

Winter 2001

Caste, Desire, and the Representation of the Gendered Other in U. R. Ananthamurthy's "Samskara," "Ghatashraddha," and "Akkayya"

Krishna Manavalli
Old Dominion University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/english_etds



Part of the [Modern Literature Commons](#), and the [South and Southeast Asian Languages and Societies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Manavalli, Krishna. "Caste, Desire, and the Representation of the Gendered Other in U. R. Ananthamurthy's "Samskara," "Ghatashraddha," and "Akkayya"" (2001). Master of Arts (MA), Thesis, English, Old Dominion University, DOI: 10.25777/qh95-v991
https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/english_etds/85

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the English at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@odu.edu.

CASTE, DESIRE, AND THE REPRESENTATION OF THE GENDERED OTHER IN
U.R.ANANTHAMURTHY'S SAMSKARA, "GHATASHRADDHA," AND
"AKKAYYA"

by

Krishna Manavalli
M.A April 1988, Bangalore University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Old Dominion University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

ENGLISH

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
December 2001

Approved by:

Intiaz Habib (Director)

Sujata Moorti (Member)

Sangita Gopal (Member)

ABSTRACT

CASTE, DESIRE, AND THE REPRESENTATION OF THE GENDERED OTHER IN U.R. ANANTHAMURTHY'S SAMSKARA, "GHATASHRADDHA," AND "AKKAYYA"

Krishna Manavalli
Old Dominion University, 2001
Director: Dr. Imtiaz Habib

U.R. Ananthamurthy is an important Kannada writer who is situated in the navya (modern) literary movement that emerged in Karnataka in the post-independence South Indian context. This modern writer's works provide crucial insights into the postcolonial tensions of tradition-modernity, which figure importantly in modern Kannada literature. They engage with the issues of caste and gender in terms of the conflict between tradition and progress in the modern South Indian cultural discourse. Ananthamurthy's novel Samskara written in the 60's, and his short story "Ghatashraddha," and "Akkayya," written later, show how this writer's location within the upper caste discourse impacts his commitment to change and progress. What surfaces as the subliminal, but very central, desire to relegitimize the brahminical structures in his works is linked with the appropriation of the identities and sexualities of the lower caste subjects and woman. In the above texts the articulation of the upper caste male protagonist's self-construction involves the "Othering" of the female and the lower caste subjects. The strategy of romanticization, and the manichean binaries are employed to construct the difference between the brahmin male self and the Others of the dominant discourse. These works reveal the manner in which the female body constructed by the brahmin patriarchy becomes a site of exploration of upper caste male desire. They foreground the deployment of various strategies of controlling female sexuality in the upper caste

discourse. However, the ambivalence of the brahmin male desire for the Other leads to the disruption of the ideological formulations of the dominant community. Even as the upper caste male discourse strains to control the female figure, the resistance of this marginalized subject to the dominant representations of herself leads to the formation of her counterdiscourse. In the “fissures” which open up in the textual discourse as a result of this disruptive performance of the female subject, the agency of woman, even the doubly disempowered lower caste woman, can be traced. It is the presence of this counterdiscourse of the female subject that problematizes the constitution of the brahmin male self, and frustrates the agenda of the maintenance of status quo caste and gender hierarchies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank the members of my thesis committee, Dr.Imtiaz Habib, Dr.Sujata Moorti, and Dr.Sangita Gopal for their valuable support and guidance during the course of this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
U.R.ANANTHAMURTHY AND HIS HISTORICAL CONTEXT	1
ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IN ANANTHAMURTHY'S WORKS.....	3
METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY	8
II. CASTE, IDENTITY, AND DESIRE: CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRAHMIN MALE SELF	12
NATURALIZATION OF THE BRAHMIN MALE BODY	14
MANICHEAN MECHANISMS	20
APPROPRIATION OF THE FEMALE BODY	26
CONSTRUCTING THE BRAHMIN MALE BODY	32
III. THE MANAGEMENT OF FEMALE SEXUALITY	34
SEXUALIZATION OF THE FEMALE BODY	35
THE UPPERCASTE MALE GAZE	41
TRANSGRESSION ACROSS CASTE AND GENDER BORDERS	46
STRATEGIES OF CONTROLLING FEMALE SEXUALITY	51
IV. THE COUNTERDISCOURSE OF THE FEMALE SUBJECT	53
TRANSGRESSION AS RESISTANCE	54
FEMALE SPEAKING SUBJECT	63
FEMALE REVERSE GAZE.....	68
RESISTANCE AND AGENCY OF THE FEMALE SUBJECT	71
V. CONCLUSION	73
NOTES	77
WORKS CITED.....	80
VITA.....	84

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

U.R.ANANTHAMURTHY AND HIS HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The well-known Kannada writer U.R. Ananthamurthy has a crucial significance within the navya (modern literary movement) that emerged in Karnataka in the post-independence South Indian context.¹ His work foregrounds the tension between the solipsistic tendencies of Western modernism, which influenced the navya movement, and the progressive commitment toward social reform that always asserts itself in his writings. In their postcolonial interrogation of the project of modernity, the later novels and short stories of Ananthamurthy enter the postmodern Kannada literary phase. However, the caste and gender relations in Indian society have always remained the major preoccupations in his writing through a span of four decades. The ambivalent attitude toward Western ideas, which figures in his works repeatedly, especially in terms of the negotiations with tradition and modernity, often ends in an implicit revalidation of the dominant male upper caste male structures.

In its caste/class preoccupations, Kannada literature of the twentieth century found immediate inspirations in the nationalist figures like Gandhi, B.R.Ambedkar, and Ram Manohar Lohia.² D.R.Nagaraj, in his discussion of how “the anti-caste social philosophy had become the slogan of Indian nationalism,” shrewdly observes that the Gandhian model of resistance against untouchability reveals “the agony of the spiritual cleansing of the Hindu self” (Nagaraj 5). This becomes observable in the articulation of

The format for this thesis follows current style requirements of The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.

their rebellion against caste structures in many postindependence navya writers. Ananthamurthy's anticaste preoccupations also participate in such structures of highlighting the upper caste male self.

However, the hegemonic brahminical structure and its systemic subjugation of the lower castes came under severe attack during this period with many navya writers continuing the preoccupations of the earlier "pragathisheela" movement in interrogating the caste hierarchies in the South Indian society.³ Writers like Ananthamurthy, who were influenced by the Lohiate Marxist thought, foregrounded these preoccupations in their writings. Gender subordination also figures as an interlocking discourse within the unequal structuring of Indian society in terms of caste in the works of the navya writers. Women writers of the 60's sought to mirror the conditions of the marginalized women in Hindu society and articulated their anger against the repressive upper caste male hegemony. Thus, navya writing created the intellectual ambience and cleared the ground for the emergence of the voices of women and Dalit, or the lower caste writers.

While the development of Kannada fiction in the early "navya" period reveals the strong influence of Western Modernism on this literary movement, in the later part of this movement there was a break with Modernism's solipsistic tendencies. The marked "inwardness," exhibited in the navya concern for form and symbol during the 40's and 50's, changed after the 60's with the navya writers disengaging themselves from the posture of political neutrality. Not only in Ananthamurthy, but also in many other major Kannada writers of the navya movement like Gopala Krishna Adiga, Shivarama Karanth, P.Lankesh, Purnachandra Tejaswi, Girish Karnad, and A. K. Ramanujam, parallel to their invocations of the Modernist sense of personal alienation and the fragmentation of the contemporary world, there also figures a desire for commitment and social change.

Women novelists like Triveni, and M.K. Indira focused emphatically on the gender and caste-related exploitation. In their early writings, at least, many of the navya writers have revealed radical and reformist zeal.

During the later navya period, the response to the postcolonial conflicts of tradition-modernity, which had surfaced as the commitment to the progressive ideal in the beginning, turned into an increasing distrust of the project of modernity. This postmodernist phase after the 70's responds to the disillusionment of democratization and industrialization in postindependence India. Threatened by intense urbanization, overcentralization, the neocolonialist context of global economy, and the erosion of communal and individual identities which these developments signaled for the vernacular Kannada writer, Ananthamurthy's later writings reveal his ambivalence toward the ideal of progress and modernity.

Thus, the postmodern phase in navya writing seeks to interrogate the liberal humanist structures, which went into the shaping of the ideals of tradition and modernity during the colonial period. In order to recover the cultural memories, they tend to focus on representing their own cosmologies. Their attempt to grapple with the problems of centralized power structures and cultural standardization involves the stress on the local and the regional. Ananthamurthy's works must be discussed by locating them within the shifts between the earlier and later navya periods.

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS IN ANANTHAMURTHY'S WORKS

Represented eminently within both the local and national canons, often translated into English, Ananthamurthy's stature as a major Kannada writer is unchallenged. He is the recipient of the prestigious national award for literature in India, the "Jnanapeet."

Apart from his most famous novel Samskara (1965) he has written many other novels and some collections of short stories. His collection of short stories Prashne (1963) has been greatly acclaimed by the critics. The other novels include Bharatipura (1972), Avasthe (1978) and Bhava (1994). Ananthamurthy is also an influential Kannada critic.

To foreground the recurring preoccupations of Ananthamurthy's works, it becomes necessary to examine the critical responses to his writing. When it was published in 1965, his early novel Samskara became the center of a raging debate between the orthodox brahmin community and progressive intellectual groups. Shivaprakash discusses how in this novel, which was written in the period when the influence of Western Modernism was strong on the Kannada writers, the "plague" becomes the symbol of impurity--a metaphor of squalor signifying the stultified brahmin order (Shivaprakash 7).

In Samskara, the narrative of the sexual transgression of the "ideal" brahmin Pranesacharya is intricately connected with the story of the performance of the funeral rites to the corpse of another transgressive brahmin-figure Naranappa. The orthodox brahmin community of Durvasapura, which is at a loss to decide whether Naranappa's body should be given a brahmin funeral rite or not, waits for the advice of its leader Pranesha. As he struggles to find an answer to this problem, he suddenly finds himself drawn into a sexual union with Naranappa's low caste concubine Chandri in the forest. Pranesha's intense moral conflict, and the identity crisis which he goes through after this act, become the major preoccupations of the novel. The plague occurs as a metaphor for the crisis in the brahmin community in this novel. In the end, the protagonist Pranesha's journey of self-search culminates in his decision to return to Durvasapura to perform Naranappa's funeral himself.

Nagaraj discusses Samskara in the context of the writer's upper caste background and declares: "Samskara occupies a unique place in the history of Kannada novel for its brilliant portrayal of the 'self-image' of the brahmins as a part of the meta-critique of the caste system as a whole" (Nagaraj 67). Meenakshi Mukherjee's study of Samskara as a representative Indian realistic novel focuses on the preoccupation with change and progress in this work as the "difficult and uneasy process of tension between the fixed settled order of life and the still inchoate stirrings of self" (Mukherjee 69). However, V.S.Naipaul's criticism of this self-search (the identity quest of the brahmin male in the orthodox Indian society) concludes that the individual (Praneshacharya, the protagonist of this novel) "imprisoned in this dead civilization [. . .] can only define himself within it" (Naipaul 86). While commending the writer's progressive intentions, Naipaul views Praneshacharya's quest as being limited by the conditions of his society.

What none of the major critics of Samskara seem to focus on, is the way in which the appropriation of woman, especially the lower caste woman, becomes crucial in the articulation of the male protagonist's self search. A particular ambivalent representation of woman and the lower castes in this textual discourse is the key element in the recuperative strategies employed by the patriarchal brahmin society to contain the threat of disruption. The idealization of the lower caste women as glowing sexual objects in Samskara works as a strategy for the domination of their bodies by the high caste male.

A later work of Ananthamurthy, "Ghatashraddha," is the story of a brahmin widow's sexual transgression. Yamunakka is a young widow living with her father Udupa in an orthodox brahmin community. Udupa runs a traditional vedic school in his home. Nani is a student here. The bond between this young and vulnerable little brahmin

boy, who is constantly teased by the older boys, and Yamunakka forms the main preoccupation of the novel, even as the narrative explores the sexual transgression of this young widow. Her relationship with the local schoolteacher leads to her pregnancy. She is forced to undergo an abortion by her lover. But, the voyeuristic boys, who spy on Yamunakka, publicize this matter. The villagers ostracize Yamunakka. She attempts suicide, but is prevented by Nani who arrives on time to save her. Her father returns from his pilgrimage and performs the ritual of “ghatasraddha” (mock funeral). At the end of the story, we find this widower remarrying.

Contemporary critics have seen this short story as a scathing attack on the patriarchal brahmin order. Of these critics only Rajeev Taranath, in his introduction to the short stories of Ananthamurthy, observes how the act of the destruction of the maternal womb here (the forced termination of the widow’s pregnancy) connects with woman’s ostracization and her ultimate effacement in the form of a mock funeral (Taranath 42). Romanticization becomes a strategy employed by the high caste male discourse to control female sexuality and the lower caste world in this work.

The ambivalent representation of woman in Ananthamurthy’s recent short story “Akkayya” deconstructs the work’s dominant high caste ideology--especially its articulation of womanhood. Akkayya is a sister, who has been deserted by her husband. This story focuses on the myths of holiness and sainthood woven around the mandatory celibacy--the sexual control—imposed on Akkayya by the upper caste society. Her expatriate brother Srinivasa’s diasporic imaginings of his own “roots” are woven into the story of his sister which he narrates to his friend who visits him in Philadelphia.

According to Srinivasa, Akkayya who was victimized by the orthodox Hindu society found her fulfillment in the little world she constructed for herself. He describes this private world of Akkayya as including not only the families of her brother, but also as revolving round the cattle shed and the lower caste servant Pilla. He recollects the myths of rebirth that Akkayya would weave when she was alive. Srinivasa's contention in this story, that Akkayya's world becomes incomprehensible when viewed through Western eyes, only ends in reconfiguring her within the structures of traditional Hindu womanhood, for instance, by coding her in terms of the nationalist symbologies of the cow and a mother figure. His "theoretical guilt" for having marginalized the world of Akkayya in the past leads to self-exorcism in the form of a "harikatha-style" dance, which the two friends perform, at the end of the story. This mock performance signifies the failure of both Western neocolonial structures, and the protagonist's sophisticated postcolonial preoccupations in defining the world of Akkayya.

In this later navya work, Ananthamurthy does not subscribe to the modernity ideal either. However, the construction of this movement away from modernity also involves the appropriation of the figure of woman. Narayan Hegde, in his introduction to the translation of Ananthamurthy's short stories, feels that the story expresses skepticism about the Western rationalist attitude towards life. He reads the story as a celebration of "the extreme innocence of Akkayya," thus connecting the rejection of modernity in this work with the construction of tradition in particular ways involving the appropriation of woman (Hegde viii).

Ananthamurthy's Samskara, "Ghatashraddha" and "Akkayya" are all representative of the major concerns of his fiction such as the asymmetry of caste and

gender relationships. In this writer's economy, the discourse of female sexuality becomes crucially connected with the articulation of woman's self and desire. The above works foreground the anxieties of the upper caste male self in the context of modernity and social change. Written over a span four decades, they reveal the writer's movement away from his professed commitment to progress toward a more traditionalist position which implicitly privileges the brahminical male self. Yet, this recuperative tendency is problematized by the disruptive performance of the female subject. This reveals the "breaks" in the textual discourse which lead to the interrogation of the upper caste cosmology in Ananthamurthy's writing. Thus, a study of this important modern Kannada writer's work provides insights into the ways in which caste and gender equations are religitized in contemporary Indian society, despite apparent signs of change. Such an examination of Ananthamurthy's works will also open up the counterdiscourse of the marginalized subject, which undoes the teleology of the upper caste male power structures, and in doing that, illuminates the otherwise obscured narratives of women's resistance.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

My interest in U.R. Ananthamurthy's works springs mainly from the desire to explore the ways in which the construction of the Other (especially the self and sexuality of the gendered subject) becomes crucial in the constitution of the brahmin male self, and the maintenance, as well as the disruption of the upper caste structures in this textual discourse. As Leela Dube points out in her discussion of the interlocking discourses of caste and gender, "the principles of caste inform the nature of sexual asymmetry in Hindu society, and hierarchies of caste are articulated by gender" (Dube, 21). Since, both caste

and gender subordination are still living issues in the Indian context, the study that follows is of much contemporary relevance.

In my study of Ananthamurthy's Samskara, "Ghatashraddha," and "Akkayya" the focus is on the processes involved in the relegitimization of the brahmin self and the revalidation of the brahminical episteme in this textual discourse. The examination of the dominant caste desire, which occurs transposed as the violent attempt to regulate female sexuality in these texts, reveals the representational politics of constructing both woman and the lower caste subject as the Other. Tracing the resistance of the female subject to her representations by the upper caste male discourse here, leads to the construction of her counterdiscourse in the above texts.

Within the context of the critical studies describing Ananthamurthy's writing as modern, controversial, realistic fiction, I attempt, first of all, to locate his works in the tradition-modernity debates, which figure importantly in this upper caste male writer's works. But, even while tracing the narratives of progress and modernity, which are foregrounded in his fiction, I establish how the idea of change and the search for a new self of the brahmin male do not mean a significant break from the status quo caste hierarchies.

It is a part of my inquiry to analyze the ways in which the Othering of the female and the lower caste subjects are worked out in Ananthamurthy's works. Lower caste women in this writer's works become the sexualized Others. The upper caste female body constructed by the brahmin patriarchy becomes a site of exploration of male desire. In order to open up the gender-caste equations in the cultural discourse in which Ananthamurthy's novels and short stories are located, it becomes necessary to examine

the tropes employed in these texts. They reveal the upper caste discourse's modes of constructing the gendered and the lower caste Others.

Even as the strains of contradiction and ambivalence disrupt the ideological formulations of the dominant brahmin community in the texts under study, it is possible to foreground how there is an inevitable fall back on the Manichean economy of representing the Other in terms of the binarian opposite of the brahmin male self. My exploration of the process of romanticization in these texts shows how this assumes strategic significance in constructing the Other here. The Manichean binaries, which construct the difference between the high caste/lower caste and male/female subjects, become crucial in the constitution of the brahmin male self. My present discussion engages with the ways in which such constructions are deployed in naturalizing the superior brahmin male body and "othering" the lower castes and women. Thus, the metaphysical articulations of the difference between the self and Other in the upper caste discourse masks the underlying desire for domination of the female and lower caste subjects.

This study, finally, also focuses on resistance strategies of the gendered subject in this social discourse. These include women's subversion of the dominant male discourse, her attempt to position herself as the speaking subject, and the reverse female gaze which frustrates the upper caste male desire to construct her. Historicizing the caste and gender paradigms in Ananthamurthy's work in terms of the postcolonial tradition-modernity debates and the more recent context of global economy and diaspora will lead to an engagement with the seminal works of contemporary Indian Cultural studies such as those of Partha Chatterjee, M.N.Srinivas, Kum Kum Sangari and Suresh Vaid, Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak and others. Such

contextualizations make possible an in depth analysis of the issues examined through the course of this study.

CHAPTER II

CASTE, IDENTITY, AND DESIRE: CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRAHMIN MALE SELF

The caste cosmologies created in U.R. Ananthamurthy's works reveal his continual engagement with the construction of the brahmin male self. An examination of this upper caste writer's works spanning four decades reveals three recurring modes employed in the construction of the brahmin male body. These modes include the naturalization of the brahmin male body, the construction of manichean binaries, and the appropriation of the female body. In the texts under study, the coding of brahmin identity in the upper caste male body is reinforced by the construction of its difference from the "Others" of the dominant discourse. By strategically deploying the sexualities of the female and lower caste subjects, the brahminical discourse constitutes the brahmin male subjecthood.

Ananthamurthy's Samskara written in 1965, and his short stories "Ghatashraddha," and "Akkayya" published much later, foreground the centrality of the encounter of the brahmin male self and its Other—articulated as the lower caste subject, woman, or even the transgressive brahmin-figures like Naranappa and Mahabala in Samskara whose identities become eventually subsumed under the brahminical paradigm. Even the romanticized world of the lower castes, which the male protagonist has to journey through in Samskara and "Ghatashraddha," figures as an ambivalent trope of desire leading to the self-discovery of the brahmin male subject.

Constructed by the "imperial" gaze of the postcolonial upper caste male writer, who is exposed to modern Western ideas, the Others of the dominant discourse are often

turned into objects of desire. This maneuver positions the brahmin male as the subject of knowledge and desire. The categories of “tradition” and “modernity” become appropriated in this context to articulate caste identities and reinforce the status quo gender relations. In the three works of Ananthamurthy being examined here, the narratorial position is often identifiable with that of the male protagonists. This male subject determines the point of view, articulates the difference of self and Other, and is involved in relegitimizing the brahmin identity via the appropriation of the lower caste and gendered subjects.

Contemporary Indian cultural studies, which engage with the issue of the hierarchical ordering of Hindu society, have been largely influenced by Louis Dumont’s theories of caste system in India. In Dumont’s view, caste system is structured mainly in terms of the opposition between the brahmin and the outcaste. He points out how the impurity of the untouchable is “conceptually inseparable” from the purity of the brahmin, and argues that they must have been established together, or at least, “mutually reinforced each other” (Dumont 54). But, he does not discuss gender, which is, in my view, another important axis along which the brahmin self becomes constructed in Indian society.

A study of Ananthamurthy’s works reveals how the brahmin male self becomes relegitimized within the structures of both gender subordination and the alienation of the outcaste/lower caste subject. The major conflicts of tradition-modernity, male-female, and individual-society are all gathered together by the central opposition of the brahmin and the Other. Manu Chakravarthy, a noted Kannada critic writing about the significance of the “metaphysics of ambivalence” in the works of Ananthamurthy, rejects the view that the “wrestling with the contraries” like tradition/modernity, individual/community here is either “ideological or philosophical.” Chakravarthy locates this sense of duality in

the search for personal authenticity, which is “inextricably connected with the society.”⁴ However, in this context, it becomes necessary to interrogate the politics of the construction of this “ambivalence” which Chakravarthy discusses. It is possible to show that the production of ambivalence in Ananthamurthy’s works becomes a strategy for rehearsing the threat to the dominant caste ideology in order to control it.

While Ananthamurthy’s works are overtly involved in constructing the notions of tradition and modernity in terms of a profoundly contradictory vision, what actually occurs is a subtle reinscription of the so-called radical ideas within the hegemonic brahmin framework. Here, the contradictions become accommodated within the overarching “brahminical” paradigm, and the ambivalence felt toward the “stultified tradition” becomes a maneuver for relegitimizing caste/gender hierarchies. This strategy of foregrounding the conflict between tradition/modernity and individual/society mystifies the carefully worked out exclusions of the lower caste/gendered Other in these texts.

NATURALIZATION OF THE BRAHMIN MALE BODY

The relegitimization of the brahminical structures in Ananthamurthy’s works often occurs by the naturalization of the brahmin male body. In Samskara, for instance, this revalidation is foregrounded by the rehearsal of transgression within the brahminical structures. Such transgressive brahmin figures as are constructed in this textual discourse become eventually subsumed within the upper caste structures, thus reinforcing the biological coding of the brahmin male body.

This attempt to essentialize the brahmin self in Samskara can be seen in the manner in which the protagonist Pranesha’s existential predicament, articulated in terms

of the progressive ideas of individual choice and self-affirmation, becomes relocated within the brahminical metaphysics, which privileges the brahmin male as the paradigmatic spiritual seeker. Meenakshi Mukherjee, in her study of Samskara as a representative work of modern Indian fiction, points out that the novel foregrounds the conflict between the brahmin identity defined by “karma and varna” and a new self-awareness “partly conditioned by existential thinking” (Mukherjee 167).⁵

However, Mukherjee does not interrogate the sophisticated ways in which the naturalization of male brahmin identity becomes reinforced in the novel. After the sexual encounter with the lower caste woman Chandri, the protagonist Pranesha rationalizes his conflict in terms of the karmic theory: “now, he is really involved in the wheel of karma” (Samskara 78). Karmic theory allows the individual to choose only that which is destined for the individual. What the ideal brahmin is exhorted to do is to transcend the dualities of good/ evil, right/ wrong, and also self /other. His duty lies in cleansing himself of the egotism of constructing himself as the “agent” of action. Even as Pranesha wanders aimlessly in search of the new “existential” self, he is subconsciously reaffirming his identity in terms of the brahminical structures. His words about the transgressive brahmin Naranappa resonate through the novel defining his own identity: “[Naranappa] may have rejected brahminhood, but brahminhood never left him” (Samskara 9). This statement reinforces the coding of brahminhood in the body of the brahmin male.

When the “transgressive brahmin” figure is subsumed within the larger brahminical framework the biological coding of caste identity becomes further reinforced. This process is foregrounded in the dramatic tension produced between the “madhva” and the “smartha” beliefs in the novel.⁶ After Naranappa’s death the brahmin

community of Durvasapura meets to discuss the caste status of the dead transgressor. In the ensuing debate one set of brahminical beliefs are played off against the other. This conflict between madhva and smartha beliefs is crucially connected with the reintegration of the transgressive brahmin figures (Naranappa, Mahabala, and Pranesha after his sexual encounter) within the overarching brahmin paradigm in an attempt to revalidate the brahminical episteme.

The three transgressive brahmin figures in the novel are identified with each other. As we begin to construct the change in Pranesha in terms of his rejection of the traditional brahmin structures, we see that his thoughts hover on the two other transgressive brahmin figures, Naranappa and his former friend Mahabala. Though Mahabala is a “smartha” brahmin, in Pranesha’s mind, especially after his “fall,” the images of Mahabala and Naranappa become conflated: “unawares I have [always] seen Mahabala in Naranappa” (Samskara 100). Pranesha’s analysis of his unconscious desires to understand the nature of his transgression, and the answer he finds in this self exploration reveal his emphatic identification with the other two transgressive brahmin figures. He declares: “to make up for my defeat there [with Mahabala], I tried to win a victory over Naranappa [. . .]. Whatever it was I fought all along, I turned into it myself” (Samskara 100).

By tracing the transgressive brahmin figure to the great monistic philosopher Shankara himself, the brahminical discourse seeks to establish the idea that the male brahmin body is invulnerable to caste pollution. The quarrel between the smartha and madhva brahmins foregrounds this association in the context of the attack on the smartha brahmin Durgabhata. Garudacharya, who belongs to the rival madhva sect, mocks him: “Shankaracharya, your great founder, in his hunger for full experience, exchanged his

body for a dead king's and enjoyed himself with the queen" (Samskara 6-7).⁷ Shankara's violation of the brahmin codes does not result in devaluing his brahminhood. In fact, this incident is often quoted in the brahmin ethos as an example of how knowledge (the experiential treated as a way of acquiring knowledge) is central in the realization of the brahmin "selfhood" according to certain brahminical practices.

It is in this context that the seeming Otherness of Mahabala and Naranappa becomes subsumed under the brahmanical order. Mahabala's violations of the brahminical codes (and by transference Naranappa's transgressions) his meat-eating, socializing with the lower castes, drinking, sexual transgressions, and the failure to keep up the brahmin rituals—are all identified with "tantric" practices associated with the "smartha" beliefs.⁸ Douglas Brooks, discussing the history of alignment of the tantric practices with the "smartha" system, theorizes this alterity within the brahmin structures as an experimenting with the "controlled violations of Brahmin-defined conventionality." He points out that the tantrics perceive these acts as a means of transcending mundane rules that are associated with the spiritually inferior (Brooks 413).

This strategic movement toward smartha "monism" (ultimate unity of God and all Creation) in the text works as a mystificatory device in the reintegration of Pranesha's existential self within the brahminical episteme.⁹ The tantric accentuation of knowledge as a means of transcending dualities foregrounds the "experiential" as a way of divesting oneself of the "aham"(the sense of human "selfness"). According to the sanatana system, if asceticism and strict adherence to the shastras lead to moksha (salvation), so does the rejection of these. In this inclusion, both terms of the opposition become located within the same brahminical paradigm.

Furthermore, the accommodation of the transgressive brahmin figure within the dominant discourse is legitimized by the ancient myths. The myth of Jaya-Vijaya, the two devotees of Vishnu who chose to be born as his enemies in order to find salvation sooner, is invoked to reinforce the brahminical discourse's mode of accommodating Pranesha's present sexual encounter with the lower caste woman.¹⁰ Pranesha himself attempts to legitimize his sexual transgression by placing it in the frame of reference of the puranic myths. He articulates:

The great sage who impregnated Matsyagandhi the fisherwoman in the boat and fathered Vyasa—did he agonize over it like me? Did Vishwamitra suffer, when he lost all merits of penance for a woman? Could they have lived, seeing life itself as renunciation, staying with God, going beyond conflicts and opposites by living through them, taking on every changing shape that earth [. . .] offers. (Samskara 98-99)

Pranesha's interrogations here work as rhetorical devices validating the biologically coded brahmin identity, which is seen as untainted by the transgressions.

The textual construction of the death of the transgressive brahmin Naranappa signals such mechanisms of "inclusion." In this context, the reinforcement of the naturalized brahmin self is achieved by the invocation of the myth of Ajamila, the brahmin sinner who was saved from damnation.¹¹ Naranappa's death connects with the mythical story of the sinner Ajamila, who in his last hours called out the God's name, and was, therefore redeemed by Him. Chandri recollects Naranappa's death thus: "as coma set in, he mumbled, 'O mother! O God Ramachandra, Narayana! Cried out, 'Rama, Rama'. Holy names" (Samskara 45). Thus, the rehearsal of the tension within the brahmin order in the form of the transgressive brahmin figure results in the reinscription of this figure within what is seen as an essential brahmin self. Naranappa begins to signify the alternate path to God, which is also sanctioned by brahminical thought.

Such attempts to accommodate the upper caste male transgression in Samskara are brought to a focus in the self-search of the brahmin male. In this novel the brahmin protagonist's search for a new self does not mean a complete disruption of the upper caste discourse. Pranesha articulates his self-chosen celibacy, the rejection of physical pleasure, and the desire to win over Naranappa's hedonism as examples of egotism unbecoming of a renouncer. He locates the moment of his sexual experience within the karmic structures: "undesired, as if it were God's will, the moment had arrived" (Samskara 97). The accommodation of this new experience is accompanied by a shift from his earlier positions. This leads to the realization that what he had constructed as his penance till then was just a "set of multiplication tables learned by rote" (Samskara 91). Now, a chastened Pranesha experiences a "renewed" self-awareness, which becomes configured within the brahminical structures.

While the novel professes an overt commitment to progress and modernity, the textual strategies, which code Pranesha as a "brahmin" problematize the constructions of change in the novel. In this context, it is particularly significant that the transgressions of Pranesha are all enacted in the "heterotopic" states outside the agrahara. His sexual encounter with the lower caste woman occurs in the forest outside the agrahara. The other transgressions (eating in the "pollution" period of his wife's death, drinking coffee in the restaurant and so on) happen during a journey. This "in between" condition of Pranesha's quest connects with Shankara's search for the knowledge of sexual pleasure, which happens in the limbo of the transmigration into the dead king's body. A brahmin loses his purity by eating the food cooked by a lower caste woman. Pranesha eats only bananas (uncooked food) given by Chandri. Dumont's view that the purification rituals like a bath, for instance, can make the brahmin male regain his purity becomes relevant

here (Dumont 44). Pranesha swims in the river after the union with Chandri. This works as a ritual bath to technically preserve his caste status.

An examination of the processes by which the overt preoccupations with modernity and social change mystify the underlying attempts to naturalize the brahmin male identity in Samskara reveals the retrograde tendencies of this novel. Transgression is rehearsed within the dominant discourse in order to foreground the reinscription of the rebel figures within the brahminical structures. The violations of Pranesha, Mahabala, and Naranappa are subsumed under the brahmin paradigm by invoking custom and the legitimizing myths that reinforce the coding of brahminhood in the bodies of these male transgressive figures.

MANICHEAN MECHANISMS

Ananthamurthy's location within the brahminical discourse problematizes his construction of the lower caste and gendered subjects in his works. This high caste writer's engagement with the liberal humanist ideas of modernity and progress often leads to the replication of the "imperial" gaze which becomes focused on the marginalized figures within the hegemonic brahmin structures. By positioning himself as the subject of knowledge and desire (or by introducing the central upper caste male figure in the narratorial framework) the writer articulates the marginalized subjects as "different" from the brahmin male self. The second important mode of defining the brahmin male self in Ananthamurthy's works is, thus, by the construction of the manichean economy of "difference." This "difference" between self and Other in the works under study is foregrounded by means of the Manichean binaries and the romanticization of the lower caste and gendered Others.

Abdul JanMohamed's discussion of the "Manichean allegory" in colonialist African and Indian literature becomes relevant to the study of the caste/gender equations in the discourse in which Ananthamurthy's works are located. According to JanMohamed the colonialist constructions of self become predicated upon the alienation of the marginalized subjects in this discourse. Both exotification and demonization of the colonized subject become necessary for such cultural constructions of colonial difference. What underlies the act of defining this difference is the agenda of domination (JanMohamed 63,67). Similar Manichean formulations of the mutually exclusive binaries articulating the self and Other are employed in Ananthamurthy's writing. These binaries become operative in the constitution of the upper caste male self. While the upper caste self becomes defined in terms of rationality, control, purity, and nonviolence, the Other becomes articulated as irrational, passionate, impure, and violent.

Likewise, the animalistic metaphors in Samskara, which are deployed in the romanticization of the Other and the definition of his/her difference, lead to the construction of the brahmin body in opposition to that of the lower caste subject. The Others of the dominant order (the lower caste/gendered subjects, and even the anti-elements like Mahabala, and Naranappa) become articulated in romanticized terms that set the desire-rejection pattern in motion. Such animalistic metaphors are closely associated with the tropes of violence mobilized in the novel. Not only the lower caste subjects, even the transgressive brahmin figures, in the moment of their association with the lower caste world, become articulated in terms of this romanticized trope of violence. Thus, the brahmin view of the lower caste world becomes that of an exoticized and desirable Othering which inspires both lust and withdrawal in the brahmin male.

In this compartmentalized vision, lust and cruelty, which are both desirable and repelling, become assigned to the Other. Even the look of the half-bred Padmavati signals fear. A brahmin like Pranesha becomes “the bird [. . .] paralyzed by the stare of the black serpent” (Samskara 123). Similarly, in the incident where Pranesha watches the “bloody” world of the cockfight in the village fair, the lower caste world becomes visualized in terms of the “nether world,” where “the cruel engagement glinting in the eyes of [the] entranced creatures [the lower caste onlookers]” will make “a brahmin like [Pranesha] wilt” ((Samskara 117). As Mukherjee shrewdly points out about the trope of the “tiger” in this work: “by implication the tiger gets associated with other aspects of life that fall outside the rarified and attenuated brahmanic existence” (Mukherjee 173). The “tigrish lust” of the transgressing Pranesha becomes fused with the image of Naranappa as the “striped tiger” desiring Chandri’s body (Samskara 81, 45). The associations of cruelty worked into the construction of lust are juxtaposed with the brahmin perception of the lower caste world.

Dumont’s theory of how vegetarianism and the ideal of “ahimsa” were incorporated into the brahmin structures sheds light on the significance of the “brahmin-ahimsa” equation foregrounded in this text. He historicizes the privileging of these values in brahminism as a response to the nonviolent ideals upheld by Jainism and Buddhism. When the rise of these new religions posed a challenge to the hierarchical ordering of the ancient Hindu society, the maintenance of brahmin supremacy became predicated on the practice of these ideals (Dumont 149). Pranesha’s revulsion toward violence (identified with the lower caste world) results in reinforcing his “brahminhood” (associated with nonviolence).

Mukherjee makes a painstaking study of the binaries between the brahmin self and the Other which structure this novel. She draws the distinctions between Naranappa and Pranesha as representing the values of abandonment and passion)/order and restraint (Mukherjee 171). An exotic image is presented in the “raging” smell of the night-queen bush in Naranappa’s garden:

In the darkness of the night the bush was thickly clustered with flowers, invading the night like some raging lust, pouring forth its nocturnal fragrance. The aghara writhed in its hold as in the grip of a magic serpent-binding spell. (Samskara 15)

According to Mukherjee, the words “darkness,” “night,” “serpent” “magic” “lust” and “writhe” evoke “an irresistibly erotic aura” (Mukherjee 171).

This exotification becomes a strategy for alienating and Othering the lower caste world. A forceful contrast is seen between the subtle fragrance of the flowers that bloom in the gardens of the brahmin houses (the “sacred balsam” and other “flowers for worship”) and the violent fragrance of the flowers in Naranappa’s garden and of those that adorn Chandri’s hair (Samskara 14-15). Strong suggestions of fear and danger are worked into the trope of the “snake-like braid” of the lower caste women like Chandri and Padmavati (Samskara 15, 123). The strategy of romanticization, which employs the animalistic metaphors to code the lower caste bodies as passionate, “sexual,” and impure (being dissociated from the “nonviolent” brahmin ideal) leads to the construction of the brahmin and lower caste bodies in terms of binarian opposites.

Both the manichean mechanisms and romanticization work out the exclusions of the lower caste subject from the dominant caste discourse in a dramatic manner in Ananthamurthy’s short story “Ghatashraddha.” In this short story, the recurring theme of the contact between the brahmin and the lower caste/outcaste subject surfaces again, and

the romanticization of the Other is worked out by the employment of tropes, which evoke fear and disgust in articulating this marginalized subject. Here, the brahmin boy Nani's subliminal responses of fear and disgust toward the lower caste world undermine it in subtle ways.

Nani's journey with the outcaste Kateera in the forest at night foregrounds his attempt to dissociate himself from the world of the Other. From the secure location of the brahmin household Kateera has always been a liminal figure in Nani's mind. But, when he sets out with Kateera alone in the forest to search for the widow Yamunakka, he is suddenly seized by an intense fear--the romanticized fear of the unknown world outside the *agrahara*. The dark night, rustling leaves, hissing noise in the thickets, burning torches, and the singing men in the outcaste huts on the fringes of the forest--all create an eerie ambience. When he looks at Kateera he is filled with terror: "as I gazed in the dim light at his dark, lanky body which was naked except for the cloth covering his loins, I thought of the fierce 'panjurli' spirit and became fearful" ("Ghatashraddha" 24). He shrinks away from Kateera.

In "Ghatashraddha" the strong binaries forged between the brahmin self and the Other are articulated through the subliminal feelings of Nani toward the outcaste world. Nani is impelled by the traumatic entry into the world of the Other to exorcise his fear of the demons worshipped by the lower castes. This, he does by reciting a brahminical chant. His imagination constructs the figures of the outcaste men and articulates them in terms of disgust and fear. They are seen as consuming the "sour smelling liquid" and eating the "foul smelling stuff" ("Ghatashraddha" 27). In a fit of terror, Nani recalls that the outcaste mustached man is the frightening figure from the "dumb show" viewed in the ruins. Both Yamunakka and Nani are repelled by the missionary.

As the narratorial eye in this short story (Ananthamurthy's location within the upper caste structures seems to determine the constitution of Nani's subjectivity) traces the forms of the raucous outcaste men drinking cheap liquor and eating meat, it juxtaposes these images of the lower caste world with the crouching figure of the vulnerable brahmin boy Nani, who becomes a trope of idealized and threatened brahminhood. His world is further threatened by the strange transformation, which has come over the drunken Kateera who refuses to recognize him in the house of the outcastes. The disruption of the caste hierarchies suggested in this act upsets Nani considerably. In this text, the more explicit critique of the traditional brahmin world obscures the implicit value judgments made on the lower caste world by way of constructing the Manichean binaries. Nani's refusal to integrate with this world works as a reinforcement of his brahmin identity.

In Ananthamurthy's works the dissociation of the outcaste world is worked out by the construction of the manichean binaries and the powerful device of romanticization, which alienates the lower caste subject even as it constructs him/her as an object of desire. The lower caste world becomes constructed as violent, threatening, and unreliable (as in the case of Kateera who refuses to recognize Nani in the house of the lower castes, for instance). In contrast, the brahmin self is reinforced in terms of its "difference" from the world of the Other—as nonviolent (the disgust, which Pranisha feels toward the violent cockfight in Samskara, or the fear that Nani experiences in the outcaste world in "Ghatashraddha" exemplify this) rational, and pure.

APPROPRIATION OF THE FEMALE BODY

The third recurring mode of the construction of the brahmin male self in Ananthamurthy's works occurs through the appropriation of the female figure. Often, the sexualities of the lower caste gendered subjects are deployed in reinforcing the brahmin body as immune to "impurity" in terms of caste pollution (as in Samskara, for instance). The identities of the upper caste women (like Akkayya in the recent short story "Akkayya" and Yamunakka in "Ghatashraddha") also become appropriated in the constitution of the brahmin male self.

I have discussed the manner in which the unsettling encounter of the male protagonist with the lower caste women in Samskara is followed by recuperative strategies, which work toward the reinforcement of the brahmin male self, in the previous sections. Another recuperative mechanism is foregrounded in A.K. Ramanujam's invocation of the idea of "appaddharma" (emergency ethics) in his "Afterward" to the translation of Samskara, where he describes how the scriptures articulate such transgressions of the brahmin as motivated by divine purpose for "loka kalyana"--an act that is performed for the good of the world. According to the ancient epics, the "brahmin seed" of the sages produced great progeny as foregrounded in the stories of the sage Vyasa and emperor Bharata.¹² The patriarchal codes operating here become clear when we look at how these tales of temptation end with the sages yielding, and in this act reinforcing the superiority and purity (in terms of its immunity to caste pollution) of the upper caste male body.

In the upper caste ethos, the lower caste female body figures as instrumental in foregrounding the biological coding of the brahmin male body. The identity of the lower caste woman Chandri in Samskara is absorbed into the self-dramatization of the two

important upper caste male figures—Naranappa and Pranesha. Naranappa's challenge to the brahmin community, his renegade status, and his awareness of being the community's repressed anti-self are all articulated, primarily, in terms of his relationship with Chandri. Chandri becomes an emblem in the construction of his difference from the other brahmins.

The invalid brahmin wife Bhagirathi and the lower caste prostitute Chandri figure as instrumental in the self-fashioning (both as the model brahmin, and as the new rebelling selves) of Pranesha. He has married a sick and invalid woman because he can construct her as a sacrificial altar (*tapobhoomi*) to divest himself of all desire. Chandri becomes another kind of sacrificial altar. Her body becomes the instrument of his new self-search in the quest for an alternate way (the hedonist way) to *moksha* (salvation).

While the brahmin male self in Samskara becomes relegitimized through the appropriation of the bodies of the lower caste women, the self-construction of the dominant caste male protagonists in "Akkayya" and "Ghatashraddha" is connected with the rearticulation of the identities of the upper caste women. The position of the male protagonist (he is located firmly within the upper caste structures) in these short stories becomes identifiable with the narratorial gaze. This gaze articulates the female figure and appropriates her body by constructing it in emblematic terms, "spiritualizing" it as in "Akkayya," or by sexualizing it in the attempt to alienate the female subject. The power relations in which the gender equations become configured in these works invest the upper caste male with power and agency. He is configured as the subject who constructs the Other in order to redefine itself.

"Akkayya" foregrounds how the sister figure Akkayya's identity is appropriated by her expatriate brother Srinivasa to repossess in his nostalgia, the sense of his past and

his place. She becomes constructed as emblematic of tradition in this attempt of Srinivasa to align himself with his past. The tropes of tradition mobilized here are connected with Srinivasa's problematized perception of his diasporic condition. As the narrator points out about Srinivasa, "the slight regret about having moved away from his roots has made him a very sensitive man" ("Akkayya" 190). Though situated in the recent times, the textual engagement with the issue of tradition here is strongly reminiscent of the turn of the century nationalist constructions, which appropriated the female figure in its counter colonial project of dealing with modernity that came loaded with the colonial power structures. This recent short story of Ananthamurthy, foregrounds how the contemporary context of neocolonialism impels the desire of the upper caste male protagonist to reconnect with what he sees as the "Indian" tradition. It is particularly significant that the nostalgia constructed in this story strongly evokes the upper caste social structures in which the idealized rural household of Srinivasa is located.

Srinivasa rejects modernity in his desire to define his difference in the new milieu in the U.S and in this process constructs Akkayya as an emblem of tradition. Lata Mani analyzes the "contentious" traditions of modernity and tradition invented by the nineteenth century nationalist discourse to foreground how women become "emblematic of tradition," with the tradition-modernity debates becoming not mainly about women but about what "constitutes the authentic cultural tradition" (Lata Mani 90). Srinivasa's appropriation of the sister-figure replicates this process. He informs his friend that his intention in narrating Akkayya's story was mainly to "tell [him] not to look at life in India from a Western point of view" ("Akkayya" 200). Akkayya's picture drawn by Srinivasa adorns his library wall alongside the pictures of other idealized symbols of his

past. The attempt to exoticize this past (evocatively linked with the upper caste ambience) involves the construction of Akkayya in terms of the ideal of Indian femininity. As Kum Kum Sangari and Suresh Vaid point out in the introduction to Recasting Woman, both tradition and modernity as colonial patriarchal constructs became carriers of particular “patriarchal ideologies” (Sangari & Vaid 17).

The dichotomies in the story, which construct the difference between tradition and modernity in the contemporary context, also relate to the male-female binaries deployed in the nineteenth century Hindu nationalist discourse. Partha Chatterjee describes the central gender oppositions deployed in the nationalist discourse in terms of “home/world, spiritual/material, feminine/masculine” (Chatterjee 252). He discusses the insistence of the nationalist reformers that whatever the changes in the external conditions of the life of women, their “essentially” spiritual virtues (conflated with the ideal of Indian femininity) had be maintained. Such divisions facilitated the male to transact with modernity, and yet remain connected with his tradition (Chatterjee 243). Similar binaries of spiritual/materialistic, male-female, pure/impure are invoked in “Akkayya,” in Srinivasa’s awkward attempts to appropriate her body to reconnect with his upper caste past.

Akkayya is constructed as a simple-minded, but sagacious, woman capable of great domestic sacrifices. Srinivasa associates the figure of Akkayya with unworldliness, which becomes conflated with “saintliness” in the textual associations with Akkamahadevi or Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He configures Akkayya within the spiritual category as against the social sphere (outside world identified with the West) by articulating how “from the perspective of Western capitalist efficiency [. . .] there is no place in this [competitive] world” for his sister (“Akkayya” 194).¹³ In this maneuver he implicitly validates the inscription of the female figure within the “inner sphere”

discussed by Chatterjee. Akkayya becomes articulated within the nationalist symbologies, which are predicated upon Srinivasa's constructions of the East-West binary. His attempt to appropriate Akkayya's identity to define himself in terms of the "Indian" tradition replicates the reformist agenda of reinforcing the upper caste hegemonic structures.

This upper caste male desire to appropriate Akkayya's identity in reinforcing his location vis-à-vis tradition (identified with the upper caste Indian structures) and modernity (coded with the West) is foregrounded in the cow symbolism and the tropes of motherhood employed to construct her. Louis Dumont's theorizing of the use of cow symbolism to signify brahmin purity becomes pertinent here. He points out that "the opposition of pure and impure is applied in a social context in which the Brahman and the Untouchable are at opposite poles, the latter responsible for dead cattle and the former a paragon of purity, assimilated to the cow" (Dumont 151). In "Akkayya" the sister is identified with the cow Kouli. Her relationship with Srinivasa is articulated in terms of the cow trope: "she had brought him up with the tenderness a cow lavishes on her calf" ("Akkayya" 188).

It is as an idealized mother figure that Akkayya figures in Srinivasa's construction of the bond between them. He reinforces this mother image by telling the narrator, how, in protecting the cow Kouli from death, Akkayya "became a jagatjanani," the mother who nourishes and protects all creation ("Akkayya" 199). As Chatterjee points out about the gender equations in the turn of the century nationalist discourse: "this was expressed most generally in an inverted ideological form of the relation of power between sexes: the adulation of woman as goddess or as a mother" (Chatterjee 248). Such idealizations of Akkayya as emblematic of tradition via the employment of the affective nationalist

symbolologies is impelled by the upper caste male protagonist's desire to deal with the threat of modernity felt in terms of neocolonialism by reinforcing his brahminical past.

"Ghatashraddha" is another short story which foregrounds the appropriation of the female figure within the upper caste male desire. In this work romanticization/demonization becomes the central strategy of alienating woman from the patriarchal brahmin discourse in its attempt to define itself. The figure of the brahmin widow Yamunakka becomes sexualized by the upper caste male desire. Her identity is caught up in the male projections of femininity. The desire of the voyeuristic brahmin boys and the anxiety of the brahmin community at large leads to the reaction-formation of demonizing the widow—the self-preservatory mechanism of the dominant discourse, which transposes the desire-rejection within self onto the figure of the Other. Yamunakka gets defined as a slut—a sexualized female and, thus, the Other. These voyeuristic boys construct her as polluted in terms of caste purity by declaring "because of this slut God has become desecrated" ("Ghatashraddha" 19).

As in Samskara, here again, both woman and the lower castes become articulated as the threatening elements to the upper caste discourse. Yamunakka's transgression leads to her alignment with the lower castes. As a representative of the brahmin order, Yamunakka's father excommunicates her and performs the mock funeral to erase her identity within the upper caste structures. Nani narrates how her father Udupa "had performed the funeral rites of his daughter as if she were dead and that she was declared an outcaste" ("Ghatashraddha" 31). Thus, the erasure of female identity within the brahmin order is viewed as the necessary act in order to reinforce and legitimize the father's location in this dominant discourse.

This short story reveals how the writer inscribes himself with the narratorial position of Nani in order to validate the ambivalent upper caste male desire for the Other. Even while Nani figures as a sympathetic narrator telling Yamunakka's story, his subliminal responses to her, especially after her association with the lower castes, become problematized. The female body in this story figures as instrumental in articulating the authorial negotiations with modernity without dismantling the brahminical structures within which woman's victimization becomes articulated. Nani's movement away from Yamunakka begins with his complicity with the voyeuristic brahmin boys, who sexualize her and alienate her from the brahmin world. His rejection of the outcaste world with which Yamunakka is associated works toward reinforcing his brahmin self.

CONSTRUCTING THE BRAHMIN MALE BODY

In Ananthamurthy's works the constitution of the brahmin male subject occurs by the processes of naturalization, construction of the manichean binaries of self and Other, romanticization, and the appropriation of the female bodies. This upper caste male writer's negotiations with tradition and modernity in the postcolonial context are impelled by the perception of the threat to the brahmin hegemony in the form of change and modernity. The ambivalence and the play of conflictual perceptions, which figure in Samskara, "Ghatashraddha" and "Akkayya" in terms of the tension between tradition and social change end in the relegitimization of the asymmetry of caste and gender relations.

My next chapter focuses on the management of female sexuality, which is crucially connected with the appropriation of the female body in the attempt to reinforce the brahmin male self. The sexualities of both the brahmin and the lower caste women become articulated within the structures of the upper caste male desire in

Ananthamurthy's works. Caste asymmetry is fundamental to the construction of the brahmin male desire, which sexualizes, or disallows sexual agency to woman. Such constructions of female sexuality, and the male desire to control it are impelled by the agenda of reinforcing brahmin hegemony.

CHAPTER III

THE MANAGEMENT OF FEMALE SEXUALITY

In the patriarchal brahmin discourse in which Ananthamurthy's works are located, the anxiety to control female sexuality in terms of the upper caste male desire figures as a strong preoccupation. An inquiry into the politics of representing the female sexual subject in the works of this upper caste male writer reveals how woman becomes constructed as the sexualized Other here. "Akkayya" and Samskara foreground the exclusion of the upper caste female from the brahminical male structures of sexual desirability. Lois McNay, in her discussion of the feminist engagement with Michel Foucault's conception of sexuality as constructed within specific discursive formations, argues that the Foucauldian view has provided feminists with an "analytical framework to explain how women's experience is impoverished and controlled within certain culturally determined images of feminine sexuality" (McNay, Foucault and Feminism 3). I find this conception of power particularly useful in focusing on the desire to control female sexuality in the dominant brahminical discourse. By employing McNay's view it becomes possible to foreground the process of coding woman within the dominant male narratives of sexuality in Ananthamurthy's fiction.

The articulations of female sexuality in Samskara, and "Akkayya" are predicated upon the upper caste social constructions of "difference" in sexuality, not only in terms of the male/female binaries, but also in terms of the upper caste/lower caste categories. It is in this context that the threat of female sexual transgression, which torments the brahminical patriarchal discourse, becomes foregrounded in these texts. What is seen as

subversive female sexuality in this discourse, impels the deployment of both overt and subtle repressive strategies to control woman's desire.

As the high caste male discourse attempts to manage female sexuality by objectifying woman in terms of male desire, it deploys the strategies of romanticization and fetishization of the female figure. This fetishization of woman is reinforced by the manichean binaries of male/female and uppercaste/lower caste sexual subjects in this textual discourse. Among the various modes of controlling female sexuality, which are employed in these texts, the brahmin male gaze figures as a powerful trope of sexualizing woman in Ananthamurthy's works.

By positioning the upper caste male as the subject of desire, this textual discourse constructs sexual difference within structures which are involved in the maintenance of caste asymmetry. This leads to the naturalization of sexuality in the female body, especially the identification of the lower caste female as passionate, impure, and "sexual." What Margrit Shildrick and Janet Price discuss in their introduction to Feminist Theory and the Body as coding of "the feminine as sexual itself" in patriarchal discourse can be perceived in Ananthamurthy's works (Shildrick and Price 79). In such constructions of her identity, woman gets defined in terms of her sexuality.

SEXUALIZATION OF THE FEMALE BODY

Many works of Ananthamurthy reveal this coding of woman as body—in terms of "sex," which becomes a mechanism of controlling female sexuality. This is employed as the central strategy of representing the lower caste women in Samskara. In this novel, the hyper visibility of the sexualized lower caste women like Chandri, Belli, and Padmavati occurs as a strategy of alienating the lower caste female Other by projecting an essential

sexuality on to her. Bell Hooks's discussion of the desire for the marginalized black woman's body in the dominant white male discourse focuses on how the former becomes synonymous with "accessibility, availability, and the sexually deviant" (Hooks, "Selling Hot Pussy" 114-7). It is possible to see parallel constructions in the upper caste male desire for the lower caste female in the brahminical discourse of Ananthamurthy's works.

The lower caste women like Chandri and Belli in Samskara become idealized sexual objects, their bodies seen as waiting to be colonized by the high caste male. Their identities are subsumed under the sanatana myths of the sensuous "temptresses" of the sages like Menaka and Matsyagandhi (incidentally, these epic women too were outside the caste hierarchies and were the objects of ambivalent upper caste male desire).¹⁴ Ramanujam, in his articulation of the brahmin desire for the lower caste women in Samskara, constructs these women as "amoral ideals of untroubled sexuality" without probing into the politics of assigning an "untroubled" sexuality to the Other, while retaining with the upper caste male, the power of making refined moral judgments (Ramanujam 144). What the idealization of the lower caste woman's sexuality in Samskara mystifies, is the underlying project of the upper caste male appropriation of these marginalized female bodies.

It is possible to see a homology between the racial structures and caste structures on the axis of patriarchal gender constructions. The particular ways in which the lower caste female figures become represented in Samskara are determined by the brahminical male discourse. This representational strategy resembles what Hooks describes as the iconic representation of the black woman's sexuality in the dominant white male discourse. Belli's representation as a naked body ready to be appropriated replicates the language which historically codes the lower caste women as "always available" in the

brahminical discourse. The brahmin society projects on to the bodies of lower caste women what Hooks foregrounds in her discussion of the sexualization of the black woman as the “narrative of sexualization”

Constructed as fetishes of sexual desirability, the lower caste and gendered Others like Chandri, Matsyagandhi of the epics, and the muslim wife of the poet Jagannatha in the ancient story are all romanticized as objects of upper caste male desire. They become dismembered in the imagination of the brahmin males, and parts of their bodies are turned into fetishizes. This maneuver, which denies proper selfhood to these marginalized subjects, underlines their object status in the dominant discourse. It leads to the fantasies of the high caste males Sripathi, Naranappa, and Pranesha about the breasts of the lower caste women throughout the novel. Pranesha fetishizes Belli’s “earth colored” breasts (Samskara 123). Here, the color marking reinforces the erotic associations. It exists in the continuum of significations of the Other in the exoticized terms of “darkness,” all the while, powerfully invoking the romantic associations of these bodies with spontaneity and Nature (earth).

What seems to underlie the stereotypical constructions of the lower caste women in terms of nature, vitality, and body in Samskara, is the agenda of upper caste male domination of their bodies. Associating “spontaneity” with the lower caste female results in locating her within a sexualized sphere from which the brahmin community is carefully dissociated. This female Other is placed in binarian opposition to the “desexualized” brahmin subject. She exists as the ambivalent object in the upper caste male imaginary signaling both fear and desire. Just as spontaneity becomes synonymous with an essentialized sexuality in this textual discourse, the equations of woman with Nature function to reinforce the coding of sex with the body of the lower caste woman.

Ananthamurthy's deployment of Lawrentian paradigms (the influence of D.H. Lawrence on Ananthamurthy was considerable) becomes instrumental in reworking both gender appropriation and caste hegemony in his works.¹⁵

Ananthamurthy's works replicate the Lawrentian paradigm of sexuality which masks the implicit phallic appropriation of the female body. In Samskara, the dominant narrative of spontaneity and sexual fulfillment mystifies woman's sexual subjugation. Kate Millet discusses the agenda of controlling female sexuality, which underlies Lawrence's celebration of "vital life," to reveal the structures within which the cult of the "phallus" becomes manipulated in the creation of "a new order of dependence and subordination" of woman. Millet's penetrating discussion of Lawrence ends with the declaration that Lawrence's "sexual program for social and sexual redemption" only signifies the desire for the male assumption of the mastery "over the female in [. . .] total psychological and sensual domination" (Millet 241-2). A similar desire for domination over the marginalized female body figures in Ananthamurthy's fiction.

This desire for domination of the female body figures strongly in Samskara, where the focus is, mainly, on the upper caste male desire for the lower caste woman. In the textual foregrounding of the dominant desire, the sexualized lower caste female body becomes an instrument of "redemption" of the brahmin male self. The brahmin discourse in which Ananthamurthy's novel is located employs the tropes of Nature, vitality, and spontaneity in the processes of objectifying the lower caste female body, and reinforcing the brahmin male as the sexual subject. Pranesha's "discovery" of personal and sexual fulfillment in the forest leads to his renewed self-consciousness (this issue is discussed at length in the previous chapter). His recollection of this experience reveals how he collapses the image of Chandri with Nature by associating her body with the cool river

water, the sarsaparilla in the forest, and the “smell of the grass roots smeared with wet earth.” What this touch with Nature evokes in him, is the desire to dominate by grasping and seizing it. In an act, which mimes his own appropriation of Chandri’s body, he “tug [s] with both hands” violently at the sarsaparilla root and severs it (Samskara 83-84). In being constructed as close to Nature and “earth,” the lower caste female figures become coded as always “available” within the dominant discourse. Sripathi, who is encouraged by Naranappa to live “fully,” constructs the lower caste woman Belli’s body as “the color of earth, fertile ready for seed, warmed by an early sun” (Samskara 37).

Thus, the brahmin males appropriate the marginalized female body even as they celebrate its desirability in terms of Nature and spontaneity. The coding of woman as Nature carries with it the implicit male desire to “apprehend, dominate and defeat” (Conboy et al 2). It becomes an attempt to foreclose woman’s sexual agency. Belli becomes a body waiting to be colonized by the brahmin male, who “had always been like ripe ears of corn bending before the falling rain” (Samskara 40). Chandri is described by the trope of the running river: “it says ‘Yes’ to everything, never a ‘No’” (Samskara 44). This “yes,” instead of suggesting agency and choice, is seen as mandated by her caste-status. The deployment of such tropes leads to the lower caste female body to be constructed and controlled as an object of upper caste desire.

Another strategy of reinforcing the naturalization of sexuality in the lower caste female body is by the construction of Manichean binaries between the sexualities of the marginalized female figures and the brahmin women in Samskara. The text constructs the lower caste women as sexually desirable in contrast with the sexually unattractive brahmin women, who are seen as “frigid with ‘dwarfish braids’ and withered bodies” (Mukherjee). The invalid wife of Pranesha becomes symbolic of the brahmin woman’s

frigidity. Similarly, Naranappa's dead wife is constructed as a "wilted" woman. Sripathi disallows sexual attractiveness in the brahmin women by describing them as: "[their] cheek sunken, breast withered, mouth smelling of lentil soup" (*Samskara* 37). He is repelled by his wife, who follows her mother's advice and "knots up her thighs" when he desires her. Pranesha's gaze of disgust rejects Bhagirathi's emaciated body with "her sunken breasts, her bulbous nose, [and] her short narrow braid" (*Samskara* 76).

On the other hand, the tropes of ambivalent desire for the Other—for example, the images of darkness, or the intoxicating flowers in Naranappa's garden, which are associated with transgressive desire—are always romanticized. This romanticization weaves fear into desire. The trope of the snake-like braid of Chandri and Padmavati foreground the ambivalent upper caste male desire: "Chandri wore her black snake-hair coiled in a knot and wore the flowers of the ember-champak and the heavy fragrant screw-pine" (*Samskara* 15). As Mukherjee points out: "the hair-serpent-eroticism thread runs throughout the novel." It figures not only in the descriptions of Chandri and Padmavati's hair but also in the descriptions of the other lower caste women like "the acrobat at the fair as 'serpentine'," and in the articulation of Belli as "a snake writhing in sand" (Mukherjee 172). Pranesha watches the acrobat: "a shapely serpentine woman, all curves [who had] spread-eagled her hands and legs, swaying, balancing herself on bare belly at the end of a bamboo pole" (*Samskara* 114). The sense of danger involved in this act deepens the pleasure of Pranesha's gaze on her. Woman's alienation from the dominant male discourse becomes reinforced through the exoticized representations of her body and sexuality.

A novel like *Samskara* reveals how the biological coding of sexuality with the lower caste woman becomes reinforced by the employment of the Manichean binaries,

which construct the difference in sexualities of not only the male/female subjects but also the upper caste and lower caste women. In this textual discourse, the tropes articulating the lower caste female in terms of Nature and vitality work toward the legitimization of her domination by the upper caste male. Another strategy, which is functional in objectifying and alienating the marginalized woman from the brahmin discourse, is romanticization. By romanticizing the marginalized female bodies in terms of ambivalent upper caste desire, the brahmin male discourse attempts to alienate and, thereby, manage female sexuality.

THE UPPER CASTE MALE GAZE

In Ananthamurthy's works the scopic male gaze of desire focused on the female body sexualizes and controls it in this textual discourse. Laura Mulvey's psychoanalytical study of the male gaze in cinematic form informs my analysis here. According to Mulvey the "formative" structure of the gaze functions in order to construct "the imaginized, eroticized" perception of the female figure (Mulvey 26). The active "scopic" male gaze focused on the "passive" female body constructs and controls it. Elisabeth Bronfen describes the scopophilic gaze thus: "for the scopophile the eye corresponds to the erogenous zone, emerging as a surrogate for genitals. Gazing becomes a 'twisted' form of the penetration of the other" (Bronfen 61). In an analogous fashion, the upper caste male gaze works as a powerful device of managing female sexuality in Ananthamurthy's works under study.

While the voyeuristic male gaze of the brahmin boys in "Ghatashraddha" performs the scopic function of probing the "secret" of woman, in Samskara the gaze of the upper caste male on the body of the lower caste female is involved in idealizing her as

a sexual object. The gaze in Mulvey's terms is articulated as the reaction formation to the originary "castration anxiety" in the male psyche. Mulvey foregrounds two modes of gazing--the voyeuristic gaze laced with sadism which attempts to investigate the mystery of woman, and the fetishizing gaze which idealizes the female figure (Mulvey 29). Both these modes are involved in sexualizing and, thereby, constructing the female figure as the Other.

Voyeurism figures as a central trope in "Ghatashraddha," where the upper caste widow Yamunakka, who is involved in a clandestine sexual relationship, is being hounded by the watchful eyes of the brahmin boys. These boys who transgress the brahminical code of behavior themselves, are however, quick to demonize the widow. Their voyeurism, which seeks to unravel the widow's "secret," becomes an attempt to control her sexuality. Yamunakka becomes configured within their "framing" gaze. This controlling gaze is linked with what Mulvey calls the "erotic basis of pleasure" (Mulvey 24). The image of the widow, who lives in a small brahmin agrahara, visits the temple everyday, and keeps up the ritual practices of an orthodox brahmin household, is transformed into that of the "slut" in the eyes of the voyeuristic boys.

The "pleasure" of knowing Yamunakka's secret is connected with the power relations along the gender axis. An overt expression of this power is seen in Shastri's delight over his changed status in relation to Yamunakka. Both the pleasure and power derived by watching her, himself "unwatched," come through in his words. He brushes off the fear of being pulled up by Yamunakka for his transgressions with defiant remarks such as: "I am not afraid [. . .]. Don't I know about her secret? Let her scold me one more time, [. . .] I will make everything public," and "just because the cat drinks milk with its eyes closed doesn't mean that others can't see it" ("Ghatashraddha" 7-8).

In Mulveyian terms the act of watching is dichotomized in terms of “woman as image, [and] man as bearer of the look” (Mulvey 26-27). Watching in “Ghatashraddha” can be configured within these dichotomized structures. Here, the image of Yamunakka as the Other is “revealed” by the boys peeping through the crack in the wall of the ruined aghara. Yamunakka becomes the salacious “object” of desire. Her demonization as a “slut” occurs within highly romanticized terms. Seen through the crack in the wall, her meetings with the lover, who is described as the “brahmarakshasa”(the archfiend) become the enactment of the archetypal fall (“Ghatashraddha” 11, 13-14). This scene at the ruins evokes the ambivalence of desire and fear in dramatic terms by employing the explicit snake symbolism with its strong sexual connotations. In this story, the recurring appearance of the snake becomes articulated as a supernatural event, when the boys declare that “because of this ‘slut,’ the God has become desecrated. That’s why [the] snake has appeared” (“Ghatashraddha” 19).

The stealth involved in the act of watching, the elaborate system of warning which the boys set up, the silence, and the hiding behind the wall—all these acts are charged with the associations of both guilt and pleasure derived from watching. However, the pleasure in watching the “fun”--fantasies played out on the Yamunakka figure--leads to the displaced desire to perpetrate violence on her body. The boys wish that the snake should bite her as a “just punishment for her sins,” and concomitantly, the fear evoked by the sudden appearance of the snake works as an exorcism of the guilt of watching (“Ghatashraddha” 19).

“Scopophilia” is associated with the desire to control as Mulvey has shown in her analysis. In “Ghatashraddha” such desire to control becomes foregrounded in Shastri’s gaze on Yamunakka. His wish to make Nani see “something interesting” is

compounded with the delight of both watching Yamunakka's secret meetings with the schoolteacher and with his assumption of the role of the guide who constructs this perception for the younger boy. With almost the tone of a stage manager Shastri announces to the other boys hiding behind the wall, "the Brahmarakshasa is here," and the silent drama in the ruins unfolds with his directions to Nani to "watch carefully," all the while promising him of the "more fun coming" ("Ghatashraddha" 19).

Another level of control is placed on the female figure in the form of the narratorial attitude toward her in this short story. The male narratorial gaze here attempts to inscribe woman within the structures of his narrative. Nani/the writer's narrativizing of Yamunakka becomes a way of constructing her as a sexual object, and thus controlling her sexual agency. In spite of being located within a different historical context, Beth Newman's observations on the narratorial gaze can be appropriated in the study of Ananthamurthy's works to foreground how the narrator as a voyeur defends himself against the "threat of the feminine by objectifying a woman, by telling her story" (Newman 456).

In this short story, Yamunakka gets inscribed within the narrative of the young brahmin boy Nani. Nani's subliminal responses betray ambivalent feelings of fascination and repulsion toward Yamunakka's secret. Female sexuality is romanticized by linking it with the dark lower caste world as I have shown in the previous chapter. While the traces of guilt associated with the gaze of desire deepen the erotic pleasure of watching, the moral ambiguity of this act leads to the "purification," which is ritually rehearsed in what is performed on Nani's brahmin body at the end of the story. This little voyeur is made by his mother to "wear a new janivara and swallow panchagavya to ritually cleanse [him] of the pollution of [his] contact with Yamunakka" ("Ghatashraddha" 31).

Samskara employs the fetishizing/overvaluing mode of gazing discussed by Mulvey. Following Mulvey, Mary Anne Doane has argued that, in Cinema, the image of woman “orchestrates a gaze, a limit,” and provides the “pleasurable transgression of watching what is prohibited” (Doane 181). The brahmin male gaze, which surveys and fantasizes about the bodies of the lower caste/outcaste women in this novel, reveals this framing of the lower caste female body. This is foregrounded in the incident where Durgabhatta’s gaze apprises Chandri during the meeting in the agrahara after Naranappa’s death.

Durgabhatta dissects, dismembers Chandri’s body, and tries to fix it in terms of the cultural images of desirability. His gaze fuses with the invisible authorial gaze and directs the readerly gaze on the female body as he describes her thus:

A real ‘sharp’ type, exactly as described in Vatsyayana’s manual of love—look at her, toes longer than the big toe [. . .]. Look at those breasts. [. . .] her eyes, which should be fickle, are now misty with grief and fear, but she looks good that way. Like Matsyagandhi, the fisherwoman in Ravi Varma print hung up in Durgabhatta’s bedroom, shyly trying to hide her breasts bursting through her poor rag of a sari. The same eyes and nose. (Samskara 8)

This scopic gaze, which is laced with sadism, seeks pleasure in focusing on woman in distress. An accentuation of desire is observable in the descriptions of the mourning Chandri and the embarrassed fisherwoman in rags.

From its location within the upper caste discourse of Ananthamurthy’s texts, the male gaze constructs the sexuality of the female figure. Jonathan Schroeder’s view that the act of gazing “implies more than to look at—it signifies a psychological relationship of power, in which the gazer is superior to the object of the gaze” becomes pertinent in this context (Schroeder 208). In these texts, the gaze works as a patriarchal mechanism,

which attempts to manage female sexuality by objectifying woman and investing agency and desire with the upper caste male subject.

TRANSGRESSION ACROSS CASTE AND GENDER BORDERS

Female sexual transgression within the upper caste order is perceived as a threat to the maintenance of its “purity” in the cultural discourse in which Ananthamurthy’s works are located. It is this anxiety, which leads to the brahmin woman’s sexuality being strictly policed by the upper caste males. An intense preoccupation with caste pollution is connected with this desire to control the sexuality of the upper caste female. Leela Dube, in her study of the relationship between caste and gender, argues that sexual asymmetry in Hindu society is structured by the principles of “separation and hierarchy.” According to Dube, the high caste woman’s “purity” becomes guarded jealously, not only because “in a patrilineal society paternity is essential for group placement,” but also since “the issues of caste boundaries” are involved (Dube 11).

While male transgression is seen only as “external” pollution, female transgression is conceived of as “internal” pollution in the brahminical discourse. Dube argues that, “the caste system is premised upon the cultural perception of a fundamental difference in male and female sexuality,” and the “master difference between male and female bodies” is defined “in respect of procreation” in this patriarchal order. Therefore, “in the case of inter-caste sexual relations, the man incurs external pollution, which can be washed off,” but woman, on the other hand, “incurs internal pollution which pollutes her permanently” (Dube 10-11). This threat of pollution to the upper caste “purity” in the form of female sexual transgression across caste lines occurs as an underlying anxiety in Ananthamurthy’s works.

What impels the alienation of the transgressive brahmin widow in “Ghatashraddha,” and the disallowing of the sexualities of the upper caste women in Samskara and “Akkayya” is this anxiety of the internal pollution of the upper caste order. Thus, though the upper caste male transgressions get accommodated within the brahminical order, as can be seen in the reintegration of Mahabala, Naranappa, Sripathi, and Pranesha within the dominant discourse in Samskara, the sexuality of the brahmin women is subjected to discreet erasures. These women get constructed as sexually unattractive to the males. In “Akkayya” the sister’s subliminal sexual feelings toward the lower caste servant Pilla do surface briefly in her story about a previous birth where she nurtures “excessive” love for the servant. However, the threat of an actual sexual relationship across caste boundaries, which involves the upper caste woman, is promptly neutralized by fixing both woman and the marginalized male in asexual images such as “Pilla is a saintly person” (“Akkayya” 197).

A recurring strategy of controlling female sexuality in Ananthamuthy’s works is the invocation of “tradition,” which is crucially linked with the issue of caste hierarchies. An upper caste writer like Ananthamurthy is preoccupied with the problem of female sexuality in terms of tradition and modernity. A shift in his ideological positions in relation to the issue of caste can be traced through an earlier work like “Ghatashraddha,” and a later short story “Akkayya.” In “Ghatashraddha” the writer overtly articulates his rage against what is seen as the traditional upper caste repression of female sexuality. But, this anger has slowly changed into a more sympathetic attitude toward the traditional “sublimatory” structures in “Akkayya,” where woman becomes inscribed within the structures of pure and spiritualized Hindu womanhood, which becomes a maneuver of disallowing her sexuality.

As discussed in the previous chapter, this recent short story reveals the attempt to code the female figure within the familiar tropes of the early part of the nationalist discourse which constructed and valorized the myths of an essential Hindu womanhood. Discussing the equation of motherhood with chastity in the nationalist discourse, Uma Chakravarti foregrounds how the reformers like Vivekananda extolled motherhood and strongly associated it with chastity (Chakravarti 77-78). In “Akkayya” the sister Akkayya’s sexuality is subsumed under the mother image. She is seen as the “jagatjanani,” the mother of Universe. This idea is clearly articulated in one of her rebirth myths that invoke the Hindu epic imagery: “listening to Krishna’s flute she would become heavy in the udders from which milk would ooze out” (Akkayya 195).

Significantly enough, Akkayya’s narratives foreground how she has internalized the patriarchal structures in which she is located. She perceives the karmic theory of suffering as an explanation of female sexual subjection in society. She believes that she must expiate the sins of her past birth by leading an ascetic life now. Her running away from the old husband with a sense of shame, when he makes sexual advances to her, reinforces her “asexual” and spiritual self. She articulates her withdrawal from sexual pleasure by mumbling that “it was disgusting,” (“Akkayya” 189). Her life is spent in taking care of her brother and later, their families. The cowshed becomes a heterotopic space condensing time and place in the form of her fantasies.

Akkayya fantasizes about her ambiguous relationship with the lower caste Pilla in her previous births. She imagines herself as having been born his overly affectionate sister-in-law. The narrator himself is quick to sense the unconscious suggestions of transgressive desire in the term “excessive” affection here (“Akkayya” 197). This myth making figures as the wish-fulfillment fantasies of Akkayya’s socially denied desires.

While these self-constructions lead to the opening up of her subjectivity, they also foreground the patriarchal mechanisms which control her sexuality.

As in “Akkayya,” in “Ghatashraddha” again the upper caste patriarchal control mechanisms involved in the control of female sexuality are connected with the issues of tradition and change. In this short story, the construction of the brahmin widow Yamunakka’s predicament can be historicized in terms of the turn of the century reformist debates, which were preoccupied with the problematic category of widows. Early marriages led to an increasing number of widows, especially among the upper castes. Strict codes of behavior came to be imposed on the young widow in this traditional upper caste discourse in an attempt to control the threat of her sexuality.

In these late nineteenth century reformist debates about tradition and woman, the upper caste women were seen as much more vulnerable to pollution in terms of sexual relations than the lower caste women. As Dube points out in her discussion of sexuality and caste, “while some of the disabilities imposed on the widows are prevalent among all castes, [. . .] concerns of purity/impurity along the gender divide have an inverse relationship with the ritual status of castes” (Dube 10). Widowhood became constructed as an expiation of the sins of past births. Reinforcing this observation, Chakravarti describes how the prescription of chastity and asceticism for the brahmin widow became a strategy for controlling her sexuality (Chakravarti 71). Apart from disfigurement in the form of shaven heads in many brahmin communities, these widows were also subjected to strict regimen in food and dress. Mortification of physical desire was mandatory. These structures of sexual repression of the upper caste widow continued into the early twentieth century Indian society.

“Ghatashraddha” focuses on the sexual repression of the upper caste widow. But the “progressive” engagement here only ends in the denial of female sexual subjecthood. The narrative of Yamunakka’s victimization reinforces her construction as the object of male control. Configured within the structures of the upper caste male writer’s narrative of female victimization in the traditional brahmin order, the threat posed by female sexual transgression to the patriarchal brahmin order becomes managed in this textual discourse.

What underlies the attempt to demonize Yamunakka is the fear of caste pollution in the traditional society. It is Yamunakka’s transgression that leads to her association with the threatening lower caste world. The textual suggestions of the caste status of Yamunakka’s lover remain ambivalent. But, the schoolteacher’s “oil dark complexion,” and his association with the outcastes locate him within marginalized structures (“Ghatashraddha” 18). As he perceives her involvement with the lower caste world, Nani’s response to Yamunakka becomes ambivalent. Even as he tries to take her away from this world, he is aware of the break, the impossibility of reintegrating her with the brahmin world again. This rupture becomes complete in her father’s performance of the “ghatashraddha” (the mock funeral) which negates her location within the brahmin world, and thus, reinforces her identity as the sexualized Other.

In the upper caste discourse of Ananthamurthy’s works, the control of female sexuality becomes crucially linked with the anxiety about the disruption of caste hierarchies. While male transgression in terms of inter caste sexual unions is accommodated within the brahmin order, female sexual transgression across caste lines leads to the control mechanisms of “desexualizing” the upper caste women, or alienating them as the sexualized Others from the dominant discourse. Such mechanisms of control of the upper caste woman’s sexuality function by invoking the cultural images of

femininity, and the notions of tradition and modernity that replicate the constructions of gender and tradition in the turn of the century nationalist discourse.

STRATEGIES OF CONTROLLING FEMALE SEXUALITY

In the attempt of the brahmin discourse in Ananthamurthy's works to control female sexuality by configuring woman within structures of upper caste male desire, woman becomes constructed as the Other. Here, the strategies employed in the management of female sexuality include the naturalization of the female body in terms of "sex," romanticization of woman, the scopic male gaze that controls the female figure, and the management of female sexuality that transgresses across caste lines by the invocation of tradition. These strategies establish the upper caste male as the subject of desire, while they lead to the fetishization of the lower caste female body as "sex" itself. On the other hand, the upper caste woman's sexuality becomes blocked or alienated from the brahminical discourse. Such constructions of female sexuality recall the familiar "madonna-whore" dichotomies of the patriarchal discourse. As Jane Ussher points out about this fundamental patriarchal dichotomy, it articulates femininity in terms where "woman is either imbued with sexuality, or is its antithesis" (Ussher 148). Both ways of articulating woman in Ananthamurthy's works, either by constructing her as the sexualized Other or by erasing her sexuality, point to the upper caste male control of female sexuality.

What such constant attempts to control female sexuality in the texts under study signal is the anxiety of the hegemonic discourse about female sexual agency. However, these attempts are eventually disrupted when woman asserts her sexual subjecthood in these texts. The surviving traces of sexual agency of the female subject in these texts

lead to the formation of her counterdiscourse. An examination of this resistant female sexual subjecthood, and the threat it poses to the brahmin male self in Ananthamurthy's works are the main preoccupations of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE COUNTERDISCOURSE OF THE FEMALE SUBJECT

In Ananthamurthy's works, even as the dominant upper caste male discourse attempts to appropriate woman within the structures of its desire, the resisting female subject poses a challenge to such formulations. This resistance leads to the disruption of the hegemonic discourse. It is in the breaks and fissures, which open up as a result of this disruption, that the spaces of female subjectivity and agency survive. By focusing on these spaces it becomes possible to trace the counterdiscourse of the female subject in these works. Eileen Schlee's discussion of constituting the postmodern female subject becomes relevant here. She argues that though postmodernism has problematized the search for a "definitive" subjecthood, "the piecing together [of] female subjectivity is yet a necessary task, given its history as a non-thing; we must seek to understand how it is constituted in order to arrive at some sort of truth about reality for women" (Schlee 69).

The female subject in the texts under study finds her agency in the strategic subversions of the dominant discourse. She seizes the voice and positions herself as the speaking subject. Her oppositional gaze becomes fixed on the upper caste male body in the conscious, or unconscious attempts, to reappropriate her desire. This results in the jamming of brahmin patriarchal discursive design which tries to fix her as an object of upper caste male desire. Angela Woollacott's argument, in her discussion of subjectivity and agency, that "historical actors exhibit creativity and flexibility in constructing their subjectivities within and against dominant forms of social power," can be appropriated to trace the dynamics of female agency, which figures in Ananthamurthy's works (Woollacott 332). The resisting female subject can be found in the interstices, the

margins of the dominant male representations of women as the Other in works such as Samskara, “Ghatashraddha,” and “Akkayya.”

In the above texts, the various and dynamic forms of subject positions, which the female subjects assume, undo the teleology of the brahmin patriarchy. In Samskara, the brahmin widow Lakshmiddevamma is able to emerge from the shadows of her peripheral existence, and seize the moment of her resistance, when Naranappa dies and leaves the brahmin community in a disoriented state. Likewise, Yamunakka, the brahmin widow of “Ghatashraddha,” whose voice seems to be muted all through the text, still acts in ways, which disrupt the brahmin order. The lower caste women in the novel Samskara reassert their agency in moments of social crisis by constructing themselves as sexual subjects, and by recovering their voice. Even Akkayya’s subjecthood survives in the slippages that occur in the shifting constructions of her identity in this textual discourse. Padmavati’s reverse gaze on the brahmin male body fixes it in the object position even while blocking the male gaze which attempts to objectify her.

TRANSGRESSION AS RESISTANCE

As the hegemonic upper caste discourse attempts to control female agency, the marginalized female subject subverts the dominant discourse from within in an attempt to assert her agency. Kelly Oliver points out that the Foucauldian idea of resistance shows how, “resistance does not have to originate from ‘outside’ the system of dominance,” and though women are “constituted by social practices, [. . .] they can resist” (Oliver 114). She argues that this conception of the subject “does not eliminate agency. It does not foreclose resistance. Rather, it opens up a space for resistance where there was no space”

(Oliver 114). The constructive approach challenges the “naturalization of the subject.” Oliver’s view of the “immanent resistance” within the shifting and “unpredictable” movements of the circulation of power in any hegemonic discourse clears space for agency of the marginalized female subject (Oliver 114).

Ananthamurthy’s preoccupation with the theme of disturbed caste equations is articulated in terms of the break in status quo equations of gender. This phenomenon is prominent in Samskara, where the brahmin order is not destabilized by the overtly oppositional attempts against it in the form of the rebellion of Mahabala, Naranappa, Sripathi and Pranesha. Their transgressions get accommodated within the brahminical metaphysics. But, the strategic subversions of this discourse by the marginalized lower caste female subjects unsettle this order.

As I have argued in my previous chapters, the tradition-modernity tensions of the nineteenth and post-nineteenth century Indian context are important in understanding the construction of the female subject in Ananthamurthy’s works. The gaping space between the writer’s professed commitment to the cause of progress and modernity, and the relegitimation of traditional caste-gender hierarchies that recurs in his works (the previous chapters engage with this retrograde movement in Ananthamurthy’s works) is closely connected with the resisting female subject.

By her disruptive performance of woman’s role in this discourse, the lower caste female subject unsettles traditional caste hierarchies. Chandri’s agency in dealing with the problem of disposing of Naranappa’s body foregrounds the spaces of female resistance to both caste and gender hierarchies of the brahmin discourse in Samskara. When Chandri’s efforts to make the confused brahmins perform the funeral rites of Naranappa fail, as an ethical act, and in remembrance of her bond of love with Naranappa

(she is not bound by custom to do so) she decides to give his body a funeral before she leaves the agrahara. The manner in which she makes the arrangements for Naranappa's funeral subverts the brahmin society's rules, and, in this oppositional act, her agency is released. Eventually, it is this lower caste woman and Barri, the Muslim trader, who together dispose of the brahmin Naranappa's body, even as the controversy over the proper brahmin funeral for his body rages in the agrahara.

When the lower caste female subject assumes sexual agency, the dominant structures of desire are disrupted in Samskara. In her assertion of sexual subjecthood, this marginalized woman resists her objectification by the high caste male. Chandri asserts her sexual agency in configuring the male body of Pranesha within the structures of female desire. The thoughts of appropriating Pranesha's body to fulfill both her sexual and maternal desires figure in Chandri's mind. Articulating her desire within the traditional structures of upper caste domination, she is still able to appropriate these structures to position herself as the sexual subject. It is Chandri who follows Pranesha to the forest and seeks the sexual union with him. When Pranesha is still in the daze brought out by hunger, sleeplessness, and the bitter disillusionment at the Maruthi temple, it is she who initiates the sexual act: "Chandri's intensity doubled. She held his hand tightly and stood up and she pressed them to her breasts now beating away like a pair of doves" (Samskara 63).

In fact, Pranesha's distress about the sexual union in the novel seems to stem from the unconscious feeling of having given up agency and subjecthood to the female. The brahminical resolution of this problem--disguising agency and locating this act within the divine design of karma—remains unstable and problematic throughout the novel. In a

lucid moment of understanding, Pranesha himself concedes, “Chandri—waiting in the dark—took what she wanted—walked away” (Samskara 125).

After the sexual act, Chandri is able to construct it for herself as “worthwhile” in terms of the pleasure she has found and also in the hope of bearing a brahmin child. She remembers, “the dark forest—the giving, the taking—the standing, the bending, and it brought only a sense of worthwhileness, like the fragrance of flowers hidden,” and “there was also a hope that his touch might bear fruit in her body” (Samskara 67-8). However, once her desire for Pranesha’s body is gratified, Chandri refuses to be a part of his further experiments with “rebellion” and “choice.” She also dissociates herself from the drama of guilt and confession which Pranesha tries to construct. She disregards his wish for a public confession of their guilt: “she couldn’t speak of it [the union] in broad daylight before those dry brahmin folk as the Acharya had asked her to” (Samskara 68).

By refusing to publicize it in the manner in which Pranesha asks her to do, Chandri not only gathers up this experience into herself as something private, but also denies Pranesha the right to construct it for her. She reaffirms her agency and her right to construct this act for herself. Eventually, she leaves Durvasapura to deal with her own life. Overall, Chandri’s appropriation of Pranesha’s body reverses the familiar paradigm of the male appropriation of female bodies in this textual discourse.

The resistance of the female subject to her representation within the narratives of victimization in the upper caste discourse occurs in dynamically different forms. Contrary to the view of the critics of Ananthamuthy’s fiction, who see Yamunakka’s silence in “Ghatashraddha” as reinforcing her representation as a passive victim, it seems to me that her silence is actually “withheld speech.” As Rajeswari Sunder Rajan points out in her thought provoking book Real and Imagined Women, the familiar equations

drawn between female subjectivity and “speech” mark language as a crucial category of resistance of the marginalized subject: “speech and silence are related and identified in terms of the presence and lack of language.” This configures them as “imbricated within the space of sameness and difference” vis-à-vis patriarchally constructed language. But, “action,” as a “nonverbal category, exceeds and escapes this problematic” (Sunder Rajan 84).

Yamunakka’s refusal to be defined within the verbal structures of domination-victimhood makes her “act” in ways that disrupt the brahminical discourse. Through her sexual transgression, she subverts the brahmin codes and challenges its patriarchal formulations. Her initial resistance to abortion, which can be sensed in her responses to the schoolteacher’s suggestion during their meeting at the ruins, figures as a problematic act foregrounding the traces of her agency in the story. When the schoolteacher talks to her, presumably, about her predicament and suggests abortion as the solution, she reveals her resistance which is described by the voyeurs in terms of how “she pulled [her hand] away and moved away from him” (“Ghatashraddha” 19).

Such traces of resistance surface as her attempts to hold out against the pressures of the brahmin patriarchy. Toward the end of the story, even after she has been through the humiliation of abortion, she acts in a manner which foregrounds her will and choice. They figure in her refusal of the conversion that she is offered after the abortion. She rejects the missionary’s offer with the full knowledge of the excommunication which awaits her when she returns home. She identifies with the high caste brahmin status (even though she has transgressed its codes) to resist this offer, which is accompanied by the missionary’s pointed references to her “fallen” status. Yet, Yamunakka always acts in ways which defy the hegemonic brahmin norms without ever verbalizing her

resistance. In this silent rebellion, she preserves the spaces of her subjectivity, which are inaccessible even to the narrativizing of the upper caste male writer who attempts to inscribe her in his story.

With the female subject's resistance, the male writer's attempt to represent her as a passive victim to foreground his progressive commitment in "Ghatashraddha" becomes disrupted. This upper caste male writer's desire to assume the position of knowledge and inscribe woman as an object within his narrativizing (I have addressed this issue in Chapter II) is rendered problematic by the surviving traces of her agency. Yamunakka's disturbing performance of woman's role frustrates the writer's desire to appropriate her within the structures of his engagement with modernity. She disrupts the upper caste patriarchal manipulation of the female figure in this male discourse's negotiations with tradition, progress, and change.

No discussion of the historical and material processes involved in the victimization of the female, and the resultant overdetermination of her subjectivity, can exclude the possibility of breaks and struggle in any hegemonic discourse. The disruption of the brahminical order by the female subject's subversion exemplifies this process in Ananthamurthy's works. Sunder Rajan's caution that "if we are to avoid the cultural determinism that follows from the argument from construction, we must also locate the liberatory space for resistance that it allows" becomes relevant to the discussion of Yamunakka's subjecthood which survives in the subversive spaces she finds within the dominant brahminical discourse (Sunder Rajan 130).

A similar challenge to the hegemonic upper caste discourse is posed by the resistant female subject in the short story "Akkayya." In this story, the conflictual perceptions of tradition and modernity, foregrounded by the play of narratives and

counter-narratives, lead to the discrediting of the brother Srinivasa's (male) appropriations of Akkayya's world. Srinivasa's self-consciousness about the "constructed" nature of his perceptions of Akkayya problematizes his appropriations of her identity. The narrator underlines this self-consciousness of his friend by pointing out how Srinivasa felt "awkward" about his constructions of Akkayya. Later, he even challenges his friend's appropriation of Akkayya's identity in his stories and his painting by declaring that "all this does not seem authentic" ("Akkayya" 198).

Such "breaks" in the male constructions of female subjectivity open up the subjective spaces of Akkayya's interiority and lead to the releasing of her voice. Akkayya's creation of the rebirth myths becomes a contestatory space of self-construction of the female subject. In the heterotopic cowshed, which offers a temporary release from her family, she finds an outlet to rework her own identity. Akkayya weaves the rebirth myths in an attempt to assume the subject position of the representational narratives that articulate her "self" in this short story.

Woman's assertion of subjecthood not only subverts the dominant discourse but also leads to the creation of the structures under which she can construct herself. Rosi Briodotti's description of subjecthood as an interface of will and desire sheds light on the conditions of self construction. Briodotti argues: "it amounts to saying that what sustains the entire process of 'becoming subject' is the will to know, the desire to say, the desire to speak, to think and represent" (Briodatti 184). Akkayya's representation of herself in the myths she creates challenges the male constructions of her in this short story. In her myths she insists on her bond with the cow Kouli and the lower caste servant Pilla. The other members of her family do not figure here. This exclusion is significant in the

context of Srinivasa's articulation of her mainly as the "sister figure"--the relational identity articulated, primarily, in terms of familial relationships.

By mapping the multiple subject positions, which the female subject assumes in Ananthamurthy's texts, the counterdiscourse of the female subject here can be traced. Woollacott's observation, in her discussion of the autobiographies and personal accounts of women, throws light on the issue of the "fragmented" nature of female subjectivity. She describes "the fluid, active, fragmented, and even indirect processes in which historical subjects articulate their subjectivities, as opposed to choosing from some preexisting array of subject positions" (Woollacott 338). The shifting life spans of Akkayya's myths, and the multiple subject positions she inhabits here foreground such fragmented, yet crucial, evidences of her desire. In Akkayya's imagination of one of her previous births the cow Kouli was her little sister. In another birth, which she describes, she was the mistress of a gowda's (village headman) household and Kouli was a cow in that family. She, then, projects herself into the epic times when, according to her, Kouli had been a gopi (milkmaid) in Gokula and she herself a cow ("Akkayya" 166).

Akkayya's constant attempts to shift the boundaries of her identity and to expand the space her self inhabits (in terms of time and place) reveal her desire to counter the present conditions of her existence. Within the narrow confines of the cowshed, pushed into the world of fantasy to live out her wishes, Akkayya is still capable of imagining new modes of existence. Even as she insists on her bond with Kouli, she has, at least, found her separate identity from her immediate family. Though her dreams are still structured in terms of familial relationships, she subverts them in the attempt to construct herself.

By playing off her caste status against her marginalization as a female, Akkayya is able to counter the patriarchal gender asymmetry. She tells her stories to Pilla, the lower caste with whom she forges a bond insistently. Her superior caste status results in the temporary disruption of male-female power equations in this relationship. In this situation, she becomes the subject of knowledge who remembers, or configures the changing relationships between them through their various lives:

[In] a previous life he had been her husband's younger brother. [. . .] thereafter, he was born a barri—a Muslim trader from Kerala. She was his carthorse. [. . .] in this life he was the cow-dung picking, saintly Pilla, and she the mistress of the house. ("Akkayya" 167)

Akkayya's relationship with Pilla is never articulated in directly sexual terms. But, the undercurrents of transgressive desire are present here.

When caste boundaries get subverted in Akkayya's myths, the traces of her suppressed sexuality begin to surface in disruptive terms. She positions herself as the sexual subject by foregrounding the traces of her desire in the stories of these past births. In the first story of Pilla and her life together, a bond of deep affection binds Akkayya (in her previous life) and her brother-in-law (Pilla in that birth) to each other. The tinge of guilt, which underlies this affection, is articulated in her words: "both had suffered because her husband felt that her love for her brother-in-law was excessive" ("Akkayya" 197).

Though this subliminal guilt is punished by the brother-in-law's untimely death, Akkayya's relationship with Pilla is not severed by death. In her narrative of their next life together Pilla is born as the Muslim Bari and Akkayya as his carthorse. She "would eat grass and huruli from his hand" ("Akkayya" 197). Such an intimate gesture suggesting proximity is problematized by the caste subversion involved here. As the

Muslim Bari, Pilla's present caste-status as the Other is replicated in this story. By projecting sexual desire, or at least, the need for intimacy on to the past life, it becomes possible for Akkayya to voice her feelings toward the lower caste Pilla. Her articulation of Pilla as "saintly" in the present life seems to occur as a reaction formation disguising her unconscious and socially unacceptable desires.

While there is always the danger of falling into an essentialist trap in seeking for an autonomously self-constituting subject, reducing the subject into only a product of power relations within a social discourse forecloses agency altogether. In this textual discourse, the subversion of the hegemonic discourse by the upper caste woman and the lower caste female subjects, who resist the dominant articulations of their self, makes it possible to trace the counterdiscourse of the female subject.

FEMALE SPEAKING SUBJECT

Patriarchally defined language is also the domain in which the female subject articulates herself, foregrounds her desire, and very importantly, fractures the upper caste representations of her in terms of the dominant male desire. The female subject's positioning of herself as the speaking subject, thus becomes a powerful mode of disrupting the dominant discourse's control over her body. As Bell Hooks declares in Talking Back, "speaking [itself] is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges the politics of domination that would render [the oppressed] nameless and voiceless," and it represents a threat to the dominant order becoming for the oppressed, "a gesture of defiance that heals" (Hooks, Talking Back 8). This assertion of Hooks seems pertinent in discussing the eruption of the voices of the marginalized female subjects in Samskara.

By voicing her challenge against the brahmin community of Durvasapura, the brahmin widow Lakshmiddevamma interrogates this upper caste discourse. The resultant release of female agency signals the disruption of the dominant order. Lois McNay's discussion of female agency shows how "agency" becomes possible because the Foucauldian conception of power is diffuse and not homogenous. According to McNay agency is the ability to "manage actively the [. . .] discontinuous, overlapping or conflicting relations of power" within a social order (McNay, Gender and Agency 16). This view of agency throws light on Lakshmiddevamma's assertion of subjecthood by positioning herself as the speaking subject. Her manipulation of the acute crisis, which the brahmin community has encountered in the form of Naranappa's death, leads her to locate herself as the subject of knowledge who is aware of the contradictions within the brahmin male self. She interrogates this brahmin self by attacking and dismantling the caste identity of the brahmin male.

Custom is often seen as crucial in the articulation of traditions. This is true of the brahminical tradition which claims sanatana (ancient) customs as constituting and validating its existence. Lakshmiddevamma questions the brahmins of Durvasapura by appropriating this idea. She invokes custom to invalidate the claim to brahminhood of these men. She challenges them with the question: "you fellows call yourself brahmins, you sit there and don't want to take out a dead man's body [. . .] in all my born days, have I seen a body uncremated all night?" and declares: "brahminism is in ruins" (Samskara 43).

This interrogation unsettles the equations of gender in the upper caste discourse. Lakshmiddevamma's positioning of herself as the authorizing agent of the brahminhood of Durvasapura men dislocates their privilege, and their claim that brahminism is

biologically coded in the brahmin male body. In this voicing of the female subject's resistance, we can trace her counterdiscourse even in the hegemonic order within which her social and economic subjection occurs. Her anger is voiced in the hysterical curses she heaps on the brahmins of this community. She calls them "rascals," who will "fall into the lowest hell reserved for the outcastes and perish there" (Samskara 43). The very location of the margins into which she is pushed in this society empowers her to speak out against it.

Lakshmiddevamma's appropriation of the issue of Naranappa's uncremated body in her attack is particularly important in the voicing of her opposition to the exploitative brahmin community. She strategically makes common cause with the dead Naranappa. Instead of highlighting Naranappa's antibrahminical position, she focuses on destabilizing the brahmin identity. Her attempt is to foreground the contradictions in the brahminical self-definition with the query: "where has your brahminism gone?" (Samskara 43). This challenge constructs the brahmin males of Durvasapura as helpless in dealing with the problem of disposing of Naranappa's body.

With this maneuver Lakshmiddevamma locates herself with Naranappa, who had always refused to be constructed as a victim of the disapproving brahmin community. In this identification she reinforces her own refusal to accept the position of a passive victim. The power relations in this discourse are subverted by this strategy. She validates both Naranappa and herself by calling him a "golden man," and by constructing Naranappa thus she condemns the brahmins themselves as "impure." This challenges the Durvasapura brahmin community's construction of Naranappa which aligns him with the outcastes. Finally, through Lakshmiddevamma's interrogation of them, the brahmins

themselves become located with the Others. She taunts them, “why don’t [. . .] you become Muslims” (Samskara 43).

In general, the lower caste women in Samskara resist the upper caste appropriation of their bodies, as they break into the self-preoccupation of the upper caste discourse by talking back. They resist upper caste subjection by asserting their sexual agency, and in doing so, emerge as speaking subjects. Two clear instances of this are Belli regaining the rights over her body in her refusal to make it available to Sripathi, and Chinni breaking into the narcissism of the brahmin discourse by the assumption of her voice.

Belli’s resistance to Sripathi’s desire is an act of recovering the rights over her own body. By withholding her body from Sripathi, she asserts her sexual agency—the power to deny him the accessibility to her body. She stops him with: “not today.” This negation empowers her to speak further. She begins her narrative of the tragedy in the life of the dalit community with the firm assumption of her subjecthood—“I want to tell you something” (Samskara 40). She goes on to describe the plight of the plague-struck outcaste community in spite of Sripathi’s resistance. This becomes the voicing of her refusal to be the silent sexual object of high caste desire.

With the acts of wrapping the cloth round her naked body and her emphatic foregrounding of her identity with the dying outcastes in the huts outside the agrahara, Belli defies the upper caste male desire. In such oppositional acts, Belli has recovered her selfhood, a self that is constructed in opposition to that of the brahmins. She establishes this difference in definite terms as she articulates: “our huts aren’t like the Brahmin houses” (Samskara 40). Her words about going to the demons for an answer to the problem the community is facing reinforce the distance of Sripathi from her world.

Belli and Chinni break into the narcissistic preoccupations of the brahmin community by their speech. They communicate their troubles to people in the agrahara, challenging their posture of disinterest by this act of speaking out. The outcaste Chinni speaks from her liminal location to foreground the tragedy in the lives of the dalits. She speaks to position the outcaste men and women as suffering subjects who seek answers to their problems. At this moment, we see that the textual preoccupation with the complex questions riddling the dominant community—its problems, fears, and desires—are temporarily deferred in order to focus on the burning outcaste huts. Chinni's talk provides visibility to the sickness of Belli's father and mother in the dominant discourse (Samskara 57).

What makes these defiant acts of the lower caste female subjects in Samskara particularly significant, is their strong awareness of a "collective" identity. Subjects in any discourse participate in contexts both in terms of individual and collective experiences. When the crisis of the plague creates an upheaval in Durvasapura community and liberates the voices of the outcastes, marginalized female subjects are able to seize their moment of speech. In these terms, the speech of the outcaste women like Belli and Chinni signals a movement toward the foregrounding of the collective identity of the marginalized subjects and points to the possibility of the struggle of the outcastes against the hegemonic and self-preoccupied upper caste world. Therefore, the positioning of the female as the speaking subject suggests the disruption of the dominant discourse in Samskara.

FEMALE REVERSE GAZE

In the previous chapter, I have discussed how the scopic male gaze attempts to construct and control the female figure. However, the textual discourse of Ananthamurthy's works also foregrounds the disruption of this controlling gaze in the form of the reverse female gaze. This reverse gaze challenges the agenda of configuring woman within male desire and leads the female subject to position herself as the subject of desire. In its disruption of the objectification of the female subject, it challenges the dominant constructions of the brahmin male self.

By resisting the appropriation of female bodies in the upper caste discourse, the oppositional gaze of the female subject frustrates the dominant male desire. Chandri's gaze on Pranesha in Samskara becomes crucial in opening up the spaces of female desire. As John Ransom, in his study of female subjectivity in terms of the Foucauldian structures of power, argues, "the individual in Foucault's account is still caught up in 'power relations,'" but "she or he participates in forming some [relations of power] and potentially modifies the effect of others through interaction with them" (Ransom 136). In Samskara the reverse gaze of Chandri, which celebrates the idealized upper caste male body of Pranesha, configures the male body within the structures of female desire. Chandri surveys Pranesha's idealized male body and thinks of his "looks, virtues" and how "he glowed." In this look, she instantly appropriates his body within her desire by defining him as the kind of man from whom "prostitutes [like herself] should get pregnant" (Samskara 46). This female gaze of desire reverses the familiar paradigm of the appropriation of female bodies by the high caste males.

In this novel, the problematic presence of Padmavati poses the final challenge to Pranesha's troubled experiments with selfhood. In the textual discourse which privileges

the male gaze, the oppositional gaze of Padmavati assumes great significance. Her desiring gaze unsettles Pranesha completely during their encounter toward the end of the novel. Her caste status—that of a “malera” woman—configures her as a half-bred lower caste woman. She is overtly aggressive in communicating her desire, her blatant sexuality and agency. Putta testifies to her choice and agency as a desiring subject: “she isn’t the kind of spirit that’ll accept any ordinary brahmin,” and he narrates how she refuses to entertain Naranappa: “Padmavati didn’t like his ways. [. . .] she told me ‘don’t you bring him here anymore’” (Samskara 125, 136).

Although Pranesha’s gaze romanticizes Chandri’s body in terms of sustaining Nature and fanaticizes about the outcaste Belli’s breasts, it is unable to deal with the threat of Padmavati’s undisguised desire. Unmixed with any mystificatory rhetoric of maternal yearnings, she directs her intense gaze on his body. Padmavati’s desire for Pranesha’s body differs from Chandri’s since it is not mixed with the wish to receive his “seed,” as it is in the latter woman’s case. At the first glimpse of her, Pranesha’s mind registers: “An unblinking eye that’ll see everything as if it is wide-open” (Samskara 123).

This powerfully foregrounded encounter between Pranesha and Padmavati in Samskara reverses the sexualizing of the lower caste woman, which occurs as a crucial strategy for objectifying the female figure. When the female subject forcefully seizes the position of the subject of desire, the self-construction of the upper caste male self falls apart. Pranesha is caught in Padmavati’s stare: “for this on-looking eyes I’m a wide-open thing.” He is fixed by her desire. The tantalizing, “elongated black” eyes, which evoke desire, also threaten and make him feel like the “bird paralyzed by the stare of the black serpent” (Samskara 124).

Power equations become reversed by the countersexualization of the brahmin male body by the lower caste gendered subject's gaze in this novel. The oppositional female gaze rips apart the myth of the naturalized and superior brahmin body. Pranesha never recovers from this onslaught because Padmavati's eyes refuse to be fixed by his gaze: "Padmavati, evading any possible direct gaze, went and sat at the front of the door. Pranesacharya was disturbed again that she was staring at him from that vantage point" (Samskara 124). Her eyes look at him "stealthily," peep "from the door," and suddenly retreat into the darkness to escape his gaze (Samskara 124). Being the object of Padmavati's gaze destabilizes Pranesha's identity and drains his agency. Then, she comes out into the light and invites his look on herself. Here, the textual construction of Pranesha's lust becomes constructed in terms of coercion. When Padmavati offers her body to be looked at by the male, it comes with the choice of giving up his desire to control her with his gaze. Meanwhile, her eyes probe into Pranesha's being and invade his private thoughts.

In the end, Pranesha is reduced to a body, he becomes "solid, an object of Padmavati's expectant gaze" (Samskara 124). He is aware that the only way he can fulfill his desire is by identifying himself in terms of her desire. She forces him to locate himself in her eyes: "That art thou" (Samskara 124). Traumatized by the loss of self, and becoming a nameless object of her desire, he withdraws in fear. Putta provides him with a tentative identity (as a brahmin from Kundapura) to inhabit in that crucial moment of surrender to female will. He gives Pranesha "an entirely new personality" (Samskara 123). This helps him stagger back into himself. At this point, incapable of a direct refusal, Pranesha moves away in stealth, deferring his decision to visit Padmavati to an indefinite future.

Even as this textual discourse tries to position the brahmin male as the subject of desire, the lower caste woman's countergaze becomes a powerful mode of frustrating this attempt. This female gaze marks the appropriation of the male body within the structures of female desire, thus reinforcing woman as the sexual subject. It is significant that the oppositional gaze, which figures in Samskara, is located within the lower caste discourse. As the doubly disempowered lower caste woman in this discourse reasserts her agency in the form of the reverse gaze, she poses a challenge to both caste and gender hierarchies.

RESISTANCE AND AGENCY OF THE FEMALE SUBJECT

Since the female subject's agency survives, resists, and disturbs the male brahmin discourse in Ananthamurthy's works, the constant attempts to objectify her within the structures of upper caste male desire get disrupted. As this marginalized subject opposes the dominant constructions of herself by the strategies of the subversion of the upper caste male discourse, the positioning of self as the speaking subject, and by foregrounding her sexual agency in the form of the reverse gaze, the power relations of both caste and gender become unsettled.

In the slippages that occur in the representations of women in terms of upper caste male desire, the multiple subject positions, which women assume in their resistance to the dominant ideology, become visible. Thus, the moments of disruption that occur within the high caste male discourse are linked to the counterdiscourse of the female subject which surfaces in the works of Ananthamurthy. In this textual discourse, the female subject resists her representation as a passive victim/idealized sexual object. Tracing the counterdiscourse of the female subject in these works reveals how both the upper caste male control over woman within the text, and the narratorial control imposed on this

female figure by the upper caste male writer fail to efface her agency. The study of female subjectivity and agency in the works of Ananthamurthy leads to further questions about the upper caste male writer's access to female interiority which the Conclusion attempts to address.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Examining a male writer's predictably inadequate construction of the female subject due to the limits of his access to female interiority, opens up a further area of study, which I must confess, is beyond the scope of this project. Such explorations would require a different methodology and also different theoretical tools of inquiry. It would require the historicizing of women's writing in postindependence South India to construct the differences in the ways in which the male and female authors access female subjectivity in this cultural discourse. Since Ananthamurthy's writing often engages with the construction of the lower caste female subjects, the theorizing of this marginalized subjectivity requires an in depth analysis of the patriarchal arrangements within the lower caste discourse.

In my view, the retrograde movement in Ananthamurthy's works and the representation of women in terms of male desire, which I trace in these texts, are connected in a crucial manner with the writer's particular location within the brahmin patriarchal discourse that was trying to rework (but not dismantle) its ideology in the post independence Indian context. This problematic location seems to make the spaces of female subjectivity inaccessible to him, or at least, not as readily usable as it is to a woman novelist like M.K. Indira, (a contemporary Kannada woman writer). Indira's Phaniyamma (published in 1974) is an extremely sensitive and nuanced representation of the female subject's interiority. The cogency with which Indira is able to foreground the spaces of resistance of the brahmin widow, and to articulate her subversion of the upper caste hegemony by focusing on her as an active agent in Phaniyamma, is absent in

Ananthamurthy's explorations of the female subjectivity in his work (an inability particularly obvious in his construction of Yamunakka in "Ghatashraddha," for instance).

In the novels of an earlier popular Kannada writer Triveni (1928-1963) the female protagonist is often located within the postcolonial tensions of tradition and change in South Indian society. Triveni shows acute awareness of how modernity only reworks the mechanisms of male control. But, in the gap between the shifting patriarchal modes, the female subject in her novels finds her subjecthood. While many of her novels end with the female figure being overpowered by the dominant discourse, Triveni articulates the female subject's resistance and the subversion of the hegemonic structures. Her novels do not attempt to foreclose female agency in the narratives of victimization, as is the case in some of Ananthamurthy's works ("Ghatashraddha" exemplifies this).

Recent Kannada women writers like Vaidehi, Tejaswini Niranjana, Vina Shanteshwar and many others represent a strongly oppositional movement to the male control of women in Indian society. Their female protagonists in these novels are often rebellious and economically independent. These female figures become represented as sexual subjects. In the works of these writers, the personal fulfillment of woman is not articulated in terms of domestic martyrdom. Their female protagonists seek to realize their hopes and desires in the world outside home.

However, I am convinced that my examination of the representational politics of the construction of woman within the structures of the high caste male desire in Ananthamurthy's works will be significantly useful in developing broader theoretical, and interpretative strategies for studying the interlocking discourses of brahminical hegemony and gender relations. It will help in historicizing female subjectivity within the particular patriarchal brahmin discourse in the South Indian context. My choice of

the upper caste male-authored texts, and my attempt to uncover the mystifications in this textual discourse, lead to the interrogation of the narratorial control of the marginalized subjects in this discourse. The engagement with these issues will point to crucial insights about how tradition and modernity become invented in the postindependence context through the processes of gender appropriation and the relegitimization of the dominant male brahminical discourse. It foregrounds how the upper caste male writer's overt preoccupations with progressive ideas mystify the sophisticated ways in which the brahminical male discourse becomes revalidated in his works.

Another issue, which might lead to important insights about the cultural discourse of Ananthamurthy's work, is the filmic representations of his work. Both Samskara (1970) and "Ghatashraddha" (1977) were made into films.¹⁶ While Samskara received the national award that year and many international awards, it also led to a controversy about the antibrahminical sentiments it was supposed to reveal. The Madras Government even banned the screening of the movie. A protest was led by the intellectuals nationwide defending the writer's freedom to express his critique of the caste system.

Much later, in one of his interviews, Ananthamurthy, made an interesting comment about how the filmic version made certain modifications, such as suppressing the incident of a muslim cremating Naranappa's body, in order to stall the anticipated public anger in the wake of its release. Muralidhara Upadya discusses this interview in his recent book on Ananthamurthy.¹⁷ In another interview collected in the same book, in his discussion of the other national award winning film Ghatashraddha, Ananthamurthy points out how the cinematic form made some changes in order to ensure public appeal. In Ananthamurthy's story Yamunakka is a shaven widow, but in the film the director Girish Kasaravalli presents her as a widow who has retained her hair. However, though

Ghatashraddha too invoked some negative response from the fanatical brahmin groups, it did not raise a controversy of the scale created by Samskara.

A probing study of the problems in making these films and the public responses they triggered off will lead to interesting insights about the cultural representations of caste and gender issues in the postindependence South Indian context. But, since such an exploration will also require the understanding of the particular strategies and the representational politics involved in cinematic forms, especially the situating of these films in the context of the new wave South Indian Cinema, I cannot engage them in my present study. However, such an enquiry might reveal new equations of caste and gender. The highlighting of the caste issue, rather than the issue of gender exploitation, in the controversies which followed the release of these two films, raises interesting questions that could be addressed in other studies which focus on films based on Ananthamurthy's works.

NOTES

¹ Identified, broadly, as the literary period in Kannada Writing spanning the decades between 1940's and 70's. For a detailed discussion of the literary periods see "Twentieth-Century Kannada Literature" by Ramachandradeva (Handbook of Twentieth-Century Literatures of India. Ed. Nalini Natarajan. Westport: 1996). 160-169.

² Dr. B.R Ambedkar (1981-1956) was an Indian freedom fighter, social reformer, and the most important leader of the fight against untouchability in India. He led the struggle against exploitation of the lower castes and their age-old domination by the upper castes. He was invited for drafting the Indian constitution, and here he upheld the fundamental rights to freedom and equality of all castes. Ram Manohar Lohia (1910-1967) was the most influential Socialist thinker of postindependence India. He was a follower of Gandhi, and adopted "satyagraha" as his mode of opposing the British rule. He began the Socialist-Congress Party in 1934 and was later the general secretary of the Praja Socialist Party. He was responsible for many social and political reforms, including the reservation of seats for the minorities, women, and lower classes in the legislature. During his lifetime he fought against caste, class, gender, and racial exploitation.

³ The "pragathisheela" or progressive literature in Kannada literature spans from 1945 and overlaps with the beginnings of the navya period. It was inspired by Leftist thoughts. It sought to ignite the spark of rebellion against the exploitative structures of class and caste in Indian society in the minds of its readers.

⁴ Manu Chakravarthy's "Metaphysics of Ambivalence" is an interesting analysis of the contradictory vision, and the profound ambiguity that marks Ananthamurthy's works (Deccan Herald, Spectrum Supplement, May 7th 1994).

⁵ Karmic theory deals with the idea of "destiny" in terms of birth cycles. "Varna" refers to caste/occupation.

⁶ "Madhwas" and "Smartas" are brahmin sects. They are traditionally thought of as rival sects. Madhwas are the followers of the philosopher Madhva (13th century) who taught dviatha or dualism (soul and godhead are two entities). They worship god Vishnu. Smartas are the followers of Shankara (7th century) who professed advaitha or monism (soul and godhead as one).

⁷ Shankara, the celibate philosopher, is believed to have been challenged by a woman-scholar. In the scholarly debate, which ensued between them, he was found wanting in the knowledge of sex. So, in order to gain the experience of sex, he entered the body of a dead king and had intercourse with his queen.

⁸ The tantric tradition in Hindu mysticism is diverse. It treats the body, the physical, and the experiential as ways to attain the godhead. Sexuality becomes an important element in this mystical pursuit. For further reference, read Douglas Renfrew Brooks's article

“Encountering the Hindu ‘other’: Tantrism and the Brahmins of South India” in Journal of the American Academy of Religion 60 (1992): 405-437.

⁹ Advaita (monism) is the branch of Hindu philosophy, which argues that the human soul and the godhead are one. It foregrounds the idea that the human and divine souls are seen as separate is only an illusion. Shankara (7th century) is an important philosopher of this branch of metaphysics.

¹⁰ According to the epics, the two doorkeepers of Vishnu called Jaya and Vijaya, were cursed to be born on Earth for their insolence. But, they chose to be born as opponents of God (as demons) so that they could return to God sooner. They preferred the role of enemies of God so that they could meet with their death, at the hands of God.

¹¹ This story from the Hindu epic Bhagavatam deals with the redemption of the brahmin Ajamila who had fallen into sinful ways. He lived with a low-caste woman, drank liquor and gambled. However, at the time of his death he called out to his son Narayana (named after Lord Vishnu). This led to a debate in the celestial world, which ended with Ajamila being saved from eternal damnation in hell.

¹² The story of Shakuntala and Dushyanta occurs in the epic Ramayana. Shakuntala was the daughter of sage Vishwamitra born when the celestial courtesan Menaka seduced the sage. Bharata was the son of Shakuntala.

¹³ Akkamahadevi was a twelfth century Veerashaiva saint who wrote many vachanas in Kannada (short religious poems). Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a famous nineteenth century Indian saint (1836-1866).

¹⁴ According to the Hindu epics, Matsyagandhi was a fisherwoman who was seduced by the sage Parashara as she ferried him across the river. She bore Vyasa as a result of this union. The sage blessed her with a permanently perfumed body.

¹⁵ For a detailed study of the influence of D.H.Lawrence on the navya writers, especially in terms of the overlapping narratives of female sexuality and spontaneity, read G.S. Shivaprakash’s Modala Kattina Gadya (Bangalore: Abhinava, 1995).

¹⁶ Filmic Representations of Ananthamurthy’s works: Samskara. (Film: B&W 100 mins, Kannada) Production and direction: Pattabhi Rama Reddy. Screenplay and dialogue: Girish Karnad. Camera: Tom Cowan. Music: Rajeev Taranath. Art Direction: S.G. Vasudev. Editing: Steven Cartaw, Vasu Cast: Girish Karnad, Snehlata Reddy, P. Lankesh. (1970). Ghatashraddha. (Film: B&W, 144 minutes, Kannada) Production: Suvarnagiri Films. Direction and Screenplay: Girish Kasaravalli (1977).

¹⁷ Muralidhara Upadhyaya, in his book on the life and work of U.R.Ananthamurthy, discusses Ananthamurthy’s responses to the controversy over Samskara and his reaction to the film Ghatashraddha. He cites the interviews with Ananthamurthy from “Samakshama” (1980) to show, mainly, how the writer was appreciative of the filmic

representations. (U.R.Ananthamurthy: Jeevana Hagu Kritigala Samuhashodha. Ed: Muralidhara Upadhya Hiriyadaka. Puttur: Karanataka Sangha Puttur, 2000). 40-42.

WORKS CITED

PRIMARY SOURCES:

- Ananthamurthy, U.R. "Akkayya." Stallion of the Sun. Trans. Narayan Hegde. New York : Penguin Books, 1999.
- . "Ghatashraddha." Stallion of the Sun. Trans. Narayan Hegde. New York: Penguin Books, 1999.
- . Samskara. Trans. A.K.Ramanujam. New Delhi : Penguin Books, 1978.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

- Briodatti, Rosi. "On the Female Feminist Subject, or: from 'She-self' to She-other'." Beyond Equality and Difference—Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity. London: Routledge, 1992. 164-176.
- Bronfen, Elisabeth. "Killing Gazes, Killing in the Gaze: On Michael Powell's Peeping Tom." Gaze and Voice as Love Objects. Ed. Reneta Salecl and Slavoj Zizek. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996. 59-89.
- Brooks, Douglas Renfrew. "Encountering the Hindu 'other': Tantrism and the Brahmins of South India" Journal of the American Academy of Religion 60 (1992): 405-437.
- Chakravarthy, Manu. "Metaphysics of Ambivalence." Deccan Herald, 7 May. 1994. 14.
- Chakravarti, Uma. "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism, and a Script for the Past." Recasting Women--Essays in Colonial History. Ed. KumKum Sangari and Suresh Vaid. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999. 27-87.
- Chatterjee, Partha. "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question." Recasting Women--Essays in Colonial History. Ed. KumKum Sangari and Suresh Vaid. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999. 233-253.
- Conboy, Katie et al. Introduction. Writing on the Body—Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory. Eds. Conboy, Medina et al. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Doane, Anne Marie. Writing on the Body—Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory. Ed. Katie Conboy et al. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. 176-194.

- Dube, Leela. "Caste and Women." Caste, Its Twentieth Century Avatar. Ed. M.N.Srinivas. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1996. 1-27.
- Dumont, Louis. Homo Hierarchicus; An Essay on the Caste System. Trans. Mark Sainsbury. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970.
- Hegde, Narayan. Introduction. Samskara. by U.R. Ananthamurthy. Trans. Hegde. New York : Penguin Books, 1999.
- Hooks, Bell. "Selling Hot Pussy: Representations of Black Female Sexuality in the Cultural Marketplace." Writing on the Body—Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory. Ed. Katie Conboy et al. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. 113-128.
- . Talking Back—Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black. Boston: South End Press, 1989.
- JanMohamed, Abdul R. "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Radical Difference in Colonialist Literature." Critical Inquiry 12 (1985): 59-87.
- Kasaravalli Girish. Dir. Ghatashraddha. Perf. Ajit Kumar, Meena. Suvarnagiri Films, 1977.
- Lata Mani. "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on 'Sati' in Colonial India." Recasting Women--Essays in Colonial History. Ed. KumKum Sangari and Suresh Vaid. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999: 88-126.
- McNay, Lois. Foucault and Feminism: Power, Gender and the Self. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992.
- . Gender and Agency—Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.
- Millet, Kate. Sexual Politics. New York : Doubleday & Company, Inc: 1970.
- Mukherjee, Meenakshi. Realism and Reality: The Novel and Society in India. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." The Sexual Subject--A Screen Reader in Sexuality. London: Routledge, 1992. 22-34.
- Nagaraj. D. R. Flaming Feet--Cosmology of Castes and the Kannada Novel. Bangalore: IKRA publications, 1993.
- Naipaul. V. S. India-A Wounded Civilization. New York: Knopf, 1977.
- Newman, Beth. "'The Situation of the Looker-On': Gender, Narration, and Gaze in

Wuthering Heights.” Feminisms—An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism. Ed. Robyn Warhol and Diana Price Herndl, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997. 452-483.

Oliver, Kelly. Subjectivity without Subjects. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1998.

Ramachandradeva. “Kannada Literature.” Handbook of Twentieth-Century Literatures of India. Ed. Nalini Natarajan. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996. 160-169.

Ramanujam.A.K. “Afterward.” Samskara, by U.R.Ananthamurthy. Trans. Ramanujam. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1978.

Ransom, John. Foucault’s Discipline—The Politics of Subjectivity. Durham: Duke University Press: 1997.

Reddy Pattabhi Rama. Producer and Dir. Samskara. Perf. Girish Karnad, Snehlata Reddy, P. Lankesh. 1970.

Sangari, Kum Kum and Suresh Vaid. Introduction. Recasting Women--Essays in Colonial History. Eds. Sangari and Vaid. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999.

Schlee, Eileen. “The Subject is Dead, Long Live the Female Subject!” Feminist Issues 13 (1993): 69-80.

Schroeder, Jonathan E. “Consuming Representation: A Visual Approach to Consumer Research.” Representing Consumers: Voices, Views and Visions. Ed. Barbara Stern. London: Routledge, 1998. 193-230.

Shildrick, Margrit and Janet Price. Eds. Feminist Theory and the Body--A Reader, New York: Routledge, 1999.

Shivaprakash.G.S. Modala Kattina Gadya. Bangalore: Abhinava, 1995.

Sunder Rajan, Rajeswari. Real and Imagined Women-Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism. London: Routledge, 1993.

Taranath, Rajeev. Introduction. Eradu Dashakada Kathegalu. by U.R.Ananthamurthy. Sagara: Akshara Prakashana, 1993.

Upadhyaya, Muralidhara Hiriyadaka. Ed. U.R.Ananthamurthy: Jeevana Hagu Kritigala Samuhashodha. Puttur: Karanataka Sangha Puttur, 2000.

Ussher, Jane. “Theorizing Female Sexuality: Social Constructionist and Post-Structuralist Accounts.” Female Sexuality—Psychology, Biology and Social Context. Ed. Precilla Y.L Choi and Paula Nicolson. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994. 148-175.

Woollacott, Angela. "The Fragmentary Subject: Feminist History, Official Records, and Self-Representation." Women's Studies International Forum 21 (May-June 1998): 329-39.

VITA

Name	Krishna Manavalli
Address	Dept of English Old Dominion University Norfolk VA 23529
Phone and email	631-216-5180 manavalli@hotmail.com
Education	MA in English Literature (Bangalore University) Bangalore, India
Experience	Teaching Experience: Full-time faculty—1992 to date (Government Arts College) Bangalore, India Freelance Journalism (1996-1999) Translations (1992-1998)
publications	“Avalokana” <u>Rajaratnam Nenapugalu</u> . Bangalore: Karnataka Sangha, 1985. Translations for <u>Comparative Literature</u> . Bangalore: Karnataka Sahitya Academy, 1992. “Restless Genius—Rajeev Taranath” <u>Phoenix</u> 2 (1996) “Puttavaru” Translation of “Little Ones” by Mahaswetha Devi in <u>Anikethana</u> (July-Sept 1998) Articles and interviews in many important Literary and Cultural magazines in India
Awards received	Gold Medal in MA (Bangalore University, India. 1988)