

# EDUDOC SERVICES: BOOK REVIEWS



## Book Reviews

January - 2019



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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, 2019**.

**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.

**Chairperson, LDD**

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# THE RETICENT MS NANDA

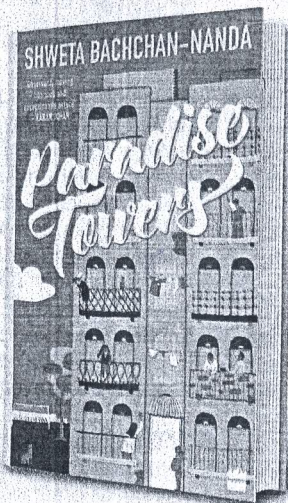
The media-shy member of the Bachchan family on her new book, braving criticism and why fiction is her comfort zone

KENNETH ROSARIO

Writing is a natural progression for Shweta Bachchan Nanda. Not because she is the granddaughter of Hindi poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan and Bengali writer Tarun Kumar Bhaduri, but by virtue of being shy. "Of all the art forms that my family dabbles in, writing suits my temperament the most," she says over the phone. On the day of our conversation, she had returned to Mumbai from a vacation with her family, ready to discuss her debut book, *Paradise Towers*, which has, in the last three months, forced the famously media-shy member of the Bachchan clan to give interviews to the press. It was only in mid-2018 that she made her Instagram account public, after launching her fashion line, MxS. But she says she is still struggling to get comfortable with all the attention. "You're famous for being related to someone famous, so it's not entirely yours," she reasons.

Growing up, Nanda was a shy girl who "lived in her fantasy world". Being driven between her bungalow and school, she silently observed residential buildings and made up stories about the people who lived in them. There was nothing in common between her rather protected life and an apartment building, which was home to people from diverse religions and communities.

For her first book, she was clear she didn't want to delve into a life she was familiar with, or worse, write an autobiography. "There's so much written about my family, some true, mostly not true, and I felt that it's not something I want to add to," she says. Instead, she chose to tap into her long-standing fascination with residential buildings and their robustness.



## ON HER BOOKSHELF

"I like reading all kinds of fiction and non-fiction. I read a lot of historical biographies. I'm currently reading *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* by Yuval Noah Harari. There's [Jane] Austen, who I reread her every year. During my writing, I read a lot of crime fiction detective books because everything ties up so neatly in the end. I'm also reading Louise Penny at the moment because I've just come back from my vacation. Otherwise, I'm reading a book called *Jahangir*. And I'm going to start Stephen Fry's *Heroes* so those are two non-fiction titles. A lot of my time goes into what's new or recommended. I listen to a lot of podcasts on books because it is very interesting. I never travel without at least two books in my hand.

quirks and eccentricities of different groups

du Kayastha") or her observation of Mumbai's apartment names ("A two-storey building would be called Quantum Heights"), they all lend themselves to plot points in her book.

She also casts an eye on domestic violence, which she passionately condemns. "It's something that really bothers me and it [also] happens to educated people and young girls, where you are placing your relationship so far ahead of self-worth, respect and sanity," she says, in one breath.

## Why fiction rules

Even though the book has been on shelves for just a few months, she already has an idea for her next novel. All she needs now is some time off to make notes and get cracking. It's the empty nest syndrome, after all, that encouraged her to write *Paradise Towers*. As much as she is relieved that her kids are old enough to not need her all the time, her daughter is also her biggest support during the writing process. "Families by default are very supportive," she explains. "They've enjoyed *Paradise Towers* and as actors, they thought it was a very visual read." But while her family of actors are under constant scrutiny for their performance and appearance, she is more likely to be judged for her intellect and ideas as a writer. Does that make her nervous? "Extremely," she replies promptly. "I am as it is a very shy person, so for me to be able to have something bright and intelligent to say every time a microphone is thrust in front of me, it's very intimidating." Despite being part of a literary pedigree, Nanda doesn't want to be too ambitious and plans to stick to commercial fiction. "Of course, people will say you have come from a literary background, but the

As told to Meghna Majumdar

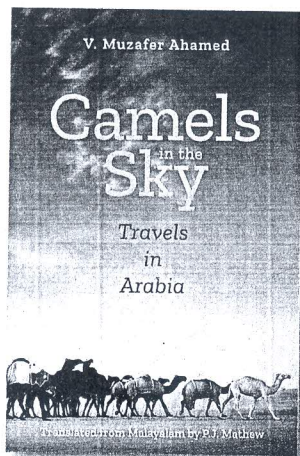
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# A date with the desert

A lyrical and compelling travelogue on various aspects of life in the Arabian desert. BY A.J. THOMAS

THE journalist V. Muzafer Ahamed began his writing career as a poet and writer of fiction in Malayalam. After a long hiatus, he resumed his literary endeavours during his 13 years in Saudi Arabia on a journalistic assignment. He made regular forays into the Arabian desert, first as part of his job, and then for the sheer joy of exploration and the discovery of many life forms in the desert and the numerous strands of indigenous Bedouin culture. Spurred on by the desert's magic, Ahamed wrote two travelogues in Malayalam, *Marubhoomiyude Atmakatha* (The Autobiography of the Desert) and *Marumarangal* (Desert Trees). *Camels in the Sky* is a collection of his essays culled from these books and translated into English by the veteran journalist and translator P.J. Mathew. Naturally, Ahamed's language is informed by impulses of the poet and fiction-writer in him, and the essays are both impassioned and evocative.

Both the author and the translator, in their "Author's Note" and "Translator's Note" respectively,



## Camels in the Sky Travels in Arabia

By V. Muzafer Ahamed  
Translated from Malayalam by P.J. Mathew  
Oxford University Press, 2019

Pages: 118  
Price: Rs.595

laud the efforts of the editor Mini Krishnan, without whose insight the book would not have materialised. And we do have a most unusual book.

Mathew has also written an erudite introduction contextualising Ahamed's work. This informative piece, which throws light on the early explorers and adventurers in the Arabian desert and the literature left behind by them, adds to the book's charm.

Comprising 23 essays on various aspects of the desert, Ahamed's collection is crisp, lyrical and compelling. The first essay, "Water War", is poignant and prophetic of the times we are about to face, even in a water-rich State like

Kerala. The Ramon Mag-saysay Award-winner Rajendra Singh, known as "The Waterman of India", predicted in an interview to Quartz India on May 24, 2016, that the Third World War would be fought over water. What we encounter in this essay is a similar war on a micro-scale. Ahamed's Saudi friend Abdurahiman Akheel takes him to his five-acre date palm estate at Sakakka on the fringes of the desert, close to the Saudi Arabia-Jordan border. As Ahamed takes photographs of the well at one end of the estate, a party of 20-odd people assaults him, hitting him in the face, and as he collapses on the ground, tramples on his back with heavy boots.

They are hoodlums sent by Akheel's neighbour who has had a long-standing dispute with him on the ownership of the well and who thinks that Ahamed is a Sudanese whom Akheel has hired to take photographs of the well to concoct evidence in his favour. The police arrive, and a criminal case is registered; Ahamed's innocence is eventually established.

Later, when the assaulter, having become aware of his folly and the deep trouble he has landed himself in, pleads for a compromise, Akheel does not pay heed, exulting instead over the advantage he now enjoys over his foe! Ahamed is reminded about the "water wars" between Tamil Nadu and Kerala, which have featured prominently in the media and politics of south India for many decades now.

"The Bedouin and the Gaaf Tree" is a deeply ecological piece. It is about the rarest of the rare "single-drop rain" that cools a single cell of the dead and withered gaaf tree in the desert, which has not seen rain in a decade. Only the Bedouin can detect this rain and they believe that this single drop will restore to life a single leaf on the dead tree. They call it "the mysterious poetry of the desert." With moderate rain, the tree will resurrect and live through the next rainless decade. The Bedouin assert that the gaaf tree will survive for three decades, with just two showers in between. Ahamed calls the gaaf tree "an appropriate metaphor for the Bedouin's life-

(2)

....What they say about the tree is, in fact, true about themselves." Further in the essay, Ahamed meditates on the many forms of life in the desert and their endurance. Once, he sees a bit of an Arabic newspaper stuck to the branch of a gaaf, as if the tree were hugging the letters. "Words (the imperishable) hugging the icon of survival," Ahamed exclaims in his reflection. The word "the imperishable" given in parenthesis above, is the literal meaning of "Aksharam" in Sanskrit and Malayalam. "A+ksharam (that which cannot be destroyed), indeed! This is a sample that brings out the tonal quality of Ahamed's meditative writing.

"Burn Marks of Death" is about a Nepali worker on an Arab's farm in a lonely part of the desert, who was swallowed whole by a python and remained in its belly for three days, and his horrible death thereafter. The prophet Jonah of the Old Testament, who was swallowed by a whale which vomited him out on the shore alive after three days and three nights, fared better! The essay highlights the hazards posed by wild creatures roaming the desert, especially to the hapless migrant workers who toil in an alien land to eke out a living.

"Cactuses Drink Moonlight" is an incomparably poetic essay. A full moon lavishes its love on cactus plants in bloom in the night, a romantic night when a pair of camels share a kiss. The author witnesses cactuses rising up in the chilly night, their limp pods standing up as if anticipating his embrace.

He says that plants in the desert respond to environmental changes more sensitively than the other living beings. The chapter also describes the sunsets in the desert, which turn everything around into classical oil paintings. It also describes the shape-shifting sand dunes when desert storms rage, obliterating everything in their wake. Countless oases, wells, rivers and even the arms of the sea abutting the desert have thus been covered by shifting sand dunes. This is how the chapter ends: "Khazmul Hisan (horse-snout river) and Khuweira Al Saida (white river with lukewarm water) are two rivers that vanished from the Ragba village in the desert, not far from Riyadh. The village had 17 poets who composed poems describing the rivers' moods. But there is neither river nor poet left in Ragba."

#### SURVIVAL SKILLS

In "Quivering Fossils", Ahamed describes the carcasses of dead animals and even human beings that are found in the village, dried-up skin sticking to the bones, much like fossils left from far-off millennia but, of course, of fairly recent origin. Humans get trapped in the middle of the desert and die of hunger and thirst, unable to move out either because their vehicles are stuck in the sands and they cannot move, and/or because they lost their orientation in the desert and had no means of communication to summon help. The author describes a near-disastrous experience he and his friends had when they ventured ill-equipped into the

desert to see the Mush-aikhira rock art dating back to the period between 3000 and 1000 BCE, and were caught in an ugly desert storm that had wreaked havoc not only in their part of the desert but in the whole of Saudi Arabia and in the adjoining seas, capsizing ships and causing scores of deaths and general devastation.

As they were stuck in the mud with their light car, having lost direction and awaiting certain death, a Saudi named Mohamed Qahtani and his five-year-old son emerge from the sandy haze of the storm; the father and son get into the car to help them out. The father starts the car in a miraculous move and the son drives the car sitting in his father's lap, pulling them out of the sand mire. Qahtani's dexterity with the car, acquired like his son's in his boyhood, and other survival skills that he developed are to be emulated if anyone wishes to survive in the desert in the 21st century! Like the Bedouin say: "If you befriend the desert, you can travel on its wings. Otherwise, caught in its horns, you can court death."

"Mirage, Mirage" is highly poetic in its descriptions of the shifting shadows that form strange shapes under a blazing sun. The author describes a journey he and his friends made through the desert during the daytime, chasing the mirages, which are so lifelike that you feel sad to learn that they are delusions, though real enough to be imprinted on exposed film frames. In this rather eventful, longish chapter, one comes

across this passage: "The eyes that mistake the vision for water offer comfort to the parched throat, albeit temporarily. Onward, onward is the message mirages give people in the desert. 'What you are seeking is there up ahead, chase it with patience and perseverance.' ...Chasing something that I know did not exist seems to make a better person of me. The yes-no maya seemed to exemplify the ups and downs of life." There is also the curious mention of women in the oases of the inner regions of the desert who drove tractors and other vehicles when it was strictly prohibited by law in Saudi Arabia at the time when the essay was written (2010), although in June 2018, this law was repealed.

Each of the 23 chapters deals with an aspect of life in the desert, its environment and topography, its ancient archaeological and paleontological sites; its natural beauty and the grace found in extreme physical conditions. Ahamed's internalising of these and his putting them down on paper has been with the passionate intention of sharing his experience with his readers at the deepest level. He succeeded resoundingly in his Malayalam essays. The translation carries the strength and beauty of the original, bespeaking its intrinsic quality and testifying to the skills of the translator, bringing out a text that both the author and the translator can be proud of. I am sure Mini Krishnan's unseen hand has healed and polished the sentences, giving them a finished gleam. □

# Fiercely honest memoir

The book takes the reader into the writer's mind, offering glimpses of the creative process, and is a forceful argument against labelling writers by gender and issues. BY SANDHYA RAO

"FOR all my writing life I have been asked, 'Why do you write about women?' ... 'Is your next novel also about women?' ... 'Damn it, I want to say to all those who ask these questions, writers write about people they know best, they write about things that trouble them. And so do I.... do you ask a male writer why his protagonists are almost always male? And why, when he writes about women, is he lauded for that fact?'"

This is Shashi Deshpande landing her punches in *Listen to Me*, her recently released memoir. Only occasionally does the private seep into her narrative and that only because she so chooses. For the most, it is the writerly self the reader meets in the book, and the direct, bold, lucid "self" that emerges is one who, it seems, has evolved over years of observing, listening and reflecting.

Author of books such as *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *That Long Silence* (Sahitya Akademi award-winner, 1990), *The Binding Vine*, *Moving On*, *Small Remedies* and *A*

*Matter of Time*, and on whom the government conferred the Padma Shri in 2009, Shashi Deshpande is scrupulously honest about and in her writing. "The discipline, the rigour, the integrity that writing demands, emphatically rejects self-indulgence," she writes. "Just as there is no room for love of oneself, love of your own words is also taboo. Writing demands honesty, it asks for ruthless self-criticism. And yet, while it may be cathartic to be open about yourself, it is also dangerous, because we live by some of our beliefs about ourselves."

In the process of shar-

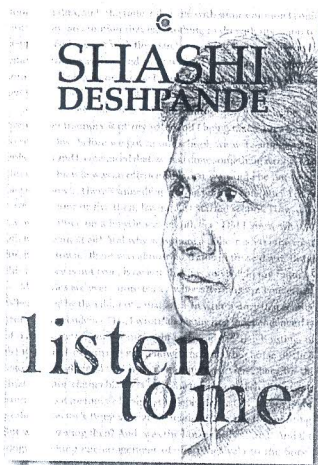
ing, almost despite herself, we see how she confronted the dangers so that, "After I had written *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, I realised that to write is to know the power in yourself, it is to defeat powerlessness. ... I had to go on writing."

Those who do not know or choose not to see, assume that Shashi Deshpande's life has followed the standard trajectory of daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, during the course of which, well, she also wrote. In fact, she speaks with distress of an interview published in *India Today* headlined "Grandmother writes old fashioned way", possibly

because her grandson walked in on the interview and because she had said she wrote her first drafts with a fountain pen. "To bring a personal identity... into a professional interview was just not done. Even more offensive was the fact that they didn't seem to understand... that they wrote this insulting headline only because I was a woman.... Would they have called a senior writer a grandfather...?" A fair question.

This is an individual who has written 11 novels, two crime novellas, a number of short stories, a book of essays, four children's books, translated from Kannada and Marathi into English, and has herself been translated into various Indian and European languages, not to speak of the conferences and festivals she has attended and lectures she has delivered in universities. The memoir, then, is a forceful argument against labelling writers by gender and issues.

Like much of her writing, the memoir, too, churns to the surface the human condition rendered with fierce honesty and fine nuance. It begins quietly, again, like her novels, but as you read on, you are so caught up in the crosscurrents of experiences and insights that it becomes impossible to put the book down. There are many references to issues concerning writers, such as the vexing business of reviews. But why worry about reviews? Because "there is no other feedback for a writer", explains the



## Listen to Me

By Shashi Deshpande

Context, an imprint of Westland, Chennai, 2018

Pages: 370

Price: Rs.699

(hardback)

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author. "Actors, musicians, dancers at least get an instant response from their audience. For authors, until the reviews come out, there is nothing. Without reviews, one is left feeling completely at sea about one's work."

Shashi Deshpande paints a canvas of writers and others she admires; equally, she is unsparing about those she cares somewhat less about and there are, in fact, some tasty morsels with respect to Salman Rushdie and V.S. Naipaul, for instance. A Wodehouse fan, she points out that he, "in spite of saying things in a light, flippant way, said many wise things about writers and writing: "There are two ways of writing a novel. One is to ignore real life altogether... the other is going right deep down into life and not caring a damn.'" She herself went "deep down into real life. But that real life for me was the life I lived at home in India, the life I knew so well.... Excellent though some of the Indian diasporic writers were, I often felt that after the initial surge of writing, which came out of nostalgia about their early years at home, there was a faltering."

Her views on the fraught relationship between Indian writers/writing in English and *bhasha* writers provide perspective, and she is clear on the question of who may write about whom: "Almost no foreign writer can write about mainstream American life, no Indian writer can write a novel without having Indians as protagonists. Vikram Seth's *An Equal*



V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

**SHASHI DESHPANDE**, during a discussion on "Listen to me" at the Bangalore Literature Festival in Bengaluru on October 27, 2018.

*Music* is a rare novel.... The problem starts with the publisher, who expects foreign writers to provide the exotic element, so that the books find a slot to fit into. Perhaps it is because of this that almost no foreign writer has made an impact on American literature." Coming from Shashi Deshpande, these opinions cannot be ignored.

Simultaneously, she is generous about sharing insights about the craft of writing. In the course of working on *Small Remedies*, she says, she learned "to hold on tightly to the characters and to let the facts seep through them, through their lives. Never to introduce facts which are not relevant to the story." Of course, she has the pedigree. As the daughter of the Kannada writer Adya Rangacharya 'Shriranga', she was exposed to the literary world

from childhood. However, with this came an unspoken literary responsibility. It would appear that even as she bears this with grace, she has not allowed herself to be borne down by it.

It is clear that her intimate connection with the real world has made Shashi Deshpande the writer she is, quietly defying stereotypes in spite of presenting a "typical" outward appearance. "Recently," she writes, "when an image of Indian women scientists in silk saris, with flowers in their hair, celebrating the successful launch of a satellite, went viral, I...thought... 'Bang! There goes a stereotype!'" And in the context of rape, she makes this sensitively discerning comment: "Men spend some of the best moments of their lives, some of the most tender moments of their

lives, with women.... Where does the hatred come from?"

There are as many different kind of writers as there are readers, and all of them advise aspiring writers in their own unique ways. Shashi Deshpande says that if she is asked, "What have you done with your life?", she will say: "I have read. I have read many books. I have read many good books, some great books.' And if the voice then asks, 'And...?' I will add in a small voice, 'I have written.'"

She then goes on to speak of her wonder at the aplomb with which a young writer, "presented to the audience as the author who has sold more books than most writers" accepted the adulation. "Such enormous self-confidence can only come, I thought then, and still think," she goes on, "with success, through earning large sums of money. And, perhaps, let me add, because the author has not read much, has not read the greats, she has no idea of her place in the world of literature." The frankness is refreshing and the love of reading, palpable. The passages describing, for instance, the excitement she felt when the Karnatak Granthalaya came to Dharwad where she spent her childhood should inspire everyone to go to the library.

*Listen to Me* is a journey unravelling places, people and ideas. More, it takes the reader into the writer's mind and offers glimpses of the creative process. Best, it motivates you to pick up books and start reading. □

5

# Unforgettable

Manisha Koirala tells the world how cancer helped her survive and thrive, in her new book



Manisha Koirala  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

spend the next painful year. It began with the trauma of uncertainty, an 11-hour surgery, and extended into 18 sessions of chemotherapy over a six-month period. "...the cancer had spread like a bowl of Rice Krispies all over the organs," she says in the book.

Amidst the feeling of "hopelessness, helplessness, powerlessness" in mind, body, and spirit, she talks of how family, group and support system, forming her strongest support system. She names all the people who stood by her, detailing the little things they did - things as small as putting a shawl over her shoulders. As she reveals, the positivity and hope shine through the dark moments. The book is roughly divided into three: the illness and fight for survival, her years in Bollywood, and insights into her own past behaviour and a rough guide to living differently in the future.

### 'I would create my own sunshine'

Manisha says she's in a good space today, content to spend time by herself, often enjoying solo travel. Before cancer, "I was not able to do that. I constantly needed company, distractions. Of course, we need people: family, a few friends, sometimes unknown people strengthen me." As for the party-friends back in Mumbai, "80% of them fell away," she says. She doesn't seem to harbour any ill-will though. "Today, my relations and friendships are more rooted and solid. Maturity and a life-changing experience lets a lot of fluff fall off."

Through the book, there are allusions to Nature: the mountains in Nepal, walking in the park in New York, watching a butterfly. "I feel I get a lot of energy from Nature when I'm by myself; I am recharged. During the shooting of *Dear Maya* in Shimla, I hired a guide, and we would go for treks in the jungle. This year I went to Austria - to Vranary, a health retreat. I'd love sitting by the lake, reading a book. I love watching the sunrise and sunset, and the sky, the birds." She says even the

I eat fish and eggs twice or thrice a week, but my body and mind have rejected alcohol



"I had kept notes during my cancer treatment, but I wasn't sure what my outcome was going to be," says Manisha Koirala, in a gentle voice, over a phone conversation from Kakhmandu. "A part of me wasn't sure if I would make it into a book. If it was going to be morbid, I wouldn't want to tell it." But she has told it, not depressing, but honestly, in *Healed: How Cancer Gave Me a New Life*.

In the book, she speaks of the life she led, beyond the glamour of *Saudagar*, Bombay, 1942: A *Love Story*, *Dil Se*. An alcohol ad-

dition, IVF, failed romantic relationships, even the fear of abandonment. "For a decade, I had abused my body," she says candidly. And in another place: "My state of mind was toxic, my approach to life complete and my attitude ungrateful." The realisation of all this came later through.

'Life was so fragile.' Back in 2012, she didn't know whether she would live or die. Diagnosed with late-stage ovarian cancer, Manisha went to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in the US, where she would

### EMOTIONAL NUTRITION

Rachna Chincholi, a certified cancer nutrition coach and nutritional therapist in Mumbai, helped Manisha write the book, in the initial stages. She speaks about why our internal environments are as important as the external.

"Cancer today is going to be as common as high cholesterol and prevent it but also on how to get through it alive and decrease chances of recurrence while increasing our quality of life and longevity. People with a higher emotional nutrition quotient and emotional strength are able to not only overcome even the deadliest of cancers but also snatch back their quality of life. Just like Manisha Koirala did. She is an amazing inspirational example of bravery and determination."

Being emotionally strong means nurturing ourselves via emotional nutrition. A lot of people neglect not just their diet but also themselves.

Within the scope of diet, foods that emotionally balance us are good fats present in nuts, seeds, organic egg yolks, extra virgin olive oil, flaxseed oil, fish oil (proven by clinical studies of Queen Mary University of London; University of Guelph). However, this is just 40% of our balance.

We need to emotionally nourish ourselves by putting ourselves first, spending time with ourselves, liking our own company.

A daily practice of moderate exercise, cooling pranayamas and meditation cleanses our mind and thoughts so that the gratitude we feel deep inside ourselves can be expressed better. We are so caught up in our hurried lives that we forget to enjoy the unburdened aspects of being kind to people around us and appreciating them.

The three components of emotional nutrition are: foods (as given above), self-nurturing, and moderate exercise with yoga and meditation.

These have clinically shown repair of telomeres, which are at the ends of our DNA. Shorter telomere lengths increase cancer risk. In cancer patients who did meditation for just 12 weeks and reduced their stress levels, an increase in telomere length was seen.

most crowded cities have and spaces that take us to Nature but we're so busy, we don't take them. She began to, only cancer.

She's more spontaneous and doesn't put her body in unnecessary stress. "If I at home, I will pamper myself with an extra nap, eat well, I spa treatment." She loves to indulge once in a while though her system calls anything very spicy or oily. "Fish and eggs twice or thrice a week, but my body and mind have rejected alcohol."

A new chapter in my life? Healed has both the raw truth journal, the sort you write when you know no one's reading; the wisdom of experience, kind you put out when you know people are listening, and the they will hear your voice. "We here to learn from one another's mistakes," she says.

She says she needs to use it voice for bigger things, but she's not sure what just yet. "I have dabbled with the idea of a foundation, but I'm a little scared of it much I can run it. I am not 100% sure of my management skills. Some donation, charity, is what I can do at present. I know that not enough at all. Someone like me can be useful in a big way will eventually end up doing something like that. But not in the immediate future."

This year, she's training to trek to the Mt Everest base camp. "I should value what we have and not take it for granted. I am the person today." Also, she'd like to travel the world to learn about various modalities on health and wellness. But, she doesn't plan long-term. "I have a vague idea keeping in mind the things I like to do. I am open to life. When you have such a close encounter with death, you know better."

Manisha Koirala will be in conversation with Dr Sheela Nambiar at The Hindu Lit for Life at Sri Mutha Venkateswara Rao Convent Hall, Chennai on January 12.



7/11/19, B.C. (Mitra)

6

# Poet of the Screen

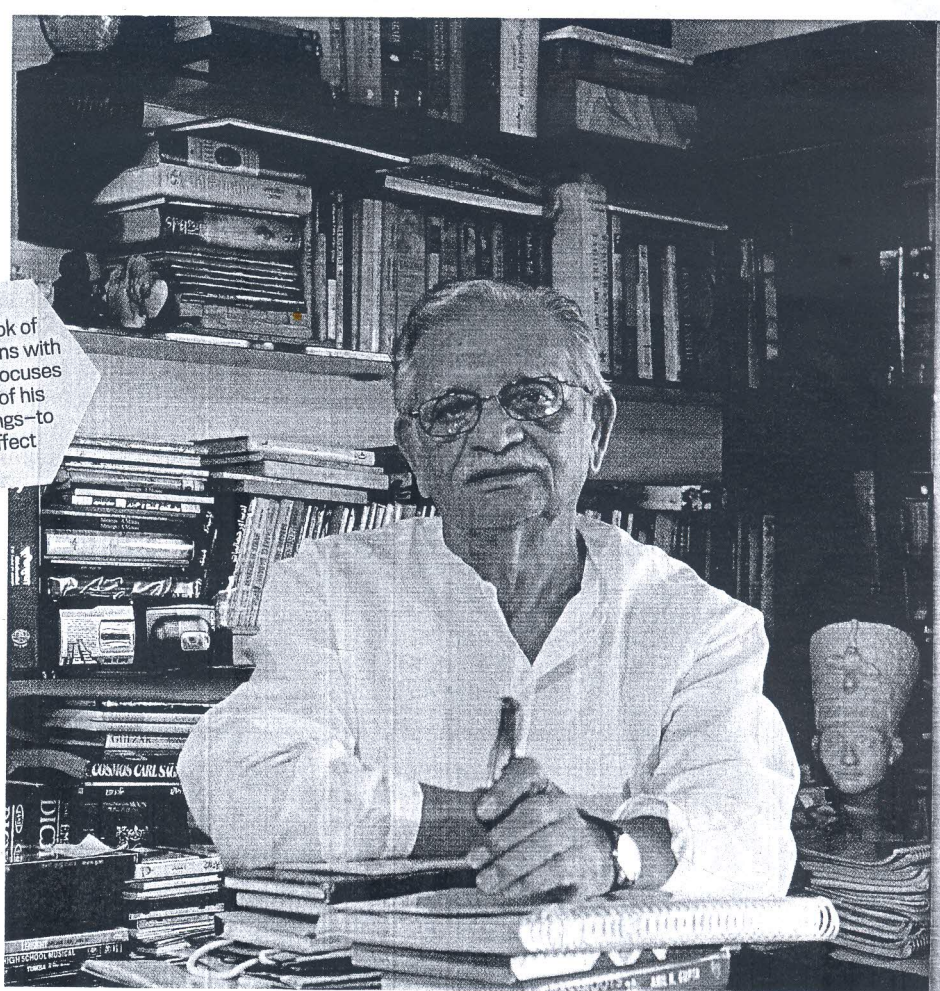
During a session about Gulzar's songs for a literature festival a few years ago, I had a minor panic attack midway through a question. It happened when I remembered that the man sitting on the next chair had written lyrics for Bimal Roy's stark social drama *Bandini* in the early 1960s, and nearly half a century later, for Anurag Kashyap's surreal *No Smoking*, Vishal Bhardwaj's *Matru ki Bijlee ka Mandola* and Danny Boyle's Oscar-winning *Slumdog Millionaire*—bridging filmmaking epochs, and movies so varied in tone, technique and sensibility that they might be completely different art forms.

Yet, Gulzar has not just retained his distinct voice through that vast body of work, he has also changed with the times, understood new contexts better than most writers of his generation, and adapted in ways that suggest he was always ahead of the curve, waiting for the zeitgeist to catch up. For instance, anyone familiar with his work will know how the unusual juxtapositions and counter-intuitive imagery in his lyrics—puzzling to many critics in the 1960s—have fit right into the edgy new “multiplex” cinema. They may even have helped facilitate this new cinema, since many of today's leading directors and screenwriters grew up with Gulzar's writing as a guiding light.

It's a daunting canvas, and

A new book of conversations with **GULZAR** focuses on a few of his iconic songs—to good effect

MILIND SHELTE



## JIYA JALE The Stories of Songs

Gulzar in conversation with Nasreen Munni Kabir

**SPEAKING TIGER**

₹499; 199 pages

for her slim book of conversations with the writer-filmmaker about his songs, Nasreen Munni Kabir took a pragmatic approach: rather than trying to be comprehensive, she focused on a few iconic songs through the decades, and allowed the conversation to take detours. This approach has worked in Kabir's earlier books (including a previous one with Gulzar, about other aspects of his career) and it works here. In discussing how to translate the lyrics of songs such as 'Chhaiyyan Chhaiyyan', 'Aane waala pal', 'Woh shaam kuch ajeeb thi' and 'Jai Ho!' into English, layers of meaning are uncovered. The leisurely interview format, and the comfort level between interviewer and subject, also allow for a freewheeling chat on such things as the line between sensuality and vulgarity in

songwriting; what love is like today, compared to in a bygone time; and the wrongfully attributed 'Gulzar poems' that get sent around as WhatsApp forwards.

And there are delightful anecdotes, such as the one about Gulzar, working for a recent film, being asked by musician Shankar Mahadevan if the song 'Humko mann ki shakti dena' (from the 1971 film *Guddi*) was written by him. Oh no, that is a traditional prayer we used to sing in school, said directors Shaad Ali and Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, before Gulzar interjected and said he had indeed written the song. It's a story that captures his stature in the film industry as a legend whose work has seeped into the DNA of our popular culture, and who continues to reinvent himself. ■

—Jai Arjun Singh

# On the road

Hindu; 6/1/19;  
Pg-16

An insight on journeys and more from a trip across continents

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR

Rishad Saam Mehta is an inveterate traveller. All he needs is the sight of a black tarmac and a set of wheels, and his reaction is Pavlovian: start the engine and get going.

Being a writer, who deals with automobile reviews, road-trips are part of his work. But his acute observations aren't entirely about horse-power and torque; they are also about people and diverse cultures within India and across continents.

It is a trait that was revealed in an earlier book *Hot Tea Across India*. And Rishad's droll insights are back in vogue through his latest writing endeavour *The Long Drive Home*. It is a tome packed with pithy lines, a wry sense of humour and helps us gape at Germany's smooth highways, Russia's Tundra landscape, China's hot-pot dishes and Burma's lush paddy fields.

The book chronicles Rishad and his fellow enthusiasts' 20,121-km-drive from Munich to Mumbai over 54 days, shepherding two Audi Q7s. A



■ **The Long Drive Home**  
Rishad Saam Mehta  
Tranquebar  
₹399

road-test that encompasses a study of people, weather cycles, urban and rural life patterns and the mandatory gushing about the cars they drive.

The last mentioned could be either seen as embedded journalism or that innate instinct in men, to drool over their vehicles.

Rishad had always hoped to do the great-overland – driving from Europe to India. And once his mentor Hormazd Sorabjee pencilled him in for the journey, a dream became a reality.

“There is a route, and it is one that stretches back to hal-  
lowed antiquity – the ancient caravan road through Central Asia that was once the only

link between Western Europe and the Far East, and along which flowed trade, artistic traditions, languages, social customs, diseases, inventions, spices, gunpowder and religious beliefs,” Rishad writes.

The lone deviation from the ancient route is one that is forced by geopolitics. He obviously could not drive a Maharashtra registered car through Pakistan and the paths were aligned through Europe, Russia, Mongolia, China, Burma and from there to Manipur's last border town Moreh before winding towards Mumbai.

The tricks he does to get a picture of the car next to a local monument; the search for a specific beer brand; the encounters with bemused immigration officials; or even the stoicism in dealing with broken bridges in Burma which forces his team to stay back for a fortnight, all make for an engrossing read.

And what do they yearn for just as they near the Indian border? A glass of tea laced with cardamom and ginger! Guess home is where the heart is.

8

# ON THE FRONT LINE

By Saeed Naqvi

I was reading Lt. Gen. Zameer Uddin Shah's memoirs, *The Sarkari Mussalman*, when the controversy about his brother, actor Naseeruddin Shah's allegedly anti-national utterances erupted.

The irony was stark. Here was the elder brother giving glorious accounts of his regiment in the celebrated battle of Longewala in the Jaisalmer sector during the 1971 war with Pakistan and the younger brother was being taken to task for the simple reason that those utterances were by someone who carries a Muslim name. The scale of Indian victory in Longewala is obvious from the number of soldiers killed: two Indians and 200 Pakistanis.

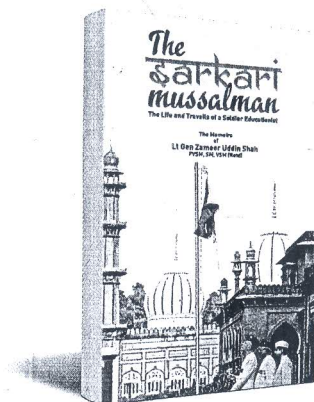
Well, Naseer's statement was not about soldiers but about a police officer shot dead by a mob outside the Bulandshahr police station. His point that more is made these days of a dead cow than a dead police officer incurred the wrath of the troll mob.

Naseer's other anxiety concerns people who are accepting mixed marriages as a norm. Though still a tiny minority, numbers in the metropolitan centres are growing. The affection with which Zameer, whose own marriage is conventional, mentions his sister-in-law Ratna Pathak Shah, confirms my impression of him as being quite as open-minded as Naseer.

I know I must appear to have deviated from the book, but I have not because the book is strewn with Zameer's hunger for diversity in all its forms.

The man's love for cricket, hockey, tennis, golf, angling and water sports qualifies him to be encapsulated in a quip: "Was everything by starts and nothing long."

But that demeans his personality. It is a satirical way of describing a man



**The Sarkari Mussalman: The Life and Travails of a Soldier-Educationalist**  
The memoirs of Lt. Gen. Zameer Uddin Shah; Konark Publishers  
₹699; 220 pages

**An account of the author's time in the army, the book is strewn with his hunger for diversity in all its forms**

of many parts. He writes with deep regret on how his switch from the cavalry to the camel regiment robbed him of his chance to play polo.

Accidental insights are scattered throughout. As defence attaché in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, Zameer travelled to several regional countries, including Yemen. During a visit to Najran, on the Saudi-Yemen border, he was intrigued to find a Pakistani garrison in division strength. It turned out they were posted near the Red Sea, during the

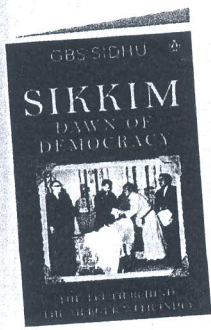
US's Operation Desert Storm in 1991. The garrison's apparent reluctance to participate in offensive operations against Iraq was cause for suspicion in Riyadh. In 1997, the garrison was withdrawn. Zameer then mentions the return of Pakistani troops to Saudi Arabia. This probably refers to Gen. Raheel Sharif, who retired as army chief in 2016. In their desperation, the Saudis had sought military help from Pakistan for action in Yemen in 2015, but the request was rejected by Pakistan's Parliament. An official military participation would have recoiled on Pakistan diplomatically and they would have been quite as isolated in the world as the Saudis are. However, relentless pressure from Riyadh forced them to find an ingenious route to help the Saudis. Gen. (ret'd) Sharif now serves as chief of the Islamic Military Alliance the Saudis have forged for their military adventures.

Zameer had a colourful innings in the army. His administrative experience stood him in good stead when he was elevated as vice chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, with which his family had long associations.

It is difficult to say whether he prides himself more in having led the army to halt the Gujarat pogrom of 2002, or in his role at the university. All one can say with a degree of certainty is this: he had a ball in life commensurate with the hard work he put into whatever he was tasked with.

Part of *The Sarkari Mussalman's* narrative echoes through his brother's recent travails. Sensitivity on that score lurks in the pages, even in the communal outburst of colleagues who have momentarily forgotten that Zameer is present, but none of it allows the book to lapse into bad taste. ■

9



G.B.S. Sidhu

Sikkim-Dawn Of Democracy: The Truth Behind The Merger With India | Penguin Viking | 240 pages | Rs 599

## Gangtok: Anvil of Statehood

Sikkim's democratic transformation into an Indian state was planned and executed by RAW. Sidhu, who led the team, gives a nail-biting account.

BY VAPPALA BALACHANDRAN

**T**HIS book is a frank, action-packed chronicle on how RAW achieved the second regime change in our neighbourhood in the 1970s to boost democracy and protect our northern border.

RAW's involvement in Sikkim starts from page 114, which quotes the late P.N. Haksar's blunt note of March 14, 1972 to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He said that India was losing the people of Sikkim by developing "great fondness for the Sikkim Durbar" as "we wait on his frowns and on his smiles". Haksar was unhappy with the appeasement policy of our ministry of external affairs, in charge of Indo-Sikkim affairs. India's rejection of pro-democracy leader Tashi Tshering in 1949 had emboldened the Chogyal, who had taken advantage of Mrs. Gandhi's weak political position after the 1967 polls. It was Haksar's advice that made her ask "[RAW chief] Kao in Haksar's presence to do something about Sikkim".

The 27-month "operation" started in February 1973, when the Chogyal refused to accept India's offer of "Permanent Association". The author had joined RAW in February 1972 after eight years in the IPS. Kao reposed full confidence in him to lead this sensitive task from August 1973, as successor to Ajit Singh Sayali, later RAW chief. Sidhu modestly interprets the appointment as India's deliberate signal to the Sikkim pro-democracy groups that New Delhi would fully support them through their representative.

RAW intervention came in three phases. The objectives were to combine anti-Chogyal and pro-democracy groups by uniting Kazi Lhendup Dorji's Sikkim National Congress (SNC) and K.C. Pradhan's Janata Congress (JC) for Sikkim's merger with India. First, it had to infuse courage among pro-democracy groups to offset years of appeasement of the Chog-

yal. For the first time, anti-Chogyal groups questioned his nomination route to manipulate majority after the 1973 elections. Then came the 'March towards Gangtok' (March 22, 1973) and anti-Chogyal 50th birthday demonstrations (April 4, 1973), forcing him to request India to take charge of the administration under the 1951 treaty. A tripartite agreement between the Chogyal, India's foreign secretary and Kazi-Pradhan Sikkim Congress was signed on May 8, 1973.

Sidhu led from the second phase onwards. Kao did not give extension to Sayali, as is usual to complete unfinished jobs. He deliberately appointed Sidhu to give an appearance of a normal transfer to avoid the Chogyal's suspicions. Sidhu gives a day-to-day account of his team's subterranean activities. MEA's political officer K.S. Bajpai and chief executive B.S. Das were briefed only partly on a "need to know" basis. The book gives frank details: motivating Sikkim Congress to demand follow-up steps of the May 8 agreement from Bajpai or Das, framing new election rules, getting the chief election commissioner of India to supervise polls, defeat-



RAW agents infused courage among pro-democracy groups to offset years of appeasement to the Chogyal (above). A march towards Gangtok and anti-Chogyal protests followed.

ing clandestine links of some Sikkim Congress leaders with the Chogyal and Communists, ferreting out the truth from discrepant intelligence from such elements, secretly vetting Sikkim Congress candidates' list in February 1974 and countering the Chogyal's propaganda that the new Assembly would have no powers. The April 15, 1974 polls gave two-thirds majority to Kazi's Sikkim Congress.

The resolution of the Sikkim Congress on the future constitutional set-up, passed by the assembly on May 11, was drafted by the author. Faced with the Chogyal's muscle power, he had to personally clear doubts of Kazi and others on the bill before the June 20 assembly session to consider the new constitution. The Government of Sikkim Bill was passed on June 28-July 3, 1974, and promulgated on July 5. A small cabinet headed by Kazi as CM was sworn in. Indian Parliament passed the 35th Constitution Amendment Bill on September 7, 1974, making Sikkim an associate state.

The third phase presented more difficulties. Bajpai, who was of great help in guiding Sidhu, was transferred. Das was also shifted. The new incumbents were not inclined to help. Quick access to Kazi became difficult. These fast-paced events reads like a thriller. It included the Chogyal's defiant visit to Kathmandu in February 1975, his press conferences, conspiracy to assassinate Kazi, the disarming of Sikkim Guards by the army on April 9, 1975, detection of the Chogyal's clandestine ham radio communication, unanimous resolutions by the assembly on April 10 for abolition of the institution of Chogyal, merger of Sikkim with India and the holding of a referendum for ratification. The April 14 referendum ratified this by 97 per cent. The Chogyal's press conference the same day disproved that he was under house arrest.

RAW's involvement ended on May 15, 1975 when the President signed the 36th amendment of the Constitution, incorporating Sikkim as the 22nd State of India. □

10

Demographic change

## People power

It is not quite destiny, but demography is too powerful for politicians to control

ONE CLUE to the character of a government comes from listening to what political leaders say about the national birth rate. Authoritarians such as Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Vladimir Putin tend to complain about it, and urge women to have more (or, occasionally, fewer) babies. Out-right dictators like Josef Stalin and Nicolae Ceausescu believed they could actually alter it. Grumbling resignation, or silence, is a mark of liberal democracy.

In truth, governments can do little to change people's minds about how many children to have. Even China's one-child policy, introduced in 1979, probably only accelerated a drop in the birth rate that would have happened anyway. Two new

**The Human Tide: How Population Shaped the Modern World.** By Paul Morland. *PublicAffairs*; 352 pages; \$28. *John Murray*; £25

**Empty Planet: The Shock of Global Population Decline.** By Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson. *Crown*; 304 pages; \$26. *Robinson*; £20

books portray demographic change as an inexorable force that, rather than bending to leaders' whims, steamrolls politicians and can change the course of history. They also suggest that what one of them calls "the great fairground ride of world population change" is running out of steam.

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81 Michel Houellebecq strikes again

82 Johnson: Keeping it in the family

Many people have heard of Thomas Malthus, the 18th-century English cleric who predicted that human populations would grow faster than food production, leading to calamity. The American demographer Warren Thompson is less famous. But Thompson's theory of demographic transition, which he outlined in 1929, has held up much better than Malthus's prognostications. To begin with, Thompson observed, a country has a high birth rate and a high death rate. As farming and health care improve, mortality falls. The birth rate stays high for a while, then it begins to drop, too. Countries that have gone through this demographic transition have lower birth rates and lower death rates than they began with—and many more people.

During the journey, countries acquire and then shed particular strengths and frailties, owing to the changing size and shape of the population. A country in the second stage, with a high birth rate and a low death rate, is young and fast-growing. When the birth rate falls, too, the country enters a wonderful spell. With fewer children relative to the adult population, but still not many retirees to look after, it becomes a nation of able-bodied workers. Then it grows old.

Paul Morland's "The Human Tide" is mostly about how this process has played out in Europe and Asia. Britain went first, to its great advantage. In the late 16th century England had 4m inhabitants—half as many as Spain, which helps explain why the prospect of a Spanish invasion was so terrifying. England's population doubled by the early 19th century, then went bonkers. By 1901 England not only had 30m inhabitants; it had also disgorged many people across North America, Australasia and Africa. The country dominated partly through sheer weight of numbers.

The populations of Germany, Japan and Russia exploded a few decades later, causing others to worry (with some justification) that they too would try to grab more territory. Their swelling, young populations gave them clout at a time when war was largely a matter of flinging bodies at the enemy. The late 19th and early 20th centuries were an era of pro-natalism, and of fear that other countries were reproducing faster than one's own. As a British newspaper put it in 1903: "The full nursery spells national and race dominance." ▶▶



That was never quite right, and seems even less true in the modern world of cruise missiles, international trade and soft power. But Mr Morland argues that demography continues to shape events. The Middle East, he writes, is unstable partly because it has so many young people. Japan no longer seems destined to be "number one", as a book published in 1979 had it, because it has so few. Demography can heighten paranoia and resentment within countries, when one national or ethnic group appears to reproduce faster than another. The former Yugoslavia, where Serbs moved to a low birth rate before Bosnian Muslims or Kosovan Albanians, is "an exemplary case of the destabilising impact of uneven demographic transition".

In the final stage of that transition, the birth rate falls below the death rate. That leads to population decline unless countries accept lots of immigrants. In "Empty Planet", Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson maintain that this is the fate of the entire world. As countries grow richer and more urban, and as more girls go to school, children cease to be economic assets. People begin to have babies not because they need them, or because village elders bully them into parenthood, but because they enjoy bringing them up. That desire can be satisfied with just one or two.

Mr Bricker and Mr Ibbitson regard a sub-replacement fertility rate (in which every woman has fewer than 2.1 children on average) as Europe's "natural state". They call the post-war baby boom a blip. Their

book argues that even baby-rich sub-Saharan Africa will gravitate towards the one- or two-child norm faster than the sedate expectations of UN demographers. This may be right. The demographic transition seems to be accelerating: Asia and Latin America went through it more quickly than Europe. To mangle a phrase of Francis Fukuyama's, the world could be heading for the end of demography and (eventually) the last man.

If so, it will reduce pressure on Earth's resources. But perhaps the cheers should be muted. Shrinking populations are hard to manage: towns must be replanned and pensions trimmed. And many people in the rich world do not actually desire one or two children. Fully 41% of Americans think the ideal number is three or more. Most families fall short because relationships prove too fragile, houses too expensive, bosses too inflexible and conception too difficult. Behind that supposedly "natural" rate lies much disappointment.

As more and more countries go through the demographic transition, something else is becoming clear. The challenges and pitfalls of population change can be handled more or less adeptly. A bulge of young adults may have been a curse in the Arab world, but it was a blessing in China. Countries can adapt to an ageing population—by welcoming more immigrants and making it easier for mothers to do paid work—or they can stick their collective heads in the sand. Demography is a mighty force. It is not quite destiny. ■

The world of work

## Nothing to lose but their laptops

The tech industry has ruined office life, according to one veteran

NEWTON'S THIRD law is that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. The titans of technology have amassed great wealth but, like investment bankers before them, they have discovered that this does not bring them popularity. The past few years have witnessed a "techlash" on a wide range of issues, including the way technology invades citizens' privacy.

Dan Lyons, a journalist who spent time working in the industry, has written an entertaining, if scattergun, attack on one aspect of technology's influence—the effect it has had on everybody's working lives. He argues that the industry has reduced real wages, made workers feel dehumanised and less secure, and exposed them to constant, stress-inducing change. Tellingly, the proportion of Americans who are happy with their jobs dropped from 61% in 1987 to 51% in 2016.

### Lab Rats: Why Modern Work Makes

People Miserable. By Dan Lyons. *Hachette Books*; 272 pages; \$28. *Atlantic Books*; £16.99

A particular target for his ire is the start-up technology company. With their sweet-dispensers and ping-pong tables, they may give the appearance of friendliness. But in the author's experience, such firms are associated with very high staff turnover, especially in sales and marketing. They tend to be marked by a brutal management style; Mr Lyons was told not only that he was failing, but that his fellow workers didn't like him. "Most startups," he writes, "are terribly managed, half-assed outfits run by buffoons and bozos and frat boys." Worse still, they offer little job security because of the way they operate. "All they have is a not-very-innovative business



The big chill-out

model; they sell dollar bills for 75 cents and take credit for how fast they're growing."

Some tech pioneers promote a new compact with workers which holds that companies owe them neither loyalty nor job security. Workers should expect to move on as frequently as singletons at a speed-dating evening. Patty McCord, director of human resources at Netflix, was astonished when a woman burst into tears when she was fired. She wrote a book saying that employees should no longer expect their company to help them with career development or acquiring new skills. The chapter about sacking workers had the title "People Very Rarely Sue".

Tech companies cover up their hard edges with a wide range of dubious management techniques. At the start of the book, Mr Lyons attends a Lego Serious Play session where he is asked to build a duck out of bricks. Lego-building is embraced by those who believe in "agile" work, one of the most popular management fads, whereby staff are organised into ad hoc teams to complete a specific task. All this approach produces, the author argues, is another set of meetings for employees to attend. Another fad is for open-plan offices where workers lose all privacy. The main advantage accrues to the management, since the design saves money by cramming workers into a smaller space. (When Apple engineers found out that they were going to be housed in an open-plan set up, they rebelled and were given a separate site.)

In the last section of the book, Mr Lyons cites examples from the alternative school of management that is built around treating people well, and thanking them for their efforts. Nurturing a reputation as a good place to work helps recruit better employees. Instead of obsessing about unicorns (startup companies worth more than \$1bn), the author thinks the world should look for "zebras", which can turn a profit and improve society at the same time. Many modern workers will agree. ■

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Ecology

## BOOK REVIEWS

with mysterious links to quantum mechanics. He has provided some references for these on p. 255.

I joined the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru as a research student in 1965, when research papers on the KdV equations started coming (including the paper of Zabusky and Krushkal) to the institute library. The subject interested me deeply but there was no question of getting involved in research in this area by a young research student without any research experience and with no one to discuss even the most elementary aspects. I collected about 30 reprints (including the review article of Miura – 1976). When I went to Mehta Research Institute (now renamed as Harish-Chandra Research Institute) at Allaha-bad, I handed over all the reprints to P. L. Bhatnagar, who was my research advisor at IISc during 1965–67. He took interest in the KdV equation, tried to promote it in India by holding a month long lecture workshop in 1976 (with only two resource persons, he and me) and wrote a book entitled *Nonlinear Waves in One-dimensional Dispersive Systems* (Oxford University Press (OUP), 1979). This book is available (with permission from OUP) at: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ffohxed111ZAPYR54rebewpENI-n\\_cIUu/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ffohxed111ZAPYR54rebewpENI-n_cIUu/view).

Much later, Zakharov was my guest at IISc and told me that he was surprised to see the first book (a good book – he emphasized) from a country where no contribution to the subject was made. Soon after, he got it translated into Russian.

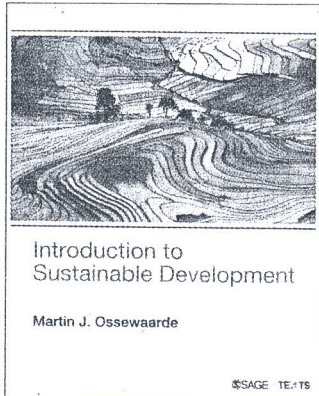
I have written the above two paragraphs with a feeling of disappointment since mathematical aspects of the subject were not pursued in India – also because I could not have pursued the subject. One of the finest contributions in mathematics and physics in the last century has been completely neglected by Indian mathematicians. There are some physicists in India who have contributed to the subject but their interest has not been in the development of mathematics associated with solitons. Kasman's book is an excellent one to encourage mathematicians to take note of the subject and start training some students at graduate level. The applied mathematics aspect, 'analysis of nonlinear PDE leading to dynamics of waves' is not covered in this book. Apart from Bhatnagar's book above, I mention one more book *Solitons: An Introduction* (Cambridge University Press, 1989) by

P. G. Drazin and R. S. Johnson, which can be used as a textbook.

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Economics



**Introduction to Sustainable Development.** Martin J. Ossewaarde. SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd, B1/I-1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044. 2018. xxv + 277 pages. Price: Rs 350.

Writing a textbook on 'sustainable development' (SD) especially for the undergraduate students is a formidable challenge. Yet, the author, Martin J. Ossewaarde has made an extremely good beginning and he deserves much appreciation and credit. The challenge lies not only in its multidisciplinary character, but also in intricate interactions among its economic, ecological and social dimensions. With a decade of experience in teaching SD to undergraduate students, Ossewaarde has brought together all the essential elements of SD in this book.

The book is divided into three parts more for convenience of grouping the issues; the fact remains that interrelationships and complex interactions among the three parts and their chapters cannot be treated distinctly from each other. Hence, this review is an overall analysis of the entire contents of the book.

The book starts with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set for the period 2015–2030. Ideally, it should

be preceded by reference to the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the period 2000–2015. It is important for students to understand that MDGs resulted in varied degrees of success across nations, and the overall impression is that failure to fulfil the target goals was mainly due to much greater emphasis on the economic dimension and much lesser on the ecological and social pillars of SD. Further, even before a reference to MDGs, the book (that is 'introductory in nature') could have ideally begun with a brief narrative of how Earth is at a cross-roads, brought about by anthropogenic activities leading to environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, depletion of finite natural resources, population growth beyond the 'carrying capacity' of the planet and technology-driven economic growth through production of largely inessential consumer goods, etc. Today, the threat of a 'tipping point' related to global warming and climate change is looming large.

The year 1968 is notably significant when M.S. Swaminathan, the architect of India's 'Green Revolution' referred to it as 'exploitative and unsustainable' in the long run. Then in 1972, publication of *Limits to Growth* (Meadows, D. et al., Universe Books, New York, 1972, p. 211) for the Club of Rome, and the UN Conference on 'Human Environment' (Stockholm, Sweden, June 1972) moved the world leaders to realize that development by exploitation of the finite natural sources cannot go on indefinitely and that environmental degradation cannot be effectively tackled without also addressing poverty, especially the rural poverty due to lack of livelihoods. Consequently, the Gro Harlem Brundtland Report *Our Common Future* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 1987, p. 416) defined SD, and provided the base material for holding the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Among its outcomes, the 'Agenda 21' calling upon the Member nations to embark on SD provided major thrust for action.

The author's statement that the policies and actions of the World Bank, World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund have not been conducive for promoting SD, especially in the developing world is appropriate. He has also pointed out that globalization encourages the spread of Western

ecology

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KdV Equation (which was derived to explain Russell's observation) so different than most nonlinear PDEs, what other equations have these properties, and what can we do with that information?

The connection between solitary waves and algebraic geometry is introduced in chapter 4, where the contribution of Korteweg and de Vries is reviewed. They showed that under a simple assumption about the behavior of its solutions, the wave equation bearing their name transforms into a familiar form and hence can be solved using knowledge of elliptic curves and functions. The computer program *Mathematica* here is used to introduce the Weierstrass  $\mathcal{P}$ -function and its properties without requiring the background in complex analysis which would be necessary to work with this object unassisted.

The  $n$ -soliton solutions of the KdV Equation are generalizations of the solitary wave solutions discovered by Korteweg and de Vries based on Russell's observations. At first glance, they appear to be linear combinations of those solitary wave solutions, although the nonlinearity of the equation and closer inspection reveal this not to be the case. These solutions are introduced and studied in chapter 5.

Although differential operators were introduced in chapter 1 only in the context of linear differential equations, it turns out that their algebraic structure is useful in understanding the KdV equation and other nonlinear equations like it. Rules for multiplying and factoring differential operators are provided in chapter 6.

Chapter 7 presents a method for making an  $n \times n$  matrix  $M$  depending on a variable  $t$  with two interesting properties: its eigenvalues do not depend on  $t$  (the matrix is *isospectral*) and its derivative with respect to  $t$  is equal to  $AM - MA$  for a certain matrix  $A$  (so it satisfies a differential equation). This digression into linear algebra is connected to the main subject of the book in chapter 8. There we rediscover the important observation of Peter Lax that the KdV Equation can be produced by using the 'trick' from chapter 7 applied not to matrices but to a differential operator (like those in chapter 6) of order two. This observation is of fundamental importance not only because it provides an algebraic method for solving the KdV Equation, but also because it can be used to produce and

recognize *other* soliton equations. By applying the same idea to other types of operators, we briefly encounter a few other examples of nonlinear partial differential equations which, though different in other ways, share the KdV Equation's remarkable properties of being exactly solvable and supporting soliton solutions.

Chapter 9 introduces the KP Equation, which is a generalization of the KdV Equation involving one additional spatial dimension (so that it can model shallow water waves on the surface of the ocean rather than just waves in a canal). In addition, the Hirota Bilinear version of the KP Equation and techniques for solving it are presented. Like the discovery of the Lax form for the KdV Equation, the introduction of the Bilinear KP Equation is more important than it may at first appear. It is not simply a method for producing solutions to this one equation, but a key step towards understanding the geometric structure of the solution space of soliton equations.

The wedge product of a pair of vectors in a 4-dimensional space is introduced in chapter 10 and used to motivate the definition of the Grassmann Cone  $\Gamma_{2,4}$ . Like elliptic curves, this is an object that was studied by algebraic geometers before the connection to soliton theory was known. This chapter proves a finite dimensional version of the theorem discovered by Mikio Sato who showed that the solution set to the Bilinear KP Equation has the structure of an infinite dimensional Grassmannian. This is used to argue that the KP Equation (and soliton equations in general) can be understood as algebro-geometric equations which are merely *disguised* as differential equations.

Some readers may choose to stop at chapter 10, as the connection between the Bilinear KP Equation and the Plücker relation for  $\Gamma_{2,4}$  makes a suitable 'finale', and because the material covered in the last two chapters necessarily involves a higher level of abstraction.

Extending the algebra of differential operators to pseudo-differential operators and the KP Equation to the entire KP Hierarchy, as is done in chapter 11, is only possible if the reader is comfortable with the infinite. Pseudo-differential operators are infinite series and the KP Hierarchy involves infinitely many variables. Yet, the reader who persists is rewarded in chapter 12 by the power and

beauty of Sato's theory which demonstrates a complete equivalence between the soliton equations of the KP Hierarchy and the infinitely many algebraic equations characterizing all possible Grassmann Cones.

A concluding chapter reviews what we have covered, which is only a small portion of what is known so far about soliton theory, and also hints at what more there is to discover. The appendices which follow it are a *Mathematica* tutorial, supplementary information on complex numbers, a list of suggestions for independent projects which can be assigned after reading the book, the bibliography, a Glossary of Symbols and an Index.

There are also four 'Big Questions' in chapter 3 entitled 'Story of solitons'. Kasman answers these questions gradually by the end of the book. I quote them from the book.

**'Big Question I** Why is it that we can write so many exact solutions to the KdV Equation when we cannot do so for most nonlinear equations?

**'Big Question II** The relationship between the  $n$ -soliton solutions and the  $n$  different 1-soliton solutions that it resembles suggests there is some way in which solutions of the KdV Equation can be combined. We know that they are not actually linear combinations and do not form a vector space. What is the method in which solutions are combined and can we give them a geometric structure analogous to the vector space structure for solutions to linear equations?

**'Big Question III** How can we identify *other* equations – either known already to researchers or yet to be discovered – that have these same interesting features?

**'Big Question IV** What can we do with this new information?

The briefest possible answer to these questions is to note that the KdV Equation has a hidden underlying algebraic structure that generic nonlinear PDEs do not share, but that by understanding this structure we can find infinitely many other equations that share all of these features and so also deserve the name 'soliton equations'.

Kasman wrote this book for undergraduate students, but he keeps on reminding us that the subject is an active area of research integrating algebraic geometry, probability and statistics, symplectic geometry, Lie algebra and Lie groups

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Hindu; 20/1/19; Pg 116

# Dissenting voice

A critique of the Modi government falls short on analysis

KANDASWAMI SUBRAMANIAN

Yashwant Sinha is angry over the economic management of the Narendra Modi government. In his early years, Sinha was a socialist and a Finance Minister in Chandra Shekhar's cabinet. In time, he moved over to the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) and served in the Vajpayee government as Finance Minister for four years and as Foreign Minister for a year. A loyal BJP acolyte, he has all the credentials to critique the policies of his government in *India Unmade*. But why now?

As he says in a dramatic vein, with the BJP coming to power, "India was blessed with a single-party government after three decades. Hopes soared, aspirations rose sky-high, and every section of the population looked forward to a new dawn."

He laments how "the elusive dawn never materialized... and hope turned into despair, despair into anger and anger turned into rage" among farmers, youth, Dalits, minorities. Overall, the essence of his charge is this: "The Modi government is



■ **India Unmade: How the Modi Government Broke the Economy**

Yashwant Sinha with Aditya Sinha  
Juggernaut  
₹699

just about event management. He is the best in creating false impression. In the process, Modi has given India its 'lost half-decade.'" Critics of the Modi government may agree with this summation. However, it is difficult to say that the detailed narration in the eleven chapters (plus an epilogue) lends support to it.

For instance, Sinha has a pathological aversion to demonetisation. He feels that it has "unmade" India. There are references to demonetisation in every chapter; but these are more

in the nature of assertions rather than analysis-based conclusions.

Sinha appears to be still driven by his experience while he was Finance Minister in the Vajpayee government. He fails to reckon that the global scenario is vastly changed and there are limits to and doubts about investment-driven policies.

But his treatment of "make in India" policies is sound and explains how it serves more to attract foreign direct investment. Where Sinha proves his loyalty to the BJP is in dealing with the various Pradhan Mantri schemes, he approves of most barring Swachh Bharat. And he entirely leaves out larger issues such as autonomy of institutions, spreading majoritarian and divisive policies, beef killings.

This book falls between two stools: it is neither an economic treatise, nor a political pamphlet. It seems to have been written in a hurry revealing the absence of inner democracy in the BJP which would have learnt a few lessons from the recent elections in the Hindi heartland

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**ENGINEERING IN ELEMENTARY STEM EDUCATION: CURRICULUM DESIGN, INSTRUCTION, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT**

Christine M. Cunningham

Teachers College Press (c), New York. 2018. 176 pages. ISBN: 13: 978-0807758779

*Engineering in Elementary STEM Education* by Christine Cunningham presents a complete framework to integrate, implement, and assess engineering experiences in elementary education. The book is well-timed in addressing major challenges faced by elementary educators:

- a) How to meaningfully bring engineering design into their classrooms?
- b) How to integrate engineering into the academic core (i.e., Science, Math and ELA)?
- c) How to engage elementary students in engineering that enhances their disciplinary learning as well as promoting engineering practices? And
- d) How might efforts to integrate engineering align with the new standards?

The book explores unique opportunities provided by engineering instruction. The author acknowledges traditional instruction and standardized testing as factors that restrict student learning and creativity. In response, Cunningham offers engineering for its inherent capacity to support student problem solving. Rather than an added demand on teachers, engineering is portrayed as an innovative platform for advancing elementary education. The book skillfully explains the benefits of introducing engineering early into formal education to motivate students to learn while enhancing their science and math understanding. While doing so the author narrates her experiences in a biographical style that inspires and appeals to the reader.

The book is pitched to a wide audience including elementary classroom teachers, science specialists, science, and engineering educators and researchers interested in both formal as well as informal learning environments. The individual chapters are presented in a coherent way that first presents a rationale for engineering in elementary classrooms. Next, the author unpacks core concepts for engineering, the design principles, and relevant aspects for elementary classrooms. The book then addresses typical teacher concerns by presenting engineering as an achievable outcome for elementary students and teachers. The book concludes with an in-depth discussion of the impact of engineering education on all the related consumers and partners in the education system. The book is an evidence of the author and her team's hard work and persistence in understanding and promoting engineering in elementary classrooms. The supporting vignettes, case studies, and assessments present *Engineering is Elementary* as a complete curriculum to enhance student learning through active participation. This places the author among educational leaders who have supported and contributed to the field of elementary engineering education in a significant way.

Engineering education is new to elementary schools and integrating it with learning experiences for young students is not an easy task. Although the book is an exceptional resource, it raises questions and conflicts with respect to current science education frameworks. As the author presents an overview of STEM and the practices of science and engineering as outlined in the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS Lead States, 2013), not much is acknowledged about the decades of research on science inquiry, ideas that students hold, and recent work in the fields of science and engineering practices. A researcher may feel that the work suffers due to the lack of

references. Also, the slightly auto-biographical tone might be highly appreciated by general audience and in fact makes it a welcome reading for teachers, it may conflict with the interests of a research-oriented audience. Similarly, the vignettes and positive conversations with teachers provide examples from real classrooms illustrate the strength of the curriculum. However, to more fully appreciate the context, it would have been beneficial to also read about limitations of failures of projects and smaller research studies conducted.

Wearing a teacher educator hat, I see the book as presenting exciting and inspirational materials for pre-service as well as in-service teachers. At the same time, certain potential discussions that may arise concern me. First teach engineering at elementary school level versus engage in engineering design at elementary school level. These are two distinct goals. With the primary intention to create a platform to engage in problem solving, no doubt engaging students in engineering design seems to be a major goal. However certain elements of the curriculum that focus on testing students for engineering vocabulary and specific engineering field related information - there may be benefits to this - risks sending confusing messages about the goals of introducing engineering in elementary classrooms. This needs to be clarified for novice teachers with limited understanding on curriculum materials or teachers new to engineering who would look up to the book as a resource to develop their understanding of the discipline. Second, use of stereotypical characters. The curriculum sought to contextualize engineering problems and support students with diverse backgrounds identify with engineering. Readers with a diverse background may also perceive this as a situation leading to conflicts and widening cultural gaps in classrooms. Ways to avoid potential conflicts may come easily to a veteran teacher. However, new teachers need to be aware of these concerns and take precautions while attempting the use the suggested curriculum. A note from the author to this effect would have well reflected the completeness of the framework for this curriculum.

As a science and engineering educator, it is interesting and helpful to read about the curriculum development process and the engineering design principles established. As a science educator who embraces the idea of integration and supports engineering in elementary classrooms, it would be of immense value to have a few questions answered. How does the curriculum support multiple designs or solution diversity that is not only a requirement of the standards but also an inherent part of engineering as a discipline? Most examples cited in the book, talk about providing students with fixed materials and present teachers with a fixed plan. Considering real classroom material management issues, most teachers would appreciate the plan. However this poses a potential threat to solution diversity especially for novice or teachers new to engineering. An elaboration to this effect and an acknowledgment that no curriculum could be teacher proof- may have helped readers appreciate the authors' stance while avoiding potential myths.

While the said critique is aimed at giving a detailed review of the book and its content from a researcher and teacher educator's perspective, it definitely credits the author and recognizes the hard work, the timely efforts and the insights of the author in presenting this book and in delivering Engineering is Elementary to the education community. This book reveals the author's success with realizing a major goal for the elementary education community. It will inspire and encourage readers to appreciate the "E" in STEM education and explore its benefits towards preparing a next generation of citizens.

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## REFERENCE

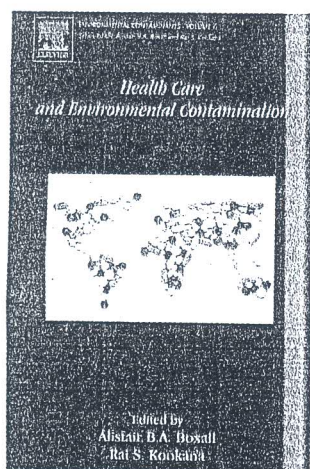
NGSS Lead States (2013). *Next Generation Science Standards: For states, by states*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Science edn.

Elementary edn. ✓

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BOOK REVIEWS



**Health Care and Environmental Contamination.** Alistair B. A. Boxall and Rai S. Kookana (eds). Elsevier, Radarweg 29, PO Box 211, 1000 AE Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2018. xi+267 pages. Price: US\$ 175.00.

This book under review deals with the important aspect of managing health care waste and its influence on the environment. It provides a fluidic view of current production practices, the source, effects and management of waste through aptly phrased 'sustainable pharmacy', and through policy regulations and risk assessment. The book also provides a systematic approach that can help in developing the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda through effectively monitoring and managing pharma waste. In all countries across the world health care is a major sector that is growing with a large consumer base, and countries like India need to assess the risk due to existing conditions and manufacturing technologies and supply chain mismanagement. Consumers are the most affected due to either mismanaged availability of pharma products or being illiterate to understand the effects of bioactive compounds that may affect the environment and humans.

Chapter 2 highlights the usage of both personal care and pharma products and their contribution of chemical pollutants to land and aquatic environments. The authors mention about the practice across the globe to mix pharma waste with municipal sewage. Wastewater treatment plants help remove all effluents, but the process by which this is done determines its capacity of removal. Chapter 2 also describes different methods of treatment of municipal sewage contaminated by

pharma and personal care effluents such as conventional activated sludge (CAS), sequential batch reactor (SBR) and ultraviolet (UV). However, these cannot remove the entire effluent category of harmful chemicals. Chapter 3 deals with the chemical composition and transformation of these chemicals. It explains how the different environments are effected with transformation through photolysis, hydrolysis and biological degradation. This chapter also explains how bio-solids are becoming a valued resource due to their application as a resource utility in agriculture sector and for maintaining the availability of water through reuse. The chapter concludes with aspects of the need to define risks to humans and environmental health through understanding the contaminants and their fate.

Chapter 4 discusses about ecotoxicology and health care. It mentions that current tools to estimate bioaccumulation and ecotoxicology are inadequate and more work is being focused on developing biological characteristics read across for mammalian safety, fish plasma modelling and behavioural ecotoxicology. Models and tests have been explained to help the reader understand these aspects in detail to end such opportunities in science and to end this environmental pollution. Chapter 5 focuses on terrestrial ecotoxicity. It gives an introduction on how the pharma waste enters municipal waste through various sources. Readers would be able to relate this to their everyday lifestyle and activities around them. This can cause soil ecotoxicity through invertebrate and entering the dairy products and increasing hydrophobicity and plant ecotoxicity through uptake by plants and affecting the consumable range of vegetables. The chapter also packs in aspects of how future directions of research have to be rooted.

Wildlife has also been exposed to such hazards, including birds, mammals, amphibians, etc. Chapter 6 focuses on how ecotoxicity would affect wildlife and in turn the risk of exposure that needs immediate attention. It also mentions that there will be harmful transfer of the hazards through wildlife as vectors. Authors address the environmental exposure effect through analysis of each category and its effects. Chapter 7 focuses on the effects of pharma industries on human health. This chapter is an important aspect of the book as it clearly dis-

tinguishes direct and indirect effects of the pharma industry. It highlights the need for work on antibiotics and selective resistance to bacteria and transfer to microorganisms through environmental routes.

Chapter 8 starts with the challenge of how antibiotics and their resistance can be combated. It explains why antibiotic genes can be considered an environmental contaminants that can be through water exposure, human exposure and so on. It points out how hospitals are vulnerable to bacterial growth that can be transported through any medium that is most suited. Chapter 9 briefly mentions how pandemic diseases are caused and their prevention. It captures the reader's attention with minute details of pandemic spread and causes with effects of using antibiotics and highlights what may be the possible options to various pandemics such as cholera, typhoid, malaria, tuberculosis, etc. Chapter 10 mainly focuses on the aspects pointed out in chapter 8 – hospital waste, its disposal and effects. It clearly defines 'clinical waste' and provides a detailed view on characterization, handling, segregation and transport of such waste. The chapter also explains the options available for waste management such as landfill, destruction process and low-temperature sterilization process, while weighing the pros and cons of each activity and treatment level. It also explains the need for a legal framework for handling and disposing such waste without causing harm to the environment, especially in low-income countries.

Chapter 11 focuses on methods in reducing contaminants in health care products. It discusses of how a legislative context and regulatory requirement has to be framed. It also provides some materials available online to check the precautionary details before health care products are prescribed. The chapter then focuses on details of alternative to antibiotic medicines with few case studies because of over prescription and over dosage. It brings to the forefront an issue that has not been discussed in earlier chapters – about source segregation of urine and its beneficial aspects.

Chapter 12 discusses different management strategies and how a sustainable pharmacy can be set up involving new business models, stakeholder interaction, stakeholder participation, design goals, etc. Chapter 13 focuses on aspects of

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Environmental Science Studies

how policy regulation and risk assessment have to be framed. Regulatory framework needs to be strengthened with new directives with stringent testing norms before releasing it to market. The chapter also compares US EPA and EU ERA methods of determining regulatory mechanisms, testing procedures, etc. It stresses on how environmental regulation needs to be more binding so that the flow of toxic materials into humans is

stopped. Finally, the need to dispose and curb the usage of life-expired medicines, such as take-back schemes and disposal methods.

This book articulates ecotoxicity, effect of pharma and need for good legislative and regulatory framework supported by documentation of necessary case studies and process explanation. Though the book has sufficiently covered all aspects as expressed by the title of the

book, it lacks deeper understanding needed for further research and insights.

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# BREATHLESS NATION

By Bharati Chaturvedi

It's a good time to read Siddharth Singh's *The Great Smog of India*. As in previous years, large parts of the country are inhaling hazardous air. This will kill about 1.2 million Indians this year too.

Fortunately, Singh's book is not as gloomy as my opening lines—and that's possibly because as a policy wonk working on energy and climate change, he seeks solutions. Such a dispassionate approach, seeking a silver lining amid the acrid smog, makes his book valuable.

*The Great Smog of India* tells us a few home truths. First, that perfect data is not needed, so let's not wait for it. We have enough information to act decisively. Second, other countries have managed to salvage an equally gloomy situation with firm but smart action. And third, that air pollution—and some of its individual solutions—exacerbate inequality. To simplify his nuanced case, using electric vehicles may clean up one city, but if it is coal that powers the electricity, pollution will be externalised.

Singh goes to the root of each key challenge he identifies as contributing to muddying the air. He examines geography, mobility, energy, agriculture, governance, manufacturing and construction—almost all the factors that make the air toxic. Often, he brings in global histories to contextualise the challenge. I found the case of electric vehicles in the US fascinating. Did you know that in 1900, a third of all cars produced in that country were electric? That trend was crushed by the Ford Model T, the first mass-produced car with an internal combustion engine in an era when plenty of oil was available.

The story of Indian agriculture from the 1950s is instructive, too. Singh pulls in the interface between early agricultural policy to address hunger in a newly independent nation, ecologi-

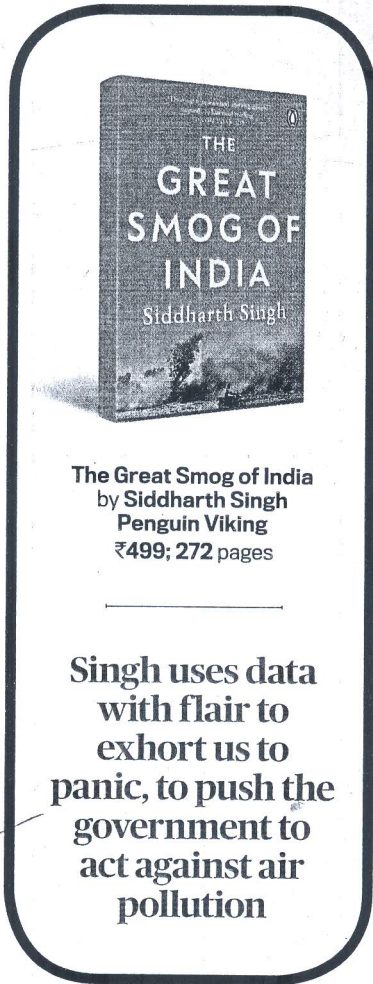
cal considerations about groundwater, and today's stubble burning. These recent histories are important to build a public perspective. It is important that these be written about with authority, because otherwise they remain disaggregated oral history and fail to carry the credibility they ought to. As one who knows some (but not all) of these histories, I was delighted to find how well these were referenced. Building on this, Singh looks at national and local policy impacts and the lessons global solutions

hold for India in 2018.

Most thematic chapters compete with each other to inform. However, the chapter, 'Made in India', was disappointing—it didn't carry the 'big thinking' of the rest. While Singh explores manufacturing and the success of the PAT (Perform, Achieve, Trade scheme of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency), the issue of the informal industries—significant in India—is absent. I'd also have liked to hear about current thoughts on clean production and the circular economy.

I was struck by the book on a personal level too. I wheezed my way through the pollution of the late 1980s and 1990s. I could never run or play sports. I was rarely allowed ice-cream. My constant companion was a Ventolin inhaler. My childhood played out in an era before asthma became an epidemic, so it was hard even for my talkative self to share with anyone the isolating, scary space I inhabited several times a year. My otherwise rational parents were so fed up of my respiratory miseries that they dragged me at age 11 to pop in the famous fish of Hyderabad, believed to cure such ailments. Reading *The Great Smog of India* as an older person, who fights both air pollution and asthma, I caught myself tearing up a few times. Not for myself, but at the thought that all these years later, many, many more children live—and even die—in that isolated space where your mind watches your de-oxygenated body fight for another chance.

That's why I especially value that Singh uses his data with flair to exhort us to panic. To push the government to act, because only governments can move things at the scale we need today. He doesn't say it, but he alludes to it—neglecting air pollution will put us on the path of becoming a failed state. ■



**The Great Smog of India**  
by Siddharth Singh  
Penguin Viking  
₹499; 272 pages

**Singh uses data with flair to exhort us to panic, to push the government to act against air pollution**

# Cauvery chronicles

The book explores the Cauvery and the trajectories of everyday life of the communities living by the river, informed by a spirit of inquiry and a subaltern perspective. BY VENKITESH RAMAKRISHNAN

WHAT a river bequeaths to the world and the human race was summed up pithily around 440 B.C. by Herodotus, often called “the father of historical studies”, when he said that “Egypt is the gift of the Nile”. The apperception and its effect have lasted for over 2,500 years and have been the inspiration for many a chronicle of rivers, the lands through which they flow and the people who inhabit their banks. The celebrated German-Swiss author Emil Ludwig (1881-1948), who too acknowledged Herodotus’ pioneering historical studies, took out a decade-long expedition between 1924 and 1934 on the Nile and the countries through which it flows, which resulted in the definitive *The Nile: The Life Story of a River*. He elucidated “the Nile’s gift” as follows. “It [the Nile] feeds hundreds of different races, men of the mountain and men of the marsh, Arabs, Christians, and cannibals, pygmies and giants. The struggles of these men for power and wealth, for faith and custom, for the supremacy of colour, can



**Kaveriyodoppam Ente Yaathrakal**

By O.K. Johnny  
Mathrubhumi Books, 2018

Pages: 452

Price: Rs.520

be traced farther back here than anywhere else in the history of mankind—for six thousand years.”

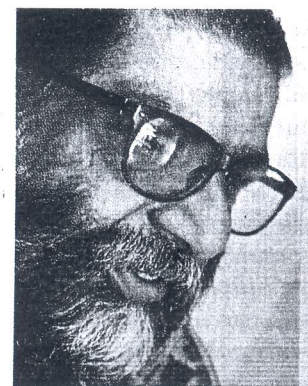
But Ludwig also added that because of this diversity and vivacity covering the expanse of life as a whole, capturing the Nile story in its entirety was difficult. Hence, all he could do was to make it appear “in fragments, which too had repeatedly to be cut down, so that the river might flow on unhindered”. Ludwig promised to get back to the omitted details in a later book but did not get around to writing it in a substantive form and scale. This was a rather unique

self-limiting experience for this otherwise prolific writer. Ludwig authored as many as 25 other books, recording historical events and the lives of great personalities such as Bismarck, Napoleon and Goethe, most of them voluminous tomes.

His sense of the work on the Nile being fragmented in many ways underscores a widely perceived mismatch in the depiction of rivers in fiction as compared to objective and historical chronicling. Objective and historical studies of rivers are few and far between, but at the same time, rivers, their unique physical character-

istics and the lives on their banks have had manifold fictional presentations brimming with creativity and philosophical perceptions of life and the universe. Fiction’s greater adaptability for fragmented selection from the array of offerings, thematic, perceptive, emotive and anecdotal, that a river’s chronicle presents is in all probability an important reason for this mismatch.

The rivers that dot fiction from across the world—Mark Twain’s Mississippi, T.S. Eliot’s Thames, Joseph Conrad’s Congo and Mikhail Sholokhov’s Don, to name a few—are all captivating illustrations of this fascinating contrast. Closer home, the abiding presence of the river Nila in the works of M.T. Vasudevan Nair, the doyen of Malayalam literature, the twists, turns and travails of life on the shores of the Padma, depicted by the Bengali writer Manik Bandopadhyay, and the celebration of the Brahmaputra by the Assamese legend Bhupen Hazarika in his expansive oeuvre spanning literature, music and cinema, all underscore the same contradistinction.



O.K. JOHNNY.

BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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Nearly eight decades after Ludwig marked the “fragmenting” in his work, objective and comprehensive studies on rivers and the lives that sprout on their banks are far fewer than the depiction of rivers in fiction. As Ludwig himself noted, chronicling the life of a river comprehensively involves great physical exertion, which could be handled only if one is driven by a consuming sense of adventure and passion for inquiry. Those who have written authentic, historical and experience-driven chronicling of rivers in these eight decades have also underscored this. Jonathan Raban’s *Old Glory: An American Voyage* on the Mississippi, Nick Thorpe’s *The Danube: A Journey Upriver from the Black Sea to the Black Forest* and Tim Butcher’s *Blood River: A Journey to Africa’s Broken Heart* on the Congo are works which exemplify this aspect at different points of time.

In the Indian context, a lot of works that claim to be attempts to chronicle a river’s life story end up as pilgrimage or tourist guides, with descriptions of pilgrim centres and tips for “comfortable visits” to such places. There are umpteen such guides passing off as river chronicles on the Ganga, the Narmada, the Brahmaputra, the Godavari, the Krishna and the Cauvery. A few exceptions such as K. Nagarajan’s *Cauveri: From Source to Sea*, Victor Mallet’s *River of Life, River of Death: The Ganges and India’s Future*, Sanjeev Sanyal’s *Land of the Seven Rivers: History of India’s Geo-*

*graphy*, Amritlal Vegad’s *Narmada: River of Joy* (translated from Gujarati), Jagmohan Mahajan’s *The Ganga Trail*, Stephen Alter’s *Sacred Waters* and Dennison Berwick’s *Along the Ganga* have presented certain facets of some major Indian rivers. On the whole, the fact remains that there are not many river chronicles in India driven by a sense of adventure and objective inquiry.

#### FILLING A VACUUM

It is this background that makes O.K. Johnny’s work in Malayalam, *Kaveriyodoppam Ente Yaathrakal* (My journeys with the Cauvery), specially significant. It is a prodigious saga of inquiry and application that seeks to fill a phenomenal vacuum in the Indian context in terms of comprehensive, objective and historical study of its rivers. Spread across 450 pages, the book unravels the writer’s repeated journeys through

the 738 kilometres of the Cauvery, exploring and capturing manifold nuances of geography, history, environmental sciences, anthropology, archaeology, architecture and sociology. Indeed, marking the trajectory of the Cauvery from its origins at Talacauvery in the Brahmagiri hills of the Western Ghats, through its gathering of many tributaries on the way to the final merger with the sea at the ancient city of Poompuhar in Tamil Nadu is an important element of the work.

But this primary exploration of the geography of a river that flows horizontally most of the time is spiked by countless perpendicular thrusts of environmental, social and people’s history, which cumulatively reflect the power of nature, the strivings for the existence and survival of plants, trees and agriculture, animals and peoples. In their en-

tirety, both the depiction of the horizontal flow of the river and the perpendicular thrusts on it form a narrative that all the beings and happenings on the river and on its banks were, and are, essentially on account of the river.

The nuanced narrative also records the subliminal trajectories of faith and devotion through different communities on the river and the multiple conflicts triggered by the urge to capture power and enforce hegemony. Beyond all this, the abiding endurance of the human spirit, marked by creativity and grit, gets highlighted in these pages. The sweep of the narrative is so magnificent that the gestalt of the reading experience is not about the author’s travels with the Cauvery, but the Cauvery’s own journey through history. The reader experiences the Cauvery as a living being, whose journey through hundreds of years manifests itself not

E. LAKSHMI NARAYANAN



**WOMEN** carrying water from the Cauvery to offer to their temple deity at Kalvadangam village near Edappadi in Salem district in Tamil Nadu on March 23. (Right) A Christian ashram on the banks of the Cauvery in Thannerpalli village near Tiruchi, a file picture.

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THE HINDU ARCHIVES

only in the flow of the water in its many hues and shapes, the diverse flora and fauna that abound in it, but also as the plurality of life that it nourished on its banks.

A sense of adventure and passionate inquiry permeates the narrative. Also evident is the narrator's intimate familiarity with the domain that he is exploring and presenting. Several parts of the book point to the scale and extent of the intimacy that Johnny has with the Cauvery, an intimacy that was formed through repeated explorations of the river and its different elements over a span of 35 years.

There are suggestions in the book that many of Johnny's friends had even called this obsessive engagement with the river some kind of "incurable madness". Still, many of them not only put up with these obsessive, compulsive river yatras but also partook in them. The book shows that these wanderings were always about learning more through ex-

haustive examinations of scores of gazetteers, including records from the periods of Tipu Sultan and the British Raj, as also contemplation and assimilation of local histories, including oral histories. The result is the conjoining of mainstream historical narrative with accounts of lay history and culture, producing new perspectives.

#### PILLARS OF GLORY

In this process, *Kaveriyodoppam Ente Yaathrakal* also revisits the well-known pillars of glory that stood, strutted and strode on the banks of the Cauvery; the personalities of Raja Raja Chola, Tipu Sultan, Hyder Ali, the saint-composers Tyagaraja and Andal and the structures at the Brihadisvara temple in Thanjavur and the legendary jungle lodge in the Karapura jungles. However, these visits are not about reasserting the simplistic or sectarian or hugely exaggerated narratives that have been constructed around many of these per-

sonalities and structures over time. Instead, these interpretative vulgarisations are confronted with the tools of historical understanding and objectivity, creating lucid illustrations of what these pillars of glory meant for the people and their times. Of particular interest is the debunking of the anti-Hindu myths built around Tipu Sultan and Hyder Ali.

But the most fascinating parts of *Kaveriyodoppam Ente Yaathrakal* are the unusual common people that Johnny discovers in the hinterlands of the Cauvery. The middle-aged Jain muni he comes across at Kanakagiri's Parshwanath Basadi (temple) after a tortuous trek through the hills and fields of Chamarajanagar and Maleyuru was practising *sallekhana* (the Jain ritual of voluntarily courting death through systematic rejection of life-supporting devices, including food). The naked and worn-out muni had blood drops all over his face. Asked the reason for the blood, the muni said with a smile that

he was plucking the hairs of his beard one by one instead of shaving as part of *sallekhana*. The muni had hopes of completing the translation of a work written by the Jaina Acharya Pujyapada 1,500 years ago in the forests of Kanakagiri. "Whenever I think of that most humble and composed muni, I am consumed by an unknown sense of fear and sorrow," writes Johnny.

Years later, in 2009, Johnny gets back to the Kanakagiri hills but is unable to locate the muni's samadhi. On the other hand, the saga of Sabu, the mahout boy from the Kabini region who caught the eye of international film directors during the shooting of a documentary and went on to become a star in Hollywood and European cinema, is elevating. The boy from Kabini has even acted in a movie of the legendary Italian director Vittorio de Sica.

Thus, the narrative in *Kaveriyodoppam Ente Yaathrakal* traverses the highs and lows of life as also that of the river. But if there is an overall or dominant thematic stream in the book, there is little doubt that it is a subaltern perspective.

Johnny's earlier works, including documentary cinemas such as *The Trapped*, *Silent Screams* and *A Village Chronicle* have sought to address the lives of marginalised people, including the Adivasis, from a subaltern perspective. His writings over the last three and a half decades have reflected the same ideological perspective. *Kaveriyodoppam Ente Yaathrakal* continues to flow in the same direction. □

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Hindu; 20/1/19, Pg-16

# Who we are and where do we come from

A compelling story of new DNA findings, tracing the people of India from prehistory to near history

SUJATHA BYRAVAN

Between 45,000 and 20,000 years ago, most of humanity lived in South Asia, reflecting the unmatched population expansion of people living in the region. This and other fun facts are scattered throughout the thrilling account of our past by Tony Joseph in *Early Indians*.



■ **Early Indians**  
Tony Joseph  
Juggernaut  
₹699

By interpreting the palimpsest of the human genome, population geneticists have made rapid progress recently and traced the migration of early humans out of Africa and into distant lands across the earth. Corroborations from anthropologists and philologists, who have independently written some parts of this story, now make it possible to make more definite claims regarding the waves of homo sapiens that migrated out of Africa (OoA). The first OoA migrants emerged around 70,000 years ago. About 5,000 years later their descendants reached India and faced archaic humans living here already. Waves of these OoA migrants also reached parts of central Asia and Europe between 60,000 and 40,000 years ago. Early Indians came to India over time from Africa, West, East and Central Asia. Homo sapiens or 'wise man' has been around for about 300,000 years but humans still carry traces of Neanderthal DNA in their genes.

**Who were our forefathers?**

Geneticists have for a long time been using the DNA in the nucleus of cells to identify specific shared DNA sequences, or haplotypes

and haplogroups – when these are shared in sub-populations. These shared sequences can be traced and also compared with DNA from other individuals either living or dead in different geographical areas. This is how many African Americans try to identify the places in Africa and elsewhere from where their forefathers came. But, more recently population geneticists have also been using DNA from mitochondria – intracellular powerhouses that have their own DNA and can be traced in the maternal line.

The DNA in the Y chromosome can similarly be used to trace sequences inherited from the father or the male lineage, since the Y chromosome is present only in men. These approaches have yielded a wealth of results since it is mostly men who migrated from one place to another and passed on their Y-chromosome to their women. DNA from skeletal remains is revealing new stories about our past, our relationships and our cultures.



■ **Civic lines:** Dholavira in Gujarat has emerged as a major Harappan city remarkable for its town planning, architecture and water management system. ■ AFP

Joseph writes a compelling story about these findings and traces the people of India from prehistory to near history. It is an astonishing tale, difficult to put down, but dense given the amount of detail it covers. Following a short chronology of the modern humans in Indian Prehistory, the book has four chapters along with an introduction and epilogue. These narratives of population genetics, deftly interwoven with archaeological research and philology, are about the following: the first Indians, the first farmers, the first urbanites or the Harappans, and the last migrants or the Aryans.

**Out of Africa**

Each chapter presents many interesting storylines. For example:

Although from the same single OoA migration, our ancestors likely reached different areas of the Indian subcontinent at different times.

The earliest Palaeolithic tools in India are from Attirampakkam in Tamil Nadu dated to around 1.2 million years ago. But the earliest microliths, small stone tools used by modern man, dated to 45,000 years ago, were found in Mehtakheri in the Nimar region in Madhya Pradesh. It was possible to trace the spread of humans through central and eastern India from around 45,000 to 35,000 years ago, by following the mitochondrial haplogroup M.

Towards the end of this spread, the world was entering full glacial conditions, but new microlithic in-

novations most probably helped modern humans to hunt, increase their numbers, and overcome the adverse climate and archaic humans who had already been in the subcontinent for hundreds of thousands of years.

Another example: There is evidence of early agriculture, probably by the first Indians, in the Mehrgarh, Balochistan region from around 7000 BCE.

Evidence for migration of agriculturists from the Zagros region of Iran into this area is available and one can see signs of their genetic markings in the Indian population even today.

The Harappan civilisation was like none other in a large number of ways and covered close to a million square kilometres. With very

precise town planning, public infrastructure, storm water drains and sanitation, it had the region's first urbanites who were also trading with people of central Asia. With changing climate and deteriorating conditions, Harappans moved out, some of them southwards, where they interacted with people in South India and formed the Ancestral South Indians. Just as the Harappan civilisation was beginning to collapse, there was an influx of people from the east into India.

Significantly, by about 2000 BCE, critical aspects of India's population were already in place. Combining evidence from Y-chromosome haplogroups from the Steppes of Kazakhstan, conducting genome wide analyses and correlating these with archaeological discoveries indicates that between 2000 and 1000 BCE, multiple waves of migration from the Steppe pastoralists brought new European languages, cultural and religious practices that changed the people of South Asia forever.

This book is excellent science journalism, the kind that we need more of in other disciplines. Following the DNA sleuths and their stories is hardly a simple task. Ideologies of racial superiority may likely not agree with these or other scientific findings about evolution or human migrations.

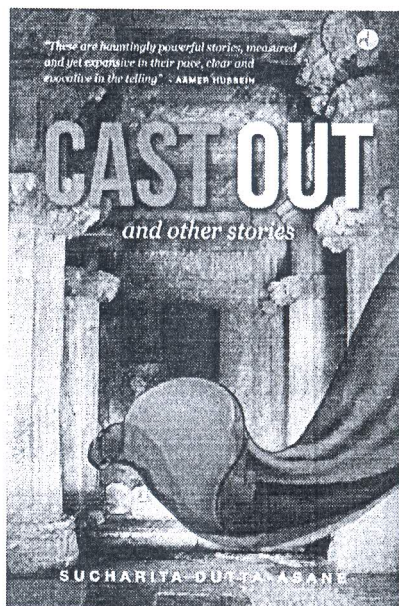
But since it is impossible to disprove non-science, there is no point in wasting one's energies to do this. Instead, now that we have an understanding of our histories, perhaps what Indians needs to focus on is where they and their country are headed.

## Can the Cast-Away Speak? Stories of Reason and Resistance from the Margins

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**C**ast Out and Other Stories by Sucharita Dutta-Asane is a scintillating attempt to curate her stories in such a way that they become not just any other narrative from the margins but her version of human dignity and empowerment. In her carefully crafted sixteen short stories, over 156 pages, she creates characters at large and women characters in particular, who tend to be cast out in real life. In the power dynamics, the individual in control of power relegate people to the margins using various tools existent in the society and backing them with either, socio-cultural and economic norms or emotional and personal conditioning. However, one cannot deny the fact that oppression in its various *avatars* doesn't create victims only, but also generates resistance and ensures revolt. Metaphorically speaking, because the locus of a centre cannot be traced without the contours of the circularity of a margin, the latter, therefore, happens to be an ideal space for contesting the dominant discourse at the centre.

Considering that society is a kind of discursive field in which individuals operate, the title story "Cast Out" is a perfect narrative on how women face discrimination on the basis of social norms surrounding menstruation. Tara, the priest's wife in the short story, enters the temple despite her 'impure' days. In the contemporary times when menstruation is a pivotal issue for gender equality and human rights, Tara's defiance and breaking the silence against the age-old ritual irks the villagers a great deal. With an appropriate dose of



*Cast Out and Other Stories* by Sucharita Dutta-Asane, Dhaulti Books, 2018.

ironic criticism, "Cast Out" deals with the paradox wherein menstruation which is basically a physical sign of female health and vitality is reduced to be a matter of fear, shame or embarrassment. In the light of the latest Sabarimala Temple entry case verdict from the Supreme Court of India that scraps the age-old ban on menstruating women's entry into the Sabarimala temple, this story holds renewed significance. Again, Sucharita's delicate handling of the mythical story of Ahalya and Gautama in "Absolution" appears to be a contemplative and fitting exercise in the hullabaloo of the scrapped Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) that deals with adultery.

"Another Life" is a heart-touching tale of lost love wherein Anu is nurturing her husband, Sameer who has lost his memory. A couple of months later, perhaps in a flickering mode, he recovers and remembers his past but it doesn't lead to his wife but to his ex-girlfriend, Shalmi. "From the depths of your subconscious, you've drawn upon lost love. Shalmi's risen from the dead, to stake claim. Have I got you back from death or lost you to the dead?" (30). Even in "True, False, Right" the protagonist, Parul has lost her husband in the Riots. Through her, Sucharita raises a valid perspective, as she writes, "In a riot, who can identify killers and saviours? Who can remember right from wrong in such times?" (110). "Night Duty" is quite journalistic in approach, in the sense that it gives the reader an impression of reading a missing report in a newspaper. Dayita, an office going girl, is missing on her return from office and the initial suspect is her boyfriend and colleague, Dev, but they later find her raped and killed on account of a rampage that happened in the city due to pro and anti outsiders riots.

We inhabit a society where the economic layers segregate the masses into rich and poor or what Marx states as 'bourgeoisie' and 'proletariat,' the axis of 'gender' being another point of marginalization for women. The hypocritical camouflage of such hierarchies among multiple identities is exposed in stories like "Fireflies," "Fire" and "Bulldozer". "Fireflies" is a narrative of a woman (with her childhood memories) who has returned to her ancestral home with her daughter to disclose the feared secrets of her childhood. If only the Biblical quote by P.B Shelley can be appropriated in this context, "To him that hath, more shall be given; and from him that hath not, the little that he hath shall be taken away" (Shelley 15) for her summer vacations in her childhood were spent here, in her grandfather's house who was "a self-made man who owned half the village at the time of his death" (32). They were rich but "their greed knew no bounds" (36). Thus, they indulged in threatening people and taking off their land. "Fire" is about starving farmers who are incessantly at war with the land mafia and their

political bosses and as Dutta-Asane writes, on the verge of "losing land...losing identity...regretting that loss... eternal pining away of souls" (80). "Bulldozer" again is a narrative which seems regular yet makes one think of it as a metaphor to the capitalist economy. While crossing a flyover or seeing the urban structures in a city, one may just get struck/stuck with the kind of infrastructural progression that our country has made, but Dutta-Asane critically confronts the murky aspects of development wherein one can't refrain from questioning the legitimacy of 'human lives' living in these unauthorized constructions.

"Half a Story" begins with an unnamed narrator taking charge of Ratri, an orphaned daughter of a prostitute. As the story unfolds, she not only discovers that her own uncle is the father of that girl but also that either this kind of cowardice, or hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie is rampant in our society. "Eyes" is about a young couple, Rajat and Teesta, and their chosen adventurous boat ride into what they refer as "ancient waterways (13)". Also, in other stories of this collection, "Cusp", "Shame", "Rear View", "Dhaara" and "Night Song" Sucharita crafts an engaging and accessible fiction. One can relate to the characters and invest in situations in such a way that they become a part of our lives. With her short stories, she indeed explores a darkened world of despair and unhappiness of people at the brink. It should make an interesting read to readers of all kinds, especially the sensitive ones.

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Priyanka Tripathi



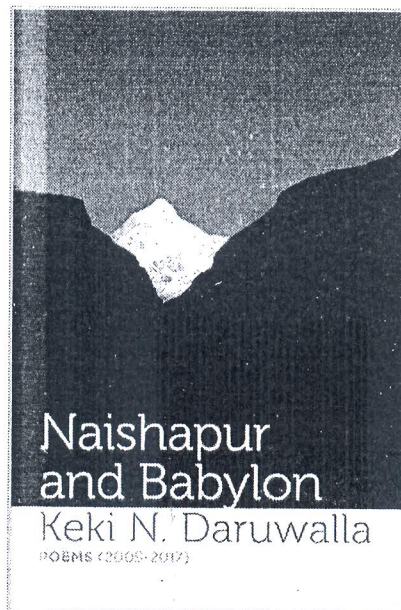
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## The Lyric Leaf of Time and Ongoing-ness of Things

Geography in Keki Daruwalla's new collection is only a note on the margins. Just as a ship log jots down the points on the liquid map traversed, while the ship here is a traveller of time, both fragmented and fulfilled. Geography for this poet, one of India's most accomplished, is also a marker of love and attachment to histories bygone as well as current. Melancholia, as is gauged from the Omar Khayyam epilogue to the volume (from where the title originates), is a vessel that also contains hope and the wine of human sensibilities as one delves into each poem.

Time in *Naishapur and Babylon* (both the place names evoking histories and stories from different civilizations) is a paradoxical experience that Hannah Arendt comments on: "It is the insertion of man with his limited life span that transforms the continuously flowing stream of sheer change ... into time as we know it...." (*The Life of the Mind*, 1981) The past, present, future, in-between-ness, now-ness and the not-yet-time in Daruwalla's poetry, however, do not display any antagonism among the concepts. Rather, what we read in this fine volume of poetry is a depiction of the "time continuum" that Arendt deemed as owing to the "thoroughgoing spatiality of our ordinary life."

Daruwalla's poetry has been centre-stage in Indian writing for a long time and his tone and diction has played a significant role in charting out the course of his contemporaries as well as later poets. Conversational, crisp,



*Naishapur and Babylon: Poems (2005-2017)* by Keki N. Daruwalla, New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Books, 2018.

shorn of known poetic devices, his poetry is an explorer of spaces and traditions. The condensation of ideas in his work is far from thick. Irony is his chief weapon, sharpened by the tenderness of execution.

From 2005-2017, his voice is still clear and ringing, as his own metaphor establishes:

Yet as the year waxes and the dying winter  
moves past the thaw ooze  
we find her voice in the songbird's throat;

("In Night Country," p 24)

Where is night country, we ask. And we immediately embark on a journey with the poet for whom night and darkness are as illuminating as ideas of knowledge and its quest.

Seasons in these poems are an undying and unending element. The poet, a songbird, will sing on, although readers are given to understand that *Naishapur and Babylon* is Daurwalla's final collection.

Daruwalla examines and retells myths and modern legends. He speaks of those realities that make one squirm to see the sacred getting dismantled, and also that demolish the notion of romanticism which doesn't allow room for introspection.

But reflections are the real thing,  
aren't they Ram Kumar?  
and you missed out on those  
for isn't Benares a parasite on the river,  
that torrent of myth which inundated the country?

("A Ram Kumar Painting on Benares," p 26)

The direct questioning above is in Daurwalla's typical style where he 'speaks' a poem. The recollection and musing about a celebrated painting is 'reflection' for the poet on the state of affairs today, the way narratives of tolerance and the sacred are being twisted around in India. 'River' and 'torrent' are the two words that spur forth his surmising further. Ancient lore and modern apprehensions converge in Daruwalla's writing. The tone is prophetic.

Yet you were everywhere  
scrolling down planet Venus  
and our lands between the two rivers,  
...

your threats boomed like thunder-echo  
'open or I'll smash door and door post  
and command the dead to rise and eat the living.'

("Ishtar," p 42)

What is divine is also assuringly mortal in the poet's craft. Gods, goddesses, beings and avatars alight on this topography of poetic abundance to constitute a Greek Chorus. Hence, essentially, the images and word-grains are replete with sombre ecstasy. All along, it's a journey that the book charts.

Daruwalla writes with sparse metaphors but on an expansive canvas. His ode to poets of love and memory and their words brims with warmth and translucence:

You knew your eyes  
were transparently radiant  
You knew how to love  
and to look into other's eyes  
You were so slender  
I thought you were as light as your curls

("Some Poems for Akhmatova," p 55)

Radiance is also what the poems in this book emit, from a gaze that arise out of sheer opening up of each metaphor that merges the body with the immateriality of ideas. 'Light' and 'curls' are signifiers and signature expressions of Akhmatova, as much as they are phantom desires embodying the poems of his beloved Russian poet.

Daruwalla, who writes a sharp, witty column on poetry for a prominent newspaper, is not averse to examining his own penchant:

Let's face it  
solace comes with poetry  
a rhyme that clangs against a tin can  
insistent, but moves into memory,  
a haiku that flies off a page  
and turns into a bird.

("This Poem Is Going Nowhere Nor Is Life," p 78)

The temporal place that rhyme and rhythm inhabit is again a transient one. Daruwalla is aware that eternity is a void where all words pour in and all lines take flight. What then is the purpose of writing poetry for decades, the reader may ask. Daruwalla, relentless and sharp, does not let that query melt into any generalization.

The very purpose of words, images, metaphors, rhymes and even exalted clichés is to keep our faith in humanity:

Let the repressed be brought into light,  
the hidden into knowledge.  
Let there be harmony  
between those who speak of shadows

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and those who speak of the sun.  
 Let the unlit be lit.  
 Steer the light our way.  
 Let the forest leaf.  
 Let the lyric leaf.

(“Prayer on January 30,” p 81)

It is this thirst for light, knowledge, harmony and the greater realization that poems will be read and written, Daruwalla assures us. The repetition of ‘light’ above alliterating with ‘lit’ and ‘let’ allows for the liquid consonant to sprout, indeed like a fresh leaf, and allure the reader.

The shadow of time is a constant reminder to the poet of what poetry can achieve in one lifetime. It’s a matter of exaltation when Daruwalla’s images hark back to the classics — again a time-leap — in order to contain the present:

But we are circling black vases and amphora  
 and find the spearman clad in armour  
 and their spears etched  
 on the baked memory of clay—

...

Behind them are tearful women —  
 wives and mothers always in black,  
 as if already in mourning.  
 Lament and prophecy:  
 Trojan women, Andromache and Cassandra,  
 clamber on to the vase without being there.

(“Greek Vases,” p 94)

The agency of the men and women depicted on the Greek vases is a story in continuum, of tragedy and letting down of human values the world over down the ages. Even while lament and prophecy follows, the joy of the quotidian envelops the poet’s utterances.

Our sad cities, a stupor induced by the modern life, the paradox of practice and praxis, and our myopic metaphors are what we need to get past. Daruwalla’s rendering of Faiz is a call to awaken the zeal for life that poetry alone can rekindle:

Though everyone didn’t own a bar or plenty’s horn  
 this city was never so melancholy and forlorn.

(“The Sad City,” p 109)

From Naishapur to Babylon to Alhambra to the hills of Tibet and Bhutan, and cities of sacred norms and mythical musings, ‘what lights up’ the migration of

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Daruwalla's poetry from realms of temporality to those of lived spaces is his easy grace in courting ideas. Whether it is 'a shadow's tenuous leaf-tap', 'Wind, quiet as a falcon on the winter's wrist', or 'spring alighting on scrub by stealth', the poems that constitute a cartography of explorations, give us readers a terrain to call our own. Each seeking, each pronouncement, and each act of awe in the scheme of things of this book erupt in rivers ('endless dreaming'), seasons ('symbol-garments'), rains ('a lake overturned in the skies'), and goddesses who are rising and breaking out of silence, who are 'moss-masked', of the 'dark heart of the forest,' and bearer of exuberance and mirth for an age and time that needs resurrecting into benevolence.

The sections in the book mark Daruwalla's own journey through the years. One however feels that the "Translations from Faiz Ahmad Faiz" could demand some more space, and that it makes the finale somewhat abrupt. Perhaps the poet will make a comeback with a full volume of his translated work.

We need small truths, we need words that clamber around like hopeful humans notwithstanding their success or misery, and we need to look over our shoulders to the three-sixty-degree-angled reality that is often a mirage as well is a construed one. *Naishapur and Babylon* draws a map nearing that possibility:

Small truths need to be so small  
that they are lost among larger things  
which have no truck with truth.

("Small Truths," p 101)

Nabina Das



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## A Novel of People

When I first picked up Manjushree Thapa's translation of the celebrated Nepali author Indra Bahadur Rai's *There's a Carnival Today*, the first thing I remembered was reading Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin all those years ago, especially his concept of carnival as a social institution and his idea of novel as polyphony.

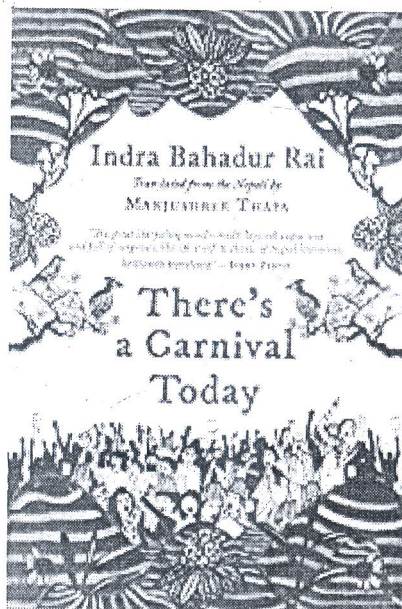
Perhaps the English title of the novel and the bright white, indigo and red cover, featuring a protesting mob, among others, were the triggers. As I read on, my hunch proved to be not altogether wrong, but not entirely correct either.

On the surface, the novel tells the story of Janak, a garment trader, and his family, his wife from across the border in Nepal, Sita, and their two children, Ravi and Divya making a living in Derjeeling, a decidedly British town, now a part of West Bengal, hosting diverse communities such as Bengali, Nepali, Lepcha, Bhotia, Tibetan, among others.

Dig deeper and several stories emerge. It is a story of a country in transition from Independence to self-rule to development (The novel begins at the dawn of Independence when Janak returns home after completing his studies in Kolkata and ends during the workers agitation in 1950s.)

It is the story of the struggle of the Tea Garden Workers' rights that led to a full blown protest in Derjeeling in the 1950s. In one sense, it is a story of the communist labour union movement in the tea plantations.

It is also the story of building a cultural identity, the 'Gorkha' identity and the rise of the demand for a Gorkhaland state. At the same time, it is the



*There's a Carnival Today* by Indra Bahadur Rai (Translated from Nepali by Manjushree Thapa), New Delhi: Speaking Tiger, 2017, Rs 350/

story of cultural diversity, the comingling of different peoples—settlers from Nepal, who while using the language, formed a separate identity as Gorkha (which the novel highlights in the confrontations between Janak and his father-in-law, who is from mainland Nepal); Lepchas; Limbus; Bhotias; Bengali administrators and tea plantation owners (exemplified by Janak's neighbours MK and Ajoy Dasgupta); and the Bihari and Marwari traders (as represented by Jayabilas, once Janak's business partner, now his bitter enemy). There are also vestiges of the colonial past (the movie theatre in the market and even Goan Jazz).

This inevitably leads to another story, a story of clash of cultures, between the Gorkhas and their Bengali leaders ruling from Kolkata, between the indigenous population and the migrants, between the tea garden owners and the workers (This clash between capitalism and communism comes to a full circle in the clash between Janak and Ravi, a businessman and a teacher fighting for workers' rights. The first half of the novel concerns Janak as he struggles to build a perfect family while the second half shift towards Ravi, who against his father's wishes, becomes a teacher and gets involved in the politics of the tea gardens.). At one point, Janak says, "Good habits are as useful as Bihari servants; bad habits are as evil as Bengali masters."

Above all, *There's a Carnival Today* is a novel about a city, known the world over for its tea and for the Kanchenjunga peak—a novel about Darjeeling, her people and their political aspirations. The story isn't over yet, and Rai knew, as he ends the novel with Janak's transition as a man without courage to a man acting as though he has courage.

So, we could perhaps read the novel using Bakhtin's philosophy after all. For one thing, Rai's narrative is classic polyphony. Unlike a classic western novel, which follows the protagonist's journey, seeing the world from his point-of-view, Rai shows an unfailing curiosity towards all his characters, and their unique situations. The novel is purportedly centred on Janak and his travails, but Rai is in no hurry to narrate the story of his struggles—his identity crisis, his struggle to succeed in business, his conflict with his children and his doomed extramarital affair.

Instead, Rai's narrative digresses at every possible opportunity to tell us more about the people in Janak's life, his neighbour MK and his long-suffering wife Babuni; Ravi and his love for an anglo-Indian girl; Bhudev, Janak's partner at the party and soon his bitter rival; Jayabilas, Janak's business partner; Namgyal and his wife Yamuna, and even occasional Madhesi servants.

This apart from Rai's interest in describing mundane activities in illuminating details, like shopping, food habits, drinking habits, customs and clothing, which he does in such a way that they take a life of their own.

In the introduction to the book in 1958, Rai wrote, "I saw that life was moving forward, but not in an organised manner, with everything falling into place. I have disarranged this novel in a similar way. I didn't see life as a singularity, or as the chemical purity and unhindered progress of a single subjectivity. Love is the mother of all emotions: Touch it, and all of our other emotions awaken and writhe."

Love, then, is the key to understand *There's a Carnival Today*—the love that Rai's characters display, and love that Rai feels for his characters, and their causes.

At this juncture, Bakhtin's philosophy doesn't help us much, for *There's a Carnival Today* defies comparison to the western novel tradition, and we must read the book in its own term, in the context of its own creation.

Indra Bahadur Rai (who passed away this year) was the first Nepali-language writer to win the Sahitya Akademi Award for a book of literary criticism on Nepali literature, *Nepali Sahityaka Adhaarharu*, in 1976. Together with two prominent modern poets from Nepal, Bairagi Kainla and Ishwor Ballav, Rai founded the abstract 'Tesro Aayam' (Third Dimension) school of writing, introducing an abstract, modernist aesthetics to Nepali-language literature. Later, Rai invented the exuberant and lyrical deconstructionist aesthetics that he called 'Leela-Lekhan' (play-writing).

*There's a Carnival Today* (the only novel by the author of thirteen other books), originally published in 1958, is Rai's early work, and as such, instead of literally being an experimentation, we notice a rather plain narrative highlighted by his desire to do right by his people and his land. Here lies the pleasure of reading the novel, like a grandfather's tale, without discernible beginning and end, yet each moment illuminated by lived experiences.

In this sense perhaps, Rai's *Derjeeling* is like Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Macondo in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and the political struggles are like the numerous wars Colonel Aureliano Buendia fought. Yet, unlike Marquez's long passages, Rai's narrative is filled with conversations, both as communication and as a code to understand character motivations. And Rai's approach is *joie de vivre*. He approaches everything with a lightness of touch, never allowing the readers to get bogged down by the complexities of it, never allowing the proceeding either to turn maudlin or tragic. This masterwork of fine balance is one of the joys of reading *There's a Carnival Today*.

In her note, the translator, Manjushree Thapa, writes, "*There's a Carnival Today* doesn't capture the wry tone of *Aaja Ramita Chha*, which deploys the word 'ramita'—a combination of fair, a show, a spectacle or some fun—ironically."

Yet, Thapa's translation is on point. At no point in the novel you feel that you are reading a translated work—it flows perfectly.

This is a good time for Indian literature in English translation, and it gives us the opportunity to explore the brilliance of Indra Bahadur Rai in English. A selection of his short stories, *Gorkhas Imagined: Indra Bahadur Rai in Translation* by Anurag Basnet was published in 2009. Another collection of short stories is *The Long Night of Storm*, translated by Prawin Adhikari, published in 2018.

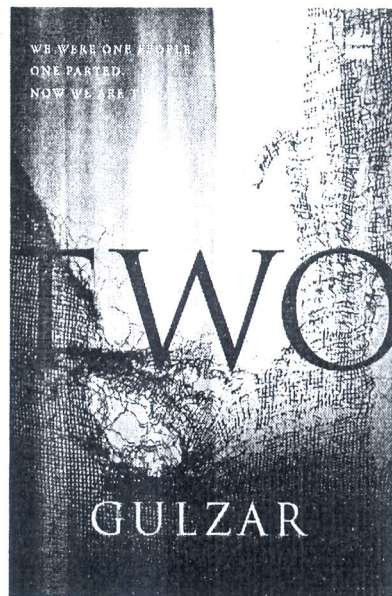
Dibyajyoti Sarma



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## On Being Sundered in Two

“We were one people. One Parted. Now we are two.” This legend super-scribed on the front cover, is in fact the one-liner that brings out the theme of the novel. It’s about the Partition that carved up a nation, cleaving a civilization in two—with people breathing the same air, drinking the same water, wearing similar dresses, speaking the same languages and partaking of the same culture, the difference being only in the core religious beliefs—split up as two nations.



*Two*, A Novel by Gulzar. New Delhi, Harper Perennial, 2017. Hardbound, Pp.179, Rs.279/-

The action begins in the small town of Campbellpur (now in Pakistan, known as Attock before 1908, and named again as Attock in 1978). It is 1946 and two thick friends, Master Karam Singh and Master Fazal, both schoolmasters, discuss the idea of Partition.

Both of them do not know how a land and its people can be divided—yet there has been a rumour that a new country called Pakistan would be carved out for Muslims. But where would that be? They had no idea. However, Master Fazal, the local intellectual, came out with this pronouncement:

History is on the rampage, making giant strides. It’s happening right in front of us. The Second World War ended and Germany was broken into two pieces—East Germany and West Germany. The country was divided, but then it divided the people too. Earlier they were one people, now they are two.

Six crore thirty lakh people lost their lives for this.

....

Another giant step of history is about to fall here—in Hindustan. Some forces are contemplating another partition, of land and people.

Hindustan is to be divided in two and a new country named Pakistan to be created.

Once again, millions of lives will be at stake.

....

This arrogant, conceited history strides ahead with her head in the clouds and never looks down. She does not realize how she crushes millions of people beneath her feet. The common people. She doesn't understand that one may cut a mountain in two, but people? It's a hard task, Bhai, to cut one people in two. They bleed (pp 3-4).

The total absence of any difference Master Karam Singh and Master Fazal felt on account of their different religions, and their brotherly love for each other, portrayed as the pristine innocence bordering on Rousseau's 'state of nature,' deepen the tragic sense. The saga of Partition, in which a people scatter all over the subcontinent as if from the exploding dry pod of a silk cotton tree, propelling little bearded seeds, scattering them in a storm, with no preplanned structure for their settling down anywhere, unfolds in the novel from this starting point. The characters developed in this open-ended novel do not settle down anywhere; neither are they free from their traumatic memories.

The novel is in three Sections—Part One, Part Two, Part Three. And then there is an extraordinary P.S. Section with a comment in the margin which reads, "Insights, Interviews & More," but which has a main caption, A NOTE ON TWO, which indeed is a single Note by Gulzar, mainly about the living wound that Partition is, which is as evocative and sensitive as Independence and which people of the Partition generation and their descendants mention in the same breath. "Two addresses this work-in-progress nature of the cataclysmic events of 1947." Clearly, this is why the novel is open-ended, as it is analogous with the open-endedness of history itself, history in the making, rather. If ever there is any other event that sticks as obsessively to a nation's memory as Partition, it's the Holocaust.

Let's now take a look at how the novel develops through Sections One, Two and Three.

After the theme-setting scene involving Master Karam Singh and Master Fazaludin shown at the beginning of this review, the story moves ahead with the scene of Fauji the truck driver and Lakshbeera, the dhabawalla, thick booze-buddies both, discussing another truck driver, Painti-Chhatti or 3536, known by the number of his truck, who was spreading all kinds of hearsay, of Hindu women being paraded naked in Sheikhpura etc. This was

the *modus operandi* of those who wanted to spread rumours and to foment suspicion and hatred between the communities and whip up violence and riots, leading up to the mass flight of people, who were turned refugees overnight, and compelled migrations alongside Partition. The novelist wryly remarks: "Rumours gradually became news. And the news began to ferment. People believed whatever they heard." This is an ongoing phenomenon.

After this stage-setting, the drama unfolds.

Karam Singh and Master Fazal, who fondly call each other 'Karme' and 'Fazlu', further discuss the oncoming Partition. Jinnah's Two Nation Theory didn't mean breaking the country into two pieces, as one would a slate, Karam said, but Fazlu explained it all with the analogy of their neighbour Deendayal partitioning his land among his sons. And they were all in there, where Pakistan was supposed to be. Even then they couldn't understand why would the Muslims leave 'India,' or the rest of the land left behind after creating Pakistan, and the Hindus living in Pakistan would leave their native villages.

But the idea of Pakistan did loom real. "Before Pakistan took shape on the map, it started taking shape in the minds of the people." As the end of 1946 approached, the borders of Partition began to emerge. "As the date of Independence came closer, freedom seemed to move further away."

Then the story turns more intense. Riots and lynching are reported sporadically. Soon Karam Singh's wife goes to her village on some business, and the riots sweep over their village. Karam is swallowed by anxiety for his wife away in her home, and leaves his own looking for her, but is caught in the reality of the riots descending on them, as it arrives in their village. Then begins the exodus — depicted in a microcosm by the people leaving in Fauji's truck which will take the lead characters of Part One to different places — some dying on the way, others facing ignominies.

Part Two deals with the post-Partition vignettes. The victims settling down in various places, and their sagas.

Part Three deals, among other things, with the life of the young son of Rai Bahadur Des Raj, displaced from Campbellpur, who reached England eventually and gets into the employment of an ex-colonial officer, a humane and gentle intellectual. His daughter Edna falls in love with him, and they marry. He returns to Campbellpur, now Attock, in Pakistan, finds his old Kothi, and meets up with the second generation of some of the refugees who had left in Fauji's truck. There are some other poignant reunions, and passionate relationships, too, like Panna, the Campbellpur courtesan, turning into the revered 'Mayya' of Kartar, the young boy whom she adopted during the journey in Fauji's truck. Also, there is a run up to the major happenings like the further fracturing of Pakistan by the creation of Bangladesh on the basis of language and culture, defying the famed Two Nation Theory of

Muhammad Ali Jinnah based on the difference in religious identity—of Hindus and Muslims. Indira Gandhi's assassination by her Sikh guards, the ensuing massacre of the Sikhs, in which Kartar was thought to have been caught, but miraculously escaped. And all the major tragedies that ensued, like the Kargil War, which Fauji had survived to witness, and to exclaim, in response to the nightlong gunfire and explosions: "There they go again, the rascals! They didn't let me sleep all night!"

Gulzar has charted all these in his imitable short sentences, incandescent with the luminosity of intellect and emotions in equal measure, like a true lyrical poet.

As Gulzar himself describes *Two*, in the 'P.S.' Section it is his first novel, or long-form fiction, which others have termed a novella. It is 179 pages and could be certainly considered a novel. However, Gulzar is not concerned about any technicality. He asserts:

For me it is a novel; it has an arc of its own that has a beginning and which makes its way to an open end. The length is immaterial. It is what I needed to tell the story. When I can say what I have to in a few lines, I do it through my poems. When a few more sentences and paragraphs are needed, I fall back on the short story. The people I encounter in *Two*, the journeys they make, needed a little more elaboration than was possible in a poem or a short story. That is what dictated the form and the length (p179).

The Introduction by Pavan K. Varma is very evocatively written. He describes *Two* succinctly thus:

Gulzar's first attempt at a longer work of fiction is all three in one: a poem, a screenplay, a novel. It is a poem because the imagery reads like one; it is a screenplay because each episode is like a picture unfolding before your eyes; it is a novel because it tells a story in a format that is neither a poem, nor a screenplay (p xiii).

Further in the Introduction he mentions about Gulzar's riveting style, and also how his debut novel is a spectacular one. He continues:

*Two* is unputdownable because the narrative is in the hands of a craftsman for whom words are like clay in the hands of a master potter. Gulzar writes with the eye of a sensitive film-maker, the feel of a poet, and the touch of someone who has himself been singed for life by the story he narrates (pp xviii).

Gulzar has dealt with the theme of Partition in his short stories, for example, those in the collection, *Footprints on Zero Line: Writings on the Partition*, also published by Harper Perennial (2017). Rakshanda Jalil, in her “Translator’s Note,” makes a significant observation about his writings on Partition:

Gulzar Sahab differs from the ‘Partition generation’ of writers such as Saadat Hasan Manto and Krishan Chander in many ways; for one, he has the benefit of hindsight and the luxury of introspection. He is not interested in chronicling the events that led to the division of the subcontinent or putting them in neat labels of ‘cause’ and ‘effect,’ or even apportioning blame. Instead, he wants to peel back, layer upon layer, the silence that had settled upon the lives of those most affected by the event. And it is this unpeeling of those long-held silences that he does in story after story in an attempt to make sense, retrospectively, of the horrors of Partition (p.202).

Exactly the same thing can be said of *Two* as well.

There is something else which is to be mentioned about the novel. It was written originally in Urdu, which is Gulzar’s medium of writing, interspersed with phrases in Punjabi, Saraiki and some local dialects spoken in that area which became part of Pakistan, as he mentions in his “Foreword” (pp ix-xi). However, its translation into English is a story in itself, so peculiar that Gulzar is shown as the author in the byline, and the translators’ names are not mentioned. As per Gulzar’s own account of it in the “Foreword,” first Sukrita Paul Kumar, a dear friend of his, took it upon herself to translate the work, but he “was not at ease while reading it.” Then “Shantanu Ray Chowdhury, another friend, tried to improve on it.” Gulzar was not still at ease with the work, though Shantanu, a professional editor and writer in English, “did his job well.” It did not correspond to the original in equivalences. It did not blend the tones and dialects as Gulzar did in the original. Still unhappy, he put it away for some time. Then he picked it up and worked on it himself, as he felt compelled to bring out the book in 2017 itself, to mark the seventieth year of Partition. There are no bylines of the translators in its title page. It would have been possible to provide bylines for the translators, only if the names of Sukrita, Shantanu and Gulzar himself could be mentioned. Now it looks like a novel by Gulzar in English, although he has himself narrated the whole saga of the translation in the “Foreword.” A similar case that comes to my mind is the translation of Milan Kundera’s novel, *The Joke*.

A.J. Thomas



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Literary posterity

## Tales of a suitcase

**Kafka's Last Trial: The Case of a Literary Legacy.** By Benjamin Balint. *W.W. Norton*; 288 pages; \$26.95. *Picador*; £14.99

THE NEAREST that FRANZ KAFKA (above) came to the Holy Land was the plan he hatched with his last lover, Dora Diamant, to open a restaurant in Tel Aviv. She would cook while he waited on tables. Alas, tuberculosis claimed the writer from Prague in June 1924, before Kafka's Place could open its doors. (Speciality? Surely, grilled scapegoat.) However, in 1939 Kafka's friend Max Brod fled Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia for Palestine with a suitcase that held most of his idol's manuscripts. It contained the never-completed novels "The Trial", "The Castle" and "Amerika", along with diaries, notebooks and correspondence.

Decades later, the contents of that refugee's valise prompted a clutch of hotly contested lawsuits. They climbed the judicial ladder until, in 2016, they landed in Israel's Supreme Court. Benjamin Balint, a critic and translator, traces this saga in his absorbing book. Not only does Mr Balint ask, "Who owns Kafka?" He explores the meaning of a writer's legacy in an age that, like Kafka's disorienting stories, puts identity and belonging in doubt.

Kafka published little in his lifetime. His admirers will know that much of his fiction can be read only thanks to an act of betrayal. Before he died, the German-speaking Jewish author from a Czech city—an epitome of "marginality, dislocation and estrangement", as Mr Balint puts

Bedroom fiction

## Teeth and claws

**You Know You Want This.** By Kristen Roupenian. *Gallery/Scout Press*; 240 pages; \$24.99. *Jonathan Cape*; £12.99

FOR A LITERARY sensation, the short story had an unassuming title. "Cat Person" portrayed the flirting and eventual date between Margot, a 20-year-old college student, and 34-year-old Robert (the supposed feline enthusiast of the title). Their relationship culminates in strange and unpleasant—but not violent or coercive—sex. The tale was published in the *New Yorker* in December 2017, just as the #MeToo movement began to encourage women to speak up about harassment, assault and abuses of power. It inspired a glut of opinion pieces, plus a satirical retelling from Robert's perspective, and may well be the most-read piece of fiction in the history of the magazine.

Little surprise, then, that there was a bidding war for Kristen Roupenian's first book, "You Know You Want This". The collection of stories (some of which, like "Cat Person", have been published before) circles around themes of desire, pain, obsession and transgression. "Inspired by a small but nasty encounter" of her own, the fable that made Ms Roupenian's name resonated with many female readers' experiences of 21st-century dating. Most of the tales in this volume are much darker and more disturbing. Many of them are shot through with moments of black comedy.

Ms Roupenian often peers behind the bedroom curtain: at the woman who wants to be punched and kicked by strangers during foreplay; at the couple who are titillated, then fixated, by the idea of their carnal embraces being overheard; at the man who can achieve tumescence only by pretending "that his dick was a knife, and the woman he was fucking was stabbing herself with it". Yet

the women in these pages are not all victimised and manipulated. Many are aggressors in their own right.

In "Sardines", Tilly, a ten-year-old girl, makes a monstrous birthday wish borne of the bullying she had endured and abandonment by her father. Ellie, the protagonist of "Biter", longs to sink her teeth into a new colleague's "sweet and gamy flesh". When he kisses her against her will at the Christmas party, she rips a chunk of skin from his cheekbone. She changes jobs regularly, "because, as Ellie quickly learned, there was one in every office"—a creep who provides a chance for her own form of predation.

"You Know You Want This" at once enchants and horrifies. Ms Roupenian's occasional supernatural touches can be distracting, but at its best her writing recalls the gloomy feminist fairy-tales of Angela Carter. This collection cements her reputation as one of the most startling new voices in fiction.



it—had instructed the devoted Brod to burn all his papers, "unread and to the last page". For Brod, disobedience constituted a higher loyalty. By 1939 his stewardship of Kafka's work had given his friend a fast-rising global renown. In Germany, it also incurred the vandalistic wrath of the Nazis.

After 1948, in newborn Israel, Brod failed to revive his own literary career. But he flourished as the keeper of Kafka's flame. His interventionist editing means that, as Mr Balint puts it, "the Kafka we know is a creation of Brod." A much-loved

companion named Esther Hoffe, another immigrant from Prague, helped him in his labours. At his death in 1968 Brod bequeathed his belongings, including the precious Kafka papers, to Esther. At the same time, his ambiguous will also requested that his estate enter a "public archive" at her death.

Thus the confused stage was set for later legal quarrels. After a preliminary skirmish in 1974, they reached heights of properly Kafkaesque absurdity after Esther left the priceless stash to her daughter Eva, a re-▶

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Eng. literature

tired El Al employee, in 2007. Now the National Library of Israel claimed Kafka as "a touchstone of modern Jewish cultural achievement" whose documents must rest on its shelves. Esther and Eva, though, had already dealt with the national archive of German literature in Marbach. The Germans had put in their own bid for Brod's treasure-trove. For their part, Mr Balint suggests, they wished to occupy the high ground of "European universalism against Israeli particularism".

Mr Balint elegantly intercuts courtroom scenes with episodes from Kafka's biography and cultural afterlife. He brings out every paradox of a judicial process that tried to tie down this most ambivalent of authors, the ultimate "disaffiliated pariah", to a fixed identity. Kafka may have flirted with Zionism, but (in 1914) he also wrote: "What have I in common with the Jews? I have hardly anything in common with myself."

Disputes over his Jewishness, or Germanness, became the grist for a slow-grinding legal mill. It sought clarity and certainty from a mind that, in literature and life, often "vacillated on the threshold of consummation". At length, the National Library prevailed. Eva Hoffe denounced the verdict as a violation. Mr Balint's scrupulous and sardonic prose makes you love Kafka, and dread the law. Lali Michaeli, an Israeli poet, deserves the last word. "From my perspective," she remarked of the writer's otherworldly talent, "Kafka's manuscripts should be sent to the moon." ■



Burying Jean McConville, 30 years on

tense conversations with her offspring, who ended their childhoods in horrible institutions and now campaign for justice. Yet much of this masterly reportage empathetically evokes the militant republican world from which McConville's killers came. Above all, it traces the relationships that emerged among leading republicans as the slums of Belfast slid into a many-sided war that debased everyone—relationships that soured after bombs gave way to politics in the 1990s.

The discerning skill with which Mr Radden Keefe gets inside these characters' minds may unsettle some readers, but it is also his book's strength. He shows how people who in peacetime might just have been strong-willed or colourful types came to condone or perpetrate the unspeakable.

The most memorable figure in this gallery is Dolours Price. She and her sister Marian were jailed in 1973 for planting bombs in London that injured 200 people and killed one. They went on hunger strike and secured a transfer to a Northern Irish jail. In their youth, the book notes, the sisters were popular, attractive figures around Catholic Belfast, dubbed the Crazy Prices after a discount store. They were radicalised after a civil-rights march was roughed up by thugs in 1969.

Dolours fascinated many people, including Margaret Thatcher, who as prime minister studied the sisters' case closely. And it was Dolours who, as she disclosed before succumbing to an overdose in 2013, drove McConville to her death. The squad waiting in the Irish Republic to fire the shots balked, so the execution had to be done by another trio: Dolours herself, who said she deliberately missed, plus two others, only one of whom she named.

The case long troubled her, Dolours revealed. It was not that she opposed punishing people who abetted the security forces, or doubted that McConville was an inform-

er. (Mr Radden Keefe, after hearing many views, is more sceptical.) In her youth she favoured dumping informers' bodies on the street, not making them vanish. But later she wondered whether McConville had to be killed at all: "What warrants death?" she mused in an interview with Ed Moloney, an Irish author, of which Mr Radden Keefe was shown a transcript. From that document, he makes his own deduction about who fired the fatal shot.

Still, there was one matter on which Dolours and some others of her passionately republican bent harboured no doubt: the peace settlement that left Northern Ireland's future to be settled democratically was a betrayal. As the book relates, another who felt that way was Brendan Hughes, perhaps the doughtiest bomber, arms-procurer and jail-breaker to emerge from republican Belfast in the 1970s. At one point, Hughes was close to Gerry Adams: the former a frontline fighter, the latter a cool strategist. But Hughes abhorred the peace Mr Adams helped broker in the 1990s.

People like Hughes and Dolours Price poured out their feelings in testimonials offered by veterans of the conflict that were stored at Boston College, with a promise they would remain sealed until their deaths. The Northern Irish police fought a legal battle to obtain some of those interviews, and it was on that basis that they arrested Mr Adams for several days in 2014. He was released without charge; he continues to deny that he was a member of the IRA or had anything to do with the abduction of McConville, which he condemns.

### Armalite to ballot box

This book's most lasting achievement may lie not in its forensic analysis of the McConville saga but in the questions it raises about the Northern Irish settlement. As it chronicles, people were willing to endure and inflict terrible pain so long as a spirit of political maximalism prevailed: if Ireland could be united fast, the thinking went, all horrors could be redeemed. But Mr Adams saw that maximalism must stop; instead the republican interest lay in well-timed compromise. That was devastating for those who had suffered and killed.

Veterans like Hughes and Dolours Price were especially dismayed by the manoeuvres of Mr Adams who, as they saw it, had once endorsed their methods but now feigned absent-minded detachment. Yet Mr Adams's sheer versatility, as a ruthless advocate of war and a tough enforcer of peace, was indispensable to the settlement. The book quotes a British government report of 2015 which spells out this unpalatable trade-off frankly. Peace had held not because paramilitary groups had faded but because they, and those with influence over them, had survived—and could finally rein in the hotheads. ■

### Violence and its aftermath

## The price of peace

**Say Nothing: A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland.** By Patrick Radden Keefe. Doubleday; 464 pages; \$28.95. William Collins; £20

ON A WINTER evening in 1972, a mother of ten, still recovering from her husband's death, received a fateful visit to her high-rise flat in Belfast's war zone. At least eight people, most of them masked but a couple recognisable as neighbours, marched her away. She was told she was being taken to a charity home for her own safety; she asked, pathetically, if her children could join her. In fact she was executed as a supposed informer. Her body was found on a beach in 2003.

Among the many stories told in dark detail in Patrick Radden Keefe's new book on the Northern Irish conflict, the abduction of Jean McConville stands out. The 100-plus interviews he conducted included in-

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# Life after Gujarat violence

Hindu; 96/1/19; Pg. 16

A journalist traces the stories of three very different men who participated in the mass hate crimes of 2002

HARSH MANDER

India has been the site of recurring episodes of horrific hate violence, which target people disadvantaged by caste, religious identity and gender. In all such episodes – of Dalit atrocities, communal killings, lynching, gang-rapes – we tend to imagine the perpetrators of these crimes who rape, murder and loot in frenzies of hate and bigotry, as faceless homogenous blurs of unmitigated evil.

We tend to forget that each of the men in these mobs (and they are almost always men) are also human beings with individual lives, aspirations, dreams, frustrations, and loves (hopefully) as well as hates. Most have families to which they go back to after their hands are stained with blood, and to the beds of wives and partners after they have raped other women. Who are these people? Why do they kill, rape and plunder? What do they do with their lives after violently acting out their hate?

## Looking for answers

Revati Laul is that rare journalist who set out to find some answers to these questions after the brutal communal carnage of 2002 in Gujarat. A reputed investigative television and print journalist, Laul found herself obsessed with these very questions. Her stunning and disturbing book, *The Anatomy of Hate*, is the result of her quest for answers. This book was 14 years in the making. She took 10 years to talk to about 100 men who had joined in the crimes of 2002, and

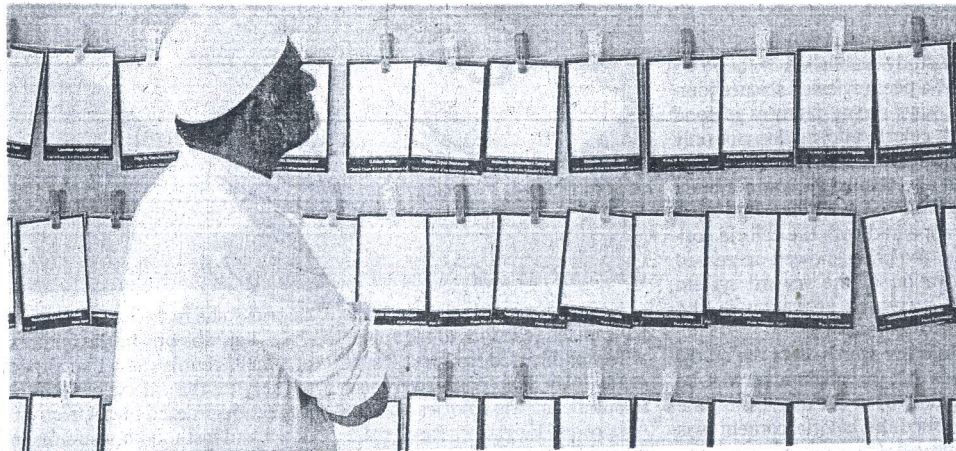


■ **The Anatomy of Hate**  
Revati Laul  
Context/ Westland Books  
₹599

to find among them persons who were willing to tell their stories of hate, guilt and complicity. There were finally three men whose stories she resolved to tell. It took her another four years to understand their stories in their complex layering, and to weave these into a book.

We meet in the pages of her book a college student, Pranav, who would accompany his hostel-mates to loot stores every night during the carnage, to stock themselves with expensive shoes and clothes from shops owned by Muslims. We are unnerved by their casual utter amorality, their complete freedom from any guilt or shame. We balk to read of a night when they decide to loot a food-store because their midnight shop-lifts had left them hungry. It matters little that it is owned by a Hindu. After they ransack it, they set it on fire, and later blame Muslims for it.

We meet Dungan, an Adivasi who is drawn into the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, attracted by the pow-



From the ashes: A survivor of the communal carnage of 2002 looks at photos of the victims at a programme in Ahmedabad. •PTI

er and status it accords him, and its call to Adivasis to give up liquor and meat. He is stirred when his leader invokes, 'You have one day. Burn the Muslims'; and on this call, Dungan sets fire to the homes and fields of his 13 Muslim neighbours, driving them out of his village.

And we meet Suresh Langdo, from Chharanagar, adjacent to Naroda Patiya in Ahmedabad, who boasts of raping and pulping to death Muslim women, and who is charged with murdering a preg-

nant woman and killing her foes. And we encounter the irony of his marriage to a Muslim woman Farzana, who he batters, abuses, rapes and loves in turn.

## The back stories

Laul draws us into their back stories. Pranav who is born into a privileged upper-caste, landed household, in a village with traditionally segregated Dalit and Muslim enclaves, rebelled as a teenager by having eggs, which were taboo, and liquor. Dungan

emerges as a spirited and intelligent Adivasi boy, ravaged by his father's drunken violence against his mother. His upper-caste teacher takes him under his wing, and becomes his role-model. The Sangh recruits him, and teaches him to see himself as Hindu, and to detest Muslims.

Suresh is born into a family of professional thieves and illicit hooch makers. His childhood is wrecked by polio that cost him one leg, and his teachers' taunts about his birth in 'a community of

thieves'. As a young man, he becomes notorious for robbery and raping women.

The most fascinating, and sometimes unexpected part of Laul's story is the descriptions of what course the lives of these three men took after their role in the communal carnage of 2002.

## Changing tracks

Pranav is riven by remorse, becomes an atheist, and devotes himself to rebuilding the lives of the survivors of the carnage, and also to restoring goodwill in the social relations between Hindus and Muslims, by joint cricket matches, and engaging Hindus in the rebuilding of Muslim homes. Dungan becomes an archetypical power-grabbing politician. And Suresh's life plunges steeply downwards; his wife Farzana finally despairs of him and divorces him; he lands in prison, where perhaps he will spend the rest of his life.

Laul does not offer us a morality tale. She does not write fiction. She tells us, in eloquent prose and careful detail, the stories of the life-trajectories of these three very different men who participated in the mass hate crimes of 2002. By so doing, she holds a mirror to us as a people: to who we are, what we have become, and what we can become. Their stories must concern us, if we are to both understand and hopefully one day end hate violence.

This is a rare book, brave and fiercely honest, unsettling, deeply troubling. Those who worry about the future of India cannot afford to miss it.

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Hindu, 6/1/19, Pg. 3 (Literary review)

# Grime and punishment

A brooding and fierce street novel about boys with “elsewhere in their blood”

■ BY GEETA DOCTOR

It's unlikely that Queen Elizabeth's traditional Christmas address for 2018 was influenced by the runaway success of Guy Gunaratne's fictional account of life in the four dark tower blocks of the Stones estate in North West London, Neasden. The book was long-listed for the 2018 Man Booker Prize and has made a hero of Gunaratne. He now lives in Malmö, Sweden.

Yet the queen touched upon a subject that is at the heart of Gunaratne's fierce and often incendiary attack on what passes for life in the underbelly of London. Tribalism. The opposite of multiculturalism, in times of war or economic distress, tribalism is what causes those in power to confine groups of people with different ideologies into ghettos, or in communes at the margins of their cities.

## Footie and girls

It's certainly what appears to have triggered the panic that led to the now contentious issue of Brexit – keep the immigrants pouring into Europe out of the U.K. Or what an earlier fascist leader Oswald Mosley (1896-1980) – who rises from the dead in Gunaratne's book like a scene from a vampire movie – orchestrated as KBW or Keep Britain White slogans pasted on walls in the mid-20th century.

Tribalism and its many manifestations are the rivets that hold together Gunaratne's clenched fist of a novel. The four main characters represent the second generation of ‘youngsters’, to use his patois, who live in the Stones estate and are linked by their love for ‘footie’ (football) and girls. There is Selvon, West Indian, who lives outside the Estate and aspires to a better life at the Uni. His father Nelson and mother Maisie came to England hoping to find the green and pleasant country of their colonial dreams, maybe even a chance to have tea with the queen. There's Ardan, whose mother Caroline fled



■ In Our Mad and Furious City  
Guy Gunaratne  
Tinder Press  
£6.99

the internecine savagery of her IRA family in Belfast. And Irfan and Yusuf from Pakistan, whose father, a moderate mullah at the local mosque, has just died leaving the family adrift and ripe to be nurtured by the radicals. Bonding over football could be seen as a tribal activity, just like drooling over girls or meeting at the laundromat or pub, but more pertinently for the purpose of the novel, it's the mosque and the power of hate that trigger the more extreme response to tribal bonding. Or so Gunaratne implies.

## An ear for grime music

Sitting in her enchanting White study with its fireplace and Christmas tree and gilded piano glittering in the background, the British queen looked uncommonly grim as she intoned: “Even the power of faith, which frequently inspires great generosity and self-sacrifice, can fall victim to tribalism.”

She may have even at this point practised what Selvon is described as doing: “I kissed my teeth,” he says, patois for sucking the lips in against the teeth with a hissing sound to express disapproval. ‘We are not amused,’ as an earlier queen was wont to say.

The patois that Gunaratne's characters use to communicate their inner lives fills the book with its own rhythm. If in his 1962 ode to violence *The Clockwork Orange*, which prophesied an England overrun by young men intent on senseless acts of rape and assault of ran-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

● If in his 1962 ode to violence, *The Clockwork Orange*, Anthony Burgess invented a strange gutter-speech, then Gunaratne's ear here is tuned to what he hears in the streets around the Estate

domly chosen victims, Anthony Burgess invented a strange gutter-speech that in itself was disturbing because it made sense only to the anti-hero Alex and his tribe of “droogs,” then Gunaratne's ear here is tuned to what he hears in the streets around the Estate. Burgess's Alex was tuned into Beethoven, or Lovely Ludwig Van, played at eardrum splitting levels. Here, music-man Ardan, the white Irish son of a former IRA supporter, has an ear for grime music.

## City blues

Never heard of grime, sistah? It's the iconic sound of Inner City Blues and electronic rap chants made famous by the likes of Stormzy on YouTube. There's an epiphany of sorts when Ardan, always the runt,

comes into his own riding on the top of one of London's double-decker buses and giving the jeering mob a taste of his self-directed genius for spouting grime. Ardan, the white Irish boy, and Selvon, the bronzed West Indian, are breddas or brothers/buddies.

“*Wa-gwan bredda? Nuttan ennit. Them Muhajiroun con to stone My-man ennit?*” Translated this could mean: “What's going on brother? Nothing. Those Mujahidin boys from the mosque want to speak with my buddy, got it?” And that's the more polite bits, none of the more colourful swear words or hot sexual innuendos can be repeated here.

They consist, we imagine, of a multicultural soup of Caribbean, Irish, Pakistani and street cred lingo.

It's a wonder the editors did not include a glossary at the end.

The fifth element, the thumbs-up that triggers the violence in the trajectory of the novel, which takes place in a 48-hour time frame set within the boundaries of the Estate, is the real-life killing that took place on May 22, 2013 of a white soldier at Woolwich by two black boys – both Nigerians.

They did it apparently to avenge the purported killing of Muslims by the British armed forces.

Gunaratne's prose is ice under fire. In the conflagration that spreads across the Square there is still hope. For that alone, thanks bredda.

The Chennai-based writer is a critic and cultural commentator.

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Hindu; 20/1/19; Pg. 16

# Words on Manto

Contemporaries on the *enfant terrible* of Urdu literature

RAKSHANDA JALIL

If you want to read a *festschrift* with a difference read *Manto Saheb*. If you want to know how Manto's contemporaries and fellow writers viewed the maverick in their midst this collection of essays provides multiple mini biographies of a complex, troubled man, one might even say a mad genius. Manto himself has left behind several biographical sketches of his friends and foes – some jewel-bright in their luminosity, others darkly witty or sharply satirical; some are to be found in the evocatively titled *Ganjey Farishtey* ('Bald Angels'), others scattered amongst his vast and varied oeuvre and occasionally buried in the forewords he wrote for some of his own books.

Provocative, outrageous, scandalous, occasionally blasphemous, always ready to cock a snook at society, literary norms and most notions of propriety, Manto revelled in being the original *enfant terrible* of Urdu literature. Seldom shy of airing his views on fellow writers, it is no wonder that those around him thought fit to air theirs as well with varying degrees of



■ **Manto Saheb: Friends and Enemies on the Great Maverick**

Translated by Vibha Chauhan, Khalid Alvi  
Speaking Tiger  
₹499

frankness, occasionally also with little regard to literary propriety such as Upendranath Ashk's *Manto Mera Dushman* (Manto, My Enemy).

Some of the essays included here were written in response to Manto's 'first strike', others spring from deep wells of affection, even love such as Ismat's tribute to her friend after his death. Krishan Chandar's elegantly sprawling reflection is by far the most insightful. After a description of Manto's physical form, he notes: 'Exasperation clearly writ on a face which reflects a singular kind of sophistication and refinement. An edgi-

ness in the voice. A restlessness to write. A kind of bitterness in behaviour. And hasty steps.'

Two personal essays bookend the others by contemporaries: Ibrahim Jalees, Muhammad Tufail, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, Balwant Gargi, among others. The first is, appropriately enough by Manto himself writing with an almost schizophrenic detachment about the other Manto, his twin, the one with an 'erratic mind', the one who 'refuses to walk the straight path'.

The last by his nephew, Hamid Jalal, is empathetic yet completely unsentimental. Praise from Ali Sardar Jafri, that eluded Manto while he lived, comes in the form of a bitter-sweet tribute entitled 'The Foul-mouthed One'.

Translated fluently by Vibha S. Chauhan and Khalid Alvi, the book would have benefitted with an Introduction and some context.

The 'Notes on the Contributors' and occasional footnotes are sketchy at best and, in one instance, contain a gross error for Ali Sardar Jafri did *not* preside over the first ever Progressive Writers' Conference; that honour went to Premchand.

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# Nothing to hide Hinder, 6/1/19; Pg-16

Surviving an acid attack to tell a story of resilience

R. KRITHIKA

Towards the end of her account of being an acid-attack survivor, Reshma Qureshi writes, "As for those television journalists who called me inspiring yet blurred my face... Rather than accepting me for who I am, they have reinforced that I have a face I should be hiding." For many of us, acid attacks are headlines in newspapers and television channels. *Being Reshma* brings you face to face with life in the aftermath of the attack. The simple direct narrative gives you a feeling of listening to Qureshi tell her story.

The youngest of five kids, Qureshi was much indulged by her siblings and parents. The acid attack had nothing to do with her. The actual target was her older sister who had left an abusive husband. On May 19, 2004, on her way to an examination centre, Qureshi was attacked by her brother-in-law and his cousins. The latter held her



■ **Being Reshma**  
Reshma Qureshi with  
Tania Singh  
Macmillan  
₹599

hands down while the former emptied a bottle of acid on her head. "They never even removed the niqab to see my face," she writes. She was wearing her sister's niqab.

Qureshi offers, in agonising detail, the rest: dealing with bureaucratic apathy and medical negligence, the numerous procedures to reconstruct her face, her attempts at suicide and dealing with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, people who blamed her for what happened.

Qureshi's family rallies around her, and meeting Ria Sharma of the non-profit

Make Love Not Scars leads her to be the face of the campaign to end acid sales. As a result of her activism and fight to regain her life, she walks the ramp at the New York Fashion Week. "Many believe that my unparalleled success at the New York Fashion Week was a historical moment for acid attack survivors. I certainly hope so, for never again in the history of the world would I wish for a story like that to make global headlines."

Qureshi also deals with accusations of trivialising acid attacks by her participation in fashion shows.

*Being Reshma* also questions attitudes to acid attack survivors. Pointing out that they didn't have a choice – "we can't change our faces or our stories" – she blames society and the governments for a system that compels them to hide their faces while the attackers more often than not get away scot-free. It's hard not to be moved by this young woman's courage and resilience.

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गुजरते 2018 की पांच प्रमुख किताबों के बारे में पूछने पर आठ-दस लेखकों-आलोचकों ने अलग-अलग पसंद बताई लेकिन पांचक किताबें कमोबेश साझा दिलचस्पी की निकल ही आईं

**सा**ल की पांच उम्दा किताबें कौन-सी? आसान कहां होता है दिसंबर के अंत में हर बार आ खड़े होने वाले इस तरह के सवालों का जवाब? हमने कुछ लेखकों-कवियों-आलोचकों की रुचियों के जरिए इसे टटोला. कुछ ने बेबाकी से जवाब दे दिए तो कुछ थोड़ा टिठके और कई पहलुओं से सोचकर जवाब दिया. हमारी मंशा भी थी कि अलग-अलग पहलू विचार में लिए जाएं. कथाकार-आलोचक विश्वनाथ त्रिपाठी इस सवाल पर अपने अंदाज में बोले, "देखो भइया, इस साल-उस साल का हमको नहीं पता, जो पसंद आती है उसे बार-बार पढ़ते हैं. जैसे अभी *सोनाम गुप्ता बेवफा नहीं* पढ़ रहा हूँ. बहुत छोटे-छोटे निबंध. माना जाता है कि यह विधा रचनात्मकता का नाश कर देती है लेकिन अनिलवा (अनिल यादव) ने इसी को औजार बना लिया. और सुनिए, निलय उपाध्याय का उपन्यास *पहाड़*. दसरथ नाम का मांझी, उसके जैसा हनीमून आज तक नहीं पढ़ा. साधारणता में विलक्षणता." पर ये किताबें तो पहले आ चुकी हैं! कथाकार असगर वजाहत बेबाकी से कह देते हैं, "पढ़ता तो रहता ही हूँ लेकिन इस साल ऐसा कुछ देखने में नहीं आया." (हालांकि उनकी दो किताबों *भीड़तंत्र* (कहानी संग्रह) और *अतीत का दरवाजा* (यात्रा वृत्तान्त) के नाम दो पैनलिस्ट्स ने लिए).

काम और मुश्किल हो गया जब किन्हीं वजहों से कुछ के जवाब नहीं मिल सके. पर विमल कुमार, प्रभात रंजन, दिनेश कुमार, पल्लव, राजीव कुमार, रजनी अनुरागी और रश्मि भारद्वाज ने 2018 में आई अपनी पसंद की किताबों की सूची हमें दी. रजनी ने स्पष्ट कहा कि उन्होंने दलित साहित्य ज्यादा पढ़ा है, सो उसी के बारे में बताएंगी. रजनी तिलक संपादित/शेखर पवार अनूदित *सावित्री बाई फुले समग्र* के अलावा उन्होंने असंग घोष, मुसाफिर बैठा, करमानंद आर्य और सतीश खनगवाल के ताजा कविता संग्रहों के नाम लिए. जिज्ञासा का विषय यह था कि कोई एक पुस्तक किन-किन की सूचियों में जगह बना पाती है. और यह सुई आकर टिकी हिंदी के मूर्धन्य कवि केदारनाथ सिंह के जाने के बाद आए उनके कविता संग्रह *मतदान केंद्र पर झपकी* पर, जो तीन सूचियों में थी. उपन्यास *पागलखाना* (ज्ञान चतुर्वेदी) और *रेत समाधि* (गीतांजलि श्री), कहानी संग्रह *अनुपमा गांगुली का चौथा प्यार* (विजयश्री तनवीर) और कथेतर *कश्मीरनामा*

- मतदान केंद्र पर झपकी (कविता संग्रह), केदारनाथ सिंह
- पागलखाना (व्यंग्य उपन्यास), ज्ञान चतुर्वेदी
- रेत-समाधि (उपन्यास), गीतांजलि श्री
- कश्मीरनामा: इतिहास और समकाल (कथेतर), अशोक कुमार पांडेय
- अनुपमा गांगुली का चौथा प्यार (कहानी संग्रह), विजयश्री तनवीर

(अशोक कुमार पांडेय) को, इस चुनावी मौसम के मुहावरे में कहे तो, दो-दो वोट मिले. केदार जी के संग्रह को "स्थानीयता की जमीन से सार्वभौम को परखने का सुंदर उदाहरण", "उनकी कविताओं की विशिष्टता रही मनुष्यता, राग, विस्थापन की पीड़ा को अभिव्यक्त करने वाली" और "कविता प्रेमियों को सत्ता और समय के प्रश्नों को परखने की दृष्टि देने वाला" बताया गया. इस सूची में सबसे कम उम्र तनवीर का प्रवेश चौंकाने वाला है. उनके इस पहले ही कहानी संग्रह ने "भाषा, प्रवाह, शिल्प और कथ्य के बूते" पाठकों का ध्यान खींचा है. *पागलखाना* के बारे में पल्लव लिखते हैं, "बाजारीकृत व्यवस्था किस कदर मनुष्यविरोधी हो सकती है, यह पागलखाना का हासिल है." और *कश्मीरनामा* में, प्रभात रंजन के शब्दों में, "एक जिल्द में कश्मीर के इतिहास, राजनीति और साहित्य सब कुछ बहुत आर्थेटिक तरीके से दर्ज किया गया है"

जाहिर है, यह एक प्रतीकात्मक सूची है. तमाम विधाओं में जहां सैकड़ों बल्कि हजारों किताबें हर वर्ष छपती हों, उनमें कुछेक के कुछ पर उंगली रख देने के आधार पर 'टॉप-5' को कैसे चुना जा सकता है? पर इससे संकेत मिलता है किस तरफ नजरें ज्यादा गई हैं. यहीं पर यह सूची खुल जाती है और कथा/कथेतर/कविता के बीसियों शीर्षक इसमें रूतबे के साथ दाखिल हो उठते हैं. मसलन उपन्यासों में *सहेला रे* (मृगाल पांडे), *एक सेक्स मरीज का रोगनामचा* (विनोद भारद्वाज), *हम यहां थे* (मधु कांकरिया), *हमन हैं इस्क मस्ताना* (विमलेश त्रिपाठी), *नए समय का कोरस* (रजनी गुप्त); कहानी संग्रहों में *ग्यारहवीं ए के लड़के* (गौरव सोलंकी), *कहीं कुछ नहीं* (शशिभूषण द्विवेदी), *किरदार* (मनीषा कुलश्रेष्ठ), *फोटो अंकल* (प्रेम भारद्वाज), *लेडीज सर्कल* (गीतांजलि श्री), *मुझे तुम्हारे जाने से नफरत है* (प्रियंका ओम). इसके अलावा कविता संग्रहों में *ईश्वर नहीं नींद चाहिए* (अनुराधा सिंह), *कदाचित् अपूर्ण* (मनोज कुमार झा), कथेतर गद्य में *मैं बोनसाई अपने समय का* (आत्मकथा; रामशरण जोशी), *चीन डायरी* (यात्रा वृत्तान्त; ऋतुराज), *साहित्य, संस्कृति और भाषा* (लेख संग्रह; जगदीशचंद्र माथुर) और *लक्ष्मीनामा* (शोध पुस्तक; अंशुमान तिवारी और अनिंद्य सेनगुप्त). अंत में कथाकार और अंतिका प्रकाशन के प्रमुख गौरीनाथ जैसे एक क्षेपक-सा जोड़ते हैं, "इसी साल हमारे यहां से छपी, 11 मशहूर मनोचिकित्सकों से साक्षात्कार वाली किताब *मनोचिकित्सा संवाद* (विनय कुमार) की 2,500 से ज्यादा प्रतियां अब तक बिक चुकी हैं." यानी आज का मध्यवर्ग झिझक और दोहरापन छोड़कर अब मानसिक संत्रास के सच को कुबूल कर रहा है! मनोचिकित्सकों के सामने ही सही. -शिवकेश

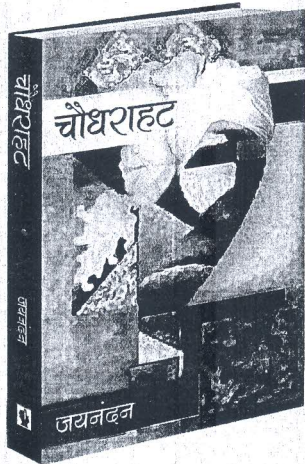
## कुछ और भी



48

किताब

# दलित नायक की पराजय गाथा



चौधराहट

लेखक: जयनंदन

प्रकाशक: सामयिक प्रकाशन,  
दिल्ली; कीमत: 495 रु.

## संजय कुंदन

जयनंदन का उपन्यास चौधराहट ऐसे समय आया है, जब देश की तमाम राजनैतिक पार्टियों में खुद को दलितों का सबसे बड़ा हमदर्द बताने की होड़-सी लगी है. हर पार्टी उन्हें अपने साथ लेना चाहती है. लेकिन इस तबके की सामाजिक हैसियत में कोई खास बदलाव नहीं आया है. समाज की घेराबंदी के बीच किसी दलित का मुख्यधारा में जगह बनाना और सुकून से जीना एक सपना ही है. यह विडंबना इस उपन्यास के नायक लोटन के जरिए सामने आती है.

लोटन रज्जाकगंज नामक गांव का एक डोम है, जिसका काम घर-घर से मैला इकट्ठा कर फेंकना है. गांव के पूर्व जमींदार रऊफ मियां की उस पर विशेष कृपा है. रऊफ ने ही उसके पिता को गांव में बसाया था और अपने बनवाए अस्पताल की पहरेदारी और साफ-सफाई की जिम्मेदारी लोटन को दी थी. लोटन ने वहीं के डॉक्टर सलाम साहब की सहायता करते हुए थोड़ी-बहुत डॉक्टरी सीख ली. उस अस्पताल से उसका भावनात्मक लगाव है. वह चाहता है कि अस्पताल विकसित हो ताकि गांव के गरीबों को इलाज के लिए शहर न जाना पड़े.

लोटन की सोच और उसके व्यवहार के कारण गांव में उसकी प्रतिष्ठा है, जो ऊंचे और संपन्न लोगों को पसंद नहीं. रऊफ मियां का एक मुलाजिम अनेर चौधरी उससे जलता है, उसे नीचा दिखाने का मौका नहीं छोड़ता. रोज नए षड्यंत्र रचता है पर सफल नहीं हो पाता.

डॉ. सलाम की मौत और अस्पताल में डॉ. दोलन की नियुक्ति के बाद वहां

अनियमितताएं होने लगीं. मुखिया और दबंगों ने उसे अय्याशी का अड्डा बना लिया. सारी बातें रऊफ मियां तक पहुंचने पर वे दोलन को हटाकर लोटन को उसका स्वामित्व सौंप देते हैं. अनेर और उसके दोस्तों को यह अखरता है और वे अस्पताल की जमीन हथियाने को साजिशें रचने लगते हैं. पर लोटन अस्पताल के लिए लड़ता है. उधर अनेर ने धर्म का सहारा लिया और अस्पताल की जमीन पर शिवलिंग के प्रकट होने की बात फैला दी और तब तक दिवंगत हो चुके रऊफ पर आरोप लगाया कि उन्होंने एक प्राचीन मंदिर तोड़कर अस्पताल बनवाया था. लोटन ने अस्पताल को सरकारी मान्यता दिलाने के लिए अनशन किया, मुख्यमंत्री तक से मुलाकात की, उनसे आश्वासन ले लिया लेकिन गांव के चंद लोगों ने अस्पताल को गिराकर कब्जा कर लिया. इस तरह लोटन की हार हुई.

लोटन की हार दरअसल गांव के कमजोर और वंचित तबके की हार है. अस्पताल दलितों और कमजोर वर्ग की आकांक्षाओं का एक प्रतीक है. उस पर समाज के प्रभुवर्ग का मंदिर के नाम पर कब्जा करना आज के समय का एक रूपक है. क्या आज धर्म की आड़ लेकर दलितों और तमाम वंचित तबकों के सपनों की धज्जियां नहीं उड़ाई जा रहीं? निश्चय ही यह उपन्यास वर्तमान भारत के समाज और सियासत की एक भयावह तस्वीर पेश करता है. यह बताता है कि हमने जनतांत्रिक प्रणाली भले ही अपना ली हो पर समाज में जनतंत्र अब भी नहीं उतर पाया है. ■

संगीत

## स्वर्णिम सुर

राजधानी दिल्ली में संगीत समारोहों के क्रम में एक आयोजन स्वर अर्पण नाम से भी होता है. सिद्धा संस्था का यह कार्यक्रम इस दफा 18 जनवरी को कमानी सभागार में शाम 6.30 बजे से होने वाला है. इस बार इसमें प्रस्तुतियां देने वाले दो कलाकारों में प्रसिद्ध मोहनवीणा वादक पं. विश्वमोहन भट्ट के अलावा शास्त्रीय गायिकी की युवा प्रतिभा स्वर्णिमा गोसाई भी हैं.

स्वर्णिमा को सुनने की जिज्ञासा इसलिए रहेगी क्योंकि उन्होंने हिंदुस्तानी गायिकी के कुछ सिद्ध नामों से तालीम हासिल की है. इनमें पंडिता शुभा मुद्गल, पंडित बटुकनाथ



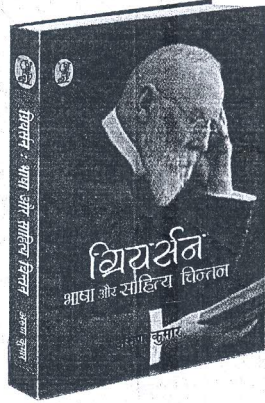
दीवानजी और सारंगी सम्राट उस्ताद साबरी खां शामिल हैं. इतना ही नहीं, उन्होंने गान सरस्वती किशोरी अमोणकर से भी सीखा, जो कि जयपुर-अतरौली घराने की अप्रतिम गायिका थीं. स्वर्णिमा की ताजगी भरी आवाज में इन सभी की तराश देखने-सुनने को मिलेगी. खासकर उनकी तान और शानदार लयकारी सुधी श्रोताओं पर अपना असर डालेगी. और पं. विश्वमोहन भट्ट तो जैसे हर बार अपने संगीत से श्रोताओं को चौंकाते हैं. राग रचना में उनकी कल्पनाशीलता गजब की है. उनकी वीणा का स्वर मानव स्वर के काफी निकट है और प्रस्तुति के दौरान श्रोता को जैसे वे ध्यानस्थ कर देते हैं. जरूर सुनें.

—एस. सहाय रंजीत

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# ग्रियर्सन को याद करते हुए

भाषा और साहित्य चिंतन  
लेखक: अरुण कुमार  
प्रकाशक: वाणी प्रकाशन, दिल्ली  
कीमत: 695 रु.



## संगम पांडेय

करीब एक सदी हुई उनके प्रसिद्ध भाषायी सर्वेक्षण को प्रकाशित हुए 21 जिल्लों में 179 भाषाओं और 544 बोलियों के स्वभाव और गठन की बारीक छानबीन करने वाले जॉर्ज अब्राहम ग्रियर्सन को आज याद करना ज्ञान की एक परंपरा का पुनरावलोकन करना भी है। शोधकर्ता अरुण कुमार ने अपनी पुस्तक *ग्रियर्सन: भाषा और साहित्य चिंतन* में यह काम काफी डूबकर किया है। ऐसे कामों में अमूमन पाई जाने वाली, विवरणों का गड्ढर बनकर रह जाने की प्रवृत्ति से बरी रहते हुए उन्होंने खुद के मौजू विश्लेषण प्रस्तुत किए हैं, और कई बार इसके लिए काफी दूर तक गए हैं। *रामचरितमानस* को दस करोड़ जनता की बाइबिल मानने वाले ग्रियर्सन तुलसी की विनम्रता और मर्यादा के कायल हैं। वे उन्हें शेक्सपियर के समकक्ष रखते हैं और मानते हैं कि तुलसी की लोकप्रियता का कारण शैवमत जनित अश्लीलता का खंडन था। लेकिन अरुण कुमार यहां कुल विश्लेषण में तत्कालीन शासन के तौर-तरीकों को भी जानने की गरज से ग्रियर्सन के ही समकालीन इतिहासकार मोरलैंड के यहां गए हैं। वे उद्धृत करते हैं कि अकबर के राजकाज में अनुत्पादक खर्च काफी थे, जिनका सीधा ताल्लुक राजस्व और उस मार्फत किसान जीवन से था। तुलसीदास की *कवितावली* का उत्तरकांड अकबर के शासकीय स्वर्णयुग के बारे में कुछ और ही कहता है कि किसान तबाह थे, वणिकों का व्यापार तंग हो चुका था, लोग बेरोजगार हो रहे थे।

ग्रियर्सन सरकारी अधिकारी के तौर पर

लंबे अरसे तक बिहार में रहे, जहां तुलसी हमेशा ही बहुत लोकप्रिय थे। ऐसे में यह विचित्र है कि वे बिहार को हिंदी नहीं बल्कि बंगाल का इलाका मानते थे और वहां की अदालतों में हिंदी के चलन के विरोधी थे। अपने सर्वेक्षण में बिहार की बोलियों पर उन्होंने अलग से विचार किया है। लेकिन यहां भी ठोस आंतरिक एकता नहीं बन पाती और मैथिली भोजपुरी से काफी दूर जान पड़ती है। ग्रियर्सन मिथिलांचलियों के सांस्कृतिक स्वाभिमान को अलग से चिन्हित करते हैं, जिसकी पुष्टि मैथिल लोगों के मौजूदा स्वभाव में भी की जा सकती है। मगही उसकी तुलना में एक गंवारु भाषा है, जिसकी वजह, उनके मुताबिक, यह है कि मगध क्षेत्र को बार-बार मुसलमान राजाओं की युद्धस्थली बनना पड़ा।

अरुण कुमार ने सौ से ज्यादा भाषाएं जानने वाले ग्रियर्सन की ब्रिटिश सरकार के प्रति वफादारी को भी बीच-बीच में अपनी चर्चा में शामिल किया है। ग्रियर्सन ईस्ट इंडिया कंपनी के शासन को मुद्रण यंत्रों के प्रसार की मार्फत हिंदुस्तान की पुनर्जागृति का समय मानते थे, पर लेखक की शिकायत है कि वे अपनी किताब *बिहार पीजेंट लाइफ* में किसानों की तत्कालीन दुर्दशा का कोई जिक्र नहीं करते।

इस किताब में विषय के ब्यौरे तो भरपूर हैं पर चर्चाएं उतनी तरतीब से नहीं हैं। लेखक एक साथ इतने प्रसंग खोल देता है कि चीजें उलझ जाती हैं। बातें किसी नतीजे पर पहुंच पाने के बजाए एक विवरण आक्रांत अधूरेपन में जाया हो जाती हैं। ■

## सिनेमा की लौ

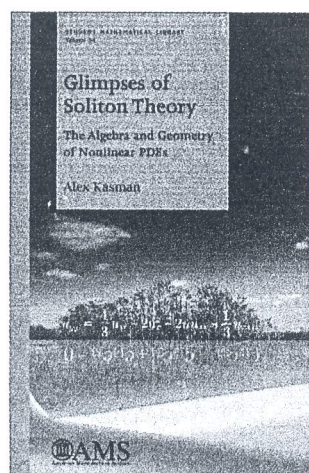
गए सात साल से अशोक वाजपेयी के अतिथि संपादकत्व में निरंतर निकलती आ रही *लोकमत समाचार* की दीपभव रचना वार्षिकी अपनी आठवीं आवृत्ति से पाठकों को चौंका डालती है। इस बार वार्षिकी के केंद्र में साहित्य न होकर सिनेमा है और अतिथि संपादक हैं अभिनेता, गायक, गीतकार पीयूष मिश्र। अपने संपादकीय में वे कहते हैं, “सफलता के लिए जरूरी है कि पूरी गहराई में जाया जाए और खुद के मैग्नेटिक फील्ड को बढ़ाया जाए। इस अंक के मैग्नेटिक फील्ड में स्वरा भास्कर के साथ काम करने के

दीप भव: लोकमत समाचार वार्षिकी अतिथि संपादक: पीयूष मिश्र  
प्रकाशक: लोकमत समाचार,  
जवाहरलाल नेहरू मार्ग, नागपुर  
कीमत: 200 रु.



अनुभव अविनाश दास सुना रहे हैं तो मिहिर पंड्या ने राजकुमार राव की फिल्मों को विश्लेषित कर उनमें आम आदमी के नायक की छवि को उकेरा है। मनोविश्लेषक डॉ. एना चांडी की कलम से दीपिका पादुकोण की सफलता की कहानी निकली है। अरुण सिंह के दोनों रिपोर्टाज नई जानकारी से लैस होने के साथ रोचक भी हैं। मॉरीशस की खूबसूरत यात्रा विकास मिश्र ने कराई है। सिनेमा और संस्मरण से सजी-धजी इस पत्रिका में विगत अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी भी हैं तो आगत स्वरूप राहुल गांधी भी। रोचक साक्षात्कार, पर्यटन, अंतरिक्ष और नमक की तरह व्यंग्य की भी उपस्थिति है।—मनोज मोहन

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**Glimpses of Soliton Theory: The Algebra and Geometry of Nonlinear PDEs, Vol. 54.** Alex Kasman. American Mathematical Society, Providence, Rhode Island, USA. 2010. 304 pages. Price: US\$ 39.20.

An important revolution took place during the 20th century in two stages in mathematics and physics. This revolution concerns soliton theory.

The first stage of revolution started in 1965 with a numerical experiment of the solution of the KdV equation (D. J. Korteweg and G. de Vries) by N. J. Zabusky and M. D. Kruskal, and then in 1967, by the theoretical discovery of  $n$ -soliton solution of this equation by C. S. Gardner, J. M. Greene, M. D. Kruskal and R. M. Miura. This stage of revolution was more or less completed before the end of 1974. Peter Lax (1968), V. E. Zakharov and A. B. Shabat (1972), and M. J. Ablowitz, D. J. Kaup, A. C. Newell and H. Segur (1974) also played significant roles.

The second stage of revolution concerns with the theory related to the discovery of a large number soliton equations and writing their exact solutions by methods more algebraic–geometric in nature. Important contributions to this were made by R. Hirota (1971–74), David Mumford (1978–79), I. M. Krichever and S. P. Novikov (1980), Mikio Sato (1981), E. Date, M. Jimbo, M. Kashiwara and T. Miwa (1982), and G. Segal and G. Wilson (1985). In the second stage also Peter Lax's work (1968, 1975) played an important role. Kasman's book deals with the material in the second stage of revolution.

In 1834 John Scott Russell made a remarkable observation of a great 'wave of translation' (Russell's description of the

observation is well known; see Wikipedia). The first stage of revolution was about a special property (also observed by Russell) that two such 'solitary waves' of different amplitudes interact and re-emerge unchanged. When Zabusky and Kruskal observed this nonlinear interaction property in their numerical experiment, they coined a new word 'soliton' for this solitary wave. But sadly, even after 133 years, Zabusky and Kruskal, and Gardner *et al.* do not refer to the great wave of translation or 'solitary wave' of Russell because this discovery was not given due attention for all these years. Korteweg and de Vries in their much referred paper in 1895 did not mention Russell's observation; instead they referred to G. B. Airy's work of 1845 and G. G. Stokes' work of 1847; both Airy and Stokes had ridiculed Russell. Since more general non-stationary solution of their equation seemed impossible, hardly any attention was paid to Korteweg and de Vries work for about 70 years. In Epilogue, Kasman mentions the failure of Korteweg and de Vries to recognize the importance of their work.

In chapter 3, Kasman describes the neglect and ridicule of Russell's discovery. Nevertheless, it is highly satisfying that Miura (one of the authors of the 1867 paper) pays glowing tribute to Russell in his survey article in *SIAM Review* in 1976. However, today several references are available to Russell's discovery that it has taken almost mythological importance. So at this stage, it becomes important to know 'who was the first to justify Russell's solitary wave mathematically?'. Kasman answers this in the footnote on p. 50. I quote from E. M. de Jager (<https://arxiv.org/pdf/math/0602661.pdf>): 'As to the credit of the "a priori demonstration a posteriori" of the stable solitary wave, this credit belongs, of course, to M. Boussinesq. On the other hand, Korteweg and De Vries merit to be acknowledged for removing doubts on the existence of the "Great Wave" and for their contribution to the theory of long waves in shallow water.'

I need not write more on this history, since a review article by Kasman, based on chapter 3 of the book, has appeared in *Current Science* (2018, 115(8), 1486–1496). It provides beautifully the historical context necessary to appreciate the spectacular developments of the first stage of revolution. In this article, Kasman describes the developments in the

sequence in which they occurred. It also includes the relevance of the Schrödinger equation, which played an important role in finding the  $n$ -soliton solution. A mathematician, not familiar with quantum mechanics, can understand the role played by the Schrödinger equation here. But he/she will be left with a feeling of incompleteness in understanding when he reads the brief statement 'quantities we previously thought of numbers (such as "speed") are actually operators' in quantum mechanics. Kasman warns that 'this sounds strange and nonsensical'. But it would have been more meaningful, had he added one or two more sentences of explanation. Hence, I give here (also included in the *Current Science* article) the web-address – <http://www.math.ucla.edu/tao/preprints/schrodinger.pdf> – of a six-page article by the Fields Medalist Terence Tao. It is a brief presentation suitable for mathematicians, who need not go through the vast literature and big textbooks on quantum mechanics.

One of the two basic assumptions of quantum mechanics is 'particles themselves are waves' – a dual role. Kasman emphasizes a parallel in soliton theory – 'solitons, which are waves, behave like particles'.

Kasman points out (p. 61) that there are two aspects of soliton theory arising out of the KdV equation: pure and applied.

1. The analysis of nonlinear partial differential equations (PDE) leading to dynamics of waves generally falls on the applied side. In this one tries to solve the initial value problem (IVP) of KdV and other soliton equations through 'inverse scattering transform (IST) method'. Though the analysis involved is difficult, it is simple to understand the general procedure when we recollect the well-known method of solving IVP by Fourier transform (FT). Generally, solving an IVP directly is difficult. One defines FT  $\hat{u}$  with respect to spatial variable  $x$  of the solution  $u$  and uses FT of the equation to derive an equation for the evolution of  $\hat{u}$  to find  $\hat{u}_l$  from  $\hat{u}_0$ . The final step is to find  $u_l$  from  $\hat{u}_l$  by taking inverse FT. In the IST method, the role of FT is replaced by IST. The important point is that, unlike FT method for linear equations, the IST method is used to solve a nonlinear equation.

2. The algebraic and geometric approach uses purest of pure mathematics. This approach is the outcome of the seminal paper by Lax in 1968. Kasman deals only with this approach and shows that it is far more simple not only to find the  $n$ -solitons solution of soliton equations, but also to find a large number of new soliton equations.

Kasman aims his book for an undergraduate one-semester capstone unit (a senior thesis or senior seminar) or reading course. When this book is used in this way, a teacher needs to interact briefly with students on a regular basis. I have personally used this method successfully in the case of many bright students with the main aim: not to teach them mathematics, but to teach them 'how to learn mathematics on their own'. The book is written in an informal style and assumes little background. It has several examples, problem sets and Mathematica code interspersed with the text, making it ideal for a reading course. The subject matter is intriguing, and this book is a great introduction to it. The problems are not simply for routine practice, but to recreate some proofs to understand them deeply (for example, see reference to Problem 2 on p. 153 after the statement of Theorem 8.3). This problem starts with an explanation of the theorem and contains a sequence of six hints.

Let me quote a few lines from the Preface of the book, which also shows the beautiful and persuasive language used by Kasman.

'...Original interest in solitons was just because they behaved a lot more like particles than we would have imagined. But shortly after that, it became clear that there was something about these soliton equations that made them not only interesting, but also ridiculously easy as compared to most other wave equations.

'As you will see, in some ways it is like a magic tricks. ...

'In soliton theory, the role of "mirrors" and "hidden pockets" of a (magician) is played by a surprising combination of algebra and geometry. ... Now that the tricks have been revealed to us, however, we can do amazing things with soliton equations. ...

'Just as solitons have revealed to us secrets about the nature of waves that we did not know (and have benefited science

and engineering), the study of these "tricks" of soliton theory have revealed hidden connections between different branches of mathematics that also were hidden before. ...'

No doubt the language used by Kasman is persuasive to learn more of the solitons and interaction of some apparently unrelated branches of mathematics, but at many places he is too brief in statements and proofs. Let me point out one such case on p. 129.

**Theorem 6.18:** Let  $V \subset \ker L$  be a  $k$ -dimensional subspace of the kernel of the differential operator  $L$  and let  $B$  be the basis for  $V$ . Then the operator  $L$  can be factored as

$$L = Q \circ K,$$

where  $Q$  is an ordinary differential operator and  $K$  is the operator from  $B$  in the Theorem 6.16.

**Proof:** Let  $B'$  be a maximal, linearly independent set of functions in the kernel of  $L$ , which are not in  $V$ . Then  $B \cup B'$  is a basis of the kernel of  $L$  (I have replaced  $V$  by  $L$ ). Let  $Q$  be constructed as the leading coefficient of  $L$  times the unique monic operator whose kernel is spanned by the functions one gets by applying  $K$  to the elements of  $B'$ . Then if ...

**Comment:** The sentence 'Let  $Q$  be constructed as the leading coefficient of  $L$  times the unique monic operator whose kernel is spanned by the functions one gets by applying  $K$  to the elements of  $B'$ .' is mathematically correct but it will be easier to understand if broken in three or four simple sentences.

*Magician's discovery of new soliton equations:* From chapter 8 onwards, new solitons equations are obtained like a magic using Lax equation. Examples are many, say eq. (8.1)

$$u_t = \frac{1}{16} (30n^2 u_x + 20u_x u_{xx} + 10u u_{xxx} + u_{xxxx}).$$

Then after a few lines, Kasman mentions 'Like KdV equation, this equation has  $n$ -soliton solution ...'. Some justification is given in problem 3. But it really looks like magic and leaves one wondering with a question 'How?'.

'So far I have not reviewed the material in the book. Each chapter begins with an abstract - which, if reproduced, will be a good review but instead let me quote (American Mathematical Society and Kasman have permitted the reviewer to quote some material from the book in this review) some material from the preface.

**'Use of technology**

'This textbook assumes that the reader has access to the computer program Mathematica. For your convenience, an appendix to the book is provided which explains the basic use of this software and offers 'troubleshooting' advice. In addition, at the time of this writing, a file containing the code for many of the commands and examples in the textbook can be downloaded from the publisher's website: [www.ams.org/bookpages/stml-54](http://www.ams.org/bookpages/stml-54).

'It is partly through this computer assistance that we are able to make the subject of soliton theory accessible to undergraduates. ... continued on a full page....

**Book overview**

'Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the concepts of and summarize some of the key differences between linear and nonlinear differential equations. For those who have encountered differential equations before, some of this may appear extremely simple. However, it should be noted that the approach is slightly different than what one would encounter in a typical differential equations class. The representation of linear differential equations in terms of differential operators is emphasized, as these will turn out to be important objects in understanding the special nonlinear equations that are the main object of study in later chapters. The equivalence of differential equations under a certain simple type of change of variables is also emphasized....

'The story of solitons is then presented in chapter 3, beginning with the observation of a solitary wave on a canal in Scotland by John Scott Russell in 1834 and proceeding through to the modern use of solitons in optical fibers for telecommunications. In addition, this chapter poses the questions which will motivate the rest of the book: What makes the

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# Conflict zone

Hindu, 20/1/19, Pg. 16

A journey to the LoC on each side reveals the plight of civilians and why both India and Pakistan are to blame

A.S. DULAT

If *Spy Chronicles*, written by two spy chiefs together, that too an Indian and a Pakistani, was improbable, so too is Happymon Jacob's entry into the sanctum sanctorum (GHQ) of the Pakistan Army or his unprecedented access to the line of control on the other side. No wonder, in his latest book, *Line of Control*, Jacob calls it "the most gripping and adventurous journey" of his life.

The Line of Control (LoC) is more than a researcher's dull academic exercise; it is at once moving and sometimes funny with unforgettably colourful characters who light up the narrative. Those of us who have served in Jammu & Kashmir have a fair idea of what is transpiring on our side so it's hardly surprising that when Lance Naik Hemraj was beheaded, a Cabinet Minister with knowledge of the border remarked that both sides indulged in such activities. But Jacob has an advantage as he could research "ceasefire violations from the other side as well."

### Oppressive nationalism

The LoC is an assumed, notional line not demarcated on the ground. "What India means in New Delhi," says Jacob, "is poles apart from what it is to a person living 100 metres from Pakistan." The Indian state appears to be present only through the barrel of the gun. Nationalism feels oppressive and compromises patriotism. There are villages that have been cut in half and the LoC runs through some houses.

As Jacob says, for civilians on the LoC, it is like living in front of a firing squad. In a standoff like this, there are no saints. Civilians are the biggest casualty on both sides. There are generations who have lived and died on the border with no other option. They are the sacrificial lambs of our respective national pride and prejudices.

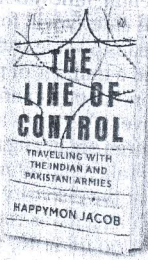
The LoC then is one of the most dangerous places on earth which marks the collective failure of both India and Pakistan. If a Kashmiri is always wary of tension between India and Pakistan how much more deadly is it for those inhabiting either side of the LoC?

### Midnight calls

Jacob's visit to Lahore is interesting and there are repeated references to the "midnight calls" and uninvited visitors to the Pearl Continental Hotel where he is put up, pointing at "the dark underbelly of Indo-Pak relations." Pakistan surveillance has always been aggressive and hence counterproductive as an intelligence tool whereas New Delhi, as



Fenced in: For civilians on the LoC, it is like living in front of a firing squad. —NISSAR AHMAD



■ **The Line of Control: Travelling with the Indian and Pakistani Armies**  
Happymon Jacob  
Penguin/Viking  
₹499

Jacob puts it, is "not all that spook friendly."

Much of the book is classic Jacob territory: Pakistan and Kashmir. He believes that peace between India and Pakistan is in our national interest. Despite being tailed on a daily basis, Lahore signifies everything he loves about Pakistan.

### Welcome change

He is at his best while describing the city whose lanes and bylanes remind him of Old Delhi – happening and welcoming. He is welcomed by Pakistan's 'Deep State' and treated as a special guest by the military. Somewhere he regrets that alcohol was not easily available in Pakistan but the three nights he spent with Ambassador Aziz Khan in Islamabad would have provided him his fill of nectar apart from all the beer he had with his 'fauji' friends.

The affable Aziz Khan, who was posted in Delhi at a crucial time during Gen. Musharraf's tenure, regrets how he missed the bus on Kashmir. As he puts it, "between India and Pakistan you can never tell what might happen tomorrow... If only the leadership showed more

Between India and Pakistan you can never tell what might happen tomorrow... If only the leadership showed more courage

courage." General Musharraf was by far the most reasonable Pakistani leader on Kashmir in the last 30 years.

### Making it happen

Operation All Out will no doubt have its success but as Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway and her predecessor the former Prime Minister Bondevik said during their visits to India, there can be no military solutions to such problems. As Jacob rightly says such chances just don't come by – if you are determined enough you must make them happen. Pakistan sadly remains in denial about terrorism and cross-border infiltration, limiting its repeated references to Kashmir to self-determination which the Kashmiri understands is well beyond his grasp.

Jacob's connections took him to the LoC and other inaccessible areas including the very 'top' in Pakistan – as close as 25 metres from where power flows there.

The GHQ, he says, conveyed a sense of imperiousness and power. The Army, which is ruthlessly professional, has a pride of place in Pakistan. As the first Indian to enter the sanctum sanctorum, including the office of the Chief of General Staff who runs it, this is the ultimate intellectual pilgrimage. If you have been there you have almost seen it all in Pakistan. Jacob's honest portrayal is a must read for those interested in Kashmir and the India-Pakistan relationship.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Peacebuilding and the rights of indigenous peoples: experiences and strategies for the 21st century** edited by Heather Devere, Kelli Te Maihāroa and John P. Synott, Springer, 2017, SSN 2367-4024 ISSN 2367-4032 (electronic), *The Anthropocene: Politik—Economics—Society—Science*, ISBN 978-3-319-45009-4 ISBN 978-3-319-45011-7 (eBook) DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-45011-7

This book represents a comprehensive review of some of the challenges faced by indigenous people in different parts of the world, and the peacebuilding strategies that they have pursued to mitigate against the effects of colonisation and industrialisation. It is thus both sobering and inspiring. It is sobering to be reminded of the scale and the ubiquity of the problems and inspiring to hear about the determination, strength and resilience of people who have lost so much. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and would recommend it to anyone who wishes to be better informed about various campaigns for the rights of indigenous people in different parts of the world, and the ways in which indigenous people have used nonviolence and traditional peacebuilding to struggle against oppression.

The book is divided into four parts, with useful appendices at the end that provide links to various peacebuilding institutions that work with indigenous people. The first part of the book reviews the pursuit of indigenous peoples' rights through political processes in contemporary peacebuilding. It contains examples from Australia, Canada and Taiwan. The chapters show, each in their own way, that, despite government involvement and the passing of various bits of legislation (including the 2007 UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People), there has been a lack of genuine recognition of indigenous rights. This is particularly problematic for nations that like to be seen as promoting peace, inclusion, equality and justice. The intersections of gender, poverty and indigeneity create toxic realities for many, who are not able to access improvements enjoyed elsewhere.

The second part of the book provides case studies of the peace strategies and nonviolent actions undertaken by indigenous peoples as part of their struggle for recognition and rights. This section contains chapters from New Zealand, Canada and Bolivia, and highlights the importance of critical indigenous scholarship and ethical perspectives on peacebuilding. I was particularly drawn to the concept of decolonising reconciliation in the Canadian chapter by Jeffrey Ansloos, and the idea that settlers need to review their identities and political discourse in order to tackle the structural and cultural violence that otherwise remains intact.

The third part reviews the challenges and barriers to the implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples and includes chapters from India and Australia. It highlights the fragility of peacebuilding efforts undertaken by indigenous people when they must proceed using the structures and funding mechanisms of outside NGOs, and the additional pressures from urbanisation and growth of infrastructure that can act against the rights and protections of the most vulnerable, such as the sexual exploitation and trafficking of indigenous women.

The fourth part concerns concepts and practices of sustainable peace, as applied to the achievement of indigenous people's rights in the twenty-first century. It contains

chapters from Timor Leste, Sweden and India, and suggests that sustainable peace must recognise traditional peacebuilding practices, and not rely exclusively on a liberal peacebuilding agenda, which tends to be grounded in Law, modernity and market-based reforms. Liberal peacebuilding is not universally applicable, as is sometimes assumed, and sustainable peace cannot be achieved through assimilation, welfare dependency or marginalisation. Indigenous peacebuilding is complex. East Timorese peacebuilding, for example, is both a metaphysical and practical process whereby attempts are made to bring the cosmos and the secular world into balance. These methods are enormously powerful, but they too have been effected by the lasting damage of colonisation, marginalisation and poverty. The solutions are not easy.

This book is an informative and enjoyable read on topics such as Law, human rights and the struggles of marginalised peoples for rights and recognition. For someone such as myself who is new to this literature, it is particularly revealing to learn, for example, that India has the largest indigenous population in the world. For someone who is interested in peace education, however, the book may disappoint. It contains a wealth of information that teachers and others working in these contexts will find valuable, but questions of pedagogy, access and quality of educational settings go largely unaddressed.

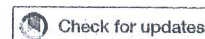
The book should be on the shelves of everyone who wishes to work towards sustainable peace, however, as the rights and needs of indigenous peoples are so often ignored, even by those who claim to be interested in social justice. My favourite chapter, by Jeffrey Ansloos, contains a moving narrative element and a prayer for the 1200 missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada and their many grieving families. To leave the last words to him:

We hope for peace like a red river because our red river is unstoppable. Our red river is alive. Flood seasons every year remind us that our river cannot be suppressed forever. Her waters surge beyond the embankments, overflowing like tears yearning for the healing of our people. Our red river is teeming with the vibrancy of our spirit, the wisdom of our mother earth and our ancestors, and carried forth by the love of our creator. We long for peace like our red river, resurgent with hope.

Ansloos 2017, p. 74

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**Einstein's pacifism and World War I**, by Virginia Iris Holmes, New York, Syracuse University Press, 2017, 344 pp., US\$29.95 (paperback), US\$65.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-8156-1085-4 (paperback), 978-0-8156-1062-5 (hardcover), 978-0-8156-5360-8 (e-book)

As a senior research editor for the Einstein Papers Project at the California Institute of Technology from 2002 to 2008, Virginia Iris Holmes gained the access, exposure and

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experience to pull from Albert Einstein's letters and writings the material that eventually went into this volume. In it she traces the intersection between historic movements and events in Europe during the period from 1914 to 1921, and Einstein's responses to questions of war and peace put before him by this history.

The first five chapters move sequentially from 1914 to 1921 with year-by-year descriptions of events and relevant quotes from Einstein's letters and speeches. Chapter six examines Einstein's awakening Jewish identity and his social justice advocacy for Jews across this 1914–1921 time period. An epilogue explores adjustments in Einstein's thinking about pacifism spurred by events between 1921 and 1955, including the holocaust and the use of nuclear weapons.

Einstein's pacifism did not spring full blown or all at once from divine inspiration or a genius brain. Rather it evolved over time through a process of negotiation – within himself, with his contemporaries and with the forces of history. This negotiated quality in the development of his pacifism is not discussed by the author but becomes apparent as one reads through mounting evidence in Einstein's letters, speeches, and accounts of his meetings and discussions with thinkers and doers in the scientific community and social justice and peace movements.

Building on his natural inclinations, Einstein honed his thinking about pacifism on the cutting edge of raging conflicts and controversies, including the socialism of the left vs. the individualism of the right; working class vs. power holders; post-war revenge vs. truth and reconciliation; peace through atomistic and armed nation states each looking out for their own security vs. peace and security through one world community and world law. In grappling with these dichotomies and questions Einstein became convinced that the only humane way forward in human development was through peace and nonviolence and a supranational organization such as a League of Nations.

His pacifism was also honed through engagement with the ideas of Tolstoy and Gandhi, discourse with Quakers and pacifist organizations such as the New Fatherland League (later named the German League for Human Rights), and his personal observations of the behavior of soldiers, the effects of war and social injustice on its victims, and his communications with fellow scientists (with whom he was often at odds).

Unlike many of his colleagues who felt it was a patriotic duty of scientists to support the Fatherland, Einstein felt patriotism was a false shrine around which people mindlessly worshipped and which needed to be questioned. He believed intellectuals and scientists had a responsibility to seek truth and speak it to power, to publicly oppose injustice and acts of inhumanity, and to shine a light on paths toward peace and a more humane world.

Although Einstein never abandoned his commitment to pacifism, he later modified his views somewhat, especially in the face of Nazism and genocide. In 1952, Einstein clarified his position to a pacifist who asked about inconsistencies in his views. Einstein responded:

I am a pacifist, but not at any price. I can identify my views nearly completely with Gandhi. I would ... resist with violence an attempt to kill me or to take away from me the basic means of subsistence. I was, therefore, of the conviction that it was justified and necessary to fight Hitler.... I am of the conviction that the realization of the goal of pacifism is only possible through supranational organization. To stand unconditionally for this cause is, in my opinion, the criterion of true pacifism. (Einstein, as quoted by Homes 2017, 196)

This volume does not examine Einstein's scientific work and achievements in this period and how his understandings and views of the universe did or did not contribute to a deeper consciousness within which his pacifism may have emerged and been nurtured. This is an unfortunate omission, because it might have shed some light on how his views of one evolving cosmos and Earth and one humanity were related to his pacifism and his call for a League of Nations.

This is a scholarly work, with more than 100 pages of citations, notes, appendices, an extensive bibliography and an index. It is dry reading at times, but also a rich treasure-trove of information not only about Einstein's thoughts on pacifism but also about the social movements, pacifist organizations and crosscurrents of thinking moving across Europe at the time and which have immense relevance even today.

This book belongs in every peace studies library. It is an important reference work for peace research, peace education and peace movements.

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**Nepali migrant women: resistance and survival in America**, by Shobha Hamal Gurung, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 2015, 186 pp., US\$ 29.95 (hardback) ISBN: 978-0-8156-3413-3

In *Nepali Migrant Women: Resistance and Survival in America*, Shobha Hamal Gurung presents a study of an unusual group of 35 mostly middle-class, well-educated Nepali women living in New York and Boston and working primarily for Indian employers in the informal sector as cleaners, nannies and care-givers, cashiers and restaurant workers. Through in-depth personal interviews and participant comments, she examines the reasons these women migrated to the U.S., the changes migration has made in their lives, how they cope with these changes, and the very real contributions they make to their families and their communities, both national and transnational. A professor of sociology and women and gender studies at Southern Utah University, Gurung employs a variety of frameworks and approaches in her work, drawing on feminist scholarship and the neoclassical and human capital theories of gender migration, but primarily she builds on a large body of scholarship based on intersectional theoretical approaches in order to examine the advantages and disadvantages of Nepali women's work in a pan-ethnic context.

In seven chapters, the author examines the implications of these women's work on many levels and in different areas of their lives – personal, political, social, cultural, economic, national and transnational. Gurung quotes extensively from her interviews, and the women's voices come through as strong, vibrant and independent, making the author's point that far from being victims of exploitation and oppression, as many migrant women in their condition are portrayed, these women transcend their work conditions to become powerful agents of progress and change.

The women in this study came to the U.S. for a variety of reasons both personal and political, though not primarily economic. Several came as a result of political

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upheavals in Nepal in the 1990s, for brief visits to a relative, or to attend the graduation of a child, but once here they decided to stay and work, though almost all intend to return and retire in Nepal. Nevertheless, finances certainly played a part in their final decision to work. Most of the women are legal migrants, but because they do not have permission to work, they count as undocumented workers. In coming to the U.S. and opting to work in the informal sector, far below their social and educational level, most of these women experience downward mobility, but their flexibility and adaptability enable them to find other compensation. Their reward and personal dignity reside in being able to provide well for their families and for others in their local and transnational communities. Their husbands are generally not able to cope as well, and many of them return to Nepal, leaving the wives behind to work in the U.S. Often, the wife becomes the main breadwinner in the family. Amid such upheaval, gender roles are redefined. As Nepali men refuse to do what they regard as 'women's work' for money in the informal sector, they take on unpaid reproductive labor at home, which would have been beneath their status in Nepal. Paradoxically, the couples thus both support and subvert the traditional patriarchal roles taken for granted in their home country.

The migrants are drawn to work in the informal sector for many reasons, for example, their undocumented status, the fact that they are paid in cash and avoid taxes, the fact that without a formal contract they can, to some extent, choose their working hours or terminate their employment at any time. In choosing to work mainly for Indian families they are choosing situations in which they are comfortable, since they may share with their employers various cultural, religious and social customs. They may cook the same food, share the same festivals and in some cases, the same writing and even language. However, being regarded as 'one of the family' has its own dangers. Child-care jobs are ill-defined in terms of duties and hours, often expanding as the worker settles into the life of the home and including more and more chores like watering plants, cooking, doing laundry, etc. Gurung sees such expansion as exploitation and regards it as a function of the workers' familiarity with the employers and their milieu. In fact, such complaints persist across the board, as the writer herself acknowledges, citing studies concerning domestic workers of other nationalities and ethnicities (82).

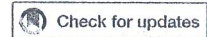
What is most striking about this small cohort of women is the way in which they build communities on the local, national and transnational levels. They form networks to inform one another of job opportunities; they work with the diaspora in both formal and informal ways to instruct children in culture and religion, preserving customs and keeping festivals for the community, creating and working with local NGOs to advocate for civil and human rights and social justice; and finally, on the transnational level, through their remittances they support not only their own families but philanthropic and development organizations in their home country.

These are not the women one usually thinks of in connection with undocumented migrants working in the informal economy, but in this very scholarly and well-researched work, with an appendix detailing the research participants' demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds the author argues that her small, highly educated and ultimately powerful group are representative of a significant trend in Nepali migration to the U.S. She points out, as many others have observed, that migrating requires both money and a good deal of sophistication, so that it is rarely the poorest who migrate. As to a significant trend, however, according to *Labor migration for employment: a status report for Nepal: 2014/2015* (11), the largest number of Nepali migrants are to be found in the Middle East and a growing number in Malaysia. The migrant stream to the U.S. is very small in comparison.

In 2016 the UN turned its attention to the vital issue of xenophobia and the need for the social inclusion of migrants in host societies. The Secretary General's report *In safety and dignity: addressing large movements of refugees and migrants* (21 April 2016; doc. A/70/59) cited the need to change the prevailingly negative narrative concerning migrants to a positive account of their contributions. Certainly, this book is a very good step forward in that direction.

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Peace education

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BOOK REVIEWS

**Theoretical frontiers in black holes and cosmology: theoretical perspectives in high energy physics**, edited by R. Kallosh and E. Orazi, Switzerland, Springer, 2016, 252 pp., £100.50 (hardback), ISBN 9783319313511. Scope: monograph. Level: postgraduate, early career researcher, researcher.

In the mid-1970s, high-energy theorists succeeded in constructing 'supergravity' theories, that is theories extending Einstein's General Relativity to include matter, both bosonic and fermionic, so that the combined system of equations is supersymmetric, i.e. is symmetric with respect to exchange of fermions and bosons. The original hope was that this would lead to theories in four space-time dimensions which could be quantised avoiding the usual infinities arising from perturbative treatments of non-supersymmetric theories. That hope has faded over the years, but no definitive decision has yet emerged and it is still an active area of research.

This uncertainty has led many theorists to turn to supersymmetric string theories which appear to be perturbatively finite, at least in 10 space-time dimensions. However, the perturbative expansion appears not to be summable and attention has focussed on non-perturbative effects which means in practice, studying the so-called zero-slope limits at the classical level which are precisely classical super-gravity theories but defined in higher space-time dimensions. In fact, many of these higher dimensional had already been constructed in the 1970s.

To make contact with the real world there was a need to find classical solutions of the bosonic equations of such theories, usually referred to as 'vacua' or 'groundstates' exhibiting the property of 'compactification', that is which could be regarded in Kaluza–Klein fashion as essentially four-dimensional spacetimes with some hidden and very small extra space-like dimensions.

Once these groundstate solutions have been found there is much more to be done. What about the cosmology of such theories, do they allow inflation? From a fundamental level, what sort of black hole solutions do they admit and can these tell us about the quantum nature of black holes and can they resolve some of the many puzzles raised by Hawking's discovery of the quantum radiance of the tiny, so-called primordial black holes, once believed to have possibly arisen in the early universe.

For these and many other reasons the field of classical solutions of Einstein's equations coupled to super-matter


fields has expanded enormously in recent years. In fact, I believe it is fair to say that nowadays, the community of workers on exact solutions of Einstein's equations is dominated by those working on super-gravity theories and probably by those working on higher dimensional solutions. This is particularly true since the emergence of the concept of 'holography'. The idea here is that information about the strong coupling limit of non-gravitational quantum field theories in flat four-dimensional Minkowski spacetime may be obtained by studying the classical solutions of super-gravity theories coupled to Yang–Mills gauge theories in five space-time dimensions of anti-de Sitter type on whose conformal boundary lives the quantum field theory.

Given the significance of what has come to constitute a vast, and at times highly technical, international enterprise, the need has arisen for Summer Schools to introduce and review in a pedagogic fashion the basics of the theory. This is the origin of the volume under review, which contains the written versions of lectures given in June 2015 at a school with the same title at Natal in Brazil. The course covered all of the topics referred to above and at an introductory level, given a preparation in group theory, field theory, general relativity and supersymmetry such as might be given in a typical graduate course in theoretical physics. The level is high and certainly not for the faint hearted but strongly recommended for beginning Ph.D. students or established researchers in theoretical physics, mathematical physics, differential or algebraic geometry and even condensed matter. The inclusion in my list of the last two specialisations may seem surprising. However, the subject has given rise to many challenging mathematical problems in geometry, as well as partial differential equations and the extension of the subject of holography has of late been extended to include non-relativistic quantum theories on the conformal boundary and this is by now a well-established part of theoretical physics.

In short, this book deserves a place in any theoretical physics library and on the shelves of anyone, be they graduate student or established researcher, wishing to find out more about this dynamic field.

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**Introduction to topological quantum matter and quantum computation**, by Tudor D. Stanescu, Boca Raton, FL, USA, CRC Press, 2016, 380 pp., £57.99 (hardback), ISBN 9781482245936. Scope: review, reference, textbook. Level: postgraduate, early career researcher, researcher.

This is a timely book that does what its title suggests, providing an overview of current ideas about topological states of matter and how they may be applied in quantum information processing. Realistic approaches to quantum information must always take account of the effects of the environment which tend to destroy the delicate web of entanglement between the quantum degrees of freedom. The idea that encoding quantum information on topologically non-trivial quantum states affords protected from the environment has been around for a while but is now being actively explored in real experiments. This area is potentially difficult to get into because it requires a combination of three rather different areas of expertise: quantum information, traditional condensed matter physics, and the type of mathematics normally associated with particle theory and general relativity. This book aims to provide an overview of the relevant aspects of all of these sufficient to allow a newcomer to start to find their way around the literature. Inevitably, it is probably easier to read for someone who has a smattering of knowledge of all three areas and wishes to find out how they fit together and where they lead but it would provide an excellent framework for a well-organised graduate student aiming to work in this area in conjunction with existing review articles on topological insulators and topological quantum computing.

The book is divided into four sections, each of three chapters, so that it is very easy to identify the structure and move around within it rather than simply reading it from cover to cover. No one topic is treated in great detail, although two specific physical systems, Majorana fermions in semiconductor/superconductor hybrids and ultra-cold atoms in non-trivial optical lattices are given more thorough discussion. However, each part conveys the key ideas rather well and is very well referenced so that it is quite straightforward to follow up any topic one wishes.

The first section covers preliminaries with chapters on the basic ideas of quantum theory (including Bell's theorem), geometric phases (including some of the basic ideas of differential geometry) and an introduction to quantum information and computation. The second section covers topological phases of matter, highlighting the idea of topological order and distinguishing it from more conventional ordered phases described in terms of broken symmetries. Topological Insulators (and their superconducting cousins) are explored as one of the key exemplars before moving on to discuss interacting systems with topological order such as fractional quantum Hall states. The third section covers topological band theory and topological field theory before moving on to cover two specific physical systems in which topological qubits might be implemented: Majorana

zero-modes in semiconductor superconductor hybrid devices and ultra-cold atoms systems subject to optically generated artificial gauge fields. The final section is specifically on how topological qubits might be used for quantum information processing prefaced with more detailed introductions to quantum information theory and quantum computation including description of canonical topics such as the no-cloning theorem, quantum cryptography, Grover's and Shor's algorithms, and the basic ideas of quantum error correction.

As a reference and a guidebook for the newcomer this is a welcome addition to the existing more detailed and narrowly focussed review articles and textbooks.

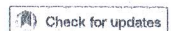
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**Soil mechanics fundamentals**, by Muni Budhu, Hoboken, NY, Wiley, 2015, 376 pp., £40 (paperback), ISBN 9780470577950. Scope: review. Level: general readership, undergraduate, teacher, engineers.

I came across *Soil Mechanics Fundamentals* when I was looking for a textbook for one of my former students. The book was intended to cover all the essential information on the mechanics of soils and illustrate the basic concepts in a way that a layman would be capable to grasp their meaning.

The manuscript makes a good first impression. The page layout and a clear typeface provide a good reading experience. The handbook is available in imperial and metric versions, which makes it suitable for a wide range of readers.

The textbook covers a broad spectrum of subjects, with the contents well organised across the chapters. The chapters were given a form of sequential lectures, each covering knowledge required to understand the following material, and therefore they can be easily adapted by instructors for their lectures or used for self-education. Each section starts with a brief introduction and a list of learning outcomes, and ends with a set of key points to summarise the covered concepts and emphasise the most essential data. The initial chapters include the general information on soil composition, characteristics of the solid, liquid and gas phases and classification systems, as well as the methods of soil investigation. The key material on hydraulic properties of soils is provided with application to one- and two-dimensional flows. The processes that occur in soils, such as compaction, the influence of various vertical surface loads on the stress distribution in soils, and soil settlement are explained. At last, the soil shear strength is defined and described, including the modelling of soil failure with the use of the basic criteria.

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The chosen examples are based on real-life problems that students may encounter in their future engineering practice. They are always accompanied by figures, photographs and graphs, which makes the explanation more readable. The exercises are designed to make it easier for the students to gain the ability to analyse the information and evaluate it objectively. A vast number of laboratory and *in situ* soil tests is described in detail, including the experimental setup and measurement methods, and most importantly, presenting an interpretation of test results.


Frequently used soil parameters and correlations tables attached in an appendix are very useful for instructors and students alike. Moreover, the author provided a compilation of all equations used throughout the book, so it can be used as a reference during a lecture or self-learning.

Additional material is available on the publisher's website. The website offers Power Point slides of 32 lectures, solutions of some of the example problems and a small set of computer applications to assist students in skill gaining. Also, a supplementary chapter 9 is available, which presents common applications of soil mechanics, such as design of shallow and deep foundations, as well retaining walls.

Overall, this textbook is a great resource for students who want to acquire fundamental knowledge on the subject of soil mechanics. I highly recommend it.

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**Waves, particles, and storms in geospace: a complex interplay**, edited by G. Balasis, I. Daglis, and I. R. Mann, New York, Oxford University Press, 2016, 480 pp., £80 (hardback), ISBN 9780198705246. Scope: reference. Level: specialist.

In a collection of research papers by experts from all over the world, *Waves, Particles, and Storms in Geospace* takes a look at the local plasma-astrophysical systems through reviews and overviews of various topics. Mostly, the analyses focus on the myriad wave modes such as the chorus, ultra-low frequency and electromagnetic ion cyclotron waves that influence the dynamics of the plasmasphere and the Van Allen belts. The Van Allen belts are two doughnut-shaped radiation zones – one inner and one outer – encircling the Earth. Discovered in 1958 during the International Geophysical Year (July 1957–December 1958), the belts are named after James Van Allen who was involved in Explorer 1 and Explorer 3 [1] although history will remember that they were very nearly called the Vernov radiation belts [2] after S. N. Vernov, the Sputnik 2 lead scientist.

On 30 August 2012, Van Allen Probes<sup>1</sup> were launched into orbit. The timing proved to be prescient. Within a few days,

the *third* radiation belt was observed [3]. The new belt, found embedded within the outer one, lasted just about a month. So had it been a month or more later, the ephemeral belt, believed to have been caused by a giant solar prominence that happened on the day after the launch, would have been missed and the world would never know different. As it is, the phenomenon had prompted some fine tweaking in the current theory, especially in the understanding of how the radiation belts behave during major solar events.

Virtually all discussions in this advanced reference book are academic but subjects of practical concern and interest such as the consequences of space weather, solar wind, geomagnetic storms and substorms that affect everyone and everything either on terra firma – as the geomagnetic activities can play a role in the global temperature and by extension the global climate – or in orbit – as they have adverse effects on spacecraft hardware and software and by extension the safety of astronauts – are incorporated in many of the chapters.

#### Note


1. <http://vanallenprobes.jhuapl.edu/>

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**Microcavities**, by Alexey V. Kavokin, Jeremy J. Baumberg, Guillaume Maupuech, and Fabrice P. Laussy, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, 608 pp., £65 (hardback), ISBN 9780198782995. Scope: monograph. Level: early career researcher, researcher.

Microwave cavities were used in the microwave radars during the Second World War. Many scientists involved in those developments turned to academics after the war and continued their research in engineering the cavity characteristics. Ed Purcell, who got Nobel Prize for his contributions in developing NMR, noted that a cavity, whose geometry modifies the spectrum of the electromagnetic field inside, can alter the lifetime of the excited states of a quantum system confined in it. This observation marked the beginning


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those systems. Next parameter of this work is *randomness*; thus, the authors refer to *random networks* throughout this essay. Indeed, the scope of studying random networks is obvious: the construction of adequate models to simulate vague real complex systems (such as for instance, computer networks (e.g. the Web), societies, elections nets in political affairs). The heavy work, in the context of assigning random networks to real systems, is the optimal statistical network's adjustment to the simulated network. This work is closely related to the topological structure of the chosen type of network.

Random networks' generation is suitable for simulations regarding the spread of malicious infections of computers. Moreover, the use of random networks models is adequate for the visualisation or, more exactly, for visualising the explanation of the spread of inconsistent (malicious) phenomena in vague areas of human activity, e.g. the spread of diseases or the case of Ecumenism spread in religions affairs.

The three most frequent terms according to the index at the end of this book are (in descending order): *constraints*, *sampling*, *topological features*. This observation is properly indicative. Indeed, the constraints' principal role in the case of random networks and of their generation is confirmed herein. Moreover, the necessary sampling for the overall process of constructing networks plays a central role. Finally, the strategic implications of topological features in the herein examined framework are also studied. Two-thirds of the material is dedicated to the relevant theory of the subject under examination while rest one-third contains relative algorithms of applications expressed in pseudocode.

The target audience of this essay is especially composed of advanced undergraduate or graduate students, as well as researchers and lecturers involved in the field of networks and graphs. Mathematicians and engineers are the prime audience; moreover, everyone working in every field which exploits graphs and networks (economics, ecology, biology, etc.).

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### The atmosphere: a very short introduction, by

P. I. Palmer, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, 152 pp., £7.99 (paperback), ISBN 9780198722038. Scope: review. Level: general readership, non-specialists.

I have enjoyed the format of Oxford University Press' Very Short Introductions right from their inception. Now the series spans a huge variety of topics and is constantly being enlarged. Naturally, Paul Palmer's book is in the same well known, small, slim, no-frills format as all the others in the

series. I do not envy him his task here. In my experience the atmosphere is a huge subject, and I was very interested to see how he was going to deal with it.


First of all, Palmer sets out what is special about our own atmosphere. Not only does this allow parallels to be drawn with extraterrestrial atmospheres it explains the gross vertical structure, which influences the timescales of mixing. Next, he introduces the physics of the atmosphere. In this section, subjects such as the radiation budget, electric currents and the role of atmospheric water are addressed. Atmospheric motion is then covered, and finally, atmospheric composition and some of the detailed chemistry going on in the atmosphere.


Palmer has chosen to describe the atmosphere on successively smaller and smaller scales. This approach works very well and leads the reader to a detailed appreciation of many of the processes at work in our atmosphere.

There are refreshingly few minor typographical errors, and nothing that will concern most readers. I was surprised, however, to learn that the infrared airglow emitted by the atmosphere was apparently visible to the naked eye. This was the only time I noticed what I assume was a typographical error that led to a misleading statement.

The text reads very well and the diagrams, although black and white, are well executed and generally complement the explanations. There are places, however, where slight discontinuities appear, as if the text has been cut down from something longer. Such features are, however, difficult to avoid when condensing such a wide-ranging subject into this abbreviated format.

As a very short introduction to the subject it does exactly what it says on the tin (*sic*). The book is aimed at an interested, general reader, and as far as I can see, hits that target well. As a starting point for study of further research on the atmosphere I would have no hesitation recommending this to undergraduates, or even sixth formers. I would go so far as to say that postgraduates too would benefit by reading this as it would help them see where their speciality fits in a wider context.

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**The conceptual framework of quantum field theory**, by A. Duncan, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, x + 782 pp., 39.99 (paperback), ISBN 9780198807650. Scope: textbook. Level: postgraduate.

The ideas and concepts of quantum mechanics are well-known for their subtlety compared to those of classical physics, and are even today subject to much debate. Quantum field

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theory is the 'next step up' and provides further challenges to both the student and the expert. It is also mathematically much more complex. In 'standard' quantum mechanics, the existence of an object called a particle is taken for granted, and its properties are interrelated and measured; in quantum field theory, the particle itself needs a careful description in terms of a coherent and linked set of field variables whose quantum properties must be appropriately described. All this requires a clear conceptual explanation in a good text.

From the title *The Conceptual Framework of Quantum Field Theory*, I had anticipated a text that would carefully and thoroughly elucidate the ideas of this branch of physics, so as to enable the mathematics of the theory to be more readily understandable. Such a text would certainly be very welcome, and there are many books on the market that do a reasonable job of introducing basic quantum theory to the newcomer. Unfortunately – if that is the right word – the present volume is in my view not at all the right material to give to a beginner in the subject, even though it is intended and advertised as an 'introduction'. Rather, it is a thorough and rigorous development of the subject from a mathematically based perspective. It goes into depths that are likely to be very useful to a practising theorist who would like a new viewpoint on the subject that is possibly better than some others that are on offer, and may well provide some new insights. This book is evidently the product of a lifetime of study on the part of its author.

Duncan's approach to the theory is to develop a broad foundation of preliminary material before venturing into the main subject of quantum fields. For this purpose there are four chapters on the dynamics of quantum systems and their relativistic aspects, all presented with formal mathematics, and an introductory treatment of scattering theory and 'clustering' theory. Finally, we are ready for quantum fields themselves. Physics ideas are mentioned from time to time, but it would seem that for Duncan the mathematics always has priority. The mathematical arguments are presented clearly on the whole, but there is a tendency to terseness and some effort will often be needed to follow the logic.

It would take some space to list adequately the extensive contents of this well-filled book. Quite a lot of stress is placed on symmetries, especially relativistic symmetry. There is a chapter on renormalisation (with a 10-page treatment of the renormalisation group), and several chapters cover interacting fields and the Feynman rules. There are four chapters on symmetries in general, and several chapters deal with scaling issues and effective field theories. One question-mark about this approach could be that the relationship between non-relativistic and relativistic quantum fields is not well brought out, and the application of quantum field ideas to solid-state physics is not dealt with.

The first two chapters present an outline of the historical development of quantum field theory up to 1949, but any new reader would do well to skip this material to begin with, since it assumes a good amount of prior knowledge. Also the author here has a habit of writing in long, complex and highly structured sentences that may need several readings

to be understood; fortunately, this stylistic fault is much less present in the main text. There are some problems – at the end of the main text chapters, but few worked examples are given of the physical application of the theory. In the end, I would suggest that a new student would do well to learn the subject first from an easier book, and then perhaps turn to this one to gain further and more rigorous understanding in a number of areas. The professional theorist may well find it helpful for the particular coverage and viewpoint that it gives. But do not be misled by the title!

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**An overview of gravitational waves: theory, sources and detection**, edited by G. Auger and E. Plagnol, Singapore, World Scientific Press, 2017, 328 pp., 106 (hardback), ISBN 9789813141759.

Scope: edited book. Level: postgraduate, advanced undergraduate, early career researcher.


The existence of gravitational waves is a necessary consequence of any relativistic formulation of gravity and connected with the finiteness of the speed of light. Hence, gravitational waves are not part of Newtonian gravity, although the instantaneous nature of the gravitational interaction in this model was of some concern already to Newton and some of his contemporaries. But since no observation was in contradiction to Newtonian gravity, it took until the times of relativity before a broader view had to be taken. The theory of general relativity as brought forward by Einstein in 1916 contains the notion of gravitational waves as a possible means of propagation of gravitational interaction at the speed of light. Einstein predicted a number of effects that could be observed in the following years and which corroborated the model and the calculations, however Einstein himself deemed the effect of gravitational waves too small to be observed, in particular, since at that time astronomical objects of high mass densities such as neutron stars or black holes had not been observed as such. The astronomical study of binary systems of high mass density first led to an indirect proof of the existence of gravitational waves which won the 1993 Nobel Prize. Direct laboratory proofs had been attempted since the 1950s and were finally successful with highly precise Earth-bound interferometers in 2016, a work that was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2017. The present book is an edited account of the fundamentals and the concepts connected with such detection of gravitational waves as a tool for a new 'multi-messenger' astronomy and cosmology. It consists of eight chapters by different authors. The first chapter "Theory of

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Gravitational Waves' sets the frame with an introduction to the theory of general relativity and the mathematical tools required for a corresponding description of gravitational waves. The chapter 'Gravitational Wave Sources in the Era of Multi-Band Gravitational Wave Astronomy' gives a detailed account of possible sources of gravitational waves that may be observed with present and future detectors in frequency domains spanning from nano-Hertz to kilo-Hertz, and of the information that can be inferred by such detection. Chapter three 'Theory of Gravitational Wave Detection' discusses the interaction mechanisms and techniques by which gravitational waves can be detected, both in Earth-bound and spaceborne detection systems. The former ones are treated in detail in the chapter 'Present and Future Ground-Based Detectors', while the latter are discussed in detail in 'Space-Based Laser Interferometric Observations'. One specific project within space-based detectors is the topic of the subsequent chapter 'LISA Pathfinder', which details the mission by that name that has been in operation since 2015 and that realises a measurement system of two test masses in free fall. The following chapters 'Pulsar Timing Array' and 'Future Gravitational Wave Detectors Based on Atom Interferometry' discuss future detection techniques that are currently being brought forward. Overall, this collection of individual chapters indeed gives a nice overview of gravitational wave science, as the book title promises. The texts are well written and fully referenced to scientific publications. The treatment is rigorous and requires some understanding of general relativity and its mathematics, as well as some understanding of astronomy and cosmology to fully appreciate the content. The book can be recommended on the level of advanced undergraduates and above with an interest in the subject or as additional reading in the context of a corresponding lecture.

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### A student's guide to dimensional analysis, by

D. S. Lemons, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017, 112 pp., £19.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781316613818. Scope: textbook. Level: postgraduate, advanced undergraduate, early career researcher, teacher, scientist, engineers.

Don Lemons has written an introductory text book on dimensional analysis which is primarily meant for self-study. The required prerequisite for the book is an entry-level university (mathematics oriented) physics course.

The book deals with not only the method and history but also with the mistakes to avoid. There are a large number of examples chosen from a wide variety of topics including mechanics, hydrodynamics, electrodynamics, quantum mechanics and thermal physics. Each chapter ends with a summary of essential ideas and many problems. The solutions to the problems are given at the end of the book.

Lemons covers important topics such as Buckingham Pi theorem, Rayleigh analysis, non-dimensionalisation of equations. Lemons also provide useful tips such as the need for minimising the number of variables so that the maximum benefit can be derived from the dimensional analysis. He also discusses thorny ideas such as the claim that temperature does not need its own dimension (since it can always be measured in energy units) and gives counterexamples as to why it indeed is essential to have a separate dimensional variable for temperature.

I also enjoyed the historical nuggets in the book – for example, about Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen who studied the ice growth rate around his ship. There are other giants such as Faraday, Maxwell, Stefan, Fourier and Planck who make an appearance in the book. In each case, even within a few lines, Lemons brings out, at times, the personalities of these researchers, and in all cases, the important contributions made by them.


The book of Lemons is a short one: it runs into about 100 pages. The approach taken to the subject is example based: each chapter contains several examples which are dealt with in detail and end with exercise problems. Many of the exercise problems are interesting and are sure to pique the interest of the reader. Lemons also explores approaches which are not very promising and indicates why or how the approach falls short of expectations. He discusses tricks such as asymptotic behaviour of unknown functions and non-dimensionalisation of equations which are useful in many other areas beside dimensional analysis.

A good handle on dimensional analysis is probably the most important skill that a modeller should have and this book is an ideal introductory text on the topic. The manner in which the book is written and the material is presented makes it ideal for students who wish to study the material on their own; it is also very useful for instructors involved in teaching courses on modelling. The production quality of the book is very high. The book will be very useful for students, early stage researchers and instructors in physics, mathematics and engineering and I have no hesitations in recommending it.

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# Tangled history Hindu; 6/1/19 Pg. 16

Exploring experiences of East India men and women, intrigues and intimacies

ARVIND SIVARAMAKRISHNAN

Commuting in from a south London suburb, I sometimes met former planters eager to talk with me, as we trundled past narrow Victorian terraces; the buildings, sullen in thin, grey rain, summed up the widespread indifference among Britons to many who had run their former empire. I wondered how my interlocutors coped with their loss – of the space and the light, of the big wooden-framed houses with creepers on the pillars and views over two ranges of hills to jagged, towering walls of rock and ice beyond.

Yet the planters may have known little of other British lives in India; Steve, the chef at my local pub in another city, used to tell me how, trained for Murmansk but sent to Bengal, he and his barrack-mates spent the war's closing months playing football with Bengali sides.

## Rich mosaic

David Gilmour has attempted the immense task of describing millions of lives led by Britons over three centuries both in imperial Britain and in India. This is a mosaic of hundreds, possibly thousands, of stories, in a thematic account ranging from motivations and intentions through working lives to the colonials' social experiences – intimacies, domesticities, leisure, and etiquette.

The detail, drawn from a colossal amount of material, is extraordinary but not oppressive, and shows the complexity of this tangled history. Through the 18th century and into the 19th, it was predominantly English men who went to India to make money and go into politics back home. Enough succeeded to comprise a tenth of parliament, but many Scots went east to pay for unprofitable estates, or because they were second sons in family firms.

The East Indiamen were very corrupt; in a reference to the 1834 Poor Law, the reformer John Bright called the empire 'a gigantic system of outdoor relief' for the aristocracy.

The book's themes themselves travel, from voyages and journeys to and within India (one officer, stranded all night on a mudbank, was not eaten by crocodiles) to the work of the colonials, from the end of the Company's monopoly to many facets of imperial rule. The old Company hands thought the new exam-recruited Indian Civil Service officers frightful specimens from a lower class (these passages are delicious) but the latter were efficient, and their presence resulted from Britain's cleanup – itself derived from reforms the government had imposed on the Company – of the home civil service.

The stories indirectly show the origins and development of the Indian Army, the Indian Medical Service, the railways, and the Indian Civil Service. No one kind of person was involved, of



**Colonial class:** The author dwells considerably on the social side of the British during the Raj. •WIKI COMMONS



## ■ The British in India: Three Centuries of Ambition and Experience

David Gilmour  
Allen Lane/ PRH  
₹999

course, and at least some of the people were astonishing characters, immensely energetic and committed to establishing education and other systems (one official solemnised his own marriage, but the courts, possibly if improbably presaging Wittgenstein, ruled the ceremony invalid). Many were open to what they encountered; for a long time, Indians accepted without query decisions by British magistrates and senior officials, as they thought the rulings would be free of caste or religious bias.

## Life in India

The social side occupies Gilmour most, and he rightly spends time on the lives of colonial women, almost all of whom made their own worlds without the props of official standing and duties.

The Indian elites figure often, and the scale of killing on various maharajas' hunts is startling.

The author might have said more about class distinctions among the colonials (of which, for example, M.S.S. Pandian wrote), though he notes that English officers found Scots colleagues less easy to rank socially. He is candid about the quiet reopening of army-approved brothels after British temperance crusaders had got them closed and venereal diseases spread rapidly. He is also uncensorious about sexual liaisons between colonials and Indians

in all classes, and about adultery among the colonials themselves.

The thematic approach and the focus on colonial society, however, mean that crucial context often disappears. Indians played a progressively greater role in running imperial India, but by the early 1860s colonial disapproval of long-standing intimate involvements between the colonials and their subjects caused a 'forfeiture of understanding', with serious consequences for the nature of colonial rule – which nevertheless needed Indians' 'tacit consent'.

Yet Gilmour never considers what Indians were supposed to consent to, and misses the intensification of colonial racism in this period; furthermore, there is no mention of the mass destruction of colonial documents as Independence approached. Such material as still exists at Hanslope Park may never be declassified.

## Slips and misses

Some of the author's language and terminology might also raise eyebrows; the name of one river is variably spelt, other names are misspelt (the East India Company spelt Sind correctly as Sindh), the First War of Independence is called the Rebellion, the princely states – whose political role is omitted – are sometimes called native states, and regional languages are called vernaculars. Ronald Ross becomes 'Robert Ross', and Gilmour may even, if unwittingly, aid the Scottish independence movement by spelling Kirkcaldy 'Kirkaldy'.

Gilmour is often uncomfortable about the fact of empire, but the texture, the inherent asymmetry, of everyday relations between the colonial rulers and their subjects rarely features.

The book concludes with an excerpt from Manmohan Singh's speech accepting an honorary Oxford doctorate, but whether that helps Gilmour confirm what look like consequentialist assumptions that colonial rule was not so bad after all is another matter.

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किताबें/ इतिहास

## नेहरू विरोध के बरअक्स



नेहरू: मिथक और सत्य  
लेखक: पीयूष बबेले  
प्रकाशक: संवाद प्रकाशन, मेरठ  
कीमत: 300 रु.

हरिमोहन मिश्र

आजादी के कुछेक वर्षों बाद ही देश के पहले प्रधानमंत्री पंडित जवाहरलाल नेहरू की आलोचनाएं शुरू हो गई थीं। ये आलोचनाएं ज्यादातर नेहरूवादी विकास मॉडल को लेकर थीं। लेकिन नब्बे के दशक के बाद और खासकर 2014 में नरेंद्र मोदी के नेतृत्व में भारतीय जनता पार्टी की भारी चुनावी जीत के बाद कांग्रेस-मुक्त भारत का लक्ष्य साधने के लिए नेहरू को सबसे मुफीद निशाना बनाया गया। उन्हें सरदार पटेल, नेताजी सुभाषचंद्र बोस तथा आजाद हिंद फौज, डॉ. भीमराव आंबेडकर, भगत सिंह के बरअक्स खड़ा करके यह अफसाना गढ़ने की आक्रामक कोशिश शुरू हुई कि देश नेहरू के हाथों में न होता तो आज हालात कुछ और होते। इस अफसाने का बड़ा पहलू यह था कि नेहरू के बरअक्स आजादी के दूसरे नायकों को ऐसे पाले में खड़ा किया जा सके, ताकि आजादी की लड़ाई में राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ की नामौजूदगी की कुछ हद तक भरपाई हो सके। इस आक्रामक अफसाने ने युवा पत्रकार पीयूष बबेले को नेहरू और आजादी के नायकों के बारे में नए सिरे से जानने को प्रेरित किया। लिहाजा, *नेहरू: मिथक और सत्य* में नेहरू के भाषणों, लेखों, पत्रों, आजादी के दूसरे नायकों के साथ उनके पत्राचारों के जरिए उस दौर के अफसाने को नए सिरे से सामने लाने की गंभीर कोशिश है। इसमें आजादी के दौर की ऐसी जानकारियां भी हैं, जो चौंकाती हैं। मसलन, कश्मीर के संदर्भ में अनुच्छेद 370 के सूत्रधार सरदार पटेल थे, कश्मीर में रायशुमारी की जिन्ना की भारी मुखालाफत से नेहरू ने उसे एक कूटनीतिक औजार बनाया। इसी तरह आरएसएस के प्रति सरदार पटेल, और नेहरू को लिखे बाबू राजेंद्र प्रसाद के पत्र में इससे भी सावधान रहने को कहा गया है कि उनके पास मुसलमानों का वेश धरकर बलवे को हवा देने वाले लोग हैं। पुस्तक में राष्ट्र, जम्मू-कश्मीर, सांप्रदायिकता, राष्ट्रनिर्माण, समकालीन व्यक्तित्व, भारत-चीन युद्ध और उपसंहार जैसे आठ खंडों में नेहरू को दस्तावेजी प्रमाणों के साथ याद किया गया है। आज के युवाओं के लिए ही नहीं, पुराने दौर और अपने नायकों की याद ताजा करने के लिए भी यह किताब महत्वपूर्ण है। ■

पत्रकारिता

## सच उघाड़ने की तरकीब

मनीष दीक्षित

पत्रकारों ने अंधाधुंध किताबें लिखी हैं पर दुर्भाग्यवश ज्यादातर पुस्तकों से कुछ ठोस सीखना लगभग असंभव है क्योंकि वे नजरिया प्रधान होती हैं। लेकिन श्यामलाल यादव की लिखी *आर.टी.आई. से पत्रकारिता: खबर, पड़ताल, असर* ऐसी किताबों में शामिल नहीं है। इसमें उन्होंने सूचना के अधिकार के बारे में सब कुछ लिख दिया है और अपनी खोजी पत्रकारिता के उन जीवंत किस्सों को पेश किया है जिनसे न केवल नए-पुराने पत्रकार बल्कि हर एक जागरुक इनसान कुछ सीख सकता है। आरटीआई एक हथियार है, भले ही इसकी कितनी ही सीमाएं हों। इस औजार से वे तमाम जानकारियां हासिल हो सकती हैं जो पत्रकारों को तथ्यात्मक खबर लिखने और सचेतन लोगों के संघर्ष में मददगार साबित हो सकती हैं। आरटीआई ने किस तरह यादव के करियर का ग्राफ ऊंचा उठा दिया, इसकी तरदीक करते हैं वे अध्याय जिनमें उन्होंने अपनी चुनिंदा खबरों के पीछे की कहानी विस्तार से बताई है। एक जानकारी हासिल करने के लिए कितने पापड़ बेलने पड़ते हैं, इसका अंदाजा यह किताब देती है।

आरटीआई से पत्रकारिता  
लेखक: श्यामलाल यादव  
प्रकाशक: सेज पब्लिकेशंस, दिल्ली  
कीमत: 440 रु.



यादव ने अपना मलाल भी इस पुस्तक में जाहिर किया है। अपने इस मलाल का ब्यौरा वे सोनिया गांधी और राहुल गांधी की विदेश यात्राओं के संदर्भ में देते हैं। इन यात्राओं के ब्योरे वे तमाम कोशिशों के बावजूद हासिल नहीं कर सके। इस कहानी को उन्होंने *बला टालने का खेल* अध्याय में बताया है। पत्रकार किस तरह आरटीआई का इस्तेमाल करें—इस पर पूरा एक अध्याय है जो कि बहुत उपयोगी है। इसमें नसीहत यह है कि पहले पब्लिक डोमेन में उपलब्ध सूचनाएं जुटाएं और फिर आरटीआई लगाएं। आरटीआई में सवाल न पूछें, सिर्फ सूचना मांगें। दिग्गज पत्रकार और *इंडियन एक्सप्रेस* के चीफ एडिटर राजकमल झा ने इस पुस्तक की भूमिका लिखी है। उनके शब्दों में, “यह असाधारण किताब बताती है कि स्टोरी का पता लगाने, उसकी पड़ताल करने और ऐसे सच को उजागर करने के लिए उन्होंने किस तरह से उन रिर्काइर्स का इस्तेमाल किया जो शायद छुपे ही रह गए होते।” पुस्तक डेटा जर्नलिज्म की तरफ झुकाव रखने वालों के लिए भी खासी उपयोगी साबित होगी। ■

BOOK REVIEW

# Through the Prism of a True Communist

GARGI CHAKRAVARTTY

*Fragments of Time: Memoirs of a Romantic Revolutionary* by Subrata Banerjee; published by the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh; 2017; pages i-xx and 494; Price: Rs 875, US \$ 35.

In popular image of Indian Communists, the names of Jyoti Basu, Hiren Mukherjee, Bhupesh Gupta or E.M.S. Namboodiripad generally surface. Subrata Banerjee did not belong to that category; yet he was a unique and distinct Communist. He has done a yeoman's service by penning down his recollection of rich experiences in his 494-page memoirs in 22 chapters. The book has been aptly titled '*Fragments of Time: Memoirs of a Romantic Revolutionary*'. He represented a genre of Indian Communists of the forties and fifties of the last century, who—with no hankering for power and position in the party hierarchy—selflessly and silently worked as foot soldiers for the Communist Party, even when as non-whole timers they carried on for their livelihood in their professional commitments. In course of that they might have neglected their private and personal space, not given time to their near and dear ones. Still they dreamt with conviction for a better future, of a socialist society and they dreamt in spite of ups and downs till the end of their lives.

This bouquet of memoirs is not a mere family autobiography; it stretches far beyond the personal joys and sorrows of intricate relationships with parents, wife, brothers, daughter and grandchildren. He blends his personal with political experiences in such a manner that this book is a fascinating read for everyone.

Subrata belonged to an enlightened family of Bengal; father Sunit Kumar Banerjee was a revered professor of English literature while mother Nalini Bala led an inspiring life to be remembered for her energetic social work. His early days with an image of a lonely child gazing into the distance from a balcony in Kaptenbazar in Dhaka,

The reviewer, formerly an Associate Professor of History in Maitreyi College, University of Delhi, is a women activist and a Vice-President of the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW).

subsequent boyhood days of hardship shared with a struggling mother in her singular battle when his father was abroad for higher studies, numerous anecdotes of his extended family and early student life are all portrayed in a prefatory manner like an *aalap* in a musical composition.

Subrata's making of an activist and breaking the shell of a protected life could happen in his college days. He narrates them in the chapter 'Cradle of Many Revolutions', where he talks about his unforgettable experiences of student life at Kolkata's Presidency College and Hindu hostel. This was a significant period for him because he was for the first time exposed to political happenings in the country and the world which drew him close to the Communists. Lectures of professors moulded his mind for an understanding of the process of historical changes that enabled him to think for himself and even at an early age he could question the efficacy of the judgement of the Communists. For example, when in 1937, a majority of socialists and Communists criticised the move for formation of Congress Ministries, saying that nothing much would happen as these were dependent on the 'goodwill of the Governor', Subrata thought differently and candidly writes: 'I had not yet been exposed to the communist thinking, and my gut reaction was that it was a step forward.' (p. 84) Throughout the course of various national and international events and struggles within the Communist Party, Subrata could think differently and yet remained dedicated to the mainstream movement. Since those days, he kept a diary where he could open up his self-analytical mind and pen down his thoughts, his mood, sometimes his own frustrations relating to political developments and even regarding personal relationships within the family.

The book is an important document, a political narration of colonial and post-colonial national scenario and within that framework the contours of the Indian communist movement. What drew him to the movement and made him an activist was not mere theoretical understanding of Marxism but a few factors which he has mentioned: first, an emotional speech by Sarojini Naidu at a meeting of students and youth, second,

the realisation of the success of public pressure in the release of political prisoners, and third, the developments in Europe and China which brought him closer to the Communists with an increasing interest in the Soviet Union for its role in halting Nazi advances. A new awakening was visible and he writes: "History was conspiring to change my way of thinking. Our struggle for independence seemed now only the first step in a bigger battle for the creation of a humane society, free from exploitation. In my mind, free India and socialist India became one single goal." (p. 89) Since then there was no looking back for him, through all the ups and downs he dreamt of a socialist India till his end. That was the period when the academically best students were drawn towards the communist ideology. He recollected a meeting of students with P.C. Joshi, the General Secretary of the then illegal Communist Party, who asked them to do their best in studies. (p. 97)

◆

SUBRATA remembers his first brush with direct activism on the streets of Calcutta. It was on January 25, 1940. The Bengal Provincial Students Federation led a massive procession against the Imperialist World War, in which Subrata joined others to raise his voice with slogans of *Inquilab Zindabad*. How his breaking away from a sheltered life and slowly turning into an active Communist was seen by his father makes an interesting reading. Discussing politics at dinner table and reading avidly the pamphlets brought by Subrata, made his father a Marxist, who soon analysed English literature from a Marxist point of view. His father even encouraged his wife Nalini Bala to 'attend Russian language classes run by the Friends of Soviet Union'. (p. 106) One does get a glimpse of the family life of the Communists of those days, an added treasure indeed.

There is more to learn. Politically conscious bright students were not allowed to disperse after their student life and were brought into cultural movements with the formation of the Youth Culture Institute (YCI), where they performed political plays, formed music choir groups, organised photo-poster exhibitions, literary meetings and also to avoid police attraction used to hold such meetings by arranging picnics. For Subrata, the YCI was a catalyst for that wider movement, the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), which he considered as having contributed

immensely to India's cultural movement even in the post-independence era. (p. 114)

'Love in the Time of a People's War' is the most interesting chapter for two reasons: first, for unfolding his romantic love relationship with Karuna, later famous for her astounding award-winning performance as Sarbajaya in Satyajit Ray's '*Pather Panchali*' and '*Aparajita*'; and secondly, for giving a detailed account of the international war situation with a new political line of the party from an imperialist to a people's war. The heroic resistance by the ordinary people of the Soviet Union against the fascist forces and Nazi Germany attracted numerous Indians to communism. Subrata writes: 'As part of the international communist movement, it was our duty to stand by the Soviet Union.' (p. 123) One gets almost a photographic account of 46, Dharmatalla Street which soon became the cultural centre of the anti-fascist movement.

Here again the analytical mind of Subrata helps the reader to look back in hindsight on the urge for a national government. Subrata candidly writes about the shortcoming of the Communist International. He felt that 'the Congress recognised that the war was for democracy, against fascism and was willing to participate in it, but only under a national government'. (pp. 131-132) The issue of a national government, according to Subrata, would have helped carry conviction with the people's war policy of the Communist Party. The mistake of the CPI was due to the political line of the Communist International.

Subrata taught for a brief period in Santiniketan but was asked to leave for political reasons. However, those years brought him close to the Tagore family. His need for a livelihood made him apply for a job. Finally he joined on October 14, 1942 the Indian Military Academy, which he considered as a way of 'fighting a people's war'. His experiences in the war front in Burma, Vietnam and Cambodia are more than mere travelogue. He took it up as a political mission and hence kept a diary with meticulously jotted notes of gripping accounts. P.C. Joshi, the then General Secretary of the illegal Communist Party, advised him to keep the diary and told him: 'Remember always, especially under the most difficult circumstances, that you are a communist!' (p. 131) There are such detailed narratives, but to my mind his meeting with Bo Aung San, the leader of the Burmese freedom struggle, is worth mentioning. His long interview with the Burmese leader has rich

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political meaning. Bo Aung San conveyed his admiration for Nehru and expressed his eagerness to meet P.C. Joshi. 'Your national movement has been the source of our strength. Your Communists and your Congressmen together should be able to work wonders.' (p. 209) At one point, Subrata's experiences in Burma made him realise that 'nationalism and anti-fascism were not mutually exclusive. In fact one fed the other. But we in India had not quite succeeded in harmonising our national aspirations with the reality of the international correlation of forces.' (p. 184) Subrata mentions interesting information about Bo Aung San's meeting with Subhas Chandra Bose whom the Burmese leader knew from his student days. 'I failed to convince him that 90 per cent of my countrymen had become anti-Japanese. He insisted that the Japanese were our friends. I spoke to him of the reign of terror that they had established in the country.' (p. 208) At a later stage Subrata could manage to meet Nehru to persuade him to demand the immediate withdrawal of Indian troops from South-East Asia in the ongoing negotiations of the Congress with the British. After leaving the Army job, Subrata moved to Bombay to work for the CPI's journal, *People's Age*. This period of homecoming is replete with political developments in the country, which he has penned down in detail—the release of INA heroes, observance of Rashid Ali Day, when on February 11, 1946, Hindu and Muslim students marched on the streets of Calcutta, massive role of RIN Strike in the final struggle for India's freedom. There were students' protest, peasants' struggle—a volcanic situation all over. Subrata felt that the CPI failed to perceive 'to link the revolutionary urges of the working classes, the peasantry and the students with the discontent in the Armed Forces in the environment of negotiations with the British. It took me quite some time to reach this understanding in its totality.' (p. 304)

Scholars working on Partition and Gandhi will get a graphic account of those critical days on the eve of independence. Some of Subrata's political realisations reflect a mature mind — 'violence without mass support causes more harm than good to the revolution'. (p. 311) He was moved by Gandhi's last efforts to bring peace and stall a partitioned India, 'to impart dignity to the fractured freedom so different from what he had dreamed of and fought for.'

(p. 312) Here again Subrata minced no words about the limitation of the party for not being able 'to absorb the strength of Gandhi as a mass leader and political strategist', and seeing him only as 'a leader of bourgeoisie and a man who compromised with imperialism'. By merely idolising him as the Father of the Nation was not enough. (p. 322) There are sensitive traits of Subrata, who at a time when P.C. Joshi was ostracised and isolated with the adoption of the new political line of 'fake independence' in 1948 within the party, maintained cordial relations with the former General Secretary. Subrata observes: 'I also felt happy that in the stifling environment of suspicion, accusations and factionalism, I had retained my sanity and some elements of the true communist behaviour, as I understood it.' (p. 322) These lines speak of a true communist.

Finally in that period of armed struggle by the Party, when the aim was to overthrow the Nehru Government, Subrata was arrested, first lodged at Thane jail and then shifted to Nasik, where his jailmate was S.A Dange, who eventually became a father figure for him. There are political anecdotes during the period of resistance within jail, when Dange took a terrible risk of being shot while facing firing and preventing Subrata from being shot. Dange wanted to prove himself that he was not a coward, as he was deeply hurt at some party documents accusing him as a 'comfort loving coward for not launching clashes with the jail authorities'. (p. 329) His long association with Dange in jail made Subrata his adopted son. There were imminent signs of inner-party struggle. Dange did not approve of the new line but kept quiet as he was afraid, the party would split. But ultimately it did split in 1964 due to two distinct political lines following the Chinese aggression of 1962.

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THERE is so much in this book—news of Stalin's death and sense of loss and disbelief at the denunciation of Stalin, still the love for the Soviet Union by the people of Calcutta to get a glimpse of Bulganin and Khrushchev during their visit to India in 1955, shocking news of Chinese aggression and the division of the party and so on. Subrata has shared his experience with the Chinese consul in Calcutta, Lee, when in

course of a long conversation, Subrata told him: 'The border dispute too should not be an intractable problem. You may disagree with us. But we cannot understand how a socialist country could suddenly take armed action against a non-aligned developing country, especially one with which China has had historic ties.' (p. 358) Ironically the Chinese succeeded in dividing the CPI as the CPI-M was formed in 1964.

In his panoramic revelation, there is hardly any event in national or international politics which is not covered. Among these are his in-depth observations on the fall of Khrushchev and later the ultimate decline of the Soviet Union, the 'New Thinking' of Mikhail Gorbachev and the debates within the CPI on that score. (p. 474)

The book is a mine of information of the world-wide anti-nuclear campaign, cultural festivals and enthusiastic response of party cadres in the 1952 general elections. Subrata's activism in taking classes among workers and other political work came to a halt in the early fifties as he realised it would be unfair for him to expect his father to continue feeding his wife and child while he would indulge himself 'in the luxury of being a revolutionary'. (p. 346) His career as a copy writer in advertising agencies such as Clarion and much later as a journalist in *Illustrated Weekly of India* in Bombay and even later in *Economic Times* in New Delhi or as an expert in the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi or working for various journals and *Patriot* daily and finally working in the CRRID for publications brought him close to many stalwarts in Indian political life like P.N. Haksar.

An important phase of his life was spent in Dhaka as he played a major role in forging Indo-Bangladesh ties as the Counsellor (Information) at the Indian High Commission after the birth of Bangladesh. Before that during the Liberation Struggle, Subrata worked as Director, Public Relations in West Bengal. A very interesting episode of his personal life unfolded when he was with his family residing at the staff quarters within the Raj Bhavan premises in Calcutta. Subrata's paternal aunt Prabhavati, a widow when Subrata was born, who had been ostracised later for eloping with a cultured Muslim man, Sayed Abul Bazar, disappeared in 1921. After almost fifty years, his son knocked the door of his flat, came in search of his mother's family. It was unbelievable for Subrata's mother to get back her favourite sister-in-law who was supposed to be

dead as she was told by her mother-in-law. Once Subrata went to Dhaka along with his mother and wife, they could retrieve their forgotten relationship. A wonderful episode no doubt!

The last chapter titled 'A Dream at the End of the Road' leaves the reader with a poignant note, of Karuna's illness and her final exit from his life on November 13, 2001; a huge personal loss. 'Now I stood alone in a crowd.' (p. 483) Though Subrata did share a little bit of his private life but the entire memoir is basically a political document. However, at the end he looked back at his precious memories and wrote on Karuna: "I wanted to rediscover her from a distance. It is a never-ending exercise. I have had the proud privilege of watching the unfolding of her personality. Karuna's intellect encompassed a much wider range than mine. She was a talented actor, writer, painter and sculptor. She was not just wife, mother and grandmother. She was Karuna." (p. 484) Talking about those precious memories he writes: 'We never felt the need to measure what we gave one another, what we meant to one another. A half-articulated look, a few broken words, a gesture, a touch, conveyed a message we could easily pick up.' It is like reading a poem.

Subrata's loneliness never stopped him from dreaming of a socialist world. He ended his autobiography with these words: "Yes, I am a dreamer still. I am a romantic and a revolutionary, because I am a Communist. I can see before my eyes the new dawn of liberty when padlocks open and chains fall to the ground, and the poor finally inherit the earth. I will not be there to see this new world. May be Piyal and Piyali (his grandchildren to whom this book is dedicated) will see it, but Karuna and I will forever remain a part of that dream of human fulfilment." (p. 486)

The cover picture of Subrata photographed by his grandson Ahmer Srivastava (Piyal) is remarkable. What is missing is a brief bio-sketch of the author with his years of birth and death on the blurb. More of his photographs along with his family members and associates would have further enriched the book.

A man with such rich experiences and sensitivity will remain forever through this magnificent saga of his life in the minds of the readers.

For anyone interested in great writing, this book is a must.

## Mizoram

The astounding Front (MNF) and his in the recent Mizo signified the return only in the State but as a whole. For the task to unseat the Government (in pov and for the Congress its last bastion in t Assembly elections a in 1987, both the Cor State. In the last tw party contest betwee in fact a battle betwe and Zoramthanga of rebel leader-turned-p of Laldenga; he as President after the d held the Chief Minis terms and emerged a the Congress in the

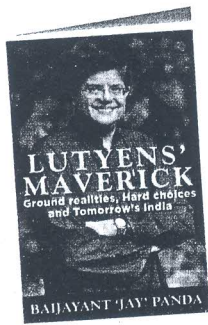
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## books Baijayant 'Jay' Panda

Lutyens' Maverick: Ground Realities, Hard Choices and Tomorrow's India | Rupa | 229 pages | Rs 399

# Go Tell It In A Bazaar

Panda's transient, on-the-spur columns might embarrass in hindsight but he richly earns his encomiums for his profound essays on a gamut of topics

BY MANI SHANKAR AIYAR

**W**HEN a common or garden reviewer is confronted with a book that is laden with the most lavish commendations, the dilemma of how to review it becomes manifest. If one praises it, one runs the risk of being accused of just paraphrasing the blurbs: "thoughtful, stylistic, perceptive" (Jagdish Bhagwati); "must read...to understand the critical intersections of politics and public policy" (Manish Tewari) etc. If, on the other hand, the reviewer carps and criticises, one runs the risk of crossing a galaxy of distinguished persons. Nevertheless, here goes.

My first huge disappointment was that this is not the autobiography I thought it would be. It is a collection of columns. When I first took a bunch of my columns to Penguin in 1990—a year after I had started writing them—the sage David Davidar shook his head and said, "Books of columns do not work". As I have since discovered, David was spot on: books of columns do not work, for they are written in the spirit of the moment. Both writer and reader are caught up—albeit sometimes on opposite sides—in that moment of time when nothing else seems as important, but time is cruel and what seemed overwhelming then is consigned to the trivia of the past.

Thus we have 'Jay' Panda pronouncing judgements that must now embarrass him. Writing in the immediate aftermath of the March 2017 UP assembly polls (pp.77-80), Panda holds that the BJP is "is now looking unassailable". Judging the Congress to be "decimated" and "outmanoeuvred", he proclaims, "the Congress today suffers from apolitical, out-of-touch and wrong instincts at its highest level". The BJP he assesses as "having once again secured the pole position", its success in UP being both "resounding" and "whopping", its

victory in "heavily Muslim-dominated constituencies" constituting "an unprecedented breakthrough". Why? All because "the PM succeeded in marketing his all-aboard strategy" through his "aspirational development message".

Surely, Panda must now concede, that the 2018 parliamentary by-elections in Gorakhpur (the Yogi constituency: *Gorakhpur mein rehna hai to/Yogi, Yogi kehna hai*), Phulpur (his deputy CM's fortress), and Kairana has shown that neither is Modi 'unassailable', nor is the Congress sclerotic. Indeed, the SP-BSP

TRIBHUVAN TIWARI



Many of Panda's excellent, non-partisan suggestions deserve serious attention, though how the system and vested interests can be pushed towards good sense is another matter.

alliance that Panda, to his credit, foresees ("desperation is the mother of invention") foretells the collapse of the "pole position" of the BJP from 71 out of 80 seats in 2014 in UP to eight in 2019 if the Congress is taken on board. (Wanna bet?) Modi's victory in UP was the result of a division of the votes of the non-BJP parties, not the high rhetoric invoked by Panda after the March 2017 results.

As for Modi's "aspirational development message", it is interesting to find Panda saying little about the demonetisation

disaster other than renaming it as "remonetisation" and suggesting that GST should be levied at a single rate of 15 per cent for 90 per cent of goods and services—without acknowledging that this, in substance, is what the Congress note of dissent to the Rajya Sabha's select committee report had stressed. Panda's unflinching support to Modi—at least at the time his former party, the Biju Janata Dal, was a supporter of the BJP in Delhi—shows that Haseeb Drabu (in the blurb) notwithstanding, the "pragmatism of a practitioner" sometimes overwhelms the "rigour of a researcher".

But once Panda moves beyond the topical, converting his writing from "columns" to "essays", his writing is insightful. His formidable team of researchers—some of the 'best and the brightest', plus his own assiduous addiction to web-finding and web-checking—gives us extremely informative, deeply mined facts, figures and assessments that are thought-provoking on a diverse number of issues ranging from the ideological to the political, to the economic and the social, foreign policy and the institutions of our democracy. These insights more than justify the encomiums in the blurbs. Many suggestions commend themselves to serious attention, even if, as a practitioner myself, I wonder how the system and its vested interests can be pushed in the direction of good sense. There is also a celebratory tinge—the glory of our democracy, the strides towards economic development, the challenges we are addressing in promoting social justice. These are non-partisan observations and imbued with greater credibility.

Now that Jay has quit the Biju Janata Dal (without telling us, in this book, why?) and acquired the 'pole position' of an eminently electable Independent, I expect him to emerge as a towering member of our political intelligentsia, much in the manner of a Minoo Masani, if not of a Jai Prakash Narain. And please, Jay, do get on with the autobiography. ☐

science

SOCIAL SCIENCE

# Unlocking the science of success

A complexity expert reveals how social networks create recognition and acclaim

By Raissa M. D'Souza

**W**ant to master your professional and social networks to maximize recognition? Want to learn how to build productive teams that create lasting impact? In his new book, *The Formula: The Universal Laws of Success*, Albert-László Barabási translates almost a decade of scholarly research on the science of success into a lively and compelling narrative woven together with captivating stories and his own deeply personal experiences.

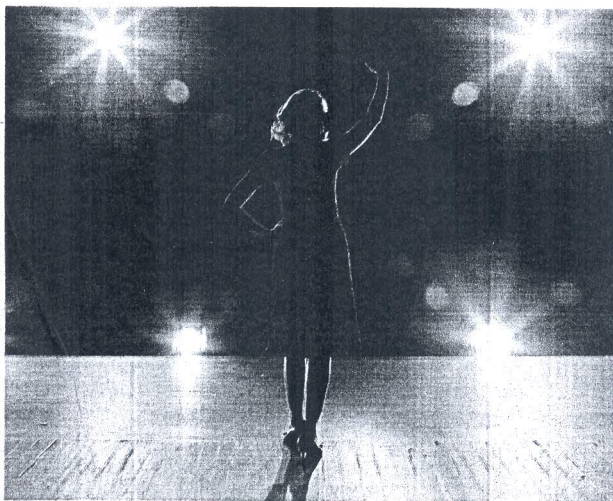
The book reveals the scientific underpinnings behind many informal “rules of thumb” used by successful people and provides scientific explanations for why our efforts to succeed often yield counterintuitive results. For instance, why are some ideas ignored in their own time but then catch like wildfire later? Why do two individuals with seemingly similar levels of skill and performance achieve widely different levels of notoriety?

In order to understand “success,” we must first define it. At its most basic, success is about achieving a specified goal. Typically, we also associate success with recognition from our peers, fame, and profit. In *The Formula*, Barabási shows us that achieving this sort of success relies inherently on the workings of the invisible professional and social networks that shape our world. He defines “success” as the intangible things, separate from performance, that bring about recognition.

Taking us on a wildly entertaining journey from the precision-measurement world of individual performance sports, such as running and tennis, to the intangible world of art and music, to team-based efforts, Barabási reveals how to extract five “laws” that govern the recognition we will receive. He begins by showing us that when performance cannot be quantified directly, it is the perceptions of others that

matter most. And even when performance can be measured, for the highest achievers, just a small increase in performance can lead to an exponential increase in how we perceive their value and in the amount of recognition they receive. Performance is ultimately limited by our personal abilities, but recognition, which comes from the networks, is unbounded.

Even when performance can be precisely quantified, measurement biases can creep in. For instance, a judge of a gymnastics competition is unlikely to give perfect marks to the first competitor, placing athletes in the first performance slot at a disadvantage. That opening competitor is further penalized if the second-round



High-quality work is essential, but visibility can also help breed success.

performances are ordered from worst to best, as is often the case in Olympic sports. In a world where minuscule score differences between the ultra-elite can lead to extremely varying levels of success, it is important to be aware of such effects.

*The Formula* also shows us how to quantify the old adage that “success breeds success.” An initial kickstart in visibility, coupled with high performance and ability (which Barabási calls “fitness”), compounds. Although a kickstart to a performer of low intrinsic quality may initially lead to high visibility, given enough time that performer should ultimately fade into obscurity.

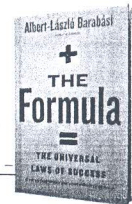
No success story is that of a single individual. Moreover, we collectively form

### The Formula

The Universal Laws of Success

Albert-László Barabási

Little, Brown, 2018. 316 pp.



the networks that create success, so the scientific study of success also reveals a lot about human nature. Although teamwork is typically at the core of any major success, we are quick to reward the credit to one lone individual. We like to create superstars to idolize and aspire to.

Society must also be ready to entertain a new idea for it to be adopted. We are excited about new things that balance

comfort and discomfort, as similarity and innovation. Too little innovation is boring, and too much is incomprehensible. How to strike the right balance? One strategy presented is to build a team that includes “forbidden triads” like Miles Davis did in creating his timeless masterpiece, *Kind of Blue*. This means, for instance, bringing in the strong collaborators of your strong collaborators. Of course, as Barabási shows, dumb luck, grit, and perseverance all play a role in success too.

It is worth noting that “success” measured in terms of recognition is not synonymous with happiness. Arguably, success is about achieving goals that matter to us personally, and most of us do like

to receive recognition from our peers, all of which can enhance our happiness.

*The Formula* is an important book for us all to read. It weaves together meticulously researched historical context with more than a decade of Barabási's and other scholars' “eureka moments” and research findings to extract scientific principles and actionable insights for achieving success. And it shows us how the numerous social and professional networks that are embedded in society shape the success stories of individuals and provides an intimate portrait of a great scientist and his own path to resounding success. ■

10.1126/science.aav7140

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PHOTO: QUAY VONDO/ISTOCK PHOTO

## MAKING SENSE OF GENES

Kostas Kampourakis

Cambridge University Press, New York City, New York. 2017. 307 pages. ISBN: 9781107128132

A growing body of research emphasizes the importance of leveraging disciplinary forms of uncertainty for science students to draw on epistemic practices (e.g. Berland & Hammer, 2012; Engle, 2011; Manz, 2015; Phillips, Watkins, & Hammer, 2017; Watkins, Hammer, Radoff, Jaber, & Phillips, 2018). As a postsecondary biology education researcher, I wonder what forms of uncertainty might productively drive student learning in undergraduate biology courses. Kostas Kampourakis' book, *Making Sense of Genes*, highlights one area of biology that is ripe for problematizing in undergraduate biology education settings. In the classroom, the concept of the gene and its biological function are often presented unproblematically as ideas long established in biology. Yet, the title of Kampourakis' book is striking: genes are portrayed as an abstract idea that one must "make sense of." Indeed, as an area of rapidly advancing research, biologists continue to progress in understanding what genes are and what genes can do. Herein lies an opportunity to foster uncertainty in the undergraduate classroom—namely to create a need to "make sense of" what genes are and what genes can do. Kampourakis' book provides historical, empirical, and philosophical guidance to do so.

*Making Sense of Genes* provides an historical account of the gene concept and its multiple meanings. The book also describes how genes are represented by the media and within formal education—and how those contribute to pervasive misunderstandings about genes. By drawing on genetics research, Kampourakis provides conceptual tools for readers to think and talk about genes in biologically valid ways. The book is intended for a broad audience from non-experts seeking an introduction to genetics, to biology teachers and educators searching for a more informed conceptualization of the field, to biological researchers interested in the link between genetics research and society.

Kampourakis successfully crafts an argument clearly traced throughout the book. Each chapter returns to the overarching problem of distinguishing what genes are and are not—and what genes can and cannot do, building clear connections through each chapter. By the end of the book, the reader appreciates that genes and genomes are more complex than commonly perceived, but it is a complexity that is worthwhile and interesting to understand. For educators and designers, it is a complexity that can be productively examined in the classroom. Although the book's implications for science education are targeted towards postsecondary settings, Kampourakis provides guidance for all levels of genetics learning in terms of how the metaphors, analogies, and framing educators evoke when teaching genetics concepts can set the stage for students to question their current ideas of what genes are and can do.

Kampourakis' book heavily problematizes the notion of "genes for" characters, a notion which suggests that there is one gene responsible for a particular character. If a person inherits that one gene, then they will display the particular character. Kampourakis explains how this notion is "scientifically illegitimate" because, for any character, there are multiple genes that must be present and functioning to express a particular character, as well as genetic factors above the level of the DNA sequence, called the epigenome, that affect observable characters. The notion of "genes for" characters presents an oversimplified conception of what genes are and what genes do; a conception that pervades public perceptions of genes. The book demonstrates the inappropriateness of the "genes for" metaphor by meticulously examining if there are "genes for" characters and if there are "genes for" diseases. Kampourakis illustrates the consequences of drawing on inappropriate metaphors by examining the presentation of genes by companies selling direct-to consumer genetic tests (e.g., 23andMe). Readers will appreciate the thorough

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discussion of how common public perceptions of genetics research could result in misinformed expectations and interpretations of such direct-to-consumer genetic testing products.

Although the book delves into the distorted portrayal of genes in the media, Kampourakis also highlights research findings that suggest formal genetics education seems to play a larger role in perpetuating inaccurate representations of genetics concepts than the media. In light of these findings, a crucial contribution of this book is the examples of conceptual tools for thinking and talking about genes. This contribution is particularly relevant to science education researchers and designers. For many, a general goal for science education is to prepare students to critically consider the validity and reliability of scientific information they encounter in the press. Yet, according to the research highlighted by Kampourakis, it appears that formal education may often misrepresent scientific knowledge through simplistic representations and inappropriate metaphors.

Kampourakis convinces the reader that appropriate metaphors, analogies, and framing are necessary to conceptualize genes, and this book immerses the reader in examples of the careful dialog that is necessary to accurately talk about genes and genomes and what these entities can and cannot do. For example, Kampourakis helps the reader distinguish the nuances in how genes are *implicated* in the development of characters but that genes do not *determine* characters. Educators will appreciate the compelling call to reconsider the way we talk about genes in formal education because Kampourakis provides us with tools to help us shift our metaphors to give a better sense of the complexity of genes and genomes, what we know these entities can and cannot do, and the exciting features of genes and genomes that remain unknown.

The book not only creates a coherent argument for how to conceptualize genes, but also situates the argument in historical contexts. Most biology textbook chapters on genetics and inheritance start with an account of Gregor Mendel as an isolated genius who discovered the laws of genetics and paved the way for the field. However, Kampourakis' account differs by highlighting Mendel's interactions within the early genetics research community and the agricultural motivations for his work. Understanding the motivations for Mendel's work and the other scientists who influenced him is significant for recognizing the affordances and constraints of the model of Mendelian genetics that came out of that work. The Mendelian model is iconic to biology education today, yet seldom helpful for explaining genetic variation in natural populations. The limitations of Mendel's laws connect to the experimental design choices he made based on the agricultural motivations for his research. Mendel eliminated much of the natural genetic variation in his populations of pea plants resulting in only two possible variants for each character that were passed through generations. Kampourakis illustrates the historical role of uncertainty in science activity where Mendel's decisions about designing his experiments were informed by the context and his motivations.

In another historical account, Kampourakis describes how Thomas Hunt Morgan emphasized in his research communications that there was no "one to one" relationship between a gene and an observable character. However, despite this explicit acknowledgment, Morgan used imprecise language of a "gene for" an observable character. Referring to a "gene for" X or a "gene for" Y, implies a one to one relationship between having one specific gene in your genome and displaying a corresponding observable character. These historical examples reinforce the importance of models and metaphors as researchers and educators talk about genetics with nonexperts, and how such tools (e.g., "genes for" characters) influence how nonexperts think about genetics.

An area of particular interest for science educators is the structure of Kampourakis' argument: he begins with the history of genetics research, then problematizes the models of genes and inheritance coming out of early research contexts, and ends by offering different conceptual tools for thinking and talking about genes and genomes. Kampourakis explicitly and implicitly provides guidance for educators and researchers to consider when designing for genetics learning. For example, in high school, the topic of genetics typically starts and stops at Gregor Mendel and his model for genetics and inheritance. Rather than framing learning about Mendel's work as an endpoint, Kampourakis problematizes standard historical accounts of high school genetics teaching and learning.

Kampourakis argues how prioritizing Mendelian genetics oversimplifies the gene concept and ignores the complexities of character development. Beyond explicitly questioning the emphasis biology places on Mendelian

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genetics, Kampourakis implicitly offers the refreshing suggestion to emphasize the puzzlements that fueled genetics research through history – puzzlements that I argue provide fruitful wonderments for engaging students. As an example, researchers in the 1970s struggled to explain why there was more DNA in animals than there should be if that information corresponded to the anticipated size of the genome. This puzzlement led to research describing DNA that coded for products other than proteins. This idea had implications for reframing the entire gene concept. By revealing these moments of wonder in genetics research history, Kampourakis entices educators to infuse elements of uncertainty into the consideration of genetics. In biology classrooms, opportunities for students to explore the limits of what they were previously taught would contribute to more scientifically accurate understandings.

A growing community of genetics educators are devoted to carefully designing multidimensional science instruction through content and practices in both undergraduate biology (driven by the *Vision and Change* report from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2011) and in K-12 science education (driven by *The Framework for K-12 Science Education* by the National Research Council, 2012). *Making Sense of Genes* potentially informs this study by illustrating how formal education has previously limited genetics learning. In its place, Kampourakis puts forth refreshing conceptual tools to support students in “making sense of genes” in alignment with contemporary genetics research. Although the implications for teaching and learning in this book are framed for postsecondary biology education settings, Kampourakis encourages wider consideration of the conceptual frames educators might draw upon in designing for genetics learning at all levels. In the process, he pushes us to shift away from the deterministic metaphor of “genes for” by offering the groundwork for opportunities of uncertainty around how students conceptualize genes, genomes, and epigenomes.

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# A Durable Solution to the Rohingya Crisis

## Strengthening 'Alternative Voices'

K YHOME

**W**ho are Rohingyas? Why are they persecuted in Myanmar? These questions have come to the fore in international media in recent years. The horrific accounts of Rohingya survivors detailing stories of mass murders, rapes, and arson perpetrated by the Myanmar military and ultra-nationalist Buddhist forces continue to emerge from different agencies, including the United Nations, as new investigations are conducted into the latest bout of violence in the northern Rakhine state of Myanmar. Known increasingly to the world only recently, the plight of the Rohingya Muslim minority community in a country they called home is as old as the emergence of the modern nation state of Myanmar.

Delving into these issues with the objective of shaking the conscience of humanity to the unfolding tragedy of the Rohingyas in Myanmar, Azeem Ibrahim's book explores uncharted roads on their history and the factors behind their discrimination. The book makes a strong case that for decades the Myanmar ruling elite adopted "state propaganda designed to ensure that most Burmese now regard [the Rohingyas] as foreigners and as a threat to Buddhist culture" [p 10]. The hazy interpretations of the Rohingyas' history in Myanmar have acquired deeper meaning as political forces redefine the nation's identity in the context of a complex political transition to democracy after decades of military rule.

The book provides alternative perspectives to understanding contemporary Myanmar by challenging popular narratives of the country. In constructing a counter-narrative, the author analyses Myanmar through the lens of Rohingyas and examines the relationship between

### BOOK REVIEWS

**The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide** by Azeem Ibrahim, *New Delhi: Speaking Tiger, South Asian Edition, 2017; pp.xx + 235, ₹599.*

the state and minority communities, between the Burman Buddhist majority and the ethnic and religious minorities, between the state and religion, and between Islam and Buddhism from a historical perspective.

#### Systemic Targeting

The first edition of the book was published in early 2016 before the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) attacked police outposts in the northern Rakhine state of Myanmar in August 2017 that triggered a bloody military operation pushing out over 7,00,000 Rohingya refugees into neighbouring Bangladesh. The book had warned the international community of a large-scale genocide that was a trigger away. The book also warned that the increasingly desperate conditions of the Rohingyas might push them to become vulnerable to exploitation by global terror groups and/or take up arms. With the events of August 2017 and subsequent developments, it may not be wrong to say that Ibrahim did foretell what was coming.

Ibrahim discusses several instances of past genocides across continents to emphasise the significant role, or the lack thereof, of the international community to argue that ignoring the signs of slow and systematic discrimination and violence against minority communities creates the perfect ground for large-scale genocide. The book identifies two critical factors as to why large-scale genocide occurs: the first is the lack of international

pressure on the perpetrators, and the second, the existence of a trigger. The continued lacklustre approach of the international community towards the Myanmar government over human rights atrocities against the Rohingyas fulfilled the first requirement. Then, the ARSA's militant attacks of 2017 provided the trigger for a large-scale genocide.

The international community did little since the outbreak of the latest round of violence that started in 2012, and the new government lead by democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi did "nothing" to address the persecution of Rohingyas. This reaffirmed Ibrahim's conviction in the revised edition that the absence of external pressure on Myanmar over the "unstable situation escalate[d] into the ethnic cleaning of an entire community—or, to give it its proper name genocide" (p xviii).

One of the key arguments in the book is that the Rohingyas are "a target of choice" of the Myanmar ruling elite and their discrimination and exclusion is "no accident," but has been "deliberately manufactured." Explicating the reasons behind "why Rohingyas are targeted in this way," Ibrahim points to two factors that he believes are at the root of the problem. First, for the Myanmar military (that ruled for over four decades since the country's independence in 1948), the Rohingya card comes handy for its survival when faced with internal opposition, to divert attention from its failures. The Rohingyas are an easy target as they pose minimum threat in the absence of an armed resistance group like other ethnic minorities of Myanmar, such as Kachin, Shan, Karen or Chin.

Second, the Theravada Buddhist tradition followed by the Burman majority emphasises the role of the state in protecting and supporting Buddhist institutions. This meant that a narrative of creating the "Other" was necessary where the Rohingyas become the key target for the Myanmar political elite to exploit racial and religious differences. Historical events also reinforced the Myanmar ruling elite's animosity and suspicion towards the Rohingyas. For instance, during World War II, the Rohingyas remained loyal to the British colonial rulers

as leaders of the Burman majority joined the Japanese forces with the aim to drive out the British colonisers.

The core issue around which the Rohingya question is centred in Myanmar today relates to the recognition of the term "Rohingya" as one of the ethnic groups of the country and the issue of citizenship. The book provides a detailed historical account to counter the claim that the Rohingyas are "illegal immigrants" from Bangladesh. Using "archaeological evidences" and colonial records, the author argues that the Rohingyas were among the early settlers in the Arakan/Rakhine region before other ethnic communities arrived there. Though this claim would remain contested, it does contribute to deepening the understanding on the subject. On the citizenship question in Myanmar with regard to the Rohingyas, the book counters the claim of the Myanmar government and Buddhist ultra-nationalists on the historical cut-off year of 1824-26 for people to be granted citizenship. Ibrahim asserts that both claims are "nonsense" under international law, and historically

"inaccurate." The book argues that the Rohingyas are entitled to citizenship not only because they are "indigenous" to the land of Arakan/Rakhine, but also because "[t]he Rohingyas are Burmese by birth and according to international law" (p 33).

**Need for Alternative Voices**

On the question of finding a "possible solution," the author identifies three key actors: the international community, the International Criminal Court, and civil society groups inside Myanmar. The author focuses on international pressure and the threat of legal action. While the significance of the external pressure in inducing behavioural change cannot be denied, for a long-term solution, counter-narrative from within Myanmar is critical. The author's assertion that the Myanmar government is not immune to international pressure may not be incorrect, but external pressure has its limits. Myanmar is a classic example where an international divide has served the military regime to sustain its rule. While the international community's role is

important, it may also be pointed out that hoping to bring about change only through external pressure may not be enough. Rather, the international community should find ways to strengthen those voices inside Myanmar that are challenging the dominant anti-Rohingya Muslim narrative.

It is indeed unfortunate that today the world knows more about Buddhist extremist groups such as Ba Ma Tha and the 969 Movement, than those civil society groups, individuals, and monks from within the Buddhist community who put their own lives at risk to counter the Buddhist extremists. Highlighting the counter-narrative inside Myanmar, however small that may be, is clearly a strength of this book because the long-term answer to the issue lies in these "alternative voices."

The title, *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide*, captures the thrust of the book, that is, to draw the international community's attention to the gravity of the crisis. However, it may be wrong to view the book as an account aimed only to vilify the Myanmar

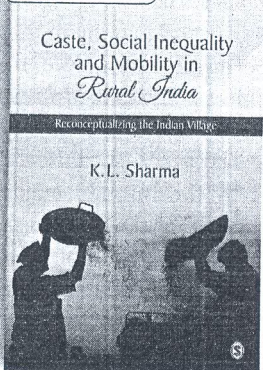
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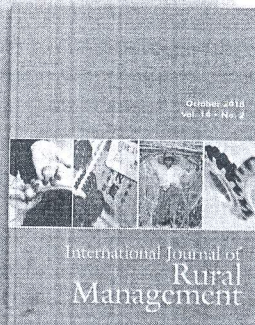
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government and the Burman majority community, as it provides insights into the country's contemporary politics that might be useful for the Myanmar political elites to reflect upon in taking forward the ongoing political transition.

A clear instance of this is the effort to underscore the existence of counter-voices inside Myanmar into the conversation. Political parties and politicians who are trying to build a nation different from the exclusivist narrative of the Buddhist nationalists would find the counter-narrative a stepping stone for creating a political constituency. Furthermore, the author strongly suggests that the separation of the Rohingyas and Rakhine ethnic groups (as Rohingyas are confined to displaced camps) would only reinforce prejudices towards each other and in no way help the cause. The book also provides insights

on the internal political dynamics among different regional political parties in Rakhine state that is essential to understand for any external actor to play a role in this complex political issue. The book discusses important internal and external dimensions of the Rohingya crisis.

One aspect the author could have discussed in more detail is the issue of the political significance of the meaning of the Rohingya identity over the years. As the author rightly argues that in the years soon after independence, the term "Rohingya" as an ethnic identity found space in government official documents. Under the military rule since the 1960s, discrimination against the Rohingyas grew, suggesting a clear correlation between the military's narrow nation-building project and the Rohingyas' recognition that they needed a political

identity to fight discrimination. Had Myanmar's polity evolved into an inclusive and democratic system without military rule, would the Rohingyas have needed to transform their ethnic identity into a political identity?

Having said that, the book undoubtedly is one of the most comprehensive works on the Rohingyas and, perhaps, the most forceful counter-narrative on the popular understanding of contemporary Myanmar. Ibrahim's book is a necessary read for policymakers and scholars to understand why genocides occur and, according to this book, Myanmar may have added itself in the list of countries that has perpetrated genocides on its minority communities.

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## Visual Culture and Art History Quest for a Shared Domain

SURYANANDINI NARAIN

**I**ndia and Its Visual Cultures: Community, Class and Gender in a Symbolic Landscape, edited by Uwe Skoda and Birgit Lettmann states its primary intent as "not to offer an overall introduction to visual culture in India in its entirety; [but] to contribute to a more comprehensive anthropological, rather than art-historical mapping of contemporary empirical visual cultures in India, which is still lacking" (p xxi). Within the first couple of pages, the editors partially invoke the key debates between art history and visual culture at the juncture of the "pictorial turn" or the "visual turn" around the 1990s (Mitchell 1992). However, delving into this proclaimed disciplinary separation demands engagement with several older debates presented in the responses to the all-important Visual Culture Questionnaire edited by Hal Foster and Rosalind Krauss in the issue of *October* (Alpers et al 1996: 25-70); debates that Skoda and Lettmann do not

**India and Its Visual Cultures: Community, Class and Gender in a Symbolic Landscape** edited by Uwe Skoda and Birgit Lettmann, New Delhi, California, London and Singapore: Sage Publications, 2018; pp xli + 379, ₹1,100.

mention. As an outcome of the 1970s-80s crisis in representation (Zerner 1982), visual culture studies had caused much angst in art historical circles, with several seminal figures at institutions of learning responding to a set of four observations/questions circulated by Foster and Krauss, later published in the crucial issue of *October*. The initiative is referred to as a "baptism of fire" by Dikovitskaya as it "helped proponents of visual culture to articulate their positions and thus contributed to the theoretical growth of the new field" (2005: 18). Following it, a spate of readers and compiled anthologies on visual culture studies by theorists such as Bryson, Ann Holly and Moxey (1994), Bird et al (1996),

Mirxoeff (1998), Jenks (1995), Heywood and Sandywell (1999), Burgin (1996), and others debated the older and newer approaches to studying art, the location of aesthetic theory, and issues of ideology and materiality that were gaining ground in studying the visual world. An acknowledgement of one such volume, *Visual Culture: The Reader* edited by Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (1999), since it was also published by Sage, may have more accurately positioned Skoda and Lettmann's work within the continued history of this publishing house.

### Reinforcing Boundaries

The main concern for the aforementioned commentators was whether art history would be redundant in the face of the new promises of visual culture. Through its inclusiveness and anthropologically grounded method, visual culture did not engage with the structuralist binaries of high/low art, folk/fine art, and heralded postmodernity in an expanded field. It engaged with what Victor Burgin calls the "integrated specular regime; of our 'mass society'" extending across media and diversity of all kinds (Burgin 1986: 204). Skoda and Lettmann go on to conclude from this sequence of intellectual developments,

that by the mid-1990s "with the increasing interest of an ever-growing range of disciplines in specific tangible pictures, and more generally, in images as different kinds of optical appearances, art history lost its interpretational sovereignty over them" (p xviii).

Ultimately, the position adopted by Skoda and Lettmann reinforces the boundaries between art history and visual culture. This is fundamentally contrary to the inclusive desires of the visual culture as a discipline, desires of resisting classification, straddling descriptive boundaries (Guins et al 1998), and rewriting culture away from patriarchal, heterosexist normativisation and Eurocentrism. Visual culture attempts the unframing of disciplinary fields, art history, film studies, mass media and communications, with theoretical evaluations of vision (Rogoff 1998). However, the editors also needed to take into cognisance the displacement that may be caused due to a divestment of self-location and historic specificity with an overarching avoidance of the art historical approach. This is especially important in light of the distinctions made

between vision and visuality, where the former is the mechanics of sight and the latter is its historicisation (Foster 1998: ix).

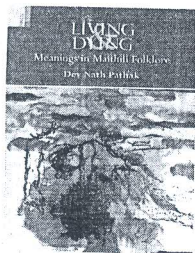
Should it not be possible then to look at a shared domain of operation between art history and visual culture, especially since several of the contributors to this volume seem to be doing so in their writings? A case in point is Radhika Chopra's essay on memorial visuals of the Sikh martyrs in the Golden Temple complex at Amritsar. Here the *tasveers* of *pirs* and *shaheeds* along with paintings of the events in the lives of the 10 gurus convert the museum space into a sacrosanct one. A museum, memorial and sacred space meld together history and belief, echoing the piety of the Golden Temple alongside iconographies of Sikh rebellion in popular bazaar prints. That said, the editors continue the hairsplitting quest to make finer distinctions between the categories of popular, folk, and mass culture, which besides being a difficult task in the Indian context (say in the case of the graphic novel mentioned by Roma Chatterjee in her essay, which simultaneously has elements of folk, elite, mass, and literary cultures at

various registers of culture capital), defeats the conflating purpose of visual culture as a discipline. Again, the five thematic subdivisions (camera works, folk /artistry, market signs, pictorial politics, and monumental landscapes) for classifying the various essays carry little justification. For instance, Fritzi-Marie Titzmann's essay on matchmaking may easily slip from market signs to the segment titled camera works, while Upasona Khound's essay on Mayawati's *Sthals* under monumental landscapes may exchange places with Chopra's piece on the Sikh Golden Temple museum complex under pictorial politics. The final point is exactly this, that studies in visual culture inherently resist any sort of classification, their contents spilling across borders and blurring outlines.

### Mapping Theoretical Strands

Skoda and Lettmann's acknowledgement of the methodological valency of visual anthropology in India comes as a refreshing input, especially since the mentioned works of Banks and Morphy (1997) and MacDougall (1997), have awaited greater scholarly attention in the

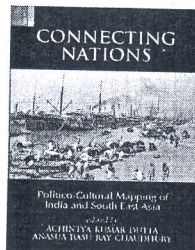
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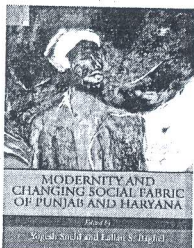
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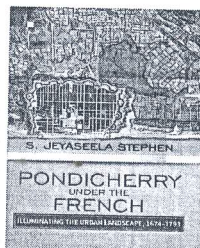


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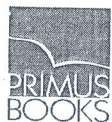


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subcontinent. The centrality of the anthropologist/ethnographer in examining the field for visual systems and visible culture, or for actually using visual methods in social research is finally given due credit for guiding investigations in cultural studies in India. In addition to these scholars, it may have aided the reader to have a brief overview of India's internal engagement with the visual in anthropology, even though visual anthropology as a sub-discipline has never been separately institutionalised. The use of photography in fieldwork, for instance, although addressed by Malavika Karlekar in her essay in this volume, has a large uncharted history in the works of several anthropological investigations in India. Although beyond the scope of this volume, such a compilation would be of great importance to Indian visual culture studies. Most importantly, such an account would have redeemed a discourse which unfortunately remains Eurocentric in relation to the essays that follow.

Skoda and Lettmann's own essay titled "Visualising Death and the Corpse: Perspectives on Post-mortem Photographs in Central-Eastern India" is a meticulous ethnographic document and a critically located piece on the subject. The authors successfully address the purpose of producing and displaying these images, and also look at contiguous indexical practices such as taking footprints, evoking the primary purpose of forensics and criminal record-keeping in photography (Sekula 1986).

A few theoretical tropes that run through the volume call for attention. A discourse on gender commences with the introductory mention of Laura Mulvey's formulation of scopophilia (1975) and carries over into the essays by Karlekar on the labouring female figure, Anusuya Kumar on female actresses in Indian cinema, Fritzi-Marie Titzmann on the feminine "ideal type" in the online matrimonial market, Jill Reese on Jayalalithaa's visual-material politics, and Upasona Khound on Mayawati's *Sthals*. Another thread of studies in material culture traverses most essays, concerning ritual objects, but also monuments (dedicated to caste, faith and regional locations),

matrimonials (in a certain dematerialised manner), and even advertisements for meat shops. Jill Reese's essay on the transformative power of material goods in return for votes by J Jayalalithaa, who is photographed from being an actress, to MGR's divine consort, to *amma* (mother), to *amman* (mother goddess) in Tamil politics most directly addresses the nexus between visibility and materiality. Theoretical understandings of materiality (Miller 2005) would thus open up these anthropological investigations, dovetailing them into the larger domain of visual studies. Intersections between religion and visibility underly the essays in Part IV titled "Pictorial Politics" (in addition to Rita Brara's essay in Part III, "Market Signs"), reinforcing the inescapable politics of faith underlying everyday visual and material culture and spatial occupations by politico-religious sites, as exemplified in Susmita Pati's essay on Delhi's "monuments."

Again, although new disciplinary areas within the realm of anthropology are being evoked, they do not exist with watertight borders, and generously share their fields of study. A rich intertextuality appears between contiguous topics, say Roma Chatterji's essay on the 9/11 *patachitras* of Bengal and Cecile Guillaume-Pey's text on Sora paintings of the Odisha-Andhra border. Both address the question of folk and ritual elements in traditional painting adapting to new subjects and contexts in a changing world, not necessarily suffering a loss but enhancing their symbolic efficacy through creative, collaborative attempts and commercial forays. Examinations of text-image relations by Asuncion López-Varela Azcárate writing on the illustrated poetry of Anjan Sen and Rita Brara's ethnography of meat shop signages draw out a similar intertextuality. One can only imagine that the two tributary workshops to this volume, one at Aarhus University and the other in conjunction with Sri Venkateswara College in Delhi in 2011-12, would have had a rich discourse between some of these scholars.

*India and Its Visual Cultures* rides on the strength of its contributors, the novelty of the fields of their research and their well-argued theoretical and critical

frameworks. Whether it is Kumar's evocation of Jungian psychoanalysis, or Brara's use of the Deleuzian method in *Difference and Repetition* (1994), or Skoda and Lettmann's references to post-structuralists, such as C S Pierce and Roland Barthes, each essay is a deeply focused contribution by the author within a larger theoretical realm. As the only publication dedicated to India's visual culture since Jyotindra Jain's edited volume in 2007, this is bound to become a key text in assisting anyone who wishes to engage with the included topics.

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# Partition trauma and social identity

The book focusses on the psychological and social dimensions of the distress and trauma emerging out of Partition, but a discussion on the rhizomatic web of caste is absent in Partition studies.

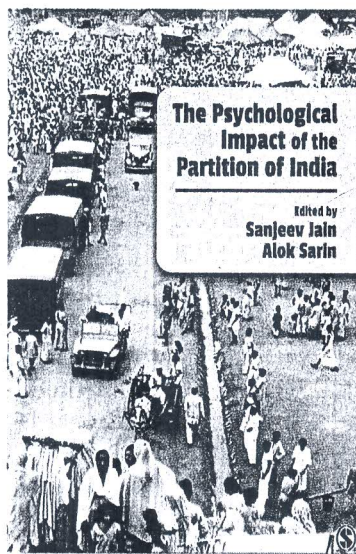
BY PARTHASARATHI MONDAL

THE book under review is a welcome contribution to the study of the psychological impact of the partition of India. It lays on the table the reorganisation of medical and psychiatric services on account of Partition and the resultant neglect of the psychological dimensions of Partition in symptomatology and in treatment and care.

Several of its chapters focus on the psychological and social dimensions of the distress and trauma caused by Partition such as vulnerability and violence; political trauma, mental illness and identity crisis; social progress, politics, and medical care; and, psychiatry's reluctance to account for the social-psychological location of the individual.

This is a beginning in mental health studies, especially in India and South Asia, but beginnings are often compromised when their foundations are not adequately reflected upon.

The rationale for the work remains rooted in the orthodox take on the philosophy and epistemology of psychiatry as science des-



**The Psychological Impact of the Partition of India**

Edited by Sanjeev Jain and Alok Sarin

Sage, New Delhi, 2018

Pages: 260

Price: Rs.850

pite protestations, questionings and elaborations to the contrary and the "pre-occupation" with the social.

**BROAD DOMAINS OF REFLECTION**

The book's engagement with the "social" and "psychological" remains perfunctory and inadequately theorised; thus, it is littered with quick and cursory statements on complicated and fundamental theoretical questions and notions arising from the literature to which it alludes and to

which it does not.

The work could be located in two broad domains of reflection, namely Partition studies and mental health studies. There are two ways in which it can be viewed: one is to note this or that aspect of contemporary scholarship on Partition in India and South Asia specifically and on Partition, migration and bordering internationally, which have not merited attention or have been considered incidentally in the chapters. The other way is to raise the question of perspective or framework that

occasions and guides the study. A few salient absences in the book in the context of Partition studies are the following. It reflects the elision of two major considerations, that is, the question of the partition of eastern India and the question of caste.

**PARTITION OF EASTERN INDIA**

Almost all the essays in it are located in the northern or north-western region of India, physically and cognitively *vis-a-vis* Partition despite the recent efforts of a fairly large corpus of literature on the partition in eastern India (specifically, Bengal (West Bengal/Bangladesh), Assam and parts of the other States of north-eastern India) attempting to overcome the historical deficiency of studying eastern India in Partition studies. This literature, based on almost all the genres that have been used in the work (that is, the humanities, performing arts, and the social sciences), alerts the student of Partition on the massive historical and civilisation specificities of

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**CIRCA 1947/1948:** At a camp for displaced Indian Muslims near Humayun's Tomb in New Delhi, during the period of unrest following Partition.

this part of the subcontinent, thereby enormously enriching the oeuvre of Partition studies. This is an important consideration given that the scale and nature of Partition (say, in terms of the very political origins of Partition, the ideological and theoretical resources that had to be marshalled to address this part of the world, violence, the volume of transfer of populations, and the resettlements and rehabilitation done in diverse geopolitical and cultural settings) were admittedly more complex in eastern India and South Asia.

Moreover, a consideration of refugee camps (and work in progress on the theoretical significance of these camps), which have been one of the hallmarks of studying the partition in eastern India, gets short shrift in the work. In this context, it is interesting to note that some of the gaps in the studies on the parti-

tion in eastern India have been reproduced in the papers in the work; for instance, (i) the inadequate treatment of regional or sub-regional differentialities in terms of issues such as geographical territories and terrains; administrative entities such as States, districts and blocks; and communities, cultures and local political economies, and (ii) the enmeshment and intersectionalities of electoral, radical and local politics with these differentialities.

#### **SILENCE ON CASTE**

This picture is closely connected to the silence on caste in Partition studies and subsequently in the book. This is despite a few seminal studies on the partition in eastern India, which have sought to make the question of caste central. Social-psychological consideration of caste in comprehending traditional and modern India (and also South Asia) is

already a part of academic lore. What is significant in contemporary India and South Asia is the political and contestive understanding of caste, which have been highlighted in a slew of studies from the humanities, social sciences, and public policy over the past three decades. A work on Partition cannot but ignore this scholarship on the brute fact of caste in India and South Asia. In this context, it is worth the while to note two developments that have a huge scope in enriching any future work of similar ambition, that is, (i) the anthropological, political and legal work being done on conflict, repression, natural disasters, environmental change and development in the context of migration and refugees in the international context; and (ii) the work being done in the intersection of philosophy and the social sciences on bordering and transitional

spaces. Much of the burgeoning scholarship on these areas is, unfortunately, missing in the book.

In the domain of mental health studies, an effort is on to study the meaning, operations and implications of caste. In these studies, psychiatrists and social scientists seek to examine the psycho-cultural dimensions of the stigma and discrimination of caste and understand the differences in the stigmatisation of untouchability and of mental distress. Secondly, this scholarship tries to comprehend how cultural identities (especially that of caste) have shaped the Indian reception to theories of textbook psychiatry and how that has influenced practice in the clinic.

There is, in this oeuvre, an effort to initiate a debate on whether the institutional and epistemological arrangements of psychiatry are incapable of a wider consideration of social justice or whether psychiatry's visualisation of it as a science, which, as an inherently just enterprise, is incapable of epistemologically countenancing caste. Given the significance of caste today, the work would have been keener if it had taken into consideration the leads provided by these rudimentary studies.

These absences in the fields of Partition studies and mental health studies prevent the work from considering several complicated issues relating to the psychological impact of Partition. The authors could have done well to engage with the issues of

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**CIRCA 1947/1948:** Sikh refugees at a relief camp at Khalsa College in Amritsar, Punjab, following the unrest in the wake of Partition.

caste, regional specificities and differentiations, and bordering. These issues structure the social, the political and the mental.

#### ABSENCE OF ARGUMENT

But the more debilitating handicap of the book is the absence of a clearly formulated argument or question from which its proposition or rationale emanate. Here, one gets the sense that it is necessary to study the psychological dimensions of Partition in India because this (and the related phenomena of migration and refugees) has been studied in the West and not in India.

Subsequently, it emerges that Partition did after all have traumatic consequences for the mind and for the social, and that

the psychiatric clinic in India had/has no answer to it. Were one to reverse this "sequence"—that is, contending first that Partition had serious mental consequences and that this has also been the observation in the case of the West—the ground would still be the epistemological ability of the science of psychiatry to cognise, accommodate/internalise, and make the social the clinical. This position runs throughout the work in somewhat muted tones but occasionally erupts to the surface with assertions on the universality and power of psychiatry and science.

This message is acutely felt when it is asserted that particular specificities, such as the identity of caste, tribe and religion, disrupt the universal mes-

sage of science and progress. Could this then be the reason for the work neglecting the literature of caste in its conceptualisation and illustrations?

#### PSYCHIATRY'S INABILITY

The claim to the superiority of the universal is problematic. The enormous work that has been done in mental health studies from the Marxist perspectives or frameworks on psychiatry, the post-structuralist destabilising of reason and madness, liquidity and fluidity of cultural studies, and even the history of "psychiatry" in India generates a whole host of arguments and questions for mental health studies, which many a time problematise the ability of psychiatry to address the social.

In this corpus, the universalist claims of reason and science and the political messages of progress, welfare and politics are thoroughly historicised and interrogated. More importantly, questions on the formulation of the social itself are raised and the inability of psychiatry to go so far "back" or "deep" is argued in terms of theory, practice and institutions.

The work does not engage with this literature and this becomes immediately evident in its inability to reconcile its latent framework or position of the truth and power of the

universality of psychiatric science with the variety of issues discussed in the chapters (which may or may not be in consonance with the contentions of the universal). References to the phenomena of emotions, power, exclusion

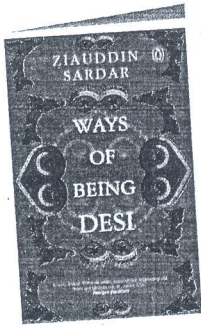
and vulnerability, which are replete in some of the chapters, have the potential of indicating the need to engage with the work done by the Marxist, post-structuralist, and cultural studies approaches in the domain of mental health, but this exercise is absent in the work. This situation becomes more alarming when one recognises, further, that even this heterodox literature of heterogeneity, particularity, multiplicity and "destability" does not raise the question of caste.

The "rhizomatic" web of caste, which tells us so much of India and South Asia, is absent even in their deliberations. This complicated terrain demands ground-breaking work in the intersections of Partition studies and mental health studies. Unfortunately, the much-needed and welcome promise of the book under review is not given the opportunity to germinate. Work on several of these concerns is in progress amongst teachers, activists and students across India ("the silent zone"). And it would be wonderful if the well-known editors who have taken a bold step took the trouble to search out these researchers, many of whom may not have reached—for many reasons—the charming circles of the national professional and intellectual elite. □

*Parthasarathi Mondal is Chairperson, Centre for Social Theory, School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He was on the editorial advisory board of Indian Journal of Medical Ethics.*

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**books** Ziauddin Sardar

Ways of Being Desi | Penguin Allen Lane | 548 pages | Rs 799

## Time's Bitterest Jokes

In an inspection of identity, influences and civilisational pull, Sardar reclaims 'desi-ness' for the Pakistani, craving a new binding of old unifiers

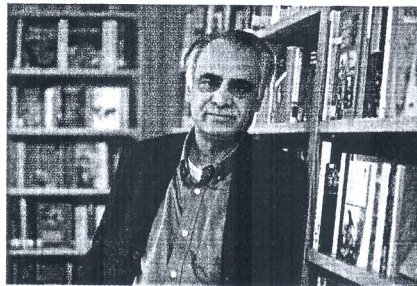
BY SUDHIRENDAR SHARMA

**F**OR the Greeks, nostalgia meant a mix of sweet and bitter pangs that humans suffer in search of their roots and identities. From what was once considered a return of pain or some sort of sickness, relived nostalgic moments are now said to improve mood, increase self-esteem, strengthen social bonds and imbue life with meaning. It does so for Ziauddin Sardar, as moments of reckoning through sights, scents, and sounds of the lived past reveal his true self as a 'desi', an identity sans ethnic lineage and national boundaries. Why should my identity be limited to a mere seventy years and a vaguely samosa-shaped area on the world map? As a compassionate critical thinker and an accomplished author, Sardar traces his identity in the macrocosm of culture and civilisation beyond the body politic of the nation-state called Pakistan.

*Ways of Being Desi* pieces together those aspects of history and culture that have either faded from peoples' imagination or lie marginalised in the percepts of territorial identity. Such an identity has cast an unmistakable imprint on people's minds, shattering their self-esteem to the point that they don't find anything true and authentic within their own country. Nothing could be worse for a heterogeneous population than a lack of belief in self and the country, the psychological underpinnings of which reduce the sense of belonging to a caricatured symbolism of political identity. It is the diasporic sense of separation and loss that is beautifully reflected in the rich anecdotal narrative.

Only by removing the mask of modernity could the author hear the call of sanity and sweetness of everydayness that he had long lived and cherished. Sardar unapologetically returns to his desi-ness, and rediscovers the emo-

tional power of relationships; captures the sense of aesthetics in language; and locates himself within the civilisational space called 'watan'. The detective novels of Ibn-e-Safi, the cinema of Dilip Kumar and Guru Dutt, the poetic genius of Ghalib and Faiz, and the crossover Pakistani television dramas help him comprehend the missing sub-continental imagination, the absence of which has only given people of the partitioned land a sense of political identity that has distanced itself from the history and culture of its ancestral lineage.



These are reflections on realities of a country that belittled the identity of its people. With wit and sarcasm, Sardar explores the shaping of a nation-state in constant paralysis.

Within the political realities which persist only for maintaining status quo, the idea of coming together of diverse traditions separated at the cruel hands of history may sound romantic; however, there is merit in it as it can counter the collective insanity and despair that fuels a sense of inferiority. Such remote possibility is pregnant with the idea of building creative alliances between shared cultures to act against the helplessness and impotence generated by modernity. One begins to feel Sardar's pain and at the same time aligns with

his optimism that only by recreating a sub-continental imagination based on diverse cultures and interlinked histories can a plural homeland be created!

Sardar traverses a significant part of his nostalgic journey through films, as he finds in them reflections of contradictions and opportunities, as well as poetic aesthetics and cultural values. In addition to acting as a universal symbol of sub-continental identity, films like *Mughal-e-Azam*, *Ganga Jamuna*, *Devdas* and *Pyassa* not only set the literary agenda but acted as a lifeline for cultural survival. While Indian cinema of the '50s, '60s and early '70s engaged with the audience purely on the basis of shared cultural assumptions, the television dramas of Pakistan during the '80s and '90s explored the role of tradition in shaping a contemporary identity. Both found resonance across political boundaries, a testimony to the acknowledgement and appreciation of shared cultural chord. Could film and television media of the kind be the reflecting mirror of shortcomings, and a messenger of promises?

At the core of *Ways of Being Desi* are reflections on socio-political realities of a country that has belittled the identity of its own people. Packed with sardonic wit and uninhibited sarcasm, the author provides an honest exploration into the shaping of a nation-state that is perpetually in paralysis. Not only the land area but mental spaces of people have been partitioned, distancing them from the aesthetic and sensibility of their subcontinental belonging. The country needs to recover its tradition of pluralism and humanism before it segregated populace plunges it deeper into the abyss of bigotry, violence and mob rule, cautions Sardar. The author invokes desi-ness as a living, dynamic reality that has the potential to reclaim the past to reunite it to its futures. □

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

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# Eye-opener on north-east India

The book looks at north-eastern India's diversity and touches upon the region's challenges and potential through the eyes of a journalist associated with the region for three decades. BY **LYLA BAVADAM**

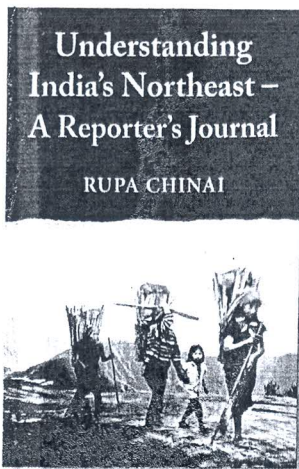
**T**HIS is an enormously empathetic book about a region and people that have been neglected severely. It tells stories of isolation, unrest, cultural diversity, dangerous politics, ethnic strife, the violation of rights and, significantly, hope.

The author, Rupa Chinai, has an impeccable journalistic pedigree and combines her reporting skills with views that reflect her empathy for the people of the region. Her first job was with *Himmat* magazine, after which she worked with *The Times of India*, *The Indian Express* and *The Sunday Observer*. She is currently an independent journalist reporting "ground reality from several Indian States".

It was during her time at *Himmat* that she developed an interest in the north-eastern region of India. In 1980, she made her first trip to the region, which was "afire with turmoil and agitations". Despite this, "no national newspaper had a correspondent in the region. Coverage of events—usually distorted—came from

journalists sitting in Kolkata, who seldom stirred further east, mainly because newspaper managements were unwilling to invest in coverage of the area."

Rupa Chinai's journalistic training comes through in the thoroughness with which she describes situations and policy. However, she is firm about her point of view, of being clearly on the side of the north-eastern region's peoples, and vigorously advocates the need to understand the situation with a historical perspective rather than respond with brutal action.



**Understanding India's Northeast: A Reporter's Journal**

By Rupa Chinai

Published by Rupa Chinai

Pages: 351

Price: Rs.600

While writing about the disillusioned youth in the region who have either affiliated themselves with underground groups or have surrendered and joined local politicians or the mafia, she says: "[T]hese youth continued to represent the face of terror within their societies and are a major hurdle to the peace process. In today's parlance these gun-wielding youth would be termed as 'terrorists' who deserve the harshest punishment. But as a witness to their social experience over decades, I understood where they are coming from and what had brought

them to this pass, though I do not condone the use of violence and the politics of hate."

The book is an education on the fierce tribal politics that rise to the surface once underground groups lose their focus and deteriorate into becoming insurgent groups. She writes, "All these organisations started with a lot of idealism and had the support of the common people but the past decade has seen them deteriorate into terrorist groups, thugs and extortionists.... An intensified struggle for power between the insurgent groups and factions has led to murderous attacks and purges on those they consider traitors or dissidents."

## ALIENATION AMONG PEOPLE

The deep sense of injustice and alienation that the people of the region feel is a recurring theme in the book. For instance, Rupa Chinai recalls how a Naga friend told her: "I have many friends who are Indian. Yet in my heart I cannot accept them as my countrymen. There is still a sense of disturbance in my mind. An Indian is always the outsider, the person with whom I come in conflict."

This sense of alienation to what they refer to as the mainland is exacerbated by poor media coverage of the region. "Denying them an opportunity to be heard and understood, depriving them access to a receptive media and sensitive judiciary, while unleashing the full force of military might

and inhumanly guilty of ruthless a peaceful people against Rupa Chinai w

The author the well-public of Irom Sha Meitei wor stripped to pro the rape of a M man by Assam sonnel; a cold-blooded Chungkham young man w dead apparentl lice despite armed. And she thousands of many of whom a statistic. The in the book de Rupa Chinai's and experienc than three dec ing and stay region.

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Sociology ✓

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and inhuman laws, we are guilty of ruthlessly pushing a peaceful and gentle people against the wall," Rupa Chinai writes.

The author touches on the well-publicised stories of Irom Sharmila; the Meitei women who stripped to protest against the rape of a Manipuri woman by Assam Rifles personnel; and the cold-blooded murder of Chungkham Sanjit, a young man who was shot dead apparently by the police despite being unarmed. And she talks of the thousands of other cases, many of whom are not even a statistic. The information in the book demonstrates Rupa Chinai's knowledge and experiences of more than three decades of visiting and staying in the region.

### STORIES OF HOPE

After pages that describe violence, isolation and a situation that seems to have spun out of control, she calms the reader with some success stories. "There is, however, much that is happening in the lives of ordinary people," she writes. "After decades of pain and suffering, many are thinking deeply and finding new liberation and creativity that shows us all the way forward. One of the most inspiring demonstrations of this approach is seen in Nagaland. For instance, in Phek district of Nagaland, villages like Chizami are working out a model of development that is rooted in their traditional wisdom and is vitally relevant to the region too. The 2018 Assembly election is a remarkable demonstration of society taking a stand against

electoral corruption and commitment to democratic values."

Yet another story Rupa Chinai narrates is that of Tyka village in Karbi Anglong district in Assam inhabited by a 350-strong tribal community called the Ingtyi. The village produces a variety of turmeric that is rated among the best in the world as proved by the laboratory of the Spices Board of India. But the villagers' lack of access to capital and to markets meant that the crops were grown largely for home consumption. Help came in the form of influential Ingtyi who were in government service and in banking. Instead of selling land to generate capital ("land is life" for people here), Ty-

ka's residents involved five neighbouring villages in order to pool in their land resources to make 1,000 hectares.

The result was the formation of something akin to a cooperative for a period of 15 years, and two companies were set up, the Karbi Farmer Producers Company and the Coinonya (Greek for fellowship). The shareholders were 80 families from the five villages who would grow the specific variety of turmeric and ginger and sell it to the Spices Board based in Kochi (one of the Ingtyi was posted in Kochi in a senior position in government). The plan was a long-term one but it held the promise of being sustainable. And more than

anything else, it spelt hope.

This is a one-of-a-kind book on the north-eastern region that combines scholarship and anecdotal accounts. It can serve as a good reference for lay readers and researchers and an index would have greatly facilitated this. Photographs would have been welcome but perhaps production costs had something to do with the lack of them. Like many of her trips to the region for which Rupa Chinai relied on her own financial resources, she has chosen to self-publish the book.

Arunachal Pradesh is conspicuous by its absence from the book, and the author has expressed her regret at this saying that she had written only on the States where her interactions had been extensive. But despite these limitations, the book is a must-read. It is not merely an eye-opener but an education and a shaming realisation that most Indians know pathetically little about the north-eastern corner of their own country.

In his foreword to the book, Rajmohan Gandhi writes: "Even those who are aware of the north-east's critical significance do not know the region's diversity or the separate potential and challenges of Arunachal, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Very few have studied the region, its intricacies and its evolution as closely or as steadily as Rupa. Finishing this book, the reader will emerge with new knowledge and insights."

That pretty well sums up the book. □



RITU RAJ KONWAR

A GARO tribal woman in Kinangaon in Kamrup district of Assam, a 2013 picture.

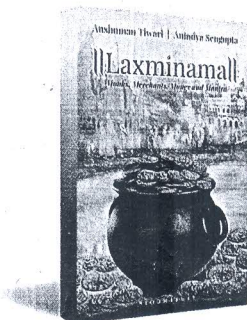
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[ BOOKS ]

# Mercantilist Mantras

By Prosenjit Datta

This is not just about economic history or the history of trade in India. *Laxminama* mixes a series of mythological tales, stories of historical figures (kings, queens, merchants, invaders, mendicants, sailors, princesses, traders, gold merchants and other adventurers) to talk about trade, economy and businesses from ancient India (and indeed the world) to fairly current times. (Strictly speaking, the book describes trade, systems, regulations and the economy of what would have been various kingdoms and societies falling in the territory of modern India as well as some neighbours, though none of the ancient or medieval kingdoms actually covered the exact area that forms modern India.) The authors start with the myths of Gilgamesh (the Sumerian emperor) and Prithu (one of the avatars of Vishnu) taking us all the way to Ram Rahim and his empire. There is a fair amount of analysis of how religion influenced trade and industry and an equally in-depth look at the principalities, kingdoms, societies and their innovations. It examines the economic and trade traditions of different empires—from the Kushanas to the Guptas to the empires of the south



## LAXMINAMA Monks, Merchants, Money and Mantra

by Anshuman Tiwari and  
Anindya Sengupta  
Bloomsbury India; ₹699; 480 pages

By the time the Vedas  
were written, there  
were many references  
to travel, both by land  
as well as sea

(Pallavas, Cholas) to the Delhi Sultans (Tughlaqs, Lodhis), the Mughals, Robert Clive and the East India Company, followed by the British empire and even the post-Independence years.

A lot of the book talks about trade, one way or another. In general, rulers and governments in India did not have

a protectionist mindset. Societies and empires were fairly well integrated with their near and distant neighbours, if not the global economy. There is evidence of trade even in a society as self-sufficient as the Harappan, though, as the authors point out, the importance of this civilisation's external trade was exaggerated by earlier historians. Even the Vedas contained numerous references to travel, by land as well as sea. (However, the authors point out that it is not entirely clear whether the Rig Veda talked of travel by sea or river, given that the references were to boats with oars, and the fact that the rivers of ancient India would have themselves been fairly difficult to navigate.) Later empires and kingdoms travelled further and traded far more. The Cholas were particularly adventurous when it came to crossing the seas and oceans.

A book like this could easily have been extremely boring, but the authors keep it lively by splicing it with myths, short stories, potted biographies and linking it with the economic and trade conditions of the era. You do not have to read it from cover to cover—it is best savoured by dipping in and out, taking each chapter as a separate, standalone piece. ■

Prime Minister **NARENDRA MODI** speaking at a rally in Kerala took the state's Left Democratic Front government to task for implementing the Supreme Court's orders permitting women of all ages to worship at the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple. The order had overturned a 1991 Kerala High Court ruling, which barred women between the ages of 10 and 50 from entering. The CPI(M) replied to Modi's comment, saying that the prime minister ought to "read the Indian Constitution, which he is sworn to uphold, rather than *Manusmriti* or RSS oath!"

### PULLQUOTE

"The Left Democratic Front government's conduct on Sabarimala will go down in history as the most shameful action of any government in power... We know that the Communists do not respect Indian history, culture and spirituality, but nobody imagined that they would have such hatred"



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India Today, January 28, 2019