidifies a portion of Aseity's subjectivity into the five hierarchical elemental factors (*pañcabhūta*) that constitute matter. The ethereal factor first carries sound waves; the aerial factor adds touch; the luminous factor adds vision; the liquid and solid factors add taste and smell, respectively (Sarkar,

⁴ In theoretical descriptions, quantum fields should not be characterized as zero-energy states, since all fields have potentiality.

⁵ There is the obvious hard problem of why Metaseity's equilibrium is disrupted, but if the qualifying energies are taken as strongly emergent forces, they coherently explain causality.

1959/2006c, paras. 3–6). These fundamental factors are the properties behind all material phenomena. In Sarkar's causal hierarchy, energy and matter are not new ontological entities but are Aseity's progressively crudified mental vibrations (para. 11). The solid factor (*kṣititattva*) is the level of extreme physicality where the qualifying pressure on Aseity's mental plate peaks so that consciousness becomes inanimate in the sense that its sentience lies wholly dormant.

It must be reiterated that this causal sequence is a flow within Metaseity regulated by Aseity. Sarkar considers it a mistake to conflate Metaseity's infinite unqualified consciousness with Aseity's capacity for infinite transformation. Furthermore, even Aseity's transformations into the cruder physical fundamental factors do not impact its pure witnessing 'I' nature (*Citi Śakti*). Tantra's view is that all creation supervenes on this consciousness, so Sarkar states Aseity has five qualities: absolute purity (*śuddhā*), infinitude (*anantā*), immutability (*aparīṇāmā*), non-extroversive movement (*apratisaṃkramā*), and witness to reflected objects (*darśitaviśayā*) (1959/2006d, paras. 1–13). This means that the cruder entropic transformations of *saiṅcara* occur within the ambit of Aseity's witnessing capacity rather than to that capacity. As an analogy, a person imagining a white elephant is not substantially transformed by the image because it lacks independent existence. The disanalogy is also instructive: a person's mental projection of an elephant does not endow the elephant with independent existence; once forgotten, the image disappears. But unlike the limited capacity of human thought, Aseity has the infinite energy required to generate, sustain, and transform the spatiotemporal vibrations of this universe through its qualifying energies.

2.2 Mind Emerges from Matter

The strongest articulation of Sarkar's Tantric idealism is that matter is not inanimate but is consciousness temporarily constrained. In "What Is This World?" (1955/2006h, para. 8), he states that there is nothing in this creation which is genuinely crude or without consciousness: the apparent crudeness of solid bricks, dead wood, or earth is only the qualified condition that energy (*Prakṛti*) has imposed upon Aseity (Consciousness). A brick possesses consciousness but cannot expand it because the energy binding it has reached its maximum constraint. He further declares

(1955/2006h, para. 3) that because human beings evolve from the solid factor and possess consciousness, the latter must already exist within the solid factor. Consciousness is dormant in inanimate matter just as butter is unidentifiable in milk before churning, but no less present for being unrecognized. This argument is effectively an application of the principle of causal adequacy discussed earlier in section 1. Towsey (2011, p. 90) says that what Western science describes as the evolution of consciousness from atomic matter through bacteria, plants, animals, and humans is, on Sarkar's account, the same sequence read from the other direction. Consequently, Tantra's principle that existential awareness is dormant in matter relocates the line between the conscious and the non-conscious from absent-versus-present to dormant-versus-expressed.

The main idealist feature of Sarkar's ontology is that mind is produced by matter, yet this fact does not reduce mind to matter because the latter is not what physicalism envisages. He describes — in language bordering on weak emergentism — the process whereby consciousness reemerges. The constant pressure and interaction of energy within organic structures cause syntropic evolutionary changes that generate higher-order consciousness. Within cells the movement of the qualifying energies leads to a "powdering down" of their inanimate constituent elements so that the sentient energy begins to dominate again, allowing consciousness to reemerge from dormancy (Sarkar, 1959/2006e, para. 5). He argues that biological consciousness emerges from the subtle neurochemical interactions within trillions of brain cells. Their compounded sentient energy creates our individual existential 'I' feeling. Through logical and intuitive analysis rather than substance dualism, Tantric ontology describes embodied minds as expressions of matter's inherent consciousness (para. 7). Briefly put, what physicalism calls consciousness is causally the reflection of Metaseity's sentient energy expressed through Aseity's Cosmic Mind re-reflected into physical matter.

The earliest stage of consciousness reemerging in organic matter is the protoplasmic mind. Every cell is a living entity possessing an independent but extremely undeveloped sentience (1958/2006f, para. 4). Even apparently inanimate matter like sand particles contains unexpressed minds that will evolve following the flow of syntropy (*pratisaiṅcara*), which does not terminate at the protoplasmic stage (para.

By developing rigorous first-person methodologies for examining the mind's causal structures, Tantra's meditative techniques have cultivated practices that access the qualia of consciousness for millennia.

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5). The reflection metaphor does the decisive philosophical work here: the human mind functions as a mirror reflecting Aseity's sentience, and the expansion of mind across evolutionary phases is a function of the increasing density of that reflection within lifeforms (Sarkar, 1959/2006e, paras. 10–11). Plants, animals, and humans thus represent three increasingly clear reflections of Aseity's sentience, with each successive stage characterized by glandular and neural complexity capable of producing deeper psychic layers. Sarkar's evolutionary model (1959/2006e, para. 13) proposes that the bodies of creatures with developed minds and sentiments are a composite structure of glands because subtler psychic clashes require glandular complexity to be expressed. Plants and undeveloped animals lacking developed egological minds (*ahamātattva*) have their vital energies and mind guided by Aseity's control over the qualifying energies (para. 14). He (1959/2006b, paras. 14–15) further specifies the developmental sequence in terms of the relative magnitudes of living organisms' mental qualities. Where the “Doer-I” remains smaller than the “objective mind” (*citta*), the psychic faculty functions as “crude mind-stuff” (*mānasa*). Where intensified clash enlarges the “Doer-I” beyond the “objective mind,” the surplus constitutes the “intellect” (*manīṣā*). Finally, where “pure existential awareness” (*mahat*) in turn exceeds the “Doer-I,” the surplus constitutes “intuition” (*bodhi*). It is glandular complexity that enables human minds to freely choose their mental trajectory — or actively expand via spiritual meditations to merge with the infinite consciousness underlying all phenomena. Human consciousness can also devolve if it follows instinctive animal behaviors that restrict the functional sentient force, thereby repressing rationality or spiritual intuition once the static or cruder mutative tendencies dominate the mind.

The foregoing model proposes that the evolution from animal to human consciousness is the transition from the dominant instinctive crude mind (Sarkar, 1959/2006b, para. 16) to intellectual dominance,

while the soteriological development of spiritual “intuition” flows from sophisticated meditative praxes that elevate the sentient energy above all other qualifying forces. It is now evident that Tantra rejects mind's emergence from matter as a coincidental trajectory. Mind is regulated by the syntropic tendency of nature's inherent sentient force to expand consciousness through matter via mind. Tantra's teleology is thus not the designer-intervention Dawkins criticizes but an immanent one flowing from the natural operations of the qualifying energies.

3. Conclusion: Integrating Philosophy and the Hard Question of Evidence

Two specific puzzles in contemporary philosophy of mind dissolve under Sarkar's Tantric ontology. The first is the combination problem, which Chalmers identifies as the principal objection to Type-F Monism: how fundamental experiential or proto-experiential properties at the microscopic level might combine to constitute the unified, complex experience of subjective mind (Chalmers, 2010, p. 406). Seager (1995, p. 278) has demonstrated that any panpsychism distributing micro-consciousness across atomic constituents must then account for how these constituents combine into unified macro-experience, and that the combinatorial task is structurally intractable. The *Brahma Cakra* dissolves the problem by inverting its premise. Where panpsychism begins with many micro-experiences and faces the task of constituting one, the *Brahma Cakra* begins with a singular Metaseity whose infinite consciousness is original and undivided. Metaseity's nescience generates the appearance of multiplicity, and syntropy restores the unity that was temporarily suspended but not lost. Sarkar (1955/2006g, para. 2) makes this explicit: Metaseity's consciousness existed before the evolution of human beings, since it is uncaused — and such entities cannot emerge in time. What evolution produces is not new consciousness but the conditions under which the singular consciousness reflects itself as a multiplicity

of unit consciousnesses on appropriately complex mental plates. Accordingly, there is no panpsychist combination problem in Tantra because there are no atomic units of consciousness to combine.

The second puzzle Sarkar addresses is the explanatory gap that Russellian Monism leaves open. Chalmers posits intrinsic phenomenal properties as a metaphysical necessity but does not specify the dynamics by which they generate the physical world. Tantra's qualifying energies fill this causal gap. The principle of causal adequacy is satisfied at every stage of the *Brahma Cakra* cycle: the sentient principle is present from the outset, and what the cycle produces is not new sentience but the increasingly clear expression of sentience that was always latent in matter. Here, emergentism's circularity is dissolved not by denying the emergent character of consciousness in evolved organisms, but by relocating the question. The question is not "how does insentient matter produce sentience?" but "under what conditions does the latent sentient property of matter become reflectively expressed?" Tantra's cycle of creation offers an ontologically rational account of this process.

Critics of idealist claims might press a hard objection at this point. If physicalism's failure is its inability to derive consciousness from matter, idealism's vulnerability is its apparent reliance on metaphysical speculation in place of empirical proof. The intrinsic phenomenal properties claimed by idealism or by Tantra's metaphysics cannot be measured by any instrument, falsified by any experiment, or independently verified by any third-party observer. Chalmers concedes this limitation, noting that fundamental theories of consciousness retain a speculative element absent from other scientific theories because of the impossibility of conclusive intersubjective experimental tests (2010, p. 19). Consider that neuroscience characteristically correlates third-person studies of brain activity with reported perceptual states to achieve objectivity. But the actual experience of consciousness is entirely opaque to such third-person examinations. While fMRI and brain scans generate useful data about neural processes, they neither explain how and why consciousness manifests in the brain nor map its capacities. Chalmers (2010, p. 32) calls this methodological bias "third-person absolutism" — a stance that reduces inner life to functional reactions while ignoring experience itself.

Neurophenomenologists are beginning to address this bias by integrating first-person introspective

reports with neuroscience. Francisco Varela, whose neurophenomenology program has become a reference point in mainstream consciousness studies, argues that the hard problem can only be addressed productively through systematic exploration of the structure of human experience as the only natural link between matter and consciousness. He draws on Asian traditions as living manifestations of an active, disciplined phenomenology (Varela, 1996, pp. 337, 354). The convergent first-person accounts produced by these methodologies — across teachers, traditions, and historical periods — constitute, in Shear's argument (1997a, p. 369), empirical evidence in the methodologically relevant sense. Perhaps, then, their convergence across independent traditions deserves the same evidentiary weight that materialists grant to the convergence of independent experimental results, yet Tantra's meditative systems and related philosophy are rarely encountered in such research.

As philosophers of science attempt to situate consciousness within the framework of quantum mechanics, invoking phenomena such as superposition and entanglement, the ontological boundaries between physicalist and idealist philosophies are blurring. I suggest Sarkar's Tantra expands the borders of physicalism's emergentist view that sentience arises from material complexity — and idealism's perspective that consciousness has qualia irreducible to physical properties. Tantra sees the causal emergence of mind in baryonic matter as a gestalt following the gradual relaxation of energetic constraints on neurologically complex cells, so sentience is not the production of a novel ontological category. Finally, the foregoing ontological interrogation of the hard problem serves as a prolegomenon to much-needed future transdisciplinary phenomenological explorations of Tantra's meditative praxes. Sarkar's Tantra does not retreat into pure metaphysics but insists that validating the subtle essence of consciousness will require subjective meditative evidence. Currently, the only access to the qualia of consciousness is via mind examining its own qualified structures. Tantra's meditative techniques have cultivated such praxes for millennia by developing rigorous first-person methodologies that examine mind's causal structures. Perhaps future transdisciplinary studies incorporating Tantric meditation, philosophy, and neuroscience will demonstrate that the emergence of consciousness in matter unveils an infinite property that is always present.

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Continued from page 23 ... **Transhumanism - Promise or Peril? A Critical Reflection**

linear scale of immutable intelligence”,²⁶ IQ tests became a beloved resource of early 20th-century eugenicists who used the measure to argue that intelligence could be objectively identified.

As a single benchmark, IQ is particularly optimized to measure skills like sequential rule-following, working memory, symbol manipulation, and numerical reasoning; traits that map closely to the kind of bureaucratic work demanded in our industrial society of global capitalism. Or, as Taleb, whose paper really should be consulted on the matter, puts it, IQ measures “how good someone is at taking exams designed by unsophisticated nerds.”²⁷ It does not, however, measure traits such as creativity, emotional intelligence, or skills that require past real-world experience.

Today’s ever-evolving landscape of newly created artificial intelligence benchmarks, of which there are an untold number (theoretically infinite) yet to be invented,²⁸ should clearly suggest that our current understanding of intelligence, superintelligence, and general intelligence is rooted in a flawed universalist conception of the phenomenon.

Even as evidence suggests intelligence isn’t reducible to a linear relationship with genes,²⁹ there are now a growing number of startups offering intelligence-related embryo screening for wealthy clients. Whether intelligence can be meaningfully selected for or not, what is no longer debatable is that for the first time in human history, parents are now capable of selecting, and soon even editing, preferred genetic traits for their children.

And for the young companies offering these “genetically optimized embryos”³⁰ to a market of rich (and nervous) parents, business is growing.

²⁶ Reddy A. The Eugenic Origins of IQ Testing: Implications for Post-Atkins Litigation. *DePaul Law Review*. 2008;57(3 Spring 2008). <https://via.library.depaul.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1270&context=law-review>

²⁷ Taleb NN. IQ is largely a pseudoscientific...

²⁸ Rübsaam A. Building Inclusive Automated Decision-Making Systems. April 14, 2026.

²⁹ Helsinki JAL University of. Bad news for “intelligence-genes” | *Practical Ethics*. September 29, 2014. Accessed April 17, 2026. <https://blog.uehiro.ox.ac.uk/2014/09/bad-news-for-intelligence-genes/>

³⁰ Sherry B. This 25-Year-Old Biotech Founder Says His Startup Can “Optimize” *Embryos for Intelligence*. Inc. June 9, 2025. Accessed April 17, 2026. <https://www.inc.com/ben-sherry/kian-sadeghi-says-nucleus-genomics-can-optimize-embryos-for-intelligence/91198815>

Objection 2: Transhumanism as a Project of the Ego in Shaping Society in the Direction of Our Existing Neuroses

As an exceptionally talented high school senior, Noor Siddiqui made the unconventional decision in 2012 to join Peter Thiel’s fellowship program, which offers teenagers \$250,000 in exchange for dropping out of school to pursue other work.

Nearly a decade later, Siddiqui is building Orchid Health, one of the most prominent startups in the field of ‘preimplantation genetic testing’(PGT). Since the 1990’s, couples undergoing in vitro fertilization (IVF) have accessed PGT as an optional procedure to screen embryos for genetic or chromosomal abnormalities.³¹ PGT-M (M for *monogenic*) is a relatively common version which detects ‘single-gene disorders’, including conditions like sickle cell anaemia and Huntington’s disease.

Today, however, a new, more controversial form is emerging called PGT-P (or *polygenic*), which claims to offer insight into more complex conditions and is pulling transhumanist ideas closer to mainstream reproductive medicine. Whereas single-gene disorders are well understood and caused by a single mutation in a specific gene, PGT-P suggests to parents that they can now select embryos based on polygenic features that involve effects across hundreds or thousands of genes. The first baby born using PGT-P in 2020 was made possible thanks to Orchid’s technology.³²

Siddiqui says that a significant motivation for starting the business relates to her mother’s rare genetic eye condition, retinitis pigmentosa, which led to her progressive vision loss and eventual blindness.³³

Today, however, her company and others like it go beyond preventing disease and now sell parents

³¹ Preimplantation Genetic Testing (PGT) | *Fertility & Reproductive Medicine Center* | Washington University in St. Louis. Accessed April 21, 2026. <https://fertility.wustl.edu/treatments-services/genetic-counseling/preimplantation-genetic-testing-pgt/>

³² Ball P. Polygenic screening of embryos is here, but is it ethical? *The Guardian*. October 17, 2021. Accessed April 24, 2026. <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/oct/17/polygenic-screening-of-embryos-is-here-but-is-it-ethical>

³³ Kehe J. This Woman Will Decide Which Babies Are Born | *WIRED*. Accessed April 21, 2026. <https://www.wired.com/story/this-woman-will-decide-which-babies-are-born-noor-siddiqui-orchid/>

What we experience as suffering is the necessary expression (or exhausting) of our vibrational waves, or samskaras. This is a necessary rhythmic adjustment crucial to our journey toward the realization of a single undivided field of consciousness.

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on the ability to select traits like intelligence, height or eye color. While Orchid doesn't explicitly offer intelligence screening to the public, a company employee told *The Washington Post* that the company privately offers this to its wealthiest clients, and it was reported that Elon Musk used this service in the conception of at least one of his children.³⁴

Another company, Nucleus Genomics, abandoning all caution in its marketing, explicitly states that it is willing to assist parents in selecting traits, including intelligence and height. For \$5,999, Nucleus also claims to predict conditions including anxiety, severe acne, or seasonal allergies,³⁵ predictions that many biologists have dismissed as junk science³⁶ due to the complexity and role of non-genetic environmental factors of these traits.

Going further, several well-funded Silicon Valley startups are now building on the controversial work

of He Jiankui to test CRISPR gene editing on human embryos.³⁷

It's certainly true that PGT and CRISPR technologies could be used to bring about favorable outcomes like reduced risks of certain debilitating diseases. Neohumanism does not reject the use of modern science to play a role in the process of procreation, and even Sarkar spoke on the implications of laboratory 'test-tube babes', which was remarkably prescient for discourses delivered in the 1950s.³⁸

However, today's "embryo optimization" industry within our current cultural paradigm unwittingly seeks to imprint our collective psychic imbalances into biology itself.

"Maybe you want your baby to have blue eyes versus green eyes," Kian Sadeghi, the founder of Nucleus Genomics, announced during the company's launch event in 2025.³⁹

Having children in the same decision-making register as choosing a paint colour for your car reflects our current materialist society, which conflates physical beauty standards with human worth. Parents spending thousands to evaluate a dashboard stat-sheet for their embryos, selecting their child's performance features in the way one might shop for a vacuum cleaner, may certainly reflect the good intentions of a parent seeking to provide the best life for their child, but it reveals a

³⁴ Dwoskin E, Torbati Y. Inside the Silicon Valley push to breed super-babies. *The Washington Post*. July 16, 2025. Accessed April 21, 2026. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2025/07/16/orchid-polygenic-screening-embryos-fertility/>

³⁵ Black J. The race to make the perfect baby is creating an ethical mess. *MIT Technology Review*. Accessed April 21, 2026. <https://www.technologyreview.com/2025/10/16/1125159/ethics-embryo-screening-reproduction-baby/>

³⁶ Tabery AC, James. No, You Can't Design Your Baby—And Trying Would Be a Terrible Idea. *Scientific American*. December 1, 2025. Accessed April 21, 2026. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-genetically-optimizing-embryos-is-misleading-unethical-and-not-even/>

³⁷ Tech billionaires want to make gene-edited babies. *The Economist*. Accessed April 21, 2026.

³⁸ Sarkar P. *Prout in a Nutshell*. Vol 1. 1959.

³⁹ Black J. The race to make the perfect...



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fear-driven culture focused on the outer material world at the ruinous expense of our inner spiritual lives.

These fears, driven by culturally reinforced standards of embodiment, are further perpetuated within a context of global capitalism, which has proven extraordinarily effective at identifying insecurities, manufacturing new ones, and selling relief in the form of purchasable status signals through an endless supply of consumer products. By extending that process into the biology of our children as a form of biocapitalism, embryo optimization is just one way transhumanist thinking unknowingly steers humanity in the misguided direction of biologically reinforcing our existing neuroses.

Objection 3: Transhumanism as a Pathologizing of the Human Experience

“Ageing is a disease.”

The first sentence of a manifesto is usually a good indication of a group’s priorities. As the opening four words of her influential *Transhumanist Manifesto*, Natasha Vita-More, a founding figure of the extropian community, offers a glimpse into how transhumanists feel about getting older.

Of all transhumanist fears fueling their search for technological salvation, none is more overpowering than a fear of dying. The history of humanity is filled with social movements hoping to overcome death, and transhumanism is simply a continuation of this ancient human tendency. Whether ageing should be classified as a disease is an issue that sometimes consumes mainstream policy discussions, most visibly when the World Health Organization sparked a fierce debate by adding, and then quickly removing, “old age” as a diagnostic category to its 2022 revision of its global standard for diagnosis.⁴⁰

Transhumanists, however, take things further.

“Until aging is resolved through nanomedicine and other innovations, augmentation and enhancement to the human body and brain are essential for survival,” Vita-More’s manifesto exclaims in the second paragraph.

Rooted in a materialism that excludes consideration of the non-physical dimension of human existence, longevity-obsessed transhumanists rarely pause to ask the philosophical question of

what the ‘me’ is that seeks to preserve itself. The yogic knowledge system underpinning Neohumanist thought holds that human beings are composed not only of the physical body, which transhumanists focus on exclusively, but also of non-material psychic and spiritual elements.⁴¹

These ideas, which can seem nonsensical within Western materialism, are starting to find validation in some areas of mainstream science.

Donald Hoffman, an MIT-trained cognitive scientist, builds on the work of high-energy physicists like Nima Arkani-Hamed to argue that if space-time is not a fundamental reality, as physics is increasingly suggesting,⁴² then the materialist assumption that consciousness simply ends at physical death is less certain than typically acknowledged.⁴³ While many in the west might dismiss the concept of reincarnation and karmic science as the wishy-washy nonsense of new-age thinking, Hoffman’s work represents a rigorous mathematical approach in exploring the underlying elements of these ideas, substituting terms like ‘conscious agents’ and ‘data structures’ for what spiritual traditions might call a ‘soul’ and ‘karma’.

Ageing isn’t the only attribute to find itself on the transhumanist naughty list. Its founding logic, which suggests that our biology is inherently a suboptimal system needing upgrade, tends to perpetuate a normative vision of human functioning that disability scholars identify as a descendant of the eugenic attempt to eradicate the ‘unfit’.⁴⁴ Rather than supporting all forms of human variation through community, transhumanism proposes the same eugenic endpoint of eliminating undesired conditions and chooses market forces as the instrument rather than state coercion.

The existence of any preference at all presumes the existence of a hierarchy; a parent’s decision to choose their child’s eye colour necessarily contains the rejection of other options.⁴⁵ We culturally

⁴¹ Anandamurti. *Ananda Vacanamrtam* Part 14. 1979.

⁴² Arkani-Hamed, N. (2017, December 1). The Doom of Spacetime—Why It Must Dissolve Into More Fundamental Structures—Nima Arkani-Hamed. *PSW Science*. <https://pswscience.org/meeting/the-doom-of-spacetime/>

⁴³ Tim Ferriss. Does Consciousness Survive Death? — Donald Hoffman. 2022. Accessed May 4, 2026. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbWGJeKq4tU>

⁴⁴ Kafer A. Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement. *Disability Studies Quarterly*. 2015;35(4). doi:10.18061/.v35i4.4985

⁴⁵ Rübsaam A. Personal Discussion...

⁴⁰ Belshe S. Should Aging be a Disease? Accessed April 24, 2026. <https://www.kumc.edu/communications/about/publications/kansas-medicine-and-science/fall-winter-2024/should-aging-be-a-disease.html>

Transhumanism's uncritical faith in engineering as the master tool of human progress is also a flawed approach to transcending our limitations. While technology may be helpful in the journey, an overfocus on external intervention is a particular disservice to the inner tools of spirituality.

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reinforce this tendency when we ask expecting parents whether they want a boy or a girl.

Transhumanism tends to take this to an extreme.

In a clip from the documentary *Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement*, James Hughes appears in a television debate making the claim that it is immoral for parents to knowingly bring an embryo with Down's Syndrome to term and that they should 'get a dog' instead.⁴⁶ While later admitting carelessness in his phrasing, he says the clip was taken out of context and that his point was about imposing disabilities on a child on the grounds that their disability might enrich others.⁴⁷ Contained within Hughes's blog post clarifying his position is the idea that if parents are given reproductive choice over their children, then society will naturally choose fewer children with disabilities, what he terms 'liberal eugenics.' Later in the same film, he states this more crudely when he says, "There are going to be fewer short, ugly, fat, dumb people in the world."

What disability scholars will point out is that what counts as disability, divergent from the norm, or a preferred trait, is often socially constructed and changes across history. Today's society, which inherits its values from 17th-century Europe, tends to emphasize the traits of white, western, able-bodied men who prioritize logical reasoning. Transhumanism tends to use this form as the measuring stick to assess "improvement." As an

extreme expression of this projection, transhumanists will sometimes argue that we have a moral obligation to use technologies to 'uplift' non-human animals to a more 'human-like existence.'⁴⁸

To counter these objections, the most common argument transhumanists advance is that their use of technology is broadly aligned with the goal of ending human suffering. While it's true that efforts to reduce suffering are worthwhile, a spiritual understanding of suffering may also reframe its role in our lives.

Newton's well-known third law of motion states that every action has an equal but opposite reaction, but this is merely a physical expression of a deeper principle guiding the structure of the universe. Current scientific understanding confirms that everything in our known universe exists as waves of energy.⁴⁹ From a spiritual point of view, what we call the mind is simply a collection of vibrational impressions stored as unprocessed reactions of past mental or physical actions. These vibrations, referred to as *samskaras* in Sanskrit, give rise to our personalities, ambitions, preferences, desires, and aversions. Therefore, what we experience as suffering is the necessary expression (or exhausting) of these vibrational waves. In this view, suffering shouldn't be seen as 'punishment' in the way some traditions frame it, but as the discharging of reactive momenta accumulated across lives we no longer remember. This is a necessary rhythmic adjustment crucial to our spiritual development in the journey toward the realization that what we experience as an

⁴⁶ *Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement - Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement*. Accessed May 4, 2026. <https://fixed.vhx.tv/packages/fixed-the-science-fiction-of-human-enhancement/videos/fixed-vhx-v2>

⁴⁷ Hughes J. Of Dogs and Disabilities. October 5, 2013. Accessed May 4, 2026. <https://web.archive.org/web/20131005095241/http://ieet.org/index.php/IEET/more/hughes20130929>

⁴⁸ Hauskeller M. How to Become Post-Dog: Animals in Transhumanism. *Between the Species*. 2017;20(1).

⁴⁹ Gleiser M. Not just light: Everything is a wave, including you. *Big Think*. December 15, 2022. Accessed May 5, 2026. <https://bigthink.com/13-8/wave-particle-duality-matter/>

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The tantric practices of yoga are holistic tools designed to work in harmony with our nervous and chemical systems; a set of technologies for transcending the limits of the personal self.

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isolated self is a temporary expression of a single undivided field of consciousness.

Suffering is a necessary friction of that recognition working itself out.

Within this view, suffering isn't an arbitrary accident but has a deep and significant purpose in our journey. The impossible paradox is that while we should certainly strive to reduce suffering in collective society, there is equally nothing out of place within the totality of existence and its flowing waves of energy.

This means we are already whole and complete as bundles of the complementary vibrational states we experience as “good” and “bad.”

In a telling exchange with an interviewer at *Wired Magazine*, Noor Siddiqui is confronted by the idea that had her embryo screening technology been used by her own grandparents, her mother's embryo would have been discarded and that she herself would not exist.⁵⁰ Siddiqui misses the point by retreating to the claim that, “I would have a mom, but my mom wouldn't have suffered in the way that she did.” The journalist tries another approach by suggesting that perhaps her mother's genetic blindness is intimately woven into the specific sequence of experiences, responses, and motivations that produced *that* specific woman and ultimately *this* specific daughter working on embryo selection technology.

The samskaras we carry, including those giving rise to our suffering, are not flawed distortions layered over an otherwise undamaged self. They are the self, in its specific and irreplaceable configuration. The point is not to say that we should preserve health conditions because they might bring

unexpected good, but rather to acknowledge the harm in reducing the world to the simplistic binary of good or bad. What Siddiqui's technology might eliminate is not only disease, but also the pressures that shape our lives and everything those lives go on to do.

Conclusion

On April 28th 2026, the FDA in the United States made history by approving the first-ever gene therapy for a rare but devastating form of hereditary deafness. The condition, caused by mutations in a gene responsible for producing a protein that converts sound waves into brain signals,⁵¹ leaves children with few options other than a cochlear implant. The clinical trials, which delivered a functional, non-heritable version of the gene to the inner ear, were stunningly effective at restoring natural hearing to children with the mutation. For the first time, a generation of children with this condition may never need the mechanical help of an implant.

Neohumanism certainly does not hold the position that emerging technologies applied to human health are undesirable. Scientific developments across many fields of technology are sure to bring tremendous benefits to humanity. As is the case for many of Sarkar's philosophies, which escape tidy categorical assignment, Neohumanism cannot be seen as falling cleanly within all existing bioconservative discourse, though it does share overlapping criticisms.

Of the many ways transhumanism violates Neohumanist philosophy, none is more

⁵⁰ Kehe. This Woman Will Decide Which Babies Are Born | *WIRED*. Accessed May 5, 2026. <https://www.wired.com/story/this-woman-will-decide-which-babies-are-born-noor-siddiqui-orchid/>

⁵¹ Sheridan C. Historic FDA approval brings first gene therapy for genetic deafness | *Nature Biotechnology*. Accessed May 5, 2026. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41587-026-03145-w>

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consequential than its breach of *prama*, a Sanskrit term at the core of Sarkar's philosophy, meaning 'balance' or 'equilibrium.' While science, technology, and human reason can and should be used as tools for humanity to overcome many of the afflictions we encounter, today's transhumanism reflects a profound imbalance in its overreliance on engineering and logical reasoning at the expense of other ways of engaging the world. This imbalance is rooted in the materialist assumptions of the Enlightenment, of which transhumanism inherited and built its worldview upon. Rather than seeking balance, those assumptions prioritize separation over connection and logical reasoning over the intuitive faculties that yogic sadhana cultivates and refines.

The consequence is not only a philosophical error but an exclusionary vision of human advancement that is liable to harm a great number of communities on earth.

Much like Cornelius Ewuoso and Ademola Kazeem Fayemi argue that Ubuntu humanism, a community-centred philosophy of social integration,⁵² might serve as a guide to reclaiming transhumanist futures, it is possible that the ambitions of transhumanism could be reconfigured within a context of Neohumanism. However, given its historical affiliation with eugenic projects that gave rise to many 20th-century horrors, the term may be sufficiently poisoned to warrant abandoning it entirely. What remains of transhumanism today is, broadly, an expression of flawed Enlightenment assumptions, the religion of physicalism, and the deification of human reason.

Transhumanism's uncritical faith in engineering as the master tool of human progress is also a flawed approach to transcending our limitations. While technology may be helpful in the journey, an overfocus on external intervention is a particular disservice to the inner tools of spirituality. What are the tantric practices of yoga if not tools, developed holistically to work in harmony with our nervous and chemical systems, as a set of technologies to *transcend* the limits of the personal self?

Continued from page 39 ... **P.R. Sarkar on Indology: Lost and Forgotten Cultural ...**

books were written in the Sriharsha script. Oriya script used to be written on palm leaves with iron pens, so in order to avoid tearing the leaves, it was written in rounded letters. Bengali was, however, written in angular letters. Kashmiri scholars were the first ones to write the ancient Rk Veda and Atharva veda in the Sarada script. The Sarada script is 1300 years old. The Nārada script was used in the south-west of Allahabad up to the Gulf of Kachh, north of Mumbai, and is 800 years old. It was invented by Nagar Brahmins, who started writing Devabhasha, i.e., Samskrta, in Nāgrī, and so it was called the Devanāgarī script. (Devanāgarī script came from Gujarat, not from UP). The Kutila script is used in the east of Allahabad and is used for Bengali, Oriya, Bhojpuri, Maethalii, Angika, etc. Bengali is 1100 years old. Now, it has 12 dialects.

Another significant aspect of the cultural history of ancient India is the use of Bhaeravī Cakra and Swastika. Bhaeravī Cakra is popularly known as the Star of David and used by Israel in its national flag. The swastika was later used by Hitler and given a negative connotation, but both the symbols are originally from the time of Shiva and part of the Tāntric culture of ancient India. They have spread all over the world and have later been absorbed by different cultures and belief systems. They have been found on Viking ships, in old churches and on old forts and temples. The five-pointed star is also found on the walls of Purana Quila in Delhi. It is also found in ancient Persia and amongst Aryan relics.

The so-called tribal people of India have distinct ethnological and linguistic characteristics. Rohtas of the Bhojpuri area belong to the Austric tribe and speak their own dialect as well as Bhojpuri. Tharus who reside in the Bhojpur area of Nepal speak a non-Aryan dialect and Bhojpuri. In Bengal, Munda, Humunda and Oraon speak Bengali as their second mother tongue. Jamatia and Chakma tribes of Tripura and Mizoram also speak Bengali as their second mother tongue. In Ra'r'h, the Singmundas are Austrico-Mongoloids, while Bauris and Dakras generally have Bengali fathers and Austrico-Mongoloid mothers. There is little Negroid influence in the Singhmunda, Bauris and Dakras. Their complexion is not jet-black but light brown, and they speak Bengali as their first language. The Bagdis live in Birbhum, while the Oraon tribe lives in Ranchi and Palamu and belongs to Austrico-

⁵² Ewuoso C, Fayemi AK. Transhumanism and African humanism: How to pursue the transhumanist vision without jeopardizing humanity. *Bioethics*. 2021;35(7):634-645. doi:10.1111/bioe.12902

negroid or Dravidian race. In Bengal, Oraons were the main tribals, and there has been a blending of the tribal cultures of Tamil, Coorg and Telugu. The Como tribe lives in 24 parganas. Transported tribes live from Ranchi to the Sunderban. The British policy of cultural subversion and tribal dislocation has caused widespread cultural alienation among them. Their cultural specialties must be protected while integrating them into the mainstream of collective life.

This short cultural history of India, as originally narrated by Shrii Sarkar with his omni-telepathic vision, shows that history must not only be confined to the study of the rule of monarchs and kings but must also reflect the weal and woes and hopes & aspirations of the common people. If humanity is to profit from the study of lost history, it must bring out the specialties and noble qualities of even the common people. Such historical analysis will inspire common people to march ahead with confidence and pride in their heritage.

Appendix: A Date-line of India's Civilizational History

- Birth of Ra'r'h: an ancient cradle of human civilization. root of eastern thought
- Rk-Vedic Age (15,000-12,000 years ago) and the root of western Aryan civilization
- Shivás Advent (5000 BC) & Tantra Yoga-silver lining between east/west Hills stage civilization born at the end of Rk Vedic period and beginning of Yajur Vedic period; Kota-Alonia civilization (finds are older than Indus Valley).
- Post-Rk Vedic period , Composition of Upanishads (2000BC) & Indo-Aryan Exchange
- Mahars'i Kapila (Samkhya)- a little before Krs'na. Born in Patti Jhalda (Anandanagar)
- Krs'nás birth (1500 BC); Plains stage; Atharva Vedic period; Veda Vyas period.
- Panini (520-460BC) & Maharsi Kanad from Gandhar in Afghanistan. Taxila; Rsi Kaushamba
- Buddha and Jain doctrines (500BC) Magadh spread to Ra'r'h
- Patainjali. (300 BC, some say older) Born in Patun village. of Burdwan (Bengal); Canakya 300BC
- Maharsi As't'avakra 2000 years ago As't'avakra Samhita (Raja Yoga/Rajadhirāj Yoga)

• Jesus visits Kashmir, and some believe he was introduced to yoga-sadhanas about 2000 years ago.

• Adi Shankaracarya (500 or 788-822CE) Paoranika Dharma introduced caste system;

• Natha Cult; Matsyendranath (8th-9th century), Miinanatha, Gorakshanatha, Gohininatha, Caorangingnatha, Mahendranatha, Bhartihari, etc.

• Vasu Gupta (860-925) and Abhinava Gupta (975-1025); Valmiki (7th-8th century). Kashmiri Shaivism tradition.

• Tibetan Yogiis* (9th century onwards) Padama Sambhava, a learned prince of Oddiyana in the 7th century AD, was the first to spread Mahayana Buddhism in Tibet . Kumarayan was a Kashmiri pandit who was invited to China..married a Chinese princess Jiivá and did groundwork practice in Buddhism in Ladhak. He translated scriptures into Chinese, too. His son Kumarjiiva spent most of his life in China. Kadampa School was founded by Atisha Dipamkar (982-1054 AD) based on renunciation & compassion. Atisha was born in Bengal; served as the abbot of the Buddhist university in Vikramshiila and spent his last days in Tibet. Dromtonpa gyalwai Jungue (1004-64) was an eminent disciple of Atisha. The Geluk tradition, in the 14th and 15th centuries (1357-1419), was centred on a monastery founded by Tsongkhapa Lobzang Drakpa. His student Gedun Drup (1391-1474) was the 1st Dalai Lama. The Sakya tradition was introduced by the Indian master Virupa and in Tibet by the charismatic translator Drokmi Lotsawa (993-1077); Kunga Nyingpo (1092-1158); Sakya Pandita (1182-1251); Chogyal Phakpa (1235-80), who was tutor to the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan. The Kagyu tradition: Mahasiddha Tilopa (988-1069); Naropa (1016/1060-1100); Marpa (1012-1097); Jetsun Milarepa (1040-1123); Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa (1110-1193). Other Tibetan lineages include: Shangpa Kagyu; Chod (Yoginii Machik Labdron, 1055-1153); Shije; Kalacakra; Urgyen Nyendrub; Siddha Urgyenpa (1230-1309) have survived. 6th Dalai Lama Tsang Yang Gyatso. China invaded Tibet on June 25th, 1950. The extraordinary life of Khyentse Rinpoche ended on 28th Sept. 1991. Currently, the 14th Dalai Lama is: Tenzin Gyatso

- Hatha Yoga Pradipika (15th century) by Swatmarama, a disciple of Gorakhnatha.
- Kabir (spiritual poet); Trailanga Swami & Totapuri –naga sanyasiins 17th century-20th century. Siddhas who lived for over 250 years.
- Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteshvarji, Ramakrishna, Meher Babaji, Vishuddhanandaji, Anandamayii Ma, Pt.Gopinath Kavirajji; Prabhupáda Bhaktivedanta, Vivekananda, Sri Krishnamacaryaj(1888-1991); Swami Shivananda, Swami Satchiddananda, Raman Maharsi, Swami Muktananda & many others.
- Life of Mahakaula Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiiji (1922-1990) Delta-stage civilization- Jamalpur phase; Trips to the Philippines, Anandanagar phase; Ranchi phase, Patna phase, World Travels, Travels in India to many historical sites. Anandanagar/Kolkata phase. His yogic contributions included: A New Philosophical Treatise (Ananda Sutram), Scientific Meditation systems, Guided Yoga-Asanas & Therapy system, Yogic Dances, especially Kaoshikii, Prabhat Samgiita, Sixteen Points, Kapalika Sadhana, Vishesha Yoga, Madhur Sadhana, Avarta Kiirtan, Avadhuta cult, Guidance on Diet & Dealings, etc. He created a global organisation with thousands of whole-time workers from over 70 countries. His exemplary disciples included Abhedananda, Amitananda, Asiimananda, Divyananda, Dada Gagan, Dineshvarananda, Samanvayananda, Vijayananda, Raghunathji, Rudreshvarananda, Chandranathji, Naginaji, Dashrathji, Ananda Bharati didi, Ananda Diipanvita, Ananda Sukriti, Ananda Supriti, Vratadhirananda and hundreds of other sanyasiins & householders who devoted and sacrificed their lives for the establishment of a universal ideology.
- Unlike past civilizations, which led to physical clashes & brought about resultant biological & social transformations in the physical realm, the future evolution of human society is likely to be more marked by psychic-metamorphosis & spiritual evolution. Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiiji predicted the advent of a Sadvipra-society led by benevolent individuals. Yoga is likely to contribute towards this golden future of the human race.

A Call for **RATIONAL VISIONARY** Writing

Neohumanist Review invites submission of articles for publication in its bi-annual (March and September) issues.

The journal comprises multiple disciplines to address the most vexing planetary issues, such as social and economic inequality, ecological collapse, war and peace, mass immigration, and technological transformations, from the joint perspective of art, science, philosophy, and spirituality.

Our aim is to bring together academic writings using the filter of the philosophy of neohumanism, focusing on the transcendental, trans-disciplinary and transformative, in order to promote the liberation of all.

Neohumanist Review aims at:

- Exploring optimistic visions for the world;
- Educating the world about the relevance of neohumanist philosophy as it is applied to diverse areas of existence;
- Offering pragmatic views as guides towards a post-capitalist world;
- Reporting on exemplary progressive initiatives undertaken by anyone anywhere in the world;
- Sharing scholarly in-depth articles on themes of popular interest;
- Publishing research reports that further peace, freedom, prosperity, justice and progress of the society;
- Encouraging rational, scientific and compassionate thinking in solving the problems of humanity.

Writers may contact editors at
theneohumanist.com

NEOHUMANIST LEARNING CENTRE



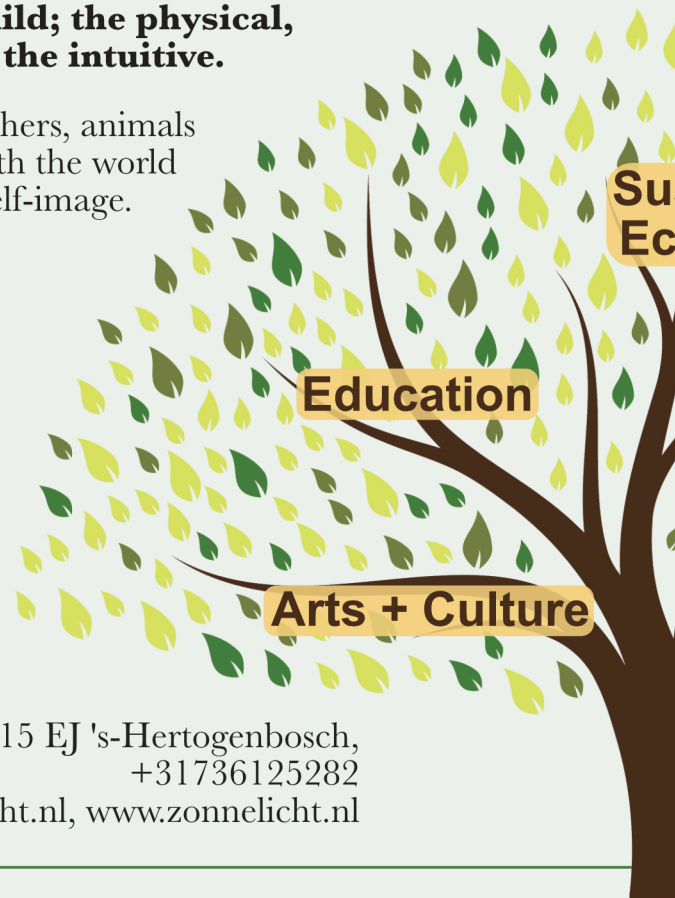
Zonnelicht works with a neohumanist vision. There is care for all aspects of the development of a child; the physical, cognitive, emotional, social, creative and the intuitive.

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We are honored to share a meaningful milestone in the journey of the Neohumanist College of Asheville. NHCA has been granted avocational (non-Title IV) accreditation for a three-year term.

This achievement reflects the dedicated efforts of our faculty, staff, students, and wider community, who have worked with sincerity and care to build an institution grounded in Neohumanist values while meeting rigorous standards of educational quality.

Accreditation affirms both the strength of our academic programs and the integrity of our mission to offer holistic, values-based education that supports personal transformation and collective wellbeing.



While this moment invites celebration, it also marks the beginning of a new phase. With this foundation, we are expanding our reach, strengthening our systems, and deepening our impact.

With heartfelt gratitude to all who have contributed, we look forward to continuing to grow and share Neohumanist education with a wider world.



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