EDUDOC SERVICES: BOOK REVIEWS

Book Reviews

January to March 2021

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 *January 2021 to March 2021*

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.

Head, LDD

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Man & Life, Vol. 46, No. 3-4, July-Dec. 2020

BOOK REVIEW

COMMUNICATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Author: Gaya Pandey

Publisher: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi (ISBN-93-86682-49-4), pps. 442.

Price: ₹ 250 (for Indian Subcontinent, Hard Bound)

The book under review titled "Communicational Anthropology" has been written by Dr. Gaya Pandey, Senior Faculty Member in the Department of Anthropology, Ranchi University, Ranchi, Jharkhand. The Present book is published by Concept Publishing Company (P) Ltd., New Delhi. There are altogether sixteen chapters in this book. The first chapter introduction, where the author explained regarding scope of communication anthropology and initiation of communicational researches in anthropology followed by chapter 2. described meaning, definition, role and function in detail. Chapter 3 dealt with nature and characteristics of communication followed by chapter 4 where the author described detailed about communication: its type, method, technique and tools followed by 5th Chapter described regarding various impediments to communication. Chapter 6 described causes of communication loss followed by chapter 7 described various communication skills. Chapter 8 described about channels of communication. Chapter 9 described various agencies of communication followed by chapter 10 expressed about media of communication. Chapter 11 described the revolution of communication followed by 12 chapter dealt various issues regarding development communication. Chapter 13. Described about business communication. followed by chapter 14 described various approaches to study of communication. Chapter 15 described ethnography of human communication. And finally chapter 16 described structure of human communication.

Regarding all the chapters mentioned above the author has taken enough pain to explain the various dynamics of communicational anthropology dealt with various facets in detail. Though subject wise communicational anthropology is being taught in different universities of county in post-graduate and under graduate departments, but there is no any systematic book covering all aspects of communication under single cover. Though there are various books but they do not cover the entire syllabus. They also lack Indian expression. The teacher, students and researchers from the field of social sciences will get benefit from this book. This book attempts to solve the problems of the readers by providing them various

Anthropology

types of materials regarding communication.

I must congratulate Dr. Gaya Pandey for his very interesting and useful book and thanks to Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi for publishing such an excellent book.

Pradip K. Bhowmick
Associate Professor
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West Bengal, India.

INDIAN PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Author: Gaya Pandey

Publisher: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi (ISBN-93-866822-35-4), pps. 384.

Price: ₹ 350 (for Indian Subcontinent, Hard Bound)

Dr. Gaya Pandey seems to be a seasoned writer wrote many books specially related to in the field of Anthropology, both in English as well as in Hindi. The present book entitled "Indian Prehistoric Archaeological Anthropology" happens to be among one such type of book. This is academic exercise to bring all materials dealing with Indian Prehistoric Archaeological Cultures under one umbrella to extend help to students, scholars, teachers and aspirants of competitive examinations in Indian expressions. This subject is taught in undergraduate and post-graduate level courses in anthropology in different universities of the country. The aspirants who opt anthropology in competitive examinations also have to study this subject. The author does not claimed any new contribution in the field of Indian Prehistoric Archaeological Anthropology. Rather, information provided in this book are based on books and papers written by great masters of Indian Prehistoric Archaeological Anthropology.

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Man & Life, Vol. 46, No. 3-4, July-Dec. 2020

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Anthropology

There are altogether fourteen chapters in this book. First chapter dealt with Indian Prehistoric Archaeological Anthropology: An Introduction followed by second chapter described Physical Background of Prehistoric Archaeological India. Third chapter dealt Pleistocene, Ice Age and Pluvial Age in India followed by chapter four expressed Indian Lower Paleolithic culture in detailed. Seventh chapter described Indian Mesolithic culture followed by eight and ninth chapter described Indian Neolithic culture and Indian prehistoric art culture. Chapter tenth described the Indian Megalithic culture in detailed followed by eleventh and twelfth chapter described pre Harappa culture (Indus Valley Civilization) and Indian Chalcolithic culture respectively. The final and last chapter namely Indian Iron Age Culture has been described in the chapter fourteen.

The author Gaya Pandey has taken enough pain and strain to collect all the detailed facts and figure for this noble work and published in the form of book. The present book is a real testimony of this academic exercise. I must congratulate once again the author as well as the publisher Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL PARADIGM FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE PERSPECTIVE AND CASE STUDIES OF PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGY

Author: R.K. Mutatkar

Publisher: Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi (ISBN-93-88937-52-X), pps. 370.

Price: ₹ 1500 (for Indian Subcontinent, Hard Bound)

In view of paradigm for policy and practice the present book entitled "Anthropological Paradigm for Policy and Practice (Perspectives and Case Studies of Practising Anthropology) was written by R.K. Mutatkar has its own relevance from rural and tribal development practices. Prof. Mutatkar while writing this book addressed the various issues and concerns of the people of India through an anthropology. Through this book author very rightly described analytically, how the theory put into practice for human development.

The contradiction and conflict about anthropology as a knowledge system and as an academic discipline in the university system in India, with demands made to analyze national issues and offer implementable recommendations are discussed, giving empirical examples as

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experienced by the author "Practicing Anthropology".

In view of the above the author very rightly expressed his academic views from theoretical as well as practical point of view. in this regard Prof. Mutatkar mentioned name of three important Indian Anthropologist namely, 1. Prof. Nirmal Kuamr Bose, 2. Prof. Irawati Karve, and 3. Prof. S.C. Dubey. Their philosophy of work mostly motivates the author to carry out the present work and published in the book form. There are altogether nine major chapters in this book. The chapter 1 discusses anthropology as a knowledge system followed by chapter 2 explained the current position of anthropology in India, Chapter 3 described practicing anthropology for the welfare of the people. Chapter 4 mainly presents various issues about ethnic identities of groups and communities which acts sometimes as a carrier and barrier of development. Followed by chapter 5 discusses Rural and Tribal development followed by chapter 6 delts about medical anthropology where primary health care as an aspect of community development has been discussed in the context of National Health Policy. Chapter 7 discuss the role of people's centric discipline of anthropology in its interaction with voluntary sectors or civil society seems to be important chapter in this book. Through this process of discussion, the author very rightly expressed his views very logically about the Paradigm shift regarding policy and practices. Chapter 8 discussed research ethics and ethical issues about participation in intervention Policy and Implementation programme. And finally chapter 9 described epilogue: Indian anthropology.

The present book undoubtedly motivates young anthropologists and other social scientists to accept the challenge of every issues, presented by an opportunity worthy of anthropological analysis, not limiting to university classification of academic disciplines.

I must congratulate Prof. R.K. Mutatkar for his very interesting and useful book and thanks Concept Publishing Company Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi for publishing such an excellent book.

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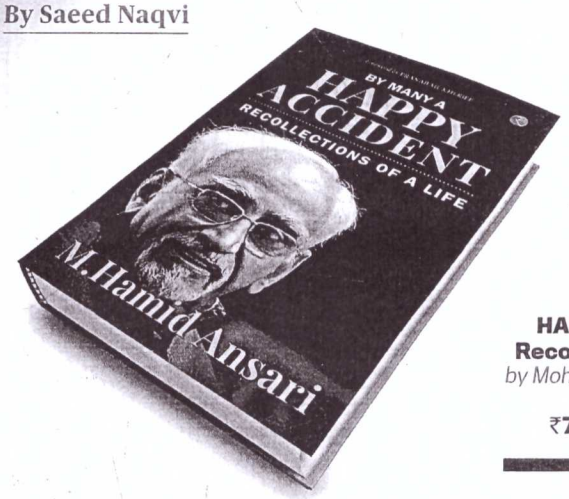
BOOKS

A HALF-OPEN WINDOW

By Saeed Naqvi



BY MANY A HAPPY ACCIDENT
Recollections of a Life
by Mohammad Hamid Ansari
RUPA
₹795; 350 pages

An honest critique of former vice-president Mohammad Hamid Ansari's autobiography, *By Many a Happy Accident*, is difficult.

There is, in our society, no tradition for clinical criticism. Instead, we have a culture of literary appreciation—polite and deferential. In this culture, my personal equation with Hamid *bhai*, one of warmth, cannot but intervene. Even so, reading the book, a question formed itself in my mind quite spontaneously: where are the sharp insights on events in this otherwise compelling narrative? It is not that insights are absent. Sometimes they are embedded in the narrative itself. But where is Hamid *bhai*, in full form, when he had the universe in his ken, analytical and penetrating, in his ample drawing rooms in Kabul, Tehran or New York.

Take this anecdote picked randomly from the book: former president of Afghanistan, Mohammed Najibullah's rival for power, Asadullah Sarwari, was sent to pasture in Mongolia and Yemen. From Aden in Yemen, Sarwari escaped to New Delhi where he was detected by the Afghan security personnel. A scuffle followed. Sarwari, among others, was arrested. Najibullah contacted the cabinet secretarial in New Delhi seeking Sarwari's repatriation for which he even sent a special plane. "The Home Ministry insisted on legal processes being followed," writes Ansari. In other words, repatriation was being delayed.

"At a reception in the palace, the President (Najibullah) asked me to stay back until others had departed," he writes. He then walked up to Ansari and said in chaste Urdu: "Do you know that if I were not here, the flag of Pakistan would be flying over this building?" Only when Ansari touched all bases in New Delhi did the issue get resolved. An ambassador less resourceful than Ansari may well have failed.

An incident like this would form a nugget in *Essence of Decision*, Graham T. Allison's masterly analysis of the decision-making process in US president Kennedy's Washington during the Cuban missile crisis—a seminal book. Hamid *bhai* has in him several such studies which he could have farmed out to research scholars, but are such studies even possible in an atmosphere of intellectual suffocation?

Let me turn to an example from journalism to make a slightly different point. For a long spell, particularly during prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's years, Nikhil Chakravarty was the most well-informed journalist in New Delhi. It is difficult to imagine such a colleague during the current bleak phase. Never has India's capital city been so short on information. Sources of information now shrink even from each other.

Nikhil *da* would set out early in the morning. After touching every possible information base, including P.V. himself, he would turn up at the India International Centre where a bevy of pundits would accost him. Nikhil *da* kept the authorities' confidence for the simple reason that he needed them for replenishment of his information diet in an ever-continuing system. It was all cleverly consumed and without annoying the sources of information.

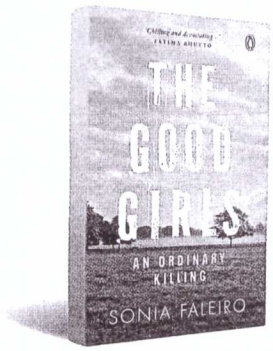
Hamid *bhai* has no such constraints now that he is out of office. Years of wisdom can no longer be prisoner to the Official Secrets Act. His career following his years in the foreign office was even more spectacular. Vice-chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, vice-president of the Republic and, particularly, his role as chairman of Rajya Sabha—these are all replete with events that make history. Each event deserves his reflection: where, when, why, how?

Now is the time for Hamid *bhai* to shake himself out of a lifetime of bureaucratic habits. He must now inform us not only about what happened, but provide diagnostics on when the rot began to set in. We need collaborators exposed from the inside. Hamid *bhai*, pay heed to Iqbal.

"Achha hai dil ke paas rahey pasban-e-aql,
Lekin kabhi kabhi isey tanha bhi chhod de

(Mind must guide the heart,
But, occasionally, let the heart have its way)." ■

Saeed Naqvi *is a journalist and author of* Being the Other: The Muslim in India (2016)



THE GOOD GIRLS
An Ordinary Killing
by Sonia Faleiro
HAMISH HAMILTON
₹599;
352 pages

JONATHAN RING

BOOKS

Bringing Horror Home

Sonia Faleiro's new book is thorough in its reporting and often harrowing in its effect

The picture first did the rounds on WhatsApp. Two girls were seen hanging from a tree in the remote Uttar Pradesh village of Katra. TV journalists who reached Budaun on May 28, 2014, made apparent they were in an India they did not recognise. They called the district "Ba-dawn"; local villagers only knew it as "Ba-da-yoo". Outrage spread as quickly as the hashtag, #BudaunRape. Everyone wanted justice for the girls, but no one asked why their bodies were left hanging for the better part of the day.

In her reportage, Sonia Faleiro details, rather insightfully, the response of urban Indians to faraway horror, but *The Good Girls* is far too invested in its subject—the deaths of two teenagers—to be distracted by borrowed rage. Faleiro calls the girls Padma and Lalli. She tells us that Lalli, 14, would fill her diary with poems, while Padma, 16, secretly dabbed on lipstick. Their desires were as adolescent as their curiosity. But in a village where farms, fairs and funerals had all been declared the domains of men, pleasure was only ever illicit, something one would find in a surreptitious meeting or phone call.

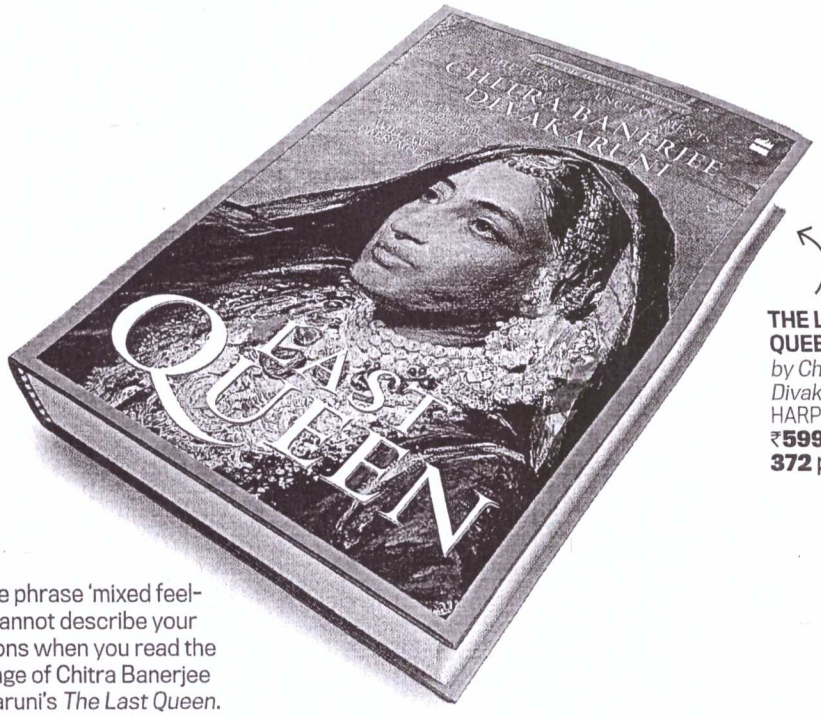
In a world made insular by caste politics and gender discrimination, it was the now-ubiquitous mobile phone that gave Padma and Lalli a smidgen of agency. In the end, the CBI used call records to back up their deduction—the girls were not raped. The incident of Padma and Lalli's death helps Faleiro join several dots—Bhanwari Devi, Shakti Mills and the 2012 Delhi bus rape—but unlike these cases where the threat of violence loomed outside, "the story of Padma and Lalli revealed something more terrible still—that an Indian woman's first challenge was surviving her own home". When Sohan Lal, Lalli's father, is asked what he would have done if the girls were alive, he says, "We would have killed them."

Reading *The Good Girls* can feel hard at times. Faleiro's description of a botched post-mortem, for instance, is both vivid and harrowing. It is bad enough to know that a sweeper without any medical qualifications had examined Padma and Lalli's bodies with a kitchen knife, but it becomes all the more distressing to learn that a lack of experience and tools is the norm in much of India, not an exception.

By reminding us how the police, judiciary and CBI function, Sonia Faleiro helps us better understand the machinations of power in the country

By reminding us how the police, judiciary and CBI function, Faleiro helps us better understand the machinations of power in the country. That said, however, there are a few occasions when the author gives us more detail about India than is, perhaps, necessary. Descriptions like "the palm-fringed western state of Goa" seem more obstructive than essential. This minor complaint, though, mustn't take away from the obvious achievements of this book. At no point does Faleiro let the want for certainty outrun her empathy. We once thought Budaun is an elsewhere. Faleiro finally brings it home. ■

–Shreevatsa Nevatia



THE LAST QUEEN
by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni
HARPERCOLLINS
₹599;
372 pages

BOOKS

God Save This Queen

There is very little that redeems **Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's** latest historical novel

Even the phrase 'mixed feelings' cannot describe your emotions when you read the last page of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Last Queen*.

On the one hand, you're grateful to have read a novel about Rani Jindan, the last wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab, queen regent of a state in turmoil after the maharaja's death, and mother of Dalip Singh, who was deprived of his throne by the British and transplanted in England. While much is written about Ranjit and Dalip, few histories go into the story of Rani Jindan, a village girl far from royal stock whose intelligence, bravery and resilience made her a true queen.

On the other hand, when you finish the book, you're seriously annoyed with the author. Because here is a story that could have been magnificent, and yet the author did little more than follow the skeleton of the Wikipedia entry on Jindan in terms of history, adding precious little insight into both the time period and Jindan's psychology as she fleshed out her novel.

This does not mean that *The Last Queen* feels incomplete. It is the straightforward tale of a bright village girl who might have grown to be a frustrated village woman had her father not pimped her to a maharaja. But she captured the maharaja's interest instead, married him, and swore to keep his state's best interests in mind upon his death. Given her position and the time she lived in, this meant understanding the games of politics, learning to take charge of her own self and her state, and coping with betrayals, exile, poverty and separation from her child. *There is no denying that it is a satisfying story.*

But the problem, you realise as you read the book, is the way it is told. A narrative from Jindan's point of view, it allows no perspective other than her own. You get no sense of the character growing. She seems the same throughout–strong, yes, but without the insights that come from experience. And the style of writing is monotonous. No matter what happens–Ranjit Singh's death, the turmoil that follows, Jindan's leadership of Punjab, her separation from Dalip, her reunion with him years later–there is no change in tone. No wonder *The Last Queen* is a frustrating book. It's less a historical novel than a domestic tale. ■

–Kushalrani Gulab

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's heroine's story is a satisfying one—Rani Jindan dealt with betrayals, exile and poverty, but learnt the game of politics and took charge of her own self

Tussle Over A Soul

India's Constitution is being scrutinised, its fundamental principles challenged, like never before. These books represent the two dominant, opposing stands.

Aakash Singh Rathore

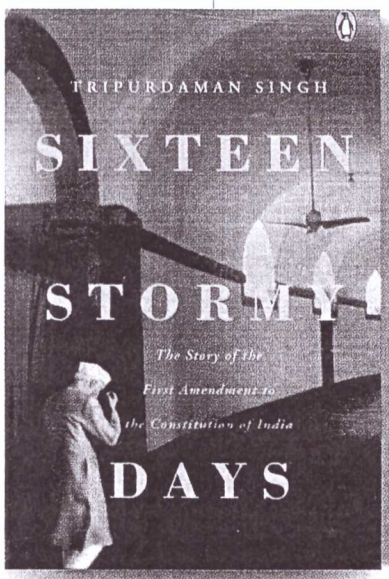
THE Indian Constitution is re-emerging today as a subject of study and an object of scrutiny. There is an emergent sea change in society's understanding of the Constitution's status. At a recent talk that I gave about the Preamble's essential concepts (liberty, equality and dignity), a faculty member in the audience challenged my reverential attitude toward fundamental rights, asking, 'What's so sacred about the Constitution?' This person was no leftist revolutionary; she was a Modi supporter.

While macro-economic challenges forced by global capitalism erode the viability of the democratic welfare-state, undermining the ideology of the welfare state would be a natural strategy for both global corporations and cash-strapped democratic states. When the architecture of the welfare state is inbuilt into the Constitution itself, undermining the ideology of aspects of the Constitution would be a necessary consequence of the strategy. For the past two decades, democratic governments have already sought to convince their people of the need to balance fundamental rights against perceived threats over 'security'. The acceptance of state exigency as superior to constitutional basics gets hardened with the triumph of the security paradigm (in avatars like National Security Act, UAPA, sedition, etc) over liberty (freedom of expression, habeus corpus, due process of law), or the normalisation of invasive surveillance (with global corporations and nation-states in connivance) that tramples citizens' privacy. This helps to catalyse atavism about the nature of state power: a return to the attitudes of many millennia back when we regarded it as the natural right of authorities to rule as they will (that is, not in line with contemporary principles of egalitarian justice). And in a certain sense, I think that behind the question that was posed to me on the sacredness of the Constitution was the question, 'Why should our executive government be bound by egalitarian justice?'

A dizzying spate of new books on the Constitution by top publishers attests to this new environment, probing into the very nature of democratic constitutions and principles. Several studies have recently appeared: Tripurdaman Singh's *Sixteen Stormy Days: The Story of the First Amendment to the Constitution of India* (Penguin, 2020), Gautam Bhatia's *The Transformative Constitution: A Radical Biography in Nine Acts* (Harper Collins, 2019), Chintan Chandrachud's *The Cases that India Forgot* (Juggernaut, 2020), Madav Khosla's *India's Founding Moment: The Constitution of a Most Surprising Democracy* (Harvard University Press, 2019), and my own *Ambedkar's Preamble: A Secret History of the Constitution of India* (Penguin, 2020). It is the first two books mentioned that I want to focus on here.

OTHER THAN EXPRESS DEEP ANIMUS FOR NEHRU, SINGH SEEMS TO PLAY TO THE RECENT, DANGEROUS EFFORTS TO DECOUPLE STATE POWER FROM DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES.

Tripurdaman Singh
SIXTEEN STORMY DAYS: The Story of the First Amendment to the Constitution of India | Penguin | 288 pages | Rs 599



Tripurdaman Singh's book is exceptionally quick-paced, reader-friendly, and well-written, excepting one dissonant chord repeatedly struck throughout the entire length of the book. That dissonant chord, or jarring needle-scratch, is the raging animus against Jawaharlal Nehru, the villain of Singh's story. Singh portrays Nehru as "a dictator", as the "authoritarian" who dismantled and permanently foreclosed liberal democracy in India, and much worse. The entire narrative around the First Amendment to the Constitution is constructed to establish Nehru's brazen, egotistical effort to "have his own way". So graphic is the character assassination of India's first prime minister that the scenes focusing on him evoke the genre of revenge-porn, here enacted for the perverse titillation of the right-leaning libertarian gaze.

More dangerously, Singh's book seems to play to the recent efforts to decouple state power from democratic principles of egalitarian justice, by showing how icons earlier

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Democracy
- Political Science

revered for championing such principles (especially Nehru), were no different from any other executive seeking to augment their own power at any cost. Such a cynical narrative insidiously supports today's waxing atavism.

The book does have its merits, to be sure. It elegantly recounts the tumultuous events unfolding in 1950 and early 1951—primarily, the challenges government faced in pursuing its foreign policy (especially with Pakistan) and social justice policies of zamindari abolition and land reform, as well as reservation—as a result of constant excoriating negative press, and a string of judicial pronouncements against government with regard to freedom of expression, and the rights to private property and to equality. All of this led Nehru and his cabinet to draft the Constitution (First Amendment) Bill, which the beleaguered PM introduced into Parliament on May 12, 1951, pushing it through in the course of some four harrowing weeks—Singh does not make clear, precisely, which sixteen days among these are the eponymous stormy ones.

ALSO blurred in the book are the different motivations and interests of the several cabinet members who supported Nehru's amendment; obviously, they did not all agree on every aspect—Ambedkar's primary motivation, for example, arose from the court's rejection of reservation (meant to undergird substantive equality in a highly inegalitarian society) on the grounds of abstract liberal equality. Singh collapses the varied motivations into a single reduction to being 'hungry for a party ticket'.

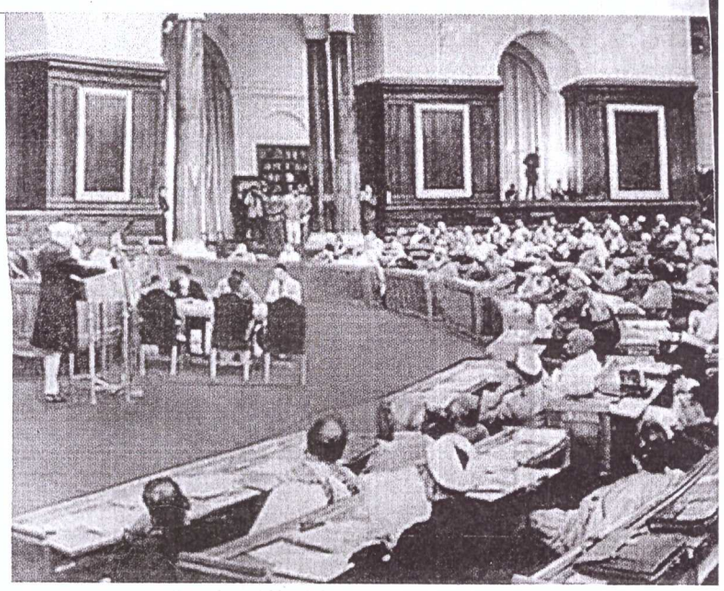
Throughout the book, only the intentions of Nehru and his party are subjected to scrutiny and doubt, and most uncharitably so. Meanwhile, all the critiques by *The Times of India* against Nehru and his government's policies are taken as objective and unmotivated, despite the obvious risk that they themselves might have represented class and caste biases against socially progressive reforms (especially, though not exclusively, about reservation policy). Similarly, the author takes the rulings of the high and apex courts at face value, ignoring the parallel history of their own rival aim to establish and augment the judiciary's sphere of influence in the emerging Republic.

In stark contrast, Gautam Bhatia's dense but lively book could not be more at odds with that of Singh. Far from assuming some libertarian ideal for Indian constitutionalism, Bhatia argues that liberty in the Indian context cannot be conceived (as it was during the 18th century American or French precedents) as a vertical relation between subjugated citizens under an oppressive government. Instead, Bhatia argues that the founders of India's Republic were aware that private, non-state "structures and institutions were often sources of domination and authoritarianism" that had to be tackled constitutionally.

Bhatia's 'transformative' reading of the Constitution traces how liberty, equality, and fraternity have evolved substantively towards a regulative ideal of democratic, egalitarian freedom. The ideal remains unrealised, but it serves to motivate citizens, and hopefully to influence government behaviour, looking forward. Thus, unlike for Singh, Bhatia does not believe that Indian liberal democracy was dead on arrival. Rather, the constitutional essentials upon which our Republic was founded remain there ready to be reanimated.

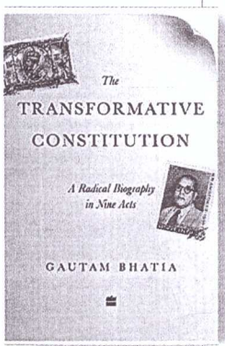
It follows, then, that the arbitrary authoritarianism of executive power need not be taken as inevitable. Our pre-constitutional past does not have to be our constitutional future. ⊡

(Rathore is author of Ambedkar's Preamble: A Secret History of the Constitution of India*)*



Jawaharlal Nehru speaking at the Constituent Assembly

Gautam Bhatia
THE TRANSFORMATIVE CONSTITUTION: A Radical Biography in Nine Acts | HarperCollins | 544 pages | Rs 699



BHATIA TRACES HOW LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND FRATERNITY HAVE EVOLVED TOWARDS A REGULATIVE IDEAL OF DEMOCRATIC, EGALITARIAN FREEDOM—A VITAL BEACON.

Hindustan Times

20/02/2021

Pg. 17

Getting to zero

Bill Gates' new book provides us with a plan to bring C02 emissions down to zero by the year 2050

Manjula Narayan

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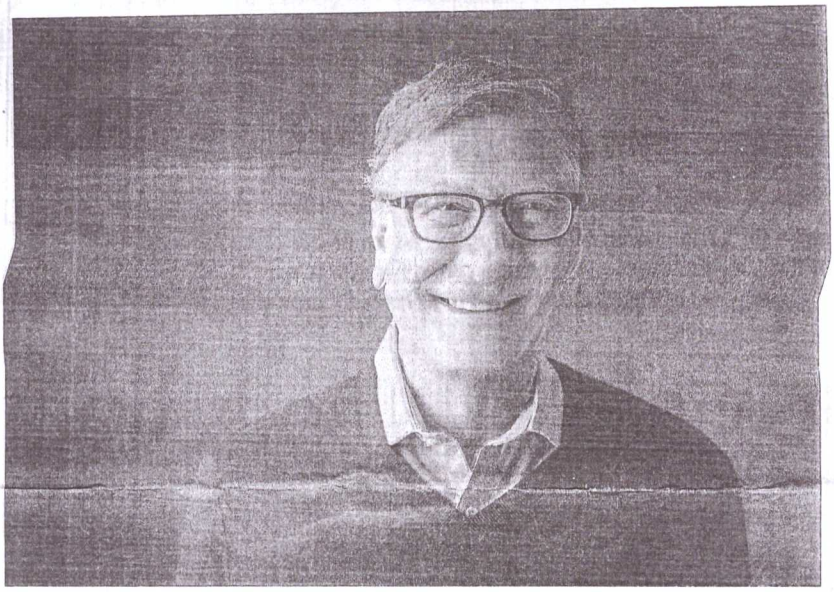


Bill Gates

Reading *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster*, Bill Gates' new book, you are struck by his belief that the world can be changed for the better, perfected, saved; that humankind can stop climate change if we sincerely tried. Not for him a horrified paralysis as the world ends in fire or ice. Approaching the monumental crisis as a problem to be solved, he provides us with a logical plan to bring carbon dioxide emissions down to zero by the year 2050.

"When people think about climate, they think about making electricity and about passenger cars mostly. They aren't aware that there are many other sources of CO2 emissions including when we make cement or steel or when we grow cows -- in some countries to eat beef. Electricity, transport, food, buildings and manufacturing are the biggest areas of emissions. The challenge to get to zero is you can't skip any of these areas of emissions. You have to do even the hard ones," he said during a video interview.

To achieve that goal requires much innovation, and a shift to new ways of doing things. "The younger generation more and more is going to demand progress, it will be the moral cause of their generation across religions and countries and so they deserve a plan. And yet, this movement doesn't really have a plan. So my book is to suggest the elements of a plan," he says stressing that battling climate change is the hardest thing humanity has ever done. "Unlike the pandemic, you won't be able to get out o f it with just a single tool like a vaccine. The fact that it accumulates slowly and just gets slightly worse can't fool us into not taking early action," says Gates who is enthused about the possibilities of everything from plant-based and cell-based meat to electric vehicles and the use of nuclear power instead of coal to generate electricity.

"About the artificial meat, if you'd asked me five years ago, I would have said that was going to be very difficult but a lot of new companies like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat are selling their ground beef and some other products in the US market and are getting quite a bit of good acceptance. Over time, those companies may have many competitors and work on different food areas and the price of those things will come down and the quality will go up, and at some point, it may be a

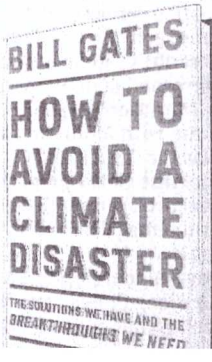
ket will shift even if the government doesn't say, 'OK, we are going to tax the stuff that causes emissions'," he says pointing out that all the areas that are the biggest sources of CO2 emissions need innovation.

"We need great innovators, great research, great policies that will radically change all five of those areas in order to get to this very ambitious goal of zero emissions. That's the only thing that will stop the temperature from continuing to rise," says Gates. He believes rich countries will ban the sale of gasoline cars in the next 15 years.

"The reason is that the cost of electric cars will go down and as those batteries get cheaper, their range will go up as they have more power storage and you'll have more charging stations and the time it takes to charge will go from hours to 15 to 20 r inutes. So even though, today, if you get an electric car, you pay a premium -- what I call the green premium -- over time, that premium will drop to zero," he says adding that much of the terrible air pollution in Indian cities comes from cars and coal plants.

"It's another reason you want to move the cars to electric and the power generation away from coal. Coal has a lot of health effects. Coal kills a lot of people and not just in mining accidents. And yet, India has a lot of domestic coal and a lot of jobs in coal so that will be a very fraught transition to move away from that," says Gates who thinks improved nuclear reactors could be the best source of clean energy.

"Nuclear reactors have been generating power for a long time. Even so, I don't



expensive, requires human operators. We want a reactor that no human has to ever push the right buttons; it is totally safe by pure physics; there's no overheating scenario." It sounds too good to be true but a company called TerraPower -- is already working on it. "They are building a demonstration plant to see if this new generation can work and be cheap. If so then maybe it can help with the climate problem," he says.

Gates believes 2021, the year of the COP26 (2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference) to be held in Glasgow this November, "is a big year for climate to get a plan". Currently, the third richest man in the world, he is aware of the limits of philanthropy. "This is not something that I, even with all the resources I have, can do a meaningful percentage of. It's such a big thing and it involves governments and big private sector companies," he says. "You know philanthropy can help invent the meningitis vaccine -- that's a few hundred million dollars type project. The energy industry is many trillions and once you add other industries like steel and cement you have a meaningful part of the world's 80 trillion dollar global economy. So my goal, although I'm doing my best and I'm putting 2 billion of my money over the next five years into this, it's really just being catalytic and speaking out about how all the resources might come together to get us to zero," he says.

For the sake of the world's young people, you hope Gates' plan works.

How to Avoid a Climate Disaster
Bill Gates
256pp ₹999

The Primary Teacher, Vol. XLI, No. 3, July 2016

Dictionary of History for Schools (Trilingual)

Seema Ojha*

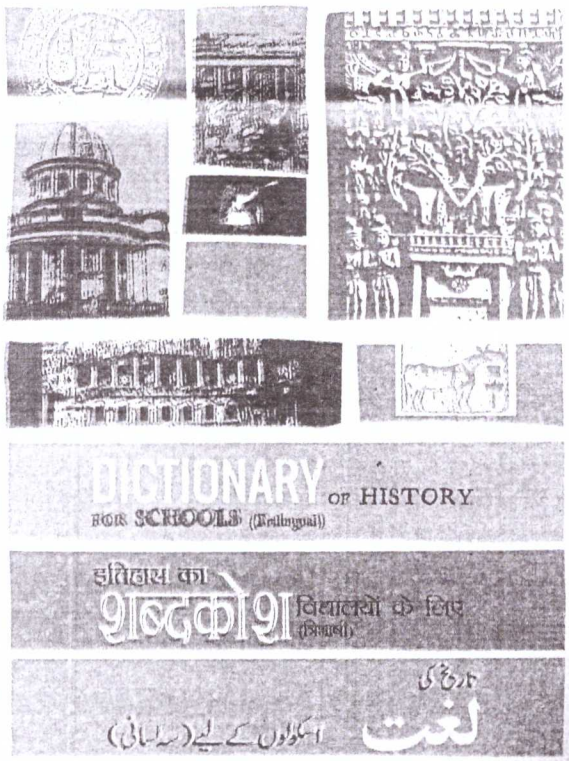
Title: *Dictionary of History for Schools (Trilingual)*

Editor: S. Perwaiz Ahmad and Rekha Agarwal (Hindi)

Publication: NCERT

Price: ₹135

No. of pages: 176



History, as a component of social science till the secondary stage and as an elective subject at the higher secondary stage, requires appropriate pedagogical support for effective teaching–learning process. The subject can be better appreciated, and terms and concepts used in the discipline can be appropriately assimilated, understood and learnt with the help of a dictionary that will suit the level and need of students.

There are many dictionaries available in market that explain historical terms and concepts but they are quite exhaustive and specific, and are therefore, not suitable for school students. These dictionaries have been developed either on events or on different periods of Indian history. Some of them have entries only on important personalities, whereas, some have a mixture of entries on important personalities, writings, events, places, archaeological sites, and so on. They have few entries on

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terms and concepts occurring in the study of history. Because of their exhaustive design, these dictionaries are useful primarily to students at higher levels of specialised education. For school students, these dictionaries turn out to be inappropriate, thus, creating a gap in understanding the concepts.

Dictionary of History for Schools (Trilingual), developed by NCERT, covers all periods of history in India and world (i.e., ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary), and is, principally, a supplementary reference resource book.

NCERT textbooks are available in three languages — English, Hindi and Urdu. Many students may be fluent in one or two of these languages but they may not be fluent in all three. For example, a child may be fluent in Hindi and find it difficult to understand English when it is used as a medium of instruction. *Dictionary of History for Schools (Trilingual)* explains terms and concepts in all three languages for better learning of the students.

Entries have been included in the dictionary on the basis of their pragmatic usefulness. It includes as many terms and concepts that learners of history in school would likely look for. This dictionary, therefore, provides a information on terms and concepts significant to different periods in the history of India and world at the elementary and secondary stage. Even though it is, primarily, meant for school students, the dictionary will be useful to anyone looking for basic information on a specific term or concept that one may come across while reading.

The explanations, though brief, give adequate information for elementary and secondary stage students and teachers teaching these classes. Conflicting statements and dates have been verified.

This dictionary with 410 entries has been structured in alphabetical order, making it convenient for the readers to access it easily. The alphabetisation is letter-by-letter, not word-by-word. Where two or more entries have the same initial name, they are in alphabetical order, e.g., Civil Rights precedes Civil War. This 'encyclopedic' format or chronological approach or even periodisation would ensure efficient use of this dictionary. Some entries, such as *zamindar,* defy easy chronological placement as they span many decades and transcend historical periods.

The dictionary also has several sub-entries. These sub-entries have been put under the respective main entries to make it easier for the students and teachers to understand the larger picture, for example the entry on 'absolutism' has 'absolutist' and 'absolute rule' as sub-entries.

Non-English words that are not proper nouns or titles are in italics with exception of few words, which have been acquired in English language. For example, 'samurai' is originally a Japanese word. But it has now been

included in English, so it is not in italics. Sanskrit and Pali words are in italics. The elaborate diacritical marks required by strict Indology are also not used in the text of the dictionary.

The explanations have been drawn extensively on the opinions of other scholars. The works that have been consulted intensively are included in the bibliography section.

For easy access, the dictionary also includes an index. In order to facilitate rapid and efficient location of information, and to make this dictionary useful, extensive cross-references (e.g., See also) have been provided.

Hence, *Dictionary of History for Schools (Trilingual)* is a comprehensive source and reference book for all scholars and students of the discipline.

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION FOR TEACHING
2019, VOL. 45, NO. 4, 486–490 Sept.

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

BOOK REVIEW

The Palgrave international handbook of women and outdoor learning, edited by Tonia Gray and Denise Mitten, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, 968 pp., £201 (hbk), ISBN 3319535498

I offer my review as a teacher educator based at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. My discipline field is early childhood education and I coordinate and teach a sustainability focussed course which supports undergraduate pre-service teachers' reflections on the importance of nature-child relationships and issues of social justice. I am also a narrative and arts-based researcher and much of my recent work has focused on the lived experiences of women in academia. Yet, I hadn't recognised the relevance this book and its contents would hold for me. I had imagined it might be filled with chapters describing adventurous, sporty, risk-taking outdoorsy women engaged in climbing, hiking and challenging activities requiring a braving of the elements (characteristics which do not describe me or my experiences). It *is* indeed about adventurous risk-taking women, but not quite in the way I had expected. Reading has enriched my understandings and my personal/professional passions, and I have found myself captivated and inspired by the myriad of contagious and important messages explored with openness, generosity and wisdom.

This book is a valuable resource for many people for many reasons. Clearly it is invaluable for outdoor educators. However, it is also useful for those of us who teach undergraduate students; who are non-specialist readers; who value interdisciplinary approaches and knowledges; who are interested in leadership and/or women's experiences; who are concerned with wellbeing; and the more-than-human world; or who use, or want to use, aesthetic, arts-based and narrative methodologies in research inquiry. It is a book that offers strategies and ideas for practitioners, academics, teacher educators, educators based in schools and early years settings, and researchers and research higher degree students – whether their work is in outdoor education or not.

A voluminous work, with 62 chapters representing 80 women authors – women across the world who have spent their lives as outdoor educators and leaders – it is a book that explores many important experiences, ideas and topics. It presents a holistic view of what outdoor learning can encompass; and encourages reflection on gender equity and how women's voices might be amplified – while simultaneously doing this through its approach and collective authorship. It presents a multitude of experiences, observations, reflections and insights. Exploring a diverse range of topics, frameworks, theories, paradigms and approaches, readers – whatever their backgrounds, focus and experience – will find countless synergies and points of connection. Its primarily narrative style ensures the work is accessible and meaningful to its wide audience, inviting a returning to themes, experiences and ideas.

I encountered many unexpected gifts and points of resonance, some of which are explored in this review. It is a book to get to know well. Abundant with knowledge and wisdom, it offers six thematic parts to explore: Setting the Scene; Contested Spaces: Gender Disparity in Outdoor Learning Environments; Motherhood and Outdoor Learning Environments: Chaos and Complexity; Leadership, Learning, Transformations, and Identity; Case Studies of Women in Action; and, Towards an Inclusive and Nourishing Future for Women in Outdoor Learning Environments.

Rather than examining the content of these thematic parts in sequence, I am taking the liberty of highlighting core messages that resonated for me, linked also to the times and context in which I was reading and reviewing.

A more gender-balanced world

My reading took place in the weeks following celebrations marking International Women's Day 2019, the theme '*#BalanceforBetter*' calling for a more gender-balanced world and focusing our attention and collective action on celebrating women's contributions and knowledge. This theme connects us to unity, celebration, reflection, collaboration, advocacy and action – as does this edited collection.

Tonia Gray and Denise Mitten call women to (continue to) advocate for themselves, find support among women while also reaching out to men and other allies. They call us to respond to the socialisation that sees 'women as lesser than' and 'the environment as lesser than'. The lived experiences of the editors and authors, described through stories, history and *her*stories, document the realities of gender bias, this 'lesser than' lens, and the barriers and discrimination faced by women in their male dominated profession. It is all terribly relatable, and every woman reader will recognise aspects of their own experiences reflected and mirrored in these stories. Part three connects the reader to the identities of women, the costs and benefits of leaving behind traditional roles, and the issues and challenges women face, particularly when juggling carer responsibilities alongside career. The stories shared offer support for interrogating 'gender (dis)parity' within our own sphere of experience and influence. Attention is given to examining ways barriers can be removed to ensure women's ideas and experiences influence the practices and structures that shape our various communities. The book is a tribute to pioneering women, honours women who work in the profession, and questions the systematic devaluing of women's contributions in the field of Outdoor Education and more widely. It brings our attention to the importance of a socially just world and to ways that 'change might be orchestrated together' (p 47).

The 'being of women' made visible

Across its 924 pages, women, and the voices of women, are made visible. To use Ursula Le Guin's (1989) phrase, 'the being of women' is heard and seen. Women's much needed knowledge and contributions to outdoor learning and leadership are palpably clear, offering women within and beyond this field many navigational tools and opportunities. As Genevieve Blades outlines in her chapter (Chapter 5 'Elder women Speak of Outdoor Learning and Experience'), this book opens us to 'what is possible and to what matters' (p.90). 'It is a call for all women of all cultures to acknowledge their inner power, to be a part of creating spaces that are what we imagine could be in the world.' 'No matter what you do, whether teaching, making a speech, gardening, or sitting in silence, attune to "what matters" and see what happens!' (p 91).

Without essentialising women, because as Denise Mitten notes in her chapter (Chapter 2 'Let's Meet at the Picnic Table at Midnight') there is 'not a single story' (p 23), the experiences captured in this book repeatedly tune the reader to 'what matters' and show that women lead and care differently, engage with the natural and more-than-human world differently, and with each other differently, from men. The stories reflect that leadership can be characterised by care, generosity, self-awareness and compassionate, collaborative and relational thinking and action. These stories of women's lives and work show us the way and generate an 'ecology of hope' (p 886).

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The experience of reading this book is not dissimilar to the powerful and hope-filled experience of watching Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand, across the world's news. In the aftermath of recent terror and cowardly hate-filled acts in Christchurch, people around the world have observed with deep respect Jacinda Ardern's response, her compassion, wisdom and inclusiveness in action. They are noting that her leadership seems to come from a different place – a place of relationship, caring, integrity, kindness, authenticity and social justice. Her distinctive approach is making world headlines. Her response: 'I don't think I'm displaying leadership. I just think I'm displaying humanity'.

Such notions of leadership and qualities of leadership are explored across this book. A positive regard to relationships (between people *and* the more-than-human) permeate the pages, highlighting women's commitments to nurturing each other because 'leadership is a relationship' (p 114). The focus on leadership as 'the relationships we form', 'integrity in the process', 'mentorship', 'empathy', 'collaboration' and 'community', rather than male-based paradigms like 'individual task accomplishments', 'domination' and 'glorification' are incredibly nourishing for this reader.

This book is a magnificent celebration of the values, knowledge, achievements and reflective influence of women. Emphases on wellbeing, care and caring, deep connection, social justice, freedom, belonging, creativity, listening, sanctuary, healing, embodied learning, self-discovery, reflection, presence with each other and with the land, spiritual nourishment, sensuous encounters with nature, 'nature as colleague' (p 867), loving the earth and loving humanity as foundations for learning, and 'awe and wonder' as important learning outcomes (p 482) showcase how women's priorities, philosophies and pedagogies are so beautifully focused on 'rehumanising education' (p 243).

Ways of knowing

The power of story, autoethnography, poetic, reflective and embodied approaches to research are illustrated across the book. These arts-based and storied ways of knowing support connection with individual and collective experiences and personal and professional lives. The reader is offered multiple opportunities to explore ideas through their own and others' experiences.

Several writers in the book refer to 'ecofeminism', the term coined by French activist Francoise d'Eaubonne to value connectedness, relationship and a sense of belonging to/with the community of life and every living thing. The editorial choice to privilege story and 'women's ways of knowing and being' enhances this concept and its interest in nurturing relationships and connections. Practices and pedagogies of reflection are used and described throughout the book, encouraging readers to give attention to ways of being, knowing, listening and communicating that are lived, embodied, contemplative, creative, arts-based and ancient. I was taken with Lynne Thomas, Nicole Taylor and Tonia Gray's chapter (Chapter 9 'Building Relationships on and with Mother Mountain: Women Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into Outdoor Learning') and the story of relationship that formed between them and the Mother Mountain Gulaga. The message of 'find[ing] a rock that calls to you' (p 161) is poignant, potent and magical.

Outdoor education as led by the amazing women authoring, and described in, the handbook's pages connects humans to the environment in transformative and experiential ways that have social, psychological, spiritual and biological impact – reminding us we are part of something bigger. As Jo Straker (Chapter 6 'Women's Voices in the Outdoors') summarises at the end of her chapter, 'These stories suggest the outdoors is not just a random scenic location or place for adventure, but can provide women with a cornerstone for living

a flourishing life'. 'Through their stories, emotional responses, vulnerability, embodied knowing, and relationships become attributes to be celebrated. This alternative discourse is well aligned with encouraging students to feel at home in the outdoors and live respectfully on a planet that we all share and depend on' (p 105).

This book reminds me how much women's stories and ways of knowing matter right now, and of Ursula Le Guin's essential question, 'If we don't speak our truth, who will? Who'll speak for my children and yours?' (1989, 16). These methodologies and ways of knowing seem incredibly important at this sobering moment in time when devastating global warming is at our door, and our children, tired of being the voiceless future of humanity, are rising for climate justice. An estimated 1.5 million children and young people from more than 100 countries (including more than one hundred thousand Australians) participated in recent weeks in global strike events for the planet and their future.

An educational 'superfood'

This book is a powerful reminder that relationships with nature and the outdoors matter. Across so many women's stories, the influence of the formative years is proven. Authors recount their childhood-nature connections established through childhood play in nature, through time spent in nature with curious accompanying adults, through family rituals and activities like walking, surfing and camping, or through community experiences with girl guides or nature clubs. They describe how their early experiences and interactions with nature call them to protect the natural world.

As educators we have a tremendous role to play in facilitating connections and relationships. The outdoors is a unique and significant vehicle for education and experiential learning. Genevieve Blades believes that combining experiential learning with Nature and the outdoors is to create an educational 'Superfood' (p 89). When she ponders what the essence of outdoor education is for her she describes it thus, 'a deep connection with Nature, with all that is, with the numinous and a yearning for a slower more deliberate encounter, with more pauses to feel what I feel' (p 89).

In these neoliberal times of measurement, academic attainment, standardised curriculum and the hurried pace of learning, Genevieve is not alone in this yearning. Learning outdoors offers solutions. A resounding message of this book is that outdoor education is a fertile platform for *all* educators. It supports the holistic education and growth of students, be they pre-service teachers, children or young people.

Concerningly, time to play and be in the outdoors is no longer an explicit part of children's lived lives or learning experiences. Worrying statistics shared by Amanda Lloyd in her chapter (Chapter 43 'Outdoor Learning in Primary Schools: Predominately Female Ground') highlight an Australian study's findings that one in 20 children never leave their homes to play, and one in four Australian children has never climbed a tree.

And so, *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning* is an essential guide and compass. Part 5 is focused on teachers and pedagogy and how we might give our pre-service teachers and students opportunities to build meaning and 'the skills to live well on the earth' (p 101). We are reminded that outdoor learning is not an additional component to add to an already crowded curriculum. Rather, it is a philosophy of teaching, and a change of location to enable authentic and direct experiences with nature and place, rich social experiences, and creativity and imagination. This section devotes itself to case-studies and pedagogical examples that demonstrate women's excellent common practices and approaches to outdoor learning experiences, presenting compelling evidence-based arguments for their effectiveness. The chapters in this section document how teachers

are broadening the traditional definitions of outdoor education and using story as pedagogy, art as pedagogy, and relationship as pedagogy. Brimming with ideas that value relationship-based experiential learning, aesthetic experiences, self-efficacy, place connections and meaning, the reader comes to understand how child-led, arts-based, place-based pedagogies can be enacted and what they can look like, sound like and feel like.

There are two standout chapters in this section for me. Kumara Ward's chapter (Chapter 41 'Singing in the Forest: Outdoor Education as Early Childhood Curriculum') describes experiential nature education based on building relationships between self, other and the natural world, enacted with children as part of an ongoing emergent style of curriculum. Kumara shares stories of how she is integrating arts-based experiences to support young children's connection and relationships with place, and she describes the theoretical rationale underpinning her responsive and creative approaches.

Clarice Lisle's chapter (Chapter 47, 'Turning Inside Out: Learning Through Local Phenomena and Lived Experience') is equally fabulous. Describing herself as 'the luckiest teacher alive' (p 691) Clarice teaches with a focus on place-based learning at Ballarat Grammar School's Mount Rowan Campus and school farm, a purpose-built campus for 75 Year 4 students. She presents a wonderful selection of vignettes which share moments of children's wonder, recognition and great joy. 'Learning to Speak Animal' is a favourite. An excerpt includes the following: *"It was a warm and sunny afternoon. The students had been desperate to get an opportunity to visit the piglets that were now 10 days old ... Over to the left four piglets were having a game of tag. In and out of the tussocks they scuttled. The children watched in astonishment.*

> "It's like us!" one child exclaimed. "They are playing like us."
>
> *"They seem to like each other's company. I can almost guess what they're thinking. I wonder if they have feelings."*
>
> Suddenly there was an agitated series of grunts. A group of piglets had wandered off too far. Breaking her repose, the mother raised her head and called them back.
>
> *"They can talk to each other," one child exclaimed in astonishment. "They can actually speak pig."* (697–698).

This book is filled with revelations of so many kinds. Revelations that connect us to 'what matters', to stories of experience and lived lives, to wonder, delight, and places to pause and feel what we feel. In summary, this wonderful hopeful book is rich with ideas and directions for an inclusive nourishing future for us all. For women. For learning. For education. For the earth.

I cannot recommend it highly enough.

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THE JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
2020, VOL. 51, NO. 5, 395–398

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

BOOK REVIEW

Posthuman insights for environmental education. A review of *Mental health and wellbeing in the Anthropocene: A posthuman inquiry*, by Jamie Mcphie. 2019, Singapore: Springer Nature. €69.99, ISBN 978-981-13-3326-2.

The first line of Jamie Mcphie's book is a bold and provocative one: 'There is no such thing as mental health' (Mcphie, 2019, p. v). For Mcphie the word *mental* was 'invented and appropriated' (p. v) and inappropriate when considered in a posthuman sense. As the rest of the book explores, the notion of mental health residing only in the head is what Mcphie finds problematic – a relic of Cartesian dualisms, where the mind and body are distinct and separate from one another. Instead, Mcphie asks, what if mental health and wellbeing were distributed throughout our environment – as *environ(mental) health* – and planetary ill-health influenced our mental health?

It may seem strange that a book on the topic of mental health and wellbeing is being reviewed for an environmental education journal. However, it is the alternative perspectives and different ways of thinking that Mcphie offers which may disrupt some common perceptions of mental health *and* the environments we live – and it's the transdisciplinary nature of Mcphie's work that provides relevance to environmental education researchers. Mcphie challenges distinctions between humans and the environment, exploring human-environment relations through experimental research techniques. Mcphie's take on human-environment relations has bearings for how we think of environments, and therefore warrants attention by environmental educators. Furthermore, I think it is important to note I am not a mental health expert; rather, an outdoor environmental educator. Hence, my review comes from the perspective of an environmental education researcher interested in the posthuman approach Mcphie deploys. I will touch on the posthuman approach shortly, but before I will note how the book is framed.

A changing climate, species extinction, rapid transformation of landscapes – in general, environmental catastrophe or ecocide – are part of this time being labeled the Anthropocene.[1] Mcphie adds mental ill-health into the mix, explaining ecocide as a problematic issue not completely separate from mental ill-health: there is a 'growing body of evidence indicating that anxiety, stress and mental ill-health are becoming more prevalent in modern Western societies' (p. 3) despite greater wealth, life expectancy and access to health care. From an ecological sense, mental health is an issue 'that involves the wider mental human-environment assemblage' (p. 9). This is to say that humans are not separate from the planet and, in many ways, mental health, physical bodies and a damaged planet are not independent entities. Such framing signals his intention to investigate how mental health and wellbeing are distributed in the environment, where 'ecocide is a mental health issue' (p. 8). This leads to a key concept of the book – environ(mental) health. The idea proposes that 'mental ill-health is evident in humans *and* the environment if viewed through an alternative lens, one that doesn't choose to isolate mental from physical process or culture from nature (or *human* from *environments* for that *matter*) [original emphasis]' (p. 42). Further entangled within environ(mental) health is the force of capitalist modes of production and consumption. Philosophically, this hints at Mcphie's disdain for Cartesian duality and alternative approach to the project.

What people might find difficult about the book is the complexity and number of concepts deployed. Posthuman thinking is not for the faint-hearted and Mcphie likens it to learning another language. In some respects, the generous footnotes[2] help introduce the language, ideas and concepts. Furthermore, the book doesn't dwell too long on one topic, moving through ideas quickly but circling back to them later. This approach develops and reinforces key messages whilst keeping the reading engaged through the complex philosophical discussions. In saying that, if a reader has no previous understanding of posthuman theory, the ideas will still likely be confronting and take some grappling with.

The approach taken for the study is described as a process-relational ontology of immanence. I mention the approach (which may be a barrier for accessing the book) as it enables the new and innovative ideas put forward. As such, the study is not a psychological exploration of mental health, but an ontological one which turns to materiality and an animistic world without pre-defined boundaries or points. I think of this as the human mind and body entangled in a broader more-than-human world – a removal of conventional boundaries. Or simply, to use Haraway's (2016) phrase, 'everything is connected to something' (p. 31). Thinking with a philosophy of immanence is to consider nothing isolated or transcendent (Colebrook, 2002). Mcphie (2019) explains immanence is 'an attempt to break free from the Cartesian trap of self-other or nature-culture dichotomies that reify transcendent and static modes of thought and practice' (p. 41). So for such an ontology, bodies become zones of entanglement with the world, where the mind (or thought) extends topologically. It is such ideas that environmental educators may find generative, because they help unsettle inequitable dualisms, including human exceptionalism and anthropocentric thinking in research practice.

The book is not all philosophy and theory. Spread throughout chapters (in what are called preludes, interludes and postludes) a post-qualitative empirical inquiry is performed, focusing on the 'Walking in Circles' (WiC) group. WiC was formed by participants from a few therapeutic groups and resulted in a range of outings to environments to investigate the perceptions of participants and the therapeutic capacity of environments. As Mcphie explains, this evolved into a post-qualitative action research project which includes participants as co-researchers. This imaginative inquiry enacts methods (or non-methods) such as psychogeography. One example involves the group following a circular line pre-drawn on a map as a way of exploring a location. The ventures to outdoor environments include urban and peri-urban settings (such as a shopping mall) where 'co-researchers' create empirical materials via journals, photography, video, etc. The ventures and discussions of the WiC group co-create insightful investigations and ruptures in thought, specific to times and particular places. This is not a conventional humanist qualitative methodology, but one guided by the environments and co-researchers as much as (if not more than) Mcphie. I see potential here to open up new modes of inquiry for outdoor and environmental education research, adapted to various locations and research situations. Mcphie's creative and emergent approach offers both an ethical and engaging style of research.

Another idea worth highlighting for environmental educators is the discussions on the healing power of nature. The benefits of time in nature are regularly discussed in environmental discourse – often portrayed as a panacea – where time in nature is good and more time is better. However, Mcphie (2019) highlights that the healing power of nature can actually be the healing power of the concept. Concepts (such as nature) have performativity – they do something – and shape how we think. But how the concept performs depends on the socio-cultural, geographical, material, historical, cognitive and political specificity of a person or group of people. For example, how a person perceives nature (the concept, e.g. a romantically idealized conception) and what a person perceives nature to be (actual bio-geographical location, e.g. a green space such as a manicured park or wilderness area) will impact how a person engages with and experiences a particular environment. Furthermore, the perception of the experience then influences whether time in that environment was beneficial for them. Does a person perceive a landscape to be damaged and degraded, or wild, healthy and flourishing? Is it pouring with rain, full of scary leaches and just plain hard work? Maybe you like rain, leaches and hard work? Mcphie (2019) highlights that of the studies purporting mental health gains from time in nature, the ones he reviewed restrict nature to idealistic and romanticized conceptions.

Such interpretations have consequences and reveal underlying issues with the 'connection to nature' rhetoric. For example, those that perceive (or have access to) green nature are only acknowledging a certain image of an environment. Alternatively, those with an ecological education (those that may see environmental destruction) or a post-romantic view might perceive a world with wounds and experience negative emotions when encountering such a 'nature'. Mcphie agitates further, questioning if we are already of nature (ontologically), how are we separate to it? How can we connect to something we are already participating with?[3] As he explains, the real problem is a crisis of perception and conception (how we conceive, develop and understand ideas), not a literal

disconnection. Borrowing from Brookes' (2002, 2004) line of thinking about outdoor education curriculum, I also wonder if connection to nature rhetoric is dominated by decontextualized, universalist and absolutist tendencies? Our abstracted epistemologies, separated from ontology, have left us free from messiness but with a certain image of the world. Mcphie's ruminations bring ontology in conversation with epistemology, ethics and the nuanced complexity often missed by normative approaches to inquiry.

Many times throughout the pages, instead of asking what something is, Mcphie asks the question of what something might do (such as a concept)? This aspect of a process-relational approach looks for performativity and productive possibilities over identity and categorization. Hence, I'm prompted in this review to think about what the book does – what was its affect as I read it?

I first read *Mental health and wellbeing in the Anthropocene* over the 2019/2020 summer in south eastern Australia. During this time, bushfires raged for months on end, with an estimated seventeen million hectares burned across the country. This was the largest fire in modern record. Thirty-three people perished in the fires, over three-thousand homes were destroyed and an estimate of over one billion mammals, birds and reptiles were killed. The fires wreaked havoc irrespective of human or other-than-human life. I was never in any direct physical danger from fires. However, friends were at risk, places I work/love/spend much of my time irreversibly damaged and the resulting smoke blanketed my home whenever the wind blew it my direction. It is within these events that I read Mcphie's book and they undoubtedly work together in shaping how I consider the book and the events of the summer. Smoke in my lungs, constant haze, news clips of leaping flames, images of jet black skies and expanding fire zones on emergency services apps all created affects and altered my (perceived) connection to (a specific) nature (in the high country of Victoria). My mind extended across the state into fire zones to empathize with species and places I have become attached to and darkened at the sight of blackened landscapes and burnt bodies. I consider this in conjunction with Mcphie's (2019) *extended body hypothesis*, where 'the physical body is extended in time and space conceptually, perceptually and affectively' (p. 184). As the fires receded and I ventured physically back to these areas, I was uplifted by green shoots sprouting from eucalypts and sobered by silty rivers showing the signs of erosion. The material events of the summer reshaped the world and myself as part of it. This is a world in process where perceptions of it are not static.

Now, as I sit down and write this review, the planet is wrapped in the grips of the COVID-19 pandemic and many of us cannot leave our homes, visit friends or go to our workplaces. Mcphie's book is both poignant and valuable to think with in such times. It has prompted me to think about the relationship between physical surroundings, the environment and mental health in ways I never had before. Throughout, Mcphie offers methodologically innovative ways for moving beyond mind-body dualisms and accounting for the physical nature of mental phenomena. He challenges commonly held assumptions on the way to a non-reductive ethical consideration of human-environment relations. I highly recommend this book for environmental educators, outdoor educators, eco/adventure/wilderness/nature therapists and researchers that want to challenge commonly-held thoughts and engage in new ways of thinking.

Notes

1. Admittedly, the Anthropocene as a label is troublesome for Mcphie, due to its anthropocentric foundation (see also, Haraway, 2016, for further discussion on the problematic naming of the epoch), and uses it for its accessibility.
2. Personally, I much prefer footnotes to endnotes. A quick glance at Mcphie's footnotes adds variant readings, a way to think with a concept or makes an interesting side comment without having to flick all the way to the back of the book. For me, the footnotes add to the reading rather than disrupting it.
3. As Mcphie (2019) elaborates:
   We can never 'reconnect to nature' because there were never any points to connect in the first place. An immanent version of nature always already includes us. It includes the impoverished. It includes the minoritarian. It includes our products. It includes plastic. It includes moving from observation to participation. This post-romantic perspective is a far cry from a Teletubby [manicured] landscape (p. 223).

in the multilingual universe of Mithila is in debt to its border-crossing others. Jha concludes: "The emergence of multilingualism, it would appear then, was socially and politically powered by a long-term historical tendency towards closer interactions among people from diverse, part-shared and part-distinct, geocultural backgrounds" (p 237). It is these interactions which shaped Vidyapati's vision of "a reformulated ideal of the imperium" (p 237) at the crossroads of late Sultanate history. There are, as Jha reminds us, many Vidyapatis: the poet, the politician, the storyteller and the songwriter. But these Vidyapatis are only accessible in readings that go beyond the state-led initiatives of memorialising and monumentalising. Jha invites us to such readings and ends his landmark study by suggesting that Vidyapati embodies nothing less than the spirit of literature in 15th century North India. After reading this book, few would disagree.

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From RSBY to PMJAY

Crutches for Health Insurance Business in the Name of the Poor

RAVI DUGGAL

Healthcare for India's Poor: The Health Insurance Way by Sonalini Khetrapal, *New Delhi, Gurugram: Academic Foundation, 2019; pp 192, ₹1,195.*

In the foreword to this book *Healthcare for India's Poor: The Health Insurance Way*, Anne Mills of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine sums up the problem Sonalini Khetrapal deals with—it is very unusual to use private insurance intermediaries in an almost entirely public-financed scheme to provide improved access to healthcare (p 14). This is, in essence, the fate of the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), a targeted health insurance scheme for the poor—the below poverty line (BPL)—to access hospitalisation care and be saved from catastrophic expenditure that would fling them further into the throes of poverty.

Healthcare for India's Poor is based on the PhD work of Khetrapal which is based on assessing the RSBY in two districts, one each from Punjab and Haryana. Unfortunately, the analysis of the RSBY in the book remains embedded largely in the findings from the two districts when statewise RSBY data is easily available and the author could have deepened the analysis with incorporation of a nationwide assessment to justify the title of the book. Further, the RSBY is fairly well-researched and has a robust literature about its performance and functioning, some of which the author has referred to in the different chapters of the book. However, the overall analysis of the RSBY in the book remains restricted, weak and inadequate, and the conclusions based on the learnings of the RSBY for the new scheme Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) to consider are unconvincing.

The book's focus is specifically the RSBY and the second half of the book is devoted to the assessment of the RSBY and learnings from it for the PMJAY so that it can build on the former's failures to meet the goals of providing hospitalisation cover to the poor without the burden of catastrophic expenditure burdens on the poor households. The first four chapters provide a general description of healthcare services and financing in India.

Chapter 1 deals with the public and private healthcare system and explains public–private partnerships (PPPs) and their various components and mechanisms since the RSBY is viewed as a PPP model. The author concludes that the evidence about the efficacy and efficiency of the PPP model especially in developing countries is questionable,

> while proponents suggest that the PPP model through the use of contracts with private players, helps increase competition, managerial decentralisation, and an increase in transparency and accountability there is limited

PPPs more often than not are failures except for some very limited or specific tasks like running ambulance services or providing security or cleaning services.

Privatisation of Health

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 provide a description of the healthcare system in India—health infrastructure, health workforce, private sector domination, lack of regulation of the private health sector, and some important health programmes like the National Rural Health Mission, Sustainable Development Goals and efforts towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC); and health financing and health insurance in India—public and private health expenditures, out-of-pocket (OOP) spending, social health insurance schemes like the Employees' State Insurance Scheme and Central Government Health Scheme, private health insurance and its regulation, and the evolution of the RSBY and its various state clones as a social welfare measure for the BPL households and one step towards UHC. The author does conclude that health insurance may not be an appropriate option given the weak public healthcare system in India and the dominant for profit private health sector and hence it may not take us towards UHC. The author also cites the high-level expert group (HLEG) report that viewed the RSBY and other government-funded health insurance schemes as "incomplete solutions in that they provide some coverage for hospitalised secondary or tertiary care but neglect primary care and outpatient care which are the major contributors to out of pocket expenditure" (p 86). However, the author fails to appreciate the political economy of health insurance and how schemes like the RSBY become a

diversion of public budgets to support private insurance and private hospitals.

In Chapters 5–8, the author presents an analysis of the RSBY based on a field study in two districts of the performance and functioning of the RSBY. The author assesses all aspects of the RSBY from the scheme design, to the organisational structure and institutional framework, enrolment process, contract design at each level, incentives, insurance companies, healthcare providers, package rates, payment mechanisms, and monitoring and supervision. The author also looks at access and utilisation, and claims processes. The findings in the two districts reveal that those enrolled and having utilised definitely benefited in terms of avoiding a large part of the catastrophic spending, but the enrolment levels from amongst the eligible population were itself very low—15% in one district and 42% in the other (p 134), and this meant that the outreach of the programme was poor which was probably deliberate so as to maximise profits of insurance companies.

Even with the limited microstudy, the book reveals that the RSBY was a failure across the board, whether it was poor enrolment, faulty scheme design, inadequate contract designs, delayed payments and almost absent monitoring and supervision. Further, despite the cashless system, the OOP expenditures were not very significantly affected. In fact, between the two districts, the one where public facility utilisation was higher, the OOP expenditures were lower than where private facility utilisation was higher, thus clearly indicating that health insurance as a mechanism of financing is unlikely to reduce OOP spending if the providers are largely from the private sector.

Learnings from RSBY

In the final chapter, the author draws out learnings for the transition from the RSBY to the PMJAY. The learnings are the failures of the RSBY indicated above and the author indicates that the PMJAY in order to succeed has to overcome these. We very well know that the PMJAY is only an expanded version of the RSBY with no structural changes, and the problems which the RSBY faced, the PMJAY continues to face. The only difference is that the package rates are more attractive because they are more in the realm of tertiary care unlike the RSBY which was more secondary care-oriented and hence profits for providers are definitely much more, especially in the higher end procedures and surgeries.

In the learnings, the author fails to question the insurance model itself and lets us believe that if the problems that the RSBY faced are taken care of, then the PMJAY would take us towards UHC. In the PMJAY rollout, we see clear failures of such a scheme-based approach to hospitalisation care and a number of states have rejected the insurance mechanism of financing, but even where the trust model or a mixed model is being used, the PMJAY has not made any significant difference in terms of access to hospital care and the financial burden of catastrophic spending continues to push households into poverty. Thus, such a targeted scheme-based approach to hospitalisation access is not the solution but only a mechanism for subsidising the private sector and assuring its survival.

The above approach needs to be changed and the second pillar of Ayushman Bharat of strengthening comprehensive primary healthcare through the Health and Wellness Centre concept beginning from the sub-health centre and upwards needs to be centre staged in public health investment. For hospitalisation, instead of the PMJAY, strengthening public hospitals at the subdistrict and district level will be a better option. However, in the transition to a comprehensive healthcare system, strategic purchasing from the private sector could be done to fill the gaps that currently exist.

Public–Private Partnership

Further, the problem lies in the NITI Aayog-driven National Health Policy of 2017 which favours the expansion of the private health sector and private health insurance, of pushing PPPs like handing over district hospitals to the private sector, and providing subsidies to the private sector to set up hospitals in tier two and three cities. This policy of providing crutches to the private health sector and health insurance business must be abandoned and we must revert to the HLEG recommendations and the 2015 draft health policy to take India towards UHC, wherein health insurance has no place as a mechanism of financing. UHC will be realised only if healthcare becomes a public good and it is not left to the mercy of the market. The only country whose healthcare is driven by insurance is the United States (US) and we see that one-third of the US population is not insured or underinsured and this makes the healthcare system a huge drain on the economy by capturing one-fifth of the gross domestic product. So clearly it is a bad example. The rest of the developed capitalist world and many developing countries clearly provide adequate public budgets for comprehensive healthcare to all without any direct financial burdens and that is where India needs to learn from.

To conclude, the book highlights the problems of the public-financed health insurance schemes but fails to reject the insurance-based model of healthcare financing hoping that corrections to the problems will sort out matters for the PMJAY to succeed. That is not going to happen. We need a complete structural transformation of the healthcare system within the framework of healthcare as a public good to reach the goal of UHC.

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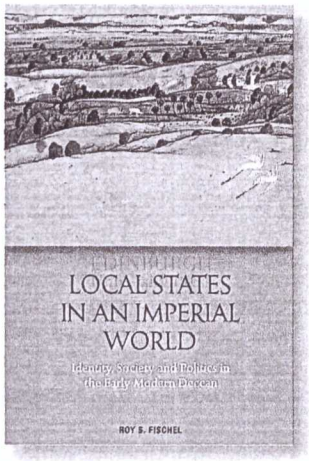
Sultans of the south

Two recent books, which focus on the Deccan Sultanates of the 16th and 17th centuries, and which chart the connections between the Deccan and Iran, serve to enrich the growing corpus of medieval Deccan history. BY **VIKHAR AHMED SAYEED**



Local States in an Imperial World

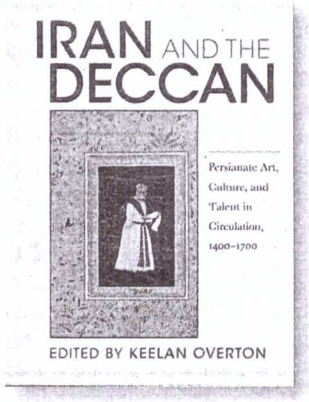
Identity, Society and Politics in the Early Modern Deccan

By Roy S. Fischel

Edinburgh University Press, 2020

Pages: x + 299

Price: Rs. 6,397



Iran and the Deccan

Persianate Art, Culture, and Talent in Circulation, 1400-1700

Edited by Keelan Overton

Indiana University Press, 2020

Pages: xv + 449

Price: Rs. 3,178

Over the past few years, there has been a burgeoning interest in the history of the medieval Deccan, a region that was ignored in the early modern history writing traditions of the 20th century. Undoubtedly, the Sultanates of the medieval Deccan were imbricated in the politics of their neighbours, but their long and independent existence of more than 300 years did not get the scholarly scrutiny they rightly deserved. Thus, the increasing attention paid to it by historians over the past few years is welcome. The two new books under review, one by Roy S. Fischel, a historian at the School of African and Oriental Studies, London and the other edited by the independent art historian Keelan Overton, add considerably to our understanding of this epoch in the Deccan.

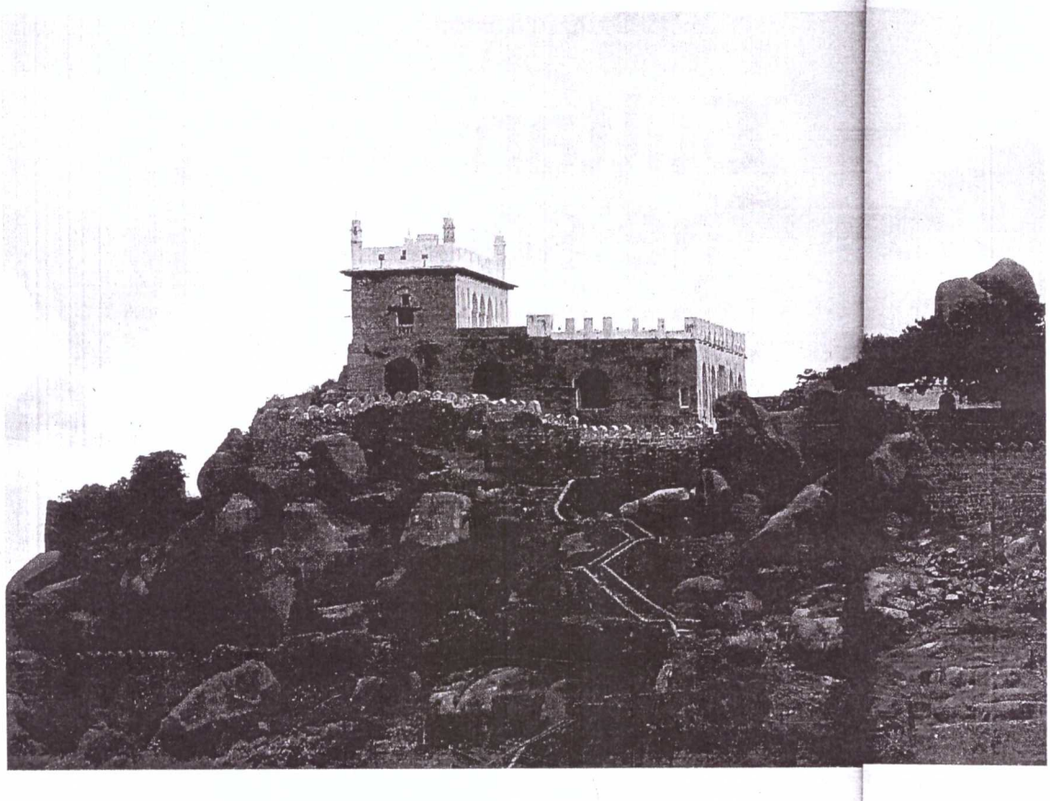
The history of the medieval Deccan, and especially that of the Bahmani and its legatee Sultanates, can be bookended by two events precipitated by rulers from northern India. The centrifugal melee unleashed over most of the Indian subcontinent as Mohammed Tughlaq's (1325-1351) hold over his sprawling empire weakened gave rise to the independent Bahmani Sultanate in 1347, delinking the Deccan from both northern and southern polities. The Bahmanis, who had frequent skirmishes and wars with their southern (Vijayanagara) and eastern (Gajapathi) neighbours, ruled over vast areas of the upper Deccan plateau up to the Krishna river until the end of the 15th century when the Sultanate spectacularly imploded due to internecine differences among the "foreign" and "native" components of its nobility.

The provincial governors of the Bahmanis soon fortified their claims over their governorates, inaugurating the era of the Deccan Sultanates. Of the five legatee Sultanates of Ahmednagar (Nizam Shahi), Bijapur (Adil Shahi), Golconda (Qutb Shahi), Berar (Imad Shahi) and Bidar (Barid Shahi) that emerged from the Bahmani system, the former three survived as robust and large states into the 17th century. The Mughals, eager to extend their territorial domain, had long set their eyes on the Deccan, and finally absorbed Ahmednagar during the reign of Shah Jahan (1628-1658). Later, Aurangzeb (1658-1707), who had an intimate knowledge of the Deccan and who had, for long, sought to quell the Shiite rulers of the region, snuffed out the independent Deccan Sultanates of Bijapur (1686) and Golconda (1687), briefly extending the domain of the Mughal Empire to its apogee.

In post-independent India, the volume *History of Medieval Deccan, 1295-1724* by H. K. Sherwani and P. M. Joshi (1975) drew attention to this region as distinct in space and time. The works of the

prolific historian Richard M. Eaton, such as *Sufis of Bijapur, 1300-1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (1978), *A Social History of the Deccan, 1300-1761: Eight Indian Lives* (2005) and *Power, Memory, Architecture: Contested Sites on India's Deccan Plateau* co-authored with Phillip Wagoner (2014), have added considerably to our knowledge of this period. George Michell and Mark Zebrowski's *Art and Architecture of the Deccan Sultanates* (1999) was instrumental in focussing the interest of scholars on the Deccan. The publication of *Sultans of the South: Arts of India's Deccan Courts, 1323-1687* (2011) and *Sultans of Deccan India, 1500-1700: Opulence and Fantasy* (2015), two lavish volumes put together by Navina Najat Haidar and Marika Sardar, following exhibitions at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, also focussed attention on the medieval Deccan.

In the past two years, several new books on this era have been published and subsequently reviewed in the pages of *Frontline*, including Manu Pillai's *Rebel Sultans: The Deccan from Khilji to Shivaji* (See "The Deccan Chronicles" *Frontline*, May 10, 2019), Pushkar Sohoni's *The Architecture of a Delhi Sultanate: Courtly Practice and Royal Authority in Late Medieval India* (See "Deccan Architecture" *Frontline*, August 2, 2019), George Michell and Helen Philon's *Islamic Architecture of Deccan India*, T.N. Devare's *A Short History of Persian Literature: At the Bahmani, the Adilshahi and the Qutbshahi Courts—Deccan* and Emma J. Flatt's *The Courts of the Deccan Sultanates: Living Well in the Persian Cosmopolis* (See "The Medieval Deccan" *Frontline*, December 20, 2019). The two books under review are the latest addition to the swelling corpus on the medieval Deccan.



GOLCONDA FORT in Hyderabad, a landmark that symbolises the Qutb Shahi dynasty (1518-1687).

NON-IMPERIAL STATES

Roy Fischel's primary focus is on the Deccan Sultanates after the implosion of the Bahmani Sultanate. His main argument is that the Deccan Sultanates were "an example of non-imperial political organisations in the early modern world." He bases this on the fact that the "key features of these sultanates were multiplicity and negotiation rather than expansion and centralisation". This argument is borne out by the fact that none of the Deccan Sultanates tried to take "over the region in its entirety". The "multiplicity" that Fischel mentions here is because the elite of the Deccan Sultanates had eclectic ethnicities. The main division and source of tension here was between the Deccanis or the "locals" (an ethnically diverse group consisting of the Muslim nobility who had come down along with the Tughlaq regime, local converts, the African-origin Habshis and the non-Muslim elites of the region) who had strong ties to the region and the "foreigners" (primarily Iranian migrants who were attracted to the opportunities in the Deccan and had trans-continental linkages).

This division of the nobility meant that "the ruling houses (of the Sultanates) had a special role in maintaining a delicate equilibrium between various actors by taking into consideration each group both politically and symbolically". Considering that there were "multiple trajectories" operating in each Sultanate, the system of the state that emerged was unique "marking it as distinct from the top-down system typical of, or aspired by, the contemporary empires."

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"Deccan" in terms of its geography, political imaginations and linguistic-cultural understandings. He also narrates the history of the region from 1000 CE, and writes that "with these divisions, it is clear that there is no one satisfactory definition of the Deccan". Yet, borrowing a concept from geographer Doreen Massey to understand a "region as a space", Fischel argues that "this geographical, political, historical and cultural understanding of the Deccan as comprising a set of subunits in varying relations provides a useful tool for analysis of the region and the constraints within which the rulers were operating. First and foremost, was the need to keep it all together in a diverse and changeable environment, in which various forces operated against unity." Through this initial chapter, Fischel demonstrates the "multiple spaces of the Deccan".

DECCANI-FOREIGNER DIVIDE

In the next chapter, Fischel takes his narrative of the history of the Deccan ahead until the 1630s while focussing on ideas of the local, peripheral and foreign. He looks closely at the identity and the politics of the Deccanis who were "most closely associated with the core region of the Deccan". The Deccanis had diverse origins; Fischel suggests that this was a "political identity" as the Deccanis emerge as a group in Persian chronicles "in parallel to their main opponents, namely, the Foreigners." Linguistically, they were associated with the emerging Dakhani language. Fischel also makes an interesting argument in this section when he says that the Deccani-foreigner divide was the main source of tension among the elites of the time rather than the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims which "seem to have been calmer, as far as we can say based on the sources." Thus, the great (Hindu) empire of Vijayanagara seems to have been "regularly included in the political system of the Deccan" whereas the Mughals and the Sultanate of Gujarat were perceived to be outsiders.

The "foreigners", migrants from Iran who came to the Deccan because of the opportunities afforded, the "extensive use of Persian practices and language", and because it was relatively more stable than north India at the time, form the theme of Fischel's next chapter. The foreigners were remarkably influential in the Bahmani and Deccani Sultanates and were much sought after. Often treated as a cohesive political group, they were nevertheless diverse and offered unique skills and training, a "marketable commodity" in the Deccan which helped them maintain "their high position in Indian politics". The migrants continued to retain their linkages with their homelands which "marks one of the main characteristics that distinguished the foreigners from the Deccani environment. Operating in trans-regional, usually urban networks, Foreigners were connected beyond boundaries." They maintained these links because of their family networks and their skill sets, which meant that they were also able to swap patrons among the Deccan Sultanates, with some of them even moving over to the Mughals who were considered as outsiders by the Deccanis. There is a widely accepted theory that there was a Shia-Sunni divide that layered the tension between the foreigners and Deccanis, but Fischel disagrees with this.

Just before the interlude from Delhi and the Bahmani ascendance, the Deccan was ruled by the Yadavas, the Hoysalas and the Kakatiyas. The way in which the Deccan Sultanates sought to localise their rule by assimilating non-Muslim elites in the state system as well as by consciously incorporating pre-Sultanate imperial traditions is discussed by Fischel in his next chapter, where he focusses on Bijapur and Golconda. This process became even more important after the demise of Vijayanagara at the Battle of Talikota in 1565.

This exercise was easy for Golconda, which inherited the well-defined Telugu linguistic zone of Telangana from the Kakatiya rulers. The process was trickier for Bijapur, which ruled the area that fell between the core regions of the Marathi and Kannada lands and whose core was away from the centres of past non-Muslim dynasties like the Yadavas and the Hoysalas. Here, Fischel makes a radical argument linking "Bijapur directly to Vijayanagara." Fischel's evidence to support this

potentially tendentious argument stems from the treatment of the Vijayanagara king Krishnadevaraya (r. 1510-1529) in certain Persian sources, the Bijapur rulers' engagement with Indic ideas, and the way in which Bijapur under Ibrahim Adil Shah II (r. 1580-1627) celebrated Id-i Nauras mimicking, in form at least, the Vijayanagar celebration of Mahanavami which preceded Dasara. Fischel writes: "This continuation not only emphasises the political centrality of the festival, but also hints at the possibility of its reincarnation in post-Talikota Bijapur. The similarity between certain aspects of Id-i Nauras and the Mahanavami is striking."

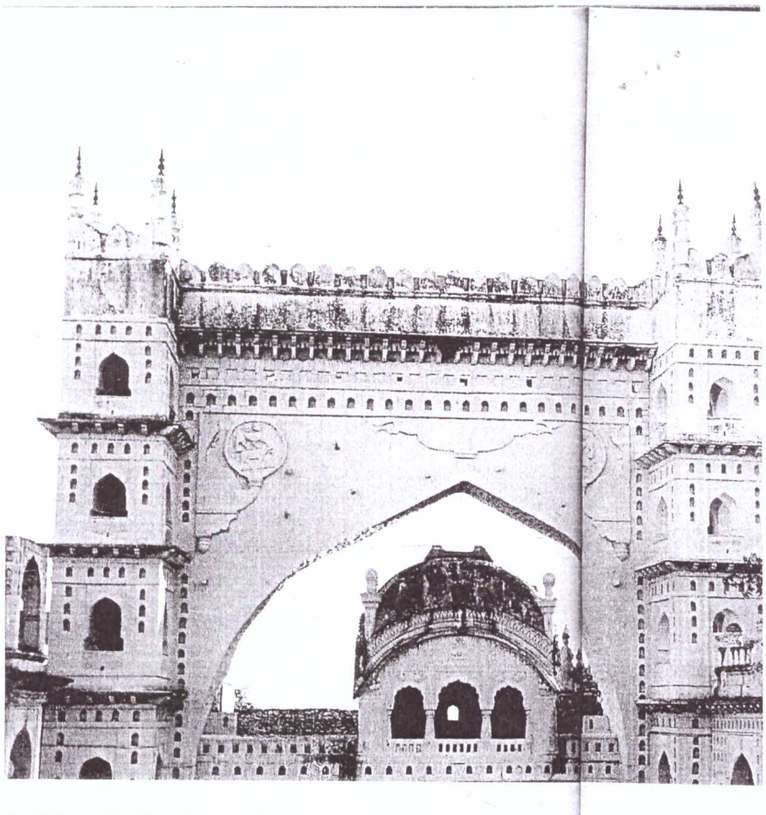
While the Deccan Sultanates ruled the Deccan for a considerable period, there were certain limitations to the Deccani system which are discussed in Fischel's next chapter. For instance, the Qutb Shahi state of Golconda could not expand beyond the core of the Telugu country and its authority, when it was there, remained weak in Andhra and Rayalseema regions. There were also certain distinct local factors that led to the decline of Ahmednagar (where the Habshi Malik Ambar and Marathas gained ascendancy in the early 17th century), Bijapur and Golconda when challenged by the Mughals.

IRANIAN CONNECTION

Keelan Overton has brought together works of both advanced as well as younger scholars in this richly produced volume of interdisciplinary essays teeming with photographs that "chart the travels and fortunes of Iranian elites and Persian cultural norms across a transregional Iran-Deccan geography" between 1400 and 1700 CE. Since the establishment of the Bahmani Sultanate in the Deccan, the region was a favoured destination for the Iranian elite. Even as they thrived in the Deccan, these migrants retained their links with their homes across the Indian Ocean. As part of the cabal of "foreigners" in the nobility of the Deccan, they were a crucial component in the politics of the era. Two of these first-generation migrants, Yusuf Adil Shah (1450-1510) and Qutb Shah (1470-1543), even went on to found the longest surviving Deccan Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda respectively.

Keelan Overton's prefatory essay provides the context of these peregrinations. She writes that for many Iranian elites, "it is useful to frame mobility through two temporal lenses. The first involves the initial migration from Iran to the Deccan...and the push-and-pull factors that informed this decision, which were both forced and voluntary...The second temporal frame concerns the migrant's (or simply itinerants) circulations within the Deccan plateau and Indian subcontinent at large." The "push" factor that Keelan Overton mentions here could include "political instability and warfare", "a rift with a ruler-patron" and so on, whereas the most significant lure of the subcontinent was "its wealth and economic prospects." Keelan Overton has also included a valuable appendix to her chapter which acts as a handy reference guide to tracing the careers of 48 Iranian elites as they moved from Iran across the Deccan Sultanates and even to the Mughal court. Thus, we can see how someone like Malik "Ain ul-Mulk" Gilani (d. 1593), who was from Gilan in Iran, fluidly moved across the courts of Bidar, Bijapur and Vijayanagara, the last of which is sometimes considered a "Hindu" empire. The ease of the elite's movement shows that in reality it was a part of the Deccani system.

In three chapters which are brought together under the theme "Iranian Elites and Their Trails", Keelan Overton clubs together papers that focus on "the human conduits at hand". Thus, questions such as who were these Iranian elite and why did they migrate to the Deccan, how did they self-identify and what contributed to their success and failure are addressed. The two historians Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Muzaffar Alam, whose joint forays have brought about paradigmatic shifts in the study of the early modern South Asian world, provide an important backdrop for the book under review as they chronologically look at this migration with a couple of case studies to demonstrate their point. Wheeler Thackston's translation of an excerpt from Rafi al-Din Shirazi's *Tazkirat al-Muluk* on Yusuf Adil, the founder of the Bijapur Sultanate, is a useful account to understand the path of this migrant who was destined for greatness in



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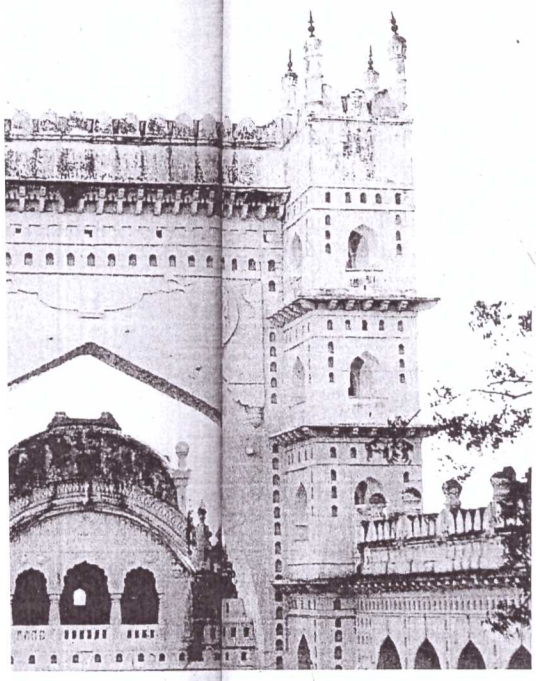

THE HINDU ARCHIVES

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the Deccan. Shirazi writes that when Adil was destitute in Lar (in Iran) and was being pursued by his father's enemies, "he had a vision of an aged and very impressive man" who said, "You must go to the Deccan, for your bread will be cooked there." Roy Fischel has also contributed a chapter in Keelan Overton's book which covers the same terrain as the third chapter of his book where he closely looks at the "foreigners".

In the next two chapters, Keelan Overton discusses "Bidar in the International Timurid". Bidar was the capital of the Bahmani Sultanate when Ahmed Shah (r. 1422–1436) moved his court there sometime after he ascended the throne. Relations between Iran and the Deccan accelerated after this shift. Royal ships were regularly dispatched to the Persian Gulf to lure the Iranian elite to cross the Arabian Sea. Peyvand Firouzeh maps "the nexus between individuals and visual and textual material that coalesced in fifteenth century Bidar" by looking closely at the "calligraphy network", which means "people and objects connected through the art of writing" between Iran and the Deccan. One part of Firouzeh's examination looks at the links between the family of the Sufi Shah Nimatullah and the royals of the Bahmani Sultanate. In the next chapter, Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom closely study the architecture of the madrasa of Mahmud Gavan (d. 1481), often called the "prime minister" of the Bahmani court. Blair and Bloom argue that the architecture of the madrasa derived from Iranian/Central Asian models. They also go a step ahead and "link the structure directly to Khurasan" and suggest that the "architectural transfer" was undertaken by "a plan rather than a person".

The next three chapters deal with "Religious Codices and Shi'i Sectarianism" and are "concerned with a religious codex that flowed between Iran-Deccan worlds." Maryam Habibi formally analyses the Quran manuscript endowed to the shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad (in Iran) by Ibrahim Qutb Shah of Golconda (r. 1550-1580), a linkage that reified Ibrahim's Shi'i creed. The next chapter is a translation of the endowment deed that is in the Quran manuscript. The subsequent chapter by Rachel Parikh is a close study of the *Falnama* (Book of Omens) that was created in the Qutb Shahi Golconda court. While there are four other *Falnamas* that were created, the relative anonymity of the Golconda *Falnama* "is most likely due to the fact that it is not 'mainstream', that is, neither Safavid or Ottoman." Parikh demonstrates that this volume, which contains 37 illustrations, was "part of the Qutb Shahi dynasty's larger initiative of promoting its political power and assimilation into the Safavid empire" and that it "reflects Shi'i political identity."

Keelan Overton, Kristine Rose-Beers and Bruce Wannell examine the St. Andrews Quran manuscript which, as a religious codex, had a fascinating trajectory. It was produced during the Safavid-era in Tabriz or Herat, from where it found its way to Bijapur under Ibrahim Adil Shah II (r. 1580-1627); the Mughal library during the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb; the minor state of Savanur and then to the Mysore court of Tipu Sultan (r. 1782-1799). After Tipu's defeat, the Quran travelled to Calcutta (now Kolkata), then London and ultimately to the University of St. Andrews in Scotland where it remains to this day. The authors write that the St. Andrew's Quran "encapsulates a staggering number of agendas and authenticities and flowed seamlessly between Timurid, Safavid, Mughal and Deccani worlds."

While Chapters 11 (by Jake Benson) and 12 (by Hamidreza Ghelichkhani) discuss "Album Culture, Calligraphy and Diplomacy", Chapters 13 and 14 are explorations of "Dakhni Literature and History" by Sunil Sharma and Subah Dayal.

Both the books under review provide new perspectives on the medieval Deccan. Fischel's pioneering argument linking Vijayanagara and Bijapur stands out because it weakens conventional scholarship that has argued that the Battle of Talikota was a religious confrontation (See "Beyond the Hindu-Muslim Binary" *Frontline*, January 18, 2019). It would help if the author expanded his bibliography to Kannada and Marathi sources while developing this argument further. A recent project that translated 21 volumes of Adil Shahi-era material to Kannada may provide some new responses on this argument from historians in Karnataka (See "Making History Accessible" *Frontline*, June 21, 2019).

In her introduction, Keelan Overton writes that the intention of the edited volume is to provide "foundational tools and sources for the ongoing integration of the region (the Deccan) into textbook studies of the Indo-Persian and early modern global worlds." One aspect of the interaction between the Iran and the Deccan which could perhaps have been added to the volume is the manner in which the ritual of Muharram emerged as the chief public event in the Shi'i Sultanates of the Deccan, and transmogrified later into a syncretic local event which is still marked across thousands of villages and towns in the Deccan (See "Muharram Celebrations in North Karnataka: A Festival of Harmony" *Frontline*, October 11, 2019). □

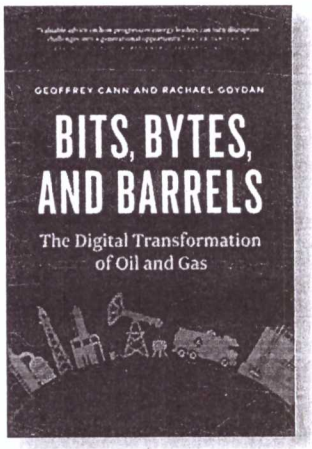
BOOKS in review

Digitisation and oil industry

A must read for the academic and industrial practitioners in the oil and gas industry.

BY **M.P. SUKUMARAN NAIR**

THIS book, written by Geoffrey Cann, a business adviser of international repute in the oil and gas industry, and Rachel Goydan, a senior Deloitte consultant for multiple industries, serves as a handbook for professionals in the oil and gas industry and in information technology to understand how digitalisation is impacting all facets of the industry. It also empowers them with insightful strategies for a possible revamp of the industry.



Bits, Bytes, and Barrels

The Digital Transformation of Oil and Gas

By Geoffrey Cann and Rachel Goydan

MADCann PRESS

Pages: 276

Price: $24.95

The oil and gas industry, which provides the essential energy inputs for improvement of the quality of life in modern times, is in dire straits. Already under the stress of serious challenges following the economic slowdown in 2019, the crisis got aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic right from the dawn of this year. Changing consumer demands, emergence of new energy resources, development of unconventional oil and gas resources, rising significance of the emerging economies—China and India—and, above all, a host of internal factors combined to depress the market. The pandemic had further pushed down demand because of extended periods of lockdown across industries and travel bans among nations. Oil demand is peaking in the developed world and prices have plunged well below the level needed to turn a profit. In order to survive, companies are reducing expenditure, bringing down capital investments and thus trying to drive down operating costs. Long gestation periods of new projects, regional geopolitical uncertainties, unfriendly government policies, financial recessions, and natural disasters are also set to weaken the financial performance of industry majors.

In this context, industry majors and oil and gas experts are seeking ways and means to contain the slump through a variety of interactions to automate operations well beyond existing instrument supports, handling of hazardous and repetitive tasks, storage, visualisation and analysis of data to make smarter decisions and integrate operations with connected devices for greater efficiency. Oil and gas companies, with the support of IT/ITES majors, are investing in digital technologies like data analytics, automation and remote monitoring, artificial intelligence, 3D printing and industrial Internet of things (IoT) in order to optimise production, maintenance, management of safety and environmental protection and better asset utilisation. Digitalisation is the new buzzword to unearth new business models and give stakeholders a better overview of operations, improve maintenance and inspection regimes and strengthen asset management. All these are expected to provide the industry with the kind of financial gain to tide it over the present crisis and advance further to see the next boom.

The book depicting this transformation is laid out in five well classified chapters.

Chapter 1 is an overview of the digital world, a primer to the advanced but well-known IT knowledge relating to data sensors, data accumulation, connectivity and data analysis. In the data processing arena, electronic chips are getting faster and smaller and programming languages are becoming easy and common. The industry is highly interconnected, and new business models are emerging very often. Amid cyber worries, digitalisation, an admix of digital and operational technologies, often enables high-speed networking in several of our daily industrial transactions at very low costs and at the same time with increased sustainability and unlocking its full-scale economic value. The IT/ITES majors have already perfected their skills in bringing digital innovation to industries and are engaging with multinational clients to

Information Technology

harness the business potential lying untapped. In this respect, it is not only likely to hasten the economic progress of the hard-hit industry but also benefit investment-starved and energy-thirsty developing nations like India.

The second chapter entirely dwells upon the building blocks of the digital enterprise in the oil and gas industry. Commercially viable and technically reliable digital tools like cloud computing, digitised ERP, AI, sensor technologies and IIoT, autonomous technologies, 3D printing, digital reality, gamification, blockchain and a combination of these technologies are defined, explained and illustrated with case studies. The technological maturity of these tools, the benefits that they impart to the industry and its user segments at the operational and management level are also discussed. The synergistic results accrued when these tools are used in combination with each other are revealed through case studies. This is useful to professionals at the decision-making level.

The third chapter titled "Long Fuse, Big Bang" discusses the impact of digitalisation across the value chain in the oil and gas industry in terms of the speed (time slot) of its implementation, identified key technologies and the derived benefit. The value chain in the oil and gas sector is indeed quite long. Starting with exploration, it extends to production, field services, processing (refining), fuel retailing, managing capital projects and construction, turnaround management and a host of support functions. In all these domains, system-specific digitalisation tools find extensive applications in order to optimise operations, impart more reliability, reduce wastage of resources, avert abnormal situations and accidents, manage auxiliary supports, projects and turnarounds without time and cost overruns.

IDEAS FOR MANAGERS

In the fourth chapter, the authors provide pragmatic ideas and essential ingredients for managers in the industry to organise digital programs. The digital journey, caution the authors, is not going to be an easy ride.

Major hurdles are lack of understanding of digital trends and their impact on the company, lack of strategic direction and organisational resistance to change. The investment, the timing, preparedness, workforce engagement and their agility, talent build-up, cyber security are all important matters needing consideration at the top management level. Other barriers include the prevalent organisational IT culture, risk tolerance, confidence in the new generation digital technologies and compatibility with existing systems and practices. Tips for ensuring data quality, integrity and relevance, sound data management, managing cyber risks, developing the requisite talent pool with a vibrant, humane and business friendly culture are also included. Elements of an organisational implementation strategy and prescriptions for an effective change management and strategies for overcoming adoption hurdles are also addressed. A case study of digitalisation of fuel retail systems reveal that the risks and challenges are not different from other industries. Getting started at the right place is important. Greenfield assets are quick adapters and workmen need to be agile and open to continuous learning for self-improvement.

The fifth and final chapter dwells upon the role of board-level management in the process of driving digitalisation across the organisation. Oil and gas industry boards these days are challenged on account of declining demand for fossil fuels, rising costs for water and emissions, competitive pressures, safety and social acceptance, talent build-up and retention, and so on. How to leverage digital innovation to address these challenges and optimise business is a priority area before them. Board members need adequate understanding about the possibilities that digitisation throws up and also the concerns that are likely to surface. Predicting a future business model in the industry is indeed difficult. Important trends need to be accommodated: demographic shifts, technology advances, climate change, shift in transportation trends and oil market shifts.

The authors advise board executives to encourage managements to develop a fitting digital strategy. Digital strategy is a set of reinforcing choices that direct the organisation's actions towards integrating digital technologies into its business. The technical feasibility, the cost involved and economic and other gains along with inspirational and motivational goals should be discussed in detail in the board and the management given a free hand to implement the adopted strategy. Ecosystems also have an important role to play in fostering innovation and digital transformation. The oil and gas companies, banks and funding agencies, professionals, entrepreneurs, universities and consultants have definitive roles in promoting innovation and boot out the prevailing orthodoxy in the industry.

In conclusion, the authors call for an industry-wide change in mindset in embracing digital innovation. This would extend the life of the fossil fuel energy system by lowering its cost to compete with renewables and reducing its carbon footprint.

The well-indexed text is enriched with a glossary of terms and abbreviations and a bibliography.

On the whole, this is a unique handbook, concise, well researched, with a lot of practical insights and studded with case studies of topical interest and relevance. A must read for the academic and industrial practitioners in the oil and gas industry. □

Dr M.P. Sukumaran Nair is Director, Centre for Green Technology & Management, and former Secretary to Chief Minister, Kerala, and Chairman, Public Sector Restructuring & Audit Board Kerala State, India.

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The News Today, Oh Boy

The all-you-can-eat-menu of daily news is toxic rubbish, argues a Swiss journalist

Sudhirendar Sharma

AUDACIOUS, provocative, and utterly persuasive, *Stop Reading the News* does what a vast majority may be secretly contemplating, but often lack courage to do not just what is possible, but what is increasingly necessary. A rare book that sets out to argue a point that you are likely not to have a deeply settled opinion on, but forces you to work through a series of interconnected views and assumptions to take a call. Witty, clear, and concise, even when the narrative may fail to convince the die-hard news lover, it succeeds in making one think—on how to avoid both reading and watching news for a happier, calmer and wiser life.

Having banished news reading and watching from his life for over a decade, Swiss journalist Rolf Dobelli provides a guide on following his footsteps to reward oneself with less disruption, more time, less anxiety and more insights. The economics and politics of news generation have made the output so addictive that before one realises, news becomes to the mind what sugar is to the body. Digitalisation has made news even more potent, its corrosive impact sidles into the brain. The all-you-can-eat-menu of the daily news has become a toxic but compulsive diet.

Stop Reading the News peels many layers of news production and its persuasive marketing which forces the reader into believing that without the news our life would be worse off. Despite most of what one reads or watches is superfluous, one doesn't realise that news is opposite of understanding the world. It only reports events—events without contexts. Yet it remains dangerously addictive; the illusion of empowerment is overwhelming!

Dobelli propels readers to the compelling need to build one's own 'crap detector' as the media has gradually stopped acting as a filter for its readers, listeners and viewers. Confirming Sturgeon's Law, which states that 'ninety per cent of everything that is published is rubbish regardless of genre', the media has only degenerated to the extent of losing its relevance. Sci-fi writer Theodore Sturgeon faced condemnation for his sweeping statement, but Ernest Hemingway had little doubt on the "need for having a built-in automatic crap detector" as the media's business model involves shovelling the greatest possible magnitude of rubbish over the greater possible area.

The trouble with news is that our brains are deluged with information on which we have a remote possibility of acting upon. Once our impulse to take action fades, we not only become passive but assume the role of a victim, defined as learned helplessness. Dobelli's intuitive but engaging style of writing asks questions on our obsession with the news at the cost of inner peace and creativity. The theoretical basis for banishing news is as compelling as the proposed thirty-day plan to take the mental step of staying away from the news. The news-contaminated lifestyle needs time to detox. Once out of it, the book lists myriad other ways of engagement that could be mentally more nourishing.

NEWS DELUGES OUR BRAINS WITH USELESS INFORMATION, TURNING US INTO PASSIVE VICTIMS, COSTING US INNER PEACE AND CREATIVITY.

Rolf Dobelli
STOP READING THE NEWS |
Hachette|
160 pages |
Rs 399

Stop Reading the News would not have come about had the author not been invited to talk to internationally acclaimed journalists at *The Guardian* newspaper, precisely critiquing a subject they spent days producing. On the following morning, Dobelli's arguments appeared under the title News is bad for you on the newspaper website. It was amongst the most-read newspaper articles for 2013. It is interesting to note that Dobelli could tease the bunch of distinguished journalists by concluding that "what you are doing here is basically entertainment", without anyone contesting it.

Dobelli has dealt a complicated subject in its entirety, taking the discerning reader into a world of dangerous possibilities for which most of us have unknowingly put our life at stake. It is light reading on a serious subject, insightful and reflective. It is a timely book on a subject that is affecting our lives and causing disturbing influences on our society and polity. Anybody reading this book would think twice about switching on the television news or glancing through the pages of the newspaper. ☐

(Sudhirendar Sharma is an independent writer, researcher and academic)

ELT Journal, Vol. 74, No. 3, July 2020.

English Medium Instruction

Ernesto Macaro

Oxford University Press 2018, 344 pp., £46.60 (paperback)

ISBN 9780194403962

'Perhaps not since the shift in the mid-20th century from education for the elite to education for the masses has there been an impact of this kind on the learning experiences of young people' (p. 1). If Macaro is even half right with this bold claim about the introduction and expansion of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), then this global phenomenon must surely be of major significance to the ELT community. This book, with its firm foundations in educational research, applied linguistics, second language acquisition (SLA), and English language teaching, is for me the most comprehensive and coherent overview of this complex subject to date.

This complexity starts with the definition of EMI, which Macaro shows us is an elusive term. He adopts the definition of EMI as: 'The use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English' (p. 1). This definition, which he accepts as open to challenge, does not include the improvement of a learner's English proficiency as a necessary component, nor does it comprise the use of English to teach non-L1 English students in, say, the UK or the USA. While the definition includes all levels and ages, Macaro chooses to exclude primary education in this work on the basis that it is not organized by subject, different subjects are often taught by a single teacher, and teaching involves different pedagogies to secondary and tertiary education. He also admits that pragmatically it is just too much to include primary education in this one book, and notes the consensus among educationalists that primary-age children should be taught in their first language where possible. Macaro therefore focuses on secondary and tertiary education and the transition between them, aiming for a global perspective in every chapter, with wide-ranging examples that include North-East and South-East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and North and South Europe. There is less mention of African and Latin American contexts, perhaps reflecting above all the lack of research available on (non-primary) EMI in those regions.

The introductory chapter is a valuable read in itself. Macaro sees the three major global drivers for EMI in higher education as attracting lucrative foreign students; internationalizing the profile of the university and thus enhancing its reputation; and encouraging local student mobility. Interestingly, the drivers at secondary level are rather different—concerns for national competence in English; a dissatisfaction with the results of ELT and a belief that EMI might do a better job; and a belief that better English proficiency will contribute to economic gains for the country. This chapter sets the scene for the development of a comprehensive overview of the interacting themes in EMI through an attempt to answer 11 key questions, which are worth repeating here:

1. Who should decide to introduce EMI?
2. Is EMI only for a social elite or only for certain groups of students?
3. Which English are we talking about in EMI?
4. Is EMI 'English only' or some form of 'bilingual education'?
5. What is the effect on the home language/culture of the widespread introduction of EMI?
6. Does EMI improve English proficiency and does it do so better than EFL?
7. Does EMI at least maintain the same subject content achievement?
8. What are the EMI teacher's responsibilities?
9. What does the EFL teacher become in an EMI context?
10. Is EMI going to become CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) or might CLIL become EMI?
11. Can we wait for a research-based evolution of EMI? (p.12)

The 11 questions are significant in that they are an innovative attempt to establish the territory of EMI research, which future research can map onto. Macaro addresses these questions through nine chapters which follow the introduction, focusing on different themes: defining EMI; language policies; teachers' perspectives; students' perceptions; which English and which teachers; costs and benefits; classroom interaction; changing roles of teachers; and learner strategies. Some controversial issues in EMI, such as the potential for elitism, the effect on home language, and the relationship between EMI and CLIL, are threaded through the chapters so that all 11 questions are addressed, even if Macaro demonstrates that none of them have been conclusively answered in the research that has taken place to date.

Addressing language policy-making, Macaro highlights the wide variation in the policies and the loci of decision-making, national and institutional, across countries and regions. He depicts a struggle

between policy-makers who adopt pragmatic approaches and educationalists who turn on the danger signals as a common feature, and points out that 'tensions between the two groups would indicate that EMI-related policies are unlikely to be based on empirical evidence' (p. 69): a depressing finding, though hardly likely to be a surprise to social scientists. Another remarkable phenomenon is the reluctance to admit that English is a global social phenomenon, leading to an avoidance of the 'E-word' in policy documents, and to hiding behind labels such as CLIL and ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education). An exception to this reluctance are the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries, where there seems to be a consensus that English has an unrivalled place as an international language and thus is a natural language of instruction, a consensus that is less challenged than elsewhere.

Macaro proposes a framework of five models for implementing EMI, which seem most applicable to higher-education contexts. These five models are: prior selection based on English proficiency; a preparation year; concurrent language support; a multilingual approach (which can run alongside any of the first three); and finally the (unsurprisingly but disturbingly all too common) "ostrich approach" in which decision-makers give little thought to important educational issues before implementing EMI. This framework leads to a discussion of appropriate professional development for teachers involved in both preparing and teaching EMI (or perhaps more often lack of such professional development), and this raises the thorny question of teacher identity—teachers, especially at higher levels, often see themselves as subject experts and only secondarily as teachers, and even less as teachers with responsibility for taking language issues into account in their teaching. There tends to be an overwhelming focus on improving teachers' English proficiency in EMI professional development programmes, and lamentably little help for teachers in developing appropriate pedagogies. On the positive side, when this pedagogical focus is present, the introduction of EMI can be a driver for improving pedagogy in higher education more generally.

Macaro looks in some depth at the perceptions and the changing roles of teachers in EMI, lamenting the lack of research on the seemingly straightforward issue of whether teachers are generally in favour of or against EMI. In many contexts EMI is imposed on teachers from above by national or institutional policy-makers, and he suggests that asking teachers if they would continue to teach via EMI if it were not obligatory is a good indicator of teacher attitudes. Teachers can have strong views on the English proficiency of their EMI students, and he gives convincing evidence that they often believe that the students do not have the level of English required for their studies. On the issue of teachers' perceptions of their own competence he quotes a study of English levels of university content teachers from Spain (Fontanet-Gomez 2012), where 89 per cent felt equipped to read literature in their field, 77 per cent felt they could present a paper at a conference, while only 52 per cent felt that their English was good enough to teach in English. However, teachers do recognize the benefits to students of EMI, benefits inextricably related to the globalization of economic systems and the internationalization of education. Macaro then proposes an innovative global model of teacher beliefs regarding EMI which categorizes teachers into 'active promoters', 'consenting participants', 'passive victims', and 'resistance fighters', although there may be very few of the latter category operating overtly, as a result of top-down pressures.

Macaro also looks in depth at student perceptions and motivations. The research here is clear that students also are very often driven to EMI by globalization, internationalization, and career prospects. EMI is often a prestigious form of education and a means of distinction. In this context learners can tacitly or even explicitly accept lower content learning outcomes. Evidence of EMI being a cause or factor in elitism and divisiveness is also explored. A later chapter on learner strategies reviews a long tradition of SLA research, with very little so far focusing on EMI contexts, and addresses two key factors affecting learner strategies, namely previous linguistic knowledge and prior knowledge of topic.

Another interesting perspective that Macaro brings to the study of EMI is the concept of a cost–benefit analysis. He starts with two hypotheses: first, that EMI leads to better English proficiency than EFL teaching; and second, that EMI does not entail any loss of content learning. He then sets out to prove or disprove the hypotheses through a review of the research. He explains why, theoretically, conclusions applicable to different contexts are difficult to obtain. After analysing and evaluating the research evidence, he concludes that the hypothesis that EMI leads to better proficiency is not confirmed, but only due to the lack of research evidence. Likewise, the hypothesis that there is no loss of content learning is also unsupported due to the lack of appropriate research evidence, not because we have found that EMI has no negative effect. In drawing his conclusions Macaro

criticizes much of the research base as fragmented and characterized by a lack of methodological rigour and even by researcher bias, and this highlights one of his main aims in the book, namely to improve the quality of research in EMI.

Macaro has a particular interest in classroom interaction in EMI and examines it in a long chapter on the subject. He reports that research shows only brief glimpses of the involvement of students in interaction during lectures, with classes at secondary level often showing much in common with university lectures, including only perfunctory teacher questioning of students. He concludes that both secondary and tertiary phases 'need to think carefully about the pedagogical transformations needed in order to make EMI a success' (p. 228).

The final chapter of the book looks at the interconnectedness of the various themes and looks to the future. A key question remains: why would a country make such a momentous change from L1 as a medium of instruction to EMI, knowing that many students will struggle to understand what is being taught and might engage less with the learning process as a result? In general Macaro concludes that the introduction and expansion of EMI has been unprincipled and under-researched, fuelled by three main drivers: the competition between public and private sectors for students, leading the state sector to ape the private sector; a belief that traditional EFL is not doing its job (however flimsy the evidence for this may be); and the internationalization of higher education with its own drivers of income, league tables, and student and staff mobility, with a consequent downward pressure on schools. However, there is little evidence that EMI performs better than traditional EFL in developing English proficiency, and those studies that suggest that it does tend to ignore important variables such as prior knowledge, socioeconomic background, or amount of time needed to progress through language proficiency levels. As for the effect of EMI on content knowledge, there is precious little evidence as to whether or not EMI produces worse outcomes—a critical deficiency in the research given society's need for well-educated doctors, engineers, and teachers.

Turning to the future, the book calls for better partnerships, including between researchers and policy-makers (who have a tendency not to listen to research findings, or at least only to those that match their intended policies), and between content teachers and language teachers. A critical question is the extent to which EMI classrooms incorporate elements of ELT rather than hoping that students will improve English proficiency merely via exposure. Macaro also returns to the thorny issue of the relationship between EMI and CLIL, which he addresses throughout the book.

Returning to my original comments on the significance and relevance of EMI for the ELT professional, Macaro suggests that EMI revives Bullock's (1975) notion of 'language across the curriculum', and it seems to me that the EMI phenomenon now offers ELT a bridge across the divide that has existed for too long to the world of general education. The expansion and preliminary research of the 2010s is a base, and the 2020s hold the promise of a gradual closing of the divide and a growing appreciation of the value of an understanding of language issues in education. Indeed, Dafouz and Smit (2020) introduce us to EMEMUS (English Medium Education in Multilingual University Settings) and develop the point that it is this wider concept of 'education' rather than 'instruction' (a term that Macaro himself problematizes) that we should be considering.

This book is in essence about what research has been done into EMI to date and what that research tells us. That research is not only reported but also rigorously critiqued, with a final section in many chapters on the quality of the research in that particular area. Macaro does not pull his punches; he is critical of EMI research generally, which tends to be small-scale institutional case studies with researchers who have been closely involved in the programme's development. However, he is careful not to blame the researchers themselves, aiming his main criticisms at decision-makers at both national and institutional level who do not make resources available for good research which would inform best practice. He maps out in each chapter areas that need more research and calls for better and higher-quality research, including longitudinal studies, national and international comparative studies, and a focus on educational and linguistic outcomes as opposed to stakeholder perceptions. The comprehensiveness of Macaro's approach makes it difficult for me to envisage a serious EMI researcher who would not want this volume within reach on their shelf. The policy-maker or teacher might find the volume less accessible, although both would benefit by at least a careful reading of the introduction, and there are relevant sections for both groups throughout the book, such as a section on 'Helping students with vocabulary in EMI settings' (p. 283).

One great strength of this book for me is that it is written by a single author who provides a global overview of EMI that can be of use to future

researchers and eventually policy-makers. The reader is left with a feeling of a gradual build-up of integrated themes, leading to a holistic overview of the field, and to a feeling of inhabiting a space that, while multidisciplinary by nature, is more clearly delineated than it has been until now. This is in contrast to the majority of books available on EMI which tend to be edited collections of case studies from specific contexts. Such collections are extremely useful, but less likely to provide a coherent and complete overview of a field that is increasingly carving out its own intellectual space in the world of education and research. While the single-author argument might be seen as a weakness inasmuch as it opens the possibility of a one-sided view, the criticism seems to me to be easily countered here, as Macaro is so careful to base his comments on careful and objective analysis and evaluation of the research, especially the systematic review which he himself led (Macaro, Curle, Pun, An, and Dearden 2018). He makes clear the contentious nature of EMI and the tendency of stakeholders to promote their own agenda, either in favour of or against particular forms of EMI in particular contexts. He is equally clear that he sees the global expansion of EMI as unstoppable, but that in many cases that implementation and expansion leaves much room for improvement in educational terms.

Macaro's work is a substantial scholarly achievement and stands for me as the touchstone for EMI research for the coming years, an area that will be of increasing interest, concern, and opportunity to ELT professionals.

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Sustainable English Language Teacher Development at Scale: Lessons from Bangladesh

I. Eyres, R. McCormick, and T. Power (eds.)

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Educational change processes targeting English language teaching are in effect around the globe, so it is not uncommon to find publications in journals or presentations at conferences that report on aspects of the process of educational change in international contexts. However, it is not very common to find an entire book that walks the reader through the change process involved in designing, implementing, and institutionalizing a successful educational innovation and that addresses how this is done at scale. This is the case of *Sustainable English Language Teacher Development at Scale: Lessons from Bangladesh*, edited by Ian Eyres, Robert McCormick, and Tom Powers, which reports on the English in Action (EIA) project in Bangladesh. The project was funded by UK aid through the Department for International Development (DfID) and managed by Cambridge Education, with the involvement of the Open University as technical lead.

In the introduction the editors present the aim of the book as providing 'a detailed, analytical and critical account of the EIA teacher development project, setting out lessons learned during the ten years of implementation' (p. 1). The remaining chapters are then arranged in four parts, each of which is guided by a framing question and incorporates the views of active members of the innovation team as well as local stakeholders who participated in the project. Each part also incorporates narratives relevant to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project, and concludes with a chapter written by a critical author, thus providing an analysis of the innovation together with an external perspective. These section-ending chapters also contain a 'Looking Forward' section in which authors pose potential ways forward and hurdles the project may face in the future.

Part 1, 'Context', composed of three chapters, identifies opportunities and challenges for the project. Chapters are framed around the question of why the government of Bangladesh sought support to enhance the knowledge of English as a skill for development. Chapter 1, by the editors Tom Power, Ian Eyres, and Robert McCormick, presents a detailed account of the educational context in Bangladesh and the pressing need to develop and generate jobs as a top priority. This is presented as a key structural reform for a country exposed to multiple vulnerabilities. Chapter 2, by Elizabeth J. Erling and Masuda Khatoon, addresses the status and economic significance of English in the context of the local conditions described in Chapter 1, and analyses how the EIA project helped counteract the perceived inefficiency of the teaching of English using communicative language teaching (CLT) methods, which were prevalent in the country. Chapter 3, by Fauzia Shamim, a professor and ELT coordinator at Taibah University, Saudi Arabia, frames the discussion of the two chapters above in the context of teaching English in difficult circumstances and provides an assessment of the suitability of the EIA project to the expressed needs identified before.

Part 2, 'Teacher Professional Development in Low-to-Middle-Income Countries', comprising four chapters, explores effective approaches to the professional development of English language teachers in the specific context of low-to-middle-income countries, as found in the literature on educational innovations in the sector. Chapter 5, written by Tom Power, outlines the EIA approach to teacher development and walks the reader through the main tenets upon which this 'principled approach' (p. 67) was developed. Chapter 6, by Claire Woodward, Bikash Chandra Sarkar, and Christopher Walsh, focuses on the use of mobile technologies, an integral part of the EIA approach, as one of the main means to scale the project. In Chapter 7, David Pedder, a Professor of Education at the University of Brighton, provides an appraisal of the impact that the design of the EIA project had on the development of an alternative leadership style for conducting teacher development in Bangladesh. Using the metaphor of supportive ecologies, he informs the reader of how school leadership teams responded to the innovation, as well as how existing beliefs and values were either confirmed or changed.

Part 3, 'English Language Teaching', made up of three chapters, addresses issues of English language teaching, including the central characteristics of the EIA model and its implications when working with teachers who possess low levels of English proficiency. The guiding question explored in this part is how the EIA project managed to develop new pedagogical practices through networks of education and support in Bangladesh. Crucial issues discussed in these chapters include the role of local understanding of CLT in promoting enhancements in language proficiency; the characteristics of the EIA approach to the development of language proficiency; how changes in classroom practice contributed to the enhancement of teachers' proficiency; and detailed quantitative accounts of how this enhancement evolved over time.

Part 4, 'Strategic Issues', consisting of four chapters, focuses on a host of contextual issues that had to be resolved by the innovation team. These include the move from a pilot project to an institutionalized programme; how research monitoring and evaluation of EIA were carried out; and how sustainability was achieved within a 'value for money (VfM) framework' (Introduction, p. 5). The guiding question in this part has to do with critical issues for any programme that wants to institutionalize and sustain its approach, and some key themes underscore the chapters in this section. First and foremost, there was the need to root all claims about the effectiveness of the project in evidence gathered during implementation and the framing of such evidence in quantitative terms. Secondly, project developers had to align the evidence-gathering process and interpretation of such evidence to quality assurance (QA) models specific to the project. Lastly, the authors provide an assessment of how qualitative studies contributed to the overall success of the programme.

The book ends with a series of final reflections by the developers of the project which effectively summarize the work done (looking back) and position the project against future challenges (looking forward). In looking back, the sections on the development of partnerships and the strategies for adaptiveness embedded in the project are particularly relevant. In the 'Looking Forward' section, the reflections on school learning and the embedding of the innovation results are particularly enlightening.

Additionally, this final chapter summarizing all lessons learned during development and implementation serves as a useful summary of the project and its impact. In looking back at the other chapters, it clearly describes the challenges faced while identifying still unresolved issues. In reviewing the implementation strategy this chapter consolidates an approach to educational change management that may prove useful in similar contexts. Lastly, the 'Looking Forward' section of the chapter addresses issues of sustainability as well as institutional and professional development, while exploring the role of technology in promoting and sustaining change, and discussing the effect of the innovations on populations outside schools.

The way each part of the book is organized provides readers with a vivid image of the issues at stake that allows them to see how the various decisions made along the way were pertinent. Hence, value lies not only in the repertoire of options explored and the actual description of the implementation of various activities, but also in the reasoning process that guided the decision-making in light of contextual challenges and opportunities. The implementation of the project resulted in the elaboration of a working model that involved actions taken at classroom, school, regional, and national levels. Alongside these actions, the authors give testimony as to how teachers' and students' proficiency in English was enhanced mainly through a principled approach to the incorporation of communicative methodologies through the building of local capacity in designing, delivering, and assessing means for teacher growth.

There are a number of relevant contributions that may resonate with interested readers who work in other contexts. Among these we should highlight the detailed summaries provided by the 'Lessons Learned' section of chapters written by participants in EIA, and the critical appraisal of the effectiveness of those lessons by local stakeholders.

This notwithstanding, readers should be mindful of the context of application of this project. The country of Bangladesh is categorized as a low-to-middle-income country. Those seeking to find inspiration for systemic changes in other contexts should bear in mind that both the problems posed by the context and the solutions sought were developed specifically for a country where resources were scarce and provisions limited.

While the book abounds in creative approaches to solving teaching and learning problems and provides evidence of true innovations in teaching and learning, the educational innovation model adhered to in the project cannot be typified as truly in line with current thinking about educational change. Recent developments in the area of change management call for a strong involvement of local stakeholders affected by the innovation at all stages of the process (Wedell 2009). This means that local teachers, principals, supervisors, and mentors should participate at the stages of needs analysis, project design, implementation design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of impact. In the EIA project, the involvement of local stakeholders at the onset of the programme was minimal, which means that, once again, decisions about their future were made by outsiders. This may explain some of the early problems the project leadership team faced, such as low teacher morale and muted involvement of administrators.

In contrast, when local stakeholders were duly incorporated at various stages of the implementation of the project, this allowed for further contextualization

of the change strategies selected for implementation which resulted in sustained success. Also, by institutionalizing the project as a state-supported and state-managed educational programme, the role of the local stakeholders took precedence as they are now the ones leading current and future innovations.

Another area not to overlook is that the project was framed within a very particular focus, that of VfM. VfM was part of the DfID agenda which specified the need to understand cost–benefit in light of quality demands. The rhetoric within this perspective is necessarily neoliberal and the implementation of such a perspective affected the fate of some solutions that were discarded because they offered no readily evident VfM. One example of this was the selection of technology for the delivery of the programme. At the start the project team selected a certain brand that delivered the expected results with high levels of quality. However, because of VfM considerations, during the scaling of the project, they had to substitute the original technology for a cheaper brand which did not deliver the same level of quality. This example highlights how principled pedagogical decisions are eventually reassessed solely on the consideration of the costs involved, leaving the benefit for participants as a secondary consideration.

Scaling was undertaken in a way that maximized the initial investment by reducing costs but this does not mean that scaling promoted a more equitable distribution of resources, both knowledge- and economy-based. Decisions about the use of local resources, the incorporation of technology and the establishment of teacher–support interfaces were all contingent upon whether a moderate to strong initial investment would be recouped as the programme expanded, and the project leadership had to be truly creative to promote quality learning at some points in the programme. Chapter 13, by Hedge, Zindel, and Chandra Sarkar, clearly details how VfM was achieved and offers suggestions on how it can be implemented across contexts by providing short case studies and by detailing how economy (minimizing cost of inputs), efficiency (maximizing the conversion of inputs to outputs), effectiveness (maximizing the conversion of outputs into outcomes), and equity (ensuring the fair distribution of benefits) were achieved.

While authors could have provided more qualitative assessments of the effectiveness and impact of the project (there are occasional case studies that portray the new situation of local stakeholders but do not provide an assessment of the impact of particular activities), the fact remains that the EIA programme complies with what theory and research say effective professional development of teachers should be like, though not with current developments in the field of educational change. The programme, which at this stage is mostly managed by the Government of Bangladesh, is needs based, school centered (all development activities have a direct classroom application), focuses on collaborative learning, provides support during implementation of new pedagogy (through on-site, distance, and mobile learning), and is highly meaningful to the teachers involved as activities, materials, and intentions are all contextualized to the local reality.

Finally, it should be made clear that an inherent value of this book resides in laying out, in book format and for the first time, how an educational innovation involving the teaching and learning of English can be implemented at scale in a low-to-middle-income country. While it is true that many countries are engaged in systemic reforms targeting ELT, it is also true that many reports of successful innovations in the area have come from the private sector and from projects undertaken in developed countries. This book provides, at long last, a working model of innovation that stands to inspire work in low-to-middle-income contexts, which is, in fact, the main characteristic of most countries involved in this kind of endeavour.

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Rethinking TESOL in Diverse Global Settings: The Language and the Teacher in a Time of Change

T. Marr and F. English

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In this book, Marr and English raise and address many of the most significant questions that English language teaching professionals have been asking regarding the TESOL profession and TESOL teacher education for many years. The book invites readers, English language teachers and English language teacher educators alike to reflect on what constitutes the knowledge foundation for TESOL practice and English language teachers' professional identities. It also encourages readers to re-examine the language that English language teachers teach, the ways in which they perceive themselves and are perceived by others, and how they can use these new understandings to deliver lessons with meaningful impact on language learners. Marr and English's thoughtful engagement with these crucial questions makes the book a must-read for English language teachers. It is also an important resource for language teacher educators who may wish to rethink how English language teacher education programmes should be organized and consider what needs to be done to further strengthen the knowledge foundation for language teachers' professional practice. In this review we will highlight what we think the book has achieved, before we comment on what else could still be done to complete this rethinking of the knowledge foundation for the TESOL profession.

First, we were impressed by the sensible assessment of the English language as 'the exceptional language' (p. 39) that Marr and English present in Chapter 2. We appreciate that some readers may feel uneasy about calling English 'the exceptional language', but Marr and English's assessment is well grounded in their concerns about relevant pedagogical implications for language teachers and focuses on issues with explicit implications for English language teaching. In particular, the chapter succinctly captures the essence of the controversies associated with the language and presents its exceptional nature as a double-edged sword. They note that the English language has been regarded as an instrument of colonization and recolonization by many critical scholars, but they also acknowledge that it has been appropriated by many language learners as an important means for upward social mobility, or access to materialistic (e.g. employment) and non-materialistic (e.g. new knowledge) resources (e.g. Rasool and Winke 2019; Rose and Galloway 2019; Shen and Gao 2019).

This realistic portrayal of the language is particularly important for readers like the two of us, who, after exposing ourselves to so many critical studies on the English language, may feel increasingly guilty of being complicit in an imperialistic project of recolonization. Our personal experiences of learning English echo some of the narratives captured by Marr and English in section 2.4, as 'English has come to be associated with economic advancement, technology and social and geographical mobility; even with such desirable abstractions such as "development" and "modernity"' (p. 31). Although we may be accused of reinforcing the imperialist project of global English, we do strongly feel that we cannot deny English language learners access to a useful resource that may empower them to become future change agents in the world. Nevertheless, we suggest that readers pay close attention to the propositions with which Marr and English end the chapter. Indeed, English language teachers need to make sure that 'TESOL practice' is 'linguistically and socio-linguistically informed' (p. 40). English language teachers need to be aware of 'a special responsibility' (p. 41) because they teach an exceptional language and their teaching may have significant ramifications for language learners, their languages, and their cultures.

Chapter 2 also raises the significance of linguistics as a crucial disciplinary knowledge foundation to TESOL practice in addressing the imbalance of language and pedagogy in many English language teachers' professional concerns. Marr and English then go on to demonstrate the ways in which our TESOL practice can be linguistically and sociolinguistically informed and focus on three critical issues in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. In Chapter 3, they recognize that many English language teachers may be shocked by the idea that standard languages are 'at best an abstraction, a product of social forces, ... subject to shift and flux' (p. 58). They empathize with many language learners and teachers who find standard languages useful because of their familiarity. Nevertheless, they still present an effort to persuade readers that '*all* language use is at root a matter of negotiation, accommodation and social practice' (p. 59; emphasis in original).

For this reason, Marr and English devote Chapter 4 to discussing how English language teachers respond to and deal with learners' beliefs and expectations in teaching. They problematize the gaps between what language learners are expected and expect to achieve and what the English language can actually deliver for them. The chapter invites readers, in particular readers like the two of us, to think about whether English has actually helped us in our professional spheres. Was

it English or the fact that the two of us did well in university entrance examinations that changed our life course? It is likely that the role of English learning in our upward social movement has been exaggerated, but this is an issue that language learners need to engage with through in-depth collaborative examination. For this reason, we particularly like Marr and English's creative solution to the identified gaps in language learners' expectations and realities, which is to make English language classrooms into crucial sites for language learners and teachers to undertake such critical explorations.

Managing these explorations to promote critical language awareness is an important component of English language teachers' professional practice. Moreover, linguistically and sociolinguistically informed TESOL pedagogy requires English language teachers to develop a solid knowledge foundation for it, as outlined in Chapter 5. This knowledge foundation includes English language teachers' language '*fluency/proficiency* in using the language (the status of "expert user"), *pedagogical* knowledge relevant to classroom practice, and *subject* knowledge, in other words, *linguistics*' (p. 103; emphasis in original). Armed with subject knowledge in linguistics, English language teachers may develop informed pedagogical goals and criteria to properly evaluate and understand language learners' language use and development. As such, the three chapters not only outline what English language teachers should know for professional practice, but also explain why they should possess this knowledge. For many years, we as language teacher educators have been bombarded with requests from language teachers on how to teach better in specific contexts, but the most appropriate pedagogical strategies develop and are refined within classroom practice. While it is important for us to offer guidance to support these teachers, we share Marr and English's belief that language teacher educators need to address their requests by helping them to develop an appropriate level of subject knowledge (i.e. linguistics). By doing so, language teachers can then adopt linguistically and sociolinguistically informed TESOL practice to overcome their pedagogical challenges.

In light of the critical importance of such informed TESOL practice, Marr and English showcase in Chapters 8 and 9 what English language teachers can do to adopt pedagogical strategies that can have a meaningful impact on language learners. The pedagogical proposals outlined in these chapters move beyond the recognition of the use of L1 as a pedagogical strategy to facilitate language learners' learning. Marr and English encourage English language teachers to fully appreciate the variety of resources that language learners bring to the classroom, including linguistic resources (e.g. their L1 knowledge) and cultural resources (e.g. cultural practices associated with learning) (see also Rose and Galloway 2019).

Linguistically and sociolinguistically informed TESOL practice also means that English language teachers need to broaden their understanding of language from its narrow association with traditional language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. English language teachers are encouraged to appreciate the significance of all semiotic resources, including visual signs, and recognize the multimodal nature of language. In particular, Chapter 9 presents three major principles (i.e. authenticity, validity, and relevance) to guide the incorporation of authentic learning materials into classroom activities. It contains a detailed presentation of pedagogical examples to show how one text can be developed into multiple pedagogical tasks. These examples show that linguistically and sociolinguistically informed TESOL practice can be dynamic, context-responsive, motivating, and impactful.

The presentation of these examples further demonstrates the significance of subject knowledge (i.e. linguistics) as a crucial disciplinary knowledge foundation for TESOL practice, and Marr and English do devote two chapters (Chapters 6 and 7) to this subject knowledge. Clearly, two chapters can only give a taste of this area; the issue of linguistics as subject knowledge for TESOL practice may require a book-length treatment. There are many books on linguistics, but most are either too theoretical or not sufficiently grounded in concerns related to TESOL practice. As evidenced by this book, Marr and English clearly understand the needs of English language teachers in this area, and it would be good if they considered writing a book on linguistics for English language teachers, significantly expanding on what they have written in Chapters 6 and 7.

Such a book, however, would in our view require a reconsideration of the kind of linguistics that Marr and English believe English language teachers need to develop as disciplinary knowledge for TESOL practice. We feel that the sort of linguistics being promoted in this book is very socially oriented, with sociolinguistics being given a very special role in subject knowledge for TESOL practice. We appreciate that language use emerges in social interaction and sociolinguistically informed TESOL practice will address the identified challenges for English language teachers including the gaps between what language

learners expect to achieve and what the language can actually deliver for them. However, we believe that Marr and English need to consider how to balance their coverage of linguistics and sociolinguistics, given that language teachers need to understand more than sociolinguistics if they are to develop appropriate pedagogical strategies.

In addition, we feel that the issue of L2 acquisition and learning has been neglected in this book. Broadly classified under 'applied linguistics' (Emmitt et al. 2014), L2 acquisition and learning research also constitutes a significant knowledge foundation for English language teachers' pedagogical practice. Therefore, Marr and English may wish to consider writing a book on linguistics for language teaching that also covers L2 acquisition. We believe that such publications are needed in TESOL programmes to help English language teachers develop an appropriate grounding in the relevant disciplinary knowledge.

We understand that Marr and English intended to produce a book that most English language teachers or TESOL education students would find accessible. The book is indeed a page-turner, and it demonstrates that the authors can win the hearts and minds of English language teachers with an accessible, captivating message. We totally agree with their final comment on English language teachers: it is true that all English language teachers are language teachers teaching an exceptional language, with a critical awareness of our exceptional responsibility. More publications like this book, dealing with the disciplinary knowledge foundations of TESOL, are needed to help English language teachers to execute our professional obligations and duties in a better-informed manner.

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World Englishes in English Language Teaching

A. Baratta

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Global Englishes for Language Teaching

H. Rose & N. Galloway

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In recent times, anyone involved in TESOL will have become aware of debates about exactly what kind of English should be taught. In a context in which debates rage about World Englishes, English as a lingua franca (ELF), and Global Englishes (GE), exactly what variety or varieties of English should be adopted as the model for students to follow? What are the implications for ELT and its associated learning materials and syllabuses if the great majority of communication across the globe in English takes place between those who are not 'native speakers' of the language? The two books reviewed here address questions of this sort, with both ultimately seeking to provide practical suggestions for classroom teachers.

One tricky problem for scholarly writers in this area is the definition and differentiation of the relatively new concepts and terminology that abound. In addition to the abbreviations mentioned above, these two books also encompass additional terms such as Inner Circle and Non-Inner Circle English (ICE and NICE), EMI (English Medium Instruction), and GELT (Global Englishes for Language Teaching). One of the challenges for both the writers and perhaps particularly the readers of these books is to figure out exactly how this galaxy of terms is interrelated yet distinctive. Hence, clarity of exposition is one of the features I shall bear in mind when describing these two books.

Baratta's text consists of an introduction; a set of chapters (2–6) that look at different aspects of World Englishes and/or Non-Inner Circle English (NICE); a pair of chapters (7 and 8) that address the methodology and results of a research project conducted by the author investigating the perspectives of teachers and students on World Englishes; and a final chapter that offers ideas on how World Englishes can be brought into the EFL classroom in beneficial ways. I will deal with each of these in turn.

The Introduction sets out the tripartite structure of the main text. Baratta also justifies his use of the term 'World Englishes' (rather than, for example, ELF or New Englishes) because he feels it to be the most appropriate way of covering all three of Kachru's (1990) circles: inner (e.g. UK), outer (e.g. India), and expanding (e.g. China). At the end of the Introduction, the author provides a helpful summary. Here he asserts, among other things, that 'EFL students are in a position to be the teacher, explaining to the class about their particular World English' (p. 20). This point is one he returns to throughout, as it has implications for classroom practices.

The author-identified 'literature review' section of the book covers chapters 2–6. In chapter 2, 'Variety Within Inner Circle Englishes', a valid point made by Baratta is that since misunderstandings occur between ICE speakers, it seems illogical to exclude NICE from the classroom on the grounds that it can lead to miscommunication. He also argues that context (by which he appears to mean social context) is an important factor in the speaker's choice of one variety of English over another. In his view, 'If the key is to communicate appropriately for the context we find ourselves in, then surely we need to look beyond standard English' (p. 35). A weakness here, in my opinion, is that the author never explicitly states what he means by 'standard English'.

In chapter 3, 'The Reality of World Englishes', Baratta notes the tendency to regard longer-established Englishes as more authentic. He states here and elsewhere that those with a knowledge of linguistics should view different varieties of English dispassionately. In his view, distinctive features of NICE should neither be celebrated nor lamented because any divergences from ICE are not mistakes, but merely differences. 'No language, dialect, accent or individual word' can be regarded as either 'good' or 'bad', he argues, and 'each language has a time and place for its appropriate usage' (p. 48). He also suggests that inner circle visitors to outer or expanding circle countries should take the trouble to learn, or at least gain some acquaintance with, the varieties of English spoken there.

Baratta next moves on (chapter 4) to consider the vexed issue of what constitutes an error when a NICE user engages in EFL study. To illustrate his points here, Baratta refers to example sentences/utterances by speakers of Ebonics, the dialect used by some African Americans. His argument is that Ebonics users observe the dialect's grammatical rules—for example, in Ebonics the third-person singular in the present simple tense has no final 's' (she go) and

copula deletion is allowed (he better)—and therefore they 'cannot be expected to conform to the rules of standard English' (p. 70). As Baratta points out, it is impossible for teachers to know the grammatical features of all varieties of English and, in his view, there exists a 'slippery balance between innovation and error' (p. 78) that needs to be addressed in the classroom. Baratta argues, for instance, that English language examinations should state explicitly which variety of English they are testing, so that when test-takers are asked, for example, to consider the grammaticality of a sentence like 'His proposal met with a lot of resistances' (ibid.), they know against what standard it is to be measured. Baratta also proposes an 'error scale' or cline that ranges from errors that could cause misunderstanding, via errors with clear meaning, to 'established usage' (p. 94).

Chapter 5 deals with three varieties of NICE: Konglish (spoken in South Korea), Indian English, and demotic Singapore English (Singlish). Regarding Konglish, Baratta notes that some 'errors' made by Konglish users do not generally cause misunderstanding. For instance, the Korean language does not (according to Baratta) have a distinction between 'at' and 'in', so that reference might be made to 'a visiting professor in Korea University' (p. 118). In relation to Indian English, Baratta again invokes the notion of a cline, in this case going from a 'zero point' via a 'central point' (the English used by teachers and civil servants) to an 'ambilingual point' (Indians who have a native-like competence in English or, in other words, who have a command of ICE). Yet at the same time many Indian speakers of English use expressions such as 'co-brother' or 'tiffin' that might bewilder an ICE speaker. The third NICE variety discussed in this chapter is Singlish, used by some speakers in Singapore. Baratta notes the long-term efforts by Singapore's government to discourage the use of this particular NICE, and closes the chapter by putting the case for ELT materials that discuss 'varieties beyond the standard'.

Logically enough, the next chapter (6) is titled 'Non-Inner Circle Englishes in the Classroom'. Baratta argues for changes in pedagogy and teacher attitudes that will 'allow NICE speakers to use their variety of English with others' (who may not actually use the same variety) while recognizing the need to be understood. In his view, such an approach 'represents a happy medium between retaining the need for intelligibility, but without having to adopt someone else's imposed standard of English' (p. 135). Later Baratta points out a significant difficulty—namely that teachers and students may not always find it easy to accept a view on the scope and nature of EFL that might run contrary to their previous experiences. He sees a danger that ICE-speaking teachers might question the need to use anything other than 'standard English' in the classroom. However, Baratta's view is that no matter which variety of English is selected as the 'dominant model' in a particular EFL classroom, this should not mean that other varieties are excluded. According to Baratta the students should essentially be 'learning to be bilingual within a single language' (p. 139). At the same time the author acknowledges that a classroom focus on too many varieties of English might leave some students yearning for a more uniform approach.

I shall discuss chapters 7 and 8 together, since the former briefly sets out the methodology through which Baratta collected and analysed the views of 36 EFL teachers and students on World Englishes in the EFL classroom, while the latter (easily the longest chapter in the book—and perhaps overlong, given the number of participants) discusses the results. The participants were 20 EFL teachers ('native-speakers' of ICE); 11 EFL teachers who were categorized as non-native speakers of ICE; and five EFL students. Data were collected via questionnaire. Baratta acknowledges the small sample size, but suggests that, as he did not want to make 'broad generalisations', large-scale research was unnecessary (p. 180). The results obtained indicated 'almost unanimously' that NICE were regarded as 'varieties of the English language' rather than as 'some kind of linguistic deficiency' (pp. 262–63). All but three participants professed to have knowledge of a specific NICE. In addition, 35 participants stated that 'NICE are valid and by extension, correct forms of English' (p. 264). Exactly half the participants favoured greater use of World Englishes in the EFL classroom, with a further 14 agreeing, as long as students' needs were accounted for. I found this chapter's discussion to be somewhat overextended, given the small sample size and other limitations listed by the author.

The final two chapters (9 and 10) cover suggestions on incorporating World Englishes into the EFL classroom, plus a set of conclusions. Baratta acknowledges that bringing World Englishes or the mother tongues of students into the EFL classroom might be seen as 'gimmicky', perhaps prompting some students to yearn for more traditional approaches. In a globalized world, his argument for including World Englishes as an important supplementary part of EFL classes is to provide students with 'a chance to better understand cultures other than their own and make cross-cultural comparisons' (p. 274).

Baratta closes the book with ideas for classroom tasks and exercises that, in his view, would promote such

opportunities for students. For instance, he advocates giving each student five minutes or so to present to the class 'their own World English variety'. Another of his suggestions is asking groups of students to look at lists of expressions from several NICEs and then to figure out or 'translate' their meanings into ICE. Overall, he argues (p. 310) that the goal of EFL teaching should be to equip students with 'an English variety that serves their needs best' and considers that this will often mean choosing a NICE variety as the classroom model. For instance, if a group of learners will be travelling to study in Australia, he argues that in addition to standard Australian English, there should be a focus on English used by the indigenous Australian community. These concluding chapters do indeed leave the reader with a clear general sense of Baratta's position in relation to syllabus content and pedagogical approach, but in my view certain specific issues remain a little cloudy (see also below).

The Rose and Galloway book falls into two parts. The first covers the theoretical underpinnings of their notion of 'Global Englishes' (GEs) and its relevance for language teaching (GELT), while the second considers the research nexus between GEs and ELT. In their Introduction the authors explain their predominant use of the term 'GEs', although, as with Baratta, numerous other terms such as World Englishes, ELF, and EMI also appear. They argue that contemporary realities in the use of English around the world necessitate a paradigm shift in classroom approaches to ELT. Furthermore (p. xvi) they see their identities 'as teachers first and as scholars second' and consequently they wish to present arguments that are in touch with the nitty-gritty of classroom language teaching.

Reputable projections indicate that by 2050 there may be four billion English speakers globally, of whom only one-eighth will be ICE speakers. This, the authors argue, indicates that revolutionary change may be needed in ELT. Rather than monolingual 'native-speakers', they argue, the most appropriate teachers will be properly qualified individuals who can bring with them to the classroom 'a multilingual repertoire' and can therefore provide 'an authentic ELF setting for each class' (pp. 23–24). The 'English-only pedagogy' that has for decades provided monolingual native-speakers with plum jobs may therefore be under threat, and, according to Rose and Galloway, ELF research suggests that the idea of a standard is incompatible with the fluid nature of ELF usage.

In chapter 2, the authors discuss the conceptual transition needed for GELT to move centre stage. There will be major implications for pedagogy, course design, learning outcomes, and assessment. The authors argue that, based on the communicative needs of particular groups of students, GELT-focused classes will need to raise awareness about the numerous subtle variations in English use worldwide. Some students may well express a desire to be taught an inner circle variety of English, but this may be because it is what previous experience has taught them to expect. As Cook (1999), quoted by Rose and Galloway (p. 34), puts it, just because learners want to be like native speakers does not mean that their views are right. Given the exigencies of the globalized world, they might actually find the outcomes of GELT-based classes to be more useful.

Chapter 3 looks at the multilingual turn in second-language acquisition (SLA) research and how this aligns well with the outlook and concerns associated with GELT. The authors argue that the focus in SLA on the monolingual native-speaker has given way to a realization that 'the competencies of bi/multilingual learners are ... the basis for successful language learning' (p. 61). The authors see that the multilingual turn in both SLA and TESOL has led to reduced attention to 'native-speaker' norms, and an attempt, through GELT, to 'increase learners' motivation by raising their awareness of the use of English as a global language' (p. 71).

What the authors see as a 'multilingual turn' in both SLA and TESOL could, they believe, result in a paradigm shift in teacher practices and the experience of classroom English language learning, and chapter 4 explores how a GELT-infused approach could drive curriculum change. At the same time this chapter considers how teacher beliefs and student attitudes could impact the feasibility and sustainability of such change. Research quoted here suggests that the majority of English language teachers currently show a preference for materials produced in anglophone countries. This is an example of how teacher attitudes may currently be at odds with the shift to a GELT approach and, as the authors note, it is 'crucial not to alienate experienced teachers by telling them that their current teaching practices are irrelevant and out of date' (p. 104). The future of GELT may depend upon those charged with the attendant change management.

Section Two of the book (chapters 5–8) turns to pedagogical research based on a GE perspective. Some of the issues raised here are how to integrate GELT materials into textbooks that are heavily based on ICE; how individuals can define their personal identity in ways that are less nationcentric; and how to move away from the oversimple native-speaker versus

non-native-speaker dichotomy to something richer and more nuanced. Of particular interest, I think, is the authors' contention that research into EMI is relatively lacking in the Middle East and East Asia, as well as on what kinds of English are actually used in EMI in those geographical locations.

Chapter 5 sets out a framework for GELT research. The authors argue, not without reason, that research in the field of GE has too often been marked by poorly designed questionnaires and a lack of replication studies, resulting in non-generalizable, non-cumulative findings. The need for classroom-based research and research into attitudes, classroom practices, materials, and teacher education is stressed.

Chapter 6 looks at teaching materials relevant to GE. Rose and Galloway contrast Tomlinson's (2016) checklist for evaluating textbooks (which they see as being without a clear theoretical foundation or link to previous work on materials evaluation) with their own framework. In testing this out, they describe a host of interesting and disparate phenomena, such as a textbook that explicitly sees English as 'nobody's special property' (p. 149) yet features mainly inner circle speakers. They also draw on Crystal's (2003) formula that sees 20 per cent of English speakers worldwide as inner circle; 27 per cent as outer circle; and the remaining 53 per cent as expanding circle. They find it deeply disappointing that textbooks tend not to reflect this reality, relying instead heavily on British and American models of English, with L1 speakers overrepresented. There may indeed be some truth in the authors' observation that commercial materials lag behind ever-evolving learner needs.

Similarly, the authors say, teacher education in the TESOL area is still permeated by notions of Western superiority. Yet Chapter 7 showcases evidence that the traditional, perhaps unthinking, attitude that native-speakers of English should for some reason hold sway can sometimes be shifted when TESOL is approached from a GELT perspective. Nevertheless, barriers such as attachment to the norms of Standard English—whatever Standard English may be—remain evident among parents, employers, and students themselves. For, as Chapter 8 goes on to show, some students still retain a desire for teachers who are American, British, or from some other 'native-speaker' group.

I found this last chapter to be perhaps the most intriguing of an engrossing book. It is replete with detailed descriptions of research carried out by the authors in China and Japan in contexts where higher education proceeds by EMI. Questions investigated include the differing views of students on the desirability (or otherwise) of mother tongue or translanguaging in EMI classrooms. There are many interesting and well-selected quotations from students on these issues and it is clear that there are many shades of opinion on questions such as whether it is acceptable to use a 'non-shared' language when students of various language backgrounds are present, or whether a monolingual teacher is ever appropriate in an EMI setting. I was also greatly interested to learn that in one Arabian Gulf setting evidence has been collected to show that during a four-year EMI undergraduate degree programme, the typical student's English only improves by half an IELTS band.

To sum up, both books have their plus points. I found some of Baratta's ideas for classroom activities to be well worth considering. For instance, he explains in detail an activity around asking students to write the opening paragraph of an essay in their L1 and then explain in English the structure of the paragraph and the rationale behind it. Another activity begins with group work on hard-to-translate words from various languages (e.g. *Schadenfreude*) and proceeds to a discussion of words or expressions in each student's NICE that do not exist in ICE. These and other ideas are stimulating and, to my knowledge, quite original. However, on the debit side I completed Baratta's book still somewhat uncertain about the precise nature of the balance he sees between a focus on NICE and on Standard English (or Englishes) in the classroom, and indeed about exactly what he means by 'Standard English'. I also found an early reference (p. 3) to Singapore as an expanding circle country a little disconcerting.

In comparison with the Baratta book, the one by Rose and Galloway is more extensively referenced and has a more comprehensive index. Many of the references to scholarly publications and research findings are also more up to date. A related strength is that the book often draws on research that the authors themselves have conducted over the last ten years or so. Hints on practical teaching ideas are sprinkled throughout the text, but these authors are perhaps stronger on the concepts underlying teaching. I found a careful explanation of the distinctions between 'method', 'approach', and 'technique' (p. 49) particularly illuminating.

Either of these books would help the classroom teacher to get up to speed on the ways in which the globalized world is beginning to reshape approaches to English language teaching and learning. It will be fascinating to see whether barriers to change, such

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as conservative attitudes among some teachers, students, and publishers, are overcome, or whether the native-speaker teacher and his or her ICE will remain dominant.

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Focus on Vocabulary Learning (Oxford Key Concepts)

Marlise Horst

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Recent government statistics show that around 17 per cent of students in state-funded secondary schools in the UK speak a language other than English at home. The number is higher for primary school students—slightly above 21 per cent (Department for Education 2019). These children face enormous challenges in keeping pace with the general academic performance of their English L1 peers because, as Marlise Horst explains in this eminently helpful new book, the linguistic gap between such children can be very large.

In *Focus on Vocabulary Learning*, Horst addresses the specific issue of how deficits in vocabulary knowledge among this type of learner (following the North American terminology, they are referred to here simply as 'English Language Learners', or ELLs) contribute to this problem of general academic performance, and how this deficit might be made up. The book begins with a crystal-clear demonstration of the problem. Horst invites the reader to answer a question about a text taken from a Canadian high school science exam. In the first version of this text, words from beyond the 1,000 most frequent word families in English have been replaced with blank spaces—thereby approximating the experience of ELLs whose vocabulary knowledge does not extend beyond these first thousand words. The percentage of 'known' words in this modified text is 73 per cent, and the task of comprehension is almost impossible. In subsequent versions of the task, Horst adds words from 2,000- and 3,000-word frequency bands, eventually increasing the 'known' word coverage to 92%. At this point, the reader will find the text essentially comprehensible, but will continue to require guesswork to answer questions. The exercise allows the reader to understand the magnitude of the task facing ELLs: even with a strong understanding of the 3,000 most frequent words in English, they are at an immediate disadvantage in terms of their ability to comprehend the type of written and spoken texts encountered in school. Only when a substantial proportion of words up to the 8,000-word level are known does text coverage rise to 98 per cent (Nation 2006), at which point comprehension becomes easier. Thus, the task facing ELLs and their teachers is to raise the ELLs' lexical coverage to something like this level.

Although Horst argues that ELLs' 'rates of [vocabulary] acquisition may match or even outpace those of their English-speaking classmates' (p. 54), she suggests that the head start which English L1 students gain from their home environment means that many ELLs fail to catch up with their peers even by the time they reach high school. The main locus of this deficit is in the type of academic vocabulary which recurs frequently in school textbooks. Several factors contribute to the extent to which the gap can be bridged by individual students. One relatively predictable factor is students' exposure to English, both in and out of school. Another is socioeconomic status: children from more advantaged families appear more likely to make rapid headway with word learning. Horst suggests that this may be related to the breadth and complexity of the L1 vocabulary used at home, as well as that language's formal similarity to English. Older learners also appear to be at an advantage: in Chapter 4, Horst discusses several studies which have suggested that the more advanced metalinguistic knowledge, memory capacity, and cognitive skills of older students mean that they tend to learn new words more quickly than younger learners.

Nevertheless, this task of making up a large deficit of vocabulary knowledge is a daunting task regardless of the child's age or background. Horst suggests numerous ways in which the burden can be reduced. One of the most important of these is the judicious selection of vocabulary. She suggests that the most important words for ELLs to learn are likely to be neither very frequent ones (which ELLs are most likely to pick up through everyday interactions), nor subject-specific words (which subject teachers are most likely to elaborate on). Instead, words of frequencies intermediate between these two poles, and frequent in school materials such as textbooks, are likely to be of most help. A number of helpful resources are introduced to help teachers to identify such words. They include word lists—particularly the Academic Word List (Coxhead 2000) and the Middle School Vocabulary List (Greene and Coxhead 2015)—and vocabulary profiling software. Horst here demonstrates a commitment not only to informing teachers about these resources, but also to helping them to take the next step: several of the book's 'Activity' sections provide basic training in finding and using online resources. For example, one early task (p. 22) guides the reader through the use of an online lexical profiler, demonstrating how it might help teachers to identify words likely to be useful for their students. Web links for several such tools are provided in the Appendix.

Horst's discussion of the practicalities of vocabulary instruction is focused mainly on curriculum design, rather than on specific teaching methods: this is not a vocabulary teaching 'cookbook'. The author instead discusses a number of comprehensive programmes which have been developed to aid ELLs with vocabulary improvement. An example of these courses is the Word Generation scheme, described by Lawrence, White, and Snow (2010; Horst provides links to lesson plans developed as part of this project in the book's appendix). These programmes have several key features. Firstly, they use multiple texts to introduce new words in a range of contexts, helping learners with elaborative processing, which Horst describes as the process of generating associations between a newly learned word and existing knowledge. Horst argues that this is crucial for the development of deep, flexible word knowledge. Secondly, they provide numerous opportunities for learners to practice recalling new words. Thirdly, they include tasks which encourage learners to practice producing the words in communicative contexts; and fourthly, these practice activities involve all four modalities.

The book also highlights the importance of training learners in effective vocabulary learning strategies. Horst again provides helpful activities here. For example, her discussion of the value of teaching word roots and affixes includes sections illustrative of the value of the partial word knowledge which affix knowledge can offer, and a classroom snapshot showing students putting this skill into practice. Other forms of learner training advocated in the book include the use of word cards, training in metacognitive strategies such as the keyword technique, and substantial practice of the skills of guessing the meaning of words from context.

Much of this volume is occupied with descriptions of research studies and their findings. The result is that the arguments being made feel clear and thoroughly justified, despite the book being quite short. Several features of the book's organization also help to make sure that the content does not become too dry. Firstly, Horst begins with a short questionnaire which invites the reader to consider their opinions on a number of key issues related to teaching vocabulary to ELLs. Horst then uses the questions in this survey to organize her conclusion, providing a helpful structure to the final chapter's summary of her main ideas. Secondly, the book makes excellent use of the activities, classroom snapshots, and spotlight study sections which are a feature of this Oxford Core Concepts series. The only criticism readers might have of these inclusions is that there are not enough of them—each of those provided are well chosen and beneficial. Lastly, the text is organized sensibly, firstly setting out what is known about vocabulary teaching and learning in general, and then narrowing in on research pertaining to children and adolescents.

This volume is illustrative of a commingling of general ELT, which was generally assumed to take place in private language schools and foreign language classrooms, with mainstream education. Given that this trend is likely to continue in the future, this book offers a timely demonstration of the way in which researchers and practitioners of ELT, on the one hand, and those of general education on the other, can learn from each other to address specific applied linguistics problems. Because of Horst's primary focus on school-aged children for whom English is not the language spoken at home, and because of the focus on syllabus-level interventions rather than on day-to-day vocabulary teaching activities, the book is likely to be most helpful to course designers or teachers who have a measure of control over the design of their syllabus. Students either of ELT or of general education for young learners will also benefit from Horst's clear expression of the principles of vocabulary teaching and learning. Much of the material here will also be of interest to more experienced teachers or researchers of vocabulary who may not have considered the specific needs of this large and growing group of learners.

Of course, the book's ultimate goal is to improve the academic chances of ELLs, including the roughly 20 per cent of UK school-aged children whose first language is not English. Although they may not know it, these students are in need of good-quality scholarship and educational design to reduce their learning burden. This book is a positive step in that direction.

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by grassroots movements resulted in a confluence of progressive elements from the press, bureaucracy, judiciary and academia resulting in an epistemic community which had the necessary expertise and knowledge to further the demand. This epistemic community managed to engage in forceful advocacy, deepening the discourse around openness and intervening in policy making by providing legal inputs. Throughout the book, several helpful tables encapsulate the findings of each chapter. Illustratively, a table (4.3) summarizes the policy recommendations pithily capturing the role of the epistemic community.

The final chapter shows how global norms of openness, transparency, and access to information had a demonstrative and operative impact on the indigenous process of institutional change. This makes a new contribution to the consolidating literature on the dynamics of norm diffusion through localization.

In situating state-society interaction the author argues that, 'had the ideas within the state not moved favourably towards the norm of openness, the state would have dealt with the same social actors differently', but this claim of how the state would have dealt with the social actors differently, is not interrogated in the book. Could this have depended on which political party coalition was in power – the National Democratic Alliance which passed the Freedom of Information Act 2002, but did not implement it or the United Progressive Alliance which adopted the RTI Act 2005 with an explicit commencement date written into the law?

While the author argues that the RTI Act is distinct from other rights-based legislation like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005, the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 and the Right to Food Act 2013 and the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARR) 2013 as it 'does not represent policy continuity but rather a complete departure from the previous policy regime', he hasn't mustered adequate evidence to justify this claim of newness. The FRA and the LARR also have their origins in the colonial period and these legacy laws were severely contested in post-independent India, akin to the Official Secrets Act. The changes to the FRA and the LARR were in response to the pressure on the government by a multitude of progressive people's organizations and movements in India. Maybe if the author had compared how the other rights-based legislations were adopted then his argument of an endogenous institutional change would have been more robust.

The author makes a strong case that this institutional change is irreversible on two counts – 'that any government in power cannot withdraw this constitutionally granted legal right and a right that was non-existent prior to 2005 was systematically instituted with the promulgation of the RTI Act.' While this is what one hopes would be the case, the author's reliance on the *norm* of openness taking root and reaching a tipping point in 2005 begs the question – What happens if the ruling party adopts the norm of secrecy? To give an example, in 1993 the then Attorney General of the United States Janet Reno had issued a memo which directed officials to 'apply a presumption of disclosure' when implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which was renounced by her successor John Ashcroft who went as far as to promise legal cover to agencies coming down on the side of non-disclosure. This is quite evident under the current administration in India, where despite the promise of *Quest for Transparency* by Prime Minister Modi, a slogan on the Prime Minister's website, the experience of RTI requesters is one of delays, evasion and even non-compliance.

Overall, the book is a very valuable addition to the growing corpus of works on transparency and accountability and a very good read. The author's diligence is clearly evident, and he provides a compelling narrative which will engage the reader's attention.

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THE TRANSFORMATIVE CONSTITUTION: A Radical Biography in Nine Acts by Gautam Bhatia. HarperCollins India, 2019.

The Transformative Constitution, released in 2019, has been a core topic of discussion amongst professionals as well as academics. It was also shortlisted for the Tata Literature Live! Book of the Year Award for Non-Fiction. Gautam Bhatia is perhaps best known to many of us in the legal field as the creator of the wildly successful and influential blog *Indian Constitutional Law and Philosophy*. Bhatia, an advocate practising at the Supreme Court of India has had a front row view of several cases of immense consequence. He is thus in a position to bring a unique practitioner's perspective to issues with a distinctive academic flair.

In The Transformative Constitution, Bhatia undertakes impressively extensive research in the fields

of legal history and constitutional design to present a novel way of interpreting the Indian Constitution. One doesn't have to agree with Bhatia's assertion that Indian judgments have broadly taken the 'view of conservatism and continuity' in order to appreciate his claim that the Indian Constitution is 'fundamentally transformative'. Using the context of colonial era legislations and the debates of the Constituent Assembly, and the writings surrounding these processes, Bhatia argues that the judiciary has careened between the two poles of constitutional interpretation: living-tree constitutionalism and constitutional originalism. He proposes the middle path of transformative constitutionalism which is about creating a 'framework that makes democratic politics possible.' This innovative tool of constitutional interpretation neither 'seeks to interfere with the democratic process' nor 'determine outcomes as opposed to the PIL vision of contemporary jurisprudence' but with removing the 'asymmetries in power' by 'deepening democracy in the public sphere.'

His methodology is as novel as it is ambitious. Bhatia chooses nine cases from the 'detritus of the Indian constitutional cannon' which fall neatly into the categories of dissenting opinions in Supreme Court judgments, High Court judgments overruled by the Supreme Court, and 'ignored or marginalized' Supreme Court decisions. Interestingly, he has been directly involved in at least four of these nine cases, including *Naz Foundation*. He aims to use these cases to highlight the 'transformative vision of the Indian Constitution.' Half of these cases are famous in the sense they have been read by all who have studied constitutional law while the remaining are truly those which many would not have encountered. This proves to be one of the many strengths of this book. Constitutional law syllabi across law schools are constrained by time and other practical considerations. Students and instructors mostly engage briefly with only the most important constitutional law judgments. Bhatia's book then becomes a much-needed resource that can supplement outside-the-classroom learning of those interested in venturing further in this vast terrain. Not only is the subject matter new and unexplored, the method (sometimes dwelling on dissent) is equally unique, refreshing and perhaps most useful for practicing lawyers.

Reading the Prologue sets the book alongside Zia Mody's brilliant and crisp *10 Judgements that Changed India*, which was an accessible compilation of comments on landmark constitutional law cases. Bhatia has also chosen nine landmark constitutional law cases but they feature on the margins of his analysis rather than being its centrepiece. The cases are used as pegs to decipher wider themes and ideas. The range of analysis not only includes Constituent debates and comments but also includes expositions by legal giants like Ambedkar, Dworkin, Munshi and the like. This book is essentially a compilation of essays on the topics dealt with in these chosen cases and not a comment on the judgments per se. It reads like a detailed constitutional law textbook which focuses on certain provisions of the Indian Constitution, providing an in-depth and well reasoned analysis of those clauses, with extensive reference to Indian and foreign judgments and doesn't limit the scope of its enquiry to the nine chosen cases. One then wonders about the need to portray this book only as a story told through nine judgments when it is so much richer in its texture and more in its scope.

Part II of the book which deals with Fraternity seems to be the weakest link in this liberty-equality-fraternity chain. Bhatia is unable to establish why the chosen articles fit the category of Fraternity better than Equality and Liberty, where they are traditionally placed. His explanation that the categories are 'not hermetically sealed off from each other' and one can read one only in conjunction with the other two, is somewhat insufficient. The Preamble to the Constitution of India identifies four goals: justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Bhatia also makes the claim that it is the individual that is at the centre of the discourse since ours is not a socialist Constitution. It then becomes difficult to justify the authorial intention to pick *fraternity* as the theme that better fits cases of discrimination by private entities rather than *justice*, even though it is clear that this constitutional trinity was chosen because it, in B.R. Ambedkar's words, embodies the meaning of social democracy.

Does the transformative potential of the Constitution only reveal itself in the rights granting (or recognizing) provisions of the Constitution? Bhatia has chosen to concentrate his analysis on Part III of the Constitution of India which deals with the fundamental rights granted to citizens and persons. These articles justifiably garner most of the attention of constitutional law scholars, dealing as they do with some of the most fundamental aspects of human life. Nevertheless, it would have been interesting to see what Bhatia's novel way of interpretation would have made of the other articles of the Constitution, for example the ones dealing with the imposition of an Emergency or those demarcating the separation of powers between constituents of the state, both vertically and horizontally. Seen in this light, Bhatia's insistence to remain wedded to the liberty-

equality-fraternity theme has precluded interpretation and experimentation in the often-overlooked corners of the Constitution's text.

Bhatia is indeed very knowledgeable and this reflects in his broad range of analysis. This book is a dense read and usually uses a language that is peculiar and more familiar to law students and legal scholars. Providing a research scheme at the beginning of each chapter gives it the feel of a law review article. The arguments put forth and his unique take on the judgments, are such that will enrich and inform the understanding of the country's Constitution for all. As he states early on – 'the Constitution is for all to interpret' – and given how the judiciary has captured popular imagination, it would be apposite that more people, especially those not trained in law, are able to understand and imbibe Bhatia's message. All things said, Gautam Bhatia's book in an insightful and thought-provoking read. It is certainly a rich addition to the field of constitutional jurisprudence in India.

T.S. Eliot once remarked, 'History has cunning passes, many contrived corridors.' Ideas, issues and themes that had somewhat been settled in the past arise before us in current times. It is here that Bhatia's book perhaps becomes most useful. The chronology of interpretation and application of philosophy and legal principles helps the reader to gain a unique and deep insight into the workings of the Constitution. It contextualizes ideas and arguments we hear each day, of constitutional values, equality and indeed fraternity. The opening chapter notes that 'By reading our constitutional history against the grain, it is a vision that is open to us to retrieve and claim.' This certainly is an interesting and, some might say, exciting proposition. It is also a perspective that one rarely encounters. Bhatia justifies this and inspires an innovative paradigm of thinking, both for academics as well as practitioners. The gaps that are left in judicial decisions – often ignored – are what seem to be most interesting under this new light.

Bhatia has many feathers to his hat – as a lawyer and a writer. He has recently explored the world of science fiction whilst also working on his authoritative blog. The hope remains that he will follow this book with contemporary ideas, to reflect the transformative nature of not just the Constitution but also the scholarly debates that nourish it in our times.

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KUKNALIM, Naga Armed Resistance: Testimonies of Leaders, Pastors, Healers and Soldiers by Nandita Haksar and Sebastian M. Hongray. Speaking Tiger Publishing, Delhi, 2019.

REPORTING on terror and conflicts, for long a subject of heated debate, saw a fierce renewal when *The New York Times* reporter, Rukmini Callimachi, came under intense scrutiny for her podcast series *Caliphate*. The lead character of the award winning series, Abu Huzayfah whose actual name is Shehroze Chaudhry, was arrested by the Canadian police in September 2020 for impersonating an ISIS fighter.

If the explosive piece by the Times' Ben Smith is anything to go by, followed by their official rejoinder, Callimachi's editors were complicit in allowing falsities to creep into the series (possibly in her other stories too) for the sake of a morally righteous flavour of narrative journalism. Enunciating the challenges of reporting on an extremist group, Smith wrote, 'If you get something wrong, you probably won't get a call from ISIS press office seeking a correction.'

You won't, unless you were reporting on the Government of People's Republic of Nagalim, particularly the late Isak Chishi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah led faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN), the political militant outfit that has been fighting for an independent nation for the Nagas since 1980. Beyond the estimated 5000 strong Naga Army that the IM commands, their Ministry of Publicity (MIP) deserves special journalistic attention and scholarly scrutiny.

Over the years, the MIP has blacklisted several news media outlets for publishing stories they believed were either fabricated or had misquoted their leaders. On 1 May 2019 they issued a statement blacklisting News 18 for failing to correct a quote by V. Horam, an Executive Member of the NSCN Steering Committee, saying it was 'annoying the way News 18 dramatize Horam's statement' (sic). In another instance, the MIP blacklisted *East Mojo*, a regional news website, after it ran a report of an alleged meeting of Muivah and two Naga politicians over a change in chief ministership in Nagaland. Stating that the news came as a surprise, the MIP said, the group nevertheless 'exercised restraint and showed courtesy to contact East Mojo to refute the report.'

The self-styled government(s) headquartered in Nagaland wields influence and operates all over India's Northeast and beyond, in Myanmar, since the last 23 years after the NSCN entered into a ceasefire agreement. Of course, the Naga movement for an independ-

of dissonance appear in characters – when for instance, Eustar recognizes that Naga women don't have land rights, an invested reader is left wanting for more tension, or nuance. Instead, it is quickly ironed out and resolved all too neatly for the sake of the larger Naga cause to achieve nationhood first. 'We would like to lay down the foundation of our organization first and then slowly discuss the necessary problems', Eustar told the authors even as she acknowledged it was a topic 'not easy to touch.'

The authors do bring out some contradictions within the political discourse of the IM vis-à-vis angling for support from China, which Muivah appears to be far more in favour of than Isak, and its control of Tibet that the leaders were not permitted to visit. Similarly, the Naga allegiance towards the British – who after conquering their land, sought to 'modernize' them through education and Christianity – is riddled with 'White man' saviour hood in fighting for a unique identity of their own.

Historical figures of any hue must be subjected to proportionate doses of credit and criticism, sympathy and scrutiny – Kuknalim offers both but not nearly enough of the latter.

Of course, neither Isak or Muivah, nor any of the other characters documented in the book, are comparably as dodgy as Callimachi's Abu Huzayfah. But if the ISIS suffers from a distortion of truth as an overreaching macabre force in the western media, in left liberal discourse the NSCN-IM holds an untainted revolutionary image, largely due to the international narrative cultivated by Phizo and Muivah.

Much of the historiography of the Naga movement suffers from the extreme binaries of decidedly pro and anti narratives of the NSCN. Kuknalim is sympathetic to only but a faction of leaders in the movement, no doubt the ones who have been steering the talks and have been the contemporary faces of it. But a book entirely based on interviews, where probing questions appear more rarely than they should, and information isn't triangulated with other sources, is not Haksar's most scholarly work.

Eunice the 'Oracle' once told the authors, 'There is no stability on earth and the earth is shaking and there is a landslide. I see people trying to build a big church but it will not stand because the land is sliding down and people are scared and holding on to the branches of trees to prevent from sliding down.'

I only wish the authors had more narratives and voices on a house as divided as the Naga movement, including those holding on and others sliding down.

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SEX AND THE SUPREME COURT: How the Law is Upholding the Dignity of the Indian Citizen by Saurabh Kirpal. Hachette India, 2020.

THE book under review, *Sex and the Supreme Court: How the Law is Upholding the Dignity of Indian Citizen* by Saurabh Kirpal, is an anthology of essays which explore the complex relationship between liberal law, individual identity and collective mores. With the object of foregrounding the nuances of this relationship, the essays focus on those judgements of the Supreme Court which deal with questions of sex and sexuality. The book traces the myriad interactions between law and the sexual to expose the transformative capability of the Constitution and the conception of constitutional morality. However, one has to bear in mind that until constitutional morality takes into account the lived realties of subjects, its transformative goals remains elusive.

The first part of the book begins by delineating the progressive history of decriminalization of homosexuality and reading down of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. Saurabh Kirpal in his essay, collapses the distinction between act and identity which was the central thesis of *Suresh Kumar Khoushal case*. While doing so he, like the court, is silent on the question at hand which was with respect to interpretation of the term 'against the order of nature'.[1] Coming from a lawyer one would expect a more honest engagement with the letter of the law rather than an exclusive focus on ideals of constitutional morality and transformative constitutionalism. Further, in celebrating the judgment for its path-breaking stance, Kirpal forgot about the class character of the judicial reasoning. Ashley Tellis, an LGBTQI+ activist, asserts that the judgement is decriminalizing only private sexual activities, thus leaving *hijra* public sex unaddressed.[2] Kirpal concludes that the 'pride parades and social gatherings have increased' which along with the 'power of social media' will bring about a change in the attitude of people. Such a position presents no critique of the neoliberal character of these parades and contests for those who view them as exclusionary and elite.

In the same part, which deals with questions of autonomy and sexuality, Justice Madan B. Lokur discusses the *NALSA judgement*. The essay, rather than being a critical engagement with the judgement, dwells more on the institutional changes that have taken place

1. Ashley Tellis, 'The Lack of Honest Toil', *Seminar* 721, September 2019, pp. 67-72.
2. Ibid.

since the judgement. However, an uncritical acceptance of the western definition of transgender people, as done by the court and the author, should be rethought in light of the ground realities of the transgender community in India.

The essay cogently lays down the developments in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu which manifest strong organizing efforts around voter cards, ration card and other rights. The essay argues that the Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 has diluted the progressive judgement of NALSA.

The next part of the book deals with the judicial reactions to the entanglement between the liberal notion of consent and communitarian assertions. The essays in this section examine the famous cases of *Shafin Jahan*, *Sakti Vahini* and *Joseph Shine* and *Independent Thoughts*. In each of these cases the apex court not only delve into questions of consent but also problems of desire, marriage and familial logic. The essays raise some very important legal question about the presumption of constitutionality in pre-constitutional laws, and the manner in which public-private divide subjugates the woman subject. However, the common thread in the arguments of both the essays is the neat binary between social morality and constitutional morality. In doing so the essays discursively construct constitutional morality as a realm which is impervious to the social. It is important to note that feminists have contended that a clear distinction between legal and the social is not possible as both of them inform each other.[3]

The essays while presenting a unified image of constitutional morality hide the contradictions and tensions that exist in the liberal law framework. For example, Arundhati Katju and Menaka Guruswamy celebrate the historic judgement of *Joseph Shine*, but they do little to acknowledge that marriage conceptually restricts the scope of intimacy until we start understanding marriage as inherently non-monogamous.[4] Further, in case of *Independent Thoughts,* though the authors cogently make a case for deletion of the marital rape exception, difficult questions of child sexuality and the possibility of sexual governance which the subject matter raises, have to be asked. Or be it the doctrine of *Parens Patriae* (as presented even by the counsel for the respondent in the *Shafin Jahan case*) and its incompatibility with the assumption of a free human subject that the concept of constitutional morality is upholding. Unless these complexities are taken into account while engaging with the judgements, we would continue to flatten the contradictions immanent even in the Constitution of India.

The interaction and negotiation between individual rights and the institution of religion form the crux of the final part of the book. The issues of Triple Talaq and entry of women in the Sabarimala temple become the focal point of the study. Madhavi Divan in her essay on Triple Talaq highlights the manner in which a plea to hear the constitutionality of *nikah halala* or polygamy were rejected to make way for religious assertions. She contends that as the All India Muslim Personal Law Board had not claimed that triple talaq was an essential practice of Islam, hence the reasoning of Justice Kehar and Justice Nazeer is fallacious. Interestingly Divan points out at the constitution of the bench, which did not have even a single woman. Further, she asserts that the 'issue of triple talaq has been examined almost entirely through the prism of personal law rather than from the standpoint of gender justice.' Such insight goes a long way in displacing the patriarchal character of a judgement which is being hailed as path-breaking in the field of women rights. However, while dealing with the woman question, Divan creates a homogenous category of women. She states that 'women constitute half of the population of every community, transcending the barriers of caste and religion.' Such a position does not take into account the intersectional nature of the identity of a Muslim woman.

In Divan's conceptualization of a Muslim woman's identity, she turns a blind eye to the narrative of those women who would not have wanted to take recourse to a secular law. For example, an Islamic woman may contest patriarchal regimes of *Quaranic* interpretation at home, while at the same time articulating a sort of global solidarity.[5] Further, she advocates the carceral stance taken by government with respect to criminalization of triple talaq, which again reduces the Muslim woman to a subaltern subject. The essay talks about Muslim Women only in broad strokes, thereby becoming another universalistic rhetoric which erases the multilayered narrative of the Muslim woman to one of victimization.

Mukul Rohatgi presents a very interesting analysis of the *Indian Young Lawyers Association case* (also known as Sabarimala case). He states that the apex court in this judgment collapses the distinction

3. Pratiksha Baxi, 'Legacies of Common Law: "Crimes of Honour" in India and Pakistan', *Third World Quarterly* 27, 2006.

4. Latika Vashist, 'Joseph Shine v. Union of India', *Newsletter ILI*, 2018.

5. Upendra Baxi, *Future of Human Rights*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2008.

between public morality and constitutional morality. Justice Misra in his judgement, while dealing with the use of the term public morality in Article 25 and 26 of the Indian Constitution, holds that 'the term public morality has to be appositely understood as being synonymous to constitutional morality.' Rohatgi maintains that in the same judgement Justice Misra asserts that 'public morality must yield to constitutional morality', thereby pointing out the patent contradiction. Such a close reading of the judgement shows the manner in which the judges get trapped on account of judicial verbosity. However, in the author's narrative around Article 25 and 26 of the Constitution the woman subject is lost. Wouldn't a discourse which advocates banning entry of women reinstate the stereotype of women as agents of contamination and fuel majoritarian anxieties about menstruating women in the so-called 'secular and modern courts'?

The anthology puts together a comprehensive analysis of cases and is a diligent effort to create a database for understanding of legal processes. However, any critical work which deals with the complicated interaction between the Indian Constitution (with its rights based approach), and the hegemonic social realities has to acknowledge that the journey of constitutional law is full of paradoxes. It is important to recognize rather than repress the contradictions in the text of the Constitution. It is only through engaging and creatively negotiating with the tensions in the text can we hope to build a constitutional morality (in every case) which is more than just a transcendental conception. The only way to build a resilient Constitution is to truly understand the spirit of Dr B.R. Ambedkar's last speech in the Constituent Assembly when he asserts that India is entering into a life of contradictions and in exploring contradictions one understands both the dynamism and the deficiencies of law.

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THE MARGINALIZED SELF: Tales of Resistance of a Community edited by Rahul Ghai, Arvind K. Mishra and Sanjay Kumar. Primus Books, Delhi, 2020.

MARGINALITY as a part of social condition has had a long history in human life. Marginality as discourse is relatively recent, not more than two centuries old. The dominant pattern of the discourse has shifted along with the changes in the orientation of social science itself. As the 19th century telescope of social science was replaced by the 20th century microscope, one question on marginality acquired a new salience: is it possible to combine economic integration with cultural autonomy of the marginalized groups? In other words, do the marginalized groups have the option of achieving affluence without paying the price of cultural submergence? The dilemma is not easily resolved, either for the marginalized groups or for the social scientists. This dilemma is also at the centre of this important volume on the Musahar community of Bihar.

The volume has a generic theoretical component and a specific empirical component about the Musahar community. The Introduction to the volume informs us: 'The Musahars are classified as SCs in Bihar and number around 1.4 million, accounting for almost 2.5 per cent of the total population of the state. Predominantly engaged in agricultural labour and casual labour at the brick kilns, the Musahars are mostly settled in the districts of Gaya, Nadwa, Munger, Bhagalpur, Purnea, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Saran and Champaran. Apart from Bihar, the Musahars are also found in the neighbouring states of Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bengal.' (p. 10)

The specific empirical essays (Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 by Badri Narayan, Rafiul Ahmed, Sanjay Kumar and Arvind Kumar Mishra, respectively) have taken up specific issues relating to the economic and cultural life of the community. Chapter three highlights how the community has used its own cultural resources for effective social and political mobilization. Chapter five is a story of how change in the food preference of the upper castes towards pork has created economic and social opportunities for the pig rearing sections of the Musahar community. Chapter four talks about how cultural assumptions of the social and political elites often come in the way of successful implementation of welfare schemes meant for the marginalized groups such as the Musahars. Chapter six takes up the concrete life stories of the important leaders of the Musahar community (Dashrath Manjhi, Bhagwati Devi and Baleshwar Prasad) and the actual transformation of a Musahar settlement (Bapugram, pp. 141-44), brought about by the community with its own hard work. The concrete stories narrated in the chapter feed into larger generalizations pertaining to the complex relationship between the mainstream and the margins, the attempts at appropriation from the apex and resistance from the margins.

Why History Matters
Reading George Gadbois

UPENDRA BAXI

BOOK REVIEWS

Supreme Court of India: The Beginnings by George H Gadbois, Jr, edited and introduced by Vikram Raghavan and Vasujith Ram, *New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2017; pp xxxii + 245, ₹795.*

George H Gadbois, Jr was a veteran scholar of the Indian Supreme Court; his contributions are immense and enduring. He was the first to study the Court jurimetrically (Gadbois 1981), and also began the tradition of scholarly bioanalysis of the Court (Gadbois 2011). Vikram Raghavan has done a great service to the world of constitutional law by persuading Gadbois to have this work published (Raghavan and Ram 2017) and I was pleased to commend the publication of this first work by Gadbois—his 1961 master's thesis at Duke University, in political science—to Oxford University Press. Gadbois had expressed a reluctance to do so and it is a source of joy that he allowed himself to be overruled.

Rarely do academic writers agree fully with each other and, although hailing my *Indian Supreme Court and Politics* (Baxi 1981) as "pioneering" and "most important ever written about the Supreme Court of India," Gadbois found it somewhat too "untidy and loosely presented." He recognised that even the "most original argument—that the post-Emergency Court has pursued an increasingly people-oriented 'frankly populistic' posture, is searching for new bases of legitimation of its power, and seeks to speak to the people at large," but added, "Perhaps it is characteristic of books of this nature to be better at provoking than proving" (Gadbois 1981).

His criticism of judicial populism is quite puzzling; now I understand better why Gadbois found problematic my insistence that the Court function "as a parallel legislature and quite often as a parallel constituent body" and that "interests of the people require the Court to *lead* and the legislature to *follow*" (Baxi 1981: xii, 248) as this is not how the Supreme Court was conceived. However, he urged towards the end of his thesis that the Supreme Court move from "literary" interpretation of the Constitution to a "liberal" construction. He also reminded us that even when individual justices may make a difference, the collegiate nature of institutions continues to provide a normative framework within which alone flows societal innovation.

As a pioneering narrative of the first constitutional court in a modern post-colonial nation, the book deals with the contemporary contentions about the "new judicial establishment" (pp 107–47) and the Supreme Court in "the Indian system of Government" (pp 149–90; see also Pylee [1960], Gadbois had access to the thesis at Duke University). This essay explores three aspects of the book: (i) how the Supreme Court came to be conceived in the period 1921–35; (ii) how it fulfilled its legalist role in *A K Gopalan v State of Madras* (1950); and (iii) the early activist stirrings of the Supreme Court. I would suggest a reading of the early history as necessarily encouraging judicial activism of a kind that matures in a demosprudence (Baxi 2016, 2017).

The Early Campaign

Gadbois traced contemporaneously with M V Pylee (now, 2016) the early beginnings of the Supreme Court in the making. Both highlight facts commonplace now but novel then. Palpable is the difference in tracing of historical detail and emphasis on the nature of constitutional adjudication.

Hari Singh Gour initiated, and persisted with, the idea of an Indian Supreme Court, somewhat like Raphael Lemkin who insisted that the United Nations affirm and adopt the crime of genocide (Benhabib 2009; Power 2007). Like Lemkin, Gour faced an uphill task in convincing anyone in the initial stages but, unlike him, he lived to see his idea accepted. While Lemkin started his campaign in the post World War II (WWII) period, Gour began his plan in the inter-war period. The analogy must end here because one does not quite know whether Gour regarded colonial governance practices as integral to genocide.

Admirably stating in 1921 his reasons justifying the establishment of a Supreme Court, Gour mentioned the distance (the Privy Council was situated in London), "prohibitive" costs, and delays (of four–five years). Moreover, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was not "equipped" to handle intricate questions of the Hindu and Muslim law and was loath to entertain criminal appeals, in absence of showing "a gross failure of justice" (pp 2–3). Nor were the Privy Council Opinions binding on the Crown, except wading through the complex history of constitutional conventions. Not directly animated by considerations of nationalism but only by those of efficiency, Gour had little difficulty in preserving litigant option to resort to the Privy Council (p 3).

His bill (some 18 months later) was opposed by Tej Bahadur Sapru arguing that: (i) A Supreme Court will trench upon the jurisdiction of high courts, (ii) the executive appointing authority will patronise some aspirants who would lobby for elevation, (iii) the "glorious traditions" of "calm and detached atmosphere" of the Privy Council will mostly thus become unavailable, and (iv) this will "entail a distinct sacrifice of efficiency and the conditions of public confidence" (pp 3–4). Incidentally, the very same arguments are now made against having more benches of high courts and against an itinerant Supreme Court (although arguments of distance, prohibitive costs, and access remain valid now as they were then).

The subsequent 1925 attempt was opposed by Motilal Nehru (p 6). A year

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after, Gandhi saw nothing wrong in the "mild and very innocent proposal" by Gour and even alleged that "the Members of the Privy Council are not free from political bias" condoning an "egregious blunder" in interpreting personal law (p 6). And yet the proposal only came to fruition at the Second Round Table conference and was ultimately implemented by the Government of India Act, 1935 (pp 10–24).

The "higher judicial structure" did not enjoy "a prominent place on the agenda of Indian nationalist demands" (p 24), despite the fact that the Federal Court of India was established on 1 October 1937 and functioned till the creation of the Supreme Court on 26 January 1950.

This remains sadly true even now, though it is a "first constitutional court" and is an institution capable of handling international law issues otherwise solely left to the executive (p 81). The temptation to "minimise its role" was very great, partly because its jurisdiction was limited and WWII had generally depleted the interpretive role of courts. Further, it was also overshadowed by the Privy Council to which appeals still lay (pp 80–81). Yet, the Court was "resolute, impartial, and independent" (p 81) and "it exhibited no reluctance to declare an enactment or ordinance … unreasonably restrictive of individual liberties" (p 81). Perhaps, the basic samskaras of constitutional democracy and rule of law were thus sown.

The Gopalan Case

K M Munshi (the pioneer, I think) of the expression "essential features" in the Constituent Assembly Debates (CADs) was a strong proponent of the phrase of "due process;" and Thakur Das Bhargava wanted it to avoid the "tyranny of the legislature." In contrast, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyer counselled that the phrase will "serve as a great handicap against all social legislation" and B R Ambedkar advocated its exclusion lest due process encourage judicial forays into the question "whether the law was a good law" (pp 152–53). The Constituent Assembly instead adopted Article 21 that merely restricted the state from taking away the rights to life and liberty, except in accordance with the "procedure established by law," an expression used by the post-war Japanese constitution under General Douglas MacArthur.

Article 21, Gadbois notes, "was not intended as constitutional imitation upon the powers of the *legislature*" (p 155) and reinforces David Bayley's Cold War conclusion that everywhere "'Substantive due process' has given ground to 'procedural due process'" (p 156, note 15). That conclusion is endorsed by a majority of three senior justices of the Supreme Court in *A K Gopalan v State of Madras* (1950), with only one justice insisting on "certain fundamental principles of justice which inhere in every civilised system of law" (p 16, Gadbois quoting Fazal Ali, J).

The Gopalan judgment will be forever discussed and has been overturned now by Justice Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud in the right to privacy decision (*Justice K S Puttaswamy and Anr v Union of India and Others* 2017). Gadbois seems to welcome the Gopalan judgment as accepting the judicial role "charted by the constitution-makers" (p 176), while recognising the "distress" caused to civil libertarians. However, Gadbois was not an "originalist" who pursued only the meaning of the founders of the constitutional texts; he is excited by the very fact that the Supreme Court accepted to consult the CADs (pp 174–75)—but this itself was an act of interpretation!

Early Activist Stirrings

The early activist stirrings concerned the nature and scope of interpretation of many constitutional amendments, judicial invalidation of compensatory preference measures, and hierarchy amongst the fundamental rights and directive principles (pp 163–66, 170–90, 197–218). Gadbois treads this large territory warily but well. He finds a judicial approach that is highly legalistic and literal, only occasionally opening itself up the traumatically changeful contexts of nation-building. It was the "jaundiced view" (p 165), particularly of "B N Rau, B R Ambedkar, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyer, and Nehru … that judicial review was fine so long as it was kept within limits and did not threaten the primacy of Parliament" (pp 105–06) that prevailed.

Yet, "the mere presence of a Bill of Rights and an authorisation to declare" laws and administrative actions as invalid "catapulted" the Supreme Court "in more powerful position than its predecessor" (p 166). The Constitution has institutionalised this structural conflict between the legislature–executive combine on the one hand and the Supreme Court on the other, and by way of a permanent institutional crisis from which there is no exit. Gadbois suggests that "essential" arbitral "function" was best performed by constitutional courts, especially when the "masses, the theoretical bulwark of democracy, can hardly be counted upon … to the defence of unfamiliar institutions and rights" (p 214); this observation runs contrary to India's developmental experience always replete with struggles. In any event, today even the constitutional elites look upon courts as "effective arbiters" of the rights and institutions which are less alien to the masses now.

Given the Cold War context, it is a marked advance that the Supreme Court has been emplaced in a "strategic position" of constitutional responsibility and its "major function" is that of "reconciling freedom and justice with the needs of a modern government" (p 215). Gadbois stresses that the Supreme Court should openly realise that its task is not merely to interpret the Constitution but also to make law (p 216), to abandon the "role of a seeker of loopholes" and cease conflating "the rule of law" with "narrow legalisms," particularly confusing statutory interpretation with constitutional construction (p 217).

Fully heeding to "the stresses and strains of a changing society" (p 216), Gadbois counsels that the Supreme Court pay heed to the "concept of social welfare state that has been accepted by the majority of Indians" and articulated by the constitutional political elites. Perplexing remains the advice that the Supreme Court must "be attuned to the values of majority" and "seek to exercise its functions in harmony" with the "accepted values" (p 216). Such "harmony" is impossible because the masses have never accepted hyper-developmentalism (and now neo-liberalism) as articulating

constitutional consensus. Is there any other better way to understand subaltern constitutionalism (Baxi 2010)?

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Early India, Goats and Brahmins

KANCHA ILAIAH SHEPHERD

Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From by Tony Joseph, *New Delhi: Juggernaut, 2018; pp 288, ₹699 (hardcover).*

I met Tony Joseph first in Jaipur Literature Festival in 2019 and next at *Mathrubhoomi* Literature Festival in January 2020 at Thiruvananthapuram. I had a lengthy discussion about his understanding of cattle like goats, buffalos, cows and so on, caste and race relations in ancient India and where the Brahminic understanding of India went wrong and they became anti-animal economy and anti-agrarian production. He gave me several clues which engendered a new curiosity in his understanding and his book. Then I started reading his book very seriously line by line. It threw up many new dimensions that were not explored in the writings of any other historians, indologists and writers on ancient India earlier.

His book has opened a new perspective on Indian economic and cultural evolution in the context of many discoveries of the economic and cultural evolution of animal, plant and bird domestication and migration to different parts of the world and India. While reading early Indian agrarian system in the chapter "The First Farmers," a new vision appeared for the first time. Joseph writes,

> the first evidence for domestication of goats comes from the settlement of Ganj Dareh in the central Zagros mountain region and is dated to 7900 BCE. (p 78)

Even now, the Indian shepherds have quite a bit of knowledge on how goats live well around shrubby hills and mountains. Goat is known as the most adjustable animal to any new environment and quite cleverly selects its food from many available plants. Its selection of plants for food later on had thrown up many medicines that humans used to treat diseases. Goat milk and meat are known as the most life-sustaining products. Its no wonder then that this was the first domesticated animal that was exported to many alien lands in prehistoric times. This discovery of goat as the earliest domesticated animal brought humans out of hunting and food gathering and also short span of life.

As an animal, goat is highly useful for humans' stable life as its meat and milk are most suitable for their survival. It is quite natural that this animal became the first source of stable food of humans. Even today, goat–sheep economy plays a critical role in global food, leather and wool economy.[1]

Joseph also tells how animals once domesticated at one place were carried along with migrant people all over the present continents across the globe, where human habitat became possible. He further says,

> so the broad picture we see is that between 9500 BCE and 6500 BCE—that is a 3000-year period immediately following the end of the Younger Dryas and the beginning of Holocene—both plant and animal domestication had spread across most of the Fertile Crescent, after progressing in fits and starts during the last glacial period, with littering regions contributing in different times and probably with multiple instances of domestication for the same species.

He further adds:

> As we saw, even as the transition was on, people were taking their plants and animals, perhaps still in the process of being domesticated and perhaps not even that, migrating to newer places. Many places in the Fertile Crescent itself saw plants or animals being imported—an example being goats in the Southern Levant. (p 79)

The Indian subcontinent certainly comes under this Southern Levant.

Aryan Migration

Joseph has established with more evidence than any other historian—including Romila Thapar (2003), R S Sharma (1999)—did earlier that Aryan migration took place as part of the third and last ancient wave of human migration, perhaps with horse as a war animal and white cow as food animal. This book has established that for Aryan Brahminism, horse was more significant and that animal was central to Rigvedic forces. Horse was not known to the Harappans, as they were not war lovers like the Vedic Brahmins. Goat, though such a crucial food animal, was mentioned just in one Rigvedic hymn.

Tony Joseph says,

> The Indian "pizza" got made, with the base or the foundation being laid about 65000 years ago, when the Out of Africa migrants reached India. The sauce began to be made

Book Reviews

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Vasudha Dalmia, *Fiction as History: The Novel and the City in Modern North India*, Permanent Black, Ranikhet, 2017, 428 pp., ₹995.

Nirmal Varma once drew a connection between climate and the novel. The layering of memories and mysteries in the dark corners of bürger houses in proud and cold European cities, he mused (he was in Bergen, Norway), had enabled the emergence of the novel. By contrast, how could novels be written amidst the 'ruins falling apart in the blinding sunlight of the centuries'? 'That's perhaps why there is no lustrous beauty (*abha*) to the novel in our country (400 pages do not a novel make)' (Varma, *Apne Desh Vapasi*, p. 14).

Vasudha Dalmia's rich book on *The Novel and the City in Modern North India* shows just how unfair Varma's passing remark was. True, the centrality of the short story to contemporary Hindi and the rich vein of rural novels, from Premchand to Phanishwar Nath Renu, Nagarjun, Shivprasad Singh down to Shivmurti in our day, have perhaps obscured just how much contemporary Hindi writers have invested in the novel form, and the urban novel in particular. And just how good and ambitious these urban novels are! Their focus, and the focus of the present book, is as much on the city as it is on ideas of the self, the family, intimacy and of what it means to be modern. A 'record of the struggle' rather than a mirror to social history, these novels go 'beyond the socially possible' to illuminate the predicament of individuals pushed and pulled between new aspirations, social expectations and the many challenges of their times. Indeed, novels like Agyeya's *Nadi ke Dvip* (Islands in the Stream, 1952, Ch. 5), Dharmavir Bharati's *Gunahon ka Devta* (The God of Vice, 1949, Ch. 6), Rajendra Yadav's *Sara Akash* (The Vast Sky, 1960, Ch. 7), and Mohan Rakesh's *Andhere Band Kamre* (Dark Closed Rooms, 1961, Ch. 8) have been instrumental in shaping the tormented—modernist—imaginary of the self for generations of Hindi readers. A simplistic binary pitting the village against the city, tradition against modernity, would define the city as the site of alienation, whereas these novels—like Marshall Berman's *All That is Solid Melts into Air* (1982)—show that the modern city is as much a space of excitement and transformation as of alienation. Most of them depict characters on the move, pushing the boundaries of the spaces and identities allotted to them, or else burrowing in to create a space of their own.

To historians, these novels offer a rich archive of 'the ideas and codes through which people viewed themselves and others'. They also, in the present book, show that it is impossible to historicize selves and ideas of modernity without

locating them in space, and without gendering both selves and spaces. Hence questions like: Can there be a modern marriage in an old haveli? Can the 'centrifugal' impulse of the bungalow that nurtures individuality in a young woman be sustained once she leaves it for her marital home?

'Literature in space and space in literature' was Franco Moretti's call in *Atlas of the European Novel* (1999). And though Dalmia's book also charts how Hindi literature gradually made a space for itself in the largely Urdu- and English-dominated cities of colonial North India, 'space in literature' is what it is largely concerned with. Space in the novels and in this book actually means two orders of things: first, the actual cities of Agra, Allahabad, Banaras and Delhi as they underwent historical and demographic changes with colonialism and after Independence. Second, the typology of urban spaces in relation to individuals and to new forms of sociability: the shop (*Pariksha Guru*, Ch. 1); the Municipal Council and the street as sites of urban politics (*Sevasadan* and *Karmabhumi*, Chs. 2 and 3); the courtyard house or *haveli* and the *gali* in the old city (*Jhutha Sach*, Ch. 4 and *Sara Akash*, Ch. 7); the bungalow itself as constituted by a modern front and a traditional backside, and subdivided into micro-spaces like the veranda, the roof, the kitchen and the bedroom, each carrying its own gendered practices, rules and prohibitions (*Gunahoh ka Devta*, Ch. 6). Other urban sites include, memorably, the restaurant, park, railway station and even the traffic island as fleeting sites of urban intimacy (*Nadi ke Dvip*, Ch. 5); the college; the coffee house and so on.

Some of the novels discussed barely name the urban space they are set in, like Delhi's Chandni Chowk in *Pariksha Guru*—which plays a more important role in Krishna Sobti's later novel *Dilo Danish* (the topic of a masterful essay by Dalmia in *Love in South Asia*, 2002). In other novels, like Agyeya's *Nadi ke Dvip*, spaces determine the quality of interaction: for Rekha the city sky is 'like a living room conversation, all talking together but, as it were, concealed, absent; recorded voices, mechanical enthusiasm and exhilaration' (qtd. p. 272). Other than in the natural setting of the mountains, authentic interactions for her can only take place on temporary perches: park benches, empty restaurants on the borderland between the old and the colonial city, railway stations. Yet other novels, like Mohan Rakesh's *Andhere Band Kamre*, map characters onto urban topography and carefully track their mobility across different areas of the city. When Madhusudan, the narrator, first walks from his dingy room in Qasabpura just outside the walls of the old city to the Coffee House in Connaught Place, it is as if he has crossed into another time-world. His landlady in Qasabpura has never been to Connaught Place. But when Madhusudan returns to Delhi nine years later and moves to a barsati on Anand Parbat, the panoramic view he commands over most of the city and his criss-crossing of Delhi on journalistic assignments or for socializing are markers of his own impressive social mobility. Similarly, the first part of Yashpal's massive *Jhuta Sach* carefully maps his characters onto the urban and social topography of Lahore. Over the two parts of the novel, Tara, who is as much a witness to history as the novel's protagonist, takes us through all the sites

of Partition and of post-Partition Delhi—the locked house and compound where abducted girls are kept, the *kafila,* the refugee camp, the refugee colony, her office at the Ministry for relief and rehabilitation... Dalmia finds the novel's second part, set in Delhi after Independence, dry. I instead find it an invaluable document of the new nation as we follow Tara gingerly finding a habitation and new ways of being in the city while she critically records for us the Congress system settling in.

Perhaps inevitably, in these novels the 'struggle' for new ways of living and being in the city is much harder for women characters. 'The modern woman is more alone', mused Mahadevi Varma: 'Today's men are incapable of relating to women outside the family in the sympathetic, respectful and natural way they relate to their mothers and sisters at home' ('Our caged literary men', 1936). Suman in *Sevasadan* discovers that once she has left her marital house, the only place for her is in the bazaar as a courtesan; and if as a courtesan she finds economic independence, freedom of movement and even some social recognition, she has lost everything else. Prabha in *Sara Akash* had the same dreams as her young husband Samar, but once married she has had to pack them all in a trunk, and now her only fulfilment can lie in supporting him in his endeavours. In *Andhere Band Kamre*'s Delhi, Nilima can become an artist, but only according to her husband's wishes. With the notable exception of Yashpal, *all* these novels view educated women as a problem and a threat. Women characters act as foils for the male protagonist to grow, be supported, or realize what it is that he does *not* want. Sure, not happiness but fulfilment is the goal, and for Rekha in *Nadi ke Dvip* or Sudha in *Gunahon ka Devta*—who 'tower' over the other characters—the ability to suffer is the path to fulfilment and to their 'true self'.

'Fiction as history', the title of the book says, and the introductions to the book and to the chapters introductions work hard to suture the history of the cities to the novelistic narratives. Particularly when the analysis focuses on the narrative function of urban spaces and how they illuminate a particular historical conjuncture or enable a particular imagination of the self, the reading of the novels is richly satisfying. But the novels have a tendency to pull Dalmia their own way, and the focus is not always sustained. Then it feels that urban history and the novelistic narratives proceed on parallel tracks rather than merging or contributing to each other. The general themes (nationalism, self, modernity and modernism) are perhaps at too high a level of generalization to generate more specific arguments related to the spatial patterning of characters and narratives—what Mikhail Bakhtin called the chronotope. It is true that the variety of themes and circumstances compensates for a sustained analytical focus, but one cannot help feeling that a sharper use of the tools of literary criticism would have helped develop one or more connecting arguments. As they are, though, the chapters of the book reward the reader with a wealth of narrative explorations and sharp observations that show just how rich these novels are and how relevant they are to historical study.

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Queer Beats: Gender and Literature in the EFL classroom

M. Eisenmann and C. Ludwig (eds.)

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The notion that language learning can only be fully successful if it is 'congruent with the learners' sense of their gender roles, societal positions, class backgrounds and ethnic histories' (Menard-Warwick 2005: 262, cited by Ludwig in this volume, p. 241) has become fairly mainstream in ELT internationally. To this end, scholars, materials writers, and classroom practitioners have turned their attention to the diverse identities and life experiences of language learners, particularly those derived from structured categories such as social class (e.g. Block 2012), race and ethnicity (e.g. Kubota and Lin 2009), gender (e.g. Gray 2010) and sexual orientation (e.g. Nelson 2010; Gray 2013; Gray and Cooke 2019). *Queer Beats: Gender and Literature in the EFL Classroom* is an interesting addition to this work and to the existing literature on gender and EFL in Germany which is referenced throughout the book (e.g. Decke-Cornill and Volkmann 2007; Elsner and Lohe 2016). The 20 chapters explore ways of approaching current perspectives on gender and sexuality in EFL classes in the statutory high school sector in Germany, doing so through the medium of literary (and other) texts from the Anglo world, i.e. the UK, the USA, Canada, and Australia—including literature by, or about, people from postcolonial contexts or, in the case of Australia, indigenous communities. The chapters cover a broad range of topics related to gender, including several on sexual orientation and identities and, perhaps uniquely in a book on ELT, three on issues pertaining to trans experience.

The introductory chapter by the coeditors, Eisenmann and Ludwig, cogently sets out the framework for the rest of the book. It takes as its starting point poststructuralist, social constructionist theories—most prominently those of Judith Butler (1990, 1993), who features heavily throughout the collection—which view gender as being interactionally produced, as 'negotiated' and 'performed', and as highly context dependent: 'contemporary gender studies', they write, 'and even more so queer studies, increasingly recognise the fluidity of gender boundaries, moving away from binary models of there being two biological sexes with two related genders oriented towards heteronormativity' (p. 24). 'Diversity is the new normal' they claim (ibid.)—but this, say the authors, presents certain challenges for teachers and students wishing to address this diversity in class: on the one hand, gender is complex and continuously evolving, making it a fairly slippery topic to 'teach'. On the other hand, despite the increasing visibility of gender and sexual diversity in public spaces, certain sexist, homophobic, and transphobic stereotypes and prejudices continue to prevail in some parts of society—and in most educational curricula LGBT issues remain largely invisible, particularly in ELT textbooks (Gray 2013). Themes of gender and sexuality thus need to be navigated sensitively, especially when it comes to the education of adolescents (the main student group discussed in this collection) as they go through a crucial period of identity formation. The authors argue that these challenges can be effectively approached through the study of carefully chosen literary texts which provide both distance (enabling the exploration of potentially difficult themes such as gender oppression, homosexuality, or gender diversity without having to necessarily personalize them) and proximity (which allows for the development of empathy with other viewpoints and experiences). Eisenmann and Ludwig argue, however, that merely exposing students to literary texts is unlikely in itself to lead to a change in awareness and that pedagogic activities, i.e. analytical tasks which encourage a change of perspective, must be employed to encourage students to focus critically on the gender issues raised in the texts. These activities should be designed so that they foster the development of what Volkmann (2016) has called gender competence, which he defines as 'the knowledge, skills and attitudes a person possesses concerning the social construction of gender' (Volkmann 2016:199, cited in Introduction, p. 29)—in particular, the ability to question the 'givenness of gender identity and gender formations' (ibid.).

Against this ambitious set of aims, then, the rest of the chapters in this collection present 19 examples of texts used in EFL classes in high schools in Germany. Each chapter describes a lesson, or series of lessons, dealing with a gender-related theme and each follows a similar structure, containing a discussion of the theoretical underpinnings or main ideas behind the lesson; a description of the focal text; a discussion of the pedagogical approach to the text; and, finally, a set of activities for exploiting the text. 'Literature' is interpreted broadly, encompassing music videos (in the chapter by Summer); blogs and podcasts (Merkl); poetry (Volkmann); drama (Eisenmann); graphic novels (Pukowski, Deetjen), television (Heß, Thomson); photojournalism (Merse); film (Lohe and Viebrock); philosophical texts (Euler), and a variety of more typically 'literary' texts. Several chapters (Fuchs and Könemann; Beutel; Mihan; Ludwig; Merse)

feature lessons based around short stories whilst others tackle novels or extracts from novels (Shipley; Ludwig; König; Stuhlmann). In each chapter, much thought and care has been taken to choose texts that might appeal to an adolescent audience (the work of the American young adult fiction author David Levithan features several times) and at the same time contain material that potentially stimulates teenage students to critically engage with gender politics and related debates and discourses. How to get students to actually do this is the other main focus of the chapters in *Queer Beats*.

It is the impressive range of pedagogic approaches and activities to texts which is perhaps the main strength of this collection. Many chapters give step-by-step instructions for teachers: the chapter by Summer, for example, offers a guide to doing visual and content analysis of music videos; Merkl offers a framework, Process Oriented Guided Inquiry Lessons (POGIL), which encourages the interrogation of texts and themes—in this case on the debate about gender-neutral bathrooms in the USA; Pukowski describes the categories used to analyse graphic novels; and Merse, in a particularly strong chapter, suggests helpful criteria for choosing 'text ensembles', i.e. groups of literary and visual texts that work together to expose students to multiple perspectives, thus avoiding a 'single narrative' approach to sexual diversity. Others adapt familiar pedagogic approaches such as pre/while/post reading activities or activities from the field of EAP (Euler), whilst others describe interesting ways to encourage students to engage more deeply with questions of gender through life-writing (Beutel), writing genderless fiction (Shipley), and drama pedagogic techniques (Eisenmann).

The many strengths and points of interest to both researchers and teachers in this collection are evident. The clear and accessible descriptions of contemporary theoretical takes on gender and sexual diversity, the strong links made throughout to existing frameworks such as critical literacy, intercultural communication, and the existing literature on gender and EFL, and the eminently transferable nature of the pedagogies described from the German high school context to other EFL settings all make this book a highly worthy addition to the literature on the teaching of gender and sexuality, and 'culture' more broadly. Perhaps most impressive is the sheer variety of texts and approaches and the thoughtful ways in which the authors have gone about choosing the texts and designing their lessons. As a researcher/practitioner of ESOL in the UK, one of my responses as I read through the collection was a feeling that young people learning EFL with these practitioners in the German state system are fortunate indeed. It is this same reflection, however, which points also to what seems to be missing in this collection—the voices, reactions and responses of the students themselves. With a few exceptions (Beutel, Shipley, Mihan, Euler), none of the chapters describe what actually *happened* when their lesson plans were put into action. This is both surprising and frustrating—surprising because most of the authors are at pains to point out the importance of learner-led inquiry, of not 'leading' students to one single viewpoint and of using the literature about the Anglo world as a springboard for reflection on their own situations; frustrating because, as any reader is aware, many of the themes addressed in the collection are in fact contentious and the source of, at times, fierce public debate. Educators reading this collection will surely be wondering, like me, what students made of the debate about gender-neutral bathrooms in the USA or the tragedy of the 'stolen generations' in Australia. What happened when students expressed conflicting ideas? How were arguments dealt with and resolved? How did the teacher and other students address discriminatory comments? Indeed, did any of the students take issue with any of the difficult, and still-contested theories underpinning this collection, i.e. the notion that sex as well as gender is a construct? And if they did, how did the teacher respond? Of course, perhaps the brief given to the contributors to this volume did not include writing about teaching in action. When they do, however, the results are interesting and moving, and after all, arguably this is what teaching is all about. Perhaps the next collection to come out of the dynamic German EFL scene will address this gap.

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The Reviewer

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Oldest Stripes

Amitav Ghosh versifies the oldest tale of the Sundarbans in a magnificently illustrated volume

Anamitra Anurag Danda

WHEN two celebrated artists, one wielding the pen and the other a paint brush collaborate, what do you expect? *Jangal Nama* is a beautifully retold episode of a legend from the Sundarbans, in verse, with rhyming couplets and fluid images. Only on a single occasion do I find Amitav Ghosh faltering, when he uses 'peepul' in order to adhere to the constraints of rhyme. Peepul trees are not found in mangrove forests.

At first sight, the very well-produced hardbound volume may seem like a children's book. My 12-year-old daughter gave it a quick read. The following are her observations: The dialogues are like poems; Dokkhin Rai is a personification of evil; he takes advantage of negative qualities of humans, like greed; he appears to be a tyrant; the book shows that good forces like Bon Bibi can't fully subdue evil like Dokkhin Rai, but can restrain it; evil never really ceases and is reawakened by human frailties. It indeed is a children's book, with hauntingly beautiful illustrations. It is for adults too, with a central theme of responsible consumption and production.

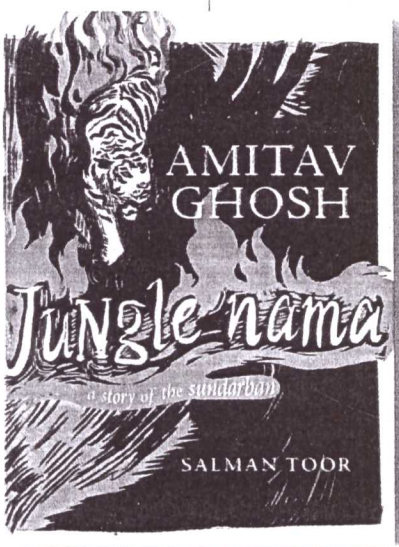
Bon Bibi Johuranama, from which *Jungle Nama* is adapted, probably came to be written around the 13th century, although the best known print versions date from the late 19th century. The legend might have been propagated when Islam arrived in this part of the world and extended the frontier into forested Sundarbans.

THE STORY OF DOKKHIN RAI AND BON BIBI, NARRATED IN THE OPENING PAGES OF JUNGLE NAMA, MAY JUST BE ABOUT DELINEATING A BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE SETTLED AND THE WILDERNESS.

Historically, the Sundarbans has been a frontier, more in the American sense than in the European one. Europeans view the frontier as a border zone between two countries. In America, a frontier is a border between the settled and unsettled, the 'civilized' and the 'wilderness'. The Sundarbans presented the conditions which allowed a process of continuous advance, both in physical and socio-political terms and has been the arena for transformation of land, religion and values. The tussle between Dokkhin Rai and Bon Bibi and her brother Shah Jongoli, narrated in the opening pages of Jangal Nama, may be not so much between good and evil, but about delineating a boundary between the settled and the wilderness.

Scholars like Richard Eaton have observed that between the 13th and 18th centuries, pioneering Muslim holy men not only established Islam in much of south and eastern Bengal, but also played important roles in the intensification of wet rice agriculture, establishment of new modes of property rights and fundamentally altering a natural, forested ecosystem. It could also be that the reverence of the mostly Muslim forest-clearers led to the emergence of Bon Bibi as the presiding deity of the Sundarbans. In 1883, James Wise, a physician by profession and an anthropologist by vocation, noted the popularity and significance of pioneers such as Mubarra Ghazi, who is said to have converted the forested western bank of the river Hooghly into paddy land. It seems that each villager had an altar dedicated to him. No one would enter the forest, and no crew would sail through the district, without first making offerings to one of the shrines. Even now, Hindu and Muslim alike, propitiate Bon Bibi before venturing into the forest.

Amitav Ghosh
JUNGLE NAMA: A Story of the Sundarbans |
Fourth Estate |
88 pages |
Rs 699



I have had an abiding interest in the Sundarbans and its people. I have lived and worked in the region for two decades. To me, *Jungle Nama* is precious, but I wonder what, outside of Amitav Ghosh's admirers or those interested in the region and its people, the book would hold for them. Does it attribute tyranny to the tigers of the Sundarbans or perpetuate the labelling of them as man-eaters? These magnificent predators are neither tyrannical nor man-eaters. Having ventured into the forest on foot hundreds of times for developing a methodology for the assessment of the status of tigers in their unique habitat, I can vouch for that.

For Ghosh fans, however, *Jungle Nama* is a collector's item, not just a book of verse with brilliant illustrations. The value of the volume will increase with time as the world hurtles towards a future that is very unlike what modern humans have witnessed. ⊡

(The author is with Vijaybhoomi University)

Broken Calacatta

A woman in mid-century Calcutta breaks free of the soul-crushing customs of widowhood to reclaim her self in this iconic novel

Malashri Lal

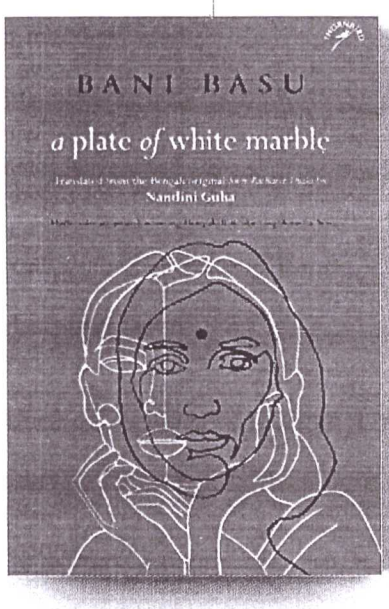
WHAT is the status of widows in our 'progressive' society? Has anything changed after the legal empowerment of widows? Bani Basu's sensitive Bengali novel, *Swet Patharer Thala*, also made into an award-winning film starring Aparna Sen, has been translated into English by Nandini Guha as *A Plate of White Marble*.

In the wealthy, educated Bhattacharjee household in 1950s Calcutta, when the eldest scion dies of a heart attack, the young wife, Bandana, finds her identity altered to that of a traditional widow. Her bewildered five-year-old son Abhiroop cannot recognise his mother in a stark white saree, shorn of ornaments. She is a shadow that suffers trauma, illness and hallucination. The bedecked mother-in-law bewails her ill luck every time she serves Bandana her frugal meal and the father-in-law assumes she will hand over all personal assets to the family coffers. Intuitively, the little child initiates small behavioural changes in his mother and Bandana starts wearing light coloured sarees and pearl earstuds to please him.

Bani Basu's iconic novel may seem like a throwback to the 19th century, but it's a modern story convincingly located in urban Bengal. The acute portrayal of Bandana's split identity is the crux of the novel—a silent rebel against widowhood practices, Bandana is also trapped in her own hesitance in breaking social codes. Unlike the widowed characters in the novels of Tagore and Saratchandra, Basu's new woman has the law on her side. She needs to battle the inherited beliefs of her own upbringing, an inner voice drumming those dreaded words, "You are an orphan...you are a widow...you are finished."

THE PORTRAYAL OF BANDANA'S SPLIT IDENTITY IS THE CRUX OF THE NOVEL—A SILENT REBEL AGAINST WIDOWHOOD PRACTICES, BANDANA IS ALSO TRAPPED IN HER OWN HESITANCE IN BREAKING SOCIAL CODES.

Bani Basu
A PLATE OF WHITE MARBLE | Tr. by Nandini Guha | Niyogi Books | 328 pages | Rs 450



Rescue comes from an unexpected source—an elderly, bachelor 'Kaka' (uncle), Somnath babu, an itinerant sojourner in the Himalayas and a free spirit who had abjured domestic ties. He is shocked by the harsh treatment of Bandana, now emaciated by limited food, forbidden any social converse and denied any normal activity. The growing boy is her slight thread by which to steer her barren existence. Kaka convinces the family that he will take her and Abhiroop back to her now-empty parental home and give her some direction.

In the forgotten familiarity of her childhood home, Bandana contends with her intellectual enquiry on widowhood. "Help me to grow against my wishes....I am living within a hard shell," she confides in Kaka, but the wise man knows that the bird will fly only when she discovers the strength of her wings. Basu's prose turns lyrical as it describes the gradual, often painful unfurling of the new woman, a single woman, a working woman, in a male-dominated society. There is angst but no bitterness, uneven tracks but no derailment. In the process, Bandana and the novelist ask questions: Why are widowers not subjected to the privations that widows have to endure? Why are single women the object of curiosity for men and women equally? How can a widow's mere presence pollute a religious ritual such as marriage?

In other words, the baggage of patriarchal assumptions about the role of women tumbles out of a not so well-locked cupboard called tradition. The key to change, implies Basu, is held in the hands of men as well as women, for the unthinking coercion of women into predetermined roles is inflicted often by the women of the family. Like Bandana, many women have internalised these identities, never quite daring to question social custom. Fortunately, Basu never becomes strident. She remains within the bounds of fiction as the gentle, persuasive voice that debates both sides of the argument, showing the pro-active laws to be external while a woman's selfhood a delicate, fragile emergence. With the eye of an ecofeminist, Basu places women within the realms of the seasonal changes in Bengal—stormy and dramatic, calm and pristine—each day, each woman her unique self, but forever masked and secret. Nandini Guha has gathered the nuances of such writing, giving us a novel in English which remembers its Bengali original with empathy. ⊡

(Malashri Lal is member, English Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi)

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किताबें

एक कवि से खरे संवाद

विनोद भारद्वाज

फेसबुक ने लिखने की शैली, भाषा आदि पर अच्छा-खासा असर डाला है. डायरी, संस्मरण, आलोचना आदि ने एक नया और कभी-कभी प्यारा रूप ले लिया है. पंकज चतुर्वेदी ने पहले वीरेन डंगवाल पर अपनी यादों को इस नई शैली में लिखा और अब वे मंगलेश डबराल के असमय निधन के बाद उनकी यादों और कविताओं, विचारों पर अलग ढंग से लिख रहे हैं. व्योमेश शुक्ल ने विष्णु खरे पर इसी ढंग से अपनी ख़ास शैली में लिखा और फेसबुक पर उनकी यादें खासी चर्चित रहीं. मैंने खुद फेसबुक से ही अपनी नई किताब *यादनामा* की डायरीनुमा लॉकडाउन टिप्पणियां लिखीं जो ऐंटी मेमोयर शैली में थीं. फ्रांसीसी लेखक मालरो की संस्मरणों की किताब का नाम ही *ऐंटी मेमोयर* है. विष्णु खरे मुझसे आठ साल बड़े थे पर हम दोनों हमउम्र दोस्त ज्यादा बन गए थे. इसलिए व्योमेश की इन इकतालीस यादों को एक साथ पढ़ना मेरे लिए एक अलग तरह का अनुभव है.

विष्णु खरे की पीढ़ी 1940 के आसपास जन्मी पीढ़ी है. चंद्रकांत देवताले, अशोक वाजपेयी, विनोद कुमार शुक्ल, प्रयाग शुक्ल आदि इस पीढ़ी के कुछ प्रमुख नाम हैं. देवताले उनके प्रिय थे और करीब भी. यह भी गौर करने की बात है कि बाद की पीढ़ियों ने (मंगलेश डबराल, असद ज़ैदी से ले कर व्योमेश तक) इस पीढ़ी के सम्मानित नामों में विष्णु खरे की कविताओं से सबसे अधिक संवाद और जिरह की है. दरअसल उनकी अनेक कविताएं आज भी एक बिल्कुल नए नजरिए से जानी-जांची जा सकती हैं. व्योमेश के ये नोट्स उनकी अनेक कविताओं का असरदार और आत्मीय विश्लेषण करते हैं. वे विष्णु खरे की जीवनी, सोच और अपने ही सोच से जिरह को खूबसूरती से नोट्स का हिस्सा बना लेते हैं. देखने में यह किताब छोटी-सी है पर इसकी लगभग हर टिप्पणी में अनेक कविताओं पर कई सार्थक बातें उभरकर आती हैं.

मैं यहां सिर्फ दो कविताओं का जिक्र कर पाऊंगा. एक *टेबिल* कविता और दूसरी *सिंगल विकेट सीरीज* कविता. खास तौर पर *टेबिल* कविता जिसे खुद विष्णु खरे अपने परिवार का उपन्यास मानते थे. व्योमेश की छोटी-सी टीप इस कविता की ही नहीं, पिता से उनके जटिल रिश्तों की अद्भुत जांच-पड़ताल करती है. विष्णु खरे ने सोलह साल की उम्र से लिखना-छपना शुरू कर दिया था. उनके स्कूल अध्यापक पिता का जब निधन हुआ तो खरे की उम्र अट्ठाईस साल की थी. व्योमेश को उन्होंने काफ्काई अंदाज में बताया, ''मुझ पर पिता का बहुत आतंक था. जब तक मेरे पिता जिंदा रहे, लेखन के मोर्चे पर मैंने खुद को कैद में महसूस किया. मुझे यह भी लगता था कि अगर मेरे पिता दस-बीस साल जिंदा रह गये, तो मैं मर जाऊंगा. मैं कुछ लिख ही नहीं पाऊंगा.''

इसे अगर एक ईमानदार और कुछ-कुछ डराने वाला कन्फेशन मान लिया जाए तो किसी जीवनीकार के लिए यह एक बहुत बड़ा चैप्टर साबित हो सकता है. पर जैसा हम सब जानते हैं, हिंदी के जीवनीकार किसी काम के नहीं हैं. वे जीवन के अंधेरे पक्ष से घबराते हैं.

विष्णु खरे ने क्रिकेट पर तीन कविताएं लिखी थीं. *कवर ड्राइव* को तो वे बाकायदा एक दिलचस्प ऐक्शन के साथ पढ़ते थे. *सिंगल विकेट सीरीज* पर व्योमेश ने अच्छा लिखा है. उन्होंने स्वीडिश फिल्मकार बर्गमान की कालजयी फिल्म *द सेवेन्थ सील* को याद किया है जिसमें नायक मौत के साथ शतरंज खेल रहा है. विष्णु खरे बैटिंग कर रहे हैं और मौत बॉलिंग कर रही है. क्लीन बोल्ड होने के खतरे के साए में आप बल्लेबाजी करने के लिए मजबूर हैं. व्योमेश ने शोएब अख्तर का सही हवाला दिया है जो रनअप पर दौड़ते हुए मौत के फरिश्ते लगते थे. चॉकलेटी ब्रेट ली की जगह वे वेस्टइंडीज के जोएल गार्नर का नाम लेते तो बेहतर था.

विष्णु खरे के जीवित रहते मैंने एक बार उनकी काली जुबान का जिक्र किया था. शायद उन्हें पसंद भी न आया हो. पर उनकी काली जुबान के शहद को भी हम सब मित्र पहचान लेते थे. व्योमेश ने एक जगह उनकी गालियों की बात की है, *कोमल* कविता पर लिखते हुए. व्योमेश के अनुसार उनकी बौद्धिक संस्कृति गालियों की इजाजत नहीं देती थी. पर किसी बहस में प्रतिपक्षी को नीचा दिखाने के लिए वे मूर्ख, मतिमंद, जाहिल, शोहदा, कायर आदि का धाराप्रवाह इस्तेमाल करते थे. पर व्योमेश यह भी जोड़ देते हैं कि ''लेकिन मेरा शक है कि उनके मन में गालियों के लिए एक अब्सेशन जरूर था, जो मध्य भारत के कस्बाई आदमी का एक चरित्र-लक्षण है.''

विष्णु खरे को खोजने का यह खेल शतरंज की तरह है, पर व्योमेश का मुकाबला आसानी से बाजी न हारने वाले खिलाड़ी से है. जरूर पढ़ें इस किताब को.■

तुम्हें खोजने का खेल खेलते हुए
व्योमेश शुक्ल
वाणी प्रकाशन, दिल्ली
कीमतः 199 रुपए

[किताबें]

चाहिए पूर्वाग्रह से परे एक दृष्टि

नरेश अरोड़ा

ब्लाइंड स्ट्रीट
प्रदीप सौरभ
नई किताब प्रकाशन, दिल्ली
कीमतः 250 रुपए

प्रदीप सौरभ के तीसरी ताली की तरह ही यह भी एक सामुदायिक उपन्यास है. इसमें दृष्टिबाधित समाज के पहलुओं और पीड़ा को कलमबंद करने का गंभीर प्रयोग है

मुन्नी मोबाइल और *तीसरी ताली* जैसे चर्चित उपन्यासों के बाद प्रदीप सौरभ ने अपना नया उपन्यास *ब्लाइंड स्ट्रीट* दृष्टिबाधितों को केंद्र में रखकर लिखा है. हिंदी साहित्य में अभी विकलांग विमर्श लेखकों के एजेंडे पर नहीं है, और अंग्रेजी की कुछेक आत्मकथाओं को छोड़ दें तो विकलांगों ने भी इस पर कलम नहीं चलाई है. इसलिए यह उपन्यास अपने आप में एक नया और जोखिमभरा प्रयोग है.

यह उपन्यास किसी दृष्टिबाधित की जीवनी नहीं और न ही जीवनियों का समुच्चय है. यह नायक-नायिका वाला भी उपन्यास नहीं है. उपन्यास के परंपरागत ढांचे के विपरीत इसके सभी पात्र अलग-अलग पृष्ठभूमि, जीवन-संघर्षों और अपनी अलग-अलग मनोसामाजिक स्थितियों के साथ अलग-अलग कहानियां कहते हैं. ये कहानियां आपस में मिलती भी हैं और कमोबेश एक दूसरे को प्रभावित भी करती हैं. प्रदीप सौरभ के लेखन की यह शैली अनूठी है. उपन्यास में कॉलेजों के प्राध्यापक, छात्र-छात्राएं, सरकारी कर्मचारी यहां तक कि भिखारी भी अपनी अस्मिता की लड़ाई के साथ मौजूद हैं. इतने व्यापक और वैविध्यपूर्ण समूह को एक उपन्यास में वर्णित करना चुनौतीपूर्ण और अभिनव प्रयोग है. *तीसरी ताली* की तरह ही यह भी एक सामुदायिक उपन्यास है.

हालांकि है यह यह फिक्शन लेकिन लेखक ने इसके लिए गहरा शोध और फील्ड वर्क किया है. शोध और दृष्टिबाधितों के जीवन में करीने से झांके बगैर इसकी रचना संभव नहीं थी. उपन्यास में शिक्षा और रोजगार के लिए दृष्टिबाधितों का आठवें दशक में किया गया आंदोलन, बिना स्पॉन्सरशिप के की गई दृष्टिबाधितों की 700 किलोमीटर की भारत पदयात्रा और दृष्टिहीन विद्यालयों की अमानवीय स्थितियों का चित्रण भी है.

यह उपन्यास दृष्टिहीनों के ऐंद्रिय नृविज्ञान में भी उतरता है और उस जगत को पकड़ने की कोशिश करता है, जहां श्रवण, गंध, स्पर्श तथा स्वादादि के माध्यम को दृष्टि के अभाव की भरपाई करते हुए ये लोग अपना अनुभव संसार रचते हैं. इसमें लेखक ऐसे दृष्टिबाधितों के लिए प्रयोग की जाने वाली स्पर्शनीय सांकेतिक भाषा की चर्चा करना भी नहीं भूलता जो सुन और बोल भी नहीं सकते. एक पात्र के माध्यम से लेखक यह भी बताता है कि लेखन, छापेखाने और नाद के अविष्कारों ने दृष्टिबाधितों का जीवन किस तरह दुरूह कर दिया है. नतीजतन अन्य ऐंद्रिय अनुभवों को गौण समझा जाने लगा है. श्रुति परंपरा के खात्मे से सबसे ज्यादा दृष्टिबाधितों को ही नुकसान हुआ है.

प्रदीप इस उपन्यास के पात्रों के माध्यम से यह आग्रहपूर्वक संदेश देते हैं कि दृष्टिबाधित न तो दया के पात्र हैं और न ही उपेक्षा के. वे न तो दिव्यांग हैं और न ही उनमें कोई देवत्व है. इसके विपरीत वे अमानुषिक भी नहीं. यह बात दीगर है कि समाज में अधिकांश दृष्टिहीनों को अक्सर सामान्य लोगों के अमानुषिक व्यवहार और टिप्पणियों से दो चार होना पड़ता है. प्रदीप के सभी पात्र हाड़ मांस के सामान्य इनसान हैं, इसी समाज में पले, बड़े हुए और इसी समाज में रहते हुए अस्मिता और अस्तित्व के लिए जद्दोजहद करते हैं. उनके हर्ष-विषाद, महत्वाकांक्षाएं, कुंठाएं, पीड़ाएं और हर तरह के व्यवहार सामाजिक संपर्कों से ही बनते हैं. जेएनयू, जामिया और दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय की समसामायिक घटनाएं प्रदीप सौरभ के पात्रों को प्रभावित करती हैं. देश में वर्तमान स्थितियों पर उनका भी एक नजरिया है. इस बात को भी उपन्यास सलीके से उठाता है.

दृष्टिहीनों के लिए चलने वाली सरकारी योजनाओं और स्वयंसेवी संस्थाओं के अपने गोरखधंधे हैं, जो कुछ खास लोगों का हित साधते हैं. इस तथ्य का भी उपन्यास में खुलासा हुआ है. दृष्टिहीन भी मैत्री, प्रेम और रोमांस, सेक्स तथा समलैंगिकता आदि सारी नैसर्गिक इच्छाओं के साथ जीते हैं. आर्थिक तंगी और महंगाई भी उन्हें प्रभावित करती है.

कुल मिलाकर प्रदीप सौरभ ने अत्यधिक संवेदनशीलता के साथ समाज के इस हिस्से को कलमबंद करने की बड़ी कोशिश की है. यह एक बड़ा और गंभीर प्रयोग है. यह बात दीगर है कि उपन्यास में अंधा शब्द का अत्यधिक प्रयोग दृष्टिबाधित पाठकों को शायद खटके. आशा है कि पाठक इसे बिना पूर्वाग्रह के पढ़ेंगे, दृष्टिबाधितों के प्रति अपने पूर्वाग्रहों को तोड़ेंगे और नए पूर्वाग्रह नहीं बनाएंगे.

लेखक दृष्टिबाधित हैं और दिल्ली के कमला नेहरू कॉलेज में इतिहास के सहायक प्रोफेसर हैं

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NOVEL } LOVE IN UNFORESEEN PLACES

Broken things are precious too

Sonali Mujumdar
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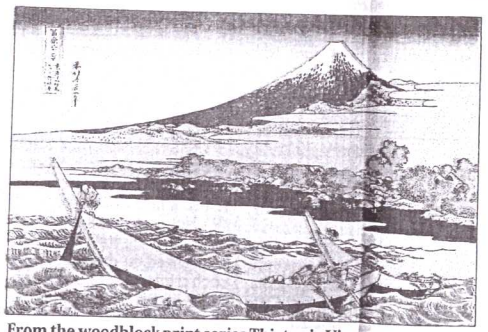
There is something poetic and philosophical about the Japanese concept of *kintsugi* that goes beyond art and functionality. The sentiment that being broken or vulnerable need not be seen as a flaw; that if the fragments of a bowl can be fused with lacquer mixed with powdered precious metals, broken people too can be healed. A newness emerges through that restoration. It is the kindness of strangers, or love in unforeseen places that helps to heal. Anukrti Upadhyay's newest book, *Kintsugi* seems to delineate this thought, as it beautifully binds six lives through serendipitous encounters. People connect deeply, disengage, break away, and at times, find each other again or re-form in unexpected places. The lives in the novel are set in places far removed from each other in geography, culture and thought and the narrative straddles Jaipur, Tokyo, Kyoto, Singapore and Borneo. These are places that the author has known well, and her love for them shines through.

Kintsugi takes us into the dim interiors of the extraordinary world of the jewellery makers of Jaipur. Deep within the *havelis* and the *gaddis* of Johri Bazaar, Haruko, a young American girl of Japanese-Korean origin, finds herself eagerly learning the intricacies of meenakari enamel work, and jewellery-crafting. She is granted entry into this all-male domain as an apprentice to Madan*ji*, one of the prominent *sunars* of the market, only due to her foreignness. The same milieu, rife with patriarchal notions, is unwelcoming of Leela, the young daughter of Munna*ji*, a fine *kundansaaz* and one of Haruko's mentors. Her part and place in the sun, comes later in the narrative. Meanwhile, Haruko's section is rich with descriptions of the art; her project piece is a *hansuli*, "a hollow lac-filled collar necklace decorated with enamel-and-stone work", and on the fly she starts work on a *sheeshphool*, a hair ornament. She forms a bond with Leela, whom she teaches to sketch jewellery, and becomes friends with Prakash, the doctor who treats her fractured leg. Her story and Leela's is also a glimpse into a society where gender, class and caste divides are glaringly present.

Kintsugi
Anukrti Upadhyay
228pp, ₹499
HarperCollins

Meena's first person account, that of a young student on a research scholarship in Japan, begins where Haruko's initial story seems to end. Upadhyay effortlessly switches from the heat and dust of Rajasthan to the pristine hilly landscape of Hakone, awash with sensorial experience; "exquisite mountain breeze laden with green fragrances", sake bars amidst ancient pines along the lake with the blue and white of Mount Fuji in the background, and *onsens* that offer cold night dips in mineral-rich hot water where shared confidences lead to frisson-laden intimacies among friends. It is the kind of love that is seen as a disgrace by families steeped in tradition in far away Jaipur. But then Meena*chan* has always been rebellious, following her heart and conviction, incomprehensible to the people back home, but unconditionally loved by her Japanese lovers, first Yuri, and then Hajime. Upadhyay is at ease painting atmospheric sketches of Japan -- the universities of Tokyo and Kyoto, the various orange and red shrines, the cultural nuances, culinary detailing, the cherry blossom time of the year: "The Zen gardens and tree-lined walks of Tenryuji were filled with golden April light".



From the woodblock print series Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (c.1831) by Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) GETTY IMAGES

The writing has restraint, poise and an understated charm with no room for superfluity. A successful author in both Hindi and English, Upadhyay treats her themes with equanimity and grace and love, loss, heartbreak, death and renewal play out in her nuanced writing. There is also the differentness of cultures that gently collide and at times coalesce to build bridges, and the question of identity or belonging. Hajime and Haruko remain outsiders due to their Americanness while Meena embraces a whole new culture rejecting her own, for the sake of love.

Kintsugi is a little gem. Haruko sums up the soul of the tale beautifully when she explains the concept of *kintsugi* to Leela: "Not all pieces are meant to hold water, some are for allowing water to seep away. Broken things are precious too." Just like the making and unmaking of jewellery or relationships.

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NewDelhi

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biography of the precolonial upland merely feels like a therapy for the absence of the precolonial state and written history.

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NOTES

1 Zomia as a possible area study, outside of existing areas studies, such as South Asia and South East Asia was first articulated by Willem van Schendel (2002).

2 It was James Scott (2009) who actually used the concept Zomia to construct an anarchist history of the uplands in South East Asian massif. He overturned the dominant civilisation narrative anchored in hill–valley perspectives. The book has been acclaimed for empowering the political struggles in the hills against contemporary nation states.

3 For a critical review of James Scott, see Victor Lieberman (2010). For a critical reflection on hill valley divide in Manipur, see Jilangamba (2015).

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A Realist Take on the Big Questions

SANDIPAN BAKSI

Brief Answers to the Big Questions by Stephen Hawking, *London: John Murray, 2018; pp xxiii + 232, ₹650/£14.99.*

The book by Stephen Hawking, published posthumously, relives the old tradition of scientists exploring questions that fall, more appropriately, within the purview of philosophy of science. While in one sense the book can, of course, be termed a popular science book, it is in its philosophical implications that the discussion around the "Big Questions" seems to excel. The book is a compilation of what can perhaps be called Hawking's final thoughts on 10 grand themes, questions that somehow remain unresolved. The noted physicist and long-time friend of Hawking, Kip S Thorne, in his introduction to the book, reveals that Hawking was still working on the answers to these questions at the time of his death, indicating that the book was a work in progress.

The book begins with the premise that the world is "real," and is governed by objective laws that are "knowable" with an increasing degree of accuracy. Hawking clearly is not ready to give away the notion of truth. It is indeed refreshing to receive a book of this nature, reinforcing the belief in science, at a time when one witnesses a persistent sceptical stance, at least within the social sciences.

The other overriding idea that runs through the text is that of progress as the essence of the history of science. Progress that is driven by curiosity and wonder on the one hand, and the possibility of ever-improving material conditions of life, on the other. Hawking's life itself is a striking example of the possibilities that science offers for the betterment of living conditions. The book is certainly a compliment to the "great [human] triumph" of understanding the world around us, including the laws that govern it, and of bringing about progressive change in it. It reinforces the belief that the evolution of human knowledge is a march away from fatalism towards greater freedoms.

The triumph, however, is not complete. It will perhaps never be complete. The expansion of the boundaries of knowledge is a perennial phenomenon. Not all queries are, or can be, settled at any given point in time. As we consistently endeavour to solve questions, newer ones come up as part of the endeavour itself, while some of the older obdurate ones continue to stick around. The book deals with 10 such questions that remain to be solved. As Hawking deals with different aspects of a particular question at the same time, the discussion is overlapping at many places. Strikingly, however, one does not come across contradictions in his thought.

Persisting Questions

Interestingly, Thorne in his introduction clarifies that six of the 10 questions—Is there a god? How did it all begin? Can we predict the future? What is inside a black hole? Is time travel possible? How do we shape the future?—"are deeply rooted in his [Hawking's] science" (p xxiii). The other four questions—Will we survive on earth? Is there other intelligent life in the universe? Should we colonise space? Will artificial intelligence outsmart us?—"cannot possibly be rooted in his [Hawking's] science" (p xxiii). Thus, Hawking's motivation behind this effort goes beyond discussing the science underlying these themes employing a language that is popular and accessible to the lay masses. Essentially, the book presents a realist position on some very complex questions. Given the nature of the book, it is difficult to place the questions into neat categories. Interestingly, while all the questions are bound by the fact that they are still unresolved, in some sense or the other, the causes behind their irresolution differ in significant ways. The inability of science to secure solutions to many persisting inquiries could be due to the inherent complexity of the problem at hand and the limitations of the current level of human knowledge. Some of the questions from the book, including "Is there other intelligent life in the universe?" "Can we [in practice] predict the future?" "What is inside a black hole?" "Is time travel possible?" and "Will we survive on Earth?" are examples that fit into this category.

On the other hand, some questions tend to persist despite being conclusively resolved by science, such as "Is there a God?" and "How did it all begin?" While Hawking's treatment of these questions is based on facts and follows a clear logic, it tends to miss the fact that the irresoluble nature of such questions is

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due to contingent social and historical factors. In fact, questions pertaining to any other pseudoscientific belief—for instance, whether homoeopathy is a genuine system of medicine—would fall into the same realm. Such questions continue to linger, notwithstanding the clear and consistent answers provided by science. They eventually, and unfortunately, would require a social consensus tobe fully resolved.

Another class of enquiry, distinct from the above, that can be resolved only by the collective thinking of human society, and not by science per se, is exemplified by the question "Should we colonise space?" Hawking clearly believes that humans can develop the potential to colonise space and should certainly consider the option as essential for their own preservation. However, it is a problem with clear ethical and political-economic dimensions, which depend on objectives that we as a society define for ourselves. Such social objectives must qualify many questions that in the first instance appear confined to the realm of the physical sciences. For instance, the acute problem of dealing with climate change (the book touches upon the problem at several points but its treatment of the question is peripheral) is as much a technical question as a question pertaining to the kind of future that we imagine for ourselves—is it an extremely unequal world where the burden of the few is to be borne by "sustaining" a lowly existence for the majority, or is it a more developed and sustainable future for all? These questions have a strong normative sense about them, and it is, therefore, imperative that they are resolved politically. Society must be the ultimate arbiter of such questions. While the approach to such questions must be informed by scientific knowledge, but science cannot fully settle the normative dimensions, which calls for genuinely democratic resolution.

Another type of problem that confronts science is encountered as part of its own development. The progress of science is by its nature uncertain. In its historical development, science inevitably confronts newer queries as part of the process of finding solutions to existing questions. For instance, the inquiry about colonising space is a question that appears concrete today because of the possibilities of space travel, and the fact that we today consciously gape at an uncertain future. The awareness of new uncertainties as well as the possibilities to transcend them invariably accompanies the expansion of the boundaries of knowledge. The latter therefore always leads to newer inquiries. The discussion by Hawking on "Will artificial intelligence outsmart us?" is another obvious example of such a problem. Such questions exemplify the essential evolutionary characteristic of scientific development, as against a Kuhnian understanding of abrupt and discontinuous paradigm change.

The Question of Origin

Hawking's discussion around the first two questions dealt with in the book—"Is there a God?" and "How did it all begin?"—establishes a highly significant philosophical point that "the universe was spontaneously created out of nothing, according to the laws of science" (p 29). Hawking hammers home the point that the universe emerged, "like a proton," from nothing. The "Big Bang," he argues, possibly required no cause at all. The basis of his argument is the fact that the "Big Bang" was also the origin of time, and therefore, any cause could not precede the Big Bang as "there was no time for a cause to exist in." He then also uses this argument to demolish the notion of an ultimate cause, a creator, or God.

Reality as the Final Arbiter

The discussion on the origin of the universe throws light on another interesting dimension of the history of science, that of competing theoretical frameworks. The question of the beginning of the universe has historically been an antinomy. One position had always claimed the beginning to be at a finite time in the past, while the other had consistently argued the universe to be ever present with no definite origin at all. Interestingly, the former position was always believed to be pointing at the existence of an ultimate cause, a God, that created something at some point in time. As a consequence, says Hawking, many scientists shied away from exploring the former position, and, in turn, supported theories that imagined the universe as a "steady state." Hawking here clearly highlights the grasp of ideology on scientific theories. Nonetheless, the grasp was ultimately weakened as a consequence of new evidence discovered in the 1920s, which distinctly implied that the universe was expanding, and, therefore, logically had a starting point, a "singularity." This did not imply the presence of an ultimate creator of the universe; rather, it encouraged the quest for a theory that explained the definite origin of the universe, but one that was spontaneous and without a cause: the Big Bang.

It is evident that the competition between the theories was eventually neither resolved through the merit of their arguments, and nor was it the relative "power" of sociocultural contexts that adjudicated between them. Rather, it was reality itself that became the arbiter, manifesting as data that could be captured only at a point in time after human knowledge had attained a particular level. It is data as a manifestation of reality that gives the history of science its intrinsic self-correcting character.

Determinism versus Uncertainty

The consistent expansion of the boundaries of human knowledge about natural phenomena, including the immutable laws that govern such phenomena, certainly raises the possibility of knowing everything and predicting the future with certainty. The potential to know and predict, however, is limited in practice due to the extreme complexity of natural systems, and the unknowable role played by external factors. The limitations of our knowledge come out distinctly in the discussions by Hawking pertaining to the questions "Can we predict the future?" and "What is inside a black

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hole?" According to modern science, nature is inherently indeterminate and uncertain. Such uncertainties, clarifies Hawking, are not just due to epistemological limitations, but are part of the constitutional make-up of reality. To quote Hawking, "even God is bound by the Uncertainty Principle" (p 95).

In fact, some scientific theories, like that of evolution, can never be predictive in nature. The evolution of the biological system can only be explained in retrospect, not predicted, as it is too dynamic. Evolution of biological systems takes place as a consequence of the long-term responses to the natural forces that act in a particular geography, at a certain time. These forces themselves can reflect catastrophic changes and accordingly the responses do not display any uniformity. Given the numerous interactions between external conditions and internal responses, it is impossible to predict the outcome at some future date.

It is extremely important here to caution ourselves, as does Hawking at multiple occasions, that such indeterminism is not an invitation to a postmodern view of reality. It is rather a proposition that although reality is knowable to a very high degree of certainty, nonetheless the knowability, and predictability, in particular, is limited by the extreme complexities that define nature and perhaps reality itself. The limitations to knowability hold true for a closed system—like an atom where one cannot determine two of its basic characteristics simultaneously with absolute precision—just as much for an extremely dynamic and ever-changing open-system, like the natural world.

Sustainability and Life

The most interesting, and perhaps bold, aspect of the book is its take on sustainability. The discussion reverberates in the chapters dealing with the questions "Is there other intelligent life in the universe?" "Should we colonise space?" and "How do we shape the future?" The idea of sustainability, it is very clear to Hawking, is centered around human life. In fact, sustainability of the physical environment of the earth, suggests Hawking, is essentially instrumental to human survival. It does not have much intrinsic value otherwise.

Interestingly, Hawking lays relatively more emphasis on the possibility of sustaining humanity through outmigration into space, than fixing the problems on earth (albeit created by humankind!). The same concern for sustainability of human life appears prominently in the discussions on artificial intelligence. While the latter, cautions Hawking, could go a long way in improving the human world, it could eventually outsmart, or even conceivably destroy the human species. The review by the physicist is certainly not alarmist; nonetheless, it points towards a possibility where we as a species fail to understand, and therefore control, the ways in which intelligent algorithms might function. Hawking also cautions against the increasing knowledge base of humans in conjunction with the persistence of "instincts, and in particular aggressive impulses," that could act as a potential threat to human sustainability. Ironically, it is the instinct of self-preservation as a species that, however, lies at the foundation of sustainability. Whether it is the maintenance of some pristine original state of nature (imaginary, of course!), or the development of new forms of superintelligent life based on "mechanical and electronic components," the end goal that they are to serve is that of maintaining human life.

Missing Social Structure

However, the book fails to recognise that science operates within social structures, and that its workings and successes are inevitably intermediated through them. Of course, the development of science, particularly its application in production, has an impact on these structures in ways that cannot be predicted. Nonetheless, scientific development and its applications must manoeuvre through these structures. The structures effect both the trajectory of development of science and its impact in myriad ways. These structures render the human condition an extremely unequal one, implying thereby that the impact of science is also very unequal, something that the book seems to ignore.

The failure to duly recognise these structures also reflects in the failure to distinguish the two categories of questions dealt with in the book that differ in a fundamental sense. One category is of questions—for instance "What is inside a black hole?" "How did it all begin," etc—that essentially are to be, and must certainly be, resolved scientifically by experts using methods of science to arrive at evidence-based conclusions. Any social interference in the realm of such questions is unfortunate and amounts to obscurantism. While the other distinct category is of enquiries—for instance "Will we survive on Earth," "Should we colonise space," or "How do we shape the future"—that are marked with a strong normative dimension. The resolution to such questions will inevitably be strongly affected by the prevalent social structures. These questions therefore call for a political solution, to be arrived at through a complex, democratic process of decision-making. They cannot be determined on the basis of expert knowledge alone. In its endeavour to resist a social constructivist view of reality, one has to be careful not to fall into a liberal technocratic world view that ignores the social structures that exist all around us. The book, perhaps, is unable to resist that fall.

In fact, the most dominant structural reality of human society today is capitalism, which is ultimately driven by the logic of profit generation. Hawking, however, displays a complete belief in profit-seeking entrepreneurs as the driving force steering scientific development for human emancipation. Whether it is superhuman artificial intelligence or interstellar travel, one wonders if such experiments under capitalism will destroy inequalities or reinforce them. The imagination of a better future, for one and for all, cannot begin but with the conscious destruction of such structural inequalities. Thankfully, the development of science and technology, production technology in particular, while guided by the needs of the structure, also works progressively towards its destruction.

The review is an outcome of numerous discussions with Aravindhan Nagarajan, T Jayaraman, Tarun Menon, and Tejal Kanitkar.

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ALIGARH AND JAMIA: Fight for National Education System by S.M. Tonki. People's Publishing House, Delhi, 1983.

THE book under review is written by S.M Tonki an alumnus of both Aligarh and Jamia. Tonki was a part of the Non-Cooperation movement in Aligarh and later joined Jamia and came back again to Aligarh as a teacher. The intent of the book was to bring to light the lesser-known aspects of Aligarh and Jamia, which in the 1980s were considered primarily Muslim institutions. Tonki being a part of both institutions felt the need to dispel this predominant notion and demonstrate the 'nationalist' character of Aligarh. The first draft of the book was earlier conceptualized and published in Urdu (1972) as *Baniye Jamia* (Founders of Jamia) and later translated into English for a wider readership.

Tonki supports his arguments, observations and opinions with records of meetings, minutes of discussions, autobiographies and newspapers. The main focus of the book is to highlight the participation of Aligarh students and faculty in the Indian national movement during the 20th century. The book describes events surrounding the non-cooperation and Khilafat movement. It argues that since Aligarh was founded on the principles of free and critical thinking, it was natural for students to be supportive of movements which demanded autonomy of educational institutions and freedom from control of the British government. He further blames the European staff for controlling and restricting students from taking part in political activities. The first few chapters demonstrate how the independent and autonomous character of the institution came under attack by European professors who gradually started controlling the college by sidelining the Indian staff. The authoritarian measures of the European staff not only led to political unrest within the college in the forms of strikes but also brought students closer to the national movement.

The second part of the book elaborates the events that took place in the college during the non-cooperation and Khilafat movement. It tells this part of the story by tracing opinions, thoughts and actions of rebellious figures of the college. It specifically focuses upon Maulana Mohammad Ali, the leader known for leading the Khilafat movement in the subcontinent. The rise of such figures along with the attitude of the British government towards the demand of an autonomous and affiliating Muslim university, further swayed other students, faculty and founders away from the British government. The book also discusses various plans of establishing other educational institutions which would be more inclusive than MAO. One such institution was Jamia, which was established by students who actively took part in the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movements and aspired to set up a nationalist institution which was free from the control of the British government. In other words, while focusing on the internal politics of MAO it traces the formation of Jamia Millia Islamia.

Tonki's account is valuable because of a wealth of sources that are used to discuss the idea behind the formation of the college. As an insider he is able to bring the reader closer to the internal politics of these institutions. Tonki's book falls broadly into scholarship which focuses on the involvement of students in the nationalist and later 'separatist' movement. Along with Tonki other works on Aligarh also have primarily emphasized the nationalist credentials of the institutions.[1]

Although this kind of scholarship is critiqued for a variety of reasons like focusing only on known figures, an undue emphasis on 'big' events and, most significantly, for a teleological approach to writing history, Tonki's account nevertheless should be assessed by reading the text in the context in which it was written. Scholarship of this genre was in response to works that traced the genesis for the demand of Pakistan, to the politics of the Aligarh Muslim University.[2] Along with questioning this dominant strand of scholarship, Tonki's book was one of the first on Aligarh which presented the college in fresh light.

While the book questions such assumptions and highlights the neglected and ignored aspects like popularity and support lent to the non-cooperation movement, it does not explain the shift or turn towards the Muslim League by 1930. This part of the story of the involvement of the Aligarh community consisting of students and teachers, has been dealt with by Mushirul Hasan in his article, 'Nationalist and Separatist Trends in Aligarh: 1915-1947'.[3] While Tonki and Hasan have focused on the politics within the university, other works such

1. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *History of the Aligarh Muslim University*. Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, Delhi, 1995; and S.K. Bhatnagar, *History of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh*. Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969.

2. Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005.

3. Mushirul Hasan and Mohd. Afzal Husain Qadri, 'Nationalist and Separatist Trends in Aligarh, 1915-47', *The Indian Economic & Social History* Review 22(1), March 1985, pp. 1-33. https://doi.org/10.1177/001946468502200101.

4. David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2003.

5. Laurence Gautier, 'A Laboratory for a Composite India? Jamia Millia Islamia Around the Time of Partition', *Modern Asian Studies* 54(1), 2020, pp. 199-249. doi: 10.1017/S0026749X18000161.

David Lelyveld's *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* is a history of the role of institutions in the creation of an elite Muslim or ashraf identity.[4] More recent works on Aligarh and Jamia focus on the post-independence trajectory of these institutions and argue that despite Jamia's role in the creation of a composite and united national identity, Aligarh was given more support by state authorities.[5]

Tonki's book represents early works on Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia, where the prime concern was to investigate and analyse the involvement of the university community in the process of nation building. While the nationalist-secularist framework is now considered an outmoded one, this book is still relevant to understand the need for reiterating the 'secular' and 'national' characteristics of an institution that has witnessed political mobilization of various hues.

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THE LOST HOMESTEAD: My Mother, Partition and the Punjab by Marina Wheeler. Hodder & Stroughton, UK/Hachette India, 2020.

MARINA Wheeler has written a very unusual book in which she fuses memory with history. The history part is based on research in various archives and visits to locations that are relevant to construct her narrative. The memory part grows out of her conversations with her mother through which Wheeler becomes familiar with her mother's and her own roots in the Indian subcontinent. The real strength and attraction of the book is the way in which Wheeler places her mother's remembrance of things past within a historical context in which her mother's family and millions of others were uprooted from their homes. This book is about Wheeler's mother, Dip (short for Kuldip, born 1932) and about the Partition of India. In Wheeler's words, her book tells 'Two stories of freedom. One was India's, its fight for political freedom, for self-determination and its people's right to govern themselves. The second was my mother's, her quest for personal freedom, for autonomy and the ability to decide her own future.' One could add that there is a third subterranean story – Marina Wheeler's inquiry into her own identity: a successful London based QC's exploration of her Indian past.

Dip was born into privilege. Her father, Harbans Singh, was a doctor in the township of Sargodha, northwest of Lahore across the river Chenab. He was committed to public health and his work in this sphere, especially during the plague of 1915, was acknowledged by the colonial authorities through a sanad that was granted in his name. Dip remembered her mother, Ranjit, as a 'saint'. Dip was the youngest of five siblings. When Dip was five years old, the family moved to the Civil Lines into a house that Harbans designed to his taste. Expanding on what she heard about the house from Dip, Wheeler writes, 'Opulent, magnificent, it seems to defy classification... it was larger than a bungalow or a haveli, but not quite a palace. If you include its extensive grounds, I decide, it's a homestead.'

This idyllic life ended abruptly in the summer of 1947 when it became unsafe for the family to live in Sargodha. Very reluctantly, Harbans left what he considered his home with his family. He took nothing valuable with him because he was convinced that he and his family would return once it was safe. According to Dip, it was her father's firm conviction that 'Muslims are our brothers. We will not be separated from them.' A line on the map and the spilling of innocent blood separated Muslims from their Sikh and Hindu brethren in the Punjab.

The Partition of India in 1947 is irrevocably linked to violence and loss. Hindus and Sikhs began to leave western Punjab leaving behind homes, careers and property. Many did not make it across. It is difficult to estimate how many lost their lives in the holocaust – one million is a reasonable figure. Those who survived and made the trek to India had to be housed in refugee camps. Dip's parents were fortunate, because of their connections, to escape that experience. But this is not to underestimate the trauma that the family suffered; and for individuals like Harbans one of the fundamental pillars of their existence – living with Muslims as brothers – had been rudely shattered. There is no measure to estimate this emotional loss.

Dip was married off at the age of seventeen into the family of Sobha Singh. The marriage was never consummated and her husband neglected her. Dip walked out on him and decided to live her own life which involved, apart from a series of minor jobs, a life of fun and socializing. She met Charles Wheeler in 1960. Charles was the BBC's Delhi-based South Asia correspondent. They married and thus began a new and happy chapter of Dip's life. From being part of a family that, because of the Partition, had been labelled, 'Displaced', Dip found in Charles Wheeler an anchor. She had to leave India because from Delhi Charles got posted to Berlin and then to other cities across the world. She was sad to leave India; and this was the second time that she was losing a home. But she set up home

sity that requires a man who would steer the infant institution through all the struggles and rivalries to arise in the earlier stages of its life.'

The author has included Gandhi's answers published on 20 December 1928 in Young India, to a few questions raised by a Muslim reader regarding among others, the principles governing Jamia, its prospective beneficiaries, its management and funds. Gandhi categorically replied that Jamia was founded upon the most liberal tenets and it had been specifically erected for the Muslims, but also welcomed people from every religion and caste with an open heart. Gandhi also informed the reader that Jamia had Seth Jamnalal Bajaj as one its trustees who was non-Muslim and that it had non-Muslims among its students, teachers and staff as well.

Apart from being a harbinger of communal and social amity, Gandhi regarded Jamia as an instrument for winning freedom by adhering to a non-violent path, unlike those that were followed by schools established by Hitler and Mussolini. To illustrate this, the author cites Gandhi's speech at Hindustani Talimi Sangh (1938). Moreover, the book also informs us that Gandhi was always concerned about the well-being of Jamia. Sahil has reproduced letters and correspondence which Gandhi wrote to prominent members and trustees of Jamia to enquire about its condition. Gandhi's concerns are visible from the fact that on his return to Delhi from Noakhali on 9 September 1947, the first thing that he had reportedly asked was, 'Is Zakir Husain fine? Is Jamia Millia safe?' The next morning he visited Jamia and Okhla, where refugees of the Partition were staying. This was his last visit to Jamia, as within six months of this visit, Nathuram Godse killed him on 30 January 1948.

The book also documents the opposition faced by Mahatma Gandhi from Hindu nationalists for his support to Jamia. On 18 January 1928, Hindu Mahasabha leader Dr B.S. Moonje raised serious apprehensions about Jamia evolving as a memorial of Hakeem Ajmal Khan. In his letter to Gandhi, Moonje termed Jamia a 'communal institution' which would further sever the ties between the two communities. To which Gandhi replied (to Moonje) that if any institution had a 'nationalist outlook' and if it contributed immensely to the nationalist cause, then such a communal institution could be called a nationalist institution. Gandhi also informed Moonje that being a Muslim institution, Jamia welcomed people from all religions and castes. Notably, when in a meeting Gandhi sought to impart religious education to Jamia's Hindu students, Hakim Ajmal Khan came two-steps forward and called for a learning of Hindu culture and the basic tenets of Hinduism, even for Muslim students. It is worth mentioning that 100 years after its foundation, Jamia still offers a similar course and many non-Hindu students study Hindu Religious Studies (HRS) instead of *Islamiaat* or Islamic Studies at school and graduation level.

In addition to extensively quoting and citing from archival sources and *Sampuran Gandhi Vangmay* (Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi), the author has, in the annexe, reproduced important correspondence and speeches in full, which enrich the book further and make it an important secondary source on Jamia, Gandhi and Muslims of India. In short, the book is an essential read for anyone interested in the university, its relationship with Gandhi and the Muslim educational movement in India.

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NUQOOSH-E-JAMIA (Imprints of Jamia) by Ghulam Haider. Maktaba Jamia Limited, New Delhi, 2012.

IN February 2003, Ghulam Haider, an early alumnus of Jamia, was tasked by the then Vice-Chancellor Syed Shahid Mahdi (2000-2004) to undertake a survey titled 'A Pilot Project on Historical Survey of the Growth of Jamia Millia Islamia.' According to Haider, the objective of the project was to record the experiences, impressions and observations of the old students, teachers and workers of the university and to convert them into a written form. The book under review is a result of that process. Published in 2012, it can be described as a sequel to *Jamia Ki Kahani*, which is the most authentic and detailed history of Jamia (1920-47) till date. However, the crucial difference between Jamia Ki Kahani and Nuqoosh-e-Jamia is that while the former was written and based on the first hand observations of its author and former principal of Jamia school, Abdul Ghaffar Mudholi, the latter is largely based on interviews with the Jamia *biradari*, apart from other resources, on the evolution and development of Jamia over the years.

Based on interviews and conversations with 35 people belonging to different periods and departments of the university, it provides a comprehensive view of

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the 83 years of its existence, right from its inception in 1920 till 2003-2004. Divided into 10 chapters, which includes the preface, introduction and appendages, the book ably documents the journey of an institution through its humble beginnings while detailing its ups and downs over the past eight decades. The chapter 'Maujooda Jamia' or the present-day Jamia (2003-4) details the different faculties and departments of the university. Towards the end of the chapter, the author rightly observes that far from remaining at a standstill, the university has evolved over the years to become a modern institution. In other words, the author sees it as a progressive, modern and forward-looking institution while being grounded and connected with its rich history.

The next chapter 'Uboori Daur' or the interim period, captures the uncertainties that the university went through following India's Independence and its elevation as a recognized institution. It can be noted that in the pre-independence period, Jamia's degrees were not recognized as the university stood against British rule. This chapter also details the journey of Jamia from an independent to deemed to central university and how, in this process, many old values were lost and new ones were gained. Chapter Six, which is poignantly titled 'Aazmaish' (roughly translated as deep crises), documents the period from 1944-45 to 1947-48. Those were the days when the entire country was in the midst of major turmoil. Victory came in the form of Independence from the long oppressive rule of the British, while leaving behind the bitter episode of partition and its aftermath of riots, bloodshed, murder, mayhem and large-scale migration. This was also the period when the author was a student of Jamia. In this chapter, while reproducing the answers of several respondents interviewed for the project, the author also extensively quotes from the freedom fighter, Begum Anis Kidwai's memoir, *Azadi Ki Chhaon Mein*, which was originally written in Urdu in 1949, and later translated to Hindi and English. It was titled *In Freedom's Shade* in English (Penguin India, 2011).

The following chapter is on its old departments, their origins, objectives, activities, achievements and relevance in the schema of the university. The author informs us that the names of some departments were changed over the years because of their expansion or merger with other departments, while some, having fulfilled the need of their times, become part of its history. For example, the Faculty of Education began as Ustadon Ka Madrasa and, until a few decades ago, was better known as the TTI (Teacher Training Institute) which still later got developed into Teachers' College. Similarly, the Faculty of Fine Arts was founded in 1951 as the Arts Institute. In 1967, it was renamed as the Department of Art and Craft Education and became a part of the Teachers' College. There used to be departments such as Jamia Dairy, Jamia Foundry, Jamia Lorry and Jamia Chemical Industries – all of them are now a part of its history.

The second last chapter focuses on those associated with the university. They are further divided into four sub-chapters namely the Buzurgan-e-Jamia or Elders of Jamia, Hayati Arakeen or Life Members, Digar Shakhsiyaat or the other personalities and Jawaab Dehandagaan, the respondents. The classification of people in different categories gives an idea about their association and involvement in the evolution of Jamia over the years. While most of the names under the category of Buzurgan-e-Jamia and Hayati Arakeen are relatively well documented for their association with Jamia, some of the names under the category of other personalities might come as a surprise to many. These include noted educationist Agha Ashraf Ali (father of Kashmiri poet Agha Shahid Ali), theatre director, poet and actor Habib Tanvir, Mahtama Gandhi's son Devdas Gandhi and Gandhi's grandson Rasik Lal Gandhi, among others.

Given the range of topics from the founders' lives to what Mohammad Talib has referred to as their 'quest for self-directed education', to events that marked the freedom struggle during the momentous third, fourth and fifth decades of the 20th century, as well as the subsequent events of freedom and partition and the parallel history of the evolution and shift of the university from Aligarh to Karol Bagh to its present location, the book provides a detailed and much needed history of Jamia as an institution which was founded on the ideals of freedom, pluralism, composite nationalism and self-directed education, all of which are at question under the prevailing circumstances. A detailed preface by Sadiq-ur-Rahman Kidwai, an alumnus of Jamia and retired professor of JNU, further enriches the book. One hopes that in the coming days, a book similar to this gets published, detailing the ups and downs of Jamia, not just in Urdu but also in English, Hindi and other Indian languages, so that the journey, contribution and message of Jamia reach a wider and larger readership.

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Foot Soldiers of the Zomia
Writing as Disruption

R K DEBBARMA

BOOK REVIEWS

Against State, Against History: Freedom, Resistance, and Statelessness in Upland Northeast India by Jangkhomang Guite, *Oxford University Press, 2019; pp 364, ₹1,095 (hardcover).*

Between a history that desires a primitive Other, and a history that aspires to disrupt that binary, which one overcomes the hill–valley divide? The former impinges on everyday tribal–non-tribal and hill–valley interactions in North East India. In fact, this binary still informs how research problem and methodologies are formulated within academia. The latter intentionally pushes methodology and reformulates what constitutes historical accuracy, and demands a critique of history. In North East India, the surviving valley states and their assured subject marvels at their extant ruins, and those who believed that they too were once a state, dig for ruins. Others have locked away their past into fateful time immemorial, as self-contained, distinct hill people—happy victims of contagious nationalist history and ruinous identity politics. This is why we must write against a historical past about ourselves, so as to disrupt the comforting truths about the indigenous and illegal, valley and hills, and civilised and primitive.

Jangkhomang Guite's book *Against State, Against History: Freedom, Resistance, and Statelessness in Upland Northeast India* is as disruptive as history writing in this region can be; the hill societies in the upland North East India are not remnant others of the civilised inheritors of surviving valley states. When you overturn the enduring civilisational bias, a different kind of facts becomes historical: civilisations are the product of indebted encounter. Any attempt to contain history within ethnic boundaries can only succeed through violence against the other and the self. This book about state-making in the valleys and the stateless in the hills during the precolonial period constructs a history of connections and commonalities. It is about how hill polities and valley states are products of a shared history, and in that sense, it is a truth about what they owe to each other. Even if statelessness was a political choice, they were always simultaneously conscious and anxious about the power of the state.

Upland History: Statelessness

Guite is a self-proclaimed Scottian, another foot soldier in the burgeoning area known as Zomia studies.[1] James Scott (2009) turned the dominant civilisational bias against the upland people on its head.[2] Scott had ventured to show that the stateless inhabitants of the Zomia or the South East Asian mainland Massif were not remnants of earlier social formation. Their agricultural practices, oral traditions, social structures, and belief systems were not the markers of primitivism, but were designed to keep states at bay, and to prevent states springing up among them, and in the process engendered egalitarian hill societies. Scott's main focus was upland Burma, though his broad canvas was the new designate Zomia, which included the hills in North East India.[3]

Guite's book extends Scott's thesis in North East India, but it would be a mistake to treat this book as a mere imitation. While the overall thesis is similar, Guite's conceptual frameworks are bold and his disruptive techniques of counter-perspectives original. In Chapters 1 and 2, he lays the historical backdrop and the political reasons for the peopling of the hills by communities who were at some historical junctures state-making valley people. This aspect of Zomia is an already agreed historical fact. It is from Chapter 3 that the book begins to pique your interest.

Chapters 3 and 4 are about spatial strategies that the hill communities adopt to repel and prevent the state formation in the hills. Here the author introduces new frameworks, such as counterculture conduit, hill screens, and clan's geographicity, in order to carry out what he calls the counter-perspective of the margin. Counterculture conduits are inbuilt mechanisms that allowed hill inhabitants to resist state structures and oppressive relations. The organisation of space, settlement patterns, social relations, and resource utilisation were designed to serve this purpose of resistance. For example, hill people are averse to surplus production, and prefer a more or less socially flattened wealth. What follows from this concept is the imaginative geography of the clan, what Guite calls clan geographicity. What is meant here is that the sovereignty over space was not premised on contiguous territoriality, but anchored on social and cultural networks. For examples, among the Kukis of present-day Manipur, clan relations were shot through marriages, symbolic tributes, death rituals, and feasts of merit—all these produced the clan geographicity. Within this clan geographicity, the pathways that connected different villages were, by choice, difficult and repulsive, passable only in single file, seasonal, slippery, and easy for ambush. According to Guite, the paths were the result of reconciling culture and security. It allowed movement of people (in tune with clan geographicity), but kept raiders of the valley, state and prospective marauders looking for slaves, at bay.

Another interesting conceptual framework deployed by Guite is the "hill screen;" an extensive forest belt between the valley state and the upland polity. Colonial states found these geographical tracts peculiar as to why the valley states did not exert their extractive power over this uncultivated and uninhabited geography. Guite believed that this was by choice; any attempt to exert power over

it by the valley state would be read as a threat to statelessness in the hills. Thus, the essence of this forest belt was political in character; its existence produces particular form of interdependence between the valley state and hill population. They depended on each other for certain kinds of resources. This symbiotic hill–valley relationship is again taken up in Chapter 9, whereby the author inserts a new spatial category called "posaland" to unravel a complex geographical arrangement of power. The inhabitants of posaland were subjects of the valley state, but they paid tributes to the hill polities. According to Guite, these tributes or posa were not paid to keep the hill people from raiding the valley-state population. Rather, these were geographies of exchange that emerged out of their interdependence for resources and need for alliance between the hill and plain in times of war.

The rest of the chapters are dedicated to the themes already fleshed out by Scott: *jhum* economy (Chapter 5), diversity of languages (Chapter 6) and folk tales (Chapter 7). Here, Guite mines the oral traditions of the hill communities to construct precolonial stateless egalitarian hill societies. Legends, myths, ballads, proverbs, riddles and sayings are excavated to look for a truth about hill people's past, their notions about power and authority. The author goes as far as to try to persuade a reader to believe that the "gossip platforms" and the grapevine were conduits of democracy, and mechanisms for socialisation. By now, one is left wondering if the author was pushing his counter-perspective to an extent, whereby the weapon he wields begins to turn against him?

On the White Man's Shoulder

Writing a history of precolonial upland in present-day North East India is an uphill enterprise, fraught with perilous steps and deceptive grips. Within the existing methodological paradigm, one can be correctly charged for lacking rigour and acceptable evidences. Chronicles of the former valley states are a case study on how to marvel at godlike rulers. Guite's counter-readings are therefore largely dependent on two treacherous sources: colonial archives and orality. His counter-perspective is made possible by the nature of these data.

First, colonial sources are offensively colonial English. It was in their interest to downplay the power of the valley state they replaced. If the rulers of these states did not have written proof about their control over attractive extractable stretch of geography, the English claimed it as theirs. The burden of proofs did not lie with them. Moreover, colonial sources are storehouse delights for preconceived politics. Torture is not necessary to extract confession about the "hill men" out of these sources. Depending on your political persuasion, you can use these sources to either call them primitive or democratic. These sources are products of a curious English affliction; they endeavoured to destroy the hill people's freedom they fawned. When a "hill man" writes about precolonial past of the hills, they ascend that treacherous upland on the shoulder of the colonising man.

Second, I agree with Guite that oral sources hide knowledge about hill societies that did not write, and that orality can be approached as a text to construct their history. But I think the author missed three crucial facts about them as historical data. One, they are malleable, fluid and open-ended. They are always becoming. Two, to prevent state formation is a refusal to be fixed, including identity, language and stories they told about themselves. Three, oral texts are not handed down in a fixed form from generation to generation. They percolate down affected by contingencies of time. Moreover, many of the adages, proverbs and riddles used by Guite seem to be from the present. They are used to unlock precolonial time immemorial without the awareness that colonialism and the fixing of ethnic identities in the hills have affected the shapes and forms of these oral texts. Ultimately, one is left wondering if they can be trustworthy guides to the long history that Guite embarks on in the book.

The unreflective approach to these sources seems to undo the counter-perspective when the author gives an account of hill women in Chapter 8, revealingly titled "Daughters of the Hills." He locates manhood in hill societies in the women; rather women are the supposed source of masculinity, whose insult and pain produces a warrior ideology. The trouble amplifies when the author nullifies patriarchy by inserting the cultural conduit for women to escape masculinity, such as their recourse to customary laws, which allowed them remarriage. Thus, according to the author, women are renouncers of masculinity and defenders of customary norms. In fact, he goes as far as to tell us that "strong sense of feminism circulated among womenfolk" in precolonial times. Masculinity has been reduced to men who beat their wives, patriarchy has been reduced to masculinity, and customary norms are propped up as non-patriarchal. Only a "hill man" could conjure such an egalitarian space for women in the hills.

Overcoming the Binary

This book is an important interruption in the ever-widening hill–valley politics in the region, especially in Manipur. Instead of employing the tired hill–valley divide, the author traces a symbiotic relationship between hill and valley by evidencing commonalities and connections. Guite leaves us with new conceptual tools and spatial categories to re-evaluate our values, biases and interpretations.

We are also left with two problems that linger on after one has finished reading the book. One, the author seems to assign all that is illiberal to the valley states and all that is praiseworthy to the hill societies. Two, Scott, the original foot soldier, directs his analysis of the Zomia towards anarchist values, to point out the historical possibilities of societies to be self-governed. Guite, despite adopting Scott's lenses, does not specify to what end his disruption is directed. Without this clarification, this fascinating

biography of the precolonial upland merely feels like a therapy for the absence of the precolonial state and written history.

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NOTES

1 Zomia as a possible area study, outside of existing areas studies, such as South Asia and South East Asia was first articulated by Willem van Schendel (2002).

2 It was James Scott (2009) who actually used the concept Zomia to construct an anarchist history of the uplands in South East Asian massif. He overturned the dominant civilisation narrative anchored in hill–valley perspectives. The book has been acclaimed for empowering the political struggles in the hills against contemporary nation states.

3 For a critical review of James Scott, see Victor Lieberman (2010). For a critical reflection on hill valley divide in Manipur, see Jilangamba (2015).

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A Realist Take on the Big Questions

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Brief Answers to the Big Questions by Stephen Hawking, *London: John Murray, 2018; pp xxiii + 232, ₹650/£14.99.*

The book by Stephen Hawking, published posthumously, relives the old tradition of scientists exploring questions that fall, more appropriately, within the purview of philosophy of science. While in one sense the book can, of course, be termed a popular science book, it is in its philosophical implications that the discussion around the "Big Questions" seems to excel. The book is a compilation of what can perhaps be called Hawking's final thoughts on 10 grand themes, questions that somehow remain unresolved. The noted physicist and long-time friend of Hawking, Kip S Thorne, in his introduction to the book, reveals that Hawking was still working on the answers to these questions at the time of his death, indicating that the book was a work in progress.

The book begins with the premise that the world is "real," and is governed by objective laws that are "knowable" with an increasing degree of accuracy. Hawking clearly is not ready to give away the notion of truth. It is indeed refreshing to receive a book of this nature, reinforcing the belief in science, at a time when one witnesses a persistent sceptical stance, at least within the social sciences.

The other overriding idea that runs through the text is that of progress as the essence of the history of science. Progress that is driven by curiosity and wonder on the one hand, and the possibility of ever-improving material conditions of life, on the other. Hawking's life itself is a striking example of the possibilities that science offers for the betterment of living conditions. The book is certainly a compliment to the "great [human] triumph" of understanding the world around us, including the laws that govern it, and of bringing about progressive change in it. It reinforces the belief that the evolution of human knowledge is a march away from fatalism towards greater freedoms.

The triumph, however, is not complete. It will perhaps never be complete. The expansion of the boundaries of knowledge is a perennial phenomenon. Not all queries are, or can be, settled at any given point in time. As we consistently endeavour to solve questions, newer ones come up as part of the endeavour itself, while some of the older obdurate ones continue to stick around. The book deals with 10 such questions that remain to be solved. As Hawking deals with different aspects of a particular question at the same time, the discussion is overlapping at many places. Strikingly, however, one does not come across contradictions in his thought.

Persisting Questions

Interestingly, Thorne in his introduction clarifies that six of the 10 questions—Is there a god? How did it all begin? Can we predict the future? What is inside a black hole? Is time travel possible? How do we shape the future?—"are deeply rooted in his [Hawking's] science" (p xxiii). The other four questions—Will we survive on earth? Is there other intelligent life in the universe? Should we colonise space? Will artificial intelligence outsmart us?—"cannot possibly be rooted in his [Hawking's] science" (p xxiii). Thus, Hawking's motivation behind this effort goes beyond discussing the science underlying these themes employing a language that is popular and accessible to the lay masses. Essentially, the book presents a realist position on some very complex questions. Given the nature of the book, it is difficult to place the questions into neat categories. Interestingly, while all the questions are bound by the fact that they are still unresolved, in some sense or the other, the causes behind their irresolution differ in significant ways. The inability of science to secure solutions to many persisting inquiries could be due to the inherent complexity of the problem at hand and the limitations of the current level of human knowledge. Some of the questions from the book, including "Is there other intelligent life in the universe?" "Can we [in practice] predict the future?" "What is inside a black hole?" "Is time travel possible?" and "Will we survive on Earth?" are examples that fit into this category.

On the other hand, some questions tend to persist despite being conclusively resolved by science, such as "Is there a God?" and "How did it all begin?" While Hawking's treatment of these questions is based on facts and follows a clear logic, it tends to miss the fact that the irresoluble nature of such questions is

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Storm And Lightning

A politically volatile, violent decade comes alive in the candid memoirs of a top police officer

Bhavna Vij-Aurora

THE 1980s and the early '90s have arguably been the most tumultuous years in India's modern history. The decade started with Punjab being engulfed by violence, largely fired by radical preacher Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who had ensconced himself in the Golden Temple complex with heavily armed followers. In 1984, then prime minister Indira Gandhi ordered Operation Bluestar to flush them out, triggering a cataclysmic chain of events, starting with her assassination, the horrific riots in its wake, the killing of Lalit Maken, Arjun Das and Gen A.S. Vaidya. The next decade started with the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 by the LTTE for sending the Indian Peace Keeping Force to Sri Lanka.

Maintaining meticulous records of these events and the immersive investigations that followed was a young police officer, Amod Kanth, who found himself at the vortex of it all. The IPS officer has now dug into his aide-memoire and written a forthright account, highlighting how political manipulations and terrorism fed on each other, consuming the socio-political structure of the day, leading to his own cathartic evolution and continuing contribution to civil society.

Khaki in Dust Storm—the first of his series of 'police diaries'—is subtitled 'Communal Colours and Political Assassinations (1980-91). In this evenhanded autobiographical account, Kanth writes about the shortcomings of the criminal justice system, the nexus between politicians and anti-social elements and the pressure on law enforcement agencies to influence investigations, especially in high-profile cases.

> KANTH WRITES ABOUT THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM, CRIMINAL-POLITICIAN NEXUS AND THE PRESSURE ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO INFLUENCE HIGH-PROFILE PROBES.

Without sensationalising events, Kanth has touched upon controversial issues with sensitivity. Ever since Mrs Gandhi's assassination, there was believed to be an unwritten code among security/intelligence agencies not to deploy Sikhs in sensitive positions. Though Kanth denies knowledge of any such unwritten law, he does mention an order that was issued by then Commissioner of Police (CP) Subhash Tandon to disarm Sikh police personnel.

Talking about events on November 1, 1984—the day after Mrs Gandhi was assassinated, Kanth writes, "Earlier in the day, a grave mistake had been committed. A wireless message was sent by the police headquarters to disarm all Sikh police officers. The purpose was to keep them away from the crowds and from coming into public contact.... such a move had an extremely demoralising effect on them." Kanth, then the DCP of Central district, says he requested the CP to cancel the order. Even as the order was cancelled, "the damage had already been done. The Sikh officers were bitter about their professionalism being questioned".

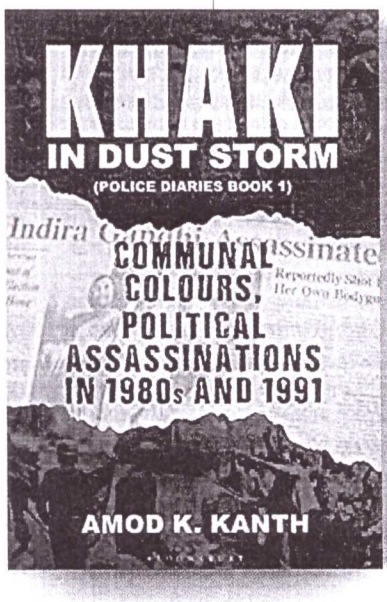
Political developments also led to Rajiv Gandhi's assassination in 1991. Kanth, then on deputation to the CBI, found himself part of the team that was investigating Rajiv's assassination. Digging into his papers, Kanth has come out with many facts made public for the first time. "With regard to Rajiv Gandhi's decision to get deeper into the Sri Lankan imbroglio...it appears to us that many a times, even heads of governments take steps whose ramifications are very different from what they anticipate," writes Kanth.

He also details the investigations into the 'transistor bombs' in 1985—another fallout of Sikh militancy—that had Delhi, Haryana and UP on the edge, and deals with his experience in the Delhi Police Crime Branch between 1985 and 1990, handling the anti-narcotics section. The fight against drugs had resulted in the landmark Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act of 1985.

The law, he feels, is being "misused" the way it is being enforced—to go after users, referring to cases arising out of Sushant Singh Rajput's death. "The role of NCB is well-defined. It is not supposed to go after users, the way it is going in Mumbai, if no recovery is made from them," he says.

Kanth's second 'police diary' will deal with some of the sensational cases he has handled. These include the Jessica Lal case, the BMW case and the dramatic Charles Sobhraj jailbreak, in addition to some notorious organised gangs. After the immensely readable first instalment, part two surely holds promise.

Amod K. Kanth
KHAKI IN DUST STORM: Communal Colours and Political Assassinations (1980-1991) - Police Diaries Book 1 | Bloomsbury | 368 pages | Rs 799



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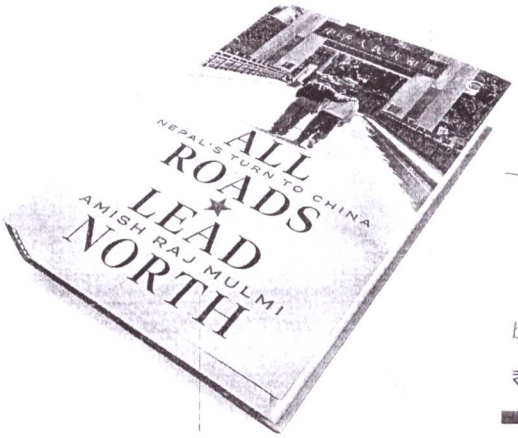
BOOKS

A TURBULENT TRIANGLE

Manjeev Singh Puri



ALL ROADS LEAD NORTH
by Amish Raj Mulmi
CONTEXT
₹592; 320 pages

There is no argument in India that Nepal is a part of the Indian subcontinent. In Nepal, though, the defining issue is of identity vis-à-vis India, with Nepali nationalism basically being anti-Indianism. The Nepali intelligentsia longs for alternate geographies, no matter the overwhelming reality. Amish Raj Mulmi's *All Roads Lead North* is a serious contemporary contribution in that direction with nearly 45 pages of footnotes following 222 pages of close-set text. It is also timely with much of the news from Nepal last year having been about the Chinese ascendance in that country.

Mulmi, who is from Nepal but lived for years in India, has strongly grounded his work in the historical and societal dynamics around Nepal's northern areas, with the de-emphasising of India being intrinsic to the construct, even though he himself notes that "the modern history of Nepal-China relations is equally a story about the triangle between Nepal, India and China". He is incensed that "binary and outlandish views dominate and because of India's overwhelming global influence in shaping the South Asian narrative, the Nepali perspective is lost amidst the cacophony of Indian news channels and the assumption of quasi-imperial notions on how the rest of the subcontinent should respond to India". On the other hand, the role and, indeed, significant place of the US, particularly vis-à-vis Tibet related activities, in Nepal stands foregrounded.

The book is a must-read for both the expert and the lay reader. Nepal-Tibet/ China history is juxtaposed against a certain contemporariness through conversations with people in the northern areas of Nepal. For a lay reader, the book clearly drives home the fact that Nepal also shares a border with Tibet/ China and has long had cross-border relations to its north. Given the sheer might of the Chinese and Nepalese inadequacies, maintaining tranquility along that border is an imperative for Nepal, which is something that is often lost in the Indian understanding of Nepal.

Indian big brotherliness and avarice in Nepalese politics are normally seen as providing segues for the rise of China in Nepal. Mulmi acknowledges this but rigorously argues that the pull to the north is underpinned by a connect at the level of the people plus the new connectivity across the border. Though the north clearly beckons for him, many would contest this compulsion is not a yearning. His narrative also avoids commonplace facts of Chinese strong-arm actions in the border areas both in Nepalese territory as well as with Nepalese who cross over.

The book offers a fascinating account of the Nepal/ Tibet wars of 1792 and 1855, cross-relating these to Chinese claims of suzerainty over Tibet. It also anecdotally deals with the Tibetan exodus and Nepal's significant place in the Tibetan diaspora, plus related matters including the escape of the Karmapa through Nepal.

Interestingly, Mulmi has spotlighted Dr K.I. Singh, known as the Robin Hood of Nepal, who is the only Nepalese politician to have sought refuge in China. This is a fact lost in the general lore of Nepalese politicians, including Communists and Maoists, escaping to India during the monarchy. Dr K.I. Singh went over in 1952 catching the Chinese off-guard. After returning in 1955, he was appointed prime minister by King Mahendra in July 1957 only to be "casually" dismissed barely four months later.

King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of modern Nepal, said that his country was the yam between two boulders, referring to China and India. 'A Fine Balance' (the title of the introduction to the book) between its two neighbours has been integral to Nepalese policy with the general view that contestation between the two provided Nepal with a certain beneficial space. Amish, though, feels that "the old dictum of being a yam between two boulders will come to haunt Nepal once again as tension between India and China rise". He concludes the book by pointing to the one big-time ask, just before the Anglo-Gorkha war of 1815, when Nepal sought China's help and was rebuffed. The future, of course, is still to unfold. ■

Manjeev Singh Puri *is a former ambassador of India to Nepal*

Vidyapati's Mithila

Literature and a New Universalism in Sultanate India

ABIR BAZAZ

BOOK REVIEWS

A Political History of Literature: Vidyapati and the Fifteenth Century by Pankaj Jha, *New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018; pp 304, ₹1,095.*

Vidyapati, a poet and courtier from the 15th century, is a household name in North Bihar. He is widely remembered as a literary luminary who not only composed in several languages but had an astonishing command of a wide variety of genres. A contemporary of Kashmiri saint–poet Nund Rishi (1378–1440), most of Vidyapati's writings date back to the period between 1400 and 1440. His enduring popularity in Bihar owes more to the songs he composed in his native Maithili. These songs are an archive of the everyday life in Mithila and have become entangled with the cultural and political imaginations of Bihar as a region. If Vidyapati finds mention in Mughal chronicler Abul Fazl's *Ā'īn-e Akbarī* in the 16th century, he also became a model of inspiration for Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore in the 20th century. Historian Pankaj Jha's *A Political History of Literature: Vidyapati and the Fifteenth Century* is a definitive study of Vidyapati that seeks to situate his writings in the political and literary culture of North India in the 15th century. Jha not only brings us near to the genius of Vidyapati but advances historical insight into the processes that were to shape the eventual rise of Mughal political and literary culture in the 16th century.

It is not just Vidyapati that interests Jha in this book but the flowering of literary expression in what he calls the "atypical region" (p xx) of Mithila in the 15th century. There is a growing body of work on political culture and the literary culture of medieval India. But to study the one in relation to the other, despite the surge in publications on India's premodern poetic traditions, is rare. Jha's approach to Vidyapati is unique in that he considers Vidyapati's texts as conversations between different genres, languages and regions. But even more significantly, he relates Vidyapati's texts to their "outside": the political life of 15th century Mithila. This turn to literature offers a wealth of material in understanding the history of political culture in the region.

What is most vitally at stake in this book is the relations of Vidyapati's texts of the past to our history in the present. Jha hints that he is not merely interested in where the texts come from (their origins) but also where the texts go (their ends). For Jha, literature is not merely a by-product of politics (read in a narrow sense as patterns of patronage or the rise of publics) but he suggests that the relations between the two are undecidable. Jha deftly turns his study of Vidyapati's texts into a deeper inquiry into the relations between history and literature. The book is an invitation to read medieval Indian literature in political terms. For Jha, history is the force of the past in the present and literature, in the interventions that it makes in the present, is always, already historical. It is in this sense that we must take Vidayapati's literature to be political: it remakes the Mithila which makes it.

Political Multilingualism

The political history of literature in medieval India seldom takes into account India's multilingualism. Vidyapati composed in Sanskrit, Persian and Maithili (as Jha reminds us, in choosing a language one chooses an audience). This situation of multilingualism is thrown into high relief in Jha's book. This is even more interesting because medieval Mithila was neither on any of the trade routes nor was it incorporated into any of the major Sultanates in the region. Yet Jha considers Vidyapati's verse in relation to Mithila's political possibility and shows how literature has the power to alter the political order. He achieves this by establishing that Vidyapati's verse discloses a universal politics unconstrained by its location in Mithila. The suggestion clearly is that the vernacular literature (be it in Maithili or Kashmiri) has had wider political consequences than had previously been allowed by scholars such as Sheldon Pollock.

Even though the historiography of Mithila has barely moved beyond chronicling the events of succession and the rise and fall of dynasties, Jha reveals the region as an extraordinary site of textual production in the 15th century. From as early as the 11th century to the 15th century, one finds a fecund continuity in Sanskrit textual production in the region. The real breakthroughs in Mithila, however, came in philosophy: it was here that philosophers like Gangesha and Vardhamana laid the foundations of the *navya-nyaya* system (p 23). Yet this period also coincided with the processes of vernacularisation in North India. Jha offers a hesitant but persuasive critique of Pollock's ideas about vernacularisation in medieval North India arguing for a multilingual situation against Pollock's idea of a diglossic struggle between the cosmopolitan and the vernaculars.

The Vidyapati corpus gives us a unique point of entry into 15th-century Mithila. Even as Jha situates this land geographically, it is the meaning-making practices of the region that concern him the most. He is neither interested in the rise-and-fall-of-dynasties framework in Sultanate India nor the narrative of Mithila as a precarious region at a time of "Islamic military raids." Rather, he attempts to

texts that take into account the history of the Karnata and *Oinivara* dynasty and its impressive literary output in Sanskrit and the vernaculars (p 35). One way he does this is to situate Mithila in the long 15th century from the departure of Timur in 1398 to the arrival of Babur in 1526. Jha is critical of the tendency in medieval Indian history to approach the 15th century as a period of historical decline. His point is that if we look at the period from the standpoint of Mithila, such narratives become untenable.

Epistolary Writing and Political Ethics

One great advantage of Jha's rigorous study is that even as it takes on an issue as enormous in scope as the relations between literature and the political in medieval India, it avoids generalisations and turns instead to a close reading of three significant texts by Vidyapati: (i) *Likhanāvalī*, (ii) *Puruṣaparīkṣā* and (iii) *Kīrttilatā*. If *Likhanāvalī* and *Puruṣaparīkṣā* are manuals for documentation and masculine ethics, *Kīrttilatā* is a genre-defying text that deals with language and politics in Mithila. One of Jha's major points is that not only were Vidyapati's texts multilingual, they were often "multivalent in their ideological orientation and diverse in their cultural projects" (p 80). Jha first turns to Vidyapati's *Likhanāvalī*, a writing manual in Sanskrit, composed at the request of a chieftain near the northern borders of Mithila. *Likhanāvalī* largely consists of model letters one could write to one's superiors, inferiors or equals. The sheer diversity of the letters is astonishing. One letter, for instance, is written by an official in charge of betel leaves to a storekeeper of the king's sister who has not returned for a month after being sent to gather betel leaves. Yet another letter instructs a spy not to waste his time staying at home. Was *Likhanāvalī* an oddity in Sanskrit literature and inspired by a Persian genre such as the *insha*? Comparing *Likhanāvalī* to the older Sanskrit classic, *Arthashastra*, Jha concludes that it is more likely that the text emerged in a dialogue with such Sufi-inspired Arabic and Persian genres as the *rasa'il* and the *maktubat* that also came to be inflected with a regional flavour.

Jha next turns to *Puruṣaparīkṣā*, a text on political ethics by Vidayapati, which was a compilation of stories that reflected on the manly ideal (p 143). The text, a didactic manual of ethics about maintaining political order, gives us unusual insight into politics in the realms of the Mithila chieftaincy and its immediate neighbourhood. It is best approached as a *katha/itihasa* (history) in the form of an *udhāraṇaṃ* (example). These example-stories were closely bound up with a moral that always had a political meaning. Here too Vidyapati's text is of its time: Turkish and Afghan soldiers figure in these *kathas* as much as the stories of Chandragupta and Bhoja (p 150). What is most remarkable about this section of Jha's book is its nuanced analysis of caste and gender in *Puruṣaparīkṣā*. Yet again the text turns out to be difficult to isolate from similar texts on *jawānmardī* and *futuwwa* in the Persian and Arabic Sufi traditions. Jha pays close attention to such moments in Vidyapati's texts and argues that we read Vidyapati beyond not just regional history but also a narrow sectarian understanding (Shaiva, Vaishnava or Buddhist).

Lastly, Jha turns his attention to *Kīrttilatā*. *Kīrttilatā* is a biographical account of one of the rulers of Mithila, Kīrttisiṃha—a genre similar to Persian biographical genres. This is a rather unusual text in the Vidyapati oeuvre. For Jha, *Kīrttilatā* is to be situated in the long history of Sanskrit charitas. *Kīrttilatā* was composed in Avahaṭṭha (p 185). The text recounts how the Sharqi Sultan Ibrahim Shah helps the great Kīrttisiṃha win his throne back from the usurper Malik Arsalan. But Jha is more interested in Vidyapati's choice of Avahaṭṭha to celebrate the life of Kīrttisiṃha and turns to this text to further develop his ideas on the processes of vernacularisation. A nuanced reading of the text draws out the sheer linguistic diversity of medieval Mithila where the languages that could come into play were as diverse as Sanskrit, Persian, Apabhramsha, Awadhi, Braja, Hindavi, Rajasthani, Shauraseni, Bangla and Avahaṭṭha. A key feature of Vidyapati's literary output is the fluidity with which he draws on this dynamic multilingualism. Jha raises many pertinent questions about the relation between region and language in this section (if Avahaṭṭha was local to Mithila, why does it turn up in texts as far as Western India?) Why did Vidyapati choose to compose *Kīrttilatā* in Avahaṭṭha? He argues that people in Mithila appreciated the common language more than cosmopolitan languages and such choices were connected to larger political processes. One such political process that the text addresses is the relation between the imperial realm of the Sharqi Sultanate and the local world of Tirhut chieftaincy. For instance, *Kīrttilatā* paints a vivid portrait of the Sharqi capital—a diverse and vibrant Jaunpur. For Vidyapati, Jaunpur is a second Amaravati (celestial city) (p 220). Jha writes that the political ideals of *Kīrttilatā* involved "universal claims, majestic courts, and supreme authority" (p 224). It is this political universalism that makes Vidyapati's literature unique inasmuch as it seeks to intervene in the cultural imaginings of the region and the imperium. Jha rounds off his discussion of *Kīrttilatā* by speculating if the text prepares a new imperial subject. Towards the end, Jha even compares Vidyapati to Amir Khusrau and shows us exactly what is to be gained from a comparativist approach to the study of literature by historians of medieval India. Jha's book also offers new clues to thinking about the early Hindu–Muslim encounter in Sultanate India (a small but significant example from the book being the translatability between such ideas as *dīn* and *dharma*).

Multiple Readings

Mithila was not located on the imperial grid of communication, commerce and war in 15th-century India. Yet it was a prized region for different Sultanates and it is here in the 15th century that we witness an unprecedented flowering of creativity in both vernacular and cosmopolitan languages. Such an irruption of vernacular articulation is a puzzle for the historians. One way Jha goes about solving this puzzle is by bringing us closer to the historical Vidyapati. The more persuasive answer he provides us is in his analysis of the multilingual situation of medieval North India. Every language

in the multilingual universe of Mithila is in debt to its border-crossing others. Jha concludes: "The emergence of multilingualism, it would appear then, was socially and politically powered by a long-term historical tendency towards closer interactions among people from diverse, part-shared and part-distinct, geocultural backgrounds" (p 237). It is these interactions which shaped Vidyapati's vision of "a reformulated ideal of the imperium" (p 237) at the crossroads of late Sultanate history. There are, as Jha reminds us, many Vidyapatis: the poet, the politician, the storyteller and the songwriter. But these Vidyapatis are only accessible in readings that go beyond the state-led initiatives of memorialising and monumentalising. Jha invites us to such readings and ends his landmark study by suggesting that Vidyapati embodies nothing less than the spirit of literature in 15th century North India. After reading this book, few would disagree.

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From RSBY to PMJAY

Crutches for Health Insurance Business in the Name of the Poor

RAVI DUGGAL

In the foreword to this book *Healthcare for India's Poor: The Health Insurance Way*, Anne Mills of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine sums up the problem Sonalini Khetrapal deals with—it is very unusual to use private insurance intermediaries in an almost entirely public-financed scheme to provide improved access to healthcare (p 14). This is, in essence, the fate of the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), a targeted health insurance scheme for the poor—the below poverty line (BPL)—to access hospitalisation care and be saved from catastrophic expenditure that would fling them further into the throes of poverty.

Healthcare for India's Poor: The Health Insurance Way by Sonalini Khetrapal, *New Delhi, Gurugram: Academic Foundation, 2019; pp 192, ₹1,195.*

Healthcare for India's Poor is based on the PhD work of Khetrapal which is based on assessing the RSBY in two districts, one each from Punjab and Haryana. Unfortunately, the analysis of the RSBY in the book remains embedded largely in the findings from the two districts when statewise RSBY data is easily available and the author could have deepened the analysis with incorporation of a nationwide assessment to justify the title of the book. Further, the RSBY is fairly well-researched and has a robust literature about its performance and functioning, some of which the author has referred to in the different chapters of the book. However, the overall analysis of the programme remains restricted, weak and inadequate, and the conclusions based on the learnings of the RSBY for the new scheme Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) to consider are unconvincing.

The book's focus is specifically the RSBY and the second half of the book is devoted to the assessment of the RSBY and learnings from it for the PMJAY so that it can build on the former's failures to meet the goals of providing hospitalisation cover to the poor without the burden of catastrophic expenditure burdens on the poor households. The first four chapters provide a general description of healthcare services and financing in India.

Chapter 1 deals with the public and private healthcare system and explains public–private partnerships (PPPs) and their various components and mechanisms since the RSBY is viewed as a PPP model. The author concludes that the evidence about the efficacy and efficiency of the PPP model especially in developing countries is questionable,

> while proponents suggest that the PPP model through the use of contracts with private players, helps increase competition, managerial decentralisation, and an increase in transparency and accountability there is limited

PPPs more often than not are failures except for some very limited or specific tasks like running ambulance services or providing security or cleaning services.

Privatisation of Health

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 provide a description of the healthcare system in India—health infrastructure, health workforce, private sector domination, lack of regulation of the private health sector, and some important health programmes like the National Rural Health Mission, Sustainable Development Goals and efforts towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC); and health financing and health insurance in India—public and private health expenditures, out-of-pocket (OOP) spending, social health insurance schemes like the Employees' State Insurance Scheme and Central Government Health Scheme, private health insurance and its regulation, and the evolution of the RSBY and its various state clones as a social welfare measure for the BPL households and one step towards UHC. The author does conclude that health insurance may not be an appropriate option given the weak public healthcare system in India and the dominant for profit private health sector and hence it may not take us towards UHC. The author also cites the high-level expert group (HLEG) report that viewed the RSBY and other government-funded health insurance schemes as "incomplete solutions in that they provide some coverage for hospitalised secondary or tertiary care but neglect primary care and outpatient care which are the major contributors to out of pocket expenditure" (p 86). However, the author fails to appreciate the political economy of health insurance and how schemes like the RSBY become a

Karma, Akarma and Us

An exacting, serious exegesis, lucidly written, is lit up by references from modern life

Anjana Basu

BIBEK Debroy has translated the Bhagavad Gita and is well aware that most people have not read it thoroughly. Through the book he explains the text, dispelling myths along the way and taking the tone of a mentor—a tone which translates between the pages with the requisite personalisation.

He points out that the Gita is part of the Mahabharata and belongs to the smriti tradition of Sanskrit texts; a smriti text, he explains, is one that is handed down in writing and as a result may vary from generation to generation. Thus, nothing in the Bhagavad Gita is cast in stone.

Chapter by chapter, Debroy takes the reader on a voyage of exploration that includes Sanskrit grammar and the nuances of words and metre, covering the anustubh chhanda that became the seminal form of the shloka, though other variations also followed as poets found themselves requiring some creative liberty. He explains the shlokas that most people know, punctiliously setting them in their context and putting out that meanings can depend on whether the text is divorced from the main body of work or not. The one that recurs is the often quoted 'renounce the fruits of action', which is related to non attachment and according to the philosophy of the Gita, akarma can also be karma and vice versa.

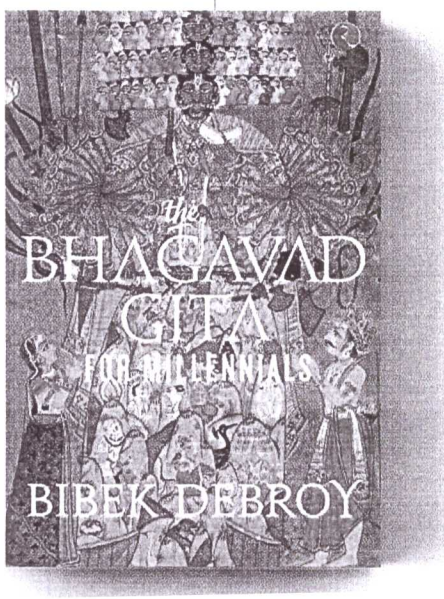
MENTIONING THE POWER OF THE BEING THAT 'SHINES LIKE A MILLION SUNS', DEBROY BRINGS IN OPPENHEIMER AND HIS ATOMIC APPLICATION OF THE QUOTE, UNDERSCORING HOW THE GITA HAS BEEN SELECTIVELY EXPLOITED.

Debroy does not rely solely on his own translation—he quotes from Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, making the point that the words chosen can make a difference to the meaning. For example the word used to connote fire in a particular shloka is 'pavak', that which purifies, rather than 'agni', that which burns. There is a subtler point—the Gita emphasises that the true atman is not possessive and 'I' and 'mine' are words expressive of 'ahankara' or ego and should be avoided in the pursuit of selflessness—Debroy is possibly demonstrating his lack of possessiveness where his translation is concerned.

The relevance of different shlokas is illustrated by allegories from modern life. The shloka on identity is amplified by references to Aadhar Cards and all those proofs that we rely on, whereas in actuality true identity does not depend on externals like relatives or possessions.

The book explores proofs of Krishna's historicity and reveals that there are many Gitas with differing messages and several generations of Ved Vyasas. It also puts agnosticism and atheism into their contexts with relevant quotations from the philosophers who coined the words—Debroy wanders from source to source to illustrate his message with an emphasis on what might appeal to millennials. Other interesting inclusions where current relevance is concerned are a study of the castes which went beyond the four main ones to cover varnas like hunters and gatherers. Then there is the fact that non-vegetarian food is allowed from the meat of a sacrifice—something currently overlooked in the myth of Vedic food purity.

Bibek Debroy
THE BHAGAVAD GITA FOR MILLENNIALS | Rupa Publications | 224 pages | Rs 500



The Bhagvad Gita for Millennials is a mythbuster for all those who profess to know what the Gita says, but have merely digested a convenient précis of the text or come to it via media. Should you believe what you see? Debroy asks at one point. Even the sky is not really blue but a scattering of colours.

The chapters journey through the various aspects of life, ending with the indestructible atman and the power of the being that 'shines like a million suns'—here Debroy brings in Oppenheimer and his atomic application of the quote, underscoring the fact that the Bhagavad Gita has been selectively exploited by many people for many reasons.

Debroy's style is easy and he addresses his reader, suggesting that a story be read again for better understanding or bringing up a reference in an earlier chapter and asking if she remembers it. Comprehension takes time because this is one of those books that, like its source, is meant to be chewed over—especially since nothing is but what is not and that is the great maya of it.

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13/02/2021
Pg. 17

Conflicts in the pursuit of dharma

A commentary that enhances our understanding of the Ramayana

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It is commonly believed that while the Mahabharata is marked by various dilemmas that contest and complicate existing notions about dharma, the Ramayana, led by the great idealistic man, prescribes a specific code of conduct. Its characters mostly live a riddle-free life and, in the occasional event of self-doubts, quickly come to follow the defined code. Arshia Sattar questions this perception in her new book, *Maryada: Searching for Dharma in the Ramayana*, and demonstrates that the characters in the Valmiki Ramayana face multiple and conflicting choices in the pursuit of dharma at crucial junctures. In seven profound and creatively-titled essays — among them, *Ayodhya's wives, The Women Outside and Lakshamana Seeks the Limits* — Sattar peels back the various layers of the epic to establish that dilemmas are "the narrative spine of the story" and hence Valmiki's text "cannot provide us with a single template for right action".

Of all the books Sattar has written on the *Valmiki Ramayana*, a text with which she has been working for the last 35 years, this one is perhaps the most insightful. It examines the nature of *maryada*, the limits that influence the actions of characters and shapes the narrative. The first major challenge arrives with Rama's exile, and begins Sattar's enquiry: on what grounds can Dasharatha and Kaikeyi be held responsible for the exile? Dasharatha had to choose among his conflicting dharmas as a father, as a husband, and as a king. Not only had Dasharatha married Kaikeyi on the condition that her son would be king, he had also given her two boons. Kaikeyi's dharma as a mother lent some justification to her demand. The responsibility of both Kaikeyi and Dasharatha rests on the premise that they choose their individual dharma over their greater duty as king and queen.

At the heart of Sattar's endeavour is the profound distinction she makes between being right and being just, a distinction that recurs through the epic. One may be right without necessarily being just. Rama may be right in killing Shambuka because, as a king, he had to perform his duty but he was certainly not just. Almost every character of the epic undergoes this duel between two choices that they often find situated on opposite poles.

Rama is conscious of the injustice of which he becomes, both, a victim and a carrier. *Though he accepts his father's decree, he can clearly see the wrong that his father* has committed and can speak about the "disaster that has befallen me as a result of the king's infatuation". On his first night in exile, he tells Lakshmana, "Even an ignorant man would not renounce his son for the sake of a beautiful woman... He who abandons wealth and dharma and chases after pleasure shall soon destroy himself, like Dasharatha did."

The ideal of kshatriya dharma has now come to acquire an inviolable space in cultural memory but it is repeatedly contested in the Valmiki Ramayana. Rama is aware of the moral hurdles inherent in his pursuit as he describes kshatriya dharma as "fundamentally unrighteous". Both Sita and Laskshmana urge him to give up his kshatriya code on several occasions. Sattar insightfully terms Lakshmana as Rama's "alter ego" who "acts out the more troublesome aspects of another character's personality". It was perhaps in the pursuance of this trope that the younger brother, who strongly opposed Rama's idea of dharma, decides to kill himself by drowning in the river, perhaps to demonstrate that the "unmitigated righteousness" can lead to self-destruction.

The narrative gains more complications upon entering Dandakaranya. The forest's code is different from that of the city. The liminal zone offers a space where multiple dharmas can coexist. Sita advises Rama to follow the dharma of the forest but he cannot avoid evaluating the monkeys of Kishkindha and the rakshasas of Dandakaranya by the code he had learnt in the city. The idea of dharma gets further contested in Lanka. Many rakshasas recite vedas; Ravana is described in majestic terms. And if it's the innate nature of rakshasas to be cruel and wicked, one cannot perhaps call them *adharmic* for following their *svabhava*.

Maryada: Searching for Dharma in the Ramayana
Arshia Sattar
224pp, ₹499, HarperCollins

But Rama knows only one dharma, which takes precedence over others. Characters like Vibhishana and Sugriva will have to abandon their innate traits and aspire to the code Rama offers. Sattar wonderfully observes that Rama is the ideal man not because he *doesn't commit mistakes, but "because it is he against whom all others are judged".*

A great text is as much about its actuality, as its unfulfilled possibilities. After capturing the spirit of the epic in words that resonate for long: "Dharma is what Rama does"; Sattar also underlines that adherence to "a dharma rooted in truth rather than in social status and roles could have made Rama's choices very different."

Sattar is empathetic to the characters. She avoids moral judgment on their lapses and even when she examines the apparent conflict in their stance and the injustice it causes, her attempt is to understand them. This wise commentary that deeply enhances our understanding of the Ramayana should be an essential read for our times that insist on a monochromatic interpretation of the epic.

Let me end with what I believe is the most profound perspective Sattar offers. Hanuman, she argues, embodies the greatest philosophical challenge to the authority and ideal of Rama. Whereas Rama is always bound by a range of duties, Hanuman is the only character in the epic who doesn't have any conflicting familial or social obligations, and hence can subjectively choose his dharma without any constraint. Despite realising that kshatriya dharma "attracts the base, the cruel, the greedy and those inclined to be wicked", Rama cannot abandon it because he cannot avoid being the *maryada purushottam*. Lakshamana can at best confront Rama, but he has to follow the elder brother. On the other hand, Hanumana can choose his actions freely and aspire to be both righteous and just. A monkey who enters the tale of the great Ikshvakus midway goes on to become a standalone revered deity in subsequent eras. That perhaps speaks about the aspirations of the civilisation that the epic wanted to represent.

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Books

THE TRUTH MACHINE: Policing, Violence and Scientific Interrogations in India by Jinee Lokaneeta. The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2020.

ON 30 September 2020, a 19-year-old Dalit woman from Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district died in a hospital after being raped allegedly by four men from the Thakur caste. The case sparked outrage owing to the police's forced cremation of the victim's body, and its apathy and inaction. But it also rekindled a public conversation on narcoanalysis after a Special Investigation Team constituted by the state government proposed to conduct narcoanalysis on the victim's family. The proposal was criticized by legal experts – and senior advocate Prashant Bhushan referred to narcoanalysis as 'akin to torture'– but, perhaps instructively, met with approval from local Brahmin and Thakur communities who felt the 'truth tests' were needed to make the poor Dalit family tell the truth.

Jinee Lokaneeta's new book, *The Truth Machines: Policing, Violence, and Scientific Interrogations in India,* while questioning the adequacy of existing theoretical frameworks to understand police violence as a site of state power in liberal democracies explores this question – whether these truth extraction practices are plain torture or rather a 'techno-political' solution to replace physical torture.

A professor in political science and international relations at Drew University, Lokaneeta reviews the emergence of truth machines (three forensic science techniques – narco-analysis, brain scans and polygraph tests for police interrogation) and deftly sifts through the interplay of law, science and policing to analyse the frameworks under which the relationship between state power and legal violence can be understood.

The slim volume builds on her previous work, *Transnational Torture: Law, Violence, and State Power in the United States and India* (2011), which looked at the nature of violence and state power in liberal democracies.

Thoroughly researched and buttressed with extensive field work and interaction with police officials, forensic psychologists, medical professionals, lawyers, activists, The Truth Machines interrogates the motivations of state and semi-state actors (the book refers to forensic psychologists as semi-state actors and compares it to the police, the state actors) for the expansion of these techniques. It questions the adequacy of the Weberian conception of unitary state action and explains the idea of a contingent state to understand everyday practices and contingencies among state and semi-state actors and its importance in analysing the relationship between state power and police violence.

The book traces the journey of these truth machines in India from its first use in the 1960s to individual practitioners working with the police to now when they are featured in Ministry of Home Affairs reports and Central Bureau of Investigation's bulletins. Through interactions with police, forensic psychologists, academics, lawyers, amongst others, the book suggests varied motivations of different actors in the use of truth machines. Truth machines fit India's desire to modernize, based on science and experts. She also contextualizes the growth of these 'scientific' techniques with the expansion of civil liberty groups, human rights movements, the constitution of the National Human Rights Commission post the Emergency and therefore the need of liberal democracies to respond to this by 'managing' its own violence. Some of the other motivations attributed for the prevalence of these interrogative tech-

niques include the police's need to buy more time for interrogation. To these are added the vehement defence of the success of these techniques by select forensic psychologists and tech companies born perhaps out of commercial concerns and patents, and court's submission to technology as means of replacing physical torture which they have failed to curb.

One of the most fascinating aspect of Lokaneeta's book is the remarkable ethnography of the state forensic architecture – the revealing interaction with forensic psychologists, their claims that their practice humanizes interrogations, their relationship with the machines, the therapeutic and scientific role of practitioners, their attempt to distinguish themselves from the police and their practices, the underlying commercial interests and the recognition of the claims of accuracy of these techniques by the state. These layered and intimate descriptions provide an insight into the multitude of factors that play into determining the emergence and expansion of these truth machines. These insights reveal that state actions are not as intentional as theories on state and police claim.

While lucidly explaining the forensic architecture, its expansion and motivations, the book also highlights the scientific community's disavowment of these practices and the evidence of lack of scientific accuracy or reliability of these invasive and discredited truth extraction techniques. The 2010 Supreme Court's judgement in the *Selvi* case made the involuntary use of truth machines unconstitutional, but the book rightly critiques the court falling short by allowing 'voluntary' administered tests in accordance with Section 27 of the Indian Evidence Act.

It is disingenuous to imagine that the court is not aware of the ease and frequency of custodial coercion. In fact, narratives of inmates who had participated in these tests and were subjected to slaps, pliers and worse attest to the fact that mental and physical torture is a part of these invasive and regressive techniques. The book incisively posits that while these techniques claim to replace third-degree interrogation, their real intention is to prevent custodial deaths.

The Truth Machine rightly calls out this allure of technology and scientific methods to save the broken criminal justice system. I was reminded of another current judicial-governmental obsession: video conferencing. In the last couple of decades, there has been a growing and unquestioning appeal for the use of video conferencing in criminal proceedings with claims of it being cost-effective, convenient and safer mode for 'producing' inmates for court hearings. Its growing popularity with officialdom exists despite the serious challenges it poses to fair trial safeguards. Just like with these truth machines, there are different motivations for its growth from different quarters, and the brunt of the consequences of these technological advancements is to be borne by those in custody.

The book, through narratives from survivors, civil society reports and court judgements, explains the inability at best and complicity at worst of the judiciary and medical practitioners responsible for safeguarding rights and preventing torture. While insights from the engagement with lawyers have added value, perspectives on the opportunity and ability (or its lack) of defence lawyers to participate and intervene in these sites of police violence would have been important to understand. The role of a defence lawyer during police interrogation – even though it's a constitutional safeguard – has been often contested in practice and unpacking this denial (which could be due to lack of role clarity, lack of a mechanism or other factors) would have been a crucial insight.

An important aspect in the book is its reference to targeting by the police on the lines of religious identity. It describes the inhumane violence and indignity meted out in two high profile terrorism cases – the Mecca Masjid case and the Mumbai Blast case. These two cases etch a pattern of state violence of picking up Muslim men, subjecting them to torture, both physical as well as through the truth machines and on occasions simultaneously. However, limited engagement of the book with the systemic custodial, and everyday, violence that the state and the police inflict on people from scheduled castes, is a clear gap. Further, while it is encouraging to see such strong reliance on Indian scholarship for understanding police violence and use of truth machines, the book would have also benefited from greater reliance on anti-caste literature on police violence, especially given the disproportionate incarceration and higher susceptibility to everyday police violence of people from these communities.

This combination of thorough academic research, detailed engagement with academics and practitioners and rich ethnographic investigation of forensic infrastructure introduces us to the inner workings of another confessional site for interrogation and warns about the creation of newer confessional sites. It has also made us reflect that these sites of power and violence operate in queer ways and not necessarily through intentional state acts. How do these confessional sites hide or manage the violence? The book discusses the Foucauldian 'scaffolding of rule of law' which masks state violence through formal legality of procedural

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safeguards being met. So, the medical examination reports will have no mention of injury signs, the police records will indicate that the arrestee was produced before a magistrate within 24 hours as is mandated – on record no illegalities or violence has ever taken place.

Wahid Shaikh, the only person acquitted in the 2006 Mumbai Blast case, reminds us of the grim choices before the tortured: '*aapko police ka torture bardasht karna haih. Yaad rakhiye tees din ka torture ya tees saal ki qaid.*' (To survive police torture, you must remember: 'thirty days of torture or thirty years in prison'). By engaging with those who have felt these truth machines and the cruelty integral to their use, the author opens a pathway for officials, experts and civil society activists to open an informed conversation about uncritical acceptance of technological solutions to deeper problems of criminal justice – complicity, who is being targeted and the politics and prejudice that grounds it. Engagement with experience of violence can undermine the scaffolding and open up the dark spaces of secrecy which presently prevent accountability, remedy and recompense to its victims. But is anyone listening or will the truth always remain out there?

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CAPTURING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: The Case of the Right to Information Act in India

by Himanshu Jha. Oxford University Press, India, 2020.

WHAT was essentially a *privilege* of elected representatives to the legislatures in India became the *right* of every Indian citizen through the adoption of the *Right to Information Act* in 2005. This momentous shift towards an accountable government requires an in-depth examination of why and how it came about. Himanshu Jha's book views the adoption of RTI as a landmark of institutional change in the Indian state. He puzzles through the factors that allowed the Indian state to open itself up to public scrutiny when this would likely expose embedded vested interests. He poses two questions – What explains this institutional change? And how did it come about?

The author argues that the 'RTI Act was the culmination of an incremental, slow-moving process of ideas that emerged endogenously from within the state' while highlighting the importance of the state-society interaction through epistemic communities bound through ideational linkages on openness. He also shows that 'global norms had both demonstrative and operative influence on the ongoing institutional change in India.'

His work complements other prior studies which emphasized peoples' movements, the role of elite networks and civil society coalitions. A considerable amount of evidence provides a *layered* account of ideas emerging in the periphery of the state through the protests of opposition parties and a vigilant press. It also shows that the institutions within the state are not static but a considerable part of institutional change. Jha makes a significant contribution on how institutional changes came about in the developing world. Prior works have 'primarily engaged with the advanced economies of the West' and this 'contributes to the larger corpus of literature on institutional change.' Hitherto the focus has usually been on economic policy paradigms.

The book is well structured in five chapters wherein chapter one and chapter two provide a chronological account. In chapter one the author looks at developments within the state from Independence in 1947 till 1989 and chapter two from 1989 until 2005 when RTI was adopted. They reveal the churning within the state, especially within Parliament through debates, discussion and introduction of draft bills.

In chapter three, the author turns toward the judiciary and presents a comprehensive account of the jurisprudence around 'Article 19(1) which moved categorically towards citizens' (fundamental) rights and towards recognizing the right to know and to information as integral to the freedom of expression and speech.' While the existing literature highlights the landmark cases, Jha provides a compendious account of judicial verdicts which capture the jurisprudence 'from various vantage points, such as the press, national and sub-national politics, environmental issues, criminalization of politics, and probity in public life.'

Chapter four is the most substantial chapter wherein he traces the work of organizations and individuals who are also currently engaged with the promotion and protection of RTI. Here we find an exhaustive account of state-society interactions which he traces through the work of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) and the National Campaign of People's Right to Information (NCPRI). The grassroots work of MKSS is recounted in a nuanced way which shows how the movement evolved and grew in strength, to compel the state to commit to provide access to information.

In this chapter he also argues that the ideas about openness, transparency and accountability demanded

by grassroots movements resulted in a conflux of progressive elements from the press, bureaucracy, judiciary and academia resulting in an epistemic community which had the necessary expertise and knowledge to further the demand. This epistemic community managed to engage in forceful advocacy, deepening the discourse around openness and intervening in policy making by providing legal inputs. Throughout the book, several helpful tables encapsulate the findings of each chapter. Illustratively, a table (4.3) summarizes the policy recommendations pithily capturing the role of the epistemic community.

The final chapter shows how global norms of openness, transparency, and access to information had a demonstrative and operative impact on the indigenous process of institutional change. This makes a new contribution to the consolidating literature on the dynamics of norm diffusion through localization.

In situating state-society interaction, the author argues that, 'had the ideas within the state not moved favourably towards the norm of openness, the state would have dealt with the same social actors differently', but this claim of how the state would have dealt with the social actors differently, is not interrogated in the book. Could this have depended on which political party coalition was in power – the National Democratic Alliance which passed the Freedom of Information Act 2002, but did not implement it or the United Progressive Alliance which adopted the RTI Act 2005 with an explicit commencement date written into the law?

While the author argues that the RTI Act is distinct from other rights-based legislation like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005, the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 and the Right to Food Act 2013 and the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARR) 2013 as it 'does not represent policy continuity but rather a complete departure from the previous policy regime', he hasn't mustered adequate evidence to justify this claim of newness. The FRA and the LARR also have their origins in the colonial period and these legacy laws were severely contested in post-independent India, akin to the Official Secrets Act. The changes to the FRA and the LARR were in response to the pressure on the government by a multitude of progressive people's organizations and movements in India. Maybe if the author had compared how the other rights-based legislations were adopted then his argument of an endogenous institutional change would have been more robust.

The author makes a strong case that this institutional change is irreversible on two counts – 'that any government in power cannot withdraw this constitutionally granted legal right and a right that was non-existent prior to 2005 was systematically instituted with the promulgation of the RTI Act.' While this is what one hopes would be the case, the author's reliance on the *norm* of openness taking root and reaching a tipping point in 2005 begs the question – What happens if the ruling party adopts the norm of secrecy? To give an example, in 1993 the then Attorney General of the United States Janet Reno had issued a memo which directed officials to 'apply a presumption of disclosure' when implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), which was renounced by her successor John Ashcroft who went as far as to promise legal cover to agencies coming down on the side of non-disclosure. This is quite evident under the current administration in India, where despite the promise of *Quest for Transparency* by Prime Minister Modi, a slogan on the Prime Minister's website, the experience of RTI requesters is one of delays, evasion and even non-compliance.

Overall, the book is a very valuable addition to the growing corpus of works on transparency and accountability and a very good read. The author's diligence is clearly evident, and he provides a compelling narrative which will engage the reader's attention.

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THE TRANSFORMATIVE CONSTITUTION: A Radical Biography in Nine Acts by Gautam Bhatia. HarperCollins India, 2019.

The Transformative Constitution, released in 2019, has been a core topic of discussion amongst professionals as well as academics. It was also shortlisted for the Tata Literature Live! Book of the Year Award for Non-Fiction. Gautam Bhatia is perhaps best known to many of us in the legal field as the creator of the wildly successful and influential blog *Indian Constitutional Law and Philosophy*. Bhatia, an advocate practising at the Supreme Court of India has had a front row view of several cases of immense consequence. He is thus in a position to bring a unique practitioner's perspective to issues with a distinctive academic flair.

In The Transformative Constitution, Bhatia undertakes impressively extensive research in the fields

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BOOK REVIEW

Newton's Apple and Other Myths about Science, edited by Ronald L. Numbers and Kostas Kampourkis, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2015, 287 pp., $27.94 (hardcover), ISBN: 9780674967984.

This book contains 27 essays dealing with "myths" about scientists found in textbooks and other educational resources. The myths challenged in this book are false statements about scientific findings and the scientists responsible for them; and date from Greek antiquity to contemporary times. The essays are organized into three chronological sections and a set of four concluding essays: Medieval and Early Modern Science, Nineteenth Century, Twentieth Century, and Generalizations. Of the 30 essay authors (including the editors) 22 are historians of science while the others represent a science discipline. The essays were first presented at a conference held at Washington and Lee University (Lexington, VA) in 2014 on the topic of "myths in science education."

Several of the essays deal with myths involving well-known scientists such as Galileo (astronomy), Newton (gravity), Darwin (evolution), Pasteur (spontaneous generation), Mendel (genetics), and Pauling (molecular basis of disease), while others may be less easily recognized outside of the science community. Each essay begins with one or more quotations, often from standard textbooks in the discipline in question. These quotations serve as examples of myths found in K-12 and college science textbooks as well as in other sources. Each essay in the three chronological sections explains why the myth in question is false. The final section, titled "Generalizations," contains essays elaborating on important themes among the myths, namely: that religion has impeded the progress of science; that science is largely a solitary activity; that the scientific method accurately depicts what scientists do, and that a clear distinction exists between science and pseudoscience. These essays attempt to summarize, generalize, and comment on the broader implications that result from myths about scientists and their theories. This set of essays alone makes *Newton's Apple* a book worth reading.

The examples cited in this book range from relatively simple concepts, as in the famous myth that Columbus proved the earth is spherical, to more complex theories from physics and chemistry that require a fairly sophisticated level of scientific understanding to follow the argument. However, while all the essays contribute to the overall theme of the book, each stands as a complete and separate challenge to a scientific myth. This means it is possible for readers to select only those essays that seem to be most interesting to read and to bypass the others.

Several of the false claims involve the impact of a discovery on religion. A good example of this is the essay about Isaac Newton, which suggested the title of the book. The myth does not involve the apple that gave Isaac Newton the idea of gravity, a story told by Newton, himself. Rather, the myth is that Newton's discovery "eliminated God from the cosmos" (8). The author of this essay, along with several other essay writers, argues that scientific discoveries such as Newton's do not directly challenge religion. In Newton's case, he was a deeply religious individual who "dedicated his life to interpreting God's two great works, the Bible and the Book of Nature" (52). In short, Newton sought to understand how God's creations function, not to challenge the idea of God the creator.

Of special interest for geographers may be the essays on the myth that Columbus discovered the earth is a sphere, distinctions between Darwin and Wallace's theories on evolution, social Darwinism, and the debate over uniformitarianism and catastrophism in geology.

As someone who has authored K-12 geography textbooks, I found the essay on the famous case of English peppered moths to reveal an issue authors may wrestle with. The light colored moths developed darker coloration as industrial pollution caused bark on trees where they perched to turn dark gray (essay 21). The textbook quotation in question presents the standard interpretation, that natural selection led to a genetic change in the moths, but then goes on to state that the case for adaptation might not yet be closed (the myth). This seems to be an example of the sort of dilemma textbook authors may confront when dealing with potentially controversial topics. Does an author write "this is the standard scientific interpretation of the phenomenon in question" or does one leave some wiggle room to accommodate those who might not accept that interpretation? And, what might be the role of editors in these decisions?

Why should a geography teacher read this book? The short answer is that much of the content is marginal to the standard geography curriculum. However, the overall concept of the book and certain essays serve as potentially useful starting points for stimulating students to think critically. For example, one might use the example of Columbus and the spherical earth (essay 2) to explore some of the physical phenomena that led 15th century and earlier scientists and navigators to conclude that the earth was spherical. These include the observations that ships appear to "sink" out of sight from the hull upward as they sail away from land; that the earth's shadow during a lunar eclipse is curved; and that stars in the southern hemisphere appear higher in the sky as one moves southward. So, assuming that Columbus was aware of these clues that Earth is spherical, he might not have worried about falling off the edge of the earth, but his underestimate of the size of the earth and the distances involved in sailing around it very well might have been his undoing.

Likewise, the essay on the myth that science is a solitary activity (essay 25) can provide some interesting discussions oh how science is actually done. Unlike the fictional Dr. Frankenstein, modern science is rarely an individual

Science

enterprise, as a glance at any scientific journal (including geography) will demonstrate. Science is dependent on precedent or the groundwork others have done before us, and on collaboration with others. This might be a nice way to introduce students to the benefits of collaborative investigation.

As a Latin Americanist, I found the essay on the synthesis of urea (essay 7) to be quite interesting because this discovery led to the chemical synthesis of urea (CH_4N_2O), which contains nitrogen in a chemically active form that can be used to make products such as explosives and chemical fertilizers. Geographers with an interest in South America likely would connect this discovery to the decline of the guano industry in Peru, which had been a major supplier of organic fertilizers to Europe. This is a simple example of how a scientific discovery can have a far-reaching impact on geographic activities.

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Aditya Sarkar, *Trouble at the Mill: Factory Law and the Emergence of the Labour Question Late Nineteenth-Century Bombay*, Oxford University Press, 2018, 359 pp., ₹1,195.

DOI: 10.1177/0257643020971961

Over the last few decades, historians in India and outside have critiqued the framing assumptions of existing labour histories, reconstituting their temporal and spatial boundaries, opening up new frontiers of research. Writings on India moved from a focus on the formal to the informal, from the factory to the non-factory, from trade union politics to the everyday. If this shift since the 1990s marked a second moment for Indian labour history, Sarkar's finely crafted monograph marks a third: it returns to the factory, but from a radically different perspective. In raising fundamental issues concerning the relationship between law, state and capital through richly textured micro-histories, the book gestures towards new ways of doing labour history.

The first part of the book examines the conflicting pressures through which state policy emerged, arguing that any simple causal connections between the commercial interests of Manchester industrialists and the emergence of Factory Acts in India elides the entangled history of regulations. To begin with, manufacturing interests in Britain were concerned primarily with tariff reforms and the repeal of protective duties on British imports into India and not so much with factory reforms. The demand for factory laws in India as a way of protecting the textile industry in Britain from Indian competition, emerged more as a bargaining ploy in the negotiations over tariffs between the state, the British Indian administration, and Lancashire capitalists. The urgency of factory reform in India and the dangers of competition from Indian mills, Sarkar argues, were greatly exaggerated in a context when Lancashire industrialists felt besieged by militant working-class movements. Workers were told to direct their opposition against their 'real' enemy and oppose the Indian government's measures to protect the mill industry in India.

There is another level at which the book engages with the dialogue on factory reform. The arguments of reformers like Mary Carpenter, Sasipada Banerjee, Shahpurji Bengali and Lokhande came from perspectives quite different to those of official and business representatives. For Carpenter and Banerjee (in the 1870s), reform was part of a larger disciplinary project that included an emphasis on worker's education. The politics of radical reformers like Lokhande, associated with lower caste social movements in the 1890s, had a wider appeal among mill workers in Bombay.

The book tracks the ways in which the boundaries of regulation were demarcated, pointing to the unexpected turns that sometimes defied the intentions of framers. In principle, there were certain shared assumptions that underlined the making of factory laws in Britain and India. (a) In Britain, as in India, laws were limited to categories of workers considered 'unprotected' and 'vulnerable'—in other words, women and children. An extension of regulations to adult male labour was seen by lawmakers as a violation of the principles of free labour.

(b) Regulations concerning wages or those that formed part of the sphere of social reproduction were excluded from legislative enactments. But laws, as Sarkar demonstrates in rich detail, acquired a life of their own, thereby creating a 'horizon of expectations' among factory workers and demands for new claims and entitlements.

Through a nuanced interpretation of the proceedings of the factory commissions of 1875 and 1890, Sarkar underlines the contradictory implications of official policies. Though the report of the Factory Commission of 1875 affirmed the viewpoint of the Bombay millowners—resistant to regulations, it also undermined the idea that regulation could be decided as a 'compact between state and capital' (p. 96). Sarkar closely interrogates the process of the inquiry, examines how the questions were framed, and the answers they elicited. The mode of inquiry, he observes, put 'the mill owner on trial: the labourer, as it were, stands on witness' (p. 96). The 'disavowal' of legislation by its opponents, Sarkar notes, produced the ground on which future laws were built. The outcome of commissions of inquiry often went beyond official intentions: they produced knowledge which entered the public domain, undermining the image of a 'happy' and 'contented' factory worker projected in millowners' representations.

The incorporation of the workers' voice in the Factory Commissions of 1890 created an important precedent. Who represented the authentic voice of workers? This was a question raised by many contemporaries and an issue that historians still grapple with. A leading figure who mobilized witnesses for the Commission in Bombay was Lokhande, founder of the Millhands' Association (social reform society) and closely associated with Jotiba Phule and the non-Brahman movement in the region. Lokhande's credentials as a spokesperson for workers were questioned by his critics who saw him as an ally of British advocates of factory legislation in India. The 'meliorist' politics of Lokhande, Sarkar suggests, had an appeal at a time when a relatively stable model of industrial relations marked by an absence of open conflict was characteristic.

But Sarkar raises questions which further complicate the argument of 'representativeness'. Women like Sakoo (p. 253), testifying before the Commission, were anxious that any limitation on hours of work would reduce their earnings. These testimonies raise larger questions around issues of gender and the woman's voice. Women, tellingly, raise questions of social reproduction absent in Sarkar's narrative on reform. A letter to the *Times of India* by a woman named Sowthoo raises two substantive issues not addressed in the official proceedings of the Commission: (a) the question of women's agency and (b) the issue of the social reproduction of labour. Sowthoo was categorical: 'let there be no *Factory Act* (sic) till we want' (p. 115). In her view, any legislation must have the consent of women. Sowthoo also underlined the need for providing food, lodging and education for workers. Was this a perspective that appears only in women's narratives? In a work of such unusual depth and richness, one would have liked a more detailed exploration of such issues around gender.

Sarkar follows the operations of law through a micro study of small events in the life of the factory. Tragic events and accidents at work ruptured the seeming

consensus provided by laws exposing the limits and exclusions they created. Radhoo Saitoo, a worker, was crushed to death in a bone crushing machine in Bombay. The incident triggered off a public outrage. Advocates of legislation emphasized the need to make laws more inclusive and bring establishments employing fewer than 100 workers within the purview of legislation. There was also a wider debate in local newspapers about fixing guilt and making employers liable for factory accidents. With the passing of the Factory Acts, the 'child' worker became an entity regulated by law. The age of the child had now to be certified by inspectors. But the uproar around corrupt doctors like Partridge and Hunter who charged a fee for issuing certificates point to the anomalies of a law that could become operative only through various illegal practices. The scandals around factory inspection in Sarkar's account bring out the subtle ways in which the meanings of law were reconstituted by those administering them. The processes through which formal regulations were introduced in nineteenth-century Bombay concealed within them a range of informal practices. This resonates powerfully with the working of laws in the contemporary Indian context.

The final chapter marks a climactic moment of *Trouble at the Mill*. Catastrophic events around the plague epidemic of 1896–1897, set off a chain of connected actions which are recounted in dramatic detail. Mass deaths and flight of workers created a virtual labour famine in the city. The exodus of carters, porters, dockers, sanitary workers paralyzed life in the city. The collapse of credit networks and the desertion of the city by moneylenders deepened the crisis. There were desperate bids to recruit labour on the streets. Agents at mill gates calling out: 'ready cash paid daily in this mill; come as many as want eight annas a day' (p. 294). These events left a deeper imprint by 'snapping' the ties that defined relations between employers and workers. The plague years, Sarkar emphasizes, marked a crucial turning point with the bargaining powers of workers reaching unprecedented levels. The picture of the pre-war years drawn in the book in many ways runs counter to a dominant strand of argument reflected in the writings of Chandavarkar and others who see the 'real story' of labour beginning in the post-First World War years.

Finally, I would like to underline two takeaways from *Trouble at the Mill* that are of profound methodological and conceptual significance. (a) The narrative developed through the book demonstrates the limits of simple, reductive connections between law, state, capital and labour. It shows the possibility of conceptual frames that can bring together perspectives drawn from the critical legal theory tradition and from Thompsonian notions of rule of law. The operation of factory laws often produced 'immunities' for workers in ways that were quite contrary to the intentions of lawmakers. Despite their limitations, laws also created a basis for the articulation of worker voices and the emergence of the labour question in the public domain. (b) The book very effectively deploys a narrative strategy in which seemingly small events become a window into relationships within the factory and outside. An accidental death in the factory, plague, mass mortality and panic in the city, rupture and set off a chain of actions which have a transformative impact on life and labour. Industrial relations which hinged on a separation between the realm of production and social

reproduction of labour were unsettled. Employers in Bombay had to confront questions of social reproduction and the urgency of the wage crisis in the aftermath of the plague. If dramatic events provide a trigger for change in Sarkar's story, a question which one may raise is about the place of the non-dramatic events in the lives of mill workers. Can one also look for agency and change in the day-to-day encounters—a kind of 'lateral agency'—which emerges not through critical events but in the ordinariness of the everyday?

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Nationalism: One or Many

Vikas Pathak, *Contesting Nationalisms: Hinduism, Secularism and Untouchability in Colonial Punjab, 1880–1930*, Primus Books, Delhi, 2018, xvi + 266 pp., ₹1,495.

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Many conceptual and empirical studies of the phenomenon of nationalism can be generally aligned along a spectrum with one end occupied by the monists and the other by pluralists. The monist way of identifying nationalism tends to be exclusive and often leaves out many nationalist experiences from its fold. It bases the concept on very limited data and thus deprives the concept of nationalism of a potential flexibility and diversity. At the other end of the spectrum are the pluralists with their unselectively inclusive understandings, which treat all the neighbouring phenomena and distant cousins as more or less different versions of nationalism. Both the approaches have their pitfalls. The first approach practises a kind of conceptual determinism which loses its explanatory potential by failing to address and encapsulate multiple experiences of nationalism. The second approach practises a kind of conceptual anarchy which too loses its explanatory worth by failing to distinguish between different kinds of experiences. If, for instance, nationalism is defined in such a loose and inclusive manner that it also brings the opposite meaning within the same conceptual orbit, it would lead to more confusion than clarity.

The book under review, to its credit, refrains from the two extremes. Balancing between conceptual determinism and conceptual anarchy, it occupies the space somewhere in between. The book has an empirical and a conceptual dimension. The two are fully connected. At a conceptual level, it deals with the different visions and orientations of nationalism that developed during the colonial period and competed with one another. At the empirical level, the book focuses on Punjab as a case study where it discusses the major political developments in the state during the twentieth century.

The central theme of the book is that Indian nationalism needs to be conceptualized through a heterogeneity of four different visions (p. 2). 'These visions

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Book Review

Monika Saxena, *Women and the Puranic Tradition in India*, Routledge, Delhi, 2019, 306 pages, Rs 1495

The book under review has brought to light the crucial role played by Puranas in shaping the identity of women in Indian History. With a detailed analysis of *Vratas* (fasts), rituals and other customary practices, the author has successfully drawn attention to the processes involved in the making of the identity of women in the background of dominant patriarchy prevalent in the pre-modern Indian Pasts. The foreword by Upinder Singh summarises the significance of sources in the reconstruction of the Past and the significance of Puranas as sources of Indian History for the different periods. Divided into four chapters supported by an appendix, the author has lucidly uncovered the many identities of women. The book widens its scope by including a good discussion on western thought and Puranic themes. Sometime ago, Vijay Nath had highlighted the role of Puranas in the process of acculturation in the Indian subcontinent from the Gupta period onwards and the present work by Monika Saxena brings to light another dimension of Puranic Studies and the way it enriches the studies on gender, identity and patriarchy besides the society in general.

The five Puranas chosen for discussion – the Vishnu, Markandeya, Matsya, Agni and Bhagavata – represent women in their different roles. The survey of primary sources and their categorisation into early and later traditions has added to the relevance of the present work as it allows for a serious engagement with Puranic traditions and the social structure they represented and impacted over several generations. The serious discourse between the Puranic and Dharmasastric traditions has also been dealt with, introducing the general reader to the richness of literary sources as well as their distinct 'personalities'. Works like this are certainly going to inspire more serious studies based on sources often regarded as 'fossilised over a period of time'. Richness of primary sources are further enhanced by the fact that Saxena does not treat women as a homogeneous category and presents the Puranas as responses to contemporary social challenges.

Divided into four chapters, with a fitting introduction and a conclusion as 'some parting thoughts', this book covers the story of change and continuity during the period CE 300–1000. The introduction talks of

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their stereotyping. The first chapter discusses the shaping of the Puranic narrative and gender. This chapter talks of the role played by the Puranas in the propagation of religious ideas. In this complex process, Puranas played a very significant role in acculturation and accommodation of marginalised groups. This integration was certainly not devoid of contestation. The second chapter looks into the issues of identity of women and the Puranic definition of patriarchy. This chapter talks of the several forms of marriages and the stereotyping of the ideal woman. It also engages the reader by bringing to light the contradictions in the Puranic traditions. The author has brought to light the contrasts in the Puranic traditions and makes one realise that the 'Puranas are not identical' to each other. These diversities of Puranic opinions certainly emerge out of the 'diversities' of situations flourishing in different parts of the subcontinent which were being gradually integrated.

The third chapter makes very interesting reading as it talks of women 'outside' the family structure. Interestingly these are neither free nor bound and the answer lies in the complex social structure of the pre-modern world. Frequent quotations from the original sources has made the book quite authentic and engaging. The *Kali Yuga* references and regional differences in social practices have interacted and negotiated with the Brahmanical orthodoxy at several stages. The fourth chapter introduces the readers to the relationship between *Vrata*s (fasts), vows, rituals and the social hierarchy gleaned from the Puranas. Gift-making and patronage issues have occupied scholarly attention for the past several decades. Along with the legitimation issues involved , some ritual-cultural practices played a larger role in shaping the identity of women. *Vrata*s, vows, fasts, etc. helped in strengthening the Brahmanical patriarchy and at times act as regulatory agencies through the purificatory powers they claimed to possess. The Puranas no doubt, confirmed these 'powers'. There were different rituals prescribed for women of different classes, age and position. The author herself writes that 'the *vratas* ingeniously denied women their individuality through elaborately designed rituals, and in the final analysis, exerted control over their sexuality and procreative potential.'

The conclusion styled as 'some parting thoughts' brings out the summary of the doctoral research of the author. The hypothesis is established and even the gaps in Puranic narratives are looked into, to explore the possibilities of any 'flexibility' in the society. The emergence the of Puranas as a distinct and influential genre of literature was a result of the active interaction between Brahmanism and local traditions. The Appendix discusses in detail the scholarly efforts in establishing Purana based studies. Starting with V. Kennedy, H.H. Wilson and E. Burnouf, Saxena incorporates recent works and micro-studies as well. The work is certainly a good read and brings out the complexities and inter-connectedness of the Puranas.

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Scholars might question the sole reliance on literary sources and a corroboration of the Puranic descriptions with the inscriptional data would have helped one understand and appreciate 'change and continuity' during the period 300 to 1000 CE. If the author would have tried to compare and contrast the descriptions from Puranas with that of the inscriptions and land grants of the same period (300–1000 CE), the work would have become more engaging and would have raised many interesting questions and provided explanations regarding the distinct nature of society and ideology during the period. A comparison of the description of *Kali Yuga* in Puranas with that of the land grant inscriptions would have brought to light the changes in economic, social and political structure during this period. The epigraphic descriptions and the Puranic ideas, at times do not go hand in hand and a chapter or some discussion on the relation between the epigraphic style and Puranic descriptions would have added to the value of the work. Still, this work is going to have a positive impact on the future studies of Puranas and gender studies.

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Shalin Jain, *Identity, Community and State: The Jains under the Mughals*, Primus, Delhi, 2017, pages 402 pages, Rs 1095.

Shalin Jain's *Identity, Community and State: The Jains under the Mughals* is a welcome addition to recent scholarship which has studied the Mughal State through understanding and contextualising its relationship with its participants. The study examines the trajectories of Jain community formation by analysing the ideological underpinnings of political processes by investigating economic considerations as well as social and cultural factors. Unlike earlier studies about the Jains, this book coalesces information from a variety of sources to understand not only the variegated nature of Jain identity and community, but also the complexities involved in their relations with the Mughal State, as well as the processes which essentialised this interaction. The study of this community is therefore taken to reflect the subtleties of the making of Mughal India and its 'pluralistic' society.

The first introductory chapter interrogates the categories of identity and community, and tackles how the Jain community has been historicised in recent scholarship. It includes an extensive review of the source material, including the Jain Vigyaptipatras. The second chapter looks at the formation of the Jain community and its organisation, and the third studies the social organisation that developed, catalysed by the caste mobility of the earlier

times. Crucial to the author's view is the internal stratification within the wider Jain community, and its role as a vital force in ideological societal formations. He brings out the different types of schisms as well as sectarian differences within the Jain community by describing the practices, beliefs, rituals and hierarchies of different groups in minute detail to show how the intra-sangha identity was often based on the adaptation or rejection of certain rituals that were prescribed in the texts. This includes examining terminologies and how they evolved, particularly how occupational groups were named, and also looks at the etic overlap between Hindu and Jain vaishyas. The fourth chapter is concerned with the demographic presence of the Jains as an urban social group, particularly the strategies and behavioural patterns of the merchant leadership, and the spread of the Jain social network in terms of both settlement and movement, as well as the construction of a public image. The complex relationship between the morally-bound piety and the wealthy laity is brought to the fore.

The next two sections of the book are concerned with tracing the attitudes of individual Mughal rulers towards the Jain community. The author disaggregates the variable factors, personal leanings, economic considerations, and political angles that went into the workings of these relationships, and which often resulted in the Mughal emperor legitimating ritual performances or intervening in sectarian disputes of the Jain community. The author demonstrates how, on the one hand, the monarchy had an acute eagerness for social engagement or negotiation with such communities, with the Mughal State constantly modifying their network of clients in order to establish a balance of power, and on the other, how this led to a diversification of attitudes, ideas, and identities within the Jain community as the attitude slowly shifted from spiritualism to materialism, and merchants came to dominate Jain sanghas.

The seventh chapter comprises the community's engagement with performative ritual actions, such as pilgrimages and festivals. Ritual markers are taken to redefine the community and its identity on a day-to-day basis. Through rituals, a vast and disparate body of individuals could be incorporated into the Jain community. Next, the author evaluates the perception of self and other in a variety of literary sources to examine the notions of identity within the Jain community, as well as by others about them to unpack the various kinds of relationships that the members of the community were involved in. Lastly, the appendices include relevant reproductions of Persian farmans, a Jain inscription, and a khatpatra.

The primary source material is skilfully handled. The author is self-reflexive about his personal engagement with the literature and sensitive to individual perspectives in space and time. This has resulted in a vibrant and textured history, built with multiple voices in which diverse sources are used to not only buttress but also complicate and challenge each other's narratives. Essentially, the author studies how a decentred community,

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without any central leadership, could still perform as a coherent religious group within the Mughal State. The social identity of the members of the community consisted of far more than their religious identity, and this plurality of social forms has been incorporated while studying their interaction with the Mughal State as well. A degree of 'public posturing' was necessary in order to gain moral legitimacy on the part of both the State and the merchant.

Both the substance and style of this work are a breath of fresh air in a field that often gets stuck in the essentialised view of religions or literary cultures. Empirical rigour is augmented by a transparent and flowing narrative, and complex ideas are communicated without recourse to opaque language. The critique may be levelled that the Mughal State itself appears to be monolithic and the perspective may be seen as elite, as the interactions portrayed are limited to religious personalities and merchants on the one hand and State authorities on the other; however, this is a limitation of the source material itself, rather than the study, in which the community has been viewed at differential levels. The author brings out the many forms in which an identity can manifest under one marker and has alluringly traced a paradigm shift from a spiritual relationship to the materialistic transactions between the Jain community and the Mughal State, and demonstrated how this affected the nature of narration of the source material as well. This work therefore also speaks of the dialectical relationship between social praxis and prescriptive action. The author has studied 'the formal expression of ideas as contained in the scriptures and the empirical practices of the Jain merchants' and demonstrated how this is brought to bear in a 'public posturing of morality' (p. 173), with mutual change being seen as having been brought about through conversational moments.

By putting the sacred and the profane, the secular and the spiritual, the ideological and the economic into conversation with each other, Shalin Jain has produced a layered and nuanced study of this community. Internal stratification within the wider umbrella is indeed a vital force in ideological societal formations, and this study shows the advantages of viewing community as a relational concept, in which identities are seen as having many layers, formed through interaction with the other.

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Studies in History, Vol. 36, No. 2, August 2020

reproduction of labour were unsettled. Employers in Bombay had to confront questions of social reproduction and the urgency of the wage crisis in the aftermath of the plague. If dramatic events provide a trigger for change in Sarkar's story, a question which one may raise is about the place of the non-dramatic events in the lives of mill workers. Can one also look for agency and change in the day-to-day encounters—a kind of 'lateral agency'—which emerges not through critical events but in the ordinariness of the everyday?

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Nationalism: One or Many

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Many conceptual and empirical studies of the phenomenon of nationalism can be generally aligned along a spectrum with one end occupied by the monists and the other by pluralists. The monist way of identifying nationalism tends to be exclusive and often leaves out many nationalist experiences from its fold. It bases the concept on very limited data and thus deprives the concept of nationalism of a potential flexibility and diversity. At the other end of the spectrum are the pluralists with their unselectively inclusive understandings, which treat all the neighbouring phenomena and distant cousins as more or less different versions of nationalism. Both the approaches have their pitfalls. The first approach practises a kind of conceptual determinism which loses its explanatory potential by failing to address and encapsulate multiple experiences of nationalism. The second approach practises a kind of conceptual anarchy which too loses its explanatory worth by failing to distinguish between different kinds of experiences. If, for instance, nationalism is defined in such a loose and inclusive manner that it also brings the opposite meaning within the same conceptual orbit, it would lead to more confusion than clarity.

The book under review, to its credit, refrains from the two extremes. Balancing between conceptual determinism and conceptual anarchy, it occupies the space somewhere in between. The book has an empirical and a conceptual dimension. The two are fully connected. At a conceptual level, it deals with the different visions and orientations of nationalism that developed during the colonial period and competed with one another. At the empirical level, the book focuses on Punjab as a case study where it discusses the major political developments in the state during the twentieth century.

The central theme of the book is that Indian nationalism needs to be conceptualized through a heterogeneity of four different visions (p. 2). 'These visions

present themselves not as watertight compartments, but as fluid entities engaged in constant dialogue with one another for appropriating the nationalist space in favour of their respective brands of nationalism' (p. 2). The first of these four visions is that of 'composite nationalism', in which the nation was seen as a federation of different religious communities. Religious communities were not to be fused but accorded their due place within the large national community. This vision obviously did not see any contradiction or incompatibility between the religious communities and *the* national community. Since the book focuses on Punjab, Lajpat Rai is portrayed as the most representative candidate for this vision.

Second is the vision of a 'secular' nationalism, free from religious symbols, which saw the two communities, religious and national, as mutually exclusive. Following the Discourse of the Enlightenment, this vision made the dissolution of the religious communities as a necessary pre-condition for full participation in the national community. Jawaharlal Nehru provided the most explicit articulation of this vision. Bhagat Singh and the communists too shared the basic digits of this vision of Indian nationalism.

Then there was what the book calls 'religious nationalism'. In the historiography of modern India, this has been generally referred to as communalism. This vision did not make the distinction between the two communities and treated the religious community as a potential national community. All the yardsticks of a nation were seen as present in the religious community. Punjab experienced all the three kinds of religious nationalisms—Muslim, Hindu and Sikh. But the book has picked up only Hindu nationalism, perhaps because of the pervasiveness of this vision in contemporary times. The one sense in which the Hindu nationalism was different from its composite counterpart was in its attitude towards India's diversity. The Hindu nationalism was not entirely contemptuous of India's diversity. But it looked upon all diversity as derivative and emanating from Hindu origins. Indic derivatives (Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism) were welcomed; non-Indic derivatives (Islam and Christianity) were not.

The fourth vision was that of a Dalit nation which was sufficiently distinct from the composite, secular and religious nationalisms. All the four visions had different 'others'—colonial state for the composite and the secular, Muslim for the Hindu nationalism, and upper caste Hindus for the Dalit nationalism. The question is: Is that enough? Is merely the presence of an 'other' enough of a justification for constituting Dalit politics into a nationalist one? As the book has mentioned at some place, not every communal or community demand can be treated as an expression of nationalism. It is the insistence on a separate, representative, sovereign state that transforms a community politics into a nationalist politics. It was precisely in this sense that the politics of Muslim League after 1937 (and more specifically after 1940) came to be termed as an alternative nationalist politics. Going by this yardstick, is there enough empirical rationale for the use of the category of Dalit nationalism? This is an important question the book ought to have taken up.

If the inclusion of the Dalit politics within the conceptual orbit of nationalism defies some logic, the exclusion of Muslim nationalism is even more surprising.

By not discussing Muslim nationalism, the book has missed out on an opportunity of finding out the nature of the encounters that developed *within* the orbit of religious nationalism. Since one of the concerns of the book is to highlight the nature of dialogue across different visions of nationalism, it would have been useful to spell out the nature of encounters *within*. Although the book has admitted this silence (p. x), it has deprived itself of an important area of enquiry.

The book, to its credit, treats all the mentioned visions of nationalisms, not simply as structures but also as processes and trajectories. This approach, of seeing them as dynamic trajectories, has a number of advantages. We can then see the linkages or the gradual coming together of the 'composite' and the 'secular' trajectories. Nehru may have been very 'secular' in the 1920s but had moved closer to the composite vision in his *Discovery of India*. After 1947, the dominant orientation of Indian nationalism was both composite and secular. The linkages between the two and their coming closer to each other can be understood and explained much better if these visions are seen as growing and evolving, and not as autonomous and isolated structures. It has to be said that the book is somewhat ambivalent in its treatment of the secular and the composite. It oscillates between emphasizing their continuities, yet insists on treating them as separate domains or visions.

At the conceptual level, it is necessary to make a distinction between a 'separatist community claim' and a 'separatist nationalist claim'. One may be included in the other, but one is not exhausted by the other. The two need not be congruent or coterminous. Not all separatist community claims are necessarily nationalist. A nationalist claim can often live with, or accommodate, multiple separate community claims. For this reason, we need a crisper and tighter (and less ambiguous) definition of nationalism. Only then we can conceptually separate nationalism from superficially resembling non-nationalisms. Certain 'surface nations' may turn out to be non-nations deeper down after careful examination and scrutiny.

This is an important book for many reasons. It introduces a kind of conceptual flexibility in the study of nationalism without going over to conceptual anarchy. It sees nationalism as a dynamic political process and not simply as a structure. This has enabled the book to retain the focus on the multiple reconfigurations *within* the world of nationalism. All the conceptual categories emanate from the empirical narrative. As a result, concepts emerge not as abstract entities but as dynamic and live political processes. And finally, the book has a contemporary relevance and resonance. By recognizing the possibility of conceptual mutation, the book is able to link up the political developments of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Punjab with the politics of today, though not in a simple and mechanical way.

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Words For Now and Later

An encyclopaedia of concepts, ideas and idioms through which we express our Indian experience

Pramod K. Nayar

NAIR and deSouza's *Keywords* is a book whose time has come, to employ a cliché-metaphor in keeping with the book's foundational emphasis on language in practice. A 'keyword', says the introduction, is an "encapsulated and enduring thought, part of an architecture of concepts that cultures tend stubbornly to uphold". Arguing that new keywords are added even as older ones remain embedded in communication, this 'conceptual lexicon' brings together the local and the cosmopolitan in an innovative effort at polyphony and the plural histories of ideas.

Organised under seven categories—classical heritages, contemporary aesthetic modes, economic mantras, intimacies, emancipatory imaginaries, language and self-reflection and politics and the political—*Keywords* is an encyclopaedia of concepts, ideas, idioms and lexias that constitute our current languages of the sayable and the unsayable. The volume is at once a dictionary and a heuristic.

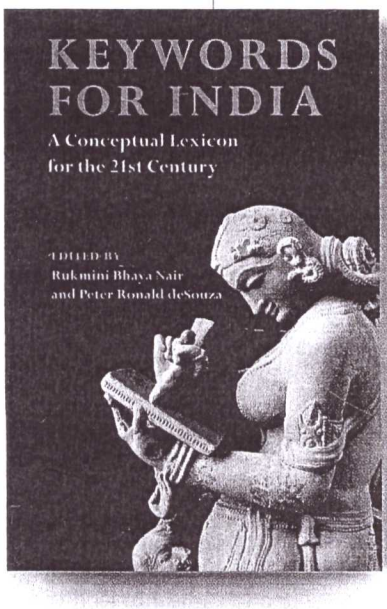
It begins with the classical inheritances of the aesthetic, social and political domains, giving us 'caste', 'Haj', 'maya', 'dhyana', 'zero' on the one hand and *frames* of interpretation such as 'colonialism' and 'orientalism' on the other. Nested under 'contemporary aesthetic modes' we find 'Bollywood' and 'saree', 'yoga' and 'selfie'. 'Digital India', 'NREGA', 'outsourcing' and 'refugee' go under economic mantras, media and technological change. Summarising the languages of emancipation and social reform means documenting 'modernity', 'Nehruvian', 'Ambedkarite', 'swaraj' and 'vote bank'. A section on language in a book on the languages of culture could not have been easy: but the volume pulls it off with 'English', 'settled', 'shruti' and 'smriti', 'bhasha' and 'time-pass'. 'Thana', 'IAS/IFS', 'AFSPA', 'Partition' and 'secular' bring up the political segment.

Keywords, echoing the effort by Raymond Williams, seeks to capture continuity and change, stability and fissures in the many ways of speaking of India, in the past, present, and in the future. Challenging to define and encapsulate in a short 'entry', ideas and usages like 'jugaad' or 'yoga' are not documented 'aise hi' (to employ a phrase in keeping with the book), but debated and unpacked for the contradictions within the cultural semantics of the term.

IDEAS AND EVERYDAY USAGES LIKE JUGAAD OR YOGA ARE NOT DOCUMENTED 'AISE HI' BUT DEBATED AND UNPACKED FOR THE CONTRADICTIONS AND TENSIONS WITHIN THE CULTURAL SEMANTICS OF THE TERM

The terms have been carefully chosen, balancing the vocabularies of more formal/academic discourse and the popular. The writers, who range from academics to activists, bureaucrats to artists, have tried to offer what can only be thought of as multiple inflected meanings. They capture the historical origins and dimensions of a term (for example, jatra or sati/jauhar or 'border') even as they allow us to see the possibilities for reconfiguring, depending on our needs, the scope of a word from the useable past. If, for example, 'border' has a specific geopolitical meaning, Yogesh Snehi's entry concludes with a paragraph, seamlessly sliding into a larger argument about the environment, on the irrelevance of the word-idea for elements like water and air. Similarly, the entry by Imtiaz Hasnain and Mahmood Ali Beg on 'amir-gharib' concludes by noting how the response to demonetisation may well be driven by "the delusion that it is the amir, the Other, who is now the immediate victim". Elsewhere, a word-concept such as the Kannada *sogadu*, which moves from an agricultural origin to describe heterogeneity and resistance to classifications, Manu Chakravarthy argues, is used to "open up questions that resist notions of 'purity' of caste, religion, linguistic expressions, food habits, music, dance, and other artistic expressions".

Edited by Rukmini Bhaya Nair and Peter Ronald deSouza
KEYWORDS FOR INDIA: A Conceptual Lexicon for the 21st Century | Bloomsbury | 467 pages | Rs 5,594



The politics of words in any domain, including the words in politics, which most of the entries pay attention to, is not about accreted meaning alone. Words and concepts carry within them not only the detritus of awkward cultural histories but also a potential for transformative thinking. The entries are alert to a philology of ideas and idioms that have informed socio-cultural imaginaries in India. By signposting the evolution, they indicate what might be said and how when speaking of India. To rework a word is to redo an imagining of a country and its futures. One discovers that *Keywords* maps the lexical-conceptual climate under which we (will) lead our lives.

Indus Valley and Old Tamil traditions

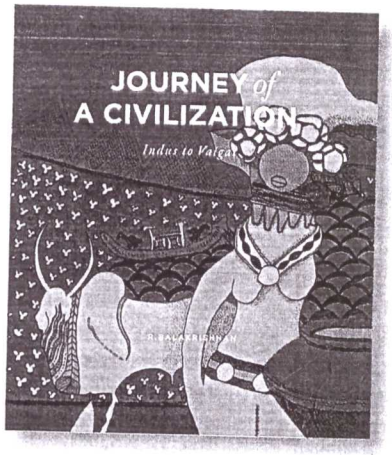
The book holds a treasure trove of surprises relating to the Indus Valley Civilisation and Tamil literature and seeks to establish common ground.

BY **T. UDHAYACHANDRAN**

INTELLECTUALS across the globe face a unique challenge today. Amidst the prevailing pandemic situation, they need to fight the gloom, triggered by unsubstantiated beliefs and stereotypes, simmering in the minds of various social groups. Unfortunately, a few time-tested and glorified phrases such as promotion of scientific temper and constructive criticism based on sound logic are slowly getting drowned out in the high-decibel levels of extreme views expressed in some quarters.

Given this situation, the role played by historians and archaeologists assumes significance. Armed with unassailable evidence, they have the historical duty to guide people on the right path to promote universal brotherhood and enable everyone to appreciate the pluralist nature of global society.

Two monumental works, *Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From* (2018) by Tony Joseph and *Journey of a Civilization: Indus to Vaigai* (2019) by R. Balakrishnan, hit the stands within the span of a month. The former uses genetic studies to base its arguments on migrations and how they created the culture of the subcontinent. Balakrishnan's book opens a treasure trove of surprises relating to the Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) and Tamil literature.



Journey of a Civilization
Indus to Vaigai
By R. Balakrishnan
Roja Muthiah Research Library, Chennai, 2019
Pages: 534

Journey of a Civilization seeks to establish common ground and connect the threads that link the riddles of Indology, namely authorship and language of the IVC and the origins of the Dravidian language speaking people in general and Old Tamil traditions in particular. Balakrishnan seeks to answer two major riddles in Indian history: where did the people of the IVC move during its decline?; what is the origin of Sangam literature and the people who wrote it? Sangam literature talks about strong copper-like forts, a rich and diverse landscape, and has carried forward memories of directional winds, the Himalaya, a bone-eating camel, a lion fighting an elephant, and so on. The author supplements this with numerous pieces of evidence such as place names, visual motifs, DNA analysis, prominent patterns of locations and structure of cities.

The book is organised into 17 chapters under three major categories, namely, fundamentals of DNA, migrations, place name theories and Dravidian hypothesis. The second establishes the Dravidian proof through the pot route, literature connections and current geographical information, and the third one is through case studies. The author brilliantly uses information from the documentation of the Nagarathar and Kongu Vellalar communities.

Sangam literature is more than just love and war poems. It is an encyclopaedia and a fountainhead of knowledge depicting both the material and the philosophical dimensions of Tamil culture. The Tamil language and the lexical encoding of words and their meaning seemingly offer extensive scope to understand the civilisational growth Sangam literature has attained. Balakrishnan juxtaposes these encodings with place names, the ideas expressed in Sangam literature with archaeological finds. The archaeological excavation at Keeladi on the banks of the Vaigai and the Adhichannallur excavation on the banks of the Tamiraparani are preg-

K.V. SRINIVASAN

POTS EXCAVATED from Adichanallur displayed at the Archaeological Survey of India in Chennai. The Keeladi excavation on the banks of the Vaigai and the Adhichannallur excavation on the banks of the Tamiraparani are pregnant with stories that will unravel in the days to come.

nant with stories that will unravel in the days to come. Balakrishnan excavates literature to find parallels between the cultures described in them and the IVC.

Sangam literature, which talks about *cemmai* (brilliant, perfect, great), *cenkal* (red brick) and *ceyon* (red God), echoes in the landscapes of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. That is why Balakrishnan pronounces, *Sinthuveli vitta idamum Sanga ilakkiyam thotta idamum* (where Indus ends and Sangam takes off). The IVC geography is far from the current Tamil geography. How does one make sense of the connections between these two locations, especially when separated by distance and time? Balakrishnan's proficiency in Tamil has come in handy and helped him do meticulous and methodical research to provide brilliant insights into an uncharted territory.

One of the most convincing arguments and theses he provides in order to show that the IVC was indeed Dravidian is by establishing the patterns in all the cities or IVC posts, such as Lothal, Kalibangan, Harappa and Mohenjodaro. In these places the established practice was to locate the elites in the western quarters on a higher location, while the common people lived in the eastern quarters lower to that of the western quarters. He calls it the High-West: Low-East paradigm, which is unique to Dravidian language-speaking cultures.

FROM INDUS TO ADICHANALLUR

Balakrishnan traces the pot route from the Indus region to Adichanallur through the Vaigai. There are several books on pottery but the fresh shreds of evidence provided by him, especially with regard to the Black and Red Ware (BRW), and the emphasis he places on reorienting research towards establishing a pan-Indian pottery and the place the BRW had in different societies over different time lines are worth exploring in detail. Balakrishnan provides a road map for further research in these areas.

The toponomical survey of the names relating to the wanni tree is also explained. This provides scope for deeper anthropological studies. Wanni seems to be a conscience keeper, under which people took oath or held arbitrations; people always spoke the truth when they stood under the tree. Balakrishnan traces their remnants through anthropological, sociological and onomastic narratives.

It is a known fact that rooster fights are held in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in India and the region that is Pakistan today. This is traced in seals, numismatics, epigraphy and in the current Tamil-speaking geography. Balakrishnan establishes the connections through all these primary sources.

The *jallikattu* bulls of Alanganallur in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu remind us of the magnificent Zebu bull in the seals of Mohenjodaro. The author skilfully connects the seal M-312 from Mohenjodaro to *jallikattu*. Bulls are revered in different societies in the subcontinent. These are the cultural remnants and legacies of the Harappan culture, as is evident from the seals and the prominence given to them.

PLACE NAMES

How does one make sense of the common place names in Tamil Nadu and the north-western geographies? Balakrishnan provides evidence through recent historical migrations—Europeans travelling to America and the Parsi migration to India and how they carried their names, surnames and

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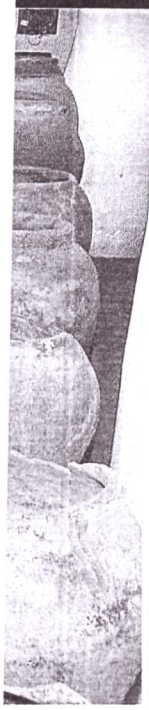

K.V. SRINIVASAN

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place names to these places. Balakrishnan says it is important to avoid etymological traps for Tamil words, especially place names. There is a need to use etymology in other areas but not in connection with place names. He lists different types of possibilities for place names—glossonym (named after a language), demonym (name of natives or inhabitants), toponym (place name), associative names (names associated with a characteristic feature), commemorative name (named after a person), possessive name (a place occupied by a person or group), and so on.

A theoretical framework has been provided to substantiate the current place names in their respective geographies. What is fascinating is that he has provided the matching names in present-day Tamil Nadu and in the IVC posts. The volume of place names is abundant. The empirical data using Google Earth to discover the names and the places they have travelled to and are still travelling to can be traced.

The parallels he draws between the material culture that is found in the Indus archaeology, Keeladi excavations and Sangam literature are profound. He provides new insights into the Sangam literature by extracting important pieces of solid evidence to substantiate the Indus archaeology. Balakrishnan also surveys Sanskrit literature to check if there are parallels, and what he has found are contradicting to the centrality of the lives of the Tamils.

In one section, he provides everything that one needs to know about the terms Tamil and Dravidian. Overall, the book articulates ideas of harmony and underscores the plural nature of Indian society. It argues that more than the oft-repeated metaphor of 'melting pot' or the new-found 'salad bowl', the most appropriate metaphor would be 'rainforest'. Presenting the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent as rainforest pluralism right from the beginning, the author emphasises the need to understand what constitutes the roots and what represents the canopy of the complex Indian civilisation as we know it now. The author calls for a revisit of the whole issue with an open mind and a celebration of the subtle nuances of Indian pluralism.

The long epilogue enables us to understand the philosophy and ideology that Tamils held and the South Asian population practised. Balakrishnan in a way ends the book with where he started his research. What prompted him to look deeply into the subject was that when he was en route to a village in Odisha, he found a village named Tamili. Surprised that it bore a name sounding similar to Tamil, he halted at the village and during his interaction with the people found that the language they spoke was similar to Tamil. This invoked a curiosity that led him to further research.

The book is constructed in such a way that both a serious researcher and the common man will benefit from it. For instance, when you get to read the section relating to DNA analysis, enough background material is provided so that even a lay reader can understand the nuances of DNA and how it mutates over generations.

This book will certainly form the basis and solid foundation for and positively trigger several hundred research papers in Tamil studies, archaeology, place names, and so on.

A SEAL made of stone, found at Mohenjodaro, depicting 'jallikattu' that was prevalent during the Indus civilisation. The author skilfully connects the seal to 'jallikattu', the famous bull sport in Madurai district.

BRILLIANT PRODUCTION

If the researcher has shown his meticulousness in organising the content, the publisher (Roja Muthiah Research Library) has matched it with a carefully curated and designed layout, which has resulted in a brilliant production with quotations, illustrations, maps and infographics. The index alone is proof of the serious work that has gone into the writing of the book. The design elements, right from the cover page to the blurb, have been used artfully. Without passion for such work, such a quality production may not have been possible. In a way, this book unintentionally redraws the boundaries of research by successfully incorporating a multidisciplinary approach as well as raising the bar in the areas of research methodology, usage of technological tools and qualitative production.

The book is dedicated to the late Dravidian scholar and bureaucrat Iravatham Mahadevan. The contribution of civil servants to language, literature and scholarship has been immense right from the days of F.W. Ellis (1777-1819), the British civil servant and Tamil and Sanskrit scholar. Iravatham Mahadevan worked on IVC and Tamil epigraphy for about 40 years. Balakrishnan's contribution and name will find a place in this grand lineage of scholars. □

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J+ Hindustan Times

27/02/2021 PD-17

Ways to keep out of sight

Ghazala Wahab's book looks at how Islam is practised in India. This exclusive first excerpt is from a chapter on the changing face of Muslim society in the country

Training and government policies can subdue prejudices. But once encouraged, they become policies. And this is what is happening in India today, compromising law enforcement and compounding the fears of the Muslims — all this is pushing some of them to take extreme measures such as the reinvention of their identity.

A few lower-caste/class Muslims, who are second or third-generation converts, have started to revert to the identity of their Hindu forefathers, starting with a name change. One of them, Mohammed Islam (not his real name), who is engaged in the business of processing bovine hides for leather tanneries in Agra–Kanpur, says, 'My forefathers were Hindus. They converted because upper-caste Hindus did not treat them well. Islam offered both dignity and security. Now, if Islam does not give us the security, then we can become Hindus again. What will we do with dignity if we can't stay alive?'

After having denounced idol worship for generations and holding the belief that there is only one God, Allah, can he prostrate before idols? And commit a grave sin, according to Islam?

Looking uncomfortable, Mohammed Islam looks around before answering. 'It is not that I am not a devout Muslim. I am a Haji (one who has undertaken *hajj* to Mecca),' he says, a bit indignantly. 'My younger son is studying to be a *hafiz*. But security is also important. It is not just about my life alone, but my family too.' After a pause, he adds, 'It is about my business also. If I have a Hindu name, no one will bother that I work with cattle skin. But as a Muslim, I worry every moment.'

So, will he only change his name?

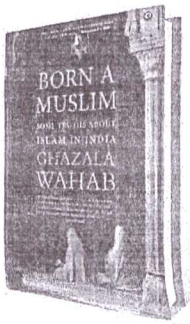
Checking for the umpteenth time about what I was planning to do with this interview, and whether his name would appear anywhere, he finally stammers, 'I am talking to some people that we want to return to Hinduism. We will go through the reconversion process and change our names. *Magar dil mein kya hai yeh kisi ko kya pata* (but how can anyone tell what is in our hearts)?'

For people like these, the stakes are very high. From being a daily wager in different tanneries, 20 years ago, Islam started his own business of skin-processing. Now he is a businessman, supplying to tanneries where he used to work earlier. As Professor Amitabh Kundu had noted in his post Sachar report (Report of the Post Sachar Evaluation Committee, 2014), the social mobility of urban Muslims largely pertains to people employed in small-scale industries starting their own enterprises taking advantage of the country's economic growth, increased demand and easy bank loans.

My younger brother, who has inherited my father's footwear export business, recalls the time when my father used to run the factory. The profile of the workers then was equally divided between Muslims and scheduled caste Hindus. 'However, in the last two decades, the ratio has changed,' he tells me. 'Today, only 20 per cent of the labour is Muslim. The rest have started their own small factories, supplying to city-based exporters. These are the people who are threatened the most.'

While part of the threat comes from government policies, especially towards businesses that depend on cattle trading — 'several factories have shut down in Agra in the last five years as they became economically unviable', says my brother — the bigger threat is the vigilante mob, which now operates with impunity. The labourers-turned-entrepreneurs worry that their former fellow labourers may target them out of professional jealousy. Given the open prejudice displayed by law-enforcement agencies, especially in a state like Uttar Pradesh, small business people are looking at imaginative ways of keeping out of sight.

Not everyone is an activist or has the desire to bring about a revolution. Many people, across religions, prefer leading a regular life without being challenged either for their beliefs or lack of them. And so it is for a large number of Indian Muslims. While they are not unaffected by the Shaheen Bagh protests, they are worried about its impact on their lives and livelihood.



Born a Muslim; Some Truths About Islam in India
Ghazala Wahab
399pp, ₹999, Aleph

Author Ghazala Wahab

Atika Zakir says, 'What the women of Shaheen Bagh are doing is really commendable. I hope it has positive consequences for the entire community. But I don't see the point of aggressive assertion of identity. What good can come out of casting oneself in perpetual conflict with others?' Atika takes pride in the fact that she hails from a family that embraced modern education three generations ago. Her great-grandfather used to bring out a newspaper called *Medina* back in the 1940s. A deeply religious family that has been as particular about observing the prayers and Ramzan fasting as about education and employment, Atika says that her family never felt the need to assert its identity.

'I don't wear a hijab. No one in my family ever did or does even today,' she says. 'I had to fight no battles at home to pursue a career. Finding a job after my education was a very natural thing to do. No eyebrows were raised...,' she chuckles. Atika is part of the small Muslim middle class that has emerged over the last few decades. Her aspirations for herself and her family are similar to those of her peers, irrespective of religion...

This change in lifestyle has, in large part, been a consequence the embrace of modern education by a growing number of Muslims. As mentioned before, when I was in school, for several years, I was the only Muslim in my class. Today, in most public schools, it is common to find at least a couple or more Muslims in all classes. Ironically, this is one of the reasons that one hears about more cases of Muslim children suffering communal profiling in schools. The target group has increased...

One constantly heard the refrain: "industrialisation is essential, but this is not the way." What strikes this reviewer most about Majumder's book is that it shows up how incoherent and contradictory the arguments for "another way," and how fuzzy the contours of the many proposed "other ways," really were. Perhaps there is indeed another way to industrialise, reasonably quickly, an economy as land scarce, with landownership as dispersed and fragmented, as West Bengal's; one that does not require large-scale state acquisition of land through powers of eminent domain. But none has actually been shown to work there, in the 12 years since the departure of the Tatas from Singur. In the meanwhile, ever-increasing numbers of young people from places like Singur keep migrating to places like Sanand in search of work.

Majumder's book deserves to be read by everybody interested in the present of West Bengal as history; so that, above all, one may not mistake snake oils of the past for elixirs of the future.

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Stories of Endemic Violence

UJITHRA PONNIAH

My Son's Inheritance: A Secret History of Lynching and Blood Justice in India edited by Aparna Vaidik, *New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, 2020; pp 173, ₹499.*

This is a book of our times. The Black Lives Matter movement in the United States (US) has reignited the discourse around White privilege and fragility which lead to institutional discrimination and violence. Closer home, Dalit Lives Matter, though in its nascent stage, is enabling conversations that do not end up ghettoising the caste identity around Dalits. Exposed to endless cycles of violence and failure of systems of governance, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is hard to shake the apathy. Aparna Vaidik's book, released in early 2020, comes at an apt time. Despite living in a country where violence against Dalits, women and Muslims is incessant, the essence of Indian culture gets associated with non-violence. By reflecting on her Marwari caste identity, Vaidik corrects this popular misunderstanding. She shows how violence is endemic in Hindu religious myths and stories that are passed on from one generation to the other.

Sitting comfortably between an engaging prologue and epilogue are eight clearly defined chapters. The chapters take the reader through the stories Vaidik inherited from her grandfather, her historicisation of these tales by focusing on the Arya Samaj and cow protection movement, the invisibility of violence endemic in religious myths, the counter-narrative presented through non-Aryan utopias and the sense of victimhood internalised by majoritarian communities. been written in an accessible conversational style which makes it an inviting and deceptively simple read.

Hindu Upper-caste Family

Sociologists and historians have engaged with the institution of family by focusing on the middle class-caste identity, labour, marriage, gender, consumption and education. Studies on upper-caste communities focusing on the institution of family are scant (with the exception of Fuller and Narasimhan [2014]). Caste then does not become a social lens for seeing Indian society; rather, it becomes a lens to see *sections* of the Indian society. Vaidik's book helps address these gaps in literature. It shows how caste and Hindu religiosity become part of an upper-caste person's habitus. Inheritance is only thought of in terms of wealth (Piketty 2014), but Vaidik shows that one inherits something equally powerful: stories. Vaidik writes this book to her son and attempts to break the cycle of caste inheritance by offering him a range of stories. In the last paragraph of the epilogue, Vaidik writes (to her son):

> Inheritance by definition is not always of your choosing. But while you are tethered to it, you are no way bound by it. You are free to choose the elements of your inheritance that you wish to own, to discard, to celebrate. Your inheritance will acquire the meaning you give it. (p 135)

Through the book, Vaidik engages with the stories she inherited from her grandfather, who was born into a Marwari family of Vaishnav Baniyas. Her grandfather had given her books on the desecration of Hindu structures by Muslim rulers and amongst the many stories he told her, the story of Bharmall stood out. Bharmall was an influential zamindar, who had immolated himself when he was unsuccessful in stopping a Muslim butcher from taking cows for slaughter. Bharmall was described as a brave warrior. He had a shrine near Khatu Syamji's temple called "Bharmall ka sata." "Sata" was the masculine form of the word sati. Vaidik in Chapter 1, pieces together the nuances of regional history and locates the Muslim butcher within the growing predominance of Vaishnavism in 17th century Rajasthan, the sacralisation of the cow and Muslim as the "other." Over the years, Vaidik continued to be curious about her grandfather's keen interest in the figure of Bharmall.

As Vaidik narrates the religious myths of Barbareek, Eklavya and Karna in Chapter 5, she shows the invisibility of violence in each account. She tells us that Barbareek, Eklavya and Karna were celebrated as generous, brave and having the good fortune of serving the gods. All three had ritually unacceptable birth status, and their caste locations determined their fate. The caste hierarchies in these myths were kept undisturbed. Barbareek born out of miscegenation, paid for it with his dismembered body. Eklavya paid for his misalliance with talent by sacrificing his thumb, and Karna

mighty warrior. The violence inflicted by the gods was never just violence but essential for redemption and liberation. This, Vaidik tells us, is the hidden blood justice in religious myths. This violence was nurtured and celebrated as righteous in religious myths; hence no amount of constitutional provisions could shake the endemic violence.

Victimhood and Fear

The word "lynch" as Vaidik tells us in Chapter 8, comes from the US, where the act filled the legal vacuum of trials and punishments. It is ironic that majoritarian communities like the Hindu upper castes and the Whites in the US claim victimhood, when they are the ones to undertake rituals of lynching. Majoritarian acts like lynching restored the collective pride of the White or Hindu upper-caste man. It is an act of redistributive justice, carried out to settle a historical injustice (p 117). The affect which is at the heart of this brutality, Vaidik tells us, is fear. This reminded me of Fanon's (1986) White child who is fearful of a "Negro" child and tells his mother that the "nigger's going to eat me up" (pp 113–14). The Black child's shivering in the cold is misread as him quivering in rage. This misreading on the part of the White child is a response of fear. A fear which is deeply instilled and has no basis in reality. Much like the White child in Fanon's text, Vaidik tells us that upper-caste Hindus like her grandfather continue to believe that

> Muslims had always victimised Hindus right from Ghazni's invasions—the destruction of the idol and the slaughter of ten thousand Brahmins praying inside the Somnath Temple; Ghazni repeatedly looted Somnath; the desecration of the birthplaces of Ram, Krishna, and Shiva and building of mosques over them; the destruction of five lakh Hindu temples; the oppression that Hindus had suffered under Mughal rule; the abuse and rape of innumerable Hindu mothers, daughters and sisters … the killing and driving into exile of lakhs of Hindu Pandits in Kashmir. (p 112)

Vaidik's grandfather who was a member of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), in spite of holding the above beliefs, helped Haroon, a lower-caste Muslim of the metalworker community (Lohars), when he suffered losses in the riot of 1989 in Indore. The ideology of the VHP was an extension of her grandfather's Arya Samaj membership and beliefs. Vaidik asks a pertinent question: "Was (there) a causal connection between one's ideology and one's everyday life?" (p 110). Vaidik goes on to tell us that her grandfather or her family had not gone on to participate in the Indore riots, but they were responsible for it since it was the culmination of the ideology they held. Vaidik reads her grandfather's helping of Haroon as part of his large-heartedness emerging from his belief in the peaceful coexistence and non-violence practised by Vaishnavas and Hindus in general. Vaidik makes sense of what might appear as contradictory through the misplaced victimhood of Hindus. They were the "victimised non-victims" (p 112).

In Conclusion

Listening and telling stories are a powerful way of inhabiting the world and communicating one's ideas. At a historical juncture when there is a concerted push to normalise the stories and myths of the majoritarian community as that of the entire country, Vaidik unpacks these accounts. She offers a range of stories that emerge from a non-utopian milieu and hold the potential for carving egalitarians societies. Her work also makes an important contribution to historical imagination, methods and writing. Through her grandfather she recognises the difference between the past and history. Like her grandfather, it appears that history for many was one without a chronological past, but became the mythical present that helps make meaning of one's present self, actions and world views. This is a book not just for the academia, but one that should be read and passed on to family and extended kin.

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it is pointed out that that the discourse of cronyism, flowing from political quarters, is an excuse to defend capitalism, showing that "corruption and cronyism are integral to capitalism, and not a curable deviation" (*EPW* 2010).

Crabtree undoubtedly provokes the most pressing but ignored issue confronting India, regarding the concentration of wealth, but applies a half-hearted approach to evince an apparently radical solution. Though the book does not make any substantive claim over India's billionaire problem and inequality, it brilliantly fills a void left owing to academic neglect. It succinctly exposes the underbelly of India's super rich boom, throws adequate light on the dynamics of cronyism in India and offers recommendations as it deems fit.

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Agrarian Transformation and Quality of Life in Highlands of Tripura

A Chronicle of Untold Stories

ISHITA MUKHOPADHYAY

Socio-economic Surveys of Three Villages in Tripura: A Study of Agrarian Relations edited by Madhura Swaminathan and Ranjini Basu, *Delhi: Tulika Books in association with Foundation for Agrarian Studies, 2019; pp xxiv+376, ₹600.*

Tripura is a north-eastern state of India, which has been much less researched in the national and international policy studies or in terms of political economic aspects by social scientists outside Tripura. A few articles are available on Tripura's socio-economic indicators but the number is much less than the research done on the economy of many other states of India. However, the state provided the opportunity of research to social scientists in the sense that Tripura underwent a massive social, political and economic transformation from 1983 onwards after the establishment of the left regime in the state. The story of the transformation was evident in several researches and reports done by established academic institutions and independent researchers.

A part of this work appeared as articles in research journals. The interesting part of the existing research was that this was mostly evidence-based analysis. This shows that documentary evidences were collected at various points of time in the process exploring the process of transformation. Secondary data in national- and state-level official statistics was also reflecting the story of transformation. In this context, the book *Socio-economic Surveys of Three Villages in Tripura: A Study of Agrarian Relations* edited by Madhura Swaminathan and Ranjini Basu is a contribution in the literature which was long awaited in sociopolitical and economic theory.

The book is based on a PARI (Project on Agrarian Relations in India) survey of three villages in Tripura. The primary objective of PARI is to understand and unfold the rural dynamics in terms of production, land relations, livelihood, sectional deprivation, and access to basic amenities. The three villages reported in this book, are typical of three distinct agrarian systems. The villages are Khakchang in North Tripura district where we have *jhum* cultivation and lowland agriculture; Mainama in Dhalai district where there is lowland and *tila* cultivation; Muhuripur in South Tripura district where lowland cultivation predominates. The book is an edited volume with the contributors all having been associated with this massive stupendous task of collecting detailed information and building up a huge database on the agrarian transformation of the three forms of cultivation in Tripura.

Agrarian Transformation Unfolded

The tone of the edited volume is set in the first chapter with an interview of Manik Sarkar with V K Ramachandran. Manik Sarkar was the chief minister of Tripura from 1998 to 2018 and is a politburo member of Communist Party of India (Marxist). The book comprises 18 chapters where the agrarian production relations, income generation and standard of living in the study villages are discussed. Village studies are crucial to the understanding of the agrarian production relations in Marxist framework. The entitlement–capability framework also uses village studies as the empirical basis. The basic needs approach and the livelihood policy programmes also had used village studies for policy implementation. B Dasgupta (1978) spoke explicitly on the importance of evidence-based analysis of village studies

in the third world to understand the process of agrarian transformation. The book provides a rich source of data with respect to land use, size of holdings, sharecroppers, agricultural labourers, distribution of rural households according to socio-economic categories, type of tenancy, acreage and cropping area, gross value of output, labour use, employment, wages, performance of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), distribution of debt, rural banks, rural indebtedness, asset ownership, housing, access to fuel, drinking water, along with literacy and education in the study villages.

This database is cross-sectional and based on the survey data from 2016. But the same villages were surveyed in 2005, which was one of the bases of analysis presented in the Tripura Human Development Report (Government of Tripura 2007). So, the comparison with the old survey is referred to in the book along with the compilation of secondary sources of data. The database helps put the primary evidences against the backdrop of the secondary data.

Tripura's agrarian transformation had the components of development of agrarian technology to overcome the geographical challenges along with the inclusive democracy with the recognition of the rights of the discriminated tribal households. The decentralised decision-making with the panchayat system in function acted as a facilitator. The three villages tell the story of three different historical evidences. A Das in his essay describes the ethnography and land use of the three villages. Sample design is also explicitly stated in this chapter. Secondary database of the sample was the list of hamlets and the number of households obtained from the panchayat office, which was formed by the Ordinary Resident Register household survey of 2015.

The article by V K Ramchandran and M Swaminathan talks about the Tripura Model focusing on the agrarian transformation in Tripura, which distinguished Tripura from the other north-eastern states of the country. S Bajar gives the historical introduction to the socio-economic structure prevailing before the process of agrarian transformation. What did this transformation consist of? The prime mover of the agrarian change was land reforms, which took place in two phases, that is, the two phases of left regime 1978–88 and 1994–98. Land reforms meant protection of tenancy rights of the peasantry together with the *bargadars*, relief to the peasantry against indebtedness, and redistribution of land to the landless and poor peasants. These were also the common elements of land reforms in the other left-ruled states like West Bengal in those times. But what distinguished Tripura was the restoration of land rights to the tribals, who suffered from illegal encroachement and occupation.

Till the partition, the tribals formed the majority of Tripura's population, which faced a change in the demographic composition with partition after independence. The demographic composition also meant a diversification in cropping pattern between *jhum* or shifting cultivation of the hills and settled cultivation in the plain lands. The second component of the agrarian transformation was the ethnic peacebuilding effort, which was translated into the changed cropping pattern of the state. The third component was decentralised planning in terms of a stable panchayat system. The three components have come out lucidly and clearly in the chapters that set the context of the book.

Changing Class Relations

The chapters in the section on agrarian structure, production and agrarian relations explore how these components are visible in the study villages. The study villages are chosen according to cropping diversity. The prevailing production relations in agriculture provided the basis of class analysis of the rural population in the villages, explained in the chapter by T S Modak and M Swaminathan. The villages were surveyed after the agrarian transformation reached an advanced stage in the state. So what was observed can be called the effect of the transformation in terms of reshuffling of the population according to land size classes, ownership of means of production and agricultural work.

The descriptive analysis of the three villages is available in the three following chapters by R Basu, R Dutta, S Patra, A Das and T S Modak. Dasgupta (1986, 1991, 2006) wrote extensively on the agrarian changes in jhum cultivation in Tripura and the simultaneous challenges in ethnicity of the state. The point made in these articles was the deplorable condition of jhum cultivation before land reforms. *Jhumias* as these cultivators are called also fell victim to the extremist movement in the state. It is these agrarian reforms, which helped them to settle down as they formed the poorest of the rural poor in the state. The resettlement of jhumias was evident in the study villages. The land distribution to these cultivators was evident; net sown area and percentage of households in this category was also high.

The data regarding farm business income and gross value added in agricultural production is represented in data description, which provides the insight into productivity increase strategy of the process of agrarian transformation. The Government of Tripura's policy of increasing the productivity of paddy by providing river lift irrigation and implementation of the Forest Act for resettlement were adequately dealt with in data description of the survey villages. This database thus provides a good opportunity to study the process of transformation where households, their ownership over means of production, cropping intensity, crop diversification, and emergence of non-farm sector are all explicitly stated. Class formation in rural Tripura is also made explicit in the chapters and the data provides scope to further study the process of changing class formations in the rural Tripura.

The three study villages also possess diversified demographic profile. This question on diversity is necessary as the agrarian transformation addressed this diversity, which is brought out in the chapters. Discussion on rubber plantation is extensive in the chapter by D Narayana and T S Modak. Reference to rubber plantation in study villages and people

associated with rubber plantation is described in detail in study areas. The role of Tripura Rehabilitation and Plantation Corporation and Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council in building up the alternative rubber economy in the state is referred to in the chapter.

Bhowmik and Viswanathan (2015) have discussed changing labour relations in rubber plantations in Tripura. The paper mentioned the dearth of primary evidences on rubber plantations in Tripura, although Tripura stood second in terms of rubber production only next to Kerala. The village surveys answered some of the questions raised in the paper in terms of transition towards hired labour from family labour in the rubber plantations.

The exclusive chapter on rubber plantations identifies the stages in the growth of labour employment in rubber plantation in the state. These stages involved primarily conversion of jhumia households to rubber plantation, resettlement of tribal households to plantation sector, increase in earnings and capacity, expansion of the sector and movement to wage labour employment. The rise in international rubber prices was also the reason for the increase in earnings and entitlement of the families. This came out clearly in the evidences of village studies. The volume rightly has a separate chapter on rubber plantation, which is one of the less talked about aspects of the contemporary history of Tripura.

Human Development

The book was preceded by surveys in the same villages when the state's Human Development Report was written in 2007. The book had two sections related to the components of human development, which are the aspects of income generation and standard of living. Asset ownership has been dealt by R Basu, basic amenities and housing are explained by R K Mahato and S Baksi, literacy and schooling are discussed by S Chakraborty and M Swaminathan in separate chapters. Separate chapters are also dedicated to income earnings and homestead economy. Imputing incomes from different sources of income generation, the chapter on income earnings concluded that manual workers and MGNREGA contributed a large proportion to increased income and lesser poverty in these villages. This study reminds one of the paper by Mishra and Nayak (2008) where it was illustrated that the per capita income of Tripura far exceeded that of the other north-eastern states. Access to income earnings was supplemented by the information on asset holdings by the households in the study villages. R Basu appropriately refers to asset poverty as a measure of poverty and includes in asset consumer durables, electrical equipment, inventory of agricultural produce, commercial and non-agricultural goods, means of transport, means of production and trees. Asset does not include any flow variables and only includes stock variables. Asset-based analysis is expected to validate the proposition that chronic poverty originates in asset poverty. The chapter presents the data of the imputed value of assets in the three study villages and how the villages differed from each other in terms of assets. This chapter extended the coverage of assets to more than the agricultural land and consumer durables whose data is obtained from the National Sample Survey reports.

The addition of remoteness and ruggedness of terrain as variables to be considered added the dimension of location to the question of accessibility, which has added new layers to the analysis. The chapter on basic amenities and housing by R K Mahato and S Bakshi also complements the chapter on access to earnings. All these chapters are directly linked to the question of enhanced capability of the people, which was visible in the study villages. The existence of *pucca* houses with sources of energy and drinking water for the study villages are also presented. Human development is indicated by a significant variable, which is education, and this is taken up in the chapter on literacy and schooling. Chowdhury and Chakraborty (2013) talked about Tripura's success in literacy which was visible in the 2011 Census data. The chapter again made the fact visible in terms of the intensive village survey data. The authors also mentioned the success story by comparing the study villages to other PARI villages in the country, where Tripura excelled among others.

In the discussion, the editors have included two articles on banking sector in the state and access to banking in the study villages by P Chavan and the performance of MGNREGA by A Das and S Patra. An overview is added at the end of the book with summary observations.

Derived Intuitions Needed

The editors of the book did the job of visualising the invisible facets of the socio-economic transition in a small north-eastern state. The facts of this landlocked state still remain invisible. The editors have carefully included within the chapters, sections on gender analysis where many new facts are revealed. The book is a massive data source providing the key to researchers, journalists and others to explore further. Public support for the people or governance was discussed in a chapter by M Swaminathan.

However, the discussion on health indicators and skill building of the workers were found to be missing in the section on the standard of living. Discussion on sustainability of the agrarian transformation could have been given some attention in the book. The state is no more under the left regime and many of the reforms are now undone with law and order situation turning grave, raising the justified question of sustainability of the findings of the survey. The edited book documents contemporary history, which will serve as a point of reference to understand today's Tripura.

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On Philosophical Causality and the Problem of Evil

Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste*

P THIRUMAL

BOOK REVIEWS

Caste: The Lies That Divide Us by Isabel Wilkerson, Allen Lane, *New Delhi: Penguin Random House, 2020; pp 496, ₹599 (hardcover).*

Isabel Wilkerson invokes a kind of metaphysical rationalism from where to think of a thing involves knowing both its cause and effect. Caste and race are things that exemplify negativity or "evil" as she prefers to call it. On the other hand, metaphysical rationalism is akin to divine epistemology of the human mind, not pitted against god but actually treated as comparable and coeval. Once you collapse the rational and the metaphysical, there is scope for breaching the walls of race and caste or flattening hierarchical forms of thought and being across species and within species.

How does Wilkerson relate caste to race? She holds the view that caste is in a primary relationship to race. The ubiquity and the ever-replenishing cultural authority of caste needs to be understood as necessary to providing a blueprint and road map for understanding race. In my view, the promise of the book tends to be the unravelling of the absurdity and the visceral character of thought associated with race but derived from the humongous negativity of caste. This derivation of race from caste is not analogical, sociological or historical but attempts to deploy a kind of a metaphysical rationalism.

Race is a lesser manifestation and is more overt and, therefore, of lesser potential for diminishing the source of life or living. Whether biological, social, psychological, or spiritual, the immutability of caste to penetrate the varied dimensions of being is more elaborate and orders the cultural unconscious in ways that escape the fleshiness of thought. She implicitly proposes (as a professional journalist) that objectivity and realism can be used to explain the subjectivity of subjugated caste experience and the force of the negativity that inspires and camouflages thought.

Idea of Inherence

To think of race, for Wilkerson, is indicative of an awareness that the race has to inhere in caste and needs to be conceived through caste. This idea of inherence fuels the logic of her work. Race stands for a mode or attribute of caste and the latter remains the more encompassing, generative and invisible infrastructure that tacitly guides one's orientation towards ideas, people, and objects. Orientation is inclusive of action or potential and disposition to act. Nazi Germany represents a classic case of this historically engineered orientation that treated others as non-beings with potential for minimal existence. In a circuitous way, she attempts to inscribe the substance for both race and anti-Semitism lies in caste.

She resurrects the work of William Boyd Allison Davis, the Black sociologist who insisted that caste provides the enduring framework for studying race and not the other way around. Davis on assuming a faculty position at the predominantly White University of Chicago was told that it "cannot assume responsibility for Mr Davis' personal happiness and social treatment." Davis was to later demonstrate the connection between the exclusivity of the making of the United States (US) middle-class culture and educational achievement and the cultural basis of psychometrics and intelligence testing. No wonder, Wilkerson refers to this exceptional Black intellectual as her spiritual father.

The invoking of B R Ambedkar is also to emphasise the groundless ground of caste. Caste is neither based solely on texts, religious, cultural and social practices, but it is the air of superiority or moral or coercive servitude that gets enacted as the dominant castes interact with the lower castes. In some ways, both these icons stood for the most oppressed to realise their potential in their capacity to obtain as many varieties of occupations, income, legal protection, and education ensuring dignity and respect as fuller human beings.

The book does a splendid job of interlacing spectacular violence with infra violence. She does a Django with downplaying the D. Her scholarship with regard to historically retrieving the exemplary violence enacted against Blacks by Whites draws the reader into a full-bodied encounter. But Wilkerson is best when she is dissecting her own anecdotal middle-class experiences of everyday acts of discrimination and humiliation, what she robustly frames as the dominant caste committing "thievery" of her time by unnecessarily obstructing and delaying her work. Innumerable anecdotes adorn the work of how she is made to spend more time doing the same work which the upper castes are allowed to complete within less time and with more élan and dignity; for instance, the refusal by the owner of a niche boutique to acknowledge her as a reporter from the *New York Times* despite displaying her credentials.

In India, spectacular violence against Dalits like lynching or sexual violence is performed through intermediary castes and endorsed by dominant castes, but infra violence is mostly experienced by middle-class Dalits. Most suicides committed by young Dalit students studying in elite educational institutions are because they face this humiliation under the guise of the remedial English programme. Senior bureaucrats can also be subjected to this microaggression aimed at damaging the self-worth and the esteem of the person.

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Sociology

In India, too, words like grace and dignity are attributed solely to upper castes. Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and other elite educational institutions are workshops, modern guilds where middle-class culture, as Bourdieu shows us, is churned out. It produces a de-historicised dominant consciousness for the rest of the society. Sometimes, one wonders why the IITs have institutionalised remedial coaching for Dalit Bahujans. Is it possible that student organisations like the Ambedkar Students Associations across various universities exist to neutralise the effort of elite educational spaces to regulate the embodied energy of the subaltern classes? From seeking representational status for Dalit Bahujans in these cultural institutions, there is now a demand for realising an embodied democracy with viscous expectations.

Caste and race are interchangeable in terms of their potential for human wrongdoing or evil. While Wilkerson ponders diligently over hundreds of pages detailing and marshalling material on the dominant castes' (White's) voracious appetite for inflicting spectacular and infra violence in the historical and contemporary US, the purpose is less to display her capacity for powerful narration but should also be seen as an attempt to draw readers into the very telling of this horrendous journey of humankind across continents, including the Nazi German context. It is in this telling that one is drawn to the play of dark forces that lie deeply buried under the half-millennial consciousness.

What looks like a minor event of a flight attendant refusing fair treatment to her while she is on board as a first-class passenger actually resonates with the derogatory comments made on social media when Prakash Ambedkar travelled in the same class. In both these instances, there is an attempt to find an irretrievable disjuncture between ordinary Blacks and Dalits vis-à-vis the upwardly mobile lower castes. The demand for recognition seems to outweigh the issue of redistribution of resources. A lack of radicalism is spoken of and the humiliation encountered is dismissed for want of revolutionary purpose. Thus, the transgression of space and time as when an ordinary Dalit mounts a horse to celebrate a *mahurat* resulting in violent reprisals from the dominant castes is a continually reported event. Unfortunately, Wilkerson seems to have avoided the detailing of such horrors in the historical or in the contemporary Indian context.

Transformative Text

The performative force of the telling makes the text not merely resonant for those who care to listen and not just hear. The sonority compels one to feel the heaviness of the jangling chains that are clasped around the feet and neck in the not-so-historical past in the present. The ensemble of the skin, metal, muted sense of the body, and the heartless expanse of untouched thought of the dominant castes is the canvas that she paints through her telling. Wilkerson brings the lynched body to speak of its dismembered and quivering organs with surgical objectivity. The merit of the book is in its ability to inspire and transform rather than focus on adequately capturing the historical or sociological complexities and diverse teleologies of caste (supremacy) in relation to race. Some of the big names in the Indian social sciences who reviewed this work seem to have totally ignored this aspect.

Wilkerson shifts the category "dominant caste" from an empirical concept into an experiential one. It is a move towards recognising the power of the irrational forces that impel the everyday normality of caste. In a manner of speaking, the practice of caste does not incite thinking and consciousness. At last, for once, an important category, dominant caste, coined by famous sociologist Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas to understand the sociopolitical dynamics particularly in South India, has been dis-embedded and inflated to carry a lot more freight and moral energy. The replacement of Whites by dominant castes required exemplary creativity and forethought. Indian social science will enormously profit from taking it back in this avatar.

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Book Review

Burnard, S. (2020) *Understanding and Managing Learning Behaviour: using a behaviour journal for developing confident teaching*. Abingdon: Routledge.

For teachers in training and during their early careers, one of the most consistent worries has been managing classroom behaviour. Over many decades approaches have changed. Many teachers have used the principles of positive behaviour management, an approach based on their recognising and rewarding good behaviour in a variety of ways. One of the casualties of these approaches has been the use of tools to aid reflection. Burnard has produced a useful guide to describe the development of confident teaching using just such approaches.

The book begins with the author describing her own personal history in developing the behaviour journal and a useful guide to the book. There follows a description of what trainee teachers need to know before embarking on the reflective journey. A chapter is given to overviews of different systems used in behaviour management before the main body of the book, which describes how the trainee teacher can produce a behaviour journal for themselves. The book then gives examples and exercises to stimulate ideas for the reader. The volume ends with quotations from previous teachers in training and a chapter on the author's personal reflections on her experiences of working in this way.

The author readily acknowledges her personal history in psychodynamic thinking. This came from her father, who was a psychoanalyst and child psychotherapist, and the approaches in this book encourage the reader to delve deep into their own personal histories. While such methods are less prevalent today, this is a refreshing reminder of their power. The book has the feel of a writer reflecting on a long and successful career. She regularly references her own previous writing, perhaps as a consequence of little being written about these methods for some decades.

The book is clearly aimed at teachers in training. It could form the basis of a coaching or mentoring relationship with a trainer or a more experienced

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teacher. It is not a book which should constitute a reader's only text on managing classroom behaviour, as the level of detail is not comprehensive enough to provide a sound understanding of the psychology of classroom management. Nor do some of the suggestions embrace modern methods of communication. The advice that the journal should be handwritten in a hard-backed book with at least 192 sewn pages is unlikely to appeal to new generations of teachers in training. That said, the book is well written and produced with numerous examples from real-life classroom situations. It is a very refreshing reminder that *people* inhabit the role of teachers, and that in behaviour management, one size does definitely not fit all. I wish it well and hope that it finds its niche.

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Reviews

Mapping Autonomy in Language Education: A Framework for Learner and Teacher Development

M. Jiménez Raya, T. Lamb and F. Vieira

Peter Lang, 2017, 157 pp., £20.95 (ebook)

ISBN 978 3 631 72220 6

'Autonomy? A great idea, but how do we put it into practice?' A long and convoluted answer begins, but before it can be completed ... 'Oh, I see. But sorry, I only have 15 minutes to prepare my next class. Let's continue this conversation later...'. Those who spend a good deal of time thinking and talking about autonomy will recognize this as the problem of implementing autonomy. How do we take this high-flown and transparently desirable goal of education and implement it in the day-to-day practice of language teaching in all of its varied contexts and settings? This is the problem that the authors of *Mapping Autonomy in Language Education* have been addressing through the concept of pedagogy for autonomy for many years now. In their latest book they come very close, I believe, to providing the solution.

The risk in this enterprise is twofold. On the one hand, an overly theoretical approach risks proposing broad-ranging solutions that 'will not work in my context'. On the other hand, an overly practical approach risks narrowing autonomy down to a set of classroom activities that may lead to better teaching and learning, but are disconnected from any longer-term educational goal. The greatest strength of this book is that the authors carefully construct a pathway through these risks by mapping three dimensions of autonomy—context, learner, and teacher—and proposing a framework that connects this mapping to ten pedagogical principles. Importantly, this is not just a pathway for the authors to follow. There are enough reflective tasks and instruments along the way to make this a usable pathway for teachers and teacher educators.

There has been talk of 'stronger' and 'weaker' versions of autonomy. The weaker versions tend to see autonomy in the classroom as a means to better or more relevant learning, while the stronger versions also emphasize broader educational and social goals. *Mapping Autonomy in Language Education* veers towards the stronger end of the continuum and offers a unique subject-free definition of autonomy in education that embraces both learner autonomy and teacher autonomy:

> The competence to develop as a self-determined, socially responsible and critically aware participant in (and beyond) educational environments, within a vision of education as (inter)personal empowerment and social transformation. (p. 17)

This definition is followed by a step-by-step explanation of each of its key terms. 'Self-determination' and 'socially responsible' highlight the individual and collective dimensions of autonomy, while 'critically aware' highlights the goal of cultivating an inquiring independent mind. The educational vision of 'empowerment' and 'social transformation' points to a conception of autonomy as 'a moral and political phenomenon whose goal is to transform (rather than reproduce) the *status quo*' (p. 18). One of the strengths of the book is that, even at its most practical, it does not lose sight of this goal.

Following an introduction that explains the genesis of the book and its main ideas, the book is divided into four chapters. Chapter 2 covers the underlying assumptions of pedagogy for autonomy and links them to general principles of language teaching. This raises the question of whether autonomy does, in fact, imply alignment with particular approaches to language teaching, rather than others. The authors insist that their pedagogy does *not* mean breaking away from communicative language teaching, but they also suggest that the communicative approach is not sufficient to promote learner autonomy, which requires additional attention to learning awareness, strategic learning, decision-making, and a critical view of education.

Chapter 3, 'Mapping Pedagogy for Autonomy', is divided into three parts covering the three dimensions of context, learner, and teacher. By 'mapping', the authors essentially mean laying out the various factors and questions that demand attention under each heading. There is a detailed discussion of factors of setting and context and how they might constrain autonomy or propel it forwards. The authors are clear that autonomy 'entails a whole-school project' (p. 23), but they also make the valuable argument that at the same time, for the teacher, it is a question of 'exploiting their professional context in ways which will move them forward rather than hold them back' (p. 35). The second section covers the familiar but important ground of previous definitions of autonomy and the competences that have been associated with autonomous learning in the literature to date, which are classified under the headings of learning competence, competence to self-motivate, and competence to think critically. The third section, on the teacher, tackles an issue that is not well discussed in the literature to date. It is worth recalling that the authors' definition of autonomy embraces both learner and teacher autonomy. By bringing the dimensions of context, learner, and teacher together, they emphasize that autonomy is as much a matter of teacher development as it is of learner development.

The idea of Chapter 4 is to bring these dimensions together into a framework of ten principles of pedagogy for autonomy. There is, perhaps, an inevitable risk that these principles will be viewed prescriptively. They are intended, however, to be more of a heuristic device for teachers to reflect on their approaches to teaching: 'Are they part of my teaching priorities, and should they be made more intentional in my practice?' In the spirit of connecting pedagogy for learner autonomy with teacher development, the concluding chapter discusses an experience-oriented, case-based approach to teacher education for autonomy, in which teachers write and share stories of their professional experiences.

Mapping Autonomy in Language Education is one of the most comprehensive accounts of the theory and practice of autonomy in language education that I have read. However, it also led me to think about two areas that might well be covered in such an account. First, the focus is firmly on teaching and the school/classroom setting, but is there also a place for attention to out-of-class/out-of-school learning within this focus? Work on the implementation of autonomy has to some extent bifurcated into work on in-class and out-of-class settings in recent years. Is there an opportunity to bring them back together, especially at a time when language learners themselves seem to be making more and more use of technologies to bridge the classroom and the world beyond? Second, the authors make clear their belief in the 'cross-disciplinary value of autonomy as an educational goal' (p. 22). Pedagogy for autonomy is not just a matter of pedagogy *for* language learning, but also of the contribution of autonomy in language learning to broader individual and societal empowerment and transformation. But does this also imply a need to consider the senses in which language learning itself, and autonomous language learning especially, may be both empowering and transformative? Language teachers have been among the most enthusiastic advocates of autonomy in education. What does this tell us about the roles of language learning in educational empowerment and transformation?

Overall, *Mapping Autonomy in Language Education* is a volume that deserves wider attention. It is worth adding that it is also a highly usable book. Its tools for mapping dimensions of autonomy and for reflection on approaches to teaching are especially valuable, making the book an excellent resource for a short course or series of workshops, or indeed as a resource for teacher self-development.

The reviewer

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Reviews

The History of Language Learning and Teaching (Vols. I-III)

N. McLelland and R. Smith (eds.)

Legenda, Modern Humanities Research Association, 2018

Vol. I, *16th–18th Century Europe*, 203 pp., £75

ISBN 978 1 781886 98 4

Vol. II, *19th–20th Century Europe*, 318 pp., £75

ISBN 978 1 781886 99 1

Vol. III, *Across Cultures*, 286 pp., £75

ISBN 978 1 781887 00 4

This three-volume collection is the outcome of a project on the history of language learning and teaching supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the A. S. Hornby Educational Trust of Great Britain. Although many of the contributions contained in this collection originated as papers presented at a conference held at the University of Nottingham in 2014, it is clear that a lot of energy and perseverance has gone into the production of a collection of this size and scope. Not only have the editors succeeded in bringing together some fifty contributions (each of them peer-reviewed) ranging over five centuries, from a variety of Western and non-Western societies, they have also managed to cull these contributions from a pool of scholars, both acknowledged experts in and relative novices to this comparatively new field of historiography. Nine of the studies are in French with an English summary prefixed to them. As far as I know, this three-volume collection is the first-ever attempt at a comparative and truly global history of our discipline.

Volume I, *16th–18th Century Europe*, contains eleven studies of language learning and teaching in this period, arranged chronologically, from French didactics in late medieval and early modern England (Critten) to the early grammattography (the analytical description of grammars) of Portuguese as a foreign language (Fonseca). Although the two tail-end chapters of this volume focus on England, the overall geographical and linguistic range is wide, extending as it does from Russia (Rjéoutski) in Eastern Europe to Spain (Bruña Cuevas) in the south-west of Europe, and taking in the Czech (Fidlerová) and Italian (De Gasperin) as well as the French (Viémon), Portuguese (Fonseca), and Latin (Randén) languages. In the same way, Volume II, *19th–20th Century Europe*, contains twenty contributions. It begins and ends with issues relating specifically to the learning of French in England, such as the drastic shift in English attitudes to speaking French in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England (Cohen) and the evolution of French language learning in the second half of the twentieth century (Daniels). But otherwise this volume ranges over a variety of European languages, settings, and topics, like, for example, content-and-language integrated learning (Giesler) or topics in the teaching of English in girls' schools in nineteenth-century Germany (Doff) and German in Spain (Marizzi).

Volume III (*Across Cultures*) likewise focuses on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but unlike the other two volumes it has a thematic arrangement mixing target languages and regions. Part I contains contributions on the place of culture in language education (chiefly in early to mid-twentieth-century England and Germany) and on internationalism (Byram), while Part II comprises chapters on language learning beyond Europe, from Arabic learning by nineteenth-century visitors to Egypt (Mairs) via the teaching/learning of German in Cameroon (Boulleys), to the late nineteenth-century 'wave' of Japanese language learning in secondary education in New Zealand (Harvey).

With this large number of chapters on the most diverse aspects of language education across five centuries I must necessarily confine myself to some remarks of a general nature. To do so I shall base myself on one or two contributions from each volume, papers that have, in my view, a more general rather than a specific import.

After a general introduction by the editors in Volume I on establishing the history of language learning and teaching (HoLLT) as a field of scholarship in its own right and its relationship to the history of English language teaching (ELT) in the UK, HoLLT on the continent of Europe, HoLLT beyond Europe, and interdisciplinary and historiographical achievements so far, Reinfried (Volume I, Chapter 1) sets out to describe the evolution of the historiography of modern language teaching: from national views to a European perspective. He shows that at least two well-known individuals have been instrumental in this. The first was the renowned French philologist, pedagogue, and political activist F. E. Brunot. Not only was Brunot a contributor to the monumental *Histoire de la langue et littérature française* (1905–53), he was also the driving force behind the Alliance française, an organisation for the dissemination of French language and culture, comparable to the British Council, and still active in many European and other countries to this day. On his own, Brunot also wrote a prodigious 10,000-page history of the French language up to 1900. This work, unique in its kind, gradually defined the French predominantly sociological approach to research in language, emphasizing the formative role language plays in the history of a nation. Brunot is perhaps best known in the history of language education for his 1,000-page work *La pensée et la langue* (Brunot 1922), a precursor of the notional syllabuses of the 1970s. The second individual to play a part in the Europeanisation of historical language teaching studies was the erudite Canadian researcher L. G. Kelly. His *25 Centuries of Language Teaching* (Kelly 1969) was very popular at the time of its appearance, simply because it made interesting reading and was comprehensive in its scope. Besides, there was no alternative available at the time. I used the book myself with my students, much to our satisfaction. One of the merits of Kelly's work, however, is that it is based on primary and secondary sources and that it covers twenty-five centuries. One of its demerits is that it is chiefly a history of language education in the Western world (including North America) and that it treats language education in these often very different societies as a more or less monolithic whole. (Strangely enough, the full title of Kelly's work is wanting from Reinfried's bibliography, though it does occur in the text.)

Reinfried also mentions the voluminous work by the Greek/Canadian scholar J.-A. Caravolas: a three-volume history of foreign language didactics in a range of European countries between 1450 and 1800, published in French in 1994 and 2000. Reinfried deplores, rightly I think, that Caravolas does not highlight the common features of European development, while mutual influences and dependencies are only seldom integrated in this discussion. But this is what a Europe-wide, indeed a world-wide, historiography will need to do in the future!

During the second half of the twentieth century, roughly beginning with Kelly (1969), there occurred a shift away from the focus on French historical studies of foreign language education. Now collections of source materials from other language areas in the shape of excerpts from German secondary literature, biographical dictionaries, state school curricula, and anthologies began to be published, while influential papers from important meetings and movements (such as the Reform) also began to appear. Many of these source materials may prove invaluable for further European research.

In a separate chapter in Volume II Linn depicts the rise and evolution of the scholarly journal as a genre in its own right. Its year of birth was 1665, but it was not until the nineteenth century that the professional language journal came into being. Linn describes how the 1840s saw the foundation of journals for general linguistics, and like linguistic scholarship itself, the modern language journals of the last quarter of the nineteenth century followed the goals and ambitions of the parent discipline which up to that point were those of historical and comparative philology. At the time there was no clear-cut distinction between linguistic scholars and interested laypeople: language was a subject of interest to all educated people. Consequently the topics discussed in the journals could be almost anything related to language. After 1860 more scholarly journals came into being, providing a variety of fora for professional debate. One of these journals was *Phonetische Studien* (1888), the principal mouthpiece of the so-called Reform movement (though at the time known by a variety of different names). The title of the new journal emphasised the importance of phonetics as the 'indispensable foundation' (Sweet 1890: v) or 'unumgängliche Grundlage' (Sievers 1876) of all language study. But this title subsequently went through several changes, indicative of the constantly changing ideas and views circulating within the community it served. By the turn of the century (1900) the journal had been renamed *Die neueren Sprachen*, with phonetics studies in the main title having been relegated to a supplement. This signalled that it is not just the teaching of phonetics and pronunciation that matters but the reform of language teaching as a whole. *Die neueren Sprachen* has continued to appear to this day (with only a fifteen-year interruption between 1995 and 2010), albeit now not as a monthly but as a yearbook.

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Some readers who are familiar with German may wonder why in certain quotations in the article by Linn the German nouns are not capitalised. Here the author might have pointed out that at that time and in the early twentieth century many German scholars often used a type of *Rechtschreibung* (spelling) in their publications in which substantives were not capitalised (as they normally are), so that we may see *Phonetische studien* alongside *Phonetische Studien* and *Die neueren sprachen* alongside *Die neueren Sprachen* (e.g. p. 155). (Apropos of spelling: I found 'Acknowledgements' [p. vii] and 'Acknowledgments' [p. ix] a bit puzzling.)

Phonetische Studien was in fact already a full-blown professional language teaching journal and credit for its status must be given to the German language scholar Wilhelm Viëtor, himself a phonetician and author of *Elemente der Phonetik des Deutschen, Englischen und Französischen* (1884), a popular and broadly conceived phonetic textbook which went through seven editions. As the founder and editor-in-chief of *Phonetische Studien*, Viëtor was able to enlist the support of such forward-looking linguistic scholars from western and north-western European countries as Sweet (UK), Jespersen (Denmark), Passy (France), and Storm (Norway). Since then similar language teaching journals have sprung up all across Europe, varying considerably in the space they devote to linguistic and literary issues on one hand and the methodology of teaching on the other, the latter often turning out as the Cinderella of language education. Over the years part of the readership of these journals, mostly practising teachers, became increasingly disenchanted with the theoretical nature of certain contributions, which, as they saw it, were only very remotely connected with the classroom situations they had to cope with. As a result in Germany, as in my own country, these practice-oriented teachers began to set up their own journals, often as simple newsletters, with a more practical, applied, slant. Recently this has happened in the Netherlands where in 2000 the journal *Levende talen* (*Living Languages*) which at that time had been in existence for almost ninety years, was split up into a more theoretical *Levende talen tijdschrift* (*Living Languages Journal*) and a more practice-oriented *Levende talen magazine*, each catering for different readerships and needs. Many journals have since also gone digital.

Volume III opens with an overview by the well-known German scholar Friederike Klippel of the historical developments in English-language textbooks in Germany with respect to their cultural content from about 1700 to approximately 1900. Following McArthur (1992), she speaks of a 'market-place tradition' on one hand and a 'monastery tradition' on the other. By this she means the use of language for practical, 'communicative' purposes, whether by educated adults (such as travellers and business people) or youngsters at school, or its use for more scholarly purposes, as practised in monastic and grammar schools. It is obvious that these different goals require a different cultural content: culture with a small c (the way of life in a sociocultural sense) or Culture with a capital C (literary and/or historical texts, institutions of a nation, etc.). In their attempt to meet these different requirements textbook writers had to comply with the regulations of the state school system. Fortunately for them these regulations were often not very explicit, which accounts for the large variation between German textbooks from this period. There is at least one big difference between pre-Reform and post-Reform textbooks as far as cultural content goes: the Reformers started to replace German or 'culture-neutral' content by texts providing information on British and American culture.

As the Reformers worked in the wake of the Romantics they were deeply influenced by their love of popular culture and dialects, the speech of the common people. And by some sort of transitive relationship this love of popular culture and dialect study was in turn a shot in the arm for the study of living languages (and thus of phonetics) and associated (sub)cultures. Contradictory though it may seem, the Reform movement went hand in hand with the European movement towards nation-states. The latter movement naturally provoked the question of what constitutes a nation. This stirred up a lot of discussion in linguistic and psychological circles and produced ideas such as *Volksgeist* (national spirit/character/mind) which was supposed to be expressed by the language we speak (cf. Finck 1899; for further discussion, see Van Essen 1983: 56–60). In this connection the question may be asked whether information encoded in a particular language can be culturally neutral at all.

Here a brief digression may be in place. For years now it has been assumed that all languages have a universal base that is largely genetically determined, and a culture-specific superstructure (probably the bigger part), which is fully integrated with the base. Thus, much of what is transmitted through language, whether this has a referential or a social/expressive function, is therefore not so much universal as culture-bound (cf. Lyons 1981: 308). Some (e.g. Phillipson 2003) would even go so far as to say that language is not a reflection of reality but rather a conceptual filter through which we constitute reality and see the world. Whatever we may think of this

position, it is considerations such as these that in the past have legitimized a cultural component in European foreign-language education, even if *Landeskunde* (Cultural Studies) and the cultural referents of a language need not be coextensive (witness, for example, the massive cultural differences between and within the US and the UK). Such culture teaching traditionally regarded the foreign culture as a monolithic whole, a view that is no longer tenable (if it ever was) if we take the existence of subcultures and sociolects into account.

To return to our review, Klippel's account ends with the year 1900. However, it is tempting to trace the evolution of Cultural Studies (I use this collocation as a blanket term for a variety of cultural phenomena, as it has been done in the UK for roughly the past fifty years) from that year on down to the present day. Byram (Volume III, Chapter 2) recounts that after World War I there was a return in certain political quarters to the internationalism that had flourished around the turn of the century. This new internationalism was particularly apparent in the work of the League of Nations. The efforts of the League of Nations notwithstanding, the frictions with nationalism of one kind or another still continued. Naturally this was also reflected in educational policies. Ultimately the wave of post-war internationalism was short-lived. It gradually petered out in the 1920s and was followed by varieties of patriotism, which emphasised the learner's national identity. Following World War II the two German states pursued different *Landeskunde* policies; later on, around 1970, a number of factors (social, political, and cultural) combined to reconsider the status of *Landeskunde* in the curricula of the Federal Republic. A prolonged and heated debate ensued, which partly spilt over into other Western European countries, and which was decisively influenced by British Cultural Studies. The outcome was a fundamental change in the attitude towards the cultural dimension of foreign language study, which was now seen as indispensable in the acquisition of intercultural competence (Kramer 2000).

An approach to Cultural Studies which I sadly missed from this collection (because I was a proponent of it myself), but which was fairly popular in the last quarter of the previous century in the teaching of English, German, and French in north-western Europe was that which went by the name of *erlebte Landeskunde* (*civilisation vécue*). The idea was that learners, after having received ample classroom instruction on a certain topic in the target language, should find out for themselves what in a particular setting in the world around them would be needed in terms of language functions and notions. They would then go to a place (e.g. an airport in the neighbourhood), reconnoitre the situation there, take notes from announcements, signposts, and notice boards, and carry out interviews with foreigners they would come across. These they would record and bring back into the classroom for further discussion and exploitation. Project Airport, dating from the 1980s, was a successful instance of this type of approach to cultural studies. It showed, among other things, what eleven-year-olds are able to achieve once they are allowed to act independently (Legutke and Thiel 1983).

With the rise of such communication languages as English as a lingua franca (ELF) one may also wonder what the place of culture teaching and learning will be. This issue is not discussed in this volume, as it is not so much part of history as of the future. But it is interesting to speculate and extrapolate from the past. Then it is likely that once ELF is given the place that is claimed for it in ELT – and by that time I am sure a comprehensive literature on the subject will have accrued – emphasis in language education can no longer be exclusively on Britain or the United States or any other English-speaking country. For the majority of ELF interactions world-wide today take place between speakers for none of whom English is the mother tongue and for none of whom English is a cultural symbol. On these grounds it may be questioned whether the teaching of culture is at all necessary to the teaching of ELF.

Volume III also contains a number of studies on language learning beyond Europe. For example, McLelland (Chapter 13) tells us the history of Chinese people trying to learn a European language, in this case German. This is a territory that was hitherto largely unexplored as the language learning was mostly in the opposite direction and I must say this chapter makes wonderful reading. McLelland focuses on one of the earliest examples of textbooks for Chinese learners of German: Teufel's *Grammatik für Chinesen zur Erlernung der deutschen Sprache* (*Grammar for Learning German for Chinese*, 1906–08). She shows that Teufel's grammar is revealing in at least four ways: (1) Teufel had a nodding acquaintance with developments in contemporary foreign-language teaching methodology; (2) he showed an awareness of the difficulty for learners of the simultaneous mastering of new vocabulary and new structures; (3) he used a foreign language as a vehicle for the inculcation of his *own* cultural values, and (4) Teufel's language pedagogy suggests a more complex and to some extent accommodating

relationship with local culture and language (p. 208). I find this latter point somewhat cryptic.

In chapter 14 the American applied linguist Bale describes the vicissitudes of Spanish language education in the United States between 1914 and 1945. He details four strategies employed by the proponents of Spanish language teaching: (1) joining the chorus of anti-German chauvinists; (2) raising the prestige of Spanish by conflating it with Iberian (Spanish) and Iberian-American high culture, while ignoring the Spanish-speaking populations within the United States; (3) typecasting Spanish language-learning as an act of patriotism, and (4) depicting a knowledge of Spanish as relevant to US interests in Latin America. Bale concludes (p. 231) that these strategies failed to meet the objectives the proponents had set out for themselves. A century later much has changed but much has also remained the same. Geopolitical considerations as well as business interests still reign supreme in the hierarchy of motives to learn an additional language.

Histories of language education are usually about languages which, for one reason or another, are worth acquiring and teaching. Hitherto these were the major languages of Europe. As we saw above, and with the imminent global changes in industrial and trade relations, this picture is likely to change even more drastically. Harvey's account of the rising popularity of Japanese-language learning in New Zealand is a case in point (Volume III, Chapter 17).

The three volumes just discussed constitute a treasure trove to the riches of which a single reviewer can do scant justice. For me as an educational linguist the following quotations from the editors' introduction epitomise what the historiography of our field is about: 'The history of language learning and teaching has, like any historical enquiry, its intrinsic value: recovering our shared past. ... [H]istorical evidence is needed as a basis on which to build appropriate reform efforts' (p. 4).

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The Reviewer

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Cost Of India Shining

An account of India's identity-shifting scramble for global capital falls short of a satisfying exegesis

Amita Baviskar

OVER the centuries, the idea of India has inspired multiple visions and manifold actions. Venerated as sacred geography, fought for as Bharat Mata, codified in the Constitution as a democratic republic—each way of seeing has influenced our being and becoming, cultural identities and political movements.

Brand New Nation focuses on a much more recent idea of India—'India Rising', 'India Shining'. Unlike older ideas that are deep-dyed into popular imagination, this new vision rose rapidly during the first 15 years of the new millennium. It then deflated just as swiftly. However, Ravinder Kaur argues that, in its short life, this image revealed how the idea of nationhood has been transformed in the context of a globalised economy. Old formulae about India's distinctive moral place in the world—non-alignment, non-violence, unity in diversity—no longer apply. Today, being a global player means parading one's assets to investors and tourists. The assets are also newly minted. India is now depicted as buzzing with entrepreneurial energy, educated youth, and booming markets—all presided over by a government that's 'open for business.' This is the New India, conjured up by India Inc.

Kaur tracks this image-making from posters at the World Economic Forum at Davos to the pages of print media. She analyses advertisements and interviews the bureaucrats and ad-makers behind them. She places these marketing campaigns within the larger story of globalised financial speculation and production, where competing nation-states strive to become magnets for mobile capital. *Brand New Nation* shows how hope is converted into hype, how numbers like GDP growth rates acquire magical powers, and how this fetish of growth intoxicates its worshippers with animal spirits. It also connects the quest to attract capital to the desire of nationalists to get a makeover, ditching the dowdiness of being 'Third World' for the more upbeat image of the 'emerging market'. This account of optimism and anxiety, blind faith and folly, must be read by all those who believe the economy runs on rational principles.

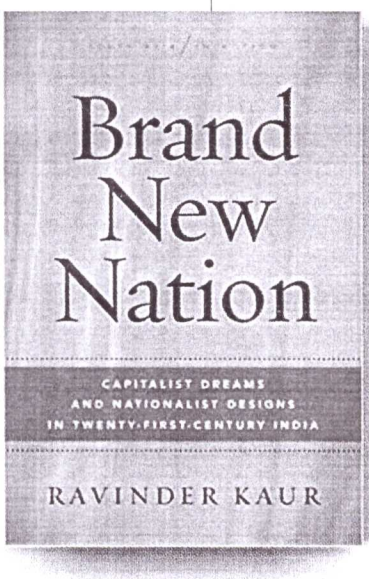
From the iconography of India Inc, Kaur moves to 'Incredible India', a tourism promotion campaign that tried to update standard yogi-yoga-tiger-Taj visual representations. Although her close reading of advertisements is insightful, it doesn't fit as well into the larger argument about how, in the 21st century, success for a nation-state is defined by its ability to attract foreign capital. Other chapters deal with 'India Shining', the BJP's disastrous media campaign of 2004, and 'Lead India', the Times Group's marketing blitz to gain credibility by adding 'activism' to the pap it serves readers. These chapters reveal a more complex—even contradictory—set of claims being made. Global capital is not at stake here. Instead, the discourse travels the familiar terrain of nation-building and national belonging. Thus 'India Shining' addressed a proud, prosperous populace (only to be repudiated by those excluded and disappointed). The subtitle, 'Capitalist Dreams and Nationalist Desires', suggests such a conjugation of old and new ideas. But these cannot be neatly packaged into the globalisation story. The book also argues that "it is no coincidence" that globalisation led to the emergence of Modi, since India Inc craves a strong leader. This does not explain the illiberal roots of the Modi phenomenon, which draw upon a substrate of social prejudices around religion, caste and gender. Political economy alone cannot account for the rise of social conservatism and authoritarian leaders in India, Turkey, Brazil and the US. The cultural politics at work are more complex. PM Modi's strongman image routinely invokes threats to national security. The idea of India as territory to be defended from foreign enemies, which probably won the BJP the 2019 elections, may be absent in advertisements but is one of the oldest and most influential nationalist stances.

Brand New Nation evocatively captures the zeitgeist of the glory days of globalisation. From the perspective of the present, where demonetisation, GST and the lockdown have destroyed people's livelihoods, India is neither rising nor shining. Crony capitalism reigns. Perhaps that was the subliminal text in the messaging: the idea that India is For Sale.

(The author is a sociologist at Ashoka University)

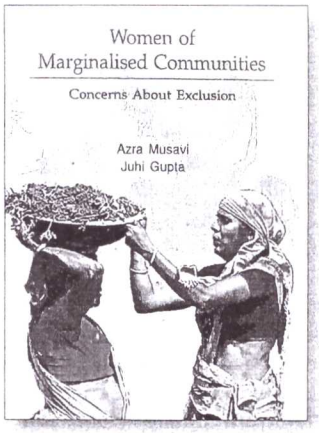
> THE BOOK CONNECTS THE QUEST FOR CAPITAL TO THE DESIRE OF NATIONALISTS TO GET A MAKEOVER, DITCHING THE DOWDINESS OF BEING 'THIRD WORLD'.

Ravinder Kaur
BRAND NEW NATION: Capitalist Dreams and Nationalist Designs in 21st century India | Stanford University Press | 360 pages | Rs 2,460



Gender-based brutality

The book makes a sincere attempt to identify the predicament of suppressed women who find themselves in a quagmire of ordeal set up by the majoritarian and patriarchal world view. BY **SHAFEY KIDWAI**



Women of Marginalised Communities

Concerns About Exclusion

By Azra Musavi & Juhi Gupta (Editors)

Sarup Book Publishers (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 2020

Pages: xxviii + 374
Price: Rs.1,800

SUBJUGATION and arbitrariness masquerading as cultural practices, religious edicts and gender perception continue to be the existential issues facing women. Discrimination triumphs over equality, the much-touted sustaining element of our social fabric. Frequent use of the language of discrimination for perpetuating gender inequity produces a trail of exclusions stretching to multiple spheres of life. Gender-based brutality transcends the boundaries of severe material deprivation and social isolation.

The concept of womanhood abetted by overt patriarchal customs gives enforced denial and abnegation a divine appearance. A skewed discourse wrapped in trustworthy vocabulary effaces the possibilities of empowerment of women belonging to marginalised communities. Marginalisation results in confinement, seclusion and displacement and other crippling disadvantages, and brings forth various layers of social closure. Social closure is the process of subordination, in which one group usurps all opportunities by bringing another group to its knees. To quote Raymond Murphy: "Social closure is a process of subordination whereby one group monopolises advantages by closing off opportunities to another group of outsiders beneath it which it defines as inferior and ineligible." Max Weber used the term social closure to discuss how power is derived from the process of exclusion to restrict access of marginalised women to resources and opportunities.

Among the suppressed and exploited female groups, which include slum dwellers, tribal communities, the differently-abled, and women belonging to nomadic communities such as the Gadia Lohar of Rajasthan and the Namasudra caste of the north-eastern region, the most marginalised are the Muslim women, who are subaltern within subaltern groups. They endure physical punishments and experience heightened suspicion and apathy. The prevalent economic and social indicators cannot ascertain their invisibility. Their deep-rooted privation on several counts in apparent and complex contexts manifests an ever-widening rupture in the social bond.

Victims of gender-based violence irrespective of religious identity, marginalised women are forced to fend for themselves, and their redemption through equal rights and active participation in the democratic process sounds quixotic. What constitutes the social universe of marginalised women? Why does their social and economic struggle against institutional control go unheeded? Why is virginity used as a pretext for veiling female eroticism? Why does their life-long segregation raise no eyebrows? These questions are central to comprehend the multi-layered social exclusion discourse which emerges as a new paradigm to analyse the dynamics of economic and social oppression. These pertinent points call for a judicious, palpable and nuanced elucidation. The brilliantly edited anthology, *Women of Marginalised Communities: Concerns about Exclusion*, seeks to respond to these queries adroitly.

The book, edited by Azra Musavi and Juhi Gupta, makes a sincere attempt to identify the predicament and plight of women who find themselves in a quagmire of ordeal set up by the majoritarian and patriarchal world view.

NEW MEANS OF EXPLOITATION

Academics belonging to various disciplines such as social medicine, sociology, political science, education, humanities, English, media studies, geography, and gender studies, through their perceptive research studies have tried to locate the suppressed

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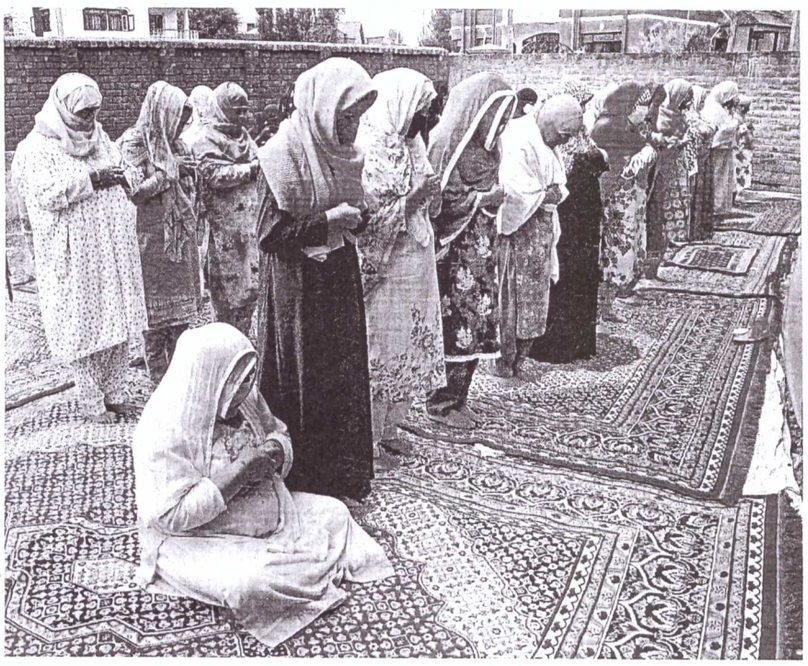

NISSAR AHMAD

MUSLIM WOMEN offering namaz on the occasion of Eid al-Adha, in Srinagar. As victims of gender-based violence irrespective of religious identity, marginalised women are forced to fend for themselves, and their redemption through equal rights and active participation in the democratic process sounds quixotic.

women beyond the quotidian narrative of victimhood and persecution. The articles explain how new means of exploitation in the guise of exigencies of governance prevent vulnerable women from joining the mainstream.

Eminent historian Professor Shirin Moosvi in her insightful but laconic foreword points out that women believe and nurture stereotypes propagated by the patriarchy. The narrative of inferiority keeps flowing, no matter how the socio-economic structure has changed. She writes: "Class-based societies have always found it advantageous to have men of oppressed classes believe that though inferior to the higher strata they were still superior to their womenfolk. The conditions thus appear especially complex in case of women belonging to the so-called 'depressed' communities. It is often seen, as with processes like 'Sanskritisation' (*a la* M.D. Srinivas) and 'ashrafisation' (the corresponding process among Muslims), that as backward classes go up in the social scale, women of those communities become subject to new repressive practices, e.g., prohibition of widow remarriage, increased seclusion (among Muslims, 'purdah') and denial of the ability to work outside the home and earn income on their own." Her observations subvert the popular notion that improved social status does have a positive bearing on the lives of women. Repressive methods continue unabated, and women continue to be subjected to cruelty.

With even-handed attention, the editors have divided the anthology into four sections to acquaint the readers with a well-thought-out debate on education, empowerment, mental health and the constitutional, judicial, and political status of women of marginalised groups. Much is said about the inhuman attitude towards women but no attempt is made to evaluate it dispassionately and place it in proper perspective.

CASTE HOLDS SWAY

One tends to side with Azra Musavi, director at the Centre for Women's Studies, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), and Juhi Gupta, assistant professor at the Centre for Women's Studies, AMU, when they correlate the complex process of marginalisation with the discrepant nature of women. The collective consciousness of women looks unpredictable owing to the density of centuries-old pain and anguish of denial. Feminist theorists deliberate upon ways to combat inter-sectional discrimination that looms large, no matter whether a woman opts for matrilocal or patrilocal way of living. Caste still holds sway over the fate of Indian women and the editors justly remark, "the domination of women under the patriarchal caste structure has resulted in women situated in various pockets of social exclusion created by the intersection of caste, class ethnicity and gender, experiencing discrimination of varying degrees across numerous aspects such as access to resources, social goods and services, political rights and power." Caste also serves as a potent mechanism to perpetuate subordination and exclusion, which according to the sociologist Anthony Giddens, "is not about graduations of inequality, but about mechanisms that act to detach groups of people from the social mainstream".

The assortment of articles begins with a prelusive article by Krishna Menon, dean, School of Human Studies, Dr B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi, in which she thoroughly interrogates the category of women. Womanhood is a social construct which takes a different shape in the cross-cultural milieu. Krishna Menon finds this concept both convincing and intimidating as she asserts: "Would this mean

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THE HINDU ARCHIVES

WOMEN belonging to the extremely marginalised Sahariya community at Kadesara Bansi village in Uttar Pradesh. Caste serves as a potent mechanism to perpetuate subordination and exclusion.

that feminist would need to abandon the politics of Solidarity? The lack of common content, however, need not necessarily exclude the possibility of drawing connections." She shuts out the emancipatory narrative of universal feminism and posits culture and space-centric feminism. She writes: "South Asian feminism emerges as a distinct possibility—not an inter-nations of South Asian feminism, neither unitary feminism of South Asia—rather feminism that while being mindful of the larger context of South Asia would also be alive to the complex histories of the specific places where women struggle and resist."

The first section titled "Education and Marginalised Women" carries five articles on education and health care, education and empowerment. They are "The Case of Gadia Lohar Women"; "A Relook, Towards Gender and Disability"; "Educational Status of Muslim Women in Murshidabad"; "Understanding the Marginalised Slum Women; and "Marginalised Namasudra Communities". The vulnerabilities of women can be dismantled only when restrictions to education are removed. In their articles in this section, Deepti Kavethekar, Monica Maini, Afaq Ahmad Mir, Mustafijur Rahman and Aarbinda Roy and Dr Sanjeev Kumar talk about the lifelong and intergenerational impact of the lack of education from different perspectives. It is distressing to note that the government does not employ a holistic and far-reaching strategy to resolve the issue.

In the second section, M. Ishaq Bhat, Zareen Fatima, Moazzam Ahmad Khan, Ishfaq Majeed, Sana Qadim, S.N. Fatimi and Ruchika Varma employ the case study method, a reliable tool of qualitative and quantitative research, to ascertain the impact of globalisation on Kashmiri women; the challenges faced by the women of the north-eastern region in combating inequalities; health and sanitation issue of slum women of Aligarh; and reconfiguration of patriarchy with regard to the mental health of women in Uttar Pradesh.

Here one looks for an incisive study of different but equally powerful sociocultural traditions in the backdrop of the attitude towards women. But, the text hardly lives up to it.

The third section devotes attention to the constitutional, judicial and political status of women of the marginalised groups. This section has articles by Ziya Hasan, Sadia Khan, Sarah Kidwai, P. Nandini, P.S. Sridevi, Sonia Sahni, Twinkle Siwach and Shewata Srivastava. At a time when inter-caste marriage is seen as proof of guilt that is met with severe punishment, Shweta Srivastava has produced a well-documented article titled "Intercaste Marriages as an Instrument of Social Change" in which she has made the runaway women of the marginalised caste the object of academic deliberation. Armed with empirical data and the Supreme Court verdict on the issue, she concludes that inter-caste marriages create a democratic and secular society. The development of the country is linked with inter-caste marriage because social opposition decreases the power and capacity of both males and females.

The fourth section titled, "Theorisation and Critiques on Various Aspects of Women's Marginalisation", goes into the theoretical perspectives and focusses on various aspects of marginalisation. Waseem Akber Baba, Mayauri Chaturvedi, Joyti Diwakar, Seema Kazmi, Aastha Mehishra and Megha Negi proffer an informed debate in their essays.

MUSLIM WOMEN IN HINDI CINEMA

In her well-rounded article, "Framing of Muslim Women in Hindi Mainstream Cinema", in this section, Nishat Haider identifies frames through which Muslim women are silenced, marginalised and rendered invisible in mainstream Hindi cinema. It is hoped that prospective film-makers find her suggestion plausible. She writes: "The filmmaker should not give voice to the Muslim woman in the sense that s/he does not speak for her; rather, s/he unblocks/frees space to allow her to speak; and her voice, in turn, revises the filmmaker's own voice that will offer new perspectives for the re-imagination of the complex web of Muslim gendered identities."

The collection of 23 articles bearing the fruits of research and academic rigour are invested with the possibilities of bringing in new perspectives and starting a pulsating debate on the elemental predicaments of various marginalised groups. □

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