

EDUDOC SERVICES: BOOK REVIEWS



Book Reviews

December - 2018



LIBRARY AND DOCUMENTATION DIVISION

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INTRODUCTION

Book Reviews aims to identify the books published recently on all the subjects relevant to NCERT.

Book Reviews have been selected from Learned Periodicals & Newspapers received in LDD during the month of **December, 2018**.

Book Reviews are arranged under broad Subject Headings. Details about the Author, Title, Place of Publication, Name of Publisher, Year, Pages, Price, ISBN followed by analytical review with exact reference to periodicals in which reviewed appeared. It will be our endeavour to bring out this Book Selection Reference Tool.

Book Reviews will be useful to our faculty members in selecting / recommending relevant books for our library and also to keep abreast of latest publications in their specialization.

We eagerly await to receive your views and comments.

(Prof. Saroj Yadav)

Chairperson, LDD

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Lost and found

Hindu; 30/12/18; pg. 16

Revisiting portraits and reminiscences of bygone-era stars

BISHWANATH GHOSH

Yeh Un Dinoñ Ki Baat Hai – loosely translated, *Once Upon a Time* – is about the era when stardom was more about grace than glamour; when crafted words were reserved only for the camera but candour prevailed off screen; and, above all, when Urdu was very much a part of India's language landscape and not considered alien.

It is refreshing to read such a book – pen portraits, reflections and reminiscences of bygone-era actors, directors, writers, lyricists and music directors appearing in various now-defunct Urdu publications – at a time when stars 'open up' to film journalists but actually set out on an exercise in self-promotion, revealing very little of their minds.

The pen portraits, of some of the biggest names of the time, weren't composed by the pen of journalists on the film beat, but processed in the minds of people who were big names themselves.

The contents page says it all: 'Meena Kumari by Nargis', 'Ashok and Kishore Kumar by



■ **Yeh Un Dinoñ Ki Baat Hai: Urdu Memoirs of Cinema Legends**
Yasir Abbasi
Bloomsbury
₹699

Iftekhar', 'Suraiya by Ismat Chughtai', 'K. Asif by Naushad' and so forth.

The very title of Nargis's piece, *Meena – Maut Mubarak Ho!*, is a telling commentary on the film industry: how a star adored by the public can actually be haunted by loneliness and indifference. She congratulates Meena Kumari on her death because "this place is not meant for people like you."

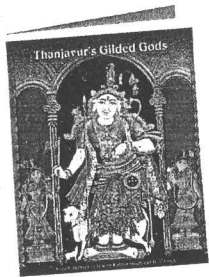
Then there is Kaifi Azmi talking about Sahir: "...I certainly wish Sahir to collide with a rock that can shatter his identity into pieces. This clash is essential to awaken the capabilities in

him." Today can you imagine a poet making such a brutal but well-intentioned comment about a fellow poet?

Sahir also figures in the reminiscences of music director Jai-dev, who never tasted the success he deserved: "I am not in denial about Sahir's contribution to my achievements. However, he is the one who is responsible for my downfall too."

Budding filmmakers should not miss the piece of Satyajit Ray by Javed Siddiqi, who gives a rare insight into the working style of the maestro – and also slips in this paragraph: "A renowned Bengali director had once said with a malicious snigger: 'His craving for publicity just doesn't subside. He freezes every two minutes to enable Nemaï Ghosh to click his pictures.'"

And come to think of it, all these writings had long disappeared from public space and public memory until Yasir Abbasi tracked down private collectors – akin to finding a needle in a haystack. With the needle he has stitched together a book that has added many more years to the era we thought had died.



books Anna L. Dallapiccola,
with Kuldip Singh and R. G. Singh
Thanjavur's Gilded Gods | Marg Publication | 180 pages | Rs 2,800

Gods Spoke To Them

A collection of Thanjavur paintings is seen afresh as objects of worship, not as mere things of beauty

BY GEETA DOCTOR

Amidst the roar of popular images of Hindu gods and goddesses in the style known as “Thanjavur paintings” that now flood the market, it’s almost a shock to discover the subdued richness of the originals.

They do not shout. They signal. They do not behave like garrulous tour guides crudely displaying nuggets of information for the entertainment of multitudes. They create multiple interpretations that call for repeated viewings. At times there is no explanation.

The Marg issue devoted to *Thanjavur's Gilded Gods* examines the extraordinary journey of one collector, Kuldip Singh, an architect and town planner whose interest in the genre happened almost by accident. As Nayanjot Lahiri says in the introduction, Singh was at first reluctant to accept two Thanjavur style paintings that had been sent to him by a dealer. Gradually, he began to feel intrigued by them. “The paintings seemed to grow on me,” he reports. Soon, Singh asked to see more. Some four decades and over 350 paintings later, Kuldip Singh’s collection of “South Indian paintings”, including related specimens from the Mysore school and from Andhra, with an essay by R.G. Singh, has been recognised by scholars and museum conservators as being a unique record of one man’s passion. His home is at Bhogal, in

Explaining the reasons for sharing the images and creating a context for them by situating each one in a particular temple, Kuldip Singh sets out his plan.

one of the older localities of New Delhi, is a house-cum-museum.

In his own introduction, Kuldip Singh situates the paintings as central to the religious arts of South India. He is at the same time acutely sensitive to suggesting their inclusive nature. Explaining the reasons for not just sharing the images but creating a context for them by situating each one in a particular temple, or iconic space, that has been extensively researched by scholar Anna L. Dallapiccola, Singh sets out his plan. “The majority of scholarly works are primarily concerned with the aesthetic qualities of religious art; its function is less often analysed or commented upon. What follows below is an attempt to view and to analyse Thanjavur paintings as objects of worship and as an inspiration for devotion, and to understand their crucial position as a bridge between the ‘classical’ aesthetic and the development of ‘calendar art’ in the 20th century.”

What lifts the collection into the realm of a pilgrimage of words and images is Dallapiccola’s energy. There does not seem to be a single temple that she has not visited or painting that she has not studied. She is the ‘shakti’ in this enterprise who has merged her scholarship into each image Singh has collected with a brevity that manages to elevate each portrait into an icon.

Singh has the last word when he describes how the once grand paintings are now made into calendars. “Viewed from the side of the gods, it appears that they have transmigrated from the physical body of exceptional purity of the ancient dhruva bhera and have acquired an ephemeral paper body to become closer to their poor, selfless devotee, the common man. Thanjavur art is surely the bridge that enables this divine transmigration.” □

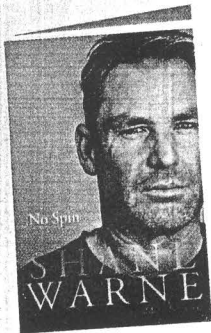
ON THE RACKS



Atul Khanna
Between You and Me | Bloomsbury

Manifesto as conversation. This is a book brimming with ideas for the transformation of society, politics, democracy, administration and the economy, all couched in a discursive format through which the author, an entrepreneur, analyses problems with how things are done at present and then presents his suggestions. He is not short of suggestions on issues from Article 370 to income tax assessments, and calls for a new constituent assembly to change what he sees as an outdated and inefficient system of governance, which he considers the root of many of modern India’s problems.

Not exactly a systematic treatise of political philosophy, this book is more focused on a number of specific policy ideas—some of which are, to put it mildly, radical. For example, Khanna’s thoughts on universal franchise: people’s votes should be proportionate to the share of the vote that they or their ancestors had during independent India’s first census in 1951. So, if two people had one vote each in 1951, later get married and have two children, the family as a whole continues to have two votes, with each person having half a vote. If they have three children, each person will get two-fifths of a vote, and so on. And each child’s half-vote gets factored in when calculating what their future children will have. But having an only child will add a new vote to the family’s tally. “Everybody gets something, nobody gets more for population explosion or to subdue those who exercise restraint and have respect for [the] nation’s growth....” It gets more intricate: “Now, say the state throws in another 100 votes. One-third to the poorest, one-third to achievers and social contributors and one-third to taxpayers. You may not like this as mediocrity loses, but that is OK, we can come up with another scheme. Basically, I don’t want to condemn anyone only to their birth forever.” We believe that speaks for itself. □



books Shane Warne

No Spin: My Autobiography | Ebury Press | 411 pages | Rs 699

A Flipper That Turned Square

Warne wastes words rambling on his growing up, affairs and escapades. On spin bowling, cricketing personages and vignettes he delivers like a maestro.

BY SURESH MENON

AUTOBIOGRAPHY is seldom as interesting as biography, and the reason is simple. Life stories told from within do not join the dots to reveal character as definitively as those told by someone with the benefit of distance in time and space. The element of self-justification that tends to creep into autobiographies often ruins them, even if the ghost, as in this case, is as fine a journalist as Mark Nicholas.

This is not a book of introspection; it is unlikely that Shane Warne understood himself better at the end of it. We certainly do not. Had it clocked in at, say, 250 pages and stuck to cricket and cricketers, it might have been engaging, but there's too much information here we can do without.

The greatest leg spinner to have played the game, one of *Wisden's* Five Cricketers of the 20th century (the others being Don Bradman, Garry Sobers, Jack Hobbs and Vivian Richards), Shane Warne tells us, sometimes disjointedly, about his growing up years, love affairs, sexual escapades, his list of the best players and so on. He confesses that he loves sex; would any of *Wisden's* other four have made a statement like that? Sobers was famous for arriving at a match straight from a well-exercised bed, for example.

When Warne talks about leg spin bowling he is brilliant, as in his career. Cricket forces both batsmen and especially bowlers into physically challenging movements. The bowler runs straight up, then abruptly goes side-on, putting pressure on his hip, back and shoulders, and that's before the arms come into play. To bowl a leg break, most difficult of the crafts, the wrists have to rotate; the googly causes even more difficulty, with the arm having to semi-rotate, putting increased pressure

on the shoulders, and the ball having to come out of the back of the hand. Warne's 708 Test wickets are testimony as much to skill as to body strength.

One of the joys of the game is to see a master like Warne at work. On the field he was insanely gifted, and was perhaps the best man never to have led Australia. Off it he had a reputation for being indisciplined and raucous. A bit like Mozart in Amadeus, lesser men asked how such remarkable skills could be bestowed upon such a larrikin.



Between his last autobiography and this one, Sachin Tendulkar has been demoted from being the best batsman in Warne's book to sharing the spot with Brian Lara.

He writes of leg spin with great passion and nuance. There is subtlety to the field placings too. "If you pack the leg side when bowling round the wicket, you send out a negative signal," he writes. "If a leg spinner has more fielders on the off side he was attacking."

It all came naturally to Warne, but he also picked up techniques from his predecessors. Starting with former player Terry Jenner, who first saw

greatness in him, and advised against being unfit, even calling him a "fat bastard". Warne is extremely generous towards the men he respected—Jenner, Bob Simpson, Ian Chappell—and dismissive of those he didn't, like coach John Buchanan and skipper Steve Waugh, whom he calls the most selfish player he knew, focused on keeping his average above 50.

Somewhere between his last autobiography and this one, Sachin Tendulkar has been demoted from being the best batsman in Warne's book to sharing the spot with Brian Lara—the former to "bat for my life"; the latter to "chase 400 on the last day". It might have something to do with the misunderstanding over a tournament in the US, when a cricket tournament had to be abandoned after the first year. "I blame the people around Sachin, not Sachin himself," he says.

There are interesting vignettes about the IPL—Shane Watson weeping in a corner of the dressing room after a Rajasthan Royals defeat, or Lalit Modi meeting Warne in a "room as large as the Oval" while getting his feet massaged by "two people, one on each foot".

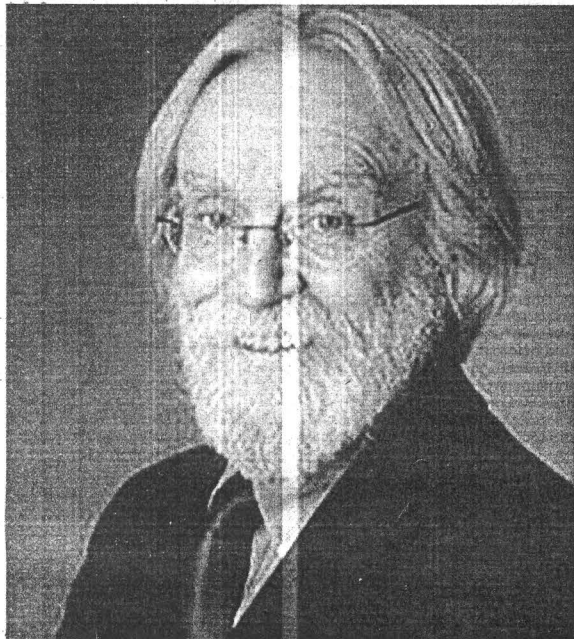
It may not all have been his fault, but Warne was at the centre of some of the main issues of modern sport: match-fixing (he was reported for sharing information, however innocently, with a bookie in Sri Lanka), drugs (he was banned for a year after, innocently, taking a masking agent to reduce weight), sex (he was photographed in a threesome in England).

Gideon Haigh, who has written a far more interesting book on Warne, said of his subject, "Warne put me in mind of Edward Ashburnham in Ford Maddox Ford's *The Good Soldier*: charmingly shallow, good-natured, weak-willed and positively revolted at the thought that she (his wife) should know the sort of thing that he did." We await the writer who can improve on that. □

Statesman; 26/12/18; Pg. 14

An appreciation of genius

The Calculus Gallery by William Dunham introduces the major contributors to the growth of this mathematical branch



S ANANTHANARAYANAN

Calculus is a mathematical technique, taught in high school and largely mastered by the time a science student graduates, and it is now the basis and foundation of the physical sciences and technology. The present form of calculus, however, has come about with the work of many, since the 17th century, when Isaac Newton sowed its seeds, and the path by which it got here shadows the explosion in science since then.

The Princeton University Press has brought out a new edition of *The Calculus Gallery*, a 2005 masterpiece by William Dunham, from Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. The author introduces the major contributors to the growth of calculus, and, like the history of art, can be described by selected works of the masters through the ages, he explains each mathematician with classic pieces of the mathematician's work, which refined or grew out of calculus, all the way till the 20th century.

As Dunham says in a first "interlude" in the book, where he reviews the progress in the first century of calculus, calculus marked the transition,

in perspective, from the geometric to the analytic. This is to say that the study of shapes and surfaces, even the path of the planets in their orbits, which were studied on the basis of Euclid, now moved to the abstraction of algebraic expressions. The paths of the planets had long been considered to be perfect circles, and Kepler, who showed they were ellipses, described the changing speed of the planet by areas swept out by the line from the sun to the planet. Galileo had studied the motion of a falling object, and arrived at a form of the equation of motion, but based on a geometric construction.

It was Isaac Newton who analysed the path of planets, or falling objects in terms of a relationship of position, speed and how they changed with time. And then the way the shape of a curve changed along its length, in terms of numbers and ratios. It was along this course of study that Newton developed the idea of the 'fluxion', or the instantaneous rate of change of a quantity that changed with time. Like the speed of a falling body, not over a period, but at any instant. The idea could be adapted to other mutually dependent values, like the length

of the circumference of a circle or the area, traced by a radius, for different angles through which the radius turns. This problem had been approached by the Greeks using geometric methods. But the method of fluxions, permitted generation of a formula (the familiar, $2\pi r$ or πr^2 , for the radius going all this way round).

With this method of dealing with smooth, or continuous changes, Newton was able to work out an analytical expression for the path of body that was in motion under a central attractive force, like a planet, and the data, and Kepler's results, showed that the force must be one that reduces by the square of the distance - the law of Gravitation.

While Newton is thus credited with discovery of calculus, the same method, with greater mathematical finesse, had been developed at the same time by the German philosopher, polymath, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Leibniz' versatility extended to history, jurisprudence, languages, theology, logic and diplomacy. When just 27, Dunham writes, Leibniz was elected to the Royal Society, for inventing a mechanical calculator that could perform all the operations of arithmetic!

The calculus that Leibniz developed was very much closer to calculus as we know it, to the extent of the notation, and was formally a method to examine the behavior of an mathematical function without the need to physically plot its values. And then, more clearly than Newton's way, to do the reverse, to identify a function, given its behavior.

Dunham goes on, before he takes the first interlude, to explain and provide samples of the work of Newton and Leibniz, the Bernoulli brothers, and then Euler, which covered almost a century from the time of Newton.

The work done during this period had first examined continuous processes as if they were step processes, which could be understood by conventional mathematics, and then by reducing the steps till they were 'vanishingly small'.

This computational device, of considering things that were 'infinitely small', was new and its validity was suspect. The process consisted of taking in hand a ratio, the ratio of changes in a pair of variables, and reducing, proportionately the values of the numerator and denominator. As smaller and smaller changes are considered, the ratio approaches a final value, at which point, the numerator and denominator reduce to zero and vanish!

The approach invited attack and criticism. The Irish philosopher, George Berkeley "ridiculed those scientists who accused him of proceeding on faith and not reason, yet themselves talked of infinitely small or vanishing quantities," Dunham says in the interlude.

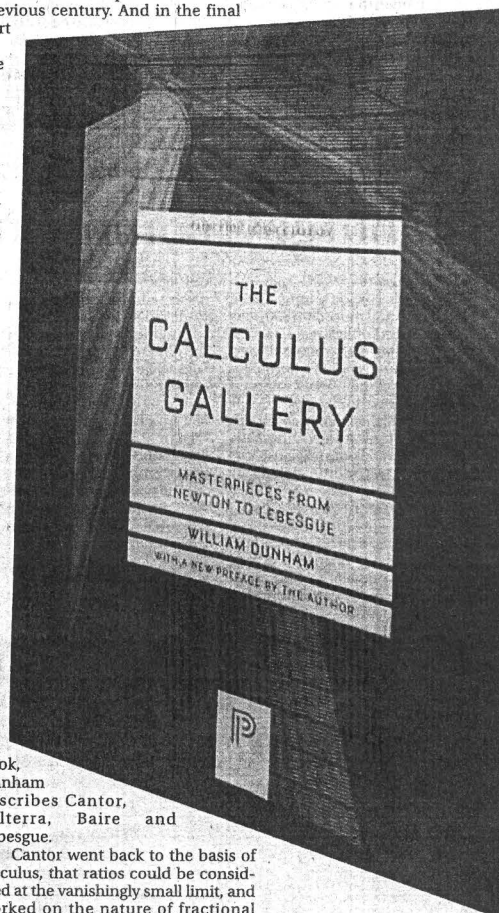
Although Berkeley did not dispute the results that calculus produced, he said the thinking was incorrect and "error may bring forth truth, but it cannot bring forth science." Capable mathematicians did their best to firm the foundations of calculus, but Berkeley held the field and "the 18th Century ended with the logical crisis still unresolved," says Dunham.

Dunham then describes the work of Cauchy, Reimann, Liouville and Weierstrass, which did put calculus on robust conceptual bases, by the year 1873, nearly a century after Euler. The work, of "unprecedented care, taking pains to define their terms exactly and to prove results that had hitherto been accepted critically, succeeded in putting to rest the objections raised by Berkeley and placed calculus on unassailable bases. And then, in the last quarter of the 19th Century, Dunham says, the work gave rise to questions that could not have been conceived before the same epochal work of the previous century. And in the final part of the

(called "real") numbers. He then brought about a change in the direction of analysis, by considering the principles of a grand generalization, the Set Theory, and 'small' and 'infinite' sets. The ideas were followed through by Volterra, Baire and Lebesgue, who "pushed analysis ever further towards generality and abstraction" and left the subject, as Dunham says, revitalised and the platform from which the advances in the 20th Century were launched.

In many disciplines, Dunham notes, there is a tradition of studying illustrious predecessors, like Shakespeare, in Literature or Bach, in music. As this tradition is not often seen in mathematics, his book, Dunham says, is an assembly of masterpieces that reflect the excellence that has gone before, and appreciation of genius.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in



book, Dunham describes Cantor, Volterra, Baire and Lebesgue.

Cantor went back to the basis of calculus, that ratios could be considered at the vanishingly small limit, and worked on the nature of fractional

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Unravelling the code

A scientist and Nobel laureate's journey is an insightful guide to the workings of modern science

Hindu; 30/12/18; Pg. 16

JACOB KOSHY

Historians of science categorise scientific progress into two main categories. One is the method of scientific revolutions; that is a general law or a mathematically-backed idea is married to conceptual insight. The discovery of the laws of gravity by Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity and, Charles Darwin's formulation of the mechanism of evolution, fundamentally changed how we thought about space, time and the origins of our species.

Discovery, invention

Such narratives of science tend to valorise individuals and generate the impression that great breakthroughs happen because the rare genius comes by and illuminates the void.

The other way, as the historian of science, Peter Gallison has pointed out, is through the development of new tools and instruments. Because, in the 17th century, the Dutch amateur scientist, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, used lenses of his own making to peer into pond-scum and discovered wiggly creatures within them an entire scientific field – microbiology – was born. Because, at the dawn of the 20th century, physicist J.J. Thomson was able to figure out how to manipulate an electric field around a cathode ray tube (the device that once made televisions possible).

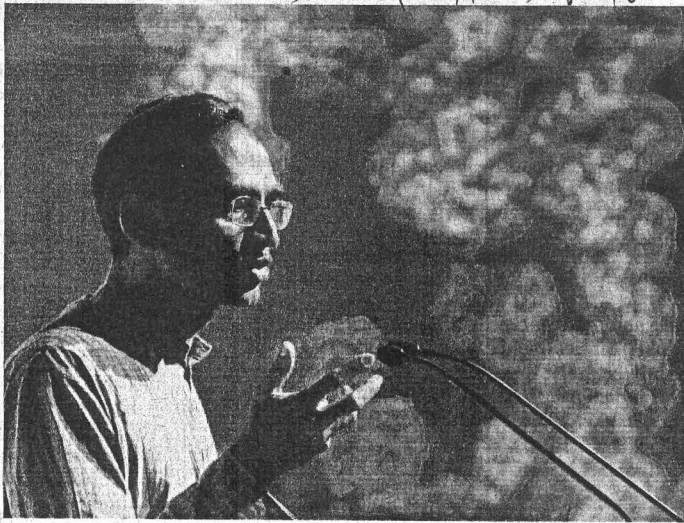
He realised that there were things called electrons, which revolved around a tightly packed nucleus of sub-atomic particles. Venki Ramakrishnan's *Gene Machine: The Race to Decipher the Secrets of the Ribosome* is one of the most valiant accounts of the triumph of instruments and methods.

Ramakrishnan, an Indian, moved to the U.S. at 19, to pursue a master's degree in theoretical physics. He went on to get a Ph.D. and then decided that he ought to switch to biology because that was where he would likely make a major advance. What follows is an account of how Ramakrishnan got interested in ribosomes – the machinery in the cell that translates the genetic code inside DNA into proteins and, therefore, life itself.

A race, a pursuit

Ramakrishnan tells a gripping story about a race, a pursuit, in which he was one of the players. He's frank about his fears and insecurities and how he was mostly unsure about whether he would close in on heady territory made by Ada Yonath, an Israeli crystallographer, and Thomas Steitz, in the U.S., in unravelling the structure of the ribosome.

Ramakrishnan would be one of the recipients of the Nobel Prize in



Grand design: Venki Ramakrishnan tells a gripping story of science.

■ S. SUBRAMANIAM



■ **Gene Machine: The Race to Decipher the Secrets of the Ribosome**
Venki Ramakrishnan
HarperCollins
₹699

Chemistry in 2009, along with Yonath and Steitz.

Understanding atoms

What the reader gets is a concise history of crystallography – the science of understanding how atoms are arranged in substances – and how it evolved from its birth in the early 20th century.

The story of the ribosome is like looking under a car hood and being made to appreciate the placement of the engine, and how the various parts combine together to execute your ride. This can be either tedious or overwhelming to the non-specialist but what lifts the book is Ramakrishnan's telling of the modern process of scientific discovery.

His reflections on how scientists are vain, often insecure, anxious about their prospects of winning a Nobel are a refreshing peek into the daily practice of the professional scientist.

➤ The story of the ribosome is like looking under a car hood and being made to appreciate the placement of the engine, and how the various parts combine to execute your ride

Here there are no quietly contemplative souls pondering the structures of cell-constituents but small bands of graduate students and a group leader, spending long hours in tedium, stressed about whether the approach they have chosen will yield results. We are led to see scientists as raiders on a hunt who are worried whether they stand to be scooped by a rival team.

Synthesising crystals

The ribosome is made of two prominent sub-units, a 'large' and 'small' one, and glory comes to those who are able to synthesise crystals that can reveal how the ribosome is composed. Knowing this would yield insight into how antibiotic drugs block the action of bacterial ribosomes and arrest microbial infections.

We are made privy to the role of luck – of being able to attract the right kind of students with skills, of being in the right laboratory and being surrounded by the right people. In his quest for the Nobel, he discusses how there is already an overture that smart scientists learn about.

This means being able to gain access and impress members of the Nobel sub-committee and making yourself available at the right conferences to discuss your work and the importance of it.

Then there's a personal recounting of life-after-a-Nobel. Here Ramakrishnan pokes fun at the notion of Nobel laureates suddenly transforming into oracles and called upon to discuss their view about matters beyond their expertise. Given that modern science works on extensive collaboration across countries and tapping into the right networks, just like one is more likely to found a billion dollar company if in the vicinity of Silicon Valley, the book offers invaluable, readable insight to the aspirant scientist.

Hindu, 23/12/18; Pg 16

Playing to the music

A young biographer goes with the beat to bring out the inner world of the shy genius, A.R. Rahman

RAMYA KANNAN

For people of a certain vintage in Tamil Nadu, 1992 was nothing short of a revelation. A theatrical revelation. We were uncharacteristically late for the film *Roja*, and as we scurried up, the usher pulled the heavy door open just a wedge to let us in to the hall. In that one moment, we stood transfixed, forgetting even to breathe.

As young actor Madhubala waded about in a pool, flipping her hair around, splashing in the water, singing 'Chinna Chinna Aasai', the music, a strange music, washed over us. It made us joyful, raunchy, set our hair on edge, even patriotic, in turns. The music, it was playing us, and we were powerless to resist.

Momentous change

There are, today, generations of young people who have grown up listening to the music of A.R. Rahman, and they are passionate fans too, but for someone who was groomed to the genius of Ilayaraja's music, the sounds of *Roja* were an epiphany. Tamil cinema as we knew it had changed, we could tell. How far Rahman, who was credited with the music, would go though no one could even fathom at that point.

Any biography, even an authorised one, at this stage in Rahman's life, can best be considered a work in progress. But the body of work that he has produced and his sheer range has given Krishna Trilok over 300 pages. As the son of



Notes of a Dream: The Authorized Biography of A.R. Rahman
Krishna Trilok
Penguin Random House
₹599

Trilok Nair and Sharada Trilok, close friends of Rahman who introduced him to director Maniratnam, and thereby helped with the big break, it can be assumed Krishna probably had a few doors already open for him. But what he has taken on, indeed at the ridiculously young age of 23, is no mean task: To write of the man everyone knows to be shy and retiring, to bring his inner world out for the others to see, is no walk in the park. He does a fair job, swinging alongside for the ride with Rahman in the latter's breathless, talented, inspired, beloved-by-all avatar, with all the energy of a young fan.

Stuff of legend

It is legend by now, but biographies by their very nature, are crafted not only to tell the tale well, but also inspire. Born Dileep Kumar, the talented son of R.K. Shekhar, a musician in the Tamil



Rise to fame: Rahman's strong work ethic, love for technology and the hectic activity that goes into his live performances find mention in the book. •PTI

film industry who died early, Rahman became the breadwinner of his family right from the age of nine. His sheer talent, strong work ethic and pleasant nature took him, through the years, to a couple of Oscars, Grammys and into living rooms across the world, not to mention into the hearts of fans.

Where Krishna succeeds is to provide a ringside view of the world of Rahman to his readers – from the minutiae – from describing the way his studio looks, to how divinity meets his music, to

what he has for lunch, the jokes he cracks, the way he is kind with people, to his role as a producer and director, his love for technology, the hectic activity that goes into live performances, and the army of people that keep the wheels turning. These are the details that fans hunger for, and in them is couched a by-now popular classic rags-to-riches tale about the man whom power, money or fame left apparently untouched.

As the book weaves in and out of Rahman's life, slipping seam-

lessly across various points of time in the subject's work, it delivers a well-researched filmography volume, with trivia packed in. But of course, the book would have been far short of where it falls now, had it stopped with just that. Krishna brings it a heart through interviews with people closest to Rahman – his music and film teams, his collaborators, sisters, and wife, besides the man himself, sometimes in mellow mode too.

While the book would have been richer with insights from

From how his studio looks to the way he is kind to people, there are details fans hunger for

Rahman's mother Kareema Begum, his bedrock, and his children, there are clearly lines drawn here. One only has to look at the brief chapter with Saira, Rahman's wife, to see how much value that kind of thing adds to the telling of a life that people already know a fair bit about.

Going global

After all, Rahman is no stranger to the world. In 2002, 10 years after the stunning *Roja* debut, he was busy in London, making music for Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Bombay Dreams*.

Walking down a rather warm subway after a night show, there was a bit of déjà vu. A blond woman is skipping past, twirling her umbrella reminiscent of the way Madhubala was flipping her hair. She's singing to herself, and in a particularly joyous moment, she pirouettes up and lands with one high heeled foot on the floor. 'Shakalaka baby,' she croons audibly, turning her umbrella in a graceful final swish. Yet another continent had clearly been colonised, and by then, there was no doubt, others were just waiting for the music to wash over them too.

Rahman, the obliging genius that he is, did just that. It is this prodigious tale that Krishna Trilok has attempted to tell.

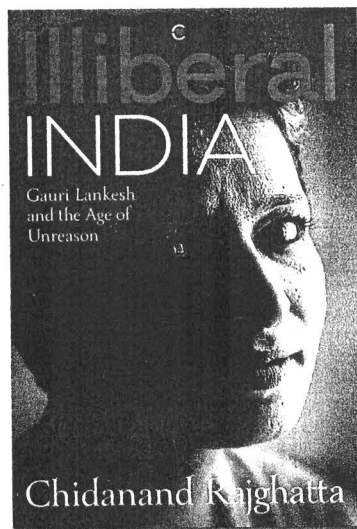
06

The making of an activist

A requiem to Gauri Lankesh and a tribute to her activism. BY VIKHAR AHMED SAYEED

WHEN the journalist Gauri Lankesh was killed on September 5, 2017, her ex-husband, Chidanand Rajghatta, a long-time Washington correspondent of *The Times of India*, wrote a heartfelt tribute titled "Gauri Lankesh: Amazing Grace" on social media. The book under review reads like an extended version of that requiem and seeks to locate the versatile engagements of Gauri Lankesh's activism and journalism with the rise of an illiberal India. Rajghatta's friendship with Gauri Lankesh extended for more than three decades, during which they were also married for five years. This has provided Rajghatta a vantage position to write a book that sometimes reads like a memoir.

Rajghatta dwells on Gauri Lankesh's formative years to give an insight into how she became the pugnacious fighter that she was. Through these expositions, he also acknowledges the differences in their world views. Rajghatta is a centrist as far as his political views are concerned, valuing a more nuanced form of journalism. Gauri Lankesh had moved left of centre politically.



Illiberal India
Gauri Lankesh
and the Age of
Unreason

By Chidanand
Rajghatta
Westland
Publications
Private Limited,
2018, Chennai

Pages: xvi + 216
Price: Rs.499

Also, as a foreign correspondent, he developed a broader "globalist" perspective on issues in contrast to Gauri Lankesh's focus on the "local" in her work.

Both Rajghatta and Gauri Lankesh were journalists in Bengaluru and Delhi in the 1980s and 1990s. The writer describes the reporting paths they took and what it meant to be a journalist at that time. Rajghatta writes that when they started working in Delhi sometime in 1985, the relationship of the newly married couple held immense promise just like the country, but the marriage was not to last, and India, also, perhaps

lost its chance to take a different trajectory through the turmoil of the late 1980s and the early 1990s. Hindu fundamentalism had taken deep roots by then and Gauri Lankesh would spend the rest of her life resisting it. Rajghatta writes: "It took nearly 35 years for the BJP to grow from near zero... to Nero. It happened during the length of Gauri's adult years, and she wrote vehemently against it."

The various themes discussed in the book indicate that the political growth of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led to the country becoming illiberal. On the BJP's ascension to power for the first

time in Karnataka in 2008, Rajghatta writes: "[B.S.] Yeddyurappa's regressive ultra-religious administration brought out the darkest impulses of the rabid Right-wing elements, particularly in their treatment of women and minorities."

Rajghatta discusses various issues that were close to Gauri Lankesh's heart: separate religion status for Lingayats, an equitable society, caste-based reservation, and women's issues. The marginalisation of the Muslim community and the Tipu Sultan controversy also find space in the book. Gauri Lankesh worked with the Karnataka Komu Souharda Vediketo combat communalism in the State.

While Rajghatta broadly looks at the nation's slide towards illiberalism, many of the incidents that he cites are from Karnataka.

Rajghatta is a fine writer and the words flow smoothly, making the book an easy read. The book could have done with a tauter framework as Rajghatta ambles through some of the themes in an almost stream-of-consciousness fashion. There are a few factual errors.

Almost all of Gauri Lankesh's writings discussed by Rajghatta to elucidate her world view are drawn from *The Way I See It: A Gauri Lankesh Reader* (2017). Considering that he knew her so well, it is slightly disappointing to see him restrict his observations to this volume. □

07

BOOKS

GREAT DIVIDE IN THE MIND

By Mani Shankar Aiyar

The worst part of this book is Gurcharan Das's blurb: "If only Patel had lived longer, India would have been spared the excesses of the Licence Raj and the Kashmir problem." This is to trivialise the massive scholarship Hindol Sengupta has brought to bear on his monumental biography of Sardar Patel and reduce the theme of this book to the wholly false binary of 'Patel vs Nehru'.

Notwithstanding the fact that, quite unlike Nehru, the Sardar wrote no books, Sengupta has mined Patel's numerous letters and speeches to give us a virtually self-written portrait of this great stalwart of the freedom movement, supplemented by a detailed study of different sources, to present a Patelian perspective on the "complex relationship" between the distinguished members of the vanguard who frequently had ideological and policy differences among themselves, as well documented by Sengupta: Sardar Patel himself; Nehru, of course; Rajaji; Azad; Rajendra Prasad; Subhas Chandra Bose and numerous others. This menagerie of leaders of genius was controlled with astounding deftness by the one who stood head and shoulders above them, individually and collectively, and to whom each of them deferred much of the time, however much they disagreed with him on specifics—Mahatma Gandhi.

I doubt that the annals of history anywhere in the world or at any time have thrown up such a democratic Team of Rivals who were permitted, even encouraged, to not only disagree with each other but also frequently with the Mahatma himself, and yet were yoked together by their quest for freedom.

However, as Sengupta notes, it was Gandhi, none other, who announced as early as 1942, in the midst of a blazing row between Gandhi and Nehru on how far to accommodate the Cripps Mission, that his successor would be Nehru. Why would Gandhi do this?

After all, Patel, in years, was like a brother to Gandhi; Nehru, in years, more like a son. But, as Sengupta explains, Patel was a very ill man; Nehru, in contrast, was extremely fit. Did Gandhi think the burden of leading independent India in its formative stages should devolve on the shoulders of one who had two decades of nation-building ahead of him rather than a colleague, however valued, who would outlast the Mahatma by less than a thousand days? Or were

there other more profound reasons?

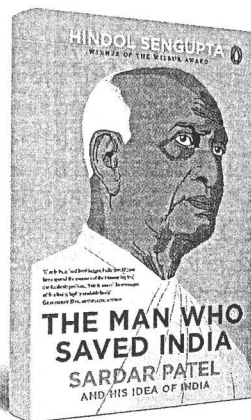
Given the assiduity with which Sengupta has researched his subject, his conclusion is bizarre. He assigns the basic reason to Gandhi's belief that Nehru should be elevated over Patel because Nehru spoke better English and his upbringing would fit him better to negotiate with the British! This is ridiculous because it portrays the Father of Our Nation as an idiot.

The fact is that Patel became Gandhi's companion-in-arms long before Nehru emerged as a distant speck on the political horizon. They linked together in 1917 to run the Kheda satyagraha in the immediate wake of Gandhi's outstanding success at Champaran (while a virtually briefless Nehru was still indolently smoking cigarettes at the Allahabad bar association). Gandhi's intimacy with Patel thus long preceded his association with Nehru. He did not need to be told of Patel's merits and claim to the Congress presidency and, later, the premiership of free India. Surely then, the Mahatma would have carefully weighed his choice before making it. Yet, Sengupta flounders in explaining why Gandhi should have so often overlooked Patel.

Gandhi was entirely cognizant of Patel's organisational talents: he knew the Congress was held together and funded by the iron hand of the Sardar. He knew too that nine of the 11 Congress provincial units sought to see Patel succeed Maulana Azad in 1946, thus paving the way for his eventual assuming of the leadership of the government. What one would have hoped for in such a comprehensive study is an examination of the grounds on which Gandhi overruled the overwhelming preference of the party.

Sengupta suggests (apparently not tongue-in-cheek) that Gandhi feared Nehru revolting against being made No. 2 whereas he was assured of Patel remaining faithful whatever his decision. Given the numerous occasions on which Nehru acquiesced to Gandhi's diktat against his own best judgement, this is not history, it's petty bias.

Gandhi chose Nehru because, while the party desired Patel, the country



THE MAN WHO SAVED INDIA: Sardar Patel and His Idea of India
by Hindol Sengupta
Penguin/Viking
430 pages; ₹599

08

the political from organization of order, from the question of power to the possibility of acting and living in solidarity, in ethical awareness of the limits to power, we create a ground for collectively, for common cause that is not rooted in an exercise of self-interest to the exclusion of all others. Ethical awareness of common cause allows us to fight all forms of inequities – of gender, wealth, colour, of Empire and slavery. It creates a public realm of which all of us are trustees. In this sense an act of disobedience becomes an act of trusteeship.

This brings us to Gandhi, who Jahanbegloo calls a 'disobedient mind'. He knows that for Gandhi the act of dissent is not an act of wilfulness, but one of deep obedience, obedience to non-violence which alone can create the fabric of freedom through solidarity, empathy and a quest for freedom through common cause. He knows that for disobedience to create freedom it requires a delicately tuned breast that recognizes the distinction between the voice of Rama and that of Ravana.

Ramin Jahanbegloo alerts us that disobedience is an act of trusteeship. As trusteeship each individual act of disobedience – even while seeming to fail in face of the world which is *After Virtue* to use Alasdair Macintyre's phrase – expands the scope of trusteeship, both as trust, as solidarity, as empathy and as common cause. These philosophical meditations are a primer and primary for all those perturbed by the authority of the lie in our times.

Tridip Suhrud

Professor and Director Archives,
CEPT University, Ahmedabad

ASHIS NANDY: A Life in Dissent edited by Ramin Jahanbegloo and Ananya Vajpeyi. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2018.

THIS is a difficult volume to review, not only because of the sheer number of essayists who celebrate the polymath Ashis Nandy on his eightieth birthday, but also because of the diversity of themes they engage with. Some of these essays offer personal tributes to Ashis *da* as he is known. Amitav Ghosh authors a short story for the birthday boy, and Aseem Shrivastava speculates on a dialogue that might perchance occur if Rabindranath Tagore were to visit us today. Shiv Visvanathan contributes a short piece on the pleasures of walking, and T.M. Krishna writes on the aesthetics of classical music.

Almost all the contributors agree that Nandy's ideas inhabit a space between the demise of verities and

a return of the age of doubt. And all express fulsome admiration for a man who has inspired imaginative explorations of the malaise of the present. Reading Ashis Nandy, writes Richard Falk, is always an encounter with the unexpected. For Lydia Liu, Nandy delivers brilliant and often counterintuitive analysis of Indian society and of the contemporary world. Douglas Lummis argues that Nandy belongs to a group of philosophers who see irony as method. For David L. Blaney and Naeem Inayatullah, the man simply knows something that others do not.

Fred Dallmayr, Richard Falk, and Ziauddin Sardar reflect on the body of work produced by Nandy's indefatigable mind. Dipesh Chakrabarty sees Nandy as pivotal to his own intellectual move from a consumer of an unreflective and almost positivist Marxism, to the world of the subaltern. Raghuramaraju recounts the influence of Nandy on his own academic trajectory. Venkat Rao suggests that for Nandy academia and research is not an answer to but part of a wider problem. And Dallmayr argues that though Nandy does not disown the textual tradition that forms the anchor of most research, he uses it creatively to demolish binaries and the neat certitudes of modernity

Nandy is, of course, the eternal dissident. Jahanbegloo focusing on precisely this quality suggests that when we look towards a future, we require conviction, but we also require Socratic rebels of the mind. Falk's special term for Nandy is 'master of contrarian reason'. John Cash acknowledges that Nandy's ideas helped him understand the role of the psychological in the realm of the political in Northern Ireland. Phillip Darby speaks of the need to cultivate a new sensibility for the muscular discipline of International Relations, through the lens of Nandy's focus on everyday forms of suffering. Lydia H. Liu acknowledges that our public intellectual enabled her to comprehend how souls are decolonized. And Venkat Rao chronicles his ability to challenge academic polemics.

Nandy, writes Tridip Suhrud, gleaned from Gandhi a new cultural iconography – that of hyper-masculinity. This trait he found in Gujarat, which today shapes imaginations in the country from consumerism, rendering Dalit and Muslim voices irrelevant, unembarrassed display of wealth, sheer pragmatism, and above all the forgetting of Gandhi. Arindam Chakrabarti takes up Nandy's notion of the future to ask a question – how do we deal with a time that has yet to come? He finds an answer in 'deep true coolness' or the slowing down of thought. In Kashmir Saivism, the idea of repose represents the final form of freedom or liberation. Rudolf

Brogankey

Heredia locates Nandy in the purported, but arguably spurious division between academics and activism. T.N. Madan honours our academic rebel by revisiting the work of M.N. Srinivas. And finally, Ananya Vajpeyi authors a delightful piece on Ashis Nandy's love of music.

Some of the most creative minds in intellectual circles admire Ashis Nandy and see in him a guide for negotiating a world that is both unpredictable and frightening. Yet his belief in the ability of Indians to live together in a certain degree of harmony, in abstraction from a toxic political context, is both touching and Utopian. His faith in the capacity of human beings to show compassion and love is equally moving, given that today Indian citizens either lynch the vulnerable, or stand around filming the repulsive act on their mobiles. And other fellow citizens consume the dissemination of revolting violence on the social media. We can excavate the strengths of our culture to help us live a good life. Still a good life can only be led in a good society, and good societies are forged through political contestation. We must be dissenters, but we also must understand the limits of dissent in a society that has abdicated its claims to tolerance. The context of culture is, after all, politics, which is occasionally creative, often unbearably ugly, and more often than not unpredictable, chancy and contingent.

Neera Chandhoke

Former Professor of Political Science,
Delhi University

X **IN DIASPORIC LANDS: Tibetan Refugees and their Transformation Since the Exodus by Sudeep Basu (with a foreword by Samir Kumar Das). Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2018.**

Sudeep Basu's book *In Diasporic Lands: Tibetan Refugees and their Transformation Since the Exodus* sets out to examine and present the multilayered dynamics in the lives of people in exile, and how they individually and as a collective engage in 'wayfinding' in alien urban lands and make meaning out of their lives anew. The study contributes to showing new perspectives in the almost banal, forced migration studies. Basu's book shows rays of possibilities in engaging and injecting intelligent conversations between theory and the field, and in doing so he unearths a rich socio-ethnohistorical account of communities in the trans-Himalayas, who over the decades due to multiple factors have been compelled to move beyond their traditional

settings and engage with vexed notions of 'home', 'place', 'lives', and 'being themselves' ('being Tibetans'/'Tibetanness'). The book in this sense injects fresh vigour into the dry documentation exercise of 'forced migration studies' in India, South Asia. The book comprises seven chapters and a postscript that has been previously published in various journals and as a chapter in edited volumes.

Chapter 1, Tibetans as Refugee Diasporas and Chapter 3, The Tibetan Exilic Paradigm opens up a panoramic encapsulative reading of the Tibetan people in exile in Darjeeling, India. These chapters bring to the fore the contested nature of the host territory (*vis-a-vis* the protracted Gorkhaland imbroglio in the state of West Bengal) and the heterogeneity of the hegemonic resident identity, namely the Gorkha identity.

Chapter 4, The Tibetan Question: A Reappraisal, in various ways question policy postures and policy overtures, projected imageries relating to the Tibetan refugee in India, Nepal and elsewhere. The chapter dabbles with a highly contentious gaze of the westerner vis-a-vis the Chinese gaze on issues like the representational issue of the Dalai Lama (pp. 80-82), or the image of the Tibetans as 'intrinsically non-violent people' (p. 77), or 'what constitutes 'Tibet' (pp. 82-90), contested histories, conflicting histories of the region from Trison Detsen to the 1959 Revolt (pp. 92-106). This chapter is the strongest part of the study in terms of spanning the historical kaleidoscope and vexed ethnicities that it engages with to revisit and contextualize the contemporary exilic Tibetan people living and torn between global and local callings. The chapter augments the notion of 'ethnosymbolism' in exile and how a multiversal and seeming polarized notions of 'being Tibetan' in diaspora and contested frames of Tibetanness, becomes a meaningful engagement for those 'far from home' and trying to find a home in themselves, or in other words 'taking their home with and within themselves'.

The fifth chapter, Organising for Exile; chapter 6, Preservation, Integration and the Pragmatics of Diasporic Identity and chapter 7, Dwelling and Movement in Exile follows the preceding chapter and provides a description of the 'home making' and multiversal 'organizing exercise' as a lived experience of the Tibetans in India. The ingenious negotiations of 'wayfinding' and circumventing the perplexed state of 'being homeless', 'refugeeness', possible 'repatriations' and 'homing practices' are documented in these chapters through Basu's discussions of the pre-exilic Tibetan hosts, the Bhutias in Darjeeling town

Tr. by Vibha Chauhan and Khalid Alvi

Manto Saheb: Friends and Enemies and the Great Maverick | Speaking Tiger | 296 pages | Rs 499

Hall Of Refracted Truths

Like his coruscatingly brilliant stories, Manto was quirky, unpredictable, made of hard and soft edges. These essays, by his literary friends, confirm his genius.

BY AAKAR PATEL

THE satirical magazine *Private Eye* has a standard response to celebrity obituaries. When someone famous like film director Bernardo Bertolucci, dies, the magazine publishes a first-person piece headlined 'The Bertolucci who knew me', poking fun at writers who use the opportunity to write as much about themselves as about the person who died.

This book has been written in the same vein. Saadat Hasan Manto was a remarkable man. He was not particularly literate (he left Aligarh Muslim University without a degree, having failed in, of all subjects, Urdu) or even well read. He was a Kashmiri who was raised in Punjab and moved to Bombay in his early 20s and began writing film scripts. At this he was not particularly good. There are no films that one can name today which he wrote, for they made little impact. The other thing he wrote were short stories. At this he is magical.

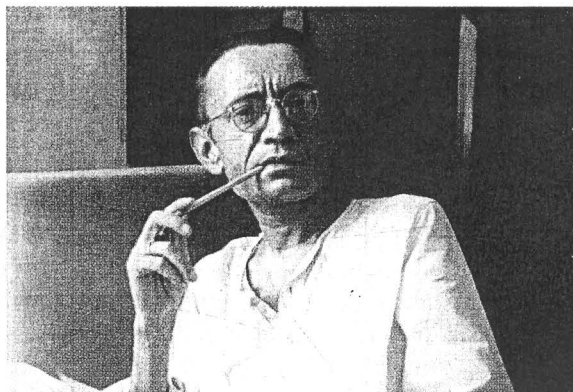
One way to test his greatness is to examine his relevance. Of his contemporary writers, almost none is read today, including the biggest name of the time, Munshi Premchand. His work is not relevant to the India of 2018. Manto's is. That is why his work is still performed on stage, why there are movies on him and why, to return to the work at hand, there are books about people who knew him.

Manto Saheb: Friends and Enemies and the Great Maverick is a series of essays, 15 in all, from people who were familiar with Manto. The best essays are four: the opening one by Manto himself, one by Ali Sardar Jafri (whom, in a *Private Eye* aside, I should mention that I knew), by Ismat Chughtai, who probably knew Manto best and one by

his daughter Nuzhat, who probably knew him least, being only seven when Manto died.

Some of the other essays are not easy reading. The longest one, 70 pages, by Upendranath Ashk, is particularly tiresome. It has some interesting details about Manto, but it is made tedious by constant self-reference. It is not objective—nor, to be fair, is it meant to be, given its title: *Manto, My Enemy*—and not of particularly high quality.

The essay by Manto on himself is breezy and he probably wrote it in an hour or two. He writes in the first person but refers to 'Manto' in the third person. Called *Manto's Twin*, the essay is disarming because the writer takes himself so lightly. He writes: "He is poorly educated, in the sense that he has never studied Marx; neither has he ever set eyes on any of Freud's works; and he knows Hegel only by name." He adds: "People should attain knowledge only through their experience." Readers of Manto will know that this quality of



Manto wasn't that well educated, dropping out of AMU and failing, of all subjects, in Urdu. Yet, all his contemporaries, even Premchand, has lost relevance, except him.

his, to observe and record what he sees around him, is the standout feature of his writing.

Ali Sardar Jafri's piece is a takedown of Manto from the perspective of a highly literate and ideological writer. It is a brilliant polemic. Sample this: "Manto could smash society to smithereens and scatter its remains far and wide. However, he could neither reconstruct it nor design a new costume to cover its nudity... After 1940, he constructed his own yardstick for judging the success of his stories: the more controversy and uproar his stories generated, the more successful they were." And also: "Manto, unlike Rajinder Singh Bedi, could not penetrate the hearts of his sad, dejected characters and provide evidence of the sincerity of the human heart." But Jafri also says this: "From the perspective of art, Manto was unique and unparalleled. There was nobody like him. No other writer had the ability to create the impact that

Manto could with the simplicity, dexterity and perspicacity of his language...he could flesh out a character in a couple of words."

This is the best criticism of Manto I have ever read. Chughtai describes Manto as through a movie camera. She brings him and his movements to life: "He concealed his troubles as if they were his failures". Nuzhat Arshad (Manto's daughter) in her two-page piece opens with this devastating paragraph: "Abba passed away in 1955.

I was just seven at the time. My elder sister was nine and the youngest was five. It is self-evident that we were not old enough to be either influenced by our father or remember much about him. None of us were fond of reading or writing—something that became a source of satisfaction to my mother. Our mother's opinion was unambiguous: It is better for people not to write." □



PERSONA OVER POLICY

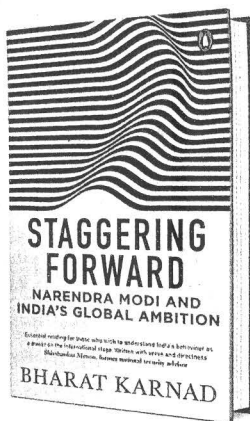
By Sumit Ganguly

This book is an insightful but uneven critique of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign and security policies. It is perceptive because Bharat Karnad quite accurately describes the principal factors that propelled Modi into office in 2014 and the hopes that many in the electorate had reposed in him. It is also problematic because his criticisms are often much too sweeping and shot through with his own idiosyncratic preferences.

At the very outset, Karnad correctly argues that Modi had represented a potential break from India's recent lacklustre past under the previous regime. Modi seemed to embody a clean image, a leader who was decisive and would bring about the much-needed reforms across the board. Few, if any, of these promises, Karnad argues, have been realised. Worse, stemming from his ideological convictions or because he is beholden to the foot soldiers of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Modi has given free rein to highly divisive forces within the Indian society. Apart from this dubious domestic stance, Karnad argues, Modi has engaged in much fanfare on the foreign policy front, but has failed to produce commensurate results.

Karnad attributes a good deal of these shortcomings to certain features of Modi's "alpha male" personality, traits that he apparently shares with a number of other nationalistic and populist leaders across the world. Whether or not one accepts the premises derived from this form of popular psychology, there are at least some superficial similarities that he does share with a number of other nationalist leaders ranging from Donald Trump to Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Some of Karnad's criticisms of Modi's policies, whether or not they can be traced to his personality, are clearly on the mark. Among other matters, he faults Modi for his failure to devise a coherent strategy for dealing with India's principal long-term adversary, the People's Republic of China (PRC). More to the point, he takes Modi to task for his preoccupation with Pakistan, a country that poses a far more limited threat to India's critical national security interests.



STAGGERING FORWARD: Narendra Modi and India's Global Ambition
by Bharat Karnad
Penguin Viking
₹599; 476 pages

Karnad's critique of Modi's foreign and security policies stands out as an important broadside from a prominent political commentator

domestic defence capabilities, no doubt, is admirable. Yet, surely, Karnad must be aware that its limitations did not emerge under the Modi regime. Hardly a single homegrown weapons system seems to have been produced in a timely or cost-effective fashion.

These quibbles notwithstanding, Karnad's critique of the Modi government's foreign and security policies stands out as an important broadside from a prominent conservative political commentator. Accordingly, it is an assessment that is worth heeding. ■

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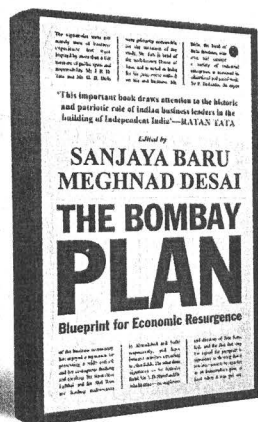
AN UNMEMORABLE PLAN

By Ashok V. Desai

After Gandhi told the British on August 9, 1942, to quit India, the entire Congress leadership was put behind bars; the British gave a strong message that they would continue to rule India. Italy surrendered to the Allies on September 8, 1943. On December 26, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek met in Cairo and agreed on a joint strategy against Japan. Two days later, Roosevelt and Churchill met Stalin in Teheran and agreed on a strategy against Germany. Allied victory was in sight. Since the beginning of their alliance, Roosevelt had been pressing Churchill to grant independence to India after the war. Churchill hated the prods; he had every intention to retain India as a colony.

Bombay House in a lane off Flora Fountain in South Bombay has been the headquarters of the Tata empire since 1924. There, Jehangir Ratanji Dorabji Tata, the scion who headed the business house from 1938 till his death in 1993, got together a few friends in 1944, including some of India's leading industrialists. They wrote up the Bombay Plan; it laid out how to develop India over 15 years. The British were determined to stay; the Bombay Plan was a nudge to them to develop India, and offered ideas for it. The Congress rebels were all behind bars; they were irrelevant to the Bombay Plan.

The government of British India took only perfunctory interest in the Plan. It was forgotten almost as soon as it was drafted. The government of independent India prepared and implemented its first five-year plan in 1951, but it never recognised or mentioned the Bombay Plan. Now, Baron Desai of St Clement Danes, and Sanjaya Baru, who created the Accidental Prime Minister, have put together a



**THE BOMBAY PLAN:
Blueprint for Economic
Resurgence**
by Sanjaya Baru and
Meghnad Desai
Rupa
₹500; 343 pages

**The government of
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collection of papers to celebrate it.

There is much discussion in the book about why India's planners did not mention the Bombay Plan. It is misdirected. The Bombay Plan was completely forgotten: there is no evidence that anyone connected with the first five-year plan, which was framed seven years after the Bombay Plan, ever gave it a thought. The five-year plan was largely put together by Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI); Pitambar Pant, whom Mahalanobis sent to Delhi, got together a bunch of young men, mostly from the ISI and Delhi School of Economics, and made up the plan. Sir John Mathai, who participated in the drafting of the Bombay Plan, was the railway minister in the first cabinet after Independence, but he soon resigned in disgust with Mahalanobis, and had no influence on the five-year plan.

The most important contribution of this book is the Bombay Plan itself, which sees light of day for the first time after 1944. It is in two parts of 99 and 48 paragraphs, respectively. The first one deals with production, and the second one with distribution and the role of the state. The planners meant to bring out a third part on income distribution and state control. They did not, which is a clear indication that they gave up.

P. S. Lokanathan wrote on the Bombay Plan in *Foreign Affairs* soon after its publication. He was doubtful whether the British government would take it up after the war, but hoped that the US would adopt and finance it. It did not. The Plan turned out to be a non-starter; its most substantial contribution is this book. ■

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economic advisor*

-13 -

A DEMON THAT NO ONE NEEDED

By T.C.A. Srinivasa Raghavan

All governments make mistakes. Mostly, these consist of a series of small ones whose effects are localised. But at 8 pm on November 8, 2016, the Modi government made a gigantic blunder, which had economy-wide effects: it rendered 86 per cent of the Indian currency invalid. The effect was the same as suddenly taking out 86 per cent of engine oil: the motor seized up.

As Winston Churchill might have said, never had so many been made so miserable by so few. The RBI recently reported that 97 per cent of the currency had come back which means that only the non-black money holders suffered. The decision to demonetise on such a scale thus neither had, nor has, any justification whatsoever.

Meera Sanyal, banker-turned-politician, tells us about it in this smart little book. It is essentially a well-crafted summary of much of the analysis that followed demonetisation. For anyone looking for a quick random walk through all the discussion, this is the book. It is simply written and well-organised. Above all, it is the banker, not the politician, speaking except in the sarcastic heading of the first chapter called "The Surgical Strike".

Four of the remaining five chapters discuss the role of the Reserve Bank



THE BIG REVERSE
How Demonetisation
Knocked India Out
by Meera H. Sanyal
Harper Business ₹599; 302 pages

Demonetisation hasn't worked anywhere except as an attempt by governments to disarm adversaries

of India (RBI), the human impact, the economic shock and finally, a comprehensive and entirely uncomplimentary report card. Much of what these chapters contain is well-known, but only to experts. The fifth takes the reader through a brief history of demonetisations and shows how it simply never works, anywhere, any time. Given this, the only rational explanation for doing it is an attempt by governments to disarm

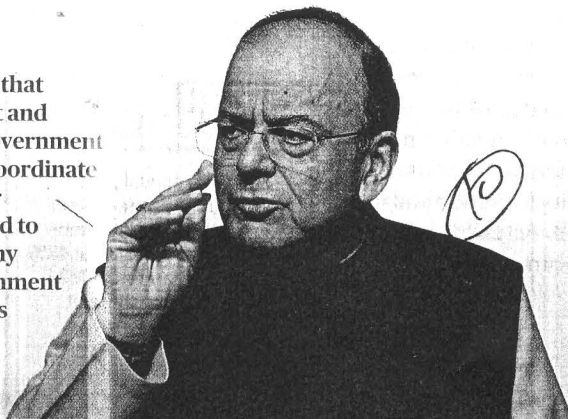
adversaries. Whether it was the 1946 demonetisation by the British, just before the pre-Independence national election later that year; or the one in 1978, which some said was aimed at Indira Gandhi's alleged cash hoard; or in Burma or Ghana or Zaire or Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, this was one of the two common threads. The other was that it never achieved its stated aims.

Chapter two discusses the role of the RBI, which had always, in 1946 and in 1978, been dead opposed to demonetisation. So was Raghuram Rajan in 2016. He demitted office as governor two months before Modi made his speech and Urjit Patel was made to take the blame after being instructed to do so with veiled references to the now famous Section 7 of the RBI Act, which allows the government to literally order the RBI to do something. This suggests that he, too, was opposed to demonetisation.

The only disappointing chapter in the book is the concluding one which is all too brief, a mere five pages. That said, the 41 pages of end notes provide a valuable source of references for researchers. They contain several hidden gems such as a *Business Today* report that says the PM told the cabinet that if demonetisation failed, he would be to blame. Hmm... Indeed. ■

PULLQUOTE

“The government believes that the RBI is an independent and autonomous body. The government will fully support it and coordinate with it in areas where our consultations are required to make sure India's economy benefits from both government policy decisions and areas which fall within the domain of the RBI”



Finance minister **ARUN JAITLEY** has been working overtime to allay suspicions that the government is undermining the independence of India's central bank. Urjit Patel resigned unexpectedly on December 10, several months before the end of his term and in the wake of obvious tension between the RBI and government over the latter's alleged interference in the central bank's functioning. The government was keen for the RBI to relax lending restrictions and be more generous with its reserves. Patel's replacement, Shaktikanta Das, is expected to be more accommodating of the government's concerns.

Book Review

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Tim Dolin, Joanne Jones and Patricia Dowsett (eds), *Required reading: Literature in Australian senior secondary English since 1945*. Monash University Publishing: Clayton, 2017; 368 pp. ISBN 978-1-9254-9557-7 (paperback) 978-1-9254-9559-1 (ebook)

Reviewed by: Brad Jackel, Australian Council for Educational Research, Camberwell, Australia

Required Reading is a collection of responses to the Analysis of Literature in Australian Schools (ALIAS) database. ALIAS contains ‘all the reading material listed in the syllabuses of every publicly examined English subject for each year ... from, 1945 to 2005’ (Yiannakis, 2017, p. 25). ALIAS is an invaluable resource for both making and testing claims about how English has been taught in Australia. As claims of this nature are invariably made in order to influence how English is taught right now, having comprehensive historical evidence with which to weigh those claims is not merely of historical interest.

The contributions collected in this book provide models of how to utilise the data of ALIAS. While not formally open-access, login details for ALIAS are provided in a footnote to one early chapter, a fact pointed to in another early chapter in case the reader missed it. I will not provide them here as, alarmingly enough, once logged in I seemed to have the option to delete parts of the database. For the record, I did not check to see whether that also worked.

In the foreword, Rod Quin (2017) reminds readers that claims about how English has been taught tend towards either the ‘golden age’ view – an ideal past collapsing into an ever more debased present – or the ‘Whig interpretation’ of history – we boldly stride from the unenlightened into an ever more progressive future (p. xv). ALIAS allows us to steer between those two extremes. While the book as a whole does slightly favour Whig, it does push back: ‘it seems as if later cohorts of teachers can’t acknowledge the ingenuity ... of their forebears’ (Dolin, Jones, & Dowsett, 2017b, p. 55), and there are some fascinating examples of just how contemporary the unenlightened past was: a Victorian English paper from 1945 asks the student to provide critical comments on a newspaper advertisement for shoes (Dolin et al., 2017b, p. 40).

The title *Required Reading* implies certain questions: what do we make students read? How are we trying to shape them? What does that say about us? How does that relate to policy and society at a given point in time? How could we do it better? Those are the central questions around which most of the contributions revolve. Different chapters cover how Australian reading lists have been impacted by policy-driven reform, organic social change, schools of thought and even specific individuals. Understanding these kinds of impacts is

important because change, intentional or otherwise, will not stop. Indeed, it cannot – any successful reform inevitably replaces one orthodoxy with another, ‘beneficial or not’ (Reid, 2017, p. 74), an observation borne out by Prue Gill’s recollections of marking VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education) papers and how these papers, over time, shifted to a ‘stifling . . . standard structure’ (McLean Davies, Doecke, Gill, & Hayes, 2017, p. 188).

As many of the contributors note, what is (or was) required reading is only part of the picture: the fact that, say, *Othello* is a perennial favourite might suggest that not much has changed, yet how students are expected to think about *Othello* certainly has. This becomes obvious through various analyses of historical essay and exam prompts and the implicit assumptions on which they are built. Within *Required Reading*, these analyses are both frequent and revealing. In one of the few chapters which considers how required reading plays out in the classroom, we are reminded of just how important it is to ensure that assessment pulls students (and teachers) in the same direction as the goals of the course, as the examination often becomes the ‘de facto syllabus’ (Sawyer, 2017, p. 150).

Others contributors consider not just what was on the reading list but what was actually read. Dowlin, Jones, and Dowset (2017a) show how an inclusive broadening of a reading list can even work to mask stasis if teachers keep teaching the same core texts anyway (p. 10): if *Tree of Man* is on the reading list but no one reads it, is it really there? In another chapter, Jones (2017) provides tables that rank set texts by popularity, showing that what is most popular in terms of inclusion over time is as revealing as what was included.

The last third of the book focuses on individual authors and theories with case studies being used to illuminate broader issues. The typical critique of the canon is that it perpetuates the values and mores of a certain class. Jenny de Reuck (2017) offers an interesting critique of that critique, arguing Shakespeare ‘continually escapes the boundaries of any particular age’s moral theory’ (p. 228), that is, could just as easily serve the needs of those who subvert as those who perpetuate but will ultimately escape both: there are more things in Shakespeare than are dreamt of in your philosophy. This would also apply to many other authors, as the chapters on Hardy, Dickens, Wright and Emily Bronte could be said to demonstrate.

If there is a weakness to the book, it is in the slight mismatch between its stated goals and what it actually is. The foreword observes that ‘teachers who lack an adequate understanding of the history of their discipline’ are likely to ‘fall prey to prevailing educational fads’ and ‘bureaucratic dicta’ (Quin, 2017, p. xv). This is impossible to argue with. An inoculation for teachers against faddism would be valuable and (always) timely. But the book as a whole is not quite it. In both tone and focus, its audience feels academic in the tertiary sense, aimed more at people undertaking higher degree studies on teaching English than actual teachers – although many of the authors were secondary school teachers, the point of view from which they are writing is manifestly tertiary. The collection would have been more balanced in terms of its stated goals with more representation by practising secondary school teachers who could consider ALIAS’s data through the lens of current practice rather than the lens of academic speciality. This is not a criticism of any given chapter within the book, rather its overall balance. Similarly, while the chapter on *Tess* (Barnett, Douglas, & Healy-Ingram, 2017) contains some authorial comments about studying *Tess* at school – contextualised by later teaching it – the collection contains little else by way of representation from a student perspective about required reading. These omissions are not insignificant in a book prepared to complain that reading lists reveal the ‘consistent marginalisation of teachers and students’ (Manuel & Carter, 2017, p. 133) from decision-making. All of that said, *Required Reading*

remains an important book, and it is difficult to disagree with the hope that it should be 'required reading' (Quin, 2017, p. xvi) for all teachers of literature even if its tone and focus do present some headwinds to that hope.

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BOOK REVIEW

Technology-enhanced Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by Moira Savage, Anthony Barnett and Michelle Rogers St Albans, UK, Critical Publishing, 2017, 184 pp., £22.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-911-10618-0, £22.99 (EPUB), ISBN 978-1-911-10620-3

With the increasing use of information communication technologies (ICT) for teaching and learning in the early years, this serves as a primary and timely textbook for early childhood education (ECE) undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as parents and educators working with three- to seven-year-olds. Also, readers who are researching, lecturing or developing their skills, knowledge and curriculum on ICT use in ECE will find this book useful as a reference. This book covers all major topics on technology use in ECE. The chapter topics span from a description of technology-enhanced learning, key debates and research evidence, physical development, literacy, mathematics, and safeguarding and welfare, amongst a few others. Chapter 1: Overview of Chapters gives an introductory statement, identifies the readership of the book and provides a summary and reflective questions for each chapter, whilst Chapter 13: Conclusion presents the linkages between the chapters. Chapter 1 is freely available from this website: <http://eprints.worc.ac.uk/5746/>.

Although predominantly focused on the United Kingdom's (UK) standards and goals, the book touches on global influences in ECE such as Italy's Reggio Emilia (Thornton & Brunton, 2010), Singapore's numeracy curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2012), standards of the US-based International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE, 2016) and New Zealand's *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996). It is important to note that a revised *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 2017) was released in April 2017, a month before this book was published.

Readers should be aware that the content of this book, although extensive, may not be as in-depth as it strives to cover as many topics and concepts as it can about ICT and ECE. To cope with this limitation, the book frequently refers to website links, videos, hardware, software/apps, theories and standards provided throughout the book. This is an effective way of using technology to help readers access up-to-date information.

This book is available in digital or print form. The digital format might be worth purchasing because the readily available hyperlinks allow readers to peruse digital online references, making it convenient to dip in and out of the book. Through these links, the book helps readers access information in various forms of media and contexts that the book did not discuss in depth. These hyperlinks may have changed though, as I found out when the book's hyperlink to Carr and Lee's (2009) *Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Te Hangarau Pārongo me te Whakawhitiwhiti*, although correct, showed as 'Page not found' on my web browser. This may differ in the actual purchased version as I received a time-limited access for this book review. If this happens, readers can copy-paste the hyperlink into a search engine to access the link, provided it is still available.

Additionally, another matter for readers to consider is the changing contexts in digital media. The book mentions MySpace, a social media website akin to Facebook. I think MySpace should not be specified in a book on ECE because, aside from becoming obsolete since the popularisation of Facebook, MySpace had a dangerous reputation for bullying, viruses, and 'adults ... simply lying about their age and other personal details to gain access to children in the site' (Gehl, 2012, p. 110). I would have thought that reference to MySpace should have been left out as it can be controversial in ECE settings, but since it was mentioned, specific evidence could have also been presented and discussed in Chapter 12: Safeguarding and Welfare. I believe it is important that trainees, in-service teachers and researchers of ECE should be aware of these issues to help them in

their role in protecting our young global citizens in the digital age. As Facebook rose to replace MySpace, I expected the book to have anticipated and mentioned new trends such as Instagram, amongst many others (Salomon, 2013). Finally, the stylus was only mentioned once in Chapter 10: Expressive Arts and Design, despite evidence that styluses can be used to enhance children's learning and development (Couse & Chen, 2010). I expected that the stylus could have been mentioned also in Chapter 6: Physical Development, Chapter 8: Literacy and Chapter 11: Technologies for Inclusion, as there has been evidence of how styluses enhance learning and development of fine motor skills (Vera & Jozwiak, 2016) and literacy (Patchan & Puranik, 2016), as well as supporting children with autism (Dowd, McGinley, Taffe, & Rinehart, 2012).

Self-reflection is a major strength of this book. Chapters 2 to 12 contain reflexive questions that allow readers to think about their pedagogy and practice. This is done through providing case studies, theories, and pedagogical linkages to the *Teachers' Standards* (Department for Education [DfE], 2011) and 'early learning goals' (DfE, 2014). Such introspective questions can help readers to reflect on their practices, beliefs and ideas on technology-enhanced learning. The chapters contain images of devices and apps to help readers concretely visualise software and hardware specified in the book. I did wonder why there was not any image in Chapter 9: Mathematics. Including images could have supported some readers who might want to learn how to use technology for teaching and learning mathematics in more concrete ways.

Now, how should this book be read? I suggest downloading and reading Chapter 1 first as it presents an overview of each chapter. With a preferred chapter or topic in mind, read the conclusion to identify which chapters link to each other as some linkages are not consecutive, such as chapters 5 (Communication and Language) and 8 (Literacy). Afterwards, prioritise reading topics of interest because you will be spending much time dipping in and out of the book whilst accessing online media, reflecting on questions or trying out devices and software that may be readily available to you.

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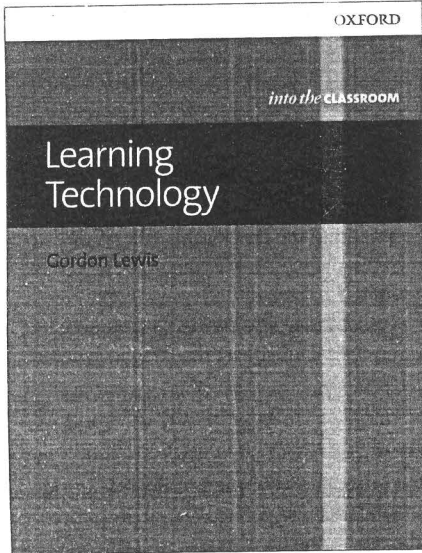
Reviews

Learning Technology

by Gordon Lewis

OUP 2017

978-0-19-420041-7



At the beginning of this book, US-based lecturer Gordon Lewis immediately identifies one of the primary issues ELT teachers face when using new technology in the classroom: the everyday challenges we face to achieve our teaching aims have changed little over the years, but the teaching tools available to us have increased to a point that can often feel overwhelming. As a result, technology is often not exploited sufficiently, is misused or is ignored completely. Acknowledging this, Lewis aims in this book to explore how various new technologies can improve the classroom experience for both teachers and learners alike, while also providing teachers with the confidence to utilise further both familiar and unfamiliar tech tools.

The chapters are grouped into four sections (Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4), but the book does not need to be read in order, making it a very useful text for teachers to dip in and out of. In every part, the main text of each chapter deals with the pedagogy behind the topic, with 'Try this' activities providing specific ideas and techniques for teachers to try in the classroom. Even when these activities are familiar, they still act as valuable revision, helping teachers to assess their own existing approaches to the use of technology in the classroom.

In Part 1, the first chapter invites teachers to develop strategies for the application of new technologies that work for them on an individual level. Initially, Lewis encourages the reader to reflect on their personal technology profile and rank themselves as a 'Casual user', an 'Old schooler' or an 'Innovator'. From there, the book offers ideas for the creation of an individual technology plan, which is a genuinely useful activity that ensures the reader actively considers their relationship with technology in the classroom.

The focus of Part 2 is on a number of popular technology tools, with practical ideas for how they can be used to enhance the learning experience. Lewis provides concise and accessible descriptions of web browsers, search engines and bookmarking tools, which are extremely useful for the less digitally-minded. There are also a number of excellent activities using tech tools that can be easily implemented in the classroom, including virtual museum tours, using *Google Earth*, creating polls and surveys and webquests.

Additionally, the book provides an easy-to-follow guide for creating podcasts and for how to exploit video in the classroom. Thankfully, the ideas are explained simply, with Lewis providing useful tips for getting things right, as well as analysing the theory that underpins them. It is only his analysis of social media sites that feels a little dated, mainly due to its focus on image sharing sites such as *Flickr*. However, the ideas contained within that chapter can easily be applied to other social media sites.

Elsewhere, the explanation of how to use test creation software provides a convenient guide to what can be an intimidating process. As Lewis admits, the assessment of speaking and writing is still quite limited with the tools available to us as teachers, but he is adamant that this will quickly change in the future. It will be interesting to see how this area will be explored in future editions of the book. Similarly, Lewis makes a clear argument that technology is developing in a way that will soon allow us to address individual learner needs with clearer, differentiated learning goals. However, he is quick to reiterate that, whatever

technological developments the future holds, the teacher will remain the key figure in the learning process.

While the layout may be a little bland, the content of the book is exceptional, with the chosen tech tools well-considered and unlikely to date too quickly. The tone of the book remains neutral, and never assumes the reader already knows what a particular term refers to, meaning that this is a useful resource for both technophobes and technophiles alike.

Paul Carr

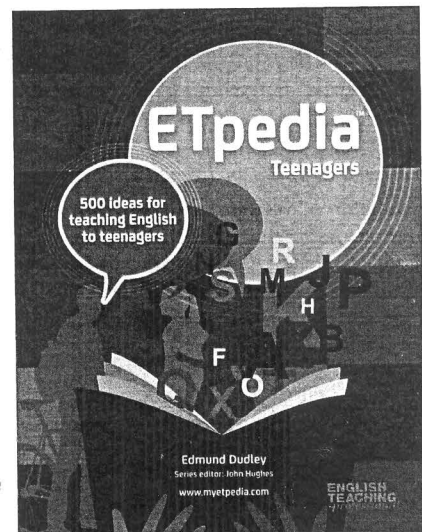
Exeter, UK

ETpedia Teenagers: 500 ideas for teaching English to teenagers

by Edmund Dudley

Pavilion 2018

978-1-911028-44-4



ETpedia Teenagers is the latest handbook in a series which also includes books of ideas for teaching business English, young learners, technology, grammar and exams. It seems to have taken a long time for publications focusing specifically on teenagers to be produced, so it is great to see a book like this finally available. It is obviously a labour of love, and what comes across clearly is that Edmund Dudley is a classroom practitioner who speaks from extensive, reflective experience. His style is clear and conversational, and the layout of ten top tips per section keeps the writing on point.

The book is divided into two parts: the first focusing on general approaches to understanding and managing teenagers. This would make an excellent introduction for teachers new to working with this age group. Having trained many teachers on CELTA courses who have gone on to first jobs involving many, or mostly, classes of teens, I would very much have appreciated having this book to recommend. It is also a beneficial reminder to all teachers of teens, especially when taking on a new class or encountering barriers to positive class dynamics, of strategies to include all the students in the lesson, find out about them and involve them in the learning process.

My favourite section here is on ways in which to incorporate L1 in the classroom. The vast majority of English teachers share the same L1 as their learners, and this is an area untapped for many years – with teachers being told that it was almost a sin to use the students' L1 in class. The ideas given in this book are not only effective language development tasks, but I know that the teens I have taught over the years would be very motivated by them, especially those that involve using television and film clips in class.

The second section of the book focuses on language development and practice tasks. There are many practical activities suggested which require little or no preparation or materials, and teachers will greatly appreciate these. I did think that, in some cases, there could have been more detailed explanation of how the activities are set up and run in the classroom – to help less experienced teachers, or even those of us with many years' experience in the classroom who are new to that particular activity. But I believe this is a by-product of having such an ambitious aim: 500 ideas, rather than 50 more thoroughly-explained tasks.

Another helpful aspect of this book is the links to websites, online videos and books where teachers can get more support and background information, if they are hooked on the ideas they read about. The book is also dotted with quotes from teachers around the world with their tips or insights on teaching teenagers, which I enjoyed reading and which support the techniques presented in the book.

One marvellous section is the guide to using the book itself. 500 ideas could

be about 490 too many for some teachers to take on board at once. This pragmatic guide to how to approach the plethora of ideas will be well appreciated.

I shall be using this book to find more ideas for my classroom teaching of teens as well as young adults, and I will definitely be recommending it to the teachers I train worldwide, who are keen for such practical, uncomplicated ideas to make their lessons engaging and motivating for teenage learners. I shall also be using and recommending the linked website, which has more ideas and articles for teachers: www.myetpedia.com.

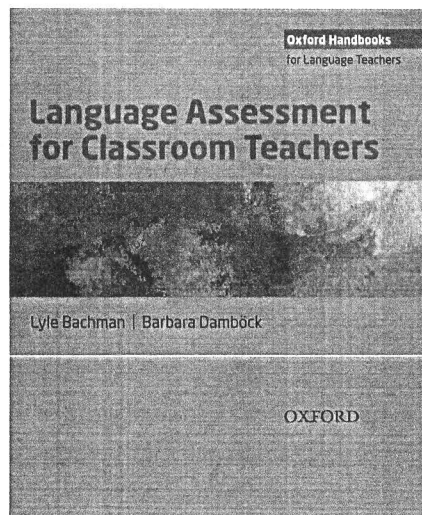
Olha Madylus
London, England

Language Assessment for Classroom Teachers

by Lyle Bachman and Barbara Damböck

OUP 2017

978-0-19-421839-9



Assessing language learning has always been a tricky issue for many teachers, whether they work in private or public schools and regardless of the level they teach: primary, secondary, university or even adult education courses. There are many questions that teachers ask themselves, especially about when and how to assess their students' learning.

Language Assessment for Classroom Teachers might be the light at the end of the tunnel, as it provides a new approach to classroom-based language assessment, based on current theory and the needs of classroom teachers.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I is the Introduction, which talks about where this new approach comes from and provides background information about the material, the contents of the book and who would benefit from reading it. It then delves into language teaching and classroom-based language assessment, the decisions one has to make in the classroom and modes of assessment.

Part II gives an overview of the approach and discusses why, when, what and how students should be assessed, as well as interpreting the results.

Part III is devoted to applying the approach and creating language assessment tasks, the administrative procedures to take into account and scoring, among other issues. Part IV illustrates the process of classroom-based language assessment by means of nine examples, bearing in mind all four skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking.

Chapters 2 and 3, in particular, contain a number of activities that clarify and reinforce what is said in the book – and which, I would suggest, will make the reader think further. At the back of the book, there are three appendices with a checklist of things to consider before using language assessment, plus templates and answers to all the proposed activities. There is also a glossary with definitions of some technical terms, as well as suggestions for further reading. Other resources can be found on an accompanying website.

In spite of the potentially daunting nature of the subject, the authors present things in a straightforward and accessible fashion, making the book a very educational and useful resource for teachers. Masters and Diploma students, and other professionals interested in this area.

Having read the book from cover to cover, I am beginning to question my own previous language assessment beliefs. I have had the opportunity to try out a few of the techniques the authors propose, and I can now see why classroom-based assessment is a fair approach to follow. Reading this book was a real eye-opener for me as a teacher. Needless to say, I would definitely recommend it.

William Chaves Gomes
London, UK

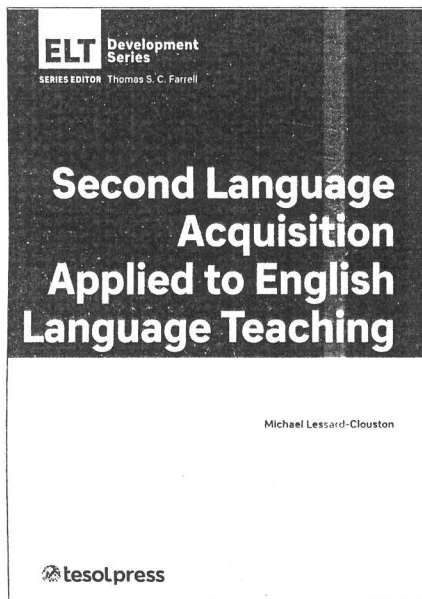
Reviews

Second Language Acquisition Applied to English Language Teaching

by Michael Lessard-Clouston

TESOL Press 2018

978-1-942799-94-8



For many teachers of English as a second language, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a bewildering maze of ideas and terminology hardly worth considering. It is often assumed to be light on practical value, whilst heavy on theory. However, in *Second Language Acquisition Applied to English Language Teaching*, the subject is given clarity and practicality in a book that can be read in one sitting.

The book is well suited to language teachers who have some experience to reflect on, but are still getting to grips with how best to teach in any given context. It also provides a very helpful introduction to those studying TESOL or Applied Linguistics at undergraduate or graduate level. Reading it will give teachers greater insight into the theory behind many teaching practices. And as it is based on sound research, it should also help them question and develop their own teaching methodology.

The first two chapters unpack SLA and its early history as a field of study. Chapter 1 starts by defining SLA, and then goes on to explain how teachers can draw on both their own experiences and an understanding of their students as language learners rather than simply non-native speakers. Chapter 2 introduces Stephen Krashen as a foundational influence on the field of SLA, together with his five principles: the acquisition-learning, natural order, monitor, input and affective filter hypotheses. The author explains each of these with a clear definition, practical examples and some pertinent applications to teaching today.

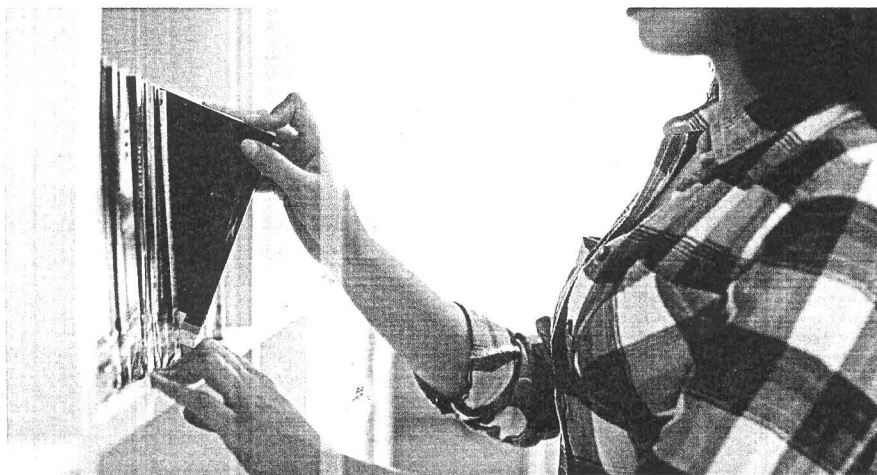
The next three chapters discuss three 'essential components' of learning English: input, output and interaction. As in the rest of the book, Lessard-Clouston aims to present some of the latest and most influential research, while leaving the reader to investigate its worth. Various distinctions of input are

discussed in Chapter 3: non-interactive/interactive, positive/negative, incidental/noticed and input/intake. The chapter ends with the value of an underlying linguistic system, extensive reading while listening, and input leading to output. Chapter 4 outlines the output hypothesis as developed by Merrill Swain. *Pushed output*, as she called it, brings meaning, opportunities to test the target language system, interaction and greater accuracy. The chapter concludes with examples demonstrating the link between output and input. Chapter 5 describes how interaction encourages negotiation of meaning, but takes on many different forms, according to the context. This chapter shows in a practical way how interaction can be encouraged in a variety of teaching contexts, such as large classes or EFL situations.

The last three chapters cover a lot of ground. Chapter 6 provides evidence that age is not a deal breaker for language learning, but merely a factor necessitating varied approaches. The author goes on to describe the need to minimise anxiety by creating a comfortable class atmosphere and setting up activities or tests thoughtfully. Some distinctions within error correction (mistakes/errors, global/local errors) are laid out. Finally, practical suggestions are given, like the use of coding systems and various types of feedback – not least, regular encouragement!

Chapter 7 is a particularly useful chapter for practitioners, as it outlines a series of principles from Brian Tomlinson, which can help match suitable ELT materials to SLA theory. It sets out the value of rich and meaningful content, engaging learners, noticing form and meaning, and opportunities for language use.

Chapter 8 culminates with an assessment of what SLA can offer classroom teachers, by bringing together some new factors with those previously discussed. The author acknowledges the complexities of language learning and SLA in particular. Next, he reviews the importance of *appropriate* input,



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output and interaction, and then provides a useful vignette to work through. The following section briefly describes the place for vocabulary, grammar and focus-on-form within SLA, including the importance of productive tasks.

The last two sections make brief suggestions and encouragement for applying SLA theory in the classroom, since, as the author puts it: *'Perhaps the main value of SLA is to help teachers recognise how understanding learning can better inform their teaching.'*

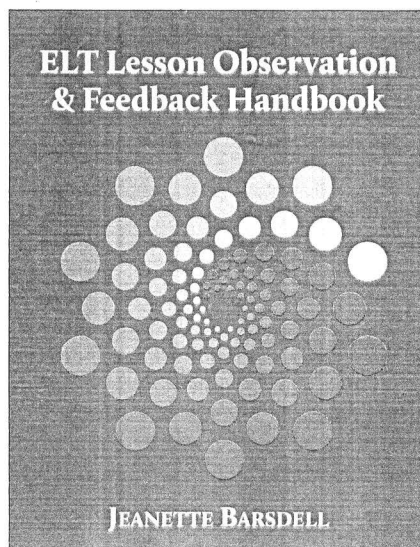
Besides the expansive introduction to SLA this short book gives, there are a number of features which make it a great tool for teachers. In addition to a clear presentation of the relevant literature, anecdotes serve to reinforce the points being made. In every chapter, the well-crafted reflective questions tease out the readers' teaching methodology. Around 30 of these reflection features are placed at strategic points, to allow what has been read to be processed and put into practice. There are also two vignettes, which are basically short case studies, placing the reader in contexts demanding thoughtful application of the principles they have learnt. Lastly, the list of references at the end will help the reader decide which aspects of SLA they wish to explore in more detail.

Overall, I found this book to be an inviting introduction to a complex and sometimes confounding subject. Having taught for many years myself and had some experience learning a second language, I appreciated the way these two aspects were brought together. Evidently, the author knows his subject well and only references the foremost research. Readers may find certain sections frustratingly short and wish for more definite conclusions from the author himself. Nonetheless, as an overview of SLA for teachers who have never ventured to study it before, it is a most adequate companion. It explains simply and applies practically the theories which have influenced us as teachers, whether we knew it or not.

Timothy Steele
Birmingham, UK

ELT Lesson Observation & Feedback Handbook

by Jeanette Barsdell
Jeanette Barsdell 2018
978-1-983308-00-0



This very useful book is designed for anyone who has to conduct a lesson observation and give oral and written feedback afterwards. The author starts out by saying that she was in the position of being asked to do this shortly after having passed her Delta, and was terrified of sitting in judgement on a teacher whom she didn't know and about whom there had been student complaints. An understanding DOS guided her through the process and now, years later, she has written this book to pass on the expertise she has gathered throughout her career as a teacher, trainer and leader of courses for senior staff on lesson observation and giving feedback.

The book provides practical and accessible information on every stage of a full and formal lesson observation which is to be followed by oral and written feedback. This represents the gold standard of lesson observation, but the author acknowledges that not every situation will require or allow for the same procedure, and readers can, therefore, pick and choose what is most relevant to their own context.

Chapter 1 begins by describing various types of lesson observation. Chapter 2 goes into how to set up a formal observation (with a handy

checklist) and Chapters 3 and 4 are about lesson plans: decoding a lesson plan and giving feedback on one, respectively. Chapter 5 is about assessing teaching practice through observation, and Chapters 6 to 8 are about various types of feedback and the best ways to give it. The final two chapters offer alternative ways to manage oral feedback and alternative ways to observe a lesson. Useful tip sections and checklists are an attractive feature of the book, and there is a large section of photocopiable resources at the end, with more checklists, sample lesson plans, observation summary documents and self-reflection sheets.

This will all be invaluable for anyone thrown in at the observation deep end, as the author was at the beginning of her career, as well as for seasoned observers. With the checklists and photocopies, a lot of the preparation work has been done for you, and the advice throughout the book is wise, sensible and rooted in reality. (As this is quite a small-format book, the photocopies may need to be enlarged, in order to make them a little more readable.)

I believe this is a must-have book for anyone who has to conduct lesson observations now, or expects to have to do so in the future.

Vanessa Willis
Exeter, UK



Gender disparity Hinder, 30/12/18 Pg. 16

How women MPs operate in a deeply patriarchal system

SMITA GUPTA

The long, chequered history of the Bill to increase the representation of women in all legislatures to 33 per cent, introduced as far back as September 12, 1996, in the Indian Parliament stands testimony to the fact that it continues to be a "deeply gendered" institution.

Today, 71 years after Independence, women in the world's most populous democracy constitute just 11.93 per cent of the Lok Sabha, the lower house, whereas the world average in September 2017 was just under 23%.

Making a strong case for increasing the representation of women MPs in their timely, new book, *Performing Representation: Women Members in the Indian Parliament*, Shirin M. Rai and Carole Spary provide the first comprehensive analysis of women's representation in Parliament, and their place and performance within the institution.

They also reveal a startling fact: using data from 1957 onwards, it will take another 11 Lok Sabhas, each of five-year



■ **Performing Representation: Women Members in the Indian Parliament**

Shirin M. Rai & Carole Spary
Oxford University Press
₹995

tenure, for one third of MPs in Parliament to be women.

The core of the book offers insights into women who have successfully become MPs, by scrutinising electoral data, news reports and their fascinating life stories, overcoming multiple challenges not only on their way to success, but thereafter in their parliamentary lives.

It explores how they operate in a Parliament, a political economy and party system, all of which continue to be deeply patriarchal.

The book makes a plea to see

parliamentary politics for what it is – that while women MPs participate in the deliberations, law-making ceremonies and rituals of Parliament, that in doing so, "they reproduce dominant forms of gendered power relations while at the same time challenge them."

This, the authors stress, does not lead to "a utopian framing of women MPs, either as challenging dominant politics or simply as docile actors in a gendered institution". It however reaffirms their analysis that "we need more women (critical mass) and more feminist women in Parliament ("collective critical actors of a different kind").

If India is to become a more equitable and safe society, the number of women law-makers must increase to ensure the transformation needed in what continues to be a patriarchal – often misogynist – society.

This book, that is widely acknowledged as breaking fresh ground in scholarship on gender and politics, is, therefore, a must read for everyone, but especially for Indian Parliament's male MPs.

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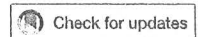
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✓ **Robot-proof: higher education in the age of artificial intelligence**, by Joseph E. Aoun, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2017, 216 pp., £19.95 (hbk), ISBN: 9780262037280

If a book can ever accomplish in leaving a reader with a lingering aftertaste, then Aoun's book is the one. Albeit offering a bittersweet flavour, this gem of a book provides a vivid portrayal of the calm before the storm. It is a known fact that evolution is characterised by extinction. Invariably this book alludes to an approaching Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven cultural evolution that, as I am writing, is unwrapping itself and which in the foreseeable future will unleash and batter our beliefs in Higher Education (HE) with full force. Originally, I assumed that this book was directed to universities, academics and educational policy makers. Now I believe that it is a valid eyeopener to anyone interested in surviving in style in the rapidly developing digital reality. This book offers a valid challenge to the status quo and fragile sense of false security that HE has wrapped itself in but which certainly must change if universities and other HE institutes are to remain relevant both in the immediate and long-term future.

The assertion that schools and educators have to prepare their students for jobs that have yet to be created has now become a meme, loosely employed in various talks that I attend and literature that I read. Yet, rarely and never to such an extent (and I for this compliment the author), have I been provided with reachable and down-to-earth solutions on how to embrace, complement and ultimately grow from this same threat that AI poses, especially to white-collar professions.


I perceive the book as the representation of two sides of the same mountain. To see the outcomes, the mountain has to be climbed up on one side and down the other. Thus: the reader firstly, has to endure an uphill and substantiated bleak setting which, supported by well-expressed and authentic facts, made me wonder and twist in my own conscience if in employability terms an essentially doomed and disposable service-oriented white-collar workforce would ever see the light at the other end of the tunnel. From the first instances, the erosion of white-collar employability is well laid out by the author through exploring the ability of computers to learn from data instead of explicit programming. Thus, machines, and more so intelligent systems that can reason and think, that do tasks faster, cheaper and better will inexorably drive a substantial fraction of white-collar and knowledge workers out of a job.

In the second part, Aoun starts by banking on the fact that history has a tendency to repeat itself. The author therefore initiates his retaliatory arguments by drawing on well-established facts and records about how, in its transformative capacity, education was

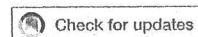
instrumental in embracing change to successfully equip workers with the required qualities for the demands of the previous industrial revolutions. But that is only the beginning. Reminiscent of a sense of mastery and with confidence in what he has to say, the author draws upon a wide knowledge base that ranges from Marx to Buffet, to penicillin, the ice bucket trend, railway, airline and pharmaceutical industries, to express how HE has to evolve so as to remain significant. Parenthetically, it is intriguing how Aoun also dubs AI's calculated reasoning and core strength as a limitation, latching, hinging and ultimately conceiving this Achilles' heel as an opportunity not to be squandered if HE is to remain meaningful for the future. Thus while intelligent systems are very good at gathering facts and can map knowledge into recognisable problems to improve 'Near Transfer Capabilities', they are thin on guesswork, that human 'gut feeling trait' so much required in 'Far Transfer Solutions'. For this Aoun draws a very interesting parallel on how universities had in the past reformed their institutional arrangements to respond to technological change. Now, it seems that we have reached that point of inflection again.

With the advancing wave of AI-powered super smart machines it has become a necessity that we all become Lifelong Learners, again implying that, if they want to remain significant, universities must grab the opportunity and go where the learners want and need to be. In this case, notwithstanding the validity of experiential learning, the author goes beyond this to envision a quite unorthodox approach. Inclined towards Lifelong Learning as a vessel for the celebration of humans' unique creative traits, universities must therefore not only perennially reboot but get committed to shed their isolated monolithic stances in preference to global multi-university networks, shifting from dictating to enabling institutions. In this case and as part of a perennial quest to adapt to, and constructively enact AI induced requirements, future nomad workers-learners will have no barriers to effortlessly design their own learning experiences. Subsequently they will be able to smoothly and intuitively follow their own respective paths in an authentic and meaningful learning experience, which only a teaching and learning institute firmly embedded in a particular local context can provide.

When it came to reviewing this book, I initially planned to have a tranquil weekend reading about another alternate reality that consistently fails to materialise. My social media posts show otherwise. Once I started delving deeper I became so much intrigued by its thought provoking content that I could not stop reading. I admit that one third into the book, I was still curious if the author would ultimately argue his way out of the very tight corner he had placed himself in. I believe that he did convincingly well. With all the objectively placed arguments, portrayed implications and change that AI can bring upon the topography of HE and education in general, I describe this reading as a journey of self-realisation. Proving to be a tough challenge to many of my beliefs, this book has been characterised by many instances where I had to retrace my steps and again read whole passages to ensure that I was really understanding the portrayed implications. On a final note the book is a must read to all educators who, metaphorically speaking, do not want to go the way of the dodo.

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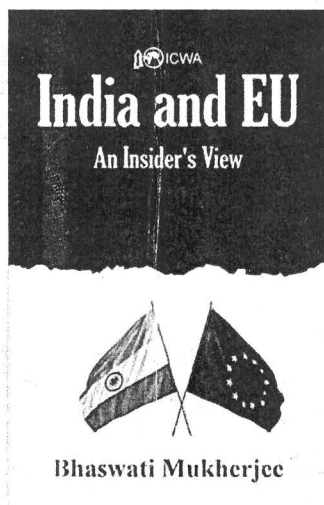
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Enduring account

A pellucid narration of India-E.U. relations supported by vigorous reasoning and maps and data that scholars will find useful. BY K.P. FABIAN

THE book under review is indeed an insider's account of India-European Union (E.U.) relations, the E.U.'s genesis and evolution, and the challenges before the E.U. and the prospects for deeper India-E.U. relations.

Ambassador Bhaswati Mukherjee has spent more years dealing with Europe in the Ministry of External Affairs and in missions in Europe than any of her colleagues. She is an insider par excellence. Bhaswati Mukherjee has an uncanny sense of timing. Her book has come out when the Brexit "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing", as Shakespeare would have put it, is being played out, risking Britain's shrinking into Little England. The E.U.'s state of health leaves much to be desired, to put it mildly. Poland and Hungary have violated E.U. values with hardly any punishment; Austria, the current chair, is xenophobic and refuses to accept refugees; and Italy, in whose capital, Rome, the 1957 treaty was signed, is refusing to adhere to Brussels' directions on its populist and disastrous budget, which is likely to engender a crisis much bigger than that of Greece.



**India and EU
An Insider's View**

By Bhaswati Mukherjee
Indian Council of World Affairs and Vij Books, New Delhi, 2018

Pages: 336
Price: Rs.995

India and EU will be of great help to anyone who wants to understand the news on E.U. For the Indian reader, the focus on India-E.U. relations is most welcome. Similarly, the general public, and even scholars on the E.U., will benefit from this insider account, written in a pellucid style, supported by truly Teutonic research and the vigorous reasoning of a diplomat of distinction. The maps and statistics will be of much help to Indian scholars. The endnotes are a study in explanation.

Bhaswati Mukherjee raises the question: India's relations with Europe go back millennia. Why then the paucity of research on the Indian side on the dynamics of the India-E.U. relationship? She con-

trasts the paucity on the Indian side with the abundance on the European side. Apart from drawing attention to India's "America-centric" approach, the author moves on without giving a clear answer. Perhaps, there is no clear answer.

"The first 'European' who reached India, as officially chronicled, dates back to 326 B.C. He was Alexander the Great." The reader might wonder whether Alexander would have considered himself a European. For that matter, would King Porus, as the Greeks named him, have claimed to be an Indian? However, projecting the present into the past is a common human habit.

The author has organised the book into 11 chapters, each divided into

sections. This reviewer is not able to do full justice to the individual chapters in view of space constraints. Therefore, we shall take up a few significant issues.

E.U.'S COMPETENCE

What is the area of competence of the E.U.? It calls itself a Union, but we all know that it is a work in progress. The Treaty of Lisbon lists three categories of competence: exclusive competence, shared competence, and special competence. Following a lucid account, the author has listed all this (pages 23-25), a listing that repays careful reading.

Does the E.U. have a foreign-cum-defence policy? In E.U. jargon it is CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy). The reader will note the importance given to security and the absence of the words "foreign policy". However, the E.U. has a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The author has explained in detail how differing national priorities come in the way of having a European policy. However, Bhaswati Mukherjee stops short of spelling out that the CSDP, if fully developed, would require the United Kingdom and France to cease to be permanent members of

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the United Nations Security Council as they would be replaced by the E.U. The reader would conclude that the CSDP will remain stunted for years to come. Does the E.U. have a defence policy? When the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) hijacked a U.N. Security Council Resolution on Libya in 2011 and started bombing that country, an unsuccessful effort was made to mount an E.U. maritime operation for surveillance of the Libyan coast. When French President Emmanuel Macron spoke of a European Army, United States President Donald Trump was quick to snub him.

The author has given a detailed explanation of the workings of the E.U. Council, the Commission and the European Parliament. The Parliament has a strength of 751 members, and the electorate, at 375 million (2009), is the second largest after India's. However, the European Parliament lacks legislative initiative. The all-powerful Commission has clipped its wings. The reader will particularly appreciate the historical account about the first meeting of the Parliament in 1952.

As the title of the book suggests, the author devotes more space to India-E.U. relations. How do the E.U. and India see each other? They do issue periodical declarations after summit meetings envisaging working together for common goals. But, do they actually work together? The author has given a clinically accurate account. The E.U. has an unjustifiable bias in favour

of China. However, the reader might find it difficult to agree with the argument advanced by the author: "India is projected to grow at 7.4 % in 2018 by IMF [International Monetary Fund] estimates as compared to China's 6.8%." Such comparisons of growth rates between two economies when one is four or five times larger than the other does not make much sense.

The E.U. is essentially an economic union and the laudable effort to make it into a community has not yet succeeded, and to call it a union before it has become a community is absurd. It should be noted that the E.U.'s trade with India was €115 billion, whereas in the same year China had a surplus of €176 billion with the E.U. The author has argued that the E.U. should take into account the fact that India is the biggest democracy, and it should understand better India's problems and show more accommodation. Her argument is not likely to be accepted by the E.U.'s hard-headed decision-makers in Brussels.

Summit meetings between India and the E.U. started in 2000. The account of what has been achieved or not is excellent. The 13th India-E.U. summit was held up be-

cause of Italy's objection. It was due in 2013, but Italy practised vendetta in true Italian style. Italy showed its displeasure over India's detention of two Italian marines who, without any justification, shot dead two Indian fishermen on the Kerala coast. The author's account of this instance of Italian vendetta falls short of her Teutonic thoroughness. She fails to mention that the big Italian tanker and the small Kerala fishing boat were both entitled to protection under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. Nor does she mention that the Indian Supreme Court need not have permitted Italy to challenge its jurisdiction without giving a ruling.

Her conclusion that the Congress party, ruling both at the Centre and in Kerala at that time, was one of the reasons for the failure of the two countries to reach a diplomatic settlement is questionable and certainly speculative. But, in a way, she is right in that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government took an unduly conciliatory stance towards Italy, perhaps not without ulterior motives, without bothering too much about delivering justice to the bereaved families. Negotiations on a trade deal with the E.U. started in 2007. The reader will find the account of the obstacles in the way as a tutorial in foreign policy. The deal is still hanging fire, mainly because the E.U. tries to drive a hard bargain.

The author has an eye for the absurd. She gives a hilarious account of the 2003 summit in New Delhi when the Italian Prime Minister refused to

board the plane from Rome and sent the Deputy Prime Minister to represent him and to be the counterpart to the Indian Prime Minister. India was able to teach Italy a lesson in protocol, but the summit was sterile.

There is one secret that Bhaswati Mukherjee is holding on to. On the eve of the disastrous 2003 summit, when Xavier Solana, E.U.'s High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, called on India's External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha, the only other person present was a note taker. Solana, a former NATO Secretary General, urged India to be a NATO partner country. He argued that to address the rising China, a strategic partnership of the U.S., the E.U., India and Japan was needed.

There was a follow-up strategic discussion subsequently in Brussels between the two and the same note taker was present. What is pleasantly perplexing is that we are not told the identity of the note taker. Nor are we told how India responded to Solana's advice. Obviously, the author is discreet.

It used to be said: Publish or perish. Nowadays, one can publish and perish. This book is timely, and has an enduring value. The E.U. will have to take note of India's growing power and work with it to build a better world sooner than later, as cogently argued by the author. She has not failed to mention the adjustments India should make. This insider has a balanced and pragmatic approach to foreign policy. □

Summit meetings between India and the E.U. started in 2000.

Critical Reflections on Muslim Marriage and Personal Law in India

QUDSIYA CONTRACTOR

This collection of essays, written by Sylvia Vatuk and published over a span of 15 years (2001–15), is based on ethnographic and archival research among Muslims in Chennai and Hyderabad. It was inspired by an increasing unease with the prevailing tendency of popular journalistic and scholarly literature of condemning the fate of Muslim women to the personal law regime that “governs” them—where polygamy and unilateral divorce leave them bereft of any means of support, should their marriage be dissolved.

A central concern for most of the essays (with an exception or two) is the question of what happens if a marriage ends up in disarray; especially when the couple faces one another in a civil court, before a community council, the *jamat* or the *imam* of their neighbourhood mosque or in the office of a local *qazi*. During the course of her research, the author found it rare for a woman to directly file a civil lawsuit or make a criminal complaint against her husband or in-laws, unless she is led to do so by members of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working on woman’s issues or is taken there by a male relative who is familiar with the ways of the judicial system.

Examining Stereotypes

The book addresses the need to examine the empirical basis for widespread stereotypes about Muslim women suffering under the oppressive burden of personal law and thereby, perhaps, finding a way of undermining some of the strength of the prevailing rhetoric. The essays based on years of research explore Indian Muslim women’s use of both civil and religious judicial institutions to resist patriarchal domination within their homes and in the society at large.

The essays also provide a close look at whether and how the Muslim Personal Law (MPL) impacts the efforts of Muslim

BOOK REVIEWS

Marriage and Its Discontents: Women, Islam and the Law in India by Sylvia Vatuk, *New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2017; pp xviii + 273, ₹650.*

women to accommodate and/or overcome the constraints and disabilities to which they are subjected in a heavily male-dominated legal and social milieu. Vatuk’s purpose is to broaden her investigations of how women fare under the MPL by looking into the role of non-state religious bodies in the administration of Islamic law.

Chapter 6 of the book on “Change and Continuity in Marriage Alliance Patterns” provides some interesting insights into the persistence of endogamy even as parentally arranged marriages are giving way to so-called “arranged love marriages” among South Indian Sunni Muslims of the *Nawayat quam* (community) (pp 196–219). *Khandan* (clan) endogamy is still widely practised while Dravidian-type customary preferential marriages are considered safe, congenial, useful, convenient and ideologically satisfying in a globalised world.

Chapter 3 on “The Cancer of Dowry” explores how a growing anti-dowry rhetoric in the 1980s moved to the centre stage as “an object of social critique by the general Muslim public as well as by social reform-minded religious authorities and institutions” (p 93).

Vatuk presents here a careful reading of the Muslim press revealing a Muslim critique of the system despite the antiquated rhetoric. These, she argues, recall some of the views of much earlier Muslim reformers in the subcontinent, who wished to purge Muslim lives of a wide range of customary rituals and ceremonial observances (*rasum*) such as *jahez*, *len-den*, *citanam* (derived from the word *stri+dhan* or women’s wealth). Anti-dowry rhetoric conceptualised these as they represented

cultural “borrowings” of “survivals” from pré-Islamic or Hindu modes of worship and life cycle ceremonies. They, therefore, had to be avoided because they had no religious sanction in the scripture, and even involved activities contrary to the dictates of Islam. While this discourse maintained that the social consequences of participating in dowry transactions are deplorable, it differed in that its appeal for reform relied on an appeal to historical origins, rather than to overall societal well-being or gender justice.

Chapter 7 looks into why marital relationships end up in dissolution. The author attributes these to a gap that frequently exists between “the partners’ religious and cultural expectations of what a marriage should be and the reality of life for Muslim men and women in India today” (pp 220–21). The author argues that divorce stories can shed light on the nature and dynamics of contemporary marriage, the cultural construction of the institution itself and the challenges that partners face in trying to perform “their assigned gendered roles which in Islamic discourse are unproblematically complementary, but in practice are highly asymmetrical” (p 221).

The author emphasises that contrary to popular perception, Muslims remain married to their first spouses till death does them part; although, there are no hard statistics to either support or refute this notion. Some expectations within marriage tend to contradict provisions of Islamic law such as a woman’s legitimate grievance with her husband taking a second wife. Being sexually faithful is an expectation that many Muslim women reciprocate and demand from their husbands despite religious law, clerical authorities and the male-led community being tolerant to the latter’s adultery.

Divorce Initiated by Women

Chapter 4 indicates how *khul* or divorce initiated by the woman has received negligible scholarly attention, yet it contributes to a significant proportion of divorces among Vatuk’s findings. The author presents evidence from divorce files maintained by qazis in Hyderabad in which “cases of *khul* clearly dominate over cases

of *talaq*" (p 138). Khul does meet the needs of many women who are willing to address their financial insecurities and stand up to societal attitudes towards divorce.

Although khul does take a woman's choice in a marriage into consideration, it still requires her to persuade her husband to act on her request in order to successfully end a marriage, while a man by pronouncing *talaq*, can act entirely of his own will and initiate to dissolve the marriage. Whether khul empowers women to exert their independent agency or makes them vulnerable to manipulation putting them at a serious disadvantage is still a matter of debate. A lot might still depend upon their relative "bargaining power" within the marriage vis-à-vis the husband. The author suggests that further detailed ethnographic research to supplement the investigation of archival records has the scope to reveal more.

Approach towards Women

Chapters 1 and 2 mention that a "paternalistic" approach towards women and their needs, permeates the legal process, in particular, the manner in which personal laws are administered in practice in the lower courts. More often the concern is

about preserving her status as a "respectable" and "chaste" woman rather than upholding her rights within the marriage. A legal discourse of "rights" is thus transformed into a discourse of "welfare" whose defining terms are set, not by the woman herself, but by her counsellor, her advocate, the judge, and in the last analysis, by the realities imposed by the society within which she lives. Chapter 8 mentions that there has been an increasing willingness of magistrates in courts to order state Wakf Boards to provide maintenance stipends to destitute Muslim divorcees, although there have been some difficulties in implementing these directives.


Nonetheless, the number of women being helped in this way is steadily increasing. In Chapter 5 on "Islamic Feminism in India," Vatuk looks at how as an approach, Islamic feminism holds considerable promise for improving the legal lot of Muslim women although merely seeking to obtain rights provided to them in the Quran might not achieve complete equality of the sexes.

This is a timely book based on empirical data that deals with debates that are back in the focus with a Hindutva propagating right-wing government in power

for whom establishing a uniform civil code has been of priority. The original essays have been revised and appear as chapters arranged in a chronological order of their original publication. This may not have been the best way to address the issue at hand. Some background of the Muslims of Chennai and Hyderabad, especially those communities that were part of the study, would have helped.

The book points to the need for further comparative research to understand the way the Indian personal law system works and to what extent one civil code has in practice any clear advantage over the others in terms of their impact on women's well-being. What are the gaps between text and practice in Muslim marriages? What is changing? What are the challenges of the new times? What are the expectations of the younger generations from marital life? Do they contradict the Islamic tradition? How is the role of the state envisaged?

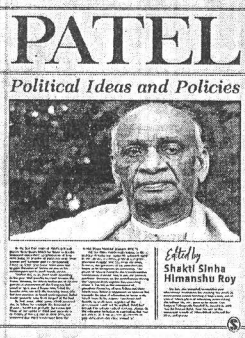
The rhetoric around divorce continues to remain synonymous to Muslim marital life. Unlike the Congress, which during Shah Bano's very public legal battle for maintenance favoured "secular" national unity over minority rights, the BJP seems



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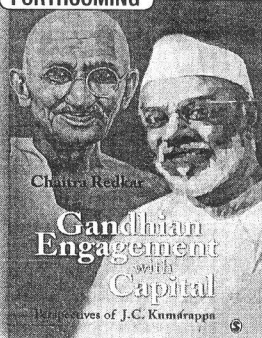
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to be clearer in its imagination of a Hindu-majority nation where the Muslim male needs to be subdued and disciplined when it comes to upholding Muslim women's rights. The book could have gained by providing an updated context to the tensions that exist between legal

safeguards, group rights and women's autonomy especially since the research spans a considerable 15 years. The book has no conclusion, which could have been a conscious decision by the author.

The book provides a comprehensive and detailed analysis of Muslim personal

law and the experience of divorce. It is good for students, practitioners and academics seeking to understand the challenges of the MPL.

Qudsiya Contractor (qudsiya.contractor@gmail.com) is a Fellow at the India-China Institute, The New School University, New York.

Rethinking Medicine and Nation-building in Iraq Ethnographic and Historical Perspectives

VIVEK NEELAKANTAN

U*ngovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq* is at once an ethnographic and historical account of medicine and nation-building in Iraq, from a Foucauldian perspective. As the author puts it in the preface, the research questions that drive the monograph are inspired by his personal experiences of growing up in Iraq and medical training in the aftermath of the Gulf War (1991). In his monograph, Omar Dewachi offers a compelling yet disturbing account of the genesis of Iraqi state medicine under the British mandate, and its dissolution following the end of the Gulf War.

Excluding the introduction and the conclusion, the book is organised into seven chapters. The chapters collectively trace the modernist agenda of Iraqi medicine. First, under the British administration between 1920 and 1932 (Mandatory Iraq), physicians were charged with modernising the nation along Western lines. Second, the author explores the transition from British-backed monarchy to the socialist era (1958–1980). Third, between 1980 and 1988, during the war against Iran, the Iraqi state mobilised medicine as an instrument of nation-building. Finally—subsequent to the conclusion of the Gulf War—the author describes the dismemberment of state medicine, first under the United Nations (UN)-sponsored sanctions, and later in the aftermath of the United States (US) invasion (2003 to present).

In analysing state power and its breakdown under the US-led war in Iraq, he

Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq by Omar Dewachi; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017; pp xiii+239, price not indicated.

challenges conventional Western accounts of Iraq's alleged unruliness and ungovernability (p 11). He contends that ungovernability is enmeshed in the disordered operations of power. The monograph—in examining the operation of power through biomedicine—seeks to eschew the conventional dichotomy in medical anthropology between modern medicine and traditional practices (p 12). In doing so, Dewachi traces the careers of three Iraqi physicians, particularly Kamal al-Samara'i, Saniha Amin Zaki, and Yousef 'Aqrawi, as agents of state-building through a close reading of medical biographies.

Mandatory Medicine

Although the British did not directly colonise Iraq, as they did in the case of India, the discourse of Iraq as an "unruly place of sickness" dates back to the British military occupation of Iraq during World War I (1914). British cultivation of Iraq's medical infrastructure was a product of imperial anxiety pertaining to neutralising the military fallout of the Mesopotamian occupation. The Kingdom of Iraq under British occupation, or Mandatory Iraq was created in 1920, following resistance against the proposed British Mandate of Mesopotamia, which was sanctioned by religious and tribal authorities. Mandatory medicine was central to the vitality of the

new state. Under the banner of the nation-building logic of mandatory medicine, doctors were charged to bring Iraq into step with modern states through medical science and public health policy (p 19).

With the declaration of the mandate in 1920, rebellions ensued in different parts of the country, challenging British authority. The newly founded Directorate of Health that the British engineered was intended to protect British interests in Iraq, diminish the threat of epidemics, and deliver a productive workforce. The introduction of the railways to the newly discovered oil-rich towns was congenial for the spread of the 1923 cholera epidemic. With the epidemic spreading in the predominantly Shia cities, especially Najaf and Karbala, the directorate introduced mandatory cholera vaccination. The management of the cholera epidemic through mass vaccinations silenced the demand for decentralisation of healthcare (p 63).

Iraqi Physicians

Efforts to cultivate Iraq's state medicine during the early 1920s under the mandatory system had to confront the realities of the fraying Ottoman Empire, famine, epidemics, and the breakdown of medical infrastructure. Governing the health of the nation was contingent upon increasing the supply of physicians. The British proposal to establish an Iraqi school of medicine was a divisive issue among local physicians.

Whereas Amin Ma'louf, King Faisal's personal physician, welcomed the proposal to establish a new medical school, Fai'q Shakir, a Baghdad-based Ottoman-trained doctor, led the opposition camp (p 71). The latter contended that inaugurating a new medical school would incur a huge financial burden on the state and it would be difficult to staff with competent local faculty due to a shortage of Arabic-speaking educators in the country. Consequently, the proposal to establish a

Gender studies in Law

of talaq" (p 138). Khul does meet the needs of many women who are willing to address their financial insecurities and stand up to societal attitudes towards divorce.

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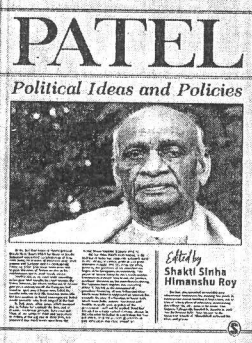
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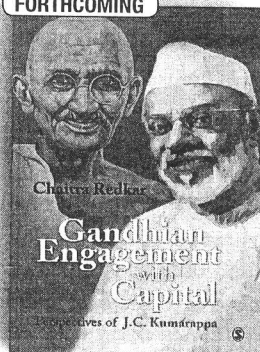
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Book Review

INDIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE: Compiled and edited by Prof. PSG Kumar; 28 Vols. New Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 2019, pp. 15778. Price INR 3000/- per volume

Publication of Indian Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science (2019) is a landmark in the annals of Library and Information Science in India. The Compiler and Editor Dr. P S G Kumar mentions that the idea of compilation of encyclopedia in LIS was simmering in his mind since long. But he formally announced it in 1977. However, he could not do so before 1997 due to his administrative and academic responsibilities at Nagpur University and professional commitments, particularly with IATLIS, ILA, etc. Though, the work was completed in the first decade of the 21st century, it took more than fifteen years to see it in the final form.

There are two major efforts made in English to bring out encyclopedia in Library and Information Science, one in UK in 1967 by Thomas Landau and second one in USA by Allen Kent and Harold Lancour since 1968. The first one is in single volume, whereas, the second one is open. The basic work is in 28 volumes and thereafter, supplementary volumes are being brought out to cover leftover and new subjects. So far about 70 volumes have been brought out.

Dr Kumar says that the coverage of Indian subjects in the two encyclopedias referred to above is meager. This made him to start compiling the present work. May be this is for the first time a work of this magnitude has been undertaken in any country in the world. Thus it is a remarkable and outstanding work.

Though each volume of the publication under review requires to be reviewed individually, but because of limitations of space and other constraints the entire set of this monumental work is reviewed here in a few pages.

The Publisher brought out a supplementary booklet of 88 pages which delineates the details of articles, arrangement and common criteria used for compilation and editing. The editor in the 'Preface' itself has mentioned the necessity of bringing out the work. Anybody who takes full

Set of 28 Volumes, will be given a copy of the supplementary booklet free of cost.

The set of Encyclopedia in 28 volumes has over 2,500 articles. The entire work runs to 15,778 pages. The subjects covered span from 1911 A.D. till early 21st century.

Contents:

<i>Vol. No.</i>	<i>Starting & Ending of Words</i>	<i>No. of items of Subject</i>	<i>Total No. of pages Headings</i>
Vol. I	AA to AE	56	507
Vol. 2	AF to AR	83	459
Vol. 3	AR to BE	89	457
Vol. 4	BE to BI	55	401
Vol. 5	BI to BU	82	465
Vol. 6	CA to CL	97	473
Vol. 7	CL to CO	58	405
Vol. 8	CO to DA	64	415
Vol. 9	DA to DU	104	435
Vol. 10	EA to EX	76	487
Vol. 11	FA to FY	84	435
Vol. 12	GA to HI	105	519
Vol. 13	HI to IN	82	555
Vol. 14	IND to INF	60	519
Vol. 15	INF to IYY	79	522
Vol. 16	JAD to KUN	116	663
Vol. 17	LA to LI	89	552
Vol. 18	LIB to MAN	110	641
Vol. 19	MAP to MYT	101	536
Vol. 20	NAB to NEW	102	616
Vol. 21	NEW to POO	142	769
Vol. 22	PO to QU	98	728
Vol. 23	RAB to RES	115	720
Vol. 24	RES to SEM	106	700
Vol. 25	SEN to SYS	142	702
Vol. 26	TAB to TRA	104	614
Vol. 27	TRA to VEL	88	588
Vol. 28	VEM to ZOO	84	366
Total		15,778	

When one looks at the Contents Page, he can understand vividly the arrangement of entries. A Title Index covering articles in the Volume is given in the beginning as 'Contents'. Author Index and Subject Index are given at the end of each volume with page number. Each article is followed by a list of references and bibliographical details of the source material used. Name of the author (s) with address (es) is/are given at the end. An abstract/note of the Editor is given immediately after the title. Appropriate Sectional Heading is provided which indicates the comprehension of the content of the paragraph. The alphabetization of each volume starts with separate serial number.

The alphabetization of:

- key words of subject
- minute subject headings
- names of persons
- names of institutions / organizations
- names of libraries etc., with page numbers are given under "Content" in each volume.

Number of items are highest under the alphabet 'S' (142) and least under the letter 'Y' (3).

This work in fact will serve as a mine of information on the history of libraries of all kinds; library science and library education; library associations and organizations; library legislation; other library acts; librarians, teachers and other library personnel; library science, particularly the 'Indian School of Thought'; library literature; new technology, its role and impact; current trends in library and information science; various standards and norms; etc.,

The set of encyclopedia will be quite useful to teachers, practicing librarians, students, research scholars of not only the present generation of LIS as well as the future.

Dr Kumar is an outstanding Library and Information Science Professional in India, not only, by publishing the *Encyclopedia*, but also, as a teacher of LIS (27 years, out of which, 24 years as Head of the Department); as University Librarian (for 10 years); as General Secretary, Vice-President and President of IATLIS; as Chairman of Education and Training (E & T); Vice-President (2 terms) and President of Indian Library Association; Author of 69 books, 230 papers, as a

reviewer of 80 books; attending 160 seminars and conferences of LIS; as President of GOC, Vidarbha Library Association (VLA) (Founder), etc. He also served as the President of Heads Forum and Association of University Teachers (AUT) at Nagpur University; Registrar of the Nagpur University; and several academic bodies of the Nagpur University.

He was felicitated by more than 100 organizations and received 4 Life-Time Achievement Awards.

He served on the Editorial Boards of 17 professional journals and was Founder of *Information Age* and *Mahiti Yug* (Marathi) journals in LIS. A Foundation was established in his name which has thus far donated more than Rs. 5 lakhs for various professional causes.

Looking to the above and many more achievements of Dr Kumar in LIS, Late Dr. K S Deshpande had once said, Dr Kumar deserves not less than a 'Padma Award'. Professional should strive in this direction.

There are many areas that could not be covered in this set. The LIS profession and LIS subject are ever growing. It is necessary that this encyclopedia brings out supplements & additions from time to time. Such a work could be undertaken by Dr Kumar and prepare one or two of his students or professionals in bringing out 'Supplementary Volumes' and serve continually the profession.

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Book Review

LIBRARY CLASSIFICATION AND S R RANGANATHAN: A GUIDE / M P Satija. Compiled and edited by Daniel Martinez-Avila and Rosa San Segundo Manuel. Ess Ess Publications. New Delhi. 2018. xviii, 292p. ISBN: 978-81-936074-7-3. Language: English. Price: Rs 1200.00 (Hard Bound)

Ranganathan and Library Classification become inseparable concepts in the field of Library Science. Since his joining to University College of London, Ranganathan was attracted mostly to classification studies due to teaching technique of his inspiring teacher - W.C.B. Sayers. As a mathematician his orderly mind tried to

perceive many similarities between classification and mathematics which helped him with innovative ideas. Prof M P Satija, a researcher on Ranganathan and his works, rightly commented that the works of Ranganathan on classification form the bedrock of an influential theory of the wide discipline of knowledge organization. When a book is written with these two concepts and that too by none other than a personality like M P Satija, the book would carry much added values of research outputs, insights and analysis with innovative ideas.

The book under review consists of nine chapters. Like many other, a 'Preface' written by the author himself ignites the minds of readers about perennial theories and methods developed by Ranganathan. 'The International Relevance of Ranganathan' appeared next which is written

jointly by Daniel Martinez-Avila, a Brazilian Scholar and Rosa San Segundo Manuel, a Spanish Scholar. Both of them have expressed the feelings of library professionals of their countries. They have reported that Ranganathan and his Colon Classification were popularly propagated in Spain during Birth Centenary of the father of Indian Librarianship. The relevance of Ranganathan's Philosophy in the librarianship profession of their countries is proved in this write-up. The first chapter 'S R Ranganathan (1892-1972): A Global Indian Library Thinker' deals with the short biography of Ranganathan. Author have mentioned how a mathematician turned to librarian. A long journey of becoming a successful and innovative librarian when there was no sign and symbol of the existence of library profession is mentioned in this chapter. In his journey, Ranganathan had opportunity to communicate with Melvil Dewey. Report of those conversations was also similarly important. These important facts of his life should have been discussed in this chapter.

The second chapter 'Colon Classification (CC)' gives overall idea about revolutionary inception of CC which was conceived as the practical classification of DDC could not satisfy the orderly mind of a mathematician. Ranganathan's philosophy as reflected in all seven editions of CC is critically analysed. However, author has also expressed his dissatisfaction for CC not being upgraded by the concerns to whom Ranganathan trusted and gave

responsibility. Prof Satija's dissatisfaction is not only of his own, it is of all Indians who feel sad seeing the uncertain fate of such a beautiful scheme due to long and callous neglect. But I believe, these dissatisfaction should ignite all minds which urge Prof Satija like scholars and personalities to join hands together in breaking the ice and bear the torch of upgrading the theories and the products thereon.

In the third chapter 'Call, Book and Collection Numbers: Ranganathan's Chronological System', author have extensively Ranganathan's suggested system of building Call Number by the way of building Book Number and Collection Number. As a class number alone fails to distinctly individualise a document in the library, method of assigning a unique identification number is introduced. The fourth chapter 'Modes of Growth of Subjects in the Universe of Knowledge' deals with the different modes of formation and growth of subjects. Ranganathan elucidated the various modes of growth viz Fission, Lamination, loose assemblage, fusion, distillation, partial comprehension and subject bundles. In this chapter, new modes of formation of subjects are also discussed in consonance with the new research trends. In chapter five 'Mapping of Social Science in the Colon Classification' author have explained and analysed the order of social science subjects in Colon Classification (6th ed). Author has pointed out that the organisation of social science in the Colon Classification is inadequate and need to be updated to accommodate current knowledge. The sixth chapter 'A Plea to Save the National Heritage : Revise the Colon Classification' deals with events occurred during the journey of colon classification. For revival of this scheme author traces the base for continuous improvements of this scheme. Ranganathan's efforts of continuous revision of colon classification are listed in the

appendix which urge to look forward in stepping further for revision and survival.

In the seventh chapter 'Classification and Indexing India : A State-of-the-Art' the author described the current state of classification theory and practice. It is also proved here that influence of Ranganathan on traditional classification is relevant are seminal in designing database, expert systems, multilingual knowledge representation, web engineering and information architecture in the 21st century. Even Prof G Bhattacharyya's POPSI and Classaurus are also discussed in this chapter establishing the relationship between Classification and Indexing.

The eighth chapter 'Ranganathan and Classification : A Chronology 1924-972' gives a structured chronology according to some epochs of the life of Ranganathan. Posthumous events are also given which will be helpful for readers. In the ninth chapter 'His Impact and Continued Relevance : What They Say', author has given comments on Ranganathan's relevance made by various personalities. Three aspects of Ranganathan viz Ranganathan as a man, as a scientist, and as a classificationist. are presented. An author index and beautiful glossary have added value to this publication.

The typescript and printing quality are good. The paper quality and binding have also been maintained a standard. This book, an important addition to the field of Library Classification in particular, will add values to the future librarianship. The cost of this book is reasonable. I am unhesitant to mention that the book is a significant attempt to carry forward the Indian school of thoughts in library classification and will fulfill the desires of readers.

Prof Pijushkanti Panigrahi,
University of Calcutta
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INTERCONNECTED STORIES

The book as machine

An elaborate mechanical network made up of bits and pieces of emotions and situations

BY ADITYA SUDARSHAN

In 1970, the Japanese roboticist Masahiro Mori coined the term 'uncanny valley', hypothesising an aesthetic revulsion towards artificial objects that mimic humanity. In our time, it is questionable how far such fine sentiments will persist, for only a thin line separates the response of revulsion from its opposite: reverence. Yet something enormously significant hangs in that balance; I think one's grasp of humanity itself.

Now, a certain inarticulateness and breathlessness are common to both these kinds of responses. Breathless, therefore, are those marvellous phrases with which critics have greeted *Half Gods*, the debut volume by New Jersey-based Akil Kumarasamy. And the reader cannot miss them, because they make up the entire length of the back-jacket. Let us pause to note: the blurb, which was once a human word meant to encourage, not displace, the individual reader's relationship with the text, is here a buzzing congregation, enforcing upon the reader the membership of a hive.

Conflicted heart

Obviously, there is no banal conspiracy in this. The reverential reviews are in all sincerity. Nevertheless, being giddy with adjectives, they are perfectly suited to be so deployed as to engineer more of the same. So, the interesting question is this: how came there to be such a synchronicity between human responses to the text, and the machinistic demands of pure marketing? This perfect match suggests a deep origin to *Half Gods*, a taproot that, as we explore it, brings us near the conflicted heart of modern humanity itself.

Half Gods consists, seemingly, of short stories about various members of a family that migrated from Sri Lanka (at the onset of the civil war) to New Jersey, and sometimes their friends and acquaintances,



Half Gods
Akil
Kumarasamy
HarperCollins
₹499

lives. Most of this volume is set in the U.S., some of it in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu, but in any case the writing is shot through with reveries of episodes spanning times and spaces.

As far as plot goes, here are some of the things that happen: a young boy idolises a street-smart peer and develops a crush on his sister; that boy's mother has an affair with her husband's brother and gets a child from him; that child, growing up into a bisexual actor, ponders his relationship with his brother, and makes out with a girl he has come across recently; the boys' grandfather goes to the beach and thinks about the past; his old friend, an entomologist, loses his son to the Sri Lankan civil war; an Angolan butcher is invited to a dinner with the family, and feels pitied.

These are some of the things that happen. And they are, indeed, the 'stuff' of life. But the uncanny valley begins here, because all these in themselves are no more 'life' than a humanoid robot is human. The overlap is intense, even marvellous, but it is absolutely superficial. The disjunct is a gaping void that has to do with the heart of the things concerned; the *raison d'être* of people.

Cogs and wires

Here I speak with some revulsion, and therefore briefly, but what I perceive in *Half Gods* is not, in fact, a book of stories about people, but a piece of intricate machinery, combining cogs and wires in ways that the observer can hardly map. The



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Where people are really located, and what is really troubling or moving them seem of little interest to Kumarasamy. The great human realities of war or death or marriage are also essentially ignored

times glimpsed at the level of the sentences, whose form of 'beauty' conceals inhuman linkages: a missing son appearing in the same breath as a chopped insect; a boy described as twirling a girl's hair like "a bandage"; the violence of a broken home rendered in loving, musical notes.

But more obvious than these is the bewildering disinterest in such fundamentals of narrative as context and crisis. This is exemplified in the volume's epigraph, "Man or god or demon, let him in!" which, we are blithely told, is from "the Mahabharata."

The Mahabharata! Where from, in the Mahabharata? Spoken by whom? To whom? It doesn't matter, and in *Half Gods* such things never

really located, and what is really troubling or moving them seem of little interest to Kumarasamy. The great human realities of war or death or marriage are also essentially ignored; instead, her concern is taking all such things ('let him in!') and gathering them together into an elaborate network made up of bits and pieces of emotions and situations.

Mechanical unity

Of course, they can only be bits and pieces, because the fullness of human attitudes is passionate, surprising, and anathema to that mechanical unity which the author here covets. Not that a really human world lacks patterns and unities. But in authentic storytelling,

and this is part of what makes for the delight of reading and writing.

How, then, can so many be so delighted with this volume? Yet is that really surprising? *Half Gods* is certainly an extraordinary achievement, even an epochal one. Perhaps never before in history could such a work have been created, a humanly conceived book-as-machine, properly intimidating in its refusal to explain itself, and feigning to satisfy a profound human desire, by making the stuff of our little lives into something rich and dense. Except, it does it in this way: a bounden humanity enters at one end and a sausage comes out at the other.

The writer is the author, most recently,

BROWSER



A Lonely Harvest and Trial by Silence
Perumal Murugan, trs. Aniruddhan Vasudevan
Penguin Random House
₹399 each



At the end of Perumal Murugan's novel *One Part Woman*, readers are left on a cliffhanger as Kali and Ponna's love for each other is torn to shreds. What is going to happen next to this couple? *A Lonely Harvest* is one of the two sequels that pick up the story where *One Part Woman* ends — Ponna returns from the temple festival to find that Kali has killed himself in despair. Devastated and haunted, Ponna must now learn to face the world alone. In *Trial by Silence*, Kali is determined to punish Ponna for what he believes is an absolute betrayal. But Ponna is equally upset at being forced to atone for something that was not her fault. In the wake of the temple festival, both must now confront new uncertainties that shatter their once idyllic life together.



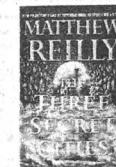
Hunger's Daughters
Nirmala Govindarajan
Om Books International
₹295

With a father presumed dead and a mother gone missing, Susanthi Bodra, from a forest village in Odisha, is compelled to become a breadwinner at the age of 12. Eight-year-old Nelli runs away from Kithapur, is kidnapped and sold into a brothel. Nainika Chandra, a journalist and the narrator in *Hunger's Daughters*, brings together the stories of young breadwinners from the forest hamlets of Jharkhand, Odisha and Karnataka.



Cut: The Death and Life of a Theatre Activist
Sreemoyee Piu Kundu
Bloomsbury
₹399

Set in a world of censorship and stifling of dissent, *Cut* takes a posthumous look at the personal and professional life of a theatre artist. Would he be considered an 'urban naxal' today or remembered as a fearless hero who fought for social change? Told through disparate voices, the novel explores artistic integrity and art as a platform for social reform.



The Three Secret Cities
Matthew Reilly
Orion/Hachette
₹599

This new novel featuring Jack West from the bestselling author Matthew Reilly is set in a shadow world behind the real world. When Jack West, Jr., won the Great Games, he threw the four legendary kingdoms into turmoil. A world with its own history, rules and prisons came into being. Then

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Hindu; 23/12/18; Pg-3 (Review)

Women in polychrome

Here men see women as inhabitants of the same planet

■ BY FEHMIDA ZAKEER

In the introduction to this collection, the editor Rakshanda Jalil says that there is a tendency among male writers to "...present women as black and white characters, often impossibly white or improbably black... such a monochromatic view inevitably results in women being reduced to objects, of being taken to be 'things' rather than 'people.'" So she wanted to pick up the "thread of men seeing women as inhabitants of the same world that they live," which became the idea behind the compilation.

The anthology contains 13 stories about women from the perspective of male writers. This can be seen as a companion piece to *Neither Night Nor Day*, a collection of 13 short stories by Pakistani women writers, edited by Jalil, which looked at the various ways in which women living in a patriarchal society viewed the lives of women around them.

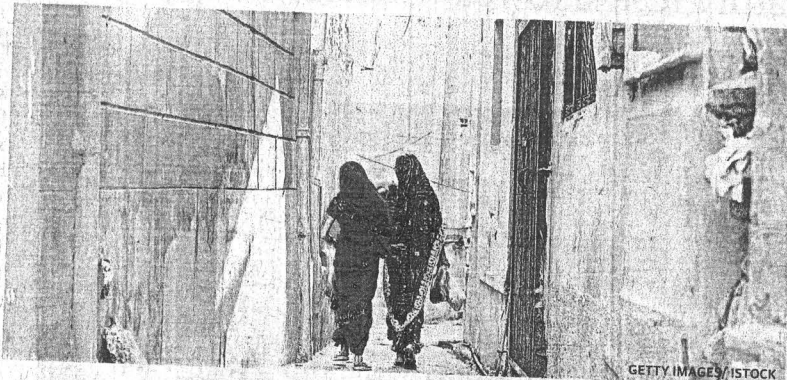
Dealing with desire

As promised, the women in *Preeto and Other Stories* do not fall into the familiar binaries of being black or white but live up to the criterion of being "a combination of contraries." However, in all the stories, the 'femaleness' of the main character is the framework on which the narratives are structured. Desire is a recurring theme.

While only a few stories like 'Preeto', 'Man', 'Wedding Night' touch upon the desires of women, many others, like 'Driftwood', 'The Unexpected Disaster', 'A Bit Odd', 'The Well of Serpents', 'Shonali', 'Woman', focus on the desires of men and their reactions to the women they come across.

'Wedding Night' is a fable-like story by Ratan Singh that explores the desires of both men and women and the follies committed in consequence.

In 'Shonali' by Faiyaz Riffat and 'The Ash in the Fire' by Abdus Samad, we see women in the role of caregivers turning into objects of desire. In the former, an ageing man directs his gaze without any qualms at the young



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■ **Preeto and Other Stories**
ed Rakshanda Jalil
Niyogi Books
₹450

◉ In 'Asexual', a young woman rebuffs a suitor because she has nothing to offer him except friendship, which she knows is not enough

girl who looks after him and his house, while in the latter a young girl has taken on a job of looking after an invalid, who is a comatose but handsome young man. The writer imagines what the girl must be feeling for the man in her care. In 'The Unexpected Disaster' by Hussainul Haque, the wife of a despotic man who is laid low by a stroke finds an admirer in the younger brother of the family's accountant.

Difficult decisions

The title story 'Preeto' is written by one of the stalwarts of Urdu writing, Krishan Chander. It revolves around a

woman's tremendous fury, which time has not managed to melt, and the person who once had done her a wrong realises this too late.

In Gulzar's 'Man', we are shown how a woman's life is never her own and how her decisions can invite hostility even from her own son. "No matter what a woman might do, she always has to offer an explanation to a man. To a father, sometimes to a husband, and sometimes to a son."

Some of the stories look at the difficult decisions women often have to make in life. In 'The Heavy Stone' by Baig Ehsas, the unnamed protagonist has to opt for an abortion against her wishes. She hears the unborn child calling out to her. But she must summon the strength to go ahead with the procedure and when she does, she takes a chilling decision.

Lack of desire is explored in Rahman Abbas's story, 'Asexual'. Here, a young woman rebuffs a suitor because she has nothing to offer him except friendship, which she instinctively knows is not enough for him. Another story where desire is not the leitmotif is 'Awaiting the Zephyr' by Syed Muhammed Ashraf, where the focus is on the beauty and dignity of a woman.

Lush with descriptions and interesting metaphors, each story in the collection attempts to look at different facets of women. While the trope of male desire keeps coming back, some of the stories go beyond this to offer a refreshingly different view of women from a male perspective.

The writer is an author and translator.

Endless Romance

There seems to be a tacit agreement among memoirists of Delhi since the 19th century to suffuse their writing with an impossible romance. From petty Mughal officials to the foot-loose travel writers of modern-day Delhi, they all seem to agree with the poet Zauq that dalliances with this city tend to be chronic affairs. Mir, Ghalib, Sauda, Zahir Dehlavi, Maheshwar Dayal, Ahmed Ali, Intazaar Hussain are all enamoured by an undefined nostalgia that they continue to seek in their city, which always seems more glorious in its immediate past than the present.

The four descriptions of Delhi in Rana Safvi's *City of My Heart* are no different. The first of these is from the famous 'Deputy Nazir Ahmed' of the *The Mirror of Beauty* fame (translated from the Urdu by S.R. Farooqui) published in 1934. The second is by Munshi Faizuddin in 1885, a bureaucrat who had access to the workings of the Mughal court before 1857. Their mutual efforts to evoke a

sense of glory and loss make them read like replicas of each other, suggesting that the city did nothing but celebrate festivals while Bahadur Shah was still the emperor. The other two reminiscences are more maudlin in tone. But only in mourning the (fictional) utopian Delhi that's been lost. *Begamaat ke Aansu* recounts the plights of various princes and princesses from the Mughal court after the fall of

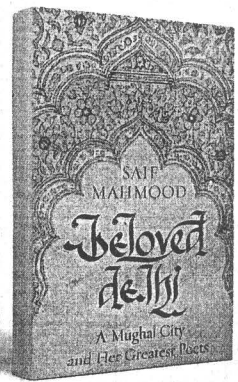
the empire, including a letter from Bahadur Shah to the Prince of Wales. But it is *Zila-e-Mualla ki Jhalakiyan*, attributed to a 16-year-old descendant of Bahadur Shah, which is the most interesting. The opulence of the other accounts can be tiring. But here the romance is of a different hue—rich with palace intrigues.

In her preface, Safvi sticks to the scripted nostalgia written by her predecessors. Sample this: 'Life in Delhi had an élan of its own and every day was a celebration'. This, to describe a time when the emperor of Hindustan was living off a pension from the British and his sons were deep in debt to the local halwai. If anything, it was a time of profligacy. But Shahjahanabad borrows its charms from writers who have bestowed it with a utopian aura. As a historic city, it is not unique in this respect, and one can hardly blame Safvi for following a tradition that is at least two centuries old. ■

—Farah Yameen

RANA SAFVI has translated four Urdu narratives spanning the period that led to the 1857 uprising and culminated in the fall of 'Mughal' Delhi

CITY OF MY HEART: ACCOUNTS OF LOVE, LOSS AND BETRAYAL IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY DELHI
by RANA SAFVI
Hachette India
₹399; 288 pages



BELOVED DELHI: A MUGHAL CITY AND HER GREATEST POETS

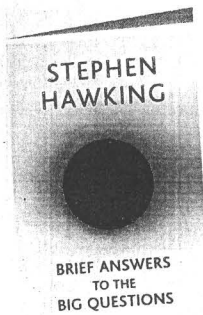
by SAIF MAHMOOD
SPEAKING TIGER
384 pages; ₹599

LOVE AFFAIRS

Saif Mahmood's *Beloved Delhi: A Mughal City and Her Greatest Poets* is both an evocative history of the city in the 18th and 19th century and a compendium of mini-biographies of its greatest Urdu poets, including translations of their best ghazals and analyses of popular poetry that still feature in everyday conversation

UNIVERSAL HISTORY ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

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India Today / Dec. 24 2018



books Stephen Hawking

Brief Answers to the Big Questions | Hachette | 256 pages | Rs 650

M-Theory In Two Nutshells

Existence, God, the future, time travel, survival on earth—some of the oldest, and newest, queries are tackled here. Only a genius would attempt it with such concision.

BY SHOBBIT MAHAJAN

ON March 14, 2018, Stephen Hawking passed away. As the most famous public figure in science since Einstein, Hawking was not just an extraordinary cosmologist—his decades long fight against a debilitating disease was a testament to his indomitable spirit. Hawking also authored popular books on science, appeared in television series and a Hollywood film based on his life had been released in 2014.

In this last, posthumous book, Hawking ponders over not just the mysteries of black hole radiation and space-time singularities (the subjects of his path-breaking research) but also attempts to traverse a wider terrain of human knowledge and experience. Hence the 'Big' in the title of this short book.

As Hawking says in the introductory chapter, "Why we must ask the big questions", these are questions which have intrigued humanity for millennia—'Where do we come from? How did the universe begin? What is the meaning of it all?' Hawking has his own list of ten big questions which he attempts to answer here.

The questions range from eternal ones like 'Is there a God?', 'How did it all begin?', to specific ones which relate to our modern view of the cosmos. Thus we also have expositions on "What is inside a black hole?", "Can we predict the future?", "Is time travel possible?" and "How do we shape our future?" Hawking also ventures into more speculative ideas when he talks about "Will we survive our earth?", "Is there other intelligent life in the universe", "Should we colonise space" and "Will Artificial Intelligence outsmart us?"

Hawking was an atheist and thus expectedly, he uses science to answer questions that lie around religion. For him, God is the "embodiment of the laws of nature", though he himself adm-

its that is not what most people think of as God. Religion, in his view, is based on authority while science is based on observation and reason. For him, science will win because it works.

The question about the origin of the universe can of course be answered fairly satisfactorily through modern cosmology. Here, in less than two dozen pages, he gives a brief description of our current understanding of this age-old question. Explaining abstruse topics ranging from the Information Paradox, Quantum Gravity and M-theory to a lay

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Hawking is too ambitious in trying to simplify complex ideas from, say, cosmology and quantum mechanics. The reader is thus deeply dissatisfied with his explanations.

audience is difficult; to do it in so few pages turns out to be too challenging even for Hawking.

This tendency to condense vast amounts of information and conceptual knowledge into a few sentences marks the book. Hawking is too ambitious in trying to simplify extremely complex concepts and ideas from cosmology, quantum mechanics and even molecular biology in a few sentences and leaves the reader more mystified and deeply dissatisfied with the explanations.

Hawking was passionately concerned about the future of the human race. The environmental catastrophe, the limited resources of the biosphere as well as the dangers of nuclear war are issues grappled with here. He views the current crisis as a clarion call for humanity to explore colonisation of space, which he sees as the only way to preserve humanity in the long run. Interestingly, he has a pretty pessimistic view of the human race's capacity to act rationally. "The human race does not have a very good record of intelligent behaviour" he rues.

The book is very readable, laced with humour. For instance, when talking about time, he refers to himself as some sort of expert on time because of his bestseller, *The Brief History of Time*. However, in a subtle dig at the post-Trumpian atmosphere of distrust of experts, he is quick to add that "these days, an expert is not necessarily a good thing to be"!

It is clear that Hawking has pondered over and thought deeply about the questions asked. As his longtime collaborator and friend, the Nobel laureate Kip Thorne, says in the introduction, "He did have the necessary skills, wisdom and self-confidence", [to tackle such big questions]. However, because of the limitations of space and the expansive nature of the subjects, his exposition of the issues is less than satisfying.

Hawking was a firm believer in the power of science, rationality and reason. But he was also fearful of a technological dystopia which the current pace of technological progress might bring about. He sums up his discussion on Artificial Intelligence with these words: "Our future is a race between the growing power of our technology and the wisdom with which we use it. Let's make sure that wisdom wins". Coming from one of the cleverest minds of our times, these are prescient words which we can ignore only at our own peril. □

Hindu; 23/12/18; Pg-3 (Review)

Shadows of the mind

One of the most realistic depictions of depression in recent fiction

■ BY ANUSUA MUKHERJEE

In recent Indo-Anglian fiction, the figure of the mother has undergone a change. From a silent, at times resentful, sufferer of patriarchy, she has emerged as one who chooses to live life on her own terms, even if that damages her family. One recalls Gauri in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*, who walks out of the mesh of mourning her life had become, abandoning her daughter. In Anuradha Roy's *All the Lives We Never Lived*, young Myshkin's mother, Gayatri, leaves him because she must follow the art she loves.

In *Dark Circles*, we meet yet another difficult mother, Mala, who condemns herself to trudge the lonely path of atonement, leaving her sons to their devices. Mala is selfish, no doubt, but she is not judged and dismissed as such. If her sons suffer the psychologi-



■ **Dark Circles**
Udayan
Mukherjee
Bloomsbury
₹499

cal consequences of her act, they also, inevitably, learn to cope.

The novel is centred on an affluent Bengali family settled in Delhi that would have been just another happy family if a tragedy in the form of the father's (Mala's husband) suicide hadn't suddenly hurled it into the abyss.

But even before that, the thwarted ambitions, unfulfilled desires and frustrations of both parents had seethed beneath the façade of the normal. The protagonist Ronojoy, Mala's son, takes

the reader with him as he digs into his past, unravelling the skein of emotions that led to the fatal event, followed by Mala's desertion. The details are camp: Udayan Mukherjee's skill lies not in the way he constructs the circumstances but in the way he reveals the shadows of the mind.

Dark Circles has one of the most realistic depictions of depression in recent fiction. Starting from physical manifestations, like the "overwhelming tiredness" that spreads over Ronojoy, it gradually bleaches his days of colour, leaving behind a wasteland.

Mukherjee doesn't glamorise it, nor does he suggest any easy way out. The book ends with Ronojoy still trapped in the dark circle of aloneness that circumscribes each of his family members: "Sometimes, his gaze would fall on the small glass bottle on the bedside table, full of the pills that tried to put him to sleep."

Hindu, 23/5/18; Pg-3 (Review)

Speaking in poetry

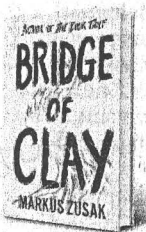
A symbiosis between life's brutish and sentimental sides

■ BY MIHIR BALANTRAPU

This is a weird book. Especially if you aren't into *Seinfeld*, where the meticulous 'Nothing' that binds a host of characters is at least garnished with a laughter track. A 600-page-long epic drama, Markus Zusak's 13-years-in-the-works novel *Bridge of Clay* gives itself a lot of space to play itself out in, wrapped up all over in metaphors of love, loss, and stoicism.

While the dust jacket will tell you it's about five hardy young-adult Australian brothers hardened by a shared life of survivalist independence and unsupervised self-sufficiency, you should know that this is all dust-jackets are allowed to reveal. Engaging with the Dunbars' story, though, is bound to unravel life-truths seldom written of with such perspicacity.

Enigmatic Clay Dunbar's Everest is



■ **Bridge of Clay**
Markus Zusak
Doubleday
₹599

to build a bridge to and for the father who abandoned his children. Good thing he trains so hard.

The reality can seem frustratingly coy for an entire first half. Matthew, the eldest Dunbar sibling and narrator, knows that this is his book and will tell it at his own pace, with a writing style that's cryptic and self-indulgent, often erring on the side of wanton parataxis

— his prose reeks of poetry for a long while, until you realise that's just how the author speaks about love and loss.

As it progresses, the emotionally-surcharged tale wants to bring out the symbiosis between life's brutish and sentimental sides. Within the drowsy earthiness of its Australian Outback setting and the de facto effervescence of its contents lie several displays of courage beyond one's means; when the narrator uses a disinterested typewriter to tell his tale and the exhumation comprises the cold opener, you know this is going to be a horribly layered story.

When you're asked to review a work of art, you're obliged to evaluate it on parameters it isn't obliged to fulfil. This book, for however long you can persevere with it, lets you experience the cliché about life being art and art being life. And all the stuff in between probably will never matter.



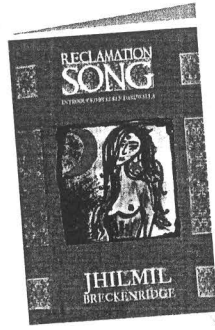
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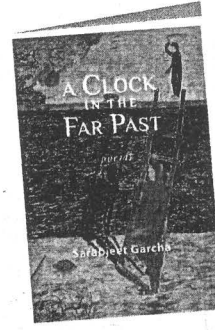
books



Satyajit Sarna
Profane | HarperCollins
| 104 pages | Rs 299



Jhilmil Breckenridge
Reclamation Song | Red River
| 98 pages | Rs 300



Sarabjeet Garcha
A Clock in the Far Past |
Dhauli Books | 66 pages
| Rs 250

In Psyche The Faithful Trust

It's a bleak time for Indian English poetry. These three fine talents dispel the gloom somewhat.

BY SUDEEP SEN

THE English poetry scene in India is going through an unprecedented churn. Many small publishers are cropping up (most dying out after a few titles). Some younger poets have formed 'collectives', publishing each other's books in their 'closed group' and then ceasing. Short-term egotistical enterprises like this is an unhealthy trend, not conducive to openness. Even though more people are writing poetry, not enough read or buy it. The level of intellectual criticism is at an all time low—conversations reduced to gossip and slander—a mass of banality, lacking cerebral gravitas. Amid all odds, independent publishers who soldier on include Poetrywala, Copper Coin, Red River and Dhauli Books. These presses, led by committed poet-activists, believe in the written word through an unbiased eye, a rarity in these dark times.

Satyajit Sarna's *Profane*, his first book of poetry, shows the microcosmic care and concern he has for language. His lines are tightly wrought, content well managed, and the unfolding narrative convincing. Yet, he maintains a high level of lyricism. Take the first stanza of *Moonlake*: "You slip out of the tent first. / Like a moth I follow you / out, into the china white, / mountain bones, bleached by starlight, / pearls underfoot, hearts skidding." There is maturity too, as in *Door*: "I am not so blinded by lust, / as I once was, / Now I hesitate, a moment of balance / between the first unveiling, / and the fitting pitch of the dance."

Scorching comment on national politics is imbued with sharply subtle irony in *National Anthem*: "We will die of this: / Standing when told, sitting in relief, / while our guardians kneel to kiss / the hem of each passing belief. // Remember: / Freedom will not clutch / at the robes of her servants. / Death himself cannot touch / true disobedience." *Profane* is a highly assured debut volume, and I expect fine things from this young writer.

Jhilmil Breckenridge's debut collection, *Reclamation Song*, is a highly illustrated book—the poet's own art/graphics liberally adorning the inside pages and cover. Her work in mental health and gender justly colours her poetry in a way that is not garishly overt but oblique. A good example is *Sita*. Savour the opening three stanzas: "There were many names for me / Wife, Mother of Four Sons, Girlfriend // But forgetting is another way / of surviving and thriving // And so amnesia, I know you well / as I create new identities."

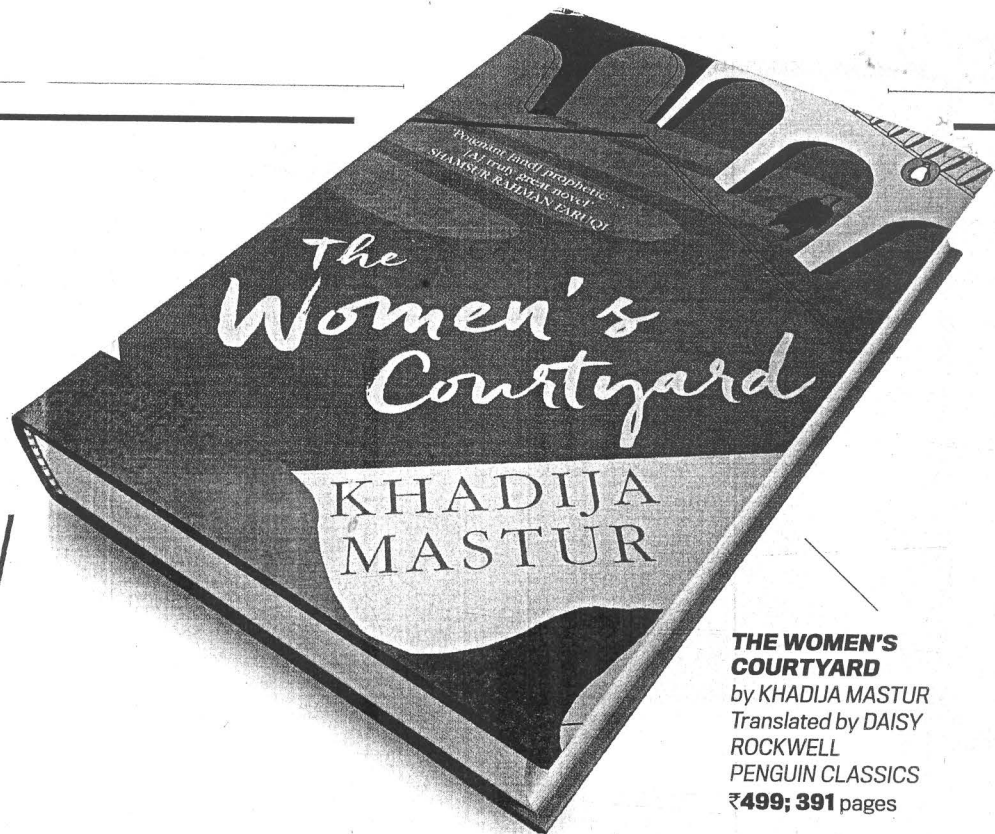
Ekphrastic, based on Mara Rucki's art *Spleen* (1949), is a fine poem and a good example of its form: "It is the mother whose breasts leak milk / but her child is gone // It is the life left in a dragonfly / whose wings are broken // It is the

That Garcha uses his multilingual talents is not the sole point; what is admirable is the way he moves in and out of these diverse language registers and cadences with ease.

oldness in a boy's eyes / after innocence is lost // ... // It is the ennui in your limbs / when a wave of depression strikes // It has many names, take your pick / Despair, Grief, Sorrow, what's your choice?" The repetitive use of the "it is" phrase sets up a chanting rhythm, pushing the narrative's intent in a convincing manner of therapy. In *Reclamation Song*, the poet not only reclaims her and humanity's past, but also leaves the door ajar for future hope to stream in. In so many ways—despite the embedded pain, despair and darkness that engulfs our society—it is a positive, sane, open-minded book.

"A temple town tempts a pilgrim / into pawing its filigreed alcoves / in summer proper // the visiting dharma nerd's head / becomes a battlefield for the blip 'n' flip / of conflictual customs" opens Sarabjeet Garcha's fine poem, *The Believer*. *A Clock in the Far Past* is Garcha's fourth book of poetry (including one in Hindi), apart from two books of translations from Hindi and Marathi. That the poet uses his multilingual talents is not even in question. Instead, what is admirable is the way he moves in and out of these diverse language registers, cadences and textures with ease.

There is quiet wisdom and acceptance in his poetry: "How can we blame / the sun for erasures / we engineered ourselves? // We surrendered, / but didn't admit / we were lost." (*Muted by Multiples*). In Sarabjeet Garcha's poetry, the metaphors are urgent, phrase-making taut, tonality rhythmically sound, and similes that ring with "tantalising ambivalence". *A Clock in the Far Past* is a very fine volume, one that is equally well designed and modest in presentation. □



THE WOMEN'S COURTYARD
by KHADIJA MASTUR
Translated by DAISY ROCKWELL
PENGUIN CLASSICS
₹499; 391 pages

BOOK REVIEW

Unhappy Families

Those looking for a happy ending in this 391 page novel will be disappointed. So, too, will those looking for mischief and banter and flavourful idiomatic conversations in the *begumati zubaan*, a la Ismat Chughtai. *The Women's Courtyard* offers an unrelentingly bleak portrayal of poverty, deprivation and the needless cruelties of time and circumstance. However, there is plenty here for those interested in a nuanced reading of patriarchy. The novel shows how the idea of romance and marriage overwhelms young girls to the exclusion of all else and, eventually, stunts their growth as well as how women sometimes uphold patriarchy in their cruelty to other women and their insistence on keeping the class and caste barriers intact. For that reason, Daisy Rockwell's immaculate translation of Khadija Mastur's *Aangan* is welcome not only for bringing the work to English readers, but also as a feminist tract that questions love, marriage and the need for happy endings.

Known as the Bronte Sisters of Urdu, Khadija Mastur and her sister, Hajra Masrur, were involved in the powerful literary grouping known as the Progressive Writers' Movement first in Bombay and later when they moved to Pakistan. Both chose to write socially engaged, purposive

fiction rather than the romantic, 'domesticated' fiction that had been popularised by women writers of the previous generation. Having lost her father at a young age and lived a life of genteel poverty till she could earn a living from her own pen, Khadija is able to evoke the life of the financially ruined Muslim middle-class torn apart by family intrigue and conflicting loyalties.

While nearly all the action in *The Women's Courtyard* takes place inside the home, it is not a hermetically sealed world. It depicts the tumultuous era of great social and political upheaval in India. News of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, food shortages, Gandhi's civil disobedience movement, rampant unemployment, growing hatred for British rule, horrific jail sentences for those who refuse to serve the colonial interests, the importance of education in middle-class homes, of families being split down the middle due to political differences, young men going off to enlist in the world war and the eventual uprooting brought about by migration, and more filters into the

claustrophobic world of the *zenana* through neighbourhood gossip, newspapers and male relatives.

Unlike other Partition stories, there are no gruesome depictions of rape, abduction, riots. Instead, migration from her enclosed oppressive home in a city somewhere in Uttar Pradesh brings emotional, financial and intel-

lectual independence and a coming of age for Aliya. While there is loss and loneliness with the breaking of ties 'back home', the new life marks a break from an old order that thrived on subjugation, cruelty and segregation. However bleak the immediate future might be, Aliya has the freedom to make her own choices and turn her face away

from love and marriage. It was left to successive generations of women writers to walk the fine line between tradition and modernity, domesticity and worldly success, individuality and multiple role-playing to reach a space where the twain can meet. In Khadija Mastur's world, regrettably, it can be one or the other. ■

—Rakhshanda Jali

Daisy Rockwell's translation of Khadija Mastur's bleak novel offers a nuanced reading of patriarchy

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किताबें/पहले कहानी संग्रह

देह से परे प्रेम की खोज में

विमल कुमार



एक नींद हजार सपने

लेखक: अंजू शर्मा

प्रकाशक: सामयिक प्रकाशन, दिल्ली

कीमत: 395 रु.

आज भी पूरी दुनिया में जेंडर का सवाल ज्वलंत बना हुआ है. तमाम विकास, आधुनिकता और उत्तर आधुनिकता की बहस के बाद भी स्त्रियां गैर बराबरी, प्रताड़ना, अन्याय और दैहिक हिंसा की शिकार हैं और उन पर पितृसत्ता ने पहले लगाए हैं. ऐसे में साहित्य में इन प्रश्नों का उठना स्वाभाविक है. हिंदी साहित्य में अगर स्त्री विमर्श इन प्रश्नों के इर्द-गिर्द सीमित है तो इसका बड़ा कारण यह है कि स्त्रियों को पुरुषों की तरह आजादी नहीं मिली है. उन्हें जीवन का सुख भी नहीं मिला है और पुरुष लेखक उनकी समस्याओं को, उनकी व्यथा को अभी तक पूरी तरह लिख नहीं पाए हैं. इसलिए स्त्रियों ने अपनी कहानी खुद लिखनी शुरू कर दी है. यही कारण है कि पिछले दो दशकों में हिंदी में बड़ी संख्या में लेखिकाएं सामने आई हैं. यह किसी परिघटना से कम नहीं.

इसी से अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है कि समाज में समस्या कितनी गहरी है. लेकिन यह दुर्भाग्य है कि हिंदी में उनके प्रवक्ता कम हैं, विशेषकर साहित्य की दुनिया में. राजेंद्र यादव के बाद उनका झंडाबरदार कोई नहीं है. पर इन लेखिकाओं को अब किसी के आलंबन की भी जरूरत नहीं है. उन्होंने अपना रास्ता भी खुद बनाया है. नब्बे के दशक के बाद मनीषा कुलश्रेष्ठ, अलका सिन्हा, वंदना राग, प्रत्यक्षा, जयश्री राय की एक पीढ़ी आई और फिर उसके बाद महिला कहानीकारों की एक और पीढ़ी सामने आई. कुछेक साल पहले भी कई नए कहानीकारों के प्रथम संग्रह प्रकाश में आए थे. उनमें से कुछ चर्चा में भी आए. अब हाल ही चार नई लेखिकाओं के प्रथम कहानी संग्रह आए हैं, जिन्होंने अपने पाठकों का ध्यान आकर्षित किया है. और सोशल मीडिया में भी उनकी चर्चा है. इनमें सपना सिंह (*उम्र जितना लंबा प्यार*; अनन्या प्रकाशन), अंजू शर्मा (*एक नींद हजार सपने*; सामयिक प्रकाशन), सोनाली मिश्र (*डेरडीमोना मरती नहीं*; शिल्पायन) और विजय श्री तनवीर

(*अनुपमा गांगुली का चौथा प्यार*; हिंद युगम) प्रमुख हैं. इन्हीं के आसपास दिव्या विजय और वंदना गुप्ता के भी संग्रह आए. फिलहाल यहां उनमें से कुछेक पर चर्चा करते हैं.

सपना सिंह की पहली कहानी *उम्र जितना लंबा प्यार* आज से करीब 25 वर्ष पूर्व साहित्यिक पत्रिका *हंस* में छपी थी लेकिन बीच में उनका लेखन बाधित रहा और अब फिर से उन्होंने लिखना शुरू किया है. अंजू शर्मा ने शुरू में अपनी पहचान कवयित्री के रूप में बनाई थी लेकिन बाद में उनकी कहानियों ने लोगों का ध्यान खींचा और अब वे अपने मिजाज में मूलतः कहानीकार ही प्रतीत होती हैं.

सोनाली मिश्र हाल के वर्षों में अपनी कहानियों से चर्चा में आई हैं वे सोशल मीडिया पर भी सक्रिय हैं. विजयश्री तनवीर दो-तीन वर्ष के भीतर तेजी से समकालीन कहानी के पटल पर अवतरित हुई हैं और अपनी भाषा और शिल्प की ताजगी से सराही गई हैं. दिव्या विजय सबसे युवतर कहानीकार हैं और उन्होंने रंगमंच से साहित्य की दुनिया में प्रवेश किया है. ये सभी कहानीकार मूलतः प्रेम और संबंधों की ही कहानीकार हैं. अंजू के यहां सांप्रदायिकता और समाज के वंचित वर्गों के जीवन को लेकर कुछ उल्लेखनीय कहानियां हैं तो सपना के कुछ पात्र समाज के हाशिए से आते हैं, अन्यथा सभी की कहानियों के अधिकतर पात्र स्त्रियां ही हैं और वे केंद्रीय भूमिका में हैं. वे प्रेमिका पत्नी, मां और मित्र के किरदार में हैं. वे अपने जीवन में देह से परे

अब इन कहानीकारों पर समय और समाज के बड़े अंतर्विरोधों को दर्ज करने की जिम्मेदारी है.

प्रेम की खोज में हैं. वे एक ऐसे जीवनसाथी की खोज में हैं जो उनका वास्तविक साथी हो, उनका साझीदार हो. वह देह से नहीं बल्कि मन से जुड़ना चाहता हो और बौद्धिक स्तर पर संवाद करता हो. इस प्रेम की खोज में स्त्री पात्र लहलुहान होती हैं, आहत होती हैं. यौन शोषण का शिकार होती हैं और कई बार तो वे इसके बावजूद अपनी मनुष्यता का परिचय देकर पुरुष को प्रेम भी करती हैं.

सपना सिंह की रंभा एक ऐसी ही ग्रामीण पात्र

हैं जो एक संपन्न डॉक्टर के शोषण के जाल में फंसने के बाद भी उसके निधन पर रोने लगती है। यह एक उदात्त चरित्र है। सपना चाहती तो उसे विद्रोही चरित्र बना सकती थीं लेकिन उन्होंने ऐसा नहीं किया। सोनाली की नायिका अपने जीवनसाथी की खोज के बदले अपनी अघेड़ मां को उसके प्रेमी से मिलाना चाहती है क्योंकि उसके पिता ने उसे छोड़ दिया है। दिव्या विजय की नायिका अन्वेषा अपने पूर्व प्रेमी की पत्नी से मिलकर अपने प्रेमी को याद करते हुए जीती हैं। दिव्या ने भी सपना की तरह अपने चरित्र को उदात्त बनाया है और इस तरह पुरुषों को ही एकस्योज किया है।

सपना के संग्रह में कुल पंद्रह कहानियां हैं। सभी कहानियों में केंद्रीय पात्र स्त्रियां ही हैं। सपना अपनी कहानियों को मनोभावों से अधिक व्यक्त करती हैं और सहज-सरल भाषा में सूक्ष्म मनोभावों को पकड़ती हैं। वे एक मध्यवर्गीय परिवार के आम जीवन के बीच से कहानियां निकालती हैं और रिश्तों को अनावृत करते हुए उसका एक क्रिटिक भी पेश करती हैं। उनमें फेमिनिज्म का उग्र प्रदर्शन नहीं है। वे कहानी में घटित घटनाओं को इस तरह रखती हैं कि पितृसत्ता नंगी हो जाती है। संग्रह की पहली कहानी घरेलू हिंसा की कहानी है, जिसमें लेखिका नायिका के पति और उसके प्रेमी दोनों को कलात्मक तरीके से एकस्योज कर देती है। इसी तरह बू में वे पति और नौकरानी के अवैध संबंधों को प्रतीकात्मक ढंग से उजागर करती हैं। डर कहानी में वे समाज में स्त्री की असुरक्षा भावना को कलात्मक तरीके से रखती हैं तो प्राप्ति में डॉक्टर के प्रति अव्यक्त प्रेम को व्यक्त करती हैं। दरअसल वे अपनी कहानियों में स्त्री पात्रों के लिए कंफर्ट जोन तलाश करती हैं।

अजू के संग्रह में 14 कहानियां हैं। वे अपनी लंबी कहानियों में विवरण और घटनाओं के जरिए कहानी को खड़ा करती हैं पर उसके केंद्रीय तनाव को बरकरार नहीं रख पातीं। लेकिन वे अपनी सामाजिक पक्षधरता को प्रस्तुत जरूर करती हैं। बंद खिड़की खुल गई दंगे में फंसी एक स्त्री पात्र के भीतर व्याप्त भय और आशंका की मनोदशा का कलात्मक चित्रण करती हैं। उनकी खूबसूरत कहानियों में रात के हमसफर और समय रेखा है, जिसमें स्त्री के प्रेम की कलात्मक अभिव्यक्ति हुई है। अजू भी सपना की तरह अपनी प्रेम कहानियों में अपना श्रेष्ठ लेखन प्रदर्शित करती हैं और अपनी शर्तों पर नायक की तलाश करती हैं। सोनाली संवाद शैली में कहानी खड़ी करती हैं और कुछ नए प्रयोग भी करती हैं। शेक्सपियर



उम्र जितना लंबा प्यार
लेखक: सपना सिंह
प्रकाशक: अनन्य प्रकाशन, दिल्ली
कीमत: 100 रु.



डेहडीमोना मरती नहीं
लेखक: सोनाली मिश्र
प्रकाशक: शिल्पायन,
कीमत: 225 रु.



अनुपमा गांगुली का चौथा प्यार
लेखक: विजयश्री तनवीर
प्रकाशक: हिंद युगम, दिल्ली
कीमत: 125 रु.

के पात्र डेहडीमोना के जरिए उन्होंने स्त्री विमर्श का एक रोचक संवाद खड़ा किया है। इसी तरह रेजगारी कहानी में उन्होंने नेरेटर के साथ अपने मुख्य स्त्री पात्र के बीच दिलचस्प संवाद रचा है, जिसमें पात्र मरना नहीं चाहता जबकि कहानीकार उसे मारने पर उतारू है। अनुवाद कहानी भी जीवन का सारगर्भित अर्थ लिए हुए है। सोनाली अपनी कई कहानियों में स्त्री-पुरुष के संबंधों की जटिलता, द्वंद्व, कल्पनाएं और लालसाओं का एक कोलाज बनाती हैं और मर्दावादी सोच को उजागर करती हैं। ब्लाडी औरत और डिस्ट्रक्शन मोड ऐसी ही कहानियां हैं।

विजय श्री तनवीर के संग्रह में 9 कहानियां हैं। उनके यहां भी स्त्री सच्चे प्रेम के लिए भटकती रहती है और दिव्या विजय की तरह एक नहीं, कई प्यार की भी वकालत करती है। तनवीर के पास भाषा और शिल्प का जबरदस्त जादू है। वे सम्मोहक कहानियां लिखती हैं और उनमें रुमानी भाव बोध अधिक है। पहले प्रेम की दूसरी पारी, भेड़िया, खिड़की जैसी कहानियां बहुत चुस्त और कलात्मक संयम का प्रमाण हैं। वे सोनाली की तरह कहानी में सब कुछ कह नहीं देतीं बल्कि उनके अनकहे में ही कहानी छिपी होती है और यही कहानी का सौंदर्य भी है। लेकिन उनकी कहानियों का फलक बहुत बड़ा नहीं है।

दिव्या विजय के संग्रह में दस कहानियां हैं और वे भी प्रेम और रोमान की ही कहानीकार हैं। अलगोजे की धुन, प्यार का कीमिया और प्रेम पथ ऐसो कठिन ऐसी ही उल्लेखनीय कहानियां हैं जिनमें उनके स्त्री पात्र सच्चे प्रेम की तलाश में हैं। विजय श्री तनवीर की तरह उनके स्त्री पात्र रुमान में अधिक जीते हैं और एक नहीं बल्कि कई प्रेमियों से प्रेम पाना चाहते हैं।

समकालीन हिंदी कहानी का विस्तार करते हुए इन सभी ने हिंदी कहानी में एक नई उम्मीद जगाई है, इसलिए उनके सामने कुछ नई जिम्मेदारियां भी हैं। नए कहानीकारों से यह अपेक्षा की जाती है कि वे समाज में हो रहे बदलावों की नई प्रवृत्तियों और बड़े अंतर्विरोधों को भी दर्ज करें। नई आर्थिक नीति के बाद बदले समाज में किस तरह की विसंगतियां सामने आई हैं और मनुष्य के लिए किस तरह के संकट पैदा हुए हैं, उन्हें चिन्हित करें। दिन-प्रतिदिन बनते भयावह यथार्थ से भी मुठभेड़ करें। वे भविष्य में इन कसौटियों पर कितना खरा उतरती हैं, यह तो समय ही बताएगा, पर उनकी कहानियों ने एक आश्वस्त का भाव जरूर पैदा किया है। और यही एक नए कहानीकार की सफलता है। ■

मैं जनक नंदिनी

संजय कृष्ण

परख

“**राम!** एक पत्नी, एक स्त्री की शुचिता चाहे कितने ही प्रश्नों से घिरी हो, परंतु एक मां की शुचिता किसी भी प्रणाम और परीक्षा से परे है. स्त्री मात्र जननी है और यही सत्य है. मैं इस सभा में कुश-लव की मां हूं तथा उनकी मां होने के नाते घोषणा करती हूं—आज मैं शुचिता की परीक्षा नहीं दूंगी.”

“हे राजा राम! आपने राजधर्म निभाया, परन्तु पतिधर्म का निर्वाह नहीं कर सके. पति-पत्नी का संबंध राजधर्म का विषय नहीं है. यह मन और विश्वास संबंध है. राजधर्म की ओट लेकर आप अपने मन का कलुष छुपा नहीं सकते. अतः आज इस सभा में समस्त समाज के समक्ष, जनक नंदिनी आपका परित्याग करती है...”

ये दोनों उद्धरण आशा प्रभात लिखित उपन्यास ‘मैं जनक नंदिनी’ के हैं. यह सीता पर लिखा गया ताजा उपन्यास है. 320 पेजों का. आशा जी मिथिल क्षेत्र की हैं. सो, सीता के दर्द को बखूबी समझा है. एक स्त्री होने के नाते उनका यह दायित्व भी था. अब तक राम के चरित पर लाखों पेज लिखे जा चुके हैं, लिखे जाएंगे, लेकिन सीता का चरित छिटक जा रहा था. जैसे राम को हमने भगवान बना दिया, सीता को माता. इसके बाद तो सब दुख-दर्द खत्म. फिर एक स्त्री की तरह हमने सीता को देखा ही नहीं. पहली बार हम उस आभा मंडल से अलग एक स्त्री के रूप में उनका दुख, दर्द, आत्मसंघर्ष, शौर्य,

स्वाभिमान, त्याग और उनके चारित्रिक बल से साक्षात्कार करते हैं. हजारों साल बाद सीता के चरित पर उपन्यास लिखना, आधुनिक समय को समझने का भी एक औजार उपलब्ध कराता है. स्त्री की कमोबेश स्थिति आज भी ऐसी ही है. सबसे दुर्भाग्य यह है कि हिंदू धर्म में हम पूरे

साल 18 दिन देवी की पूजा करते हैं. दो नवरात्र में, लेकिन देवी की पूजा करने के बाद हम फिर 347 दिन प्रताड़ित करते हैं. दहेज के नाम पर एक स्त्री को जलाने में तनिक भी संकोच नहीं करते. हिंदू धर्म की बड़ी-बड़ी बातें करने वाले धर्मगुरु अब बहुत बौने हो चुके हैं. यह उनके बोल और आचरण से हर दिन देख सकते हैं इसलिए सीता के चरित का गायन आज ज्यादा प्रासंगिक है.

यह उपन्यास सीता के पूरे व्यक्तित्व से रूबरू कराता है. यह अलग बात है कि सीता को लेकर सवाल आज से नहीं, उसी समय से उठते रहे हैं. सीता की अग्नि परीक्षा, सीता का राम द्वारा परित्याग...यह एक राजा का कर्तव्य तो हो सकता है, एक पति का नहीं. राजा राम मर्यादा पुरुष हैं. उन्हें पुरुषोत्तम कहा गया है. किसने कहा, क्यों कहा, कौन यह विशेषण लगाकर राम की महिमा का जयगान कर रहा था? इसे समझना कोई कठिन काम नहीं है. एक धोबी के कहने पर राम अपनी अर्धांगिनी सीता का परित्याग कर देते हैं. बेशक, राम के अंदर कई गुण थे. एक तो यह कि वे अन्य राजाओं की तरह बहुपत्नी नहीं रखते. इसका एक कारण यह भी हो सकता है



कि वे अपने पिता की हालत देख चुके थे. तीन पत्नी रखने का हथ क्या होता है? इसलिए, राम ने बहुत सोच-समझकर यह संकल्प लिया कि वे एक पत्नीव्रता रहेंगे. फिर भी, राम द्वारा सीता का परित्याग और उनकी परीक्षा लेना कहीं से भी उचित नहीं कहा जा सकता? यह

उपन्यास दरअसल, राम के इस निर्णय का रचनात्मक प्रतिरोध है.

सीता कौन थी? हम सब यही जानते हैं कि सीता जनक को खेत में हल जोतते समय मिलीं. कौन रख गया था, किसकी पुत्री थीं सीता, यह कोई नहीं जानता. संस्कृत ग्रंथों से लेकर बाबा तुलसी तक. कहानी यही है. पर क्या सीता का आदिवासी संस्कृति से कोई संबंध या नाता हो सकता है? इस बारे में अब तक विद्वानों का ध्यान नहीं गया? इसका एक कारण हिंदी विद्वानों का यह रहा कि वे आदिवासी संस्कृति से बहुत परिचित नहीं हैं. उनकी रुचि भी नहीं है. मानवशास्त्रियों ने अलबत्ता खूब काम किया. हिंदी वाले भी यही समझते हैं कि यह काम तो मानवशास्त्रियों का है, पर कुबेरनाथ राय अपवाद हैं, जिन्होंने पूरी गंभीरता से आर्य संस्कृति में आदिवासी संस्कृति के तत्त्व खोजे और बताया कि आर्य संस्कृति में आदिवासी संस्कृति का कितना योगदान है? वैसे आदिवासियों के अंदर भी रामकथा मौजूद है, जिन पर अभी तक गंभीरता से काम नहीं हुआ है. बहरहाल, सीता का सबसे पहला उल्लेख मुंडारी में मिलता है. मुंडारी देश की सबसे प्राचीन भाषाओं में से एक है.



डॉ. रामदयाल मुंडा इस पर प्रकाश डालते हैं। वह लिखते हैं, “राजा जनक को सीता हल चलाते समय मिली। किंतु सीता शब्द की उत्पत्ति संस्कृत में अस्पष्ट ही कही गई है। दूसरी ओर प्रायः सभी मुंडा आदिवासी भाषाओं में सीता का अर्थ हल चलाना और तब वर्तमान क्रियास्पदबोधक प्रत्यय के रूप में प्रयुक्त होता है।” मुंडारी भाषा में एक जदुर गीत भी गाया जाता है, जिसकी प्रथम दो पंक्तियों का अर्थ है :

“हमने हल चलाते समय उसे पाया था। हम इसे सीता नाम ही देंगे।”

कहने की आवश्यकता नहीं कि सीता के प्रति संस्कृत भाषा-भाषियों का जितना दावा है, उससे कम आदिवासियों का नहीं। प्रस्तुत गीत की पंक्तियां न केवल सीता को वरन् जनक को भी आदिवासी बना देती हैं।

सीता का यह साहस और यह बल भी यहीं आदिवासी संस्कृति से आता है। रामायण कथा का आदिवासी पाठ अभी बाकी है। इस पाठ से कई रहस्य खुलेंगे और कुछ नई स्थापनाएं सामने आएंगी। हालांकि इस उपन्यास में इसका सीधे-सीधे बखान नहीं किया गया है, लेकिन सीता का जो साहसी चरित्र दिखाया गया है, वह कहीं न कहीं इस उपन्यास में अंडर करंट की तरह आदिवासी अस्मिता दिखाती है। यह जाने भी हो सकता है, अनजाने भी। हमें सीता को इसी दृष्टि से देखने की कोशिश करनी चाहिए।

अब जरा एक दृश्य देखिए।

“राम मेरे सम्मुख थे। हर्ष के आवेग ने मेरी सांसें भींच दीं...पलकें नत हो गईं लाज के भार से। किंतु नत दृष्टि से बच न सके उनके युग्त नील पद्म चरण... थोड़े सूजे हुए घावों के चिह्न। दृष्टि तनिक ऊपर उठी। तन पर भी सूखे-हरे असंख्य घावों के चिह्न...हाहाकार कर उठा हृदय। आह राम, इतना कुछ सहन करना पड़ा आपको मेरे लिए? नेत्र छलक पड़े। धुंधले नेत्र मुख की ओर उठते राम का श्रवण हुआ—

अब राम को सुनिए—

“सीता, रावण का वध कर मैंने उसके चंगुल से तुम्हें मुक्त कर दिया है। तिरस्कार के प्रतिकार हेतु मानव कर्म के अंतर्गत जो निहित है, वह मैंने किया है। किंतु मेरा यह समस्त उद्यम अपने विमल वंश और कीर्ति के रक्षार्थ था, तुम्हारे लिए नहीं। परपुरुष के घर में इतने काल रही स्त्री को कोई भी कुलीन पुरुष नहीं ग्रहण करेगा। तुम्हारा चरित्र संदेहास्पद हो गया है। मैं तुम्हें मुक्त करता हूं, तुम जहां चाहो जा सकती हो...”

मर्यादा पुरुषोत्तम राम ने यह पराक्रम अपनी धर्मपत्नी सीता, जिसके साथ सात फेरे, सात वचन लिए थे, के लिए नहीं, रघुकुल की प्रतिष्ठा के लिए किया था। पर जब सीता को छोड़ना ही था तो यह पराक्रम क्यों किया? इसकी कतई जरूरत नहीं थी। सीता यही सवाल उठाती है— “राम! यदि यही शंका थी आपको तो मेरी खोज के लिए इतना उद्यम करने की क्या आवश्यकता थी? उसी समय त्याग दिया होता। हनुमान से यह संवाद सुनकर मैं अपना जीवन पथ निश्चित कर लेती। इतनी यातना सहना क्या अभीष्ट था मुझे? आपको भी जीवन संकट में डालकर युद्ध नहीं करना पड़ता...”

सीता के जीवन की आगे की कहानी सब जानते हैं। सीता ने अग्नि परीक्षा दी, फिर भी महल से निष्कासित होना पड़ा और वाल्मीकि के आश्रम में शरण लेनी पड़ी। लव-कुश का जन्म। राम की मर्यादा आड़े नहीं आई कि एक गर्भवती स्त्री को अपने राजमहल से निष्कासित कर देते हैं? फिर भी हम रामराज की कल्पना करते हैं? क्या हम ऐसे ही रामराज की चाह रखते हैं। जहां एक स्त्री बार-बार प्रताड़ित होती है, बिना किसी गलती के। फिर भी चारणों की एक लंबी परंपरा में राम मर्यादा पुरुषोत्तम कहलाए?

यह उपन्यास वाल्मीकि की कथा पर आधारित है। सीता विवाह के प्रसंग को आप देख सकते हैं। तुलसी ने मानस में दिखाया है कि जब जनक की सभा में धनुष टूट जाता है तो उसकी गूंज दूर तक

सुनाई देती है और परशुराम इस गूंज को सुनकर तत्काल जनक की रंगभूमि में पहुंचते हैं और क्रोधित होते हैं। लक्ष्मण-परशुराम संवाद होता है। पर राम विनयी बने रहते हैं। तुलसीदास की यह उद्भावना अभिमानी और ईर्ष्यालु राजाओं के द्वारा उत्पन्न विषम परिस्थिति को दूर करने में भी एक विचित्र नाटकीय चित्र उपस्थित करती है। परशुराम के आते ही राजाओं की बोलती बंद हो जाती है, लेकिन वाल्मीकि में परशुराम राम से उस समय मिलते हैं जब वह सीता के साथ फेरे लेकर अयोध्या की निकल पड़ते हैं। यानी रास्ते में उनकी भेंट होती है। पर जो बचपन में रामलीला देखते आए होंगे, वह तुलसी के प्रसंग से ही परिचित होंगे। वाल्मीकि के अलावा रामदास ने भी अपने सार रामायण में बारात जाते समय ही राम-परशुराम का आमना-सामना करवाया है। आशा प्रभात ने भी मार्ग में ही परशुराम का सामना राम से करवाया है। इस उपन्यास में कई ऐसे प्रसंग हैं, जो आज की पीढ़ी नहीं जानती। नहीं जानती कि राम की कोई बहन भी थी। इस तरह की कई जानकारियों से हम रूबरू होते हैं और हमारे स्मृति-पटल पर अतीत फिर से जीवंत होने लगता है। एक लंबे काल खंड की परत धीरे-धीरे खुलने लगती है लेकिन इन सबके बीच एक बात जरूर रही कि सीता देवी की ही तरह प्रतिष्ठित कर दी गई। इसलिए जब हमारे पुरखों ने सीता की अग्नि परीक्षा का जिक्र किया तो बताया कि यह असल सीता नहीं थी। पृथ्वी में समाने वाली सीता, सीता नहीं, उनकी छाया रही। उन्हें देवी बना देने से कवियों ने यह सहूलियत पा ली और जनमानस में सीता की यही छवि रच-बस गई।

इस मिथक को तोड़ना आसान नहीं। देवी बना दी गई सीता को एक सामान्य स्त्री की तरह 21वीं सदी में दिखाना, किसी जोखिम से कम नहीं। हमने कभी सीता की दृष्टि से राम को देखने की कोशिश भी नहीं की। आशा प्रभात यही काम करती हैं। हम सीता को एक स्त्री की तरह देखते हैं और उनके जीवट संघर्ष को,

त्याग और बलिदान को. इसलिए वह सीता के मुख से कहलवा सकीं कि—आज इस सभा में समस्त समाज के समक्ष, जनक नंदिनी आपका परित्याग करती है...पर कुछ लोग यह मानते हैं कि यह राम की गलती नहीं थी—उस काल की सामाजिक व्यवस्था ही ऐसी थी. रामायण काल का यह समाज संक्रमणकालीन समाज था. एक दूसरी संस्कृति थी—रावण की. असुर संस्कृति. जहां स्त्रियां काफी स्वतंत्र थीं. राम-रावण युद्ध भी सिर्फ सीता के लिए युद्ध न था, बल्कि एक सांस्कृतिक युद्ध भी था. संस्कृति की लड़ाई थी. इन सब तर्क के बावजूद सीता के निर्वासन का सवाल ज्यों का त्यों बना रहेगा और इसे किसी भी दृष्टि से उचित नहीं कहा जा सकता. अच्छा होता, राम भी राजमहल को त्यागकर सीता के साथ चल पड़ते. तब उनकी मर्यादा और बढ़ जाती. पर राम ऐसा नहीं करते और फिर आगे चलकर चारों भाइयों को सरयू में डूबकर अपना जीवन समाप्त करना पड़ता है. राम को करुणावतार कहा गया तो क्या राम का हृदय सीता के लिए रुदन न करता होगा? 14 साल जिनके साथ वन-वन भटकी, धरती को बिछौना बनाया, उस सीता को राम से ज्यादा कौन समझ सकता था, लेकिन राम एक धोबी के ताने से विचलित हो गए और उनकी मर्यादा खंडित होती जान पड़ी.

भारत के दो महाख्यान हैं. एक रामायण और दूसरा महाभारत. एक के नायक राम हैं और दूसरे के केंद्र में कृष्ण हैं. कृष्ण को पूर्णावतार माना गया है. कृष्ण किसी मर्यादा से बंधे नहीं हैं. जैसे को तैसा जवाब देते हैं. राम शास्त्र का अनुकरण करते हैं और कृष्ण न शास्त्र की परवाह करते हैं न किसी मर्यादा के बंधन से बंधे होते हैं. सीधे सरल शब्दों में कहें तो राम समाज के पीछे चलते हैं और कृष्ण समाज के आगे. इसलिए यदि ऐसी स्थिति कृष्ण के सामने उपस्थित होती तो वे कतई सीता का परित्याग नहीं करते. राम का आदर्श परिवार के लिए जरूरी है, समाज के लिए नहीं. समाज के लिए कृष्ण का चरित जरूरी लगता है. पर इन सबके बीच वह सवाल तो बना ही रहेगा, सीता का परित्याग क्या उचित था? कोई दूसरा रास्ता नहीं निकल सकता था? इसे अवतार के आवरण में लपेटकर देखेंगे तो हम पुराने ही निष्कर्षों पर ही जाकर ठहरेंगे? वैसे इस उपन्यास से सीता को देखने का एक नया नजरिया दिया है. इसके साथ ही, हमें इसके भीतर और जाने की जरूरत है. सीता का आदिवासी पाठ भी जरूरी है. तब हो सकता है, रामकथा, कुछ और विस्तार पाए और कुछ नई चीजें हासिल हों. आखिर 14 सालों तक जंगलों में बिताने वाले राम की जंगल गाथा कहां अभी तक लिखी गई है? एक ही तरह के पाठ और कुपाठ होते रहे हैं? आशा प्रभात ने सीता को रचकर एक नई शुरुआत कर दी है. उन्होंने साफ कर दिया है, यह अलौकिक सीता की लौकिक प्रस्तुति है.

□

पुस्तक : मैं जनक नंदिनी

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नज़्म सुभाष की गज़लें

क्या किसी तकरीर में गूँजा कभी ये मुद्दा
आदमी की भीड़ में है आदमीयत गुमशुदा
है हमारे वेतनों की वृद्धि जायज़ बंधुवर
आप जनता हैं बजाए, दे रहे हैं झुनझुना
सभ्यता के स्वर्णयुग में कुंतियों की त्रासदी
कर्ण को फेंके नहीं तो और क्या है रास्ता
न्याय की अवधारणा जब हो तिजोरी पर लिखी
झूठ तब सच के बराबर गर्व से होगा खड़ा
आइना सच को उजागर किस तरह आखिर करे
जब अंधेरे से निरंतर हो रहा हो सामना
रोज़गारों में अगरचे आप शामिल हो गए
फिर ये झंडे और बैनर कौन ढोयेगा भला
आप तो कीड़े-मकोड़े की तरह जिंदा रहे
वोट देना, तिलमिलाना है मुकद्दर आपका

●

जो जरूरी है वही तो गुमशुदा किरदार है
हाशिए पर नींव है बिल्डिंग मगर दमदार है
वक्त के परिदृश्य में हर सू कुहासा है घना
दृष्टि से ओझल हुआ जो ढूँढ़ना बेकार है
शूल सारी राह मेरे पांव में चुभते रहे
इस तरह बागों में नंगे पांव का सत्कार है
है किसानों के लिए टोटा हमेशा देश में
हां, फसादी वास्ते धनराशि का भंडार है
विषवमन की सोच लेकर हों जहां सब एकमत
एकता की बात सुनना फिर किसे स्वीकार है
सभ्यता की त्रासदी, हम लौटते पीछे रहें
ये हमारी आस्थाओं का नया आधार है
चीथड़े को ओढ़कर गणतंत्र बैठा सोचता
मैं यहां बीमार हूं या देश ये बीमार है

□

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गांव और किसानों का जीवन

वीरज पाण्डेय

परख

कथाकार स्वयं प्रकाश ने अपने जीवन का ज्यादातर समय महानगर या नगरों में व्यतीत किया है। उनकी कहानियों में भी मुख्यतः शहरी मध्यवर्ग का जीवन आया है परंतु गांव जहां आया है वहां किसी 'यूटोपियन' संकल्पना के साथ नहीं बल्कि यथार्थ के साथ। बदलते समय ने हमारी जीवन शैली में जो बदलाव किया है उससे न व्यक्ति अछूता है, न ही गांव या नगर। स्वयं प्रकाश द्वारा लिखित गांव केंद्रित कहानियों का संग्रह है—'नैनसी का धूड़ा'। जिसका संपादन रचना सिंह ने किया है। इस संग्रह में कुल बारह कहानियां हैं जो ग्रामीण-कृषक संस्कृति के तमाम पहलुओं को अपने अंदर समेटे हैं।

'सूरज कब निकलेगा' उम्मीद को खोते हाली (ऐसा किसान मजदूर जिसके पास जमीन न हो और वह बटाई पर दूसरों के लिए काम करता है।) जीवन की त्रासद कहानी है। भैराराम और सुगनी जो बरसात के कारण बढ़ते नदी के पानी से स्वयं के झूंपे को डूबते देखने को विवश है: वर्षा और बाढ़ जब आज लोगों के लिए पर्यटन और एडवेंचर के कारण बने हैं उस दौर में भैराराम जैसे लोगों की नियति का क्या। जिनके छत पर खुला आसमान है वह भी बिना सूरज का आसमान। यहां सूरज वह उम्मीद है जिसके आधार पर किसान जी रहा है। यहां बाढ़ व्यवस्था के उस दलदल का भी प्रतीक है जिसमें भारतीय किसान डूब रहा है। उसे उम्मीद है कि किसी दिन उसका भी सूरज निकलेगा और उसे 'उसके हिस्से की धूप' मिलेगी। जीवन के दल-दल और अवसाद से निकलकर वह भी उल्लास

का जीवन बिताएगा। आम-आदमी बनी हुई व्यवस्था में सहज ही विश्वास करता है। भैराराम को भी विश्वास है कि सब सही होगा। मैं बाबा रामदेव पीर को नई चादर चढ़ाऊंगा, यह कथन उसके विश्वास का सूचक है परंतु अंततः वहीं भैराराम भगवान को इन लालचों के बाद धमकियों और फिर गालियों

से संबोधित करना शुरू करता है। इस तरह भगवान से टूटता भैराराम का विश्वास प्रकारांतर में उस टूटते विश्वास का भी सूचक है जो अवाम की हमारी प्रशासनिक व्यवस्था में हैं। अनंत आस्था से यह मोहभंग ही है जो हम अपने देश की व्यवस्था से ऊबने लगे हैं। भैराराम का भगवान की व्यवस्था से विश्वास उठना प्रकारांतर में हमारी आजादी के सपनों के टूटने का भी दर्द बयां करता है। स्वयं प्रकाश इस कहानी के अंत में लिखते हैं—“आगे की कहानी मैं नहीं सुनाऊंगा। उसमें दुख, तकलीफ, निराशा, भूख, भाग्य, हताशा और लाचारी के सिवा कुछ नहीं है।” हमारे देश में किसान, मजदूर जीवन की यही त्रासदी है। भूमिहीन होकर दूसरों के सहारे जीना जिसकी नियति हो जाए तो वह क्या जानेगा आजादी, लोकतंत्र, कल्याणकारी राज्य की संकल्पना को।

ऐसी ही विशिष्ट कहानी है, 'बिछुड़ने से पहले' जो एक तरीके से बदले वातावरण में 'सत्ता' के दंभ की कहानी है जिसमें एक पगडंडी और खेत के माध्यम से सड़क और पंगडंडी के रिश्तों को उजागर किया गया है। सड़क जहां सत्ता का प्रतीक होता चला गया वहीं पगडंडी लगातार हाशिए पर चलती चली गई। पगडंडी का यह



कथन—“आज तक किसी सड़क से, पगडंडी से दोस्ती की है जो वो मेरे से करेगी?” यह प्रश्न सिर्फ पगडंडी का नहीं बल्कि उन सबका है जो समाज में, राष्ट्र में हाशिए पर कर दिए गए हैं। संविधान का प्रस्तावना 'हम भारत के लोग' को पलटकर जब प्रश्न होने लगे कि 'तुम कैसे भारतीय हो, तुम्हारा अस्तित्व

क्या है भारतीयता में?' 'तब ऐसे प्रश्न स्वाभाविक हैं। खेत और पगडंडी उस विकास की भी पोल खोलते हैं जिसमें हम बिना लक्ष्य दूसरे को पीछे करने के लिए लगातार दौड़ रहे—थके, अवसादग्रस्त और अकेले।'

गांव के बदलते स्वरूपों और जरूरतों की सच्चाइयों को उजागर करती कहानी है—'नैनसी का धूड़ा'। जहां धूड़ा कभी पशु तो कभी मनुष्य लगता है। वस्तुतः पूंजीवादी व्यवस्था ने लाभ-हानि की जो संस्कृति पैदा की है उसमें अर्थ साध्य है—मनुष्य मात्र साधन है। 'धूड़ा' जब तक काम करता है, वह तब तक उत्पादन का साधन है परंतु उत्पादकता खत्म हुई तो व्यवस्था उठाकर-बाहर फेंक देगी। स्वयं प्रकाश लिखते हैं कि “भूख और भोजन जीवन का सबसे बड़ा सत्य है और खूटा एक तकलीफदेह चीज का नाम।” परंतु आज कौन है जो खूटे में नहीं बंधा है। फर्क यह है कि किसी के गले में पट्टा है, पगहा है तो किसी के गले में टाई है। परंतु नियति 'नैनसी का धूड़ा' होना ही है। कहानी के अंत में धूड़ा मर जाता है परंतु सनद रहे यह धूड़ा कोई जीव नहीं बल्कि प्रवृत्ति है, नियति है आज भी कई धूड़े पूंजी के बाजार में पूंजीवाद के पहरेदारों के खूंटों पर बंधे मिल जाएंगे।



‘जंगल का दाह’ आदिवासी विस्थापन और सत्ता से उनके संघर्ष की कहानी है. आदिवासी समाज को अपने जमीन, पर्यावरण और अपनी परंपराओं से काट दिए जाने ही कहानी में मूल चिंता है. पर्यावरण नियमों को बनाकर पहले उनके लिए जीवन निर्वाह संकट को पैदा किया गया और अंततः पूंजीवाद और सत्ता के गठजोड़ ने उन्हें विस्थापित जीवन जीने को विवश कर दिया. कहानी में राजकुमार मामा सोन से धनुर्विद्या सीखना चाहता है परंतु जब सीख नहीं पाता है तो जंगल को आग के हवाले कर दिया जाता है. स्वयं प्रकाश का यह कथन आज आदिवासियों से उनकी जमीन और उनकी जड़ों से काटने का मार्मिक वर्णन करता है—“मनुष्य से बड़ा कौन-सा लक्ष्य हो सकता है? खासकर जब उसकी मुश्कें बंधी हों, और पीठ तख्ते से सटी हो, चारों तरफ सशस्त्र सैनिकों का पहरा हो और सरपरस्ती के लिए पीठ पर राजा का हाथ भी हो.” यह कथन सैनिक कार्रवाई के बल पर खाली कराए जाने वाले जंगलों की सच्चाई को उद्घाटित करता है. मामा सोन आदिवासी संस्कृति और आदिवासी परंपरा के सूचक हैं, जिनका नष्ट होना भारत की संपूर्णता में संध लगने जैसा है.

‘कानदांव’ कहानी एक बनिया और पाठक के माध्यम से भारत की सांस्कृतिक विरासत और बदलते सांप्रदायिक माहौल की कहानी है. लाभ-हानि को दोस्ती से अधिक महत्त्व देने वाले पात्रों के आपसी रिश्तों के आधार पर भारत की गंगा-यमुनी संस्कृति का वर्णन किया गया है. लेखक कहानी की शुरुआत ही उस दौर से करता है जब मुसलमान की बेटी की शादी में हिंदू कन्यादान लेकर जाता था और हिंदू की बेटी की शादी में मुसलमान जोड़ा लेकर जाते थे. परंतु आजादी के दौरान अंतिम विकल्प के रूप में ‘पार्टीशन’ को चुनकर हमारे आदि पुरुषों ने इस विभाजन को स्वीकार कर लिया जो सदियों से हमने संजोया था. इसी प्रकार ‘बलि’ कहानी बदले परिवेश में सामंजस्य न बैठ पाए की कहानी है. वस्तुतः आदिवासी लड़की

‘साहब’ के यहां काम करते हुए उस समाज का हिस्सा हो जाती है जहां औरत वस्तु नहीं, मनुष्य है, उसे मार-पीटा नहीं जाता. लड़की का बाप उस व्यवस्था की पैदाइश है जिसके लिए लड़की उत्पादन की साधन है. शादी उसकी ऐसी जगह होती है जहां पति अपनी सत्ता स्थापना के लिए जरूरी समझता है—पत्नी को पीटना. अंततः जीवन में आए इस बदलाव से वह सामंजस्य नहीं कर पाती और उसे स्वयं की ‘बलि’ देनी पड़ती है. सामंजस्य के स्थापना की ही एक और कहानी है—‘संधान’. जिसमें ग्रामीण जीवन और महानगरीय जीवन की अपनी विशिष्टताओं को रेखांकित किया गया है. जिसमें विश्वमोहन का परिवार शहर घूमकर आता है तो उसे गांव दोगम दर्जे के लगते हैं, कुछ भी अच्छा नहीं लगता. सब उसी दिवा स्वप्न में खोए रहते हैं जो महानगर ने पैदा किया है. परंतु अप्रत्याशित यह होता है कि विश्वमोहन जी के मित्र महानगर छोड़ घूमने के लिए गांव की तरफ रुख करते हैं. उनकी उत्सुकता और बच्चों के उल्लास को देखकर विश्वमोहन का परिवार इस ‘हीनताबोध’ से बाहर निकलता है कि गांव दोगम दर्जे के हैं. संधान इस स्थापना की कहानी है कि शहर में ऊंची इमारत हैं तो गांव के आसमान में तारे, शहर साफ है तो गांव के क्यारियों में हरी सब्जियां उगी हैं, शहर में स्विमिंग पूल है तो गांव में कोई भी अपनी ‘बोरिंग’ आपके लिए खोल देगा. आप जी भरकर पानी से नहा सकते हैं.

इसी प्रकार ‘आयाचित’ कहानी एक ऐसी लड़की की कहानी है जो अपनी पसंद से ‘भागकर’ शादी कर लेती है तो उसे उसका परिवार हमेशा-हमेशा के लिए छोड़ देता है. लेखक लिखता है कि खुद जब यह लड़की ‘मां’ बन जाती है तो अपनी बेटी की कम उम्र में ही बिना मर्जी शादी कर देती है. इस तरह स्वयं के जीवन में दूसरी जाति से शादी करने वाले लड़के-लड़की मां-बाप या अभिभावक के रूप में ऐसी रूढ़िवादी सामाजिक व्यवस्था का पालन करते हैं जो सदियों से चली आ

रही है. इस प्रकार पुनः रूढ़ियों की तरफ लौटना ‘त्रासदी’ का सूचक है. यहां यह प्रश्न भी है कि कहीं वे अपने क्रांतिकारी कदम का पश्चात्ताप तो नहीं कर रहे? अगर ऐसा है तब तो रूढ़ियां और मजबूत होंगी.

मीडिया के बाजारवादी और चमत्कारिक न्यूज दिखाने की होड़ की कहानी है ‘उस तरफ’. किस तरह नखत सिंह जो अपनी बहादुरी से लोगों की जान बचाता है उसे ‘साधारण’ से ‘असाधारण’ बनाने का कार्य मीडिया करती है, उसे उद्घाटित किया गया है. समाचार में वही है, जो चमत्कार पैदा करे, बिकाऊ हो. और ‘साधारण’ बिकाऊ नहीं हो सकता. इसी प्रकार ‘जो हो रहा है’ का रंजीत बदले जमाने का युवक है जो पुरानी रूढ़िगत परंपराओं, जातीय विभाजन को नकारता है और अंततः वर्चस्ववादी वर्ग के मास्टर साहब से संघर्ष के पश्चात् उसे अपमान झेलना पड़ता है. परंतु कहानी का अंत बदले जमाने के युवकों के दृढ़ता को स्थापित करता है, बिना इस दृढ़ता के समाज नहीं बदलेगा.

‘नैनसी का धूड़ा’ रचना सिंह द्वारा संपादित उन कहानियों का संकलन है जिसमें पूंजी और सत्ता के गठजोड़ से उपजी समस्याएं हैं और इनके केंद्र में गांव का जीवन-संस्कृति है. समन्वय और सामंजस्य के अभाव में हम जहां जा रहे हैं वहां हमारी नियति क्या होगी? यही यक्ष प्रश्न हमारे सामने है. चाहे वह धूड़ा हो या पगडंडी, चाहे ‘बलि’ की लड़की हो या भैराराम. हमें ‘उस तरफ’ और ‘इस तरफ’ में संतुलन बनाकर ही इन समस्याओं को सुलझाना है. इसके लिए ‘संधान’ की जरूरत है. यह संधान ‘कल्याणकारी राज्य’ और ‘अधिकार आधारित राज्य’ के बीच होना चाहिए.

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पुस्तक : नैनसी का धूड़ा

लेखक : स्वयं प्रकाश

संपादक : रचना सिंह

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सुरेश कुमार

परख

समकालीन पीढ़ी के युवा कथाकारों में मनोज कुमार पांडेय एक सिद्धहस्त कथाकार के रूप में जाने जाते हैं। मनोज कुमार पांडेय की कहानियां कभी सांप्रदायिकता का गला पकड़ लेती हैं, कभी जाति व्यवस्था से जूझ रहे लोगों की हमराही बनकर जाति व्यवस्था को उखाड़ने की मुहिम में शामिल हो जाती हैं। मनोज कुमार पांडेय की कहानियों की यह भी ताकत है कि अतीत की मनुष्यता विरोधी परंपराओं पर गर्व करने वाले लोगों के मानस पर तंज करती हैं। 'खजाना' कहानी-संग्रह की कहानियां सांप्रदायिकता की मार से लहलुहान देश की कराह, बजबजाती राजनीति की स्वार्थपरता, मनुष्य विरोधी ताकतों के उभार से तंग लोगों की पीड़ा और भविष्य के खतरों की शिनाख्त करती हैं। कहानियों के विवरण और ब्योरे अतीत और भविष्य का भाष्य रचते दिखाई देती हैं। इन कहानियों की खूबी यह है कि कल्पना से यथार्थ और यथार्थ से जादुई यथार्थ फिर यथार्थ की जमीन पर ला पटकती हैं। 'खजाना' कहानी-संग्रह की कहानियों को पढ़ते समय यह महसूस नहीं होगा कि कब कहानीकार ने अपने गिरफ्त में ले लिया है। मेरे कहने का अभिप्राय यह है कि मनोज कुमार पांडेय की कहानियों में गजब की किस्सागोई है जो पाठक को शुरू से लेकर अंत तक बांधे रखती हैं।

'खजाना' कहानी-संग्रह में मनोज कुमार पांडेय की आठ कहानियां संकलित हैं। 'चोरी' कहानी समय के उस भयावह

पक्ष को हमारे सामने रखती हैं जिसकी आड़ में देश लूटा जा रहा है। यह एक लंबी कहानी है जो छोटे ब्योरे से शुरू होकर यथार्थ की ओर ले जाती है। कहानी का नैरेटर चोरी को एक कला के रूप में देखता है। जैसे कहानी आगे बढ़ती वैसे ही पता चलता है कि चोरी कला नहीं

बल्कि व्यवसाय के रूप में तब्दील हो गई जिसकी आड़ में देश के नागरिक और उसकी संपदा को सत्ता की सांठगांठ से लूटा जा रहा है। केवल देश की संपदा को ही नहीं लूटा जा रहा है बल्कि नागरिकों की आंखों के सपने और संवेदना भी चुरा ली गई है। कहानी की यह पंक्तियां देखिए जिनमें नैरेटर कह रहा है, 'वह जीवन चुरा रहे थे हमारा। वह हमारी आंखें चुरा रहे थे। उन्होंने दोस्ती कर सकने की ताकत चुरा ली थी। वह हमारे भीतर का जो कुछ भी शानदार, चमकीला और संभावनाओं से भरा था सब कुछ चुराए जा रहे थे।' लेखक की इस सजग और गंभीर टिप्पणी में नागरिकों को सचेत करने का मंतव्य निहित है। वे समाज में घटित घटनाओं पर सिर्फ पैनी नजर ही नहीं रखते बल्कि उन पर गहन मनन और विश्लेषण भी करते हैं। कहानी का नैरेटर मानो देश और काल की दुखती हुई रग को ही पकड़ लिया है। जब वह कहता है कि 'मेरे चारों तरफ मुझसे बहुत बड़े-बड़े चोर थे। मैं चाहे जितने जन्म लेता पर उनकी बराबरी मुमकिन नहीं थी।' 'टीस' एक बच्चे की पीड़ा को व्यक्त करती हुई कहानी है। बच्चे के मन



की टीस यह है कि उसकी पीड़ा को अध्यापक भी नहीं पढ़ पा रहे हैं। जब बच्चा कहता है कि उसकी कांख में दर्द हो रहा है तब अध्यापक मजाक बनाते हुए उसकी कांख पर ही जोर से प्रहार करते हैं। यह कहानी बताती है कि हमारी संवेदनाएं मर गई हैं जिससे

निरंकुशता हमारा स्वभाव बन गया है। इतना ही नहीं हम संभावनाओं पर प्रहार करने से नहीं चूकते हैं। 'मदीना' कहानी सांप्रदायिकता की विषबेल पर प्रहार करती है। हिंदी साहित्यकारों ने सांप्रदायिकता पर खूब लिखा है लेकिन इस मुद्दे पर लिखी गई मनोज कुमार की कहानी अद्भुत और बेहद दिलचस्प है। मदीना कहानी पढ़ते समय लगेगी नहीं कि कब कहानीकार ने सांप्रदायिकता और दकियानूसी व्यक्तियों की जड़ता पर प्रहार कर गया है। कहानी में एक लड़का है जो दसवीं में पढ़ रहा है, उसकी एक अपनी दुनिया है। उस दुनिया का सपना है कि वह अपने घर को फूल-पौधों से सजाए। किसी प्रकार वह पचास रुपया जोड़ता है और इन रुपयों से पांच पेड़ नर्सरी से खरीदकर लाता है जिनमें गुलाब के साथ-साथ मदीना का पेड़ शामिल है। गुलाब और कनेर के पेड़ तो सूख गए। लेकिन मदीना का पेड़ हरा-भरा होकर फूल देने लगा। लड़का योजना बनाता है कि पचास पेड़ और लगाऊंगा जिसके लिए वह पांच गड्डे खोदकर तैयार करता है। वह पांच पेड़ लेकर आया तो उसने देखा कि मदीना के पौधे को काट दिया गया है।



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अपने पिता से उसने कारण पूछा तो पता चला कि एक पंडित जी आए थे जिन्होंने बताया यह तो मुसलमानी पेड़ है। इसको घर पर लगाने से बीमारियां पैदा हो जाती हैं। इसके प्रतिरोध में लड़के ने जो गड़दे खोदे थे उन गड़दों में उसने बबूल के बीज डाल दिए। 'कष्ट' कहानी में व्यवहार और सिद्धांत में अंतर करने वाले व्यक्तियों की मानसिकता को पकड़ा गया है। कभी-कभी छोटी घटनाओं के दखल से हमारा जीवन काफी प्रभावित होता है। कहानी का पात्र बी.ए. की पढ़ाई कर रहा है। एक दिन सिगरेट पीते हुए, उसके पिता देख लेते हैं। जिसके चलते वे पढ़ाई का खर्च देने से इनकार कर देते हैं। इस घटना के बाद वह स्वयं अपनी पढ़ाई का खर्च उठाने का निर्णय लेता है। बरेली की एक अचार मिल में काम करने लगता है। वहां मिल में काम करने वाली एक तोला नाम की औरत से उसका प्रेम-संबंध हो जाता है। उन दोनों के प्रेम-संबंध की जानकारी सुपरवाइजर को हो जाती है। सुपरवाइजर उसे डांटते हुए कहता है कि पंडित होकर नीच जाति की औरत से संबंध बनाने में तुम्हें शर्म नहीं आती है। कहानी में गजब का मोड़ तब आता है जब वह खुद सुपरवाइजर को तोला के साथ देख लेता है। यह समाज की कैसी मानसिकता है कि वह दलित समाज के साथ तो छुआछूत का भेदभाव करता है लेकिन दलित स्त्रियों के साथ संबंध बनाते समय तथाकथित लोगों की जाति आड़े नहीं आती है। इधर, जब वह सुपरवाइजर से काम पर न आने की बात कहता है सुपरवाइजर उसकी बात को नकार देता है। लेकिन वह अपने सुपरवाइजर से तोला से संबंधों वाली बात को उजागर करने की धमकी देता है। वह अपने काम से मुक्त होने का प्रार्थना पत्र अपने मालिक को लिखकर देता है। प्रार्थना पत्र की आखिरी लाइन में यह लिखा था कि मुझे मुक्त करने का कष्ट करें। इस पर मालिक ने उससे कहा, हमें कष्ट किस

बात का हो रहा है। प्रार्थना पत्र दूसरा लिखकर लाओ। कहानी की अंतिम पंक्तियां इस तरह हैं, "मुझे गाली बकी गई थी। पर मुझे कुछ खास दिक्कत नहीं हुई। मुझे मालिक की तिलमिलाहट अच्छी लगी। उसे बहुत कष्ट था।"

'खजाना' कहानी को हमारी नाकामी, कामयाबी, इच्छा, आकांक्षाओं का मार्मिक आख्यान कहा जा सकता है। कहानी 1857 के विद्रोह से होते हुए, वर्तमान की चकाचौंध में लाकर पटक देती है। खजाना लंबी कहानी है। इसके बावजूद कहानी में दिलचस्पी और पढ़ने की ललक बराबर बनी रहती है। कहानीकार ने इस कहानी की कथावस्तु के जरिए देशकाल और परिवेश का मूल्यांकन प्रस्तुत किया है। कहानी का नैरेटर कहता है कि "हमसे बेहतर यह कौन जानता था हम यह सब सचमुच में थे। ऊपर से पवित्र और आध्यात्मिक दिखने की कोशिश पर भीतर से खोखले, दीन-हीन, लालची, मुफ्तखोर, केंचुआ, ढोंगी।" यह महज कोई उक्ति नहीं है बल्कि इतिहास को फिर से उलट-पलटकर देखने के लिए बाध्य करती है। अभिलाषपुर केवल एक गांव नहीं बल्कि हमारी अभिलाषाओं का एक वीरान टीला है जो हमारे संवेदनहीन होने का वृत्तांत कह रहा है। इस बाहुबली समय में भी मनोज कुमार पांडेय राजसत्ता की विसंगतियों पर प्रहार करते हैं। 'घंटा' कहानी सत्ता के चरित्र और इसके द्वारा छले हुए लोगों की पीड़ा को प्रस्तुत करते हुए आगे बढ़ती है। कहानी की ये पंक्तियां व्यवस्था के खोखलेपन को दर्ज करती हैं, "अब राजा है तो साथ में मसखरे तो होंगे ही। बल्कि ध्यान से देखा जाए तो राजा साहब की उपस्थिति ही पूरी मसखरी है।" 'मोह' मनोविकार से ग्रसित व्यक्ति और पितृसत्ता के पाटों के बीच पिसती स्त्री के प्रतिरोध का मार्मिक आख्यान है। यह संग्रह की सबसे लंबी कहानी है। इस कहानी का पात्र गौरीनाथ जिसे इस बात का शक है कि उसका बेटा जारज संतान है। इतना ही

नहीं उसे इस बात का भी शक है कि वह भी अपने पिता की जारज संतान है। गौरीनाथ की संवेदनहीनता की पराकाष्ठा यह है कि वह अपने पिता और भाई को जहर देकर मार देता है। अपने बेटे को भी मार देना चाहता है। अंत में गौरीनाथ खुद जहर खा लेता है। वह इस मोह में फंसा हुआ है कि उसका बेटा उसे देखकर रोए तब उसके प्राणों को मुक्ति मिलेगी। कहानी में गौरीनाथ की पत्नी बैजंती का प्रतिरोध देखने लायक है। इस कहानी में गजब की किस्सागोई है। दरअसल, मनोज कुमार पांडेय असाधारण प्रतिभा के धनी लेखक हैं जिनकी कहानियों में देश और काल की वास्तविक परिस्थितियों का अंकन है। उन्होंने जिस कथा शैली को अपनाया उसमें मिठास और मन को प्रभावित करने वाला सोंधापन है।

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पुस्तक : खजाना

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हंस के एजेंट बनें

आपके शहर में भी हंस सुगमता से उपलब्ध हो इसके लिए आप हंस की एजेंसी प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।

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सूरज पालीवाल

परख

मधु कांकरिया ने पिछली शताब्दी के बीतते हुए वर्षों से लिखना शुरू किया था लेकिन उनका पहला उपन्यास 'खुले गगन के लाल सितारे' दोनों शताब्दियों के संधिकाल में आया. इसके बाद वे लगातार लिख रही हैं लेकिन धैर्य के साथ. यह धैर्य जिस साधना का परिणाम है, इससे वे बखूबी वाकिफ हैं इसलिए अपने समय के लोकलुभावन और प्रसिद्धि के रामबाण स्त्री विमर्श ने भी उनके लेखन में किसी प्रकार की बाधा नहीं डाली बल्कि वे उन समस्याओं के विरोध में लिख रही हैं जिन स्थितियों में स्त्री या तो कुलटा बना दी जाती है या वेश्या. वे स्त्री को उसके गरिमामय स्त्रीत्व में ही देखना चाहती हैं इसलिए उन्होंने स्त्री को कभी उसकी देह तक सीमित नहीं किया अपितु एक विचारवान और संघर्षशील सामाजिक स्त्री के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित किया जो उसकी अपनी पहचान है. उनके यहां स्त्री भावुक और बात-बात पर टसुए बहाने वाली नहीं है बल्कि अपनी स्थितियों से लोहा लेते हुए उन्हें बदलने के संकल्प के साथ खड़ी स्त्री है. यह संकल्प उनके समकालीन स्त्री लेखन में बहुत कम देखने को मिलता है, इसलिए वे तथाकथित स्त्री विमर्श के ढांचे को तोड़ती हुई स्त्री जीवन की संघर्षपूर्ण गाथा लिखती हैं.

2018 में प्रकाशित 'हम यहां थे' उपन्यास ने मेरी धारणाओं को और अधिक पुष्ट किया है. यह उपन्यास एक ऐसी स्त्री की कथा कहता है, जो पति परित्यक्ता है.

पति तो देवता है इसलिए भारतीय पारंपरिक समाज में उसे अपनी पत्नी के परित्याग के लिए कोई कारण बताना नहीं पड़ता, और जो कारण बाद में बताए भी जाते हैं वे निहायत मूर्खतापूर्ण और झूठ पर आधारित होते हैं. पर उपन्यास में जो एक कारण दिखाई देता है वह उसका

काला होना है, दो गोरे भाइयों के बीच अकेली काली बहन. भारतीय समाज कितना भी कह ले कि हम रंगभेद विरोधी हैं लेकिन ऐसा है नहीं. हमारे भगवान काले हैं लेकिन उनकी स्त्रियां तो गोरी हैं. भारतीय धर्मशास्त्र से लेकर काव्यशास्त्र तक गोरी स्त्री को ही सुंदर माना जाता रहा है. तब पारंपरिक मारवाड़ी समाज में स्त्री काली कैसे हो सकती है? मधु कांकरिया ने कलकत्ता के मारवाड़ी समाज में व्याप्त अंधविश्वास और पाखंड को भी उजागर किया है कि बंगाली समाज जितना प्रगतिशील है, मारवाड़ी समाज उतना ही पिछड़ा हुआ. व्यापार में अग्रणी मारवाड़ियों ने बंगाल के सांस्कृतिक और धार्मिक नवजागरण से कुछ नहीं सीखा, उनके परिवार में स्त्रियां अभी भी सामंती संस्कारों में रह रही हैं. इसलिए 'हम यहां थे' की दीपशिखा के सामाने पति परित्याग से बड़ी समस्या उसकी अम्मा है, जो उसके दैनंदिन जीवन को नरक कर रही है, "जब से मैं अपना सामान लेकर यहां आ गई हूं, अम्मा ने मुझे दर्जन भर हिदायतें दे रखी हैं—मैं खुद को सबसे छिपाकर रखूं, मैं न फोन उठाऊं और न ही घंटी बजने पर दरवाजा खोलूं. और जहां तक संभव हो ड्राइंगरूम में भी



कम से कम बैटू, मेहमानों और पड़ोसियों से भी नहीं मिलूं जिससे लोगों को भनक भी न पड़े कि मैं अपना घर-बार छोड़कर यहां आ गई हूं"; अम्मा इस छद्म विश्वास में जीना चाहती हैं कि उनकी बेटी को पति द्वारा छोड़े जाने की खबर किसी को नहीं लगेगी. यह भोलापन नहीं है

यह जानबूझकर ओढ़ा गया आडंबर है, जो रूढ़िबद्ध समाज की अपनी सीलन से उभरता है. अम्मा का यह व्यवहार एक पढ़ी-लिखी लड़की को अंदर से कितना तोड़ रहा है, इसका अनुमान भी वे नहीं कर सकतीं. उन्हीं के साथ उसी शहर में बंगाली समाज रह रहा है जो लड़कियों को बराबर का दर्जा दे रहा है, जहां विवाह, प्रेम और परित्याग जैसा कोई टेबू नहीं हैं, जहां लड़कियां आराम से घर से निकलकर पढ़ती भी हैं और नौकरी भी करती हैं. लेकिन मारवाड़ी उन्हीं स्थितियों में रहना चाहते हैं जिन स्थितियों में वे घर छोड़कर बंगाल आए थे. मधु कांकरिया के सामने केवल दीपशिखा का अकेला परिवार ऐसा नहीं है बल्कि वे उनके रिश्तेदारों से लेकर आस-पड़ोस का इतिहास बताती हैं जहां स्त्री को पुरानी नजर से ही देखा जाता है. मारवाड़ी समाज की ये अपनी विसंगतियां हैं जिन्हें रेखांकित किया जाना जरूरी है. अनाप-शनाप पैसा होना और प्रगतिशील होने में फर्क है, जो यहां दिखाई दे रहा है. सिंधी, पंजाबी और गुजराती व्यापारियों के घरों में इस प्रकार की स्थितियां नहीं हैं, वे अपने व्यापार के साथ सोच में भी उदार हुए हैं इसलिए उनका व्यापार विदेशों में

सबसे पहले पहुंचा। उन्होंने अपनी उन रूढ़ियों को सबसे पहले तोड़ा जो रूढ़ियों के विकास में बाधा बन रही थीं।

अम्मा के प्रतिबंधों और उपेक्षाओं का विरोध करती दीपशिखा दुखी होकर कहती है—“पहली बार जाना—जिंदगी का सबसे बड़ा दुख शायद यही है...न समझा जाना. न अम्मा मुझे समझ पा रही थीं और शायद न मैं अम्मा को.” यह एक ऐसी लड़की की पीड़ा है, जो दुहरी मार सह रही है. बाहर की मार का प्रतिकार किया जा सकता है लेकिन अंदर की मार तो गहरे तक टीसती रहती है. इसलिए उपन्यास में पति की विशेष चर्चा नहीं है, दो-एक बार को छोड़कर उन स्थितियों का रोना भी उपन्यास में नहीं है जिनके कारण दीपशिखा को छोड़ा गया लेकिन अम्मा के दैनंदिन व्यंग्यबाणों से आधा उपन्यास भरा पड़ा है. यह कैसा समाज है, जो आर्थिक रूप से समृद्ध है, लेकिन हजारों कोस दूर बंगाल में भी अपनी जड़ताओं से मुक्त नहीं हो पा रहा है और न मुक्त होने की कोशिश ही कर रहा है.

दीपशिखा ने आदिवासियों की उपेक्षाभरी रंगहीन जिंदगी को निकट से देखा, उसने जाना कि कोलकाता के जीवन और झारखंड के आदिवासी जीवन की कोई तुलना नहीं हो सकती है, कोलकाता में सब कुछ होते हुए भी आदमी अकेला है, वह अकेलापन व्यक्ति को अंदर से छीलता रहता है लेकिन यहां अभावों में भी जिंदगी है, परस्पर अनुराग हैं और कुछ पाने के लिए संघर्ष करने का आनंद है. वह लौटकर फिर से अपने घर, परिवार, अम्मा, भाई और कोलकाता की जनसंकुलता को देखती है और जंगलकुमार को पत्र लिखती है—“काश, मैंने बिशुनपुर और आपको नहीं देखा होता तो शायद यहां भी सुख ढूंढ लेती. पर यहां से लौटकर मेरे सोचने की दिशा बदल गई है।” यह पत्र दीपशिखा के आत्मविश्वास का परिचायक है, वह जो जीवन कोलकाता में जी रही है वह घुटनभरा जीवन है, चारों ओर तमाम तरह की बंदिशें हैं, अकेलापन है, परित्यक्ता होने की टीस है, अम्मा की

अंतहीन नसीहतें हैं, मारवाड़ी समाज की रूढ़ियां हैं तथा अपने आसपास की स्त्रियों के कहे-अनकहे दुख हैं. वह सबको खुली आंखों से देख रही है, अब तक उसके पास इन दुखों से मुक्ति का कोई रास्ता नहीं था, झारखंड के आदिवासियों के बीच रहकर उसने एक ऐसी जिंदगी देखी है, जो अभावों में भी खुली-खिली हुई है. मारवाड़ी समाज की किसी कम उम्र की स्त्री का इस प्रकार जंगल जाना सहज-सरल नहीं है, दीपशिखा के लिए भी नहीं था.

मध्यवर्ग का आदमी अपने दुखों को सबसे बड़ा दुख मानकर दुखी होता रहता है, वह दुनिया को केवल अपने तक ही सीमित कर लेता है, बाहर की दुनिया से उसका कोई वास्ता नहीं होता इसलिए वह या तो आत्महत्या करता है या कुंठित जिंदगी जीता रहता है. दीपशिखा ऐसा नहीं करती, आदिवासियों के बीच रहकर वह जान जाती है कि आदिवासियों के सामने उसके दुख बहुत छोटे हैं, यह विवेक उसके अंदर पैदा होता है और वह आदिवासियों के उत्पीड़न के विरोध में उठकर खड़ी हो जाती है. पुलिस उसे माओवादियों की सहायता करने के आरोप में पकड़ लेती है, माओवादी क्षेत्रों की पुलिस ऐसी ही विवेकहीन हरकतें करके माओवाद को जीवित और सक्रिय रखती है. दीपशिखा से अदालत में जब यह पूछा जाता है कि वह माओवादी रणधीर भगत से क्यों मिली थी तो वह बयान देती है—“उन्होंने मुझे समझाया हुआ कि बाँक्साइट को पहाड़ियों से निकालने, लोहे को जंगल की धरती से बाहर करने के लिए भारत की पचास फीसदी जनता को उसकी जमीन से बाहर खदेड़ना होगा और भारत को पुलिसिया राज बनाना होगा, उसे सही ठहराने के लिए सरकार को दुश्मन की जरूरत पड़ेगी. माओवादी वही दुश्मन हैं और वे इस लड़ाई में इसलिए शामिल हैं क्योंकि हुआ उनके लिए तो मौत दोनों ही तरफ है...तो हुआ आप बेइंसाफी और भुखमरी खत्म कर दीजिए, माओवाद अपनी

मौत मर जाएगी.” दीपशिखा का यह बयान उसकी अपनी राजनीतिक समझ और आदिवासियों के बीच रहकर उपजे विवेक से पुष्ट है. यह सही है कि आदिवासियों का जितना शोषण बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों ने पुलिस और सरकार के संरक्षण में किया है, उसके आंकड़े भयावह हैं. बांग्लादेश के क्षेत्रफल के बराबर जमीन पर कब्जा और उनकी बहुमूल्य संपदाओं को हथियाकर उन्हें मजदूर बना दिया है. यह भी सही है कि शोषण के प्रतिरोध में पनपा माओवाद भी आदिवासियों की रक्षा करने में असमर्थ रहा है. सरकारें यथास्थितिवाद को बनाए रखने में विश्वास रखती हैं, एक ओर उसें बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों से चंदा मिलता है तो दूसरी ओर अशांत क्षेत्र होने के नाते शोषण और संवैधानिक अधिकारों का हनन करने की खुली छूट.

‘हम यहां थे’ उपन्यास एक पारंपरिक घर की स्त्री के निजी संघर्षों को जनसंघर्ष बनाने की विचारमय यात्रा का दस्तावेज है. भारतीय सामाजिक व्यवस्था में किसी स्त्री के लिए यह कठिन रास्ता है, लेकिन कोलकाता के अनुभवों ने उसे समझदार और विवेकशील बना दिया है इसलिए वह जंगल कुमार से कहती है, “सफलता-असफलता कुछ नहीं होती. असली चीज होती है आपके जीवन का ताप कितनों तक पहुंचा. जीवन का अर्थ है अपने पीछे कुछ निशान छोड़ जाना.” दीपशिखा अपनी विचारयात्रा से स्थायी निशान छोड़ती है कि निजी दुखों से मुक्ति का मार्ग व्यापक सामाजिक सरोकारों के साथ खड़े होने से ही मिलता है.

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पुस्तक : हम यहां थे

लेखक : मधु कांकरिया

प्रकाशक : किताबघर प्रकाशन, नई दिल्ली

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Evaluating Post-Sachar Interventions and the Status of Muslims in India

SAUMYA UMA

In the context of the threat to the Constitution and its core values, and a gradual exclusion of marginalised and minority communities from social justice interventions, both through patent and latent means, Abusaleh Shariff's book—which evaluates the impact of initiatives taken in the post-Sachar Committee context—is like a whiff of fresh air. For long, we have had a common knowledge that most pro-minority programmes and interventions by central and state governments have only served the purpose of a “feel-good” effect on paper. This book discusses why, how and to what extent the implementation has failed, and what can be done to address and redress the issue, so that constitutional rights of religious minorities can be institutionalised.

The Sachar Committee report, released in 2006, was significant in its study of the socio-economic and educational status of Muslims—the largest religious minority community in India. The report was followed by immense public discourse and some efforts by the central government to address and redress aspects of Muslim deprivation, particularly through the Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities, in 2009. By 2012, there were calls for revision of the programme and increased accountability around expenditures and incomes. As the book points out, under the new 15 Point Programme, a unique provision was made for scholarships to minority students at the elementary and higher levels of education across all parts of the country. It was subsequently found that this scheme did not operate in West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand and Gujarat, that is, the states that have a sizeable presence of Muslims. This is an illustrative example of the dire need for evaluation of the implementation and

BOOK REVIEWS

Institutionalizing Constitutional Rights: Post-Sachar Committee Scenario by Abusaleh Shariff, *New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016; pp xxix + 485, ₹1,195.*

impact of all such beneficial schemes, to ensure that they bring a positive difference to the lives of the stakeholders who are intended to benefit from the same.

The Sachar Committee report recommended the creation of an autonomous assessment and monitoring authority. This body was intended to engage in continuous monitoring and evaluation of the extent to which the benefits reached the intended beneficiaries under the myriad policies, programmes and schemes launched by the central and state governments in pursuance of the report recommendations. A failed attempt at establishing a committee to conduct the evaluation in 2013 by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, coupled with the disinterest of the subsequent government in undertaking such an evaluation, left a looming gap in documenting, analysing and evaluating the implementation and impact of post-Sachar policies by the central and state governments. This is the gap in the pool of information available in the public domain at present that the book attempts to address. And it does so with immense conviction, amply substantiated by factual data. In the author's own words, the book is the result of “the author's response to the government's refusal to document, analyse and publicise the impact of post-Sachar policies and their associated national and state-government programmes” (pp 3–4). That it has managed to do so without the benefit of highly skilled human resources and privileged access to data

that had been provided by the Indian government for the Sachar Committee report, is a feather in its cap.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the demographics of education, economy, employment, social structure, diversity and the significance of the Human Development Index (HDI) as a tool for monitoring equal opportunity. The second part of the book critically analyses inclusive policies and programmes initiated by the Ministry of Minority Affairs (MMA), development credit and financial inclusion, special purpose programmes and public institutions favouring minorities, a case study of inclusive development of Gujarat, and finally, recommendations for equitable social and economic development in India.

Minority Programmes

Of immense importance is a chapter that critically analyses the programmes launched by the MMA. The chapter argues that since the Sachar Committee recommendations were broad and all-encompassing, an effective implementation would have warranted its incorporation into the programmes of various line ministries such as human resource development, labour, finance, social welfare, industries and panchayati raj. Instead the UPA-II government established the MMA, and implementation took place through this single ministry. Whether it was lack of imagination, zeal, commitment, or all of these, which restricted the implementation to a single ministry, is anybody's guess. The relevant line ministries manage large amounts of budgetary allocations in relation to their functional areas, and are mandated to ensure equity and equal access to all. Then, the author rightly asks, is it not logical that the implementation would have been more effective and impactful if the line ministries were involved?

The chapter discusses the Prime Minister's revamped 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities, which includes a focus on enhancing opportunities for education, employment, improving living conditions, and prevention and control of communal riots. It analyses elaborately

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on the first two aspects. Substantiated by ample data and analysis, the chapter has several findings, including that the availability of formal credit to Muslims is meagre; scholarship schemes sanctioned are much lower than the total applicants, the amount offered to students from religious minorities are not on par with the amount disbursed to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, a considerable delay in disbursements exists, and shockingly, that the scholarship money is being siphoned off.

The chapter on critical analysis of the programmes of the MMA makes only a cursory reference to prevention and control of communal riots, an important aspect of the new 15 Point Programme. However, this aspect is discussed further in the final chapter of the book, where it gives recommendations for institution-building. While it is true that there have been no major instances of communal violence in recent times other than in Muzaffarnagar in 2013, states such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh have faced low-level targeted violence, often involving acts of commission or omission by state authorities. The Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill, initially drafted in 2005, underwent several modifications subsequently. The UPA-II government, through the National Advisory Council (NAC), established a working group on communal violence, comprising members from the bureaucracy and civil society, culminating in the Prevention of Communal and Targeted Violence (Access to Justice and Reparations) Bill, 2011, which too, had serious concerns. As a member of the Advisory Committee of NAC's working group, I recall that a bone of contention in both the drafts was in making public servants accountable and dispensing with prior sanction from the government for prosecution of errant government officials. Reflecting this key concern, the author observes as follows:

Although it is clear that a specific bill to address communal violence is the need of the hour, whether (the) current draft will see the light of the day and get translated into reality is debatable. Any new bill or progressive piece of legislation will have to be executed by the same government, institutions and

bureaucratic machinery, including the police, who resist penalties and try to remain above the law. (p 361)

The author points to the essential nature of the proposed law for reinstating the trust of the minorities in the government, and to empower the community for justice and reparation. Given the fact that effective prosecutions of perpetrators could act as a deterrent and prevent communal violence in future on one hand, and restore the faith of the minorities in the system of justice on the other, the discussion on the topic is pertinent and timely.

Public Institutions

A chapter that would be of interest to many is that which reviews the functioning of important public institutions favouring minorities, namely the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) and the National Commission for Minorities (NCM). Substantiated by credible data, the author, in his critical review of the NMDFC, points out that it has extremely low allocations, turnover and coverage, and that the total flow of credits from the NMDFC is negligible. This is compounded by functional and administrative constraints such as lack of accessibility to the public, absence of functional autonomy and the non-existence of an outreach programme. The author concludes that in their present form, neither the national nor state corporations have the potential to address these issues, and recommends that they be closed down, and as a viable alternative, their programmes be transferred to public sector banks.

On the NCM, the author highlights that the annual reports that have been regularly submitted by it to Parliament never get discussed; an indication of the lacklustre concern for and commitment to minority rights by the highest lawmaking body. The NCM has an explicit mandate of evaluating the development of minorities, yet senior officials of the NCM are unwilling to undertake the monitoring and evaluation of government programmes for minorities, as they are convinced it is not within their mandate. The author rightly questions how the NCM's mandate can truly be fulfilled without such an

evaluation. The NCM lacks funding as well as political autonomy, which is expected for it to function as an independent statutory body, the author opines.

Some recommendations to increase the efficiency of the NCM are made as temporary measures, including conferment of constitutional status to the NCM and vesting of powers of inquiry on par with other national commissions. In the long run, the author favours the establishment of an independent Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC), which would be open to access to all communities of India, due to the non-efficient functioning of special purpose institutions such as the NMDFC and the NCM. However, a question that remains in creating a new institution such as the EOC, particularly in the present political context, is whether the institution would be allowed to have political commitment to minorities, functional autonomy and financial independence.

'Inclusive Development'

This book review would be incomplete if it does not make a mention of the chapter that analyses Gujarat as a case study for inclusive development. Given the hype created by the Gujarat model of development, and its promotion as a benchmark for good governance, a rational analysis of the same through the lens of the Muslim minority community, substantiated by facts and figures, is an imperative. In terms of per capita net state domestic product (PCNSDP), which is used to measure economic prosperity among communities at the state level, Gujarat has remained one of the top 10 states for a long time. However, the chapter delves into investigating the state performance through qualitative indicators such as poverty, hunger, human development and social equity, and finds deep-rooted poverty and stark income inequality among Gujarat's lower castes and Muslims in comparison to other communities. The chapter concludes that Muslims in Gujarat fare poorly on the parameters of poverty, hunger, education and vulnerability on security issues, and are facing high levels of discrimination and deprivation.

There are three limitations of the study, as highlighted by the author: the rural-urban differentials and the

gender differentials are sharp, and are imperative to understand the depth of deprivation and exclusion of communities, yet, these differentials could not be analysed due to want of time and resources. Additionally, the intra- and inter-community differentials among Muslims also warrants analysis, but could not be undertaken due to compulsions of empirical and technical standards.

While all three differentials are of immense importance, there is a particular need to analyse the impact of post-Sachar policies, programmes and schemes from the perspective of Muslim women's empowerment. Gender issues among the Muslim community are often confined to discourse around the practices of triple talaq, polygamy and *halala*. Scarce attention has been paid to evaluating the impact of post-Sachar initiatives on Muslim women's status vis-à-vis education, employment, health and

nutrition, housing and sanitation, political participation, and a general enjoyment of citizenship rights over and above issues pertaining to Muslim family law. It is hoped that the present study will pave the way for future research in this arena.

Conclusions

Twelve years after the release of the Sachar Committee report, there are yet no indications of improvement in the socio-economic status of the Muslim community. If anything, there has been increased deprivation, discrimination and exclusion of the community from mainstream development. The Muslim community in India today faces threat to life and liberty, and extreme insecurity, going by a high incidence of targeted lynchings of members of the community in the name of cow protection. This is in addition to the vulnerability to false or

trumped-up criminal charges of terrorism leading to prolonged incarceration without bail. Those affected are mostly impoverished members of the community. Civil and political rights go hand in hand with social, economic and cultural rights, and mutually reinforce each other. An effective implementation of the Sachar Committee recommendations could have resulted in socio-economic empowerment of Muslims, and reduced their vulnerability to such attacks. Shariff's book, through its various recommendations, indicates the path towards institutionalising their constitutional rights. As a counter to the current majoritarian assertion of secondary citizenship to religious minorities, the importance of this book cannot be overstated.

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Neo-liberal Transformations and the Challenges of Governing India

MITHILESH KUMAR JHA

The book *Neo-liberal Strategies of Governing India* is a timely intervention by Ranabir Samaddar to understand governing practices in India in its most recent neo-liberal phase. This book is a companion volume to an earlier work, *Ideas and Frameworks of Governing India*, by the same author (Jha 2017). Together, these two volumes critically explore the politics and practices of governance in a postcolonial society. Samaddar's analysis of these practices combines "political and ideological aspects" of governance with "technological characteristics" and examines it "in a historical framework." While critically analysing ideas, frameworks and strategies of governing India, its inner tensions and challenges, Samaddar is equally interested in examining the evolutions of newer categories and subjecthoods as a result of such governing practices.

Neo-liberal Strategies of Governing India
by Ranabir Samaddar, Delhi: Routledge India, 2016;
pp xviii + 334, ₹1,095.

This makes his analysis of the "contemporary history of Indian democracy" unique and also very interesting. This volume deals with some of the most dramatic decades of Indian democracy that have witnessed the weakening of democratic institutions as well as domination of the market and capital over state and society. There are a series of ideological and political churnings underway in contemporary India. Social and political movements of various kinds often challenge the "official" narrative of politics and governing practices that make the business of democracy and governance a messy affair. However, contrary to many pessimistic arguments about the possibilities of social transformations in terms

of empowerment of the marginalised or excluded, Samaddar continues to believe in and highlights the "hope for a politics of radical democracy."

He has two major premises for his analysis of neo-liberal governance in India: first, "mutually constitutive relationship between the rulers and the ruled, based on norms, rules, rights and popular claims;" and second, "governance as a strategy of creating conditions of" and providing the "institutional matrix" (p viii) for accumulation. This book is divided into three parts. In Part I, there are four chapters which are not necessarily interconnected, discussing diverse issues. Examining these issues, he discusses the questions of rights and development, and assesses how they have become the sites of neo-liberal governance. Part II consists of four fascinating chapters on how various modes of governing practices strengthen the hand of the market through the state that ensures the accumulation of wealth and natural resources. He also examines how this has an impact on the society and the state at large, and the status of labour in particular. In Part III, he revisits some of the theoretical questions and conceptual frameworks on

Those 21 months

Hindu; 9/12/18; pg. 16

Why the Emergency cannot be adequately understood without situating it in the context of modern India's past and present

MINI KAPOOR

Did the prompt, clever and, in the circumstances, brave obituary writer get the date wrong by a day? As historian Gyan Prakash recounts in *Emergency Chronicles*, this notice appeared in the June 28, 1975, edition of *The Times of India*: "D'Ocracy - D.E.M. beloved husband of T. Ruth, loving father of L.I. Bertie, brother of Faith, Hope, and Justicia, expired on 26th June."

Because it was before the midnight hour, on June 25, that the President of India, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, had signed a proclamation of Emergency, on the recommendation of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, that "a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India is threatened by internal disturbances."

But in this seminal and vivid inquiry, it is not the date of that notice that Prakash questions. The question that animates this book is, to align it to the phrasing of the classified, how dead was democracy during the 21-month-long Emergency? The proclamation had after all been sought and signed, lawfully, under Article 352(1) of the Constitution of India.

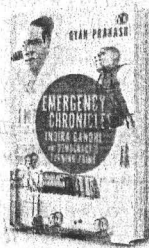
State of ferment

The sense of foreboding that something had to give had been in the air for long. Over the past year and a half, student unrest in Gujarat and Bihar had been channelised by Jayaprakash Narayan as first a politics-free revolution to reboot the system, and subsequently as the staging ground to unite opposition parties, from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to the Lohiaites to the Jan Sangh, for a very political battle against the ruling Congress, seeking, for instance, the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly. Inflation had been running high, with successive droughts in the early 1970s. Mrs. Gandhi had already made her leftward shift, having won the 1971 general election on the "garibi hatao (remove poverty)" call, and was struggling to calm the ferment on the street, and in the process pulling decision-making to the Prime Minister's Residence, with a greater role played by her younger son, Sanjay.

Matters had taken a yet more precarious turn when on June 12, 1975, the Allahabad High Court set aside her election to Parliament on grounds of corrupt electoral practices - it barred her from contesting for another six years. On June 24 she obtained a stay from the Supreme Court, but with the caveat that she could not vote in the House or draw her salary as an MP till such time as



Changing tide: A historian argues that Indira Gandhi made a leftward shift after winning the 1971 election, but matters took a precarious turn in 1975 when the Allahabad High Court barred her from contesting polls. ■PIB



■ **Emergency Chronicles: Indira Gandhi and Democracy's Turning Point**
Gyan Prakash
Penguin/ Hamish Hamilton
₹699

hi's Ram Lila Grounds, repeating Hindi poet Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's words, "Vacate the throne, for the people are coming," and exhorting the police and armed forces to refuse to obey 'unconstitutional orders'.

But on the night of June 25, Prakash recaps, the President's consultation on the request for the proclamation centred on the letter of the Constitution, not the politics swirling around it. "This late-night concern for constitutional propriety is revealing," he writes. "...This is because Article 352(1) of the constitution itself had left the judgment of the necessity for the Emergency outside law."

This is at the heart of Prakash's thesis: that we err in 'sequestering' the Emergency in post-Independence history, instead of seeing how the repressive Emergency regime situated itself amid the provisions of the Constitution.

He asks us to examine the debates of the Constituent Assembly, with Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and B.R. Ambedkar lending their weight to the creation of a strong Centre. The task of integration of princely states, the backdrop of the disruptions of World War II, Partition violence and rehabilitation of refugees,

26th of January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality." In the end, the Constitution was 'a fine balance', with Fundamental Rights and civil liberties balanced with "laws of exception" to keep order and enable social transformation.

Dystopic detail

Yet, even as the Emergency drew from this constitutional scheme, the administrative effect was, writes Prakash, "something more insidious": "Suspended laws let loose shadow powers and shadow laws." Prakash recaps the Emergency reign, from the midnight swoops to detain opposition leaders to competitive targets of the family planning programme and the demolitions in Delhi's beautification drive that are familiar in accounts of the Emergency. But the arbitrariness that this shadowy phase allowed is caught most strikingly in all its dystopic detail in the arrest of a student of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Prabir Purkayastha, in September 1975 on mistaken identity.

Nothing in *Emergency Chronicles* is unconnected to the larger drift of history, and along with the young man's story, Prakash weaves in cinema, novels, urban planning, law-making, political biographies of before and after the Emergency to locate these 21 months in the longer story of the nation.

In doing so, Prakash pulls the narrative to the current-day Hindutva mobilisation and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's centralised rule, and says that "the Emergency enjoys an afterlife": "The social and political crises that it unsuccessfully sought to resolve with shadow laws and authority gave rise to fresh challenges. Backward-caste politics, Hindutva and market liberalization

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Books

THE DISOBEDIENT INDIAN: Towards a Gandhian Philosophy of Dissent by Ramin Jahanbegloo. Speaking Tiger, New Delhi, 2018.

IN November 1936 Basil Mathews asked M.K. Gandhi, 'where do you find the seat of authority?' Gandhi pointed to his breast, probably to the very same spot through which one of the bullets entered and lodged itself in his body, and replied, 'It lies here. I exercise my judgement about every scripture, including the *Gita*.' Gandhi was only pointing to what Socrates called his *daimon/daemon*, his inner voice. If the inner voice or the conscience is the source of authority, it is the source of all judgement of truth, if it is the measure of things then disobedience of what is repugnant to it becomes not only an imperative but that capacity defines such an individual, the very idea of human vocation.

Ramin Jahanbegloo's meditation on the possibility and the need for dissent is premised on the human capacity to distinguish between truth and lie, between virtue and evil, between that which affirms life and that which while seeming to preserve life and order destroys the very purpose of it.

Ramin Jahanbegloo is no stranger to dissent, to disobedience and the freedom that it accords even while, or perhaps only in captivity. Marshalling allies from Socrates to Heidegger, via Thoreau and Albert Camus, he brings us to Gandhi to ask a question: why do we disobey? In seeming to answer this question he poses a more basic question. What is it that we obey in the act of disobedience? And our answer to this question

would, he suggests, defines for us the realm of politics and its relationship to human action.

There are many possible answers to this question. One could be that we obey God. This requires us to believe that God can and will save us. But if we do not have faith in divine intervention to save us, the act of obedience would have to take a more secular, this worldly, form. And this we believe is the realm of the political, a realm that asserts that human beings are integral to common life and can and have to realize their freedom through common life. And this common project could be that of human autonomy. Ramin Jahanbegloo suggests that if our obedience is to the common life attained through autonomy then we are duty bound to challenge and defeat the 'twin corruptions to democracy: Imposed conformism and normalized complacency' (p. 43). The challenge to the corruptions of democracy for him is posed through moral capital, not just ethical behaviour but our capacity to wrestle with the place of violence in a challenge to political evil. This wrestling enables us to discover our own nature as humans and the nature of the world that we inhabit. This discovery is what Gandhi called *swaraj*, as both self-recognition and self-rule. Such disobedience creates the possibility of *swaraj*.

If that were the only concern of the book, we could have perhaps dispensed with reading it. But the book proceeds to question the primacy of the realm of the political. This he does by opening up the idea of solidarity, solidarity as 'a reciprocated sense of empathy and a consciousness in the commitments of others to shared purposes' (p. 57). By bringing the concern of

Political History

the political from organization of order, from the question of power to the possibility of acting and living in solidarity, in ethical awareness of the limits to power, we create a ground for collectively, for common cause that is not rooted in an exercise of self-interest to the exclusion of all others. Ethical awareness of common cause allows us to fight all forms of inequities – of gender, wealth, colour, of Empire and slavery. It creates a public realm of which all of us are trustees. In this sense an act of disobedience becomes an act of trusteeship.

This brings us to Gandhi, who Jahanbegloo calls a ‘disobedient mind’. He knows that for Gandhi the act of dissent is not an act of wilfulness, but one of deep obedience, obedience to non-violence which alone can create the fabric of freedom through solidarity, empathy and a quest for freedom through common cause. He knows that for disobedience to create freedom it requires a delicately tuned breast that recognizes the distinction between the voice of Rama and that of Ravana.

Ramin Jahanbegloo alerts us that disobedience is an act of trusteeship. As trusteeship each individual act of disobedience – even while seeming to fail in face of the world which is *After Virtue* to use Alasdair Macintyre’s phrase – expands the scope of trusteeship, both as trust, as solidarity, as empathy and as common cause. These philosophical meditations are a primer and primary for all those perturbed by the authority of the lie in our times.

Tridip Suhrud

Professor and Director Archives,
CEPT University, Ahmedabad

ASHIS NANDY: A Life in Dissent edited by Ramin Jahanbegloo and Ananya Vajpeyi. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2018.

THIS is a difficult volume to review, not only because of the sheer number of essayists who celebrate the polymath Ashis Nandy on his eightieth birthday, but also because of the diversity of themes they engage with. Some of these essays offer personal tributes to Ashis as he is known. Amitav Ghosh authors a short story for the birthday boy, and Aseem Shrivastava speculates on a dialogue that might perchance occur if Rabindranath Tagore were to visit us today. Shiv Visvanathan contributes a short piece on the pleasures of walking, and T.M. Krishna writes on the aesthetics of classical music.

Almost all the contributors agree that Nandy’s ideas inhabit a space between the demise of verities and

a return of the age of doubt. And all express fulsome admiration for a man who has inspired imaginative explorations of the malaise of the present. Reading Ashis Nandy, writes Richard Falk, is always an encounter with the unexpected. For Lydia Liu, Nandy delivers brilliant and often counterintuitive analysis of Indian society and of the contemporary world. Douglas Lummis argues that Nandy belongs to a group of philosophers who see irony as method. For David L. Blaney and Naeem Inayatullah, the man simply knows something that others do not.

Fred Dallmayr, Richard Falk, and Ziauddin Sardar reflect on the body of work produced by Nandy’s indefatigable mind. Dipesh Chakrabarty sees Nandy as pivotal to his own intellectual move from a consumer of an unreflective and almost positivist Marxism, to the world of the subaltern. Raghuramaraju recounts the influence of Nandy on his own academic trajectory. Venkat Rao suggests that for Nandy academia and research is not an answer to but part of a wider problem. And Dallmayr argues that though Nandy does not disown the textual tradition that forms the anchor of most research, he uses it creatively to demolish binaries and the neat certitudes of modernity

Nandy is, of course, the eternal dissident. Jahanbegloo focusing on precisely this quality suggests that when we look towards a future, we require conviction, but we also require Socratic rebels of the mind. Falk’s special term for Nandy is ‘master of contrarian reason’. John Cash acknowledges that Nandy’s ideas helped him understand the role of the psychological in the realm of the political in Northern Ireland. Phillip Darby speaks of the need to cultivate a new sensibility for the muscular discipline of International Relations, through the lens of Nandy’s focus on everyday forms of suffering. Lydia H. Liu acknowledges that our public intellectual enabled her to comprehend how souls are decolonized. And Venkat Rao chronicles his ability to challenge academic polemics.

Nandy, writes Tridip Suhrud, gleaned from Gandhi a new cultural iconography – that of hyper-masculinity. This trait he found in Gujarat, which today shapes imaginations in the country from consumerism, rendering Dalit and Muslim voices irrelevant, unembarrassed display of wealth, sheer pragmatism, and above all the forgetting of Gandhi. Arindam Chakrabarti takes up Nandy’s notion of the future to ask a question – how do we deal with a time that has yet to come? He finds an answer in ‘deep true coolness’ or the slowing down of thought. In Kashmir Saivism, the idea of repose represents the final form of freedom or liberation. Rudolf

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Challenge to pluralism

Harsh Mander's book talks about India being unmade as hatred and bigotry become the new normal and questions the Hindu supremacists who claim monopoly over nationalism. BY ZIYA US SALAM

"MY son Junaid was too young to understand that he should not have worn a skullcap," his mother, Saira Begum, lamented. A little earlier, Junaid had been murdered in what became a ghastly public spectacle of a 16-year-old's lynching aboard a train near Delhi.

The activist Harsh Mander along with the senior journalist-activist John Dayal went to meet Junaid's father, Jalaluddin. Mander says: "We felt compelled to say to his bereaved family that we grieved with them after Junaid's brutal lynching. We knew these words may mean little to a family that has been so brutally dispossessed, but for whatever they may be worth, we felt that these words still must be spoken."

In the prologue of *Partitions of the Hearts: Unmaking the Idea of India*, Mander recounts his experience of trying to be one with the family in silent solidarity. He writes: "We sat on string cots outside. People spoke of how frightened everyone is of travelling outside their village, walking, on trains or in buses. Frightened of wearing a skullcap, a beard, a burkha.

Frightened of looking Muslim."

This is probably the cruellest lasting legacy of the Narendra Modi government. What was the fate of Sikhs in 1984 is the fate of Muslims in the Modi era. "Frightened of looking Muslim", much like many Sikh men chopped off their hair and shaved off their beards during the early 1980s out of fear of being stigmatised because of their appearance.

As for Junaid, "The Ramzan of 2017 he proudly recited the entire Quran from memory, to pious gatherings of his own village, over twenty days.... In appreciation, the villagers had made

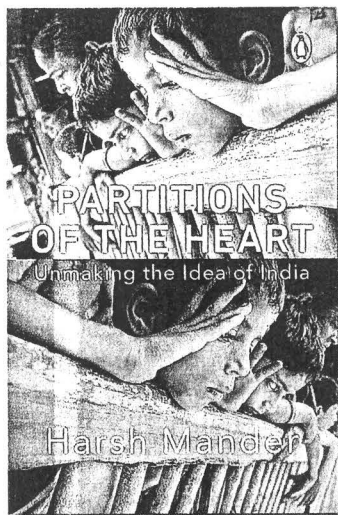
small offerings of money to him. His father added his contribution, and with a total sum of Rs.1,500, he set out with his brothers to the old city of Delhi to purchase new clothes, prayer mats and some gifts.... he wore jeans, unusual for him, for his shopping adventure to the big city. But he also wore a skullcap on his head. This was to be his fatal undoing."

He looked a Muslim and, in these increasingly pernicious times, became an easy target for those nursing hatred towards the community. After their Eid shopping, Junaid and his brothers, Shakir and Hashim, took a train from Sadar Bazar station in Old Delhi. The brothers got

seats. A little later an old man entered the train. Junaid vacated his seat for the old man. Soon, a crowd that had entered the train started roughing up his brothers for seats. When they refused to yield, they were slapped and beaten, their skullcaps thrown off, and the beards of the older boys were pulled. They were called Pakistanis, beef-eaters and much worse. Soon, the attackers took out their knives and stabbed the three brothers. Junaid and his brothers screamed for help, but to no avail. Nobody came forward. Some took videos, while others egged on the assailants. Among them was the old man Junaid gave up his seat for.

Mander writes: "There are moments in history that will compel later generations to ask, what is it that you did at that time? I believe that we are living through one such moment of history."

In this moment, India is being unmade, nibbled at, pierced through. Hatred and bigotry are becoming the new normal. Proof is self-evident and all around us at railway stations, markets, offices and television studios. All closet communalists are out, masquerading as great



Partitions of the Heart

Unmaking the Idea of India

By Harsh Mander
Penguin

Price: Rs.499



S. SUDARSHAN

AT A PROTEST against the deaths of Junaid, Rohith Vemula and Pehlu Khan, in Nagpur on July 7, 2017.

nationalists, indulging in hate speech, terrorising the innocent and partaking in mob violence. Muslims and Christians are treated as second-class citizens; a Bharatiya Janata Party spokesman on a television show makes a naked threat to rename a mosque after Vishnu, another objects to Christmas choirs in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Even Dalits and women are demonised.

The soul of India—which extolled Asoka only after the Kalinga war, which sought to emulate Akbar and not Aurangzeb, and which felt inspired by the words of the Mahatma while consigning those of V.D. Savarkar and K.B. Hedgewar to the dustbin of history—is under relentless attack. It is to this wounded soul of India that Mander draws our atten-

tion. His heart bleeds for Junaid, whom he calls “my son”. He sheds a tear, too, for Pehlu Khan, the dairy farmer who was lynched by a mob when he was returning from a cattle fair. Worse, the State police charged them with cow slaughter. A family whose head was butchered by a mob being held responsible for cow slaughter. Such are the times we are living in, the times the succeeding generations will ask us questions about.

Mander says: “Their anguish was amplified exponentially because the police in January this year filed charge sheets not against the killers but instead against the young men Azmat and Rafeeq who had been attacked along with Pehlu Khan, barely escaping with their lives. The police charged that they are cow smug-

glers. Directly after Khan’s lynching, the State’s Home Minister and the District Superintendent had also dubbed Khan and his sons and companions as cow smugglers, in effect building a cynical and dangerous alternative moral frame to justify the lynching.”

Yet, *Partitions of the Heart* goes way beyond instances of lynching and state apathy, even collusion. The author talks in detail too about encounter killings, love jihad, a series of communal riots and goes as far back as the Gulberg Society massacre that took place before the Gujarat model was promoted as an ideal of development.

Among the victims of the Gulberg massacre was the former Member of Parliament Ehsan Jafri, a man who had experienced communal violence early in his

married life in Ahmedabad.

In 1969, his small house was reduced to ashes and his family given shelter by his Hindu friend Rama Seth. After spending some time in refugee camps, the Jafri family moved into a one-room dwelling offered by Seth and rebuilt their life from scratch. Many advised him to move into a Muslim-dominated area of the city to avoid a similar fate again. Jafri had greater faith in India’s pluralist tradition and steadfastly ignored all such advice. He would say: “Everything I believe in would lose meaning if I felt I could be safe only among Muslims.”

This was a faith that was not shaken even when communal riots began to take a heavy toll of life and limb in Ahmedabad in 2002. Jafri and other res-

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R.V. MOORTHY

JUNAID'S FATHER, Jalaluddin, during a protest against his son's lynching, in New Delhi on July 2, 2017.

idents of the largely Muslim society believed nothing would touch them. Yet again, their confidence proved misplaced. The society was burnt down, its residents slaughtered. Among them was Jafri.

Writes Mander: "2002 was the year when large parts of Gujarat were ripped apart by one of the most brutal and bloody communal massacres since India attained freedom. More than 1,000 persons—unofficial estimates are as high as 2,000—the large majority of whom were from the minority Muslim community, were slaughtered. On February 28, Jafri was gruesomely murdered by a feverish mob. Slaughtered along with him were around 70 women, children and men who had taken shelter with the man



THE HINDU ARCHIVES

JUNAID'S brother Shaqir, who sustained grievous injuries during the attack.

whom they had believed was influential enough to save their lives from a colossal armed mob baying for blood. He was their only hope. But he was dragged away... his limbs were cut off from his body before he was burned."

The *modus operandi* remained the same some

16 years later in Sitamarhi, where an 80-year-old Muslim man was similarly mutilated and burned alive by a mob that was part of Durga Puja celebrations in the town. Between Gulberg in 2002 and Sitamarhi in 2018, nothing has changed for India's principal minority.

Taking into account many instances of communal riots, from 1969 to 1984 and on to 2002 and beyond, Mander questions the Hindu supremacists who claim monopoly over nationalism, in fact, their version of nationalism. He wonders why all Indians should adhere to one faith, speak one language, eat the same food, marry the same way. Casting his net wide, he uses an eagle's eye to point out the flaws of such a reasoning.

Happily and steadfastly pitching for India's

pluralist tradition, he writes: "For them, nationalism first requires acceptance of India's Hindu identity. And since Hinduism is an intensely heterodox and pluralist faith system, this entails that a true nationalist accepts the version of Hinduism—belligerent, militant and intolerant—that the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh] and its associate organisations subscribe to. This requires, for instance, the violent defence of the cow, restraint on assertive and independent women who cut their hair, wear Western clothes, drink liquor and mix freely with partners they choose with or without marriage, acceptance of caste as the principal organising principle of social relations, prohibitions on same-sex love, and reverence to the primary deity of Ram. And that too a warrior Ram."

In all such moments of death and denial, displacement and deprivation, the past comes fast forward, all the ache and agony somewhat dimmed with the passage of time comes surging back. And old wounds begin to bleed as eyes well up. It is a past India must learn from. It is a challenge India must confront so that we do not repeat the mistakes of Partition. The partition of the heart in 2018 provides a steep challenge.

Kudos to Mander for writing a book that hitherto existed only in little notes of remembrance in all of us. It takes an extraordinarily sensitive man to pen this saga. It deserves equally responsible and responsive readers. □

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gender differentials are sharp, and are imperative to understand the depth of deprivation and exclusion of communities, yet, these differentials could not be analysed due to want of time and resources. Additionally, the intra- and inter-community differentials among Muslims also warrants analysis, but could not be undertaken due to compulsions of empirical and technical standards.

While all three differentials are of immense importance, there is a particular need to analyse the impact of post-Sachar policies, programmes and schemes from the perspective of Muslim women's empowerment. Gender issues among the Muslim community are often confined to discourse around the practices of triple talaq, polygamy and *halala*. Scarce attention has been paid to evaluating the impact of post-Sachar initiatives on Muslim women's status vis-à-vis education, employment, health and

nutrition, housing and sanitation, political participation, and a general enjoyment of citizenship rights over and above issues pertaining to Muslim family law. It is hoped that the present study will pave the way for future research in this arena.

Conclusions

Twelve years after the release of the Sachar Committee report, there are yet no indications of improvement in the socio-economic status of the Muslim community. If anything, there has been increased deprivation, discrimination and exclusion of the community from mainstream development. The Muslim community in India today faces threat to life and liberty, and extreme insecurity, going by a high incidence of targeted lynchings of members of the community in the name of cow protection. This is in addition to the vulnerability to false or

trumped-up criminal charges of terrorism leading to prolonged incarceration without bail. Those affected are mostly impoverished members of the community. Civil and political rights go hand in hand with social, economic and cultural rights, and mutually reinforce each other. An effective implementation of the Sachar Committee recommendations could have resulted in socio-economic empowerment of Muslims, and reduced their vulnerability to such attacks. Shariff's book, through its various recommendations, indicates the path towards institutionalising their constitutional rights. As a counter to the current majoritarian assertion of secondary citizenship to religious minorities, the importance of this book cannot be overstated.

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Neo-liberal Transformations and the Challenges of Governing India

MITHILESH KUMAR JHA

The book *Neo-liberal Strategies of Governing India* is a timely intervention by Ranabir Samaddar to understand governing practices in India in its most recent neo-liberal phase. This book is a companion volume to an earlier work, *Ideas and Frameworks of Governing India*, by the same author (Jha 2017). Together, these two volumes critically explore the politics and practices of governance in a postcolonial society. Samaddar's analysis of these practices combines "political and ideological aspects" of governance with "technological characteristics" and examines it "in a historical framework." While critically analysing ideas, frameworks and strategies of governing India, its inner tensions and challenges, Samaddar is equally interested in examining the evolutions of newer categories and subjecthoods as a result of such governing practices.

Neo-liberal Strategies of Governing India
by Ranabir Samaddar, Delhi: Routledge India, 2016;
pp xviii + 334, ₹1,095.

This makes his analysis of the "contemporary history of Indian democracy" unique and also very interesting. This volume deals with some of the most dramatic decades of Indian democracy that have witnessed the weakening of democratic institutions as well as domination of the market and capital over state and society. There are a series of ideological and political churnings underway in contemporary India. Social and political movements of various kinds often challenge the "official" narrative of politics and governing practices that make the business of democracy and governance a messy affair. However, contrary to many pessimistic arguments about the possibilities of social transformations in terms

of empowerment of the marginalised or excluded, Samaddar continues to believe in and highlights the "hope for a politics of radical democracy."

He has two major premises for his analysis of neo-liberal governance in India: first, "mutually constitutive relationship between the rulers and the ruled, based on norms, rules, rights and popular claims;" and second, "governance as a strategy of creating conditions of" and providing the "institutional matrix" (p viii) for accumulation. This book is divided into three parts. In Part I, there are four chapters which are not necessarily interconnected, discussing diverse issues. Examining these issues, he discusses the questions of rights and development, and assesses how they have become the sites of neo-liberal governance. Part II consists of four fascinating chapters on how various modes of governing practices strengthen the hand of the market through the state that ensures the accumulation of wealth and natural resources. He also examines how this has an impact on the society and the state at large, and the status of labour in particular. In Part III, he revisits some of the theoretical questions and conceptual frameworks on

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governance in India, like the notions of crisis, its interrelationships with neo-liberal governance, passive revolution and so on.

Development and Rights

In this neo-liberal era, development as a faster rate of economic growth lies at the very core of nationalist imagination. Achieving this faster rate of economic growth within the parliamentary framework of democracy is a serious task before the policymakers. Developmental discourse and governance continue to set the agenda of politics and governments both at the central and state levels. It allows the governments to classify the population into different target groups and to subject them to various policies and techniques of neo-liberal governance. These new tools and techniques of governance monitor and control all spheres of individual and community lives. It has created a new dynamics of power relationships.

Samaddar, using the Foucauldian perspectives on governmentality and subjectivities, invites us to examine how "these life controlling aids emerging out of the combination of development and democracy have produced in terms of new forms of power and new forms of subjugation?" (p 79) He begins by analysing how "a recalcitrant minority population" poses governing challenges to the colonial and postcolonial governments in India. He offers an interesting analysis of the politics and prospects of various commissions with regard to minority issues. He observes, perhaps rightly that "the minority issue in India since its birth hangs between two markers: identity and development." He traces the challenges of governing the minority in the colonial era and in his estimation, the governing of minority in India oscillates between "coercion and hegemony." However, many readers may have strong objection to a few of his observations and terminologies like "a recalcitrant minority," "rebellious minority" (p 5), and finally, his assertion that "exactly as the minority groups face the problem of the power of the sovereign, the sovereign also faces the power of the minority groups, given the attraction of the latter

towards the ideas of autonomy and self-government" (p 4). It is hard to agree on what basis one can equate such an enormous asymmetry of power between these two groups.

Chapters 2 and 3 are a fascinating read about how basic rightlessness and vulnerabilities of a large section of the society go hand in hand with laws and administration in the country. He cites the example of how selling a child is illegal but how at the same time, starvation deaths cannot be deemed to be illegal. This study helps to understand how access to food campaign is intertwined with the language of rights on the one hand and notions like "entitlements," "claims" and "social security" on the other. He also examines the ways in which indigenous, subaltern and other deprived groups have reacted or responded to such developmental narratives. Samaddar rightly asserts that illegalities and semi-legalities in the conditions of absolute rightlessness of the masses and the dominating nature of the administration characterise the neo-liberal strategies of governing India. Famines or near famine-like situations in various parts of the country, farmer suicides and starvation deaths, food riots, and forcible land acquisitions, such as in Singur and Nandigram, pose serious challenges for governance. Interestingly, Samaddar is of the opinion that political parties in this neo-liberal era have failed to include these concerns and grievances in their policies and programmes, and have become merely an apparatus through which one acquires and yields power. In his terminology, this shift in the approach of political parties is "governmentalization of parties" (Chapter 4).

Extraction and Accumulation

Perhaps, one of the worst consequences of neo-liberal strategies of governance has been the coming together of the market and state which intervenes and aims to govern all spheres of the social life of individuals and communities. Labour has been the worst victim of this schema of governance, which has clearly shifted its focus from empowering the masses/citizens to produce the conditions for accumulation of wealth and natural

resources. In this new era, Samaddar argues, cities have "become new sites of extraction, accumulation and governance." Neo-liberal strategies of governance lead to are large-scale dispossessions and displacements of rural and marginalised communities and their migration to the cities. Any urban space in India is testimony to these ironies in the Indian society and the unrepresentativeness of neo-liberal governing structures.

Chapter 5 dwells upon the government's approach (combined with the logic of market and capital), to social governance and peace-building measures in India's North East. Here conflict becomes the framework of both social and political governance. Draconian and repressive measures continue to characterise the governance of the region even when the focus is on pacification and expansion of government and electoral democracy. Chapters 5 and 6 engage with the questions of political economy within the overall framework of neo-liberal governmentality. Here two things appear to move simultaneously: increasing dispossession and as a result, large-scale internal migration mostly rural to urban, and accumulation of wealth and ever widening economic disparities. Samaddar characterises this large-scale accumulation of wealth and resources as "the process of primitive accumulation" (p 228), which signifies the inner tensions of democratic politics, where the focus is now on facilitating this process rather than empowering or strengthening citizenship and representation. Here, extraction becomes the hallmark of the liberal economy. Informal work conditions of labour, guarded by "labour reforms" result in the multiplication of labour forms, that is, from one site to

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another and one form to another. The cases of mining, in Bellary in Karnataka or “rat-hole mines of Meghalaya” are examples of utter disregard for labour laws or environmental consequences. These activities operate through a nexus between illegal miners, traders, politicians and the administrative departments. In some states, they have acquired enough power to shape the electoral fates of various political parties. The existence of special economic zones (SEZs), public-private partnership (PPP) models and economic corridors further aggravate this situation. The condition of labour in such a situation is correctly expressed through the notion of “transit labour,” which is by and large migrant labour kept in the invisible informal sectors, in subhuman working conditions. In other words, transit labour operates by and large beyond the purview of law.

Samaddar has examined the various dimensions of transit labour and how it leads to the creation of ungoverned and ungovernable subjects and spaces that coexist with perfectly managed and supervised spaces and zones. Urban neighbourhoods in contemporary India are a stark reflection of such governing systems, which Samaddar calls “logistical governance” (Chapter 8). It governs not just the big infrastructural projects and plans but also the urban space. Working within the language of freedom and risk in the name of security, this form of governance ensures parallel strategies wherein fenced and walled modes of supervision coexist with the space that reminds one of the spectre of chaos, narchy and illegality.

Neo-liberal Governance

Urban politics, protests and agitations have become the sites of neo-liberal governance that also poses serious challenges to it. In order to ensure “reckless financialization and extraction of all conceivable resources,” it is the urban masses, who according to Samaddar, are “deployed as foot soldiers in the governmental programmes of mobilisation, assembly and attacks on the unyielding sections of population to throttle” their protests or agitations (p 306). Here, the whole apparatus of governance attempt

“to posit the ideology of the market before the society as natural” and legitimises monopolies, corporates, corruption and cronyism. Further, organisation, planning and management of the city embody the principal contradictions of our time and this creates new class divisions. In such a formulation, space becomes the marker of identity and in governing such spaces, the question of the subaltern or what Samaddar also calls “multitudes,” becomes absolutely critical to our understanding. In this connection, he rightly draws our attention to not only the populist response, but also populist resistance as well as demands for reforms in the neo-liberal era of governance. Populism which symbolises the “politics of the multitude” can also present itself as the “contradictory other of the neo-liberal capitalism.” It can, according to Samaddar, very well upset the existing structure of dominations and subordinations and may also lead to mobilisations of ungovernable subjects that may open up the possibilities of radical democracy in the country, even in this neo-liberal phase of governmentality.

Summing Up

Samaddar examines the transformative impacts of neo-liberal strategies of governance on various sections of the Indian society. This volume is a fascinating study of the contemporary history of Indian democracy and its various challenges. However, the book is also surprisingly silent about many burning issues in contemporary Indian politics. For example, he talks about minority politics and the challenges it poses to governance, but is conspicuously silent about the rise of Hindutva politics. In fact, the spectacular rise of Hindutva politics is one of the major characteristics of Indian politics in this neo-liberal era, but the author has maintained an absolute silence on this issue. Similarly, while he focuses on the urban politics and challenges of transit labour, he hardly engages with the challenges of rural distress and large-scale farmer suicides. Many readers, especially those with a keen knowledge of the specific usage and contexts of some of the terms like

governing, governance, government and governmentality may find his liberal use of these concepts not only problematic, but at times confusing too. He claims that despite knowing “the specific intonation of each word and the need to keep them distinct,” he has liberally used these terms and at times interchangeably too (p xiv). However, in the very next page, he asserts that “this book is on governing India and not on governance” (p xv) and, thus, makes a clear distinction between the two. Thirdly, like the previous volume, this one too is replete with long quotations running into several pages (pp 22–26; 33–37; 39–42; 117–20; 214–17). These quotations overshadow his arguments and many of these citations could have been briefly summarised. And, if these were considered as necessary for the arguments, it could have been placed in appendices. Similarly, summarising the previous chapters in each subsequent chapter works as a constant reminder, presumably to an inattentive reader, which could have been avoided. However, through this work, Samaddar raises some very pressing questions of democratic politics in contemporary India, the explanation of which requires revisiting some of the conventional vocabularies and notions of explaining Indian politics.

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An Open Question God in the Age of Atheism

TABISH KHAIR

In his foreword to *Confessions of a Dying Mind: The Blind Faith of Atheism*, C K Mathew, the former chief secretary of Rajasthan, calls it a “masterpiece” and expresses astonishment that the author is a young man “not yet thirty.” Perhaps the matter is not that of astonishment, for the book is on a topic that only an ambitious young man “not yet thirty” would dare to tackle: God.

Haulianlal Guite approaches the matter from various disciplinary perspectives, but mostly by way of an eclectic reading of philosophy and science. It might not be a “masterpiece” but the author has to be commended for his intention, effort and ambition.

More specifically, this is also a book of the times. With religion storming the bastions of society and even banning science—consider, for instance, the effective prohibition on teaching Darwinism and evolution in some states of the United States (us) and West Asia—scholars, who had long forgotten about religion as a sociopolitical force, have had to return to the matter of God. Marxists like Terry Eagleton and Slavoj Žižek are engaging fruitfully with religion now. Even the new atheists—with their staunchly faithful dismissal of God—can no longer afford to ignore religion: the fact that some of them get so upset at the unprovable existence of God proves it. In that sense, Guite’s book is at the tip of a burgeoning trend.

Despite his recourse to a vast selection of texts, Guite approaches God and a/theism with two texts always in mind: Plato’s dialogues and the Norwegian writer Jostein Gaarder’s *Sophie’s World*. Guite’s *Confessions of a Dying Mind* combines the two in its structural allegiance: it is a “novel” that consists of dialogues between a dying man and an angel/hallucination, named Walker. This is again

BOOK REVIEWS

Confessions of a Dying Mind: The Blind Faith of Atheism by Haulianlal Guite, *New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2017; pp xxxvi+378, ₹559.*

an ambitious choice, but it is not certain that it works: Can the largely prescriptive and eventually monologic structure of Plato’s so-called dialogues be turned into the dialogic—multivocal—form of a novel? I also fear that Gaarder’s excellent bestseller is a dangerous model, for it is surreptitiously based on standard courses of high school philosophy as taught in Norway, while Guite is venturing into unknown pedagogic territory. Still, the effort has to be praised, and it leads to some interesting arguments, many of which, as is the case with Plato’s questions in his dialogues, are already slanted towards a certain resolution.

Let us take this extract, in which we are presented with “Walker’s Sixth Dilemma: Is there a way, a criterion, to definitively distinguish the real and the unreal?” (p 62):

“But there are other good criterions that will help us distinguish the real from the unreal. For example, the idea of a shared reality—of a reality shared by many people,” he suggested.

Walker shook his head.

“It won’t work,” he disagreed. “Otherwise, there would be no such thing like hallucinations and mass delusions, split personalities and schizophrenics.”

“But these people don’t share their experiences. It is they and they alone who has them,” Dyers objected.

“Not from their perspective, my dear Dyers. Not from the point of view of the patient. When they hallucinate, they do not see them as unreal images of their minds, but as truly real.” (p 63)

Apart from the rather insipid language of the dialogue, this is an idea that has been repeated more often than

it deserves to be, sometimes in complex ways by great philosophers, for instance, when Friedrich Nietzsche questioned whether the cause comes before the effect, because we only look for a cause after feeling the effect. From various kinds of idealist religious beliefs, it has also seeped into much of recent postmodernism and, now, contemporary politics, as “alternative truths” and “fake news.” The problem with all such arguments—and God, when negotiated within such arguments—seems to be their ultimately closed nature. At best, it represents a kind of sophistry. Reality, which is always negotiable, is never settled by a single or a singular indicator. Or, in other words, reality is not “closed;” it is open on all sides—both its dismissal and its proof. That is why the fact that the Wright Brothers built a plane is history and the fact that Ravana had a flying vehicle is a story. The day enough and credible indicators of Ravana’s flying vehicle are made available, it would become history. Until then, alas, we cannot claim to have flown the first plane, no matter what Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) ideologues believe, envision, feel or imagine.

The reason I choose this “dilemma” to focus on is that it represents both the essential weakness and the ultimate strength of belief in God. The weakness is this: You cannot ever disprove God, and hence people in power can get you to believe in their God. The strength is this: They cannot ever prove God, and hence you can always have no God, or a hidden God who is different from whatever God is in power. In Guite’s case, however, one does not really know what his God is, though one senses a degree of tolerant impatience with atheistic ideas.

Sweeping Convictions

It is difficult to review a book like this, for one cannot engage with each of its arguments, all of which are taken from other sources: Not only does the ambition of this book makes a comprehensive review difficult, but also the fact that it draws upon convoluted ideas and complex texts (but tries to put them in

Philosophy of religion ✓

simple language) makes it impossible. However, in general, the book struck me as interesting in parts and perhaps too self-assured in other parts. At times, this can lead to sweeping and slightly incorrect statements. Let us take this extract:

One of the oldest question mankind has ever asked since he came out of the caves, perhaps even the oldest of all, if indeed he came out of the caves, is the question of God's existence. [...] At first the questions were worldly, and the beings inquired about were themselves creatures. Except that they were spirits, perhaps even winds, the stones and the rocks, and the mountains too, animated in his image. Then the queries became more complex, and such beings were seen to control nature [...] Not long after, mankind began wondering whether the supernatural world exists. This first happened in India, expressed through such writings like the Creation Hymn of the Rig Veda and the Upanishads in general. (p 208)

Despite the obvious ghost of Max Müller in this extract, its vast sweep and absolute conviction of its own truth rings a familiar and somewhat unpleasant political bell in my head. This is sad: while there is no certainty that thinking critically about the supernatural started in India, there is absolute certainty about the fact that the Rig Veda was not "writing." It existed in oral forms before being written down.

In general, scholars have avoided talking about God, and for good reason. Even in ordinary life, it is common to avoid talking of God, unless you are a devout believer or a fervent disbeliever. In reasoning circles, God is usually not discussed too much because he is impossible to define. Your God is not my God, unless, of course, we are united by a system of devout belief or a system of fervent disbelief. And even in that case, one can argue, that both my God and your God will actually be someone else's God. As scholars such as E B Taylor have rightly noted, belief in God is not even compulsory in all religions: Buddhists, for instance, as Guite notes too, can operate without any necessary concept of God. That is why Taylor defined religion not as belief in God, but as "belief in spiritual beings." And even this does not always apply.

Though religion is by no means a solid subject to grasp, it seems more amenable

to reasoned—as well as scientific and scholarly—discussion. Hence, scholars and scientists tend to discuss religion more often than God, despite the rise of the new atheists in response to various religious fundamentalisms, which has followed the Newtonian law of action-reaction. However, Guite's book basically discusses theism—and hence God—and that too without footnotes. This is a very difficult endeavour, fraught with pitfalls, though I respect the attempt.

'Thoughtfully' Religious

Like Guite, I too have a quarrel with those who want to convince me that God exists and those who want to convince me that God does not exist. That is so because, often, I see very little difference between them. I also see a world of difference between them and those who doubt or do not doubt the existence of God, without the desire to impose their doubt or lack of doubt on others. There is much in common between the religious who believe in a God they can never fully comprehend and doubters who doubt that such a God exists in a universe they can never fully comprehend. Just as there is much in common between those who claim that they know the mind of God (and hence impose it on others by force or persuasion) and those who dismiss God in the name of some greater knowledge, just as hubristic and misleading, and impose that knowledge on others by persuasion or force. It has to be noted to the credit of the latter that they have less often imposed their conviction by force.

To be militantly religious, you need not chop off heads, though some of the militantly religious do so too. You are also militantly religious if you are so convinced of your notion of God that you need to impose it on others, even if it is just my persuasion, by conversion. As against these, you have the thoughtfully religious—I avoid the word "truly," as it has been misused by the militantly religious for centuries now. The thoughtfully religious might have a deeper faith in their God, but they are aware of their human fallibility and the basic "sacrilege" of claiming to know God or act and speak on God's behalf, and hence they keep their faith, like a fragile treasure,

to themselves. Similarly, avoiding the limiting "agonistic," I prefer to contrast the militantly atheistic to the thoughtfully atheistic. The thoughtfully atheistic may be agnostic, that is riven by doubts about God, or they may be as convinced as the militantly atheistic that God simply does not exist for them. But, aware as they are that religion is a matter of belief and human knowledge is limited (though capable of improvement), the thoughtfully atheistic live with their doubt and do not make a political slogan of it. They are aware that there is at times little difference between championing faith and championing doubt. In this the thoughtfully religious share with the thoughtfully atheistic a true appreciation of the endlessness of the realities—God, universe, science, etc, whatever it may be termed—out there, and their own limited capabilities to comprehend it and themselves.

I have always wanted to write a book covering those matters. No longer being 30, I suppose I never will. Guite is to be commended for writing a book in which he is moved by a similar concern to tackle a necessary and much-muddled topic. Though I cannot help but wish that he had waited a few more years before publishing this book, perhaps after some revision. But, of course, then the book might have remained unwritten, just as I hesitate to write one on God at my age of 50-plus.

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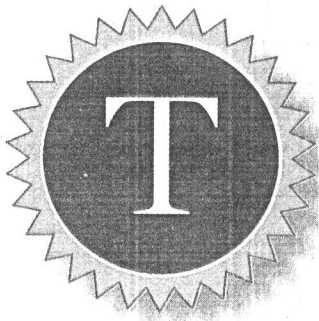
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THE BHAGAVAD GITA nestles comfortably in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata, just as the fratricidal war is about to begin. Despite the fact that scholars believe that the Gita was always a part of the great epic, it stands out not only for the philosophy of being and doing that it explores but also because it has always received attention as an independent text, over and above any significance that it may have within the Mahabharata's larger story.

Over the centuries, Indian thinkers, from the classical philosophers Shankara, Ramanuja to Bhakti poets as Dnyaneshwar, have chosen to write commentaries on the Gita's 18 chapters. The idea that the Gita was crucial to the understanding of Hinduism carried into the colonial and modern periods, and translations and commentaries on the Gita have continued to blossom. Both Mahatma Gandhi and S. Radhakrishnan have seen their respective philosophies reflected in the text. Even B.R. Ambedkar, who so fiercely rejected Hinduism, was compelled to address the Gita. And so it is that Amit Majumdar's new translation, *Godsong*, stands within a long tradition of the Gita being presented to English-reading and speaking audiences with greater and lesser knowledge of the religion in which it is so firmly embedded. Each translation is accompanied by some kind of commentary. There is either an explanation of the many philosophical positions and relationships to the divine that the Gita suggests, a statement of the translator's take on those positions or a description of what the translator is

attempting to do with the well-known and well-loved text. Of course, each translation reflects the time and place in which it was made. They respond, as they must, to the zeitgeist.

Majumdar is a radiologist and a poet. That's significant, as his translation of the Gita reaches for the text's poetry as well as its spiritual meaning. Typically, only poets choose to acknowledge that the Gita, as its very name attests, is a song.

Majumdar translates not only as a poet but also as a Hindu and a member of the Indian diaspora in the US—all these identities are heavily underscored in his introduction and the critical material with which he surrounds his translation.

The commentary Majumdar provides has an interesting and very contemporary form—he summarises each chapter of the Gita, which he calls a 'session', before giving us his translation of the text. The summaries are succinct, pointed and useful. Each session also comes with a 'listener's guide' at the back of the book where Majumdar explicates what he himself has received and understood from each chapter. Since the Gita has long lent itself to different and varied interpretations, one cannot discount Majumdar's insights. So, too, I am sure there are many contemporary readers and believers who will agree with him, though (or perhaps because) he finds it necessary to take sideswipes at how other religions think about god and an individual's relationship to the divine.

"Only Hinduism had armour, and that armour (sic) was the Gita (p.xxii)," he writes, because it is a text of 'multiplicities', encompassing many belief

systems and many ideas of the divine.

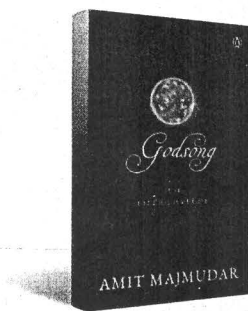
Majumdar's claim for Hinduism is that it is fundamentally 'one in the many'. This is hardly a new argument, but he makes it persuasively, using the Gita as a basis for the claim and placing it firmly in the genre of the Upanishad, a teaching given by a spiritual master to a student.

Majumdar's translation is easy to read. It resonates with much that has come before him, absorbing and reflecting (if not acknowledging) the long and rich tradition of Gita translations. Majumdar rejects what he calls the 'mythistory' of the Gita and seems to come at it almost as a naïf, letting the sacred poem speak to him and hearing it as he wills.

This makes for some interesting moments. For example, he hears Arjuna's question as "what do you do when the other fellow wants to kill you?" rather than the more conventional (and challenging) formulation of "how do I justify killing my teachers, my elders and my family?"

Whatever quibbles I might have with this new translation (and there are many), I will remember *Godsong* because Majumdar has poignantly reminded me that what lies at the heart of this poem about god is the idea of friendship. The dialogue begins and ends as it does because Arjuna believes he is talking to his friend, an older and wiser friend who can help him through the

most desperate moral crisis of his life. How magnificent it is that his friend, Krishna, says, 'trust me, because I am god'. And when Arjuna doubts him, Krishna shows him that he is, indeed, god. In all of world literature, there is no more glorious epiphany or demonstration of friendship than the one that Arjuna experiences in Chapter 11 of the Bhagavad Gita. ■ —Arshia Sattar



GODSONG: A VERSE TRANSLATION OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA
by Amit Majumdar
Penguin
₹599; 208 pages

A historical tour de force

Hindu; 9/12/18; Pg. 16

This sweeping narrative of four powerful cultures, Kannada, Malayali, Tamil and Telugu, explores the ties that bind diverse peoples

G. SAMPATH

As Rajmohan Gandhi observes in the Introduction of his latest book, south Indian history is largely the story of “four powerful cultures – Kannada, Malayali, Tamil and Telugu... and yet more than that, for Kodagu, Konkani, Marathi, Oriya and Tulu cultures have also influenced it.” That’s not all. He adds that “older and possibly more indigenous cultures often seen as ‘tribal’, as well as cultures originating in other parts of India and the world” have shaped it.

Such a layered complexity poses a challenge to the neat demarcations without which the business of constructing a historical narrative cannot quite take off. Gandhi, to his credit, navigates this challenge with dexterity.

Rich mosaic

He starts where the canonical work on south Indian history stops. K.A. Nilakanta Sastry’s classic, *A History of South India: From Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar*, ends around the time Europeans start setting up trading posts along the southern coast. Gandhi picks up the threads from this historical moment and weaves a mosaic of events, characters, and details that together make for a tour de force of modern south Indian history.

A great deal transpired between 1565 and 2018. The broad historical contours are well known. After joining hands to defeat the Vijayanagara empire, the Deccan Sultanates of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar,



■ **Modern South India: History from the 17th Century to Our Times**
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Golconda and Bidar revert to their old pattern of intrigues and infighting. This is the time when Europe’s great maritime powers, Portugal, France, England and Holland, are competing, among themselves as well as with Indian merchants, for control over trade. This is also the time the Mughals are looking to decisively stamp their authority over the Deccan. The 17th century also saw the rise of another empire in the sub-continent, the Marathas, who would soon rival the British as the supreme power in the Deccan. And then there were, of course, the scores of smaller territories and suzerainties held by nayakas, poligars, and assorted chieftains and princes that criss-crossed the plateau. These would, in due course, be picked off one by one, or played off one against the other by the colonial powers until, by the mid-18th century, the entire region comes under the control of the British East India Company.



■ **Layered complexity:** The book covers every milestone of Tamil Nadu’s political history. ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Gandhi’s narrative shifts back and forth between the four main tracks: Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada. In the beginning, this takes a little getting used to, as the switch sometimes happens when you want the narrative to stay put and zoom in for greater detail. For instance, as we read about the British deployment of native soldiers to subjugate native princes, the Company’s deft exploitation of the old faultlines of religion and caste are duly mapped. So are the caste tensions that eventually lead to the Dravidian politics unique to Tamil Nadu. But rather than embed these

dynamics in the social history of the region, the chosen approach seems to be to tick the important boxes and keep moving forward with the political chain of events. This gives the book a breathless, sweeping feel, and it is, indeed, magnificently comprehensive – its narrative journey covering not just every single milestone in the region’s political history but also pausing every now and then to contemplate a great musician or singer, a fine diarist, a social reformer, a crafty courtier, or a courageous warrior.

Gandhi is in his element when he slows down the narrative to fill

in the colours on his vast canvas. His account of the rise and fall of Tipu Sultan, the section on the Vellore Mutiny, which anticipated the Revolt of 1857 by half a century, and the potted biographies of the early proponents of what we know today as Carnatic music strike a fine balance between the telling detail and the big picture.

Vaikom Satyagraha

He is at his best as a historian of the freedom struggle, taking the reader by the hand to elaborate on landmarks that tend to get the short shrift not just north of the Vindhyas, but even in the South.

One such is the Vaikom Satyagraha of 1924-25, which predated Gandhi’s famous Salt Satyagraha by half a decade and delivered perhaps the first major blow against untouchability in the South. It also achieved something unique in the context of the freedom struggle, something Mahatma Gandhi had striven for all along. As his grandson puts it, “In the Malayalam country, Vaikom helped the freedom and social justice movements to join hands. Elsewhere in India, the news from Vaikom confronted insulated caste Hindus with the ugly realities of untouchability and unapproachability.”

Finally, to state something obvious but oft forgotten, there is only ever one vantage point from which all history is produced and consumed: the present. So, while an orthodox historian might balk at the idea of viewing the past through the filters of the present (as opposed to learning about it on its own terms), the lay reader may well take a different tack. For her, one of the pleasures, and perhaps, uses, of studying the past are the intriguing parallels and patterns it throws up in the context of the unfolding present.

If you are one such reader, you will find this book to be full of moments where the present seems to be repeating itself in the past, as it were. And if you are a purist, then too, there is plenty to savour, not least the idea that the diverse peoples of a peninsula that has never been a single political or cultural unit could, nonetheless, have a lot in common, starting with their history.

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Tourism in Nepal In Pursuit of Shangri-La

MICHAEL HUTT

Mark Liechty's name is already well established among students and researchers of Nepali history and society, and *Suitably Modern*, his wryly titled 2003 book on the Kathmandu middle classes, is a rare example of a Nepal-focused monograph that has made it onto anthropology reading lists worldwide. So, this reviewer was not alone in greeting the news that Liechty was about to publish a study of the history of tourism in Nepal with delight. It turned out that he had been working on it for over 20 years, latterly with the assistance of two of Nepal's excellent young researchers, Rashmi Sheila and Ramakanta Tiwari.

The book under review, *Far Out: Countercultural Seekers and the Tourist Encounter in Nepal*, at a little under 400 pages, is quite a hefty tome. Its cover is a Desmond Doig watercolour of the iconic view of the Basantapur tower of the Hanuman Dhoka palace in Kathmandu, as seen from "Freak Street" during the hippie heyday. Foreigners fill the street, the men all long-haired, with just one Nepali figure at the margin. Signboards declare: "New Hungry Eye," "Orient Lodge," "Don't Pass Me By Restaurant." The title and its cover, therefore, suggest that this is a study of the "hippie" period of the history of tourism in Nepal. However, Liechty's account of the hippie period actually amounts to a little under half of the study, because the book attempts to do a great deal more than simply reconstruct (and deconstruct) a fascinating period. As the book's title suggests, its central purpose is to analyse the history of tourism in Nepal in terms of an "encounter" between the foreign visitor and the visited Nepali.

The book is divided into three uneven parts and begins long before the arrival of the first hippies. Liechty records that, before 1950, Kathmandu had received no more than 300 "foreign" (that is,

Far Out: Countercultural Seekers and the Tourist Encounter in Nepal by Mark Liechty, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017; pp xiv + 387, \$35.

non-South Asian) visitors, less than a quarter of the number who had managed to get to Lhasa. Much of Part 1, "The Golden Age," follows a path previously trodden by Peter Bishop in his book, *The Myth of Shangri-La* (1989), but with much closer attention to local cultural and political contexts. Thus, we meet the mystics and eccentrics of late 19th- and early 20th-century Euro-America, such as the theosophist "Madam" Blavatsky, whose claim to have been inspired by a meeting with a princely Nepalese "master" in London in 1851 Liechty politely dismisses by pointing out that Jang Bahadur and his entourage actually visited London one year earlier. And, of course, the point is well made that the often-deluded imaginings of Blavatsky and her successors were focused not on Nepal per se, but on their own notions of "Tibet." The fact that Tibet became totally inaccessible to foreigners at almost the same time that the exclusionary Rana regime came to an end in Nepal meant that Nepal became the next best thing for seekers of an essentially "Tibetan" Shangri-La. This is one of the more interesting coincidences of Himalayan history.

One aspect of the Euro-American pursuit of Shangri-La that Liechty rather misses, however, is the atmosphere of moral uncertainty that existed in Europe following the end of the 1914–18 war, and particularly the near deification of British mountaineer George Mallory, who disappeared on Mount Everest in 1924 and is widely believed to have provided the character template for the hero of James Hilton's 1933 novel, *Lost Horizon*, in which the "keyword" Shangri-La was first coined.

Tourism in a recognisably modern form dates from the 1950s in Nepal, and the figure of Boris Lissanevitch, the Russian founder and proprietor of Kathmandu's first international hotel, looms large over this period. It was during this period that mystics faded away and were replaced by well-heeled American tourists who flew in for a few days as an extension of their Indian tours, and by mountaineers. Liechty digs more critically into Lissanevitch's story than authors like Michel Peissel whose book, *Tiger for Breakfast* (1972), first mythologised a man who knew exactly how to sell to a new breed of foreign visitors the colonial fantasies that they craved. Liechty argues that Lissanevitch's ability to run his business depended greatly on remaining in favour with King Mahendra, for whose coronation in 1955 he organised the catering and hospitality, importing the food in three DC-3 aircraft flying non-stop shuttles between Patna and Kathmandu, and bringing in over 200 catering staff from Calcutta. International media coverage of the coronation, Liechty writes, proclaimed "Kathmandu's antique and Oriental charms to an audience predisposed to dreams of Shangri-La and eager to imagine that such a place still existed in some remote corner of the Himalayas" (p 44). However, the Shahs realised the potential of foreign tourism to generate large amounts of foreign income and, by 1969, Lissanevitch's hotel was closed and he was put in prison.

Part 2, "Hippie Nepal," is the heart of the book. Liechty's account of the way in which the first seekers of peace, love, and cheap legal cannabis were taken in by low-caste Newars (food sufficient, cash-poor, unworried by notions of ritual pollution) is well researched and fluently written. It leads on to a fascinating account of the growth of Kathmandu's famous Freak Street, the dwindling of the hippie flow, the closing down of the government-licensed cannabis trade, and the emergence of the city quarter known as Thamel, which is where the (relatively) clean-living young tourist has always almost stayed since the 1980s. Liechty locates all of this persuasively against the backdrop of Cold War geopolitics and the emergence of the 1960s youth culture

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(although the European contexts of the latter are somewhat neglected in favour of the North American), and his account is greatly enriched by its focus on some of the key players, both Nepali and foreign, many of whom he tracks down and interviews. Thus, we meet fascinating pioneers such as Ravi Chawla, an Indian whose early initiatives led to the emergence of Freak Street, and D D Sharma, the Nepali proprietor of the famous "Eden Hashish Centre." Liechty also tells us a lot about the cultural legacy of this period. Interestingly, many of the Western-inspired innovations in art, literature, and music that took place in Kathmandu during this seminal period stemmed rather more from interactions with diaspora Nepalis from Darjeeling than with local actors.

Part 3, "Adventure Tourism," is the book's shortest section, and deals with the advent of the trekking industry and the way in which Nepal has become a prime destination for Euro-American followers of "Eastern religion," thus picking up the threads with which the book opened. One of its most interesting passages recounts the career of Zina Rachevsky, the Paris-born socialite who played a central role in the establishment of Kopan Monastery as the hub of a worldwide network of Buddhist study and meditation centres. Liechty contrasts Western religious seekers' construction of

Nepal as a "Buddhist country" with many Nepalis' unwillingness to acknowledge Tibetan Buddhism as an attraction that brings dollar-spending tourists to their country. Inevitably, tourism in Nepal nowadays is more of a business than a cultural encounter, especially when seen from the Nepali side: "If Freak Street had been a lark, Thamel meant getting down to business, a business that transformed tourists from foreign curiosities into extractive resources" (p 322).

This fascinating book is not without its flaws. Large chunks of three of its chapters were previously published as articles in the journal, *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, and have not been integrated into the text of the book as fully as they might have been. As a result, the book is sometimes marred by unnecessary repetition. Also, Liechty's laudable aim of producing a balanced account of the encounter between the visitor and the visited is somewhat hampered by the imbalance of the material available to him: while tourist sources abound, documentation of the Nepali response is scarce. He makes up for this in considerable measure by interviewing key players, but there are inevitable gaps in the record. For instance, it would be incredibly interesting to chart the role of the Shah monarchy in more detail. Although the hippies were entirely oblivious to the political currents

that swirled about them, the 1960s and 1970s were the heyday of the repressive Panchayat regime, and kings Mahendra and Birendra clearly took a political view of tourism while seeing it as a generator of revenue.

The publication of this book coincided rather neatly with that of Paulo Coelho's new novel, *Hippie* (2018). But, the story it tells is not over. A notable development on Nepal's tourist scene in recent years is the arrival of a growing number of Chinese visitors, both in organised group tours and as individual young travellers. Perhaps, because of a revival of interest in Buddhism in China, many visit not only the Kathmandu valley but also Lumbini, the Buddha's birthplace in Nepal's Tarai. What Liechty's book demonstrates is that Euro-American visitors to Nepal have always been lured there by their imaginings, which often remain impervious to the realities of the society they encounter. What, then, are Chinese tourist imaginings of Nepal, and what do they tell us about the way in which human beings from different places construct and encounter one another? Liechty's book provides both a signpost and a template for further research on such questions.

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Noir as reality

Hindu; 23/12/18; Pg. 16

Racism, sexual assault, slave trade – Sweden's squeaky clean image is ripped apart in an expat's grim account

ZAC O'YEAH

Swedish noir comes in many shapes and sizes, but this is the first time I've read it as non-fiction. Although popular crime writers such as Henning Mankell (who has been a mentor to the author of this book) and Stieg Larsson investigated the darker sides of Swedish society – to the extent that the king of Sweden felt compelled to remark that he didn't appreciate such negative portrayals of his kingdom – it is really the non-fiction writers who have consistently reported on the country's downside. And they have generally got away with it since they are not widely read outside the country and have only a limited local readership compared to the mass market crime fiction.

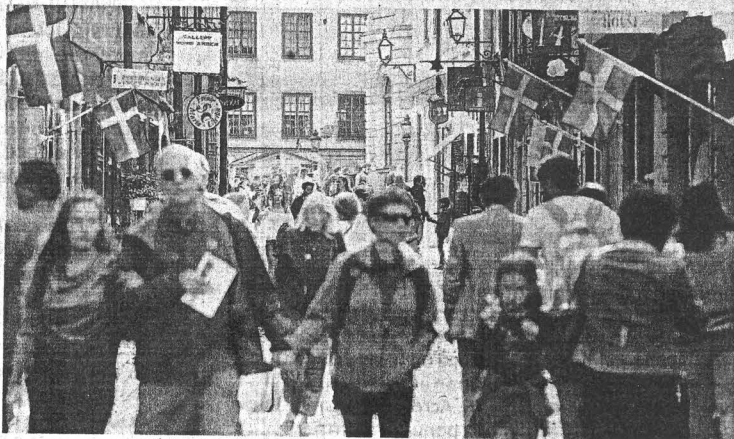
That might change now, as Kajsa Norman, a Swedish expat war correspondent expects to be made *persona non grata* in a country known for its high-ceilinged tradition of debate. She starts her book by quoting a former prime minister promising to stigmatise or brand with an iron (*brännmärka*) those 'who speak ill of Sweden abroad'. She continues, "The more I dug, the more warnings I received: 'Aren't you afraid?' "You realize you'll never be able to work in Sweden again." This, then, seems to be a book that no Swedish publisher has dared to touch and so rather unusually for a Swedish writer, her book is first published outside the country in English.

Refuge in lies

Norman has constructed a complex plot mechanism, making the book as compelling as Swedish noir, except that the main overarching story here is a true one of systematic sexual assaults against very young teenage girls taking place at a youth festival in Stockholm over a period of 10 years, the news of which was blacked out by the mainstream media because it would have been politically incorrect to tell the truth: that the perpetrators were largely immigrant and refugee boys.

Norman discusses at length the perversity of the Swedish mentality – the 'innate ability of Swedes simultaneously to emphatically maintain a moral position while actively participating in its violation' and 'an internalized herd mentality that shunned difference and sought consensus at all cost'. This is undergirded by an extreme political correctness and an ideal of equality that not only hampers individuals from exploring their individuality (the infamous 'Law of Jante – the Nordic social code of egalitarian conformity') but also makes it near impossible for outsiders to integrate into the society.

To investigate these particular matters deeper Norman employs two parallel narratives – written like fiction, with Capotesque dialogues and dra-



Tough truths: An extreme political correctness and an ideal of equality make it near impossible for outsiders to integrate into Swedish society.

• GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK



■ **Sweden's Dark Soul: The Unravelling of a Utopia**
Kajsa Norman
Hurst & Co.
₹1,825

matised scenes – through which she does a spectacular job of bringing her protagonists alive.

One strand is about an Armenian movie buff, Samvel Arabekyan, who worships Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman so much that he migrates to Sweden and tries to become Swedish. His albinism makes him blonder than Swedes, and the 'cold and the dark appeal to him. In Armenia he is different, in Scandinavia he would fit in...' Only to be thrown out of the country after eight years, by when he is so Swedish that even Swedes find it hard to believe he's a foreigner.

Breaking news

The other is Chang Frick, a Swede from a community known as *resandefolk*, a subgroup of the Roma people or 'gypsies' who have been subjected to racism and enforced sterilisations and other atrocities through the 500 years they've been settled in Sweden.

At a young age, Chang who is his school's *svartskalle*, or 'black skull', a derogatory Swedish term for people with dark hair and brown eyes, decides to prove his Swedishness by turning rightwing nationalist. He eventually starts a news website to counter anti-right reporting, through which he breaks the news of the me-

dia-blackout regarding the teenage mass-molestation scandal.

Social engineering

Norman, intent on taking apart Sweden's squeaky-clean image, paints a dirty picture of the country. She describes how its slave trade continued until long after countries such as the U.S. and the U.K. had banned it, the 19th century creation of a nationalistic discourse based on ahistorical notions largely grabbed out of thin air, the founding of the world's first Institute of Racial Biology in Uppsala long before the Nazis came to power in Germany, and the ostensibly neutral Sweden's illicit support for Germany during WWII.

Then there are the various insidious aspects of the welfare state project such as 20th century social engineering 'to shape the individual, in order to effect desired societal change' according to which 'everything could and ought to be changed and improved: how and what to eat, how to dress, how to make one's bed, how to express oneself, how to structure relationships'.

Norman's dismissal of Sweden sometimes feels one-sided. One could, for example, counter-argue that extensive conformism was necessary for Sweden to take the great social leap from being a largely poor and underdeveloped country in the 19th century to one of the world's richest and most egalitarian in the 20th. But then Norman is concerned with the face of the coin much as its flipside.

Her incisive study mesmerises and amazes, shocks occasionally, but as a Swede, feel insulted by this incisive takedown of the society I grew up in? Well, call me a masochist, I find these verbal whiplashes revealing. This forthright book – not at all biased and scurrilous as it may be quoted out of context – will surely ruffle feathers among Sweden's intellectual ducks and create refreshing dialogues of debate in their shallow pools.

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Monarchy as model

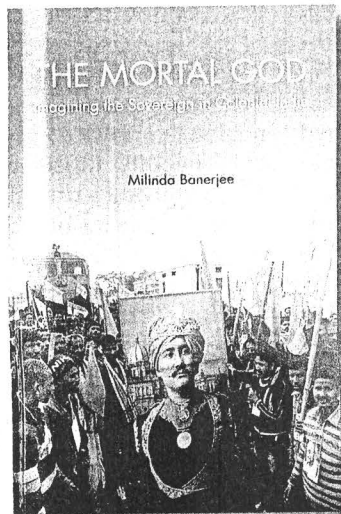
The book explores the idea of monarchy in colonial India and its impact on nationalism.

BY SUHRID SANKAR CHATTOPADHYAY

AFTER the defeat of the mutineers in 1857, the reins of India passed from the hands of the East India Company to the British Crown. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858, which promised all subjects equal treatment and admission to government offices, tried to establish the idea of a benevolent monarchy. It was an idea that was to have a "profound impact on Indian political discussions".

Interestingly, after 1876, Queen Victoria, while remaining the "Queen of England", would assume the title of "Empress of India". The distinction was apparently made on the basis of the fact that while the United Kingdom possessed a constitutional government, its rule in India was a despotic one.

The Mortal God: Imagining the Sovereign in Colonial India by Milinda Banerjee is a fascinating exploration of the concept of monarchy in India under British rule, how the colonial rulers used it for their own ends and the key role it played in shaping the political thinking of Indians. The author also ex-



The Mortal God Imagining the Sovereign in Colonial India

By Milinda
Banerjee
Cambridge
University Press

Pages: 435

Price: Rs.995

amines the Indian nationalist movement in relation to the idea of singular rulership and the inspiration it derived from the idea. It is, in fact, a unique book that delves deep into aspects of Indian history that have mostly been glossed over or, at best, superficially touched upon.

To establish a strong centralised rule in India, Lord Lytton (Viceroy from 1876 to 1880) had the idea of earning the loyalty of Indian aristocrats by rewarding them with honours without giving them any real political power. The British even made sure

that the Indian princes did not assume those emblems or badges of royalty that were exclusively the right of the representative of the Crown. "Ultimate authority, including its symbolic form, was to be concentrated in a sovereign centre," writes the author.

This concept of centralised power was further emphasised in the Durbar of 1903—a show of power and grandeur to remind all subjects of the region that they were under the dominion of a new and single sovereign. In this scheme of power, the Viceroy himself, as imagined by Lord Curzon, would represent

both the justice of the royal government and the "personal attributes of the monarch". But the pomp and rulership as stamped upon India was in evidence 100 years earlier, in 1803, with the completion of the grand official residence of Governor General Lord Wellesley in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

The "vernacularising" of the cult of the crown is an important and interesting feature in the study of the concept of single rulership in colonial India and its impact on the nationalist movement. Even in the early days of nationalism, when the extreme loyalism of the zamindars was lampooned in newspapers, protest against exploitation was often expressed through a personalised appeal to the British monarch.

For example, in Girish Ghosh's play *Hiraka Jubilee*, written on the occasion of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, he says: "Mother, turn your glance towards your poor subjects who cultivate the soil; we are without means, without wealth, and poor...."

The author observes that Queen Victoria's appeal rested in part on her maternal image. "In Bengal, traditionally known for its goddess-centred religiosity, Victoria was often portrayed as a quasi-divine figure, compared, in some texts at least, to Indian goddesses," writes Milinda Banerjee. At the same time, there was this feeling, particularly prevalent in Bengal, that the British monarchy was a

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“fake kingship”. Many felt that the visual majesty of the monarchy as displayed by the British was empty of real content as the rulers did not have any real love for Indians.

In fact, many nationalists from Bengal felt that while precolonial rulers, in spite of their hierarchical forms of authority, at least tried to integrate the ruled into the framework of power through acts of generosity, the British simply exploited the ruled and deliberately kept them out of decision-making. “...this critique generated new discourses on kingship as well, which sought to counter models of industrial exploitation with normative expectations of monarchic rule. Thus, while reflecting on the visit of the Prince of Wales to India in 1905-06, Rabindranath Tagore denied that there was any true raja in British India. Rather, British rule expressed the power of one nation over another,” says Milinda Banerjee.

Mahatma Gandhi and Lala Lajpat Rai held views similar to Tagore’s. In 1910, Gandhi suggested that it would be better for India to be ruled by a British king rather than the entire British people as “the tyranny perpetrated upon a people in the name of the people was more dangerous than the atrocities committed by one individual”.

PRINCELY STATES

One of the most enlightening parts of *The Mortal God* is where Milinda Banerjee explores how the princely states in the late 19th and 20th centuries provided Indian reformers “new grammars of imagin-



K. MURALI KUMAR

THE STATUE OF QUEEN VICTORIA at Cubbon Park, Bengaluru, in 2014. After 1876, she assumed the title of “Empress of India”.

ing national rulership, charismatic and paternalist governance, political theologies of monistic sovereignty and economy, as well as idioms of progress and civilisation”. He points out that while there has been extensive work on the socio-economic and political history of the princely states, and their relationship with the British administration, there has been relatively little research on the “discursive impact of princely governments on Indian intellectuals and politicians who operated from (non-princely) British India”.

In his attempt to address this gap in academic

research, Milinda Banerjee makes two case studies, the princely states of Tripura and Cooch Behar and two of the greatest minds of that age intimately associated with the two states: Tagore with Tripura and the social reformer Keshub Chandra Sen with Cooch Behar.

Sen, who had given his daughter away in marriage to Nripendra Narayan, the maharajah of Cooch Behar, regarded the institution of monarchy as vital to his reform programme. “He found the princely states inspirational for the manner in which the subject there showed an enthusiastic outburst of

genuine sentiment and personal attachment for the sovereign,” writes Milinda Banerjee. Sen, it must be remembered, had even met Queen Victoria and Princess Louise in 1870 in a private interview during which he discussed his social reform policies in India and the subject of women’s education. “The impact of this meeting was quite momentous in terms of moulding Keshub’s ideology,” says Milinda Banerjee.

The Tagore family’s links with the princes of Tripura date back to the time of Rabindranath’s grandfather Dwarkanath Tagore, but the relationship between the two families was closest during the friendship of Rabindranath with Raja Birchandra Manikya (reign 1862-1896). Three important works of Rabindranath Tagore—*Mukuta* (1885), *Rajarshi* (around 1885), and *Visarjana* (1890)—were directly influenced by his association with the royal family of Tripura. “Rabindranath Tagore’s world view clearly resembled British colonial perspectives, in terms of regarding a strong male monarch as essential to maintaining a kingdom’s security and protecting its borders. But he added to that an indigenising vision of national, social and moral reform,” says Banerjee. The fact that Rabindranath Tagore idealised the relationship between social reformers and princes is made very clear in *Rajarshi* (“The Sage Prince”).

It must be borne in mind that many Indian nationalists of the time were attracted by the idea

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of “indigenous sovereignty” that the princely states seemed to promise and often sought alliances with the rulers in order to implement their programmes of national uplift.

Interestingly, as Milinda Banerjee points out, the model of monarchy was at once rejected and dialectically appropriated by a large number of Indian intellectuals and politicians who “imagined national sovereignty through concepts and ceremonies relating to singular rulership”. Rulers from Indian history and legends were hailed in public meetings, referred to and celebrated in literature and songs and even discoursed in political essays. Several international events, including the unification of



WIKIPEDIA

SURENDRANATH BANERJEA, one of India’s most prominent nationalist leaders. In 1906, at the height of the Swadeshi movement, he tried to have himself anointed and crowned.

Germany and Italy in the 1860s and 1870s and the victory of Japan over Russia in the Russo-Japanese war (1904-05), apparently heightened the attraction of a national monarch among

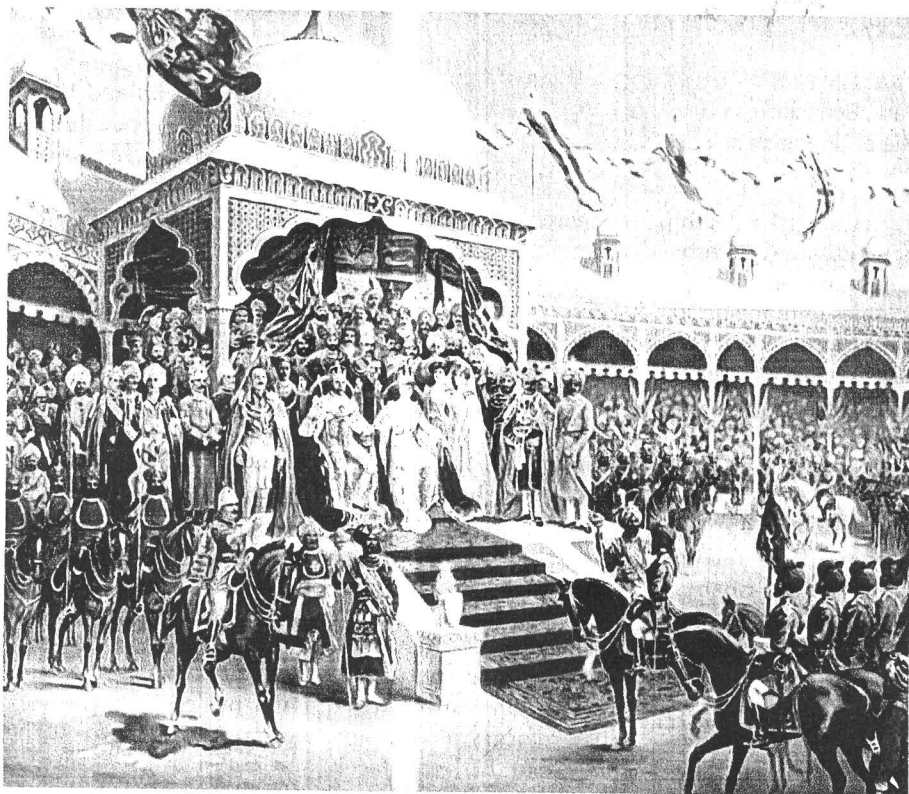
the Indians. The author cites a unique instance in India’s colonial history when Surendranath Banerjee, one of India’s most prominent nationalist leaders, tried to have himself anointed and crowned in 1906 at the height of the Swadeshi movement. Milinda Banerjee observes that though no analysis of this attempted coronation was ever foregrounded in academic scholarship, the incident showed the “limits of kingly discourses in practical instantiation”. What was more important was the representation of singular rulership, not the practical aspect of it.

Across the late 1900s and 1910s, the author says, precolonial Indian rulers, such as Rana Pratap and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maha-

raj, and anti-British rulers, such as Sirajuddaulah and Bahadur Shah Zafar, “were ubiquitous in seditious pamphlets which were circulated in militant revolutionary circles and among the general public in Bengal”.

Milinda Banerjee does not overlook the fact that in Indian nationalist discourses, not just the kings but also the queens of Indian history were conceived as symbols of nation construction. He observes that there were essentially two ways that queens were imagined: benevolent motherly figures such as Jijabai Shahaji Bhonsale and Rani Ahilyabai Holkar or fierce Hindu Goddesses such as Lakshmibai of Jhansi and Chand Bibi. “The Indian nation itself was imagined as a regal goddess, Bharat Mata,” he points out.

An interesting aspect of the book is its focus on peasant and tribal politics and their contribution in “collectivising and democratising notions of rulership, divinity, and sovereignty in twentieth century India”. The author makes a study of those peasant and tribal groups that while demanding self-governance claimed to have royal origins and described themselves as descendants of Kshatriya kings. He draws attention to the recent movement for a separate state of Greater Cooch Behar where protesters were seen carrying pictures of King Nripendra Narayan. And so, like in the days of the British rule, people were demanding autonomous political existence in the name of an erstwhile king as recently as in 2016. □



THE HINDU ARCHIVES

A DEPICTION OF the Delhi Durbar in 1903. The durbar was a show of power and grandeur to remind all subjects of the region that they were under the dominion of a new and single sovereign.

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ing national rulership, charismatic and paternalist governance, political theologies of monistic sovereignty and economy, as well as idioms of progress and civilisation”. He points out that while there has been extensive work on the socio-economic and political history of the princely states, and their relationship with the British administration, there has been relatively little research on the “discursive impact of princely governments on Indian intellectuals and politicians who operated from (non-princely) British India”.

In his attempt to address this gap in academic

research, Milinda Banerjee makes two case studies, the princely states of Tripura and Cooch Behar and two of the greatest minds of that age intimately associated with the two states: Tagore with Tripura and the social reformer Keshub Chandra Sen with Cooch Behar.

Sen, who had given his daughter away in marriage to Nripendra Narayan, the maharajah of Cooch Behar, regarded the institution of monarchy as vital to his reform programme. “He found the princely states inspirational for the manner in which the subject there showed an enthusiastic outburst of

genuine sentiment and personal attachment for the sovereign,” writes Milinda Banerjee. Sen, it must be remembered, had even met Queen Victoria and Princess Louise in 1870 in a private interview during which he discussed his social reform policies in India and the subject of women’s education. “The impact of this meeting was quite momentous in terms of moulding Keshub’s ideology,” says Milinda Banerjee.

The Tagore family’s links with the princes of Tripura date back to the time of Rabindranath’s grandfather Dwarkanath Tagore, but the relationship between the two families was closest during the friendship of Rabindranath with Raja Birchandra Manikya (reign 1862-1896). Three important works of Rabindranath Tagore—*Mukuta* (1885), *Rajarshi* (around 1885), and *Visarjana* (1890)—were directly influenced by his association with the royal family of Tripura. “Rabindranath Tagore’s world view clearly resembled British colonial perspectives, in terms of regarding a strong male monarch as essential to maintaining a kingdom’s security and protecting its borders. But he added to that an indigenising vision of national, social and moral reform,” says Banerjee. The fact that Rabindranath Tagore idealised the relationship between social reformers and princes is made very clear in *Rajarshi* (“The Sage Prince”).

It must be borne in mind that many Indian nationalists of the time were attracted by the idea

Bj-9

The first Indians

DNA analysis helps us understand who our ancestors were and how they looked



TONY JOSEPH

Early Indians draws from a fascination with the Harappan civilisation: "Who were the people who built the largest civilisation of their time, and where did they go?" This specific question leads to others, and the scope of the research on India's pre-history expands from finding out who the Harappans were to how Indians came to be. Somewhere along the way, it also becomes clear that the most important revelations are emerging from the new field of population genetics, thanks to analysis of DNA extracted from individuals who lived tens of thousands of years ago. An extract:

When the first group of modern humans walked into India, perhaps no more than a few hundred people in groups of twenty or twenty-five, trekking all the way from the Arabian peninsula over hundreds of years or perhaps even a thousand or more years, did they have a cosmology of their own that tried to explain the inexplicable? And did they have any inkling that they were entering a special place that more than a billion of their descendants would one day call their home? We are unlikely to ever know the answers to such questions, but there are other questions that we can crack with the technology and material evidence that we have. Questions such as: when they entered India, were they walking into a country that they had all to themselves – like the first modern humans in Australia or the Americas – or did they have competition in the form of other members of the Homo species, like in the Levant and Arabia? Did they tangle with each other? Or did they tango? Did our ancestors drive the others to extinction? Did they bring advanced technology – like bows and arrows and spears – or did they come with just a Middle Palaeolithic stone toolkit of scrapers, axes and sharp flakes that could be used as blades? And, of course, what did they look like? Do we have their direct descendants among us today? How big a brood have they left be-



"Today's Onge are as distant chronologically from the first migrants as any of us." Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with the Onge in Hut Bay in Little Andaman in March 1981. ■ PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU

hind? Where can we find them?

The Onge

Let us start with the most tangible question first. What did they look like? We know that the Onge in the Andaman Islands are descendants of the original Out of Africa migrants who may have mixed less with other groups. But does that mean the First Indians looked like them? That would be stretching things too far.

Today's Onge are as distant chronologically from the first migrants as any of us. This is such an obvious truth that it shouldn't be necessary to say it. But it is surprising how often our mind plays tricks with us. For example, when we think of the earliest modern humans, say, those who existed 300,000 years ago, our mental picture of them may resemble today's Africans. But this is an ill-conceived idea. The Africans of today are exactly as removed from the earliest modern humans as we are and have gone through similar levels of mutation and change as the rest of humanity. They are no closer to the early

tendency of small sequestered populations to have declining genetic diversity over time. The principle is simple. In every generation, there is a chance that the last person carrying a particular genetic variation may die without leaving an heir. In a large population, the chances of any single genetic variation dwindling down to having just one last representative is low and, therefore, the effect of drift will be less too. In other words, small populations are likely to lose enough diversity over time and become more homogeneous – or rather, drift towards a uniform genetic standard. So in a given time, drift alone could make a small population look very different from how they used to look.

The word 'selection', on the other hand, alludes to the essential process of evolution – the physical environment or the social environment or sexual preferences lending greater genetic success to some traits or mutations and less success to others, thus shaping the evolution of a population in a particular way. So it is highly likely that because of all these – mutations, drift and selection – the Onge today look quite different from what the First Indians looked like. (This is precisely the process – mutation, drift and selection – that makes different population groups separated by distance or other geographical barriers grow genetically distinct over time.)

Until we find a well-preserved skeleton from some 65,000 years ago that we can use to reconstruct the faces of the first migrants, we have only one other, suboptimal option: look for ancient skeletons of modern humans from other regions. And we do have one from the Skhul cave of Israel, although it is dated much earlier, between 80,000 and 120,000 years ago. It is the skeleton of a female modern human, and the reconstructed face shows a person we can easily identify with, but with some distinct differences. Of course, we have no idea what level of difference existed among modern humans in different parts of Africa and the Levant over 80,000 years ago. It is possible that the people who moved into the Arabian peninsula (who would eventually reach south Asia) looked quite different from those who entered the Levant.

Extracted with permission from *Jisc*.



■ **Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors And Where We Came From**
Tony Joseph
Juggernaut
₹699

modern humans than we are. Mutations can change the colour of the skin, the shape of the nose, the texture of the hair, or the slant of the eye – not to speak of such things as the ability to survive at high altitudes (Tibetans) or to stay underwater for long (the Bajau people of south-east Asia).

Drift and selection

Similarly, in the case of the Onge too, 60,000 or 65,000 years is a long time for mutations to have done their work, and also for drift and selection pressures to have winnowed the genetic field. What is drift and selection? Genetic drift is the phrase geneticists use to describe the

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Against the grain

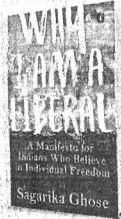
Hindu;
23/12/18; Pg. 16

A reminder of the perils in following the herd

ANURADHA RAMAN

Strange are the times we live in when we require a manifesto for espousing liberal values. And stranger are the times if we have to explain why we choose to be a liberal and defend our views. For too long we had taken many things for granted, including the right to be neither Right or Left, so much so, that all it required was someone to tap into our deeply embedded anxieties and insecurities, pitting one against the Other. Sometimes, the Other is a woman. Or, a Muslim. Or someone from a different caste. Or someone who eats differently or, shall we say, meat. Or simply, someone who does not follow the herd, or, as the author Sagarika Ghose, writes in the book, the dominating majority collective.

Just a few years ago, it was kind of alright to be liberal. It was okay too if you did not fly flags on 207 feet tall flag masts from university buildings or



■ **Why I Am A Liberal: A Manifesto for Indians Who Believe in Individual Freedom**

Sagarika Ghose
Penguin/ Viking
₹599

sing the national anthem when ordered. It was okay to question the government and, in turn, be prepared to be questioned by it. Not anymore. There is a faceless army that stands with the government today ordering people to be wedded to it. The government's tacit approval of the mob gives it strength as it grows in numbers. To be wedded to the mob is to be intolerant of the Other. Hence a manifesto. An appeal to the human in man. An appeal to reasoning. An appeal, that we

may differ, at time, virulently, but that's okay.

Why I am Liberal is about cautioning the individual against the collective. It is a reminder of how embedded the notion of liberal tradition was to Indians. Above all, the book is a reminder of the perils in following the herd for the liberal thinker, the liberal Hindu, the liberal patriot, the liberal dissenter and the liberal woman who together form the chapters of the book.

The liberal Hindu is pitted against a nameless mob that claims to represent all Hindus. The nameless mob which includes men and women wants a movie banned for misrepresenting them; and kills people for eating beef. Why should the mob define itself according to its enemies is the question the author asks. It is a book that delves deep into the past to hold up a mirror to the present. The book, a manifesto, could easily have been a requiem for the liberal!

Heredia locates Nandy in the purported, but arguably spurious division between academics and activism. T.N. Madan honours our academic rebel by revisiting the work of M.N. Srinivas. And finally, Ananya Vajpeyi authors a delightful piece on Ashis Nandy's love of music.

Some of the most creative minds in intellectual circles admire Ashis Nandy and see in him a guide for negotiating a world that is both unpredictable and frightening. Yet his belief in the ability of Indians to live together in a certain degree of harmony, in abstraction from a toxic political context, is both touching and Utopian. His faith in the capacity of human beings to show compassion and love is equally moving, given that today Indian citizens either lynch the vulnerable, or stand around filming the repulsive act on their mobiles. And other fellow citizens consume the dissemination of revolting violence on the social media. We can excavate the strengths of our culture to help us live a good life. Still a good life can only be led in a good society, and good societies are forged through political contestation. We must be dissenters, but we also must understand the limits of dissent in a society that has abdicated its claims to tolerance. The context of culture is, after all, politics, which is occasionally creative, often unbearably ugly, and more often than not unpredictable, chancy and contingent.

Neera Chandhoke

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IN DIASPORIC LANDS: Tibetan Refugees and their Transformation Since the Exodus by Sudeep Basu (with a foreword by Samir Kumar Das). Orient Blackswan, New Delhi, 2018.

Sudeep Basu's book *In Diasporic Lands: Tibetan Refugees and their Transformation Since the Exodus* sets out to examine and present the multilayered dynamics in the lives of people in exile, and how they individually and as a collective engage in 'wayfinding' in alien urban lands and make meaning out of their lives anew. The study contributes to showing new perspectives in the almost banal, forced migration studies. Basu's book shows rays of possibilities in engaging and injecting intelligent conversations between theory and the field, and in doing so he unearths a rich socio-ethnohistorical account of communities in the trans-Himalayas, who over the decades due to multiple factors have been compelled to move beyond their traditional

settings and engage with vexed notions of 'home', 'place', 'lives', and 'being themselves' ('being Tibetans'/'Tibetanness'). The book in this sense injects fresh vigour into the dry documentation exercise of 'forced migration studies' in India, South Asia. The book comprises seven chapters and a postscript that has been previously published in various journals and as a chapter in edited volumes.

Chapter 1, Tibetans as Refugee Diasporas and Chapter 3, The Tibetan Exilic Paradigm opens up a panoramic encapsulative reading of the Tibetan people in exile in Darjeeling, India. These chapters bring to the fore the contested nature of the host territory (*vis-a-vis* the protracted Gorkhaland imbroglio in the state of West Bengal) and the heterogeneity of the hegemonic resident identity, namely the Gorkha identity.

Chapter 4, The Tibetan Question: A Reappraisal, in various ways question policy postures and policy overtures, projected imageries relating to the Tibetan refugee in India, Nepal and elsewhere. The chapter dabbles with a highly contentious gaze of the westerner *vis-a-vis* the Chinese gaze on issues like the representational issue of the Dalai Lama (pp. 80-82), or the image of the Tibetans as 'intrinsically non-violent people' (p. 77), or 'what constitutes 'Tibet' (pp. 82-90), contested histories, conflicting histories of the region from Trison Detsen to the 1959 Revolt (pp. 92-106). This chapter is the strongest part of the study in terms of spanning the historical kaleidoscope and vexed ethnicities that it engages with to revisit and contextualize the contemporary exilic Tibetan people living and torn between global and local callings. The chapter augments the notion of 'ethnosymbolism' in exile and how a multiversal and seeming polarized notions of 'being Tibetan' in diaspora and contested frames of Tibetanness, becomes a meaningful engagement for those 'far from home' and trying to find a home in themselves, or in other words 'taking their home with and within themselves'.

The fifth chapter, Organising for Exile; chapter 6, Preservation, Integration and the Pragmatics of Diasporic Identity and chapter 7, Dwelling and Movement in Exile follows the preceding chapter and provides a description of the 'home making' and multiversal 'organizing exercise' as a lived experience of the Tibetans in India. The ingenious negotiations of 'wayfinding' and circumventing the perplexed state of 'being homeless', 'refugeeness', possible 'repatriations' and 'homing practices' are documented in these chapters through Basu's discussions of the pre-exilic Tibetan hosts, the Bhutias in Darjeeling town

Sociology

(pp. 201-213). The three chapters contribute effectively to a sociological understanding of 'home and the outside' in the context of refugees or those in the diaspora.

The Postscript: A Mediatizing Tibetan Diaspora and Beyond genders the unsettledness of identities and the predicament of belonging and detachment among the Tibetans in Darjeeling and by way of extension to all Tibetans in the diaspora. The unsettledness of identity formation and evolution unleashes exasperations and insatiable aspirations of becoming at multiversal spaces from real to virtual. The virtualization of the diaspora Tibetan (pp. 216-219) provides a space for the disparate Tibetan communities to reconnect, reinvent and reconfigure their indelible yearning and nostalgia for the 'lost home' (i.e., Lasha, Tibet) and create 'newer homes' (i.e., 'Little Tibets') in unusual geographies from Nepal, India, America to elsewhere. As Samir Kumar Das notes in the Foreword: 'The Tibetans are not global nomads... Tibetan refugees of Darjeeling or elsewhere are at home in Darjeeling. Theirs is not a celebration of homelessness, but rather the celebration of making the outside their home. But to the extent they develop relationships with multiple homes, the singularity of home back in Tibet disappears, making room for movements across many homes' (p. xvii).

The book unsettles our notions of fixities of identities and reaffirms the understanding that 'we endlessly choose to become something new' and in doing so skilfully put the rhythm of connectivities into motion among the disparate Tibetans in diaspora.

The methodological improvisations/innovations (chapter 2, Methodology and Imperatives in Refugee Research) creatively crafted by the author in the field and the bibliography is undoubtedly a treasure trove for future academic engagements. The innovative seaming of multiple methods gives flesh to the dry study of refugees as mere digits and brings to the reader a picture of the refugee as a vibrant subject, one oozing with the colourful radiance of 'live worlds' (for instance, chapter 7, Dwelling and Movement in Exile, pp. 200-203, 205). A sectional discussion dedicated to Tibetan Muslims and their ways of enduring 'Muslimness' and Islam while being 'Tibetan' could have augmented the work further. This collection should interest students, research scholars, policy makers and implementers, activists, lawyers and those interested in the trans-Himalayas.

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SEMINAR 712 - December 2018

BOOK REVIEW

ANTHROPOLOGY AND TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

Editors: Subir Biswas and Abhijit Das

Publisher: Concept Publishers Company (P) Ltd. New Delhi: 2018, ISBN: 13:978-93-86682-40-6 (Hard Bound), Pages-Viii + 195

Price: Rs.800/-

Tribal population in India that constitute 8.08 percent of the total population of the country as per 2011 census forms an important and ancient segments of population in India. Anthropology since its beginning as a scientific discipline primarily focuses its attention on tribal studies and its development. Even today tribal development is a subject of study with utmost relevance in the field of anthropology and other branches of social sciences. The present edited book is the compilation of ten articles presented in the National Seminar on "Anthropology, Tribal Policies and Tribal Development in India" organized by the West Bengal State University, Barasat during 21st to 22nd March, 2016.

In the first article Suman Chakrabarty discussed about the barriers

and opportunities in tribal development. His paper is based on a case study among the Rava. Exactly 85% of his sample is Christianized Rava (officially spelt as Rabha). But in his paper impact of Christianity on the developmental aspect has not been discussed. The author claimed that there is more than 65% of Rava borrow drinking water from tube well. But our knowledge on the rural areas reveals that most of the rural people borrow drinking water from hand pump and not from tube well in which underground water is lifted through a suction pump. In this regard it is also to be stated that according to the author more than 91% of the household do not have irrigation facility at the cultivable land. Hence the chance of borrowing of drinking water of about 2/3rd Rava population from tube well is remote. In the reference, Census of India 2001 and 2011 are written. However, for a scientific paper reader expect full reference.

In the second paper, Rangya Gachui discussed about education and development among the Tangkhul Naga tribe of Manipur. The author is of opinion that culture and social change was brought by the Christian missionaries in the Tangkhul Naga society. The author also after quoting Nuh 1986 concluded that

American missionaries liberated them from the bondage of darkness and brought them in the era of civilization as good as the rest of the world. However, the present reviewer is of opinion that the paper ignores the cultural excellence and creativity of the Tangkhul Nagar society. In the third paper, Amlan Kanti Ray and Binod Kumar Singh discussed about ethnographic way of understanding social landscape from the Bharia, Baiga, Kol and Gond of Patakot and Amarakantak area. The author concluded that objective of tribal development is a massive one and it demands a kind of cerebral elasticity to meet the vast well of the outcomes of tribal development in relation to each tribal people and community. Sampa Das on the basis of her study on Ballipara village of Birbhum district of West Bengal discussed about socio-economic growth through woman education. She concluded that women education is the first stage of development which in turn raises the social position of the Santal women. Suman Das and Suchismita Sen Chowdhury in their paper highlighted influence of occupational change on the cultural tradition of the Lohra community of Jalpaiguri and Purulia district of West Bengal. The author concluded that trend of education among the Lohra is better in

the tea garden areas of Jalpaiguri due to impact of Christianity than that of Purulia where they still practice traditional way of life and Hinduism. In Purulia influence of traditional panchayat is still existed among the Lohars.

Ananya Chandra and Sanjay Basu described their findings on the basis of their case study on the tribal self help groups under LAMPS. Their findings give some interesting findings like there are more number of female accounts than male accounts in the LAMPS as the females are economically much active and they grow the habit of savings small accounts from their earnings in order to utilize the same at times of necessity. They concluded the paper by saying that progressive generation grows thrift habit which would improve the quality of life of the tribal people. Biswajit Parida in his paper discussed about the Kalinga Nagar Industrial Estate in Odisha along with the impact of the said industrial estate on the socio cultural life of the tribal people. Finally, the author also analyzed change in the livelihood pattern of the tribal people due to the establishment of Kalinga Nagar Tata Steel Plant. The author finally concluded policy pertaining to Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR) of the tribal people is not specially visible.

Soumyajit Das and Suchismita Sen Chowdhury in their paper stated about

the lifestyle of the Dukpas, a subgroup of the Bhutia. One of the major findings of their paper is the fact that Dukpas living in one of the location becoming as modernized and empowered like any other surrounding communities. On the other hand Dukpas, a little known community residing in other location still holding traditional way of life and they remain isolated from all other communities. In the penultimate paper of the volume under review Debasis Mandal discussed how media broadly performs its function in social and political spheres of tribal livelihood in eight villages of Birbhum district of West Bengal. The author also argued that media promotes the idea of self reliance and transform social status of the tribal group in many ways. Media shows the importance of the tribal communities for nation building and encourages them to cooperate actively towards national development. In the last paper Munshi Ismotara discussed role of social media for tribal development. The author has discussed case study among the tribal of Bolpur in Birbhun district of West Bengal and observed that social media empowers the tribal people and is an instrumental for their development.

In short the book under review is successfully reestablishing relevance of anthropology in the domain of development, policies and welfare

measures. All the papers are presented in a uniform model. Editors deserve a sincere appreciation for the same. However, the book is devoid of any introduction or short summary of the papers presented in the book under review. Moreover, total number of tribal communities in the country as mentioned in this volume needs to be checked as the number is much higher than the number of communities stated in the preface and acknowledgement section of the book under review. Some of the references are cited in the text portion of the preface and acknowledgement without full reference after the section of preface and acknowledgement. The book needs more careful editing.

In spite of few shortcomings the book would be immensely helpful for students, scholars and policy makers to understand multidimensional facets of tribal development. Editors of the volume and publisher M/s Concept Publishers Company (P) Ltd. deserve special appreciation for publishing such an important book in a most impressive manner.

TilakBagchi

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TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUSIVE POLICY

Editor: Nupur Tiwari

Publisher: Concept Publishers
Company (P) Ltd. New Delhi: 2018,
ISBN: 13:978-93-86682-20-8 (Hard
Bound), Pages-xxi + 194,

Price: Rs.750/-

The edited book under review is the outcome of a two day national consultation on "Repositioning Tribal Question for Public Policy" organized by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi on 19th and 20th March, 2014. From the preface and acknowledgement it is revealed that the consultation was called to holistically reassess the issues pertaining to tribal rights and bring to light the issues and concern of the tribal areas to shape a viable, vibrant and sustainable policy papers for future action. The present volume has fulfilled the said objective to a large extent. The book under review is comprised of eleven articles, one introduction and a scholarly foreword of Shri Nand Kumar Sai, Chairperson, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, Government of India. Shri Sai very rightly observed that various laws

and policies enacted for the protection of the *adivasis* (tribes) have not been implemented primarily due to the wrong development policies adopted by the states which have tended to strengthen rather than weaken the political and economic power of the non tribal vis-à-vis the tribal. He also pointed out that sustained grievances have been cropped out about consistent ignorance by the development drivers regarding the injustice and policy for future since Independence. Against the backdrop of the above the book is an important and welcome documentation on various issues related to tribal development, problem and their welfare.

In the first article titled "Development Challenges in Tribal Areas: LWE and PESA", Nupur Tiwari deals with history of tribal exploitation and alienation and subsequent genesis and growth of Naxalite movement. However, the author had not mentioned about the Naxalbari, in Darjeeling district of West Bengal, the seedbed of Naxalite, LWE or Maoist movement in India. Naxalites present themselves as defenders of the poor and marginalised people and capitalize their discontent. Their operation

can be branded as an unconventional warfare against the state. To address tribal discontent the Bhuria Committee was constituted in 1994. On the basis of the report of Bhuria Committee the PESA (Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Area) Act was enacted in Parliament in 1996 with an objective to protect the tribal communities from exploitative practices by creating a bigger role for the Gram Sabha. The author critically evaluating PESA Act under the backdrop of the functioning of LWE and the author stressed the need for effective functioning of the Gram Sabha to redress tribal discontent. In the second paper, Gunajit Sharma tried to show role of food processing industry on the socio economic upliftment and development of BTAD (Bodoland Territorial Area District) of Assam. Author firmly believed that food processing industry would eradicate unemployment problem, rate of poverty, under utilization of natural resources in BTAD area. In the third paper, Ashima Srivastava discussed about the socio economic profile of the tribal population in India. She argued that Twelve Five Year plan document shows that incidence of poverty is most alarming among the scheduled tribes among all social groups.

Though efforts have been made through tribal sub-plan and other programmes gap still exist between tribal and non tribal population. She finally concluded that general welfare schemes and programmes can be quite helpful for addressing the problem.

In the fourth paper, S.C Roy discussed about way of empowering tribal communities through the protection of their tribal traditional knowledge system. There is hardly any effort for documentation of their indigenous knowledge. It covers medicinal herbs, cultural heritage, tribal system of ethno-medicines, dance and so on. Tribal dance has been copied by film industry. The paper has also discussed regarding constitutional protection and PESA provision for the tribal. In the fifth paper B.N Kamble seeks to study effectiveness of the development programmes for the scheduled tribes in Maharashtra. The analysis of the effectiveness of the programme is broadly organized into four heads according to the spirit of the programme viz socio economic condition, poverty, educational development and impact of development programme. In the sixth paper, Shankar Tadwal and Rahul Banerjee studied the activity of Bhil *adivasi* mass organization

namely the Adivasi Ekta Pariushad (AEP) in Western India. Authors argued that AEP have worked on the traditionally rich tribal cultural heritage to target a new assertive identity for themselves. The organization helps the tribal to negotiate the complex social, economic and political milieu of modern liberal democracy and have in this process developed an alternative framework for equitable and sustainable development. The present reviewer however felt that AEP has virtually no role for the development of the Bhils in Rajasthan in general and South Rajasthan in particular. On the contrary Bhil Samaj Vikas Samiti, Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad and such other organization headed by the Bhils of Rajasthan has made valuable services for the social reform and development of the Bhils of Rajasthan and Gujarat which is a part of Western India in a big and impressive manner. In the seventh treaties of the volume under review Ramya Ranjan Patel dealt with environmental degradation of as an inherent part of economic development as envisaged among the tribal population of Odisha. The author strongly advocates that tribal agricultural technology and practice has the potential of promoting development and reduction of poverty with true spirit of

idea of sustainability without any damage in the environment.

In the eight chapter, Satyam Sunkari made an attempt to understand the forest policies and people specially tribal people oriented community forestry programme of Andhra Pradesh and its effectiveness with regard to changing programme of forest and forest development in the state of Andhra Pradesh. In the ninth chapter, Sthitapragyan Ray tried to highlight dialectical inference between the tribal population and protected areas mediated through main intervening factors including composition of affected people, historicity and geography of project, political ideology of the stake holders, articulation and mobilization of the interest of the States. The author has documented protest movement of the tribal and other forest dwellers affected by the proclamation of Kuldiha Wild Life Sanctuary under scheduled Nilgiri Subdivision of Balasore district of Odisha. The movement of the tribal and other forest dwellers as author observed is to legitimize the rights and claims of the tribals and the forest dwellers by opposing the elite ideology of exclusionary

conservation. Their protest is on conflict over forest resources and claim and counter claim of the poor forest dwellers in one hand and state and elites on the other hand. It has shaped the condition of the forest life of the forest dwellers since centuries. In the tenth paper, Prabha Shastri Ranade discussed the population growth of the tribal belt of Gujarat, its infrastructural development and urbanization. The author has pointed out the issues related to diversion of forest land for infrastructural development and other consequences of urbanization. The paper takes into consideration public health infrastructure, food and other civic amenities in tribal areas. The author also observed that tribal belt of Gujarat is alarmingly attracting population from outside due to development. In the last paper, Minashree Horo discusses the idea of communalization approach based on underline principle of community participation to achieve the goal of "Health for All". The author highlights and explores communalization process through Village and Sanitation Committee (VHSCs) within National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) in Gumla and Khuti of Jharkhand, a tribal dominated state.

In short the book attempts to portray holistic reassessment of tribal issues, welfare programme and other development paradigm of the tribal population of India. The book covers selected and highly scholarly papers from all the major tribal areas of India barring island regions. The book would be immensely helpful for researchers, planners and students. I heartily congratulate the editor for this praise worthy publication and also to the publisher M/s Concept Publishers (P) Ltd, New Delhi for publishing such an important and very valuable book. The book is well printed and edited with an impressive jacket for which both publisher and editor deserve appreciation. Last but not the least, Shri Nand Kumar Sai, Chairperson, National Commission for Scheduled Tribe, New Delhi deserve special appreciation and regards for his foreword.

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At the launchpad

Hindu; 9/12/18; Pg. 16

Recording early days of India's space odyssey

JACOB KOSHY

India's steady successes in the realm of launching satellites and building reliable launch vehicles is the result of a generation of engineers, who were fresh out of college in the 1960s, and immediately absorbed into the budding Indian Space Research Organisation. These early pioneers, led by Vikram Sarabhai, were effectively learning on the job and scrambling to close the formidable headway made by the United States, the erstwhile Soviet Union and France, among others. This first-generation, in the last few years, have been effervescing an assembly-line of memoirs about their time in the organisation, their challenges, the influence of Isro's early chairpersons such as Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan and 'missile man' A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

In this oeuvre comes a memoir by Ved Prakash Sandlas, who was a part of Kalam's core team in the Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV) programme and eventually became that group's leader in 1980. *The Leapfrogers: An Insider's Account of Isro* has an intriguing premise.



■ **The Leapfrogers: An Insider's Account of Isro**
 Ved Prakash Sandlas
 HarperCollins
 ₹399

"Leapfrogging is not like long-jump... it relies upon stored energy and leaping above unexplored territory with calculated risk... this is a storybook, rather than a history or chronology document."

Sandlas' account begins from his posting at Thumba, the nondescript fishing village in Kerala, that served as India's first rocket launching centre. Born in Punjab, his first anecdotes are about acclimatising to life in Kerala and its differences from north India for instance, a "matriarchal or matrilineal system," and "all-women (bank) branch," the way houses were spaced close to each other, an efficient garbage-disposal system and extortionist

practices by trade unions. There are two chapters on Sandlas' childhood and his training as an engineer where he discusses his exposure to ham radios and how this has remained a lifelong passion and was intricately connected to his career as an Isro engineer.

Subsequently follows a fairly long description of SLV minutiae, down to various project leaders and the frenetic pace at which engineers would work – often sacrificing dinners and holidays – to achieve "impossible deadlines" especially those set by Kalam.

For a historian of the Isro and interested in the nitty-gritty of the SLV, Sandlas' book may be an important reference guide.

However insight – aside of the well-trodden ground of Isro's work culture and luminous leaders – or anecdote is mostly lacking.

There's an excessive reliance on technical documents both in terms of language and documentation – and an inordinate focus on Isro heads (who've anyway had reams written about them). Unfortunately, the book doesn't quite read like the storybook it is promised to be.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Continuity, complexity, and change: teacher education in Mauritius, edited by Michael Samuel & Hyleen Mariaye, Common Ground Publishing, Champaign, Illinois, 2016, 236 pp., \$US40 (pbk), ISBN 978-1-61229-820-7.

Weaving together a number of journeys *Continuity, Complexity, and Change: Teacher Education in Mauritius* offers a rich and thorough analysis of the growth and development of the Mauritius Institute of Education. What started as a 'celebratory anniversary account' of the forty-year history of the Institute has evolved into a valuable theoretical analysis of the complexities, demands and changes of teacher education in Mauritius. This was done through drawing on local authentic voices and personalised experiences of the biographical narratives of the participants. These narratives provide both an institutional history and a study into the evolution of teacher education in the country from the search for an independent voice in the post-colonial era through to the current landscape and the pressure of market forces.

The opening lines of the book encapsulate what, and who, the book seeks to give voice to:

Who we are as teacher educators, as members of the small island developing state; as emerging collaborating partners in a global terrain of higher education (p.xvi).

The book is organised into nine chapters presented in four themed sections. Part A outlines the context of Mauritius and details of the research process. In Part B the individual narratives, referred to as institutional biographies, are examined. Part C considers the two broad themes arising from the individual narratives – teacher education identity and organisational change. Part D provides a synthesised analysis of the intersection of personal, institutional and national forces.

Mauritius offers a unique context as a small island developing state. However, the book has relevance beyond the specificities of small island states. In exploring the growth and development of the Mauritius Institute of Education, the forces impinging on the Institute are afforded visibility as the smallness of the context brings into sharper focus the factors impacting on the expanding institution. In raising the question of how outside forces are appropriated to the local context, the authors provoke inquiry of widespread relevance to both small and large states. In this way small island states can provide a means to explore 'big issues', where 'the intimate can become the educative' (p.187).

In telling the story of this institution the book presents an intricate and detailed account of three waves of teacher educators; the pioneers, the managers, and the foot soldiers. Each wave is tied to a different era of the institution's development. The detailed narratives afford important insights into becoming a teacher educator in a time of political, economic, and social change. These narratives make compelling reading for those who wish to better understand the development of the professional role and identity of teacher educators. This volume adds to the emerging scholarship on teacher education and the transition from teacher to teacher educator, which has been described as a precarious and challenging process (Berry and Forgasz 2016) and a confusing transition (Boyd and Harris 2010). Through each of the journeys narrated in this book, we better understand this complex process, which lends weight to the idea that becoming a teacher educator is far from being a self-evident

activity (Berry and Forgasz 2016). We gain insights into the experiences of self-doubt, the challenges and opportunities and the need to create a new professional identity.

The various personal journeys reveal a contrast between those building their teacher education identity based on practice and experience and those who began their career through an academic pathway based on qualifications and theoretical foundations. This draws attention to the relationship between teacher education and academia, which is a theme that is returned to throughout the book. The various phases of the growth and development of the Mauritius Institute of Education are contextualised with changes in the Mauritius higher education landscape.

In its search for legitimacy and operating as a separate institution from the University of Mauritius, the Institute faced various pressures in its development and the narratives speak to its role in servicing the Ministry of Education. This raises questions about its research agenda as the Institute was seeking to advance its academic credentials and research profile. Since the Mauritius Institute of Education was operating in the shadow of the other institutions with university status, this highlights the tension between teaching and research, a pressure well known for those working in teacher education. The authors distinguish between the scholarship of teaching and the scholarship of research in teacher education, something that arises through the narratives and underscores forces at play. The Institute was positioned, to some extent, as a client of the Ministry of Education which meant it was tied to government agenda and limiting capacity to critique education policies. As such the book explores wider questions around the relationship between policy, research and practice and raises an important question about where an independent critique of government education policies could come from in this context.

Another interesting paradox explored is the juxta-positioning of the post-colonial indigenizing era or what is referred to as 'Mauritianization agenda' (p.130) which occurred while there was a simultaneous outward reach for foreign assistance and capacity building. Explored is the tension between an agenda for localising and contextualising the programs with the desire for international partnerships and external benchmarking responsive to the marketisation of courses. The book provides examples of institutional collaborations that were designed to build capacity, but in doing so continued to draw on colonial perspectives within the post-colonial era. However, importantly there is also reference to a successful international collaboration, which, the authors argue, was based on dialogue and a sense of dual responsibility.

The concluding chapter articulately presents a case for the important role that small island states can play in theorising about the evolving nature of teacher education. This is indeed a strength of the book. Returning to the title of this volume, at this end point, it would have been useful to see each of the notions of continuity, complexity and change woven into the concluding chapters more explicitly.

In this short review it is not possible to do justice to the detailed analysis that is offered through this book. This is a scholarly work that presents a rich understanding of not only of the Mauritian context but offers insights of wider significance from the rich and perceptive analysis presented.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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- Berry, A., and R. Forgasz. 2016. "Becoming Ourselves as Teacher Educators: Trespassing, Transgression and Transformation." In *Professional Learning through Transitions and Transformations*, edited by Williams, Judy and Hayler, Mike. 95–106. Heidelberg: Springer Berlin. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-22029-1_7.

use of P4C in higher educational contexts. The aim is that educationalists can develop teachers who can cope with the demands of our current educational climate, whilst also supporting the skills and values that will make a fundamental difference to children's learning and development.

This book is an accessible and enjoyable read. As a teacher with many years' experience in a number of fields, including P4C, I found it to be a thought provoking, interesting and encouraging exploration and evaluation of the approach. It was especially, interesting to consider the significant potential of P4C in initial teacher and education courses. Substantial research is drawn upon throughout which is wholly welcome in an age where an evidence-based profession is paramount for its future success.

Students who are currently embarking on their initial teacher education study, those engaging in further study, and those who are in their early career years will be able to explore and consider the potential of P4C in terms of their developing educational philosophy and practice. Ultimately, this book fulfils the dual role of being an invaluable guide to P4C, whilst also causing the reader to examine their own beliefs and practice.

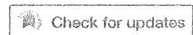
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✓ **Philosophical perspectives on teacher education**, edited by Ruth Heilbronn and Lorraine Foreman-Peck, London, Wiley-Blackwell, 2015, 216 pp., £19.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-118-97766-8

Philosophical Perspectives on Teacher Education, edited by Ruth Heilbronn and Lorraine Foreman-Peck, is both a slender (in terms of length) and yet weighty (in terms of intellectual depth) work. It covers from a philosophical perspective issues ranging from what constitutes a 'good' teacher through to the respective roles of universities and of schools in teacher education, through to a theory of well-being for teachers and its implications for teacher education. Despite the range of topics, a number of recurring themes emerge: the nature of the relationships, interactions and communications between student teachers and teacher educators; the ethical and values base of education and teacher education; and the limitations of a purely competency/performance-based approach to the education of teachers. The book is helpfully divided into three sections, each covering a key philosophical concern: the knowledge that is required by teachers, and which therefore needs to be covered in programmes of teacher education; teachers as ethical agents; and what it actually means to be a teacher. Those with a general understanding of philosophy will be familiar with many of the thinkers and writers referenced, including Kuhn, Popper, Camus, Plato, Socrates, Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Kant, while prior knowledge of some of the others would require more recent and specialised knowledge.

In the opening chapter (which might actually have sat better in sections 2 or 3), Gert Biesta writes about the limits of competence-based teacher education, something of particular interest in England and in many other parts of the world. Those in England familiar with the exhaustive list of standards set out in the Teacher Training Agency's circular 4/98 will agree that such detailed competency-based procedures inevitably lead to a tick-box approach to teacher education, with no measure of how good a teacher will actually be. He goes on to point out, perhaps more interestingly, that detailed lists of competencies are always based on what is happening currently or

what has happened in the past, and will not sufficiently prepare teachers for what might happen in the future. Good teachers, he points out, need to be able to exercise judgement about what to do, and which competencies to employ and how to employ them in particular circumstances. As he says:

.... making something, such as a saddle, is never about simply following a recipe. It involves making judgements about the application of our general knowledge to this piece of leather, for this horse and for this person riding the horse. (15)

A similar point is made by Colin Wringe when he points out that the objects of craft are inanimate objects, where set procedures will under the same conditions produce the same outcomes, whereas the object/recipients of education are human beings with varying needs and priorities. To him, the whole idea of schools 'producing' particular kinds of material to satisfy the needs of government or employers is 'morally grotesque', while in a similar vein Ruth Heilbronn considers why in her view teachers rarely question from a moral perspective why the prime aim of education is often conceived of as the employability of its recipients. As already mentioned, the ethical dimension of education is, unsurprisingly, a recurring theme throughout the book, including in the chapter from Chris Higgins ('Why we need a Virtue Ethics of Teaching'). In their chapter, Damien Shortt, Paul Reynolds, Mary McAteer and Fiona Hallett argue convincingly for ethical considerations to be included within teacher education, something for which their research demonstrates a demand for amongst educators. This could in turn, they argue, help pupils to navigate their way through the ethical dilemmas that all of us at some stage have to face.

One of the most timely chapters in the book is Lorraine Foreman-Peck's on 'Towards a Theory of Well Being for Teachers', in which she identifies the key elements of well-being (emotional, psychological and social), and the need for more account to be taken of the well-being of teachers and the limitations of an approach which assumes that a combination of competency in particular areas combined with appropriate personal qualities will equip new teachers with everything they need. The well-being of teachers is, in fact, something that is rather belatedly recognised by government, although if it is to be addressed in teacher education the chances are that it will be via the drafting of additional competencies and prescription.

The role of universities in teacher education, and how they interact with schools, has been one of the key topics in this field for many years, and relates directly to the afore-mentioned discussions about the sufficiency or otherwise of purely competency-based approaches. James McAllistair writes convincingly about the importance of school-university partnerships, but on the condition that these deliver teacher education that allows teachers to think '*broadly, deeply and imaginatively*' (41) about education, as well as equipping them with the necessary technical skills. In his chapter, David Aldridge argues for a concept of 'higher-education' for teachers that does not depend on a sharp division of labour between schools and universities.

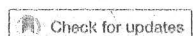
This is a useful and thought provoking book which warrants more than the one read this reviewer could devote to it. Inevitably what I have written oversimplifies and quite possibly misconstrues what are often carefully crafted arguments. But much will be remembered and referred back to. For that I and others will be grateful.

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BOOK REVIEWS

✓ **Philosophy for children: theories and praxis in teacher education**, by Babs

Anderson, Skye, Routledge, 2017, 154 pp, £32.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781138191754

This book offers those in the field of teacher education an insightful guide to Philosophy for Children (P4C) through a thorough examination of its potential in the classroom and an evaluation of its impact on both the learner and the P4C practitioner. It examines through a number of subjects, disciplines and age ranges how P4C can promote a pedagogy and practice that places reflection, values and dialogue at the heart of teaching and learning.

Theories and Praxis in Education is designed to be a key guide for those undertaking courses in Early Childhood Studies, Education Studies and Initial Teacher Training courses; however, this book is also of real value to those already working in the field of education who are interested in P4C and who want to take stock and examine their own practice.

Part 1 offers a valuable guide to the history of P4C and succinctly explains the fundamental principles of the approach. It goes on to delve deeply into the fundamental purposes of P4C and its value for initial teacher education and for schools of the future. Valuable connections are made to key theorists and thinkers from the field of education, such as Dewey and Schön, which helps to frame the P4C emphasis on critical reflection.

Part 2 focuses in-depth on the practice of P4C and begins with a fascinating chapter that reports on the impact of teachers' ideas of the concept of 'child' on their P4C practice. It challenges current perceptions of childhood that many students and teachers, perhaps unconsciously, hold, and it creates much needed space to evaluate our own perceptions of what it means to be a child and how this can shape our relationships with children, and hence ultimately our practice in the classroom. Part 2 goes on to explore the key pedagogical P4C theme of dialogue and the crucial role of high levels of quality collaborative talk for meaning-making. Alexander, Mercer and Lipman himself (the founder of P4C) are referred to, and this helps us to understand that P4C pedagogy is largely underpinned by the ideas and research of these influential theorists.

Part 3 takes the principles and practice of P4C into school and explores how P4C naturally links to Early Years and Primary Education pedagogies. Early chapters in this section argue that philosophical enquiry can offer a foundation on which to build language, reasoning and personal and social development. This section then goes on to explore how P4C is equally relevant in Secondary education and can find a natural place through discrete subjects such as science, citizenship and PSHE. This section further emphasises the role of a community of enquiry in promoting effective reasoning by raising the awareness of the teacher so they view collaborative, critical and creative thinking as central to their practice.

Part 4 focuses on the role of P4C in higher education and provides interesting reading relating to the value of P4C to teacher educators and their students in enhancing the range of skills they can draw upon in their classroom practice. This section also emphasises that P4C offers student teachers the space to reflect on the key educational concepts that underpin their practice, a vital dimension for deep understanding that is arguably under-emphasised in teacher training courses. Furthermore, connections are made to the role of reflection and the part that P4C can play in supporting teachers to develop a deeper and more rigorous reflective approach to their thinking and practice. There is substantial evidence through each chapter in this section that supports the

use of P4C in higher educational contexts. The aim is that educationalists can develop teachers who can cope with the demands of our current educational climate, whilst also supporting the skills and values that will make a fundamental difference to children's learning and development.

This book is an accessible and enjoyable read. As a teacher with many years' experience in a number of fields, including P4C, I found it to be a thought provoking, interesting and encouraging exploration and evaluation of the approach. It was especially, interesting to consider the significant potential of P4C in initial teacher and education courses. Substantial research is drawn upon throughout which is wholly welcome in an age where an evidence-based profession is paramount for its future success.

Students who are currently embarking on their initial teacher education study, those engaging in further study, and those who are in their early career years will be able to explore and consider the potential of P4C in terms of their developing educational philosophy and practice. Ultimately, this book fulfils the dual role of being an invaluable guide to P4C, whilst also causing the reader to examine their own beliefs and practice.

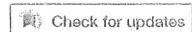
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Cynthia J. Miller, ed. *Teaching History With... Series*.
Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

Integrating video into the history classroom has been a common practice for decades. Indeed, there have been a good number of books dedicated to the topic. Cynthia J. Miller, editor of the *Teaching History With... Series*, brings together three able historians to explore specific genres and their potential for inclusion in the history classroom.

In this series of books, readers are provided with an engaging look at both commonly and rarely utilized types of videos for the history classroom. The three concise volumes in this series—*Teaching History with Musicals*, *Teaching History with Newsreels and Public Service Shorts*, and *Teaching History with Science Fiction Films*—are each structured in a logical, user-friendly manner and offer readers ample ideas to consider for their own instructional practice.

Each book is divided into three sections intended to provide the history educator with a brief historical survey for each discipline with an emphasis on concepts derived within them, a collection of approaches for integration of the videos, and a concise collection of sample documents such as syllabi. Although the overwhelming majority of materials are relevant primarily to the latter portion of the twentieth century (where the majority of such video footage exists, making the scope of courses that can benefit from these materials somewhat limited), the authors take this and other challenges on quite well.

Throughout the series, the most powerful opportunities for developing skills of historical inquiry are related to analyzing the films in terms of their relationship to their cultural and historical context. Another limitation is also contextual in that the vast majority of productions available for use are derived from American industry. However, the authors at times take this on and even highlight some potential ways of mitigating this constraint.

Overall, the series is successful in its aim of equipping readers with an expanded understanding of the potential and possibilities for integration of video in the classroom in each domain it tackles. While at times it leaves the reader yearning for extended discussion and perhaps a clearer articulation of the most appropriate scope of such integration, the series is engaging and worth reading.

Kathryn Edney. *Teaching History With Musicals*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Pp. 133. \$35.00.

Teaching History With Musicals is particularly strong in its discussion of potential musicals for United States History and Western Civilization. One of its most effective segments provides readers with a detailed collection of discussion starters invoking different methodologies one might employ in the classroom. These examples are well developed and provide a specific illustration for the real potential of including musicals as tools to help develop the skills of historiography. A slight distraction in the volume comes from a fairly consistent tendency to present topics through a more postmodern lens, which, while often providing unique insights, seems less appropriate for the more general domains of history the book focuses on. And although the documents portion of this volume include only a syllabus and an annotated collection of musicals for the teacher to consider, each is well constructed and useful for the reader. Overall, this volume provides history educators with enough tools to see a logical fit for musicals in the history survey course.

Aaron Gulyas. *Teaching History With Newsreels and Public Service Shorts*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Pp. 139. \$35.

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newsreels and public service short films is more prevalent than either musicals or science fiction in the history classroom. Aaron Gulyas, however, manages to achieve his two goals of illustrating different kinds of films from the eras explored as well as providing a nice collection of assessment samples that are well designed and helpful for the history educator. One notable idea shared that is both patently obvious but often overlooked for good historical instruction is the value in “juxtaposing very different arguments from the same era” (25). Through smart commentary such as that, Gulyas is able to move the reader to think beyond how he or she has utilized such video clips in the classroom before and enhance their pedagogical integration.

✓ **A. Bowdoin Van Riper. *Teaching History With Science Fiction Films*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Pp. 139. \$35.00.**

In perhaps the most ambitious volume in the series, A. Bowdoin Van Riper examines the possibilities for *Teaching History With Science Fiction Films*. This volume presents what is stated as the first contribution arguing for the possibility and merit of incorporating science fiction films into the history classroom. The volume is thoroughly grounded in the historical works of science fiction, providing a survey of science fiction film and also a primer of the socio-cultural trends influencing the development of a vast array of films for general United States or World History courses with specific consideration as it relates to the Cold War and the history of science and technology. While acknowledging that those “courses that take a broader view” are particularly challenging as teachers and students try to adequately contextualize such films, an admirable attempt is made at laying out possibilities to consider. A final highlight for this particular contribution to the series is the collection of documents, which includes an annotated collection of potential science fiction films, several sample film guides, and a

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collection of exemplary essay questions to help the history teacher consider how these might be woven into the curriculum.

A Summary of the Series

The history teacher has long been drawn to consider the perils and prospects for using video footage in the classroom. While there are many books available that provide general insight into the use of these sources, the authors in this series make a valuable contribution to placing video in its proper context. In each volume of the series, history educators are equipped with a knowledge-base to consider the genre of film more specifically and its implications for inclusion in the classroom. The series is limited in its unavoidable emphasis of twentieth century subject matter in a discipline that extends centuries. And it is also challenging in that the "how this works" aspect of integration, while still respecting students' cognitive load, is not fully articulated. These limitations aside, the series provides a unique and engaging collection that makes for a good addition to any history educator's library.

Middle Tennessee State University

Kevin S. Krahenbuhl

Erika Gasser. *Vexed with Devils: Manhood and Witchcraft in Old and New England*. New York: New York University Press, 2017. Pp. 272. \$35.00.

Erika Gasser's *Vexed with Devils* is part of an abundantly rich scholarship on possession and witchcraft in Western Europe and the colonial U.S. during the early modern period. This field, which flourished in the 1980s and produced such classic studies as Brian Levack's *The Witchhunt in Early Modern Europe* (1987) and Carol Karlsen's *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* (1987), has experienced a recent resurgence. Estimates of the numbers of victims in the period between 1450 and 1750 vary widely, from