

‘EVALUATE PATRIOTISM WITH LOGIC!’: INTERRUPTIVE INTERIORITY, NATION AND INDIAN STAND – UP COMEDIES: A TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

ARIKTAM CHATTERJEE

ABSTRACT:

Ernst Renan considers nation to be a spiritual principle, which is characterized by its citizens' common possession of a rich legacy of memories, and the desire to live together with the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form. This spiritual undivided continuity is often prioritized in nationalist constructs, which gloss over through tact and coercion the many sites of oppositions, ambiguities, and fissures that may arise from its numerous constituencies. This paper examines how the question of nationalism is questioned by the burgeoning cultural form of 'stand up comedy' in India. It first undertakes an overview of the theoretical interventions in understanding jokes and its relationship to the comic from within the literary and the psychoanalytic schools of thought. It then brings in the elements of materiality and the model of Eric Berne's transaction analysis (the parent, adult and child) to understand how jokes work within a performance set-up. Next, the article takes up two leading stand up comedies of India, Kunal Kamra and Rahul Subramanian, and analyses two acts from their repertoire that raise the question of nationalism and patriotism using the tools that

have been previously laid out. In conclusion, it reveals how resistance against totalitarian nationalist narratives and ideologies are emerging out of unlikely cultural sites, and how the material condition of its dissemination are making these resistances possible.

Keywords: Stand up comedy in India, Nation and stand up comedy, Transaction Analysis, Transaction Analysis of Jokes, Jokes and Materiality