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**Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College,
Ghatkopar (W), Mumbai-400086.**

Mā Śāradā (1853–1920)

by Amita Valmiki

DOI:10.5040/9781350993785.006

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The “Yellow Peril” and the Visual Politics of Race**(/encyclopedia-chapter?****docid=b-9781472544001&tocid=b-9781472544001-****chapter5&st=Ma+Sarada)**

Sabine Doran

The Culture of Yellow : or, The Visual Politics of Late Modernity

Bloomsbury Academic, 2013

Book Chapter

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... democracy.” Susan Buck Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 89. Buck Morss concludes her chapter on “A Short History of the Square” thus: “Conceived in the revolutionary...

☆ **On Captivation: A Remainder from the ‘Indistinction of Art and Nonart’**

(/encyclopedia-chapter?**docid=b-9781472547378&tocid=b-9781472547378-****chapter3&st=Ma+Sarada)**

Rey Chow and Julian Rohrer

Reading Rancière

Continuum, 2011

Book Chapter

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... of the Avant-Garde, trans. Michael Shaw, foreword Jochen Schulte-Sasse, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. James Clifford (1988), *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard...

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the spiritual movement that was initiated by Sri Ramakrishna. It was a *Vedānta* Movement. The *Mission* was established by Sri Ramakrishna's chief disciple Swami Vivekananda in 1897.

Contribution to the *Mission*

Though Ma Sarada acquired tremendous spiritual guidance from her great spiritual master-husband; she had her own individual spiritual realm. She was a giant in her own rights in spiritual domain and she had her own disciples/followers in *Ramakrishna Mission* – both men and women. She would look after with a tender heart of a mother both her own disciples and Sri Ramakrishna's disciples. She provided a helping hand to Swami Vivekananda to run *Ramakrishna Mission* with full vigour. In this connection she got associated with schools for girls started by Sister Nivedita who was an ardent disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

Ma Sarada believed that Sri Ramakrishna showed the 'motherly instinct' to whosoever came to him; and after his demise she was supposed to continue his legacy by showering the motherly love, forbearance, sacrifice, compassion and care to all living creatures – humans or otherwise. Therefore Swami Vivekananda considered Ma Sarada as 'ideal for women in this modern world.'

At Calcutta, Ma Sarada revitalized her energy by initiating many disciples who were spiritual seekers. It was mainly because of her female devotees that in 1928 *Ramakrishna Sarada Mission* was established in Bagbazar, Kolkata. Like *Ramakrishna Mission*, the *Ramakrishna Sarada Mission* intended to propagate the philosophy of *Ramakrishna Mission* and to initiate social reforms. But the *Ramakrishna Sarada Mission* was not as structured as *Ramakrishna Mission*.

As such Ma Sarada did not write any book. Her speeches in the form of teachings are recorded by her disciples Swami Nikhilananda and Swami Tapasyananda. We have records of her philosophy and her spiritual endeavours in some of the reminiscences from her devotees. She was known for immaculate purity. She never had any physical contact with Ramakrishna.

Religious and Philosophical Pursuits

About devotion, Ma Sarada was of the opinion that surrendering oneself to God and having faith in Him itself is a *sadhana* (spiritual practice). For Ramakrishna, Ma Sarada had said, "Really and truly he was God himself. He assumed this human body to remove the sorrows and sufferings of others....." (1990, 474)

Like Ramakrishna, Ma Sarada believed in religious tolerance and respect to all traditions. Therefore their philosophy was not doctrinal but was creating an edifice for spiritual exploration. Ma Sarada continued the spiritual ministry of her husband for thirty-four years after Ramakrishna's demise. She accepted "*practical Vedānta*" and this is justified by one of her popular quotes, "I tell you one thing – if you want peace, do not find fault with others. Rather see your own faults. Learn to make the world your own. No one is stranger, my child; the whole world is your own." (1997, 11) For her God realization makes an individual qualified to obtain wisdom and enlightenment. Like *Vedānta* philosophy, Ma Sarada believed that it is mind that oscillates between purity and impurity. So taking God's name, the mind dwells in "purity" where mundane pleasures do not hold good for the aspirant. One has to discipline the mind with regular practice of meditation.

Ma Sarada combined in life the spiritual philosophy and its praxis. Her teachings contained the synthesis of philosophy, theology and its practical implications in life. That is very conspicuous in her teachings. All the major doctrines of the Vedanta are mirrored in her teachings. Ma Sarada considered *māyā*, (the illusion producing power of God) is the reason behind this diversified world. Once *jñāna* (wisdom) dawns, this illusory world disappears. *Bhakti* (Devotion) too plays a pivotal role in her philosophy where total surrender to God by renouncing everything is crucial. This bestows on the individual 'the grace of God.' Ma Sarada never underestimated *karma* (action in form of duty). To exhaust the residue of past karma and the effects of fate are consequential in performing one's duty. Therefore renunciation 'in' action is vital. Overall Ma Sarada adopted a holistic philosophy where *jñāna*, *karma* and *bhakti* along with God's grace together raise an individual to the level of spiritual consciousness that transcends the life and death.

Last Days

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In December 1919 Ma Sarada suffered from fever. She was brought to Kolkata, but people witnessed serenity on her face. One of Ma Sarada's disciples and hagiographers, named Durgapuri Devi says a prayer for Ma Sarada in *Sarada-Ramakrishna*, "I prostrate and pray again and again at the lotus feet of Ramakrishna the Teacher of the World and Sarada the Divine Mother." (2003,23) One of the female devotees of Ma Sarada was extremely perturbed seeing Ma Sarada in this fragile condition; to this Ma Sarada consoled the devotee by saying that she need not fear since you (the devotee) have seen the master (Ramakrishna). That she should accept the whole world as her own. Nobody is an outsider. This whole world is your own. It is said this was the last spiritual message of Ma Sarada who continued the legacy of her husband till her death. Ma Sarada breathed her last on 21st July 1920.

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Disciplines

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Movement

Spiritualism

Region

India

Period:

1875-1885

1886-1920

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