

EDITORS' PREFACE

Bernard Bate, or Barney as his friends and colleagues called him, passed away in early March 2016 “at the height of his powers,” as one of his teachers, John Kelly, put it at a 2016 memorial at the University of Chicago. Barney was on a writing fellowship at the Stanford Humanities Center, working on his second book, this book. This manuscript was very much the prehistory of his masterful 2009 study, *Tamil Oratory and the Dravidian Aesthetic*, a redacted version of his 2000 dissertation in the University of Chicago’s Department of Anthropology. Bate finished his dissertation by saying:

Some definitive statements have emerged [in this dissertation regarding “stage Tamil”]. But I am left with far more questions than firm knowledge. Many of the questions are historical: How did stage speaking begin in Tamil? . . . What was the first “oratorical revolution” like when Tamil was first deployed as oratory (by Christians in Jaffna and Kanyakumari, I think)? How and why were these new models taken up outside the context of the Christian sermon (by a man named Arumuga Navalar in Jaffna, December 1847–September 1848)? . . . In the world of formal political oratory, what were the conditions in which Congressmen and others decided to stop speaking in English and begin speaking in Tamil (c. 1918–1919)? . . . I will pursue these questions further. (2000, 319)

And he did, through archival work in the American Ceylon Mission and Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India from January to May 2005 and, later, through near seven hundred hours (Bate 2009a) in the Tamil Nadu State Archives from November 2008 to May 2009, along with numerous interviews with journalists, historians, and those with first- and secondhand knowledge and memories of the times he was exploring (including Mayandi Bharati, the late Tho. Paramasivan, Pe. Cu. Mani, A. Sivasubramanian, “Krishi”

Ramakrishnan, Thi. Ka. Sivasankaran, Che. Divan, Nellai Kannan, J. Rajasekaran, V. Arasu, A. R. Venkatachalapathy, and V. Geetha). This intensive research resulted in a series of publications (Bate 2005, 2009a, 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2013), as well as numerous talks that he gave in the United States, Canada, India, Sri Lanka, and Singapore, all of which were to become part of the book before you.

When we, the editorial team (E. Annamalai, Francis Cody, Malarvizhi Jayanth, and Constantine V. Nakassis), received the manuscript materials, we received something with a definitive shape and plan, though the various documents were both partial and sketchy—filled with bullet-point lists, elliptical placeholders for later elaboration, missing references, notes to self (in particular, in the Introduction)—and abundant and excessive—redundancies across chapters, long descriptions and quotations of primary materials, as well as a panoply of short fragments unconnected to particular chapters. While some of the chapters were almost fully done—for example, Chapters 1–2, versions of which had already been published (as Bate 2010 and Bate 2005, respectively)—others had to be put together from many different drafts (often from talks, in particular, Chapters 3–5) or supplemented with sections from fragments, other chapters, and notes (the Introduction). The final, concluding chapter—the Epilogue—was absent, though implied as to be carved out of existing publications (in particular, from Bate 2013).

We also had to contend with alternative outlines and titles of the book. In a truncated version of a draft of the Introduction, Barney writes in a parenthetical statement that indicates the ambitious Weberian and Durkheimian scope of the project, followed by his instantly recognizable, intimate, oral voice:

(I'm tempted to call it [the book] *Protestant Textuality and the Spirit of Political Modernity*, but that might be a step just a little too far. Sort of like people entitling their books with something like “*Elementary Forms of the . . .*”). Let me give you a sense of the overview of this thing, then: . . .

We have attempted to maintain that intimate voice (indeed, oratorical style) of Barney's, as it moves from the near and familiar to the grand sweep of his sense of history and culture, one well worth, in our opinion, the appellations Weberian and Durkheimian.

A further point to note is that in his many talks on this project, Barney always began with a slightly different, and ever-developing, overview of the project as a whole (Bate 2013 offering a published snapshot of this vision ca. 2012–13). This was a project that was changing over a decade, even if it had its sights set on the questions he identified at the close of his dissertation, defended a decade or so before. We do not pretend that what we put together here is what Barney would have eventually published. It surely would have kept developing and filled out in ways we could not have anticipated or completed ourselves. Instead, we have attempted to provide something true to his vision of the project as it was developing up to and at the time of his premature death. In short, while it is from many chapter drafts, publications, talks, fragments, notes, and outlines that we have put together the book before you—a task that sometimes required filling out prose in what was indicated only fragmentarily and other times redacting or rephrasing redundancies (though we have let many remain as well), as well as inserting transitions, callouts, and the like (these different sources and emendations are indicated through editorial notes in the various chapters; see References for a list of such documents)—it is, irrevocably, Barney's voice and arguments. We hope to have done them justice.

A word on the time line and the editorial process. After receiving the materials in May 2017, the editorial team met to discuss how to tackle the process of editing the book. First, Malarvizhi Jayanth went through the notes, fragments, chapter drafts, talks, outlines, and archival materials, cataloguing them, putting together their time line, and indicating the most definitive or complete versions to work from and supplement. From there, E. Annamalai, Francis Cody, and Constantine Nakassis went over the chapters one by one, editing them in rounds—Frank or Costas taking the first round of a chapter, then followed by the others. We proceeded chapter by chapter from July 2018 to May 2019, followed by a second round of reading, editing, and discussing in May and June 2019. This produced a (relatively) clean near-final copy, which we sent to A. R. Venkatachalapathy and Sudipta Kaviraj to read and write a foreword and afterword, respectively, as well as to two anonymous reviewers at Stanford University Press. All provided helpful feedback and suggested emendations to the text, which

we integrated insofar as they explicated and clarified Bate's arguments and points. Reviewer comments that differed from Bate's arguments are mentioned and delineated in editorial notes. With these additions, we present you with Bernard Bate's *Protestant Textuality and the Tamil Modern: Political Oratory and the Social Imaginary in South Asia*.