

MANY VOICES

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

These words were added at the occasion: it is understood that unregulated climate control brings about increased disastrous weather on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. This delayed my arrival here, because a very heavy snowstorm held up the flights. Evidence of a failure of the ethical toward our worldly habitation. I therefore commend the combination of science, technology, and the human spirit in the planning of the Kyoto Prize.

I should like to remark on the shared spirit of the two other laureates and myself. With Dr. Sutherland: the heart is in the work but the result is out of my grasp. With Dr. Ohsumi: today the emphasis is on outcome/efficiency/speed. But intellectual inquiry must have its own time and space.

Please hear these resonances in the remarks that follow.

Who speaks when we speak? Whether we are scientists or artists, institutionally educated or otherwise, all our history speaks through us. We ourselves can only chart a very small part of that history. Today I have given myself as my task such a charting so that I can acknowledge, that in choosing to reward me with the Kyoto prize, you have in fact rewarded many others who have contributed to my making, more than I can tell.

Recently I have discovered that highly educated people in most nation-states in Africa sometimes use mother tongues that were not systematized by European missionaries in the 19th century, to communicate to others who share that mother tongue. Indeed, if you follow the track of these un-grammatized mother tongues, sometimes you can move down the East coast of Africa all the way to the South. There are probably many other such tracks that I don't know about. In fact, the idea of calling them "endangered" sometimes does not recognize this extraordinary survival record. Also, calling them "traditional" sometimes does not recognize their mobility and changefulness through the centuries. Indeed, thinking of them as confined only to very poor communities does not recognize the presence of all these "modernized" persons who use the language voluntarily, and, of course, also use it for electoral purposes. In other words, the languages exist in the modernity of democracy. I have learned to think of these languages as repositories of untracked histories. Thinking about this resource with African and other colleagues, I have been helped in my efforts today.

Therefore, when I think of the people who have helped me on life's way, I want to touch the histories behind them, concealed by the official lines which seemingly produced them. I

will build my words on my understanding that the ethical is the unconditional call of all others and that the democratic is a politics based on training in judgment.

My parents did not just bring us up to think of other people. By their own example, they made it part of what I will call our “soul,” something holding together our thinking, feeling, imagining, and even our disposition of the body.

My mother, Sivani Chakravorty, would leave the house in the early morning when I was five years old, to get to the local railway station, to welcome and help rehabilitate the refugees coming into Calcutta because of the Partition of India upon our independence from the British Empire in 1947. As I grew up, she drew me into the work she did to make destitute widows employable. She labored mightily to work on the establishment of Sarada Math, a nunnery, so that women who wanted to lead spiritual lives could find a place to do so. These women, mostly intellectuals, did a great deal of good in their turn for an altogether large circle of “other people.” My mother went on to establish the first working women’s hostel in Calcutta, with such success that the state government asked for her secret. In doing this, she also recognized the capacities of a cousin who had suffered greatly from domestic violence and internalized gendering unable to resist, by employing her as the superintendent. My mother restored many lives in this way. I should add that, in her 70s and 80s, when she became a citizen of the United States, she decided to start in her new country, by working more than 10,000 hours as a volunteer for victims of posttraumatic stress syndrome among the veterans of the war in Vietnam.

I have only been able to list some of the things that my mother did. I have not been able to record the every day presence of the cheerful and good humored person who was at the same time on the move toward unconditional ethics.

My father, Dr. Pares Chandra Chakravorty, born a village boy, destroyed a brilliant career as the youngest Civil Surgeon in British India, by refusing to give false evidence at a rape trial. This was before my birth. By the time I knew him, he was the saintly doctor with an enormous charitable practice among low income families living all around us. He was the man who protected these Muslims from the neighborhood during the religious riots brought on by the partition of India, even as his own Muslim students protected him from the other side. When I was 11 years old—he died when I was 13 years old—he took me to the local post office and pointed at the long lines, and said, “because you’re my daughter, and because you’re a gentlewoman, they will let you go to the head of the line. Remember, always stand at the end of the line.” This was in 1953. It is not an exaggeration to say that I have thought of this every day since the choice of pushing ahead became a possibility.

My parents made me sensitive to the difference of gender. My mother was 14 years old

when she was married. She was in her last year of high school. My father did not just believe that women should be educated. Of course he believed that. What is important was that he recognized that his child bride was an intellectual. He kept the ways open for her so that she could go ahead and get a masters degree in 1937 when she was only 24 years old. And she continued as an independent intellectual until the very end of her life. As a woman receiving the Kyoto prize, I must say that the ethical turn in my mother and myself does not belong to the enforced responsibility toward others which is quite often the gender role for women in all societies—super-mothers conditioned to manic service to children and family.

I think some of this was the result of my parents' involvement with the early Ramakrishna movement and its revolution in the institutional thinking of all sectarianism: of class, race, and religion, today largely forgotten, because an in-depth training of children is no longer practiced. Like the rest of the “rising” world, we have lost the desire for preparing the muscles of the mind for ethical reflexes.

Ramakrishna (1836-1886) was an ecstatic visionary whose wife initiated my father into the ethical life in 1920, when he was 21 years old. To have a female spiritual teacher was undoubtedly of help in recognizing the importance of gender justice. In 1928, he took my mother for initiation into the ethical life to one of Ramakrishna's direct disciples, Swami Sivananda. Sivananda's simple down to earth gender sensitivity so inspired my 16 years old Mother that she told us the story many times. I hope you will discern its philosophical depth beneath its earthiness. The story still moves me to tears. I have a picture of this man in old age on my desk in my study. He said to my Mother: “as a new bride in your husband's house with your father-in-law in residence you will not have any time to yourself to meditate. When you're alone to answer Nature's call, just clap your hands and say glory to the teacher and that will be enough.” I will in a bit talk about gifts of spirit that I received from another monk in the movement in the 1960s.

My parents sent us to a school where the teachers were Christianized aboriginals and mostly so-called lower-caste Hindus: St. John's Diocesan Girls' High School, attached to the oldest church in Calcutta, where Job Charnock, the founder of the city, lies buried. These teachers taught with the passion of the newly liberated. I do often say, Diocesan made me. Sanskrit, the classical language of North India, as grand as all classical languages are, was taught to me by Miss Nilima Pyne, one of these teachers, with such dedication that I can still use the language for my scholarly and teacherly work. As the days go by, Miss Charubala Dass, the principal of the school, becomes my role model. Her affectionate dignity, and her gentle sternness is not something that I can hope to imitate. That she had a hand in putting in place the openness to the need for ethical reflexes that you have kindly recognized in me

will be made clear by the following story, the significance of which at the moment I did not recognize.

I have been training teachers among the landless illiterate in western West Bengal for 30 years. I am myself not at all religious, not a believer, about which more later. Recently, at one of the meetings where all the rural teachers had come together for training, I gave them a lesson in English prepositions by repeating Miss Dass's school prayer: "be thou, O Lord, before us to lead us, behind us to restrain us, beneath us to sustain us, above us to draw us up, round about us to protect us." The call of the ethical from my school days done into a different kind of lesson, which I translated, for these people rather far removed from the metropolitan center, in this case Calcutta. Make of it what you wish.

I should mention here that my parents loved our mother tongue and thus we were allowed to sustain some connection to what I call ethical semiosis. There is a language we learn first, as infants, before reason, which activates the parts of our mind that are unavailable to the waking mind. As infants we invent a language. Our parents "learn" this language. Because they speak a named language, the infant's language gets inserted into the named language with a history before the child's birth, which will continue after its death. As the child begins to navigate this language it is beginning to access the entire interior network of the language, all its possibility of articulations, for which the best metaphor that can be found is—especially in the age of computers—"memory." Here, before our reason starts working, is the constitution of our ethical semiosis, or meaning-making, in the learning of our first language, in our first languaging. It is undoubtedly true that I am able to love English, French and German, and now, in old age, Chinese and Japanese as a student, because the love of the mother tongue sustains this. I try, like all old-fashioned students of Comparative Literature, to produce a simulacrum of first language learning as I learn other languages, even as I know that it is, of course, impossible.

In 1961, I came to New York, and, as a person connected to the Ramakrishna movement, I went to the Vedanta Society in New York. As you know, Vedanta is a highly cerebral philosophical area of Hinduism, and I encountered at the Vedanta Society in New York its extraordinary Director Swami Pavitrananda, an austere yet gentle, immensely learned vedantist in his 60s. In 1963, at the age of 21, I felt that I had lost my faith—I can find no other words to describe this, and I am amused to think that I will have no guarantee that the Japanese equivalent will catch the absurdity of these words. I felt that it would be incorrect not to share this with the Swami.

When I said to him, "Sir, I have lost my faith," he said to me, "Gayatri, where will you escape? Your focused study is your way to the sacred." (Let me say here that I understood

Jacques Derrida's idea that reading is a species of "prayer to be haunted" by the text as a consequence of Pavitranda's remark.)

What I have translated as the "way to the sacred" was the Sanskrit word *tapasya*. It is the word that describes the concentrated meditation of Siddhartha Gautama, from which he emerged as the enlightened one, the *buddha*. I had understood the word, when the monk spoke, as an indication that the proper study of the humanities gave practice in the intuition of the transcendental, which prepared one to respond reflexively, if the call of the ethical happened to happen. In 1991, I received another gift of spirit which expanded this understanding into my soul.

In 1985, I had started a friendship with Bimal Krishna Matilal, the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at Oxford University. Bimal was interested in the philosophy of deconstruction and I was interested in reading indic rational critique in Sanskrit with him. This work continued until his death in 1991. In one of our last meetings, Bimal had spoken about one of the numerous etiologies to be found within Hindu heteropraxy. At his death, when I found myself in Paris at the Bibliothèque nationale, I looked up the story in the *Satapathabrahmana*.

Vrhaspati, the divine craftsman, created all the creatures, and they ran away from him. He ran after them but couldn't catch them. He returned sweating heavily, and dripped sweat into the fire where he had fashioned them. Hinduism lights a fire to establish divinity in its services. This dripping of sweat into the fire became the first offering and created the human being, as well as the brick, looking forward to the dwelling that would move the human from nature to culture.

Standing there in the gathering dusk in Paris, I received this gift from my dead comrade, and from Charles Malamoud—a French Jew who had written a stunning book on classical India—*Cuir le monde—Cooking the World*, with whom I had an appointment the next day. I realized that *tapasya* was not just the enlightenment gained through the transformation of intellectual labor. It related also to *taapa*—heat—the heat generated by creative manual labor in the living body. This realization inspired me in my attempt to teach the intuitions of democracy to the largest sector of the electorate in India, kept in cognitive imprisonment because of the ruling class's contempt for manual labor.

Pavitranda gave me another direct gift in the practice of teaching. In 1964, at the Annual Convention of the Modern Language Association of America, I got my first fulltime teaching job, at the University of Iowa. I said to the monk, "Sir, I am afraid. I am 22 years old. I am only 3 years out of India. I have to teach graduate students. I have inherited a graduate seminar on the French poet Baudelaire, the German poet Rilke, and the Irish poet Yeats. I

am afraid.” “Gayatri,” said he, “you are going to teach for a living, for money. You are your students’ servant. Have you not seen how the servant can chastise the master’s children in order to perform her or his obligations? Always remember, you are your students’ servant. If you start thinking you are a great teacher—a *guru*—all will be lost.” He was, of course, referring to a profession of domestic service that has now luckily disappeared almost completely, but the metaphorical lesson was not lost on me. I remind myself of it everyday, both at Columbia University and at the rural schools.

In 1967, by sheer chance, I ordered a book off a catalogue by a (to me) unknown author, and, little by little, my work began to encounter its philosophical shape. The book was *De la grammatologie*, the author Jacques Derrida.

In 1986, I emerged from the miasma of gender poison, two unsuccessful marriages. I found myself ready to learn from below. I looked around. I found the heroic medical activist Zafrullah Chowdhury, who sent me out with rural woman paramedics in Bangladesh. He set me to work at schooling the rural poor, sent me to work in remote night schools. The poet Farhad Mazhar, with whom I had formed a friendship in the seventies, introduced me to the practitioners at the devotional school of Lalan Shah Fakir, a 19th century grassroots theologian and minstrel composer of amazing depth and invention. Farida Akhter, Farhad’s comrade and partner, an indefatigable global feminist activist, drew me into her circuit. Under her leadership, I participated in the 1994 United Nations Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, where the UN first opened its doors to NGO-s or non-governmental organizations. In the North-South divided atmosphere of that meeting, I received a sense of how top-down planning could never be a shortcut to the ethical, how teaching the deprived nothing but justified self-interest was deeply problematical. For this, I continue to thank Farida.

Farhad has recently reminded me that I had counseled him to sink himself in Lalan. Yet I think of Lalan as his gift to me. Speaking to the disciples there at Lalan’s graveside, I discover the wealth of deconstruction. And, because these disciples are without institutional education, it is training for me again, in suspending oneself in another’s space responsibly, basic training in responding to the ethical call if and when it comes, a training that a humanities education, understood in Pavitrnananda’s way, can perhaps attempt to provide.

Here is a description of the self-representation of Lalan’s disciples, composed by Farhad in English, part of an invitation to a memorial service at the death of one of their own:

He [the recently deceased] felt the necessity to mobilize the “subalterns” and the “outcasts” in order to create the ethico-political condition to unite the human kinds in their diversity. From this perspective he always insisted that anti-caste, anti-class and

anti-patriarchal politics is integral to the bhokti movement. Depoliticising the Bhokti movement is to deny its profound ethico-political significance. If we leave his legacies unattended we will miss a solid ground to reconstitute the wisdom of Lalan's school. This mobilization means a congregation of wise people practicing a harmonious and responsible lifestyle evolved through hundreds of years of tradition.

I should first point out that Lalan Shah brought together the two conflictual religious traditions of Eastern India: Islam and Hinduism, by integrating ethico-philosophical elements from both. Secondly, I should say a word about the "subaltern," mentioned in the very first line of the description of the deceased disciple that I have cited above.

"Subaltern" is a word that we have learned from Antonio Gramsci. On the analogy of the army where the "subaltern" only takes orders, Gramsci used this word to describe those who are cut off from the state.

Finally a word about *bhokti*, which is described in the passage as requiring "anti-caste, anti-class and anti-patriarchal politics." Mine will not be an expert's account.

Bhokti is a broad all-India movement. Lalan Shah falls within the branch in East India that took shape in the sixteenth century. The word *bhakti* comes from the Sanskrit root *bhaj*, the primary meaning of which is "to divide" as well as "to share." This characteristic is shared by the French word *partager*. Deconstructive philosophers have commented a good deal on this characteristic of *partager*: divide to share.

Would it surprise you if I revealed that I am discovering this French-Sanskrit connection to be "correct" only because I am writing something for you, for an audience toward which I must be intellectually responsible. I knew of course that *bhaj*- meant "to divide," and had based my understanding of *bhokti* on it. Writing this piece, however, I looked in the Sanskrit-English dictionary, and saw that the *first* meaning of *bhaj*- is given as "to divide." Since on the model of the 16th century European Reformation, the *bhakti* movement is generally explained as direct devotion, I thought until 30 minutes before writing these words that I alone thought that *bhokti* meant dividing oneself and playing a specific role laid out in the tradition, in as powerful a way as a great actor would, just not for money, and never giving up, in order to enter into a specific relationship into what the daily self cannot contain. This thought of mine is what had been welcome to the disciples of Lalan Shah, because they knew it, could think it, without the dictionary and without academic or popular explanations. I could enter into this as a humanities person, through the importance of theater. This was the deconstructive wealth I described above. And now you have made that wealth secure.

I have perhaps become a little abstract here. Let me go back to childhood.

When I was a child, I loved to "teach" illiterate children who were domestic servants,

dragging them into the kind of compulsory studentship that only a child can absolutely require. This early habit has never quite left me. As a result of this kind of attempt at uncoercive teaching on the ground whenever I visited Purulia, a “backward” district of my home state of West Bengal, an activist from there sent me a plan, asking me to open an elementary school for tribal children. I responded with hesitation, but once it got going, I could not tear myself away from it. I did not know it then, but the work of Antonio Gramsci, a man who had been put in jail by Mussolini and who died in jail at the age of 47, was going to resonate with this teaching work—because I was interested in learning the environment of these tribals, who voted in the world’s largest democracy without much sense of the intimations of democracy at all. I didn’t know then, but this would become for me a project that I came to call supplementing vanguardism, a project that would come to recognize that Gramsci in jail working out that Marx’s project of social justice was an epistemological one (in other words, a matter of changing how one constructed objects of knowledge) was on the same journey. My thinking of social justice was started at the age of 15, connected with the work of Karl Marx, but this Gramscian byway, toward which the rural schools tended, gave it a kind of ethical specificity which was important. Democracy was, after all, the difficult politics of the ethical. This work would also come to reveal to me that my interest in the African-American educationist W. E. B Du Bois would resonate as well with some of the assumptions—that the very poor should themselves be ethical subjects rather than simply the recipients of alms—that sprang from this period.

From the start, I started shedding presuppositions at these schools. I came to realize that the landless illiterate—tribals and “untouchables” (constitutionally protected but not so in the mind of the privileged)—had been cognitively damaged by the oppression inherent in the caste system. This is where my understanding of *tapasya* as both intellectual and manual enlightenment came into play. The idea of manual labor was of great interest to my teachers and students in the rural area, especially when I pointed out that they had been denied the right to intellectual labor, which only the upper classes and castes were supposed to be able to perform. Thus even manual labor to them was without joy. They were able instantly to recognize and understand this theme. As the days went by, and the US went by, I was beginning to recognize that at the high-end, American students were also denied the right to intellectual labor because of the facility of the Internet search engines and because of the total focus on employability and revenue. I am certainly not a technophobe. But I believe the digital is both poison and medicine, and can be used productively, in a healing and constructive way, only by minds trained at the slow speed of the humanities.

In 1997, my dearest friend, Lore Metzger, died. Dying, she gave me a gift of spirit. The

last time I saw her, we stayed up all night talking. I asked her what still seemed valuable? Lit with the glow of triumph over great pain in the proximity of death, she said, without hesitation, “teaching.” I had spoken to her of the teaching in the rural schools, in long monologues, in her study in Atlanta. She never interrupted me. I was therefore overwhelmed but not surprised that she also left me a material gift—\$10,000—so that I could start a foundation in the name of my parents: the Pares Chandra and Sivani Chakravorty Memorial Foundation for Rural Education. Your bounty has augmented the foundation greatly. I hope I will be able to train one or two workers in the lessons I have been trying to learn from my experience, trying to teach with the same standard of quality control at both ends of the spectrum.

Here a gift of spirit from my sister Professor Maitreyi Chandra must be acknowledged. You have been kind enough to invite her. She has been and is active at the highest levels of work to influence education, especially technical education for the girl child and environmental education on the secondary level, with the Government of India. Her work influences a very large number of people, while my work can only remain focused on a few hundred. She knows how much her experienced encouragement, that my kind of textural work is necessary to sustain the structural work undertaken by the state, has meant to me over the years.

Let us speak of the material implications of the training for the ethical. Before I die, I want to understand something (understanding everything is impossible) about bypassing the necessity of “good” rich people solving the world’s problems. “Good” rich people are dependent on bad people for the money they use to do this. And the “good” rich people’s money mostly goes back to bad rich people. Beggars receive material goods to some degree and remain beggars. My work is to produce problem-solvers rather than solve problems. In order to do so, I continue to teach teachers, current and future, with devotion and concentration, at the schools that produce the “good” rich people (Columbia University) and the beggars (7 unnamed elementary schools in rural Birbhum, a district in West Bengal; this work cannot be done with an interpreter and India is multilingual; Bengali is my mother-tongue). I must understand their desires (not their needs) and, with understanding and love, try to shift them. That is education in the Humanities.

My task, then, is to learn from mistakes how to teach the practice of the intuitions of democracy—the tug of war between autonomy and the rights of others. “Democracy” is a contested word, and a good friend who read this piece said I was refashioning it: For the top, the auto-critical habit in the intellectual space produced by the presence of basic civil liberties: the freedom of speech; democracy constraining freedom of speech through

constructive auto-critique. For the bottom, the hope that perhaps even one student will develop something like democratic judgment, quite different from justified self-interest against oppression from all sides, and from mere leadership.

Let me unpack these words.

Learning from mistakes. The major mistake is to think that equality means sameness. My upbringing, by enlightened parents in the metropolitan middle class, and all the caring gifts of spirit that I have here recounted, resulting in a collection of pre-suppositions and habits that is our instrument of learning, an instrument not identical with that of people who have been millennially repressed, specifically in how they were permitted to use their minds.

I want to give a concrete example here.

I met Chris Rewa, a young Belgian woman, at a biodiversity festival in Bangladesh in 2000. We sat on the stoop of a thatched cottage with wattle walls. I was listening to a stream of complaints from rural women about what the requirements of micro-credit aid really represented for them. Sitting there in the delicious winter sun, Chris said to me that she was disillusioned with working at her city job in Belgium (a multinational NGO, perhaps?). What she said next was, I now know, the beginning of her journey, just as, a few years before that, it had been mine; coming to the realization that equality is not sameness. “Gayatri,” she said to me then, “I wanted to give up that restrictive job and be with the world’s poor. But I had thought that these people would be just like Belgians, but poor. And now . . .”

How do I know this was the beginning of a journey for her?

On September 14, 2012, I arranged a high-profile meeting at Columbia University to create public awareness of the tremendous oppression of the minority Muslim Rohingyas in Burma—also known as Myanmar—even as the country is supposedly going through a democratic transition. One of the most respected names to emerge was Chris Rewa’s. She had understood that equality was not sameness. She had learned how to suspend herself in others, for others.

Just as the world’s poor are not Belgians, so are the landless illiterate in Birbhum district not metropolitan Calcuttans, only landless and illiterate. It took me some years to realize that I had to begin to learn the specificity of the mental instrument with which they know. And if I am to teach them I must learn to serve them to use this particular instrument, not some universal human instrument. I am still learning and failing, learning and failing, not giving up.

And yet they vote; and that, if not universal, is generalizable. I am a citizen of India, and in the one-person one-vote situation, I am their equal but not the same. Therefore, I am not just training and teaching teachers and children who are by nature not good enough (the

upperclass view) but by history made less than good. I am also trying to provide the habits of democratic thinking so that they vote right. These subaltern classes cannot use the state. In a democracy, the people supposedly control the state. My humble, unsuccessful, and persistent effort can be called restoring the spirit of citizenship to the subaltern. I think of my Mother serving the Vietnam veterans as new US citizen.

Citizenship, however, is generally understood as the self-interested part of democracy: autonomy. Without an other-interested ethical education this preparation is unprotected from the worldwide control exercised today by trade in the difference in the different currencies of different countries, rich and poor: finance capital.

We must understand the other-interested side of democracy for the subaltern as well.

Drawing from my own Indian experience, I had earlier found the best model for democracy in Indian classical music: creative freedom within self-chosen structural rules. Drawing from his European experience, my colleague Jan Elster found the best model of the mind-set that will get to democracy in Homer's story of Odysseus having his sailors wax their own ears and bind him to the mast so that he could hear the sirens' magic song and still not give in to the temptation of sailing to their island and wrecking his ship.

Both of us were thinking at the top. To create classical music, you must be highly trained. And Odysseus needed the sailors to do his bidding. Democracy as self-restraint. This is what I describe above as democracy constraining freedom of speech through constructive auto-critique. But what about those who have been, by gender and class, forcibly constrained? to develop something like democratic judgment, formula for the bottom.

The practical development of democratic judgment in the rural child is to distinguish between education and passing exams. Meghnad Shabar of Bangthupi settlement taught me this in 2006. The Human Development Index can only ask for quantity: how many years of schooling? For our children we tour schools, where is the best? Meghnad, tribal teenager, child of illiterate landless parents, had not wanted to be a statistic for the local landowner, as the first tribal child to come first in the State secondary exam. He had wanted to be educated according to unconditional standards. Democracy in the subaltern is a fearful thing. The landowner closed the schools. Twenty years' labor gone. Try again, I told myself; Birbhum district is less feudal than Purulia.

Among these subaltern children, then, the polarization between top and bottom comes undone. Children's minds are like wet cement. We are inscribing contradictory habits into them. No competition, yet unconditional pursuit of excellence. Pleasure in schoolwork, yet training to enter the mainstream. Discourage tendency to leadership, yet encourage

questioning authority. Nothing through sermons, everything through classroom moves. Gender balance, yet gender preference, to undermine established gendering. Follow Kant: freedom as human, equality as subject, independence as citizen; yet remember that human meaning, as in modern informatics, may be produced from meaningless bits in inaccessible psychic mechanisms. Tremendously difficult to devise as habit-formation, not blind obedience, in child-subjects and teacher-subjects that are equal but not the same.

Ground-level law enforcers—the rural police—often belong to these subaltern classes. These law enforcers are corrupt and have internalized rape and bribe culture. They are of course included in our long-term work toward classlessness.

Poet Adrienne Rich can describe my response to the Kyoto Prize, as the necessary effort to “call . . . up the voices we need to hear within ourselves.” I call them up, give them names, and accept the prize in all their names, except the ones too well-known to include: Sivani Chakravorty, Pares Chandra Chakravorty, Nilima Pyne, Charubala Dass, Swami Pavitrananda, Zafrullah Chowdhury, Farida Akhter, Farhad Mazhar, Prashanta Rakshit, Lore Metzger, Roshan Fakir, Maitreyi Chandra, Meghnad Shabar. On their behalf I thank you.