

# GLOBAL BAULS, LOCAL BAULS: COMMUNITY, VIOLENCE AND EVERYDAY LIFE

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*Abstract:* The enormous power of globalization influences not only the local communities but also the pattern of everyday life of the individuals who belong to those communities. The global often involves violence in its course to interact with the local. The Bauls of West Bengal (India) can be taken as a site where this process is salient. The *ascetic-minstrel* Bauls, the practitioners of Baul *sadbona*, who usually stick to their community and the *silpi-artist* Bauls who are not *sadboks* but become globally famous Baul figures as singers and performers (of Baul song) can broadly be seen as *local* Bauls and global Bauls. The global pull-up tends to fracture, and so loosen, the unity of the Baul community based on certain crucial everyday activities as the new generations of Bauls in the post-independence era (of India) prefer more to be *silpi-artist* Bauls than to be *sadbok* Bauls. It shows that the demarcation between the *sadbok* Bauls and *silpi-artist* Bauls, and local Bauls-global Bauls after them is flawed, for both in reality and in conception, they have always been in a state of flux. As these categories may re-position themselves on account of the changes occurred in real circumstances, so it is possible that the notions of “local” and “global” may flap. This phenomenon, as it may be termed “glocal”, is important in understanding the workings of global forces through which the global and local condition each other.

*Keywords:* globalization, local, bauls, community, everyday, violence.

## INTRODUCTION

The categories of “local Baul” and “global Baul”, as one of the much talked-about socio-cultural themes in recent years, are indicative of the phenomenon where the meanings of local and the global can be delved into. The relationship of these two categories of the Bauls with each other who essentially belong to the rich and long-standing folk heritage and folk culture of both (West) Bengal (India) and Bangladesh comes to make sense of the concept of global in terms of the

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notion of local. But such interactions, if looked into carefully, imply a violent disjoint between the identities of community and individuals in the course of the process. In order to understand why this is so, it is crucial to take the local culture of Baul-ism, and Baul song, i.e., Baul *gan*, as one of its most vivid elements in particular, and the cultural force of so-called globalization at once into consideration. Further, what is remarkable about this puzzling phenomenon altogether is that it would remain elusive if the two categories would be viewed from outside the realm of everyday life which serves as a natural ground for them to develop and act.

## CONCEPTIONS OF BAUL: SADHOK BAULS AND SILPI BAULS

The discourses on the Bauls are ample and intricate. As the Bauls generally do not write about themselves, rather they are written about, so the Bauls are framed and viewed from several perspectives. They have been regarded as “disgusting others”, “Swadeshi Bauls” (in the imagination and writings of Rabindranath Tagore), “Udashin Baul” (disinterested Bauls with authentic heart), as “Body-centric Bauls” (who follow the “doctrine of body”, practitioners of *sadhona*), or as “Sexual libertine Bauls” (who have multiple ritual-partners or have radical views on sex). These constructions have, however, grown through and been influenced by certain socio-cultural and political phases over time: periods of colonialism, national movement, post-independence, and globalization, in broad terms. And they were concomitantly featured with a variety of stereotypical images of Bauls moulded with an ideological underpinning – subaltern, nationalist, spiritual idealist, esotericist, secularist, liberalist, and globalist. Differences of outlooks as to Baul songs persist too: to some, beautiful Baul songs signify transcendental humanism, some others see them as musical expressions of a sect’s collective mindset whose members are involved in derogatory practice of sexo-yogic rituals; or heart-melting songs that would earn alms for the rural Bauls; and, simply as an entertaining as well as a class apart form of



folk songs that are part of the culture of Bengal. What is more, in order to study the Baul songs one must depend on the collections and published materials of others, i.e., scholars, researchers, writers, which may have high chances of being intermixed with those others' own subjective opinions, interpretations, and understandings. It is, therefore, necessary to have comprehensive knowledge of Baul discourses in order to tease out the aspects of "being" and "becoming" of Bauls (and their songs).

The Bauls of Bengal, West Bengal and Bangladesh taken together, are members of a religious sect that derives its name from Sanskrit *vātula* meaning "windy, affected by the wind disease, mad", or *vyākula*, "restless, disordered". "The madness which the name Baul implies is one characterized by a disregard of social and religious conventions accepted by the great majority of Bengalis" (Capwell 2011: 10). They are "rosik" (derived from Sanskrit *rasa*, "sap" in English) who believe that life is meant to be enjoyed, discarding the traditional religious path of asceticism, calling it "dry" (*śukhmo*) (Capwell 2011: 11). They consider asceticism and the extreme of hedonism as opposites and think that well-being can be attained by the natural instrument of mind-body – a much juicier way to live a meaningful life.

To be a Baul *sadhok*, to find such a life, one has to go through four levels of *sadhana*: *a) sthul* (coarse disciple), *b) proborto* (the novice), *sadhok* (practitioner), and *siddho* (perfected disciple). In the course of *sadhana*, the *sadhok* Bauls exercise the ritual of "four moons" following "one of the oldest tantric treatises, the *Hevajra*" where "they are mentioned as camphor, musk, frankincense, and a portion of four ingredients, and elsewhere in the treatise these are defined as *sandbhābhāsa* (Skt., code language) for urine, feces, semen, and menses, the excretions known to the Bauls as the 'four moon'" (Capwell 2011: 22). The Bauls learn the uses of these vital elements under twin guidance of *gurus* (or *murshids*), namely, *dikhsa guru* and *sikhsa guru*. An aspirant novice, at a particular point of the process of *sadhana*, when he assimilates all the theoretical aspects of the same (e.g., mantras, breathing techniques, yoga positions, complete cognizance about four moons

etc.) from the *dikhsa guru*, is offered initiation that requires a female partner, i.e., *sadhon sangini*, to acquire skills of sex-yogic rituals of coitus reservatus by the *siksa guru*. A reflection of a radical approach to gender roles is captured in the exercise: the *diksa guru*, “who gives the initiatory mantra” (Dimock 1989: 101) is conceived of as Lord Krishna, and the *siksha guru* “who conducts the worshipper in his search for realization” (Dimock 1989: 101) as Radha, Krishna’s beloved. “All women participate in the qualities of Rādhā, therefore all women are in some sense gurus”. A Baul and his *sangini* are treated equal in *sadhona*. The union of *sadbok* (male) and *sangini* (female), Krisna and Radha (in Vaisnava-Sahajia tradition), and Shiva and Shokti (in Tantric tradition) is thus observed in the everyday life of a *sadbok* – *Ascetic Bauls* in the *akhara*, and *Household Bauls* in their *homes*.

“Despite the secrecy of their core belief, the Bauls have paradoxically spent much time and effort in drawing attention to themselves through the medium of public performance of their songs” (Capwell 2011: 11). They have created their musical tradition following the philosophy and songs (*gan*) of great Lalan Fakir who is thought to be the founder of the cult of Bauls. But as a matter of fact, this exposure “does not constitute an abuse because the songs are neither a constituent of nor an accompaniment to secret practices.” Baul songs are then considered as folk music for the very “fact that it is ubiquitous in rural Bengal and is understood and appreciated by all” (Capwell 2011: 42-43). There is a paradox. The Bauls were marginalized as community, i.e., *sampraday*, for the “middle-class urban Bengalis have ambivalent feelings toward the tradition” (Salomon 1995: 187). The urban middle-class Bengalis appreciate “their songs for their musical and literary quality”, yet often tend to idealize the “saintly figures” of the Bauls wearing “a half-dhoti and an *ālbhāllā*” that are “made of cloth often dyed an ochre-umber color, called geruyā in Bngali (“saffron” in English...)” (Capwell 2011:13). This was the reason why the Bengali noble laureate Rabindranath Tagore himself (and his associate Ksitimohan Sen) was (were) keen on elevating “the Bāuls to the status of a cultural symbol” (Salomon 1995: 188), while the same section of the Ben-



galis “condemn or deny their tantric sexual rituals” (Salomon 1995: 187).

The dual aspects of the Baul life, the Baul way of everyday life to be precise, leads to a distinct categorization between the *sadhok* Bauls and *minstrel* Bauls – those who, in a simple sense, “focus their spiritual lives on realizing the Divine, which they believe resides within the human body, and uniting the male and female principles through sexo-yogic practices” (Knight 2011: 5), and those who sing traditional Baul songs. Herein resides a problem, a perceptual one, of course. When an author had inquired about the Bauls she met, she was told that “those other Bauls were not ‘real’ Bauls; they were only singers (*śilpī Bāul*)” (Knight 2011: 12) who do not practise *sadhona* – they never ingest human excretions, or sexual rituals that a devotee Baul has to do. The statement spots out the “other” types of Bauls, i.e., *silpi* Bauls who are different from the *sadhok* Bauls by nature as they are not the practitioners of “*real sadhona*”. But it does not at all mean that a *minstrel* Baul cannot be an *ascetic* Baul, that is, as if *sadhok* Baul is pristine engaged only in *sadhona*. It is, however, not easy to pinpoint the splitting between a *sadhok* Baul and a *minstrel* Baul for a Baul who upkeeps a secret life may also be a singer of Baul songs, as it is seen above, without restrictions. It can hence be deduced that the *ascetic* Bauls and the *minstrel* Bauls are the same individuals, and essentially differ from *silpi* Bauls.

Again, it is to be noted that, as one of the pioneering scholars in this field, Upendranath Bhattacharya, claims in his path-breaking work entitled “The Bāuls of Bengals and Bāul Songs” (*Bānglār Bāul O Bāul Gān*), published in 1968, that although the restricted sexual rites of the *sadhok* Bauls are, however, “central to Bāul religion and to an understanding of their songs” (Salomon 1995: 188), the ascetic-minstrel Bauls so carry and spread the seeds of the philosophy through their songs. They inform that “whatever is in the universe is in the receptacle”, i.e., the earthly human body. According to this “doctrine of *dehatattva*”, that is to say, “the truth in the body”, the *sadhok Bauls*, “locate cities, mountains, rivers, pilgrimage places – virtually everything on the map – in the human body”



(Salomon 1995: 193) in their songs. The idea of microcosmic body that “the worship of the body is the essential thing” is reflected in the Islamic imagery in one of the popular Lalan Fakir songs “Ache adi makka ei manab dehe”, meaning “The Original Mecca is in the Human body”. The “principle of human body”, i.e., *dehotattvo*, among other principles such as *premtattvo* (principle of spiritual love), *gurutattvo* (principle of the spiritual preceptor), *guhyyotattvo* (principle of esoteric), has been valued most. The body is the site of *sadhona* which incorporates the circle of life. Where the *chakra* (wheels), i.e., muldhara chakra, manipura chakra, and vissudha chakra, and the *padma* (lotus) – the three nerves, namely, idea, pingala, and susuma – converge upon in human body, known as *triveni*, is thought of as the force of life. The painstaking secretive process of *sadhona* concerns mastering inner passion: developing innate strength within the body through the triad of nerves in order to attain devotion and gain knowledge.

Those who choose to be ascetic Bauls rather than household Bauls would be ready to put themselves in a different condition of life. The ascetic Bauls live and meet with other Baul practitioners in *akharas* where they exchange their views, songs, and spiritual thoughts. They religiously observe *madbukari* (subsisting on alms from everyday ritualistic begging and refusing anything surplus) an important aspect of the Baul way of life. They do not depend on institutions or organizations for survival, but instead try to create a community of adherents in the rural society. To collect *madbukari*, they wander through the village paths, visit door-to-door not only for mere alms but to keep contact with well-wishers as well as spread spiritual and emotional amity in the community. During this ritualistic begging (money, grain, vegetables, fruits etc.), they perform publicly and accept any offering as per the capacity or choice of their adherents. Upendranath Bhattacharya had shown that in Kusthia region (which happens to be the birthplace of Lalan Faki), Bauls came to households with an *ektara*, or a *sarinda* (violin) under his arm, singing devotional and/or esoteric songs and asking for alms or exchange talks with the householder. They consume only what they earn from *madbukari* – a splendid livelihood acted upon a



noble way of life which shuns and repudiates the so-called consumerist ideological constraint. A *sadhok* Baul thus consciously creates his own mode of social interaction, holds up his agency, and (re)discovers his own identity. And in doing so he comes to probe the content and joy of everyday life which is constituted through his experiences.

#### TENSION AND TRANSFORMATION: FROM LOCAL BAULS TO GLOBAL BAULS

The “*silpi Bauls*” (“Artist Bauls”, that is to say, “Singer Bauls”) do not engage themselves in the sexual practices. In spite of this fact, those who belong to this category in particular also cannot escape the overarching and deep philosophical orientations of the core *Baul-ism* altogether. Nevertheless, there are stern differences between the *ascetic-minstrel* Bauls and the *silpi-artist* Bauls. The former ones are not just another pack of singers – rather they have certain spiritual orientations and seek to inspire and teach common people. They cultivate convictions and values they believe in which creates spaces where they are able to enact their faculty. Their songs laden with philosophical, spiritual, and novel messages tend to seek alternative paths of social change. Unlike them, the latter ones have no traditional root or cultural pedigree. They just go with the flow, and are simply fond of money, fame and material gain.

This tendency is not new and can be found in the socio-cultural history of nineteenth century Bengal. The reputation of the *sadhok* Bauls as “disgusting others” in the early colonial era has faded away and has even been to a great extent replaced by another sort of representation of the Bauls which has gained gradual acceptance among a large section of the urbanized, middle-class, educated Bengalis: the amateur Bauls, i.e., *shokher Bauls*. The amateur Baul and their songs had already gained its ground before the publication of a short review of collections of Baul Songs in *Bharati* (Magazine) by Rabindranath Tagore in 1883. It was Kangal Harinath (Majumdar) (with his group) who was mainly responsible for this





alteration of the Baul image in the last quarter of the nineteenth century:

he (Harinath) and his group were in demand all over Bengal, and a host of similar groups sprang up in surrounding towns and villages. Such performers dressed up in long robes, strapped anklets to bare feet and at all times wore false beards and long curly hair (Openshaw 2002: 29-30).

The consequences were, however, awfully interesting. First, it was now easily possible for a singer to become a singing star of Baul songs without having any link with the Baul culture and practices. Second, the Baul songs and the style of performing those songs had become fashionable and popular. Third, the educated urban poets and lyricists started to write Baul songs. And fourth, the charming melody of Baul songs, i.e., *Baul sur*, was superimposed randomly upon any genre of songs, i.e., *Kirtan* songs or *Prarthona* (prayer) songs, in order to present them as Baul songs. This crucial changeover had generated a mixed feeling, a sense of ambivalence for the Bauls in the minds of urban middle-class Bengalis which continued to exist for years to come. Every winter, for instance, Rural Baul *akarars*, and *melas* overcrowded with Bengali *bhadraloks* in the adjacent areas of Shantiniketan, vouch for the presumption.

History begins to repeat itself in the post-colonial (West) Bengal chiefly since the late 1960s. It is like the reincarnation of the *amateur* Bauls in the form of *silpi* Bauls. The community-based long heritage of Baul song that is “primarily transmitted orally from guru to disciple and singer to singer”, captured the changes in late 1970s and early 1980s as they gradually came closer and were influenced by Western culture. Bonded with the principles of secularism, equity and humanity, the way of life of the “Minstrels of Bengals”, as the *ascetic-sadhok* Bauls were known, started to move outwards. The traditional Baul folk music and everyday practices of *sadhok* Bauls now tended to exhibit several signs of transformation. First, it was external: musicians other than Bauls and the music industry pick up Baul songs, branding them with popular urban language to attract the younger generation to mass consume





them. Many bands and groups of singers – educated, middle or upper class, urban – experiment with the Baul songs to catch the eyes (and ears) of the budding generation. They use a number of unconventional instruments in order to gloss up their performances: flute, dhol, tabla, khol, harmonium, ramchaki, and ghongroo instead of more basic ones like ektara, dotara, khamak, dugi, and khanjani. They even use guitars (acoustic and bass), drumming kits, octopod, and keyboard in making of fusion Baul music. Second, it was internal too: the new generation of Bauls has developed grave propensity towards a “folk-modern” type of Baul songs. Not only do they go on to re-mix and re-produce the old songs, but they also adopt westernized dress patterns, haircuts, body languages, and even instruments. The use of loud decorations on stage is indicative of the shift from the traditional form of Baul singing that was held in the Baul *akharas* or during soliciting *madbukari* in earlier times.

In the process, the *ascetic* Baul singers identified with his commonplace dirty looks – a ragged *alkhalla* (saffron robe), an orange-clad nomad roaming over placid hamlets with soul-searching songs – is eventually lost and substituted by the *silpi-artist* Bauls who are rather “cosmopolitan performers”, colourful, flamboyant, and smart enough to dazzle their city audience. The “new” *silpi-artist* Bauls, like the historical *amateur Bauls*, are Baul singers without having beliefs in Baulism, and lack true *Baulepana* (natural insanity in the behaviour of a Baul, that is, *Baul-ness*). A transformed Baul’s (*silpi-artist*) perceived outlook is, therefore, is congruent with the primal philosophy of liberalism: that the individual is free to choose his own way of life for his own prosperity; and he has liberty over his body, mind. What he wants to do is defined only by him: a philosophy fundamental to the ideal of globalization. The *silpi-artist Bauls* aspire to re-mold themselves, keeping in view being liberal and global, doing things that the *sadhok Bauls* would never normally do. They travel by motorcycle, they stitch the portrait of Lalan Fakir, or the icon of *ektatra* on their modern clothes, use visiting cards, wear gold-plated wrist watches and jeans. What is most surprising is that they have



developed an endearment for name, fame and greater reorganization.

The popular media helps in bringing the *silpi-artist* Bauls to the global platform and label them as “Global Bauls”. “The significance of a study of Bāuls is no longer confined to the South Asian Context. Recent years have witnessed an immense expansion of the Bāul roles as representative of South Asian spirituality and folk culture” (Openshaw 2002: 4). And they have become increasingly important, “more recently to Euro-Americans” (Openshaw 2002: 3). The avenue to the global stage is open to the *silpi-artist* Bauls having potential and talent, representing his province (Bengal), nation (India), and even South Asia, starting the journey from the “local”: community, people, and area. The great Purna Das Baul reached and overwhelmed the western world from the soil of Shantiniketan, where Tagore founded Visva Bharati University in 1921, in the district of Birbhum of West Bengal: “The rapid absorption of the famed ‘Bāul emperor’ Pūrna Dās, into popular American culture – he features on the front cover of one of Bob Dylan’s albums” (Openshaw 2002:4). He first visited United States of America on the invitation of Albert Grossman, Bob Dylan’s ex-manager to perform in a music festival held in San Francisco in 1967.

An official program schedule regarding the visit of Sanatan Das Baul and his co-singer Kartik Das, two other famous *global* Bauls from the districts of Bankura and Birbhum, West Bengal, to France reads respectively that:

Sanatan Das Baul, born in 1923, has preserved an authenticity linked with his rural mode of life [...] He interpretes [*sic*] Bhatiali, (song of the river) by plying on the *ektara* (stringed lute) on the *dota-ra* (lute with 4 strings) [...]. He celebrates the awakening of the soul (Chakraborty 2010: 90-91).

And:

Kartikdas Baul belongs to the “topsil” caste, linked with agriculture. An old member of “jatra”. [*sic*] a popular musical theatre of Bengal [...]. He became a disciple of Sanatandas Baul [...]. He spe-

cially invokes the Ganga and its cruelty, to the accompaniment of his gab-gubi (Chakraborty 2010: 91).

“Bāul musicians regularly take part in cultural export drives such as the government sponsored Festival of India, and participate in a range of workshops, concerts and other inter-cultural encounters centering on music, dance, poetry, drama, yoga, and meditation” (Openshaw 2002: 4). In this process the (local) *silpi-artist Bauls* turn into global performers, creating “ethnoscapes” (to borrow Arjun Appadurai’s term) just like the individuals from other domains of societies, for the *silpi-artist Bauls* also crave “not just of moving to Poo-na or Madras but of moving to Dubai and Houston” (Appadurai 1996: 34) The force of globalization thus makes the word “Baul” a “generic” one, blurring their “rootedness” and the “identity” they have acquired from their community.

## COMMUNITY, VIOLENCE AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Communities, like many other things in the global order, are not immune to the waves of the forces of globalization. The Bauls as *sampraday* are no exception to the rule. Bauls receive their identities, as *sadhok* or as *gayak* (singer), from the very fact that the community exists. The basis of the organization of Baul community does not simply rest upon its members as community beings (followers of Lalan Fakir and Baul ideals) but the everyday practices and relationships it bears up. It acts as a cementing substance to the community, and it keeps the community alive. Violence is the violation of the integrity which refers to “something that has not been broken, or that has not lost its original form” (Bufacchi 2007: 40). Violence as such means the disruption of the “pre-existing unity” of something. It signifies that to be violated, something has to exist as intact, for it is “the violation of integrity that is the essence of an act of violence, not the injury, suffering or harm” (Bufacchi 2007: 43).

The process and effects of globalization do violence to the age-long community of Bauls in two fundamental ways: first, it



reduces the spirit of the *ascetic-minstrel* Bauls into items of hedonism. The global Baul is now a product associated with global order and demand. The Baul songs, Lalan Fakir himself (better to say his immortal image), their ways of presenting themselves, unprejudiced food habits, the instruments they carry – all have been elevated to the status of export items, commodities, and global spectacle. The proliferation of the Bauls without spiritual or philosophical training or initiation threatens the survival of the rural Bauls at the margins. Such global *silpi-artist* Bauls have now contradictorily been patronized by the *bhadrolok* (at the regional and national level) and by foreign investors and organizers, i.e., *bideshi bhadralok* (at the international level). Moreover, the increasing longing of global Baul after material things, name and fame [an example may be given here: on the visiting card of Purna Das Baul, it is printed that “Baul Samrat, Baul Kiran Ratnakar, Baul Sagar (Benaras), Baul Mani of International fame, Lok Ragashree (Allahabad)” (Chakraborty 2010: 113)] tend to put the Baul ethos at stake. Second, the changing identities of Bauls, from local to global, causes the innate unity of the community as a whole to loosen. Besides, the inward movement of the Baul-loving foreigners to locales of India and Bangladesh put the final blow to the disintegration of the community – the *silpi Bauls* fall prey to money, drugs, and people blindly and easily.

Globalization integrates the Bauls to its process and disintegrates their community at the same time. This paradox of lifting out from the local context and re-situating the global into local, in turn, eventually badly affects the traditional ethnic community life of the Bauls based upon the mundane activities of roaming, singing, begging, and inner soul-searching. For example, as the process of liberalization continues to rapidly curtail rural spaces, so even the *sadhok* Bauls have to look for alternative sources of livelihood to secure basic minimum subsistence. It direly alters the nature and practice of *madbukari* altogether for they are compelled to sing in improper environments such as unfamiliar public places, gatherings, even in the trains, just to survive. If the idea of cosmopolitanism is believed to signify day-to-day aspects of Western life, so the everyday practices of the *sadhok* Bauls – *ascetic* and



*household* alike – point to their cultural life based on organized community and unorthodox philosophy which is acutely damaged, if not completely lost, in the face of such structural and symbolic violence.

The global Bauls are indifferent to the community. The local *sadbok* Bauls are as usual dependent on the community and the identity it provides to them. It seems that the glaring age of globalization is, perhaps, not at all fitting for the cult of Baulism, being a Baul, or living the life of a Baul in conventional ways. The harder they have to struggle for livelihood, the more they would be vulnerable to the overwhelming dictum of globalization that “Life is either a feast or a fast”. The identities of Sanatan Das Baul and Kartik Das Baul written in the programme schedule, as shown above, matter nothing to them even though they had been described as “*bhatiali*” (the folk song of the river) singers, a completely different genre of Bengali folk music. Further, the Baul songs are “not commercial music”; and “although Bauls may be paid for performing, the pay is not contractual and is, at least abstractly, alms rather than a fee” (Capwell 2011: 43). The majority of the global Bauls, to put it succinctly, do not belong to the Baul sect, or community – they are trained singers of Bengali folk songs, professionals who pick Baul songs just to perform. What it means is there are clear differences between a global (*silpi-artist*) Baul and a local (ascetic/household-minstrel) Baul:

[...] for example, a particular Baul-*gān* as sung by Nirmalendu Chowdhury and by Tinkori Dās Baul, though it be the same tune and text, has two different sets of qualities involving such differences as place of performance, audience to whom the performances are directed, the type of accompaniment, and the type of vocal production [...]. Chowdhury is a professional, trained singer of Bengali folk songs who has performed throughout the world and has a teaching post in an important university; Tinkori is a Baul who lives in a village and sings only for such gatherings as village fairs (Capwell 2011:37).

Therefore, many “bona fide” Bauls like Tinkori Dās, who sing with the intention “to perpetuate a tradition and to stir up interest in religious matters” (Capwell 2011: 37) and “earn



their living singing, and because of their songs”, clearly differ from the “modernist” global *silpi-artist* Bauls such as Nirmalendu Chowdhury, or even Purna Das Baul who “is a Calcutta-based professional singer, but he sings Baul-*gān* exclusively, performs only by contract, and has toured the world” (Capwell 2011: 37), eventually supporting their community. Here the global and the local are mediated through community and the everyday life continuing to snatch at the typical ideals these Bauls believe in.

## CONCLUSION

The *sadhok* Bauls believe that they bear cosmic love and relations within their soul and body. They learn from the *gurus* how to be humble, simple, and apathetic (*udasi*) towards worldly things. Both *sadhona* and *singing* represent these cardinal traits. It is then sheer irony if a Baul goes on to find something more desirable outside his own traditional domain, by hampering the intactness of the precept which constitutes his Baul identity in relation to the members of the community. The Baul entity has been capitalized by those who do not bother about the community out of which they make profit. A simple regular program of Baul music where the rural *ascetic* Baul singer and the audience share the same ground-plane known as *sadhuseba* or *sadhusobha*, has fancifully been replicated in the organized global performances of the hired, invited *silpi-artist* Baul(s), where a hierarchy of singer(s) (performing on stage) and the audience (sitting below the stage-level) disrupts the humanitarian Baul ideal metaphorically, equipped with modern technological support and various media – a copy of the copy (to employ Platonic term) which, in fact, lacks the original everyday flavour of Baul spirit. The tension between two terminal poles -the occasional, formal, disjunctive, global showcasing of Baul music on the one hand, and the self-reflective, emotive, local, everyday celebrations of the *ascetic-minstrel* Bauls on the other – thus can be seen as one of the most important interfaces where the notion of cultural globalization, with its pros and cons, is worth looking for.



There is, it may be assumed, a grey zone where both the conceptions of Bauls and corporeal Bauls – *sadbok*, ascetic, household, minstrel, *silpi*, local and global – reside, interact, and influence each other in multiple ways within particular time-space limits. Their identities are, then, subject to constant shifts and change slowly or rapidly resting upon the socio-economic and cultural state of affairs. They are not fixed but are struck by uncertainty: that even a *sadbok-ascetic* Baul may turn into a global *silpi-artist* Baul, as is seen above, in consequence of globalization; or conversely, a global *silpi-artist* Baul may feel irresistible spiritual urge to pursue the assault course of Baul *sadhona*. Or, as an *ascetic-minstrel* Baul tends to construct his own discursive space and comes to negotiate with the dominant forces through songs and everyday practices in local settings, so a global *silpi-artist* Baul, if he ever used to be a *sadbok* Baul, may do the same on a much larger platform, if required or willed. If the proposition is regarded as true that “globalization is itself a deeply historical, uneven, and even *localizing* process” (Appadurai 1996: 17), then it is possible that global and local may come to overlap through the realities which both the *sadbok* Bauls who “continue to be basically rural, ill-educated, and poor” (Capwell 2011: 11) and their community must confront.

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