

AN ANALYSIS OF PRE-LIMINAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE BIOGRAPHY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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Abstract

In a time of global mobility, digital networking, interethnicity, transnationality, ecological rethinking of species boundaries, and technological redefining of what it means to be human, liminality—the boundary or middle ground between process stages, spatial complexes, and inner stages—is crucial. Since autobiographies typically involve major life changes, transitions, and confusion, liminality might be helpful. Some people are liminal during certain times in their lives, when they are not quite who they used to be but have not quite become who they will be. There is a lot of uncertainty, change, and possibility in this state a lot of autobiographies start with the subject's childhood to show the reader how they grew up. The present study has focused on the early life of Swami Vivekananda where the incidents of his earlier life are connected to pre liminal stage. His transformation from doubtfulness to clarification, apprehensions to trust and unsteadiness to surrender are discussed through a few incidents in his life which indicate the stage of pre liminal.

Key words: *post liminal , pre liminal, transformation, anthropology, behaviour and self-narration.*

Introduction

An individual could think of these steps as turning points where a person is almost ready to move from being a child to an adult. During this transitional stage, people may try to figure out who they are and where they fit in the world. The moments of change can cause liminal experiences as people get used to their new roles and responsibilities and feel different about who they are. A lot of autobiographies are about spiritual or emotional quests, where the person goes on an inner journey to find meaning and purpose. These times of thinking about oneself can be seen as liminal places, where the person is on the edge of different ideas about who they are and what they believe. People may be in liminal states when they change jobs or start new professional paths. This is because they are dealing with uncertainty and having to get used to their new roles and responsibilities. A lot of autobiographies talk about problems, setbacks, or personal issues. These tough times may be transitioning ones, when people face their flaws, think about their values, and try to come out on the other side. Writing an autobiography can be a transition experience for some people, as they think about who they were in the past and how they have changed into the person they are now.

The idea of liminality can be used in diaries to help writers explore their own growth, self-discovery, and change. This gives the story more meaning and lets readers connect with the universal experience of figuring out how to deal with life's changes and unknowns. By focusing on transitional times, autobiographies become more relatable and teach us important things about how people live. In this connection, the concept of liminality can be applied and it is inevitable. This study focuses on pre liminal perspectives in the biography of Swami Vivekananda written by Swami Nikhilananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

The stage of pre- liminal

This is the first stage where an individual is in confusion, this is the initial stage before the transition or liminal experience begins. During this phase, individuals or groups are still part of their old identity or status quo, but they are often aware that a change is impending. Pre-liminality can be characterized by feelings of anticipation, uncertainty, and preparation for the upcoming transition. This study concentrates on major incidents considered under pre – liminal stage in the life of Vivekananda. The narration of incidents is fallen from his childhood to his sainthood. His intellectuality, mettle, unflinching faith in supreme power of God and belief in right education had made him an outstanding personality in the universe. His struggle to become a monk is not a bed of roses.

The progression from the pre-liminal phase to the transitional point in his life is profoundly inspiring. The individual's unwavering resolve to transform into a sociable individual originating from India is a tough undertaking. Swami Vivekananda, renowned for his efforts in rejuvenating Hinduism in India and disseminating its enduring principles, was born at 6:33 a.m. on January 12, 1863. On Makarasamkranti, a significant number of Hindus engage in the act of worshiping the Ganga. Upon being presented with the infant as a gift by Vireswara Siva, Bhuvaneswari Devi proceeded to bestow upon him the name Vireswara. His family referred to the individual in question as Narendranath Datta, also known as Narendra or, more affectionately, Naren. The Datta family, hailing from Calcutta, was renowned for their

affluence, altruistic endeavors, erudition, and autonomy. Durgacharan, the paternal grandpa, departed from this mortal realm with the birth of his eldest progeny, presumably to reunite with the divine. Viswanath, a legal practitioner admitted to the High Court of Calcutta, has extensive knowledge in the fields of English and Persian literature. He derived personal satisfaction and entertained his acquaintances by reading passages from both the Bible and the works of Hafiz. Viswanath firmly believed that both literary works contained unique truths. As a result of his close interactions with educated Muslims in the north-western region of India, he developed a strong affinity for Islamic culture. Similar to his father, he also amassed a substantial fortune through his legal career and derived pleasure from his lifestyle.

After receiving the child as a gift from Vireswara Siva, his mother, Bhuvaneswari Devi, named him Vireswara. The family called him Narendranath Datta, or Narendra, or more affectionately, Naren. The Datta family of Calcutta, where Narendranath was born, was famed for their wealth, philanthropy, scholarship, and independence. Durgacharan, the grandfather, left the world for God after his first son was born. Viswanath, an attorney-at-law of the High Court of Calcutta, was well-versed in English and Persian literature and delighted himself and his friends by reciting from the Bible and Hafiz, which he claimed contained unparalleled truths. Due to his intimate contact with educated Muslims in north-western India, he was drawn to Islamic culture. He too made a lot of money from the law and enjoyed life, unlike his father. His childhood was of no trouble financially. He was brought up in a well – to – do environment. People in his town assumed that Naren’s grandfather who renounced the world to lead monastic life was reincarnated as Narendranath Datta. He was greatly influenced by his devout mother who used to utter the name of Lord Shiva all the day and guided her son to the right path. As part of life process, it is unavoidable that an individual has to encounter suffering at every phase despite his discretion.

Naren is thoughtful since his childhood. But his mischievous deeds at young age helped him to realize from ignorance, haughty attitude and transform himself from unknowing to knowing. When he was six years of old he was sent to a Primary school, unfortunately he learnt a few vulgar words, repeatedly used at home with his mother and eventually, his father wanted him to realize from his mistake. Eventually, he used to pen the same words what Naren had uttered on the door of his room with a piece of charcoal. He used to do this to make his son realise how he had treated his mother.

He was later provided academic courses under the guidance of a private tutor because of influence of bad friends at his school. There are many incidents occurred in his childhood that pestered his parents. His whimsies and fancies at childhood are lead to find a way to his future to strengthen his inner faculties. In another incident he demanded his father what he had done for him and his father strongly replied him to go and look at himself in the mirror that would reveal his answer for the question. In another occasion he questioned his father how he should have to conduct himself in the world. His father replied him to be neutral to anything and any situation that he would encounter in his life. This invaluable advice let Narendranath maintain his serenity whether living with royals in palaces or beggars in straw huts throughout his life.

Influence of superstitions at Young age

His childhood acts included climbing a neighbor's blossoming tree, plucking flowers, and causing other havoc. After being ignored, the tree owner informed Naren's friends that a white-robed ghost guarded the tree and would squeeze their necks if they disturbed his tranquillity. Fearful guys stayed away. Narendra convinced them to walk after him and he climbed the tree for amusement, breaking several branches for more mischief. He turned to his companions and remarked to his friends what sort of timid boys they were and asked them to find how safe his neck was. He asserted that the story of an old man's is untrue. H

Another incident shows his bravery and foresight. He sought assistance from nearby individuals to set up a heavy trapeze in the gym. One was an English sailor. The trapeze collapsed, knocking the sailor out, and the crowd fled in fear of the authorities. Naren treated the sailor's wound, bandaged it, bathed his face, and eventually recovered him. He brought the injured man to a nearby schoolhouse and nursed him for a week. Naren sent the sailor to leave with a small amount of money taken from his friends after he recovered.

Concentrated his intellectuality and energies in multiple tasks

Narendra started high school at eight in 1871. His professors and classmates noticed his intellect. He was initially hesitant to study English because of its alien background, but he soon became hooked. But he spent little time on the curriculum. Outside activities used most of his unlimited energy. He entertained himself with many games he developed or improvised. He built an imitation gasworks and aerating water factory, which were new to Calcutta. He founded an amateur theatre and gymnasium and took fencing, wrestling, rowing, and other sports training. He attempted cooking too. Due to his restlessness, he would quickly tire of one hobby and try another. He attended the museum and zoo with buddies. He settled his playmates' arguments and was popular in the neighbourhood. His bravery, honesty, and simplicity were admired by all.

It is important to consider that his ignorance and disability to recognize his inner strength at his young age always made him surprise. As it is already discussed that the age is one of the factors of hindering development or transformation in an individual life. There are a few incidents that connects to this statement.

He encountered his initial spiritual ecstasy when he was in teens. The family set out on a journey to Raipur in the Central Provinces, with a bullock cart helping with some of the transportation. On that specific day, the atmosphere exhibited a refreshing and unobstructed quality, while the foliage of trees and creepers displayed an abundance of verdant leaves and diverse blooming of all hues. Furthermore, avian creatures adorned with vibrant plumage emitted melodious songs inside the surrounding forested areas. The cart was traversing a tight passage, characterised by the close proximity of towering peaks on either side. Narendra observed a substantial beehive nestled within the crevice of an immense cliff, prompting a profound sense of admiration and respect for the concept of divine Providence. He became

unconscious and remained in that state in the cart for an extended period. Despite reentering the realm of sensory perception, he exuded an aura of profound joy. Another intriguing cognitive phenomenon may be alluded to in this context, as it was frequently encountered by Narendranath. Since his early years, upon initial encounters with specific individuals or locations, he would experience a sense of familiarity, as if he had encountered them in the past; nevertheless, he could never recall the exact duration of this prior acquaintance. On a certain occasion, the individual in question, along with a group of acquaintances, found themselves gathered within a designated space within the residence of an associate. Within this setting, the participants engaged in discourse pertaining to a range of subjects. A topic was brought up, and Narendra immediately recognised that he had previously engaged in a conversation on the same issue with the exact same group of friends in that particular location.

The individual adeptly provided an accurate depiction of each intricate detail and aspect of the structure, despite having no prior familiarity with it. Initially, the individual endeavoured to understand this unique occurrence via the lens of the idea of reincarnation, postulating the possibility of having inhabited the aforementioned dwelling in a preceding existence. However, he disregarded the notion as highly unlikely. Subsequently, the individual arrived at the conclusion that prior to his birth, he likely possessed foreknowledge of the individuals, locations, and occurrences that he would encounter in his current embodiment. This, he reasoned, elucidates his ability to promptly identify them upon their manifestation before him.

Naren was reluctant to accept his education in the language of British.

The implementation of English education in India subsequent to the British colonisation of the nation facilitated the interaction between Hindu society and the intellectually and assertively inclined European culture. The Hindu youths, who were influenced by the emerging and vibrant way of life, became aware of the numerous deficiencies within their own community. During the period of Muslim control, predating the arrival of the British, the vibrant nature of Hindu culture was repressed, and the caste system became further entrenched. The priests exerted control over the religious practices of the populace in pursuit of their own self-serving motives. Meaningless dogmas and lifeless rites supplanted the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita's rejuvenating philosophy. The general population experienced exploitation, particularly at the hands of landowners, and the situation of women was particularly distressing. After the decline of Muslim governance, a state of disorder prevailed across various aspects of Indian society, encompassing social, political, religious, and economic domains. The introduction of English education has highlighted the numerous disadvantages of society, leading to the initiation of several reform movements, encompassing both liberal and orthodox perspectives, with the aim of restoring the nation's well-being and functionality.

The quest for the right path of Narendranath led to indecisive initially

During this formative stage of his life, he developed an affiliation with the Brahmo Samaj, a significant religious movement of the era, which exerted a notable influence on him. The Brahmo Samaj, being one of the liberal groups, greatly appealed to the educated youth of

Bengal. Raja Rammohan Roy (1774–1833), the individual responsible for establishing this religious institution, diverged from the customary practices of orthodox Hinduism, including rituals, idol worship, and priestly activities. Instead, he encouraged his adherents to devote themselves to the veneration and reverence of the Eternal, the Unsearchable, and the Immutable Being, recognised as the Creator and Sustainer of the cosmos. The Raja, possessing a profound intellect, engaged in the study of Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Buddhist scriptures. Notably, he became the pioneer among Indians in recognising the need to employ Western reasoning methods to address the various challenges faced by Hindu civilization. He had a significant role in the implementation of English education in India. Initially, this had a negative impact on emerging Hindu awareness. However, it eventually allowed a select group of Indians to discover the rich cultural legacy of their own indigenous civilization. Devendranath Tagore (1817–1905) and Keshab Chandra Sen (1838–1884) emerged as notable figures within the Brahmo Samaj following the tenure of Rammohan Roy. Tagore exhibited a profound reverence for the Upanishads, while Sen demonstrated a proclivity towards the rites and ideas associated with Christianity. Under the guidance of their leadership, the Brahmo Samaj made the decision to renounce some traditional aspects of Hinduism, including rituals and the veneration of deities through visual representations. The movement primarily focused on reform, with its main goals being the liberation of women, the remarriage of Hindu widows, the eradication of early marriage, and the promotion of widespread education. The Brahmo Samaj, under the influence of Western culture, espoused the primacy of rationality, advocated against unquestioning adherence to scriptural authority, and fervently endorsed the principles espoused by the French Revolution. The movement as a whole exhibited an intellectual and diverse nature, emerging as a response to the exigencies of the day.

In contrast to conventional Hinduism, it lacked a foundation in the spiritual encounters of revered individuals and visionaries. Narendra, akin to other present-day young individuals, was drawn to the allure of its progressive ideologies and thereafter joined its ranks. However, it will soon become evident that the Brahmo Samaj was unable to fulfil the profound spiritual longing within his soul. During this period, Narendra received encouragement from his father to enter into matrimony, and shortly thereafter, a suitable prospect emerged. A father of considerable wealth who had proposed his daughter Narendra as a potential bride expressed his willingness to cover the expenses associated with pursuing advanced education in England.

The purpose of this financial support was to enable the individual to enhance their qualifications and ultimately become eligible for the highly esteemed Indian Civil Service. Narendra declined. Previous initiatives of a similar nature yielded no discernible outcome. Evidently, it was not his predetermined fate to assume the role of a householder.

Narendra was initially excited by Brahmo Samaj rituals and devotional songs. However, he soon realised that these practices failed to provide him with a genuine spiritual encounter. The individual expressed a desire to attain a direct experience of the divine, which is considered the ultimate objective of religious practice. Consequently, they recognised the crucial necessity of seeking guidance from someone who had personally encountered the divine.

Meeting his Master Ramakrishna Paramahansa to quench his spiritual thirst

In a state of great enthusiasm, the individual approached Devendranath, the esteemed leader of the Brahmo Samaj, and inquired about his personal encounter with the divine, without allowing the latter an opportunity to speak. Devendranath experienced a sense of embarrassment and responded by stating, "My dear young individual, your visual perception exhibits qualities akin to those possessed by a practitioner of yogic discipline." The individual in question The young individual experienced a sense of disillusionment and perceived the teacher as inadequate in providing guidance for their spiritual journey. However, the leaders of other religious sects failed to provide a more satisfactory response. Subsequently, the individual recollected being acquainted with the appellation of Ramakrishna Paramahansa through Professor Hastie, who, during his lecture on Wordsworth's composition *The Excursion*, made reference to states of altered consciousness, asserting that these spiritual raptures were an outcome of moral integrity and focused mental faculties. Moreover, he asserted that such a transcendent encounter was an infrequent occurrence, particularly within the contemporary era.

The individual in question, as he had mentioned, is Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar, the sole person whom I have encountered to have achieved such a revered condition. A visit to the saint can help one gain a thorough understanding of trances. Narendra was also acquainted with the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna through his relative, Ramchandra Datta, a prominent disciple of the Master who maintained his household duties. Upon discovering Narendra's aversion to marriage, Ramchandra attributed it to his aspiration for a spiritual existence. In response, Ramchandra advised him, "If your true intention is to pursue spiritual enlightenment, I recommend that you pay a visit to Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar." In November 1881, Narendra encountered Ramakrishna for the first time at the residence of Surendranath Mitra, a devoted follower of the Master. Narendra had received an invitation to the gathering, where he showcased his musical talents to delight the attendees. The Paramahansa was deeply struck by the individual's earnestness and dedication. Subsequently, following a brief period of questions, the Paramahansa extended an invitation for the individual to meet his Guru at Dakshineswar. Narendra agreed. He hoped to learn if Ramakrishna was the man to help him in his spiritual search.

His doubt about God's existence during his odd times

Narendra started doubting about the existence of God as he was affected by financial troubles soon after his father's death. He could see another phase of the world. The wealthy brought up made him unaware of the common world. His doubtful condition about the existence of God and inverted condition of his family made him think in such a way. This quality can be considered under pre liminal stage. In the year 1884, during Narendranath's preparation for the B.A. exams, his family had a significant misfortune. The untimely demise of the father resulted in the mother and children being engulfed in profound sorrow. Viswanath, a guy characterised by his benevolent disposition, had exceeded his financial capacity during his lifetime, resulting in his demise and leaving the family encumbered with a substantial debt. The arrival of creditors, akin to ravenous predators, commenced a vigilant presence near the entrance.

Compounding the situation, certain family members initiated legal proceedings to divide the hereditary residence.

Narendra suffered destitution after losing wealth. Being the eldest male member of the family, he assumed the responsibility of procuring the necessary means to provide sustenance for a household consisting of seven or eight individuals, prompting him to actively seek employment opportunities. Additionally, he participated in the law courses. He was dressed in rough attire, without shoes, and experiencing hunger. Frequently, he declined meal invitations extended by acquaintances as he recalled the plight of his famished mother, siblings, and kinfolk residing in his household. He would intentionally avoid participating in family meals by falsely claiming that he had already consumed food at a friend's residence in order to ensure that the individuals residing in his household could obtain a greater portion of the limited food available.

The Datta family exhibited a strong sense of pride and refrained from seeking assistance from others outside their immediate circle. In the presence of his companions, Narendra exhibited his customary jovial demeanour. Undoubtedly, his affluent acquaintances observed his pallid countenance, yet they refrained from extending any assistance.

Only one of his friends provided occasional anonymous help, and Narendra was forever grateful. In the interim, all of his endeavours to secure employment proved unsuccessful. Several acquaintances who had acquired funds through unethical means approached him, urging him to partake in their illicit activities. Additionally, a wealthy woman extended an indecent proposition to him, offering to alleviate his financial woes. This was reported to his Guru who chided him to come to his one self.

Conclusion

Narendranath Datta was afterwards bestowed with the moniker Vivekananda by his spiritual master. The individual's aspiration to lead a monastic lifestyle has been realised under the leadership and teachings of their master. His lifespan extended to a duration of thirty-nine years. During the brief span of his existence, he succeeded in attaining the status of an ideal leader, serving as an inspiration for the younger generation, embodying a modest lifestyle, and representing the epitome of personal growth, transforming from an ordinary individual into a globally recognised role model. The pre-liminal stage is exemplified by several occurrences in his life that have contributed to his eventual strength. This shift enabled him to disseminate his ideology globally.

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