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INDUSLATION: TRANSLATING INDUS VALLEY



Sandeep Sharma

ABSTRACT: -

Where there is painting, there must be a script and there must be names, even music, mimetic or representative of memories of a lost civilization. Whether it is European, Occidental or even rongo rongo of Eastern Island. Still keeping in view all these plus more possibilities how can we think of a civilization without names? But is it possible in real life to have, to be in one frame, deadly animals, alphabets and human beings together? If so, then when?

KEY NOTES: teaching poetry ,elementary level ,Indian context.

INTRODUCTION :

But it is for sure that valley people were engaged in games, of trade, of escaping from the valley (let it be by death, only if dying required some mental worth, or whatsoever other cause) depending on their mental worth. Was their metal state high or low? Let us presume that they knew alphabets, their design, the vocal cords which brings alphabets the body-like curves in writing.

Gender-Imbalance: If all are men what sexual differences these images portray? What do the alphabets, if they are all masculine, portray? What

does masculine actually portray in the IVC? If these are not alphabets then were Valley People exhibitionists (although writing is also a kind of exhibition)? And if alphabet then it requires a thorough logocentric, semiotic reading. We have no choice as they have left us nothing but logos. Then were they logocentric? No one knows as to why we have missed a chance to look at the ever emerging debate on female and male in these seals. Could the draftsman be a male or a female? Coming back to the question of alphabet, it is quite clear as to why a culture which gives authoritative pose to Pashupati Nath drew flexible body lines for writing about Self (see the Fig 2.)

Valley people stand neither praying, nor frightened. No haste, no running, no escape from the frame. But how could they escape when there's no strength in their legs which originate from their thin bums? They are standing thus: Standing as if ready for a family photograph. Standing animals: like the inhabitants who are not allowed to sit like some sales person who is not allowed to sit in their workplaces, constantly under the vision of the third eye. Does it indicate that seals were used for business, a transaction which needed a communication? Does continuous standing makes legs thin, buttocks fleshless? Has that made their legs go so thin?



Fig 1. Seal from Mohon Jodro

Unicorn is not cruel, it is not carnivorous, it cannot gaze authoritatively at the sculptor. Unicorn is also incapable of languages understood by human beings. It is almost impossible, for sure, for IVC to recognize the vowels and consonants of Unicorn's speech. As Unicorns to Indus so Indus to Us. For us Indus is no more than the Unicorn. But Unicorn is exhibited like Human Beings. Unicorn as a mimesis of men: wears ornaments, has a tail (which is longer than its body). These seals make us impotent or reflect the impotency of its sculptor. There is no sculptor but unicorn as sculptor. We must name it 'No Sculptor.' Unicorn's head upwards as if in sexual ecstasy in a reverie: Dream-walking unicorns.

Why?

Unicorn, the blind and also as I of English alphabet as: "the I declares that the blind can be recognized by the way they tilt their heads upwards." Is it that whatsoever is upwards is I? As we have "main" in Hindi for representing I, more of a unicorn like. Was the Unicorn blind or loaded with some fear of seeing and taboo on seeing? Eyes of the unicorn—unicorn's eye: if not sexual ecstasy or some taboo then perhaps surely spiritual gaze combined with the gaze of a man whose hands are open in the gesture of prayer (if there were tears and prayers in the valley). Why could the unicorn be fearful, if it belonged to the God, looking up in the sky to his Lord (or looking at the crab?) (see Fig 1).

It is strange that the gaze of the unicorn is perverted towards the sky like soul's gaze of human beings and a disembodied head in the extreme centre. Maybe that is why unicorn is exhibited like human beings and human beings are exhibited like unicorns, mute in their body language. Valley people too have tail like structure on their head. Another mimesis of unicorn. And again unicorn as a mimesis of men: it wears ornaments, has a tail (which is longer than its body which is a question of evolution) (see the Fig 1.)



Fig 2. Pashupati Nath of Mohan Jodro

Valley people stand like unicorns as their hands do not act: lazy hands, careless hands (see Fig 1). The space between them is equal. What does it signify? Their right hand is a bit displaced from their bodies. Right handed valley people or right handed craftsman/woman. Moreover their right hands are kept as if in some state

of a reverie showing no revolt.

High expectations: Can one expect these people to write as one can expect unicorns to write? Do illiterate people and unicorns have these kinds of hand which can be capable of writing or grasping something to write? No, not surely. Then what could be proper of Valley People as they were human beings different from animals? Was it that they took bath? Was bathing proper to IVC as it is to animals, to the unicorn, that swims on the surface of some and the same river, as if in some dream? Could one expect these careless hands of IVC for auto affection? But there is no trace of auto affection in the seals. Where are the objects of sensation in the seals?

How could one really expect these careless hands of IVC to bath everyday if these are the hands of valley people? They didn't want to be seen; perhaps that is why they disappeared. It is a possibility that they must be seeking pleasure in leading a private life. What they did in the great baths, with or without cloths, remains a dilemma?

Is it possible to carve out any relationship between them at all when they project difference of viewpoints? Does it recall democratic structure of the state, of the blind citizens?

Men on the seal, blind men as their so called King seems to be uttering vowels through his nose and closed lips (See Fig 03). Where's the sun, the light in these seals?

But who is the guiding gaze, the Sun in it? Could it be the Creator of these seals who attested the moment? Do we still expect proper names of these people? Can we name/derive one except for Harappa (which we have derived with our own logic)?



Fig. 3 King of Harrapa. (Harrapa.com)



Fig 4. The Unicorn of Indus Valley Civilization (Coomaraswamy 28).

Graphic theme of glaring memory in these images, memory of concavity of signs: Seal of Pashupati Nath must be having visions of the man, a man who dared to look in the eyes of others with his six eyes, a man into whose eyes others wanted to look (with or without hope), a man having two eyes, a man who is afraid to talk and

look at his six eyes³ (see Fig 2). Even sculptor cannot escape his gaze from His stern looks, looking at the image of Him, expecting divinity and He giving them His blessing through glare, six fold.

When one reads it through the glass of palmistry, as also Vahia has done through the lenses of Indian astronomy, one can see feeble lines, no trembling in it- no participation of a hesitated murmur (43-59). Were then these seals made in front of, under the eyes of, some authority? No debate, for a moment, on the first spectator or even the spectator of the moment of creation of these seals for now. But the prosthesis of the mirror image, half turned semi circles, somehow show the presence of the other, the powerful spectator, while the piece of art might be in process. And a powerful spectator can blind the blinding genre of seals and make some dark lines appear thinner.

Chain of Unicorn and Man: Unicorn with one-eyed men just like the one eye of Valley Man gazing at the back of other men.

There's another possibility of these signs being mathematical.⁴ Also, topological, geometrical, musical so on and so forth. For that could the language of IVC be musical? Why should we miss a mark on the sound patterns of these languages? Is it music or the vowels in music which gives stylistic variations in the written language (See Fig 6 and 7). Especially the seal containing the sacrificial theme (see Fig 1). If we consider them musical then it is a known fact that music can be used for didactic purposes. Musical script has stylistic variations (see Fig 4). When one draws a straight line between the seal of IVC one can easily see the same kind of variation in the use of floating signs (see Fig 7). It can be read from left to right contrary to the latest computer generated research which proves that it was written from right to left.⁵

Other side of Music: The question of IVC script also iterates the cardinal question of Physis and techne: Use of tools to write and its script as a prop. Prop of some proper language, a proper name or maybe a musical language. Let us observe, for the time being that the script might have moved like musical notations, up and down. Can animal also dance with the music as the dancing and seductive lady of IVC, if she is dancing at all? (see Fig 5).

Dancing seal: The unicorn is as if in singing ecstasy. Could it be their national anthem or the anthem of unicorns?⁵ We can relate to its religious origin only if can successfully relate it to ancient times of India keeping in mind their barter value, their profitability and also the fact that these seals were not found near any temple of IVC.



Fig. 5 Dancing Lady of Indus Valley Civilization.

The melody and tempo of the body, of the wholly holy unicorn, too moves with the rising and falling notation of signs represented on the seal as when the face of unicorn is straight and laid down, the signs too remain in a order, in a formal structure, but when the face of the unicorn is tilted above towards the sky the signs too show their relative pitches:

These metaphorical and economical images, signs of economy are effaced with the ruins of time. Are these smooth images symbols or signs? The surface of these seals is equally important. The ceramic base no way shows its monetary value, the coinage but may tell something of linguistic or philological aspects of IVC.

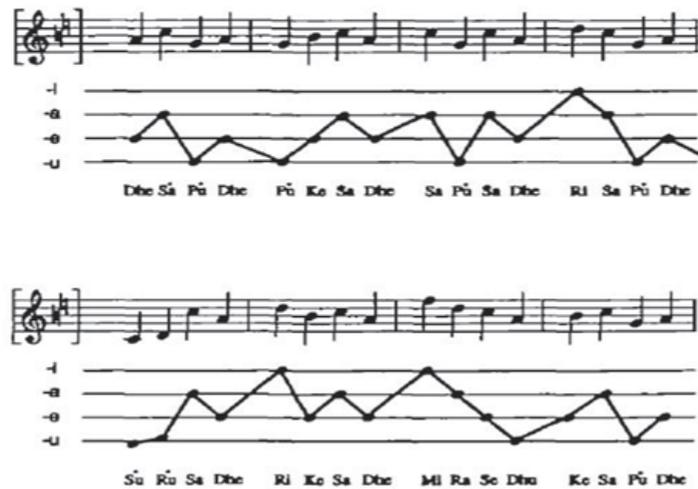


Fig 6. Stylistic variations in Music (Widdess 395).



Fig 7. Stylistic Variation in the presentation of signs: Seal from Mohonjo Doro

For the one who reads these images of IVC it ignites the desire for searching some proper meaning, a ground, as one is governed. Every time one tries to decipher this, IVC irritates the remembrance of impotence, decapitation and the seed, desire for the seed, and limits of semiotics, gestures, anthropology and psychology---The Real and Horrible Aporia. It also cautions us that to what extent generalized reading can be dangerous. Nothing to construct, nothing to deconstruct here.

They might have never dreamt. But how can we deny the fact that Valley People dreamt? How can one deny that they dreamt through their hollow eyes (see the image) struggling to create their self portrait? Dream and making us dream walkers as there is fading of seals now? How can one deny the fading of images in their seals, dream like images on the seals, condensation and displacement. And above all the Dancing Lady of IVC.

The meaning is missing. It gives us immense pain when we look at it. The pain of looking at the nameless seals, the sun which has no name. A nameless seal, a nameless act (as of the sowing by the Sun, of Aristotle). And finally the thought settles for a minute: These seals are the gift of the signified, the expression of some signified. Signified displaced and condensed into the sensible seals. That's it. And one more frustrating thought with a line of relief: "In non-sense, language is not yet born" ("White Mythology" 41). See, for example, the quote of BB Lal in which he draws a list of scholars, half frustrated hypothesis of the meanings always needing a supplement,

who had worked very hard on the terrible IVC script.

Then how to translate these signs? Is this language of visual and tactile (sight and touch) metaphors in IVC sensuous or motivated by natural metaphors or motivated by the sensuous desire to write? If that is so then the signs must be having a sensuous meaning in contrast to proper sensible meaning (as we have in mathematics which has no sensuous meaning attached to it). But there are traces of it being in touch with natural metaphors like the sign of so called "fish" or what the present scholar believes "eye"; the man who looks like man (See Fig 1). The eye of an imitator, of genius, by the genius (only if the images of IVC are of controlled nature) as: "The genius for mimesis can therefore give rise to a language, to a code of controlled substitutions, to the talent and the techniques of rhetoric, to the imitation of genius, to the mastery of ungraspable" ("White Mythology" 46). Or the genius creator trying to revolve around the binary of figurative/proper senses in these seals, the language of IVC, essence and accident of meanings will be prompted to give a quick and terse remark on the script of IVC: "In the Indus Valley script it is sign no. I30b, and probably means 'city' (Newberry 133).

An inevitable peripheries of the Being, of viewers of these seals, around the use of primitive or ordinary word (kurion) and the idiomatic words of the elite class, the unusual word (glotta) until one finds the name for the sowing by the Sun (Poetics 1457b3-4).

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