

## CHAPTER 8

# INTER-GRATION AND INTRA-GRATION IN COSMOLOGY

### **Author's Note**

This chapter was prepared initially for a discussion on contemporary cosmologies at University College London in 2011. This discussion was an opportunity to expand further on the idea of an intra-grated cosmos, one that is held together more from within itself through itself, and that of an inter-grated cosmos that is held together from outside itself. I associate the first kind of cosmos more with tribal and traditional cultural orderings and the second more with monotheistic social orderings.

I argue counterintuitively that in cosmoses of the more open kind—held together within themselves, through themselves—there is less emphasis on the external boundaries of cosmos. On the other hand, monotheistic cosmoses are of the more closed kind, since they are held together from outside themselves by their creator God, all-knowing and surviving any destruction of the world He created. Here great attention is given to how cosmos is closed, separating human beings from the creator God who in large measure dictates rules for living a moral existence (perhaps especially so in Judaism). I go into some detail of a goddess cosmos in South India that is intra-grated (and analyzed in greater detail in Chapter Four of Handelman 2014). Moreover, I argue that cosmos should not be reduced to the social, and that this should be at the heart of cosmology and metaphysics, in a sense, to cosmology in its own right. This approach is largely abandoned by anthropologies which perceive, wrongly in my view, that by definition cosmos is closed and therefore out of sync especially with the movements of modernization and globalization.



## Introduction

At the roots of what we call “religion” are values of *holism* (Handelman and Lindquist 2011). The late Galina Lindquist and I contended that such values were never extinguished during very lengthy periods in ancient and traditional worlds in which holism related first and foremost to cosmos, indeed to cosmos that hold itself together from within itself, through itself—as *intra-gration*.<sup>1</sup> This kind of cosmos was shattered primarily by the historical emergence of the monotheisms that shaped cosmoses that were “encompassed”—that were held together from outside themselves. These developments are associated with a lengthy period that Karl Jaspers called the Axial Age (See Bellah and Joas 2012; Robbins 2009; Thomassen 2010). Lindquist and I call this shattering of cosmos, in areas of the ancient world, the First Great Rupture of Cosmos.

Nonetheless, values of holism continued through modern Western worlds, as these values were lodged in what came to be called “religion,” and still later in peoplehood, nationhood, statism, ethnicity, and not least in the individual (culminating in Foucault’s idea of the care of the self).<sup>2</sup> In Part I, I explore relationships among holism and cosmos, stopping with the First Great Rupture. Following this, in Part II, I outline, through its rituals, a goddess cosmos in South India that, in emerging from itself as an ongoing dynamic, holds itself together from its interior. This exemplifies the idea of cosmos *intra-grating* holistically. I close with a discussion of this cosmic logic.

## Part I: Holism and Cosmos

Louis Dumont understands holism (and individualism) as value through which the social is organized. Dumont (1986: 279) gives the following succinct definition of holism: “We call holist [holistic] an ideology [which he understands as “value”] that valorizes the social whole and neglects or subordinates [the value of] the human individual.”

I modify Dumont’s formulation as follows: holism entails the *integrity* of the *entirety*, where the “entirety” may be any kind of human unit, and where these units are not necessarily bounded clearly (in the sense of being contained from their boundaries inward). The emphasis within an entirety is on *integrity*, which there are many different ways of accomplishing. I use integrity here in the sense of entirety, completeness, soundness. Integrity is related to integration. Integration refers more to parts added together to constitute a whole—so that in the first instance the connection between parts is additive—thus, an *inter-gration* through connections of betweenness. By contrast, my intention for integrity refers more to the synergistic relationships within and through the parts of a whole—thus, the connections between parts must be *intra-relational*, held together through their entirety. My interest is in how worlds are holding together through the metaphysics of the human, through the imaginaries of the human, where “world” may vary from the cosmic to the indi-

vidual, even as, say, in modernity, religion becomes civil, political, national, secular, individualized, yet forming and re-forming around the globe, carrying their seeds of holism (Handelman and Lindquist 2011: 42–45). *Cosmos* here refers to the entirety of the phenomenal lived-space of all entities—human and other-than-human—the entirety of a world of all dimensions of existence.

### *Beginnings—Holistic Cosmos Held Together from within Itself*

As noted, cosmoses may be distinguished broadly if crudely in terms of their logics of organization, between (1) those held together *largely* from within themselves and (2) those held together *largely* from their boundaries, from outside themselves. Cosmos held together from within and through itself applies primarily to a wide variety of archaic, traditional, and tribal cosmoses. Cosmos held together from outside itself is pertinent particularly to the surviving monotheisms.

In the English language there is no word I can find to describe how something is intra-grated from within itself through the self-integrity of its interiority, rather than from outside itself—an excellent monotheistic understanding of integration. In English (translated from the French) the word made prominent by Louis Dumont (1981) to describe how something—social, cultural—is held together from *outside* itself is “encompassment.” My dictionary defines “encompass” (and “incompass”) as, “to surround, to encircle, to include, to contain, to get in one’s power.” This kind of being-held-together is crucial to monotheistic cosmoses.

Yet consider the following dynamics of an ancient holistic cosmos of Mahayana Buddhism, that of the cosmos of the Chinese Hua-yen school of Buddhism from the seventh century CE (Cook 1972: 2):

Far away in the heavenly abode of the great god Indra, there is a wonderful net which has been hung by some cunning artificer in such a manner that it stretches out infinitely in all directions. In accordance with the extravagant tastes of deities, the artificer has hung a single glittering jewel in each “eye” of the net, and since the net itself is infinite in dimensions, the jewels are infinite in number. There hang the jewels glittering like stars of the first magnitude, a wonderful sight to behold. If we now arbitrarily select one of these jewels for inspection and look closely at it, we will discover that in its polished surface there are reflected all the other jewels in the net, infinite in number. Not only that, but each of the jewels reflected in this one jewel is also reflecting all the other jewels, so that there is an infinite reflecting process occurring . . . This is a cosmos in which there is an infinitely repeated interrelationship among all the members of the cosmos.

This relationship is said to be one of simultaneous . . . mutual inter-causality (which I read as mutually relational or indeed intra-relational).

Every jewel is the sole cause for the infinity of jewels, but simultaneously the infinite whole of jewels is the cause for every single jewel. In terms of beings,

each . . . is at once the cause for the whole and is caused by the whole, and what is called existence is a vast body made up of an infinity of [beings] all sustaining each other and defining each other. The cosmos is, in short, a self-creating, self-maintaining, and self-defining organism . . . what affects one item in the vast inventory of the cosmos affects every other individual therein. (Cook 1972: 3–4)

The Hua-yen cosmos has no center, or, if there is a center, “it is everywhere. Man certainly is not the center, nor is some god” (ibid.: 4). Note that the Hua-yen cosmos has no external boundaries, unlike the absolute, virtually impassable boundary between God and human beings to which the surviving monotheisms have accustomed us to as natural and commonsensical. The Hua-yen cosmos is not enclosed from outside itself, in contrast to our understanding of the kind of holism suggested by Dumont’s idea of “encompassment.”

The absence of boundaries in the Hua-yen cosmos is attested to by the emphasis on the infinity of intra-relationships that in a strong sense *are* this cosmos. This cosmos holds itself together through its intra-relationalities, the very densities and textures of these connections creating a thick mesh of intensities of mutual being. This kind of cosmos lives wholly through itself—within which human being and other-than-human are thought to be alive and interactive.

The Hua-yen cosmos is *continuous within itself*. Continuousness here is graduated between levels and among domains without necessarily abrupt shifts or ruptures between human beings and other-than-human. Cosmos is hierarchical yet flowing, with an utter abhorrence of *stasis*. I contend that a continuousness of cosmos is generally immanent, *not* transcendent, since continuousness is primarily self-referential, referring to nothing outside itself (See Jacobsen [1976] on ancient Mesopotamia), without implying in the least that cosmic continuousness indexes harmony and an absence of fragmentation (though it may index ongoing self-creation—autopoiesis and self-repair from within itself).

Analogous descriptions of organic cosmos with the qualities I ascribe to this abound for a host of tribal cosmologies. Without romanticizing this, tribal cosmologies had integrity: these were and are cosmoses that were true to themselves within themselves, held together from within themselves through the densities, intensities, and textures of the fullness of intra-acting connectivities with deep resonances between deities, human beings, other beings, and the continuousness of their shared cosmos. In my terms, in such cosmologies *holism is only sometimes dependent on cosmic closure*. Indeed, much of the historical and ethnographic evidence points to holistic cosmologies that are open.

With regard to the eventual emergence of Western cosmology, two great ruptures of holistic cosmoses developed historically. The first emerged during what is often called the Axial Age; while the second, the separation of politics from religion, sometimes referred to as the Great Separation (Lilia 2007), formed through the

deep rupture in Western European Christian culture provoked, in particular, by the Protestant Reformation, beginning in the sixteenth century. Monotheistic cosmos, forming through the first rupture, contained the beginnings of a foundational break with itself, within itself.

### *The First Great Rupture: The Axial Age*

The cultural loci of these radical ruptures in cosmic organization are usually given as Greece (of the philosophers), Palestine (of the Hebrew prophets), Iran (of Zoroaster), China (of Lao-tse), and India (of the Buddha). The most persuasive instances are those of ancient Israel and Greece (but only of the *philosophes*). The rupture of cosmic holism severed the graduated continuousness of cosmos, such that the other-than-human separated from the human. This separation enabled that which scholars call “transcendence” to emerge within cosmos. On the other side of the rupture, Deity became unknowable to human being, positioned way beyond the capability, capacity, and knowability of the latter. How were human beings able to relate to the now transcendent divine?

The rupture created the other-worldly transcendence of the gods. God and gods were no longer of this world, even of this cosmos. God and gods become the absolute creators of cosmos rather than living within and integral to it, no longer sharing with human beings the substances from which cosmos was constituted. This is where the idea of encompassment comes in.

My Axial Age concern here is with what the historian of religion Jan Assman (2008: 75) calls the “revolutionary monotheism” of ancient Israel, and how this indelibly changed the logics through which cosmos was held together. The emergence of monotheism eventually came to posit the absolute separation of God the transcendent Creator from humankind. God crossed this chasm at will; yet, human beings might cross it only through prayer and sacrifice. Frankfort and Frankfort (1963: 241–44) argue that, “The God of the Hebrews is pure being, unqualified, ineffable. He is *holy*. That means he is *sui generis* . . . . It means that all values are ultimately attributes of God alone . . . . Only a God who transcends every phenomenon . . . can be the one and only ground of all existence.” Herewith and underlined is the contrast between a cosmos that holds together from within itself through itself, and the emerging monotheistic cosmos of the Hebrew God who is boundless, infinite, unnameable, unfathomable, creating His finite cosmos as one ruptured from himself.

Given the absolute boundary between God and the human, the ancient Hebrew cosmos became held together from its exterior by the transcendent God whose eternal existence did not depend on that of his finite cosmos. The integration of this cosmos depended on its being *encompassed* by God, by his moral injunctions. As noted, cosmos acquires exteriority through the cosmic rupture, and so the capacity to be encompassed by transcendent deity. The rupture of the intra-grated holistic cosmos led to the creation of another kind of holism, that of the monotheistic, in which

God holds his cosmos together from its boundaries, while his primary positioning is outside his creation. Basically, he is independent of the cosmos of his creation whose parts are inter-grated. The monotheistic cosmos turned the perfection of the human being into the divine purpose of the universe, while setting before human being the goal of organizing the world into one that was truly, exclusively, and solely human. For as various scholars (e.g., Bruno Latour) have commented, in the worlds that eventually derived from monotheism, most living beings who were other-than-human were either killed off, reduced in their communicative capacities with humans, or, treated as inert, were no longer perceived as living.

So far, I have referred in the abstract to cosmos that holds itself together through the densities and intensities of its own interiority. Now I turn to a goddess cosmos in South India to introduce one variety of how such a holistic cosmos might work. I do this in brief using ritual events through which the goddess—Paiditali, the Golden Lady—forms and re-forms as she changes herself and her cosmos.<sup>3</sup>

## Part II: The Fluid Cosmic Logic of the Goddess Paiditali

The venue of the following discussion is the small city and former kingdom of Vizianagaram in northeastern Andhra Pradesh. Culturally, Vizianagaram is in the region called Kalinga, and Vizianagaram shared cultural themes with other previously extant little kingdoms (e.g., neighboring Bobilli), some of whose kingship-related rituals have been studied by anthropologists in Puri (Apffel-Marglin 1981, 2008) and Jey-pore in Orissa (Schnepel 1996, 2002), and Bastar in Madhya Pradesh (Gell 1997). With all the hubris entailed, I will attempt here to take something of the perspective of the goddess.

Paiditali's story and her relationship to the kingdom of Vizianagaram begins in the eighteenth century. In January 1757, Vijaya Rama Raju, the Raja of Vizianagaram, aided by French irregulars led by the adventurer Charles de Bussy (who held a *farman* from the Padshah in Delhi to collect taxes in the Kalinga region), set out to war with Bobilli.<sup>4</sup> In the foundational myth of Paiditali, the younger sister of the Raja, Paidimamba, pleaded with him not to go to battle, saying nothing good would come of it. Vizianagaram was victorious, Bobilli destroyed, and yet that very night the Raja was killed in his tent by the greatest hero of Bobilli. Hearing of his death, overcome with grief, Paidimamba hurled herself into a lake close to Vizianagaram and drowned. Before entering the waters, she said she would return, and her death was self-sacrificial. Later she appeared to fishermen and told them to dive and find her image. She emerged from the depths as the goddess, Paiditali, onto the hard, flat surfaces of the land. Her shrine, called the Wilderness Temple, was erected close to the lake. Later, a second shrine, called the Square Temple (echoing the square mandala according to which the old city was built), was located in the vicinity of the palace-fort of the Raja. Paiditali had returned with the explicit aim of protecting and aiding kingdom and kingship. She resides roughly half the year in the Wilderness

Temple and half in the Square Temple. The climax of her yearly return is a great Jatra (festival; literally, movement)—the Sirimanu—through which a people's version of kingship is renewed.

The cosmos of Paiditali is radically different in its logics of organization from those of most other South Indian deities as they are discussed in the literature. This goddess cosmos is characterized by dynamism, by interiority, by depth, by fluidity, and by hardness, yet by a somewhat different sense of hierarchy than that which one might expect in India.

Paidimamba, the Raja's sister, left the brittle flatness of the land and went into depths of water. The fluid is replete with itself, extremely dense, leaving no interior emptiness, no holes, without boundaries in itself, and in continuous movement within itself. The sister rose from the depths of fluidity as the goddess, Paiditali, emerged onto the surface that she had left. The land of the surface is dry and thin, its features fixed in form and perhaps in place, organized by the linearity of rule, of law, rectilinear (its spaces cultivated and ordered in different ways), and constituted in terms of temporal distinctions and movement that are formed through starts and stops, often through counted durations. Yet surface must have the fluid (water) to survive. This hardened surface is that of the animate and human world which of course is integral to Paiditali's cosmos. Yet this world is that of the surface of Paiditali's interior fluidity. Surface, then, exists because it is the flattened, hardened, rigid, encrusted portions of Paiditali's cosmos. And these rigid portions are fragile (Handelman and Shulman 2004). When fluid rises on this surface, the latter becomes softer, more malleable, and more tensile, amenable to being shaped to awaken fertility and growth upon which humankind depends.

Though Paiditali desires to help humankind in its struggle on the inhospitable surface of her cosmos (though humanity can exist nowhere else) this is not the location where she is most at home to herself, most fully herself. Her fluidity, her deep interiority, is self-intra-grating through its never-ceasing dynamic movement which continuously permeates itself. Deep within herself is where she is most true to herself as herself. Thus, as she approaches the surface of her cosmos, one can say that her transition is severe (though likely not abrupt—her cosmos is continuous, as is she within herself). And it is here, on her hardened, fixed surface of selfness (so unlike her true selfness) that human beings use ritual to affect and effect this transition as gently as they can, to bring her once more to perceive human needs, to re-awaken her desire to aid the people of Vizianagaram, their kingship and king.

The highest degree of *intra-gration* in Paiditali's cosmos is deep within herself, within her infinite depths (which have no center) where she is most fully herself, uninterrupted, undivided, wholly dynamic. The lowest degree of intra-gration is near or on the surface of her cosmos, in the animate world. Here rituals aid or enable the presence of the goddess to become form, phase by phase. In doing so she quickens life in the encrustation, infusing this with the dynamism of reviving growth. Rituals are the primary if indirect source of thinking on Paiditali's cosmos.<sup>5</sup>

I turn briefly to the ritual phases through which Paiditalli annually emerges into form, moving from formlessness within her own deep interiority into her own shallows, from which she wades ashore to where the human dwells, and where shaping and self-shaping through ritual begins and continues, until and then after its climax.

*Devara Pandaga Ritual: The Birth of the Goddess on Her Cosmic Surface*

This ritual cycle begins near the end of the hot season (usually in May), broken by the coming of the monsoon. The hot season is blazing and extremely dry. In the past this was the primary period of disease and epidemic, and goddesses in South India are often the bringers both of the extreme heating of disease and its healing, its blessed cooling. The *devara pandaga* ritual takes place on the shore of the lake where in 1757 the king's sister drowned herself and emerged as Paiditalli. In the stillness of the deep night, her priest and his two helpers enter the waters. On shore, in clusters here and there, are gathered devotees of the goddess. The priest and his helpers address the goddess, pleading with her to come, cajoling her, yet also as time passes cursing and insulting Paiditalli in efforts to arouse her from her depths. Sometimes this is a difficult birth, taking hours; yet sometimes it is easier and quicker. Nonetheless Paiditalli often resists coming, and then when she does appear it is with force, in anger at being disturbed deep within her fluid depths.

All await a sign of fire in the dark sky. Eventually a spark appears, perhaps heat lightning, which is seen as falling into the water. The priest and his helpers grasp handfuls of mud from the lake bottom even as they fall unconscious with the force of the anger of the goddess's coming, and they immediately are dragged ashore, their fists clenched around oozing mud. The priest sees in the mud the two colors that are the essence of the Goddess (and of the female in general). One is gold, the color of turmeric (*pasuppu*), and the other, vermilion, the redness of *kunkum*. In her coming, Paiditalli joins together the basic elements of cosmos: fire (the lightning), air (through which she passes), water (the lake from which she emerges), and earth (the mud within which her essence rests). She comes as an infant re-born. Women on the shore immediately feed her and ritually protect her in her openness and helplessness in the animate world. I call the goddess in this form, Mud-Paiditalli; within the mud she is relatively labile, fluid, amorphous, perhaps still closer to her own depths. Nonetheless the initial shaping and hardening into form is occurring, and her fluidity lessens as she takes on form. Simultaneously, Paiditalli brings the depth and density of cosmic interiority and fluidity to the hardness, dryness, and brittleness of the human world, softening this, making this more malleable to reshaping, and, so, more suitable for the deeper potential of fertility and growth, as the monsoon rains come.

Mud-Paiditalli is placed in a *jangidi*, a winnowing basket. The basket's concave inner surface has been rubbed intensively with golden-colored turmeric. In the center of the basket is a largish circular bed of vermilion *kunkum* surrounded by white flowers. On the bed of *kunkum* is a circular lamp filled with camphor, in which is a lit, long wick and a raw mango. The whole basket is formed as female. The winnowing



basket is rubbed with turmeric as is the face of an auspicious married woman after her morning bath. This intensifies her femaleness and gives this greater depth, greater density and self-resonance. The basket is marked with a dot of vermilion *kunkum*, as is the female forehead—intended to ward off any untoward forces in the vicinity. In Andhra the winnowing basket is strongly associated with the womb and female fertility (Handelman 2014), and the mango with the vagina and the birth of goddesses.

Thus: face within the womb, vagina within the face, a lit lamp on the forehead, a mark of respect and worship. The newborn amorphous infant is placed simultaneously deep within the female form (the *jangidi*) yet also on its intensified (and therefore deeper) surface, from which she will continue to emerge and mature in the human world. The female turns into and through herself, interior becoming more exterior, exterior becoming more interior. Autopoietically, the goddess gives birth to herself, first in the lake and then on shore, at the water's edge, in the winnowing basket. Coming from deep within herself, she is placed deep within herself on the shore of the hardness of the human world, into an exterior womb on the surface of the human world, an exterior womb that is no less a cradle, one designed for the human forming of the female—which is how the winnowing basket has been prepared here. The goddess gives birth to herself without ever leaving herself, which speaks to the depth and density of her cosmos. In this sense she is permitting human beings to shape her for their need to create depth and life within the flatness of civilization. She is quiet now, a slumbering infant.

Dawn breaks, and the winnowing basket is carried in procession from the lake into the city, to the Square Temple some hundreds of meters from the palace-fort of the Raja. In the climactic ritual of this renewal of kingship, the goddess will move between her Square Temple and the palace-fort.

### *The Goddess Becomes Womb*

Within the inner sanctum (*garbha griha*) of the Square Temple, Mud-Paiditali is divided into clumps which rejuvenate metal pots of the goddess that have been taken out of storage. Fifteen days later the dried mud is carefully put back into the lake, and two, new, spheroidal pots (made from lake-bottom clay) are placed in the inner sanctum where for the next months (through August) they absorb the energies and female qualities (turmeric and *kunkum*) of the infant from her permanent metal pots. Her amorphousness is curved, the energies are curving, the curvature enclosing itself with her energies within this: Paiditali enclosing herself within herself. The two clay pots are a virginal womb for and of the goddess, her own form within which she matures and evolves. Mud-Paiditali turns herself into Pot-Paiditali. She herself is described as “innocent,” as prepubescent. In effect, the goddess is moving from womb to womb, from the lake of her origins to infancy in the wicker basket to her own pre-existing metal pots to her own clay pots shaped especially for her on this occasion. Each womb is a locus of depth on the superficial surface of the human world. Even as her form acquires a measure of solid presence, she continues flowing

within herself. She is the Golden Goddess and in South India gold is the solid that is the closest to the fluid.

Just as Paiditalli's movement from womb to womb opens depth and softness in the hard, shallow surface of the human world, so, too, does the growing of rice, the food staple. The maturing of the goddess within the Square Temple parallels the growing of rice in the rural fields outside the city. Farmers perceive powerful parallels between the growth of the rice plant and female pregnancy. The paddy is planted in a rice-plot (*aku-madi*), a corner of the larger field. Around the end of July, the sprouts are removed and transplanted into the larger field. Around this time, Paiditalli transplants herself from the mud into the metal pots. Inside the plant the pannicle buds begin forming, shaping what is called the "little stomach," akin to the first signs of pregnancy. By late August, as the rice stomach grows very visibly, the two, empty, clay pots that are Pot-Paiditalli, daily begin leaving the Square Temple, going into the Old City of Vizianagaram. While the rice-plant flowers, its female and male reproductive organs are pollinated together by the wind. The flower turns into seed and develops a quasi-protective hull that fills with liquid (starch and protein). As the flower falls away, this milky fluid is visible. Farmers say that "the flower becomes pregnant with milk," proof that the soft, green seed is a viable offspring. The plant is successfully pregnant within itself as the seeds develop and is heavy with rice as it bends back and down, ready for harvesting.

The annual rice cycle in the region of Vizianagaram is related intimately to the opening of space and depth—in seeding, in the extrusion of shoots, in the ploughing of furrows and filling them with water, in the transplanting, in the protrusion of the stomach in the extruding plant, in the forming of the milk-pregnancy, and in the birth of the mature turmeric-colored rice. The dynamics are those of interiority exteriorizing itself and emerging onto the softened, now receptive, indeed welcoming, surface that is the human world. The dynamics of exteriorization are primarily female, generating new life from within life. This is Paiditalli's purpose on the surface of her cosmos.

### *Pot-Paiditalli Furrows and Sows*

During the period that stomach, flower, and milk pregnancy appear in the rice plant, the clay pots of Pot-Paiditalli leave the Square Temple most evenings during August and September and go through Old Vizianagaram, street by street, alley by alley. This is the first phase of Paiditalli's evolution that is marked less by her interiorization within womb-like structures and more by her bringing her fertility, her womb, to human beings. Now she is actively moving into the thin hardness of a kingdom in need of softening, depth, fertilization, and healing. As she goes from home to home, Pot-Paiditalli is met by family members, especially women, who place their offerings in the pots and ask for the goddess's blessing. This worship, night after night, street after street, is akin to *furrowing* the surfaces of the city, opening space for the depth

of presence of the goddess within home after home. So, too, one can think of these movements of the goddess as sowing the coming of kingship in every corner of the *furrowed* mandala of the Old City. The climactic harvesting will occur during the Sirimanu, as the king is brought anew to his palace-fort, renewing this intra-grative core of the kingdom.

### *The Tevadam Rite: Paiditalli Sprouts from the Earth*

As the sowing of the city nears completion during the second half of September, Paiditalli reappears, now growing in a Tamarind tree (*cinta cettu*) some 40–45 feet high, in the midst of paddy fields.<sup>6</sup> At the beginning of October, Tree-Paiditalli is carefully, ritually, taken out of the earth, and on to the city where she rests quietly in a street close to her priest's home until the Sirimanu Jatra some ten days later. In contrast to Mud-Paiditalli, Tree-Paiditalli demands to enter the human plane of her cosmos, to sacrifice herself once more (being cut, severed, injured). This is her most prominent exteriorization of herself within her cosmos as she forms herself as thoroughly solid and lineal in shape, with powerful linear directionality (unlike the recursiveness of the pot). She is the goddess evolving further, her cosmos preparing to harvest and deliver kingship within the Old City, energized and prepared by Pot-Paiditalli. Unlike her precursors, she is her own shrine, independent of any fixed location. Utterly self-aware, she extrudes and protrudes into the human world within herself.

From her top, four slender pieces are sliced away, with one given a crude visage. Three are the head-body of Paiditalli and her arms, yet no less the head-body of her younger brother, Potu Raju (the Buffalo King). The fourth is also Paiditalli. In the priest's yard the vehicles for the Jatra are being assembled. Foremost is the Sirimanu carriage (*ratham*) itself which will carry Tree-Paiditalli, enabling her to swivel up and down or to rotate. To her top will be slotted, and in this way fixed there, a seat and footrest. As the Jatra nears, Tree-Paiditalli is intensified and self-intensifies through offerings and sacrifices, her tree-body rubbed with turmeric, red rings of vermilion traced round her girth, camphor lamps placed along her entire length which is caressed over and over.

In other rituals the night before the Jatra, the Potu Raju qualities of Paiditalli (the three-piece) are nurtured (indeed treated as an infant) even as she becomes more she-he, her-him. Potu Raju is the generic younger brother of the goddess in South India. Where the Goddess is present, his presence is ubiquitous (Biardeau 2004), considered her guardian and protector. Yet now the goddess, her cosmos, contains him, and he emerges from, is cut from her so that their relationship and presence is fuzzy-minded (and likely felt fuzzily in ways that people cannot articulate), and they infra-lap (rather than overlap) even as they separate. Both are one and the one is the goddess within herself. In effect, Paiditalli gives birth to her younger brother as she does to the entirety of the cosmos.

*The Surimanu Jatra: Tree-Paiditali Carries the King Home*

A small city bursting with visitors: perhaps three to four hundred thousand persons have come to Vizianagaram to see the Sirimanu. Tree-Paiditali's length is again rubbed with turmeric and she is taken by ox cart to the Square Temple and there mounted on her carriage. Her priest wears the white, silken finery of a raja (and given to him by the son of the last Raja of Vizianagaram), the raja's turban on his head. He is garlanded and receives turmeric and vermilion. Tied with new saris into the seat, with one hand he holds tightly onto the fourth sliver cut from her head even as she carries him throughout the journey. In his lap, wrapped in a silk cloth, is the three-piece, the other three slivers cut from her head, who are Paiditali—Potu Raju, the goddess, and her younger brother.

With a great cry, a wave-like sigh from the assembled, Tree-Paiditali lifts her priest high in the air at a 45-degree angle and swings him in an arc of 180 degrees. This great raising and heightening of space is the opening of the *depth* of the kingdom by Tree-Paiditali, harvesting its capacities for creativity and growth sowed and rejuvenated by the goddess. King and kingship *sprout* from Tree-Paiditali into her priest, the receptacle formed to receive them within the human world. Tree-Paiditali and her entourage make three journeys from the Square Temple to the palace-fort and back. The first is climactic, carried high on the surging waves of the crowd's emotions. During each successive round there is less overt excitement, the waves subsiding, becoming gentler, gentler. Yet there is no lessening of enthusiasm and more a sense of increasing fullness, repletion, and quietude as a difficult, lengthy journey nears its completion. As the sun sets with the third return of Tree-Paiditali to the Temple, the Sirimanu ends.

From the human perspective the priest is possessed by Paiditali. From Paiditali's perspective—if I may be allowed the hubris of this extrapolation—she absorbs him fully into her interiority so that he becomes part of her greater depths. The new saris are her, tying him into her, dressing him, enclosing him so that he is held next to her as a mother would carry an infant in front of her. From this perspective the world of Vizianagaram is an exteriorization from within the cosmos during this period when Paiditali comes closest to exteriorizing herself in this way. And it is within herself that the king sprouts into the priest becoming the raja, the priest who *is* the raja, just as the raja is no less the slain brother of the younger sister who drowned herself and became a goddess and who has a younger brother who emerges from her. The priest-turned-king sprouts from within the interior of the goddess as she brings him to his palace-fort, the sovereign center of the kingdom. In this sense the autopoietic goddess brings the king out of herself into her own exterior, *into an extension of herself* that is still herself and, within this, into the kingdom of Vizianagaram that she has sown and grown with her blessings. In a profound sense, within herself she gives birth to the king, her brother—or to her brother, the king. Put otherwise, the king slips out from the goddess just as Potu Raju emerges from his sister. Now older sisters both, younger brothers both.

### *The Uyyala Kambulu Ritual: Paiditalli Swings Away to the Wilderness Temple*

All post-Sirimanu rituals are intended to quiet, soothe, and please Paiditalli, to make her softly sleepy. The two weeks after the Sirimanu are felt as a spooky period of betwixt and between, a post-harvest lull, perhaps a time of cosmic dissipation. A swing is erected outside the Square Temple. Some parts are from an old Sirimanu carriage. In effect the swing is another vehicle (*ratham*) for Paiditalli, yet a fluid, modulating version of the Sirimanu carriage. After these two weeks, aspects of the goddess are placed on the swing which is referred to as a cradle. From the apex of her maturity in the human world during the Sirimanu, Paiditalli again moves toward infancy, moving deeper into herself, involuting, withdrawing from the encrusted, superficial, human part of her cosmos into her fruitful depths. Her priest speaks of Paiditalli now as a young girl, and of the swinging as a lullaby. In the past the swinging away was more explicitly a *pavalimpu seva* ritual, one of putting the goddess to bed as is done every evening in her temples. Now she is swung away to her Wilderness Temple next to the lake, there going deeper into herself, into her intra-grated cosmos where she is said to sleep, to rest—into the fluid, dense, continuous, flowing depths of herself, where she remains from mid-October to mid-May, far from the thin, brittle, divided, and bounded world of humans, the world of kingdom and kingship.

### **Conclusion: Reflections on a South Indian Cosmic Logic**

I suggested in Part I that, in an intra-grated cosmos, holism is only sometimes dependent on cosmic closure. Instead, these holistic cosmoses are open, rather than enclosed from their exteriors. So, how does Paiditalli's cosmos hold together—sort of topologically (and unrelated to the mathematics of topology)? This is something like trying to visualize the first nano-moments of the Big Bang before anything existed externally to whatever expands from, as it were, its inside.

Paiditalli's cosmos emerges from deep within herself, from fluid bottomless depths, from her autopoietic beginnings in the lake. Visualized, this is something like an inverted conus without a cap, which rises through itself to protrude above itself without leaving itself. The dynamic is from an inside without end toward a non-existent outside, without ever fully surfacing outside because everything continues to be inside, and then moving from the direction of a non-existent outside into inside, the cone-without-cap going into itself without end—while the actual shaping of these movements is done through ritual. Were I to look for boundedness to this intra-grated cosmos, where would I look? The liquid depths of innerness have no bottom. Neither does the cosmos have an exterior, an outside. Instead, in moving further outward from the deep innerness of great densities and intensities of ever-flowing fluidity, there is a hardening, a rigidifying, through which depth turns into encrustation. This may be called a surface, yet it is inside cosmos. This dynamic is cosmic process—the less deep slows and in slowing becomes encrusted with itself.

Thus cosmos is held together by shifts in concentrations of gravity from deep-within to less deep-within. As the intensity of deeper fluidity rises outward, the positioning of densities, of qualities of energy and fruitfulness, shift, softening the less-deep encrustations of the fluid that are the animate world of human beings. This dynamic reaches the apex of its own interiority in a concentration of gravity in the least deep-within during the Sirimanu in the merging of Potu Raju, king, and brother within the goddess at the very top of Tree-Paiditali.

In Paiditali's cosmos the encrustations of the fluid are entropic, a senescence of cosmos: these are the regions in which fluidity slows, encounters obstacles, dries out, losing the energy of the fertile and the fruitful, and, so, withers and dies. The rituals I have discussed drive this melting of crusted fluids of the as-if surface, the less-deep. Understood in this way, there are no boundaries to this cosmos, and even their formation toward outer-ness, into encrustation which is decay, cries out for their softening and dissolution.

This cosmos is fluid yet without boundedness, without encompassment, seemingly an impossibility, yet not so since existence-as-fluid is what there is, and this existence discovers its own currents within itself, the goddess within herself, the human within the goddess. Nonetheless this cosmos is not a closed system since it is unbounded, yet neither is it open since it includes everything there is. Similarly, calling this a porous system merely begs the question. One can say of course that this is merely a cosmos constructed through ritual and therefore illusory, and, so, minimally related to the realities of daily existence of human being. This leads into fruitless discussion on religion and social order (see Handelman and Lindquist 2011), and in the case of Vizianagaram also denies the profoundly fluid, involitional, cultural currents that emerged in the kingdom of Vizianagaram during the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

The cosmos discussed here has powerful resonances with a medieval South Indian cosmos of Siva (Handelman and Shulman 2004). I briefly draw attention to this cosmos, thereby stipulating that it is worth thinking again on other South Indian cosmoses through time.

Siva, the great god, the creator of cosmos and its interior depths, is told that in the Forest of Pines there are sages who have forgotten him and instead seek enlightenment through severe ascetic practices. Siva goes to the faraway Forest where the sages practice their asceticism, accompanied by Visnu in his female form as Mohini. While naked ash-strewn Siva seduces the sages' chaste wives, ravishing Mohini arouses the sages from their asceticism with her sexual allure. When the sages become aware of what has befallen them and their wives, they curse Siva (whom they do not recognize) as a wicked, lascivious magician and plan to kill him. From their great sacrificial fire appear weapons one by one to attack Siva, yet he catches and tames each one and makes it part of himself (tiger, axe, elephant, deer, snakes, two-headed drum, the bleached skull of Brahma, etc.). Defeated, the sages recognize him as the great god and worship him once more. Then in the Forest he dances (as Nataraja, Lord of the

Dance) for the first time, desisting only as the cosmos, nearing collapse, terrifies all the assembled.

Siva is the all-knowing cosmos of his creation and he is affected by what transpires within it. He does not encompass his cosmos—this has no boundary—but he is anywhere and everywhere within it. He is the life principle of cosmos. His cosmos, though not liquid, nonetheless flows continually just as he does. The alternative—entropy, stasis—is the destruction of cosmos, of himself. Evident at the outset is that his quality of knowing has deteriorated, for he is unaware that the sages deny his existence and have become autonomous of him. In effect, part of his cosmos has congealed, hardened, fragmented, leaving cosmos, himself, diminished, less whole. After Siva and Mohini destroy the self-contemplation of the sages, the latter practice sorcery against Siva. Through this he discovers that he had lost significant attributes of his being, for the weapons they send against him are aspects of himself that fragmented from him as did the Forest—and he takes them back, completing himself again, softening the Forest back into himself, into cosmos as the sages worship him. Fully himself once more, he dances, and the dynamic is both that of destruction and creation, for the two are inseparable. Implicit in this is that Siva, like Paiditali, must continually conserve his cosmos from its interior, finding those loci that are losing dynamism, freeing them from senescence that is entropy, so that again they are intra-related, held together from within. In both Vizianagaram and the Pine Forest there are powerful continuities though separated by hundreds of years, and in both instances cosmic work is directed to reviving human beings and their surround.

Paiditali's cosmos (and that of the medieval Siva) are flowing, full of currents and shifting volumes of density, without boundedness. These cosmoses are highly systemic. Yet how can fluidity without boundaries be systemic? Would the question itself arise without one or another perspective that insisted on intra-gration rather than inte(r)gration, or without a perspective that eschews cosmos as container,<sup>8</sup> instead seeking dynamics? One interesting idea that emerges from thinking on "primitive" cosmos as intra-grating is that, without external containment (in the monotheistic sense), cosmos is not necessarily self-limiting but potentially can go on and on. If cosmos is characterized by fluid dynamics (which to my knowledge no monotheistic cosmos is) then the problematic of holding itself together is even more acute. However, if cosmos is less exteriorizing than it is interiorizing, plumbing depths rather than expanding through space (as, for example, encompassment and other ideas of hierarchical meta-organization stress), then holding together may be a problem of movement through other dimensions of which we are unaware or do not recognize. Consider that which transpires at the top of Tree-Paiditali during the Sirimanu Jatra as the balance of fluid densities shifts toward lesser depth and sister, brother, king, and goddess all come together through the priest, or, more accurately, all go through one another so that they cannot be distinguished from one another.

So, perhaps, Paiditali's fluid cosmos is held together through recursiveness, and this recursiveness is activated primarily by ritual. Paiditali's essential being is fluid depth without end. Her natural condition of being is going deep into her own depths, becoming denser as she goes, distant from the congelation in her lesser depths. Left to her own nature, she would stay in her own depths and her human world would dry, harden, fragment. Ritual activates the recursiveness to shift the intensities of her densities toward the human world. Recursivity braids cosmos together through movement, though not through structure, unless one argues that structure itself is movement (i.e., Prigogine and Stengers [1984] on every thing existing through the movement of its own time because this is basic to its interior existence—and time, of whatever variety, is movement). Yet saying that recursiveness braids together a fluid cosmos through the very movement of recursiveness is nonetheless arguing that cosmos intra-grates itself from within since the entirety, fluidity, is recursive through and through.

In anthropology, studies like that of Paiditali's cosmos demand rethinking movement, be it called process or dynamics. Victor Turner (1977) called for this long ago. There are attempts, for example, Daryn's (2006) use of fractals to discuss in stimulating ways a Nepalese Brahmin world, Roy Wagner's (2001) maddeningly creative use of the holographic worldview, and the worthy attempts to apply chaos theory in the chapters of Mosko and Damon (2005).<sup>9</sup> The latter volume would have been more potent had the contributors rethought "structure" as varieties of the temporal—perhaps "structure" as slow or very slow temporal processes—thereby avoiding the division of "structure" and "process" that inevitably demands "stops" ("structure") and "starts" ("process") which subvert the very dynamics proposed by chaos theory (Handelman 2007). Temporality (though less so linear time) may accomplish unification in a way that space (and structure) are less capable of, given that the latter tend to segregate and separate (Rosen 1994: 203–4).<sup>10</sup>

I said at the outset of Part II that my intention regarding the cosmos of Paiditali is metaphysical. In sociocultural anthropology the usual approach to cosmology is to begin with the social, the cultural, and construct cosmos on these bases. What happens then is that the limning of cosmos tends strongly to *reflect* the social, the cultural, and rarely goes beyond this. Otherwise, fears of theology take over, and Western philosophies of the ontological, especially phenomenology, may be invoked to sidestep these worries. In his late, great work, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim came to the idea of effervescence to recognize that something critical to human existence is shaped by people together that cannot be reduced to the social (or the cultural), just as the social cannot be reduced to the individual. In my view, this kind of recognition is at the heart of the study of cosmology and its metaphysics. One can enter into cosmos in its own right and fruitfully discover different kinds of entirety.<sup>11</sup>



## Notes

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1. A neologism is necessary since the conception that informs it is foreign to standard English language usage.
2. In the perspective offered here, values of individualism are not antithetical to values of holism. Rather, more at issue are differences and shifts in scale that reorganize values of holism, rather than radical changes in value. In the Western individual (yet obviously not only) there continues the sense of an entity that holds together rather than fragments. My response to postmodern claims for the fragmentation of a unified self is that it has always been preferable, analytically, to speak of qualities of selfness rather than of the self (Handelman 2002).
3. For the fuller ethnography, see Handelman, Krishnaya, and Shulman (2014).
4. Narratives of this war are discussed in Narayana Rao, Shulman, and Subrahmanyam (2001: 24–92).
5. The surface is not uniformly hard. Lakes, springs, caves in the mountains, are all softer areas within the hardness. The human beings in these locales—fishers, hunters—resonate more naturally with the fluidity of the goddess. So, too, healers in their healing soften the rigidity of the surface.
6. The tamarind can grow beyond sixty feet. Its wood is hard and dense; its heartwood colored dark red, its sapwood yellowish.
7. After the 1757 debacle at Bobilli, Vizianagaram ceased being an expansionist kingdom and turned inward. In the nineteenth century this social involution produced a cultural florescence in the Telugu country. Under royal patronage, Vizianagaram became the most vibrant cultural center between Calcutta and Madras through creativities that engaged intensive introspection in language, tantric yoga, ayurvedic healing, and more. The cosmos of Paitall and the ritual cycle that activated this in the human world may have been another post-1757 shaping of this involution through popular ritual rather than through royal rites of renewal.
8. Leading to the oft misguided notion of linear framing and content within the frame (Handelman 2012; see also Chapter Seven).
9. My interpretation of McKim Marriott’s (e.g., 1989) perspective on the exchange of substances in India among what I could call sentient cosmic particles (human and other) which continuously alter each other’s interiority, influences the idea of intra-gration in everyday life. For example, the inter-action among persons in the West is understood—through phenomenology, self-theory, symbolic interactionism and the like—as an utterance or action that comes from one’s interior self, moving to one’s (often facial) exterior and is absorbed through alter’s (often facial) exterior, entering alter’s interior self, back and forth. What is related to goes outside of one and enters into another from the exterior, and so forth. With Marriott’s general perspective on the exchange of substances in India, a quite different constellation emerges. Persons, the earth, one’s home, are related through depths of movement (Daniels 1984), such that, rather than moving from depth (of self) to surface and over to another surface and into depth (of the self of another), the exchange of substances in India moves from the depths of the person directly to the depths of another, yet not only between persons but between person and house, between person and natal earth, and so forth (see Bar-On Cohen [2009] on accomplishing a related condition of being in karate). Extrapolating further, all of these cosmic particles are somehow related to one another through their insides, their depths, and the changing densities and intensities of these intra-relationships. Indeed, this is an intra-gration of cosmos in the everyday. As Babb (1990: 202) writes on Marriott’s theory, “This is surely a possible world. Whether it (or something like it) is an actual world, a world conceptually and perceptually dwelt in by Hindus, is one of the most interesting questions yet raised in the anthropology of India.”

10. Interestingly, as Allen Abramson notes, this connects to the late-modern physics of quantum theory (see Rosen 1994: 203–4, and, among quantum physicists, especially Bohm 1981). Abramson comments (personal communication) that the quantum cosmos goes on and on without closure and perhaps without reversing itself. In the case of a human cosmos like that of Paititali, recursive braiding (rather than closure) is accomplished through made ritual.
11. Or as the late Roy Wagner (2001) might have said, be discovered by cosmos in its own right.

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