The Fall of the Indigo Jackal: The Discourse of Division and Pūrṇabhadra's Pañcatantra.
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The philology of Indic literary works has developed steadily, and can be said now to have reached a new stage. Though its method has undergone little change, it has been adapted in such a way to enable us to see the history of Indian literature—from the ancient to the modern ages—as a single stream.

India, it goes without saying, is a multi-lingual country. There the word "multi-lingual" signals not only regional or geographical variety but also diversity of language among social classes. Although various works were composed in Sanskrit and appreciated in the literary salons of the upper class, these venues were not open to ordinary people. Nonetheless, the latter surely engaged their neighbours in pleasant chats and idle talk, telling simple tales cast in a vernacular language. In other words, even if Sanskrit texts represent *literary* culture, this portrayal is restricted to the upper layers of society. Yet "Indic culture" is composed of the entirety of Indian society, not merely its upper layers. Thus, in order to understand culture as a whole it is essential to investigate literary texts together with their contextual backgrounds, namely, evidence of the contribution from the lower layers of society not necessarily ascertainable through direct textual reference. How can we obtain a comprehensive picture of all the layers of ancient and medieval Indic culture? In my opinion, the best way is to conduct precise textual investigation and broad comparison. In some cases, for example when investigating the oneiromancy in India, we should refer to the texts of works of natural science, such as the Āyurvedic texts. There also is a long cultural history in India of oral transmission, both of scholarly works and those meant for entertainment. Based on the premise that any kind of text constitutes a piece of literary culture, investigation of the relationships among these texts, I think, will enable the interspaces that exist between them to be bridged. As we investigate more texts, the interspaces will become narrower, thus making visible a more comprehensive image of Indic culture. With this general orientation in mind, reading McComas Taylor's book has been a splendid opportunity for me. In it he undertakes to clarify the background of a famous Indian narrative work, the *Pañcatantra*, by comparing it to texts from other genres—such as the Vedas—that he refers to as the brahmanical archive.

The author first outlines the distribution and genealogy of the versions of the *Pañcatantra*. This introduction is invaluable because it enables readers to understand not only the phases of Indic narrative literature but also why Taylor specifically chose the recension of the Jaina monk, Pūrṇabhadra. He rightly notes that versions of the *Pañcatantra* exist in numerous forms and media (p. 30), a state of affairs suggesting that a single original text in fact may never have existed, nor an original author ever known.

After an intensive exploration of the meaning of the word *jāti* as it appears in Pūrṇabhadra's *Pañcatantra*, Taylor expresses his ideas on certain aspects of the discourse of division, showing how *jāti* (birth) determines *svabhāvā* (essential nature) and how this in turn determines position in social hierarchy and social relationships. Next, he shows how the discourse of division woven through the *Pañcatantra* functioned in society via an examination of the status of written texts in Indic literary culture and other factors. After a reinforcing comparison with expressions in the brahmanical archive, he concludes his work by highlighting the idea of the brahmanical tradition in the *Pañcatantra*.

As a kind of hermeneutics, Taylor's study certainly is very interesting and innovative. Nevertheless, I could not help but feel somewhat at odds with the following points. First, animal fables are popular

throughout the world. Thus anyone, regardless of nationality, may be able to comprehend, or even share, the concept of the *jāti* of each animal. Yet the *varṇa* system is unique to India, so readers outside India would not have the social background necessary to grasp its intricacies. How then is the existence of the European *Aesop's Fables* or *Le Roman de Renart* to be explained? One need not invoke Dumézil's trifunctional hypothesis, considering that people outside India too had their own kind of social hierarchy, and would be able to identify with the conditions in which didactic works such as the *Pañcatantra* were composed and appreciated. While brahmanical society may have affected the composition of animal fables, it likely is not the whole story.

Second, in an investigation of this phase of Indian society, one also should consult the *Purāṇas*, because some of them occasionally function as śāstra. For example, Veena Das has shown how the author wove into a puranic work his own social advantage of being a Brāhmaṇa.[1] The authors of the *Purāṇas* very likely were either Brāhmaṇas or members of the authoritarian Kṣatriya class who maintained relative proximity to the masses, i.e., the lower layers of society.

Third, didn't the individual tales collected in works of Kathā (narrative literature) originate among the masses? Although Taylor unfortunately omits the fact (p. 136), some tales are common among works such as the Jākatas and the Pañcatantra (e.g. Jākata 215: *Pūrṇabhadra's Pañcatantra* 1, 16; *J.* 357: *PP.* 1, 26; *J.* 218: *PP.* 1, 21), likely because they originally were folktales transmitted among the general populace that were then occasionally picked up and recorded in Sanskrit or in Pali (one of the Prakrit languages) by a learned person of a higher class. The tale of "The Fall of the Indigo Jackal" prompts us to imagine a Brāhmaṇa-dominated society, but it is equally possible that the masses narrated their view of social affairs via the symbolism of animal fables so that dissatisfaction about their oppressive life could be voiced without risk of censure. Thus it is quite natural that the *Pañcatantra* includes such tales as "The Lion and Hare" that were meant ultimately to satirize Brāhmaṇa and the brahmanical society. The first work of *Kathā* literature in India was the *Bṛhat-kathā*, a Kashimiri recension of which included a version of *Pañcatantra*. It is said to have been written in Paiśācī, a Prakrit language—a fact that points to its aboriginality. I think that the roots of the Indic narrative works in Sanskrit might lay in folktales narrated in various vernaculars. Even today, many tales continue to be narrated in various vernaculars and exist in innumerable recensions, some of which share common motifs with the *Pañcatantra*.

Fourth, were all Sanskrit texts really authorized by brahmanical society? If we approach this issue from a different point of view, we must consider the possibility of some Brāhmaṇas who, rather than acting out of a consciousness of his/her own authority, actually were motivated by the genuine desire to transmit unaltered a literary tradition from generation to generation. Sanskrit seems to have functioned like a treasury for the preservation of cultural documents. Perhaps some good-natured Brāhmaṇas, or even learned persons who were not Brāhmaṇas, might have meant to record and preserve these stories as real cultural phenomena. Each recension of a narrative text written in Sanskrit thus seems to exist as a culmination of its oral transmission, or of people's activities in the realm of their vernacular languages—although some editors may have aimed to attribute it to the brahmanical tradition. Although I may not have been able to present my view convincingly, I am optimistic that future advances in philological study, i.e., the close study of texts written not only in Sanskrit but also in the Prakrits or vernaculars, will prove that my view is not mere speculation. Needless to say, McComas Taylor's study has provided us with a new angle for methodology that will ensure the continuous progression of our field of study.

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1   Veena Das, "A Sociological Approach to the Caste Puranas: A Case Study." *Sociological Bulletin* 17:2 (1968).