

Jainism and society*

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I

Jains in the World: Religious Values and Ideology in India (JW) is the long overdue book version of John E. Cort's widely acclaimed doctoral dissertation *Liberation and Wellbeing: A Study of the Śvetāmbar Mūrtipūjak Jains in North Gujarat* (LW), which was published by UMI in 1989. The slimmed-down shape of the book indicates that it is conceived as a showpiece for an impressive body of supplementary research articles to which the author frequently refers and which should be read in conjunction. The influence of Cort's oeuvre has been immense. In many respects it has dominated the field of Jain studies for more than a decade, because it engaged not only the new sociological and anthropological research, which from 1985 onwards transformed Jain studies from a purely philological, art historical, and archaeological endeavour to a multidisciplinary exploration of a living tradition, but also the dominant Indological discourse on the Jains. The author's probing of the validity of previous 'Orientalist' studies of Jainism, notably the standard portraits by Jacobi (1914), Glasenapp (1925), Schubring (1935) and Jaini (1979), backed up by original data and a new methodology, could not be ignored by anyone in the field. Moreover, while many of the earlier field studies were either descriptive or thematic, with Jain materials used as illustration, Cort's work presented for the first time a comprehensive and detailed picture of Jainism as a lived religion, and offered an exemplary integration of data and theory. Prior to *Liberation and Wellbeing*, no substantial empirical information was available on the religious life of the Mūrtipūjaka or image-worshipping Śvetāmbara Jains in India, in this case a lay community in Pāṭaṇ, who account for up to 30–40 per cent of all Jains today.¹ *Liberation and Wellbeing* was also the first field study in English to make systematic use of the modern vernacular literature of the Jains.² Written in a focused, clear and easily accessible style, Cort's work injected a breath of fresh air into a then stagnant and inaccessible field, and attracted a new generation of students to the still largely unexplored field of Jain studies. It seems worthwhile, therefore, to reflect on the methodology and the wider implications of the theory presented.

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¹ Similar ethnographies on the religious practices of Mūrtipūjaka lay communities in western India have since been published by Banks (1992), Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994), Laidlaw (1995), Babb (1996) and Kelting (2001); not to mention influential articles, notably the programmatic publications of Humphrey (1985), Reynell (1985a), Banks (1985b), Laidlaw (1985), Babb (1988) and Carrithers (1988, 1989) and the volume edited by Carrithers and Humphrey (1991). The only book-length field studies of other Jain traditions are those by M.-C. Mahias (1985), Shāntā (1985) and Valley (2002), plus a number of unpublished doctoral dissertations most of which were produced at European and North American Universities. *Jains in the World* is thematically closely related to the works of Banks (1992), Babb (1996), Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994), and especially Laidlaw (1995): who presented his almost identical theoretical framework in an article in 1985.

² To date, no significant empirical work on the Jains has been produced in India itself. The notable exception is the pioneering study of the sociologist Vilas Sangave 1959/1980, who makes extensive use of local sources. His work is based mainly on the Indian census and survey data and does not convey a picture of contemporary religious practice.

Cort argues that Jainism³ as a lived religious tradition cannot be sufficiently understood through the opposition of doctrine and practice that is favoured both by Jainism as a normative ideology and by modern Indology and Weberian sociology.⁴ From the point of view of lay Jains in the world, the problem is rather one of finding a balance between two contrasting but hierarchically interlinked value-orientations: liberation (*mokṣa*) and wellbeing. This is indisputable, and now widely recognized in the literature. However, both of these value-orientations, which are defined as irreducible to one another, are characterized as ‘Jain values’ by the author, whose main proposition is that for Jains the pursuit of wellbeing is a legitimate religious goal in its own right, albeit a secondary one, and not merely a deviation from the soteriological path. It is argued that the path of liberation (*mokṣa-mārga*), which is often presented as the core or essence of Jainism, and wellbeing, do not represent specifically mendicant and lay values,⁵ but universal value-orientations within Jainism which ‘are found among both’ (JW: 8).⁶

This theory is controversial, both within the Jain tradition itself and within academic discourse on the Jains. Earlier studies, criticized in *Jains in the World*, have dismissed the value of wellbeing as ‘non-Jain’ simply because it is not accessible in textual form as a consciously formulated ‘ideology’ but merely as a ‘value’ which is, if at all, only indirectly expressed in religious practice (JW: 187). With this remark the author implicitly refers to the standard portraits, to Weber and Dumont, and to the pioneering field study of Mahias (1985: 4), who first investigated the duality and contradiction between the explicit values of ‘religion’ (*dharma*) and the implicit values of ‘society’ (*samāj*) in the life of Jain householders,⁷ and demonstrated the difficulty in clearly separating ‘Jain’ and ‘non-Jain’ (‘Hindu’) practices on the level of custom and habit.⁸ The question whether the analytical distinction between values of religion and society can be usefully replaced by a distinction of different spheres of value within ‘a’ religion is still open for debate, and depends to some extent on the chosen etic and emic delimitation of the terms ‘religion’ and ‘society’. Certainly, Max Weber’s (1921/1978: 215, 209) view that there is only one absolute value in Jainism, i.e. salvation, which acts as an obstruction to economic rationalism, was successfully challenged by Reynell (1985a: 29 ff.), Laidlaw (1985: 55 ff., 1995: 359) and Cort (1989; JW), who all pointed to the classical

³ JW does not offer a concise definition of Jainism, but Cort (2002a: 65) writes: ‘most scholars have identified Jainism as a reified body of doctrine that is essentially unchanging over time, whereas I view Jainism as the sum total of the practices and beliefs of all people who call themselves Jains throughout the centuries’. See also Laidlaw’s (1995: 9, 21) concept of ‘Jainism as an enduring form of life’. The terms ‘Jainism’ and ‘Jain’ were, however, not used before the modern period, nor were the identity claims associated with them current. See Weber (1978: 207) and Flügel (2005: 16, n. 12).

⁴ LW and JW (p. 16) criticize earlier textual scholarship for presenting ‘as a model of Jainism what more accurately is a model for Jainism’. See Caillat (2000: 10, 24) for a rejoinder.

⁵ This is claimed by Jaini (1991: 188), Laidlaw (1995), Johnson (1995) and Laughlin (2003) among others.

⁶ For empirical evidence see Flügel (2003).

⁷ See also Banks (1992: 219), Laidlaw (1985: 68 f.), Carrithers (1991b: 264–7), Lath (1991: 29).

⁸ ‘On peut aussi parler de deux systèmes de valeurs, dont l’un est transmis consciemment en tant que devoir et l’autre, sous-jacent à la pratique commune, est pensé comme habitude ou coutume. Les Jaina expriment cela comme une dualité entre “religion” (*dharma*) et “société” (*samāj*). ... Les faits de cette seconde série sont “sociaux” dans la mesure où la doctrine jaina les ignore et où ils assurent la continuité de la communauté jaina et son insertion dans la société globale, car ils dépendent aussi de valeurs hindoues’ (Mahias 1985: 287). Mahias (1985: 53) is not suggesting that on the social level the Jains simply ‘follow the broader Indian rules of purity and pollution’ without considering Jain rules (Cort LW: 247; 2004: 74 f.), but she does not distinguish clearly between social and socio-religious contexts (Khare 1986: 574), and tends to equate Jain social identity with caste and sect, disregarding other, for instance political, dimensions of community formation for which see Banks (1992) and Carrithers and Humphrey (1991).

Jain karman theory, and to apocryphal doctrine interpretations which they documented during fieldwork amongst the Mūrtipūjaka Jains in India, to argue that the accumulation of material wealth is indirectly recognized as a Jain value because it is seen as the fruit of good karman (*punya*).

The important observation that merit-making, that is the accumulation of good karman, is a doctrinally recognized aim compatible with economic rationality, 'not dissimilar from the Calvinist drive', was first made by scholars of modern Hinduism and Buddhism such as Spiro (1970/1982: 431–54),⁹ who showed how the 'Janus-faced' doctrine of karman can help transform the socio-economic order into a moral one, and contributes to a 'profound ambivalence about power' and even to political instability. The idea that the accumulation of *punya*, leading to a better rebirth and material wealth, should be a respectable religious aim in itself is foreign to the early canonical scriptures of the Jains, which do not know of the technical Jain karman theories of the later texts and are largely addressed to salvation-seeking mendicants. It is particularly attractive for lay Jains, which may have been one of the reasons for its elaboration. However, the conception poses a serious problem, namely how to practise renunciation and accumulation at the same time. Spiro (1982: 454) stated the dilemma in unambiguous terms: merit can only be acquired through morality (*dāna*), while wealth 'must be acquired through economic action'.¹⁰ One practical solution to balance the two orientations is to keep merit books in an attempt to reckon good and bad actions. According to the Jain doctrine of karman this is a futile undertaking since every type of karman will come to fruition independently. Another is to define wellbeing primarily theologically in socio-moral rather than material terms.¹¹ In order to analyse alternative strategies of dealing with this dilemma within Buddhism, Spiro (1982: 12) distinguished between worldly action and religious action, and subdivided the latter into *nibbanic* and *kammatic* (two forms of soteriological Buddhism), and *apotropaic* or welfare-oriented action (a form of magical Buddhism), though it remains unclear how specific practices relate to these categories.

With the exception of Goonasekere (1986), who was primarily interested in Spiro's problematic psychological theories, none of the ethnographers of contemporary Jainism took notice of Spiro's useful analytical categories.¹² Most of them thought the answers to their questions could be found in the analysis of observed practice and the opinions of their lay informants, some of whom seemed to act on the assumption that they can have it both ways, given the intrinsic ambiguity of key terms of Jain religious language and the ambivalence of their own intentions. James Laidlaw (1985), who in contrast to Cort distinguished between religious and non-religious actions, analysed the Jain 'language game' in terms of the dual reference of Jain concepts, such as the *aṃvratas* or small vows for the Jain laity, to both the '*mokṣa*-discourse' and

⁹ Bechert (1966, 1978), S. J. Tambiah (1970) and R. Gombrich (1971: 279 f.) also discussed this issue in separate ways. See M. Singer's (1956) somewhat different interpretation of the modern 'Hindu work ethic'.

¹⁰ What exactly an 'economic' action is in this context is not entirely clear. But Spiro is right to contrast ideas and practice. By contrast, Cort and others and Laidlaw (1995: 354) argue that religion and economy are harmoniously integrated in Jain culture through polyvalent symbols such as credit: 'credit (*udhar, sukhi*) is at once an economic and an ethical notion': 'Accumulation can be related dynamically to renunciation in a single life' by alternating between the two orientations 'like "the constant movement of a pendulum"' (p. 363). Spiro (1982: 458 ff.) does not discuss 'social' and 'socio-religious' actions as such in this context, but issues of social integration through rituals, etc.

¹¹ See note 73.

¹² Spiro's 'apotropaic' Buddhism corresponds to Laidlaw's (1985: 65 ff.) 'magical' use of Jain rituals. Weber (1978: 206) interpreted the Jain soteriology itself as a spiritualized 'magical' belief.

the ‘*punya*-discourse’.¹³ JW, p. 145, argues similarly that, because of the existence of at least two hierarchically ordered levels of value within Jainism, in practice every event, action, word, or symbol is ‘open to multiple levels of interpretation’, and that the meaning of all actions and words can ‘oscillate between the two understandings’ (JW: 167). However, Cort does not discuss merit-making in terms of the explicit ambiguities of the *karman* theory or of double standards (Derrett 1980: 144), but in terms of a sphere of value which is not, it is argued, explicitly expressed in Jain doctrine but embedded in practice: ‘The *mokṣa-mārg* ideology and the value of wellbeing are held in unresolved tension because of the multivocality of the symbols by which the two are expressed. According to the *mokṣa-mārg* ideology, an individual has to make a choice between wellbeing and the *mokṣa-mārg*. In practice, the two are held in tension, and people act and live on the assumption that one can have it both ways: following practices of the *mokṣa-mārg* brings wellbeing, and pursuit of wellbeing (within certain boundaries) advances one at least a small way along the *mokṣa-mārg*’ (JW: 200).

What is meant by the analytical categories ideology, value and practice? The term ‘ideology’ is broadly derived from Dumont’s use of the word ‘value-idea’. It is defined as a hegemonic (JW: 186) normative ‘mode of interpreting reality based upon a systematic, idealist quest for order’ which gains religious functions ‘to the extent that such a truth is treated as sacred’ (JW: 10) in the sense of Eliade (JW: 196). The term ‘value’ is reserved for ‘symbolic ideologies’, that is encompassed, unconscious or merely implicitly expressed values, such as wellbeing. Except for general references to the significance of intentionality, the cognitive status of implicit values, and their relationship to practice, remains unexplored in JW, both theoretically and empirically.¹⁴ The investigation of the ‘interaction between the realm of wellbeing and the ideology of the path of liberation’ (JW: 6) in space and time is left to the analyst, who alone, it is argued, is able to uncover the untheorized values of wellbeing which (may) underlie ‘writings, spoken discourse, and rituals’ (JW: 30).¹⁵ This is because there is no single unifying emic term corresponding to the ‘analytical category’ of wellbeing, which refers to a multiplicity of polyvalent terms and concepts designating states of ‘one’s material embodiment’: ‘It is marked by health, wealth, mental peace, emotional contentment, and satisfaction in one’s worldly endeavours. In the Gujarati language, wellbeing is indicated by a family of polyvalent concepts such as *maṅgaḷ*, *śubh*, *kalyān*, *lābh*, *punya*, *śreyas*, *śrī*, *lakṣmī*, and *śānti*, which have a range of overlapping English meanings that include holiness, good fortune, prosperity, wealth, good luck, auspiciousness, goodness, welfare, health, gain, benefit, merit, beauty, calmness, quietude, and peace. The ‘goal’ of this realm, to the extent that it is goal-oriented at all, is a state of harmony with and satisfaction in the world, a state in which one’s social, moral, and spiritual interactions and responsibilities are properly balanced’ (JW: 7). Rather than privileging one or other of the listed Sanskrit terms such as *śubha*, auspiciousness (Carman, Madan, Marglin), *maṅgala*, pure

¹³ Jaini (1985, 1991: 187 f.) also contrasts the ‘path to nirvāṇa’ and the ‘path of merit-making’, but does not focus on the functions of the polyvalence of terms.

¹⁴ JW: 11 f. stresses that ideology is not always at the centre of (Jain) culture. Sometimes implicit values such as wellbeing are foregrounded, though it is not entirely clear how. Dumont’s (1980: 165) theory of the contextual reversal of the levels of value argued that accumulating wealth was recognized as a value only implicitly ‘in traditional India’ since it remained ‘undifferentiated within politics’ (*artha*).

¹⁵ ‘Because the value of wellbeing is not systematically expressed, the student must investigate the various elements constituting this value that are implicitly expressed within the tradition, and then extract these elements for scholarly analysis’ (JW: 187).

auspiciousness (Jaini), or *punya*, merit (Williams, Laidlaw, Jaini, Johnson), which can be lumped together only with difficulty, Cort characterizes the relationships between these terms as ‘family resemblances’ (Wittgenstein)¹⁶ in order to avoid the artificial reification of the ‘implicit’ realm of value which, in his view, has not yet been rationalized or ‘framed’ by Indian intellectuals (JW: 64) and is therefore ‘intractable to precise definition’ (JW: 187): ‘If there were a single Indian term, wellbeing would not be only a symbolically expressed value. It would be a consciously expressed ideology like the *mokṣa-mārg*’ (JW: 188).

II

The theoretical framework of JW is a variant on the influential holistic approach of phenomenological structuralism which was introduced into Asian studies by Dumont (1966/1980), Tambiah (1970) and others, to re-integrate conceptually the ‘great tradition’ and the ‘little tradition’ within a single (syncretic) ‘cultural system’, i.e. the ‘hierarchy’ of values or the ‘cosmology’ of a given society, perceived from a hypothetical participants’ point of view. Burghart (1978), Malamoud (1982), Madan (1985), and others refined this model by introducing notions of ‘multiple’ and ‘revolving’ hierarchies (within the same cultural or social system) but did not substantially alter it. The interesting additional perspective offered in this book is the analysis of the ways in which different, conflicting but intersecting, dimensions of value are integrated within a hierarchical system through the use of multivalent symbols. Within Jaina studies the role of intentional multivocality was investigated first by Williams (1963: xviii–xx) and elaborated in different ways by Laidlaw (1985, 1995) and Cort (1989, 2001), with an emphasis on semantic structure, and by Carrithers (1991b, 1992) and Flügel (1993, 1995–96) with an emphasis on pragmatics, i.e. the strategic uses of multivocal symbols, and the social implications of religious language. The theoretical literature on symbolic systems, tropes, and socio-linguistic pragmatics has greatly influenced the post Weberian and post-Dumontian debate on the status of Buddhist and Jain ideologies within composite cultural and social universes; in particular the analysis of language games (Wittgenstein), speech acts (Austin), indexical symbols (Burke), polythetic categories (Needham), conversational implicatures (Grice), politeness (Brown and Levinson), and communicative action (Habermas). It was sensed that the study of discourse would generate a solution for the theoretical problem of how to conceptualize Jain culture as an independent dimension between the soteriological ideals of Jainism and society at large, given the situational fluidity of boundaries in Indian/South Asian culture and society, which can hardly be depicted as a seamless whole.¹⁷ After the linguistic turn, the relationship between religion and society was generally conceived as indirect, as a discourse mediated by specific symbols and forms of reflexivity, at the cost of social structural analysis. Max Weber (1978: 217) already identified the unclear status of the lay rituals as one of the main ‘weaknesses’ of Jainism, which relies on the rituals of the Brāhmanical social system, because it has not created stable social rituals on its own. Due to the resulting vacillating (*schwankenden*) status of the Jain laity, who find themselves sandwiched between society at large and individual Jain mendicant traditions to whom they are closely connected while simultaneously being strictly separated, Jain

¹⁶ See also Laidlaw (1985: 55).

¹⁷ See Laidlaw (1995: 83, 95) and also Cort (1998).

culture has no clearly identifiable shape.¹⁸ Another key problem, particularly for modern Jain reformers who wish to create a unified 'Jain' society, is the continuing strength of traditional sectarian and caste identities. Most Jain lay rituals are imitations of idiosyncratic monastic paradigms. In addition, (Śvetāmbara) Jains employ Brāhmaṇs for the performance of common Hindu life-cycle rituals. They also worship popular Hindu gods, such as Gaṇeśa, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī for good luck and wellbeing. Williams (1963: 216) argued that even 'the only major element of the layman's religion ... which may be said to belong exclusively to the lay life', that is the custom of image-worship (*pūjā*), is 'one of Jainism's earliest conscious imitations of the Hindu world around'.

While placing himself within the Harvard tradition of Carman and Marglin (1985),¹⁹ whose edited volume *Purity and Auspiciousness in Indian Society* served as a springboard for the present book, Cort refrains from engaging in the wider theoretical debate²⁰ and confines himself to the use of the distinction between univocal and plurivocal symbols. Despite some disclaimers,²¹ *Jains in the World* characterizes the dominant *mokṣa-mārga* 'ideology' as consisting largely 'of literal, nonfigurative statements', and the 'religious values' of wellbeing as only expressed in the form of multivocal symbols, which is debatable, because even the terms of the doctrine of the *mokṣa-mārga* can be used ambiguously.²²

In contrast to Dumont's depiction of India as a cultural whole whose surface variations are governed by an unchanging ideological core (the structural opposition of pure/impure), the method of JW is characterized as 'post-structuralist': 'There is not one structure, different parts of which are more or less visible at different times, that makes up the essence of Jainism. The structures themselves and the relationships among them change over time' (JW: 14 f.). This means that the 'interplay' of the value of the *mokṣa-mārga* and the values of wellbeing is manifest in historically variable forms which are thus generated not by one but by (at least) two mutually irreducible structural oppositions (purity +/-, wellbeing +/-). The two dimensions of purity and wellbeing themselves are conceptualized as unchanging structural constants (though only one appears to be expressed explicitly)—in contrast, for instance, to Max Weber's 'ideal types', which permit the analysis of changing values.

The main problem of this methodological postulate is that it does not correspond to the largely synchronic analysis presented in the body of the text. Instead of pointing out the structural and semantic inconsistencies in the Jain scriptures and investigating the competing interpretations of different doctrinal schools within Jainism, and the rhetoric of specific agents, Cort states, like the classical Indologists and Jain reformers who are criticized for presenting

¹⁸ Although Jainism is recognized as an independent religion by the Indian constitution and by the Census of India, socially and culturally Jains are often treated as 'Hindus', for instance in modern Hindu law, and many Jains tend to identify themselves as 'Hindus', at least in certain contexts.

¹⁹ Cort's (1990: 62) triad of 'ideology, intention, and practice' echoes both Parsons and Shils' (1951/2001: 6 ff.) triangle of 'culture, person and action' and the title of Tambiah's 1985 collected articles. Tambiah's application of the theories of the indexical symbol (Burke) and the shifter (Jakobson) is, however, not taken up in JW.

²⁰ Cort (1997: 104) describes the works of Malamoud 1982, Madan 1985, and Needham 1975 as his immediate sources of inspiration, but does not discuss the differences between a 'revolving hierarchy' (Malamoud) and a 'polythetic classification' (Needham). See Banks 1992: 228 and Carrithers 2000 for other applications of Needham's concept of polythetic categories to the Jain case.

²¹ JW: 11, 186.

²² The names of the Jinas can serve as 'auspicious' mantras, etc. The Jain versions of the two-truth theory postulate that all concepts have primary and secondary meanings in accordance with the transcendental and the conventional points of view. See also fn. 73.

the *mokṣa-mārga* ideology as the ‘core or essence of Jainism’ (JW: 200), that the doctrine of the path of liberation ‘as explicitly spelled out some two thousand years ago in *Tattvārtha Sūtra* chapter 1 and *Uttarādhyana Sūtra* chapter 28 has remained remarkably consistent throughout subsequent Jain history’ (JW: 186): ‘my discussion will present it as an unchanging, timeless, eternally true system. ... There is a history of the *mokṣa-mārg*—albeit a history that exhibits greater conceptual conservatism than do most ideologies—and there are multiple, sometimes conflicting viewpoints within the ideology’ (JW: 16). As alternative ‘minimal definitions’ of what it is to be a Jain in practice, Jain vegetarianism (JW: 130), and the participation in annual festivals (JW: 144) such as the *saṃvatsarī pratikramaṇa* (JW: 160) are mentioned.²³

Further methodological conundrums, which the author himself would have preferred to avoid, are connected with the problem of the ‘residuals’ in the Neo-Kantian philosophy of value which underlies the Dumontian approach, and the problem of methodological holism: ‘The holism of north Gujarat Jain life is a heuristic fiction. But it is not untrue. I have chosen for strategic purposes to imagine the Jain culture of North Gujarat as a whole; I could have just as easily chosen to emphasize the ways in which it is not a whole. That would have been another book’ (JW: 15). Without presupposing a concrete whole, the universe of discernible elements of a chosen field of study cannot be defined. However, in JW holism is not just a heuristic or rhetorical feature, but a key premise of the presented analysis of ‘implicit realms of value within a culture’ (JW: 12). Without presupposing a Jain ‘culture’ (*saṃskṛti*), ‘society’ (*samāja*), or ‘community’ (*saṅgha*) as an entity,²⁴ it may as well be argued that, in many contexts, non-Jain values rather than (or in addition to) secondary Jain values are implicated in polyvalent ‘Jain’ terms, as indeed Williams (1963: xviii–xix, xxiii), Jaini (1985a: 89 f.), Mahias (1985: 287), Laidlaw (1985: 68 f., 1995), Carrithers (1991b: 280 f.) and occasionally the author himself (Cort 1991: 392, 406) have suggested. Implicit contextual meaning knows, after all, no ideological boundaries. In another publication, written ten years after LW, the author adopts L.A. Babb’s (1996: 194) view that the unit of study should be ‘South Asia’²⁵ rather than ‘Jainism and the Jains’ as in JW: ‘Jainism so-called is Indian civilization, just from a particular angle of vision’ (Babb, cited in Cort 1998: 12). Yet, the problem of reification is not solved in this manner, just shifted up one dimension (back to Dumont).²⁶

III

Both the advantages and the disadvantages of Cort’s chosen method are evident in the analysis of the data. The advantages are obvious: numerous examples cited from liturgical texts which were used in the ritual performances observed by the author²⁷ demonstrate that the theory of the two levels of value

²³ Banks (1992: 228) identified three ‘common core features’: ‘the person of Mahavira as a focal point, the concept of ahimsa, the existence of an ascetic order’.

²⁴ The word *samāj* can mean both ‘society’ and (organized) ‘community’.

²⁵ Laidlaw (1995: 95) made a similar point, but used the term ‘Hindu public culture’.

²⁶ Cort (1998: 5) criticizes ‘the pitfalls in studying the Jains from any overly restricted perspective’ and ‘the misleading assumption that the Jains constitute a single entity in the face of the larger social reality of South Asia’ (p. 8). He rightly states: ‘We do not have a single Jainism, but multiple Jainisms, and multiple visions of what Jainism is’ (p. 13).

²⁷ Four practices are featured in the book: the two main forms of image-worship of the Mūrtipūjakas: *caitya vandana* (image veneration) and the *aṣṭaparakāri pūjā* (eightfold worship), and two of the most significant annual festivals: *pariyuṣaṇa* and *divālī*. See Laidlaw (1995: 387) for a similar analysis of the ‘Jain idiom’ of ‘this-worldly well-being’ in the Jain *divālī* celebrations, and other Jain rituals. Similarly Babb 1996.

reflects key aspects of Jain ‘ritual culture’ that have not previously been studied.²⁸ Clearly, most Jains are not desirous of salvation but rather of a better life in this world or in the next. According to classical Jain doctrine, both aims can be achieved through the accumulation of good karman (*puṇya*) via gift giving, worship, etc. However, the question of the extent to which good karman is beneficial for advancement on the path of salvation, which ultimately demands the destruction (*nirjarā*) of both bad and good karman, primarily through asceticism, is disputed within the tradition.²⁹ To make the practice of asceticism attractive (JW: 91), the language of wellbeing is sometimes explicitly used by Mūrtipūjaka Jain mendicants to highlight the simultaneous salvific and worldly effects of *tapasyā*.³⁰ ‘Both outer and inner riches are gained from the glory of *tap*’.³¹ The clearest evidence supporting the main thesis of the book is given in the description of the two key annual festivals of the Jains which evince a ‘temporary encompassment of the *mokṣa-mārg* ideology by the value of wellbeing’ (JW: 159): the *pariyuṣaṇa* week, the most important religious festival of the Śvetāmbara Jains during which the *Kalpa Sūtra* is worshipped (‘Wealth, the Jina-speech is wealth’)³² and the symbols of the auspicious fourteen prenatal dreams of Mahāvira’s mother auctioned; and the *Dīvālī* = *Mahāvira Nirvāṇa* festivities where the ritual invocation of the value of material wellbeing can be observed during the Ghaṇṭākarna worship and the account book *pūjā*, etc. The descriptions of these rituals, which are not performed by most aniconic Jain traditions,³³ show that many mantras, stories and hymns of the liturgical rituals which Mūrtipūjaka mendicants created for their lay followers contain ‘simultaneous emphases on liberating knowledge and gain of wellbeing’ (JW: 164) by using words that ‘are themselves multi-valent, pointing toward both the *mokṣa-mārg* and wellbeing, and so are understood to be efficacious for both’ (JW: 185). Moreover, the congregational performance of the *pariyuṣaṇa* rituals has positive effects both for the individual and for the religious community in its ‘twofold emphasis, on the one hand on asceticism and nonharm to improve one’s karmic balance, and on the other hand on reinforcing the unity of the Jain community’ (JW: 150).

IV

The disadvantages of the chosen approach are less visible. The second chapter of JW provides a detailed overview of the history and social structure of the Jain laity in Pāṭaṇ and supplies much needed information on the Mūrtipūjaka

²⁸ Babb (1996: 11) defined ritual culture as ‘an internally coherent body of skills, kinetic habits ..., conventions, expectations, beliefs, procedures, and sanctioned interpretations of the meaning of ritual acts’.

²⁹ ‘Merit can be rewarded at any of three levels: by fortune in this life, by an auspicious reincarnation in the *deva-loka* or in a *bhoga-bhūmi*, and by release from the cycle of existence. In popular Jainism where the second aim rates as high as the third it becomes as important to build up a good karma (which is not in harmony with the creed) as to destroy all karma’ (Williams 1963: xix). There is no evidence for this conception in the oldest scriptures.

³⁰ Schubring (2000: 316) maintained that such ‘concessions’ to popular beliefs ‘have nothing at all to do with the road leading to salvation’. But JW: 141 rightly emphasizes that, according to classical Jain karman theory, wellbeing (*puṇya*) is a recognized side-effect of *tapas*. ‘Hindu’ forms of instrumental fasting (*vratā*) are invariably criticized by the Jains (JW: 140).

³¹ Vijaya Dharma Sūri (1868–1923), in JW: 139. Implicit references to wellbeing are detected in terms such as *śukha*, joy, *sānti*, peace, *abhaya*, fearlessness, *ānanda*, bliss. The common belief that asceticism generates supernatural power (*siddhi*), which attracted many kings as well, is not discussed in JW: 140 f.

³² Refrain of Paṇḍit Virvijay’s 1826 *Pistālīś Āgam Pūjā*, a hymn for the ‘Worship of the Forty-Five Scriptures’ (JW: 152).

³³ The account book *pūjās* of the Terāpanth Śvetāmbaras, for instance, do not generally involve Jain symbols.

Tapā Gaccha mendicant tradition to which the majority adhere. The methodological focus on the local following of a single mendicant tradition, ‘the *caturvidha saṅgha* of the Tapā Gaccha in Patan’ as part of the Jain culture in North Gujarat, represents a major advance in the study of the Jains, compared to the prevailing thematic approaches. However, by privileging only one dimension of the complex spectrum of sectarian categories, the social divisions of the Jains, which cut across the religious divisions,³⁴ and the intra-sectarian divisions are made invisible. At the same time, selected local and sectarian variants of widely practised rituals gain the status of universal paradigms through a process of abstraction.³⁵ Most of these problems could have been avoided if the differences between the sub-sects (*samudāya*) of the Tapā Gaccha had also been investigated, which, if the presented evidence can be believed, inform most of the ritual practices of the Tapā Gaccha Mūrtipūjaka Jain laity in Pāṭaṅ (there are at least twenty-seven independent monastic orders within the Mūrtipūjaka tradition nineteen of which belong to the Tapā Gaccha, not to speak of other Jain traditions which are underrepresented in Pāṭaṅ). Instead, the book is predicated on the hypothesis that ‘nowadays’ the (Tapā Gaccha) Mūrtipūjaka Jains in Pāṭaṅ form a single community, or *sakaḷa saṅgha*, whose members occasionally congregate in the two citywide ‘pilgrimage temples’ rather than being, as elsewhere in contemporary India, internally divided according to sect, caste, region of origin and neighbourhood affiliation. This assumption underlies all chapters, although it does not tally with the information given on p. 147 that the local neighbourhood congregations form separate *pariyuṣaṇa* assemblies, which demonstrates that the category of the *sakaḷa saṅgha* is of limited practical relevance.³⁶ Moreover, the rivalry between the lay congregations (*saṅgha*) of the two citywide temples replicates the competition between the two principal branches (*śākhā*) within the Tapā Gaccha, the Vijaya Śākhā and the Sāgara Śākhā, which are further subdivided into a number of mutually exclusive mendicant orders (*samudāya*) some of which, Cort notes, have ‘specific affiliations’ with one or more of the eighty Jain neighbourhood communities in Pāṭaṅ (JW: 52).³⁷ The boundaries of these *śākhās* and *samudāyas* are described as ‘fuzzy’ (JW: 46) and ‘informal’ (JW: 51), despite the fact that the mendicants of different *samudāyas* of the Tapā Gaccha are generally not even allowed to eat together because they observe slightly different rules.³⁸ The ideological holism of the Mūrtipūjaka Jain lay community in Pāṭaṅ (whose members live predominantly in Mumbaī and Amadāvād)³⁹ thus seems to be an often invoked but rarely implemented communal ideal which deliberately papers over the tangible sectarian differences which determine ritual practices and religious identity in day-to-day life.⁴⁰ In the light of the presented evidence, which is corroborated by accounts of similar ‘imagined communities’⁴¹ amongst the Jains, it remains doubtful whether ‘today the *sakaḷa saṅgha* is the final authority within the Jain community, with

³⁴ See Sangave (1980: 67) and Banks (1985b: 46). JW, pp. 57–60, highlights the common features of the six principal (Jain) Vāṇiyā or merchant castes in Pāṭaṅ; for instance that they live ‘mixed together’ in the same neighbourhoods, and are ‘lumped together by non-Jains’.

³⁵ See the enormous variation in the medieval ritual texts investigated by Williams (1963).

³⁶ *Pariyuṣaṇa* is generally performed collectively by the local followers of a particular sub-sect.

³⁷ Personal guru veneration ‘cuts across any traditional allegiances to *samudāy* or *gacch* based on family or neighbourhood’ (JW: 114).

³⁸ Personal communication of Acārya Jaya Sundara Sūri in Mumbaī, 23 October 2003, and by Tapā Gaccha monks from other *samudāyas*.

³⁹ See JW: 57 f. and Cort (2004: 97) on the ‘fictive identity’ of the Pāṭaṅ Jain merchant castes which is only ‘in the metropolis becoming a social reality’.

⁴⁰ ‘I must stress that although all Jains of Patan recognize the division between these two *saṅghs* in practice, in conversation they also deny that the division has any real importance’ (JW: 50).

⁴¹ See Carrithers (1991b: 285) who, like Cort, did not touch the issue of Jain communalism.

authority over even the heads of the *samudāys*' (i.e. the *ācāryas*), since 'this authority remains largely on the level of abstract ideology, and cannot be directly translated onto the level of practice' (JW: 50).

V

JW is not primarily concerned with the specific religious, socio-historical or economic aspects of the life of the Jains in Pāṭaṇ. It concentrates rather on the investigation of the constitutive features of contemporary 'Jain culture' as a whole, that is the ways in which the participation in rituals and ceremonies 'reaffirms the individual in his or her identity as Jain' (JW: 142). Following the method advanced by L. A. Babb (1996: 13 f.), three of the four substantial chapters of the book (ch. 3–5)⁴² focus on the 'structural variants of the same basic interaction' with 'sacred others' (JW: 61), i.e. the interaction with deities, mendicants, and with the inner self.⁴³ Chapter 6 finally shows, through a description of 'the' Jain religious year (JW: 183), how these key elements are weaved together to form 'a distinct Mūrtipūjak ritual culture' (JW: 142).

The method of presentation is to contrast selected textual paradigms with generalized descriptions of observed ritual practice, sporadically interpolated with examples of individual performances.⁴⁴ In contrast to Humphrey and Laidlaw's (1994) theory of the 'lack of fixed meanings' in (Jain *pūjā*) rituals,⁴⁵ Cort believes, in my view correctly, the orientation towards the 'single meaning' of each ritual as a whole as outlined in textual paradigms to be 'essential' for Jain ritual practice (JW: 220, n. 4).⁴⁶ Jain ritual is more informed by 'intentionality and theology' (JW: 71) than by orthopraxy and by the freedom of the individual to pick and choose ritual elements to construct a personal style of worship.⁴⁷ He points to five observed limits of choice: the influence of the family tradition, the occasion, the physical layout of the temple (JW: 84), and the main 'two concerns of the worshiper': to avoid moral faults (*āsātana*) and to conform to the spiritual meaning of the rituals (*bhāva*) (JW: 71). Thus, there are 'multiple ideological interpretations of the acts, demonstrating both the ideological concern that there should be a single meaning and at the same time the fact that the actions cannot be so reduced to a single meaning' (JW: 72).⁴⁸

The generally freshly translated ritual texts are those used by the participants themselves. Cort's guides in this matter are lay informants rather than local experts or scholars (JW: 14), though, sadly, their own voices—expressions of lived experience—can hardly be heard. The texts are selected from a variety of Mūrtipūjaka traditions (JW: 88 ff.) for only one purpose: to demonstrate that by composing widely used liturgical texts which sometimes invoke the value of wellbeing 'some *sādhus* have promoted cults specifically

⁴² The work is in seven chapters: (1) Ideology of the path to liberation; (2) Jains and Jainism in Pāṭaṇ; (3) Going to the temple: how to worship God; (4) Gifting and grace: patterns of lay-mendicant interaction; (5) Holy asceticism; (6) Remembrance and celebration: the Jain religious year; (7) Ideologies and realms of value.

⁴³ Cf. Laidlaw (1995: 19) on 'ethics'.

⁴⁴ 'I will present the ideological prescriptions ... and then show how elements of these are used as the building blocks for distinctive personal styles of worship' (JW: 64).

⁴⁵ Humphrey and Laidlaw's (1994: 109, n. 14) views were inspired by the work of Frits Staal.

⁴⁶ Similarly Jaini (1979: 189) ('common spirit') and Babb (1996: 198, n. 7).

⁴⁷ 'In the concepts of *cāitya-vandan* and eightfold *pūjā* we see attempts to frame a complex range of actions and intentions within a single ideology. Framing here expresses a concern with boundedness, with keeping the activity within a framework of *mokṣa-mārg* ideology' (JW: 64).

⁴⁸ See Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994: 132) who, according to Cort (1997: 107), are 'engaged in a theological and philosophical debate with the Jain tradition'. Humphrey and Laidlaw's theory of ritual seems to have more in common with Sāṃkhya than with Jain philosophy.

designed to respond to the laity's worldly needs' (JW: 91).⁴⁹ Most of the selected passages belong to the genre of the contemporary Mūrtipūjaka *Śrāvakācāra* literature, which is based on medieval paradigms.⁵⁰ A wealth of new information on the eighteenth–twentieth century authors of the largely unstudied ritual manuals and their respective sectarian agendas is scattered in the footnotes. Since the study is mainly generalizing and theoretical in orientation, the texts are not reproduced in the original, nor are the rituals situated within specific contexts. Generalizations about 'Jain ritual culture' as a whole are difficult on the basis of these sources, for one because no prescriptions for image worship can be found in the older strata of the canon, as criticized by the aniconic Jain traditions. By contrast, the texts concerning ascetic practice have canonical precursors. It will be an important task for future scholarship to analyse the different interpretations, for instance, of the efficacy of various ritual practices offered by Tapā Gaccha intellectuals and to compare them, say, with those of the aniconic Jain traditions. Compilations of contemporary Jain views on the putative karmic effects of *pūjā* inevitably invite the conclusions of Cort and Laidlaw (1995: 68), that despite sustained Jain efforts to achieve a 'consistent interpretation', the 'connection between theology and the efficacy of *pūjā* is not one of them' (JW: 99). Functional theories are generally hard to prove.

VI

One of the most significant contributions of JW is the presentation of overwhelming evidence for the prevalence of devotional practices amongst the Jains. Cort demonstrates that the perceived potential of Jain *bhakti* to generate both purification and wellbeing, either indirectly through the purification of karman (the *kammatic* perspective) or directly through the request of the assistance of 'tantric' Jain protector gods and goddesses (the *apotropaic* perspective), involves both explicit and implicit appeals to the grace of the liberated Jinas (JW: 98, 100). Because classical Jain doctrine describes the Jinas as transactionally absent,⁵¹ Schubring (2000: 316), Williams (1963: xix) and Jaini (1985a, 1985b, 1991: 187) dismissed such practices as corrupted forms of 'popular religion', or 'Hinduisation'.⁵² Cort, by contrast, emphasizes their integral role in Jain ritual culture (probably assuming that any action performed in the context of a Jain ritual that is backed by a Jain ritual text is a 'Jain' practice).⁵³ Convincing evidence is presented in the form of Jain hymns and mantras, written in Prakrit, Sanskrit and Gujarati, which invoke the wish-fulfilling qualities of correct faith, of the Jinas (JW: 67–9), and of the minor Jain gods and goddesses, such as the hitherto unstudied guardian deity Ghaṇṭākarna Mahāvīra (JW: 91, 164–8). A new translation of the canonical *Caturviṃśatistava*, the liturgically important standard *Āvaśyaka Sūtra* hymn to the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, corrects Williams' (1963: 195 f.) earlier English rendition of the explicit request to the Jinas to give health (*arogga*) in verse six, but adds a variant of Williams' symbolic interpretation in brackets without comment: 'the Perfect Ones, may they grant the benefits of health [= liberation] and knowledge, and the best, highest enlightenment' (JW: 66). The significance of such forms of devotional worship and of references to the grace

⁴⁹ This is also Schubring's (2000: 316) point.

⁵⁰ See Williams (1963).

⁵¹ Babb's (1996) terminology.

⁵² Jaini (1979: 189) prefers to speak of the 'Jaina-ization' of Hindu practices, assuming that outwardly imported forms have, throughout, been given different meanings by the Jains.

⁵³ On 'true' Jainism see for instance Jaini (1979: 146), Laidlaw (1995: 394), and critically Dundas (1993: 253).

of the Jinas in standard Jain liturgy were downplayed by earlier commentators on doctrinal grounds, although Leumann (1934: 3 ff.) already identified and translated 'die Bhakti-Partien' of the canonical *Āvaśyaka Sūtra*, and Alsdorf (1965: 8) highlighted in general terms the significance of Tantric elements in medieval Jain liturgical texts.

The comparison between Jain and 'Hindu' *bhakti* is one of the main themes running through the book. Before Cort, only Jaini (1979: 163, cf. pp. 194 f.) had written on this subject, arguing that even though 'the Hindu concept of *iṣṭa* has exerted a certain amount of influence', 'Jaina devotionism is oriented not towards a chosen deity (*iṣṭa-devatā*) but toward an ideal, the attainment of *kevalajñāna*; thus reverence is given to all beings who have been or are actively engaged in pursuit of that ideal'. Babb (1996: 177, *pace* p. 93), by contrast, interpreted all types of Jain *bhakti* as variations of a 'common South Asian theme'. The main proposition of Cort is that most Jain lay rituals, apart from *tapasyā*, are forms of *bhakti*.⁵⁴ In JW, he follows Babb (1996: 191) in defining *bhakti* as a form of 'interaction with sacred others', without, however, explicitly adopting Babb's (1996: 13 f.) initial characterization of the 'object of worship' as a living entity which 'reacts', since this would contradict both common Jain beliefs and Jain doctrine which is, in the last instance, always privileged by the author. The two-pronged argument firstly identifies 'similar attitudes within Jain practice, of lay veneration (*vandan*), worship (*pūjā*), and devotion (*bhakti*) of mendicants' (JW: 111) by implicitly privileging a particular strand of Mūrtipūjaka theology which deliberately stretches the meaning of key ritual terms to include alms-giving (*dāna*),⁵⁵ and secondly postulates that the underlying 'ideology of interaction' is 'analogous ... to the ideologies found in Hindu bhakti traditions', although there are 'differences in the understanding of the transactional ontology involved'.⁵⁶ Although the conceptual relationship between 'ideology' and 'ontology' is not explicated,⁵⁷ Cort's analysis of the ideology of 'different transactional universes' of Jains and Hindus, i.e. of 'the Jain gift' (*dāna*) to mendicants, and of 'the Hindu gift' to Brahmins or Gods⁵⁸ significantly qualifies prevalent notions of 'the Indian gift'. According to the Jain *mokṣa-mārga* perspective *karman*/impurity cannot be transmitted to others but has to be purified or annihilated by the subject itself through one-sided acts of renunciation, despite Jain popular beliefs.⁵⁹ The Jains, in the words of McKim Marriott (1976: 122, 127) and Babb (1996: 193 f.), doctrinally live in a non-transactional ritual universe of 'symmetrical non-exchange' or 'zero-way transactions',⁶⁰ though the form of the observable ritual practices

⁵⁴ Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994: 8) adopt J. Atkinson's distinction between 'liturgy-centred' and 'performance-centred' rituals to describe the difference.

⁵⁵ Williams (1963: 216) noted that '*pūjā* [worship by offering material objects] ... is often by the Śvetāmbara voluntarily confounded with the *caitya-vandana* [praise of the Jina image]' and the semantic range of the word extended to pilgrimages, copying scriptures, or alms-giving.

⁵⁶ 'The relationship between *bhakti* and guru among the Śvetāmbara Mūrtipūjak Jains in many ways resembles those in the guru-bhakti cults that are becoming a dominant form of contemporary urban Hinduism, as recently studied by Lawrence Babb (1986). A major difference, however, is that the Śvetāmbara Mūrtipūjaka guru remains a human being, albeit a special, powerful human being, whereas among Hindu guru cults the guru tends to assume the status of a deity' (JW: 116). The argument is further complicated by a comparison between Digambara and Śvetāmbara practices for which complex evidence is cited at JW: 107 and JW: 114.

⁵⁷ The use of the terms contrasts with Babb's (1996: 176) distinction between differences in 'ideas' and similarities in 'ritual culture'.

⁵⁸ As theorized by Heesterman, Parry, Raheja and Babb (1996: 174–95).

⁵⁹ See Reynell (1987: 355).

⁶⁰ The assumption of Marriott (1976: 135) and authors such as Bayly (1983), Reynell (1985a: 31f.; 1985b), Laidlaw (1995: 60; 1995: 354), or Cort of an 'isomorphous' character of moral with economic and political transactions, and the resulting depiction of Jain merchants as 'minimal transactors' rather than 'optimal transactors' does not reflect empirical practice. See Flügel (1995–96: 163) and footnotes 10 and 76.

has been characterised by Jaini (1979: 193) and Cort (JW) as a 'one-way transaction'. Because Cort privileges a model of *bhakti*, which takes only the perspective of the 'giver' into account, the difference between *pūjā* to the transactionally absent Jinas and *dāna* to the transactionally present mendicants becomes invisible. As a consequence, JW remains fundamentally ambiguous on the points of similarity and difference between Jain and (Vaiṣṇava) Hindu practices, although it establishes clear contrasts between Jain doctrine and documented practices. Cort observes that, though non-transactional in theory, in practice, mendicants are dependent on transactions with the laity and act in turn primarily as a source of *puṇya*⁶¹ for the Jain laity, who rarely offer alms for the exclusive purpose of annihilating karman.⁶² He even finds a 'similar understanding' in the way in which a one-way offering to a Hindu guru can 'deliver up impurities ... which are taken by the guru into or onto himself' (Babb 1986: 66, cited in JW: 111).⁶³ Doctrinally only 'the end position for the recipient is different, for the Jain mendicant does not have the added *pāp* to contend with' (JW: 109). The same cannot be said of the Jinas and their images. The interpretation of the new evidence on 'Jain' *bhakti* therefore remains somewhat inconclusive. The stress on the similarities between Mūrtipūjaka and Hindu *bhakti*, imported from Babb, also seems slightly exaggerated, as are the remarks on the differences between Digambara and Svetāmbara styles of mendicant–laity transaction.⁶⁴ The ethnographic evidence presented certainly does not support the rejection of the Hinduization theory.

A first attempt to move away from the characterization of *bhakti* as a form of interaction has since been made by Cort (2002a: 62 f., 2002b: 738) where *bhakti* is re-defined as a form of 'veneration' (of diverse objects: 'sober' or 'enthusiastic').⁶⁵ At the same time, the non-derivative nature of Jaina *bhakti* is re-emphasized. Cort (2002b: 738) went even further by proposing 'to conceive of *bhakti* as a style of religiosity, one that can be applied to almost any religious content' and suggested the 'term *enthusiasm* ... as an alternative gloss'; while M. W. Kelting (2001: 113), emphasized the Jain commitment to 'the right sentiment'. Yet the problems underlying the equation of *pūjā* and *dāna* cannot be solved in this way.

VII

Jains in the World is a pioneering book which even in its earlier version (LW) succeeded in fundamentally changing received views of Jainism as a purely world-negating religion, and opening up new avenues for research, notably on tantric and devotional forms of Jainism.⁶⁶ Like all influential studies, it will

⁶¹ Lay Jains are, in Cort's words, 'not so much concerned with the removal of *pāp* through *dān* as they are with the generation of *puṇya* [here: auspiciousness, P.F.] through *dān*' (JW: 109). On this issue see also Laidlaw (1995: 289 ff., 390), who does not take account of LW. He describes the 'transaction' as a 'barter' in which the interplay of incompatible schemes needs to be negotiated (p. 320). For alternative interpretations of Jain conceptions of *dāna* see Flügel (1995–96: 126–8) and Dundas (2002b: 1 f.).

⁶² According to Jain karman theories, the gift of pure food, with the right attitude, to the right person contributes either to both the annihilation of *pāpa* and the accumulation of *puṇya*, or just to the annihilation of karman. Cf. *Viy* 8.6.

⁶³ The words *śuddha* and *asuddha*, JW: 90, 192, 222 n. 39, do not appear in the index of the book.

⁶⁴ Particularly in the light of the fascinating section on the controversial practice of *guru pūjā* amongst the followers of the Tapā Gaccha *ācārya* Rāma Candra Sūri, who by performing the nine-fold *aṅga pūjā* (which is usually reserved for Jina statues) to his body blurred the distinction between the liberated Jinas and the living mendicants 'in the same manner that Vaiṣṇavs oftentimes conflate Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa and their living gurus' (JW: 114).

⁶⁵ Leumann (1934: 7) distinguishes between verses of 'prayer' and 'veneration' in the canonical *Āvaśyaka Sūtra*.

⁶⁶ Gombrich and Obeyesekere (1988: 56) define Tantra as 'the doctrine that the same observances may yield either material benefits (*bhukti*)—notably power—or salvation (*mukti*)'.

attract as much praise as criticism, not least from Jain schools which explicitly reject the doctrine of two realms of Jain value. In the light of alternative Jain conceptions, such as the Terāpanth Svetāmbara tradition's unambiguous distinction between religious (*dharmik*) and worldly (*laukik*) realms of value,⁶⁷ which overlaps with Dumont's theory of Jainism as a 'religion of the individual/choice', or sect, which is superimposed upon a 'religion of the group', such as caste, etc., one must question whether the admirable integration of theory and data accomplished in JW is not due to the replication of fundamental features of the Mūrtipūjaka theology.⁶⁸ The latter's differentiation between *nivvānic* and *kammatic* Jainism,⁶⁹ as paradigmatically formulated in the cited *Tattvārtha Sūtra* and the *Śrāvakācāra* texts of Hemacandra (YS) and other medieval authors, is enacted in the Mūrtipūjaka ritual culture. At this point, the reader might ask to what extent Cort's theory really differs from the 'normative model of Jainism' posited by classical Indology.

In my view, the construction of an opposition between the explicit doctrine of liberation and an implicit value of wellbeing is problematic, because it does not distinguish clearly between ideas and practice, and thus does not address the crucial question of the articulation of Jain and non-Jain values⁷⁰ and practices in a given 'lifeworld'—a concept which is missing in the chosen analytical framework.⁷¹ The word 'wellbeing' itself is used ambiguously in JW, maybe fittingly, since it refers to qualities which are partly explicit and partly implicit (from the point of view of Jain doctrine). Without further conceptual distinctions, the analytical usefulness of the term is limited.⁷² The principal, mutually incompatible, components may be labelled Wellbeing A (spiritual and socio-religious wellbeing as defined by Jain doctrines) and Wellbeing B (material wellbeing based on practices not discussed or rejected by Jain doctrines). If wellbeing is indeed interpreted, as in JW, as the state of 'balance' between the contrasting ideals of liberation and material wellbeing, it can only be defined as a 'Jain value' in the first sense, which is itself ambiguous and should be further sub-divided into A1 and A2 along the lines suggested by P. S. Jaini.⁷³ Material wellbeing *per se* is not a Jain value,⁷⁴ though it may be a value of

⁶⁷ As a textual example for the Jain value of wellbeing, Cort (1991: 393 f.) cited Hemacandra's YS 1.47–56, which lists thirty-five qualities of the ideal layman who balances the ends of *dharmā*, *artha*, and *kāma*. Yet, 'There is nothing specifically Jain about this list' (p. 392). By contrast, the equivalent list of the Terāpanthis defines a 'wellbeing' vocabulary in unambiguously other-worldly terms. See Flügel 1995–6: 125, n. 18; 154, n. 64.

⁶⁸ Or more generally the theology of image-worshipping Jain traditions.

⁶⁹ Terms adopted from Spiro (1982). The two levels of value in Jain karman theories, corresponding to the aims of liberation and of better rebirth respectively, are interpreted differently by the Jain sectarian traditions.

⁷⁰ See Cort's (1987) similar critique of Mahias (1985); and Cort (1998).

⁷¹ Habermas (1981: 222 f., 228, 338–51) has criticized Parsons, and argued that it is necessary to conceive the lifeworld as both 'socially' integrated through symbolically mediated communicative actions and 'functionally' integrated through 'systemic mechanisms' based on the unintended consequences of actions. I have tried to apply this perspective in Flügel (1995–96, forthcoming), but definitions of 'society' are many, even within the Jain tradition.

⁷² The liberation/wellbeing opposition is also overdetermined, since several distinctions are amalgamated into one. It seems preferable to speak, like the Jain tradition itself, of transcendental and conventional perspectives (*naya*) in this context, rather than invoking substantive values which are controversial within the tradition itself. See Ryan (1998: 77) and Flügel (1993, 1995–96: 124, n. 14).

⁷³ Jaini (1985a: 90 f.) argues that the equation of ascetic purity (*śuddha*) and auspiciousness (*maṅgala*) was an innovation of the Buddhists and Jains. As a consequence, *maṅgala* was not only reserved for worldly, meritorious activities (*puṇya*), but came to refer 'both to the transcendental (*śuddha*), as well as to that portion of the mundane sphere which was pure (*śubha*)' by virtue of 'an association with the "truly" holy (*maṅgala*)'. The suggested sub-divisions between different forms of wellbeing correspond to the logic of 're-entry' of the distinction between a system and its environment within a system. For a theory of 'auto-poetic' social systems (in contrast to 'closed' and 'open' systems) see the work of Luhmann.

⁷⁴ See Weber (1978: 212).

Jains, but a function of meritorious practices, and can indeed only be symbolically (analogically) expressed in religious contexts (although this apocryphal idea may be exactly what some Jains have in the back of their minds when they practise Jain rituals as JW suggests).⁷⁵

From a methodological point of view, it is tautological first to deny the Jain realm of 'wellbeing' a conscious existence, because there is no single emic expression for it, and then to assemble under a self-created etic label⁷⁶ a group of terms which 'have the greatest number of shared features' (not just a single semantic feature) in common, and to interpret its 'polythetic' nature as an indicator for the inherent multivocal nature of the Jain realm of wellbeing (JW: 187). Moreover, both realms of value—not only the *mokṣa-mārga* doctrine—are explicit features of classical Jain doctrine. Most of the listed elemental terms of the realm of 'wellbeing' have one or more clearly defined doctrinal meanings—especially the key term *puṇya*, whose legitimate status as a secondary Jain value is extensively debated in the Jain scholastic literature. Since the theory of *puṇya* and *pāpa*, which gives a concise normative answer to the puzzling question how riches and renunciation are interrelated in the Jain context,⁷⁷ is a component of the classical doctrine of the path of liberation, it seems that both levels of value are integral to the classical *mokṣa-mārga* theory whose ubiquity the book set out to undermine. In fact, the very model of the path to liberation, encompassing both laity and ascetics in form of the classical *gṇasthāna* scheme, creates space for semantic ambiguity and moral ambivalence. Since the scheme cannot be found in the early canonical texts (cf. *Sūyagāḍa* 1.11), it may have been invented precisely for the purpose of bridging the chasm between the new karman and rebirth theories of the classical Jain cosmologies and the unequivocally renunciatory doctrines of the earlier period. In this sense, the *mokṣa-mārga* and the *puṇya-mārga* are indeed two sides of the same coin.⁷⁸

There is no need to infer a hidden realm of value at the level of categories, as Cort's material shows, since the theory of the two realms of value is, in one way or another, explicitly spelled out in the texts. What is not expressed openly are the this-worldly conditions and functions of the process of realizing the qualities of 'wellbeing' as defined by Jain theologians, i.e. the social institutions and the attitudes, actions and circumstances of real human beings in the pursuit of their everyday life, which is, as Mahias (1985: 40 ff.), Banks (1985b: 34) and Laidlaw (1995: 21; 1985: 69) rightly stressed, 'composed in part of social practices belonging to areas of life not usually designated as "religious"' (by Jains);⁷⁹ in particular political and economic action, which are in reality hardly 'organically intertwined' with Jain 'renunciatory striving' as Cort (1997: 105)

⁷⁵ The intentional reversal of ends and means is explicitly criticized in Jain texts. Cort's (2004: 93) observation that not Brāhmanical notions of purity but the 'merchant value' of wealth is the dominant social status criteria amongst Vāṇiyā castes in Gujarat can serve as an illustration of Wellbeing B. However, the author also postulates that even today in Gujarat (not Rajasthan) 'socio-economic status ... cannot be separated from moral status' (p. 80). The compound 'socio-economic' obscures the fact that in modern India economic status is clearly differentiated from social and moral status.

⁷⁶ The technique of using English 'omnibus words' such as 'auspiciousness' or 'purity' (Dumont) which 'conceal more than they reveal' was rejected by Burghart (1996: 62) and Madan (1985: 12) in favour of the examination of 'words actually employed in everyday speech'.

⁷⁷ See Reynell (1985a: 32; 1985b; 1987; 1991), Laidlaw (1985: 60), Cort (1989).

⁷⁸ See Jaṇi (1979). This has also been noted by Laughlin (2003: 215) in his comments on Laidlaw's (1995) and Babb's (1996) interpretation of the Kharataragaccha Dādāguru worship as a means of bridging the gap between contradictory ascetic and worldly values.

⁷⁹ This is also recognized by Cort (1991: 406–10, 1998). Jain 'religious practice' is 'narrowly' defined by Laidlaw (1995: 21) as an individual 'matter of who and how one is in relation to the Jinās and to ascetic renouncers'.

suggests. The 'Jains' have never formed and still do not form a self-enclosed 'cultural system',⁸⁰ 'community',⁸¹ or 'ethnic group'⁸² which encompasses all aspects of life of 'a Jain', as it may appear from outside, but in practice form complex identities, few dimensions of which are theologically and/or ritually thematized by selective 'self objectifications'.⁸³ 'We are all fragments ... also of ourselves', Simmel (1911: 379) noted, 'Each element of a group is not only a societal part, but beyond that something else'. Like everyone else, Jains participate in a variety of different overlapping 'systems', and interact on different levels, often through marriage and business—caste, class and politics—with the Jain and non-Jain socio-cultural environment, without ever being 'perfectly integrated'.⁸⁴ To be 'Jain' is just one, if often a dominant dimension of many in a lay Jain's life, which causes the problem of finding a balance between conflicting demands in the first place. A possible exception is the borderline case of dedicated Jain mendicants, who as members of a 'total institution' (Goffman) commit themselves to a more circumscribed Jain way of life. Whenever Cort departs from his favoured observer's perspective (JW: 12) the ambiguity is clearly stated: 'The *mokṣa-mārga* ideology is one realm of value among others within the Jain tradition (and within the surrounding South Asian culture), and so in any one life and any one event we can discern multiple values at play' (JW: 29).⁸⁵ 'A tradition', in W.C. Smith's (1991: 168) words, presents itself not as a unit but as 'a growing congeries of items' of a diverse nature, which is only 'unified in the conceptual mind, by processes of conceptual abstraction'. But the question is: Whose abstraction? For what purpose? And how does it affect human interactions?

The problem for the analyst is that the values and practices cannot be consistently integrated within a single theoretical system, as proposed by Cort, but represent alternative analytical perspectives which are mutually irreducible.⁸⁶ In order to understand the ways in which the Jains negotiate the contradiction between other-worldly and this-worldly orientations in practice, and which role theology and ritual play in this context, it is necessary to study Jain values not as constants but as variables. This-worldly orientations are generally not theorized by the Jain literature, nor are they manifest in ritual culture, except in metaphorical terms, as Cort demonstrated. Doctrinally, attitudes and actions which do not correspond to the Jain tenets, including 'Hindu'

⁸⁰ Babb (1996), JW: 12, Dundas (2002a: 7). Jainism forms an independent religious tradition, but was never able to shape the way of life of its lay followers in its entirety, as presupposed in the theory of open systems. See Luhmann's (1994) distinction between 'closed', 'open', and 'autopoietic' systems.

⁸¹ Sangave (1980), Carrithers and Humphrey (1991: 5–7).

⁸² The 'analytically soft' (Cort 1997: 103) term 'community' and the, in my view, inappropriate term 'ethnic group' are used virtually interchangeably by Carrithers and Humphrey (1991) and Banks (1992: 6f.).

⁸³ Parsons and Shils (2001: 203) understand an action system (such as ritual), which they see as being constituted through the internalization and institutionalization of values, as a compromise between two imperatives: 'Integration, both within an individual's value system and within the value system prevailing in a society, is a compromise between the functional imperatives of the situation and the dominant value-orientation patterns of the society'. See also Dumont (1980: 272); and Laidlaw (1995: 95 f., 349), who wrongly ascribes a group-focused view to Max Weber (p. 93).

⁸⁴ See Khare's (1986: 573 f.) critique of Mahias (1985: 4). The general point has been made by Burghart (1996: 65) and more recently by Cort (1998: 12–14) himself.

⁸⁵ The terms 'profane' or 'secular' would be inappropriate here, though not totally out of place (Jaini 1985b: 102 f.). In contrast to 'Hinduism', Jainism and Buddhism cannot be sufficiently characterized in terms of 'orthopraxy' since both religions are predicated on clearly defined 'orthodoxies' or belief systems, much like certain 'Hindu' sects. See Glasenapp (1925: 495), also Banks (1992: 196 ff.), JW: 63.

⁸⁶ See Habermas (1981) on the necessity of alternating the mutually irreducible system and lifeworld perspectives; a conception which should not be confused with Dumont's (1980) and Malamoud's (1996) ideas of the 'reversal of levels' or 'revolving hierarchies' of values, inspired by Parsons' general systems theory.

beliefs and practices, are categorized as *ásuddha*, *aśubha*, *pāpa*, etc., that is in terms of the negative correlates of the terms of the 'wellbeing' lexicon.⁸⁷ The pedagogic story literature of the Jains, accordingly, generally only shows how deluded (*mithyātva*) individuals are converted to the right view (*samyaktva*). Other aspects of life are of marginal interest. Liturgical texts are even more narrowly focused. However, from historical and sociological perspectives, the Jain doctrine itself is both the cause of the moral dilemmas and its self-declared solution. Social scientists have found a wide variety of common strategies to deal with conflicting values or contradictions between values and actions in general such as forming hierarchies, compartmentalization, and ideological masking or rationalization of the conflict, for instance by unreflective orthodoxy, interruption of interdependence, reflective doubt, symbolization, or simply integration by force or value change.⁸⁸ However useful the study of strategies such as these may be, it does not solve the problem of conceptualizing the social dimensions of Jain culture. Laidlaw (1995: 394) characterized his anthropological aim as 'to describe the social arrangements whereby people live in the light of ideals they do not meet, and to describe how values which cannot be realized are none the less given motivational force'. In contrast to Cort and others, he argues that 'Jain cultural distinctiveness does not rest on rituals or practices in which people are marked as different and counted in or out' but on 'a range of practices and relationships through which Jains *participate* in Hindu public culture in India, and do so as Jains' (p. 95). From this point of view, the realm of Jain culture has no independent existence, but narrows down to a shared 'ethical' life-style or a 'class psychology'.⁸⁹ Laidlaw argues that a local Jain community is not a bounded cultural entity, nor an association based on felt togetherness. What he calls Jain 'ethics'⁹⁰ is modelled on the Socratic art of living well through the cultivation of the self (*epimeleia heautou*) and treated as compatible, if not coterminous, with 'a set of processes and practices which cluster around the ownership, management, funding, and use of property' (p. 147, cf. 349 f.). Group formation beyond the institutions of family, caste and religious trusts is in his view ephemeral and dependent on processes of strategic mass mobilization by individual lay leaders. Banks (1992: 75 ff.), on the other hand, focuses on lay institutions, rituals, and community events. The most important factor in the processes of emotive or strategic community formation are the Jain mendicants,⁹¹ which were instrumental in the creation of most Jain rituals, temples, community institutions and castes, if their origin myths are to be believed. Babb (2004: 30, 186) has studied these myths in order to understand the 'social (as opposed to soteriological) symbolism' within specific caste rituals, which he rightly sees as intrinsically connected with important dimensions of 'Jain' social identity. In image-worshipping Jain traditions, the role of the mendicants as symbolic foci can, to some degree, be replaced by temples under lay management, which act as alternative centres of Jain religious culture, but not in aniconic Jain traditions. An important empirical question for future research is, therefore, how social practices are categorized as 'religious', 'social', 'socio-religious', or 'non-religious' by the different Jain

⁸⁷ The relative de-sacralization and de-substantivization of the 'social world' of 'Hindu' transactions is a key feature of both Jainism and Buddhism.

⁸⁸ See Parsons and Shils (2001: 172 ff.), Luhmann (1982: 305–7), Habermas (1981: 343 ff.)

⁸⁹ P. Veyne cited affirmatively by Laidlaw (1995: 146). Jainism was already described as a psychology by Jacobi (1914).

⁹⁰ Laidlaw (1995: 12–21) adopts Foucault's distinction between 'ethics', here voluntarily accepted ascetic precepts and self-techniques, and 'morality', or 'socially enforced' rules, and defines 'code-' or 'rule-orientation' as the distinguishing attribute of morality, in contrast to the 'self-' or 'ethics-orientation'. Sociologists generally prefer the related terms ethos, or character, custom, habitus, disposition, to describe (unscripted) culturally valued life-styles.

⁹¹ Babb (1996: 137 ff.; 2004), Flügel (1995–96: 159).

traditions themselves, and how these realms are seen to be interrelated.⁹² This seems to be one of the more promising ways forward at the moment.⁹³ The Terāpanth Śvetāmbaras, for instance, have a strict doctrinal distinction between religion and society, without leaving much conceptual space for the development of an ambiguous socio-religious ritual symbolism which dominates the Mūrtipūjaka and (Bisapanthī) Digambara Jain traditions, and to a lesser degree some Sthānakavāsī traditions.⁹⁴ In the Terapanth ritual system, the socio-religious realm is paradoxically not categorized as part of religion, but as part of society, i.e. the non-religious or worldly sphere.⁹⁵

Since Cort did not set out to investigate empirically the ways of integration of discordant elements of the Jain tradition and local custom, or the strategies through which the self-designated Jain laity seek to achieve a balance between other-worldly and this-worldly imperatives in their lives, but to focus on the narrow realm of overtly 'religious' activities such as worship, asceticism and collective festivals, he automatically ties himself to the classical (Mūrtipūjaka) Jain theology of the two wheels of *dharma*, which are held together through the *mokṣa-mārga* sequence. This doctrine paradoxically proposes that the more one renounces in this life, the more one will receive in the next—which is not the same as saying that 'the pursuit of wellbeing advances one along the *mokṣa-mārga*'. The circular form of the question as to how participation in Jain rituals and ceremonies 'reaffirms the individual in his or her identity as Jain', as opposed to other identity markers, demands that the ambiguity of the symbols which mediate between the 'two modes of sacrality' (Cort 1991: 410 f.) must primarily be explained as an effect of the process of value-realization, to use a Neo-Kantian term, which involves a differentiation of one and the same value into two realms of value—the value in its abstract and its concrete or mixed form⁹⁶—but not as the consequence of the collision or a syncretism of two antagonistic values as proposed at different junctures of the argument.⁹⁷ The multiple sources of ambiguity in the described ritual practices are made invisible by the proposed model because of the author's ultimate commitment to a culturalist cosmological holism (JW: 195 f.), imported from Eliade, Tambiah, and Carman (1985: 116, cf. 118), which makes a critical analysis of the contextual relationships between Jainism and society, Jainism and power, etc.—masked by the use of multivalent symbols—virtually impossible. 'Clearly', writes Cort, 'most scholars of ideology view power as ubiquitous' (JW: 11). The power of the sacred, here the 'holy power inherent in the Jaina religion', is described by JW: 171 as both transcendent and immanent and therefore as the ultimate source of wellbeing: 'Wellbeing is thus derived from the holy nature of the Jain religion itself. From this perspective, both the *mokṣa-mārg* and wellbeing spring from the same source, much as God is the ultimate source of both salvation and worldly auspiciousness for a Hindu

⁹² Burghart's (1983/1996: 65) intra-cultural approach, i.e. the shift from the imposition of observer categories to the study of 'native discourses about society' in particular historical contexts, is a useful alternative to cultural determinism, building on situational analysis and critical hermeneutics.

⁹³ Theoreticians of Jain modernism such as J. L. Jaini (1916) distinguish strictly between 'religion and society'.

⁹⁴ Flügel (1995–96: 170 f.).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁹⁶ JW: 7 defines wellbeing as 'one's material embodiment' (Wellbeing A). Jaini (1985a: 90) speaks of the 'Jainization' of the realm of wellbeing which he calls the 'mundane pure' (*śubha*) in terms of its symbolic association with the 'transcendental pure' (*śuddha*). This is the kind of double meaning implied in Dumont's notion of 'hierarchy' where 'the same term is used in its two meanings, that is, both as the whole and as a part of that whole' (Malamoud 1982/1996: 120).

⁹⁷ See Bruhn (1987: 109) on the difference between 'syncretism' and 'import'.

(Carman 1974; Narayanan 1985). Just as without wellbeing the *mokṣa-mārg* would not survive, without the *mokṣa-mārg* there would be no wellbeing' (JW: 201 f.).⁹⁸ Although this formula seems overly idealistic,⁹⁹ even from a Jain doctrinal point of view,¹⁰⁰ there is no doubt that the wealth of new data and ideas offered in this exquisite book provides the deepest insights yet into the contemporary religious world of Jain laity. It will serve for some time as a paradigmatic monograph for future empirical studies of Jain religious life.

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⁹⁸ Wellbeing A.

⁹⁹ For a different perspective see for instance Hardiman (1996).

¹⁰⁰ In Jain doctrinal terms it is the soul itself, not the scriptures which describe it, which is the ultimate source of 'wellbeing'.

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