

“Postal” Discontents:

A Ground Report on the Anthropology of Knowledge in India

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Abstract

In this paper I argue that to produce knowledge about India that is reliable, robust, and not controlled by the dominant trends in the Western academy remains a challenge. A genuine alternative might emerge only by fracturing the authority of the overriding Euro-American discourse. But if one departs from the dominant discourse, one’s position is generally not accepted as acceptable knowledge. This, then, remains our conundrum: if you say it their way you are co-opted; if you say it differently, it is not considered knowledge. This paper offers a situated re-examination of this discursive tangle, which persists not only because of the legacies of colonialism, but because the central crisis at the heart of (post)-modernity is, arguably, the crisis of knowledge itself. This paper is a reflection not just on post-modern possibilities in India, but on the continuing challenges inherent in producing meaningful knowledge that continue in our present context. What is the solution? Not just survival, but *svaraj*.

Introduction: *Bees Sal Pehle*¹

How to produce meaningful knowledge about ourselves in India? I became interested in this problematic over twenty years back when India was rife, somewhat belatedly, with discussions on post-modernism.² I myself participated in deliberations, a detailed account which may be found in my newly published book, *Debating the ‘Post’ Condition in India: Critical Vernaculars*,

¹ The phrase, which means twenty years back, is slanting allusion to *Bees Saal Baad*, a murder mystery in the guise of a ghost story, a Hindi adaptation of a Bangla film loosely based on *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Released two years after I was born, the film, directed by Hemant Kumar, starring Biswajeet and Waheeda Rahman, was a huge hit. It had popular songs such as “*Bekarar Karke Hume*,” sung by Hemant Kumar, who was also its music director. In the context of this paper, the “haunting” is not so much by the ghost of post-modernism, but by the continuing problem of producing meaningful knowledge about India.

² One of the earliest Indian discussions of the subject is an edited volume by Maurya and Maurya (1994).

Unauthorised Modernities, Post-colonial Contentions (Abingdon, New York, & New Delhi: Routledge, 2018). The genesis of this particular report was an invitation to be a plenary presenter at the Sahitya Akademi annual seminar, 26-28 February 1996.³

The famous Kannada writer and Jnanpith award winner, U. R. Ananthamurthy, was then the President of India's national academy of letters. Naturally, Ananthamurthy wanted to bring the annual festival of letters to Bengaluru, the capital of his home state, Karnataka. It was no accident that Karnataka was then ruled by the Janata Party, whose leader and Chief Minister, H. D. Deve Gowda, was Ananthamurthy's political patron.⁴ Ananthamurthy was a star on his home turf; all his guests, participants in this literary festival, were received by the CM in Vidhana Soudha, the massive and monumental State legislative assembly building that dominates the centre of the city. Deve Gowda looked the least interested in us. He barely smiled as he dutifully if perfunctorily dispensed a bouquet to each of the invitees, a select dozen of us. The conference was inaugurated by other bigwigs in the historic Sir K.P. Puttanna Chetty Town Hall on Jaya Chamarajendra or J.C. Road, the first and last time I had ever addressed a gathering in those august premises.

The point that I tried to make was that despite the occasional, if exceptional, display of such panoply and power, our intellectual and creative efforts rarely produced meaningful knowledge about ourselves in India. That was because whether we were dominated by modernism or post-modernism, we remained subject if not subjugated. The colonisation of India's intellectual class was still our lived and daily reality even fifty years after independence.

³ Given its central argument that the "post" does not fit all that well in India's discursive matrix, a facetious title of this paper might be "Post-modernism's *Desi* Difficulties." Some of the writers and critics who played a notable role in debating the "post" in India during that decade include Gurbhagat Singh, Aijaz Ahmad, K. V. Thirumalesh, Anjan Sen, Madan Soni, and Udayan Vajpayi.

⁴ Haradanahalli Doddegowda Deve Gowda was the 14th Chief Minister of Karnataka from 1994 to 1996. He went on to be the 11th Prime Minister of India from 1 June 1996 to 21 April 1997.

As it happened, someone in the audience appreciated what I was saying. I was soon invited to contribute to a Festschrift to honour Dr. Shankar Mokashi-Punekar, a senior Professor of English, as also an important Kannada writer, translator, and critic. I sent them my write-up, which I titled “Bypassing Post-modernism: The Burden of Creating Meaningful Knowledge in Contemporary India.” The volume, edited by K. Raghavendra Rao, K. D. Kurtkoti, and Basavaraj Naikar, Professor Mokashi-Punekar’s former colleagues at Karnatak University, Dharwad, was published by a Felicitation Committee in 1998.

Professor Mokashi Punekar, who passed away in 2004, was a Sahitya Akademi award winning writer in Kannada. His major novels were *Avadheswari* (1987) and *Gangavva Gangamayi* (1958), both of which were translated into fourteen Indian languages. I knew him as an Indian-English critic and the author of books such as the *Indo-Anglian Creed* (1972), *An Epistle to Professor David McCutcheon*, and *Studies in Indo-English Literature* (1980). He was also an Indian-English poet, though not as well regarded for his English creative output as for his Kannada works. But the reason I contributed a paper to his Festschrift was because I believed that the values I espoused were likely to meet with his approval. In much of his work, Professor Mokashi-Punekar had resisted our intellectual domination by the West, regardless of which agency it came via. Thus, in his time, he resisted the hegemony of literary modernism and the primacy it accorded to the aloof, detached, ironic outlook to Indian life and reality.

When I sent my paper for the Festschrift, I thought we were challenged by what was an ostensibly an invasion of theory, over-laden with obscure post-modernist jargon, difficult to decipher let alone engage with. Were we, I wondered, opening ourselves to a new wave of domination, albeit in a different style? If modernism represented a refusal to engage seriously with Indian reality by preferring ironic detachment and noncommittal disingenuousness, post-

modernism too refused to show any commitment to positive values by valorising indeterminacy almost to a metaphysical principle. Was revelling in irresponsible free-play appropriate in the Indian context? Would the celebration not just of the absence of authority, but of the impossibility of normative structures, suit a “developing” country like ours? Wouldn’t that be tantamount to escape, evasion, retreat from our social and political responsibilities as privileged intellectuals? I wondered if such an avoidance or circumvention of duties might be *adharmik*.

In keeping with the courtesies of that age, I got a hand-written thank-you letter from Professor Mokashi-Punekar, graciously acknowledging my paper. In turn, it reinforced my own claim to affiliating with “nationalist” Indian teachers of English including senior professors such as K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, C. D. Narasimhaiah, and M. K. Naik, all of whom I made it a point to call on even after they were retired. Professor Mokashi-Punekar belonged to that school.

Today I revisit, in addition to record, this bit of local history to make an observation directly related to an objective of the *American Journal of Indic Studies* – to produce knowledge about India that is reliable, robust, and not entirely controlled by the dominant trends in the Western academy. Twenty years earlier, such an endeavour would hardly have been possible. Those of us who resisted the overriding neo-colonialist thrust of Indian academics could only offer a sort of guerrilla warfare, occasional skirmishes if not flourishes, which made their way into un-refereed journals or unknown publications, little circulated, soon forgotten. Intellectual life, instead, was governed by personal relationships, teaching practices, and native-language contributions, augmented by translations and the limited world of Indian-English scholarship. This was the fate of my original paper and its subsequent appearance in a “lost” publication.

But we survived. I think that is the key takeaway of those decades.

The Perseverance of the Problematic

The issue of what constitutes valid knowledge about India, however, persists. If post-modernism was the (non-)official Western critique of modernity, the burden of creating knowledge in contemporary India demanded engaging with, not succumbing to, it. Such a move was necessary because an official critique of the dominant carried with it many of the oppressive vestiges of what it sought to overturn. A genuine alternative might emerge for us in India only by fracturing the authority of this overriding Euro-American discourse itself. But if one departed from the dominant discourse, one's position was generally not accepted as acceptable knowledge. This, unfortunately, remains our conundrum: if you say it their way you are co-opted; if you say it differently, it is not considered knowledge.

A situated re-examination of that older discursive tangle has bearing not just on post-modern possibilities in India but on the continuing challenges inherent in producing meaningful knowledge even in our present context. This is as it should be because the crisis at the heart of modernity itself is, arguably, the crisis of knowledge. No wonder, the post-modernists' undermining of the West's dominant knowledge systems did not, ultimately, break those systems down. The dominant knowledge systems recouped and drafted their opponents into their own master-narrative and to their own purposes. Knowledge systems are sustained by economic, political, and military might, by the direct and rear guard action of advanced capital. In these systems, new languages of power – even languages of dissent which appear to subvert power – themselves soon morph and merge with older codes. It is a continuing process of modification, substitution, and reproduction of power. Therefore, we must articulate our personal and

civilizational aspirations in alternate languages, even if these are not accorded recognition or legitimacy to begin with.

When we are concerned with the epistemic rather than merely the literary, our inquiry is implicated in the broader range encompassing the state of our society and culture, especially in the challenges we face in understanding, theorising, and studying ourselves. Such concerns, understandably, are imbricated not only in the epistemological and disciplinary regulations, but in the economic, political, social, and cultural bases of society. Creating knowledge in and about India, with our own concerns and aspirations, self-definitions and modalities of survival, is a direct concomitant of the condition of our society, of the world we live in. And to me this is intimately linked with the history of colonialism and with civilizational difference. Our academic situation is not only related to modes of production and distribution, systems of governance and authority, but to competing ontologies and metaphysics, alternative epistemologies and axiologies. Leading a meaningful if not authentic life as an Indian intellectual entails bringing a certain minimum coherence and consistence between one's *anubhav*, *vichar*, and *achar*.⁵ In a word, it is the pursuit of *svaraj*, as I have said in my numerous books.

Not Content, but Mediation Validates Knowledge

Going back for a moment to the conference I mentioned at the beginning, its programme, which I've preserved as a memento, seems so quaint, not to mention out dated, today. Not just because of the titles of papers or the list of speakers since deceased, but also the whole institution of the conference itself: to produce a paper to order, that too within a couple of months, to present

⁵ I was introduced to these terms by the late Professor K. J. Shah; he thought they were more effective than the more common "thought, word, and deed."

it in a packed panel on which unrelated papers are also slotted, to try to find an attentive audience in an event overloaded with literary celebrities – all these put the prospecting academic, even an experienced one, in a state of almost insurmountable anxiety.

These, and similar misgivings, are what might be termed first order difficulties. Given the nature of our cultural institutions, given other contingencies of time, space, and human resources, this is perhaps the best we can do in managing our intellectual affairs. There is, in other words, a strange and absurd theatricality to events like this. A seminar is a “show” in more senses than one. It is meant to demonstrate or display the fact that intellectual activity is in progress. But it is also a spectacle in that all the players know that they are playing the role of intellectuals, whether or not a meaningful intellectual exchange is really taking place. The role of the designated “intellectual” is already defined, as are its limits and parameters. Within these limits and parameters, can new knowledge be produced? The likelihood is slim.

So much for the semiotics of seminars. Seminars, and the papers produced therein are, ultimately, about knowledge. And the crisis in knowledge is at the heart of our inquiry. This is one reason to begin on a self-reflexive note. But that, as I already admitted, is a first order difficulty. The problem of knowledge is, of course, far more serious and complex. Consequently, so are the complications in an institutional analysis of knowledge. The more serious confrontation lies in the question of what constitutes knowledge itself. Who confers the label “knowledge” to a process of thought? What are the devices, structures, and forces that produce this category called knowledge? And, once produced, how is such knowledge disseminated? Who validates, authorises it? Thereupon, what procedures, conventions, and techniques are used to market it? To these we may add further questions implied in the triad of interrogatives: knowledge of whom, for whom, by whom. The import should be obvious: the moment what I say is recognized as constituting

“knowledge,” a certain power is bestowed upon it and on me. On the other hand, by denying my words the status of knowledge, they, as well as I, at once, become bereft of such authority, disenfranchised.

This should be obvious, especially after post-colonial critiques of knowledge. But would the problem of knowledge be solved if the institutional constraints and contingencies which I outlined earlier as the first order difficulties were solved? Perhaps, such a question cannot be properly answered because institutional constraints, of one kind or another, do exist. Moreover, in the Indian context, they are still rather daunting, if not overwhelming. But let me state my thesis more bluntly: it is the processes of arbitration that matters in knowledge production, not just the content. Impact factor, indexing, gate-keeping, refereeing, peer-recognition – these constitute the brick-and-mortar of knowledge much more than what you say or discover. Mediation or dissemination, more than substance or insight, determines the constitution of knowledge.

When Dissent Becomes a Form of Consent

The second order difficulty in producing meaningful knowledge, in other words, has little to do with its immediate circumstances, but is implicated in its broader institutional, even civilizational structures. It is, as such, harder to tackle. By and large, what constitutes valid knowledge today, whether in the sciences or humanities, is determined by Western modernity. The processes of recognition, legitimation, and authorization institutionalised over 200 years or more of Western rule have created our purported universal civilisation. We all accept this, in varying degrees, even the counter-systemic spoilers and wreckers, who look to holy books or party dogmas as sources of authority to destroy Western modernity.

What I say may not be considered knowledge at all – this is the fear that haunts us in India, especially in the Humanities and Social Studies. This fear, again, has more than one source. There is, first of all, the anxiety of measuring up to what constitutes as valid knowledge “over there,” in the West, which has been the source of our self-definition for about two hundred years. Whatever happens, we must measure up to them, to their yardsticks, to their parameters – even if we have no direct access, nor the means to understand these. So, whether or not we really measure up, we must at least aspire to or believe that we do. We must pretend to, even if we are only fabricating a comforting delusion.

Similarly, we must speak about the latest trends – whatever they be. We must, moreover, demonstrate our knowledge of these trends so that we are not left behind. If we cannot do so in the West by publishing in their journals as some of our better known NRI theorists have done, we can try some “make-in-India” import-substitution. As long as we convince ourselves that we are not lagging too far behind, we will be all right. We will be able to hold our own as intellectuals. Such is our faith.

But our unequal relationship with the West, attribute it to colonialism, neo-colonialism, intellectual imperialism, doesn't change. We seem to be trapped in it, only because of our history as a defeated, colonized civilization, but because of our ongoing, continuous junior partnership with our erstwhile masters in what we are ourselves complicit. We are responsible for our prolonged subjugation because we have not built our own counter- or alter-narratives. Our heroes and role models remain enshrined in the Western academy. It is very clear to me that our intellectual class, no matter what it professes, has always known where its interests lie. Our interests lie in perpetuating the hegemony of the West and its knowledge systems. We are rewarded

for playing a subsidiary role. Recognition abroad ensures rewards at home. The comprador intellectual class of which we are proud members sustains neo-colonialism.

This unequal relationship operates in subtle and invidious ways. For instance, once we question the validity and primacy of master-narratives in a post-modernist fashion, shouldn't that, logically speaking, free us once and for all, from the master-narrative of imperialism and neo-imperialism? But does it actually do so? No. Instead, we have a new decentred universalism in which all have become post-modernists and post-structuralists – all the while bemoaning the power-cuts, water-shortages, poor air quality; complaining about the corruption, inefficiency, and wastage in the Government; seeking better jobs, better cars, better schools for our children; buying more and more “modern” gadgets to “improve” our lives; yet complaining of our inability to find any time to enjoy life, and so on. Thus we display all the typical tendencies of post-colonial middle-class people – and in the same breath celebrate the petty victories of post-modernism over modernism. Surely, there is a contradiction somewhere? If there is, so what? Post-modernism revels in such contradictions.

The fact of the matter is that post-modernism has done precious little to dethrone the master-narratives that really determine that kind of world we live in. It has not dethroned capitalism or economic, political, and military domination. Can we be culturally equal when we are economically, politically, and militarily weaker? We can, but that possibility is not permitted in the dominant discourse. In other words, the very same countries which produced the ultra-liberal discourse of post-modernism are the most conservative when it comes to retaining their economic, political, and military advantages. North America and Europe are stricter than ever when it comes to giving visas to coloured people; yet they used to tout their multiculturalism as a model to the rest of the world. For people like us in what used to be called the “Third World,” neo-colonialism

is far more relevant a critical category than post-modernism. We must, of course, remember that the discourse of neo-colonialism itself is appropriated by the West and controlled from there. As long as our forms of dissent are derived from those manufactured in the West, I am afraid our dissent will only be a form of consent.

The problem of what constitutes meaningful knowledge cannot be solved without breaking out of the dominance and stranglehold of Western knowledge systems on post-colonial intellectuals. This cannot be done without taking cognizance of the material conditions in which inter-cultural relationships are embedded. Once the overwhelming power and force of these material conditions is recognized, we have only two options left before us. To strive to change these material conditions in a materialistic manner, or to alter the definitions of power and value from those which accept the primacy of the material to those which question them? If the latter course is taken, then it is not enough to crow about our alternative sources of strength and vitality, but to live them, to demonstrate them through action. Though enslaved, we must live as if free.

Western Modernity as a Sinking Ship

I started this discussion with the constraints that seminars impose on the production of knowledge. This problem, especially in its present context, has to do with the post-colonial academy and how it functions. In that sense, it is a problem internal to India. Another section showed how we are actually implicated in a larger, disadvantageous relationship with the West because Indian academics function, by and large, as a dependent outpost of the Western academy. As long as our relationship of existential subservience persists, how can we seize control of our own narratives? In this final part of the polemic, I wish to continue my cross-cultural approach,

but not merely in the oppositional, India vs. the West, mode. The opposition, alas, cannot be done away with entirely because global academics is not just comparative, but competitive. But it must be modified, sooner or later, if we wish to live in and work for one world rather than several. From larger accumulative and affiliative clusters that work as power blocs, we begin to see both the West and India as divided within, at times, against themselves. The internal divisions within the West bring us to the heart of our crisis, both in the West and the rest of the world.

Post-modernism, it is said, both announces and celebrates the failure of the modern project. I wonder if this is entirely true. As suggested earlier, modernity survives and flourishes in spite of the post-modernist onslaught. Ironically, post-modernists were rewarded much the same way as those who supported and propagated modernity. Their worth was measured by their fame and productivity; they are given material, measurable rewards. This has led some to allege that the post-modern crisis is more about jobs and tenure, and less about the discontents of modernity. Secular, humanistic, modernity continues as the dominant civilizational mode of the West.

Modernity is not merely a cultural or intellectual fad so that its demise too can be merely a cultural or intellectual exercise. Modernity is constituted of economic, political, and military might. These are not being dismantled by post-modernist or post-colonial theory. There's no point claiming that we are all equal when the West still controls much of the wealth of the world and has the weapons required to maintain it.

Likewise, the idea that modernity has ended only just recently, sometime in the 1980s – all because some philosophers had grave difficulties with its premises and conclusions – would be too naive. The fact is that modernity has always been a bitterly contested domain, secured through endless violence and oppression. Since its very inception, it has been thus. The crisis within modernity, then, is nothing new. Modernity was always in a state of crisis. To that extent, Marx

was right, even if his bitterly fought battle against capitalism created its own monsters. The other of pluralistic democracy in the West was the authoritarianism of Fascism and totalitarianism of Communism. The two sides fought bitterly for control and dominance in the world through the bloody twentieth century.

If modernity had its roots somewhere in the Enlightenment or even prior to that, if its rise is related to the rise of colonialism, capitalism, industrialism, and technological dominance, then all these were historically contested within Europe and North America themselves. Post-modernity is but a new expression of the discontents of modernity. Moreover, post-modernity, except in some non-standard versions, does not really change the West's self-definitions. It makes no serious attempts at self-recovery; instead it tends to veer towards irrationalism or nihilism.

Similarly, its derived forms in India do not go far enough to question the dominant paradigms of modernity. This brings me to a third order difficulty in producing meaningful knowledge. So far I have been on an oft-trodden path as far as Indian academics is concerned, but now, I am afraid I shall have to face the risk of a rejection even from my fellow-travellers. My point is that the dominant knowledge-systems of our time, even in India, are totally hostile to what I consider to be the civilizational genius of India.

Scientific, secular, modernity does not honour the self-recognition of the human as a spiritual being. So, if I were to say that to undo modernity, the received post-modernity of the West is inadequate but instead a reaffirmation of India's spiritual self is necessary, I am sure I would be close to annoying most of my peers if not committing academic hara-kiri. What, then, does a person like me do? Do I remain silent? Do I take on modernity on its own terms? Both options seem to me to be self-defeating. It is one thing for a sage like Ramana Maharshi to be silent. His

was a silence which spoke loud and clear, the silence of the self-validating and the self-effulgent. If I remain silent, it will be like the *ahimsa* of the coward, both self-deluding and ineffective.

On the other hand, I also know that modernity cannot be defeated on its own terms. It will not recognize any terms other than its own. Therefore, what I must do is to try to spiritualize this very discourse of academics and modernity. It is like living within the belly of the beast or in a river full of crocodiles. One has to fight in a sort of intellectual insurgency. Luckily, the situation is not all that desperate. Perhaps for the wrong reasons, the West itself is now saying that the modern project is severely beleaguered by a combination of interlocking crises that are ecological as well as economic. What is the way out?

A global system that depends on endless consumption and exhaustion of resources is doomed to destroy the very habitat that sustains it. The dualities that undergird modernity – man vs. God, man vs. nature, man vs. man, man vs. woman, and man vs. machine – have brought us, it would seem, to the brink of suicide and self-annihilation. The human species, which has overrun our entire planet and captured all its resources, seems to have succeeded so well as to almost ensure its own failure and extinction. Mother earth, our only *oikoumenē*, is under threat. Can Derridean indeterminacy, Foucauldian resistance, Deleuzian schizoanalysis, Habermasian communicative action, Cixouvian *écriture féminine*, Levinasian ethics of the Other, and so on, save modernity from its own excesses and depredations?

Perhaps, modernity is like a sinking ship. Like one of its most powerful metaphoric representations, the ill-fated and arrogant *Titanic*, it must be abandoned. If so, it makes as little sense to try to fight modernity as to salvage it.

Can Indian “Spirituality” Salve if Not Save?

I have been arguing that post-modernism, in the narrow sense of the term, as an elite discourse generated from within Western hegemonic structures, fuelled no doubt by the internal crises of modernism, remains a creature and minion of modernity. That is why I have focussed for most part not so much on the official versions of post-modernism as upon the crisis of modernity itself we may perceive it from within our civilizational location in India. The essential crisis of modernity, from such a perspective, is the denial of humanity’s spiritual quest and the substitution of it by the promise of material well-being. That the latter promise has been broken, we in the colonized world should realize with greater clarity than those in the world of the colonizers. Furthermore, if modernity claims that happiness is obtainable through the fulfilment of material desires, this claim is disputed not only by our traditions, but also by the multiple detractors of modernity itself.

The question therefore is what shape should the world of the future take? Will human happiness, peace, cooperation, and wellness be guaranteed by greater material prosperity alone, engendered by the market economy, by globalization, and by the spread of cultural homogeneity, all of which exacerbate the planetary ecological crisis? Or will our contentment, peace, cooperation, and welfare be achieved through a self-recovery, self-renewal, and self-recognition? If this latter approach is called spiritual, then so be it: only a recovery of our spiritual self can avert the present crisis. We must not hesitate to proclaim this boldly. Only such a self-recovery can check the advance of consumerist capitalism and its logic of hegemonic globalisation.

Ainslie Embree in an essay that is not as well-known as it should be once argued that Indian civilization is not as open and tolerant to foreign influences as is generally thought.⁶ He claimed that the basic questions implicit to a meaningful life had been asked and answered by Indians about three thousand years back. A certain philosophical and social pattern had then emerged to cope with most human requirements; this pattern, Embree averred, is still essentially unchanged. Some of the key ideas on which our civilization was founded, for Embree, include assumptions about what constitutes reality (*sat*) time (*kala*), karma, rebirth, and dharma, assumptions which differ fundamentally from those of Western civilization. Interestingly, Embree does not include caste in his list, implying thereby that it is not an essential feature of Indic civilization.

According to Embree, India dealt with foreign influences not through a process of synthesis but of encapsulation: “all truths, all social practices, can be encapsulated within the society as long as there is willingness to accept the premise on which this encapsulation is based,” the fundamental premise being that there are “many levels of truth” (34). Embree concluded by that this is how India would cope with scientific modernity too, by maintaining urban, Westernized, industrialized “enclaves” within a countryside still traditional (38). This process would be marked “not by synthesis but by erosion and decay of the traditional values and ideals of Indian culture” (38). Ananthamurthy put it brilliantly: we are on a moving train headed West, but we are all looking east.

Embree made me see my own civilisation in a different light. Will its values be eroded by modernity, as Embree predicts, or will India be able to offer an invigorated and far-reaching response as Sri Aurobindo envisaged in *The Renaissance in India*? The verdict is still out. But it is clear to me that India’s truths must be revitalised and re-established in the light of its own self-

⁶ Embree (1968).

understanding. This is the real and far-reaching challenge of creating new knowledge in and about India.

If the contemporary Indian academy is incapable of understanding or making use of its spiritual heritage, if Indian intellectuals continue to accept the mastery of Western discourse, if all of us fail in our civilizational responsibilities, what will happen? The intellectual class will be left with its derivative and empty debates, rendered even more irrelevant and incompetent. India, still seeking its own enlightenment and the enlightenment of the world, will find another way to fulfil its civilizational mission.

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